

***2023 ISSUES & insights index***

*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 2023 and are available online [here](https://pacforum.org/programs/issues-insights).

1. [**Vol. 23, SR1 — Toward a Unified NATO Response to the People’s Republic of China**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr1-toward-a-unified-nato-response-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china)editedby Rob York

Vladimir Putin’s Russia, and its brazen invasion of Ukraine last year may not have succeeded in bringing Ukraine to heel or establishing Moscow as a great military power again, but it did accomplish two other things. For one, it demonstrated for the world what the countries separated by the Atlantic could achieve—even indirectly—by helping partners (even nonNATO members) acquire the means to defend themselves. For another, and for all Putin’s claims to the contrary, it showed that nations near Russia’s western border have a very good reason for wanting NATO membership. Putin, more so than any mainstream American or continental European security scholar, has demonstrated the alliance’s continued relevance in providing for the security of countries that desire selfdetermination and alignment with the liberal, rules-based international order.
2. [**Vol. 23, SR2 — The World After Taiwan’s Fall**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr2-the-world-after-taiwans-fall)edited by David Santoro and Ralph Cossa

The study, which provides six national perspectives on this question (a US, Australian, Japanese, Korean, Indian, and European perspective) and fed its findings and recommendations into the second round of the DTRA SI-STTsponsored (and Pacific Forum-run) Track 2 “US-Taiwan Deterrence and Defense Dialogue,”[1] outlines these strategic implications in two alternative scenarios. In the first scenario, China attacks Taiwan and it falls with no outside assistance from the United States or others. In the other scenario, Taiwan falls to China despite outside assistance (i.e., “a too little, too late” scenario).

1. [**Vol. 23, WP1 — Why Gender Balance Matters for Equity and Peace in the Indo-Pacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-wp1-why-gender-balance-matters-for-equity-and-peace-in-the-indo-pacific) by Maryruth Belsey Priebe

Who shows up at events and conferences matters. Public and closed-door events are where successes and failures are analyzed; where conceptions about security, what it means, and how we can achieve it bump up against one another; and where problems are solved in novel ways. The greater the diversity of perspectives, the more powerful the outcomes. But within the security sector, predominantly all-male panels—or “manels”—suggest a lack of gender diversity, resulting in the exclusion of women, people of non-binary identities, or both. Manels represent a more serious lack of gender inclusion at leadership levels, making it difficult for women to gain recognition through promotion to senior decision-making positions. The following is a discussion of Pacific Forum’s work to study more than nine years of programming with a goal of understanding historical trends in order to implement and measure policies to increase the number of women attending and speaking at Pacific Forum events. The analysis identified room for improvement, and marks a jumping-off point for Pacific Forum’s work on mainstreaming gender within institutional programming.

1. [**Vol. 23, WP2 — Digital China: The Strategy and its Geopolitical Implications**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-wp2-digital-china-the-strategy-and-its-geopolitical-implications) by Dr. David Dorman and Dr. John Hemmings

Over the past few years, there has been growing concern inside the United States, Europe, and in the Indo-Pacific on the strategic direction behind China’s technology policies. Beginning with the debate over 5G and Huawei, this debate has covered Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum teachnology, and semi-conductors—a foundational technology. And despite a large number of policies in place – Made in China: 2025, Cyber Super Power, and the New Generation AI Development Plan—few in the West have known China’s overall digital grand strategy.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR3 — Strategic Competition and Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr3-strategic-competition-and-security-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific) edited by Carl Baker

There is a growing acceptance among countries in the IntoPacific region that strategic competiiton between the United States and China is changing perceptions about security and the adequacy of the existing security architecture. While some have characterized the competition between the two as a new Cold War, it is clear that what is happening in the region is far more complex than the competition that characterized the original Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. First, the economic integration that has taken place since the early 1990s makes it much more difficult to draw bright ideological lines between the two sides. Further, the Asian context of the emerging competition is one where the two competitors have grown to share power. As the dominant military power, the United States has been the primary security guarantor in Asia and beyond. China, on the other hand, has emerged over the past decades as the primary economic catalyst in Asia and beyond. Currently, each side seems increasingly unwilling to accept that arrangement.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR4 — A History of Shared Values, A Future of Shared Strategic Interests: US-Australia Relations in the IndoPacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr4-a-history-of-shared-values-a-future-of-shared-strategic-interests-us-australia-relations-in-the-indo-pacific) edited by Rob York

Authors of this volume participated in the inaugural US-Australia Next-Generation Leaders Initiative, sponsored by the US Department of State through the US Embassy in Canberra. With backgrounds from academia, public policy, civil society, and industry, the cohort brings rich insights on the past, present, and future of the US-Australia relations. This program was conducted from February 2021–September 2021.

1. [**Vol. 23, CR1 — South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Emerging US-Japan-Philippines Trilateral**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-cr1-south-china-sea-east-china-sea-and-the-emerging-us-japan-philippines-trilateral) edited by Jeffrey Ordaniel & Carl Baker

The US-Japan-Philippines Trilateral Maritime Security Dialogue conducted in December 2022 confirmed that there is very little difference in threat perceptions regarding the East and South China Seas. The three countries view China’s increasingly assertive claims to the territories and maritime zones in the two bodies of water as antithetical to their shared vision of a free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific. China’s reapid military expansion, including unprecedented nuclear weapons and missile buildup, reinforces the urgency of the threat. Japanese and Philippine interlocutors worry that as China approaches nuclear parity with the United States, the region’s strategic environment will worsen. American participants emphasized greater and tangible demonstration of alliance commitments and agreed that some risk-taking is required to push back against Chinese coercion. There was a consensus about the challenge of addressing Beijing’s gray zone activities that have so far succeeded in seizing territories and maritime areas in the South China Sea and establishing regular intrusions into Japanese waters in the East China Sea. Participants struggled to find a strategy to blunt China’s salami-slicing tactics while avoiding escalation and armed conflict.

1. [**Vol. 23, WP3 — Understanding JI Resilience and Australia’s Counterterrorism Efforts in Indonesia**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-wp3-understanding-ji-resilience-and-australias-counterterrorism-efforts-in-indonesia) by Tom Connolly

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) remains one of Indonesia’s longest standing state security threats. It has survived major organizational transformations, state security crackdowns, and international military operations in its pursuit of an Islamic caliphate in Indonesia that could extend to incorporate Malaysia, Singapore, and the southern Philippines. Jemaah Islamiyah rose to prominence for its role in orchestrating the 2002 Bali Bombings, which prompted the United States and Australia to engage Jakarta with the shared goal of destroying the organization and its links to al-Qaeda. Security pressures from Indonesian security services and international forces led to the dismantling of much of Jemaah Islamiyah’s leadership by 2007, which pushed it into a state of hibernation, where members focused on consolidating numbers and religious outreach. The emergence of the Islamic State and its Southeast Asian affiliates in 2014 occupied much of the Indonesian security services’ resources, which gave space to Jemaah Islamiyah to regenerate its strength with renewed vigor. The 2017 discovery of a JI military training program in Syria realerted Indonesian counterterrorism authorities to the risk posed by the group, and successive waves of arrests and crackdowns ensued. Although the COVID-19 pandemic meant that many terrorist groups ceased offensive operations and maintained a low profile, Jemaah Islamiyah began to infiltrate Jakarta’s state apparatus, civil society, and academia to promote its political objectives. Jemaah Islamiyah’s long history in Indonesia has proven it to be adaptable, patient, and persistent in pursuit of its objectives. Although it is not currently engaged in military operations, JI’s long history in Indonesia has shown the group is adaptable, patient, and longterm in its thinking. Observers suspect that leaders in Jemaah Islamiyah are biding their time and seeking gaps in state authority

1. [**Vol. 23, SR5 — ROK-US Alliance: Linchpin for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr5-rok-us-alliance-linchpin-for-a-free-and-open-indo-pacific)editedby Rob York

The US-ROK alliance in 2023 celebrates its 70th anniversary, and in both countries remains broadly popular. Previous doubts that both countries have had about the other’s commitment have largely given way to a sense of shared opportunities, and shared challenges. Not only is there an ever-more belligerent North Korea, with its growing nuclear and missile arsenals, but the People’s Republic of China uses both military and economic means to coerce other countries and Russia has demonstrated a willingness to upend norms, redraw borders, and dare former partners (including Seoul) to risk its ire.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR6 — Pressing Security Concerns in Southeast Asia: Next-Generation Perspectives**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr6-pressing-security-concerns-in-southeast-asia-next-generation-perspective)editedby John Hemmings

Southeast Asia is a pivotal sub-region of the Indo-Pacific. Spanning 1,700,000 square miles, its total population is 676 million – around 8.5% of the world’s population – and has a collective GDP of US$3.67 trillion (as of 2022). Over the years, it has been associated with both economic dynamism and significant security challenges. As authors in this volume note, the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, disagreements over water rights in the Mekong Delta, and the current conflict in Myanmar highlight fault lines not only between Southeast Asian states themselves, but also between great powers such as China and the United States. There are many more–the EU, India, Japan, Australia, and South Korea–that pay close attention to developments in the sub-region. Maintaining peace and stability in a region that plays host to one-third of global sea-borne trade, hosts major undersea internet cables, and is a major thoroughfare for energy supplies from the Middle East to the advanced manufacturing hubs in China, Japan, and South Korea is both challenging and complicated.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR7 — Southeast Asia’s Clean Energy Transition: A Role for Nuclear Power?**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr7-southeast-asias-clean-energy-transition-a-role-for-nuclear-power)editedby David Santoro and Carl Baker

To bring clarity on these developments and their implications in Southeast Asia, the Pacific Forum commissioned several Southeast Asian scholars to write analytical papers on the energy transition that is underway in the region, which are compiled in this volume. Each chapter looks at the current and possible future energy landscape of a specific Southeast Asian country and focuses especially on the place and role of nuclear power in it. This “nuclear focus” is important because, for decades, most Southeast Asian countries have expressed onand-off interest in nuclear power but never brought it online. Interest is now picking up again, especially for SMRs, so if this time one or several Southeast Asian countries successfully went nuclear, it would be a first.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR8 – The United States & Japan: Allied Against Disinformation**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr8-the-united-states-japan-allied-against-disinformation) edited by Rob York & Akira Igata

In our 21st century information age security does not start with weapons or with the armed forces who wield them. A range of non-traditional security issues has arisen to test even the oldest and closest of alliances—including that of the United States and Japan. Disinformation is among these issues, and this paper series, carried out with the generous support of the US Embassy Tokyo, highlights the specific challenges that disinformation presents. The good news is that Japan, at least so far, is not demonstrating exceptionally high difficulties with disinformation so far. However, as the paper by Prof. Morihiro Ogasahara demonstrates, there are specific demographics and specific types of news consumers in the country who are vulnerable, and Dr. Christopher Paul’s findings indicate that Japan could very well find itself under a more sustained attack by adversaries wishing to weaken its relationship with the US in the future. We at Pacific Forum hope that these papers serve as a wakeup call for policymakers, and lead to proactive solutions not only for this alliance, but which may be modeled for US relationships throughout the region.

1. [**Vol. 23, WP4 – US-ASEAN Digital Economy Cooperation**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-wp4-us-asean-digital-economy-cooperation) by Hanh Nguyen

Long criticized for its lackluster record in economic engagement with Southeast Asia, the US is now looking to bolster digital economy cooperation with the region as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy. Both sides have already engaged in several cooperation initiatives to strengthen Southeast Asia’s digital capacities. These actions/engagements aim to help the region capture the immense benefit and respond to potential socioeconomic disruptions brought by the digital economic boom. However, US-ASEAN cooperation will have to deal with two challenges. First, China has already established a comprehensive and prevalent presence in the region’s digital economy, from hard infrastructure and customer-facing businesses to developing digital standards. Second, Southeast Asia’s diversity in economic development leads to varied capacities among its members. These attributes carry certain security complications for Southeast Asia and the US in the long run. Addressing them will require both sides to further boost cooperation, particularly in shaping regional digital standards.

1. [**Vol. 23, WP5 – Understanding Alignment Decisions in Southeast Asia: A Review of US-China Competition in the Philippines**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-wp5-understanding-alignment-decisions-in-southeast-asia-a-review-of-u-s-china-competition-in-the-philippines) by William Piekos

The United States and China are engaged in an ongoing struggle for the alignment commitments of Southeast Asian governments, employing a variety of measures to entice, cajole, and threaten states to alter their policy behavior. Caught between this competition, countries in Southeast Asia weigh their alignment options in search of the strategy viewed by the ruling regime as most likely to ameliorate risk and increase its prospects for survival. While nonalignment through hedging is a sought-after option, most often smaller states align with the major power that offers inducements (over coercion), as the material and diplomatic benefits bolster regimes’ claim to performance-based legitimacy and its domestic stability and security.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR 9 – The United States & Japan: Allied Against Disinformation — Next Generation Voices Speak**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr-9-the-united-states-japan-allied-against-disinformation-next-generation-voices-speak)editedby Rob York & Akira Igata

Pacific Forum, like the US government and much of the international security community, considers the information space a crucial theater in the United States’ ongoing great power competition with the People’s Republic of China and Russia. To meet the need for fresh policy ideas, as well as Pacific Forum’s long-standing mandate to train the next generation of policy professions in the US and its partners, we present to you this volume. In it, readers will find the finalists of our Young Professionals Essay Contest, as part of our ongoing program, The United States & Japan: Allied Against Disinformation.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR 10 – Friend-shoring in the Indo-Pacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr-10-friend-shoring-in-the-indo-pacific) by Akhil Ramesh and Rob York

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine highlight the challenges of increased economic interconnectedness with adversarial states. The shortages in critical sectors such as pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and other industries significant for technological advancement in the fourth industrial revolution have revealed the importance of select supply chains to the American public and the broader global community. As the strategic competition between the US and China accelerates, understanding of their importance will only gro

1. [**Charting a roadmap for multiparty confidence and security building measures, risk reduction, and arms control in the Indo-Pacific**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-charting-a-roadmap-for-multiparty-confidence-and-security-building-measures-risk-reduction-and-arms-control-in-the-indo-pacific)by David Santoro and Miles Pomper

The practice of strategic dialogue, confidence-building measures (CBMs), risk reduction, and arms control has its roots in the nuclear revolution and the Cold War. It thus developed in the Euro-Atlantic because of the realities of the US-dominated, Eurocentric security environment of the time; recall that the United States had just fought the Second World War with a Europe-first strategy. That practice developed primarily in two directions: between the United States and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpower enemies. The goal of strategic dialogue between the United States and NATO, still in place today, has been to build deterrence of adversaries and defense of the “free world,” and an important by-product has been reassurance of weaker NATO allies by the much stronger United States. To do so, Washington and allied capitals have engaged at many levels, including in the strategic nuclear domain, where they have established shared roles and responsibilities over forward-deployed US nuclear weapons.

1. [**Vol. 23, SR11 – Anchoring the US-Philippines Alliance**](https://pacforum.org/publication/issues-insights-vol-23-sr11-anchoring-the-u-s-philippines-alliance)editedby Jeffrey Ordaniel and Carl Baker

The US- Philippine Alliance has advanced significantly over the past two years. The period of transition, from Duterte to Marcos, and the renewed American commitment to the Indo-Pacific under Joe Biden were key determinants. Institutionalizing this progress in ways that allow the alliance to better withstand political changes, both in Washington and Manila, and to better deal with emerging regional security challenges is imperative.