



ANNOUNCING TWO NEW ISSUES & INSIGHTS CONFERENCE REPORTS

Pacific Forum, with the support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), organized the U.S.-Viet Nam Security Dialogue and the U.S.-Indonesia Security Dialogue. Written by Jeffrey Ordaniel with co-principal investigators David Santoro and Robert Girrier, the just-released *Issues & Insights* Conference Reports contain key findings and recommendations from the discussions.

The United States and Viet Nam: Charting the Next 25 Years in Bilateral Security Relations

Washington and Hanoi left behind their past as Cold War adversaries and upgraded their relations into a comprehensive partnership in 2013. The relationship has since flourished considerably and rapidly. The next logical step is to elevate the relationship into a strategic partnership, i.e., a deepened security engagement. That process has already begun, but more work is needed, and urgently, given the increasingly tense situation in the South China Sea. The region continues to face growing security challenges – from irredentist claims and blatant sidestepping of the rule of law in many of the region’s maritime spaces, to the threat of pandemics and cybersecurity. So far, most Track 2 U.S. engagements with Viet Nam have centered on issues pertaining to development, empowerment, and historical reconciliation. The time is now ripe for a security-focused dialogue involving the two countries’ top strategic thinkers to build on current gains, underscore opportunities for deeper defense cooperation, generate sound and actionable policy and operational recommendations, and highlight the importance of a tighter partnership to the peace and stability of Southeast Asia and the broader region.

To this end, Pacific Forum, with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and in collaboration with the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam (DAV), organized the inaugural Track 2 U.S.-Viet Nam Security Dialogue on May 18-20, 2021. The dialogue was aimed at building a body of knowledge on U.S.–Viet Nam security relations that DTRA and other interested U.S. Government agencies could use to conduct better military engagements, and provide a more responsive and complementary capacity-building, with greater impact to improve deterrence.

Read *Issues & Insights, Vol. 21, CR1 The United States and Viet Nam: Charting the Next 25 Years in Bilateral Security Relations* here: <https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/US-Vietnam-Issues-and-Insights-2021.pdf>

The United States and Indonesia: Re-Converging Strategic Interests in the Indo-Pacific

The United States and Indonesia, the world’s second and third largest democracies, form a consequential relationship in the Indo-Pacific. However, despite common values and shared interests, U.S.-Indonesia relations have yet to realize their full potential, especially on the security front. Many strategic imperatives should drive closer U.S. security engagements with Indonesia. These include Jakarta’s leadership role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other key regional institutions, its outsized role in promoting the security of vital sea-lines of communications and trading routes, its location as the archipelagic nation connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans, its shared interest with the United States in countering violent extremism and other trans-national threat networks, and its activist and independent foreign policy. These realities, when leveraged, can facilitate a more coordinated and effective response to a multitude of geopolitical, economic, and security challenges in the region, and can advance the United States’ Indo-Pacific vision.

The Biden Administration has made clear that the Indo-Pacific is a “top priority,” an enduring theme through several U.S. administrations. U.S. officials have also stressed that the United States will seek to “build a united front of U.S. allies and partners to confront China’s abusive behaviors and human rights violations.” While this framing alone is unlikely to generate in-depth Indonesian cooperation, Jakarta is interested in working with the United States to stand up to China when needed and take a leading role in ensuring Southeast Asia’s strategic autonomy.

To this end, Pacific Forum, with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and in collaboration with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS Indonesia), organized the inaugural Track 2 U.S.-Indonesia Security Dialogue on June 1-3, 2021. The dialogue was aimed at building a body of knowledge on the bilateral security relations that DTRA and other interested U.S. Government agencies could use to conduct better military engagements, and provide a more responsive and complementary capacity-building, with greater impact to improve deterrence. The organized panels were aimed at increasing awareness and understanding in Indonesia and in the United States of the two countries’ converging and diverging interests, defense and foreign policy doctrines, and views on key regional and global security issues.

Read Issues & Insights, Vol. 21, CR2 The United States and Indonesia: Re-Converging Strategic Interests in the Indo-Pacific here: <https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/US-Indonesia-Issues-and-Insights-2021.pdf>