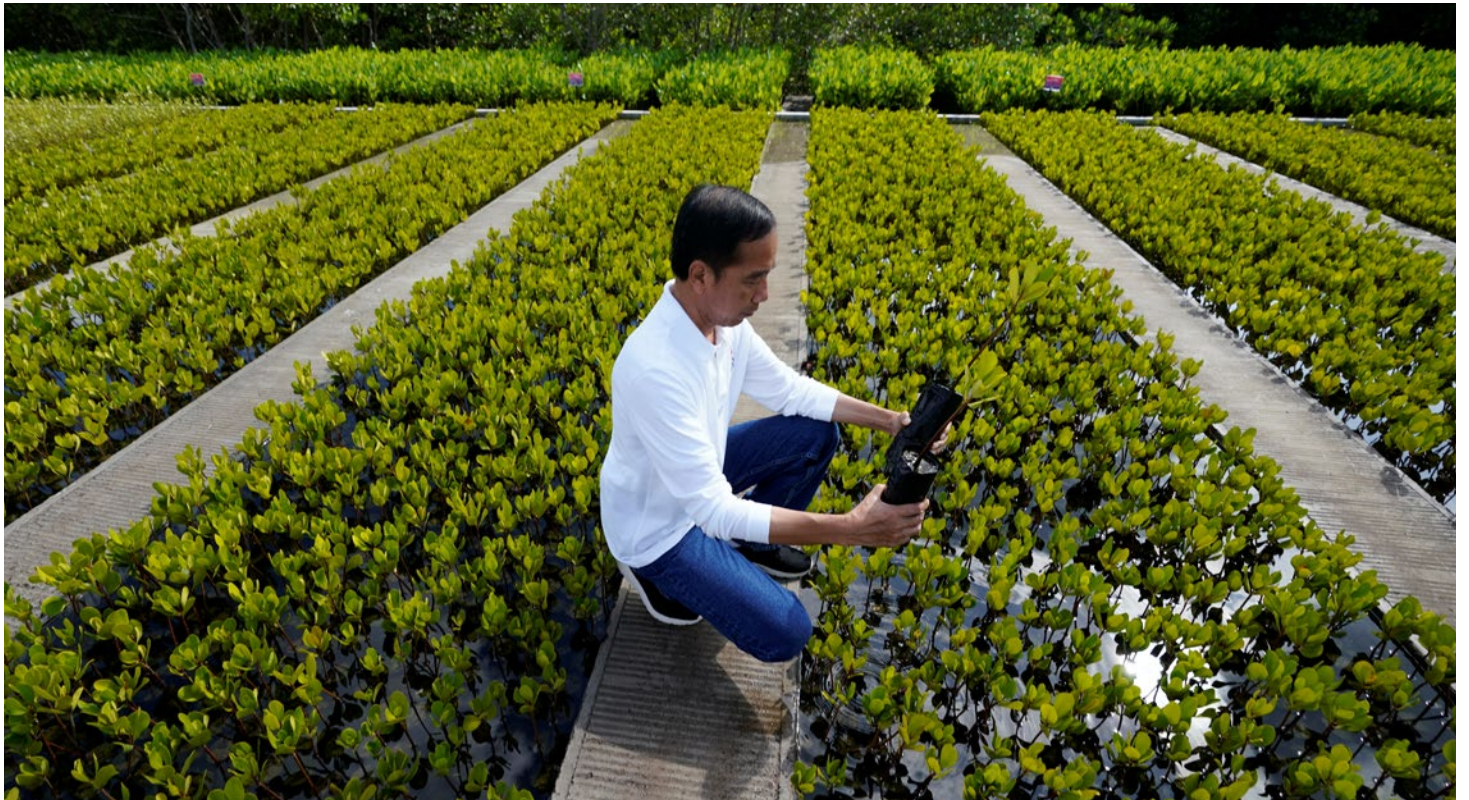


EASTASIAFORUM

ECONOMICS, POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Quarterly



Comprehensive regional security

Yose Rizal Damuri An agenda for regional cooperation

M Chatib Basri Indonesia's chance to lead as next ASEAN chair

Mely Caballero-Anthony Climate and Indo-Pacific security

Qingguo Jia Reconstructing China's role in regional security

Montek Singh Ahluwalia Climate change ... and more

ASIAN REVIEW: Kathryn Robinson on gender equity in Indonesia

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From the Editors' desk

Southeast Asia has long understood that effective national security goes well beyond military preparedness to encompass a variety of 'non-traditional' security issues. This idea is at the heart of political cooperation within ASEAN and competes with traditional notions of regional security in East Asia. Japan's *sogo anzen hoshō* (comprehensive security) philosophy has also underpinned its plurilateral pursuit of non-military security objectives since the 1970s. This goal has driven Japan to champion multilateral trade liberalisation and institution-building, and the whole of Asia has been the beneficiary.

This issue of *East Asia Forum Quarterly* explores the idea of comprehensive regional security—an approach that embraces economic, environmental and energy security as well as military interests, and considers how they are collectively secured within today's economically interdependent and politically cooperative regional system.

The vocabulary developed in the face of growing geopolitical tensions—decoupling, dual circulation, friend-shoring, 'strategic' supply chains, securitisation—suggests that the big powers are working towards their own notion of comprehensive security. But there is nothing comprehensive, or regional, about this. Indeed, it subordinates key national interests to a process of geopolitical competition that is, by its nature, a zero-sum game. Securitising the economic arenas which facilitated the mutually-beneficial, cooperatively-achieved growth of the past 70 years has unwelcome externalities for the rest of the world—at the expense of economic openness, growth and adaptable supply chains.

Contributors in this issue recognise that comprehensive regional security can only be secured collectively: one country's resilience to climate change, or access to free and well-served markets for energy and food doesn't come at the expense of others', for instance.

They emphasise the 'regional' in comprehensive regional security for good reason. In East Asia multilateralism and international integration have a fighting chance against protectionism and hyper-nationalism. Asia's homegrown multilateral platforms—including ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the Asian Regional Forum, the East Asian Summit and now RCEP—offer powerful instruments for integrating the security and economic domains within multilateral rule-making and cooperation.

Our Asian Review section suggests one way through the North Korean roadblock and scores political progress on gender equity in Indonesia.

Nicola Cole and Liam Gammon

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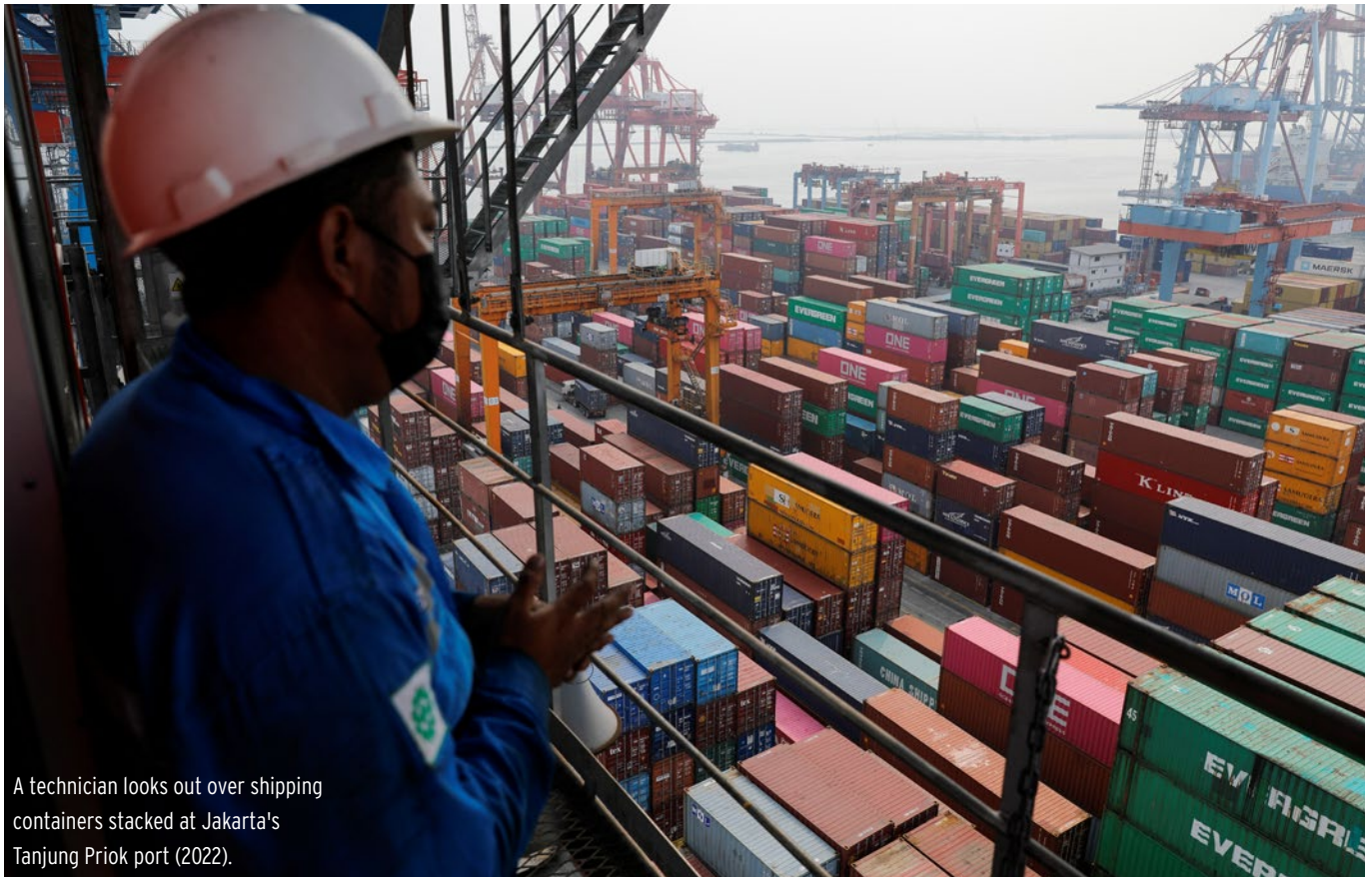
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Climate change challenges Asia-Pacific security

COVER PHOTO: Indonesian President Joko Widodo plants mangrove trees at the Taman Hutan Raya Ngurah Rai Mangrove Forest on the sidelines of the G20 summit (Bali, 2022). Picture: Alex Brandon/Pool via REUTERS.



A technician looks out over shipping containers stacked at Jakarta's Tanjung Priok port (2022).

Core element of security in Asia

SHIRO ARMSTRONG

WE ARE in a world where global powers are deploying politically motivated trade sanctions and unleashing industrial subsidies that shut down and divert international markets. The multilateral rules-based system doesn't seem robust enough to constrain the ignoring of international rules and norms when big countries want. That describes the United States today. And China.

The multilateral economic system is under threat. The United States led and underpinned the multilateral economic order from the end of World War II right through the early 21st

century. But the 'America First' agenda under president Donald Trump and the 'foreign policy for the middle class' agenda under President Joe Biden are emblematic of structural economic challenges and shifts in political undercurrents in the United States in the long aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis.

The United States is no longer able or willing to play the role of principal guarantor for the multilateral trading system as it did in the past. It has resorted to industrial subsidies in its CHIPS and Science Act, exactly what it pressured Japan to avoid,

and is now accusing China of doing. Worse still, its escalating economic sanctions on China and holding of the WTO's rule-enforcement mechanism to ransom make the United States a source of considerable uncertainty internationally.

China's assertiveness and use of coercive economic measures has put it on a collision course with the United States and its allies. China's trade integration with regional partners is seen as a vulnerability by some governments and commentators, but open and contestable markets secured by enforceable multilateral rules still

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constrain Chinese behaviour. Open and contestable markets significantly blunt the effect of intervening in markets for political or economic gain by providing alternative markets and suppliers. Multilateral rules constrain the ability of governments to intervene in markets for political or rent seeking reasons and help avoid adjustment costs of such interventions.

Strengthening the multilateral order to create space beyond zero-sum engagement for China, the United States and large emerging powers in South and Southeast Asia is a priority for collective leadership that will have to be led by East Asia where the major global geopolitical, economic and security fault lines are. A regional priority is to ensure the United States remains committed to the Western Pacific to help constrain Chinese assertiveness. A zero-sum approach of containment or decoupling will end in a poorer and less secure world.

The US alliance framework remains the bedrock of Australian, Japanese and regional security and stability. US alliances with Australia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, US bases in Japan, joint facilities in Australia and now the Australia–United Kingdom–United States (AUKUS) trilateral agreement lock the United States into defence of the Western Pacific. But it is through economic engagement that the region needs to entrench US interests in rule-making in Asia.

The economic architecture in East Asia and across the Pacific is rich and overlapping and has been built up over decades. Habits of cooperation and consensus building have been developed, although they are challenged by the distrust of a rising and more assertive China and US–Chinese strategic competition. ASEAN is still the centre of regional

cooperation but the connections between the economic and security domains are under-leveraged given the intersection between them and the uncertain international environment. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and other Southeast Asian initiatives are not integrated in a way that helps manage the broader fractures in global governance.

A COMPREHENSIVE regional security framework has to be based upon economic interdependence, multilateralism and contestable markets that diffuse power, and emphasise security cooperation and the primacy of peaceful resolution of differences. It transcends zero-sum balance of power calculations through multipolarity in favour of positive-sum engagement, and it blunts the use of economic tools for malign intentions through open, contestable markets backed up by domestic and international rules and institutions that secure them. No one country, however big, ought to dominate the Asia Pacific or Indo-Pacific and multilateral principles can set terms of engagement that help to constrain the exercise of raw political power.

The 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, signed at the first ASEAN Summit, provides a template for relations between countries beyond ASEAN and their dialogue partners that have signed onto these principles—Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and the United States.

ASEAN and its dialogue partners should promote the fundamental principles of the TAC for broader multilateral adoption in the region.

ASEAN's TAC includes: mutual

respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, or coercion; non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner; renunciation of the threat or use of force; and effective cooperation among themselves.

A comprehensive regional security arrangement that affirms commitment to multilateral economic rules and signs on to TAC principles will help secure a free, open, inclusive, prosperous and politically stable region. This frames a vision for the region in which ASEAN dialogue partners would shape their future in a way that references the principles of crucial importance to prosperity and security. The bilateral understandings between ASEAN and its dialogue partners need to be strengthened to

start delivering on that vision.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine brings increased uncertainty to the global order. Energy security now has to be managed alongside the energy transition towards net zero emissions. Asian cooperation would help facilitate both. The pandemic reminded us all that no country is immune from global problems. The transition to a stable multipolar regional order will require commitment to security that integrates national security, economic and environmental sustainability objectives. A broader conception of security beyond military security is needed in an interdependent world.

Seeking regional multilateralisation of the TAC over time will entrench habits of cooperation, mutual respect, equal treatment and sustainability. Established regional and global arrangements encompass different dimensions of those principles and they need to be strengthened over time and entrenched. TAC

principles are core to economic, political and strategic engagement and comprehensive security in the region. That must encompass strong undertakings on sustainability. The process towards achieving a multilateralised TAC would provide an organising vision for regional cooperation that would involve trust-, confidence- and institution-building around a comprehensive regional security agenda that will be as important as the end-goal itself. A multilateralised TAC would be a game-changing geopolitical initiative of the same kind that the signing of the Atlantic Charter was in 1941. [EAFQ](#)

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THE CASE FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

An agenda for regional economic and security cooperation

YOSE RIZAL DAMURI

THE connection between economic integration and political security has long attracted attention. Integration through intensive trade and investment relations has led to greater interdependence and made conflict more costly, helping states to

maintain peace and stability. But interdependence can also increase the risk that geopolitical tensions might turn into open conflict.

The situation in East Asia and the Pacific resembles the first case. The last open conflict in Southeast Asia took place in 1979 with China's

invasion of Vietnam. Despite its deep security and geopolitical fissures, Northeast Asia has been free of open conflict since the Korean armistice was signed in 1953. This peace has been built through greater trade and investment relations among economies throughout the region.

As geopolitical and economic environments have evolved, the nexus between economic integration and security has become more complex

Trade among countries in Southeast Asia has been growing at an average of 11 per cent per year in the past three decades—higher than GDP growth in the region over the same period. The emergence of regional value chains in the 1980s has given rise to an investment relationship between economies in Northeast Asia, and the formation of the so-called ‘Factory Asia’. This too has contributed to regional stability and security.

Two major developments in East Asia and the Pacific in the last three decades underline the dynamic of economic integration and geopolitics—the rise of China and the proliferation of regional trade agreements (RTAs). China’s rapid economic and technological development has changed the power balance in the region. The integration of China into the global economy in the late 1990s served as an effective engine for regional growth but also increased geoeconomic tension as China gained competitiveness over other countries. China’s demands for greater recognition and power sharing in global agendas have also brought a sense of unease to the established order.

While the rise of China has increased tensions among countries in East Asia and the Pacific, the proliferation of trade agreements has reduced the risks that stem from increasing economic interdependence. The region began its formal integration with the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in 1993. This was followed by a series of bilateral and regional agreements with partners such as Japan, China and Australia. These RTAs filled the gap in rulemaking and liberalisation efforts at the multilateral level. The agreements created rules for trade and investment relations and provided platforms to settle disputes. Although trade agreements do not necessarily eliminate the risks of conflict, they can insulate economic disputes from security issues.

But trade agreements in the region are limited to ASEAN countries and some of their partners. Agreements between other countries in the region—such as China and Japan, or China and Korea—were non-existent, making economic relations between them prone to greater tension.

As geopolitical and economic environments have evolved, the nexus between economic integration and security has become more complex. East Asia and the Pacific remains free from interstate conflict, but tensions are growing. The consequence is that countries have turned to using economic and trade policies for geopolitical and security purposes. Australia, for example, is involved in trade disputes with China that started as security concerns over the activities of technology company Huawei in 2018 and intensified over prosecuting investigation into the origins of COVID-19. In Japan and South Korea, mutual export and import bans have continued to escalate since 2019 over historical disagreements stemming

from the Japanese occupation of Korea more than 80 years ago.

COUNTRIES in East Asia and the Pacific need to do more to prevent economic tensions emerging from greater interdependence and refrain from using trade and investment policy for security purposes. Region-wide agreements, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), offer platforms to improve policies on trade and deal with economic tensions. But these agreements need to include rules that cover a range of new issues like cross-border digital investment and intellectual property and technology acquisition. These are issues that will potentially lead to more disputes and need stronger disciplines.

Trade and economic agreements are only effective in reducing tensions that originate from economic relations. Countries also need to continue talks on political and security issues that have taken place under existing regional initiatives, such as the ASEAN Political Security Community or South China Sea code of conduct talks between ASEAN and China. These talks should be extended to the

The region cannot shy away from common regional and global challenges, such as energy transition and mitigating climate change

broader East Asia and Pacific region to include other issues such as tensions over the East China Sea. Just like trade agreements, these would be managed better under a regional framework, not bilaterally. They should not aim to settle the issues, but rather to seek a common understanding on how countries in the region should refrain from flexing military power.

In the meantime, the region cannot shy away from common regional and global challenges, such as energy transition and mitigating climate change. Those require massive resource allocations that are too burdensome for individual countries to manage. Asia-Pacific countries could start to look at specific projects

to undertake together. With specific common projects, greater trust will be developed to facilitate conversation on more difficult issues.

ASEAN has a potentially central role to play in these initiatives. It is the only institution with the mechanisms in place to deal with regional and global issues in both the economic and security spheres. ASEAN plus three and RCEP could be expanded to deal more purposefully with tensions arising from economic relations. Incorporating the agreements of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership into RCEP might be a starting point, but that would require more inclusive implementation.

The biggest problem is the absence of leadership in ASEAN that is committed to directing the regional agenda. Indonesia needs to fulfill this role more actively. After its successful leadership of the G20 and in getting the global agenda back on track, Indonesia has an important responsibility to develop this regional agenda. Indonesia has both the moral authority and convening power to lead the discussion and come up with a concrete agenda as the Chair of ASEAN next year. **EAFO**

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PICTURE: DENNY WIDIANTO



ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta; As chair of ASEAN in 2024, Indonesia has the opportunity to set a concrete agenda for regional and global initiatives (2020).



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joko Widodo take part in a handover ceremony at the G20 Leaders' Summit (Bali, 2022).

Indonesia's chance to lead as next ASEAN chair

M CHATIB BASRI

THE world is becoming a more contested and dangerous place. In Asia, the tensions between the United States and China continue to worsen, and economic decoupling and bifurcation of the global economy threaten Asian economic prosperity and political security.

The appeal of protectionism in the name of self-reliance or national security is an ever more powerful

narrative in the national politics of many countries. While this response to the circumstances that political leaders face resonates with domestic audiences and may provide some short-term payoff, the retreat from globalism undermines long-term economic prosperity and collective security.

The world desperately needs global economic cooperation because of the

lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the looming threat of climate change. But increased geopolitical tension, economic nationalism and fear of supply chain disruption are making cooperation more difficult.

Multilateral forums are vital to addressing these shared challenges collectively. No country alone can overcome the problems of climate

change, global health challenges and food security. Economic and financial coordination is vital to steering the course towards post-COVID-19 economic recovery in an era of inflation and increasing interest rates.

Multilateral cooperation amplifies the reach and efficiency of the national resources available to meet these challenges. But simply convening the G20 in Bali this year has been a major challenge for Indonesian leadership.

Asia, more than any other region, has the most to lose from the retreat from globalisation. The stakes will be high in 2023 when the region hosts a suite of important multilateral forums: Indonesia has opportunity to build on its 2022 G20 presidency as it assumes the chair of ASEAN, India hosts the G20, Japan the G7 and the United States hosts APEC. Ensuring that these meetings strive for common and cooperative goals won't be an easy task.

Indonesia's leadership through its G20 presidency exemplifies the positive role it can play in navigating today's international political tensions. Indonesia's focus on health, climate, the digital economy and economic development priorities and its navigation of great power conflict has kept the G20 process on course. Despite the difficulty of G20 ministers and leaders reaching consensus on joint communiqués, Indonesia's leadership has ensured participation by all members—including at leader level—and guarded the G20's role as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

President Joko Widodo's invitation to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to attend the G20 represents the symbolic continuation of Indonesia's long-standing foreign policy of *mendayung antara dua karang* or 'rowing between two reefs.'

This strategy of not choosing sides and not being pulled into one camp or another, is welcomed by most of Asia and the developing world as it struggles to find balance between increasingly divided political blocs.

EAST ASIA'S rapid growth was driven by its openness and access to international markets for exports, inputs and investment and premised on the multilateral trade and economic order that was set up after World War II. The current trajectory of technological and economic decoupling will leave everyone worse off. It will be particularly detrimental for countries such as Indonesia because it closes off the path of peaceful development that has seen a remarkable period of prosperity and political stability in Asia despite a history of regional confrontation and mistrust.

The priorities of international affairs often sit awkwardly in Indonesia's national politics. Yet the 2022 G20 process has seen greater appreciation in Jakarta of how vital the alignment of Indonesia's national interests to its regional and international role is for securing its ambitions for national development.

Despite the distraction of national elections in early 2024, Indonesia chairing ASEAN in 2023 presents an opportunity to step up regionally on the global threat to its core national economic and security goals.

Defence of the multilateral economic order remains a top priority for Asian nations. Indonesia has pitched in since the 2019 Osaka G20 Summit and during its G20 presidency to help define a way forward on strengthening the system through WTO reform. But with geopolitical conflict in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and security concerns

now overwhelming global policy affairs, these global economic policy objectives need reinforcement from stronger regional action.

In 2011 when Indonesia was last in the chair of ASEAN, it launched the negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement that came into effect this year. RCEP is a remarkable affirmation of multilateralism and openness by East Asian countries and an example of regional action that strengthens economic cooperation among nations that comprise roughly a third of world trade. At the same time, it reinforces global rules and principles. RCEP is the world's largest free trade area. It incorporates an economic cooperation agenda and ongoing, built-in political level dialogue at the ministerial and leaders' levels.

RCEP may not be perfect. Its signatories must continue trying to engage India in its economic cooperation agenda if not yet in its trade liberalisation endeavours. But it presents a significant institutional base in East Asia from which to pursue Indonesia's and ASEAN's open global economic diplomacy. More importantly, in a world in which military security is beginning to

Indonesia takes the driver's seat in ASEAN as the region faces the danger of becoming a pawn in the game of global politics

Securitising climate policy will keep the Indo-Pacific afloat

MELY CABALLERO-ANTHONY

dominate economic, environmental and other security considerations, it offers an ASEAN framework for pursuing comprehensive security across all these domains.

The economic interdependence on which East Asia's development is based is a crucial element in regional security. Retreating from it would impose large costs on the regional economy and disrupt political stability. The challenges of climate change, global health and food security are all best dealt with through close global and regional cooperation.

It is important to recognise the reality of geopolitical tension and identify regional cooperation that is both politically feasible and economically beneficial. Government must enact multi-stage regional cooperation that begins with a low-ambition strategy and progresses to more complex goals. This can start with identifying areas where members can agree.

Climate change, global health and food security issues can serve as a starting point and the common denominator for regional cooperation. ASEAN has created the platform for a comprehensive strategy to deal with these challenges across the region's geopolitical fissures.

Indonesia takes the driver's seat in ASEAN as the region faces the danger of becoming a pawn in the game of global politics. There has perhaps never been a time when its leadership in crafting a strategy to strengthen comprehensive regional security was more needed. **EAFQ**

M. Chatib Basri teaches at the Department of Economics, the University of Indonesia, is a member of the High-Level Finance Advisory Group to COP27 and was formerly Indonesia's Minister of Finance.

IN 2021 the Sixth Assessment Report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that climate change is rapid and intensifying in every region of the world. The Indo-Pacific is widely known as the region most exposed to natural disasters, with climate change causing more frequent and intense extreme weather events. It is particularly exposed to rising sea levels with its archipelagic countries, small island states and large coastal population centres, while extreme heat is impacting large geographic areas and densely populated urban settlements.

The region faces huge challenges not only in dealing with the geophysical effects of climate change, but in terms of fragility risks such as adaptation capacity, lower economic development and governance. For countries in the region that have ongoing domestic conflicts, the economic and cultural effects of climate change, such as the forced displacement of vulnerable groups and communities, are likely to compound the conflicts.

Despite the plethora of robust scientific studies, global summits and conferences on climate change, the urgency in dealing with the climate emergency is often lost in the technical

details. The kinds of framings associated with climate change also inform the nature of policy responses. Policies to address climate change are framed within the environment and sustainable development, green growth, circular economies, resilience and climate justice. What has been missing in the policy debate is the language of security—climate security. This framing could help elevate this issue to the highest priority in the political and security agendas of states.

For non-security analysts, linking climate change with security often raises concerns about the unintended consequences. There are concerns that climate security may become a military-driven agenda, given that this kind of framing is now seen in military circles. It could justify an increased role of the military in 'non-military' matters. Getting the militaries of like-minded states to work together on climate security may also be viewed as reinforcing alliances or defence arrangements like the Quad. Despite the expansion of the Quad's agenda beyond naval exercises, it has not been able to shake off the perception that its purpose is to contain China. Climate security becoming part of the Quad's agenda could risk reinforcing major power competition instead of cooperation.



Protesters gather with banners and placards during a 'fridays for future' demonstration in New Delhi (2022).

While climate security sits well with the conventional considerations of the climate's impact on national security and defence, security threats from a human security perspective are equally—if not more—compelling. Climate change affects all aspects of human security. The wide-ranging security impacts can be seen in times

What has been missing in the policy debate is the language of security—climate security

of extreme weather events. In 2021, 174 natural disasters were reported in the Asian region, with around 66.8 million people affected, including over 12 million displaced in East Asia and the Pacific region—all significant increases on previous years. Between 2017 and 2021, approximately 36,000 lives were lost because of natural disasters.

The economic loss of these disasters has been staggering. Thailand's floods in 2011 caused more than US\$45 billion in economic loss and damage. As the flood inundated large parts of human settlements, farms and infrastructure, close to 10,000 factories were affected—seriously disrupting international supply chains.

The IPCC report noted that the impacts of climate change on food security can be seen in declining

crop yields and quality of produce, increasing incidence of pests and diseases, stunted growth, livestock mortality and low farm incomes. In China, flooding patterns are expected to alter crop areas and land use. Within Southeast Asia, areas in Cambodia, Northwest Vietnam, Northeast Thailand and the Philippines are expected to have significant yield reductions, although these are within longer timeframes.

Climate change poses threats to human health as environmental changes can affect the occurrence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Dengue cases are expected to become more severe and health issues relating to increased heat are set to become more prevalent. The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis has also flagged the

increasing incidence of infections of zoonotic origins. The COVID-19 pandemic was not just a global health crisis but also an economic crisis. Global poverty rose significantly with 150 million more people falling into extreme poverty and 100 million more undernourished people globally.

The magnitude of the climate emergency is such that its effects extend well beyond food, the environment and health. The Indo-Pacific region is a geopolitical arena for geopolitical tensions and competition between major powers in the region. This explains why the Secretary General of the United Nations has called the climate emergency a danger to global peace and security. There is urgency for the region to engage proactively on climate security.

For a region where ideas of comprehensive security, human security and non-traditional security are deeply ingrained and seen in states' practices, advancing the agenda of climate security goes a long way in helping states address climate-related

security risks while promoting regional cooperation. Regional organisations like ASEAN should be at the forefront of climate security engagement and urge other regional institutions to integrate climate security in their respective agendas.

These regional organisations should put more effort into 'climate-proofing' areas of cooperation, which include economic cooperation, trade and investment, food, energy, health and the environment. Existing regional mechanisms like the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve and the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases should be strengthened. More attention should be given to building regional capacity in adaptation, including climate financing. More investment is also needed to support energy transition, such as building sustainable infrastructure in renewables.

Inter-agency learning would also be useful and should take a leaf

from how the military sector has advanced operational preparedness in emergency responses in a changing climate. Military investments in green technology and adaptation of military training to navigate exposure to extreme weather events reflect how seriously they take the security threats of climate change. Efforts by South Korea and Singapore to bolster 'military greening efforts' and use renewable energy are noteworthy.

Given that climate security is cross-cutting, governments should build partnerships with civil society groups, academic and scientific communities and the media. Countries in the region should be thinking about what needs to be put in place today to protect and ensure the security of their peoples and states, prevent conflict and sustain peace in a climate change world. **EARQ**

Mely Caballero-Anthony is Professor of International Relations and Head of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.



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The false economy of supply chain resilience

ADAM TRIGGS
AND SAMUEL HARDWICK

IN 2018, the United States put Russian aluminium giant Rusal on a blacklist to turn the screws on Russia's influential oligarchs. Because of Rusal's centrality in global alumina, bauxite and aluminium networks, the global repercussions were immediate.

The sanctions hit operations as far away as Guinea and Jamaica. Irish ministers held talks with the European Commission in an effort to save jobs at a refinery in Limerick. European car manufacturers that relied on Rusal for hard-to-substitute aluminium parts

ultimately lobbied successfully for the sanctions' reversal within a year. Now with the invasion of Ukraine, there are reports that the White House is weighing up new Rusal sanctions and broader curbs on Russian aluminium.

PICTURE: FACHAOSHI



Mechanical arms assemble vehicles in a factory of JAC Motors, a Chinese state-owned automobile and commercial vehicle manufacturer (Jiangsu province, 2020).

Although it is just one example, the Rusal saga provides some lessons for economic resilience and underscores the difficulties of so-called ‘onshoring’ and ‘friend-shoring.’

Securitisation of trade is not going away quickly. Onshoring or friend-shoring policies are an established feature of US trade policy. But in an era of great power competition, restrictive trade policy won’t be enough for countries to achieve their

economic or security objectives.

The notion that onshoring, or producing domestically, makes supply chains robust is a fallacy. International supply and production networks allow firms to adjust to shocks in specific places. When COVID-19 first struck, Samsung could quickly redirect production from its factory in South Korea, where the outbreak was severe, to relatively less affected Vietnam. After the 2011 Tohoku earthquake,

Japanese car manufacturers diversified their parts suppliers from domestic to international sources.

‘Onshore’ supply chains are rarely as onshore as they seem. Products that are made domestically usually have inputs from overseas. It is little wonder that many of the products that consumers struggled to buy during the pandemic were made locally.

Internationally traded goods and services sometimes embody information, such as sensitive data or technical know-how, that governments have a security interest in protecting. These goods and services might include state-of-the-art radar systems, encryption software or a social media app for sharing dancing videos. The objectives are to get the right level of security at the lowest cost and to understand the point at which those costs would no longer be worth bearing.

When safeguarding sensitive research, investing in monitoring and enforcing contracts will often provide more bang for buck than visa restrictions, which deter talent. Unilateral restrictions like export controls will be self-defeating if the target can find substitutable products or information elsewhere. It’s not worth spending billions of dollars upgrading the gate if there is a huge gap in the fence.

Taken at face value, friend-shoring—the awkward term for cultivating trade with politically aligned countries—seems like an economically conscious alternative to onshoring. Deepening and broadening trade relationships, including through free trade agreements and commercial diplomacy, is a broadly held economic and strategic priority.

On critical technology, there is plenty of scope for cooperation among appropriate groups of countries. An

PICTURE: SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS VIA REUTERS



Workers walk through a Samsung Electronics' chip production plant at Pyeongtaek (2022).

August 2022 CSIS report set out a proactive agenda for semiconductor cooperation, targeting areas where international coordination is most likely to add value.

BUT if friend-shoring is just decoupling from China by another name, rather than smarter international cooperation, the economic fallout is likely to be vast and volatile. China's global value chain-related output—the value of a country's production that crosses at least two borders—is the highest in the world. China is also the world's top exporter of intermediate inputs, particularly in the electronics sector.

Another downside of friend-shoring is that it facilitates security-nationalist policies that waste resources and undercut the strategic benefits of openness. Those benefits include export revenue for research and development investment, inflows of talented personnel and the ability to raise foreign capital and find synergies with foreign firms.

The 'friends' in friend-shoring initiatives will have their own risks to weigh up. Not least of these are the global economic impacts of splitting supply networks into blocs, including higher prices. South Korea's reported reluctance about Washington's 'Chip 4' initiative highlights other concerns, such as asymmetric gains for foreign producers and higher levels of concentration in key industries.

The United States and China make up over a fifth of global two-way trade and over half of global research and development expenditure. That economic and strategic enormity means that there are different incentives for smaller nations.

But the world is bigger than China, the United States and the US-allied sphere. Non-aligned partners will want

evidence that economic and security cooperation is mutually beneficial, inclusive and addresses geopolitical tension rather than exacerbating it.

As Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong put it, reshoring and friend-shoring can 'shut off avenues for regional growth and cooperation, deepen divisions between countries, and may precipitate the very conflicts that we all hope to avoid'.

In many cases, multilateral trade provides insurance against domestic and bilateral risks. Before imposing sanctions in 2020, China accounted for 76 and 70 per cent of Australia's barley and cotton exports, respectively. The sanctions sent those market shares close to zero, but in the months that followed, Australia's exports of the two crops actually increased. The ability to reallocate trade so quickly depended on producers' agility and access to global markets elsewhere for those commodities.

Policymakers sometimes look instinctively to trade policies for supply chain resilience when other policies may be more important. These include getting a better handle on data. For goods critical to national defence and basic social needs that could mean real-time monitoring of supply networks, combining private and public datasets and regular stress testing. These resources are worth little, however, without the institutions to use them wisely and an understanding of governments' role in risk management.

Governments also have tools to mitigate economic shocks without having to anticipate them. Automatic stabilisers in tax and transfer systems ease economic stress without requiring any new legislative action. Lowering trade costs, whether through agreements, customs reform or infrastructure investment, eases

Onshoring or friend-shoring policies are an established feature of US trade policy. But in an era of great power competition, restrictive trade policy won't be enough for countries to achieve their economic or security objectives

the pain of adjustment by making it cheaper to find new markets.

As former US official Kevin Wolf put it when reflecting on semiconductor controls announced in October 2022, we are in 'uncharted territory'. 'You can't just export-control yourself into a healthy economy', he observed, 'given the fungibility of technology and the capability of smart people' around the world. Even in uncharted territory, it helps to know the destination. [EAFQ](#)

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Fixing the deadlock in North Korean denuclearisation

CHUNG-IN MOON

On 19 September 2018, after signing the Pyongyang Declaration with then South Korean president Moon Jae-in, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared, 'We have agreed to make every effort to make the Korean Peninsula a land of peace

that is free from nuclear weapons and nuclear threats.'

In his speech at the Rungrado 1st of May Stadium in Pyongyang that evening, Moon reaffirmed this and celebrated that 'Chairman Kim Jong-un and I reached concrete agreements

on measures to completely remove the fear of war and danger of armed clashes on the Korean Peninsula.' Over 100,000 North Korean citizens welcomed the remarks with cheers of enthusiasm.

North Korea followed up on its

PICTURE: KCNA / EYEPRESS



A photo released by the North Korean Central News Agency shows Kim Jong-un walking ahead of the Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile before its launch (March 2022).

leader's pledges by closing nuclear test sites in Punggye-ri and showing a willingness to dismantle a missile-launching platform in Dongchang-ri. Pyongyang also claimed it would close all nuclear facilities in Yongbyon provided that the United States honoured the Singapore Declaration signed on 12 June 2018.

Before these moves, Kim Jong-un had already initiated a unilateral moratorium on nuclear and missile activities in April 2018. It seemed that peace was near and a pathway to denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula had finally been found.

Come the beginning of 2022, however, we witnessed a completely different picture. In January, Pyongyang announced the cancellation of its nuclear and missile moratorium. Since then, it has test fired more than 30 ballistic missiles. On 8 September 2022, it enacted a new nuclear forces law, making its possession of nuclear weapons formal and legal. The law not only stipulates the automatic firing of nuclear weapons in the case of a leadership emergency but also identifies five conditions that could trigger the use of nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang also revealed its possession of tactical nuclear weapons and their deployment to frontline units. More critically, Kim Jong-un declared the irreversibility of North Korea's nuclear armament, precluding any diplomatic negotiations on denuclearisation by stating that 'There will never be such a thing as our abandonment of nuclear weapons or denuclearisation first, nor will there be any negotiations to this end or bargaining chips in these processes.' These developments invalidate three decades of dialogue and negotiations on denuclearisation, heightening the danger of a nuclear catastrophe.

A golden opportunity was missed

in February 2019. After an exchange of 'love letters', former US president Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un met in Hanoi between 27–28 February for the second time. Kim took a 60-hour train ride from Pyongyang to Hanoi with the hope that he could return home with a message of hope.

At the summit on the morning of 28 February, Kim proposed that the North would dismantle all nuclear facilities in Yongbyon in return for a partial relaxation of UN Security Council sanctions on North Korea relating to the civilian economy and essential goods. It was an unprecedented proposal by the North Korean leader.

It was also a good deal, precisely because—as Siegfried Hecker, a renowned specialist on the North Korean nuclear issue, pointed out—nuclear facilities in Yongbyon account for at least 60 to 70 per cent of North Korean nuclear production capabilities.

But Trump turned it down outright and counter-offered what he described as 'a big deal' in which 'a bright future' for the North Korean economy was promised if the North abandoned its nuclear and biochemical weapons and ballistic missiles completely. It was tantamount to requesting that Kim surrender. Kim still wanted to conduct further discussions during a scheduled working lunch, but Trump cancelled the lunch and left. He went back to Washington with no deal by proposing a 'big deal' while rejecting Kim's 'some deal'.

Washington officially cited North Korea's hidden highly enriched uranium facilities as justification for derailing negotiations, though North Korea was willing to discuss these facilities further. Later, Trump confessed that he turned down Kim's

offer because of strong opposition from then national security advisor John Bolton and secretary of state Mike Pompeo.

It was a bad decision, driven mostly by domestic political considerations, such as congressional hearings involving Michael Cohen that were taking place on the same day and distracting media attention away from Hanoi.

In late June 2019, Trump met Kim in Panmunjom for the third time and promised to suspend US–South Korea joint military exercises in return for the resumption of working-level talks. But his pledge was not kept, and North Korea rejected the United States' proposal.

Although North Korea showed up to a working-level talk with the United States in Stockholm in early October 2019, there was no progress. North Korean officials simply notified the United States that the North would never return to such talks unless Washington's hostile policy was reversed. The Trump administration continued a 'maximum pressure' strategy through the intensification of sanctions.

Major stakeholders in the region share a common goal of denuclearising North Korea, but their approaches have diverged

US President Joe Biden has not been interested in reviving the summit talks, a Trump legacy, and has favoured working-level dialogue. But Pyongyang has not responded. In the eyes of North Korea, Biden's policy, which is anchored in placing maximum pressure on the North through sanctions and stable management of the North Korean nuclear situation through deterrence and alliance coordination, is no different from that of his predecessor.

North Korea does not occupy a high priority in Biden's foreign policy agenda alongside hot issues such as strategic competition with China, the Taiwan Strait crisis and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Former president Barack Obama's strategic patience has degenerated into strategic neglect under the Biden administration.

South Korea has been helpless in reversing this retrogression. The Moon Jae-in government played a crucial facilitating role in arranging the summit talks between North Korea and the United States by taking advantage of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018. Seoul also contributed to the opening of channels of communication between Pyongyang and Washington.

When the Singapore summit, which had been scheduled for 12 June 2018, was on the verge of collapse because of a war of words between US and North Korean senior officials, president Moon convened a secret summit with Kim at Panmunjom on 26 May. As Pyongyang–Washington relations soured after then secretary of state Mike Pompeo's visit to North Korea in July 2018, Moon convened the Pyongyang summit a month earlier than scheduled and helped smooth out soured relations. At every critical juncture, Moon played an important role in facilitating dialogue between

Kim and Trump.

The Moon government had great expectations for the Hanoi summit. The Yongbyon card that Kim played had been strongly suggested by president Moon at the Pyongyang summit in September 2018. The Hanoi setback, therefore, dealt a critical blow to the Moon government, and Pyongyang began to show an increasingly hostile attitude towards the South.

Moon failed to deliver as promised at the Panmunjom and Pyongyang summits primarily because of international sanctions. Moon tried to resuscitate talks between Pyongyang and Washington by proposing in September 2021 that the Biden administration adopt an end-of-war declaration involving Seoul, Pyongyang, Washington and Beijing, relax sanctions against North Korea and endorse the partial opening of the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mount Kumgang tourist project. The Biden administration was not supportive, and the Moon government failed to revive momentum for dialogue.

As US–North Korea bilateral summits over the past three years demonstrate, trust deficits and rigid bargaining positions can easily derail dialogue and negotiation

SOUTH KOREA'S Yoon Suk-yeol government, inaugurated in May 2022, regards its predecessor's North Korean nuclear policy as a total failure and has pursued a hardline policy. While placing a heavy emphasis on conventional deterrence, it has strengthened extended deterrence in partnership with the United States, increased the frequency and intensity of US–South Korea joint military exercises and training, requested the regular deployment of US strategic weapons in South Korea and consolidated South Korea–US–Japan trilateral cooperation.

Yoon also proposed an 'audacious initiative' that links Pyongyang's incremental denuclearisation to the provision of lucrative economic incentives such as massive food aid, large-scale infrastructure projects and international investment and financial support. But the North openly ridiculed the initiative by calling it 'an audacious delusion', putting the Yoon government in a helpless situation.

China is now rather indifferent. In the past, Beijing actively facilitated the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem by hosting the Six-Party Talks. It also advocated for diplomatic negotiations based on the principles of a 'freeze-for-freeze' of North Korea's nuclear weapon and missile tests and South Korea–US military exercises, 'parallel progress' towards a peaceful regime and the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and gradual exchanges of simultaneous concessions.

The Chinese government is adamant that sanctions alone cannot compel North Korea to denuclearise. The United States has not listened to Beijing but continues to outsource the North Korean problem to China. Pyongyang has not been cooperative with Beijing either, ever since China

began to lose its influence over Washington. Caught between North Korea and the United States, China has been sidelined.

Japan has taken a hardline posture on North Korea by adhering to the principle of 'denuclearisation first, dialogue and incentives later'. Along with the United States and the European Union, Japan has adopted unilateral sanctions against North Korea. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's cabinet has followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, Shinzo Abe, in favouring deterrence, sanctions and close trilateral cooperation with the United States and South Korea.

Although it is a member of the Six-Party Talks, Russia has been a rather marginal stakeholder. Its policy has been similar to that of China and it has closely coordinated with

China at the UN Security Council in blocking punitive measures targeted at North Korea. Pyongyang's diplomatic support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to make Russia a staunch patron of North Korea. Nevertheless, Russia will not be supportive of North Korea's status as a nuclear-weapons state.

Major stakeholders in the region share a common goal of denuclearising North Korea, but their approaches have diverged. The United States, South Korea and Japan see North Korea's denuclearisation as the immediate goal, to be achieved through deterrence and hard-pressure tactics such as sanctions and the show of military force. China and Russia are taking the opposite path, preaching the utility of diplomatic negotiation, crisis stabilisation and an incremental

and reciprocal approach. Meanwhile, North Korea has become bolder and more assertive, with no signs of making any real concessions.

How can a breakthrough be made in the current stalemate? It will require pragmatism and a new multilateral arrangement.

Seeking practical solutions should be a starting point. North Korea already possesses nuclear facilities, materials, warheads and missiles and has expanded its nuclear arsenal by carrying out six nuclear tests and making its nuclear devices smaller, lighter and more diverse. North Korea is a nuclear-weapons state in all but name. Setting complete and irreversible denuclearisation as the immediate goal of diplomatic negotiations is unrealistic. Sanctions, conventional deterrence and US

PICTURE: REUTERS / LEAH MILLIS / POOL



US Vice President Kamala Harris stands next to the demarcation line separating South Korea from North Korea (September 2022).

provision of a nuclear umbrella to South Korea prevent North Korea from accepting the denuclearisation demand.

THE most critical step is to listen carefully to what North Korea wants. Pyongyang has consistently stated that its nuclear weapons are a product of Washington's hostile policy, which threatens its survival and hampers its people's right to development. North Korea wants the suspension of joint military exercises and the withdrawal of US strategic weapons, the adoption of an end-of-war declaration, diplomatic normalisation with the United States and Japan and the lifting of sanctions to enable economic opening and reform.

These demands should be addressed at any negotiations, along with the international community's demands for reciprocal measures towards denuclearisation. Simultaneous exchanges based on action-for-action should be the terms of engagement with the North.

The United States is the only country that can satisfy North Korea's demands. But since the Hanoi setback, damage to mutual trust between North Korea and the United States is deep and almost irreparable. If the North undertakes a seventh nuclear test or a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile, bilateral relations will worsen.

The Biden administration continues to call for dialogue, but Pyongyang has not responded. Third-party facilitators will need to jumpstart Pyongyang–Washington bilateral talks. In the past, Beijing and Seoul have played this role. Now, neither can. Seoul has taken the side of the United States, while Beijing is reluctant to serve as a mediator. The European Union, ASEAN or Australia

could be potential replacement candidates.

Modalities of dialogue and negotiation with North Korea have varied over time. The Agreed Framework of 1994 was the result of North Korea–US bilateral negotiations, while the 19 September Joint Statement of 2005 was adopted at the Six-Party Talks. Pyongyang has always preferred bilateral negotiations, while the United States has favoured multilateral arrangements with the assumption that if talks with the North fail other multilateral stakeholders would join the United States in pressuring the North.

As US–North Korea bilateral summits over the past three years demonstrate, trust deficits and rigid bargaining positions can easily derail dialogue and negotiation. A multilateral approach in the form of Six-Party Talks needs to be revived. This is not only because the North Korean nuclear issue is nested in Northeast Asian security dynamics, but also because a combination of bilateral and multilateral talks can facilitate more flexible negotiations.

Given the past failure of Six-Party Talks, such a multilateral arrangement may sound idealistic. The current climate of US–China rivalry and the international isolation of Russia following the war in Ukraine are also inhibiting factors. But the North Korean nuclear problem, along with tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, is unlikely to be resolved without reference to a comprehensive regional security perspective.


The Six-Party Talks were not successful partly due to the level of the delegates involved. Principal negotiators came from the level of assistant secretary (in the case of the United States) or deputy

Simultaneous exchanges based on action-for-action should be the terms of engagement with the North

foreign minister. To deal with the North Korean nuclear issue from a comprehensive regional security perspective, higher-level representation is needed.

The ideal would be the convening of a Northeast Asian security summit held annually. At this summit, the North Korean leader's participation would be indispensable. Kim would attend the summit if a US president attended and if China persuades him.

The issue here is whether the United States and China can cooperate. Within an institutional framework, all agenda items could be addressed. These include denuclearisation, nuclear arms control, extended deterrence, South Korea–US–Japan joint military exercises and new ideas such as a Northeast Asian nuclear-weapon-free-zone.

Denuclearising North Korea is a perilous odyssey. Pragmatic attitudes coupled with multilateral arrangements can serve as a useful guide to navigating that odyssey. 

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Thousands attend a rally calling for women's rights and equality ahead of International Women's Day (Jakarta, 2017).

Empowering women's rights in Indonesia

KATHRYN ROBINSON

GENDER equality was a key aspiration of the popular movements that led to the toppling of Indonesia's authoritarian New Order regime 24 years ago. The catchcry of that euphoric moment—*pemberdayaan*, or empowerment—encompassed women's rights. The years following the fall of Suharto, known as *reformasi*, have brought

gains for women. But progress has been mixed.

As households faced difficulties meeting the needs of everyday life during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the first street protests against former president Suharto's government unfolded in Jakarta in February 1998. During the subsequent protests, the regime orchestrated the rape of

ethnic Chinese women to scapegoat Indonesia's Chinese for the economic chaos. This had the unintended consequence of bringing violence against women into the political debate.

Interim president B.J. Habibie instituted legal reforms that were the foundation of the sudden move to democratisation, including direct

elections and the decentralisation of political authority to the district level. He also created the National Commission on Violence against Women (KOMNAS Perempuan), based on an order by leading women activists. These institutional reforms, along with the establishment of the Constitutional Court in 2001, have proven to be critical sites for the battle over gendered power.

Since *reformasi*, women activists have aspired to increase their voice in directly elected parliaments at national, provincial and district levels. After the first direct elections in 1999, only 8.8 per cent of seats in the national parliament were won by women. This led to demands for the 2003 law on elections to adopt an aspirational gender quota as recommended by UN bodies. This required parties to ensure that women comprise at least 30 per cent of candidates on party lists for multi-member electorates in national, district and provincial parliaments.

In the 2004 national elections, six out of the 38 parties failed to meet the quota and only three placed women in winnable positions. Revisions to the electoral law in 2008 required that at least 30 per cent of party candidate lists should be women, and

The educational advantage to women and girls continues, with girls' participation outstripping boys in post-primary years

that at least one out of the top three candidates should be a woman.

Direct elections where gender quotas apply have been held for district and provincial legislatures since 2004 but have been slower than the national parliament to achieve change. In 2009, women on average won 16 per cent of seats in provincial regional parliaments and 9 per cent at the district and municipal levels. The 2014 elections saw the proportion of women elected to provincial parliaments decline to 14.6 per cent, while there was a 14.2 per cent increase at district and municipal levels. These numbers hide considerable diversity as many regional bodies have no women, while in others all legislators are women.

POLITICAL parties have been identified as the principal barriers to women gaining seats as they have not enthusiastically supported female candidates. While there is no gender quota for the upper house, where candidates in multi-member electorates are elected through single non-transferable votes, women have been more strongly represented. In 2009, 26.5 per cent of upper house members were women, rising to 30 per cent in 2014, where it remains.

Political debate and action about quotas have impacted positively on the public acceptance of women holding office and there has been a small rise in the number of women elected to executive positions. A 2010 regulation limiting incumbency to two terms has had an unexpected effect on female candidates. In 2015, at least 16 candidates had connections to the previous incumbent as a wife, daughter or daughter-in-law.

Indonesia has had one female president, Megawati Sukarnoputri,

who was elected under the 'old system' by the upper house of Indonesia's bicameral national parliament. The idea of women's right to a seat at the table has flowed into post-New Order cabinets. The number of women ministers reached a peak in President Joko Widodo's first cabinet which included eight women, or 24 per cent of his cabinet, and above the world average of 17 per cent at the time. Recent cabinets have seen women in portfolios such as Finance, Foreign Affairs and Environment and Fisheries.

In the 2019 elections, women won 21.4 per cent of seats in the national parliament, in line with the 21.1 per cent average for Asia. The Inter-Parliamentary Union concludes that gender quotas are one of the most critical factors to increase women's political representation.

The exclusion of women from the exercise of political power is an active process. Increased women's representation in elected governing institutions is a significant attack on a gender order where masculine power is replicated and amplified through the institutions and agencies of the state. Slow gender equity gains under women legislators underscore that even where women achieve greater representation, men do not give up their power lightly.

Women politicians come from different parties, regions, families, cultural-linguistic groups and social classes. As legislators, they represent these intersectional interests. In Indonesia's parliaments, women's interests are amplified by cross-party women's caucuses, which are formal associations within the parliaments. In some regional parliaments where there are few women, extra-parliamentary caucuses assist women in the representation of their interests, which are broadly defined in contemporary

Indonesia.

Women politicians and the political movements that support them have been instrumental in achieving legislative reforms long demanded by women's groups, especially in the areas of marriage law and gender-based violence.

Gendered power was at the heart of the authoritarian New Order administration. The policy of 'state *ibuism*', or state motherism, naturalised the authority of the president as the head of the nation, mirroring the 'natural' authority of the male head of household. The role of the 'citizen mother' was defined as wifeliness and motherhood.

New Order ideology and state practice aimed at homogenising the diverse expressions of masculinity and femininity throughout the archipelago. This ideology of gender relations was enforced through institutional practices such as compulsory corporatised women's organisations and the state family-planning program, where only married women were eligible for contraceptives with permission from the male head of household.

The reshaping of gender hierarchies in Indonesia gave men prerogative in many areas of life where women traditionally had power—such as headship of family groups now being defined by seniority, not gender. Modern systems of land titling tend to annihilate women's customary land use and ownership rights by assigning titles to household heads who are assumed to be men. Currently, only 25 per cent of land titles issued through the national agency are held by women.

The New Order ideology of familialism is proving to have residual strength in defining women's social, political and economic roles and the

cultural construction of womanhood and masculinity. In commentaries and popular discussion, the New Order model is often deemed to be the 'traditional' pattern of gender relations in Indonesia rather than a political, social or cultural construction. The power delivered to men through the patriarchal bargain is not readily relinquished.

Women's unequal rights in marriage have been a lightning rod for activism since the colonial era. The New Order-era marriage law gave women rights against forced marriage and constrained men's prerogatives of

unconditional divorce and polygyny in Muslim marriage. But the same law ironically enshrined men as household heads in the view of the state. Another complaint of women's rights activists was the marriage law's failure to address domestic violence.

Marriage regulation has proven to be unfinished business. Soon after *reformasi*, women activists proposed a revision to the 1974 Marriage Law, especially aiming to ban polygyny and end legal child marriage by raising the age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18. There were also demands to remove the clause establishing men as

PICTURE: REUTERS / AJENG DINAR ULFIANA



Students read books at a school in Muntang village in Central Java (2021).

household heads.

Since its establishment in 2003, the Constitutional Court has become an important site for contesting these issues. At least 10 cases arguing that provisions of the 1974 Marriage Law are unconstitutional have been brought before the court. The case arguing against raising the minimum marriage age stood out as the court accepted religious arguments against defining adulthood in a secular sphere. This was a clear example of the mobilisation of an Islamist ideology to challenge women's rights. The Marriage Act of 2019 brought the minimum age of marriage for women to 19, the same as for men.

Another of the post-*reformasi* institutions, KOMNAS Perempuan, worked with legislators to pass Law 23 in 2004, outlawing domestic violence. In addition to the incremental success

of women achieving positions in formal politics, these new institutions are providing avenues for the championing of women's rights. A second landmark achievement was the 2022 Sexual Violence Crime Law, which defines marital rape as a crime.

State *ibuiism* promoted a powerful ideal of women's primary roles as in the household not as wage earners. However, the New Order expanded educational opportunities for boys and girls to make them work-ready for industry. The light industrial factories that invested in Indonesia preferentially employed women, facilitating women's employment outside the home. The educational advantage to women and girls continues, with girls' participation outstripping boys in post-primary years. Another important historical legacy is that since the 1950s,

Indonesia's labour laws have included provisions for menstruation leave, maternity leave and breastfeeding breaks.

THE continuing gains in women's education and ongoing growth of Indonesia's economy have not resulted in women achieving a higher share of formal sector jobs. A significant gender gap persists in formal sector participation as women bear the ongoing responsibility of unpaid care work.

This does not mean there have not been any changes. For example, in the mining town of Sorowako Sulawesi, the only formal employment offered to women in the late 1970s was as nurses, secretaries or domestics in the mining company. The Canadian parent company faced demands from women employees for more opportunities.

PICTURE: REUTERS / WILLY KURNIAWAN



Female workers pass a vendor on the sidewalk of a main road after office hours (Jakarta, 2020).

Now in Sorowako, women work in all areas of the company—including as heavy machine operators, apprentices, engineers and doctors. But the nature of the community significantly facilitates this as rural women workers can frequently rely on female relatives to provide childcare whereas urban working women often cannot.

When the New Order opened Indonesia's workforce to international labour migration, Indonesian women were propelled into the global labour force as domestic servants in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and East Asia. While this work provides opportunity for economic gain, it is also risky. Exploitation and abuse have been reported since the early 1980s.

Rural areas are the principal sources of overseas labour migrants, exemplifying the differences in the opportunities and risks for rural and urban women. In the current quest to eradicate child marriage as a key element in reaching gender equity, the challenges faced by young rural women, especially in eastern Indonesia, are prominent. The underlying causes—limited opportunities for education and employment—mean that marriage remains the principal avenue for girls to move from childhood to adulthood.

While New Order-era conceptions of gender roles are proving hard to dislodge, new waves of Islamist ideologies also bring challenges for women and non-binary individuals. The Islamist rhetoric of male prerogative is providing the counter-narrative to advancing women's rights, as evident in the Constitutional Court challenges regarding polygamy and child marriage. But Islam is also providing rhetoric for gender equity.

Women associated with Nahdlatul Ulama—one of the world's largest Islamic mass organisations—held

the Congress of Women Ulama in 2017, the world's first congress for female Muslim clerics. Outcomes of the plenaries and workshops were delivered as three *fatwas*—legal rulings based on Islamic jurisprudence. These rulings established the minimum age of marriage to be 18, asserted that sexual violence against women is *haram* or forbidden regardless of marital status and maintained environmental destruction as *haram* as it can trigger gendered social and economic imbalances.

As Indonesia has democratised, decentralisation has empowered district governments and provided risks and rewards for women. Political expediency based on controlling women emerged in the *perda sharia*—by-laws based ostensibly in Islam typically imposing curfews or requirements for women to wear head coverings. But decentralisation promised to bring power holders closer to the public and there is evidence that local women's groups have been able to press this advantage to secure favourable results.

Despite this, decentralisation still poses risks to nationally legislated services benefiting women, such as the national family-planning program which provided contraception to women across the archipelago. The decentralised model relies on private providers—mostly village midwives—overseen by district government departments.

The ability of women to control the number and timing of their children is fundamental to gender equity, but there has also been concern about the pro-natalist rhetoric from some Islamist groups during *reformasi*. While the continuing decline in Indonesia's fertility rate indicates that a smaller family size is the 'new normal', contraception is still restricted to

The continuing gains in women's education and ongoing growth of Indonesia's economy have not resulted in women achieving a higher share of formal sector jobs

married couples and growing numbers of unmarried youth are not eligible.

Though women's rights in Indonesia have long been contested, various political, social and religious movements have arisen to address gender inequity. Suharto's New Order reshaped the political culture of Indonesia over 32 years, refashioning gender relations as an instrument of power. Many of these changes have been unwound in the 24 years since the regime fell.

Some New Order policies, such as fertility control and universal education, have had lasting positive impacts for women. Others, such as the assumption of women's primary roles as wife and mother, are proving hard to dislodge. But though the homogenising ideology of the New Order persists, the state inscription of gendered power and forms of masculinity and femininity appears to be slowly dissolving. **EAFAQ**

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US President Joe Biden walks ahead of leaders at the US-ASEAN Special Summit for a family photo (Washington DC, 2022).

Blind spots in Washington's Indo-Pacific Strategy

PAUL HEER

THE Biden administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy, released in February 2022, affirms that the United States will work through 'a latticework of strong and mutually reinforcing coalitions' to foster 'the collective capacity' of the region to confront 21st century challenges. To that end, Washington has played a leading role in promoting multilateral institutions and shared interests in the region.

These efforts include the Quad—a

dialogue process that combines Japan, Australia, India and the United States—and the AUKUS security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the economic realm, Washington has partnered with multiple countries in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) as a substitute for US membership in the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership and the

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. The Biden administration also includes the Indo-Pacific in the Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership, an infrastructure investment program launched at the G7.

US-led initiatives also include the Declaration on US–Pacific Partnership with multiple South Pacific Island countries and the complementary Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP)

initiative launched in June 2022 with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom. These groups overlap with the pre-existing network of formal US allies in the region and Washington's longstanding participation in ASEAN-centred institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit.

Though this would appear to be an embarrassment of riches in terms of US multilateral engagement in the region, several underlying issues have tempered the impact of Washington's efforts and pose challenges going forward.

WHILE most of the Indo-Pacific is eager for US engagement and commitment, fault lines persist on what to prioritise in the regional agenda. Many countries perceive the US focus on traditional security issues to be at the expense of economic concerns and climate change. Washington has ramped up its attention to the latter issues, but diverging views on what is most important will continue to hamper robust cooperation. So will limits on the resources that the United States can bring to bear.

Diverging priorities also reflect varying levels of readiness to sign on to what some perceive as an overly confrontational US approach to dealing with China. Many leaders and strategic thinkers in the region have expressed their countries' unwillingness to choose sides between the United States and China. Washington has repeatedly insisted that it will impose no such choice on its partners, but some of its diplomacy and rhetoric suggest a desire for other countries to align with the United States.

Some US partners are also concerned about how the various

US initiatives fit together. ASEAN countries have long welcomed Washington's embrace of 'ASEAN centrality' in regional multilateralism. But ASEAN's exclusion from the Quad and AUKUS has raised questions about whether US attention is being diverted away from Southeast Asia's priorities in dealing with China and other regional issues.

The Quad appears to be gaining momentum, but its effectiveness will continue to be subject to a lagging consensus on what its focus should be, both in terms of traditional versus non-traditional security issues and on how confrontational the group should be towards China. The Quad may also be hindered by the varying levels of confidence its members have in each other.

Overall regional confidence in the United States itself is also a lingering issue. Washington's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017 undermined faith in its commitment to the region, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is viewed by many as a somewhat meagre alternative. Much of the Indo-Pacific anticipates that US domestic politics will constrain Washington's reliability in the region for the foreseeable future.

The elephant in the room is China, which is excluded from the United States' multilateral initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. Washington and its key partners routinely minimise any explicit mention of China in their multilateral diplomacy, but no one doubts that the Quad, AUKUS, IPEF, B3W and PBP have that aim.

Washington's multilateral diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific frequently emphasises the importance of 'inclusiveness' in the pursuit of a region that is 'free and open, peaceful and prosperous. But the more the United States avoids including China

in its regional initiatives, the more obvious it is that those efforts are aimed at excluding and targeting Beijing.

When China is addressed in the US Indo-Pacific Strategy and the National Security Strategy, it is framed in terms of the central threat it poses to openness, security and prosperity in the region. There appears to be little consideration of the possibility that Beijing might share some of its neighbours' goals or other elements of Washington's regional agenda. US strategy focuses almost exclusively on mobilising US allies and partners, implicitly against China. Even the list of 'prospective members' in the US–Pacific Partnership does not include Beijing.

The United States and China, as the two most powerful countries in the world, must find ways to cooperate on key global issues for the benefit of humanity. This should apply within the Indo-Pacific as well, with both countries playing key roles in regional multilateralism in a shared pursuit of stability, prosperity, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence.

There is no doubt that cooperation would be complicated, given the inevitable rivalry and strategic mistrust between Beijing and Washington. But the alternative of a region divided between hostile camps would almost certainly be worse. Accordingly, the United States should consider an approach to Indo-Pacific regional security that works with China rather than exclusively against it. [EAFQ](#)

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Reconstructing China's role in regional security

QINGGUO JIA

TODAY the possibility of consolidating an inclusive regional architecture for comprehensive security in the Asia Pacific has become almost inconceivable. This is because ongoing China–US tension appears to have excluded that option. The United States has been busy consolidating its old military alliances and putting together new ones in the region in order to compete with and contain China. China has reacted by enhancing its ties with Russia even after the outbreak of the Russia–Ukraine war and telling its neighbours to stay away from China–US conflicts.

As a result, instead of an inclusive, regionwide security architecture the Asia-Pacific region has ended up with a set of security arrangements that is increasingly fragmented, confrontational and crisis-prone.

Two sets of factors are competing

The kind of role China will play in regional security cooperation... does not depend on China alone

in shaping this development. The first includes domestic political manoeuvres, excessive fears and identity compulsion. They are exacerbating tension between China and the United States, making the deficit of regionwide security cooperation greater. The second includes national interests, stakes in the regional order and the prohibitive cost of an all-out confrontation between China and the United States. They call for pragmatic management of relations between the two countries and cooperation where shared interests and stakes overlap. Which of these two sets of forces will prevail remains to be seen.

The United States does not trust any security arrangement over which it has no absolute control, especially one that is believed to potentially weaken or displace its current military alliances in the region. In part because of this, successive efforts since the end of the Cold War to push for a regionwide security architecture—such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asian Summit (EAS) and the Asia Pacific Community idea—have not yet been successful.

Until recently, though China has been uncomfortable with the US-led military alliances, it has not challenged them as long as they do not target China. China has even acknowledged certain useful roles these alliances have played. For its part, the United

States and its allies have also made efforts to alleviate China's concerns, such as by declaring that China is not the target of the alliances and inviting China to participate in the annual Rim of the Pacific Exercise. But in more recent years, the situation has changed drastically.

As a stakeholder of the existing international order, China has every reason to defend that order. As China's economic size and capabilities have grown, increasingly China can only protect its interests through helping maintain this order—such as via providing public goods—as opposed to taking a 'free ride'. China has tried to play a positive role in regional security mechanisms such as the ARF and the EAS. China believes that the region desperately needs a regionwide inclusive security mechanism. Despite what are seen as US efforts to contain China, China has not changed its position on this so far.

It is in the best interest of all countries to make sure that China will adhere to this position. But no one should take this for granted. The reason is simple. China has adhered to this position largely because it is a stakeholder of regional security cooperation. If the current US efforts to contain China were successful and the status quo on the Taiwan question changed, China would lose its stake in the system and its rationale for supporting regional security

cooperation. China's policy on regional security cooperation would be likely to then shift in a direction that no one wishes to see.

Ironically, the actions of the United States and some of its allies in the region have the effect of decreasing China's stake in regional security cooperation. One example is endorsement of Taiwan's independence activities. Taiwan has remained the most sensitive issue in Chinese politics because it was returned to China at the end of the World War II and has never left China in a sovereignty sense. China regards Taiwan as its core interest. If the international order cannot help protect China's sovereignty over Taiwan, most Chinese would not find any reason for China to care about that order.

The kind of role China will play in regional security cooperation, therefore, does not depend on China alone. It also crucially depends on the United States and its allies. How China approaches regional security cooperation depends not just on China's own actions but on how the United States and its allies address China's legitimate security concerns.

This does not mean that what China says and does do not matter. It does. China must try to explain its positions and reassure others about its strategic intentions. China should also do more to demonstrate what it means in policy terms by its dedication to 'building a community of shared futures.' Specifically on regional security cooperation, China can do more to convince other regional players that a stronger China is an asset, not a

liability or a threat.

China's role in regional security is facing a critical moment of reconstruction. It is in the interest of everyone in the region to make sure that China's stakes in regional peace, stability and prosperity are respected and protected—as are those of the United States and its allies—so that China and the United States both have a good reason to play a responsible role in regional security cooperation.

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PICTURE: REUTERS / TINGSHU WANG



A delivery worker rides past a screen showing soldiers from the Chinese People's Liberation Army on the day of its 95th founding anniversary (Beijing, 2022).



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida holds a placard reading 'Corona disease countermeasures, New Capitalism, Diplomacy and security' during a debate session with leaders of rival political parties ahead of Japan's lower house election (Tokyo, 2021).

Revisiting Japan's comprehensive security strategy

TOMOHIKO SATAKE

ECONOMIC security, or *keizai anpo*, dominates the current Japanese strategic debate. Since 2019, the Japanese government has rapidly put in place new positions, organisations and bills related to economic security. According to Takayuki Kobayashi, Japan's newly appointed minister for economic security, the term refers to securing

'the Japanese state and national interest through economic measures.'

To achieve this objective, the Japanese parliament passed the Economic Security Promotion Act in 2022 to strengthen supply chain resilience, protect critical infrastructure, develop emerging technologies and prevent technology outflow. Japan's new national security

strategy—to be published by the end of 2022—will likely incorporate these elements.

It is not the first time that Japan has recognised the economy as an integral part of its security. In the mid-1970s, Japanese politicians, intellectuals and businesspeople began to discuss the need for 'comprehensive security' (*sogo anzen hoshō*) that included economic,

No single country can enhance the resilience of supply chains, develop emerging technologies and respond to hybrid threats without the help of others

food and energy security.

A 1980 report published by an advisory board to the Masayoshi Ohira government (the Ohira Report) advocated a ‘comprehensive security strategy’ that promoted Japanese security by various measures in multiple domains. While the report never underestimated the importance of military roles, it acknowledged the importance of other areas—such as economic, food and energy security—and recommended that Japan should enhance its security by coordinating policies across different areas and means.

The report reflected dynamic changes occurring in the international security environment after the early 1970s. The 1973 and 1978 oil shocks and high inflation led Tokyo to recognise that security could be jeopardised by non-military threats. To secure energy resources, it became imperative to review Japan’s overdependence on the Middle East and diversify its energy supply chains.

The Ohira Report also addressed the decline of US primacy and Japan’s growing desire for autonomous

economic growth. With ‘the termination of clear American supremacy in both military and economic spheres,’ the report argued the world would enter an era of ‘peace maintained by shared responsibilities.’ In such an environment, Japan should enhance its self-help efforts and contribute to the strengthening and the maintenance of the system.

THE evolution of comprehensive security also reflects deeper changes in the nature of power politics during the 1970s. As Hiroshi Nakanishi points out, ‘the diversification and the complication of power politics’ promoted the multi-polarisation of international relations. As demonstrated by the US defeat in the Vietnam War, economic relations and psychological factors came to play an important role in power politics alongside military capability.

According to Nakanishi, these diversified and complex power politics also blurred the boundaries between ‘high politics’ associated with ideology, governance and military strategy, and ‘low politics’ concerned with the economy, energy supply and social affairs. In an environment characterised by what Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane termed ‘complex interdependence,’ Japan was forced to adopt a more autonomous and comprehensive foreign security posture that could deal with a broader range of challenges.

The conditions identified above—Japan’s energy crisis, the decline of US primacy and the complication and diversification of power politics—have become even more prominent in today’s security environment.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet Union’s GDP was less than 25 per cent of US GDP. In 2022, China’s GDP amounts to nearly 75 per cent

of US GDP. After the 1972 Sino–US Rapprochement, Washington was able to exploit the Sino–Soviet conflict and maintain a pivotal position. Today, however, China is increasingly aligned with Russia, challenging the US-led order.

The rise of the emerging states, the development of military and information technology and the promotion of interdependence has created a highly diversified and more complex security environment compared to with the 1970s. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and its nuclear brinkmanship has revealed that traditional power politics have not become a thing of the past. At the same time, Ukraine’s surprising resistance against Russia suggests how non-military or non-kinetic factors, such as national morale, information warfare and cyber defence, play an increasingly important role in determining war outcomes.

Russia’s reduction of energy supplies and Western sanctions against Moscow also demonstrate that the ‘weaponisation of interdependence’ may be no less important than conventional warfare.

Japan has been responding to this complex security environment. Unlike the Cold War era, when the Soviet Union was the primary source of external threat, Japan now faces threats on three fronts: China, North Korea and an increasingly belligerent Russia. In addition to the deployment of its well-known grey-zone tactics, China has already overtaken Japan in terms of the material capabilities of its economy and military and in some areas of newly emerging technologies.

To make up for its disadvantage in material resources, Japan has attempted to integrate resources and capabilities across different areas and domains. Japan’s pursuit of economic

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security, as well as its adoption of the 'Multi-Domain Defense Force' concept, demonstrates the strong crisis mentality of Japanese policymakers in an increasingly contested, diversified and complex security environment.

The problem is that pursuing economic security could restrict free economic activities, which may weaken interdependence and exacerbate global political divisions. While the Economic Security Promotion Act stresses the compatibility between economic security and free cooperation, it remains unclear how the government can achieve such a delicate balancing act.

Unlike the 1970s and 80s, Japan's global position in terms of material resources has declined due to long-term economic stagnation and an ageing population. While it is important for Japan to pursue a more autonomous posture in defence and economic security, this path also has its inherent limitations.

All these factors suggest that international cooperation has become more important than ever. No single country can enhance the resilience of supply chains, develop emerging technologies and respond to hybrid threats without the help of others.

Competition must also be managed through diplomatic measures such as enhancing transparency, confidence-building and crisis management. Today's comprehensive security should be considered both from competitive and cooperative perspectives. It is high time that Japan considered its comprehensive security strategy with other like-minded partners, rather than on its own. [EAFQ](#)

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RCEP benefits extend beyond economic cooperation

IMAN PAMBAGYO

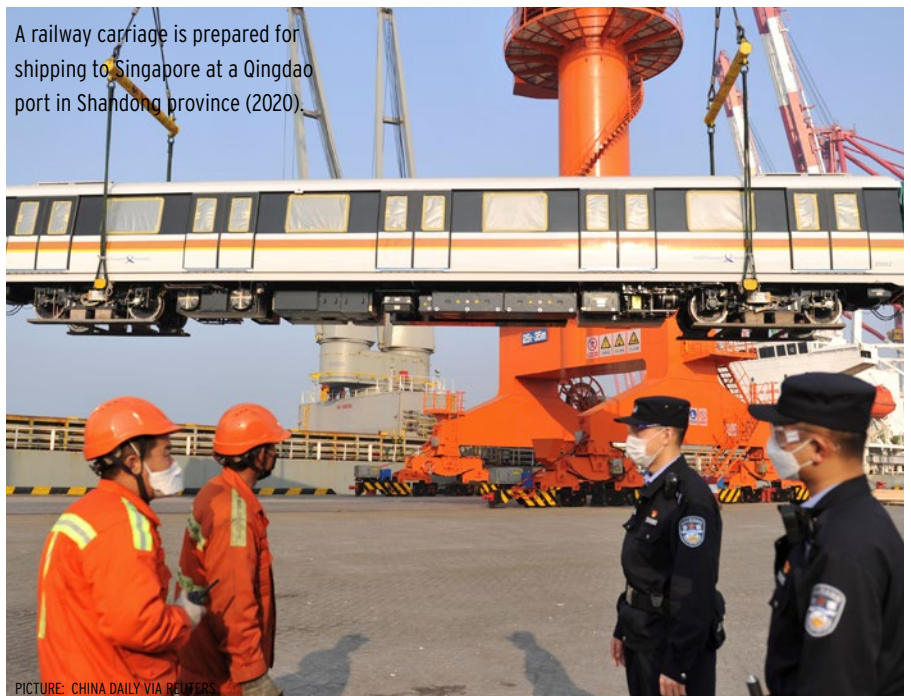
CONSIDERED one of the world's largest regional free trade agreements, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) stole the world's attention once again as it entered into force on 1 January 2022.

Representing 30 per cent of the world's population, the agreement epitomises how its 15 participating countries with stark differences in political, economic and social systems managed to bridge these gaps during seven years of negotiations.

The agreement was eventually signed in November 2020 amid continuing trade tensions between the United States and China as well as the spread of COVID-19, the combination of which has caused unprecedented disruptions in global trade.

The conclusion of the RCEP negotiations serves as yet another example of the importance of constructive engagement to building mutual understanding and closing the gaps between states. Pursued under the principle of ASEAN centrality,

A railway carriage is prepared for shipping to Singapore at a Qingdao port in Shandong province (2020).



PICTURE: CHINA DAILY VIA REUTERS

the negotiations provided a platform to develop rules and procedures that helped parties—big and small—to calibrate their ambitions. The bigger economies in the group were unable to exercise their power over others fully as contending states were constrained by procedure and pressure was watered down.

The document that resulted from this ‘dynamic equilibrium’—a term coined by former Indonesian foreign minister Marty Natalegawa—is an agreement which allows flexibility without compromising commitments and provides room for cooperation to narrow gaps that remain as the agreement is implemented. Peter Petri and Michael Plummer emphasise that ‘the effects of RCEP are impressive even though the agreement is not as rigorous as the CPTPP [Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership]. It incentivises supply chains across the region but also caters to political sensitivities’.

Now that the RCEP Agreement has entered into force, parties will focus on the full implementation of their commitments. It is the task of the RCEP Joint Committee, with the support of the RCEP Secretariat, to facilitate the implementation of the agreement, monitor parties’ compliance and enforce their commitments.

There is one area of the agreement to which RCEP parties must give special focus: developing and delivering a cooperative work program as mandated by Chapter 15 ‘Economic and Technical Cooperation’ under the RCEP Agreement.

Pursuing economic and technical cooperation among RCEP member countries needs to be high on the agenda as the Partnership is not only designed to advance trade and

investment liberalisation. Chapter 15 of the agreement also provides a framework for realising development objectives through the RCEP Agreement.

RCEP member states agreed that economic and technical cooperation in RCEP should aim to narrow development gaps and maximise mutual benefits. The agreement is also intended to facilitate the expansion of regional trade and investment and contribute to global economic growth and development.

The rationale for giving priority to economic and technical cooperation under RCEP is twofold. The agreement has entered into force at a time when global value chains are being reconfigured—if not challenged by the ‘winners’ of trade—both on cost grounds and also increasingly on the basis of political and security considerations. RCEP parties, and in particular developing and least-developed countries, need to strengthen their regulatory systems to enable them to seize the opportunities arising from the reconfiguration of global value chains.

RCEP countries differ from one another in terms of regulatory systems and economic potential, including labour capacity in developing sectors. Economic and technical cooperation will enable RCEP member states to coordinate policies in line with their respective economic capacities and to build these capacities while addressing the challenges caused by disruptions in global value chains.

Economic and technical cooperation can also serve as a platform for parties to build mutual understanding, promote collaboration and moderate potential tensions. Seven years of close engagement through 31 rounds of negotiations at the senior official level, 11

RCEP parties ... need to strengthen their regulatory systems to enable them to seize the opportunities arising from the reconfiguration of global value chains

intersessional ministerial meetings, eight ministerial meetings, three summits and intense multi- and bilateral negotiations on market access should offer parties a strong bond through which to continue their collective journey to improving the lives of RCEP’s 2.3 billion people. This is no small feat at a time when global trade has become more fragmented along geopolitical lines.

This soft asset could be nurtured further through economic cooperation in various forms, including dialogue on major issues, exchanges of experts and joint research. As Mari Pangestu and Peter Drysdale suggested in a 2019 article for East Asia Forum, RCEP economic security will help strengthen political security in the region.

In a time of great uncertainty, the RCEP Agreement provides an opportunity to contain potential conflicts and focus instead on common purposes to elevate the economic, political and social welfare of RCEP’s citizens. [EAFQ](#)

Iman Pambagyo is the former chairman of the RCEP Trade Negotiation Committee.



A young boy walks through seawater as it floods over an ineffective sea wall during high tide (Fiji, 2022).

Climate change challenges Asia-Pacific security

MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA

AT FIRST glance, regional security issues seem to be remote from the problems of climate change. They involve exercising diplomatic and military power, often in collaboration with other like-minded countries, to ensure that the balance of power in the region is not disturbed. Regional security in this sense is a precondition that allows countries to concentrate on economic growth by expanding trade and investment, all of which contribute to faster growth.

The Asia-Pacific region has had its share of potential conflict points—North Korea, Taiwan, the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands—but until recently these were perceived as manageable and the overall environment was relatively secure. This has changed markedly in recent years with the rise of geopolitical tension between the United States and China, which is associated with the economic rise of China and its declared objective of challenging the United States both militarily and technologically. Climate change will add new dimensions to

these tensions on several counts.

The United Nations has estimated that the world is set to see a temperature increase of about 2.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. The adverse impacts of global warming on this scale are well known. Higher temperatures will reduce human and land productivity, jeopardising food production in many countries. Variable rainfall and more frequent extreme weather events will inflict substantial damage. And responding to these events will soak up resources that could have otherwise been spent

on raising productivity or increasing social protection. Accelerated melting of the polar ice caps and the Himalayan glaciers will lead to a rise in global sea levels by an estimated 0.44–0.76 metres by 2100. Some scientists warn that actual rises may exceed these figures.

Rising sea levels could see smaller island states in the Pacific and Indian oceans mostly or entirely submerged by 2100. The Republic of Kiribati is particularly vulnerable because its highest point is less than 2.5 meters above sea level and the Maldives is in a similar situation. In such cases, there may be no alternative to relocating the entire population. Though Kiribati and the Maldives have small populations—117,000 and 500,000 respectively—one cannot assume that other countries will welcome their displaced populations.

MOST countries in the Asia-Pacific region will not face comparable threats from rising sea levels but many will experience serious flooding. Bangkok, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, the Sundarbans area in Bangladesh and the Pearl River Delta in China are all vulnerable. Significant migration away from these areas may be unavoidable. Though this migration is expected to occur domestically, it will come with significant costs and it could lead to internal political instability if not handled effectively. This could easily trigger some cross-border migration, which would only intensify regional security problems.

Climate change can also intensify existing territorial conflicts. China lays claim to a large part of the South China Sea in the form of its nine-dash line—a claim that is contested by Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. The Philippines referred the dispute to the International Court

of Justice which ruled against China. China unilaterally rejected the Court's finding.

One can imagine climate change creating new conflicts if rising sea temperatures lead to fish populations moving into areas claimed by China under its nine-dash line. If China denies fishermen access to these areas, it could pose a threat to livelihoods and lead to conflict.

Climate change could also create new tensions over competition for water. The Mekong River begins in Tibet and its 4700 kilometre journey to the sea takes it through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. The latter four countries established the Mekong River Commission in 1995 as a system for shared management of the river. But China is not a member of this arrangement and it controls the Mekong upstream.

In 2019, the water level in the Mekong dropped to its lowest level in 100 years. This may have been due to natural environmental factors, such as lower rainfall and glacial melt, but concern was expressed that the fall in water levels was caused by upstream dams constructed to divert water for use in China. Such diversion could cause more problems if water scarcity worsens. Similar concerns have been expressed in India on China's reported plans to divert water from the Tsang Po River as it flows east through Tibet, reducing the water available in the river when it becomes the Brahmaputra on entering India.

International law provides only general guidelines for countries to share water based on some criteria for fairness. What constitutes a 'fair share' is undefined, but the law provides that once an agreement is reached it must be strictly observed. In the absence of any agreement there is little that can

be done. Since climate change will exacerbate water scarcity and increase the frequency of droughts. It also means that what was deemed a fair share at the time an agreement was made may not be seen as fair during periods of intense scarcity.

Climate change is also expected to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events, such as cyclones or tsunamis. This suggests a need for institutionalising cooperation among navies and other security forces in the region to help with the immediate challenge of rescuing people in the aftermath of disasters. Small countries are unlikely to have a sufficient supply of internal assets or even trained personnel to deal with sudden and unexpected disasters.

The regional security aspects of climate change need to be factored into decision making more so than ever. International cooperation on climate change mitigation is of utmost importance—not only because of its adverse effects on economic outcomes, but also because of the way it impinges on security issues in the region. **EAFQ**

Montek Singh Ahluwalia is an economist and former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in India.

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