



**Workshop on the Future of Alliances in Asia  
Friday, October 30, 2020**

**POC:** Sara Bjerg Moller, Seton Hall University  
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**Participants:**

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Koji Kagotani, Osaka University of Economics

Dong Jung Kim, Sogang University

Sung-han Kim, GSIS, Korea University

Tongfi Kim, Vesalius College

Kei Koga, Nanyang Technological University

Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center

Sara Bjerg Moller, School of Diplomacy and IR, Seton Hall University

Anit Mukherjee, RSIS, Nanyang Technological University

Carla Norrlof, University of Toronto

Terence Roehrig, U.S. Naval War College

Randall Schweller, The Ohio State University

Joshua Shiffrinson, Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University

Krista Wiegand, University of Tennessee

Thomas S. Wilkins, University of Sydney

Ketian Zhang, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Quansheng Zhao, School of International Service, American University

## TIME ZONES

(in relation to **EDT**)

**Japan (JST):** +13 hrs

**Korea (KST):** +13 hrs

**Singapore (SGT):** +12 hrs

**Europe (CEST):** +5 hrs

**Australia (AEDT):** + 15 hrs

## AGENDA

**Friday, October 30, 2020**

### **Session A: Asia Panel**

8:00 pm – 8:10 pm **KST** // 7:00 am – 7:10 am **EDT**

Opening Remarks: Moller and S. Kim

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7:10 pm – 7:55 pm **SGT** // 7:10 am – 7:55 am **EDT** // 8:10 - 8:55 pm **KST** // 10:10-10:55 pm **AEDT**

Koga, “Japan’s “Alignment” Strategy: New Bilateralism and Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific”

**Discussant:** Thomas S. Wilkins, University of Sydney

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8:00 pm – 8:55 pm **SGT** // 8:00 am – 8:55 am **EDT**

Mukherjee & Joshi, “Aligning sans Alliances: India’s approach to Asia’s Emerging Balance of Power”

**Discussant:** Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center

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9:00 pm – 9:55 pm **SGT** // 9:00 am – 9:55 am **EDT**

Kim (DJ), “The Strategies of Procrastination in Alliance Politics”

**Discussant:** Randall Schweller, The Ohio State University

**Session B: North America Panel**

10:15 am – 10:30 am **EDT**

Opening Remarks: Moller

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10:30 am – 11:15 am **EDT** // 7:30 am – 8:15 am **PDT** // 3:30 PM **CEST** //11:30 PM **JST**

Gartzke & Kagotani, “The Concept and Consequences of Leverage in International Security”  
**Discussant:** Tongfi Kim, Vesalius College

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11:20 am – 12:05 pm **EDT**

Norrlof, “US-Sino Geoeconomic Competition”  
**Discussant:** Krista Wiegand, University of Tennessee

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**Lunch Break: 12:10-1:00 pm**

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1:00 pm – 1:45 pm **EDT**

Wiegand, “Pawns in the U.S.-China Rivalry: U.S. Allies, Security Partners, and Disputants in the South China Sea Dispute”  
**Discussant:** Ketian Zhang, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

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2:00 pm – 2:45 pm **EDT**

Zhao, “Shift between Friend and Enemy: Dynamics of the China-Japan-US Triangle”  
**Discussant:** Sara Bjerg Moller, Seton Hall University

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3:00 pm – 3:45 pm **EDT** // 8:00-8:45 pm **CEST**

Shifrinson, “Analogies at Cold War? America’s Asian Alliances and the U.S. Grand Strategy Debate”  
**Discussant:** Tongfi Kim, Vesalius College

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4:00 pm – 4:45 pm **EDT**

Moller, “Domestic Politics, Threat Perceptions, and the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of South Korea, 1993-2020,”  
**Discussant:** Terence Roehrig, U.S. Naval War College

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4:45-5:00 pm **EDT**

Wrap-up & Next Steps: Moller

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## Panel A

### **Japan's "Alignment" Strategy: New Bilateralism and Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific Era**

Kei Koga, Nanyang Technological University

Japan's core strategic principle at the global and regional level has been consistent—to maintain and enhance the US-Japan alliance. Japan has been the staunch supporter of the existing international order largely shaped by the United States in East Asia since the end of the Cold War, and the US-Japan alliance has become the crucial strategic tool to ensure Japan's security and economic prosperity. However, this strategic focus began to shift from the 2000s. From the 2003 Asia Cooperation Dialogue that advocated for promoting "strategic partnership" among Asian states, Japan has actively strengthened its security ties with regional states, particularly India, Australia, South Korea, and ASEAN member states. These alignments—sometimes labeling it as "strategic partners"—are not military alliances, and their characteristics are not necessarily consistent. This poses a certain question—what are the geopolitical utilities of such alignment, and do these alignments have any strategic implications for Japan's regional strategy, particularly in the Indo-Pacific? This paper explores the utility of Japan's bilateral and minilateral "alignment" emerging from the 2000s, namely with South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and the "QUAD." My hypothesis is that the alignments will be strategically useful in influencing the regional balance of power if they help Japan: (1) promote dual-use security cooperation (in the field of traditional and non-traditional security), such as joint military exercises to enhance inter-operability and capacity-building programs to conduct quasi off-shore balancing; (2) understand and shape partner states' assessment of regional strategic landscape in its favor; (3) coordinate their diplomatic and security policies and signaling in the region, and (4) prevent particular regional states from criticizing such a strategic arrangement. However, the limitation of such a strategy is that the alignments cannot decisively determine the configuration of the balance of power, which requires strong regional and external powers' partnership.

### **Aligning sans Alliances: India's approach to Asia's Emerging Balance of Power**

Anit Mukherjee, RSIS, Nanyang Technological University

Yogesh Joshi, National University of Singapore

India's strategic behaviour in mustering external support for its security needs reveals an inherent preference for informal alignments rather than formal alliances. The preference for informal alignments guided India's security behaviour during the Cold War. Though the rise of the Chinese threat has intensified in recent years engendering strategic partnerships with like-minded states in the Indo-Pacific, prospects of formal alliances remain anathema in Indian foreign policy. What explains India's reluctance towards formal security partnerships? We argue that India's reluctance towards formalisation of security partnerships into treaty-based alliances is guided by three major considerations. First concerns the reputational costs of formal alliances. Formally aligning with other great powers diminishes India's own claims towards a great power status. The performative requirement for strategic autonomy engenders out of two factors: national identity construction and fractured domestic politics. Second consideration guiding India's approach towards alliances are its balancing requirements. Unlike other states in the region, given India's warfighting attributes especially for the defence of the status quo, New Delhi does not require external partners to physically defend India's sovereignty. Internal balancing, therefore, has always been New Delhi's preferred balancing strategy. Informal alignments could help provide economic and technological resources to support internal balancing without compromising the reputational imperative of the Indian state. Lastly, reliability issues over formal alliances cloud India's decision-making process. New Delhi remains sceptical of formal alliance commitments. If risks of abandonment are assumed to be relatively high, so are the costs of entrapment into unnecessary conflicts. We operationalise the above-mentioned attributes of India's balancing behaviour through a case-study of its approach towards the Quadrilateral Security Initiative or the Quad.

## **The Strategies of Procrastination in Alliance Politics**

Dong Jung Kim, Sogang University

How do U.S. allies delay responding to demands of support from their security patron? Since the end of World War II, U.S. allies have often found themselves caught between the United States and a challenger to the U.S.-led order. Unless an all-out great power confrontation is imminent, those allies want to retain both security support from the United States and benefits from exchanges with the United States' strategic competitor. Accordingly, U.S. allies would want to procrastinate making a decision over the patron's demand, even though they might eventually need to make a choice when pushed by the patron. Nonetheless, the strategies for delaying responses to the security patron's demands have not won adequate scholarly attention. This article first elaborates on the strategy of procrastination as a distinct policy option for a security client in a U.S.-led alliance. It can be defined as ideas about delaying definite answers to demands of support made by a security patron without provoking antagonism from the patron, expecting changes to occur in confrontation between the patron and its rival. This article articulates four specific strategies of procrastination that utilize either (1) buckpassing, (2) international legitimation, (3) domestic political procedure, or (4) voice as their main mechanisms. Then, it discusses the conditions under which procrastination strategies can indeed be employed by the client. Two factors play key roles: (1) type of entailed risk in procrastinating (whether functional or relational), and (2) consistency of the patron's demand with existing rules that were set by the patron. The concept and specific strategies of procrastination, as well as the conditions to employ them, are elaborated with illustrative examples of U.S. allies' behavior over Washington's demand of support during the George W. Bush administration and the Trump administration.

## Panel B

### **The Concept and Consequences of Leverage in International Security**

Erik Gartzke, UCSD

Koji Kagotani, Osaka University of Economics

Leverage is a familiar concept in finance, but it is virtually undiscussed in international security. Banks in particular leverage by borrowing against capital to make several loans where there is nominally only cash for one. This is analogous to how capable states leverage military power by committing to act in more ways or places than is actually practical. How does a country's level of leverage affect the risk of war? Three factors chiefly affect the utilization and management of leverage in a nation's foreign policy: 1) The capacity and mobility of a nation's military, 2) The number, commitment, capability and dispersion of security partners, 3) The size, coherence and objectives of threats. While these are largely the same factors that affect international security generally (processes like deterrence, escalation and alliance formation and maintenance), their dynamics -- the way they interact -- differs in the aggregate. The ability to leverage security commitments increases influence while also creating a more "fragile" security environment. We illustrate these processes by demonstrating how U.S. foreign policy has become increasingly leveraged over time by combining a shrinking military with an ever growing number of security commitments. We conclude with suggestions for how the U.S. can deleverage its foreign policy.

### **U.S.-Sino Geoeconomic Competition**

Carla Norrlof, University of Toronto

This paper offers new ways of understanding geoeconomic power and its geopolitical consequences. To that end, we introduce a new concept, geoeconomic power, which we measure in three ways. First, we offer a geographic proximity index, measuring the distance between a state, its nearest great power ally, as well as to its primary great power rival. Second, we develop a geoeconomic power index to gauge the balance of dependence in a specific relation, and a particular context. Third, we show how power is derived from a state's position within informal geoeconomic networks. We relate these power metrics to the existing literature, and demonstrate their substantive utility by highlighting the extent of US geoeconomic power in the financial domain. Three illustrative cases spotlight the security implications of the US-Sino geoeconomic imbalance.

### **Pawns in the U.S.-China Rivalry: U.S. Allies, Security Partners, and Disputants in the South China Sea Dispute**

Krista Wiegand, University of Tennessee

Since the late 2000s, China has exerted an immense amount of effort using legal claims and low-level provocations against multiple disputants to seize and justify claims of islands, maritime features, and waters in the South China Sea. China could significantly benefit from access to oil, natural gas, seabed resources, and maritime trade lanes by controlling the sea and maritime features. How much of the South China Sea dispute is really about the sovereign status of disputed islands and maritime rights for China and the significant economic salience of the sea? I present a theory about coercion and issue linkage, arguing that China uses a coercive tactics against disputants in the South China Sea to indirectly signal resolve to the U.S. and its allies and strategic partners in the region. The dispute is therefore not primarily about extending territorial sovereignty for China, nor to achieve tangible gains, but pursued for a much larger objective of extending Chinese power projection against the U.S. and deterring U.S. power projection supported by its allies and strategic partners. Therefore, the South China Sea disputants and U.S. allies and strategic partners are pawns in the much more significant U.S.- China rivalry.

### **Shift between Friend and Enemy: Dynamics of the China-Japan-US Triangle**

Quansheng Zhao, School of International Service, American University

The aim of this paper is to systematically analyze the changing dynamics of the China-U.S.-Japan triangle from a theoretical framework that combines foreign and domestic politics, illuminating a shift relationship between cooperation and conflict across Pacific. There are at least the following five factors affecting the shift between friends and enemies: Priority of National Interests; Changes in Power Distribution; Alliances; Diplomatic Maneuvers; International-Domestic Linkages. It will also analyze the importance of balancers.

### **Analogies at Cold War? America's Asian Alliances and the U.S. Grand Strategy Debate**

Joshua Shiffrin, Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University

Amid talk of a “Cold War 2.0” between the United States and China, what explains the United States’ approach toward managing its Asian allies? Consciously or otherwise, I argue that major portions of the United States’ strategy debate over its Asian alliances today are coming to mirror the alliance debates of the Cold War in Europe from 1945-1990. Such convergence is especially clear with regard to U.S. concerns over allied defection, the sources of reassurance, and allied free-riding. And, just as analysts highlighted the questionable rationales undergirding the Cold War-era alliance debate – and flagged potential risks to the United States along the way – so too are the underlying assumptions of the contemporary alliance debate contestable. Drawing on IR theory, Cold War history, and contemporary policy discussions, this paper explores these themes.

### **Domestic Politics, Threat Perceptions, and the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of South Korea, 1993-2020**

Sara Bjerg Moller, School of Diplomacy and IR, Seton Hall University

How do domestic politics affect the management of alliances? Contra Snyder (1984), I argue that states’ alliance management strategies do not arise solely in response to the external threat environment but rather differing perceptions of it by government leaders. I illustrate my argument through a plausibility probe of the U.S.-South Korean military alliance, demonstrating how South Korean leaders’ partisan interpretations of the threat environment affected intra-alliance bargaining in the coordination of military affairs. Consistent with the framework developed here, I find that partisan differences do a better job explaining alliance dynamics over the past quarter century than systemic factors alone.