



RIPS Webinar

*International Security Cooperation for the  
Territorial Integrity in East Asia in the Age of the  
Great Power Competition*

Summary Paper

February 2025

Research Institute for Peace and Security

## Forward

The Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS) hosted a webinar to discuss in-depth the current maritime security challenges in East Asia.

East Asia is a large seascape. As Japan and other regional countries depend much on the maritime space for their survival and prosperity, it is critically important to maintain the rules-based maritime international order. The most serious challenge is China's maritime expansion in the absence of any overarching regionwide multilateral security framework. China tries to alter the status quo not only by the PLA Navy but also by its maritime law-enforcement organization and by maritime militia under the disguise of civilian fishermen. China's coercive activities in the vicinity of Japan's Senkaku Islands as well as in the South China Sea have been continuing.

As East Asia is at the forefront of the great power competition, the regional security environment will continue to be volatile and unstable. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also been casting a long shadow on East Asia as well by swaying the rules-based international order.

In this situation, it is increasingly important for the international community to share the correct recognition on the East Asian security environment and also to be reminded of the importance of the principle of the rule of law. Creation of a number of emerging minilateral initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region such as the Quad and AUKUS is noteworthy in this context. How to generate synergy of these initiatives by intertwining all of them will be an important challenge for all the relevant regional and extra-regional actors.

With these as the backdrop, this webinar will look into the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the East Asian regional security as well as the Beijing's grand strategic objectives in the maritime realm. Based on shared recognition on these points among the experts, the webinar will seek to address how we should and can address those serious challenges; is synergy of the vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), which the Quad is promoting, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which the ASEAN is promoting expected for maritime security? What is the future of the regional security architecture, including the roles of US alliance network, the Quad, AUKUS, ARF, ADMM?

## Summary

The webinar on the theme of International Security Cooperation for Territorial Integrity in East Asia in the Age of the Great Power Competition, was open to the general public.

First speaker, Dr. Pajon, discussed this theme from the perspective of Europe and France. The main concern for EU countries, including France, is the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. She pointed out that the main concerns for Europe are China's growing influence and expansion in the maritime domain. In this context, Dr. Pajon argued that China's actions are a challenge to the rules-based international order. She argued that France's top priority in the region is to protect against Chinese aggressive behavior, and that the way to do this is to uphold the rule of law, particularly by supporting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In the Indo-Pacific region, there are still some areas where a regional security framework has not been established, but the EU and France, as normative powers, can provide support for upholding international law and countering the exercise of influence by revisionist countries such as China and Russia.

Dr. Permar then reported from the perspective of Southeast Asia. She pointed out that, unlike the US's Ukraine policy, there are many unclear points regarding the US's Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asia policies, and that this is working to China's advantage. He also argued that, unlike Mr. Pajon, European security and Indo-Pacific security are becoming separate and are not linked to each other. He pointed out that freedom of navigation is important for all countries, but that the UK's allies are being forced to take over the support that the US has been providing due to the reduction of US foreign aid. Regarding Malaysia's policy, she pointed out that Malaysia is promoting cooperation with Indo-Pacific countries and the QUAD on each issue, and that the focus is on limiting risks, promoting the rule of law, and improving inclusiveness in maritime cooperation.

Prof. Kraska pointed out that the birth of the Trump administration has provided an opportunity to reflect on past strategies and make improvements. He argued that the United States, Japan and other major allies such as Australia should develop a more comprehensive and coordinated plan to counter China's encroachment. she cited DIME (diplomacy, intelligence, military and economics) as an area for cooperation between the United States and its major allies, and gave specific examples such as cooperation in UN diplomacy, intelligence cooperation

with NATO and the EU, encouraging Japan to strengthen its defense capabilities, and economic cooperation with a view to creating a joint market between Japan and the United States.

Finally, Admiral Katsuya Yamamoto pointed out that historically China has been a continental nation, but it is now becoming increasingly clear that it is also seeking to expand its influence in the maritime domain. Specifically, he pointed out that China is aiming to make the area inside the so-called First Island Chain its internal waters. He also argued that the China Coast Guard is playing a major role in establishing this maritime dominance. Specifically, the incorporation of the China Coast Guard in the People's Liberation Army in 2018 was a turning point. However, these Chinese moves are not acceptable, and we need to work together to prevent China from turning the South China Sea into its internal waters. He pointed out that in order to do this, it is important for Japan and Australia to further strengthen the cooperative relationship they have built with the countries in the region to date, and to share the resources and experience that Japan and Australia have.

## List of Panelists

### International security cooperation for the territorial integrity in East Asia in the age of the great power competition

Chair: **Mr. Hideshi Tokuchi**, President, Research Institute for Peace and Security

Panelists:

- ✓ **Dr. Celine Pajon**, Head of Japan Research, French Institute of International Relations (ifri)
- ✓ **Dr. Sumathy Permal**, Centre Head of Maritime Security and Diplomacy, Maritime Institute of Malaysia
- ✓ **Professor James Kraska**, Chair and Charles H. Stockton Professor, US Naval War College
- ✓ **RADM (ret.) Katsuya Yamamoto, JMSDF**, Senior Research Fellow, Security Studies Program, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

## Biography

### Public Webinar: International Security Cooperation for Territorial Integrity in East Asia in the Age of the Great Power Competition

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#### Céline Pajon

Research Fellow, Head of Japan and Indo-Pacific Research, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

**Dr. Céline Pajon** is Head of Japan and Indo-Pacific Research in Ifri's Center for Asian Studies, which she joined in 2008. She also coordinates the research program on Pacific Islands, set up in 2022. Céline is a Senior Researcher with the Japan Chair at Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB) and an International Research Fellow with the Canon Institute for Global Studies (CIGS) in Tokyo. In 2016, she was a visiting researcher at JIIA, the Japan Institute of International Affairs, the think tank of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A graduate from the Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and Sciences Po Lyon, Céline also studied for two years in Japan, at Waseda University (Tokyo) and Osaka University. She tweets @CelinePajon.

#### Sumathy Permal

Senior Fellow and Head of Maritime Security and Diplomacy, the Maritime Institute of Malaysia

**Dr. Sumathy Permal** is a Senior Fellow and Head of Maritime Security and Diplomacy, the Maritime Institute of Malaysia. Her research areas are maritime security governance

in the Indo-Pacific and geopolitics, energy, and resource security in the South China Sea. She is on the editorial board of the Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs Australia and Associate Member of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies. Sumathy Permal is the Member of Curriculum Committee, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University Malaya July 2022 -July 2024. She was also appointed to (*Board of Studies*) Institute Asia-Europe, University of Malaya (JKP AEI) 2020 - 2022. She was an International Expert Panel for National Bureau of Asian Research and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA on Maritime Awareness Program, 2016 and a Profession Fellow On- Demand Exchange Program by the U.S. Department of State for Think-Tank in Asia.

### **James Kraska**

Charles H. Stockton Professor of International Maritime Law and Chair of the Stockton Center for International Law at the U.S. Naval War College

**Professor James Kraska** is Charles H. Stockton Professor of International Maritime Law and Chair of the Stockton Center for International Law at the U.S. Naval War College and Visiting Professor of Law and John Harvey Gregory Lecturer on World Organization at Harvard Law School. He served as Visiting Professor of Law at the College of Law, University of the Philippines and Visiting Professor of Law at Gujarat National Law University. He was also Mary Derrickson McCurdy Visiting Scholar at Duke University Marine Laboratory and Office of the Chief of Naval Research Fellow at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He is the General Editor of International Law Studies and Editor-in-Chief of the treatise, Benedict on Admiralty: International Maritime Law. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Reading School of Law and a Permanent Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Professor Kraska served as a U.S. Navy officer and lawyer, with multiple tours of duty in Japan and the Pentagon. His most recent books are “Peaceful Management of Maritime Disputes” (contributing editor with Hee Cheol Yang) (Routledge 2023) and “Peaceful Maritime Engagement in East Asia and the Pacific Region” (contributing editor with Myron H. Nordquist & Ronan Long) (Martinus Nijhoff/Brill 2023). In 2022 he published “Disruptive Technology and the Law of Naval Warfare” (with Raul Pedrozo, Oxford University Press 2022) and “Emerging Technology and the Law of the Sea (with Young Kil Park, Cambridge University Press 2022).

### **Katsuya Yamamoto**

Senior Research Fellow, Security Studies Program, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

**Retired Rear Admiral YAMAMOTO “Kats” Katsuya, JMSDF** joined Sasakawa Peace Foundation

in April 2023. Kats graduated from the Japan National Defense Academy and earned a Master of Policy Studies degree from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies. He studied at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) and the PLA National Defense University.

He was a surface warfare officer, serving onboard various destroyers including as the commanding officer. Kats also worked in a variety of staff positions including Chief of the International Policy Planning at the Joint Staff Office and Director of the National Security & Strategic Studies Office in the JMSDF Staff College.

Kats served as Defense/Naval Attaché to China and President of the Naval Attaché Corps in Beijing. He served as an International Military Professor of the U.S. Naval War College. His last mission of the active duty was as Director of Education at NIDS.

He has been awarded the Ba-Yi Medal from the Ministry of National Defense, PRC, and the Meritorious Service Medal from the U.S. Navy. Kats is a member of the Advisory Board of the Japan-America Society of Rhode Island, and the Visiting Fellow of the Philippine Public Safety College

### **Hideshi Tokuchi**

President, the Research Institute for Peace and Security, Japan

**Mr. Hideshi Tokuchi** has been President of the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS) since June 2021. He joined the Defense Agency (the predecessor of the Ministry of Defense) of Japan in 1979 as a civilian and retired from the Ministry in October 2015, after completing several senior assignments, including Director-General of the Operations Bureau, of the Personnel and Education Bureau, of the Finance and Equipment Bureau, of the Defense Policy Bureau and most recently the nation's first-ever Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs.

Mr. Tokuchi holds several positions in academic and research institutions: Visiting Fellow at the Institute of International Relations of Sophia University, Senior Research Advisor at the Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS)

## Public Symposium

# International Security Cooperation for the territorial integrity in East Asia in the Age of the Great Power Competition

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**Dr. Celine Pajon,**

Head of Japan Research, French Institute of International Relations (ifri)

### Mounting Tensions and Risks of Escalation around the Senkaku islands

China has intensified its activities around the Senkaku Islands, raising concerns about escalatory moves and the potential for conflict:

- **Gray Zone Tactics:** China's use of coercive measures has expanded, marked by new regulations for the China Coast Guard (CCG), allowing detention of foreign nationals in contested waters for up to 60 days (effective June 2024).
- **Frequent Maritime Incursions:** In 2024, Chinese ships were recorded in the Senkakus' contiguous waters nearly daily (355 days). Since June, all vessels were armed, and in December, four CCG vessels carried 76mm cannons.
- **Joint Military-CCG Activities:** December saw the Chinese navy and CCG conduct joint maneuvers resembling a naval blockade in the Miyako Strait.
- **New Incidents:**
  - August 24: A Chinese survey ship intruded into Japan's territorial waters, followed by airspace incursions near Nagasaki.
  - November 24: China installed a buoy in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

### **Attempts to Assert Control**

China continues efforts to enforce claims over the Senkaku Islands:

- **Symbolic Assertions:** CCG ships navigated with Automatic Identification System (AIS) activated since March 2023 to signal effective control.
- **Targeting Japanese Vessels:** Since July 2023, the CCG has named Japanese fishing boats operating near the Senkakus on social media, claiming to have warned them to leave.

### **Japan's Responses**

In response to China's assertive actions, Japan has strengthened its security measures:

- **Enhanced Coast Guard Presence:** The Japan Coast Guard (JCG) has ramped up patrols and plans to add 15 large patrol vessels to its fleet of 91 ships by FY 2029.
- **Defense Reinforcements:** The Nansei Islands have seen bolstered defenses, including a new Ground Self-Defense Force unit with electronic combat capabilities on Yonaguni and surface-to-air missile batteries on Miyako and Ishigaki Islands.



- **Naval Operations:** For the first time, Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) deployed a destroyer through the Taiwan Strait in September 2024. This was part of a multinational transit with Australia and New Zealand ahead of joint exercises in the South China Sea, drawing strong protests from China.

### **Implications**

China’s incremental and provocative actions underscore its strategy to gradually assert control over contested areas, heightening the risk of miscalculation. Japan’s countermeasures, including enhanced maritime surveillance and military deployments, reflect a firm commitment to safeguarding its territorial integrity while navigating an increasingly tense security environment.

### **Mounting Pressure and Escalatory Moves in the Taiwan Strait**

Since Nancy Pelosi’s 2022 visit to Taiwan, tensions in the Taiwan Strait have significantly escalated, further exacerbated by the election of William Lai as Taiwan's president. China's actions reflect a strategy of attrition and intensified military operations:

- **Increased Military Drills:**
  - **Joint Sword-2024A** (May): Following Lai’s inauguration, China launched large-scale drills involving mock strikes by dozens of fighter jets, destroyers, and missile speedboats targeting “high-value military targets” while encircling Taiwan.
  - **Joint Sword-2024B** (October): Held after Lai’s National Day remarks affirming Taiwan’s sovereignty, these drills demonstrated an expanded geographic scope, with heightened Chinese activity.
  - **December Maneuvers:** Taiwan’s Defense Ministry detected 53 Chinese aircraft, 19 navy vessels, and numerous Coast Guard ships near Taiwan, signaling another potential round of war games.
- **Frequent Air and Naval Incursions:**
  - Increased crossings of the Median Line in Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).
  - Deployment of a dozen warships and Coast Guard vessels near Taiwan’s outlying islands.
  - Specific operations around Kinmen waters, including “law enforcement patrols” in February.
- **Largest Exercise After Lai’s Stop in Hawaii:** Following Lai’s transit through Hawaii, China

staged its most extensive military exercise yet, further straining cross-strait relations.

### **Attrition Strategy**

China's persistent incursions and exercises aim to exhaust Taiwan's defense capabilities by keeping the island on constant high alert, increasing the operational burden on its military.

### **Implications**

China's aggressive actions in the Taiwan Strait highlight its intent to isolate and coerce Taiwan while testing the resilience of regional powers. The linkage between Taiwan and East China Sea tensions is increasingly evident, with Japan playing a critical through defense upgrades, strategic partnerships, and contingency planning.

## **Challenges Posed by Growing China-Russia Maritime Coordination**

### **1. Expansion of Russian Maritime Capabilities**

- While ground forces have been diverted to Ukraine, air and naval strength remains intact, with renewed emphasis on the Sea of Okhotsk as a bastion for strategic nuclear capabilities.
- Modern assets include three Borei-class SSBNs, a Yasen-class attack submarine, and ships armed with Kalibr cruise missiles capable of nuclear and conventional strikes.
- Deployment of hypersonic-capable frigates and S-300 missile batteries (with a 400 km range) further bolsters Russian deterrence in the region.
- Russia's 2022 Maritime Strategy prioritizes the Pacific after the Arctic, highlighting the Sea of Okhotsk as a "vital zone."

### **2. Enhanced Sino-Russian Coordination**

- **Deepening Military Ties:**
  - Joint naval exercises like "Joint Sea" (annual since 2012) and multilateral Vostok drills (2018, 2022) highlight increased interoperability.
  - Exercises have expanded geographically, including East China Sea.
- **Strategic Messaging:**
  - Demonstrates their "no-limits friendship" (2022 declaration), with coordinated aerial and naval patrols targeting U.S.-aligned maneuvers.
  - Joint provocations, such as the May 2022 flight during the Quad summit in Tokyo, underline their alignment.

### **3. Objectives and Regional Implications**

- **Deterrence and Power Projection:**

- Sino-Russian maneuvers signal strength and challenge the U.S.-Japan alliance, including joint circumnavigations of Japan and long-range bomber flights.
- Exercises also signal countering of U.S.-Japan-South Korea military drills and growing NATO-AP4 (Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand) ties.
- **Strategic Disruption:**
  - Coordination serves as a disruptive force in the region, amplifying China's assertiveness and pressuring U.S. allies.
  - Potential roles in diversionary tactics during crises in the Taiwan Strait or South China Sea, or even collaboration with North Korea.

### Impact of the North Korea-Russia Alliance

#### **1. North Korean Support for Russia's War in Ukraine**

- **Military Contribution:** North Korea has reportedly sent approximately 12,000 troops to assist Russia in Ukraine.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** North Korean forces gain exposure to modern battlefield conditions

#### **2. Technology and Capability Aspirations**

- **Desired Enhancements:** North Korea is likely seeking advanced Russian designs for:
  - Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and re-entry vehicles.
  - Submarine and satellite technologies.
- **Drone Production:**
  - Following lessons from the battlefield, Kim Jong Un has emphasized drone technology, inspecting suicide drones in November and ordering large-scale production.

### How to strengthen deterrence at Sea?

- **Key Elements:**
  - Focus on **informal coordination** in the deployment of naval forces and intelligence systems.
  - Enhance cooperation on maritime situational awareness to project strength and preparedness.
  - Ensure **readiness of forces** through robust training, modernization, and allied collaboration.
- **Shifting Focus:**
  - Emphasis on practical measures that strengthen deterrence rather than symbolic responses.

- Deepen informal partnerships and regional cooperation to counter gradual Chinese advances.

**International Security Cooperation in the Age of Great Power Rivalry: Responses from Southeast Asia on Maritime Security**

Safer, stronger, and prosperous America is the new foreign policy direction for the United States under the second Trump administration. To pursue its foreign policy effectively, the U.S. may have to reprioritize its national interest and engagement with external countries and its global posture. What does this policy mean to Southeast Asia in particular in the maritime context? The answer relies primarily on how much the U.S. will fend off its strategic rival China. Will the South China Sea remain a U.S. strategic security priority? How do Southeast Asian countries respond to this great power rivalry?

China's principles approach remains unchanged with Trump's administration. China emphasised on mutual respect and win-win cooperation and wanting to find the right way for both countries to get along. However, it is too soon to predict the right formula. The release of DeepSeek- AI in January 2025 is another surprise signalling the Chinese government's strong effort to up the ante against U.S. innovation and technology breaking the assumption that China has limitations on science, technology, and artificial intelligence (AI). The emergence of low-priced Chinese AI has threatened the western dominance of AI bringing tech shares like Nasdaq dropping 31(%) and prompting Google, Microsoft, and Meta to re-strategize to remain competitive.

The U.S. competitive policy regarding economic interest vis-via China is quite clear but not on the strategic front. The U.S. administration has said little about Indo-Pacific security. In this regard, we are at a turning point in global affairs, living in an era marked by a complex interplay of cooperation and division. The security of Europe, including Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific, is becoming increasingly divided and not interconnected.

Various ocean-related issues, including challenges in the East China Sea and the South China Sea are critical security concerns for Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asia. While President Trump wants to end the war between Russia and Ukraine, there's no clear policy outline on Asia's maritime domain. This is an advantage to China that is more prepared to pursue affirmative actions in the SCS while keeping the U.S. busy with trade war. This might widen the power vacuum in the Indo-Pacific maritime region.

Turning to the South China Sea, maritime commerce is the backbone of international trade and the global economy, with over 80% of global trade by volume carried by sea. Remarkably, approximately one-third of this maritime trade transits through the South

China Sea. Safeguarding the navigability and security of the South China Sea is not just a regional concern but a shared responsibility with global implications. Among the five Southeast Asian countries who have overlapping claims with China, the Philippines is the most vulnerable against China but is turning to multiple its security and defence. The Philippines started negotiating defence pact with New Zealand to face China's threat.

Ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight is essential for all stakeholders. The U.S. Secretary of Defence said that the U.S. will collaborate closely with allies in the IP to deter China military aggression. At the same time, the U.S. has also cut foreign aid funds to prioritize national interest. These actions may force its allies such as Japan, Australia, and the EU to absorb more security assistance in the IP. Japan unequivocally opposes unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercive actions that heighten tensions.

Malaysia will continue to promote thematic engagement with Indo-Pacific and QUAD partners. The focus has been on reducing risk, promoting the rule of law, and enhancing inclusivity for maritime cooperation. Malaysia has a vested interest in maintaining a peaceful, open, and stable South China Sea, as such consistently demonstrates its commitment to risk reduction by strongly advocating for disputes to be addressed peacefully through existing platforms and diplomatic channels. Malaysia opposes any escalation of tensions or the use of force, as reaffirmed by the Prime Minister in Malaysia Parliament in 2024.

Malaysia assumes a pivotal role as ASEAN Chairmanship in 2025. Under the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability," Malaysia aims to steer the region toward a constructive and cooperative approach to the South China Sea. Malaysia set to advance negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea. Building upon the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC), the COC serves as a vital framework to build trust, uphold international law, and a political tool to prevent conflicts. Malaysia will champion ASEAN centrality and is expected to navigate the challenges in the South China Sea with a focus on three guiding principles: adherence to international law, regional unity among ASEAN member states, and inclusivity in managing great power's rivalry. Malaysia clearly understood the stakes are far too high for division and aggression.

James Kraska

Chair and Charles H. Stockton Professor, US Naval War College

**Japan's Territorial Integrity in the Regional Maritime Context: A Coordinated and Reciprocal Alliance Strategy**

This paper assesses the regional strategic environment involving the South and East China Seas and explores how to enhance the rules-based regional order. Because East Asia is a maritime geography, the regional system of power is expressed through the maritime domain and the rules that govern it are derived from the international law of the sea. In short, the strategies of the democracies – the United States, Japan, Australia, and others – have not effectively restrained China's challenge to the rules-based order in East Asia. The South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Yellow Sea are the vanguard or bellwether of Chinese overreach, with the Japanese position in the Bonin Islands, the U.S. position in Guam, and the independence of the states of Oceania and Australia as a secondary front. Over the past 20 years, China has inexorably whittled away at the legal order and oceans governance in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Beijing's audacious attempts to subvert the regional maritime order are executed along four lines of effort: (1) the dashed line claim over the South China Sea, undermining the rights of Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, and Indonesia; (2) encroachment of Japan's territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands and challenging sovereignty to the islands; (3) interference and claims over Korea's exclusive economic zone in the Yellow Sea; and (4) a persistent pressure campaign in the waters surrounding Taiwan. In a recent example, on January 24, 2025, three PRC Coast Guard vessels conducted aggressive maneuvers against two vessels from the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Philippine Coast Guard bound for Sandy Cay to conduct a marine scientific survey. Sandy Cay is a feature within the Philippine exclusive economic zone. Meanwhile, six PRC citizens in the Philippines have been detained on suspicion of espionage. These examples illustrate the full spectrum threat Communist China poses to the regional order.

The new U.S. administration provides an opportunity to reflect on past strategies and offer suggestions for improvement. In his January 25, 2025, Message to the Force, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth stated that the U.S. Department of Defense "will work with allies and partners to deter aggression in the Indo-Pacific by Communist China" and that "we will stand by our allies." During an introductory call on January 31, 2025, with Japanese Defense Minister Nakatani Gen, Secretary Hegseth recognized the U.S. – Japan Alliance as "the cornerstone of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region." The two leaders committed to "deepening defense cooperation to strengthen deterrence and to advance a shared vision for a free and open Indo-

Pacific region.” Japan has successfully shaped the regional security order with its vision for a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” which the United States and other nations have accepted as a shared strategic goal.

The United States, Japan, and other key allies, including Australia, must adopt a more comprehensive and coordinated plan to counter Chinese aggression. Revisiting the concept of linkage that the United States effectively used against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Allied states should coordinate their China strategies. The Allied Strategy should have diplomatic, information, military, and economic elements. In the past, each state has pursued these lines of effort individually at the national level and not in concert with Allied states at the regional level. The United States and Japan should begin 2+2 talks with Secretary Rubio and Hegseth and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeshi Iwaya and Nakaani Gen to craft coordinated responses to China along these four lines of effort.

- Diplomatic. Japan and the United States should coordinate their efforts in every UN agency, beginning with the U.S. position as a permanent member of the Security Council. Japan should visibly serve as a “Plus One” shadow member of the Security Council through the U.S. permanent seat, especially on matters dealing with China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Furthermore, Japan and the United States should develop positions and talking points they represent as coordinated during bilateral and multilateral engagements with partners and potential adversaries. These efforts will underscore that Japan and the United States form a solid bloc and that contending with one of the two states will draw the other into the equation. The United States should also recognize Japanese sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, as it implicitly did during the American occupation of Okinawa. Past U.S. equivocation on this issue has merely encouraged aggression by China. U.S. perceptions that a middle road would ensure it was viewed by Beijing as a neutral or “honest broker” have not been reciprocated by China and have served only to weaken Japan (and, by extension, American) deterrence in the East China Sea.
- Information. Japan and the United States should advance information narratives, sometimes in coordination with third states or organizations, such as NATO and the EU, especially concerning China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran and their threat to international peace and stability. While promoting U.S. and Japanese narratives, such as a free and open Indo-Pacific, the two allies should purposefully root out Chinese influences in their media and civil society.
- Military. The United States should quietly encourage Japan to increase the budgets of the JMSDF and JASDF while broadening defense cooperation to include intermediate-



range ballistic missiles. Japan should be brought into the AUKUS submarine technology agreement, possibly leading to nuclear submarines in the JMSDF fleet.

- Economic. Japan and the United States should move toward a common market. Japan's tariffs on U.S. goods are generally low, and the U.S. – Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA) has reduced or eliminated many tariffs. However, Japan also has non-tariff barriers that impact trade. In January 2018, President Trump began to impose tariffs on some Chinese goods, and President Biden continued those policies. Now President Trum has imposed 10% tariffs across the board on Chinese goods. These are quite modest compared to tariffs that the EU imposes on American goods, and U.S. tariffs should be increased. Moreover, the United States should coordinate with Japan, Australia, and other partners to standardize and increase tariffs on Chinese goods to diminish China's economic power and fortify their own economies. Economic power is the bases of national power. China has siphoned off trillions of dollars in assets from developed economies through currency manipulation, non-tariff trade barriers, and dumping. The United States and Japan should lead the developed world in resetting these scales to ensure that their industries are protected and that the Chinese industry is diminished. China is caught in a significant economic slowdown, debt spiral, and potential deflationary market confront China. The United States and Japan should ensure these trends accelerate, weakening Chinese political and military power.

These coordinated DIME efforts are designed to synchronize the Japan—U.S. Alliance as an all-spectrum partnership, bolstering the security and position of the United States and Japan while diminishing China's position and capacity to threaten its neighbors. The guiding theme for these efforts should be alliance solidarity and an insistence on reciprocal interactions with China. In other words, the default position of the United States and Japan in coordinating their response to Chinese aggression should be that the two democracies will insist on treating China in a reciprocal or analogous fashion as China treats them.

**Katsuya Yamamoto**

RADM (ret.), Program Director, Security Studies, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

Japan's territorial integrity in the regional maritime context Asymmetric Behavioral Logic

The prevailing understanding within the international community is that the concept of sovereignty over the ocean differs from that over land. The absence of Visualized national borders surrounding islands is a salient feature of island territories. These islands possess a territorial sea, defined by a 12-nautical-mile, extending beyond which lies the domain of international waters. These maritime domains are critical important global commons that not only contain marine resources but also contain sea lanes and submarine cables that maintain global supply chains and digital networks.

Notably, China, a historically land-based power, has exhibited a growing ambition to extend its influence on the maritime domain. This endeavor is characterized by a pursuit of dominance, akin to its approach on land, whether intentionally or inadvertently. In recent years, China has embarked on a significant initiative to transform the waters within the first island chain into inland waters. Within the first island chain, located in the East China Sea, are the Senkaku Islands, which are under Japanese jurisdiction. In the South China Sea, there are islands and reefs over which various countries claim sovereignty or jurisdiction. China's strategic objective is to incorporate the islands within its like Weiqi" 围棋," thereby plundering effective sovereignty over them.

The primary actor in China's efforts to establish its dominion over the waters within the First Island Chain is the China Coast Guard.

This shift is particularly salient considering the 2018 reorganization that underscored the China Coast Guard's and its parent organization, the China People's Armed Police Force, increasing militarization. Consequently, the China Coast Guard has undergone a transformation, evolving from a law enforcement organization into a formidable military force, akin to a second Chinese navy. The China Coast Guard has already demonstrated its capacity to execute all its missions independently, without requiring support from the PLA Navy. The scope and scale of the China Coast Guard have expanded to the point that it now performs has surpassed not only law enforcement capabilities but also the naval fighting capabilities of neighboring countries, except for Japan.

The China Coast Guard is overseen by the People's Armed Police Force, a domestic military force dedicated to combating domestic hostilities. Therefore, the distinction between law enforcement and national defense operations remains ambiguous. The strategic mindset of the

China Coast Guard, which is under the command of the People's Armed Police Force, mirrors that of domestic military force. Consequently, the distinction between the law enforcement operations of the China Coast Guard and its national defense operations is not readily discernible. China's Gray Zone operation can attribute to this phenomenon.

It is not acceptable for a single country to monopolize and make into its internal waters the global commons that are the East and South China Sea. For this reason, we need to work together to oppose China's internalization of these waters, not by a single country, but by combining multilayered cooperative frameworks. When engaging with the countries of the South China Sea, it would be advantageous for the QUAD countries, which possess advanced naval and law enforcement capabilities, to leverage their established networks.

To achieve this objective, it is imperative that each nation utilizes its distinct strengths and collaborates with other members of the alliance. For instance, Australia possesses historical experience with countries in the region, such as the FPDA. Japan also has a wealth of experience to share with coastal countries, including the safety of the Malacca Strait and support for the capacity building of coast guard forces. A similar situation is observed with India, which, in this January, reached an agreement with Indonesia regarding new security cooperation. Among the nations of the South China Sea, there is a wealth of experience to be shared, including ReCAAP, Malacca Strait Patrols, and Eyes in the Sky.

A crucial aspect of this endeavor is the establishment of a multifaceted cooperative network encompassing maritime power including navies, coast guards and other agencies. To forestall the escalation of armed conflict, it is imperative that the maritime law enforcement agencies of each nation confront the Chinese Coast Guard, which refers to itself as the China Coast Guard. However, given the Coast Guard's dual nature, characterized by the ambiguity between law enforcement and military defense behaviors, a two-tiered system of law enforcement agencies and the military is imperative. This system should be complemented and crossover by a multifaceted, interwoven framework that facilitates a seamless response.