

ASIAN VOICES

ON THE FUTURE OF U.S.– ASIA RELATIONS

**STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION
ON FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ASIA**

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The Asia Foundation



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Asian Voices on the Future of U.S.- Asia Relations

*Strategic Recommendations for the Biden Administration
on Foreign Policy Towards Asia*

Chair

H.E. Han Sung-Joo

Chairman of The Asan Institute for Policy Studies
Professor Emeritus at Korea University

Co-Chairs

Kirida Bhaopichitr

Director of TDRI Economic Intelligence Service (EIS)
Thailand Development Research Institute

C Raja Mohan

Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore

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Introduction

Since its founding more than six decades ago, it has been a major objective of The Asia Foundation to foster greater understanding and dialogue between the United States and Asia to advance our mission of promoting a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. If workable solutions are to be found to achieve these goals, it is important for Asian voices from throughout the region to be heard. With its network of 18 field offices, the Foundation's extensive relationships and comprehensive development programs provide extraordinary access to a wide range of Asian leaders, both inside and outside of government, who can articulate these perspectives.

In the past U.S. administration, long-standing assumptions about the global political order were repeatedly questioned, and actions were taken that represented unexpected departures from established U.S. foreign policy positions. During this time, Asians responded with a mix of confusion, concern, relief and approval. Many feared the United States might withdraw from the region. This never happened, but many Asians still believed that the U.S. was insufficiently engaged. One durable truth, however, is that Asia remains a vast, diverse, and complex region full of conflicting trends and differing interpretations. While there are vocal minorities in Asia opposed to any U.S. presence, Asian nations, by and large, want a United States that is engaged in their region. But what should America's role be?

To help address this question, the Foundation assembled a small, select group of leading political, security, and economic and trade specialists from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam to share their perspectives virtually on U.S. policies and prospects in Northeast, South, and Southeast Asia. After these discussions were held, three of the project's participants were charged with writing the report. The report's chair is H.E. (Dr.) Han Sung-Joo, Chairman of The Asan Institute for Policy Studies and former foreign minister of the Republic of Korea. The report's co-chairs are

Dr. Kirida Bhaopichitr, Director of TDRI Economic Intelligence Service (EIS) at the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) and Dr. C. Raja Mohan, Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at National University of Singapore. The report's authors and dialogue participants represented themselves in their personal capacities only. The views expressed by the authors in this report are their own, and not those of their affiliated institutions or The Asia Foundation.

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David D. Arnold
*President and CEO
San Francisco*

John J. Brandon
*Senior Director
Washington, D.C.*

Kwang Kim
*Korea Country
Representative
Seoul*

U.S.-China Strategic Competition

The deepening U.S.-China rivalry marks a definitive moment in the evolution of Asian geopolitics. Five decades ago, the U.S. surprised the world by ending its postwar policy of isolating the People's Republic of China, subsequently normalizing bilateral relations and facilitating China's integration with the global economy. This in turn facilitated wider political and economic engagement between China and the rest of Asia. The productive relationship between the United States and China has been at the very heart of the Asian order—in both the political and the economic domains—for the last five decades. The depth of U.S.-China commercial interdependence and the expanding interface between the two societies gave Asia confidence that the cooperative relationship between Washington and Beijing was irreversible and encouraged it to strengthen all-around ties with both nations.

Few in the region were prepared for a profound shift in the terms of engagement between the United States and China. That moment, however, is now upon us, and Asia has no choice but to deal with it. When President Donald Trump adopted a confrontational stance towards China during his presidential campaign, many in Asia saw it as a part of electoral politics that would be ignored once Trump was elected. If Asia was surprised by Trump's policy moves on trade and security targeting China, the region was still hopeful that this was an aberration triggered by a rank political outsider and likely to be corrected by the next president.

But Asia has been surprised again by the unexpected and decisive continuity of China policies under Trump's successor, Joe Biden. If President Trump's policies appeared to be shaped by his persona, President Biden has brought the full weight of the U.S. establishment to bear upon his promise to offer "extreme competition" to China.

The first seven months of the Biden Administration have left Asia in no doubt that fundamental changes are underway in U.S. domestic politics that are redefining

Washington's approach to China. If Trump emphasized putting "America first," Biden is talking about a foreign policy for the middle class. Both insist on aligning international policies more closely with domestic interests.

There is a growing recognition across the aisle in the U.S. political class that unconstrained economic globalization has hurt critical segments of the U.S. population and that international trade must now be subject to greater scrutiny and safeguards. Given the scale of commercial engagement with Beijing, trade with China has inevitably been drawn into the debate. Biden has largely persisted with many of the trade measures imposed on China by Trump. More broadly, he has promised not to embark on any new trade liberalization agreements without significant safeguards for workers' rights and environmental standards.

The United States is not the only one taking a fresh look at economic globalization. Under President Xi Jinping, China has adopted the strategy of "dual circulation," which privileges the domestic market—internal circulation—over interdependence with the global economy—external circulation. Dual circulation is now integral to China's 14th five-year plan, (2021-25).

As China puts greater emphasis on growing innovation at home, the prospect of a technological decoupling becomes part of a weakening of Sino-U.S. economic interdependence. With China emphasizing huge investments in new keystone technologies like AI, robotics, quantum computing, synthetic biology, renewable energy, and materials sciences, the Biden administration plans to match that effort.

Both sides are also actively trying to introduce political and strategic constraints on the massive integration of the technology sectors in the two countries as well as the deep relationship between U.S. capital and Chinese technology companies that emerged over the last couple of decades. The world of divergent technological standards and a divided internet now look like real possibilities.

The economic stress in the U.S.-China relationship is magnified by deepening military tensions between the two giants. China's rapid economic growth over the last few decades has inevitably translated into expansive military capabilities. China's weapons production is growing at an unprecedented pace, and the United States is scrambling to retain its historic military edge in the western Pacific. As

part of that effort, Washington is beefing up its security posture in the region.

The deepening U.S.-China confrontation has also acquired a potentially dangerous ideological dimension. The Biden Administration has framed the problem with China not just in economic, technological, and military terms but also as a clash of ideologies: democracy versus authoritarianism. In China, the Communist leadership is more confident about its development model compared to the Western model. The Chinese ideological narrative frames the current problems within the United States as part of terminal Western decline. As the United States and China frame their competition in ideological terms, they will inevitably find it harder to manage their differences, and extremist approaches could gain the upper hand in domestic debates on the bilateral relationship.

For leaders and policymakers in the rest of Asia, this is a very different landscape, at once unfamiliar and deeply disconcerting. Much of modern Asia came of age after the Second World War and the emergence of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. Although the current Sino-U.S. confrontation is often compared to the Cold War, the Asian context is rather different. Russia is not central to Asian geography, and its political, economic, and strategic influence in Asia during the Cold War was limited to a few pockets.

China, in contrast, is at the very heart of Asian geography, with ever-growing political and economic influence in the region. It was easier for Asian powers to align with one of the distant powers in Moscow and Washington or to stay nonaligned between them. In contrast, framing policies vis-à-vis a neighbor that towers over them and has deep commercial and political linkages is an extraordinary challenge for Asia.

As it settles into an extended rivalry with China, Washington needs to appreciate the kind of dilemmas confronting China's Asian neighbors; the old playbook from the Cold War is unlikely to work. In Asia, where there is no shared understanding of the challenges that China presents or the kind of answers that could meet those challenges, the United States needs policies that are highly differentiated rather than one-size-fits-all.

Modernizing U.S. Alliances

For nearly seven decades, U.S. bilateral alliances have been a critical element of the regional security order in Asia, but the structure of these alliances, designed during the Cold War to deter perceived threats from the Soviet Union, now faces at least three challenges. One stems from the rise of China and its massive economic and military power; a second is the questioning within a section of the Washington foreign policy establishment of the utility of such alliances; and a third is the massive power imbalance between China and its Asian neighbors, including the largest, India and Japan. Even as China's temptation to exert economic and political influence has risen rapidly, the capacity of U.S. alliances to respond has experienced growing stress.

The steady economic integration of U.S. allies with China has altered the context in which these Asian alliances operate. The Asian hope that it can continue to rely on China for economic growth and the United States for security has been shattered by the deepening schism between Washington and Beijing. The economic interdependence with China also constrains the ability of some allies to support U.S. positions on China. Some allies do acknowledge the security threats from Beijing but find it hard to scale down their economic engagement with China.

The scope and intensity of China's military modernization is testing the durability of the U.S. forward military presence that has been the bedrock on which U.S. alliances have rested for decades. The United States, meanwhile, is planning to strengthen its military posture to deter aggression. The seeming inevitability of growing military friction between the United States and China is making much of the region nervous. Much of Asia is unwilling to differentiate between Chinese regional assertiveness and the U.S. response to it and sees U.S.-China conflict as a problem they would rather not have.

Some of the Asian elite believe that the logic of geography that favors China over the United States in Asia—Chinese proximity and the distance that separates Asia and the U.S. homeland—will continue to test the credibility of U.S. military alliances in Asia. That in turn has opened space for China to fan the emerging political doubts among U.S. allies about the ability of the United States to cope with the military challenges presented by the PLA. Beijing has also warned U.S. allies that they should come to terms with China's centrality to the region and recognize the futility of relying on America to provide security.

China's push to weaken the U.S. alliances in Asia has unfortunately been reinforced by what Asia sees as growing isolationist sentiment in the United States. This isolationism is not an abstract phenomenon; it was fully expressed during the Trump years. Even as he confronted China, President Trump berated the allies for not doing enough for regional security.

Many countries in Asia therefore welcome President Biden's emphasis on the restoration of traditional alliances, especially those in Asia. It is widely noted that the Japanese prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, and the Korean president, Moon Jae-in, were the first foreign leaders to visit the White House. Yet, there is persistent apprehension in the region about the continuing U.S. preoccupation with Europe and the Middle East and the political commitment in Washington for a sustained engagement with Asia.

But the real challenge for the United States will be to manage the structural consequences of China's rise for Asia's alliances. In Northeast Asia for example, South Korea's approach to China is different from that of the United States and Japan. The incumbent government in Seoul has shown reluctance to readily accept calls from the United States to draw closer to the Quadrilateral Framework with Tokyo, Canberra, and Delhi.

But Tokyo is not too enthusiastic about South Korea's participation and is apprehensive that Seoul might dilute the cohesion of new groupings like the Quad or the plans to expand G-7 to include Australia, India, and South Korea. The United States has long struggled to minimize the larger differences between Seoul and Tokyo, and the Biden administration's efforts in that direction has faced much difficulty. Washington is concerned that the divergence between its key treaty

partners in Northeast Asia will inevitably hobble U.S. efforts to build a credible regional coalition to blunt China's advances.

The divergence is especially acute on the question of managing North Korea's nuclear proliferation. President Moon, for instance, wants an end-of-war declaration as soon as possible to facilitate dialogue with North Korea. The United States views such a declaration as a premature step that would weaken the rationale for U.S. troops to be stationed in South Korea. Japan wants North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens to be part of the agenda. Tokyo is also more deeply concerned about the long-term security consequences of North Korean proliferation and wants a tougher approach towards Pyongyang than Seoul does.

Meanwhile, Japan's growing concerns about China's muscular threats to Taiwan are not readily shared either in South Korea or in Southeast Asia. Most countries already have serious problems of their own with China and are reluctant to add an additional dimension, Taiwan, to the list. But there is no denying the critical importance of Taiwan as an issue to peace and stability in the region and the dangers of China abandoning the principle of peaceful reunification, or the U.S. reinterpreting its position related to Taiwan. If either of these things happen, it will be hard to sustain the credibility of American alliances in Asia.

U.S. alliances in Southeast Asia and the Pacific are now under greater stress. Two of America's long-standing allies in Asia—Thailand and the Philippines—have come under China's shadow. New Zealand, with deep ties to the Anglo-Saxon world, is increasingly ambivalent about the United States' approach to China. Meanwhile, China's own security cooperation with Southeast Asia—through arms transfers and military diplomacy—is getting traction. China is also reportedly close to acquiring a military facility in Cambodia and gaining military access to other countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. This arguably reflects a shift in the military balance in Asia in favor of China.

Asian Regional Architecture

The last few years have witnessed a transformation in how the United States “sees” Asia. Recent ways of imagining the region are now being superseded by a new notion, that of the “Indo-Pacific.” While many are reluctant to shed the old usage of Asia-Pacific, “Asia” has always been a fluid conception. There were many monikers for the region and its constituent parts in the last century—the East Indies, Indochina, the Far East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Asia-Pacific. The “Indo-Pacific” concept can be seen as a recognition of China’s rise and the expansion of its footprint into the Indian Ocean. It is also an acknowledgement of the need to incorporate India into the calculus of a new equilibrium in the region.

Although the Indo-Pacific idea was initially proposed by the Japanese in 2007 and embraced early on by Indonesia and Australia, the new geography has acquired greater salience in the last few years. When President Trump began to use the term during his Asia visit at the end of 2017, it surprised the region. Accompanying the Indo-Pacific idea was the revival of the Quadrilateral Security Framework that brought traditionally nonaligned India into a partnership with the United States and its treaty allies, Australia and Japan.

As Trump began to raise the level of confrontation with China, Washington quickly institutionalized the Indo-Pacific geography and the Quad. Not everyone expected the new structures to outlast the Trump Administration, but President Biden quickly doubled down on the concept of the Indo-Pacific. He also elevated Quad meetings to the leaders’ level—realized digitally—within weeks of taking charge. The Biden administration has also expanded the agenda beyond security to cover the president’s plans for an in-person summit in the Fall of 2021.

The new Indo-Pacific geography, as well as the U.S decision to put the Quad at the center of the revamped Asian architecture, has inevitably raised eyebrows, especially in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Although

ASEAN adopted an Indo-Pacific Outlook in 2019, its premises vary from the Indo-Pacific strategy articulated by Japan and the United States. ASEAN is even more wary of the Quad, which many in Southeast Asia see as potentially supplanting the centrality of ASEAN in the current regional architecture. ASEAN's concerns are, indeed, widely shared in the broader Asian region, and the Quad's repeated protestations of its commitment to ASEAN centrality has not allayed those concerns.

If bilateral alliances with the United States constituted one leg of the Asian regional architecture, the ASEAN-centered multilateral order was the other. Earlier attempts by the United States to create collective defense structures in Asia failed miserably. The Central Treaty Organization in Southwest Asia and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization set up in the 1950s never got going and were wound up by the 1970s. Nor did Soviet plans for collective security gain much traction—either the 1969 Brezhnev version or the 1989 Gorbachev version.

What endured in the region was the relatively modest regional multilateralism of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that grew slowly but organically during the Cold War. Since the early 1990s, ASEAN has rapidly widened its scope and created a range of new regional platforms that made it the heart of Asian regional architecture. But the very conditions that facilitated the significant rise of ASEAN in the last three decades are now under great stress.

The end of the Cold War ushered in an era of great-power harmony that created the political basis for an ASEAN-centered multilateralism acceptable to all. This was reinforced by ASEAN's tradition of limiting bilateral conflicts and freezing territorial disputes that facilitated the acceleration of regionalism. Under Deng Xiaoping, China chose to discard the political excesses of the Maoist era and focus on national economic renewal and regional cooperation. This provided a strong basis for generating a measure of Asian political unity that had appeared so elusive in the past. The widespread acceptance of the Washington Consensus meant the region could adopt a faster pace of regional economic integration. The turn to economic globalization in China, Indochina, India, and eventually Myanmar, and their embrace of ASEAN, provided a huge boost to regional cooperation.

The post-Cold War great-power entente has now yielded to great-power

rivalry between the United States and China. While the threats from Sino-U.S. contestation are significant, the more immediate challenge for the region comes from unilateral Chinese efforts to alter the disposition of territory in disputed areas, whether it is in the Western Pacific or the Great Himalayas. If the growing imbalance in military power between China and its neighbors has given Beijing considerable impunity, the capacity to drive a wedge between its neighbors, and the weaponization of economic interdependence have made it harder for China's neighbors to counter this collectively, let alone individually to resist.

It is this context that provides a basis for the discourse on a rules-based order in the region. The debate on this at an abstract level cuts very little ice with Beijing and makes little difference to China's assertive policies on the ground. Consider, for example, the definitive 2016 ruling of the UNCLOS Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in favor of the Philippines in the South China Sea dispute. China simply refuses to abandon its claims in Philippine waters of the South China Sea. Chinese disregard for the UNCLOS ruling challenges the basic legitimacy of the existing order in the region. Some Asian countries believe that the American response to China's repeated violations has been weak in the past. While the Biden Administration has taken a tougher-than-expected posture towards China, the region awaits greater clarity on U.S. plans to deter China's territorial expansionism.

Meanwhile, the consensus on economic globalization in the region has broken down. ASEAN is deeply disappointed with India's decision to walk out of the Asia-wide free trade agreement called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Far more consequential, however, has been the anti-free-trade sentiment in Washington. If Trump walked away from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Biden has signaled that he is in no rush to return. This, however, leaves a huge gap in U.S. engagement with the region that needs to be addressed.

Economic Prospects, Trade, and Investment

Economic recovery from the pandemic will diverge between the developed economies in the West and the developing economies in Asia, except for China. As Covid-19 spread across the globe last year, global GDP contracted by 3.5 percent. With the availability of mRNA vaccines and widespread vaccination, developed economies, particularly the United States, are recovering much faster than developing ones, with the exception, again, of China. China has been able to control the spread of the virus since early last year; its economy did not contract like most economies in the world; and it is poised to grow by almost 10 percent this year. On the other hand, developing countries in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia and India, are still facing widespread outbreaks of the virus that are severely affecting their domestic demand. Governments in these countries have been raising more debt to finance fiscal stimulus, posing risks to their fiscal sustainability in the future. Recovery in Asia will depend on access to high-quality vaccines and the ability of countries to quickly vaccinate the majority of their populations.

Another key engine for the recovery of most Asian economies is international trade. However, this is being dampened by the trade and technology tensions between the United States and China. Most Asian countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, are export-oriented, with developed countries and China being their main markets. With the recent economic recovery of these major markets, exports from Asian countries are also recovering from their contractions last year. Nevertheless, U.S.-China tensions, which have slowed global trade and shortened supply chains, will continue to dampen trade into the future. These tensions are leading to greater regionalization and raise the prospect of Asian countries splitting into two camps—centered on either the United States or China—in trade, technology adoption, and foreign direct investment.

More Asia-Pacific nations will likely seek to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the latter the world's largest free trade agreement. Others will pursue alternative arrangements such as a free trade agreement among China, Korea, and Japan. The United States is absent from the CPTPP and the RCEP, which over time are likely to strengthen intra-Asian integration around China (with RCEP) and Japan (with CPTPP).

Patterns of foreign direct investment in Asian countries are also changing as supply chains are readjusted amidst the tensions in U.S.-China trade. U.S. and Japanese on-shoring policies have lured much production of American and Japanese firms out of China. The Japanese government's policy of providing subsidies to Japanese companies to relocate from China resulted in greater investments in Japan and Southeast Asia last year, particularly in Vietnam and Thailand.

U.S.-China trade tensions and the Covid-19 outbreak in China have also spurred many Chinese and non-Chinese firms to move parts of their production out of China. These relocated production facilities are mainly for the non-Chinese market. Most relocations of Chinese companies since 2018 have been to Southeast Asia, with Vietnam being the top destination, followed by Thailand. This has increased Chinese economic influence on Southeast Asian countries. South Asian nations, on the other hand, are having trouble attracting the much-needed foreign direct investments they need to boost to their economies.

China has also been stepping up both its digital and physical infrastructure investments in Asian countries to promote connectivity through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Many Asian nations lack the resources to develop vital infrastructure, especially that needed to facilitate bilateral and regional trade. Trade-facilitation infrastructure includes ports, customs and quarantine stations, cross-border roads, railways, airline connectivity, and dry-port facilities for landlocked countries. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRI have been providing both resources and technological know-how for the development of such infrastructure in Asia. Once the Covid-19 pandemic is over, countries across the region will revive their ambitious infrastructure programs derailed by the pandemic, increasing the need for funding and know-how.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the economic importance of digital services and the need for digital infrastructure and connectivity. Many services, including e-commerce, entertainment, meetings, banking, education, and healthcare, are now available online, and demand continues to grow as Asian countries adopt the “from home economy.” The backbone of this connectivity will be 5G and 6G technologies. China has been promoting its 5G infrastructure, which costs less than Western alternatives, and many developing countries in Asia, with the notable exception of India, are adopting China’s technology. With these investments and relationships in place, developing Asian countries may be inclined to adopt China’s 6G standard in the future.

On the other hand, U.S. investment in both physical and digital infrastructure in Asia is falling behind. China has been making progress on its Belt and Road Initiative, with funding provided in part through the AIIB and other financial sources. Regarding digital infrastructure, the United States has announced sovereign funds to help countries adopt non-Chinese 5G technologies. But Chinese 5G—and possibly 6G—is more affordable, and while concerns about data privacy and cyber security are growing, it remains to be seen whether U.S. alternatives will be sufficiently attractive to compete.

Technology Tension and Development

The technology tension between the United States and China is intensifying, as China has been making rapid progress in the development of advanced technologies. In 2017, China led the United States in patent applications in nine out of 10 key advanced technologies: AI, blockchain, autonomous cars, cyber security, VR, regenerative medicine, drones, lithium batteries, and conductive polymers. Moreover, China has been moving ahead with its “Made in China 2025” initiative, with the goal of becoming the world’s leading developer and exporter of 10 essential technologies by the year 2025, including robotics, IT, electric vehicles, rail transport, medical devices, and energy equipment.

China has also been an active investor and supporter of Chinese technologies in Asian countries since 2015. Launched that year, the Digital Silk Road (DSR) has become a key component of China’s broader connectivity initiatives under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under the DSR, China provides aid and support to recipient countries and to its own exporters of technology, with a focus on boosting capabilities in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, e-commerce, mobile payment systems, surveillance technology, telecommunications networks, and other areas related to building smart cities. Chinese e-commerce platforms, mobile payment systems, and 5G telecommunication networks are now a clear presence in Southeast Asian countries.

The United States has attempted to answer China’s bid for world technology leadership through trade and investment controls. In trade, the U.S. Department of Commerce maintains the Entity List, a list of foreign firms considered a threat to U.S. national security. Most of the firms on this list are Chinese. Any firm using certain U.S. technologies must obtain a license to sell their products to firms on the Entity List. In investment, (1) the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United

States (CFIUS) is tasked with reviewing and approving foreign investments (Chinese in particular) in American firms, and (2) President Biden has issued an executive order prohibiting 59 Chinese companies—among them Huawei—from receiving U.S. investments, and more companies will be added.

Europe will soon issue its own regulations on the use of technology. By 2023, the European Parliament plans to adopt three measures: the Artificial Intelligence Act, the Digital Services Act, and the Digital Market Act. These laws, along with the already effective EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), seek to protect the rights of EU consumers. Meanwhile, China's State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) has released draft guidelines updating its antitrust law to regulate big tech firms in China, and other new laws will expand government's power to control the flow of personal data of Chinese nationals and anyone else in China.

There is now a real prospect that advanced technologies and the regulatory regimes that govern them will evolve into two camps—one anchored by the United States, Europe, and Japan, and one centered on China. The tension is focused on critical technologies, critical infrastructure, and sensitive personal data (TID), which have been considered issues of national security since the Trump administration. The United States, the European Union, and Japan are united on TID, while China is being isolated. China thus feels even greater pressure to develop its own technologies and infrastructure.

Much of the region is affected by this tension. Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea are producers of some of the technologies at issue, while most developing Asian countries are users. The tension has exacerbated the current worldwide shortage of advanced semiconductors, as China's largest semiconductor producer, SMIC, has been cut off from their Western supply chains. Chinese electronics manufacturers like Huawei that are on the U.S. Entity List also have to delay production of consumer electronics, because they cannot acquire the chips from Taiwan. Manufacturers and consumers in developing Asian countries have been hurt: car manufacturing has been delayed, while consumer electronics such as mobile phones from China, which are affordable in developing countries, are now in short supply. The semiconductor shortages will persist until new chip fabrication plants in the United States and China come online in 2024.

The split of standards and regulatory regimes into two camps, Western and Chinese, will adversely affect Asian countries, particularly developing ones. Firms may need to adopt two sets of standards, raising the cost of operation. In cases where only one set of standards can be adopted, firms may have to choose to do business with only one camp, limiting their opportunities for trade, investment, and growth.

Another technology challenge lies in the nature of the institutions that shape their use by Asian governments. In the wrong hands, these technologies could be used by authoritarian governments to suppress political dissent, erode citizens' rights, and exacerbate democratic decay. Therefore, it is critical that countries strike the right balance between building these technological capabilities and strengthening institutions for their regulation in different governing environments. This institutional component seems to have received little attention, even as Asian nations have deployed new and more powerful technologies for commerce, national security, and other uses.

Finally, another important area for technological development is domestic innovation in Asian developing countries. The startup scene in Asia is thriving, and the region accounts for the second-highest number of unicorns worldwide. According to CBInsights, investors in 2019 poured more than US\$110 billion into nearly 8,500 deals involving tech startups in the Asia-Pacific. This included investments in leading tech companies such as the Chinese payments giant Ant Financial Services Group (the best-funded company in the region, with over US\$19 billion) and the on-demand ride-hailing company Grab, in Singapore (US\$9 billion), among others. While the startup ecosystem functions well in South Korea, Singapore, Australia, and the United States, it is still incomplete in many developing Asian countries due to lack of funding and support and burdensome business regulations designed for larger companies.

Promoting Democracy in Asia

The Biden administration's emphasis on human rights and democracy has been greeted in Asia with a mixture of enthusiasm, concern, and skepticism. Activists and civil society groups have welcomed the renewed American interest in promoting democracy as a boost to their own political struggles for greater freedom from state oppression, but many Asian governments are apprehensive that the Biden administration will use democracy and human rights as weapons against Asian governments they are at odds with. Whether true or not, the perception is entrenched among Asian elites that American democracy promotion is about geopolitics and regime change.

Those familiar with the history of U.S. engagement in Asia are confident that President Joe Biden's human rights rhetoric will be tempered by pragmatism as Washington copes with the enormous scale and complexity of the challenges that it faces there. Skeptics in Asia are intrigued by the Biden administration's proposition that the contest between democracy and authoritarianism is a major international contradiction today.

Students of U.S. foreign policy, however, are not surprised by the Biden administration's prodemocracy rhetoric. They understand the enduring ideological importance of democracy promotion in postwar U.S. foreign policy and the vigorous domestic constituencies for global action to promote human rights. Even the Trump administration, which downplayed the importance of human rights in the conduct of American foreign policy, could not ignore the issue. The rhetoric of democracy and human rights, in fact, figured prominently in President Trump's confrontational policy towards China.

Yet, the skeptics also recognize the persistent problems with the implementation of U.S. policy. Despite its enormous power, the United States has been unable to implement its laudable ideological principles in a consistent manner, inevitably

treating its allies, friends, and adversaries rather differently when it comes to promoting democracy.

The United States also inevitably considers trade-offs between its values and interests when dealing with other countries. During the Cold War, the U.S. often subordinated human rights concerns to the overarching task of containing the Soviet Union. Then and since, U.S. policy has faced tensions between the imperative to cooperate with adversaries on issues of war and peace and the ideological commitment to promote democracy within their societies.

These issues have a special edge in the current U.S. contestation with China. Those in the United States who view climate change as the critical challenge for humanity, for example, have no desire to undermine engagement with China by focusing exclusively on human rights. Those who favor a restructuring of the economic relationship with Beijing have no incentive to subordinate that goal to democracy promotion.

Asia has long resisted the Western democracy agenda. That resistance is rooted in the powerful legacies of anticolonialism and anti-Western nationalism. On both the left and the right of the Asian political spectrum, there are powerful voices questioning the United States' credibility in promoting democracy. They point to the many social, political, and economic problems within the United States itself.

This critique gained new wind with the January 6 riot on Capitol Hill, which sought to overturn the presidential election results and prevent the peaceful transfer of power from the incumbent to his successor, and the continuing upheaval over voting rights and election procedures has thrown an unflattering light on the operational integrity of American democracy.

To its credit, the Biden administration appears to be acutely conscious of this challenge. It has made the renewal of democracy at home a major political priority. In articulations of its foreign policy, Washington is now emphasizing the importance of promoting human rights at home as well as abroad. The acknowledgement of serious problems with American democracy has replaced some of the self-righteous attitudes of the past with a welcome humility.

Under President Biden, Washington has also adopted a more respectful tone towards its Asian partners on the question of democracy. While Washington has taken a tough stance on the coup in Myanmar, it has been more open to listening rather than lecturing fellow democracies in Asia. Nor has the Biden administration suspended political and strategic engagement with Asian states that are not democracies or are democracies with significant problems. It has carefully avoided pushing human rights at the cost of other important U.S. objectives in the region.

The Biden administration has also adopted a modest approach to the Democracy Summit to be convened in December 2021. It has framed the Summit as a consultative process aimed at promoting an honest dialogue among leaders of government, civil society, and the private sector to address “challenges facing democracy” and “collectively strengthen the foundation for democratic renewal.”

This measured approach is in sync with two contradictory developments. One is the proliferation of democratic backsliding and the need to address it. There are multiple struggles around the world for the realization of democratic aspirations, and Washington will find it hard to turn its back on these movements. On the other hand, there is the equally powerful fact that political support in the West for muscular policies to promote democracy has passed its post-Cold War peak. The squandering of blood and treasure in the name of democracy promotion and nation-building has taken a toll on Western resolve.

The current juncture offers the United States an opportunity to engage Asia in a way that resists the temptation to weaponize human rights for geopolitical purposes and avoids launching costly but ineffective crusades for democracy. Under this pragmatic approach, the U.S. should strengthen the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which brings governments and civil society groups to a common forum to promote transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance.

The United States should also initiate a dialogue with fellow democracies in Asia on managing the threats to democratic politics that are emerging from the digital revolution. Developing appropriate standards for regulating social media and protecting citizens' rights must be accompanied by cooperation to prevent the manipulation of democracies by nondemocratic and extremist forces.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing policymakers around the globe, and the stakes are particularly high in Asia. With the world's most populous and fastest-growing economies, the Asia-Pacific produces about half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. China and India are the first- and third-largest emitters, respectively, with the United States second. These nations and other large emitters need to make greater efforts to reduce emissions if global warming is to be kept to the Paris Climate Change Agreement goal of 1.5 to 2 degrees centigrade (2.7 to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels. Extreme weather and rising seas threaten not just the well-being of Asian nations, but in some cases their very existence.

The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement underscored U.S. domestic constraints in implementing an international agreement on climate change. The Biden administration's decision to return to the Paris Agreement, and its renewed attention to climate change, are welcome developments, but Asian responses to a new U.S. climate policy will be tested against their own domestic politics and the potential political costs in each country. Asian countries have significant reservations about any U.S. policy that could subordinate their national sovereignty to a regime of global enforcement, and enforcement mechanisms such as sanctions would likely foment a political backlash in the region.

Environmental damage has been among the most serious side effects of Asia's rapid economic growth. Heavy use of fossil fuels has degraded air quality and ecosystems, reduced the supply of clean water, and created significant health hazards. Climate change will not only lead to higher temperatures but will also threaten Asia's economic productivity in the years ahead. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, South and Southeast Asian nations could face more severe consequences of climate change than other parts of the world if no action is taken. Between \$2.8 trillion and \$4.7 trillion of Asia's annual GDP could be at

risk by 2050, primarily due to lost labor from reduced outdoor working hours in a hotter, more humid climate. As Asian nations seek to grow their economies, climate is a critical challenge that the region will need to manage.

If nothing is done, the negative effects of climate change on Asian economies will continue to accumulate, especially in vulnerable coastal and mountainous countries. In land-locked Nepal, glaciers are melting and Himalayan snowcaps are disappearing, causing increased flooding. As 80 percent of the 675 million Southeast Asians live 65 miles or less from coastal waters, and the region's sea level is expected to rise 27 inches before the end of the 21st century, quickly and effectively addressing the threat of climate change to food and water security is imperative. It is estimated that by 2050 some 63 million South Asians could be forced from their homes by rising seas and drought-stricken land that can no longer support crops. This number could be reduced by more than half, however, if governments met the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

There is also a strong correlation between climate change and income inequality. According to a Stanford University study, global warming has exacerbated income inequality, making countries in more temperate zones (many of which are in Asia) considerably poorer than they would be had there been no global warming. Three forces underlie this rising inequality: new technology, globalization, and market-oriented reform. These forces have also been the major drivers of Asia's rapid economic growth. Owners of capital, the better educated, and those with access to better infrastructure and markets have benefitted from these forces, but the poor have been disproportionately hurt.

Sustaining Asia's prosperity will require greater equality of opportunity and incomes for Asian citizens. Covid-19 has only worsened income inequality. Over the past 18 months, economic performance has depended on the effectiveness of virus containment, the ability to take advantage of the revival of international trade, and the capacity of governments to provide fiscal and monetary support. According to the World Bank, poverty reduction in Asia stalled for the first time in decades due to the economic shock of Covid-19. The advent of the alpha and delta variants of the virus, coupled with low Asian vaccination rates, could further stymie poverty reduction through 2021 and possibly into 2022. Lower- and middle-income households are being battered by the economic effects of the pandemic,

particularly in the all-important tourism sector. Without timely assistance to small and medium enterprises, the backbone of Asian economies where real job growth occurs, many will not survive, leaving the field to ever larger companies, many of which are already starting to buy up or displace their smaller competitors.

To avoid a temperature rise exceeding the crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees centigrade, carbon emissions must decrease by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030. To avoid a 2-degree centigrade rise, emissions must decrease by 25 percent by 2030. A 10-year delay will increase the costs of climate change in 2050 by 60 percent. Without dramatic action, Asian nations will experience rising seas, heat waves, cyclones, typhoons, drought, and other calamities. The broader economic impact of climate change on Asian nations will be catastrophic, with lower national GDPs pushing tens of millions throughout the Asia into poverty over the coming decades.

Inaction is not an option, and time is of the essence. The Paris Climate Agreement has encouraged some countries to raise their ambitions, but others, including many in Asia, are falling short of their own voluntary pledges to reduce emissions, which already were not ambitious enough to keep global warming below 2 degrees centigrade. Perhaps a supplementary agreement among the top greenhouse gas emitters—the adoption of a differentiated carbon price floor to aid monitoring and limit competitiveness concerns, for example—could help countries coordinate. Since China and the United States account for more than 40 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, it is critical that these two nations cooperate and exhibit leadership for other nations throughout the Asia-Pacific to follow. We implore both nations to focus their attention on climate change as the defining geo-strategic threat in the Asia-Pacific, and to begin marshalling the resources for a coordinated international effort to win the fight against climate catastrophe.

Covid-19

The connections between global health and international relations are clear today as never before, as the Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the responsibility of nations to treat disease in a way that safeguards their neighbors as well as their own populations. Over the past four decades, Asia has faced repeated outbreaks of infectious diseases—from HIV/AIDS, SARS, and the H1N1 virus to malaria, dengue fever, MERS, and Japanese encephalitis. But the world has seen nothing like Covid-19 in more than a century.

No country, including the United States, was prepared for the Covid-19 pandemic, and leaders in both the eastern and western hemispheres were unwilling to acknowledge the danger of the virus until the human and economic costs became impossible to ignore. Since the WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, more than 200 million people have been infected by the virus, and more than four million globally have died.

The pandemic has battered Asian economies, ruined lives, and sharpened wealth disparities between nations and within societies. Asia's middle class shrank by more than 50 million people in 2020, but Covid-19 has fallen most heavily on marginalized groups—women, migrant workers, and those scraping by in the informal economy, threatening to leave hundreds of millions of Asians behind.

At the beginning stages of the pandemic, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea were praised for their pandemic response—collectively among the best in the world. These countries, along with Taiwan and Hong Kong, were able to control the virus through early, aggressive actions such as strict lockdowns and contact tracing. But a “third wave” of Covid-19, linked to new, more contagious strains of the virus, particularly the Delta variant, has now produced the worst outbreaks in South and Southeast Asia since the start of the pandemic.

Compared to the United States and Europe, most Asian countries have been slow to inoculate their populations, largely due to a shortage of vaccines. As of August 2021, only 24 percent of people in Asia had received at least one dose of vaccine, compared to more than 70 percent in the United States and 80 percent in the United Kingdom. Vaccination rates in poorer nations such as Nepal and Bangladesh are in the low single digits. In the advanced middle-income countries of Thailand and Indonesia, less than 10 percent of the populations are fully vaccinated. Indonesia has now replaced India as the new epicenter of Covid-19 in Asia. Hospital beds are filling up, and oxygen is in short supply throughout the region. In response to the coup in Myanmar and its violent aftermath, many doctors and nurses have fled the country or joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), leaving public hospitals short-handed.

These signs suggest that Asia may be the last region to recover from the pandemic. In April 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that more than 87 percent of the world's supply of Covid vaccines had gone to wealthy countries. Least developed nations received less than 1 percent of available doses. There is also concern about the reliability and effectiveness of some Covid-19 vaccines, because of their low efficacy rates.

Shortly after the Biden administration came to office, the U.S. government pledged \$2 billion to the worldwide COVAX initiative to provide safe and effective vaccines to 92 low- and middle-income countries. The United States will release another \$2 billion when existing donor pledges are fulfilled later in 2021 and in 2022. In July, 16 million of the 80 million doses donated by the United States were sent to 16 Asian nations, the Pacific Islands, and Taiwan.

China has provided around 800 million doses of vaccines to over 100 countries around the world, and Xi announced at a vaccine summit earlier in August 2021 that China will aim at providing 2 billion more doses this year and will donate \$100 million to COVAX to support vaccine distribution to developing countries.

The Covid-19 crisis arrived during an historic low in U.S.-China relations, and insufficient cooperation has been a key impediment to fighting the virus. Great powers can choose whether to compete or collaborate. Despite significant disagreements and low trust on both sides, the United States and China, along with other nations, must work together to ramp up vaccine distribution, just as

in 1955, although the two nations were at odds, the United States and the Soviet Union worked together to distribute the new polio vaccine. A key imperative for the United States today is to provide safe, affordable, and effective vaccines in large quantities to the hardest-hit nations in Asia. The U.S. and China must work together on this enormous task, or Asian populations and economies could continue to languish for years.

Meanwhile, Asian governments have provided less economic support to their populations than their Western counterparts have, and this too will weigh on the region's economic recovery. A coordinated, global commitment to fiscal stimulus is needed. Stimulus efforts could be organized through the G-20 and implemented by international financial institutions.

The Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated an already tense U.S.-China relationship, making it hard for the two powers to cooperate in combating the global pandemic. The pandemic has been mismanaged on both sides of the Pacific, making it difficult for the major powers, along with other nations, to address this common threat. Until all countries bring the pandemic under control through widespread vaccination, the Covid-19 crisis will not be resolved. Failure to resolve this crisis will perpetuate sickness, economic hardship, erosion of human capital, and tensions in U.S.-China relations.

The Fall of Afghanistan: Implications for U.S.-Asian Relations

The chaotic end to U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, just days before the twentieth anniversary of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, on New York and Washington, has generated much discussion around the world about the credibility of American power and the durability of its security commitments.

Beyond the deep dismay provoked by the awful scenes of the botched American evacuation from the Kabul Airport, Asia had no reason to be surprised by the withdrawal itself. Across three successive administrations, amidst declining domestic political support for the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, it has been abundantly clear that withdrawal was in the cards.

President Barack Obama sought to end both the wars initiated by his predecessor, George W. Bush, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Obama had accomplished his objective in Iraq—which he called a needless “war of choice”—by 2011. He described the Afghan occupation as a “war of necessity” against international terrorism, and although he was skeptical of a military solution in Afghanistan, he ordered a massive surge of U.S. troops in 2009, with the promise to wind down operations by 2014. But he left the final decision on full withdrawal to his successor.

Donald Trump was even more impatient than Obama with the war in Afghanistan and began a dialogue with the Taliban in which he agreed to pull out all U.S. troops by May 1, 2021. President Joe Biden ordered a quick review of the options and chose to end the U.S. intervention by August 31.

The surprise that greeted the withdrawal, then, is not about the abruptness of Washington’s decision to leave. Rather, the surprise is rooted in the inability of much of Asia and the world to accurately assess the unfolding changes in the U.S. worldview.

If growing disenchantment with “free trade” has marked the evolving U.S. debate on globalization, growing opposition to America’s “endless wars” has begun to shape the foreign policy debate. On both issues, the divide is not between Democrats and Republicans or between liberals and conservatives.

At both ends of the spectrum, there has been a growing sentiment questioning Washington’s uncritical support for globalization and its deep commitment to an interventionist foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Trump’s response was to frame the trimming of U.S. foreign policy ambitions and engagement as “America First.” Biden chose to define the recalibration of U.S. global engagement as “foreign policy for the middle class.”

Yet, although they were emerging in plain sight, the international discourse was unwilling or unable to recognize these elements of continuity in the worldviews of Trump and Biden. It is no surprise, then, that much of the world, including Asia, feels blindsided by the developments in Afghanistan.

Reinforcing the shift towards a readjustment of U.S. foreign policy goals were three other factors. One was U.S. exhaustion with counterinsurgency and nation-building in the greater Middle East. If President George W. Bush waded recklessly into an adventure to transform the Middle East, Obama, Trump, and Biden were all convinced that the ancient region with its deep fault lines and historic animosities was not amenable to social and political reengineering.

As Biden put it at the end of the Afghan intervention, the United States has no vital interest in Afghanistan, and the wars to remake other societies by expending American blood and treasure must end. While countering terrorism will remain an objective, the United States is now focused on means other than permanent deployment of American forces in alien territories.

A second factor has been the reemergence of great-power rivalry. U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era of nation-building and counterinsurgency also coincided with an era of relative harmony among the great powers. That began to change in recent years as Trump framed the perceived threats from China and Russia as the principal challenge to the United States. The Biden Administration concurs with this proposition.

In a third development, the United States has slowly but surely begun to see Asia as the most important theater for American military engagement. Reducing U.S. focus on the Middle East was part of that redefinition of strategic regional priorities. George W. Bush began with a commitment to focus on Asia but was drawn deeply into the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks. Obama talked about a “pivot to Asia” but could not shift decisively. Trump articulated the concept of the Indo-Pacific, which demanded a redirection of U.S. military resources to Asia. Biden has simply doubled down on that position, and his decisive withdrawal from Afghanistan and unapologetic defense of that strategy must be seen as a culmination of these gathering trends in the United States.

While many in Asia are concerned about the credibility of U.S. alliances in the region in the aftermath of Afghanistan, many are willing to test the Biden administration’s claim that this will free up U.S. political attention and strategic resources for a more purposeful engagement with Asia. They note that well before the Afghan withdrawal, President Biden had been devoting greater attention to strengthening U.S. alliances in Asia.

Asian governments also note that since the Biden administration took charge, in January 2021, it has been talking up its commitment to the security of Taipei amidst the mounting tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The near-term threat to U.S. alliances from the Afghan withdrawal in Asia appears to be limited. In the post-Afghan phase, the Biden administration must signal to allies that it believes the U.S. military presence in Asia serves American self-interests. Japan and South Korea already pay billions of dollars to the United States to host and support 78,500 troops, because they believe the U.S. military presence serves their self-interest.

Washington benefits immensely from its long-standing alliances and partnerships in Asia. Framing them in terms of common interests and mutual security rather than burden-sharing opens the door for a purposeful effort to modernize these alliances and make them sustainable over the long term.

Recommendations

- (1)** To help Asians adapt to the new policy dynamic in Washington and recover common ground with the United States, the U.S. establishment must consult closely with Asian policymakers to explain the internal changes in America, their effects on U.S. foreign policy, and the rationale for and sustainability of current American approaches.
- (2)** To counter China's increasing influence in the region, Washington must update its military deterrence posture, restructure its alliances, and offer credible economic alternatives. At the same time, these regional alliances are not a zero-sum game, and Washington must remain flexible toward Southeast Asian engagement with China. The United States must also revitalize its bilateral diplomacy to pursue close, but discrete, engagement with individual Asian nations, whose interests and concerns vary considerably.
- (3)** The United States must redouble its assurances that the Quad is meant to complement ASEAN centrality in maintaining a rules-based order, not to displace it. The welcome expansion of the U.S. Quad agenda beyond military security to such areas as access to vaccines must be accompanied by substantive engagement between Asian nations, individually and collectively, and the members of the Quad.
- (4)** The United States must promptly address Asia's growing anxiety that U.S. trade policy is backtracking from the commitment to economic globalization that has been its hallmark in Asia. Resolving current trade disputes with Asian nations, including China, and building a new consensus for global trade reform is essential to meet the concerns of all actors. Early agreements, even if broad and general, can be constructive first steps towards a smoother process for settling trade disputes. The United States should also reconsider its rejection of the CPTPP and flesh out plans for a new pact on digital commerce with Asia.

- (5)** U.S. development assistance and private sector investors can help develop Asian entrepreneurship and support small and medium enterprises by investing in sectors where the United States has a technological advantage, such as energy, transportation, mining, agriculture, tourism, and urban development, including smart cities. Asian nations welcome the U.S.-led Build Back Better World initiative (B3W) to develop critical infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries. It is hoped that B3W and China's Belt and Road (BRI) Initiative can work together to build a better Asia after Covid-19.
- (6)** If the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of the global economy, the deepening technological competition between the United States and China threatens to splinter the digital world. As China draws Asia into its technological orbit, the United States must respond with its own digital initiatives. Washington should promote greater engagement between U.S. innovation hubs and Asian start-up ecosystems and support an ongoing dialogue with Asian governments on the domestic and international regulation of emerging technologies.
- (7)** Although the Biden administration has adopted a respectful tone toward the promotion of democracy and human rights, there is deep concern in Asia that these issues could be weaponized against the region. Undue focus on democracy and human rights could easily undermine the U.S. goal of rebuilding strategic partnerships. The United States should concentrate on supporting the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and encouraging it to expand its purview to include judicial independence, the rule of law, and the empowerment of civil society, elements of democratic governance that the great majority of citizens throughout Asia desire.
- (8)** America's return to the Paris Agreement is welcome, but the country must make tough decisions about resources and strategies to become a technology leader in curbing carbon emissions. The United States should shift decisively away from coal-fired energy both at home and abroad and work to convince Japan and other allies to do the same, investing instead in clean energy projects—solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal—to reduce Asia's destructive reliance on coal. The U.S. could offer incentives such as tax breaks, duty free imports, preferential loans, and easier financing to boost investment

in renewables. Another opportunity for U.S. leadership is to support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to create a global standard for good governance of the oil, gas, and minerals industries. The United States should take the lead in helping all countries end fossil fuel subsidies, create incentives for renewable resources, and make decarbonization a policy goal in future trade negotiations.

- (9)** Most Asian nations welcome America’s “vaccine diplomacy” to boost the region’s lagging pace of Covid-19 vaccination and smooth the way for economic recovery, but so far this initiative is falling short of the accelerated, mass vaccination programs and ramped-up testing that will be necessary to stop the pandemic in Asia from persisting into 2022 or even 2023. This is an opportunity that the United States, with its leadership in vaccines, should not waste. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health should rededicate themselves to partnerships with their Asian counterparts to halt the pandemic and mitigate the future spread of infectious diseases that threaten public health.

Chairs

H.E. Han Sung-Joo

Chairman of The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Professor Emeritus at Korea University

Han Sung-Joo is a Professor Emeritus at Korea University.

Prof. Han previously served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-94), UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus (1996-97), a member of the UN Inquiry Commission on the 1994 Rwanda Genocide (1999), Chairman of the East Asia Vision Group (2000-2001), Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United States (2003-2005), and Action President of Korea University (2002, 2006-2007).

Prof. Han is a graduate of Seoul National University (1962) and received a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley (1970).

Previously, he taught at City University of New York (1992, 1995). He was also a Distinguished Fellow at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (1986-87).

His English publications include *Korean Diplomacy in an Era of Globalization* (1995), *Korea in a Changing World* (1995), *Changing Values in Asia* (1999), and *ON THE BRINK (A Korean Diplomat's Journey for Peace)* (2018).

He has many publications in Korean, including *Nam Gwa Puk, kurigo Sekye (The Two Koreas and the World)* (2000).

Kirida Bhaopichitr

***Director of TDRI Economic Intelligence Service (EIS)
Thailand Development Research Institute***

Dr. Kirida joined the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), a leading independent think tank in Thailand, in 2015. She is currently the Director of TDRI Economic Intelligence Service (EIS) which is TDRI's corporate membership program.

Dr. Kirida leads the preparation of content for the monthly seminars for corporate members on issues that are of high relevance and interest for business. Her specialization spans monitoring and analyzing developments of the global and Thai economies which includes the business environment, impacts of Covid-19 pandemic, demographic changes, and technological development issues. Prior to this, Dr. Kirida had been a Senior Economist at the Macroeconomics and Fiscal Policy Management Global Practice and the Country Economist for Thailand of the World Bank Group from 1999 to 2015. Dr. Kirida's work on Thailand includes monitoring and assessing Thailand's economic developments, investment climate, competitiveness, impact of the 2011 floods, and the reforms in the public sector. Dr. Kirida was the main author of the World Bank's bi-annual Thailand Economic Monitor (2003–2015), the most downloaded and widely cited World Bank publication on Thailand. Dr. Kirida has significant regional experience, having worked on Lao PDR, Cambodia, and South Asia.

She regularly contributed to the World Bank's bi-annual report on economic development, the East Asia and the Pacific Update. In 2010, Dr. Kirida spent a year at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC, where she worked on regional issues in East Asia and authored a paper on estimating remittance trends in South Asia. A recognized fixture in economic and business circles in Thailand, she appears regularly in the media and speaks at public and private high-level forums and executive courses in Thailand and overseas. She also gave a TED talk at a TEDx event in Thailand in 2018. Dr. Kirida holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Cornell University (USA).

C Raja Mohan

Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore

Professor C Raja Mohan is the Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. Previously, Professor Mohan was Professor of South Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Professor Mohan is one of India's leading commentators on India's foreign policy. He has been associated with a number of think tanks in New Delhi, including the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, the Centre for Policy Research and the Observer Research Foundation.

He was also the founding director of Carnegie India, New Delhi - the sixth international centre of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC. He was the Henry Alfred Kissinger Chair in International Affairs at the United States Library of Congress, Washington DC, from 2009 to 2010. He served on India's National Security Advisory Board.

He led the Indian Chapter of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs from 1999 to 2006. He writes a regular column for the Indian Express and was earlier the Strategic Affairs Editor for The Hindu newspaper, Chennai.

He is on the editorial boards of a number of Indian and international journals on world politics. Professor Mohan has a Master's degree in nuclear physics and a PhD in international relations.

Among his recent books are *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (2013) and *Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence* (2015).

Appendices

Dialogue 1

Political / Security Issues Important to Asia and the U.S.'s Role in the Region

- **China** - Zha Daojiong, Professor, School of International Studies, Peking University
- **India** - C Raja Mohan, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University Singapore
- **Indonesia** - Dino Patti Djalal, Founder and President of the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia, Former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to the United States
- **Japan** - Akiko Fukushima, Senior Fellow, The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research
- **Nepal** - Ajaya Bhadra Khanal, Research Director, Centre for Social Inclusion and Federalism
- **Republic of Korea** - H.E. Han Sung-Joo, Chairman of The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, Professor Emeritus at Korea University
- **Republic of the Philippines** - Marites Vitug, Editor-at-large for Rappler, Chair of the Journalism for Nation Building Foundation
- **Singapore** - Ong Keng Yong, Executive Chairman, RSIS, Director of Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
- **Thailand** - Kavi Chongkittavorn, Senior Fellow at Chulalongkorn University's Institute of Security and International Studies
- **Vietnam** - Trần Minh Dũng, Former Senior Official, Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam

Dialogue 2

Trade and Economic Issues and America's Role

- **China** - Huiyao Wang, Founder and President, Center for China and Globalization (CCG), Counselor, China State Council, Vice Chairman, China Association for International Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce
- **India** - Nisha Taneja, Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
- **Indonesia** - Arianto Patunru, Fellow at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Former Head of Institute for Economic and Social Research, Department of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia (LPEM-FEUI)
- **Japan** - Shintaro Hamanaka, Senior Fellow, Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO)
- **Nepal** - Bhawani Mishra Rana, Immediate Past President, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
- **Republic of Korea** - Taeho Bark, Professor Emeritus, GSIS, Seoul National University, President, Lee and Ko Global Commerce Institute, Former Trade Minister of Korea
- **Republic of the Philippines** - Ronald U. Mendoza, Dean, Ateneo School of Government, Ateneo de Manila University
- **Singapore** - Manu Bhaskaran, CEO, Centennial Asia Advisors Pte Ltd
- **Thailand** - Kirida Bhaopichitr, Director of TDRI Economic Intelligence Service, Thailand Development Research Institute
- **Vietnam** - Nguyen Hoa Cuong, Vice President, Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM)



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