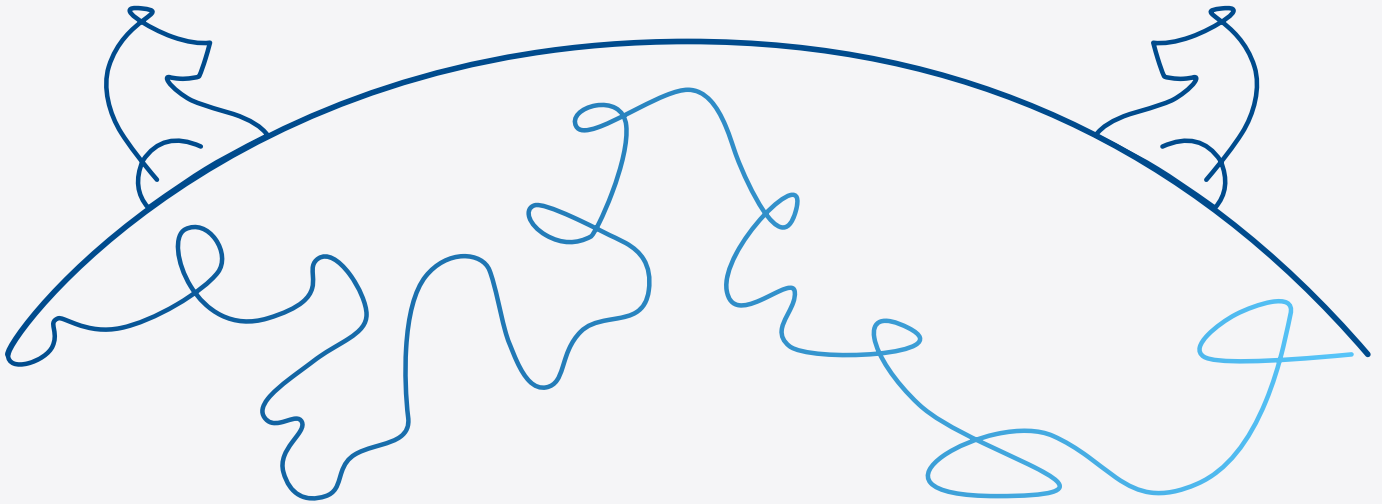


US-China Rivalry: Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia

YALE-NUS COLLEGE GEOPOLITICS CONFERENCE
22 – 24 MARCH 2023 | YALE-NUS COLLEGE PERFORMANCE HALL



The United States-China strategic competition is often seen as a rivalry confined to the two great powers in which secondary states do not have much influence. The calls for secondary states to “choose sides” are undertaken with limited understanding of how domestic processes in secondary states shape the choices they make. As much as electoral cycles, leadership changes, and domestic politics in the US and China affect their policies towards each other, elections and domestic factors also influence how secondary states respond to the US-China rivalry.

This conference focuses on how domestic politics shape the foreign policy of Southeast Asian countries, particularly how they position themselves between the US and China. Southeast Asian countries are undergoing elections in the next few years, and a new generation of leaders and political parties are poised to take over. The Philippines appointed a new president, Ferdinand Marcos, in 2022. In 2023, Thailand faces calls for fresh elections. In Cambodia, Hun Manet, has been designated to succeed his father, Hun Sen. Indonesia and Singapore will also see election cycles in 2024-2025, ushering in new leaders to succeed Joko Widodo and Lee Hsien Loong. How will the sea change in domestic politics shape the foreign policy of these countries with respect to the US and China? This conference examines the variables of domestic politics, political institutions, and leadership in shaping the foreign policy choices of secondary states and their implications for US-China relations in the region.

This conference is organised by Yale-NUS College, in partnership with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs, and supported by the Tan Chin Tuan Chinese Culture & Civilisation Programme.

Day 1 | Wednesday, 22 March 2023

6:00pm

Registration

📍 Yale-NUS College Performance Hall Foyer

6:15pm

Keynote Address 1

6:15pm

Keynote Address

👤 In-person
📺 Live stream

Mr Ryan Hass, *Senior Fellow and Michael H. Armacost Chair, Brookings Institution; Nonresident Fellow, Yale Law School*

Moderator

Professor Danny Quah, *Dean and Li Ka Shing Professor in Economics, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

7:00pm

Question & Answer Session

7:30pm

End of Day 1

Day 2 | Thursday, 23 March 2023

8:30am Registration and Breakfast

📍 Yale-NUS College Performance Hall Foyer

9:00am Welcome Remarks

👤 In-person
📺 Live stream

Professor Joanne Roberts, *President, Yale-NUS College*
Ms Chew Gek Khim, *Deputy Chairman, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation*

9:10am Keynote Address 2

9:10am
👤 In-person
📺 Live stream

Keynote Address
Professor Khong Yuen Foong, *Li Ka Shing Professor in Political Science, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

Moderator

Dr Trisha Craig, *Senior Lecturer of Social Sciences (Sociology and Political Science) and Vice President (Engagement), Yale-NUS College*

9:55am Question & Answer Session

10:25am Coffee & Tea Break

10:45am Panel 1: Domestic Factors in Southeast Asia's Foreign Policy Orientation

10:45am
👤 In-person

Panel Introduction
Dr Selina Ho, *Co-Director of Centre on Asia and Globalisation, and Assistant Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

10:50am

Discussants

Professor Alice D. Ba, *Professor of Political Science & International Relations, University of Delaware*
Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang, *Associate Professor of Social Sciences (Political Science), Yale-NUS College*

11:30am

Lead Author Responses


Dr Adhi Priamarizki, *Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University*
Mr Raymund Joe Quilop, *Former Associate Professor of Political Science, University of the Philippines*

11:50am

Open Discussion (All Authors) and Question & Answer Session

12:15pm Standing Lunch

1:00pm Panel 2: Bilateral Security and Economic Priorities in Southeast Asia-China Relations

1:00pm  In-person **Panel Introduction**
Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang, *Associate Professor of Social Sciences (Political Science), Yale-NUS College*

1:05pm **Discussants**
Professor Arne Westad, *Elihu Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University*
Dr Selina Ho, *Co-Director of Centre on Asia and Globalisation, and Assistant Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

1:50pm **Lead Author Responses**
Professor Dr Kuik Cheng-Chwee, *Professor in International Relations, National University of Malaysia (UKM)*
Dr Soulatha Sayalath, *Independent Researcher*

2:10pm **Open Discussion (All Authors) and Question & Answer Session**

2:30pm End of Day 2

Next page for Day 3

Day 3 | Friday, 24 March 2023

8:30am Registration and Breakfast

📍 Yale-NUS College Performance Hall Foyer

9:00am Panel 3: Bilateral Security and Economic Priorities in Southeast Asia-US Relations

9:00am Panel Introduction

👤 In-person

Dr Selina Ho, *Co-Director of Centre on Asia and Globalisation, and Assistant Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

9:05am Discussants

Mr David Rank, *Senior Fellow, Yale University, Jackson School of Global Affairs*
Professor Mely Caballero Anthony, *Professor of International Relations; Associate Dean (International Engagement); Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies; President's Chair in International Relations and Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University*

9:50am Lead Author Responses

Ms Hoang Thi Ha, *Senior Fellow and Co-coordinator, Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute*
Assistant Professor Pongphisoot Busbarat, *Director, Institute of Security and International Studies, and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University*

10:10am Open Discussion (All Authors) and Question & Answer Session

10:30am Coffee & Tea Break

10:45am Panel 4: Outlook on US-China-Southeast Asia Relations

10:45am Panel Introduction

👤 In-person

Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang, *Associate Professor of Social Sciences (Political Science), Yale-NUS College*

10:50am Discussants

Professor Alice D. Ba, *Professor of Political Science & International Relations, University of Delaware*
Professor Arne Westad, *Elihu Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University*
Dr Ronan Tse-Min Fu, *Assistant Research Fellow of the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica*

11:50am Lead Author Response

Associate Professor Terence Lee, *Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore*

12:00pm Open Discussion (All Authors) and Question & Answer Session

12:20pm Closing Remarks

👤 In-person

Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang, *Associate Professor of Social Sciences (Political Science), Yale-NUS College*

12:30pm End of Conference

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Professor Khong Yuen Foong

Li Ka Shing Professor in Political Science, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Professor Khong Yuen Foong is Li Ka Shing Professor in Political Science at the National University of Singapore. He was formerly Professor of International Relations, and a Professorial Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford University. He received his PhD from Harvard University in 1987 and was Assistant/Associate Professor at Harvard University's Government Department from 1987-1994. His PhD dissertation was awarded Harvard's Sumner Prize for the best dissertation on war and peace in 1988. His book, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, 1992; sixth printing 2006) was co-winner of the American Political Science Association's Political Psychology Book Award (1994). He also received the Erik Erikson Award for distinguished early career contribution to political psychology in 1996.

He has held grants from the Social Science Research Council (New York)-MacArthur Foundation Program on Security in a Changing World, the United States Institute of Peace, and the (UK) Leverhulme Trust. A former Vice-President of the International Studies Association (USA), 1999-2000, he has also served on the Social Science Research Council-MacArthur Foundation Committee on International Peace and Security. His research interests include United States foreign policy, the international relations of the Asia Pacific, and cognitive approaches to international relations. Recent publications include 'Power as Prestige in World Politics', *International Affairs* (January 2019), 'The American Tributary System', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* (2013) and 'The United States Response to China's Rise', *International Security*, (2013/2014). He is currently working on two long term projects, 'International Politics: The Rules of the Game' and 'The American Tributary System'.

Keynote Address

The US-China Geopolitical Contest: Security Dilemma or Power Transition Dynamics?

The defining security challenge of our times is the US-China geopolitical rivalry, the intensity of which seems to be growing by the day. International relations scholars have resorted to two paradigms to describe and analyse the rivalry: the security dilemma paradigm and the power transition paradigm. Which paradigm better reflects the nature of the competition today? In this address, I shall argue that since 2008 at least, the US-China competition hews closer to power transition than it does to security dilemma dynamics. My argument is based on four "observable implications" that fit better with the power transition perspective: certainty about what "the other" is up to, indifference to the unintended consequences of one's actions, the paucity of reassurance policies, and the adoption of full spectrum response – encompassing military, economic, technological, and cultural dimensions – to the challenge posed by the other side.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mr Ryan Hass

Senior Fellow and Michael H. Armacost Chair, Brookings Institution; Nonresident Fellow, Yale Law School

Mr Ryan Hass is a senior fellow at Brookings, where he serves as the Michael H. Armacost Chair in Foreign Policy Studies and the Chen-Fu and Cecilia Yen Koo Chair in Taiwan Studies. He is also a non-resident affiliated fellow in the Paul Tsai China Center at Yale Law School. From 2013 to 2017, Hass served as the director for China, Taiwan and Mongolia at the National Security Council (NSC) staff. In that role, he advised President Obama and senior White House officials on all aspects of US policy toward China, Taiwan, and Mongolia, and coordinated the implementation of U.S. policy toward this region among US government departments and agencies. He joined President Obama's state visit delegations in Beijing and Washington respectively in 2014 and 2015, and the president's delegation to Hangzhou, China, for the G-20 in 2016, and to Lima, Peru, for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meetings in 2016. Prior to joining NSC, Mr Hass served as a Foreign Service Officer in US Embassy Beijing, where he earned the State Department Director General's award for impact and originality in reporting, an award given annually to the officer whose reporting had the greatest impact on the formulation of US foreign policy. Hass also served in Embassy Seoul and Embassy Ulaanbaatar, and domestically in the State Department Offices of Taiwan Coordination and Korean Affairs.

He was born and raised in Washington state and graduated from the University of Washington and attended the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies prior to joining the State Department. Hass is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations. His book about America's relationship and rivalry with China, *Stronger: Adapting America's China Strategy in an Age of Competitive Interdependence*, was published by Yale University Press in March 2021.

Keynote Address

Will Competition Veer into Conflict? An examination of US-China Rivalry and its Implications for the Region

In his keynote address, Mr Ryan Hass will address three questions at the heart of the US-China relationship: What are the United States and China competing over, how their competition is likely to unfold in the coming years, and what are the implications of this unfolding competition for the rest of the region and the world. Mr Hass will make a case that the US-China relationship remains defined by a mutually unsatisfying state of competitive interdependence. While domestic political imperatives in both countries likely will limit room for moderation, so too will strategic requirements impel efforts by both sides to control risk of unconstrained rivalry and conflict.

PAPER AUTHOR

Dr Adhi Priamarizki

Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

Dr Adhi Priamarizki is a Research Fellow at the Indonesia Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University. He holds a PhD in International Relations from Ritsumeikan University, Japan and a MSc in Strategic Studies from RSIS. Dr Priamarizki wrote a doctoral dissertation on civil-military relations in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand. His research interests include Indonesia's military transformation, civil-military relations in Southeast Asia, and Indonesian politics. His publications have appeared in *East Asia Forum*, *The Jakarta Post*, *New Mandala*, *The Indonesian Quarterly*, *Defense & Security Analysis*, and *Contemporary Southeast Asia*.

Paper Abstract (Indonesia)

Beyond 'Free and Active': Context and Drivers of Indonesia's Foreign Policy towards US-China Rivalry

Indonesia's 'Free and Active' foreign principle remains sacrosanct in guiding the country's foreign policy from time to time. It is no doubt that the 'Free and Active' principle has been navigating Indonesia to pass various stormy geopolitical competitions and frictions. Nonetheless, the implementation of the principle depends pretty much on the context and circumstance surrounding the particular juncture. Here domestic factors act as other important determinants in shaping Indonesia's foreign policy, including Jakarta's response towards contemporary US-China rivalry. Furthermore, the rise of populism under the country's democratic setting made foreign policy no longer an instrument to fulfill strategic interests *per se*, but also a tool to maintain the regime's popularity. Against this backdrop, my article examines how domestic factors shape Indonesia's foreign policy and orientation in the country's relations with US and China respectively. This study also aims to identify potential domestic factors that determine Indonesia's foreign policy. In addition, this paper discusses Jakarta's responses towards recent international dynamics resulted from the US-China strategic competition.

PAPER AUTHOR

Ms Hoang Thi Ha

Senior Fellow and Co-coordinator, Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Ms Hoang Thi Ha is Senior Fellow and Co-coordinator of the Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Before her current position, she was Lead Researcher (Political-Security) at the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS. Her research interests include major powers in Southeast Asia and political-security issues in ASEAN, especially the South China Sea disputes, ASEAN human rights cooperation, ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific discourse and ASEAN's institutional building. Ms Hoang joined the ASEAN Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam in 2004. She then moved on to work at the ASEAN Secretariat for nine years, with her last post being Assistant Director, Head of the Political Cooperation Division. She holds an MA in International Relations from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam.

Paper Abstract (Vietnam)

Domestic Determinants of Vietnam's Foreign policy Choices Amid the Sino-US Rivalry

Vietnam's relations with China and the US are full of contrasts and complexities. The Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have the same political ideology and share a prevailing interest in the preservation of their one-party rule. Yet, China also presents the most pronounced threat to Vietnam's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, not least in the South China Sea. Public and elite opinion polls consistently suggest a deep and abiding distrust of China in the country. The US meanwhile enjoys high approval ratings among the Vietnamese public but Hanoi views Washington's democracy and human rights agenda with deep apprehension and concern for its own regime's survival. In terms of soft power, the Vietnamese cultural traditions and bureaucratic statecraft were heavily influenced and inspired by those from China, but young Vietnamese students nowadays overwhelmingly choose the US over China for their tertiary education. Economically, Vietnam is deeply interdependent with both superpowers with the bulk of Vietnam's imports coming from China and the US being Vietnam's largest export market. This article seeks to understand these complexities by examining the domestic determinants of Vietnam's foreign policy decision-making, including the historical, cultural, political, institutional, economic and security factors that shape Vietnam's foreign policy choices amid the intensifying Sino-US rivalry.

PAPER AUTHOR

Professor Dr Kuik Cheng-Chwee

Professor in International Relations, National University of Malaysia (UKM)

Professor Kuik Cheng-Chwee is Professor in International Relations and Head of the Centre for Asian Studies, Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), National University of Malaysia (UKM). He is concurrently a non-resident fellow at Johns Hopkins' Foreign Policy Institute. Previously, Prof Kuik was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Princeton-Harvard "China and the World" Program. His research focuses on smaller state foreign policy, Asian security, and international relations. He served as Head of the Writing Team for the Government of Malaysia's inaugural Defence White Paper (2020). Prof Kuik's publications have appeared in peer-reviewed journals and edited books. His essay, "*The Essence of Hedging*", won the Michael Leifer Memorial Prize awarded by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. He is co-editor (with Alice Ba and Sueo Sudo) of *Institutionalizing East Asia* (Routledge, 2016), and co-author (with David M. Lampton and Selina Ho) of *Rivers of Iron: Railroads and Chinese Power in Southeast Asia* (University of California Press, 2020). His current projects include: hedging in international relations, elite legitimation and foreign policy choices, and the geopolitics of infrastructure connectivity cooperation. Prof Kuik serves on the editorial boards/committees of *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *Asian Politics and Policy*, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, and *East Asian Policy*.

Paper Abstract (Malaysia)

Malaysia between the US and China: Internal Legitimation and External Equidistance

Malaysia has long pledged and positioned itself to be equidistant from the US and China. Being equidistant, however, does not mean being equally distant from both competing big powers; rather, it means keeping as productive and pragmatic relations as possible with all powers, without taking sides with any. Such equidistance is manifested not only in the economic and development realms (e.g., embracing both China's Belt and Road Initiative and the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework) but also in the defence and diplomatic domains. There are discernible gaps: the Malaysia-US defence partnership is much closer than that between Malaysia and China, whereas Malaysia-China diplomatic and developmental ties are more multifaceted than that between Malaysia and the US. While Malaysia's equidistance stance may not be unique among similarly-situated states in Southeast Asia (and smaller states elsewhere), it does entail a peculiar paradox: the equidistance is maintained via a prudent counteraction of selective deference and selective defiance vis-à-vis both powers. This essay unpacks the domestic determinants of Malaysia's paradoxical equidistance. While the smaller state's insistence on not-taking-sides is primarily a product of structural conditions, the manifestations of its counteracting approaches are primarily a result of elite's domestic political needs, specifically, the necessity to strike a balance between the performance, particularistic, and procedural pathways of legitimation in a culturally multi-ethnic and politically fragmented society. This elite legitimation intersects with such other internal variables as institutional and socio-political configurations, which prompt the elite to pursue paradoxical equidistance to hedge and offset prioritised risks, while maximising returns under conditions of power uncertainties.

PAPER AUTHOR

Assistant Professor Pongphisoot Busbarat

Director, Institute of Security and International Studies, and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

Assistant Professor Pongphisoot (Paul) Busbarat is the Director of the Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS Thailand), Assistant Professor in International Relations, and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. His research interests include great power competition in Southeast Asia, Thailand's foreign policy, and norms and identity in International Relations. Currently, Asst Prof Busbarat is working on several projects: normative constructs influencing Thailand's strategic choices between the US and China, and geopolitics of great power competition in the Indo-Pacific, especially the Mekong subregion. His publications appear in various academic and policy outlets, for example: "SWOT Analysis of the Position of the United States and China in Thailand" (2022) ASAN Institute; "China and Mekong regionalism," *Asian Politics & Policy* (2021); "Thai foreign policy in the regional power competition," *The Sage Handbook in Asian Foreign Policy* (Sage, 2020); "Thai-US relations in the post-Cold War era," *Asian Security* (2017), "Opportunities amidst the US-China power competition," *CSCAP Regional Security Outlook* (2019); "Grabbing the forgotten: China's leadership consolidation in mainland Southeast Asia," *ISEAS Perspective* (2018), "China's 'Shame Offensive'," *ISEAS Perspective* (2017); 'Bamboo swirling in the wind,' *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2016). He holds a PhD in Political Science & IR from the Australian National University, and postgraduate degrees from Columbia University and Cambridge University. He served as a policy analyst at Thailand's Office of the National Security Council (NSC) before embarking on his academic career.

Paper Abstract (Thailand)

Bamboo stuck in the Chinese wind: Thailand's unsuccessful foreign policy rebalance between the US and China

This chapter examines the continuing impact of Thailand's political polarisation broadly between the conservative and progressive coalitions on its foreign policy orientation towards the United States (US) and China. It argues that since the mid-2000s, the conservative coalition in Thailand has viewed the US promotion of human rights and democracy as a challenge to its maintenance of political legitimacy. Thus, the bloc has appreciated China's adherence to the non-interference principle. This domestic-foreign policy nexus was evident during the coup government between 2014 and 2019, where the military regime in Bangkok strengthened ties with Beijing in response to Washington's pressure. China, therefore, emerged as a major external actor that supported the regime's legitimacy internationally and helped maintain its economic performance domestically. Despite the elected government coming to power in 2019, Thailand's foreign policy rebalancing towards the US has been slow, reluctant, and inconsistent. This is mainly because foreign decision-making is still primarily controlled by a conservative leadership surrounding the Prime Minister, top militaries, Foreign Ministers, and close advisors, who still see China as their reliable source of legitimacy. As long as Thai conservative elites still want to keep a tight grip on politics, Thailand's foreign policy orientation will remain tilted towards Beijing.

PAPER AUTHOR

Mr Raymund Joe Quilop

Former Associate Professor of Political Science, University of the Philippines

Formerly a tenured associate professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines - Diliman and previously an assistant professor at De La Salle University in Manila, Mr Raymund Quilop is currently with the ASEAN Secretariat as Assistant Director and head of the Analysis and Monitoring Division of the ASEAN Political Security Community Department. His research areas include ASEAN regionalism, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, non-proliferation and disarmament, democracy and democratisation, and civil-military relations. He has published in peer-reviewed international publications as well as written books and book chapters on these issues and has received two international publication awards from UP. His book, *Security Community Building: From Dialogues to Practical Cooperation*, was published during ASEAN's 50th Anniversary in 2017. He was also in government service as assistant secretary (deputy minister) at the Philippines' Department (Ministry) of National Defense in-charge of international affairs. For his government service, he is a recipient of the Philippine Legion of Honor and two Outstanding Achievement Medals (OAMs). He obtained his graduate and undergraduate degrees (Political Science) from the University of the Philippines, finishing his AB Political Science with the highest distinction of Summa Cum Laude.

[Paper Abstract \(Philippines\)](#)

Philippine Foreign Policy: Consistency Amidst Seeming Shifts

Contemporary Philippine foreign policy has been anchored on the three pillars of (i) protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty, (ii) economic development and (iii) protection of overseas Filipinos. Beginning with the Ramos Administration (1992-1998) when it was first enunciated, these three pillars have remained constant in the succeeding Estrada, Arroyo, Aquino and Duterte administrations. Notwithstanding the seeming perception that the Philippines may have gravitated towards a particular foreign partner at a particular juncture of its history depending primarily on who was at the helm of executive power, these three pillars of the Philippine foreign policy have remained the basis of the Philippines' dealing with its foreign partners. Furthermore, while it could be hypothesised that the country seemed to have chosen a particular country to partner with in promoting a particular pillar of its foreign policy thereby giving a de facto division of roles for its two key partners, with one being seen as ally in protecting Philippine sovereignty and the other being seen as economic partner, such de facto division of role may be a bit superficial. Because in reality, the Philippines' relations with these important partners could very well be seen as contributing both to the protection of the country's sovereignty, pursuit of economic development and most importantly, protection of the Filipinos abroad.

PAPER AUTHOR

Dr Soulatha Sayalath

Independent Researcher

Dr Soulatha Sayalath is an independent researcher from Laos. He was a former postdoctoral researcher from Hiroshima University, where he earned his PhD degree in 2016. His research interests focus on domestic politics in Laos, its international relations with neighbouring countries including the United States. His writings appear in the journals *Contemporary Southeast Asia* and *Southeast Asian Affairs*. He currently lives in Bangladesh with his family.

Paper Abstract (Laos)

Turned Foes into Friends: China and the US in Laos' Foreign Policy

This article discusses the role of domestic politics that has over time shaped foreign policy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR or Laos) with the People's Republic of China (China) and the United States (US). It shows the LPDR's perceived threats, at home, that China and the US' support to anti-LPDR forces in 1980s drove the regime's desire to adopt close relations with Beijing and Washington to ensure internal security. A key external driver was the collapse of the Soviet Union, a main sponsor of Laos' socialist building, that forced Vientiane to shift its foreign policy since 1986 from the one that tightly allied with socialist partners like Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) to China and the US to protect not only its strategic autonomy but also find new strategic partnership. The article concludes with a short discussion on LPDR's views on ASEAN's role in regional security that went from anti-communist club to cooperative one and the country's position to maintain balance in US-China competition in the region.

PAPER AUTHOR

Associate Professor Terence Lee

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore

Associate Professor Terence Lee is from the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore where he specialises in the study of civil-military relations, military organisations and international security. Assoc Prof Lee was previously Assistant Professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore and Postdoctoral Fellow in National Security Studies at Harvard University's John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies. He earned his PhD and MA degrees in Political Science from the University of Washington, Seattle. He also holds a MSc in Strategic Studies from the Nanyang Technological University (Singapore) and a Bachelor of Arts (Distinction) degree in Political Science and Southeast Asian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is author of the book, *Defect or Defend: Military Responses to Popular Protests in Authoritarian Asia* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). His other publications have appeared in *Asian Survey*, *Armed Forces and Society*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Foreign Policy* and *Pacific Review*. Professionally, Assoc Prof Lee serves as Associate Editor of the journal *Armed Forces and Society* and is on the editorial board of the journal *Government & Opposition*. He is also a Council Member of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. His other research interests include international relations theory, theories of comparative politics and Southeast Asian politics.

Paper Abstract (Singapore)

The Domestic Determinants of Singapore's Equidistant US-China Foreign Policy

As the US-China rivalry intensifies, Singapore ostensibly maintains an equidistant foreign policy. Its approach has been to claim that it "does not wish to choose sides" between Washington and Beijing. Instead, the city-state seeks opportunities to maximise gains from cooperating with both powers while avoiding confrontation. This strategy maximises Singapore's central location in Asia and role as an established commercial and financial hub. It also appears to reflect the structural logic of a small state – the imperatives of survival. While not discounting the conventional realist perspective of small states coping with a hostile international system, this paper examines foreign policy decision-making in Singapore from the lens of domestic politics. Arguing against observers who posit that domestic politics does not matter in Singapore's foreign policy, it demonstrates how the domestic imperative of maintaining single-party political dominance shapes the ruling People's Action Party's decision-making in its relations with the US and China.

DISCUSSANTS

Professor Alice D. Ba

Professor of Political Science & International Relations, University of Delaware

Professor Alice D. Ba is professor of political science and international relations at the University of Delaware, where she has served as Director of Asian Studies (2009-2014) and is currently Associate Department Chair. She has published widely on the structures, processes, and systemic effects of regionalism and regional integration; relations between Southeast Asian states and major powers, especially China and the United States; and the construction of maritime regimes and security in Asia, including the South China Sea. Recent and current work also investigates the role of strategic narratives, legitimation strategies of regional organisations, interactive effects of US, China, and ASEAN initiatives, and Cambodia's ASEAN chairmanship. The author of *(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (Stanford 2009), she has received US Fulbright awards for work in Beijing and Singapore, is a regular speaker on China-Southeast Asia relations, ASEAN, and US-Southeast Asia policy for US Department of State Foreign Service Institute and visiting scholar programmes, and serves on several editorial and advisory boards.

Professor Arne Westad

Elihu Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University

Professor Arne Westad is a scholar of modern international and global history, with a specialisation in the history of eastern Asia since the 18th century. Originally from Ålesund on the Norwegian coast, he studied history, philosophy, and modern languages in Oslo before doing a graduate degree in US/international history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prof Westad has published 16 books, most of which deal with twentieth century Asian and global history. In the first part of his career, he was mainly preoccupied with the history of the Cold War, China-Russia relations, and the history of the Chinese civil war and the Chinese Communist Party. He published two monographs, *Cold War and Revolution* (Columbia University Press, 1993), which deals with US and Soviet intervention in the Chinese Civil War in 1944-1946, and *Decisive Encounters* (Stanford University Press, 2003), which is a general history of the Chinese civil war and the Communist victory in the period from 1946 to 1950. He also edited several books on Sino-Soviet and Cold War history topics. Since the mid-2000s, Prof Westad has been concerned with more general aspects of post-colonial and global history, as well as the modern history of China. The three key works from this period are *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) which argues for ways of understanding the Soviet-American conflict in light of late- and post-colonial change in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean; *Restless Empire* (Basic Books, 2012), which discusses broad trends in China's international history since 1750; and *The Cold War: A World History* (Basic Books, 2017), which summarises the origins, conduct, and results of the conflict on a global scale. Today he is mainly interested in researching histories of empire and imperialism, first and foremost in Asia, but also world-wide. He is also trying to figure out how China's late twentieth century economic reforms came into being and how their outcomes changed the global economy.

Prof Westad joined the faculty at Yale after teaching at the London School of Economics (LSE), where he was School Professor of International History, and at Harvard University, where he was the S.T. Lee Professor of US-Asia Relations. At Yale, he teaches in the History Department and at the Jackson School for Global Affairs, is an adviser at Davenport College, and serves as director of International Security Studies. He is a fellow of the British Academy and of several other national academies, a visiting professor at Peking University, and a research associate of the Harvard Fairbank Center.

Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang

Associate Professor of Social Sciences (Political Science), Yale-NUS College

Associate Professor Chin-Hao Huang's research and teaching focus on China's foreign relations, the international relations of East Asia, and international security. He is the recipient of the Lee Kong Chian National University of Singapore-Stanford University Distinguished Fellowship on Contemporary Southeast Asia (2018-2019) and the American Political Science Association's Foreign Policy Section Best Paper Award (2014). He is the author or co-author of three books, including his latest manuscript, *Power and Restraint in China's Rise* (Columbia University Press, 2022). His work has appeared in *International Organization*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *The China Quarterly*, *The China Journal*, *Asian Survey*, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, and *International Peacekeeping*, and in edited volumes through Oxford University Press and Routledge, among others. He has testified on China's foreign affairs before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, US Congress. He has also served as a consultant for US and European foundations, governments, and companies on their strategies and policies in the Asia-Pacific. Until 2009, he was a researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and prior to that worked with the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC. His Doctor of Philosophy and Bachelor of Science are respectively from the University of Southern California and Georgetown University.

Mr David Rank

Senior Fellow, Yale University, Jackson School of Global Affairs

Mr David Rank is a Senior Fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and head of the China practice at The Cohen Group, a global business strategy consultancy. He spent 27 years as a State Department Foreign Service Officer, including his final assignment as Deputy Chief of Mission and, following the 2016 election, as the Charge' d'Affaires (acting Ambassador) at the US Embassy in Beijing. In addition to six Foreign Service assignments in greater China (three in Beijing, two at the American Institute in Taiwan and one at the US Consulate General in Shanghai), Mr Rank served at the US embassies in Kabul, Athens, and Port Louis (Mauritius). In Washington, he worked in the office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP), the State Department Korea desk, as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and as a Fellow at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. In 2015 he received the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award for his role in the release of the only American servicemember held by the enemy in Afghanistan. He is also the recipient of the American Foreign Service Association's Sinclair Award for the study of languages and their related cultures. He speaks Mandarin Chinese, French, Dari and Greek. He and his wife, Mary, have three children.

Professor Mely Caballero Anthony

Professor of International Relations Associate Dean (International Engagement);

Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies; President's Chair in International Relations and Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

Professor of International Relations Mely Caballero Anthony is from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, and holds President's Chair for International Relations and Security Studies. She is also the Head of the RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies and Associate Dean (External Engagement). Prof Anthony's research interests include regionalism and multilateralism in Asia-Pacific, human security and non-traditional security, nuclear security, conflict prevention and global governance. She has published extensively on a broad range of security issues in Asia-Pacific in peer-reviewed journals and international academic press. Her latest books, both single-authored and co-edited, include: *Covid-19 and Atrocity Prevention in East Asia* (Routledge 2022), *Nuclear Governance in the Asia-Pacific* (Routledge, 2022) and *Negotiating Governance on Non-Traditional Security in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (Columbia University Press, 2018). Prof Anthony has led a number of global and regional research projects on international security and global governance. She has served as the Secretary-General of the Consortium on Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia since 2008, and is a member of the

international Climate Security Expert Network. She was Vice President at-large of the Governing Council of the International Studies Association (ISA) and was member of the ISA's Global South Task Force from 2018-2021. From 2013-2017, she was a member of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (ABDM) and served as its chairperson in 2016. She is also a member of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network on Nuclear Non-Proliferation (APLN). She was Director of External Relations at the ASEAN Secretariat from 2011-2012.

Dr Ronan Tse-min Fu

Assistant Research Fellow of the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica

Dr Ronan Tse-min Fu is an assistant research fellow in the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica (IPSAS). Prior to joining IPSAS, he was a postdoctoral research fellow in the China and the World Program at Columbia University. His research interests include international relations theory, political psychology, Chinese foreign policy, US-China strategic relations, and experimental methods. His work has appeared in *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *Political Geography*. Dr Fu holds a PhD in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Southern California, an MA in Political Science from National Taiwan University and a BA in Diplomacy from National Chengchi University.

Dr Selina Ho

Co-Director of Centre on Asia and Globalisation and Assistant Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Dr Selina Ho is Assistant Professor in International Affairs and Co-Director of the Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. She researches Chinese politics and foreign policy. Specifically, she is interested in how China wields power and influence via infrastructure and water disputes in Southeast Asia and South Asia. Her work stands at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations. Dr Ho is the author of *Thirsty Cities: Social Contracts and Public Goods Provision in China and India* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), co-author (with David M. Lampton and Cheng-Chwee Kuik) of *Rivers of Iron: Railroads and Chinese Power in Southeast Asia* (University of California Press, 2020), and co-editor (with Kanti Bajpai and Manjari Chatterjee Miller) of *The Routledge Handbook of China-India Relations* (2020). She has published widely in peer-reviewed journals, including *International Affairs*, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, among others. Dr Ho is the editor (with Kanti Bajpai) of Amsterdam University Press's "Politics and International Relations in Asia" book series.

Dr Ho served a two-year term as Chair of the Master in International Affairs Programme from January 2019-December 2020. She is currently a non-resident senior fellow with the Asia and Latin America Programme at the Inter-American Dialogue and a non-resident senior fellow of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. She was appointed a Global Futures Council Fellow with the World Economic Forum in September 2017-September 2018.

She received her PhD from The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, where she also received a Master in International Public Policy (Honors). She graduated from the National University of Singapore with a BA in History (Honours). Prior to academia, Dr Ho was a Singapore civil servant.