



RED OR BLUE

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR ASIA IN THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION

AN EDITED VOLUME FROM THE ASIA SOCIETY POLICY INSTITUTE

RED OR BLUE:

What's at Stake for Asia in the 2024 U.S. Election

AN EDITED VOLUME FROM THE ASIA SOCIETY POLICY INSTITUTE



With a solution-oriented mandate, the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) tackles major policy challenges confronting the Asia Pacific in security, prosperity, sustainability, and the development of common norms and values for the region. The Asia Society Policy Institute is a think- and do-tank designed to bring forth policy ideas that incorporate the best thinking from top experts in Asia and to work with policymakers to integrate these ideas and put them into practice.

AUTHORS

Farwa Aamer, Asia Society Policy Institute

Anthony Bubalo, Asia Society Australia

Emma Chanlett-Avery, Asia Society Policy Institute

Wendy Cutler, Asia Society Policy Institute

Rorry Daniels, Asia Society Policy Institute

Dominique Fraser, Asia Society Policy Institute

Duyeon Kim, Center for a New American Security

Yuka Koshino, International Institute for Strategic Studies

Lizzi C. Lee, Center for China Analysis,
Asia Society Policy Institute

Kate Logan, Asia Society Policy Institute

Akshay Mathur, Asia Society Policy Institute Delhi

Vivek Mishra, Observer Research Foundation

Lyle J. Morris, Center for China Analysis,

Asia Society Policy Institute

Jane Mellsop, Asia Society Policy Institute

Kaewkamol “Karen” Pitakdumrongkit, S. Rajaratnam
School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological
University, Singapore

Daniel Russel, Asia Society Policy Institute

Li Shuo, Asia Society Policy Institute

Neil Thomas, Center for China Analysis, Asia Society Policy
Institute

Mariko Togashi, Institute of Geoeconomics

Shay Wester, Asia Society Policy Institute

Wu Xinbo, Fudan University

Helen Zhang, Sydney University's United States Studies
Centre's Emerging Technology Program

INTERVIEWS

Ambassador Dino Patti Djalal, Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia

Han-koo Yeo, Peterson Institute for International Economics

The Asia Society Policy Institute and the Asia Society take no institutional positions on matters of public policy and other issues addressed in the reports and publications they sponsor. All statements of fact and expressions of opinion contained in this report are the sole responsibility of its authors and may not reflect the views of the organization and its board, staff, and supporters.

© 2024 The Asia Society. All rights reserved.

THE ASIA SOCIETY POLICY INSTITUTE

Web: AsiaSociety.org/Policy-Institute

Twitter: @AsiaPolicy

Facebook: Facebook.com/AsiaPolicy

Email: policyinstitute@asiasociety.org

NEW YORK

725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021

+1 212 288 6400

WASHINGTON, D.C.

1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 805, Washington, D.C. 20036

+1 202 833 2742

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4
1. MR. HAN-KOO YEO ON ASIA'S TRADE & INVESTMENT LANDSCAPE	8
2. MR. DINO PATTI DJALAL ON INDONESIA'S VIEW OF U.S. REGIONAL POLICY	14
3. ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & POLITICAL ECONOMY	19
4. ON THE ECONOMIC SECURITY AGENDA	25
5. ON SCIENCE & TECH DIPLOMACY	31
6. ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & CLIMATE	37
7. ON U.S.-ASEAN RELATIONS & TRADE	43
8. ON SOUTH ASIA IN THE INDO-PACIFIC	52
9. ON ALLIANCES IN NORTHEAST ASIA	59
10. ON U.S.-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS & AUKUS	66
11. ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & SECURITY	73
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	80
ENDNOTES	87

FOREWORD

In anticipation of the upcoming U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections, the Asia Society Policy Institute presents, “Red or Blue: What’s at Stake for Asia in the 2024 U.S. Election.” This volume pairs ASPI’s experts with thought leaders across Asia to investigate the key topics and trends through four critical questions:

- What priorities does the Asian region have on this issue?
- What is the likely pathway or drivers of policy decision-making on this issue if Donald Trump wins the presidency?
- What is the likely pathway or drivers of policy decision-making on this issue if Kamala Harris wins the presidency?
- What policy recommendations would be useful to consider in the year ahead?

The essays reveal some consensus among expert views of the American public’s attitudes toward global and regional policies. Rising mistrust of China, a sense that trade and globalization have not effectively served the American worker and the communities in which they live, and political polarization on how the United States should engage in the world bind the ongoing political campaigns—and the winner’s likely policy trajectory—within a scope that does not quite match Asia’s articulated needs and interests for greater economic

The American public’s sense that U.S. foreign policy has created more challenges than opportunities will shape how the next administration approaches Asia.

engagement, a stable security environment, and considerable assistance tackling twenty-first-century development challenges, including climate change and economic resiliency.

These assumptions about American electorate viewpoints are shaping not only the platforms of the campaigns but also the issues on which the two candidates are campaigning. Economic security,

for example, is an emerging area of public attention to address unfair trade practices and overreliance on adversaries for essential and strategic products. Investments in regional security, including alliance projects and networking, speak to the domestic debate over U.S. defense priorities and costs. Diminishing public opinion on China’s position in the world affects the tone and tenor of not only bilateral but also regional dialogue and diplomacy. In short, the American public’s sense that U.S. foreign policy has created more challenges than opportunities will shape how the next administration approaches Asia.

This volume starts with interviews of two former senior Asian officials: Han-koo Yeo, former minister of trade of the Republic of Korea, and Dino Patti Djalal, former vice foreign minister of Indonesia. Mr. Yeo reiterates the importance of U.S. economic engagement and leadership to help manage the challenges facing both developed and developing countries in Asia. While recognizing that the United States is not returning to a trade liberalization agenda, he finds new arrangements such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) useful in addressing today’s economic challenges and warns against U.S. protectionism that could leave the region with fewer choices for investments and markets.

Dino Patti Djalal analyzes the election choice in terms of U.S. predictability and likeability, noting that though former president Trump's policies were unpopular in Indonesia, Kamala Harris has yet to advance her vision for the Asian region. Mr. Djalal hopes the United States will prioritize three key areas for Indonesia and the developing Southeast Asia—commerce, technology, and educational exchange. Meanwhile, Indonesia welcomes the U.S. military role in stabilizing the South China Sea and ensuring sea lanes of communication remain open and accessible without forcing a strategic choice between the United States and China.

Next, Neil Thomas and Lizzi Li tackle the future of U.S.-China relations through the lens of political economy, noting that a bipartisan Washington consensus to be tough on China will persist for the foreseeable future. The key question is how the candidates will pursue competition—through tariffs to address trade imbalances in the Trump scenario or perhaps through the lens of human rights and values in a Harris scenario. Thomas and Li recommend prioritizing leader-to-leader diplomacy, enhancing dialogues and exchanges, and seeking cooperation on existential threats, including climate change and AI governance.

We then move to global issues with an Asia focus, with essays on economic security and science and technology diplomacy, as well as prospects for climate progress in the U.S.-China context.

Jane Mellsoop and Mariko Togoshi outline key priorities for the G7 economic security agenda and discuss how Asian countries are affected by supply chain restructuring, friendshoring, and other methods to create resilience in international trade. They explore how the U.S. “small yard, high fence” strategy may adjust over time. Mellsoop and Togoshi recommend that countries of the region adopt the G7 agenda to create a stronger, more resilient international defense against economic coercion.

A key issue between a Harris scenario and a Trump scenario is tech regulation—will the United States use government tools to shape the tech industry and how will those policies affect global governance?

Akshay Mathur and Helen Zhang address science and technology in the international context, noting that many Asian countries are participating or leading bilateral and multilateral agreements on digital partnerships and tech governance. A key issue between a Harris scenario and a Trump scenario is tech regulation—will the United States use government tools to shape the tech industry and how will those policies affect global governance? Mathur and Zhang recommend the next U.S. administration build on existing partnerships to deepen tech cooperation with Asia.

Li Shuo and Kate Logan consider how climate factors into the two candidates' likely approaches to U.S.-China relations and global climate action, warning that the world cannot afford the United States to minimize its climate ambition in service of unilateralism, protectionism, or strategic competition. The two scenarios are perhaps starkest in this essay, reflecting the authors' sense that climate has become one of the most politicized issues in the United States. Li and Logan recommend U.S. and Chinese leadership insulate climate from the more contentious bilateral agenda, urge other countries to broaden cooperation with one another, and point to China's industrial decarbonization as the leading trend to watch.

Turning to subregions, the next two essays summarize priorities for the U.S.-ASEAN relationship, particularly in trade, as well as a changing U.S. approach to South Asia after the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

Shay Wester and Kaewkamol Pitakdumrongkit note that diversification away from China is driving U.S. trade and investment with ASEAN but that the countries of Southeast Asia want to avoid choosing sides between the two major powers. This may be a more difficult balance under a Trump administration if it pursues robust decoupling from China, although ASEAN may also be under renewed scrutiny for environmental and labor protections under a Harris administration. The authors recommend ASEAN strengthen its own regional integration and pursue diversified trade relationships.

Farwa Aamer and Vivek Mishra look at U.S. suspicion of China's influence in South Asia as a dominant factor driving policy after the United States left Afghanistan. The United States and India are pulling together amid rising tension with China, while other countries of the region calibrate to shifting U.S. interests and expectations. Aamer and Mishra recommend that South Asia prepare for both a Trump scenario, which would

The United States and India are pulling together amid rising tension with China, while other countries of the region calibrate to shifting U.S. interests and expectations.

necessitate an active contribution to burden sharing, and a Harris scenario, which would focus more on good governance and democratic development, especially for countries in transition such as Bangladesh.

Finally, the volume concludes on security issues. The effects of the election on U.S. alliances are explored through a piece on U.S. relations with

Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and a piece on U.S.-Australia relations and AUKUS. The final essay addresses opportunities and challenges for the United States and China to manage their bilateral security competition.

Emma Chanlett-Avery, Duyeon Kim, and Yuka Koshino explore U.S. alliance relations in Northeast Asia, noting that both Tokyo and Seoul have concerns about maintaining the international rules-based order with U.S. leadership increasingly looking inward. They contrast the candidates in terms of style, with a Trump 2.0 raising anxiety over contentious burden-sharing issues and likely to diminish pressure on the two allies to do more together. The authors recommend that U.S. allies in the region continue to develop their own latticework of cooperative arrangements and take a more proactive role on both regional security and global issues such as the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Anthony Bubalo and Dominique Fraser provide a view from Australia on its own alliance relationship with the United States and the future of the AUKUS security arrangement between Washington, London, and Canberra. Noting the longtime horizon of AUKUS—through 2075—the authors find that Australian public support needs an equally lengthy plan to maintain enthusiasm for the costs of the project and the partnership with a sometimes volatile United States. Bubalo and Fraser recommend the governments start with an active and affirmative public messaging campaign on the benefits of the alliance and the need for investment in long-term capabilities.

Finally, Lyle Morris and Wu Xinbo consider the future of the U.S.-China relationship through the lens of security issues. While “strategic competition” will remain the central framing device for the United States, Trump and Harris are likely to emphasize different factors of competition—with the former more focused on trade as a barometer and the latter likely to continue high-level communication while pursuing deeper relationships with allies and partners. However, it remains to be seen how a second Trump administration

would handle political issues and diplomacy with China or how a Harris administration would approach bilateral trade.

As a whole, the volume speaks to common assumptions about the two candidates that there would be significant continuity in their approaches to foreign policy and to the Asian region from the Trump-Pence administration and the Biden-Harris administration. These assumptions are supported by candidate statements and likely personnel appointments.

The contributors also identify a number of macro trends that are likely to persist over the next four years: efforts to de-risk global trade and investment from both security concerns and resiliency concerns; efforts for U.S. administrations to maintain majority support at home by bolstering the domestic economy; strategic competition with China and the need to work more closely with allies and partners to maintain a favorable balance of power in the region; and the relatively narrow lens on global issues—such as climate change, economic integration for lower- and middle income countries, and use of international institutions—that these trends have engendered.

One of the key questions moving forward is how events will shift policy by reprioritizing U.S. attention and resources. The war in Ukraine has reached a stalemate in which thousands of young men are still laying down their lives. The conflict between Israel and its neighbors is widening into regional instability. Warming global temperatures are generating unprecedented weather events that are destroying ecosystems and livelihoods. And political volatility in the United States in which both sides of the political aisle feel increasing enmity toward the other side is reverberating through global politics; driving maximalist positions; and stymieing compromise, including within international institutions.

If the United States can articulate and implement an Asia policy that shows how U.S. global leadership can manage and resolve these worrisome trends, then America will be in an excellent position to thrive amid twenty-first-century challenges. As a first step, policymakers should consider the recommendations in this volume as guiding principles toward effectively taking full advantage of Asia's dynamism, diversity of capabilities and needs, and nexus of security challenges to create a stronger, more prosperous world.

Policymakers should consider the recommendations in this volume as guiding principles toward effectively taking full advantage of Asia's dynamism, diversity of capabilities and needs, and nexus of security challenges to create a stronger, more prosperous world.



1 MR. HAN-KOO YEO ON ASIA'S TRADE & INVESTMENT LANDSCAPE

ASPI Vice President Wendy Cutler's Interview of Former Korean Trade Minister Han-koo Yeo

WENDY CUTLER: Please share with us, from an Asian perspective, why it's so important for the United States to have an active economic agenda with its Asian trading partners?

MINISTER HAN-KOO YEO: There are many countries in the region that want strong, credible, and also predictable U.S. leadership and economic engagement in the region. Let's think of this as two categories of countries: first, advanced countries and second, developing countries in the region. First, advanced countries, including Korea, Japan, and Australia, have gone through a paradigm shift in the trade environment and have also experienced supply chain disruption, climate crises, and other challenges. These countries need to tackle these global challenges with a strong partnership with the United States. Additionally, China's economic ride for the past couple of decades has been phenomenal, and I think the United States could play a constructive role of balancing it out in the region.

When it comes to developing countries in the region, e.g., ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, India, they need market access to the United States and they want to be integrated into the U.S.-led global supply chain. In fact, many countries in the region, starting with Japan, Korea, and Singapore, have moved up in the industrial and technology ladder through economic cooperation with the United States. So, from the perspective of both developed and developing countries, U.S. economic leadership in the region is critically important. The current U.S. administration should get credit for returning to the region and resuming its leadership, even if the economic and market access engagement in the region is not as robust as many would have preferred.

CUTLER: You mentioned that developing countries in the region welcome becoming part of the U.S.-led supply chain network. But, would this not be at the expense of China?

YEO: No. These countries are being rapidly integrated into the supply chain led by China. But they realize that if there is too much dependence or too much concentration on one country, that becomes a vulnerability and a risk. It's a matter of overall overdependence on one partner, especially China. So, developing countries want to expand their trade and supply chain integration with China, while also seeking a more active regional role from the United States and participating in these U.S.-led supply chains as well.

CUTLER: Under the Biden administration, the United States has basically retreated from pursuing market-opening agreements or free trade agreements. Is there still a hope in the region that at some point the United States will go back to that model, even if not as robustly as it has in the past? Are countries still interested in pursuing free trade agreements with the United States?

The current U.S. administration should get credit for returning to the region and resuming its leadership, even if the economic and market access engagement in the region is not as robust as many would have preferred.

YEO: Obviously, they woke up to this brutal reality that things have changed in the U.S. political environment. In my view, it's inconceivable to go back to this previous era where the United States played a leadership role in bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade negotiations. But I also think that there's wishful thinking that maybe four years or even eight years from now, a return to a market-opening agenda could happen.

CUTLER: Let's discuss the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), the cornerstone of the Biden administration's economic engagement in the region. Many people, both in the United States and Asia, have been skeptical about this initiative. But I note, Minister Yeo, that you have been supportive and have written a number of pieces pointing to potential benefits and the importance of this initiative. Can you share with us your views on IPEF, and in particular do you think it will be able to deliver concrete outcomes and provide benefits to all its members the way it's constructed now?

YEO: Yes. We live in a different world right now. For example, Korea has gone through a series of supply chain shocks and disruptions for the past few years. Like others, we quickly realized the absence of a new template for internal cooperation to cope with these new kinds of global challenges. Korea is one of the most wired countries with its extensive FTA network with countries all around the world, including RCEP, and Korea has been aiming to join CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Part-

nership). But these traditional FTAs weren't really designed to deal with the new types of challenges that we are facing. That's why I think that these new types of economic cooperation agreements, such as IPEF, could play a meaningful role to fill the gap left by more conventional types of trade agreements. I believe that we should continue to advance trade liberalization through conventional FTAs (bilateral and plurilateral) but also, we need these new templates for new challenges, such as supply chain resiliency, decarbonization, and so on. Although IPEF is not perfect, it's a meaningful first step.

CUTLER: If Vice President Harris becomes president, there is an assumption that she would continue many of Biden's policies and initiatives in this space, including IPEF. If you could offer her some words of advice on how to build on the current IPEF to make it more meaningful for Asia, what elements would you suggest could use strengthening?

YEO: Vice President Harris is known for her strong advocacy on climate change and her environmental agenda. So, for example, the clean energy agreement in IPEF could be a starting point on which to build. The current text creates a cooperative work program, which is a way in which IPEF member countries can launch concrete projects that are of common interest to these countries and then aim to produce tangible outcomes. For example, they launched a regional hydrogen power project, which is a promising new source of clean

energy, with new supply chain development and new ways to trade hydrogen. However, there's a lot of work to do to develop tangible ways to activate this hydrogen power market. I think that this kind of project could show that IPEF could be useful in bringing tangible outcomes and benefits to these member countries through dedicated implementation.

You may also know that a couple of months ago, Singapore hosted an IPEF clean energy investor forum, and it was reported that about \$23 billion of potential clean energy investment opportunities were identified. Of course, what matters is how much of these

investment pledges can actually materialize into projects; but in order to do that, IPEF members need to work together to resolve investor grievances, including extensive red tape and bureaucratic hurdles.

CUTLER: As you know, the United States has put the IPEF trade pillar effectively on hold through the election season. A lot of progress was made, but we also hear that a number of developing country members of IPEF had concerns about the labor provisions, in particular. Do you think if these talks were resumed quickly after the election that they could be swiftly concluded or do you think that there are larger differences in positions between the countries that could necessitate a lengthy negotiation?

YEO: I think it's more of a problem on the U.S. side than for other IPEF members. What I'm particularly worried about is the digital trade component. Recently, the WTO (World Trade Organization) e-commerce plurilateral joint statement initiative was concluded with its text "stabilized." Although there is a shortage of more ambitious outcomes, I still think this is a meaningful achievement. The digital trade and e-commerce

The digital trade and e-commerce market in the region is exploding. These markets have young populations and growing middle classes, and many are interested in joining the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA). China is also showing interest in DEPA, so now the United States is falling behind.

market in the region is exploding. These markets have young populations and growing middle classes, and many are interested in joining the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA). China is also showing interest in DEPA, so now the United States is falling behind. There are no rules of the road for digital trade and without globally agreed, high-standard, digital trade rules, I think these countries in the region tend to copy and paste the standards and infrastructure available from China. So, I am afraid that the United States is falling behind in developing new global standards and rules for digital trade.

CUTLER: Former President Trump has made it clear that if he is elected, he would, early on in his administration, instruct the United States to exit IPEF, calling it “TPP-2” (Trans-Pacific Partnership). How do you think the region would respond to such a move? My sense is that many countries in the region are still trying to get over the U.S. exit from TPP, so how would such an act by President Trump be perceived in the region?

YEO: First of all, IPEF is not TPP-2—it's completely different. U.S. withdrawal from IPEF is a very undesirable scenario that we want to avoid at all costs. I also think if that happens, the credibility of the United States will be damaged severely. And, I think it's not just short-term fallout but would impact relations in the more medium and long term too. To have a flagship U.S. economic engagement project and make a 180-degree U-turn would be damaging to U.S. credibility and leadership in the region.

CUTLER: Trump also has been very vocal about his intention to increase tariffs against China as high as 60%, but he is also advocating for an across-the-board tariff increase of 10% on all products and for all trading partners. While there may be exceptions, that's his current proposal. How would these actions be viewed in the region?

YEO: This is very, very worrisome. If you look at the big picture of what is happening in the region, I believe that U.S. industrial policy has been quite effective, at least up to this point, such as the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the CHIPS and Science Act. Because of these policy actions, many cutting-edge companies from Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are investing massively in the U.S. market for semiconductors, batteries, EVs, etc. This new trend of diversification and “China plus one” business strategies is providing countries like ASEAN members or India with new opportunities to develop their industries. They weren't really given such opportunities before because everything was concentrated in China, but now they are being integrated into new global supply chains led by the United States. Against this backdrop, if the United States takes a complete opposite turn in its policy direction and imposes tariffs against the products from its friends and allies, it will be very counterproductive to the momentum building in the region and will damage U.S. national interests in the end.

If the United States takes a complete opposite turn in its policy direction and imposes tariffs against the products from its friends and allies, it will be very counterproductive to the momentum building in the region and will damage U.S. national interests in the end.

CUTLER: A number of countries retaliated against the United States during the first Trump administration, when tariffs were imposed, particularly on steel and aluminum, and China retaliated with its own sizable tariffs on U.S. imports. Are countries in the region likely to try to negotiate a deal to head off tariffs, or do you think that they are already planning retaliation moves against the United States?

YEO: I think China will definitely retaliate, but it's a more complicated picture for other countries in the region. In terms of security cooperation, I think many of these countries are under the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” or under some sort of security arrangement, so countries will take into consideration economic aspects as well as security aspects when deciding on the appropriate response.

CUTLER: Under the Biden and the Trump administrations, the United States has retreated from its leadership role in the WTO. How do you see the WTO operating in the coming years, particularly as issues like supply chain resiliency, export controls, and advanced technologies become more and more prominent? Do you think the WTO risks becoming sidelined or irrelevant? Or, in light of the recent announcement on a digital trade agreement between many of the participants in the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-commerce, do you think that there is hope for the WTO to take on some of these challenging issues?

YEO: Yes, obviously there's a leadership vacuum at the WTO, and because of all these global challenges that we have discussed, today, more than ever, we need an organization like the WTO. But obviously, the WTO is not living up to the needs of the time. However, what is encouraging, despite overall difficulties that we are facing, is that recently middle-power countries have stepped up and have been playing a constructive leadership role. For example, the negotiations for the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) were led by Korea and Chile. The JSI e-commerce agreement that you mentioned, which was concluded recently, was led by Japan, Australia, and Singapore.

It would be critical for the United States to step up its economic engagement in the region by providing tangible incentives for allies and partners.

I think, more and more, these middle-power country groups need to step up to fill the void left by the superpowers at the WTO. I also think that the WTO needs to tackle these newly emerging global challenges. For example, while there are widespread concerns with Chinese export surges and overcapacity issues, there is no global dialogue on this issue. I think the G7 is probably the only dialogue raising its voice on this issue, but its approach is more confrontational than collaborative.

If you look at WTO data on ongoing anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations which were reported to the WTO after 2020, actions against China have comprised 30% to 40% of the total actions. This means that there is a structural issue, not just a case-by-case temporal matter. This also means we need more evidence-based, objective discussions on the extent and nature of the problem, and how it is impacting not just U.S. and China relations but also third nations including the EU, Korea, Japan, and the Global South. We need to explore global solutions to address these global issues. But there is no such global discussion underway right now. I think the WTO will need to play a more authoritative role as the only global trade body that is supposed to discuss and find solutions to these international trade issues. Also, as you mentioned, we have all of these newly emerging national security arguments regarding export controls, investment screening, and so forth. We have to decide whether to bring these matters into the realm of the WTO.

CUTLER: How realistic is it though for the WTO to have a reasonable conversation on the overcapacity issue when top officials from China are denying that there actually is a problem?

YEO: It is a difficult issue. I understand that some Chinese scholars acknowledge the need to have a global dialogue, but it's very challenging to expect the WTO to have an effective role in taking up these very sensi-

tive and difficult issues. However, if we were to find any place where we could have these kinds of conversations, I can't see any other venue than the WTO.

CUTLER: My final question is that if you had the opportunity to go into the Oval Office and brief our next president on these issues with very little time, what points would you highlight with respect to policy actions that they should or should not take? As the United States contemplates some of the policy measures we've been discussing, how would you urge the president to think about the region?

YEO: It's a very difficult question. If I had 30 seconds, I would make three points. First, U.S. trade and industrial policy can have a significant impact on shaping the economies and supply chains in the Indo-Pacific, as we have witnessed for the past few years. Second, nevertheless, sometimes the U.S. policy goal of strengthening U.S. leadership in the region and encouraging diversification and friendshoring of allies and partners doesn't match its policy actions to achieve that. Third, therefore, it would be critical for the United States to step up its economic engagement in the region by providing tangible incentives for allies and partners with market access, industrial policy benefits such as the IRA tax credits, and digital trade rule-making leadership.

Han-koo Yeo is a Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and Former Korean Trade Minister.

Wendy Cutler is Vice President at the Asia Society Policy Institute and the managing director of the Washington, D.C. office.



2 MR. DINO PATTI DJALAL ON INDONESIA'S VIEW OF U.S. REGIONAL POLICY

ASPI Vice President Daniel Russel's Interview with Former
Indonesian Ambassador to the United States Dino Djalal

DANIEL RUSSEL: As an experienced diplomat with long experience in the United States and as a high-ranking former government official, how would you describe the Indonesian perspective on the upcoming U.S. presidential election?

MR. DINO DJALAL: There are basically two elections in the world of overriding importance to Indonesia, both in terms of geopolitical significance and generating a public spotlight. One is naturally our own, and the other is the U.S. presidential election. The long campaigns and even longer pre-campaign periods have always been watched closely by Indonesians, who see the United States as a country that is immensely consequential. The average Indonesian will describe the United States as a superpower whose foreign policy has a great impact on Indonesia, on the region, and the world. So there has always been this fascination about U.S. presidents. Of course, given his connection to Indonesia, President Barack Obama was the most popular

U.S. president. But there's always been fascination with the U.S. president, and a great deal of attention paid to the elections.

RUSSEL: It's more than just curiosity; America is important. But what are the practical implications for Indonesia of who gets elected, that's it. Has it mattered significantly in the past?

DJALAL: It has mattered in various ways at different moments. For example, under Suharto the view was that Republicans would be preferable to us and Indonesian politicians would say that. Because their perception was that Republicans cared more about trade, economics, and investment than democracy or human rights issues. Now, the reality wasn't so simple, but that was the perception. Democrats were seen to be more active in pressuring Indonesia on democracy and human rights issues at that time. And then, of course, came the *reformasi* period and perceptions shifted. It was no longer as black and white as it appeared before.

Obama's presidency was significant, not only because of his childhood experience in Indonesia but because when he came to Indonesia in 2010, he made the most memorable visit by any foreign head of state in Indonesian history. When he gave a speech at the University of Indonesia, millions of people in the country stopped what they were doing to listen. His speech was in the headlines for a week. Nobody else has ever done that. Even today people still talk about that Obama speech.

Most Indonesians would say that Trump's presidency had the most impact on public opinion in Indonesia.

As for practical implications, most Indonesians would say that Trump's presidency had the most impact on public opinion in Indonesia. The only time we had one million

people turning out to protest in Indonesia was when Indonesians demonstrated in front of the presidential office in Jakarta to protest the decision to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018. I don't think Indonesians had ever had a decision by an American president—or even any foreign policy issue—affecting the grassroots in that way. And in a sense, it also affected the Indonesian elections when President Jokowi ran for his second term in 2019. That issue was in the background and so there was greater need to show his Islamic credentials to the electorate, which was also reflected in his choice of vice-presidential running-mate.

RUSSEL: So, in this current campaign, are you seeing anything that from the Republicans or the Democrats in terms of policies or positions that you think would affect Indonesian interests or attitudes?

DJALAL: One of the questions that I get asked by students and other Indonesians is about immigration. The issue of illegal migration into the United States doesn't directly affect us since it's principally people coming across the southern border from Central and South America. But I get asked whether Muslims will be able to get visas to the United States if Trump returns. I remind them that when Trump enacted his "Muslim ban" policy in his first year in office, it was not aimed at Indonesia; it applied to Muslim majority countries in the Middle East. It didn't directly affect U.S. visas or entry for Indonesians.

But I think the biggest question, Dan, is this: What would MAGA—"Make America Great Again"—actually mean for us if Trump wins a second term? When he was president, his approach created a lot of disruption and change—not just in domestic policy but in U.S. foreign policy as well. It's clear that a second Trump term would end the continuity in traditional U.S. foreign policy that we see in the Biden administration. But what's not clear is what a return of Trump would mean for countries like Indonesia in practice.

RUSSEL: One dimension of “America First” was and would again, apparently, be tariffs and trade. What are the implications of Trump imposing across-the-board 10% tariff hikes and taking a tough line on countries that have trade surpluses with the United States? He is signaling very high tariffs on China, which would almost certainly further slow China’s economy and have a knock-on effect on countries in Southeast Asia.

DJALAL: We would hope that the U.S. government would be wise about this and not yield to the temptation to take protectionist measures. Southeast Asian countries have been very consistent in anti-protectionist positions and have been quite persistent in making sure trade flows remain unimpeded. We think there should be greater trade facilitation measures, not the opposite. And remember, China is going to respond. New U.S. tariffs can lead to a trade war. So, those sorts of actions will not go down well with America’s trading partners in the region. Indonesia is quite sensitive about measures that raise barriers to trade. We are having quite some issues with the Europeans over this. So, any move by a new U.S. administration that would complicate trade relations would be seen as a concern by Indonesians.

RUSSEL: What about on the security side? Indonesia is not a claimant in the South China Sea, but you’ve got real equities in the area of Natuna in terms of maritime security, and you also have a security partnership with the United States. To what extent would the Indonesian government be concerned about a shift in U.S. defense policy in the Indo-Pacific region?

The best thing about our relationship with the United States is that it is between the two militaries....The strategic trust they have with one another is also at a high point.

DJALAL: Yeah, well, first, the best thing about our relationship with the United States is that it is between the two militaries. Our mil-to-mil relations are very good now. The exercises, the exchanges, the consultations, the arms purchases—they’re all, I think, at an all-time high now. The strategic trust they have with one another is also at a high point. I think that that part of our relationship will remain constant, especially now that Pres-

ident-elect Prabowo will take office in October because he was the one who oversaw this strengthening of our military relations. Second, I think what we want to see is more confidence building and the avoidance of an escalation of tension in the South China Sea. We are trying to push hard for the code of conduct negotiations with China to be finalized, but it seems that it’s not going to happen anytime soon. We will be very wary of any prospect of heightened strategic rivalries in Southeast Asia. I think we will do our best to see that strategic stability prevails in our part of the Indo-Pacific region.

RUSSEL: We talked a bit about Trump. What about Kamala Harris? Or to put it another way, what would your expectations be for another Democrat in the White House?

DJALAL: Yeah. Well, to be honest, Kamala Harris is less known in Indonesia, and perhaps in Southeast Asia as well, because a lot of attention has been on Biden. It’s true that she attended the ASEAN Summit, and she did come to Indonesia and made a very good impression. Definitely there’s no question that we like her, and we look forward to hearing more on her policy positions as a presidential candidate in this year’s election. But unlike Biden, who is a longtime veteran of U.S. foreign policy who we know a lot about, Vice President Kamala Harris really needs to present her foreign policy ideas. We look forward to hearing what she has to say about our part of the Indo-Pacific region—Southeast Asia. In any case, whoever wins the US Presidential

elections, the the United States and Indonesia will remain bound by the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that we have built together.

RUSSEL: So, you mentioned that the military to military relationship between the United States and Indonesia is strong. Your president-elect is the current defense minister and is himself a former general. Perhaps defense is one aspect of the relationship that is likely to remain constant. Are there other elements in the U.S.-Indonesia relationship that you think would endure without being particularly affected by the politics of the White House?

DJALAL: I would say that Indonesia and the United States are very much aligned on the need to preserve the freedom of the seas, especially in the South China Sea. If anything happens in that body of water, our trade would be affected, and the Indonesian economy, and other economies in our region, would be severely impacted. As a nation made up of islands, one constant in our foreign policy is to ensure our maritime rights are protected. The “archipelago concept” is central to our interests—namely, that we have sovereignty over the waters within the baselines of our islands. We’ve been very much at the forefront of the formation of UNCLOS—the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Maritime issues are very much integral to our overall foreign policy. And there’s been a long appreciation of the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation, not just within Indonesian waters but throughout the South China Sea. This is a common interest between our two countries and an area where we would like to see continuity from the United States.

Indonesia and the United States are very much aligned on the need to preserve the freedom of the seas, especially in the South China Sea.

RUSSEL: So, would it be fair to say that it is a priority for Indonesia, and perhaps for a number of other ASEAN countries, to ensure the continued robust presence of the U.S. Navy to keep the sea lanes open, to combat illegal fishing, and to maintain a certain level of stability?

DJALAL: We have always been open to the U.S. naval presence in the area. Again, it is aligned with our interests and there’s also a high degree of confidence and trust between our navies. Going beyond the defense relationship, I would mention three other areas in the relationship that are important to us. One is obviously commerce. And here is an area where the United States needs to do more to compete. There are a lot of players with a lot of trade packages—it’s getting crowded. Trade is such a big item, and I know that Jakarta and Washington have been trying to bring our trade relationship to the next level. We are keen to have critical minerals be part of an elevated strategic trade relationship between the two sides. It’s important for Washington to know that it’s a very competitive space right now; everyone has something to offer on trade. So, the United States also needs to offer attractive packages to Indonesia and to others in the region. Secondly, I would say technology is a priority in the relationship. Access to technology is one of the key drivers of our interest in the United States. And the third area I would mention is education. Now, for many years the level of educational exchange has remained flat. I don’t know why. So many different ambassadors and administrations in both countries have tried to increase the number of students from Indonesia studying in the United States. I think we’re stuck at around 10,000. It would be nice to double it.

RUSSEL: Have you got any thoughts or advice or recommendations for the next U.S. administration?

DJALAL: Obviously, we would like the United States to be actively and constructively engaged in Southeast Asia. There is the thought in Southeast Asia that because of your political cycles, you are subject to a kind of stop-and-go syndrome. There's a period in your politics when you go on autopilot, and that is not reassuring to us. We know the United States has permanent interests in Southeast Asia, but we're not assured of your permanent attention. We saw this during the Trump administration, for example. President Trump did not attend any ASEAN Summits, and the post of American ambassador to ASEAN was vacant for some time. And not only that, the post of American ambassador to a number of Southeast Asian countries was left empty for some time. For us, presidential attendance at the ASEAN Summit and the presence of American ambassadors are things that we would like to be a constant. For us, the United States is very important—not just bilaterally but in terms of regional architecture. Many countries are engaged in hedging and balancing, including Indonesia, and the engagement and presence of the United States in that scheme of regional

We know the United States has permanent interests in Southeast Asia, but we're not assured of your permanent attention.

equilibrium is quite important to us. But, of course, that's up to Washington, DC. That's up to the political leaders there.

So, what advice? Obviously, show up—show up and listen, engage and add value to Southeast Asia. Not everything is measured by what you are going to put

on the table, but we do like to see the United States being one of the countries that intensely cooperates with us on climate change, on technology, on food security, on education, on infrastructure, and so on. To enhance its engagement, the United States must be relevant to a wide range of issues that are important to Southeast Asians, one of the fastest changing regions in the world.

RUSSEL: How does the Middle East affect the U.S.-Indonesia relationship?

DJALAL: I was a diplomat for 28 years. I can say that I've never seen the Indonesian public being as galvanized by a foreign policy issue as they are over the situation in Gaza. We've seen frictions in the past when there were incidents in Palestine, including some demonstrations, but never in this way. A lot of Indonesians and the political elite are questioning the world order because of what they see as glaring inconsistencies or double standards. We appreciate that the Biden administration has begun to use its influence more and more to push for a ceasefire. There is also widespread belief in Indonesia that the United States, given its strong relations with Israel, is a country that is best placed, with the right political will, to bring about a two-state solution. Also, given President-elect Prabowo's interest in the Middle-East, especially on the Palestine issue, there may be opportunity for Jakarta and Washington DC to work together in any future peace process.

Ambassador Dino Patti Djalal is the founder of the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI) and former Indonesian Ambassador to the United States

Daniel Russel is Vice President for International Security and Diplomacy at the Asia Society Policy Institute



3 ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & POLITICAL ECONOMY

By: Lizzi C. Lee and Neil Thomas

Communist leaders may not like electoral democracy but there are few events they will pay more attention to this year than the U.S. presidential election on November 5. General Secretary Xi Jinping says U.S.-China ties are “the most important bilateral relationship in the world,” and Chinese officials, scholars, and netizens are anxious to glean insights about Republican Party candidate and former President Donald Trump and Democratic Party candidate and current Vice President Kamala Harris.¹

For Beijing, the stakes are high. The presidencies of first Trump and now Joe Biden saw the United States adopt a posture of “strategic competition” toward China that has significantly impacted the ruling Chinese Communist Party’s external environment and domestic priorities. Trump imposed tariffs on most Chinese imports to the United States, which Biden ramped up in key industries including electric vehicles. Biden introduced extensive export controls aimed at curbing China’s chip industry, which could be expanded to other sectors. Trump and Biden have both elevated U.S. support for Taiwan; strengthened restrictions on inbound and outbound investment with China; and sanctioned hundreds of Chinese government agencies, state-owned enterprises, private firms, and individuals. Biden has further prioritized working with U.S. allies and partners on economic, political, and security policies to blunt China’s influence. Both countries

seek “guardrails” against crisis and conflict, but bilateral diplomacy is increasingly fraught and multilateral cooperation on global challenges is increasingly difficult.

This essay analyzes the China policies of both candidates, focusing on the diplomatic and economic dimensions of U.S.-China relations, highlighting how a second Trump administration could deliver acute shocks but potential openings while Harris would likely bring continuity with Biden's approach. It argues that Beijing has no clear preference between the two candidates. Therefore, neither election outcome would fundamentally change China's international strategy, although the result would produce different tactical responses. It concludes with recommendations for how both Washington and Beijing can safeguard global stability while preserving national sovereignty regardless of who succeeds Biden.

Trump's China Policy: Acute Threats but Unique Opportunities for Beijing?

When Donald Trump was in the White House, he dominated decision-making to an extent unusual even for a U.S. president.² He led an administration that included cabinet members and senior officials with conflicting views on China policy who fought for his attention. He changed tack with Beijing several times during his four years in power, variously heeding and ignoring advice from different factions.³ Sometimes he made decisions in the middle of the night and first shared them on social media.

Trump's most consistent positions for the past four decades have been support for tariffs, domestic manufacturing, and reducing the trade deficit.

His campaign team emphasizes that no one else speaks for Trump, despite several Republican advisors offering their views about what foreign policy could look like in a second term.⁴ Should Trump win in November, his China policy will depend somewhat on the level of personal interest he takes in

the country, and on whom he selects as his national security advisor and secretary of state, variables that Trump himself may not yet know. It makes sense, therefore, to base predictions of Trump's policies on what he himself has said. And Trump's most consistent positions for the past four decades have been support for tariffs, domestic manufacturing, and reducing the trade deficit.⁵ China, by far the world's largest manufacturing country, has comprised the largest share of the U.S. goods trade deficit since 2000, with a bilateral deficit of \$279.1 billion in 2023 (down from a record \$418.2 billion in 2018).⁶

Compared to Biden, Trump is more likely to lean on his executive authority to pursue tougher economic measures against China in a more sudden and unilateral fashion. In recent months he has promised to revoke China's most-favored nation status—ending many of its current tariff exemptions—and introduce a blanket tariff of around 60% on Chinese imports.⁷ He has also suggested introducing much harsher restrictions on Chinese ownership of U.S. assets and U.S. investment into China; expanding U.S. export controls on China from Biden's “small yard, high fence” to a “big yard, high fence” approach; and phasing out imports of Chinese electronics, steel, and pharmaceuticals entirely.⁸ Furthermore, an exception to the Trump campaign's reticence about anointing surrogates has been directing some media inquiries to his former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, a champion of comprehensive “strategic decoupling” from China.⁹

Trump may not fully implement all these ideas, but they give a flavor of his China policy priorities, which could cause significant economic pain in the country. A UBS study estimated that a 60% tariff on all Chinese

exports to the United States would by itself shave 2.5% off China's GDP growth rate the next year.¹⁰ The effect could be even worse if Trump also follows through on another promise to impose a “universal baseline tariff” of around 10% on imports from all countries. Still, the authors said Beijing could mitigate the impact by shifting exports and production to other countries, and through more aggressive fiscal stimulus, monetary policy, and exchange rate depreciation—potentially allowing Xi to avoid having to compromise with Trump.

While Trump's views on tariffs are unlikely to change, he may seek to use his tough trade measures (or the threat thereof) as leverage with China. In his telling,¹³ tariffs are beneficial because they raise revenue, they make factories return home, and they are “good for negotiation” because foreign leaders during his first term “would do anything” to get them removed.¹¹ Without the Covid-19 pandemic, which triggered a sharp deterioration in bilateral ties, Trump's first term may have ended with more amicable relations with Beijing, following the signing of the US-China Phase One trade deal in January 2020. On the campaign trail this year, Trump has said that relations with China can be “mutually beneficial” and has frequently praised the country, claiming that “I love China” and “I respect China,” and Xi, saying “I liked him a lot” and “he's a strong guy.”

While Trump's views on tariffs are unlikely to change, he may seek to use his tough trade measures (or the threat thereof) as leverage with China.

Trump, an incorrigible dealmaker, may see his tough economic proposals against China as the opening gambit of Phase Two negotiations, especially if Beijing decides to meet (or gesture towards meeting) some of his demands.¹² His invitation to Chinese auto-makers to invest in American factories and his backflip on banning the Chinese-owned app TikTok, in which one of his campaign donors is a major investor, suggest that some of Trump's stances on China can be flexible to serve his broader goals.¹³ Trump could also become more open to compromise with Beijing if his policies lead to a slump in the U.S. stock market, to which he is known to pay particular attention.¹⁴

Trump may link China's economic actions to diplomatic and security issues. In particular, he has been critical of Taiwan, which China claims as sovereign territory and with which it refuses to rule out using force to achieve unification. He has complained recently that “Taiwan took our chip business from us” and “We're no different than an insurance company. Taiwan doesn't give us anything.”¹⁵ Taiwan is 9,500 miles away. It's 68 miles away from China.” This attitude reflects Trump's general belief that allies and partners are freeloading off the U.S. military and should pay more for their own defense. If Trump views Taiwan policy through a transactional lens, he could either use it as a stick, by increasing U.S. support to try and force Beijing to the bargaining table, or as a carrot, by agreeing to reduce U.S. support in exchange for economic concessions, or both. The chances of a grand bargain may be slim under a Trump presidency, but they would be virtually non-existent under Harris.

Harris's China Policy: More of the Same for U.S.-China Relations?

The elevation of Kamala Harris to the top of the Democratic ticket has brought a flurry of scrutiny of her views on China. While her earlier career in law enforcement focused on domestic issues, she gained foreign policy experience in the Senate as a member of its Intelligence Committee and Homeland Security Committee. In her almost four years as vice president, she has since actively participated in almost every meeting of the National Security Council and discussion of the Presidential Daily Brief.¹⁶ She has made 17 foreign trips,

including representing the United States at the ASEAN Summit in 2023 and at the Munich Security Conference in both 2022 and 2023.

Harris appears to broadly share the mainstream Democratic approach to China policy that Secretary of State Antony Blinken summarized in May 2022 as “Invest. Align. Compete”—that is, invest in domestic capabilities, align with allies and partners, and compete with Beijing for economic advantage and global leadership.¹⁷ Later statements from the White House, when Biden met Xi in Bali in November 2022, added that the administration believed this competition should play out in the context of “guardrails,”¹⁸ such as leader-level diplomacy; military-to-military dialogue; and limited cooperation on issues of mutual concern such as climate, trade, and counternarcotics.

Harris appears to broadly share the mainstream Democratic approach to China policy that Secretary of State Antony Blinken summarized in May 2022 as “Invest. Align. Compete.”

Harris is likely to build on Biden’s China policy. In August she told the Democratic National Convention that as president she would ensure that “America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century.”¹⁹ She has said the United States must pursue a “de-risking” of its economic relationship with China to guarantee that it is the “leader in terms of the rules of the road.”²⁰ She has stood on a Philippines Coast Guard

vessel and criticized Beijing’s “intimidation and coercion” in the South China Sea.²¹ She supported Biden’s policies to strengthen ties with Taiwan by saying the United States “will continue to support Taiwan self-defense” and meeting Taiwan’s now-president Lai Ching-te in Honduras.²² But she has expressed support²³ for cooperating with China on global issues such as climate change and has told Xi that the two countries need “open lines of communication to responsibly manage the competition” between them. She has also embraced cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, as well as with NATO and Ukraine, emphasizing that “isolation is not insulation” from the world.²³

Of course, as vice president, Harris ultimately must implement Biden’s foreign policy, and reporting does suggest a few differences in foreign policy emphasis between the two. Harris apparently disagrees with Biden’s framing of international relations as a simple battle between democracy and autocracy, implying more willingness to strengthen ties with non-democracies that traditionally favor Beijing.²⁴ But she also has a history of support for the cause of human rights in China, possibly beyond that which Biden was willing to offer. When running for president in 2019 she said, “China’s abysmal human rights record must feature prominently in our policy toward the country.”²⁵ In the Senate she co-sponsored the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in 2019 and the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act in 2020. Her views here may resonate with those of her running mate Tim Walz, who once lived in China and while in Congress met with both the Dalai Lama and Hong Kong democracy activist Joshua Wong.²⁶ More focus on addressing human rights in China through U.S. actions could raise tensions and test the guardrails of bilateral relations.

Lose-Lose: Beijing Has No Clear Preference between Trump and Harris

Chinese interlocutors have summarized the mood in Beijing about the U.S. election with a line from the classic Qing dynasty novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*: “All crows under heaven are the same black.” In other words, neither Trump nor Harris is a good option, as both would pursue a hostile China strategy, even if their tactics could be quite different.

Beijing has scrupulously avoided expressing any views on the candidates but policymakers there are under no illusions²⁷ about the dramatic shift in U.S. policy on China in recent years. None of them are expecting Washington to return to its past policy of prioritizing engagement with China anytime soon. They see both Trump's "America First" mantra and the Biden-Harris administration's "foreign policy for the middle class" as reflections of a shift in U.S. thinking from prioritizing absolute gains from economic globalization to prioritizing relative gains over China, even if that means disrupting international markets. They know that U.S. public opinion on China is at a near-record low.²⁸

Beijing's judgment that outcompeting China is a bipartisan priority in Washington means that Chinese leaders have put forward a relatively clear set of foreign policies²⁹ that are likely to persist regardless of who wins the U.S. election: 1) turbocharge technological innovation, advanced manufacturing, and scientific research to reduce U.S. leverage by building autonomous supply chains and dominating future industries; 2) shape a favorable external environment by elevating diplomacy with the Global South, gaining influence in global governance institutions, and maintaining stable ties with the West; and 3) advance China's territorial claims and security ambitions through aggressive gray zone activities while being careful to avoid a major military confrontation with the United States.

Even if China's long-term strategy will not fundamentally change, the candidates have important policy differences that will affect Beijing's near-term approach to U.S.-China relations. A Harris administration would

likely bring policy continuity with Biden, including a commitment to leader-level diplomacy and bilateral guardrails, which could be more advantageous to Xi in the short term, as he looks to steady the Chinese economy. But the progressive consolidation of a U.S.-led network of China-skeptic partners may be more systematically damaging to Beijing in the longer term, as it would likely mean that China faces more effective allied deterrence, export controls, and technology cooperation.³⁰

Chinese interlocuters have summarized the mood in Beijing about the U.S. election with a line from the classic Qing dynasty novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*: "All crows under heaven are the same black."

In contrast, the geo-economic policies of a second Trump administration are likely to quickly and significantly escalate U.S.-China tensions, worsening Beijing's economic challenges and intensifying threat perceptions among Xi and his top advisors. A more unilateral Washington could also express support for Taiwan or other Chinese Communist Party concerns in ways that cause Beijing to see greater threats to its red lines. Such threats could lead to more combative conduct in regional hotspots and raise the risk of a military incident. However, Trump's openness to unconventional diplomacy and strong belief in leader-to-leader negotiations could provide an opening³⁹ to improve U.S.-China relations that is virtually inconceivable under Harris.³¹ Moreover, Trump could undermine international "anti-China" coalitions by alienating U.S. allies and partners through his implementation of universal tariffs, refusal to militarily support Ukraine, demands for greater allied burden-sharing, and opposition to multilateral action on major issues such as climate change.³² Some nationalist Chinese even say they prefer Trump, calling him *Chuan Jianguo*, or "Trump, builder of our country," because they believe that he will weaken America's domestic governance and global standing.³³

Policy Recommendations: Keeping the Peace in U.S.-China Relations

A fundamental view shared by Harris, Trump, and Xi is their desire to avoid a great power war between

China and the United States. Regardless of who replaces Biden in the White House or whether they pursue policies that lower or raise the temperature of U.S.-China relations, the two sides should work to maintain the basic peace between them through the following three principles.

1. **Prioritize leader-to-leader diplomacy.** To avoid dangerous misunderstandings and miscalculations, it is essential for the top leaders of China and the United States to speak to each other. If bilateral visits prove politically difficult, these meetings can occur by video conference or preferably on the sidelines of international summits. Even if the leaders agree on nothing of substance, they should continue to meet. Direct talks allow for the communication of credible signals about red lines and avoid the risk that signals from one country are distorted by yes-people or vested interests in the government bureaucracy of the other. These meetings also serve as critical action-forcing events inside each government to consolidate positions and emphasize mutual priorities. And they establish contact points that can help manage international flashpoints. More information leads to better decisions and less risk of unintended consequences, such as security crises or even military conflict.

A fundamental view shared by Harris, Trump, and Xi is their desire to avoid a great power war between China and the United States.

Even if the leaders agree on nothing of substance, they should continue to meet. Direct talks allow for the communication of credible signals about red lines and avoid the risk that signals from one country are distorted by yes-people or vested interests in the government bureaucracy of the other. These meetings also serve as critical action-forcing events inside each government to consolidate positions and emphasize mutual priorities. And they establish contact points that can help manage international flashpoints. More information leads to better decisions and less risk of unintended consequences, such as security crises or even military conflict.

2. **Enhance dialogues and exchanges.** Leaders will usually only talk at most every few months, while events, policies, and priorities can change by the day; so, it is essential for China and the United States to maintain regular channels of communication to remain informed about developments in the other country. This should take the form of Track I, Track 1.5, and Track II dialogues that involve politicians, officials, executives, and scholars, as well as people-to-people exchanges such as tourism, study abroad, and research fellowships. Naturally, these events should be undertaken with appropriate security precautions, and with full transparency about the affiliations of each side's interlocutors. Whatever ideas Beijing and Washington have for U.S.-China relations, dialogue does not necessarily mean agreement; the more that each side knows about the other, the better they will be able to understand their motivations and work to avoid worst-case scenarios.
3. **Cooperate on existential threats.** Some global issues should transcend national boundaries because they threaten everyone. Low trust between Beijing and Washington has made such cooperation difficult in recent years, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic, and because climate action is not a Trump priority. However, new technologies may pose more immediate threats to humankind. Both Trump and Harris, as well as Chinese policymakers, have expressed concern at the potential existential risks posed by future developments in artificial intelligence, leading to the creation of high-level bipartisan Track II dialogues and the U.S.-China Intergovernmental Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence. These early steps could provide a foundation for building more sustainable habits of cooperation that add stability to what will be an ongoing strategic competition between China and the United States.

Neil Thomas is a Fellow on Chinese Politics at Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis

Lizzi C. Lee is a Fellow on Chinese Economy at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis.



4 ON THE ECONOMIC SECURITY AGENDA

By: Jane Mellsop and Mariko Togashi

Economic security has been hitting the headlines in recent years, with the catchcry that “economic security is national security” underpinning many countries’ view of the world today. While there is no single definition of economic security, the United States and its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific are increasingly concerned about the security and resiliency of their supply chains and access to markets for strategic products, including critical minerals; the disruptions their businesses face from geopolitical, health or climate crises; inappropriate technology transfers; and the risks of economic coercion. The emphasis that each of these countries places on individual economic security issues will necessarily differ due to a range of factors such as their development status, national interests, vulnerabilities, and China policies.

In 2023, the Group of Seven (G7) leaders took the first unified step to put the spotlight on economic security as a critical global challenge. Japan shepherded through a new G7 Leaders’ Statement on Economic Resilience and Economic Security at the Hiroshima Summit, highlighting the need to address economic vulnerabilities and counter exploitative practices.³⁴ By taking this move, the G7 illustrated its leadership in addressing pressing global economic issues, especially as other groups, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), falter in generating collective responses and rules to address new challenges. Representing

around a third of the global economy, the G7 can set the tone and the agenda for action on critical issues facing the global economy, although its small number of members is also a limitation when trying to garner broad support for new initiatives.

Meanwhile, a number of countries have also been busy developing distinct national economic security strategies (not all of which are public) or strategies to tackle specific issues—such as Japan’s semiconductor and digital industry strategy, Korea’s strategic technology plan or India’s approach to critical and emerging technologies. Alongside these, countries are also including economic security as a specific topic for discussion among leaders during bilateral meetings, as with the recent Japan–United States summit in April. The elevation of economic security shows that for many countries in the Indo-Pacific, the stability of their regional relationships and the depth and strength of their relationship with the United States remain crucial to long-term security and prosperity. A number of Indo-Pacific countries are also concerned that any measures taken by countries to protect or enhance their own economic security are in accordance with the international rules-based trading system.

A Democrat in the White House

The United States has employed a range of tools to build out its economic security agenda in recent years. The Biden administration has focused on strengthening and diversifying supply chains, especially in key sectors. In 2021, the recommendations flowing from the “100-day review” of supply chain vulnerabilities focused on strengthening the resilience of these supply chains through, inter alia, working with partners to address vulnerabilities and a more robust industrial policy that supports domestic industry. The re-shoring of critical areas of production was supported through new legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act

(IRA) and the CHIPS and Science Act, with more than \$800 billion having been pledged in subsidies for semiconductor manufacturing and research, climate and energy investments, and infrastructure spending.

Alongside these domestic measures, the Biden administration has put extra effort into reenergizing its relationships with a range of Indo-Pacific countries. For example, it invested in rebuilding the Quad with Australia, Japan, and India, as well as pulling together some new mini-groupings, such as the Philippines, Japan, and U.S. summit in

The elevation of economic security shows that for many countries in the Indo-Pacific, the stability of their regional relationships and the depth and strength of their relationship with the United States remain crucial to long-term security and prosperity.

April 2024 and the historic Japan, Korea, and U.S. summit in August 2023. Consistent with this increased engagement was the introduction of its so-called friendshoring policy, whereby the United States has been reducing its economic and trade dependencies on unfriendly countries in favor of its allies and partners. This can be seen in action through the conclusion of a supply chain agreement under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) among 14 countries and the establishment of the Minerals Security Partnership, which includes four key partners (Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea) from the Indo-Pacific. Biden also put a premium on working with partners to address economic coercion risks and, in particular, supporting them when they faced coercion. For example, as one State Department official noted earlier this year, “we are all in for South Korea and any other partners who face Chinese economic coercion.”³⁵

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan characterized the Biden approach on economic restrictions that apply to China as “small yard, high fence.” This has included export controls such as adding more than 300 Chinese companies to the Entity List (more than in the Trump administration) that requires a license for exports and establishing an outbound investment screening mechanism for specific sectors. The United States continues to work with partners including the Netherlands and Japan to successfully implement its export controls. Also, in the name of national security, in May, the United States announced new tariffs to tackle head on some of China’s unfair trade practices, including a 102.5% tariff on electric vehicles. As these moves have expanded on Trump’s tariffs, being “tough on China” is now seemingly cemented as a bipartisan policy.

Continuity most likely under Harris

It is likely that a Harris administration would follow a similar path as President Biden has on underscoring the importance of economic security, diversifying and strengthening supply chains, and re-shoring domestic production. In 2021, Harris commented that it was “critical our trade policies prioritize American workers and businesses,” and it seems unlikely this will change, given the growing domestic pressure to keep jobs in the United States and the touted success of programs such as the IRA and CHIPS and Science Act in politically important states.³⁶

It is expected that a Harris administration would continue the Biden approach to prioritize working closely with partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific on a range of issues, including economic security. Harris has traveled to seven countries in the region as vice president

(although not China), including representing the United States at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in 2022 and has taken a keen interest in some Asian foreign policy issues such as Hong Kong’s freedoms and Myanmar. In the 2020 campaign, she emphasized that she would “work with our allies in Europe and Asia to confront China on its troubling trade practices.”³⁷ Similarly, Brian Deese, economic policy advisor to the Harris-Walz campaign, has said that “America’s national and economic security is bolstered through strong alliances.”³⁸ These partnerships could include supporting more collective action to address concerning economic coercion tactics, working together to ensure effective implementation of the U.S. export controls, and strengthening supply chains.

It is expected that a Harris administration would continue the Biden approach to prioritize working closely with partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific on a range of issues, including economic security.

Whether the “yard” will continue to grow and encompass more and more products, services, and investments will in part be determined by the course that China takes, and how China’s actions are perceived by the United States. Given the impact such expansion could have on other partners, it will be critical for the United States and partners and allies in the region to work together to ensure both that the measures taken by the United States are effectively implemented and that partners and allies can avoid being caught up in them. As vice president, Harris has advocated for de-risking from China, commenting in 2023 that “it’s not about pulling out but it is about ensuring that we are protecting American interests, and that we are a leader in terms of the rules of the road, as opposed to following others’ rules.”³⁹

Two possible areas of expansion are human rights and the environment. Harris’s track record includes co-sponsoring the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, and she has previously noted the value in using trade

to promote human rights, a viewpoint that is likely to impact China policy.⁴⁰ Likewise, Harris's concern for the environment, including her earlier statements around prioritizing clean energy in international trade, may mean environmental elements are included in considerations of appropriate supply chain partners or the IRA's climate provisions are beefed up.⁴¹ She may also be inclined to draw a more explicit link between addressing climate change and our economic security and prosperity.

The Trump Administration on Economic Security

Donald Trump was instrumental in bringing economic security issues to the fore during his presidency, with China being central in his sights. In launching his 2017 National Security Strategy, President Trump said, "for the first time, American strategy recognizes that economic security is national security."⁴² In 2018, the Trump administration imposed new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports citing national security grounds. These measures attracted the ire of a number of U.S. partners in the Indo-Pacific that were also

impacted, especially as many of them regarded the action as trade protectionism and inconsistent with trade obligations.

Trump has promised (at least) 60% tariffs will be imposed on all Chinese goods to protect the American economy and jobs. He has also promised a 10% (or higher) tariff on goods imported into the United States from anywhere.

Citing China's unfair trade practices, such as dumping, discriminatory non-tariff barriers, forced technology transfer, overcapacity, and industrial subsidies, Trump imposed a range of tariffs on more than \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods over his term. China in turn retaliated with its own tariffs and other measures affecting U.S. imports. Trump also restricted access to cut-

ting-edge technologies through export controls. Amid increasing tensions with China, in 2019, the Chinese telecom company Huawei was a high-profile addition to the Entity List, with exports to hundreds of other Chinese companies similarly restricted over the president's term. In 2020, further restrictions prevented American manufacturers of equipment used to produce semiconductors from selling to companies abroad that wanted to sell chips to Huawei. Furthermore, federal agency use of Huawei's equipment was restricted.

Trump's administration was more focused on "making America great again"—with less interest in nurturing key relationships in the region. His transactional approach to many relationships meant that he did not prioritize assisting countries that were targets of economic coercion, as South Korea found out when it faced economic retaliation from China following its 2016 decision on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) installation. The U.S. absence disappointed South Korea and is still keenly felt by some.

The vulnerability of U.S. access to critical minerals was also recognized by the Trump administration, with the Department of Commerce beginning to establish a coordinated federal strategy to address supply chain challenges in this sector in 2019.

What does Trump II hold in store?

Trump's rhetoric on China appears largely unchanged, and it seems likely that the next Trump administration would continue many of Biden's economic security measures, including further actions against China. Trump has promised (at least) 60% tariffs will be imposed on all Chinese goods to protect the American

economy and jobs. He has also promised a 10% (or higher) tariff on goods imported into the United States from anywhere. Both of these moves, were they to happen, would have significant impacts for Indo-Pacific partners. And such impacts would not be limited to just economic consequences but would also undermine key relationships with allies and partners in this important region that the Biden administration has been strengthening.

Trump is unlikely to stop with tariffs next time round. As Robert Lighthizer, key Trump advisor and former U.S. trade representative in the Trump administration testified to the House Select Committee on China, a multipronged approach is needed. This would include strengthening export controls on dual-use and other important products and technologies flowing from U.S. entities to China, expanding the scope of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) so that it can block Chinese investment in the United States for reasons other than a national security threat, and establishing a regime to screen all outbound investment into China.⁴³ It is worth noting that Lighthizer also stressed that the United States should work with its allies on this strategy wherever possible.⁴⁴

A second Trump administration is likely to again be focused on America First as the driver of its economic and trade policy.

In the past, Trump was willing to take unilateral action to bolster national security at the expense of the U.S. friends and allies in the Indo-Pacific, and it remains unclear whether he would take their views onboard this time round. A second Trump administration is likely to again be focused on America First as the driver of its economic and trade policy. This would also lend it to supporting a continuation of the industrial policy to support U.S. manufacturing—although Trump is likely inclined to adjust the IRA to reflect his priorities.

Given Trump's track record, it seems likely that he would be interested in supporting allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific (or elsewhere) to address economic vulnerabilities only when those countries can show that there are some tangible benefits for America. However, Trump's preoccupation with trade deficits may interfere with other countries' strategies to reduce economic dependencies on potential adversaries if those strategies entail selling more goods and services to the United States.

The Biden administration's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which Trump has labeled as "TPP-2," has drawn Trump's ire. In November, Trump claimed that he would "knock out" TPP-2 immediately upon taking office.⁴⁵ Such a move would be a great disappointment to the region, which is looking for more—not less—U.S. engagement and leadership on trade issues.

In any case, Indo-Pacific countries are preparing their own strategies for engaging with the next administration and whatever that may bring, highlighting the value that they bring to the United States and the importance of stability in the region for broader U.S. economic security. They are also busy working on contingency plans should they face the action that has been threatened during the campaign, including looking at potential exceptions that could be negotiated, whether retaliation is an option, and considering alternative markets.

Maintaining Momentum and Strengthening Partnerships

The future of economic security policy in the United States and the Indo-Pacific centers on strengthening

partnerships and maintaining momentum. Due to the very nature of the interconnected world economy and the challenges that so many countries face today, working with allies and partners to effectively address those challenges is going to be critical. No country, be it the United States or a country in the Indo-Pacific, can singlehandedly achieve its economic security goals—whether those be to ban access to high-end technologies (or other products), build resilient supply chains, address highly subsidized goods flooding the global market, or bounce back from being a target of economic coercion.

The United States needs to consider the benefits beyond the direct and immediate dollars and cents when considering the value of cooperation and collaboration with partners in the Indo-Pacific. For example, the broader benefits of maintaining a functioning rules-based world order need to be part of the equation when it comes to economic security calculations. In this regard, the United States is also at risk of losing credibility with its partners (and its future partners) if it continues down a path of unilateral action, especially when its partners are, albeit it sometimes unintentionally, caught in the cross fire. Better communication and coordination with its partners and allies to address the

common challenges are going to bear more fruit, especially in the long run. Absent these, there are real risks for the continuing influence that the United States will have in the region.

No country, be it the United States or a country in the Indo-Pacific, can singlehandedly achieve its economic security goals.

The United States and Indo-Pacific countries should work together to build on the momentum for addressing economic security challenges and drive forward further work internationally. For example, G7 trade ministers could adopt an action plan that sets out pragmatic and concrete steps that countries can take to support work in this area. A key part of that plan should involve broadening out G7 cooperation to involve more partners in the Indo-Pacific region—the United States should draw on its significant convening power here. Indeed, the United States has an opportunity to draw on its economic weight to lead the economic security agenda in a manner that will create more favorable and effective economic and security conditions for both itself and its friends.

For its part, Indo-Pacific countries need to clearly articulate their economic security agenda; prioritize having up-to-date economic security strategies across the region; and, importantly, identify where the United States fits into their strategies (whether it is a Democrat or a Republican in the White House). Indo-Pacific countries need to insert themselves into conversations on economic security in the region and help shape the regional agenda for these matters. And if Trump is reelected in November, they also should underscore the value of regional resilience and stability to economic security.

Jane Mellso is the Director of Trade, Investment, and Economic Security at the Asia Society Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

Mariko Togashi is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Geoeconomics (IOG).



5 ON SCIENCE & TECH DIPLOMACY

By: Akshay Mathur and Helen Zhang

A new era of intergovernmental science and technology cooperation has emerged, driven by the United States and its Asian partners in the Indo-Pacific such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Singapore, and India. As science and technology take primacy in the modern economy, countries are introducing laws and policies to build new sovereign capabilities, protect sensitive innovations and industries, and govern cross-border cooperation.

This essay examines the key trends we have observed in the United States and select Asian countries in the Indo-Pacific, the nature of agreements being inked, and the likely direction of cooperation under the next U.S. administration.

Recent Technological Renaissance in the Indo-Pacific

While technology is not new to the region, there is a discernible shift in recent years toward building competence and capability in newer domains such as artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, quantum computing, clean technologies, space science, semiconductor manufacturing, and digital public infrastructure.

To meet their national objectives and to keep pace with scientific and technological innovation, Asian countries in the Indo-Pacific are upgrading their legislative agendas and policies. For Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Singapore, and India, the authors found more than 100 legislative measures and policies introduced for science and technology since 2020 (Hyperlink PDF) by respective foreign, trade, home, and science and technology ministries, excluding defense.

For instance, South Korea's Framework Act on Science and Technology, legislation introduced in 2001, which traces its roots back to legislation enacted in the 1960s, has been updated several times up to 2024.⁴⁶ Australia published its National Quantum Strategy in 2023 to modernize its economy, "build sovereign capability," and attract talent for the field.⁴⁷ Singapore upgraded its National AI Strategy in 2023 to develop "greater capabilities" but also to address "greater concerns" about its dark uses.⁴⁸ Japan's "New Form of Capitalism" launched in January 2022 has focused on investing in science, technology, and innovation, particularly in "GX" (green transformation) and "DX" (digital transformation).⁴⁹ India, alone, has launched national missions for

quantum computing, green hydrogen, supercomputing, geospatial technology, artificial intelligence, interdisciplinary cyber-physical systems, deep ocean exploration, bioenergy, coal gasification, advanced manufacturing, and broadband technology.⁵⁰

A defining characteristic of these new domestic policies for science and technology is the focus on economic and national security.⁵¹ South Korea enacted the Special Act on the Fostering of National Strategic

Technology in 2023 to protect sovereignty of technologies with implications for its diplomacy and security. Australia's Critical Technologies Statement published in 2023 details how it is protecting and promoting innovations in quantum technologies, autonomous systems and robotics, artificial intelligence, and advanced manufacturing.⁵²

For Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Singapore, and India, the authors found more than 100 legislative measures and policies introduced for science and technology since 2020.

America's Science and Tech Agreements with Asian powers in the Indo-Pacific

Simultaneously, and perhaps more significantly, building on the same security imperatives, Asian countries are upgrading their partnerships with key allies, within and outside Asia.

The United States now has a mix of bilateral (e.g., India-U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, 2022), trilateral (e.g., U.S.-ROK-India Trilateral Technology Dialogue, 2024), and mini-lateral agreements (e.g., Quad Principles on Critical and Emerging Technology Standards) with Asian countries.⁵³ The authors found over 20 agreements inked since 2021 between the United States and its key partners in Asia and the Indo-Pacific (Hyperlink PDF). Some of them are domain specific, such as the manufacturing-focused U.S.-India Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership (2023) and the U.S.-ROK Cooperation in Quantum Information Science and Technologies (2023).⁵⁴ As per the Congressional Research Service, the United States has 60 science and technology agreements globally and more than 2,000 sub-agreements.⁵⁵

The United States has had a deep engagement with China, as well. The U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement⁵⁶ established in 1971 is still in force. It was initially established to counter the Soviet Union and has been renewed every five years, including in 2018 (with added provisions for intellectual property) and again in 2023 and 2024 for six-month intervals.

Meanwhile, the Trade Pillar of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (2022), one of the four workstreams along with Supply Chain, Clean Economy and Fair Economy, boasts of America's partnership with 14 Asian countries and is developing "high-standard rules" for the digital economy, including on cross-border data flows and data localization.⁵⁷ The Supply Chain Pillar is set to secure sectors "critical" for the economies, and the Clean Economy Pillar aims to decarbonize with sustainable technologies. At the inaugural IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum in Singapore in June 2024, nearly 50 startups competed for \$2 billion for development and deployment of clean energy and climate friendly infrastructure and technologies in member countries.⁵⁸

The authors found over 20 agreements inked since 2021 between the United States and its key partners in Asia.

Unsurprisingly, the Quad, in which the United States partners with India, Japan, and Australia, has an agenda that overlaps with that of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). It includes critical and clean technologies but also adds space and cyber to its agenda. The push behind Open Radio Access Network by the Quad is of particular importance given that it is an effort to break the market oligopoly of 5G telecom vendors, driven primarily by fear that networks may become hostage to geopolitical rivals (e.g. China).⁵⁹ At the September 2024 Quad Summit, the leaders pledged further support for the Asia Open RAN Academy (AORA) in the Philippines which already has an \$8 million commitment from the United States and Japan.⁶⁰ India banned Huawei and ZTE in 2021 and has already announced its homemade open radio access network (ORAN) network, Comet, in February 2024.⁶¹

U.S. Tech Posture toward Asia and the Indo-Pacific

Over the past three administrations, American foreign policy has increasingly centered on Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Starting with President Obama's "Pivot to Asia" and continuing under both the Trump and Biden administrations, the United States has moved rapidly to increase its focus on the region to counter a rising and more assertive People's Republic of China (PRC).⁶²

The ongoing competition between the United States and China in Asia has taken on several dimensions. Most often discussed are the military dimensions, including concerns over Chinese naval activity in the South China Sea, fears of U.S.-China military conflict over Taiwan and regional tensions between China and American allies including Japan.⁶³ In addition, this competition has economic dimensions, as seen during the Trump administration's trade war with China, and diplomatic dimensions, as both America and China compete for influence in international organizations and court strategically important nations in Southeast Asia.⁶⁴

Technology, in turn, has become one of the most important dimensions of modern U.S.-China competition. Leaders in both China and the United States believe emerging technologies—most notably artificial intelligence (AI), synthetic biology, quantum computing, and more—will shape the twenty-first century. In both sides' view, AI and other technologies will enable the development of more powerful autonomous systems for use in war, lead to automated scientific research that will speed up innovation, and more.⁶⁵

American policy on technology in Asia has thus adopted a bifurcated approach. On one hand, it seeks to ensure the United States remains a preeminent leader in global innovation ahead of the PRC. In line with this strategy, the United States placed sweeping export controls on the supply of high-end AI chips to China,

launched an international campaign to keep the Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei away from American and allied networks over espionage and security fears, as well as other measures.⁶⁶

On the other side, however, America has also attempted to bolster its technology cooperation with its Asian partners, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. For example, in April, the United States announced new agreements to cooperate with Japan on lunar exploration and fusion energy. The United States also launched a critical and emerging technologies dialogue with South Korea and helped upskill more than 50,000 people as part of an ongoing partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).⁶⁸ These efforts not only help advance American and allied innovation but also help build key regional ties that the United

States hopes will help it check China's growing influence.

On the other side, however, America has also attempted to bolster its technology cooperation with its Asian partners, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.

American science and technology agreements with its Asian allies are, in turn, as diverse as the populations that inhabit the region. With nations that are longtime technological powerhouses, such as Japan and South Korea, these agreements include efforts to support joint scientific research and dia-

logue over technology usage.⁶⁹ For nations with more nascent scientific infrastructure, American agreements include provisions to foster greater cooperation between research institutions, aid in training new scientists, and more.⁷⁰ In this way, American agreements are tailored to meet the diverse needs of countries across Asia.

Key Tech Trends We Have Seen in the Biden Era

Beyond bilateral agreements, the Biden administration has also implemented several domestic, regional, and international policies with ramifications for Asia.

At home, the U.S. Congress passed the CHIPS and Science Act, which invested \$280 billion to improve American semiconductor research and help onshore chip supply chains.⁷¹ Such measures are meant to reduce American dependence on Taiwan, the world's leading producer of high-end chips, and help America keep pace with China's growing investment in the sector.⁷² The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which created substantial incentives for investment in American green technology firms, is similarly designed to help America keep pace with China's ever-expanding production of electric vehicles and other green technology products.⁷³ Even the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) was in part designed to improve American infrastructure to boost national competitiveness vis-à-vis China.⁷⁴ Indeed, while these policies were not Asia focused, they have significant consequences for the region.

A telling speech on America's changing approach to technology security was given by the U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in 2023. In his remarks, he explained how the United States is evolving from a narrow focus on trade policy to a broader focus on international economic policy that prioritizes domestic industry and economic security (a "new Washington Consensus").⁷⁵ Given the geopolitical and geoeconomic rivalry with China, a key objective of this shift in policy will be protecting "foundational technologies with a small yard and high fence." He also emphasized that America's focus on industrial policy aligns with a parallel objective of securing global supply chains by collaborating with Asian partners such as Japan,

South Korea, Taiwan, and India—in line with our observation that the United States is taking a bifurcated approach toward science and technology cooperation.

American efforts to shape global digital governance has value for Asia. The Biden administration crafted a 2023 executive order on AI governance, and its officials attended the first AI Safety Summit in the UK.⁷⁶ As part of the follow-up to these efforts, at the 2024 AI Seoul Summit, the United States was one of several nations that agreed to help establish an international network of AI safety institutes designed to ensure the safe development of the technology.⁷⁷ The United States and its G7 allies helped mobilize more than \$200 million to enhance connectivity in under-resourced areas as part of a program called Digital Invest. In turn, Digital Invest programs have had a significant impact in Asia, for example, by expanding digital payment systems in Uzbekistan.⁷⁸

Asian countries have also influenced global policy on issues of technology governance new to the United States.

Many of these Asia-focused efforts come with substantial private sector engagement. The aforementioned Digital Invest program run by the United States and its allies helped launch a fund for technology entrepreneurship in South and Southeast Asia.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the Quad began its own Quad Investment Network (QUIN) to bring together executives from Quad nations to foster increased investment in technology development.⁸¹ Beyond investor-focused initiatives, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has also launched efforts such as the COMET project, partnering with Microsoft, Google, and others to provide new technologies to farmers in the Mekong Delta.⁸²

On the other hand, Asian countries have also influenced global policy on issues of technology governance new to the United States. During its G20 presidency in 2023, India introduced, negotiated, and developed consensus on a definition for Digital Public Infrastructure and supplemented it with guiding principles for its development and deployment.⁸³ India also introduced the G20 Chief Science Advisors Roundtable and is currently the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence.⁸⁴

What Will the Next Administration Do?

America's broad focus on technology-based engagement in the Indo-Pacific may change based on the upcoming presidential election. The victory of either Vice President Kamala Harris or former president Donald Trump could have important implications for American technology engagement with Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Under a Harris Administration

If Vice President Harris triumphs in November, she will likely continue much of the Biden administration's technology policy. Insiders have already suggested that a Harris administration will likely maintain the Biden administration's 2023 executive order on AI governance, which means it may commit to international efforts such as the proposed network of global AI safety institutes.⁸⁵

A President Harris is also likely to deepen engagement with America's Asian allies on science and technology while promoting a robust effort to keep the United States ahead of the PRC.

There may still be some subtle shifts under a Harris administration, however. Hailing from California, Vice President Harris has longtime relationships with leading Silicon Valley figures, such as her well-known friendship with Laurene Powell Jobs. As a result, Vice President Harris may be more likely to work with Silicon Valley on technology issues, including in Asia.⁸⁶ A Harris administration, for example, might include more partnerships between the United States and its top technology firms to train scientists and promote technology adoption across the Asia-Pacific, as it currently does with the aforementioned COMET project.⁸⁷

Vice President Harris may also partner with industry on issues of international AI governance, as she did on privacy policy while serving as California's attorney general.⁸⁸ Therefore, she represents continuity with the status quo, but with a greater focus on public-private partnerships.

Under a Trump Administration

Meanwhile, if former President Trump wins, we anticipate more significant changes. The former president has made it clear that he wants the United States to stay ahead of China on AI; therefore, a second Trump administration will likely renew and strengthen efforts including export controls on advanced chips. Trump allies have also been reportedly planning efforts to research and design new advanced AI systems for use by the U.S. military.⁹⁰

However, Trump has also stated his desire to limit AI regulation, such as by rolling back the Biden administration's 2023 executive order on AI governance.⁹¹ This position may signal that the Trump administration may be less committed to efforts including building a network of global AI safety institutes. Therefore, global AI governance efforts may take a backseat in a second Trump administration.

Looking Ahead

Governments are building capacity to usher in this era of science and technology diplomacy. New roles are emerging. The authors found nearly 50 cyber-, science-, or technology-focused cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and senior officials in the United States, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Singapore, and India (Hyperlink PDF). The Biden administration appointed Nathan Fick as the inaugural ambassador at large for the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Similarly, Japan has appointed an ambassador for science and technology cooperation, South Korea has an ambassador for science and technology, and Australia has an ambassador for cyber affairs and critical technology. India's Ministry for External Affairs has a division for cyber diplomacy as well as one for "new, emerging, strategic technologies."

If the Harris or Trump administration decides to deepen its science and technology cooperation with Asia and the Indo-Pacific, the United States will find the matching technical expertise, entrepreneurial ambition, and geopolitical impetus in its partners in the region.

Akshay Mathur is the Senior Director, Asia Society Policy Institute, based in New Delhi and responsible for the institute's policy mandate in India.

Helen Zhang is a non-resident fellow in the Sydney University's United States Studies Centre's Emerging Technology Program, and the co-founder of Intrigue Media.



6 ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & CLIMATE

By: Kate Logan and Li Shuo

Introduction

Climate change, and how to confront it, is one of the most politicized issues in the American political system. Regardless of how U.S. politicians talk about climate change, its effects are increasingly dire for Americans and the entire world—including many vulnerable populations in Asia. With the United States and China accounting for around 40% of annual greenhouse gas emissions globally, the speed and scale of their collective emissions reductions will largely determine the future magnitude of economic and human damages. Moreover, how the United States and China implement climate policy and interact will also shape geopolitics, especially for Asian economies that depend on fossil fuels or those rich in minerals and technologies needed for clean energy.

The nature of climate change as a common global challenge previously enabled the United States and China to forge a uniquely cooperative relationship on the issue. U.S.-China joint action famously laid the groundwork for the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, while tempering bilateral tensions. Former president Donald Trump's subsequent withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, however, irrevocably damaged this

cooperation, along with global trust in the United States as a climate leader. And the recent emergence of U.S. economic competitiveness with China as a rare area of bipartisan consensus has further complicated the issue, as U.S. policy responses aiming to limit China's global dominance in essential clean technologies including solar panels and electric vehicles are seen as counterproductive to the global clean energy transition. Despite this, President Joe Biden and his vice president, Kamala Harris—now the Democratic presidential nominee—have supported climate cooperation as a critical area of U.S.-China convergence.

This is the backdrop against which this year's U.S. election is playing out: two parties that largely align in their view of China as the top U.S. competitor, but who hold starkly polarized views toward climate policy as an economic enabler, in Harris's and the Democrats' case, or as a barrier to growth that must be dismantled, as Trump and his supporters contend. The stakes are high—for U.S.-China relations, as well as for the health and safety of our planet.

U.S.-China Climate Engagement under the Biden Administration

The Biden administration complemented its domestic “whole-of-climate” approach with a dedicated strategy to reinstate and leverage U.S. leadership for global climate progress. At the core of this diplomacy were efforts to engage with China to convince the world's largest emitter to raise its climate ambition. Key U.S. “asks” included ending coal power, reducing methane and other non-carbon “super pollutants,” and aligning targets for near-term emissions reductions and net zero emissions with a 1.5°C warming pathway. Upon taking office and rejoining the Paris Agreement, Biden installed former U.S. secretary of state John Kerry as the nation's

This is the backdrop against which this year's U.S. election is playing out: two parties that largely align in their view of China as the top U.S. competitor, but who hold starkly polarized views toward climate policy as an economic enabler.

first-ever special presidential envoy on climate change. This prompted China into appointing veteran climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua back into a corresponding role. The dynamic of these two climate envoys created a clear and dedicated platform for U.S.-China climate engagement.

Despite tense bilateral relations, the first year of the Biden administration saw meaningful progress with China. Kerry traveled to China twice in 2021: first in April to Shanghai, which delivered

the U.S.-China Joint Statement Addressing the Climate Crisis, and second in August to Tianjin, which paved the way for another joint declaration both countries later released at COP26 in Glasgow. China's President Xi Jinping also participated in the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate convened by President Biden in April and indicated that China would join the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and strictly control coal. In September, at the UN General Assembly, Xi further announced that China, as the largest supporter of overseas coal power plants, would impose a moratorium on such projects. All of these developments can be seen as Beijing's nod to long-standing pushes from Washington.

Bilateral tensions started to have a negative impact on the U.S.-China climate relationship in 2022. Beijing suspended climate talks with Washington as a retaliatory measure after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed around the same time; while strengthening Washington's climate credibility, exacerbated trade tensions with China. As a result, Chinese officials ramped up their rejection of separating the climate agenda from the broader bilateral relationship, stressing that if the overall relationship is the encroaching “desert,” it is not possible to preserve the “oasis.”⁹² Even

though subsequent efforts helped restore climate dialogues in late 2022 and saw the adoption of the Sun-nylands Agreement in 2023 and the launch of a bilateral working group on climate change in early 2024, the climate relationship continues to suffer from heightened U.S.-China tensions and could only progress within the boundaries defined by this competitive relationship.

The Harris Scenario

The rapid coalescing of Democrats behind Kamala Harris as their presidential candidate in the wake of Biden's decision to forgo a second term opens up a unique opportunity to reset the dynamic of U.S.-China climate cooperation. Harris has long championed climate action, spanning from her days as San Francisco district attorney to more recent leadership, including her participation as the highest-level U.S. representative at COP28 last year in Dubai. Furthermore, she also has a relatively blank slate when it comes to directly engaging China, having only met Xi briefly on the sidelines of APEC in 2022—in contrast to Biden, who had already met Xi during a China visit as vice president in 2011. Harris therefore has an opening to shift the U.S. economic and climate rhetoric away from an obsessive focus on competition with China and toward a more domestic-focused angle.

To be clear, dialing down current trade tensions with China would require significant political resolve. It is by no means a likely scenario given the current U.S. domestic politics as well as the contentious U.S.-China relationship. But charting out a new course is necessary to not only enable more productive bilateral climate dialogues with Beijing, while also ensuring U.S. domestic policies achieve the triple objectives of addressing climate change, enhancing economic competitiveness, and strengthening national security.

The rapid coalescing of Democrats behind Kamala Harris as their presidential candidate in the wake of Biden's decision to forgo a second term opens up a unique opportunity to reset the dynamic of U.S.-China climate cooperation.

In particular, making bilateral climate engagement more sustainable and secure over the next decade will be critical for any hope of preserving the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature limit. Countries' new climate targets, or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), are due in early 2024 and are expected to cover the coming ten years to 2035. China's climate action during this time frame is especially significant as it will cover the trajectory of emissions after China's promised pre-2030 peak. The extent to which China's emissions plateau versus declining rapidly will influence the temperature pathway of the entire world.

Against this backdrop, a Harris presidency could tap into China's desire to stabilize bilateral relations to reset the dynamic of bilateral climate cooperation. The foremost component of a reset would involve high-level endorsement that climate progress can be enabled by both sides, and that disagreements on thornier issues should not block headway on the most existential ones. Beyond this, a reset could see both countries move beyond what they "can do" on less sensitive but climate-impactful topics, including methane and non-CO₂ gasses, to what they "must do"—that is, reduce domestic emissions across all sectors at speed and scale, and help the rest of the world do the same while adapting to increasing climate impacts. It could also mean proactively engaging on challenging issues, such as U.S.-China trade tensions or energy security, to minimize their negative impacts on climate progress. Furthermore, both sides could expand and further institutionalize subnational and nonstate climate cooperation to buttress government-to-government engagement. These

actions could protect and strengthen climate progress from a future climate-hostile president, while enabling a second Harris term or other climate-positive president to achieve even greater substantive progress.

The most salient opportunity for Harris, Biden, and the Democrats to put the U.S.-China climate relationship on a stronger footing as part of the coming political transition is a confluence of events at the end of this year. COP29 will take place over two weeks in Azerbaijan in November 2024 and begin less than a week after the U.S. election. APEC and the G20 Summit—the two most logical opportunities for President Biden to next meet Xi Jinping in-person after their summit in San Francisco last year—will also convene during COP29. Should Harris be elected, this timing creates an opportunity for Biden and Xi (and potentially Harris, should she join such meetings) to inject momentum into climate talks by coordinating their messaging and even moving together on their respective NDCs, which they have both promised to submit before the UN deadline in February 2025. Taking such a bold step could help define a new phase of the bilateral climate relationship that moves beyond a “meet and disagree” dynamic to demonstrate that both countries are ready to invest together in climate progress. In a best case scenario, it could eventually enable both sides

to pursue joint goals and actions that advance global progress, such as by working together to supercharge much-needed climate finance and technologies for the Global South.

Beyond the diplomatic sphere, Harris could de-escalate rising tensions between U.S. industrial and trade policy and climate progress. During the Biden administration, U.S. policies—such as the Inflation Reduction Act and high tariffs on imported Chinese electric vehicles and other clean technologies—have

The most salient opportunity for Harris, Biden, and the Democrats to put the U.S.-China climate relationship on a stronger footing as part of the coming political transition is a confluence of events at the end of this year.

been premised on advancing U.S. economic competitiveness vis-à-vis China. One driver of such policies has been Biden's yet-to-be-proven belief that these policies might secure support from key labor constituencies in industrial-oriented swing states, such as Michigan and Pennsylvania. By shifting economic policies away from this focus and toward issues that resonate more directly with the broader middle class, Harris could dial down forceful rhetoric blaming China's overcapacity for U.S. industry's woes. At the same time, she could reorient U.S. economic policy to prioritize minimizing the cost and maximizing the pace of the energy transition, while still taking action to address the risks created by China's dominance of clean technology supply chains. Potential actions could focus on ensuring that tariffs on climate technologies have clear sunset policies to incentivize U.S. industry competitiveness and clarifying rules to incentivize Chinese foreign direct investment in clean technologies where it provides clear benefits to the U.S. with little risk.

The Trump Scenario

While the climate crisis calls for accelerated action, Trump's election will portend a major retreat from ambition at both the domestic and international levels. In addition to repeating a retreat from previously made commitments to reduce emissions and provide support to developing countries, a Trump administration withdrawal from global climate action would tarnish any remaining U.S. climate credibility, blow off any hope for the world to stay below 1.5°C, and bring global climate efforts to an unprecedented crisis point. A Trump administration will shut down official climate exchanges with China, rendering bilateral exchanges to be carried by non-state and subnational actors. The sidelining of climate change in the U.S.-China bilat-

eral agenda could foreclose any hope for significant bilateral climate achievement in the near future, a precondition for rapid global progress as demanded by climate science.

The damage a second Trump administration could create internationally starts from withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement again. On the 2024 campaign trail, Trump has consistently expressed his distaste for the Paris Agreement. In the first presidential debate in June, Trump claimed the climate treaty will “cost U.S. a trillion U.S. dollars” and is “a rip-off of the U.S.”⁹³ A second Trump administration, if savvier than the first one, could also attempt to pull the United States out of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the broader legal framework that underpins the Paris Agreement. This attempt would create profound damage, potentially keeping the United States irreversibly out of the global climate regime, ending such a regime as we know it since its inception in the 1990s. On top of that, if Trump rolled back all of Biden’s key climate policies, the United States would be all but guaranteed to miss its 2030 climate target. Based on an analysis by Carbon Brief, Trump’s victory in November could lead to an additional 4 billion tonnes of U.S. emissions by the end of this decade.⁹⁴

The U.S.-China official climate dialogues, by no means a smooth sail under the Biden administration, nevertheless delivered incremental progress. Future dialogues will undoubtedly be called off by a reelected President Trump. If similar to Trump’s first term, this means the complete severance of bilateral climate engagement at the official level until at least 2029. As a result, actors in both countries will have to fall back to Track II dialogues and engagement at the private sector and subnational levels. It remains to be seen how effective and resilient these mechanisms will be in maintaining the momentum of bilateral exchanges. But if these mechanisms fall off, what used to be a complex fabric of bilateral climate exchanges will be reduced to none, posing the biggest challenge for global climate progress.

If similar to Trump’s first term, this means the complete severance of bilateral climate engagement at the official level until at least 2029.

Trump’s reelection will also present a set of thorny questions to Chinese climate officials. Starting from COP29—held immediately after the election—Beijing will need to prepare its initial response to the likely coming changes in U.S. policy. If Trump is reelected, the rest of the world will crave enhanced action from China to fill the leadership void, so boilerplate lines from Chinese diplomats at COP29 will not cut it. Paradoxically, while four years of U.S. climate inaction could dampen China’s desire for progress, high ambition is precisely what the world will seek from Beijing. Chinese leaders may rise to the challenge or use Trump’s election as a convenient excuse for delaying further ambition. Another possibility is that they offer a muddled response, which will hardly provide assurance to multilateralism. Beijing’s difficult choice will carry profound implications for its upcoming 2035 climate targets and its domestic energy transition.

Chinese policymakers will also need to decide whether to work with the rest of the world while the United States is out of the climate scene. During the first Trump administration and as an effort to signal unwavering support for the Paris Agreement, China, together with the EU and Canada, created the Ministerial on Climate Action (MOCA), a high-level dialogue of climate ministers from key countries. So far, this has been the most notable step to demonstrate China’s willingness to provide diplomatic leadership by working across the traditional developed versus developing country dividing line. Whether China would be willing to continue this leadership role is to be determined. For MOCA, China’s challenging relationship with the other two co-chairs, Canada in particular and to a lesser extent the EU, and the shifting domestic politics in these countries, will certainly complicate their coordination.

The Paris Agreement did create a mechanism for countries to individually pursue climate action regardless of cooperation. However, if past experience serves as any reference, having the world's largest economy pulling out of a global climate effort will undoubtedly weaken international climate determination over time. China is not immune to this dynamic. Trump's climate backsliding will fuel conservative sentiment in Chinese domestic politics. Beijing will grow even more skeptical about Washington's intentions or ability to follow through on political commitments. With heightened tension between Washington and Beijing, a second Trump administration will serve as a stronger excuse for Chinese climate inaction than in the past.

Recommendations

Three recommendations can be made about future U.S.-China climate engagement. Admittedly, these suggestions are less likely to be taken up by a Trump administration than by a Harris administration. But to the extent they can be adopted by a wide range of non-state actors, the next four years are still crucial to building back the conditions for a meaningful bilateral climate relationship regardless of who is elected in November.

Top leaders in both the United States and China need to insulate the climate agenda from other conflicts to ensure progress.

First, despite the contentious bilateral agenda, top leaders in both the United States and China need to insulate the climate agenda from other conflicts to ensure progress. The last few years have seen bilateral tensions spilling into climate exchanges, capping the possibilities of these talks. Even though

incremental progress was painstakingly achieved, the hard upper limit set in the bilateral relationship is becoming increasingly evident. Without redefining the role of climate change in the broader relationship, the world will need to live with the reality of divisive climate politics between Washington and Beijing. As a result, the global climate process will be slowed down significantly.

Second, the complex fabric of bilateral climate exchanges needs to be strengthened beyond the two governments. While engagement between them remains critical, it will continue to be challenging and insufficient to meeting individual or global climate goals. Both countries urgently need new forces to drive bilateral cooperation. Subnational and private sector actors need to be better organized. More people-to-people exchanges, at the researcher and future decision-makers levels, would also be helpful. This effort will make sure the current bilateral tensions do not disrupt the personal ties that are necessary for each country to understand the other and resolve or manage their differences over the long run.

Third, there needs to be a more clear-eyed strategy to manage industrial competition with China in the low-carbon sector. When it comes to most of the technologies needed to decarbonize, the reality is that China is leading the world in R&D, manufacturing, and deployment with a significant head start. This lead cannot be wished away by U.S. policymakers. Future U.S. administrations will need to carefully evaluate where to compete with China; where to learn from it; and what races may not serve U.S. political, economic, and climate interests and are therefore best avoided. Failing to set these clear priorities will not only delay near-term action in the United States but also make the politics of decarbonization more complicated.

Kate Logan is Director of Climate at the Asia Society Policy Institute and a Fellow with ASPI's Center for China Analysis.

Li Shuo is the Director of China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute.



7 ON U.S.-ASEAN RELATIONS & TRADE

By: Shay Wester and Kaewkamol Pitakdumrongkit

The Stakes of U.S.-ASEAN Economic Relations

As the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) deepen their economic ties, the stakes for both sides are rising. Comprising 10 Southeast Asian nations, ASEAN stands as the fourth-largest trading partner of the United States, with bilateral trade approaching \$500 billion in 2023. The region maintains a \$200 billion trade surplus with the United States, mainly from high-tech electronics and manufactured goods.

Southeast Asia's economic importance to the United States is substantial and growing. By early 2024, the United States had overtaken China as ASEAN's largest export market, with 15% of ASEAN's exports destined for the United States, up nearly 4% since 2018. The United States is also the largest source of cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) in ASEAN, with total stock reaching nearly \$480 billion in 2023—almost double the combined U.S. investments in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

The region's potential for future growth is impressive: with nearly 700 million people and a GDP of \$3.6 tril-

lion, Southeast Asia is projected to be the world's fastest-growing trade area, driven by its young population and economic diversity.⁹⁵ The region's digital economy alone is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030.⁹⁶

These dynamics position Southeast Asia as not only an economic hub but also as a linchpin in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy. Recognizing this, the U.S. and ASEAN governments have advanced their economic cooperation across multiple fronts. Bilateral ties with key Southeast Asian partners have strengthened, including upgraded partnerships with Indonesia and Vietnam, a new dialogue with Singapore on critical technologies, and an infrastructure initiative in the Philippines.

At the regional level, ASEAN plays a key role in facilitating dialogue and shaping economic policies among its member states and external partners. Through mechanisms such as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the organization aligns national priorities with broader regional objectives. In 2022, the U.S.-ASEAN relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with President Biden hosting a Special Summit in Washington. The Biden administration has intensified regional cooperation by launching new

ministerial dialogues, establishing a U.S.-ASEAN Center in Washington, and increasing investments in areas such as infrastructure, digital economy, and clean energy.

However, challenges remain in U.S.-ASEAN engagement. While the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) emerged as a key cooperation platform with seven ASEAN member states, its scope remains limited and progress on trade-related aspects has

By early 2024, the United States had overtaken China as ASEAN's largest export market, with 15% of ASEAN's exports destined for the United States, up nearly 4% since 2018.

stalled due to congressional opposition over digital trade, labor, and environmental standards. Concerns about U.S. commitment to the region persist, particularly due to fluctuating policies and strategic competition with China. Many ASEAN nations feel that U.S. initiatives often focus more on countering China than on addressing their economic priorities. As they navigate challenges like economic instability, climate vulnerabilities, and widening socio-economic gaps, ASEAN countries seek more tangible benefits from their engagement with the United States, including improved market access and new investments.

Southeast Asia's Economic Priorities and U.S. Engagement

Southeast Asian nations are eager to expand ties with the United States in trade, investment, technology, and infrastructure. They seek sustained, long-term engagement and new trade and investment agreements to boost sectors like electronics, textiles, agriculture, and the digital economy. ASEAN countries are particularly keen to see a renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which expired at the end of 2020. GSP renewal would reinstate duty-free treatment for exports from developing Southeast Asian economies, enhancing their competitiveness in the U.S. market.

Southeast Asia also positions itself as an alternative to China for manufacturing, benefiting from global supply chain diversification. However, countries are cautious about being seen as part of a U.S.-led "friend-shoring" strategy, maintaining a balanced approach with both the United States and China. As Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim stated, they aim to be a "neutral and nonaligned location" for industries including semiconductor manufacturing.⁹⁷ This balancing act reflects the region's desire to maintain its strategic autonomy while benefiting from economic partnerships with both powers.

Technology partnerships are a high priority for Southeast Asian countries. They seek collaboration on digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, AI, and e-commerce, aiming to foster innovation crucial for digital transformation and global competitiveness. This aligns with the region's ambition to become a leading player in the digital economy.

Sustainable development is another shared priority, especially given the region's vulnerability to climate change. ASEAN countries actively seek U.S. engagement in financing and developing sustainable infrastructure projects.

ASEAN countries value U.S. support for the principle of “ASEAN centrality,” which emphasizes that ASEAN should lead in crafting the region's economic and political architectures. This recognition strengthens ASEAN's role as the primary driver of regional integration and cooperation, enhancing its relevance in shaping the region's future.

While ASEAN countries share common goals of economic growth and regional stability, their specific priorities in relations with the U.S. reflect diverse national interests. Vietnam focuses on expanding manufacturing and export sectors, particularly in electronics and textiles. Indonesia seeks investment in infrastructure and energy, including electric vehicle battery production. Singapore prioritizes partnerships in digital innovation and biotechnology. The Philippines emphasizes cooperation in business process outsourcing, critical minerals development, and securing investments in infrastructure and agriculture to reduce reliance on China.

The 2024 U.S. Elections: A Watershed Moment for Southeast Asia

The 2024 U.S. elections present ASEAN with two divergent paths for economic engagement, each carrying implications for the region's ability to achieve its goals. Beyond shaping U.S. policy in Southeast Asia, the election outcome will impact U.S.-China dynamics, a critical consideration for ASEAN given its deep trade and investment links with both powers.

Either a Harris or a Trump administration would be expected to maintain a strong focus on outcompeting China and bolstering U.S. domestic production capacity, though their strategies would have significant differences. Southeast Asia should anticipate intensified pressure on China's tech sector and more restrictive trade measures from Washington.

The growing bipartisan embrace of tariffs as a tool to protect American interests and counter Chinese influence also signals that ASEAN countries will face a United States more inclined to use such measures as an economic lever. Additionally, the rise in Chinese investment in ASEAN, particularly in advanced manufacturing, critical minerals processing, and digital infrastructure, may complicate these dynamics further, with both administrations likely to scrutinize Chinese involvement in the region.

A Harris administration would likely continue the Biden administration's multilateral approach, emphasizing partnerships and regional cooperation through initiatives like the IPEF. In contrast, a second Trump

Either a Harris or a Trump administration would be expected to maintain a strong focus on outcompeting China and bolstering U.S. domestic production capacity, though their strategies would have significant differences.

presidency would be expected to return to more unilateral policies, focusing on bilateral deals and rebalancing trade deficits through aggressive tariffs. ASEAN member states must remain agile and ready to navigate either scenario while continuing to advance their strategic economic objectives.

Prospects under a Harris Presidency

Policy Continuity and Evolution of U.S. Initiatives

A Harris administration would likely build upon the Biden administration's strategies, while introducing some shifts. The overall predictability would be welcomed by Southeast Asian nations, which have invested considerable time engaging with U.S. initiatives. Key policies such as IPEF, the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), and the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JET-P) are expected to be sustained and potentially expanded. These initiatives, focusing on resilient supply chains, digital infrastructure, and sustainable development, align with U.S. strategic goals in the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN's own priorities.

Harris's leadership in AI policy under Biden suggests that responsible AI—with a focus on privacy and security—will remain a key focus.

In short, U.S.-ASEAN relations under a Harris presidency could be expected to continue growing, without the dis-

ruption that might come from a major policy shift, providing an opportunity for ASEAN countries to deepen economic ties with the United States and advance long-term regional goals.

New Priorities: Technology and Climate Change

In technology and innovation, a Harris administration would likely prioritize areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure development. Harris's leadership in AI policy under Biden suggests that responsible AI—with a focus on privacy and security—will remain a key focus. Southeast Asian countries would welcome deeper U.S. partnerships on initiatives to foster innovation, data privacy, and secure digital ecosystems.

Harris's strong commitment to environmental sustainability could bolster U.S. support for Southeast Asia's clean energy transition and infrastructure development. The scale of U.S. support remains uncertain, but Southeast Asian nations are likely to seek engagement with Washington in financing green energy projects and developing sustainable infrastructure.

Trade Policy

On trade, Harris is expected to take a progressive stance, particularly around environmental and labor standards. Her past opposition to agreements, including the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), suggests she would push for stronger protections in these areas. This could complicate negotiations on the stalled IPEF trade pillar, where diverse economies may struggle to align with U.S. demands on issues like labor standards and digital rules. Nonetheless, efforts to advance IPEF's trade pillar would likely continue under a Harris administration. The pace and robustness of these efforts would be an early indicator of her administration's approach to economic engagement in Southeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Similar challenges could impact the renewal of GSP, as congressional debates over labor and environmental standards have already contributed to delays in its reauthorization.

While comprehensive trade agreements are unlikely in the near term, Harris might pursue targeted sectoral or bilateral deals that align with strategic priorities. Notably, her trade policy is not expected to focus on reducing U.S. trade deficits as a primary objective, a difference from Trump's approach that is likely to be viewed positively by countries in Southeast Asia.

Geopolitical and Industrial Policy

Regarding China, Harris would likely continue Biden's "de-risking" approach, selectively reducing dependence in critical sectors while maintaining economic engagement. Her policies would address concerns about China's trade practices through targeted tariffs and regulatory measures on critical sectors like technology, while also working with partners and allies through multilateral efforts. In Southeast Asia, Harris would likely seek to counter China's growing investments by promoting alternatives such as the PGII while highlighting strategic and environmental risks of Chinese projects.

This shift could also accelerate the relocation of manufacturing from China to Southeast Asia, benefiting ASEAN economies that are positioned as alternative production hubs. However, Harris's focus on reshoring U.S. industries, as exemplified by the CHIPS Act and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), could also shorten supply chains and reduce future U.S. investment flows into Southeast Asia. ASEAN countries may need to reassess their strategies to remain competitive as U.S. industrial policy drives more localized supply chains.

Harris's track record of engagement with Southeast Asia, including multiple visits to the region as vice president and meetings with key leaders, indicates that her administration would prioritize cooperation with ASEAN.

Engagement with ASEAN and Multilateralism

Harris's track record of engagement with Southeast Asia, including multiple visits to the region as vice president and meetings with key leaders, indicates that her administration would prioritize cooperation with ASEAN. She would likely continue supporting ASEAN centrality, helping ensure the bloc remains a driver of regional integration and cooperation. Harris's multilateral approach—building on ASEAN-led initiatives such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)—would be seen as a positive signal by ASEAN member states eager for sustained U.S. engagement in the region.

Her administration would likely also pursue bilateral relationships and targeted mini-lateral efforts, such as supply chain cooperation with countries like Vietnam and Singapore. Southeast Asian countries would look to leverage U.S. support for digital infrastructure, green energy, and regional security to advance their own economic and geopolitical goals.

Challenges and Opportunities for Southeast Asia

A Harris presidency offers Southeast Asia a path of continuity, predictability, and cooperation. Her focus on technology, sustainability, and multilateralism aligns with ASEAN's goals, but stricter labor and environmental standards could complicate trade negotiations and strain regional competitiveness. Additionally, U.S. reshoring policies could lead to more localized supply chains, potentially limiting U.S. investment in

Southeast Asia and requiring ASEAN countries to adapt their economic strategies. Ultimately, the impact of a Harris presidency on Southeast Asia will depend on her administration's ability to navigate complex regional dynamics, deliver tangible economic benefits, and balance competing interests.

Prospects under a Trump Comeback

A second Trump term would revive "America First" policies, emphasizing balanced trade and economic nationalism. Trump favors direct, bilateral negotiations over multilateral frameworks such as IPEF, as evidenced by his withdrawal from the TPP and prioritizing deals including the USMCA, the revised U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), and the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA). He has threatened to "knock out" IPEF if reelected, pledging that "TPP Two will be dead on day one."⁹⁸

Trump's return would likely reintroduce the volatility seen during his first term, characterized by sudden policy shifts and unpredictability, especially around tariffs and trade agreements

Trump's return would likely reintroduce the volatility seen during his first term, characterized by sudden policy shifts and unpredictability, especially around tariffs and trade agreements. Trump's comments welcoming Chinese auto investment in the United States, while at the same time threatening high tariffs on Chinese goods, are a case in point.

This unpredictability is likely to be less welcomed by Southeast Asian countries, as it risks creating market instability. Investors in the region may delay decisions, potentially slowing trade and investment flows.

Tariffs and Rebalancing Trade

A cornerstone of Trump's economic policy is the aggressive use of tariffs, likely more severe and widespread than in his first term. He has proposed tariffs of 10 to 20% on all imports and a 60% tariff on Chinese goods. Trump views tariffs as both economically beneficial and a powerful negotiating tool, stating, "Tariffs do two things. Economically, they're phenomenal ... And man, is it good for negotiation."⁹⁹

These measures aim to slash trade deficits, rejuvenate American manufacturing, and counter perceived market distortions by foreign governments. Trump views trade deficits as indicators of unfair practices and would likely push for balanced trade with ASEAN nations through bilateral negotiations. While disrupting regional supply chains, this might also accelerate diversification, offering potential benefits for some Southeast Asian nations as they position themselves as alternatives to China. Yet economic costs could be substantial, especially if countries with large U.S. trade surpluses like Vietnam (\$105 billion) and Thailand (\$41 billion) are pressured to reduce imbalances or face punitive tariffs. Other ASEAN countries with significant surpluses, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, could also come under scrutiny, potentially complicating trade talks and heightening tensions.

The effectiveness of Trump's tariff strategy in reducing trade deficits and creating a fairer landscape for U.S. industries could also be undermined by several factors, including currency movements, circumvention tactics, and negative impacts on U.S. manufacturers reliant on imported components. Additionally, this approach risks retaliation and could escalate trade tensions globally.

Strategic Decoupling and Supply Chain Shifts

A key focus would likely be "strategic decoupling" from China, aiming to reshape the economic relationship in America's favor. This could involve imposing higher tariffs to achieve more balanced trade or even withdrawing China's most favored nation status. Trump's policies aim to reduce U.S. reliance on Chinese manufacturing, enhancing America's economic security and bargaining power with China. A second Trump term might also take a more confrontational stance toward Chinese investments in ASEAN, using tariffs or bilateral deals to pressure Southeast Asian nations to limit Chinese influence in strategic sectors like manufacturing and digital infrastructure.

The Trump administration could also be expected to impose strict rules on U.S. technology exports and investment, particularly in sensitive sectors. These policies could reshape the tech landscape in Southeast Asia, presenting both risks and opportunities for ASEAN countries to position themselves as trusted alternatives to China in high-tech supply chains. As Chinese manufacturing relocates to the region, ASEAN countries could benefit from increased investment and technological know-how.

A second Trump administration might also...pressure Southeast Asian nations to limit Chinese influence in strategic sectors like manufacturing and digital infrastructure.

However, heightened U.S.-China tensions could destabilize the region, pressuring ASEAN countries to align more explicitly with either Washington or Beijing. Such a competitive environment could threaten economic growth and increase the risk of misunderstandings leading to broader conflicts.

Industrial and Energy Policy

Trump's second term would likely emphasize traditional energy sectors; he has vowed to rescind unspent funds allocated under the Inflation Reduction Act and hinted that he would slash funding to climate-focused agencies. Trump would likely reduce U.S. support for Southeast Asia's renewable energy transition, slowing the region's sustainability efforts. Additionally, his industrial reshoring policies could shorten supply chains and potentially limit future U.S. investment in Southeast Asia's technology and energy sectors. This shift would require ASEAN countries to adapt to a global landscape shaped more by short-term economic nationalism.

Bilateral Shift and Regional Implications

Trump's preference for bilateral over multilateral frameworks could erode U.S. leadership in ASEAN-centric initiatives, potentially diminishing ASEAN's role in shaping regional affairs. ASEAN member states value multilateralism and are likely to view Trump's approach as marginalizing ASEAN's influence. This could raise concerns about ASEAN's future relevance in regional diplomacy and economic integration, particularly if key partners begin to bypass the organization in favor of bilateral engagements.

At the same time, some Southeast Asian leaders may welcome Trump's focus on quick, tangible deals, aligning with their preference for clear economic outcomes over complex policy dialogues. His transactional approach would likely appeal to those seeking pragmatic, deal-oriented interactions, especially those looking to leverage ongoing U.S.-China trade tensions.

While Trump may be unable to immediately exit some parts of the current IPEF due to legal restrictions, he could use security reasons to sidestep U.S. commitments in areas such as supply chain cooperation.

ASEAN, as a bloc, would likely work to maintain its centrality by balancing bilateral opportunities with broader regional frameworks, though its members could face pressure to accept “balanced trade” arrangements preferred by Washington.

Challenges and Opportunities for Southeast Asia

Trump's emphasis on reshoring U.S. manufacturing and reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains could significantly disrupt regional trade dynamics in Southeast Asia. Countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia may see increased trade and investment as companies diversify away from China. However, these gains may be tempered by Trump's unpredictable, transactional approach, which could create uncertainty about the U.S.'s long-term economic commitment to the region.

Trump's emphasis on reshoring U.S. manufacturing and reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains could significantly disrupt regional trade dynamics in Southeast Asia.

While some ASEAN countries could benefit from this shift, others may struggle to adapt, especially if U.S. engagement remains narrowly focused on trade imbalances and tariffs rather than addressing broader regional challenges. Southeast Asian nations will need to remain flexible in navigating

these policy shifts, balancing opportunities with the potential risks posed by a more transactional U.S. economic strategy.

Policy Recommendations for ASEAN

To navigate the complex landscape of U.S.-ASEAN economic relations in light of potential election outcomes, we propose the following recommendations for ASEAN policymakers:

- 1. Strengthen Regional Economic Integration:** Accelerate efforts to deepen economic ties within ASEAN, particularly through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) post-2025 agenda currently under development. Reduce intra-ASEAN trade barriers, harmonize regulations, and enhance regional supply chains. A more integrated ASEAN economy would be more resilient to varying U.S. policy directions and would have greater bargaining power in trade negotiations.
- 2. Diversify and Strategically Align Trade Relationships:** Actively seek new bilateral and regional trade agreements, especially high-standard ones such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Engage proactively with dialogue partners such as the EU, Japan, and India. Expand trade relationships by fast-tracking free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with Canada, deepening ties with U.S. FTA partners including South Korea and Australia, and leveraging Singapore's unique position as an ASEAN member state with a U.S. FTA. These relationships could serve as valuable bridges to U.S. markets and supply chains, helping mitigate potential disruptions from U.S. trade actions. Additionally, ASEAN should consider the long-term implications of U.S. tariffs on global supply chains and seek to attract high-value manufacturing from companies relocating due to these trade measures.

3. **Accelerate Innovation and Sustainable Development:** Foster regional innovation ecosystems and accelerate digital transformation to reduce external dependencies. Invest in key domestic industries to enhance competitiveness and reduce vulnerability to external economic shocks. Prioritize both green and digital economies, emphasizing digital transformation as outlined in the ongoing ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) negotiations.
4. **Strengthen Economic Resilience and Balance Trade Relations:** Assess vulnerability to potential new tariffs and trade restrictions, focusing on high-risk sectors. Develop strategies to diversify export markets and consider actions to reduce trade surpluses with the United States. Consider gradual, strategic tariff reductions on select products, particularly items with significant tariff differentials compared to U.S. rates. Simultaneously, explore opportunities to increase imports from the United States to create more balanced trade relationships. Improve transparency in trade policies and regulations to pro-actively address concerns about unfair practices.
5. **Enhance Strategic Engagement and Promote Dialogue:** Cultivate bipartisan relationships at various levels of the U.S. government, including key members of Congress, governors, and local officials, while also strengthening ties with the U.S. business community. Increase communication with U.S. officials to address concerns and underscore the importance of U.S.-ASEAN relations. Identify incentives to promote positive engagement with the new administration and collaborate on shared challenges such as supply chain resilience. Propose a U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit in the new administration's first year to reinforce the partnership's significance.

By implementing these recommendations, ASEAN can prepare for potential policy shifts under either a Harris or a Trump administration, positioning itself as a strong, unified economic bloc capable of engaging productively with the United States while safeguarding its own interests.

Shay Wester is the Director of Asian Economic Affairs and Outreach Director at the Asia Society Policy Institute
Kaewkamol "Karen" Pitakdumrongkit is Senior Fellow and Head of Centre for Multilateralism Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.



8 ON SOUTH ASIA IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

By: Farwa Aamer and Vivek Mishra

In the dynamic landscape of geopolitical shifts, U.S. policy toward South Asia has consistently been a critical area of focus. As the region continues to evolve amid changing political, economic, and security imperatives, the outcomes of the upcoming elections in the United States necessitate a reassessment of strategic priorities and approaches. This article delves into the interplay of continuity and change in the U.S. policy toward South Asia, analyzing the implications of the possible electoral shifts and how the United States can navigate its interests and partnerships in this pivotal region post-election.

From Stability to Strategic Partnerships: The United States in South Asia

For decades, the region's strategic significance to the United States has centered on the long-running conflict in Afghanistan, which has shaped much of U.S. diplomatic, military, and economic strategies. Stability in Afghanistan as a precondition for broader regional security has been a U.S. foreign policy constant.

With the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, however, Washington's engagement with South Asia has significantly evolved. It is now more focused on countering Chinese regional influence than navigating the

traditional mistrust between India and Pakistan. While these two countries remain central to the U.S. strategy, there is a growing recognition of the strategic importance and economic potential of other South Asian nations. This shift is partly driven by the U.S. desire to counter China's expanding influence in the region, particularly following the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launch in 2013.

Bangladesh, for instance, has emerged as an important player for the United States due to its strategic location, economic promise, and potential to serve as a meaningful partner in the larger Indo-Pacific vision. The United States has also focused on Sri Lanka, supporting post-conflict reconciliation, democratic governance, and economic development to strengthen its sovereignty and reduce its dependency on Chinese investments.

Nepal, positioned at a geopolitical crossroads, has attempted to balance its relations with China and the United States. The latter has been actively engaging with Nepal to promote democratic institutions, infrastructure, and sustainable development, aiming to offer alternatives to Chinese investments. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Nepal Compact, signed in 2017, exemplifies this effort.¹⁰⁰

Under the administrations of former President Donald Trump and the current President Joe Biden (under the Biden-Harris administration), the U.S. policy toward South Asia has seen both continuities and shifts.

Under Trump, the regional policy maintained a degree of continuity with previous administrations while introducing specific strategic initiatives. The South Asia Strategy, unveiled in 2017, emphasized a conditions-based approach to the war in Afghanistan, increased pressure on Pakistan to bolster counterterrorism efforts, and established India as a key component in any regional strategy.¹⁰¹ Trump's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision was another significant development, formally integrating South Asia with the broader Asia-Pacific strategy and defining new means of U.S. policy engagement in the region in light of China's growing presence in the area.¹⁰²

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, overseen by Biden, was politically contentious and strategically monumental. This major shift in U.S. regional interests necessitated a reevaluation of the U.S. strategy in the region.

When Biden assumed office in 2021, with Kamala Harris as his vice president, the administration adapted to new challenges and opportunities. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, overseen by Biden, was politically contentious and strategically monumental. This major shift in U.S. regional interests necessitated a reevaluation of the U.S. strategy in the region.

As the U.S. elections draw near, strategic competition with China remains a central focus for the Biden-Harris administration—a trend that is likely to persist post-election, no matter the outcome. India's relevance as a natural partner and counterweight to China in the South Asia region has only increased and paved the way for a multifaceted U.S.-India partnership. It is notable that Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for the upcoming presidential election, is the first U.S. presidential candidate of Indian and South Asian heritage, although that might not be a key political factor for her administration.

Beyond India, the United States stands to benefit from an increased engagement with the region overall, with a comprehensive South Asia outlook going forward to ensure regional stability.

A Closer Look at U.S. Relations with India and Pakistan

The U.S.-India dynamic has been notably consistent amid the major political transitions in the United States over the past two decades. The relationship between India and the United States has grown both from a bilateral perspective with strong defense and trade ties as well as from definable shared interests in the Indo-Pacific.

The two countries have consistently found areas of alignment. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi first took office in 2014, India and the United States have signed three foundational agreements: the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA), creating closer military and strategic cooperation.¹⁰³ During the Trump administration, U.S.-India ties experienced notable highs and some challenges. The two leaders, then-President Trump and Prime Minister Modi, enjoyed a good personal relationship, which helped elevate bilateral engagements. However, the relationship was not without its challenges. Both leaders' nationalist positions sometimes led to divergent views, exemplified by Trump's "America First" policy and Modi's "Make in India" initiative. Trump's attempts

to achieve tariff parity created tensions, particularly around trade issues.

The relationship between India and the United States has grown both from a bilateral perspective with strong defense and trade ties as well as from definable shared interests in the Indo-Pacific.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, the U.S.-India relationship received further emphasis: 2023 was a particularly significant year in the relationship with Modi's historic state visit to Washington, which included an address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress and a series of consequential agreements ranging from high-level defense

co-production to new avenues for technological partnership.¹⁰⁴ During the visit, Harris acknowledged the impact that Indian Americans have had in the United States. She reiterated the importance of cooperation between the two countries on climate, space, and public health, among other areas. India and the United States have also found themselves working together more closely within the Quad—a group of four countries: the United States, Australia, India, and Japan—as well as other mini-laterals such as the I2U2 group formed by India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Tense China-India relations, particularly the unresolved border issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), have provided an additional plank for closer U.S.-India cooperation as well as having motivated India to play a more prominent role in South Asia, positioning itself as an alternative to China for other countries in the region and the larger Global South.

The U.S.-Pakistan relationship has experienced significant fluctuations in recent years. Historically, Pakistan has been a major non-NATO ally of the United States, playing a crucial role in regional dynamics, particularly in the war on terror and the Afghanistan peace process. However, mutual mistrust has often strained this dynamic. Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan has sought to reset its ties with the United States, aiming for new avenues for bilateral cooperation and engagement.

Under the Trump administration, U.S.-Pakistan relations faced considerable challenges but also moments of recalibration. Initially, the administration expressed frustration over Pakistan's perceived lack of cooperation in counterterrorism efforts. However, recognizing Pakistan's unique influence over the Taliban, the

United States reengaged Islamabad to facilitate a diplomatic resolution in Afghanistan. Signs of improved relations emerged during then-prime minister Imran Khan's visit to the United States in 2019; he was positively received by President Trump. Trump's offer to mediate the Kashmir conflict, although contentious for India, and his call for stronger trade ties with Pakistan reflected a more engaged and multifaceted approach toward Islamabad.

In contrast, the Biden-Harris administration has shown less eagerness to deepen engagement with Pakistan, particularly after the U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. The administration's focus on bolstering ties with India and the lack of a comprehensive South Asia strategy has further marginalized Pakistan's role in U.S. foreign policy. Pakistan's close relationship with China has also been an element of dissension. However, on Kashmir, Harris, during her time as a senator in 2019, conveyed that "there is a need to intervene if the situation demands," showing a more vocal stance than Biden. However, whether this will once again emerge as an important focus area for her remains to be seen.¹⁰⁵

The administration's focus on bolstering ties with India and the lack of a comprehensive South Asia strategy has further marginalized Pakistan's role in U.S. foreign policy. Pakistan's close relationship with China has also been an element of dissension.

Potential Shifts and the Future of U.S.-South Asia Relations

Like the rest of the world, South Asia is grappling with the multifaceted possibilities that could arise from the November presidential elections in the United States. These apprehensions stem from the vastly different policy implications of the incoming administration in Washington. The possibilities of both continuity and change are driving speculation, with concerns about the latter weighted more heavily.

If the Republican Party secures victory and Donald Trump returns to the presidency, his primary goal could be a substantial reorientation of America's domestic and foreign policies. Domestically, the Trump administration could intensify its inward-looking approach, while externally, it could renegotiate its engagements with other nations based on what the country has to offer to the United States.

Four key trends are expected to dominate Trump's approach, significantly impacting South Asian countries: heightened trade tariffs, reduced military involvement abroad to cut U.S. costs, increased pressure on allies to contribute more, and a potential reevaluation of relationships with key global players. This would necessitate recalibrations in foreign policy strategies across South Asia.

The trade war during the first Trump administration reverberated strongly in South Asia. If Trump reinstates or escalates trade tariffs, South Asian economies that rely on exports to the United States, including India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, could be heavily impacted. These countries could face higher costs for their goods, leading to economic adjustments, and potential trade disputes with the United States. Therefore, future trade relations with these countries might pivot around Trump's broader objectives to maintain U.S. engagement in the region.

Trump has previously advocated for reducing U.S. military involvement overseas to cut costs. This could

lead to decreased military aid and support for South Asian nations, requiring them to reassess their security strategies and defense expenditures. The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy will be strongly tethered to India's indispensability in the region, although managing expectations under Trump could be a challenge for New Delhi. Some of the demands under a potential second Trump term could range from enhancing capacity for greater regional support to other partner countries (burden sharing) to developing a clearer China policy, one that aligns with his own stance toward China, competitive or otherwise.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy will be strongly tethered to India's indispensability in the region, although managing expectations under Trump could be a challenge for New Delhi.

However, the second Trump administration may also see an increased military spending in Asia, especially with reference to the Taiwan contingency and Washington's China strategy as envisaged in the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022.¹⁰⁶ While the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan aligned with Trump's grand strategy of reducing U.S. financial and strategic commit-

ments abroad, the evolving politics in the Middle East could also see the Trump administration's diplomatic involvement in the region, even if cautiously. Given South Asia's close geographical proximity to the Middle East, particularly that of Iran, any policy shifts impacting the wider regional security dynamics could have ramifications for South Asia as well.

Within South Asia, the Trump administration's approach toward specific countries may largely remain the same as in his last term. Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka may receive more attention from an Indo-Pacific strategy perspective from Washington, underscoring the China angle. The Trump administration could discourage significant strategic partnerships between China and South Asian countries but is unlikely to enter into new military or strategic cooperation agreements that would require additional U.S. funding. Pakistan stands out in the region due to its strong bilateral ties with China. While little change is expected regarding Pakistan, there are new opportunities for Pakistan to explore a reset it has long sought, although careful strategic planning will be crucial to identifying areas of mutual interest given Trump's pragmatic approach to politics and Pakistan's own challenges.

In sum, the Indo-Pacific strategy under a second Trump administration is likely to continue as in the first but with altered characteristics. A lot will depend on his China policy and appetite to work with allies and partners on security, economic, and other domains.

If Kamala Harris becomes president, there will likely be continuity of the Indo-Pacific strategy as under President Biden. This administration has spent valuable time in building a lot partnership-focused approaches whether in shape of maintaining the momentum of the Quad or working with other countries through minilaterals—something the Indo-Pacific partners value. India will consequently continue to play an increasingly significant role in this approach.

With Bangladesh the latest country experiencing turmoil, South Asia is undergoing a change in regional dynamics and great power relations, with the United States closely observing the developments. A post-Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh could highlight the undercurrent of dissonance between the interests of India and the United States in the area. The nature of Washington's approach may depend heavily on whether a Democratic or Republican administration is in power. Under a Democratic leadership, as exemplified by the

Biden-Harris administration, there has been a proactive effort to engage with Bangladesh's interim government and supporting it to chart a more democratic future for the country. However, Washington's approach and interests may not always align seamlessly with India's, which prioritizes regional stability and security, and is currently navigating its own relationship with the new stakeholders in Bangladesh post-Hasina. In contrast, a Republican-led government, particularly one akin to the Trump administration, would likely take a more cautious approach toward Bangladesh, placing less emphasis on the promotion of democracy and more on safeguarding U.S. strategic interests.

Moreover, as U.S.-China competition intensifies, particularly in the tech sector, India is likely to become more involved in the broader regional dynamics of great power rivalry in South Asia. The Biden-Harris administration's decision to restrict high-end tech exports to China, combined with rising wage rates in China, has coincided with India's growth as a manufacturing hub. This has attracted more tech and manufacturing companies to move from China and around the world to India. These developments may trigger a broader structural shift in the geoeconomic competition between China and a coalition of democratic countries led by the United States.

The Biden-Harris administration's decision to restrict high-end tech exports to China, combined with rising wage rates in China, has coincided with India's growth as a manufacturing hub.

The ongoing wars in Europe and the Middle East have diverted some of the Biden administration's attention from the Indo-Pacific. However, measures such as the CHIPS and Science Act, continued tariffs on China, and intensified tech competition with Beijing indicate a sustained focus on countering China's influence. Biden's policies have established a framework that future administrations may find difficult to reverse, something Harris will also follow, ensuring that South Asia remains central to U.S. strategy in balancing China's regional influence.¹⁰⁷

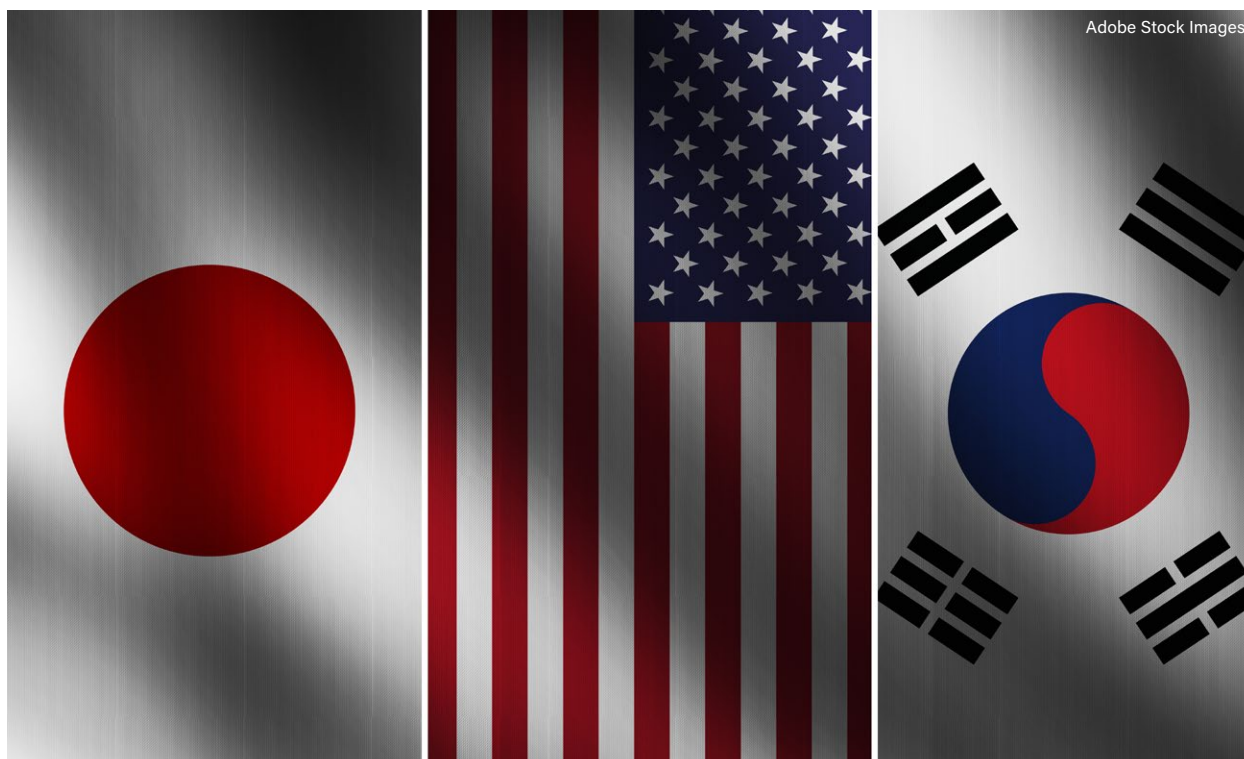
Regardless of who wins the upcoming presidential election, most of these channels of strategic engagement between India and the United States are likely to continue. However, in a Trump scenario, pressures for India related to tariff and burden-sharing could grow. In the debate between Trump and Biden on June 27 this year, Trump justified his decision to pull out from the Paris Accord in 2017 because "India, China and Russia weren't paying."¹⁰⁸ India may have relief from back-channel pressure on its relationship with Russia, given Trump's own seemingly pro-Russia stance, his promises to not provide military aid to Ukraine, and above all his promise to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict in a day. Yet, the Biden-Harris administration has shown remarkable accommodation and understanding vis-à-vis India's continued relationship with Russia since the Russia-Ukraine war began. The Biden-Harris administration's occasional critical push against India, such as that on religious freedom enunciated recently,¹⁰⁹ is likely to weaken under a Trump administration.

Pakistan has chosen to remain neutral on the Ukraine conflict, exemplified by its recent decision to skip the Ukraine Peace Summit in Switzerland in June 2024.¹¹⁰ A Trump administration that is less confrontational toward Russia could provide Pakistan with greater flexibility to strengthen its ties with Russia without fear of significant backlash. However, the complexity of Pakistan's foreign policy is heightened by its strategic partnership with China. Navigating its relationships with all of these major powers presents a challenge for Pakistan, as Islamabad must balance its interests carefully to avoid alienating key partners.

In the coming four years, both the United States and South Asia must focus key policy measures to effectively manage regional stability and growth. India may have to take proactive steps toward burden sharing to engage the United States, particularly if faced with another Trump presidency. For its part, the United States needs to deepen its understanding that stability in South Asia is critical to the broader Indo-Pacific region and acknowledge the global repercussions of conflicts in the area. Enhanced U.S. engagement as a development, economic, strategic, and security partner would benefit all. Moreover, with recent developments in Bangladesh, the United States should focus on supporting the country's stability during this transitional period, ensuring economic and other forms of aid are provided to help rebuild the nation and, by extension, contribute to regional stability. Any administration in Washington must recognize that a one-size-fits-all South Asia strategy is challenging to implement. The region's complexity, marked by fractured political landscapes, diverse economies, and often conflicting interests, necessitates a more nuanced and tailored approach.

Farwa Aamer is the Director of South Asia Initiatives at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

Vivek Mishra is a Fellow of the Americas at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).



9 ON ALLIANCES IN NORTHEAST ASIA

By: Emma Chanlett-Avery, Duyeon Kim, and Yuka Koshino

Over the past two years, delegations to Washington from Japan and South Korea have one predominant question for their interlocutors: What would a Trump 2.0 administration mean for their countries and for U.S. global leadership more broadly? Both Asian capitals appreciate the upgrades to their bilateral pacts with the United States under the Biden administration's alliance-centric foreign policy, and express anxiety about the possible return of Trump as commander-in-chief. Even before his election in 2016, Trump had expressed open disdain for U.S. alliances and that skepticism could be amplified in a second term by his "America First" approach.

With Kamala Harris now at the top of the Democratic ticket, Washington analysts assume broad continuity in her foreign policy approach, although nuances may yet emerge. But while a Harris election and a second Trump presidency contrast sharply on policy and style, the views from Seoul and Tokyo point to enduring elements of American foreign policy that are likely in either outcome.

In many ways, Trump and Harris share an approach to U.S. economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Upon taking office in 2017, Trump fractured the Obama administration's core economic pillar of the so-called

rebalance to Asia by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This divorce drew dismay particularly from Japan; Tokyo had seen the 12-nation free trade pact as its primary tool to blunt China's rising economic sway over the region and to reinforce its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy (FOIP). The Biden-Harris administration has similarly expressed little enthusiasm for re-joining the reformed version that Japan salvaged after the U.S. withdrawal, and its signature regional economic policy, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) lacks the market access that the region's economies crave. Japan and South Korea also had misgivings about the passage of domestic economic legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act that would have penalized South Korean and Japanese investment in the United States. "Friend-shoring" rhetoric

aside, both Seoul and Tokyo see either leader forging an industrial policy that defaults to protectionist trade practices.

Both Japan and South Korea are also concerned about diminishing American leadership of the world and the ascendance of illiberal, authoritarian blocs. Biden and the Democratic Party have generally promoted U.S. alliances as underpinning a world order

that promotes stability and the rule of law. Yet during Biden's presidency, wars in Europe and the Middle East have flared, threatening to distract Washington from its Indo-Pacific priorities and driving deep divisions in public opinion both domestically and internationally. Trump and his Republican colleagues, on the other hand, mostly disapprove of U.S. military involvement in international conflict and fidelity to international alliances, particularly NATO. A Trump administration could undermine the rules-based system by brokering deals with authoritarian leaders, neglecting multilateral institutions that seek to quell conflict, and reinforcing the rising ideological isolationism in U.S. politics.

Trump and Biden policy convergences aside, Seoul's and Tokyo's experiences with each president are starkly different. A Trump presidency would almost certainly present deeper challenges to each country and disrupt the web of security partnerships that both countries view as broadly stabilizing. How Trump would approach the China challenge is likely to be the central question: Will he be relatively supportive of U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific if he sees them as amplifying U.S. power and deterrence? Or will he seek to cut his own deals with Beijing that excludes allies' interests? Would he demand multifold increases in the burden-sharing agreements supporting the U.S. military presence in the region that allies would resist?

A separate set of questions arises considering a Democratic victory. Would Harris opt to continue Biden's approach to alliances? Would her administration see the Indo-Pacific as equally important to the trans-Atlantic partnership? Would Harris's foreign policy team have a different view of how to handle strategic competition with China? All of these yet-unanswered questions loom large for Japan and South Korea over the coming months.

The View from Seoul

The conservative Yoon Suk Yeol government is confident that the alliance will remain strong regardless of who sits in the White House next year. Still, Seoul is expecting challenges with a Trump administration, and concerns and even anxiety can be felt in Seoul. On the other hand, Seoul appears more at ease about the prospects of working with a Harris administration because of policy familiarity and broad policy alignment as well as a degree of policy predictability.

Both Japan and South Korea are also concerned about diminishing American leadership of the world and the ascendance of illiberal, authoritarian blocs.

South Korea's experience with the Trump administration underwent many twists and turns. In 2017, relations had a rocky start when progressive South Korean President Moon Jae-in was elected because his views completely diverged from those of the Trump administration on how to deal with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea). Trump already had in place a "maximum pressure and engagement" strategy. South Korean progressives, on the other hand, preferred front-loading on concessions, although the Moon government achieved its goal of brokering U.S.-North Korea talks via inter-Korean engagement. Seoul and Washington eventually converged on each using summitry with Pyongyang as a method of diplomacy, but continued to disagree on detailed policy approaches. Eventually, the breakdown of the U.S.-DPRK Hanoi summit led to Pyongyang bullying South Korea and refusing to engage Seoul diplomatically for the remainder of Moon's term; North Korea was apparently upset at the Moon government for raising false expectations about Hanoi and failing to convince Washington to lift sanctions against it. Trump's demands for Seoul to pay more to host U.S. troops was another source of tension. Unable to reach an agreement, the burden-sharing pact expired, leaving thousands of South Korean employees furloughed and inflicting a major wound on the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance.

After President Biden took office in 2021, South Korea under Moon was reluctant to participate in global initiatives and contribute to strengthening the rules-based international order because of its domestic political aims and narrow focus on inter-Korean relations. The allies continued to diverge in their approaches to North Korea, China, and Japan.

The fate of trilateral cooperation may depend on the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

Since 2022, however, the alliance was bolstered after conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol took office. Today, the allies are closely aligned in their approach towards North Korea, Japan, and China as well as upholding liberal democratic values at home and defending the rules-based international order. The allies have been working to strengthen deterrence against North Korea and reassure the South Korean public of Washington's defense commitment. Seoul and Tokyo began to mend their relations, which have long been fraught with historical grievances and disputes, and held a historic trilateral summit with Washington at Camp David for the first time. Since then, trilateral cooperation quickly expanded and deepened across virtually all sectors of society.

The fate of trilateral cooperation may depend on the upcoming U.S. presidential election. If Harris is elected and if she continues to invest as the Biden administration has done in supporting trilateral cooperation, the three countries are expected to continue working together closely (barring any drastic changes in Japan's or South Korea's foreign policies after September 2024 and May 2027 respectively). If Trump is elected, the Yoon administration believes that the ongoing institutionalization of the three-country cooperation will keep the partnership intact. However, trilateral cooperation could stall, suffer, or even end, given both Trump's treatment of allies and prior preference in foreign policy for bilateral mechanisms over multilateral ones.

On U.S.-South Korea relations, the allies are expected to continue on their current trajectory during a Harris administration. This means that the allies would also continue to work together intimately on regional and global issues. However, a possible area of contention could be the growing questions in Seoul on the reliability of U.S. extended deterrence. There is skepticism and anxiety in some South Korean circles about whether the alliance can deter a North Korean nuclear or conventional attack or sufficiently respond to one because of North Korea's increasing nuclear weapon capabilities. Such skepticism and anxiety come from their per-

ception that Washington is not doing enough to solve the nuclear problem, and many South Koreans do not feel reassured enough about America's political commitment to defend their country. In addition, South Koreans are concerned about Washington's attention span as it simultaneously grapples with two nuclear competitors, Russia and China, that are challenging America's global leadership. All of these factors, in addition to Russia's renewed mutual defense treaty with Pyongyang, have fueled calls among South Korean conservatives for South Korea the country to develop its own nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, how Seoul would respond in a military contingency involving Taiwan and China remains unclear. While the Yoon administration has so far stood up to Beijing in clearer ways compared to its predecessors, Taiwan is still a very politically-sensitive topic in South Korea; factors at home and abroad would determine Seoul's involvement in a military conflict. Seoul is also contemplating how to deal with Moscow in the wake of Russia's latest pact with Pyongyang and alleged technical support for North Korea's nuclear weapons development.

Tokyo's priority remains the strengthening of a rules-based free and open Indo-Pacific as a cornerstone of the broader international order.

If Trump is elected, South Koreans will still have questions about Washington's security guarantee. However, their insecurities will further spike if he treats allies in a transactional manner, strikes a deal with North Korea that threatens South Korea's national security, and/or decides to withdraw or significantly reduce the number of U.S. soldiers in the country. The latter scenario will

likely cause South Korea to embark on a path toward nuclearization. While President Yoon has reiterated his country's commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and nuclear-weapons abstinence in the Washington Declaration last year, some in South Korean conservatives circles see a Trump victory to be their country's opportunity and greenlight to go nuclear even if a Trump presidency damages the rest of the alliance relationship. Seoul will also continue to feel pressured to join Washington in decoupling from China and many South Koreans are concerned about Trump's future trade policies potentially hurting their own economy.¹¹¹ In these scenarios, frustration and even resentment would surface, but Seoul's reaction to them would depend on circumstances in the alliance relationship and in the geo-economic/geo-strategic landscape.

The View from Tokyo

As it described in its historic National Security Strategy update in December 2022, Tokyo views today's strategic environment as "severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II."¹¹² This threat perception is driven by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, rising tension in the Taiwan Strait, continuing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea, and deepening China-Russia strategic relations. In 2023, Hamas's violent attack against Israel and the subsequent war in the Middle East and the Russia-North Korea partnership in defense and technological support are further adding turbulence to the environment.

Against this backdrop, Tokyo's priority remains the strengthening of a rules-based free and open Indo-Pacific as a cornerstone of the broader international order. It has pursued its own robust security and defense transformation, an upgrade of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and increased cooperation with like-minded partners in Asia and beyond. No matter which presidential candidate wins in the November election, however, Washington's ability and capacity to take on a regional and global leadership role is likely to be limited. Tokyo may need to pursue an even greater role to proactively shape the regional and international order.

The Trump presidency was defined by U.S. isolationism, unilateral and transactional approaches to foreign relations, and an economic policy that narrowly focused on addressing trade imbalances under the “America First” slogan. This approach was challenging for Tokyo as it sought to maintain the benefits and structure of the post-war U.S.-led liberal international order. In particular, the U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP, later the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP), which took nearly a decade to negotiate and was expected to have a strategic impact given its size and high standards, was a blow for Tokyo and triggered deep concerns about the U.S. commitment to the regional security and economic architecture. The administration’s ad-hoc and unpredictable diplomatic moves to strike a deal with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were also troubling for Tokyo as the diplomatic strategy was conducted without a clear goal for the country’s denuclearization or for resolving abductee issues that remain politically salient in Japan.

Tokyo has demonstrated its ability to think innovatively as a rules-shaper, pursue proactive diplomacy, and showcase its ability to be a willing and capable partner for the United States.

Tokyo has demonstrated its ability to think innovatively as a rules-shaper, pursue proactive diplomacy, and showcase its ability to be a willing and capable partner for the United States. These approaches are all key to navigating the international environment under Trump 2.0. For instance, Tokyo championed free trade by concluding the signing of the CPTPP in 2018, simultaneously stepping up its defense and security commitments, and actively building a coalition among like-minded partners in the region and beyond to deal with the military and economic rise of China. The Abe government convinced Trump to adopt the FOIP policy early in his administration. With Tokyo’s encouragement, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or “Quad,” comprised of Japan, the United States, Australia, and India) was revived in 2018 and expanded to include a geo-economic agenda. Coordination on economic security policy also advanced to reduce risks associated with Chinese digital high-tech. The 2020 Armitage-Nye report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) commended Tokyo’s role as an “idea innovator” and equal partner in the alliance and explained that Japan’s main policy drivers have shifted from “American *gaiatsu* (outside pressure) to Japanese leadership”.¹¹³

In contrast, under the Biden-Harris administration, Tokyo does not necessarily need to be as “innovative.” Cooperation among U.S. allies and partners solidified through Biden’s leadership to enhance mini-lateral frameworks such as U.S.-Japan-Australia, U.S.-Japan-Philippines, and most importantly, the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation. Biden also elevated the Quad to the summit level in 2022 and made the framework more inclusive and acceptable to ASEAN countries. The U.S. and Japanese national security strategies released in 2022 respectively demonstrated deep alignment in their goals and approaches especially vis-à-vis China.

The Biden-Harris administration also required greater contributions from its individual allies. Accordingly, Tokyo maintained an active diplomatic posture, committed to fundamentally reinforcing its defense capability to take “primary responsibility” to defend itself, and to pursue further interoperability with the United States to enhance regional deterrence. With Washington’s hands full dealing with strategic fronts in Asia, Ukraine, and the Middle East. Tokyo will continue to implement defense and security transformation, including upgrading the alliance’s command-and-control framework and integrating the defense industrial and technological base.

In the economic realm, the Biden administration's policies were largely a continuation of Trump's "America First" protectionist policies. It is unclear if Harris will take a different path, but observers do not anticipate a major divergence. U.S. absence from the CPTPP, the lack of market access in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, continued opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism, and industrial policies emphasizing reshoring manufacturing to the United States as seen in the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act all signal that Tokyo would need to bear a heavy burden of championing free trade.

However, Tokyo's newly elected Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru's stated defense and security policies could pose a major risk to this pathway in two ways. One is the proposal to create "a collective self-defense system like NATO in Asia" to deter China as stated in his interview with Hudson Institute. Japan's close partners, including India, are already expressing concerns to this transformative approach to regional security. Another is his determination to revise the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and Status of Forces Agreement to seek "equal" partnership with the United States, such as stationing the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) in Guam. These ideas are drastic shifts from the past three administrations, or even from the long-standing U.S.-Japan alliance system since the revised security treaty was signed in 1960, which could risk the stability of U.S.-Japan relations.

Policy Recommendations

For the U.S. alliances with South Korea and Japan to thrive—or merely survive—under the next administration, policy makers need to consider different options for different outcomes. Depending on the next

president, the steps could be either defensive against U.S. unpredictability or reinforcing existing initiatives. With isolationism on the rise in the United States, it is essential in either outcome to build the ark now even if the next commander in chief is strongly supportive of U.S. alliances.

Reinforcing the web of security partnerships would deepen the "lattice-work" of the Indo-Pacific, hedging against the variability of U.S. leadership changes. The continuation of Seoul-Tokyo rapprochement is central to stabilizing the region.

Both allies should continue to upgrade their own security capabilities, prepare for less or variable U.S support and to hold onto and defend any gains in interoperability as much

as possible, whenever possible. The reality of this severe strategic environment is unlikely to change in the coming years. For Japan to enhance its domestic defense capability and convince Washington that it is an indispensable ally, Tokyo should endeavor to fulfil its political commitment to double domestic defense spending by the end of fiscal year 2027 and to remove legal and technical barriers to enhance interoperability not just among the armed forces, but among industries and defense innovation eco-systems to enhance joint deterrence and response capabilities. While the government has been increasing its investment pace, political instability and public resistance have delayed their decisions on raising taxes to fund the programs.

Seoul will similarly need to strengthen conventional military capabilities to demonstrate its own security investments and to deter DPRK aggression in preparation for the possibility of weakened U.S. extended deterrence. Seoul should not only robustly resource its own defense spending but also work to improve synergy among its services, strengthen cooperation in the Combined Forces Command (the U.S.-ROK joint

warfighting command), and continue to advance large-scale bilateral—or mini-lateral—military exercises.

Reinforcing the web of security partnerships would deepen the “lattice-work” of the Indo-Pacific, hedging against the variability of U.S. leadership changes. The continuation of Seoul-Tokyo rapprochement is central to stabilizing the region. Absent American facilitation, the delicate balance of enhancing defense and economic cooperation and managing historical sensitivities is challenging, but both Japan and South Korea understand that the higher stakes of the security landscape reinforce mutual interests. The trilateral partnership born at Camp David could bear fruit as a stronger, more strategically aligned bilateral relationship. Other mini-laterals with Australia, the Philippines, NATO, and others should also continue if the United States pauses, downgrades or withdraws from these arrangements. The same approach should be applied in the geo-economic sphere, including continuing to press for a multilateral trade pact that provides a counterweight to China-dominated arrangements and to make other trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and ASEAN free trade agreements as liberalizing and high-standard as possible.

Maintaining the global non-proliferation regime is another critical imperative. If U.S. extended deterrence is questioned, this will be a challenging task, particularly if North Korea continues to advance its nuclear weapon and missile capabilities. Reassurance to South Korea and Japan of U.S. commitment to its security guarantees—including under the nuclear umbrella—is a necessary, if not sufficient, factor to prevent the allies from developing their own nuclear arsenal. Seoul seems especially vulnerable to this development, but Japan could soon follow suit in a cascading breakout of a nuclear arms race.

If leadership in Washington appears unable or unwilling to maintain the strength of the two alliances, Seoul and Tokyo should seek other power centers in the United States in order to weather the storm of political turbulence. Developing stronger ties with the U.S. Congress could ensure more continuity at the official level, even if growing numbers of lawmakers appear hostile to alliances. Sub-national efforts to reach out to state and local leaders could also prevent the erosion of cooperation. Japanese and South Korean companies investing in the United States should also enhance their political and geo-economic literacy to avoid U.S. domestic political intervention in major economic deals. People-to-people exchanges and engagement with the grassroots can also help ameliorate the damage at the political level.

On its face, a Trump victory in November is likely to present significant policy challenges for both Seoul and Tokyo. But a Harris election holds some degree of political uncertainty as well, absent a more specific foreign policy blueprint that details continuity and changes from Biden's approach. In either outcome, the allies must work to forge a future that does not solely revolve around Washington's treaty commitments, but rather integrate those potentially diminishing guarantees into a broader, more comprehensive, and diversified security landscape.

Emma Chanlett-Avery is Deputy Director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's Washington, DC office and the Director for Political-Security Affairs.

Duyeon Kim is an Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at CNAS based in Seoul.

Yuka Koshino is an Associate Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and a doctoral student at the Keio University Graduate School of Law researching U.S. alliances and security, defense, and technology cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.



10 ON U.S.-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS & AUKUS

By: Dominique Fraser and Anthony Bubalo

The forthcoming U.S. presidential election comes at a time of great strategic uncertainty for Australia. Successive governments have said repeatedly that Australia now faces its most complex strategic environment since World War II. A key element of Australia's response has been to embark on a fundamental re-shaping of the Australian Defence Force. AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, lies at the heart of this transformation.

AUKUS is groundbreaking for several reasons, but mainly because it involves the transfer of nuclear submarines to Australia. What also makes the pact remarkable is the length of time it covers — the end point has been set at 2075. This means that a succession of governments will need to sustain support for what is already a complex, ambitious and expensive endeavor.

Every future U.S. election—and for that matter every Australian and UK election—will be highly consequential for AUKUS. However, two things make this November's election particularly important. It will be the first political test of sustained U.S. political commitment to AUKUS. Whichever candidate wins will be

inheriting an agreement they did not sign. Moreover, because President Trump is running there are fears that should he win, his “America First” focus might imperil the agreement.

For reasons mostly unrelated to Trump, these fears are probably overstated. Yet, because the next U.S. election will determine the personality and nature of U.S. global leadership, the election will shape Australian public attitudes to an agreement that is already going to entail tough fiscal choices for future Australian governments.

What Is Important to Australia?

In AUKUS, Australia has embarked on “the single biggest investment in [its] defence capability in [its] history.”¹¹⁴ At the heart of the pact—so-called Pillar One—is a plan for Australia to acquire eight nuclear-powered (but not armed) submarines. This will make Australia the only seventh country to operate such vessels.

There is also a second pillar to AUKUS—cooperation in the development of critical defense technologies in fields such as cyber warfare, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and hypersonic missiles. Combined, Pillars One and Two promise a fundamental reshaping of the Australian Defence Force and the nation’s defense industry.

Support for it runs deep in the Australian national security bureaucracy – so much so that the only articulated plan B is to make even more effort to make plan A, AUKUS, work.

Under the “optimal pathway”, Australia will initially buy three Virginia-class nuclear submarines from the U.S. Navy (two used and one new) in the 2030s, with the option to acquire two more. Around the same time, Australia and the UK will begin domestic construction of a new nuclear submarine, the SSN AUKUS. The UK will receive its first SSN AUKUS in the later 2030s, while Australia will receive its first in the early 2040s.¹¹⁵

Long before any Australian nuclear submarines hit the water, the United States and the UK will establish a rotational presence of nuclear submarines in Western Australia beginning in 2027. Work has already commenced to ensure that the Australian navy’s Fleet Base West in Western Australia has the infrastructure and trained personnel to support such a presence, which will include providing maintenance to visiting submarines.

AUKUS currently enjoys bipartisan political support in Australia. It was announced and initiated under the conservative government led by prime minister Scott Morrison. It is now being developed and implemented by a progressive government led by prime minister Anthony Albanese. Support for it runs deep in the Australian national security bureaucracy—so much so that the only articulated plan B is to make even more effort to make plan A, AUKUS, work.

AUKUS has its critics—both professional and political. When it comes to political critics this too is bipartisan. A former conservative Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and a former progressive Prime Minister, Paul Keating, have opposed the agreement publicly. Keating warns that AUKUS entails a loss of Australian sovereignty because, he claims, the submarines “will forever remain within the operational remit of the United States ... with technology owned and dependent on U.S. management.” Turnbull, meanwhile, fears

that the United States will determine that they do not have enough Virginia-class submarines in the 2030s to transfer three to Australia.

Despite these criticisms, AUKUS currently enjoys majority support in opinion polls; however, there is a softness to this support. It runs at lower levels than support for the alliance. In Australia's most authoritative poll on public attitudes to international issues, the Lowy Poll, support for AUKUS slipped this year from 70% to 65%, while disapproval increased from 28% to 32%.¹¹⁶ It is also noteworthy, given the multigenerational nature of AUKUS, that support is weakest among 18-34 year-olds, only a third of whom agree that AUKUS is good for the country.¹¹⁷

One reason for public reticence about AUKUS is its eye-watering cost. The Australian government has said publicly that over the next three decades, AUKUS will cost 0.15% of Australia's GDP (between \$183 and \$251 billion).¹¹⁸ Given the tendency of governments to underestimate the cost of defense expenditure, it is likely that the bill will be a lot higher. As Shadow Minister for Defence Andrew Hastie has acknowledged, this will require some "hard choices" in federal budgets to come. In the 2023 Lowy Poll, almost half of Australians said

the cost of AUKUS was not justified; only 27% said it was and just as many said they were not sure.

The other major issue that has come up in the public discussion of AUKUS is whether the agreement makes it more likely that Australia would follow the United States into any future war with China. While this is a mostly arcane question debated by national security wonks or academics at the moment, there are several

ways that it could become a pertinent issue for the broader public in the future—one of these being the re-election of Donald Trump as U.S. president.

AUKUS currently enjoys majority support in opinion polls; however, there is a softness to this support. It runs at lower levels than support for the alliance.

What Is Likely if Donald Trump Wins the Presidency?

A lot of discussion has already appeared in the Australian media—and no doubt privately within government circles—about what might happen to AUKUS should Trump win the election. A number of reports have quoted individuals from within the Trump camp who say the former president supports the agreement. Given that the mercurial former president does not have a reputation as a medium-term thinker, such assurances are not that comforting.

However, Trump's attitude toward AUKUS may to some degree be academic. One of the most discussed and critical aspects of AUKUS is the sale of U.S. Virginia-class nuclear submarines to Australia. The 2024 U.S. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provides a framework for that transaction. A critical component of that legislation is that for the sale to proceed, the U.S. president will need to certify that the transfer will not negatively impact U.S. submarine capabilities.

Critics of AUKUS, in both Australia and the United States, have latched onto this important detail. They argue that given the current significant shortfalls in U.S. submarine construction, it is unlikely that a U.S. president will be able to make such a certification—especially if that president is Trump with his "America First" outlook. But while critics are right to point to this as a major risk to Australia's acquisition of nuclear

submarines, it is not an issue likely to come up in the next presidential term—at least not on the current, publicly available, AUKUS timeline.

The three Virginia-class submarines are scheduled to be sold in 2032 and 2035 for the second-hand submarines, and 2038 for the new build.¹¹⁹ According to the NDAA, a future U.S. president must certify the sale 270 days before the transfer happens. On the current publicly-available AUKUS timeline the first certification would need to occur in early 2031—a full two years after a possible second Trump presidency will have ended.

In fact, a second Trump administration may help make the submarines transfer more likely. Trump has promised to increase defence spending. In his first term in office, spending for the domestic defense industry, including shipbuilding, rose from \$606 billion to \$723 billion—a nearly 20% increase. If a future Trump administration does manage to increase U.S. submarine production in its term, it makes it more likely that his successor would be able to certify a sale.

Moreover, many of the events scheduled to occur under AUKUS over the next four years will be highly advantageous to the United States. As already noted, the United States will gain a new basing infrastructure on the Australian west coast for its submarines. Even more appealing to a reelected president Trump would be that Australia would pay billions of dollars into the U.S. defence industry.

It is entirely possible that Australia could make these investments in the U.S. submarine industrial base and not receive any submarines.

As part of the AUKUS agreement, Australia will invest \$3 billion into the U.S. submarine industrial base. Australia will transfer \$957 million in 2024-2025, \$1.15 billion in 2025-2026, and another \$1 billion over the remainder of the decade. These payments are solely to help ensure that the United States is able to sell submarines to Australia—they are not payments for the submarines themselves. It is entirely possible that Australia could make these investments in the U.S. submarine industrial base and not receive any submarines.

There is another way that a second Trump administration could impact AUKUS, and this relates to Australian public attitudes. Australia's alliance with the United States enjoys overwhelming public support and has done so for many years. For example, in the Lowy Poll's 20-year history, belief that the alliance makes Australia safer has never fallen below 62%. That dip came in 2007 during the presidency of George W. Bush. Another dip occurred in 2019 during the presidency of Donald Trump (72%). During the Obama and Biden presidencies, average support for the alliance was 81.5% and 82.5% respectively.

One can argue that a fall to 72% and even 62% is still very respectable, especially compared to support for the United States in other parts of the world. But it shows that who occupies the White House does, to some degree, shape Australian attitudes toward the alliance. Other polls suggest that Australians are far from sanguine about a second Trump administration. A recent U.S. Studies Centre Poll found that 45% of Australians believed a Trump win in November would be bad for Australia and 37% said they would want to withdraw from the alliance altogether if this occurred.¹²⁰

Given that support for AUKUS already runs softer than support for the U.S.-Australia alliance, a second Trump administration could well erode what some observers have called AUKUS's social license—public

acceptance of the deal.¹²¹ A second Trump presidency that is perceived to be unreliable or protectionist, or that highlights the less appealing sides of American domestic politics, will make it difficult to sustain public support for sending billions of dollars into the U.S. industrial base (for potentially no return), or for hosting more frequent visits by U.S. nuclear-powered submarines.

A Trump administration that is seen to be reckless and irresponsible in its competition with China would also likely promote more public discussion of AUKUS's impact on Australian sovereignty and the ability of Australian governments to resist being dragged into any U.S. war with China.

What Is Likely if Kamala Harris Wins the Presidency?

What if Kamala Harris is elected president in November? Harris is, to some degree, the continuity candidate when it comes to AUKUS. While she did not sign the deal, she was the vice president in the U.S. administration that did. Beyond that her views on AUKUS are somewhat of an unknown. A lot will also depend on her senior-level appointments, in particular whether Kurt Campbell—a major advocate of the agreement—continues to play a senior role in her administration.

Australians would probably be reassured by Harris's previous comments on China that while the United States does not "invite conflict ... we absolutely are prepared to and engaged in what is necessary to compete.

Similar to a future Trump administration, the main ways a Harris presidency would shape AUKUS will be with respect to the state of the U.S. submarine industrial base and the condition of AUKUS's social license in Australia.

On the submarine industrial base, much will depend on a Harris presidency's willingness to boost defense spending as well as the priorities it sets within the defense budget. Harris's views on defense spending are still a little unclear. Back in 2020, she said,¹⁴⁸ "I

unequivocally agree with the goal of reducing the defense budget." But in her acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, she stated that she will "ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world."

Nevertheless, under a Harris presidency Australia could expect there to be more competition for the defense budget coming from domestic and social programs. In that respect there is probably more risk that U.S. submarine production will not ramp up as quickly as needed under Harris; as a result, it will be harder for her successor (or for her in a second term) to certify the sale of submarines to Australia, at least on the current timeline.

In contrast to Trump, however, Harris may be able to contribute more positively to sustaining AUKUS's social license in Australia. The vice president currently enjoys a favorable image in Australia. In a recent poll, Australians said they would overwhelmingly vote for Harris (48%) over Trump (27%) if they could vote.¹²³ While her approach to foreign policy is still a bit unclear, she is more likely than Trump to retain Biden's focus on strengthening alliances and partnerships, which would play well in Australia.

Australians would also probably be more at ease with her more orthodox approach to foreign policy than the unpredictability promised by Trump. Here, her approach to China could play a defining role in shaping

Australian attitudes toward the alliance and AUKUS. These public attitudes toward China have hardened in recent years, but most Australians are still more pragmatic than hawkish. Australians would probably be reassured by Harris's previous comments on China that while the United States does not "invite conflict ... we absolutely are prepared to and engaged in what is necessary to compete."¹²⁴ A continuation of such an approach during a Harris presidency would calm concerns that AUKUS could potentially drag Australia into an unnecessary war with China.

What Is Likely to Stay the Same no Matter the U.S. Election Choice?

Despite some skepticism in Australia about whether AUKUS's lofty ambitions can be realized, progress on the implementation of the agreement has been fairly impressive to date. Australians are training and, in some cases, already graduating from courses designed to ensure that Australia can operate and maintain nuclear submarines. Australian firms are already winning U.S. defense contracts related to AUKUS. Legislation has been tabled or passed in both countries providing the necessary legal framework for implementing the pact. In August this year, for example, the three AUKUS partners finalized the establishment of a defense export license-free environment.¹²⁵ This will streamline what have often been complex and time-consuming processes for trade in defense goods and sensitive technologies.

What this underlines is that while U.S. elections may have an impact on the politics and public discussions, it will probably have little bearing on rapidly developing momentum at the working level. Short of some decision by the next administration to totally repudiate AUKUS—which seems highly unlikely—these working-level arrangements will continue to expand. It may well be that when it comes to AUKUS, what really matters is what happens below the surface.

Key Policy Recommendations

The two biggest risks to AUKUS over the term of the next U.S. president will be any inability to ramp-up U.S. submarine construction and any erosion in AUKUS's social license in Australia. Neither is an easy problem for policymakers to manage.

In terms of submarine building, a lot will come down to how much a new administration spends on defense, and how it prioritizes that spending. Even with significant financial contributions from the Australian government, raising the productivity of the U.S. submarine industrial base is ultimately a matter for the U.S. government. In that regard, AUKUS's fate—or at least its current timeline—really does rest in the hands of the next administration.

The two biggest risks to AUKUS over the term of the next U.S. president will be any inability to ramp-up U.S. submarine construction and any erosion in AUKUS's social license in Australia.

Where the two governments can work more closely together is on AUKUS's social license in Australia. This is not a new suggestion. A number of observers have said that both governments need to do a better job of explaining AUKUS's rationale and value. The problem is that to date too much of the focus has been on what are, for most people, relatively arcane topics: the tactical and strategic advantages of nuclear submarines and the future trajectory of the Chinese government's regional and international policies.

The issue that is much more material to AUKUS's social license in Australia is the agreement's impact on Australian sovereignty. Here both governments will need to provide regular assurances that AUKUS will not compromise Australia's sovereignty and specifically that it will not tie Australia to U.S. decision-making on future conflicts in Asia. Both governments might reasonably respond that they have done that to date. But the message has not always been carefully delivered, consistent or well-coordinated. For example, comments in 2023 by then U.S. Deputy Assistant to the President and Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell at a public event in Washington that, "when submarines are provided from the United States to Australia, it is not like they are lost. They will just be deployed by the closest possible allied force" became ready fodder for those in Australia who have criticized AUKUS from the sovereignty angle.

But this is not just a message management issue. Assurances on respect for Australian sovereignty need to be credible as well as consistent. There needs to be more public discussion, and where possible greater transparency, about the details of the agreement as it evolves. A focus on the sovereignty question should, for example, be reflected in public comments when Australian and U.S. ministers and officials meet, such as at the annual Australia-U.S. Ministerial consultation (AUSMIN). And it hardly needs saying that assurances on Australian sovereignty will be especially important if the next U.S. president acts in ways that erode Australian public confidence in the alliance and in U.S. global leadership.

Dominique Fraser is Research Associate at the Asia Society Policy Institute in Australia.

Anthony Bubalo is Chief Executive Officer of Asia Society Australia.



11 ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS & SECURITY

By: Lyle Morris and Wu Xinbo

In the run-up to the November 2024 U.S. presidential election, national security issues are playing a key role in the campaigns of the two candidates—Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump. In particular, since China has been identified as the United States biggest “strategic competitor” during both the Trump and Biden administrations, a key question is how will the trajectory of U.S.-China relations will be affected under a Harris or a Trump presidency?

This article explores how both candidates will approach China if elected president. In particular, both authors will present U.S. and Chinese perspectives of how both candidates will influence bilateral relations, with a particular focus on national security. The central question to be considered is this: Will there be any discernible changes to U.S. policy towards China under a Harris or a Trump presidency? If so, what changes might be expected?

Both authors agree that there will be few differences at the macro level in the China strategies of Harris and Trump: “strategic competition” has become deeply ingrained as the guiding principle within the U.S. national

strategy towards China.¹²⁶ Furthermore, national security has seeped into U.S. trade and investment policy toward China in recent years, to include greater U.S. export controls on high-technology commodities. Thus, it is likely that both candidates will continue policies that nest national security considerations within an overall economic approach towards China.

However, we may expect tactical differences in both candidates' policies regarding trade and U.S. approaches to alliances. Harris will likely continue policies under a Biden administration that prioritize the central role that U.S. alliances in Asia and Europe play in the world. While Trump will likely inject uncertainty into the role of alliances within strategic competition with China. He will also likely adopt a much more aggressive stance on trade, to possibly include heavy tariffs on China, that may destabilize an already unstable bilateral relationship.

The View from Washington

If Vice President Harris wins in November, there will likely be significant continuity between her China policy and that of President Joe Biden, which has emphasized investing in domestic capabilities, aligning with allies and partners, and competing with Beijing for economic advantage and global leadership. During the U.S. presidential debate on September 10, 2024, Harris said the United States must “beat China in the competition for the twenty-first century.” This echoed her August 2024, speech at the Democratic National Convention, for example, , saying she would ensure that “America—not China—wins the competition for the

21st century” in fields such as space and artificial intelligence, and that the United States “does not abdicate its international leadership.”¹²⁷

If Vice President Harris wins in November, there will likely be significant continuity between her China policy and that of President Joe Biden.

If Trump returns to the White House, trade will continue to form the centerpiece of his policy towards China. This includes his promise to impose higher tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports. He has also suggested that he will heavily restrict Chinese ownership of U.S. assets

and U.S. investment into China; expand export controls on China from Biden's “small yard, high fence” to a “big yard, high fence” approach; and phase out imports from China of electronics, steel, and pharmaceuticals.¹²⁸ His more unilateral approach brings more downside risk for U.S.-China stability but also slightly more upside potential, as he views tough policies as negotiating tools for potential deals with China.

Trump will also likely continue his prior approach on U.S. alliances, casting doubt on their utility and calling for allies to “pay their share” of mutual defense commitments. As recently as February 2024, Trump threatened not to honor NATO treaty commitments involving hostilities with Russia, for example.¹²⁹ His support for U.S. alliances in Asia is also tenuous. During his tenure as president, Trump is perhaps best remembered as scraping the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, oscillating between confrontation and appeasement with North Korea, and injecting bilateral tension with Japan over trade and burden-sharing arrangements.

While Trump has a four-year track record of China policies to draw from, Harris's China policy remains less clear. As vice president, Harris has largely amplified Biden's policies on China, which include being outspoken on China's “unfair” trade practices, concerns over Beijing's military modernization, and China's human rights record.

On human rights, Harris regularly worked on legislation as a senator promoting human rights in Hong Kong. Trump signed into law a bipartisan bill she introduced with Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL.) promoting human rights in Hong Kong and sanctioning Hong Kong officials implicated in “undermining fundamental freedoms and autonomy” in the territory. Harris’s co-sponsorship of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act¹ helped make it law in 2020 and empowered the U.S. government to impose sanctions against “foreign individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses” in Xinjiang.¹³⁰

On the geographic flashpoints, such as Taiwan and the South China Sea, Harris has signaled continuity with the Biden administration. Speaking aboard the *USS Howard* at the Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan in September 2022, for example, Harris offered some of her most pointed remarks about China’s military activities in the Indo-Pacific and near Taiwan, accusing China of “undermining key elements of the international rules-based order” and calling Beijing’s behavior in the East China Sea, South China Sea and Taiwan Strait “disturbing.”¹³¹ She also echoed President Biden’s comments on Taiwan, saying the United States will “continue to oppose any unilateral change to the status quo. And we will continue to support Taiwan’s self-defense, consistent with our long-standing policy.”¹³²

Notably, Harris became the highest-ranking United States official ever to visit the western island of Palawan, the closest Philippine landmass to the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, in November 2023.¹³³ Harris said “as an ally, the United States stands with the Philippines in the face of intimidation and coercion in the South China Sea.” She also reaffirmed the “unwavering” commitment of the United States to defend the Philippines if its vessels or aircraft were attacked in the South China Sea.¹³⁴

While Harris has not visited China or Taiwan as either senator or vice president, she has spoken with both Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te. Harris met briefly with Xi on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Retreat in 2022 where she urged him to “maintain open lines of communication to responsibly manage the competition between our countries.”¹³⁵ Harris also met Lai at the inauguration of Honduras’s President Xiomara Castro in that same year prior to Lai’s successful bid for Taiwan’s presidency in January 2023.¹³⁶

Trade is likely to be one of the most critical issues in U.S.-China policy, with significant variation between a Harris and a Trump administration.

Harris’s selection of Tim Walz as a running mate, however, may increase the chances of a new direction for the U.S.-China relationship. Walz has spent significant time in China, including teaching English during the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, giving him a unique perspective on China and its world view. While the role of the vice president in foreign policy varies from administration to administration, Walz’s deep China background may influence a Harris administration in new and important ways.

Finally, trade is likely to be one of the most critical issues in U.S.-China policy, with significant variation between a Harris and a Trump administration. While both sides of the political aisle agree on the importance of reducing the trade deficit with China and decreasing reliance on Chinese imports, the methods adopted by Trump and Biden have varied significantly, possibly suggesting different approaches in a Harris versus a Trump presidency.

President Trump initiated a trade war with China in 2018, imposing tariffs of up to 25% on a range of Chinese goods under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. President Biden has not only maintained these tariffs but also increased or introduced new duties on strategically important goods.

Trump's agenda adopts a considerably broader, blanket approach to trade barriers compared to the more targeted strategy employed by the Biden administration. The central aim of his trade strategy is to bring back manufacturing jobs to the United States that have been lost to overseas competitors—particularly China. In his 2024 campaign materials, for example, Trump has proposed universal baseline tariffs on most imported foreign goods, as well as a mechanism to gradually increase tariffs on countries, such as China, that have been deemed to devalue their currency or engage in other unfair trading practices. Thus, universal baseline taxes under a Trump administration would be a major hit to Chinese exporters—particularly those selling

From the Chinese perspective, the 2024 U.S. presidential election is unlikely to bring about major changes to U.S.-China relations.

consumer goods—as the United States is one of the largest export markets for China. It would also considerably increase costs for U.S. consumers and businesses.

While Harris has yet to release a specific policy platform for her campaign, statements made in public

appearances suggest she largely holds the same positions as the Biden administration on trade with China, which include targeted “de-risking” and tariffs against Chinese goods, while leaving room for a slightly more open trade posture with China. During an interview with CBS last year, Harris said, “It’s not about pulling out, but it is about ensuring that we are protecting American interests, and that we are a leader in terms of the rules of the road, as opposed to following others’ rules.”¹³⁷

It also notable that as a senator, Harris criticized Trump's trade approach to Beijing, telling then-Vice President Mike Pence during the vice presidential debate in 2020 that Trump “lost that trade war” and that his tariffs hurt the U.S. economy without rebalancing the U.S.-China relationship.¹³⁸

The View from Beijing

From the Chinese perspective, the 2024 U.S. presidential election is unlikely to bring about major changes to U.S.-China relations: Trump and Biden have largely set the trajectories for the U.S.-China policy during their presidencies from 2017 to 2024.

The Republicans and Democrats have reached a general consensus over the designation of China as America's primary challenge or threat and the pursuit of a China policy featuring competition and containment. However, Trump and Biden do differ in some specific approaches to China, which may suggest differences in a Trump or a Harris administration in 2025. Differences in diplomacy, economic engagements, people-to-people exchanges, how competition should be managed and conflicts should be avoided, and whether cooperation with China in certain areas is still necessary all constitute possible areas of divergence between the two candidates. In this sense, the election result in November 2024 will determine how the legacy from the previous two administrations will evolve over the next four years.

Should Trump be reelected, his China policy will give priority to economic issues, as was the case during his first tenure. Trump and his advisors including Robert Lighthizer have proposed imposing new tariffs on

all the imports from China, revoking China's Permanent Normal Trading Relations (PNTR) status, restricting two-way investments between two countries, and intensifying the control of technology flows to China. While national security will inevitably drive a harsher trade and “de-risking” policy under a Trump administration, his national security team may also push China hard on traditional security issues. However, given Trump's personality, he may opt to make a deal with China on certain security issues for the sake of his economic agenda.

On the political side, the picture is less clear. Although Trump himself may not be interested in provoking an ideological or geopolitical conflict with China, hawks in his national security team may seek to push China on Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South China Sea. Furthermore, the Trump administration will generally view ties with China as a liability and take an indifferent attitude toward engagement and cooperation with China, either bilaterally or multilaterally.

China-U.S. economic ties will suffer more devastatingly than it did during the first Trump administration, with “decoupling” taking place at a faster pace and at a larger scale.

So what are the implications for bilateral relations under a Trump presidency? First, China-U.S. economic ties will suffer more devastatingly than it did during the first Trump administration, with “decoupling” taking place at a faster pace and at a larger scale. This suggests the single most important pillar underpinning the bilateral relationship will be shattered.

Second, at a time when Beijing is highly vigilant over Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te's pro-independence stance, if Washington pushes the Taiwan issue and further undermines the United States' “One China” policy, a serious crisis and even confrontation across the Taiwan Strait is likely to occur. Beijing will be watching for signs that the next administration understands the seriousness of the Taiwan issue and can manage its ties with Taipei to avoid a conflict.”

Third, dialogue and communication between the two governments at the national and sub-national level will shrink to a minimum, and cultural and people-to-people ties between two sides will diminish.

And finally, Sino-U.S. coordination and cooperation in global governance, from maintaining the stability of international financial system to curbing the effect of climate change, will evaporate. Overall, under a Trump presidency, Sino-U.S. relations will witness intense frictions, serious crises and even military conflicts.

China policy under Kamala Harris is harder to predict. Given her lack of experience on foreign policy issues, she may be more inward-looking and more concerned with domestic social-economic issues. However, as a senator from California—a state with significant trade with China—she may be more aware of the importance of economic relations with China than Trump or Biden. She may also feel less pressure to demonstrate toughness toward China than Biden did, when the latter entered office in the wake of the Trump presidency's hawkish policies towards Beijing. In this sense, her approach to China could be more pragmatic and less national security or ideologically driven than Biden.

Having said that, U.S. China policy under a Harris administration will generally see more continuity than change from the current trajectory. Economically, Washington will, in the name of competition, work to

strangle China's technological advancement and restrict two-way investments in emerging technologies. Harris may remove some of the Trump-era tariffs on Chinese products, which have failed to weaken China's competitiveness while unnecessarily burdening U.S. consumers. However, the general trajectory of trade barriers and restrictions on U.S. exports to China will likely continue.

Politically, Harris will likely promote the narrative of "democracy versus autocracy," to include criticizing China from time to time on Xinjiang and Tibet, which was featured in the National Security and National

Defense strategies under both the Trump and Biden administrations

Policymakers in Beijing and Washington are under no illusions that a dramatic shift in U.S. policy on China will take place, regardless of which candidate wins.

Diplomatically, a Harris administration will likely join hands with allies and partners to pursue geopolitical competition with China in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, and possibly devote more resources to competing with China in the Global South. While Trump may pay lip service to such

priorities, his policies may be harder to pin down, as he has spoken little about the importance of the Global South on the campaign trail.

On the security front, the Harris administration will continue to support Taiwan and ratchet up military deterrence against Beijing in the Western Pacific, to include pressuring China in the South China Sea. However, Harris may try to avoid major crises or conflicts with China, viewing engagement and cooperation in some areas with China as both necessary and valuable.

Given the above, if Harris wins, what will U.S.-China relations look like over the next four years? They will remain strained in economic, diplomatic, and security fields, with constant tensions and frictions becoming the "new normal." Some of these frictions may even boil over into crisis. On the other hand, some of these negative trends may be offset by sustained or increased engagements and cooperation, which will help build mutual trust and enhance stability in bilateral ties. The hope is that the next four years will see some progress in arresting the major power rivalry between China and the United States. For instance, Beijing and Washington may develop a better understanding of the boundaries of competition, the premise of cooperation, and the effective means to manage differences. To be sure, U.S.-China ties will still be challenged during a Harris presidency but could be more stable than during the Trump and Biden years.

Finally, external events may inject opportunities into U.S.-China relations. In the past, major events generated positive momentum in bilateral ties. In the future, a serious U.S. economic crisis may compel Washington to seek Beijing's assistance, as it did during the 2008 financial crisis. Or a major international conflict may force the United States to cooperate with China, either bilaterally or multilaterally. No one knows for sure if any of these scenarios will arise at all, but in a highly uncertain world, all sorts of possibilities exist.

Conclusion

Policymakers in Beijing and Washington are under no illusions that a dramatic shift in U.S. policy on China will take place, regardless of which candidate wins. This conclusion highlights a widespread consensus in China and the United States that neither Harris nor Trump will deviate from the current U.S. strategy of

strategic competition with China, even if their tactics may diverge. Both sides also agree that a new normal of competition and tension in the national security domain will be the defining feature of either candidate's administration, with little expectation of a return to past U.S. policies prioritizing engagement with China. However, both authors agree that a Harris administration may leave open space for discrete areas of cooperation between Beijing and Washington, which may soften some of the sharper dimensions of competition. While Trump's harsher trade policy towards China, coupled with uncertainty over the value of U.S. alliances in Asia and Europe, may inject greater instability into the U.S.-China relationship.

Lyle J. Morris is Senior Fellow for Foreign Policy and National Security at Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis.

Wu Xinbo is Professor and Dean, Institute of International Studies, and Director at the Center for American Studies, Fudan University.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

FARWA AAMER is the Director of South Asia Initiatives at the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) in New York where she oversees the institute's policy work and projects in South Asia. Prior to ASPI, Farwa worked at the Stimson Center where she led research on the security, political, and socio-economic dimensions of transboundary river governance in the Himalayan region. Through her work, Farwa has organized and convened high-level Track II dialogues and discussions designed to facilitate greater inter-and intra-regional cooperation on issues and opportunities concerning water, energy, climate change, and sustainable development in South Asia, MENA, and Central Asia. Farwa also worked on highlighting the disproportionate impacts of climate change and water insecurity on women. From 2017 to 2021, Farwa was with the EastWest Institute (EWI) and served as the Director of the South Asia program. At EWI, Farwa worked on promoting non-traditional channels of diplomacy and establishing multi-stakeholder platforms for shared economic, financial, and geopolitical interests by bringing together policy shapers, media influencers, thought leaders, and business experts from within South Asia and across the globe. Farwa received her Bachelors of Science degree in Economics from University College London (UCL) and has a Masters in Management with Finance from BPP Business School, London.

EMMA CHANLETT-AVERY is Deputy Director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's Washington, DC office and the Director for Political-Security Affairs. Previous to this post, she served for 20 years as a Specialist in Asian Affairs at the Congressional Research Service, where she focused on U.S. relations with Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Thailand, and Singapore, with an emphasis on security issues and alliances. In 2023, she served as a Congressional Fellow on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, assisting the Chairman with drafting Asia policy legislation and preparing for hearings. Ms. Chanlett-Avery was a Presidential Management Fellow, with rotations in the State Department on the Korea Desk and at the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group in Bangkok, Thailand. She also worked in the Office of Policy Planning as a Harold Rosenthal Fellow. She is a member of the Mansfield Foundation U.S. – Japan Network for the Future and a Mansfield-Luce Asia Network Scholar. In 2016, she received the Kato Prize, awarded by Washington think tanks for strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance. She serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Association of Japan America Societies, Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Japan America Society of Washington DC, and as a Trustee of International Student Conferences, Inc. Ms. Chanlett-Avery received an MA in international security policy from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and her BA in Russian studies from Amherst College.

ANTHONY BUBALO joined Asia Society Australia in July 2023 as its Chief Executive Officer. He has over a decade of experience as a senior executive leading research, not-for-profit and consulting organizations. He has also worked as an Australian diplomat, intelligence analyst, speechwriter, and think-tank researcher. Prior to joining Asia Society, Anthony was the Chief Operating Officer of the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas. Before that he was a Principal at the international management consultancy, Nous Group. In 2004 he joined the Lowy Institute as one of its founding researchers and established its West Asia Program. Between 2012 and 2018 he was the Lowy Institute's Research Director and Deputy Director. While at the Lowy Institute Anthony published research on Islamist, energy security and geostrategic connections between the Middle East and Asia, and on Australian sports diplomacy in Asia. He is the author of *Remaking the Middle East*, published by Penguin Random House Australia. He has written for Australian and international publications including *The Australian*, the *Australian Financial Review*, the *Financial Times*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Foreign Policy*, *The National Interest*, and *The New Republic*. Between 1991 and 2003, Anthony worked in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He served as an Australian diplomat in Saudi Arabia and Israel. From 1997 to 1998 he was seconded to the Office of National Assessments, where he was the senior Middle East analyst. He was a departmental speechwriter twice, in 1999 and 2003.

WENDY CUTLER is Vice President at the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) and the managing director of the Washington, D.C. office. In these roles, she focuses on leading initiatives that address challenges related to trade, investment, and innovation, as well as women's empowerment in Asia. She joined ASPI following an illustrious career of nearly

three decades as a diplomat and negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), where she also served as Acting Deputy U.S. Trade Representative. During her USTR career, she worked on a range of bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade negotiations and initiatives, including the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, U.S.-China negotiations, and the WTO Financial Services negotiations. She has published a series of ASPI papers on the Asian trade landscape and serves as a regular media commentator on trade and investment developments in Asia and the world.

RORRY DANIELS is the Managing Director of Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), where she leads and oversees strategy and operations for ASPI's projects on security, climate change and trade throughout Asia. She is also a Senior Fellow with ASPI's Center for China Analysis. She was previously with the National Committee on American Foreign Policy where she managed the organization's Track II and research portfolio on Asia security issues, with a particular focus on cross-Taiwan Strait relations, U.S.-China relations, and the North Korean nuclear program. Her most recent research project audited the U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue to evaluate its process and outcomes. She regularly writes and provides analysis for major media outlets and newsletters on security issues in the U.S. and the Asia Pacific. She is a 2022 Mansfield-Luce scholar, a member of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and the National Committee on North Korea, a Pacific Forum Young Leader, as well as a Korea Society Kim Koo Foundation Fellow (2015 cohort). She earned her M.S. in International Relations at NYU's Center for Global Affairs, where she focused her studies on East and South Asia. She is proficient in Mandarin and holds a B.A. in Media Studies from Emerson College.

AMBASSADOR DINO PATTI DJALAL is the founder of the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI). Previously, he was a career diplomat and ambassador, best-selling author, accomplished academic, youth activist, and leader of the Indonesian diaspora community. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada); a master's degree in political science from Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, Canada), and a Phd in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (London, UK). In 2004, when President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono began his term, Dino was appointed special staff of the president for international affairs. From 2010 to 2013, he served as Indonesia's ambassador to the United States. In June 2014, Dino was appointed vice minister for foreign affairs, until October that year. He founded the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia, which now has become the largest foreign policy group in the country, with more than 90,000 people in the FPCI network.

DOMINIQUE FRASER is Research Associate at the Asia Society Policy Institute in Australia. She joined the Asia Society Policy Institute in October 2021. She supports the work of ASPI in Australia. Prior to this, Fraser worked as a researcher at the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, completing research projects on COVID-19 related hate speech and atrocity prevention risk assessments. Fraser worked in the field of atrocity prevention for five years in Geneva, gaining experience across research, advocacy, project management, and communications at Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC) and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. She completed a Master in International Affairs at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in 2017, following a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Honors) in International Relations, from which she graduated as Valedictorian of the Faculty of Humanitarian and Social Sciences at the University of Queensland.

DUYEON KIM is an Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at CNAS based in Seoul. Her expertise includes the two Koreas, nuclear nonproliferation, arms control, East Asian relations and geopolitics, U.S. nuclear policy, and security. She is a Columnist for the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and a Visiting Professor at the Yonsei University Graduate School of International Studies teaching Regional Security Regimes in Europe and Asia as well as Deterrence and Negotiations with North Korea: Theory and Practice. Dr. Kim's writings have appeared in leading publications, including Foreign Affairs and Foreign Policy. She is a frequent media commentator and quoted widely in leading global media outlets. She serves on the board of directors of the bilateral Korea-America Association and is a member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific U.S. Committee, the International Nuclear Security Forum, the U.S. National Committee on North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul. Dr. Kim was previously Senior Advisor for Northeast Asia and Nuclear Policy at the International Crisis Group; an Associate in the

Nuclear Policy and Asia programs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and a Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of non-proliferation at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington, D.C. In her first career, Dr. Kim was the Foreign Ministry Correspondent and Unification Ministry Correspondent for South Korean TV news. She holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Korea University; an MS in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service; and a BA in English/Literature from Syracuse University. She has native proficiency in Korean and English.

YUKA KOSHINO is an Associate Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and a doctoral student at the Keio University Graduate School of Law researching U.S. alliances and security, defense, and technology cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. She was a member of the IISS research team between 2020 and 2023, serving as Research Fellow for Security and Technology Policy (2022–23) and Research Fellow for Japanese Security and Defence Policy (2020–21). She is the co-author of *Japan's Effectiveness as a Geo-Economic Actor: Navigating Great-Power Competition* (Routledge, 2022). Prior to joining the IISS, Yuka conducted research for the Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She also provided policy and business analysis on Asia's high-tech and defence industries at the Avascent Group and the Asia Group in Washington DC. She graduated from Keio University in 2016 with a BA in law and received an MA in Asian studies from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service.

LIZZI C. LEE is a Fellow on Chinese Economy at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis. Ms. Lee is an economist turned journalist. She graduated from MIT's Ph.D. program in Economics before joining the New York-based independent Chinese media outlet Wall St TV. She is currently the host of "The Signal Live with Lizzi Lee" powered by The China Project, where she interviews the most knowledgeable minds on China for analysis of the ever-evolving business and technology ecosystem.

KATE LOGAN is Associate Director of Climate at the Asia Society Policy Institute. She is also a Fellow with ASPI's Center for China Analysis. Her work focuses on enhancing climate action across Asia, including developing a stronger regional vision for achieving net-zero emissions and encouraging more ambitious action in key national jurisdictions, especially China. Logan joined ASPI from ClimateWorks Foundation, where she managed grants for the Clean Energy, Clean Air initiative to rapidly transform the global power sector away from coal power and toward clean energy in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies. She also led efforts to engage subnational governments to adopt net-zero emissions targets and join the Race to Zero campaign on behalf of the UN High-level Climate Champions in the lead-up to COP26 in Glasgow. Logan began her career in Beijing, China, where she was a Princeton in Asia Fellow at the Natural Resources Defense Council and later directed international outreach and green supply chain initiatives for the Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, a non-profit founded by Chinese environmentalist Ma Jun. She also co-founded and produced *Environment China*, a podcast on solutions to China's environmental challenges. Logan holds a Master of Environment Management from Yale University's School of the Environment, where she twice co-chaired a symposium on greening the Belt and Road Initiative and received her bachelor's degree summa cum laude from Middlebury College in East Asian Studies with a focus on economics. She speaks Mandarin and is an avid distance and trail runner.

AKSHAY MATHUR is the Senior Director, Asia Society Policy Institute based in New Delhi responsible for the institute's policy mandate in India. His area of expertise is Geoeconomics, specifically international financial architecture, global trading system, global economic governance, and global digital governance. He is also concurrently a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Digital Economy Programme at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) based in Canada. Previously, Akshay has led Mumbai-based, business-supported, independent foreign policy think tanks - Gateway House and Observer Research Foundation Mumbai. He has written columns for Indian and foreign news publications, led Indian government-supported Track II dialogues with other countries, published research for various Indian and global think tanks, and convened and spoken at several Indian and global forums on international, domestic, and local policymaking. He represented India at the inaugural cohort of the Asia Global Fellows programme for mid-career leaders in the field of global policymaking hosted by the Asia Global Institute in Hong Kong in 2017 and the Georgetown University's Young Leaders Forum in Qatar in 2012. Akshay has advanced degrees in policy, business and

technology, specifically an MPA from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University as the Edward Mason Fellow, an MBA from Boston University's Questrom School of Business with concentration in Finance and Business Analysis, and a B.S. in Computer Science from the Manning College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

VIVEK MISHRA is a Fellow, Americas, Observer Research Foundation (ORF). His work focuses on US foreign policy, domestic politics in the US, America's role in the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific, particularly its role in shaping South Asian security. His other interests include Indo-US defence ties and great power competition.

Vivek was previously Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi; Assistant Professor (International Relations) at NIAS, Kolkata and Fulbright Nehru visiting scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace, SIPA, Columbia University (2015-16).

Vivek has a PhD and MPhil in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has one single authored book: *Covid 19 and Post Covid-19 Indian Diplomacy* (KW Publishers, 2022); two co-authored books, *Sapru House: A Story of Institution building in World Affairs* (KW Publishers, 2021); *India in the United Nations General Assembly (Vol I & II)* (KW Publishers, 2019) and an edited volume *The Regional Great Game in the Indian Ocean and India's Evolving Maritime Strategy* (KW Publishers, 2020). He over 16 peer reviewed journal articles and 15 book chapters.

LYLE J. MORRIS is Senior Fellow for Foreign Policy and National Security at Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis. Prior to joining ASPI, Lyle was a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation leading projects on Chinese military modernization and Asia-Pacific security from 2011-2022. From 2019 to 2021, Morris served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) as the Country Director for China, advising OSD on defense relations between the Department of Defense and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and on Indo-Pacific maritime security. He received the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service for his service. Before joining RAND, Lyle was the 2010–11 Next Generation Fellow at the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) and a research intern with the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Lyle has lived and studied in Beijing, China for four years, where he studied Mandarin at the Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies (IUP) at Tsinghua University and later worked at Dentsu Advertising and the China Economist Journal. Morris holds an MA in international affairs from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), earning a Certificate in East Asian Studies from Columbia's Weatherhead East Asian Institute; and BA in international business from Western Washington University.

JANE MELLSOP is the Director of Trade, Investment, and Economic Security at the Asia Society Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. Jane is an experienced international trade negotiator, lawyer and public policy professional. Jane has served as a diplomat with the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Most recently, Jane was the Senior Trade Adviser to New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Export Growth where she provided critical advice on the full range of international trade issues, including the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), New Zealand's hosting of APEC in 2021, implementation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and conclusion of bilateral free trade negotiations with the United Kingdom and the European Union. Her previous roles have included Chief Legal Counsel for the negotiation and implementation of several free trade agreements, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), New Zealand - Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership, and the New Zealand - Korea Free Trade Agreement. Jane was also posted overseas to the New Zealand Embassy in The Hague, the Netherlands, and has worked on multilateral and regional security and human rights issues earlier in her career. Jane has also been a Fellow and Director of Research at the think-tank Public Policy Forum in Ottawa, Canada, where she spearheaded a multi-year project on the Canada-China relationship and launched a training series focused on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples for senior public servants. Jane also has social policy experience, having been a Policy Manager for Youth Justice and Disability at New Zealand's Ministry for Children, Oranga Tamariki. Jane has a B.A. in Politics and a L.L.B. (First Class Honours) from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, where she graduated top of her class.

KAEWKAMOL “KAREN” PITAKDUMRONGKIT is Senior Fellow and Head of Centre for Multilateralism Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She is also a Non-Resident Fellow at the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), U.S.A. Her research interests include international economic negotiation, Indo-Pacific economic governance and integration, regional-global economic governance dynamics, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN's external relations (ASEAN-Plus frameworks). She has published in various outlets such as *The Singapore Economic Review*, *The International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, *The Pacific Review*, *Australian Outlook*, *Review of International Political Economy*, *The Diplomat*, and *East Asia Forum*. Her media interviews include *Bangkok Post*, *Bloomberg*, *Business Times*, *Channel News Asia*, *CNBC Asia-Pacific*, *New Straits Times*, *The Strait Times*, *South China Morning Post*, and *Xinhua*. Besides publications and media engagement, Dr. Karen organized several capacity-building programmes such as the Annual RSIS-World Trade Organization (WTO) Parliamentarian Workshops in Singapore, and In-Country Workshops on Technical Trade Issues which are tailored to the specific needs of the trade officials in Asian countries. She was also part of the team involved in composing the elements of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. In addition, Dr. Karen teaches modules at the RSIS MSc International Political Economy programme, and occasionally provides briefings to international diplomats and military students at Singapore's Goh Keng Swee Command and Staff College.

DANIEL RUSSEL is Vice President for International Security and Diplomacy at the Asia Society Policy Institute. Previously he served as a Diplomat in Residence and Senior Fellow with ASPI for a one year term. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service at the U.S. Department of State, he most recently served as the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary on July 12, 2013, Mr. Russel served at the White House as Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Asian Affairs. During his tenure there, he helped formulate President Obama's strategic rebalance to the Asia Pacific region, including efforts to strengthen alliances, deepen U.S. engagement with multilateral organizations, and expand cooperation with emerging powers in the region. Prior to joining the NSC in January of 2009, he served as Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs and had assignments as U.S. Consul General in Osaka-Kobe, Japan (2005-2008); Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague, Netherlands (2002-2005); Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus (1999-2002); Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering (1997-99); Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (1995-96); Political Section Unit Chief at U.S. Embassy Seoul, Republic of Korea (1992-95); Political Advisor to the Permanent Representative to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Ambassador Pickering (1989-92); Vice Consul in Osaka and Branch Office Manager in Nagoya, Japan (1987-89); and Assistant to the Ambassador to Japan, former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (1985-87). In 1996, Mr. Russel was awarded the State Department's Una Chapman Cox Fellowship sabbatical and authored *America's Place in the World*, a book published by Georgetown University. Before joining the Foreign Service, he was manager for an international firm in New York City. Mr. Russel was educated at Sarah Lawrence College and University College, University of London, UK.

LI SHUO is the Director of China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute. He is also a Senior Fellow with ASPI's Center for China Analysis. His work focuses on analyzing China's environmental and energy policies and supporting the international community's engagement with China's climate agenda. Prior to ASPI, Li Shuo has more than a decade of experience in United Nations environmental negotiations, including on climate change, biodiversity, ocean, plastic pollution, and ozone.

NEIL THOMAS is a Fellow on Chinese Politics at Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis, where he studies elite politics, political economy, and foreign policy. Previously, he was a Senior Analyst for China and Northeast Asia at Eurasia Group, the world's leading political risk advisory and consulting firm, a Senior Research Associate at MacroPolo, the in-house think tank of the Paulson Institute, and a lecturer at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. He has testified before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission and his writing appears in publications including *The China Story*, *ChinaFile*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Lowy Interpreter*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wire China*. He is regularly quoted by major media outlets such as *Bloomberg*, *CNN*, *Financial*

Times, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He holds a Master in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Australia, and certificates from Renmin University, Tsinghua University, and Zhejiang University.

MARIKO TOGASHI has been a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Geoeconomics (IOG) since January 2024. Prior to IOG, Mariko was a Research Fellow for Japanese Security and Defence Policy / Matsumoto-Samata Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London for two years, focusing on Japan's economic security policy. She also worked as a research assistant to Dr. Kent Calder at Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, as well as a research intern at CSIS' Economics Program, focusing on the economic security of the U.S., Japan, and China. Before taking her master's degree, Mariko worked as an equity analyst in the Japanese machinery sector at Deutsche Bank and Bank of America Merrill Lynch (currently BofA Securities) for more than five years.

Mariko earned her master's degree in international economics and strategic studies from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and her bachelor's degree in international law from Keio University, Tokyo.

SHAY WESTER is the Director of Asian Economic Affairs and Outreach Director at the Asia Society Policy Institute where his research focuses on trade and economics in Asia. He also leads ASPI's external engagement with the U.S. and Asian policy communities in Washington D.C. Prior to joining ASPI, Shay spent 9 years in Singapore at the US-ASEAN Business Council, where he led policy strategy and programming across all industry verticals. He engaged extensively with U.S. and ASEAN governments and regional stakeholders to solve problems and address policy concerns.

Earlier in his career, Shay served as a legislative assistant for Senator John Cornyn, providing policy analysis and advising on issues including foreign policy, homeland security, transportation, economic development, and space policy. He also worked for the U.S. Trade Representative in the Office of Policy Coordination on the annual U.S. trade policy report to Congress, and for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Originally from Texas, Shay received his undergraduate degree in Economics and Political Science from Southern Methodist University. He holds a Master's Degree in International Relations and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington D.C.

WU XINBO is Professor and Dean, Institute of International Studies, and Director at the Center for American Studies, Fudan University. He teaches and researches China's foreign and security policy, Sino-U.S. relations, and U.S. Asia-Pacific policy. Prof. Wu is the author of *Dollar Diplomacy and Major Powers in China, 1909-1913* (Fudan University Press, 1997), *Turbulent Water: US Asia-Pacific Security Strategy in the post-Cold War Era* (Fudan University Press, 2006), *Managing Crisis and Sustaining Peace between China and the United States* (United States Institute of Peace, 2008), *The New Landscape in Sino-U.S. Relations in the early 21st Century* (Fudan University Press, 2011), and co-authored *Asia-Pacific Regional Order in Transformation* (Current Affairs Press, 2013), *China and the Asia-Pacific Chess Game* (Fudan University Press, 2017). His work has also appeared in English language journals such as *International Affairs*, *The Washington Quarterly*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Asian Survey* as well as Chinese language journals published in China. He also contributed chapters to book volumes published by Stanford University Press, Columbia University Press, Oxford University Press, etc. Dr. WU serves on the policy advisory board of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is on the editorial board of *The Washington Quarterly*, *European Journal of International Security* and on the International Advisory Board of *International Affairs*. He was a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Geopolitical Risk and served as its Vice-Chair (2012-13) and Chair (2013-14), and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Geo-economics (2015-2016). He is currently a member on the Advisory Council of Asia Society Policy Institute, as well as a member of The Trilateral Commission. Dr. WU entered Fudan University in 1982 as an undergraduate student and received his B.A. in history in 1986. In 1992, he got his Ph. D. in international relations from Fudan University. In the same year, he joined the Center for American Studies, Fudan University. In 1994, he spent one year at the George Washington University as a visiting scholar. In the fall of 1997, he was a visiting fellow at the Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University and the Henry Stimson Center in

Washington DC. From January to August, 2000, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution. From September 2006 to July 2007, he was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace.

HAN-KOO YEO has been a Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics since June 2023. As a Senior Fellow, Yeo contributes to the thought leadership of the Peterson Institute and writes on a variety of topics, including Indo-Pacific economic cooperation, U.S.-Korean bilateral trade policy, the nexus of national security and trade, and free trade. From 2021 to 2022, Yeo served as the minister for trade of the Republic of Korea, culminating almost three decades of working in the Korean government. A veteran international trade negotiator and policymaking practitioner, over the course of his career, Yeo was involved in many bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations as one of the chief negotiators for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Korea-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Korea–Central America FTA, Korea-Indonesia Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), and Korea–the Philippines FTA, and he participated in developing the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) from the start. As Korean minister for trade, he oversaw trade and investment portfolios covering not only conventional trade negotiations but also export control and investment screening, such as Korea's export control measures against Russia tied to the war in Ukraine. A graduate of Seoul National University, he also holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and an MPA from Harvard's Kennedy School.

HELEN ZHANG is a non-resident fellow in the Sydney University's United States Studies Centre's Emerging Technology Program, and the co-founder of Intrigue Media, a geopolitical media company which produces the flagship 'International Intrigue' daily briefing. Prior to this, Helen worked at Google Search on online harms policies, served as an Australian diplomat in Tel Aviv and Hong Kong, and practiced commercial law. Helen was a Fulbright Scholar and Harvard Kennedy School graduate.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The White House. "Remarks by President Biden and President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China Before Bilateral Meeting – Woodside, CA." The White House. November 15, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/11/15/remarks-by-president-biden-and-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-before-bilateral-meeting-woodside-ca/>.
- ² Turnbull, Malcolm. "How the World Can Deal With Trump." *Foreign Affairs*, May 31, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/how-world-can-deal-trump>.
- ³ Davis, Bob, and Lingling Wei. *Superpower Showdown: How the Battle Between Trump and Xi Threatens a New Cold War*. New York: Harper Business, 2020. <https://www.harpercollins.com/products/superpower-showdown-bob-davislingling-wei?variant=32127351160866>.
- ⁴ Wadhams, Nick. "Ex-Trump Adviser Urges Him to Cut Ties With China, Restart Nuclear Tests." *Bloomberg*, June 17, 2024. Updated June 18, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-security-adviser-urges-cutting-china-ties-resuming-nuclear-weapons-tests>.
- ⁵ Tankersley, Jim, and Mark Landler. "Trump Delays Auto Tariffs for Six Months as China Trade War Escalates." *The New York Times*, May 15, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/15/us/politics/china-trade-donald-trump.html>.
- ⁶ "The Usual Suspects Behind U.S. Trade Deficits: China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Germany." *FRED Blog*, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, October 1, 2018. <https://fredblog.stlouisfed.org/2018/10/the-usual-suspects-behind-u-s-trade-deficits-china-canada-mexico-japan-and-germany/>; U.S. Census Bureau. "Foreign Trade: Trade in Goods with China." U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed October 3, 2024. <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html>.
- ⁷ Irwin, Neil. "Trump's China Tariffs Are Back, and They're Going to Cost You." *Axios*, updated July 9, 2024. <https://www.axios.com/2024/07/09/trump-china-tariffs-trade>.
- ⁸ Savage, Charlie, Jonathan Swan, and Maggie Haberman. "Trump's 2025 Trade Agenda: What It Means for China." *The New York Times*, December 26, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/26/us/politics/trump-2025-trade-china.html>.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*; Davis, Bob. "The Trade War's Unlikely Architect." *Foreign Policy*, July 16, 2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/16/trump-trade-war-robert-lighthizer-china-economic-policy/>.
- ¹⁰ "China's Home Price Slump Eases After Government Rescue Efforts." *Bloomberg*, August 15, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-08-15/china-s-home-price-slump-eases-after-government-rescue-efforts>.
- ¹¹ "Transcript: Trump's Interview with Bloomberg." *Bloomberg*, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-trump-interview-transcript/>.
- ¹² Trump, Donald J., and Tony Schwartz. *Trump: The Art of the Deal*. New York: Random House, October 6, 2015. <https://www.randomhousebooks.com/books/180675/>.
- ¹³ "Trump Invites Chinese Carmakers to the U.S. Amid Tariff Negotiations." *Fortune*, July 19, 2024. <https://fortune.com/asia/2024/07/19/trump-invites-chinese-carmakers-eva-us-mexico-tariffs-200/>; Cortellessa, Eric. "Donald Trump's TikTok Ban Is Back in Congress." *TIME*, March 12, 2024. <https://time.com/6900348/tiktok-ban-donald-trump-congress/>.
- ¹⁴ Davis, Bob, and Lingling Wei. *Superpower Showdown: How the Battle Between Trump and Xi Threatens a New Cold War*. New York: Harper Business, June 9, 2020. <https://www.harpercollins.com/products/superpower-showdown-bob-davislingling-wei?variant=32127351160866>.
- ¹⁵ "Transcript: Trump's Interview with Bloomberg." *Bloomberg*, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-trump-interview-transcript/>.
- ¹⁶ Kaplan, Fred. "Kamala Harris's Foreign Policy Vision for 2024." *Slate*, August 6, 2024. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2024/08/kamala-harris-foreign-policy-2024-presidential-election.html>.
- ¹⁷ "Kamala Harris's Foreign Policy: How She's Balancing Competing Interests." *Foreign Policy*, July 26, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/26/kamala-harris-policy-china-russia-trade-immigration-israel-gaza-india/>; Blinken, Antony. "Secretary Blinken on the Administration's Policy Toward China." *Asia Society Policy Institute*, August 12, 2024. <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/events/secretary-blinken-administrations-policy-toward-china>.
- ¹⁸ Agence France-Presse. "Biden Wants to Reopen Communication, Set Guardrails in Xi Talks." *Barron's*, August 3, 2024. <https://www.barrons.com/news/biden-wants-to-reopen-communication-set-guard-rails-in-xi-talks-white-house-01668391506>.
- ¹⁹ "Transcript of Kamala Harris's Speech." *The New York Times*, August 23, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/23/us/politics/kamala-harris-speech-transcript.html>.

- ²⁰ Garrity, Kelly. "Kamala Harris Emphasizes Cooperation with China in New Speech." *Politico*, September 10, 2023. <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/10/kamala-harris-china-relationship-00114893>.
- ²¹ Gutierrez, Jason. "Kamala Harris Visits the Philippines Amid Rising Tensions in Asia." *The New York Times*, November 22, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/22/world/asia/kamala-harris-philippines.html>.
- ²² McCullough, Colin. "Kamala Harris Calls for Stronger U.S. Commitment to Taiwan." *CNN*, September 28, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/28/politics/kamala-harris-china-taiwan/index.html>; "China Expresses Anger Over Kamala Harris's Meeting with Taiwan's Vice President." *NBC News*, January 28, 2022. Updated January 30, 2022. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-anger-kamala-harris-meeting-taiwan-vice-president-honduras-rcna13922>.
- ²³ "Kamala Harris's Foreign Policy: How She's Balancing Competing Interests." *Foreign Policy*, July 26, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/26/kamala-harris-policy-china-russia-trade-immigration-israel-gaza-india/>; Pathi, Krutika. "Biden, Harris Meet with Xi Jinping Amid Rising Tensions." *Associated Press*, November 19, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/biden-china-asia-kamala-harris-xi-jinping-f4b0cdf25b12af6c96c15e25282e60bb>; "Vice President Harris Rejects Isolationism, Authoritarianism, and Recent Attacks on NATO While Making Forceful Case for America's Continued Global Leadership During Munich Security Conference." *The White House*, February 16, 2024. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/02/16/vice-president-harris-rejects-isolationism-authoritarianism-and-recent-attacks-on-nato-while-making-forceful-case-for-americas-continued-global-leadership-during-munich-security-conference/>.
- ²⁴ Kaplan, Fred. "Kamala Harris's Foreign Policy Vision for 2024." *Slate*, August 6, 2024. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2024/08/kamala-harris-foreign-policy-2024-presidential-election.html>.
- ²⁵ "Candidates Answer CFR's Questions: Kamala Harris." *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 21, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/article/kamala-harris>.
- ²⁶ Sevastopulo, Demetri. "Kamala Harris: 'We Will Not Stand by While China Tries to Undermine Our Democracy.'" *Financial Times*, August 30, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/1527d949-8298-40c1-9292-c3d0e6adb395>.
- ²⁷ Wang, Jisi, Hu Ran, and Zhao Jianwei. "Does China Prefer Harris or Trump?" *Foreign Affairs*, August 1, 2024. <https://foreignaffairs.com/united-states/does-china-prefer-harris-or-trump>.
- ²⁸ Huang, Christine, Laura Silver, and Laura Clancy. "Americans Remain Critical of China." *Pew Research Center*, May 1, 2024. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/01/americans-remain-critical-of-china/>.
- ²⁹ Thomas, Neil. "Xi Signals Firm Strategy but Flexible Tactics at China's Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference." *China Brief* 24, no. 8 (April 12, 2024). <https://jamestown.org/program/xi-signals-firm-strategy-but-flexible-tactics-at-chinas-central-foreign-affairs-work-conference/>.
- ³⁰ Yang, Stephanie. "Does China Fear Trump or Biden More?" *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 2024. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2024-04-25/does-china-fear-trump-or-biden-more-us-presidential-election-campaign>.
- ³¹ "Trump-Kim Summit: Photos from the Historic Meeting." *CNN*, June 12, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/06/politics/trump-kim-summit-cnnphotos/>; Rogers, Alex. "The US-China Relationship Will Get Worse Before It Gets Better." *Financial Times*, September 11, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/15673a34-0863-4426-8d58-ebf60b947354>.
- ³² Demarais, Agathe. "What China Wants from the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election." *Foreign Policy*, February 7, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/07/china-trump-biden-us-presidential-election-2024/>.
- ³³ Gan, Nectar. "China's Reaction to Trump's Conviction." *CNN*, May 31, 2024. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/31/china/china-trump-conviction-trending-intl-hnk/index.html>.
- ³⁴ "G7 Leaders' Statement on Economic Resilience and Economic Security." *The White House*, May 20, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/g7-leaders-statement-on-economic-resilience-and-economic-security/>.
- ³⁵ Song, Sang-ho. "Biden, Yoon Discuss Ways to Strengthen Ties and Address Regional Issues." *Yonhap News Agency*, May 4, 2024. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240504000800315>.
- ³⁶ Harris, Kamala. "As we work to build a more equitable economy, I was proud to join @SecondGentleman and @SecYellen to announce a new initiative to expand access to capital for small businesses owned by people of color." *Twitter*, March 18, 2021. <https://x.com/vp/status/1372693574672867333?s=46&t=wey9F942MbjHfep7DQkybA>.
- ³⁷ "Candidates Answer CFR's Questions: Kamala Harris." *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 21, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/article/kamala-harris>.
- ³⁸ Deese, Brian. "Remarks on Executing a Modern American Industrial Strategy." *The White House*, October 13, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/10/13/remarks-on-executing-a-modern-american-industrial-strategy-by-nec-director-brian-deese/>.

- ³⁹ "Face the Nation: Full Transcript, September 10, 2023." *CBS News*, September 10, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-full-transcript-09-10-2023/>.
- ⁴⁰ Hannah Monicken, "Harris, WTO Director-General Speak on Reform, Pandemic Recovery," *Inside Trade*, September 16, 2024, <https://insidetrade.com/daily-news/harris-wto-director-general-speak-reform-pandemic-recovery>.
- ⁴¹ Kamala Harris, "Climate Plan," *Kamala Harris: Official Campaign Website*, last modified December 3, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20191203230607/https://kamalaharris.org/policies/climate/full-policy/>.
- ⁴² Erica R. Hendry, "Read Trump's Full Speech Outlining His National Security Strategy," *PBS NewsHour*, December 18, 2017, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/read-trumps-full-speech-outlining-his-national-security-strategy>.
- ⁴³ Robert Lighthizer, "Testimony Before the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party," May 17, 2023, https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/robert-lighthizer_china-committee-testimony_may-17_2023.pdf.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Nathan Layne, "Trump Vows to Kill Asia Trade Deal Being Pursued by Biden If Elected," *Reuters*, November 18, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-vows-kill-asia-trade-deal-being-pursued-by-biden-if-elected-2023-11-19/>.
- ⁴⁶ Korea Legislation Research Institute, "Act on the Promotion of the Use of Blockchain Technology," (hseq 4625), accessed October 3, 2024, https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=4625&lang=ENG.
- ⁴⁷ Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources, *National Quantum Strategy*, May 2023, <https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/national-quantum-strategy.pdf>.
- ⁴⁸ Singapore Government, *National Artificial Intelligence Strategy*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://file.go.gov.sg/nais2023.pdf>.
- ⁴⁹ Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, "Special Address at Davos Agenda 2022," *Kizuna*, January 17, 2022, https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2022/02/special_address_at_davos_agenda.html.
- ⁵⁰ Government of India, *Tech Panorama for Atmanirbhar Bharat: Report – 08 March*, accessed October 3, 2024, [https://psa.gov.in/CMS/web/sites/default/files/publication/Tech%20Panorama%20for%20Atmanirbhar%20Bharat%20Report%20%E2%80%93%2008%20March%20Full%20Version%20\(1\).pdf](https://psa.gov.in/CMS/web/sites/default/files/publication/Tech%20Panorama%20for%20Atmanirbhar%20Bharat%20Report%20%E2%80%93%2008%20March%20Full%20Version%20(1).pdf).
- ⁵¹ Korea Legislation Research Institute, "Act on the Promotion of the Use of Blockchain Technology," (hseq 62878), accessed October 3, 2024, https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=62878&type=sogan&key=54.
- ⁵² Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources, *Critical Technologies Statement*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/critical-technologies-statement>.
- ⁵³ "The United States and India Elevate Strategic Partnership with the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (ICET)," *The White House*, January 31, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/31/fact-sheet-united-states-and-india-elevate-strategic-partnership-with-the-initiative-on-critical-and-emerging-technology-icet/>; "Joint Fact Sheet: Launching the U.S.-ROK Next Generation Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue," *The White House*, December 8, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/12/08/joint-fact-sheet-launching-the-u-s-rok-next-generation-critical-and-emerging-technologies-dialogue/>; "Quad Principles on Critical and Emerging Technology Standards," *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*, accessed October 3, 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/36575/Quad_Principles_on_Critical_and_Emerging_Technology_Standards.
- ⁵⁴ "Press Release: Government of India Launches Initiative to Strengthen National Security," *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*, March 10, 2023, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1905522>; "Joint Statement of the United States of America and Republic of Korea on Cooperation in Quantum Information Science and Technologies," *U.S. Department of State*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-of-the-united-states-of-america-and-republic-of-korea-on-cooperation-in-quantum-information-science-and-technologies/>.
- ⁵⁵ Karen M. Sutter and Emily G. Blevins, "National Security and Technology: A Primer," *Congressional Research Service*, IF12510, updated May 16, 2024, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12510>.
- ⁵⁶ Jason A. Gallo and Karen M. Sutter, "China's Trade and Economic Relations with the United States: A Backgrounder," *Congressional Research Service*, R47373, February 29, 2024, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47373>.
- ⁵⁷ "Fact Sheet: In Asia, President Biden and a Dozen Indo-Pacific Partners Launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity," *The White House*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-in-asia-president-biden-and-a-dozen-indo-pacific-partners-launch-the-indo-pacific-economic-framework-for-prosperity/>.
- ⁵⁸ "Press Release on the IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum," *Government of Singapore*, June 6, 2023, https://files-myxp.gevme.com/de2d5457-8ad1-4ba6-ad40-11d73c00d667/660a9a90fc665ffd2e7506db/zAJHp/press_release_on_the_ipef_clean_economy_investor_forum_-_6_jun%5B68%5D.pdf.

- ⁵⁹ "Quad Open RAN Security Report," *Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australia*, May 2023, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/quad-open-ran-security-report.pdf>.
- ⁶⁰ "Wilmington Declaration: Joint Statement from the Leaders of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States," *The White House*, September 21, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/09/21/the-wilmington-declaration-joint-statement-from-the-leaders-of-australia-india-japan-and-the-united-states/>.
- ⁶¹ "Press Release: India and Australia Agree to Strengthen Cooperation in Emerging Technologies," *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*, February 10, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2004801>.
- ⁶² A. S. Stepanov et al., "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Addressing Global Health Challenges," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 9 (2023): 10052221, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10052221/>.
- ⁶³ "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea>; "Confrontation Over Taiwan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/confrontation-over-taiwan>; Alessio Patalano, "What Is China's Strategy in the Senkaku Islands?" *War on the Rocks*, September 10, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/09/what-is-chinas-strategy-in-the-senkaku-islands/>.
- ⁶⁴ Ryan Hass and Abraham Denmark, "More Pain Than Gain: How the U.S.-China Trade War Hurt America," *Brookings Institution*, August 7, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/more-pain-than-gain-how-the-us-china-trade-war-hurt-america/>; Courtney J. Fung and Shing-hon Lam, "Mixed Report Card: China's Influence at the United Nations," *Lowy Institute*, December 18, 2022, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/publications/mixed-report-card-china-s-influence-united-nations>; Prashanth Parameswaran, "Southeast Asia and U.S.-China Competition: Contours, Realities, and Implications for the Indo-Pacific," *Wilson Center*, December 21, 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/southeast-asia-and-us-china-competition-contours-realities-and-implications-indo-pacific>.
- ⁶⁵ Mark A. Milley and Eric Schmidt, "Is America Ready for the Wars of the Future?" *Foreign Affairs* 103, no. 5 (September/October 2024), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/ai-america-ready-wars-future-ukraine-israel-mark-milley-eric-schmidt>; Eric Schmidt, "AI Will Transform Science," *MIT Technology Review*, July 5, 2023, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/07/05/1075865/eric-schmidt-ai-will-transform-science/>.
- ⁶⁶ Sujai Shivakumar, Charles Wessner, and Thomas Howell, "Balancing the Ledger: Export Controls on U.S. Chip Technology to China," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 21, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/balancing-ledger-export-controls-us-chip-technology-china>; Justin Sherman, "The U.S. Is Continuing Its Campaign Against Huawei," *Lawfare*, July 20, 2021, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/us-continuing-its-campaign-against-huawei>.
- ⁶⁷ "United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement," *The White House*, April 10, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/10/united-states-japan-joint-leaders-statement/>.
- ⁶⁸ "Joint Fact Sheet: Launching the U.S.-ROK Next Generation Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue," *U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Korea*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://kr.usembassy.gov/120923-joint-fact-sheet-launching-the-u-s-rok-next-generation-critical-and-emerging-technologies-dialogue/>; "Fact Sheet: U.S.-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: One Year On," *The White House*, September 5, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/05/fact-sheet-u-s-asean-comprehensive-strategic-partnership-one-year-on/>.
- ⁶⁹ "United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement," *The White House*, April 10, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/10/united-states-japan-joint-leaders-statement/>; "Joint Fact Sheet: Launching the U.S.-ROK Next Generation Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue," *U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Korea*, September 12, 2023, <https://kr.usembassy.gov/120923-joint-fact-sheet-launching-the-u-s-rok-next-generation-critical-and-emerging-technologies-dialogue/>.
- ⁷⁰ "U.S.-ASEAN STIC," *U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.usascp.org/programs/us-asean-stic/>; "Asean Science and Technology Fellowship," *ASEAN Foundation*, accessed October 3, 2024, https://www.aseanfoundation.org/asean_science_and_technology_fellowship.
- ⁷¹ Ryan Tracy and Natalie Andrews, "Senate Approves \$280 Billion Bill to Boost U.S. Science, Chip Production," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 2022, updated July 27, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/senate-approves-280-billion-bill-to-boost-u-s-science-chip-production-11658942295>.
- ⁷² "Taiwan's Dominance of the Chip Industry Makes It More Important," *The Economist*, March 6, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/03/06/taiwans-dominance-of-the-chip-industry-makes-it-more-important>; Laura He, "China Is Launching a New Investment Fund to Compete in the Global Semiconductor Market," *CNN*, May 27, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/27/tech/china-semiconductor-investment-fund-intl-hnk/index.html>.
- ⁷³ Ilaria Mazzocco, "Why the New Climate Bill Is Also About Competition with China," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, August 25, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-new-climate-bill-also-about-competition-china>.
- ⁷⁴ Jim Tankersley, "Biden's Infrastructure Plan Includes Competition with China," *The New York Times*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/16/us/politics/biden-infrastructure-china.html>.

- ⁷⁵ "Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Renewing American Economic Leadership at the Brookings Institution," *The White House*, April 27, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/27/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-renewing-american-economic-leadership-at-the-brookings-institution/>.
- ⁷⁶ "AI Safety Summit 2023," *GOV.UK*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/ai-safety-summit-2023>.
- ⁷⁷ "Global Leaders Agree to Launch First International Network of AI Safety Institutes to Boost Understanding of AI," *GOV.UK*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/global-leaders-agree-to-launch-first-international-network-of-ai-safety-institutes-to-boost-understanding-of-ai>.
- ⁷⁸ Fact Sheet: U.S. Action on Global Development," *The White House*, September 20, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/20/fact-sheet-u-s-action-on-global-development/>.
- ⁷⁹ "Digital Investment," *U.S. Agency for International Development*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.usaid.gov/digital-development/digital-invest>.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ "Readout of the Quad Investors Network Event at the White House," *The White House*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/18/readout-of-the-quad-investors-network-event-at-the-white-house/>.
- ⁸² "Private Sector Engagement," *U.S. Agency for International Development*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/asia-regional/fact-sheets/private-sector-engagement>.
- ⁸³ "Union Cabinet Approves Establishment of the National Quantum Mission," *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*, July 15, 2024, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2033389>.
- ⁸⁴ "India Assumes Chair of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence," *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*, December 12, 2023, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1985585&ref=blog.denic.de#:~:text=Background-,GPAI%20is%20a%20multi%2Dstakeholder%20initiative%20with%2029%20member%20countries,chair%20of%20GPAI%20in%202024>.
- ⁸⁵ Madison Alder and Rebecca Heilweil, "Officials: Harris to Combine Biden AI Policies with Silicon Valley Approach," *FedScoop*, July 24, 2024, <https://fedscoop.com/harris-combine-biden-ai-policies-with-silicon-valley-approach/>.
- ⁸⁶ "Meet the All-Woman Billionaires Club Backing Kamala Harris," *The Times*, July 23, 2024, <https://www.thetimes.com/world/us-world/article/meet-the-all-woman-billionaires-club-backing-kamala-harris-fkctwqcf>; Madison Alder and Rebecca Heilweil, "Officials: Harris to Combine Biden AI Policies with Silicon Valley Approach," *FedScoop*, July 24, 2024, <https://fedscoop.com/harris-combine-biden-ai-policies-with-silicon-valley-approach/>.
- ⁸⁷ Ryan Tracy and Natalie Andrews, "Senate Approves \$280 Billion Bill to Boost U.S. Science, Chip Production," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/senate-approves-280-billion-bill-to-boost-u-s-science-chip-production-11658942295>.
- ⁸⁸ Kamala D. Harris, "Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Secures Global Agreement to Strengthen Privacy Protections for Users of Mobile Applications," *California Department of Justice*, February 22, 2012, <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-kamala-d-harris-secures-global-agreement-strengthen-privacy>.
- ⁸⁹ Christine Mui, "Trump, Biden Debate Tech Issues in 2024," *Politico*, June 27, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/digital-future-daily/2024/06/27/trump-biden-debate-tech-00165399>.
- ⁹⁰ Cat Zakrzewski, "Trump Signs AI Executive Order, Aiming to Balance Innovation and Regulation," *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/07/16/trump-ai-executive-order-regulations-military/>.
- ⁹¹ Harry Booth, "Republicans Move to Repeal Biden's AI Executive Order," *Time*, July 11, 2024, <https://time.com/6996927/republicans-repeal-biden-ai-executive-order/>.
- ⁹² "China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Responds to Latest Developments," *Xinhua*, September 2, 2021, http://www.news.cn/english/2021-09/02/c_1310162405.htm.
- ⁹³ "Fact-Checking the CNN Presidential Debate," *CNN*, June 27, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/27/politics/fact-checking-the-cnn-presidential-debate/index.html>.
- ⁹⁴ Simon Evans and Verner Viisainen, "Analysis: Trump Election Win Could Add 4bn Tonnes to US Emissions by 2030," *Carbon Brief*, June 3, 2024, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-trump-election-win-could-add-4bn-tonnes-to-us-emissions-by-2030/>.
- ⁹⁵ "DHL Trade Growth Atlas 2022," <https://www.dhl.com/global-en/delivered/globalization/dhl-trade-growth-atlas.html>.
- ⁹⁶ Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company. *e-Economy SEA 2023: Southeast Asia's Digital Decade Begins*. Google, Temasek, Bain & Company, 2023. https://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/e_economy_sea_2023_report.pdf.

- ⁹⁷ Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia. "Speech Text by Prime Minister: National Semiconductor Strategy (NSS): Bridging Technology for Our Shared Tomorrow." May 28, 2024. <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2024/05/speech-text-by-prime-minister-national-semiconductor-strategy-nss-bridging-technology-for-our-shared-tomorrow/>.
- ⁹⁸ Nathan Layne, "Trump Vows to Kill Asia Trade Deal Being Pursued by Biden if Elected," *Reuters*, November 18, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-vows-kill-asia-trade-deal-being-pursued-by-biden-if-elected-2023-11-19/>.
- ⁹⁹ Bloomberg Businessweek. "The Donald Trump Interview Transcript: Full Text, Fact-Checked." Bloomberg, July 16, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-trump-interview-transcript/>.
- ¹⁰⁰ "Top Ten Facts About MCC in Nepal," *U.S. Embassy in Nepal*, March 3, 2022, <https://np.usembassy.gov/mcc-in-nepal-top-ten-facts/>.
- ¹⁰¹ Jim Garamone, "Trump Unveils New National Security Strategy," DOD News, August 21, 2017, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/1284964/#:~:text=Trump%20tonight%20unveiled%20an%20expansive,artificial%20timelines%20built%20into%20it>.
- ¹⁰² Demetri Sevastopulo, "Trump Gives Glimpse of 'Indo-Pacific' Strategy to Counter China," *Financial Times*, November 10, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/e6d17fd6-c623-11e7-a1d2-6786f39ef675>.
- ¹⁰³ U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation with India," January 20, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-india/>; "What is LEMOA," *The Hindu*, October 18, 2016. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/What-is-LEMOA/article15604647.ece>; "What is COMCASA," *The Hindu*, September 6, 2018. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/what-is-comcasa/article24881039.ece>; "India and US have signed BECA," *The Hindu*, October 27, 2020. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-and-us-have-signed-beca/article32962324.ece>.
- ¹⁰⁴ "U.S.-India Strategic Technology Coalition (STC) Launch," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, June 23, 2023. <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/36952/U.S.India+Strategic+Technology+Coalition+STC+Launch>.
- ¹⁰⁵ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Democrat VP Nominee Kamala Has Strong Views on Kashmir but Has Refrained from Taking a Position," *Economic Times*, August 14, 2020. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/democrat-vp-nominee-kamala-has-strong-views-on-kashmir-but-has-refrained-from-taking-a-position/articleshow/77512543.cms?from=mdr>.
- ¹⁰⁶ U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Taiwan Policy Act One-Pager," accessed October 3, 2024. <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Taiwan%20Policy%20Act%20One%20Pager%20FINAL.pdf>.
- ¹⁰⁷ The White House, "Fact Sheet: CHIPS and Science Act Will Lower Costs, Create Jobs, Strengthen Supply Chains, and Counter China," August 9, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/>.
- ¹⁰⁸ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "US Opted Out of Paris Accord as India, China Weren't Paying: Ex-Prez Trump," *Economic Times*, November 2, 2023, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/us-opted-out-of-paris-accord-as-india-china-werent-paying-ex-prez-trump/articleshow/111331593.cms?from=mdr>.
- ¹⁰⁹ "The U.S. Issues Rare Criticism of India in Religious Freedom Report," *The Hindu*, June 28, 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-issues-rare-criticism-of-india-in-religious-freedom-report/article68337621.ece>.
- ¹¹⁰ "Fact Sheet: CHIPS and Science Act Will Lower Costs, Create Jobs, Strengthen Supply Chains, and Counter China," *The White House*, August 9, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/>.
- ¹¹¹ "Washington Declaration," *The White House*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/washington-declaration-2/>.
- ¹¹² "National Security Strategy of Japan," *Cabinet Office, Government of Japan*, December 16, 2022, <https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryu/221216anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>.
- ¹¹³ "Armitage-Nye Report: The U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/programs/japan-chair/projects/armitage-nye-reports-us-japan-alliance>.
- ¹¹⁴ "Pathway for AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarines," *Australian Government, Department of Defence*, March 14, 2023, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2023-03-14/aukus-nuclear-powered-submarine-pathway>.
- ¹¹⁵ "Optimal Pathway for AUKUS," *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, last modified October 2, 2024, <https://www.asa.gov.au/aukus/optimal-pathway>.
- ¹¹⁶ Ryan Neelam, "Security and Defence: AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarines," *Lowy Institute*, June 3, 2024, <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/report/2024/security-and-defence/#aukus-nuclear-powered-submarines>.

- ¹¹⁷ Jared Mondschein, Victoria Cooper, Samuel Garrett, and Ava Kalinauskas, "One Year from the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election: The Stakes for Australia and the Alliance," *United States Studies Centre*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.usssc.edu.au/one-year-from-the-2024-us-presidential-election-the-stakes-for-australia-and-the-alliance>; "Washington Declaration," *The White House*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/washington-declaration-2/>.
- ¹¹⁸ David Crowe, "The Three Reasons Why Anthony Albanese Told Us the \$368 Billion Nuclear Submarine Cost," *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 15, 2023, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/the-three-reasons-why-anthony-albanese-told-us-the-368-billion-nuclear-submarine-cost-20230315-p5cs6j.html>.
- ¹¹⁹ Megan Eckstein, "Here's When the US Navy Plans to Sell Subs to Australia Under AUKUS," *Defense News*, November 13, 2023, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2023/11/13/heres-when-the-us-navy-plans-to-sell-subs-to-australia-under-aukus/>.
- ¹²⁰ Jared Mondschein, Victoria Cooper, Samuel Garrett, and Ava Kalinauskas, "One Year from the 2024 US Presidential Election: The Stakes for Australia and the Alliance," *United States Studies Centre*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.usssc.edu.au/one-year-from-the-2024-us-presidential-election-the-stakes-for-australia-and-the-alliance>.
- ¹²¹ Peter K. Lee, Alice Nason, and Sophie Mayo, "The Social Licence for AUKUS Has Not Yet Been Earned," *The Lowy Institute*, August 25, 2023, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/social-licence-aukus-has-not-yet-been-earned>.
- ¹²² Harris, Kamala D. "Harris Statement on NDAA Amendment Vote—Defense Budget." Vote Smart. Accessed October 3, 2024. <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/public-statement/1456520/harris-statement-on-ndaa-amendment-votedefense%20budget>.
- ¹²³ ABC News. "Who Would Australians Vote for: Kamala Harris or Trump?" August 26, 2024. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-08-26/us-election-who-would-australians-vote-for-kamala-harris-trump/104267762>.
- ¹²⁴ Garrity, Kelly. "Kamala Harris on China: We're in a New Era of Competition." Politico, September 10, 2023. <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/10/kamala-harris-china-relationship-00114893>.
- ¹²⁵ Australian Government, Department of Defence. "Generational Export Reforms to Boost AUKUS Trade and Collaboration." Media Release, August 16, 2024. <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-08-16/generational-export-reforms-boost-aukus-trade-and-collaboration>.
- ¹²⁶ The White House. "U.S. Strategic Approach to The People's Republic of China." Report, May 2020. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/U.S.-Strategic-Approach-to-The-Peoples-Republic-of-China-Report-5.24v1.pdf>.
- ¹²⁷ Ken Moriyasu, "Kamala Harris Says America, Not China, Will Win 21st Century," *Nikkei Asia*, August 23, 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/U.S.-elections-2024/Kamala-Harris-says-America-not-China-will-win-21st-century>.
- ¹²⁸ Phelim Kine, "State Laws Restricting Chinese Land Buying Gain Momentum," *Politico*, April 3, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/03/state-laws-china-land-buying-00150030>.
- ¹²⁹ Marianne LeVine, "Trump's NATO Allies Struggle to Align on Russia," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/10/trump-nato-allies-russia/>.
- ¹³⁰ Marco Rubio and Bob Menendez, "Rubio, Menendez Applaud Senate Passage of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act," *Senator Marco Rubio*, accessed October 3, 2024, <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/rubio-menendez-applaud-senate-passage-of-the-uyghur-human-rights-policy-act/>.
- ¹³¹ Colin McCullough, "Kamala Harris Says China Will Not Have Control Over Taiwan," *CNN*, September 28, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/28/politics/kamala-harris-china-taiwan/index.html>.
- ¹³² Ibid.
- ¹³³ "US Warns China Against 'Coercive' Actions Over Taiwan," *Taipei Times*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/world/archives/2022/11/23/2003789469>.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid.
- ¹³⁵ Krutika Pathi, "US Aims to Strengthen Relations with India Amid Rising Tensions with China," *Associated Press*, November 19, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/biden-china-asia-kamala-harris-xi>
- ¹³⁶ Keoni Everington, "Taiwan's Relations with US Will Not Be Affected by AUKUS: Premier," *Taiwan News*, January 28, 2022, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/4424566>.
- ¹³⁷ Kelly Garrity, "Kamala Harris Highlights Challenges in U.S.-China Relations," *Politico*, September 10, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/10/kamala-harris-china-relationship-00114893>.
- ¹³⁸ Rick Helfenbein, "Senator Harris on Trump's China Strategy: 'You Lost That Trade War'," *Forbes*, October 12, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rickhelfenbein/2020/10/12/senator-harris-on-trumps-china-strategy-you-lost-that-trade-war/>.

For more content related to this report, visit AsiaSociety.org/Elections2024

Other Asia Society Policy Institute Reports

Understanding China's Perceptions and Strategy Toward Nuclear Weapons: A Case Study Approach

Asia's Climate Finance Needs & Opportunities: Advancing a Shared Vision

Climate Change in China's Governance: Agenda, Agents, and International Collaboration

Green Hydrogen for Decarbonizing Asia's Industrial Giants

China's Genetically Modified Dilemma

Resilience & Resolve: Lessons from Lithuania's Experience with Chinese Economic Coercion

China's Cooperation with Southeast Asia to Support More Ambitious Clean Energy Transition by 2030

The Limits of Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Japan-ROK-China Relations After the Fukushima Wastewater Release

China 2024: What to Watch