

## Network Power in the Asia-Pacific: Making Sense of the New Regionalism and the Opportunities for Cooperation

**Friday 7 February 2020**

Chatham House | 10 St James's Square | London | SW1Y 4LE

The Asia-Pacific region continues to increase in geopolitical and geoeconomic importance. The rise of China and tensions with the US are affecting bilateral relationships and traditional alliances in the region. Whether seen from the perspective of the Quad – Australia, India, Japan and the US – or the Indo-Pacific concept embraced by a wide range of countries but with no shared consensus on scope and objectives or with ASEAN who insists on the importance of its own centrality, the region is redefining and reconceptualising itself.

With a diverse range of initiatives – including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – there are a plethora of regional agreements and institutional groupings that add further complexity.

As the Bretton Woods architecture continues to be dominated by Western powers, China is also spearheading parallel governance initiatives such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a means of enhancing its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence.

This one-day conference will focus on how such networks and alliances have been built, and sustained, in the Asia-Pacific region. In order to understand how new regional initiatives might open up opportunities for new forms of international cooperation, the conference will focus on the themes of cyber-technology and innovation, sustainable development and mitigating the impacts of climate change and new infrastructure initiatives. It will assess whether there is a zero-sum conflict between competing networks and agendas or whether a common approach can be developed.

### **Friday 7 February 2020**

09.45-10.00    Registration

10.00-11.00    **Opening Session: Networks and Cooperation in the Asia Pacific**

This session will focus on existing – and new – networks and alliances in the Asia-Pacific. How have long-standing multilateral and bilateral partnerships been affected by US-China tensions: where are the key areas of divergence emerging within these traditional partnerships? How are emerging powers responding to the changing environment?

This session will briefly consider the historical context behind the establishment of groupings such as ASEAN, APEC, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Asian

Development Bank, while also giving particular attention to the role of Asian powers in developing new initiatives to foster regional integration via initiatives such as CPTPP, the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), RCEP, the AIIB, the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) and the trilateral summit process between China, Japan and the Republic of China.

Some of these initiatives have been especially successful and durable, others less so. The opening session will consider what have been the core reasons for success or failure and assess the prospects for closer regional cooperation and potentially integration in the future.

Can Asian states collaborate effectively in using new and existing regional bodies to foster support for international norms and standards or is the recent pattern of institutional innovation a sign of an increasingly zero-sum (and counterproductive) approach towards regionalism.

#### Welcome and Chair's opening remarks

**Champa Patel**, Director, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

#### Speakers

**Tanvi Madan**, Director, The India Project; Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Project on International Order and Strategy, *The Brookings Institution*

**Yu Jie**, Senior Research Fellow on China, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

**Carlo Bonura**, Senior Teaching Fellow, Southeast Asian Politics, *The School of Oriental & African Studies*

#### 11.00-12.00 Session One: Cyber and Innovation – 5G, Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- How have big data and the rapid growth of digital industries affected regional cooperation?
- To what extent has the growth of state-surveillance capabilities created concerns about protecting individual freedoms from authoritarian governments?
- What are the risks associated with cyber-technology to the integrity of individual states' electoral and political systems?
- Can new global and regional digital standards be established to balance the desire for rapid and easy access to information against the risks of the dissemination of disinformation and the related problem of increased political polarization within and between different polities?
- How can innovations in cyber technology and connectivity enhance cooperation between citizens and governments across Asia in ways that ameliorate political polarization and rising nationalism?

#### Speakers

**Mihoko Matsubara**, Chief Cybersecurity Strategist, *NTT Corporation*

**Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones**, Minister of State for Security and Counter Terrorism (2010-11)

**Shashank Joshi**, Defence Editor, *The Economist*

#### Chair

**Harriet Moynihan**, Associate Fellow, International Law Programme, *Chatham House*

#### 12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00-14.30      **Session Two: Sustainable Development and Climate Change – Including Marine Plastic Waste**

- How can new forms of regional cooperation in Asia help foster green growth and sustainable development, consistent with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals?
- Which regional bodies in Asia are best suited to promote these goals and what are the most critically important climate challenges in Asia that require a response from regional actors?

**Speakers**

**Yumiko Nakanishi**, Professor, *Hitotsubashi University*

**Tim Forsyth**, Professor of Environment and Development, *The London School of Economics and Political Science*

**Jiang Wenguo**, Senior Research Fellow, Energy Environment and Resources, *Chatham House*

**Chair**

**Ana Yang**, Acting Executive Director, Hoffmann Centre for Sustainable Resource Economy, *Chatham House*

14.30-15.00      **Coffee break**

15.00-16.00      **Session Three: Addressing the Infrastructure Gap: Finding Sustainable Solutions**

- Where are the most urgent challenging and immediate infrastructure development needs in Asia?
- How best can governments work with the private-sector to foster environmentally-friendly infrastructure projects that both meet the development needs of emerging economies and avoid the dangers of excessive debt-dependency?
- How genuinely “strategic” and coordinated are the initiatives of institutions such as the ADB, the AIIB, and work associated with the FOIP concept? Where do initiatives such as the ROK's ASEAN focused “New Southern Strategy” fit into these wider regional frameworks?

**Speakers**

**Motoko Aizawa**, Sustainability Expert, *Institute for Human Rights and Business*

**Yasser Helmy**, Head of Smart Cities for the Asia Pacific Region, *Cisco*

**Hiroki Sekine**, Visiting Fellow, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

**Chair**

**Yu Jie**, Senior Research Fellow on China, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

16.00-17.00      **Closing Session: Global Governance vs Regional Governance and Alliances**

- Is there a role for the OECD, the United Nations, the G7 and G20, or other supranational regional organizations/initiatives in helping to reinforce existing/promote new norms and conventions that can meaningfully enhance some of these new regional initiatives?

- What role might European actors and the United States, working with partners in East Asia to develop common agenda goals, play in the three issue areas discussed above?
- What role can and should be played by civil society and non-governmental organizations in promoting some of these common agenda goals?
- How great a threat is rising nationalism to effective regional cooperation in East Asia?

**Speaker**

**Jennifer Lind**, Associate Fellow, US and the Americas Programme and the Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

**John Nilsson-Wright**, Senior Research Fellow, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

**Alessia Amighini**, Co-Head of Asia Centre and Senior Associate Research Fellow, *Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI)*

**Chair**

**Champa Patel**, Director, Asia-Pacific Programme, *Chatham House*

17.00-17.30 **Closing Remarks**