

## **Policy Alternatives for Integrating Bilateral and Multilateral Regional Security Approaches in the Asia Pacific**

### **Brief Description**

The research project investigates various approaches and prospects for shifting from a predominantly U.S. and allied bilateral security posture to a 'bilateral-multilateral nexus' in order to enhance regional security and order-building. Particular emphasis will be assigned to how existing U.S. alliances can interact effectively with emerging regional security coalitions to coordinate joint multilateral security initiatives. The project will also reassess U.S. regional interests, institutional priorities and diplomacy from a 'regional' perspective, complementing an American assessment to be undertaken by the Pacific Forum within the overall Asia Security Initiative framework.

Our main research question will be:

How will U.S. bilateral relationships either co-exist or eventually integrate into more comprehensive multilateral security approaches in the Asia Pacific in response to ongoing and emerging regional security challenges?

At the end of the research project, we hope to offer some broad policy recommendations that will:

1. Allow for the effective exploitation of the so-called 'bilateral-multilateral security nexus';
2. Anticipate how practices and mechanisms within existing alliances and coalitions can adapt to influence and improve approaches to 'broader security politics' (in both traditional and non-traditional policy sectors);
3. Identify linkages between Asia Pacific economic and security policies; and
4. Enhance the applicability of security architectures to rapidly evolving dynamics of regional nuclear proliferation and arms control imperatives.

## Objectives and Approach

The major objective of the project is to provide U.S. and allied policy-makers with a range of policy recommendations for managing the policy transition from a *predominantly* bilateral approach to regional security to one incorporating a more tangible balance between bilateralism and multilateralism. We seek to identify and incorporate the key advantages from both approaches for future regional stability and order-building.

This research objective will be explored by convening four research groups focusing on the following areas:

1. Processes for achieving a bilateral-multilateral security nexus in the Asia Pacific;
2. Alliance/coalition initiatives on 'broader security' challenges;
3. The intersection of economics and security; and
4. Arms control and nuclear non-proliferation.

The first research group will mainly concentrate on finding new ways of utilising bilateral and multilateral approaches to respond to ongoing and emerging security challenges in the region. It will examine how U.S alliances and coalitions could harmonise their strategies with those of multilateral initiatives such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

The second research group will look at how alliances may be utilised for countries to collaborate on addressing 'broader security' challenges in both the 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' policy sectors. Traditional alliance strategies such as deterrence and balancing may or may not be appropriate, revised or updated to reflect a more order-building orientation. Non-traditional alliance politics seeks to embrace 'positive security' components in carrying out more specific or 'task-oriented' functions in response to such contingencies as natural disasters, pandemics, and environmental and transnational crimes. This research group will also study issue-specific coalitions and initiatives currently administering conflict management or conflict prevention strategies to test whether emerging regional multilateral architectures can potentially inform or enhance security policy renovation in this respect. Such regional 'flashpoints' as the Korean peninsula and the South China Sea will be reviewed in this context.

The third focus group will examine how international economic crises interface with the state as a security actor. This group will be concerned with assessing to what extent policy initiatives introduced by regional institutions may be applicable in managing problems relating to energy, maritime security, counter-terrorism, finance and trade, and other economic issues in the region that 'bridge' with various security challenges and agendas.

The fourth research area will investigate nuclear arms control agreements and disarmament mechanisms, proliferation issues, deterrence strategies, and nuclear technologies. It will explore diplomatic alternatives for encouraging established and emerging nuclear powers to become more collaborative and transparent with regard to building their respective nuclear capabilities and managing their nuclear strategies. This group will also study and compare the extent to which bilateral and multilateral

approaches can contribute to more robust arms control that might lead to greater viability of nuclear regulatory regimes.

Each of the focus groups will endeavour to extensively study their designated research themes by conducting selected interviews with key regional policy-makers and experts, conducting targeted surveys, structuring and applying appropriate case study material and simulation techniques (a major simulation exercise will be conducted in Canberra during mid-2010). We will also sponsor lectures in Canberra and in the region by experts in our areas of enquiry. The simulation will consolidate preliminary research results via a session that will include project scholars, government officials (in their unofficial capacities) and selected postgraduate students.

Workshops will be convened annually to monitor and assess project development. Research findings will also be disseminated through brief position papers posted on the project website, the publication of monographs as policy papers and/or journal articles, and through newsletter outlets, podcasts, and policy briefings. Project activities will be coordinated and managed by the project's two directors (Tow and Ravenhill), who will be assisted by a postdoctoral fellow and various research assistants.

### **Research Team Leaders**

**William Tow** specialises in the alliance politics of the Asia-Pacific, security architectures, and human security problems gained over thirty years of academic experience. He has published widely cited single-authored works on alliance politics and major edited works on Asian security politics and human security. He has edited a forthcoming volume on the global/Asia-Pacific security 'nexus' with Cambridge University Press. He has also published over 100 journal articles/book chapters assessing these policy areas. He has served on the Australian Foreign Affairs Council, and has been a Visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center (1999), the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) London (1995) and a Visiting Professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore (2008). He was formerly editor of the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, remains co-editor of the Routledge series on Asia-Pacific security, and was on the Australian-American Fulbright Committee's Board of Directors.

**John Ravenhill** specialises in international political economy, especially of the Asia-Pacific region. Professor Ravenhill has published single-authored works with Cambridge University Press and Columbia University Press, and major edited collections with Cambridge University Press, Cornell University Press, and Oxford University Press. He was the founding editor of the Cambridge University Press book series, *Cambridge Asia-Pacific Studies*. He has contributed articles to most of the leading international relations journals, including *World Politics* and *International Organization*, and the major regional journals on the Asia-Pacific.

**Robert Ayson** is Director of Studies in the Graduate Studies in Strategy and Defence Program, SDSC. His research interests centre on the relationship between strategic ideas and strategic policy. His current research projects focus on the requirements for stability in stabilisation operations and the prospects for collaboration between the great powers in Asia. He is a regular media commentator on nuclear issues and the use of force in international politics.

**Rikki Kersten** is Professor in the Department of Political and Social Change, and an expert on contemporary Japan, who has published widely on Japanese foreign policy, Australia–Japan relations, and contemporary Japanese politics and history. She is a former Diplomat, having served in the Political Section of the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, and has deep familiarity with Japanese policy development and processes. As a former Director of the Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific (RIAP) at the University of Sydney, she initiated and led numerous region-wide research projects for APEC, regional governments, and non-governmental organisations.