

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

DIJ Study Group



June 13, 2024, 6.30 pm (JST) / 11.30 am (CEST)

Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific Construct Securing strategic autonomy in the South China Seas: FOIP and BRI as Hedging Strategies

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Southeast Asia faces the conundrum that its largest economic benefactor China is also a geopolitical challenger to the region's cohesion and rules-based order. How do Southeast Asian states balance their economic interests and security interests? What is the role of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision (FOIP) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in that balancing process? How can we conceptualize these balancing actions using hedging? Using Cheng-Chwee Kuik's hedging framework, this presentation comparatively investigates how Southeast Asian states hedge against China by leveraging the FOIP vision and BRI to secure strategic autonomy. This research finds that the competitive nature of Sino-Japanese relations, as manifested in the interaction between the BRI and FOIP, provides Southeast Asian states extra regional assets to lessen the contradictions that exist between the beneficial economic interactions with China and its geopolitical challenges. Furthermore, Japan's FOIP, while distinct from the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, cannot be seen to stand alone in its contributions to securing Southeast Asia's strategic autonomy. Rather, FOIP's commitment to multilateral relationships means that FOIP can direct a multitude of multilateral support to Southeast Asia in its hedging approaches.

Stephen R. Nagy received his PhD in International Relation/Studies from Waseda University in 2008. He is professor at the International Christian University, Tokyo, a fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and a visiting fellow with the Japan Institute for International Affairs. He is currently working on middle power approaches to great power competition in the Indo-Pacific, Canadian foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific and Sino-Japanese relations. His latest publications include: Nagy, S.R. and Indu Saxena. 2024. *Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific Construct*. Nova Science Publishers and Nagy, S.R. 2024, "The Global South and the Liberal International Order: Conceptual Challenges and Structural Limitations," *IN DEFENSE OF THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER*, Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), Kajima Institute for International Peace and the Prospect Foundation, Jagannath Panda (ed), February 14, 2024.

About:

The DIJ Study Group is a forum for scholars from all disciplines conducting research on contemporary or modern Japan. The event is open to all. This session is organized by Harald Kümmerle.

Hybrid Event:

On-site participation: please register via email to kuemmerle@dijtokyo.org until June 12, 2024.

Online participation: please register via our [webpage](#).

Venue:

Online and DIJ Tokyo: <https://www.dijtokyo.org/access/>