

The Katipunan Dialogue Podcast

Episodes 18 to 23



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FOREWORD

We are thrilled to introduce the proceedings of the Katipunan Dialogue: A Podcast on Philippine Foreign Policy and the Regional Strategic Landscape. Over the past year, the Indo-Pacific region has undergone significant transformations that demand thorough scrutiny and analysis. From geopolitical tensions to economic realignments and security challenges, these developments have created a multifaceted environment with profound implications for the Philippines and the broader Southeast Asian region.

In response to these shifting dynamics, the Katipunan Dialogue Podcast serves as a crucial platform for experts across various fields to examine changes in the strategic landscape of the Philippines and the wider region. For the podcast's third year, we are excited to unveil six new episodes focusing on the growing economic and political significance of the Indo-Pacific region. These episodes explored a range of topics, including regional maritime security, the Indo-Pacific strategies of key players, and the economic and security implications of the country's One China Policy.

Our dedication to covering these developments aligns with our mission to foster informed dialogues and contribute to shaping strategic thinking in the region. With a focus on both traditional and non-traditional security issues, we aim to continue engaging with new experts and practitioners while maintaining our commitment to producing high-quality episodes that serve as valuable reference materials for researchers, students, organizations, and stakeholders alike.

The Katipunan Dialogue Podcast is an annual initiative organized by the Strategic Studies Program (SSP) of the University of the Philippines (UP) Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS), in collaboration with the Philippine Office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). We extend our sincere appreciation to UP CIDS and KAS Philippines for their steadfast support. Additionally, we express our gratitude to the moderators and guest speakers whose invaluable contributions have enriched the series, shaping the discourse and fostering a deeper understanding of strategic issues.

Episode 18

Setting Sail for the Indo-Pacific

The EU Strategy for Cooperation

- **Host | Herman Joseph S. Kraft**
Professor, UP Diliman Department of Political Science
Convenor, UP CIDS Strategic Studies Program

- **Guest | Maria Thaemar C. Tana, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
UP Diliman Department of Political Science
Co-Convenor, UP CIDS Strategic Studies Program

The first episode of the third season of Katipunan Dialogue focused on the discussion of the emergent key player in the Indo-Pacific, the European Union (EU), its deepening engagement in the region, and its corresponding effects.

The initial point of discussion centered on the factors led to the EU launching its own Indo-Pacific strategy for cooperation in 2021. Dr. Maria Thaemar Tana identified several factors which contributed to its development: (1) China's rise to military and economic power; (2) the emerging hegemonic competition in the Indo-Pacific and looming bipolarity, posing serious geopolitical and

geoeconomic challenges to Europe; and (3) Europe's desire to remain aligned with the United States.

Aside from the factors mentioned above, Tana, also highlighted the reason why Europe introduced its own strategy for cooperation:

China's use of economic coercion, technological authoritarianism, and severe human rights violations go against core European values. So, in relation to this, observers also note that Europe perceives a need to demonstrate strategic autonomy to show that it is capable to strike out on its own without the need for the US to support it. They are not always regarded as a strong security actor, and it aims to perhaps change this perception and underscore several contributions it makes and can make, and promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture.

The EU aims to contribute to the Indo-Pacific's stability, security, prosperity, and sustainable development, consistent with the principle of democracy. It also seeks to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific while building strong and enduring relationships with key actors in the region. The long-term goals of EU centers on solidifying and defending the rules based international order. This involves promoting inclusive and effective multilateral cooperation, based on shared values and principles, and engaging in bilateral and multilateral cooperation with different partners in achieving different goals in the region. As such, Tana added:

...to engage in bilateral and multilateral cooperation with partners, to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change in the convention on biological diversity. Also, to pursue its long-term multilateral and regional cooperation with the UN and Bretton Woods institutions as well as regional organizations, such as ASEAN and [the] African Union and the Western Indian Ocean; as well as to support truly inclusive policy-making and cooperation for the voices of civil society, the private sector, social partners, and other key stakeholders' account; next is to establish mutually-supportive trade and economic promotion to region that foster inclusive economic growth and stability and promote and facilitate connectivity; and finally, to engage in the region as a partner in their efforts to raise awareness of the impact of the global demographic trends.

The succeeding parts discussed how the EU would be extending their contribution to the Indo-Pacific with its new strategy. Tana enumerated four ways that the EU can impact the region including (1) EU embracing their role as a normative power, (2) EU continuing to support multilateralism, (3) EU's involvement affecting China's strategic calculations, and (4) EU increasing security and defense cooperation within Indo-Pacific states, to wit:

The EU, according to its Indo-Pacific strategy, pledges to promote an open-ended rule, based [on a] regional security order focusing in particular and securing the sea lines of communications and capacity-building. In line with this, the EU intends to enhance its naval presence in the region to conduct more joint exercises and port calls with regional countries, to protect freedom of navigation and ensure the safe passage of commercial vessels. The EU also seeks to intensify defense and security dialogues within the Pacific partners, including the sessions on counterterrorism and cybersecurity.

Tana also stressed the impact that the EU could bring to the region's relationship with China. Although the military balance of power might not change, there are still ways EU's presence can make a difference. For one, the persistent and permanent European presence in the region will make China's strategic calculations more complicated in consideration of other country's military presence in the region. Additionally, Europe's capability to connect the US activities in the region could improve the joint trainings held by partner states in the region.

The difference between EU's strategy for cooperation and other states was also discussed. Japan's objective is primarily anchored on security and protection from China's presence in the region. Germany engages in multilateralism to tackle issues on climate change, environmental protection, peace and stability, human rights, the rule of law, and fair and sustainable free trade, which neither affect nor deny China and the US. Meanwhile, Netherlands focuses on international legal order, democracy and human rights, sustainable free trade, maritime security, climate change, global healthcare, and poverty-reduction. As for their position with China, Netherlands cooperates but protects when necessary. France is committed to defend its interests in the Indo-Pacific and is prepared to oppose China. Meanwhile, the EU emphasizes cooperation and not confrontation with China. It seeks to promote cooperation with all actors

in the region by bilaterally encouraging China to be an active participant in maintaining peace, and offering solutions to common challenges in the Indo-Pacific. Tana added:

However, it is also emphasized that while the EU will continue to protect its essential interests and promote its values, it will stand firm in defending its core values and principles like human rights.

The involvement of Europe in the region posits possibilities to the Indo-Pacific, one of which is its effects on the Southeast Asian nations. As there is no hard power in the region, ASEAN could benefit from Europe's strategy for cooperation with its increased attention and presence in the region, leading to potentially more varying regional distribution of power. Likewise, the EU strategy for cooperation emphasizes a cooperative, inclusive regional architecture vis-à-vis China. The Quad and Europe share the same core belief of liberal democratic values aiming for the protection of the region from authoritarian states. However, Tana also recognized that explicit anti-China coalitions could potentially increase the chances of great power conflict escalating in East Asia.

Because such power or great power conflicts will inadvertently drive the ASEAN states to choose sides narrowing their strategic options. So, as the scene in the EU's competition is likely to intensify in the coming years, the EU's tools will remain limited instead of presenting a unified European front to call out China's malpractices. The EU's own divisions and interest regarding China and China's investment funds will ensure it remains in the sidelines [of scene] of EU's confrontation. This will also show whether they use economic, diplomatic, and normative weight and below in the global affairs...is sufficient to present the EU's way of viable strategic alternative.

Some of the potential roadblocks that EU might have to face in its involvement in the Indo-Pacific Region is its economy's interdependence with China, the ambivalence and divides among the EU member states about the matter with China, and the uncertainty of the US and Japan on the EU strategic rules. The current relationship of EU and China is affected by the strategic relations of the US with China, but it is not cornered in a position where its options are heavily

dictated by the dynamics between the two powers. To reiterate, EU aspires to be more independent in world politics. As explained by the guest:

...while Brussels and Washington, undoubtedly, share the same liberal values especially those related to upholding rules-based order and norms like democracy and human rights and fair trade. Europe may not necessarily agree with the US's idea for a power fantasy grand strategy. The competition between the US and China actually puts the EU in a position where it can play both sides, but perhaps more against China. So, Brussels can be expected to continue engaging Beijing as long as US-China relations will not be completely turned upside down, and as long as the EU can extract meaningful economic concessions, I guess. So, ultimately the relations between China and the EU are determined by how far China is ready and ready to satisfy some of the EU's demands.

In conclusion, Tana believed that Europe does indeed have the potential to play a significant role in the Indo-Pacific. However, it needs to reassess its engagement strategies and manage the perceptions of key regional actors in the region.

Episode 19

Confronting Regional Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific

■ **Host | Herman Joseph S. Kraft**

*Professor, UP Diliman Department of Political Science
Convenor, UP CIDS Strategic Studies Program*

■ **Guest | Moses Isaiah B. Palces**

*Defense Research Officer II, Philippine Navy
Armed Forces of the Philippines*

Episode 19, the second episode of the third season of the Katipunan Dialogue, discussed the implications of maritime security issues and developments in the Indo-Pacific.

The discussion started with the concept of *maritime security* in the Philippines as laid out in the country's National Marine Policy or NMP. Maritime security, as the NMP defines, is a state in which the country's marine assets, maritime practices, territorial integrity, and coastal peace are in order, protected, conserved,

preserved, and enhanced. Generally, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine Navy developed its own operational strategy which adopts the NMP definition for maritime security. When asked how this concept developed within the policy circles, Palces explained:

The way I see it, Maritime security's importance in academic and policy circles were actually highlighted especially at the beginning of China's militarization and reclamation efforts in the South China Sea. There was a revitalized interest, definitely, in exploring the subject of sea power for example, and how the Philippines should harness its latency power capabilities as part of what could be potentially a grand strategy.

The Philippine Navy is constantly and consistently adopting academic concepts and applying it to the maritime security of the Philippines. One of these is the concept of *sea power*, which became a foundational framework in the development of programs to protect the nation from other states, especially with the growing strategic rivalry between the US and China. Palces also highlighted that the first step in ensuring national maritime security is recognizing that the Philippines is an archipelagic state, which means the common issue that it faces is inherently maritime.

The host sought clarification on the current approach of the Philippines in addressing maritime security concerns, especially the threats that the state is facing and would potentially encounter in terms of maritime involvement. Palces explained how the Philippine Navy is assessing how China is responding to the foreign policy strategies from the Aquino III administration up to the Duterte administration. He noted:

So, the Aquino administration really took the Philippines, really took our foreign policy direction through institutionalism, multilateralism, and brought China to Court and then we also relied on alliances to maintain national Maritime security. Then when the 2016 PCA ruling was issued during the very early days of the Duterte administration, we were advised by then-Undersecretary Perfecto Yasay to celebrate the ruling with some right. Then we eventually saw that the Duterte administration took reproachment policy direction towards China, especially considering that we have infrastructure development initiatives, such as the Build-Build-Build Program.

Despite former President Rodrigo R. Duterte's pronouncements of severing ties with the US, the Navy observes that China has consistently used gray zone strategies in the region, particularly in its treatment of the Philippine maritime vessels.

As to how the Marcos administration is currently strategizing against maritime threats, the Navy is attempting to maximize the gains from the Aquino III and Duterte administration. The current administration is also trying to reestablish its relationship with the United States through a series of *Balikatan* exercises in the Philippines. Palces, however, observed that the Marcos, Jr. administration is not yet fully adopting to how the Aquino III administration dealt with China. It has to reengineer both Aquino III and Duterte's foreign policies.

Palces also reiterated emerging security issues by looking at it on two sides, traditional and nontraditional security interests. On one hand, traditional security issues include the rivalry between US and China, and the issue on the South China Sea. On the other hand, some of the nontraditional security threats include violent extremism, piracy, and terrorism in the Sulu-Celebes Sea region, prompting the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia to revisit trilateral cooperation agreements.

Prof. Herman Joseph Kraft likewise sought clarification on domestically-oriented and externally-oriented security concerns in the Indo-Pacific, and how the current administration is taking advantage of these orientations. The guest explained that there is a need to look at the country's current National Security Policy and the National Security Strategy, as well as revisit the 1994 National Marine Policy as it has not been reviewed since its inception. These documents could guide the FBI and the Philippine Navy to strengthen their operational strategies at the policy level and allow them to align their strategies with the prescribed policy, especially since the core and perennial security concerns of the Philippines is maritime in nature. Palces added:

The way I see it, we're slowly moving from a largely domestic perspective of national security into a more external position. Within the AFP... they're looking at how they could modernize their capabilities to defend against external attacks. The Philippine Marine Corps is also developing its capabilities... They're moving towards [from] a largely amphibious operation. So, they're looking at how they could actually contribute to

external maritime defense, and this comes along with how Navy's actually also developing its capabilities... Instead of focusing on the number of ships that we have, we're now focusing on what we could actually do, what the maritime security environment requires us to do, in order to perform more effectively and efficiently despite very limited resources.

The discussion moved on to the two perspectives on *sea power*, which are both internal and external. Instead of relying on the changes in the regional landscape and merely adapting to the environment, the Philippines is currently taking a more proactive role in influencing the region to develop a more advantageous position. The Philippines has been more open to maritime cooperation, alliance-building, and confidence-building, among others. One of the most prominent examples is the Balikatan exercises, which the Philippines is currently hosting. Palces highlighted the stronger support the Philippine Navy has recently received from the administration, and the active and consistent communication it has with the Department of National Defense and the Department of Foreign Affairs. These developments have a huge impact on the establishment of National Defense Strategy, both on security and diplomatic components. However, one of the issues the Philippines faces in its effort to modernize and strengthen its naval security is the signal it sends to other states within the Indo-Pacific region. In Palces' words:

...it's more of a signaling issue that we're modernizing our fleet to protect our own national security interests. And at the same time, we should be signaling that these modernizing efforts are actually defensive in nature and should not be taken from the wrong position unless, of course, the shoe fits.

Reiterating that building alliances is not only concerned with addressing traditional security threats, but also numerous nontraditional security threats, Palces added:

I think it's, again, it's counterproductive for the Philippines to actually tame down how it modernizes its Armed Forces in the faint hopes of really reducing tension.

On the last leg of the discussion, Kraft asked if there is a convergence between the Philippines' approach to maintaining peace, stability, and cooperation in the region and that of other ASEAN states. Palces noted that the level of interest that Philippines share with other regional players, particularly ASEAN member states, is very limited. To illustrate, he cited the different levels of concern among ASEAN nations with China's militarization over the South China Sea. As Palces elaborated:

It's generally [a] difficult thing to gather all the member states to come up with a common position over the South China Sea. Also considering that they also have their own interests which are anchored on China's investments. We also have to consider that ASEAN operates on a consensus-based decision-making system which makes it, again, extremely complicated and difficult for the Philippines to convince other member states.

At this juncture, Palces pointed to the rising trend of minilateral arrangements within the region. Minilateral setups are promising avenues for certain member states who share similar concerns, such as maritime security, to work together without having to hurdle the bureaucratic challenge of compelling all Asian states to participate. Palces cited the case of the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines which focuses on issues like piracy, terrorism, and smuggling in the Sulu-Celebes Sea and straits of Malacca. He described the trilateral arrangement as a "more efficient and effective way of regional cooperation" but also clarified that it is not a replacement for ASEAN.

Asked if minilaterals could be leveraged to specifically address gray zone tactics by China, Palces warned that it could cause sensitivity issues, so ASEAN states have been generally avoidant of the term. Nevertheless, ASEAN states are aware of their responsibility to protect marine resources over global commons such as the South China Sea, and are engaged in discussions to protect marine resources, promote freedom of navigation, and maintaining regional peace and stability.

As a closing note, Kraft inquired about the possibility of shifting the focus of prevailing discussions on maritime security from traditional security, mainly relating to the US-China rivalry, to less traditional and less contentious matters. Palces points to the importance of track 1.5 and track 2 diplomacy. These

track circles involve further discussions with the academe, private sectors, non-government organizations, allowing for a more holistic perspective on maritime security. Additionally, ASEAN is able to approach stability in the South China Sea, in terms of the protection of the environment, marine resources, and interoperability to mitigate climate change. However, as a member of the Philippine Navy, Palces remarked:

But as far as the defense is concerned, at the very least, the Philippine Navy is concerned, our primary focus is more of a traditional sense of it... There are a lot of perspectives really to look at maritime security aside from traditional differences in security. Again, like I mentioned, human security, we have to look at [a] safer security of our own fisherman and as well as protecting other marines' resources... It's not just a defense issue, it's also an economic issue, it's also a livelihood issue... That's why, we have to actually open up rooms for more discussions on how we should actually look at the issue of maritime security apart from the very traditional perspective of National Defense.

Episode 20

AOIP Unboxed

Exploring the ASEAN Blueprint of Regional Engagement

■ **Host | Marvin Hamor Bernardo**

National Chengchi University

■ **Guest | Herman Joseph S. Kraft**

*Professor, UP Diliman Department of Political Science
Convenor, UP CIDS Strategic Studies Program*

Episode 20, the third episode of the third season of the Katipunan Dialogue Podcast, focused on the ASEAN and the ASEAN Outlook in the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

The discussion began with the factors that led the ASEAN into adopting its own Indo-Pacific approach. Prof. Herman Joseph Kraft explained that the ASEAN came up with the AOIP in 2019 as an attempt to implement various strategies introduced in Southeast Asia. The AOIP puts together all the initiatives that ASEAN has introduced to guide and centralize its role into one framework, positioning itself at the center of the Indo-Pacific region. As Kraft framed it:

To a large extent, the purpose behind ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific was to rationalize all of the things that have already been put into place by ASEAN to its multilateral, through its ASEAN-led multilateral

arrangements, and then bring all of these things into alignment with the notion of an Indo-Pacific geographic scope of what the regional architecture needs to be—how the regional architecture needs to be further shaped.

Delving deeper into the discussion, the host asked Kraft how ASEAN's efforts to reach out further into the Indian Ocean through ASEAN-led multilateral arrangements impact the politics in both regions, especially considering the Indian Ocean's distinct political systems and dynamics. Kraft reiterated how ASEAN's expansion is basically a move to formalize a framework that already exists. In reality, transformations in the Asia Pacific region already involve countries like India. In turn, India has a Look East Policy which reflects its increasing focus on the Asia Pacific. This effort, to an extent, is no different to how Japan, the US, and India use the *Indo-Pacific* terminology to geographically define the region, further attesting to the inextricable link between the two areas.

It is a point of interest that the AOIP's framing of the region is quite similar to that of Japan, India, and the US—the Quad states. This similarity raises questions and concerns that, akin to the Quad, the AOIP might be underpinned by an anti-China sentiment. For Kraft, however, while the general notion of the AOIP is aligned with how the Quad has designed their framework, its approach to China is fundamentally different, focusing on inclusiveness, cooperation, and regional peace. As Kraft noted:

So, to that end, in fact, China should actually welcome what ASEAN is actually doing, precisely because in doing that reappropriation and then redefining things in terms of assets centrality and in terms of the regional architecture that's based on the ASEAN-led multilateral arrangements. Then it ensures that an Indo-Pacific framework would be inclusive and not directed against somebody, in this context, not in the way that the Quad seems to be presenting it.

The discussion delved further into the four key points of the ASEAN Outlook in the Indo-Pacific framework. The first is maritime security which protects the resource allocation, climate change, and general security of the maritime domains. Second is the importance of connectivity which deals with regional productivity including infrastructure, energy grids, communications, and so on.

Third is achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG); and fourth is the expansion of economic cooperation on various fronts. As Kraft explained:

If you look at these four areas that the AOIP actually emphasizes as key points of cooperation. It goes back to what are the key issues that ASEAN is actually concerned about. If you talk about ASEAN centrality, what are the things that ASEAN wants its dialogue partners to actually contribute in terms of strengthening ASEAN-community building, and of course, the kinds of regionalism that ASEAN is actually trying to promote within the context of the regional architecture.

Unique to the AOIP framework is, of course, it's emphasis on inclusivity and ASEAN centrality. ASEAN does not only endorse ASEAN integrity but also uses centrality as a guiding principle for regional engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

The succeeding part of the discussion covered how the AOIP addresses growing tensions in the region, specifically with the US-China and China-India competitions. It was established that the ASEAN-led multilateralism is based on the notion of providing a venue for discussing issues within the Southeast Asia. The main role of the AOIP is to continue providing that safe space for discussions among rival states without their existing competitions hindering cooperation on other areas within the region. As Kraft explained:

So, to that extent actually, ASEAN plays an important role in terms of, I guess, making sure that great power tensions don't dominate the way that relationships around the region actually proceed... As long as ASEAN is actually able to provide a venue where issues can be talked about, can be raised, and even being able to provide the sideline venue for meetings between China and the United States, then, I think, to that extent, ASEAN is still has a very important role as far as maintaining some degree of stability in the region.

The discussion also highlighted how the ASEAN, as compared to the other engagements, has been successful in mitigating an all-out conflict between competing states. It promotes effective cooperation and coordination between diverse member states under the AOIP framework. Kraft remarked:

I think there are ways by which we can look at this; they're not mutually exclusive. One is that diversity actually provides you with multiple perspectives on the issue, and therefore it's not going to be dominated by like mindedness and things like that. You will have to accommodate different appreciations or different ways by which countries actually appreciate the situation. So, to that extent, you'd expect that, then any resolution would cover multiple areas of concern. The main issue with that, of course, is that it makes it more difficult to find consensus and find some ways of finding a common ground, which could be the basis for common action.

The role of minilaterals was introduced as a way to solve the concerns faced by the ASEAN member states in reaching a consensus. This approach makes it more feasible for countries interested in addressing issues to collaborate and find solutions together. Additionally, minilaterals also make it easier for countries having common interests to act without involving the whole ASEAN grouping. As for ensuring inclusivity and strengthening regional cooperation within ASEAN, the group takes into consideration the idea of complementarity to find a common ground.

As part of the concluding discussion, the AOIP's execution was assessed in terms of achieving its own goals. Kraft pointed out that there have been active attempts to intensify the alignment of the framework with what has been tried and tested in terms of connectivity, as well as trying to promote the UN SDG. However, ASEAN has been slow in its progress. As Kraft puts it:

We always see ASEAN promoting norms and always promoting certain aspirational considerations. But I think many of the partners of ASEAN want to move forward from these kinds of aspirational points, and so, that's where you actually have questions about operational capabilities... So, in other words, given the kinds of ways by which ASEAN actually works, it might be overtaken by efforts or initiatives on the part of some of its dialogue partners that want more progress operationally.

On the growing tension in the Indo-Pacific region, Kraft mentioned:

It might find itself actually being overtaken by that competition between China and the United States. In other words, this is a competition that goes beyond the Indo-Pacific. It's a competition... that ASEAN might find difficulty in trying to contain especially on the aspects that are actually driven by hard power... So, as far as those kinds of things are actually going on, all of these efforts on the part of ASEAN, to promote AOIP, to continue using the kinds of mechanisms that actually has, would always be constrained by things that—by conditions and by developments—that it might not be the position to do and to influence precisely because of the speed at which the differential speeds at which these different issues are actually being—are actually evolving.

As a concluding note, Kraft reiterated that the most important thing that ASEAN can offer is their ability to convene countries within the region to discuss issues.

Episode 21

Steering Ways Forward

Japan's Indo-Pacific Vision

■ Host | Maria Thaemar C. Tana, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

UP Diliman Department of Political Science

Co-Convenor, UP CIDS Strategic Studies Program

■ Guest | Jikko Alfonso Puzon

Filipino Researcher

Former Visiting Research Fellow

Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)

This episode focused on Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision or the FOIP. The episode attempted to uncover how Japan perceives its role and responsibility in regional and global affairs. The discussion began with a briefer of what the FOIP is. As explained, the institute was established in 2013 as a guiding principle for a divided and confrontative world. It considered the recent security developments in various parts of the world and other nontraditional security challenges. Through the FOIP, Japan's foreign policy has taken on the approach of proactive pacifism, where the country would proactively contribute to global peace and cooperation without relegating the 'no war' clause of its peace constitution. There are three main pillars in Japan's FOIP: first, the promotion and establishment of the rule of law, freedom of innovation, and free trade;

second, pursuit of economic prosperity; and third, commitment to peace and stability. As Jikko Alfonso Puzon puts it:

Japan also sought to facilitate free and robust economic activity throughout the region and eventually they realized the prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. Simultaneously, Japan enhanced strategic ties with the United States, Australia, and India institutionalizing what we now know as the Quad.

Scholars suggest there are two major driving forces behind the launch of the FOIP in 2016. First is the economic and military rise of China, and second is the relative decline of US leadership in Asia. Puzon noted:

In the past, Japan was seen as extremely pragmatic, and economic interests would usually be predominant when it comes to its priorities. It would usually follow visions or strategies crafted by the United States. Under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, however, Japan took an important step to have its own vision of an international order that was eventually supported by other important players in the region.

In terms of Japan's relations with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region—especially Southeast Asian states—the United States, and China, the FOIP has been instrumental in the purchase of foreign aid through foreign investment as well as its defense and security policies. In recent years, Japan and the ASEAN upgraded their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership to further boost cooperation in key areas, including economic development and maritime security, through its National Security Strategy. This makes China Japan's biggest strategic challenge. As Puzon remarked:

Japan has continued to engage with China economically and diplomatically, while seeking to strengthen its defense capabilities and its strategic alignment with countries such as the United States, Australia, and India.

In the context of its relations with the United States, the US-Japan alliance plays a pivotal role in the FOIP. Bilateral security commitments remain the anchor of

the alliance. However, the United States and Japan have made significant steps to project their influence in regional peace and stability, as well as in maintaining a rules-based international order.

The FOIP also affected Japan's domestic security policies on remilitarization by increasing its defense budget, modernizing the Japan self-defense forces or the JSDF, and strengthening its alliance and partnerships, particularly with the United States and other like-minded states in the region. Puzon added:

But, aside from that, Japan's pursuit of a larger security role in the region could be attributed to the Indo-Pacific's evolving security landscape as well as the emergence of various security challenges, both traditional and nontraditional. In this sense, Japan has been actively modernizing its forces to better align with the evolving security landscape in the Indo-Pacific.

Although there have been differences from the 2013 and the 2016 Japanese FOIP, the bottom line remains the same: Japan's unwavering commitment for an international order based on the rule of law. The 2016 FOIP has improved on including a broader scope for cooperation with like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific as well as other states in other parts of the world. Japan's FOIP refused exclusion and thus displays a higher moral standard vis-à-vis China's hegemonic attempts in the region. It proposed what Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida termed as *Rulemaking through Dialogue*, which prioritized Japan's respect for the historical and cultural diversity of each country, and equal partnership among nations.

The discussion further delved into the possible challenges and roadblocks that Japan could face in pursuing the new FOIP policy. One of which is the emerging security threat in the maritime domain and the use of gray zone operations of other hard power countries like China.

There has also been a brief discussion on how the Philippines can maximize its strategic partnership with Japan to address emerging security challenges in the maritime domain, and how the Philippines and other like-minded states can effectively contribute to achieving the FOIP. On the first point, Puzon recognized how the capacity of the Philippines in addressing maritime security issues

within its domain, especially in the West Philippine Sea, remain significantly weak. He argued that with Japan's FOIP, the country can improve the Philippine Coast Guard and its capacity to address emerging security challenges in the maritime domain. Japan's participation in the Balikatan exercises has also been advantageous for the Philippines. Puzon explained:

In order to accelerate the Philippine government's efforts to build a minimum credible defense posture, Japan could also contribute by providing much needed assistance to the country's law enforcement agencies and its civil maritime agencies. This could be in the form of long-term capacity building programs, maritime and civil maritime trainings, and educational exchanges. Japan could also facilitate new programs, dialogues, and other joint engagements between the PCG and the JCG—joint maritime patrols in the West Philippine Sea or another opportunity that both countries could explore.

Closing the discussion, Puzon reiterated how the Philippine government should continue fostering deeper cooperation with the country's network of allies and strategic partners, including Japan. This is to positively contribute to promoting an open, stable, and inclusive international order through open communication and dialogue with like-minded states in the Indo-Pacific.

Episode 22

The One China Puzzle

Decoding the Philippine Perspective (Part 1 & 2)

- **Host | Edcel John Ibarra**
Assistant Professor
UP Diliman Department of Political Science
- **Guest | Laura Quiambao-Del Rosario**
President, Miriam College
Former Undersecretary
Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs
- **Guest | Julio Amador III**
President, Foundation for the National Interest
Executive Director
Philippine-American Educational Foundation

This two-part episode focused on the One China Policy and its provisions, historical context, evolving interpretations, and the multifaceted implications it holds for the Philippines's foreign relations, security, and regional influence.

The discussion started with a question on what the One China Principle is, as defined by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and how they uphold it. Mr. Julio Amador III explained that, in general, the principle suggests that there is one government that represents China. Beyond the PRC, however, countries across the globe have different interpretations and applications of the principles. He noted:

Just bringing it to the Philippines, we actually do have a One China Policy, not just a principle, in which the Philippine government actually recognizes that, you know, the PRC is the sole representative of China as it's much more specific for the Philippines.

Former Ambassador Laura Quiambao-Del Rosario added that the Philippine government recognizes the legal government of China as the sole legal government. It understands and respects the position of the Chinese Government that there is but one China and that Taiwan is an integral part of the Chinese territory. However, as Quimbao-Del Rosario put it:

Look at the verbs 'understands' and 'respects'. It doesn't say that they accept that Taiwan [is] really already going to be—what they call that—under the legal authority of China.

The delicate relationship between the Philippines and China limited the opportunities of the Philippines in building ties with Taiwan. For instance, one of the prerequisites by the PRC is that any diplomatic relationship, including the opening of embassies in Beijing, would require acceptance of the One China Principle. The Philippines thus had no choice but to accede with this requirement in view of building its official relations with the PRC, even if it meant removing Philippine representation in Taiwan. As a countermeasure, the Philippines pursued an unofficial relationship with Taiwan by creating the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) which manages our cultural and economic relations with Taiwan.

The Philippines established its diplomatic relations with China in 1975 during the administration of former President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr. While it meant dealing with a significantly limited relationship with Taiwan, the Philippine government

made the difficult decision based on its strategic calculations of transformations in the global security landscape. Quiambao-Del Rosario called it the Cold War approach, with the Philippine government adopting a balancing tactic. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China were moving further away from each other, and Philippines wanted to have another ally aside from the US to expand its strategic options. Meanwhile, Amador noted that the Philippines was also embroiled in tensions with the US. We lamented the lack of assurance from our security ally, the US, while the latter had been critical of the human rights violations of the Marcos, Sr. administration. Quiambao-Del Rosario also highlighted:

We really opened up, not just [to] China. We also opened our embassies at that time, in Hungary, in Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia and Romania. Talagang pumupunta tayo noon sa eastern bloc cleaning tools, trying to show the US, 'look, hindi lang kayo ang pwede naming economic partners,' yeah.

[We really opened up, not just to China. We also opened our embassies, at that time, in Hungary, in Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia and Romania. We really went to the eastern bloc cleaning tools, trying to show the US, 'you're not the only economic partners we have', yeah.]

Delving deeper into the discussion, the guests also explained the differences between the US and the Philippine interpretations of the One China Principle. Amador explained that the US recognizes the One China Principle, but does not necessarily agree with it. It recognizes that Beijing, for the PRC, is the sole government of China. As Amador put it:

So meaning, whatever claims that Taiwan has on China probably is not something that the US recognizes. But at the same time, you can see that the US was also more than nuance about [it]. It was very clear that's why they passed the Taiwan relations act to govern the relationship with [the] Taiwan. So, I think that provides them also, and maybe it's also power dynamic here, that because they are ... the most powerful country in the world, ... China cannot do anything about this...that the US has a Taiwan relations act.

The American Institute of Taiwan or the AIT located in Taipei is considered the equivalent of the Philippines' MECO. However, the head of AIT is a political appointee, which is the equivalent of a Chief of Mission in other countries while the rest of the staff are considered US diplomats. Quiambao-Del Rosario added:

They [the US] appointed people who really understood foreign policy. And at the same time, we should remember that when the US decided to recognize China, it had to terminate its mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, which they signed in 1951. And instead, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, which somehow made it almost like an obligation for the US to really keep [up] Taiwan, because part of the acceptance of the One China Policy, as they call it, is that they will not accept of course full reunification of Taiwan and China.

In the case of the Philippines, the country has been hamstrung and restricted by Executive Order No. 313 (EO No. 313) which states that *“no official of the Philippine government may visit Taiwan, no official of the Philippine government may receive Taiwanese officials visiting the Philippines, and no official activity relating to Taiwan should be carried out without the clearance of the Department of Foreign Affairs.”* This is very different from the US approach. They have the Taiwan Relations Act which secures their economic and commercial ties with Taiwan.

The guests agreed that the Philippines' One China Policy is significantly stricter than other states, even more than the US joint communique. For instance, official meetings with TECO representatives are not allowed to be held in the DFA and other government offices, whilst in the US, it was shared that the certain establishments have been officially designated by the Department of State to house meetings with Taiwanese delegates. The EO also restricts the appointment of Philippine diplomats to work at the MECO, when the members of the diplomatic service are the most capable to aid in the work of the office given their knowledge in foreign relations and regional global development. In addition, EO No. 313 also, in practice, restricts the country from pursuing a more robust economic relationship with Taiwan, such as entering into free-trade or facilitating the entry of foreign direct investments. Quiambao-Del Rosario explained further:

But you see in the US, they have a very special mechanism by which they could really relate with Taiwan unofficially, while carrying

out their commercial and economic objectives, if not the defense objectives. That's why you have the Taiwan Relations Act. In our case, we were straitjacketed, *parang di ka makakilos*, and that's why we lost the opportunity for us to really benefit from Taiwanese investments, ang laki-laki, you know, they invested a lot in Taiwan.

[But you see in the US, they have a very special mechanism by which they could really relate with Taiwan unofficially, while carrying out their commercial and economic objectives, if not the defense objectives. That's why you have the Taiwan Relations Act. In our case, we were straitjacketed, we couldn't move freely, and that's why we lost the opportunity for us to really benefit from Taiwanese investments, it was sizable, you know, they invested a lot in Taiwan.]

That said, the guests proposed to review the Philippine interpretation of the One China Principle, particularly EO No. 313. This would accommodate changes in our relationship with Taiwan, especially on the economic and cultural fronts, while maintaining some level of separation from matters of defense and security. Quiambao-Del Rosario noted:

Our officials from the Department of Trade, from the Department of Finance, Board of Investments should be allowed, you know, free visits and free exchanges and free discussions. After all, what we told China, our relationship with the Chinese Taipei, as they call it now, or Taiwan will really be economic and cultural. But the Executive Order prevents even the economic. Tomorrow, the trades people from doing official business when what they're doing is really official but it's under that ambit of, you know, nonpolitical engagement.

Amador concurred with the argument and added:

...we need to explore also how we're going to—sector can benefit from improved relations with Taiwan, whether a free trade area can be declared between us, whether we can negotiate with Taiwan for more scholarship opportunities, but at the same time also more opportunities for Filipinos. Can you imagine Indonesia's around 300,000 workers in Taipei or in Taiwan as [a] whole? That's bigger than ours which is only about Php 150 officially. So, why aren't we taking advantage of our

proximity to actually have more OFW in Taipei if it's something that we should consider in from the economic relationship?

The guests also recommended the transition of MECO's oversight from the Office of the President—its assignment since the Ramos administration—back to the DFA, suggesting MECO operate as an attached agency. This restructuring aims to enhance the synergy between MECO and the DFA, leveraging the expertise of diplomats who are adept in crisis management. Implementing this change would improve the collective strategic and emergency planning capabilities of both entities in response to the evolving dynamics in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

As the discussion came to its end, there were some reflections on the potential advantages for the Philippines should there be changes with the current interpretation of the One China Principle. One of which would be the strong economic investment and manpower trade that Taiwan could offer the Philippines, and vice versa. Although Amador reiterated that establishing a security relationship with Taiwan should be averted to prevent potential tension with China, he did acknowledge the importance of military contingency planning with Taiwan.

Lastly, it was also highlighted how the Philippines could take advantage of its relationships they have with China and Taiwan by adopting a more flexible approach to the One China Policy. As Amador emphasized:

But we have to be more creative, given that there are many other factors related to Taiwan; and not just about the formal diplomatic relations that we have with China; and we're talking about [with] security technology, people to people, cultural and educational opportunities, work opportunities and potential, you know, trade relations with Taiwan that we could reap benefits from precisely because of proximity factors alone. I think these are enough in terms of displaying benefits versus costs as to why we need to expand our understanding of our One China relationship without sacrificing the political diplomatic relationship with Beijing. I think what we suffer from is a lack of creativity, and how we want to move forward with our relationships with Taiwan... These provide opportunities for all of us to work with these sectors of Taiwan. In conjunction with other countries now. But at the same time, we need

to think about possibilities in terms of contingencies... On its own terms, on a wider regional scale and ultimately, I think, you know, for all policies in place, what reforms can be done to accommodate our relationship with Taiwan without sacrificing our One China Policy.

Episode 23

Strategic Pivots

Threading South Korea's Indo-Pacific Path

■ Host | Aaron Abel T. Mallari

Assistant Professor

UP Diliman Department of Political Science

■ Guest | Alex Kim

First Secretary

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines

Episode 23, the last episode of the third season of the Katipunan Dialogue Podcast, focused on South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy, exploring its strategic objectives, pivotal programs, and their implications for South Korea's interests.

The discussion started with a background of the South Korea Indo-Pacific Policy in 2022, titled "Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific (SFPPIP)." This new policy shifted from South Korea's original and earlier stance of neutrality under the Moon Administration which distanced itself from the Indo-Pacific concept.

Kim briefly explained the difference between the Moon Administration's New Southern Policy (NSP) and the SFPPIP, which is South Korea's current Indo-Pacific strategy. NSP primarily focused on strengthening economic and cultural ties with Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the Indo-Pacific Strategy is a broader and

more ambitious policy, with a wider geographic scope and a stronger emphasis on shared values and security cooperation. As Kim explained:

First, regarding the geographic focus. The NSP focused on Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific strategy. The IP strategy is focusing on Indo-Pacific. And the second, in the context of approach, the NSP was neutral and [tried] to avoid taking sides in the US-China rivalry. However, the Indo-Pacific strategy is more proactive and it's more aligning with US-led Indo-Pacific strategy. Third were the NSP focused on expanding access to Southeast Asian markets and resources. The Indo-Pacific strategy is deepening trade and investment ties with countries across the Indo-Pacific region. It is kind of broadened. A lot. Lastly, while the NSP tried not to engage in regional security issues, the Indo-Pacific strategy is more active in the regional security cooperation.

As Kim noted, there are three main reasons why the Moon administration designed the NSP in such a way. First, it tried to avoid taking sides in the rivalry between the US and China. Second, the policy emphasizes engagement with all Southeast Asian countries regardless of their political or economic system. Third, the policy focused on mutually beneficial cooperation rather than promoting South Korea's own interest at the expense of others. All of these meant neutrality for the Moon administration.

The shift away from this neutral orientation was instigated by transformations in the geopolitical landscape, most of which South Korea could no longer ignore. It was mainly the rise of China, but the worsening tensions between the US and China came a close second. The NSP was also criticized for being too passive. In the end, South Korea was prompted to reassess its regional engagement strategy and ultimately adopt a more proactive approach. Kim noted:

Our new Indo-Pacific strategy is more comprehensive and forward-looking than the NSP... It outlines South Korea's vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. And it sets out a plan for achieving this vision through a range of initiatives. I can admit it, that the strategy is also more aligned with the US-led Indo-Pacific strategy, which reflects South Korea's close alliance with the United States.

Kim described South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy as extensive and ambitious. It seeks to play a leading role in addressing challenges and pursuing opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby shaping its future. There are three main objectives in the IP Strategy. First, to build a free and open Indo-Pacific region; second, to maintain peace and stability in the region, and lastly, to promote economic prosperity and shared prosperity in the region. In order to achieve these objectives South Korea is pursuing a variety of policies and initiatives in three key areas, namely economic cooperation, security cooperation, and diplomatic engagement. Kim added:

In the area of economic cooperation, South Korea is promoting trade and investment within Indo-Pacific countries through FTA—free-trade agreements—investment, promotion, and infrastructure development. You know, we are pursuing policies to address new economic issues such as supply chain resilience, digital transformation, sustainable development, and [in] the area of security cooperation, South Korea is promoting a rule-based international order, Maritime Security Cooperation, nonproliferation [of nuclear weapons], counterterrorism, and cybersecurity cooperation. We are also participating in regional organizations such as ASEAN and the East Asia Summit... In the area of diplomatic engagement, South Korea is expanding its diplomatic network in the Indo-Pacific region. And we're prompting people-to-people exchange. The country is also providing development assistance to Indo-Pacific region.

South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy also reflects the nation's evolving stance amidst the great power rivalry between the US and China. Kim explained that the Yoon administration has adopted a more assertive and definitive approach, aligning more closely with the US and building stronger relations with the Quad. This is a significant development from the neutral orientation of the NSP but a rather strategic one, especially in light of the North Korean threat. For the Yoon administration, a strong alliance between South Korea and the US is crucial in the face of this security crisis. Beyond the North Korean issue, South Korea has also been vocal in its criticism of China on issues such as the West Philippine Sea, where South Korea has expressed its support for the Philippines' position, calling for a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Kim further added:

The strong Korea-US alliance comes at the cost of [a] more strained relationship with China. But, despite this tension, Korea is still committed to maintaining a constructive relationship with China. We're trying to talk with the China a lot... But at the same time... I think it's the same with what happens in the Philippines. South Korea is intertwined with China in many aspects, especially in economy.

It was also established that it is difficult to predict the future of South Korea's bilateral relations China, given the adoption of the Indo-Pacific strategy. Ideally, the two countries could decouple, reduce their economic dependence on each other, and eventually develop a more stable relationship. This scenario is ideal but also unrealistic given current regional dynamics. For now, Kim hopes that both nations continue to manage their differences and avoid actions that could provoke each other.

The discussion then pivoted to South Korea's relationship with Southeast Asian nations. Kim explained that the Indo-Pacific strategy places special emphasis on ASEAN, under the premise that ASEAN is the heart of the Indo-Pacific. South Korea has launched its Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative (KASI) as a regional policy, specifically tailored to ASEAN within the framework of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Kim remarked:

Korea is supporting ASEAN members' maritime law enforcement capacity through cooperation on transfer of decommissioned ships. We are already doing that and logistic supplies training for counterterrorism, counter-piracy, and search and rescue operations. Also, we were taking part in joint naval exercises. We're developing cooperation projects for better management of maritime resources and marine environment. We've already initiated the project on reducing maritime plastic litters in the East Asian seas. We are investing a lot of money on these things.

Kim also highlighted the implications of South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy on its strategic relations with the Philippines. Both Republics share common interest in regional cooperation, economic development, and rule-based order. In terms of security cooperation, South Korea's commitment to uphold regional order based on norms and rules is in line with the Philippines' own security interest. Economic cooperation is also another positive impact. The Indo-Pacific strategy

can draw more trade and investment opportunities for the Philippines and increase our access to much needed financing for infrastructure development and other projects through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and similar mechanisms. Lastly, the Philippines can benefit from technology transfer opportunities in areas such as digital infrastructure and renewable energy from South Korea.

Kim also identified some challenges that South Korea might face in the implementation of its new Indo-Pacific strategy, mostly in terms of navigating political headwinds, securing domestic support, and enhancing diplomatic capacity. Notably, he considered the people as the most important challenge:

South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy emphasized the importance of people-to-people ties. I mean, strong connections between individuals and communities are essential for fostering mutual understanding and promoting cultural exchange and strengthening of regional cooperation. I think it's all about the people. For this, in our strategy, the main concern [focusing] is that South Korea is making efforts to broaden exchanges between youth—who are our future. So, building mutual trust and friendship between future generation can help to make Indo-Pacific regions free, peaceful, and prosperous. If they get along with each other, they will get along in the political and economic fields.

As a concluding statement, Kim highlighted the importance of the Indo-Pacific and South Korea's interest in the region:

The fact that the majority of our top twenty trading partners are located in this region, and that sixty-six percent of our foreign direct investment is destined for Indo-Pacific, clearly reflect our close ties with this region. So, therefore, free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific is very essential for the future of the global community and is also a key factor of Korea to develop our democracy and economy. Our democracy and economy that you helped to promote. In this sense, aspiring to become a global key role state. We should be—we want to lead this region's peace so, so our country, my country, is willing and able to contribute more and take on a bigger role in this region. Yeah, I would like to conclude like this. Please count on us. I think it's our turn to support to go along together with you guys.

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