Worldviews on the United States, alliances, and the changing international order: an introduction

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Evelyn Goh[a] and Ryo Sahashi[b]

[a]Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia; [b]Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

ABSTRACT

Since the end of World War II, US alliances have been at the core of the regional orders in both East Asia and Western Europe. However, doubts about the US-hegemonic order have arisen due to great power competition and uncertainty about US leadership. This introductory paper sets out the research questions which the papers for this Special Issue address, and discusses key implications of their findings. It suggests the divergent worldviews held by the United States and its allies/partners could create political tensions between them, and also motivate US allies/partners to review the role of these alliances and partnerships within their individual state strategies. If an international order's quality rests on how stable, peaceful, and consensual it is, the choices and actions made by US allies and partners can significantly impact regional dynamics and order-building.

For almost 75 years since the end of World War II, the regional orders in both East Asia and Western Europe have been constituted by US alliances at their core. The United States' alliance systems survived and even expanded following its Cold War adversary's implosion. Nearly three decades later, however, escalating globalisation, resurgent great power challengers, and uncertainty about US global leadership have cast unprecedented doubts on the durability of the post-Cold War US-hegemonic international order. Doubts and fears about the future role of US alliances quite naturally follow.

The project from which this Special Issue is derived begins with the assumption that the international order is changing. While it remains uncertain as to what the results of the ongoing changes will be, the international system and the widely shared understandings and norms undergirding its operation are clearly perceived to be in transition and even potential transformation. The research question that the project tackles is: where do these changes leave alliances? More specifically, *how are key US allies and security partners in Europe and Asia perceiving the changes in international order, and how are they re-evaluating their alliances and partnerships with the United States against this changing context?*

The rationale

There are at least two good reasons for asking the research question this way. First, even though US alliances are widely regarded as intrinsic to the post-war European and East Asian orders and were re-constructed and reified as central elements of their post-Cold War orders, it remains necessary to ask the fundamental questions of why alliances are formed and under what conditions they decline or are given up. As observed in one field review, 'while there are plenty of studies on alliance management, research is lacking on why alliances are formed and when they dissolve' (Masala & Corvaja, 2009, p. 349). We would add that, short of alliance creation and outright death, there is relatively little existing work on the 'in-between' questions of when and how alliances change in character or significance within individual state strategies.

The literature on alliance is, of course, a large and well-developed one. These studies have traditionally focused on alliances as an instrument of state in the pursuit of war, with a resultant focus on questions of alliance formation and management, as well as on the effects of alliances on the likelihood or intensity of war. More recent trends in such research include focusing on alliances at the intersections of conflict and cooperation, such as the interactions between exclusive collective defence arrangements and inclusive collective security institutions (Rynning & Schmidt, 2018). However, this project is less interested in the parts of the alliance literature that examine the operation of alliances in relation to military conflict or other coordinated uses of force. It focuses instead on the parts that examine what we might think of as the *politics* of alliances, to paraphrase Glenn Snyder (1997).

In studying the politics of alliances, this project's starting point departs from most of the existing literature. Thus, the second major reason for asking the question this way is to make a vital contribution to the state of the art. Many other studies on alliance politics start from an explicitly or implicitly US-centric point of view (and some never move beyond that narrow focus). For instance, there are a number of studies that revolve around arguments about whether the US alliance system will endure as a pillar of the East Asian security order fundamentally because of what the United States will or will not do (for example, persist as an Indo-Pacific power or draw down from the region).[1] Less common are analyses that privilege the agency of US allies or security partners in determining the character of the changing regional order and the role of the US within it. Yet, some scholars have demonstrated that a major reason for the continuation of US alliances and creation of US hegemony in East Asia after the Cold War was the complicity of both US allies and partners in the region in accepting the costs of facilitating this role for Washington (see Goh, 2013; Hamilton-Hart, 2012). More recently, notable studies emphasising the agency and strategic choices of US allies include Dian and Meijer's (2020) special issue on putative alliance networking in East Asia and White's (2017) provocative essay about Australia's potential choices in an Asia 'without America'.

It remains too early to determine what the systemic effects of such rethinking and recalibrations on the part of US allies might be. However, even during the course of our project (2017-2019), the world changed around us in ways that increased the evidence that the international order is in transition. Alongside growing doubts about the commitment and purpose of US power after Trump's election grew concerns about Chinese and Russian assertiveness, and there has been an increase in the attention paid to the

responses of other states, particularly US allies. Against this context, our project's focus on the *worldviews* of US allies and partners is deliberate: we aimed to capture the widening scope of strategic thinking and discourse within which the ongoing reconsiderations and debates about the United States and its alliances have been nested. Rather than focusing solely on specific policy choices and outcomes, we chose to focus on the changing mind-sets among defence, foreign and strategic policy communities, their questioning of assumptions and re-evaluations of foundations, including their relationships with the United States. During the research for this project, we probed the palpable sense that the boundaries of what can be thought and said about these issues had broadened significantly within the countries that we surveyed.[2] Our rationale for doing this is that changes in worldviews and mindsets underpin the reconfigured scope of choice and action that allied and partner countries perceive themselves to need.

This project's team emerged with more certainty that the countries we surveyed are ready to think more imaginatively and innovatively about what to do about the ongoing transition in international order now than when the project started. The extent to which they can put these ideas into practice and the degree to which they will be successful are questions that further studies must probe as more time passes. Meanwhile, for those who recognise that hegemony or international leadership requires the complicity of supporter states (see Goh, 2013), it is fairly obvious that investigations about the viability of any hegemonic enterprise must include such serious study of supporter state perceptions and evaluations. Arguably, during the current period of order transition, supporter states enjoy a potentially system-impacting scope for strategic choices; their changing worldviews and conceptions of choices and actions can feed into shaping the regional and international orders as they change.[3]

The approach

This project's approach is unusual in three ways. First, we focus on US treaty allies as well as key security partners. The latter are especially important in security complexes which lay outside of the core of US post-war power projection but have seen growing US security involvement since the Cold War ended. These include South and Southeast Asia. Second, the project covers the Eurasian space that spans the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. In this Special Issue, we present a selection of papers that cover our key European and Asian cases to highlight the range of changing worldviews in key allied and partner countries. Third, in conducting the research, exchange, and project development, we explicitly tried to control for a certain type of audience bias. Area studies scholars from both Asia and Europe have often anecdotally observed that discourses about alliances or security relationships can be skewed when conducted in the presence of a powerful ally or partner (be it representatives from Russia, China, or the United States), whether as a result of self-constraint on the part of junior partners or agenda-setting by the powerful ally. Thus, in the substantive parts of our project research design, papers, and workshops, we focused exclusively on allied and partner participants (in terms of expertise, nationality and institutional base) and did not include papers about views from the United States, China, or Russia. As such, the project was able to focus on what we referred to as 'spoke to spoke' exchange, with important impacts on the scope of our research and findings.

The project's primary purpose was to gather up-to-date empirical material in these key Asian and European cases at a critical juncture in the ongoing international order transition. Consonant with this aim, we recruited country or area experts who were knowledgeable about each case, rather than alliance theorists *per se*. The project design also reflects this first systematic attempt to ask a set of questions that can help us to plot the changing perceptions and assessments underpinning the current and potential policy and strategic choices across this wide range of cases. The resulting papers are necessarily heavy on evidence-backed description – they provide the vital empirical groundwork that is necessary for further conceptualisation and/or theory testing and development. Because we are investigating an ongoing process of fairly recent change, the data simply does not yet exist to support rigorous hypothesis testing and robust explanations. By investigating the following questions, our aim is not to predict what these case countries will or will not do, or their particular alignment choices. Instead, we aim to identify the parameters of possibilities in allied/partner choices going forward. This is a vital endeavour that will also shed light on the parameters of change in the regional and international orders. For the above reasons, our project is more wide-ranging than other studies of alliances.

The research design and analytical framework

All the papers in this project were prepared in response to a standard set of five key questions, as detailed in Table 1. These five questions served to structure the research and ensured comparability and consistency across the cases. The authors of the individual papers made their own decisions about the exact order in which the questions would

Table 1. Questions guiding the project.

1. FOUNDATIONS of alliance/security partnership
• Outline the historical origins and purposes of your case country's alliance or security partnership with the United States.
• Identify and explain any major alterations in the above during the transition from the post-World War II to the post-Cold War periods.
2. ROLE of US alliance(s) in grand strategy or national security strategy
• How does the US alliance or security partnership relate to your case country's identity (national purpose/place in the world/sense of self/status ambitions)?
• How has the US alliance or security partnership featured in (or constituted) your case country's strategy? Take into account any salient multilateral/institutional and regional dimensions.
• How do policy-makers and key constituencies in your case country view US alliances in general, in relation to regional/international order?
3. Key aspects of ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT (during Obama-Trump administrations)
• What are the key issues in your case country's bilateral alliance with the US, and how has it approached these issues?
• What are the multilateral/institutional and regional dimensions (if any)?
4. Perceptions of US POWER under Obama and Trump
• How have policy-makers and key constituencies' perceptions of US power evolved over the two most recent US administrations?
• Aspects of US power can include: relative power, credibility, reliability, 'values', public goods provision, self-interest, revisionism, US commitment, US self-perceptions and national purpose
• Note longer-term trends preceding Obama (if any)
5. Perceptions of WORLD ORDER
• How do your case country's key policy-makers/political constituencies assess the changing regional/international order? What is the 'baseline' order? What are they worried about that is changing? What do they think is causing the change?
• How do these perceptual changes interact with expectations and evaluations of US alliances; and with the policy choices that have been made?
• What is the desired order? What is possible?

be addressed and the relative weight that would assigned to each question. These decisions were dependent on each case's findings and argument. In Table 1, the sub-questions listed under each main question show how we parsed the questions in various ways that allowed the authors of very different cases to address each of these themes. We did not expect every paper to address every sub-question.

These five questions guided the research conducted to explicitly situate the usual (tactical and operational) alliance management questions against the other key variables of interest to us. On the one hand, we wanted to investigate the contemporary views of allies and security partners about US alliances against the wider context of their assessments of US power especially after Trump's election. We also wanted to explore their possibly changing expectations about the role of the United States in their case country's national security strategies. We expected that these US-centric questions would also be closely related to allied/partner perceptions, hopes and concerns about how they see the international and regional orders changing more broadly. On the other hand, we also wanted these contemporary analyses to be grounded in a good understanding of the background and trajectory of each relationship. Because of this aim, we included the questions about each alliance's founding and evolving purpose and about the domestic and regional contexts of such evaluations.

During the research and exchanges conducted for the project, the wider group of participants together fleshed out three sets of ideas that influenced our subsequent analyses:

Order is used ubiquitously in the project at both the regional and international levels. We understand international order to refer to three elements: (a) structure, including leadership, hierarchy, and ranking within the order; (b) substance, including the norms, values, and shared purposes of the international society being studied; and (c) quality, that is, the extent to which the order is peaceful, stable, or consensual.

We employed the standard International Relations framework of the 'three images of analysis' (Waltz, 1959) to reference the individual, internal state, and structural levels of analysis. The project's research design originally foregrounded the domestic and structural levels of analysis, but in the course of the research and exchanges, we found that one common focus across many of the cases was the importance of the *regional* level of analysis. Considerations about regional order and the particular case country's interests and role within its region often serve as a vital context for alliance decisions and order management. Thus, project participants developed the shorthand of '*image 2.5*' to refer to the regional level of analysis.

In the course of the project, our wide range of cases also enabled us to address the basic question: what are alliances for? Alliance theorists tend to begin their research with the realist assumption that alliances are threat-based collective action responses to common external enemies. However, in both western Europe and East Asia, the centrality of the US alliances with Germany and with Japan stem from quite different – though equally visceral – conditions of rehabilitation after defeat in a systemic war. Our project participants identified three broad types of *alliance motivations* across our cases: (a) threat-based, as conventionally understood; (b) ontological, encompassing a variety of motivations that range from essential conditions for post-war membership of international society for defeated powers, to other identity-based motivations; and (c) transactional or instrumental, which is largely geared towards non-existential benefits such as status-boosting or security hedging.

Findings

The six articles that are included in this Special Issue cover the following cases: Japan, Australia, India, Germany, Poland, and Turkey. While India is not a US ally, it has strengthened its partnership with the United States in recent years and is an emerging power that has an important role in the Indo-Pacific region and world politics. The remaining allies have very different national strengths and power relationships with the United States, and each alliance faces diverse regional and sub-regional challenges. These countries have played important roles in shaping the regional orders in Europe and Asia. By including these countries, we can effectively elucidate the purpose of this Special Issue, which is to examine both how non-American countries have positioned their alliances with the United States within their own national purposes, strategic goals, and status ambitions and how they have sought to use it to manage changes and uncertainties in international order. Of the countries studied, a few have historically unique relationships with the United States. For instance, Japan fought in the Pacific War with the United States, Poland joined NATO in the post-Cold War period and asserts that the United States is a crucial partner for its own survival, and Turkey has repeatedly changed its perceptions of the United States. Moreover, the cases of Japan, Australia, and Germany highlight that order formation or maintenance is a major objectives of alliances.

This section highlights each study's answers to our research questions. Then, we summarise each study's arguments and findings with regard to the issues that have recently arisen in their relationship with the United States, such as how each government has sought to manage the alliance and how it has aimed to contribute or respond to changes in the regional and global orders.

For Japan, the foundation of its relationship with the United States is based on a security treaty and the two countries formed an alliance against the communist bloc during the Cold War. Moreover, Nobuhiko Tamaki argues that, from the Cold War to today, 'Japan [has been seeking] to preserve existing liberal international (rather than domestic) norms and rules' and has recently shifted its focus toward the Asia Pacific. To Japan, the alliance with the United States is not merely for Japan to secure its vital interests but also to shape international order. Obama's foreign policy approach created a fear that Washington would be less committed to allies' territorial defence, while Trump's foreign policy approach has constructed a different source of concerns even as the Abe administration appears to be managing its relations with the current US president. Tamaki is concerned with Trump's 'lack of respect for liberal institutions and his abrupt foreign policy shifts', such as on the North Korean nuclear issue and on Iran. The Japanese government admits that there has been a relative shift in the international balance of power in favour of rising powers, but it is still confident that the American military maintains its supremacy. However, Tokyo holds that protecting a rules-based order is essential for the country's national interests, and Tamaki therefore argues that Japan's attempt to maintain a 'rules-based order' is composed of a 'classical' method that combines balancing acts and diplomatic consensus-building with potential challengers.

This analysis successfully explains why Japan continues to negotiate with China and other authoritarian regimes while also enhancing its relationship with the United States. He contends that 'Japan attempts to engage with China to make China's policies more acceptable for Japan from a stronger position, which is sustained by Japan's own military

expansion and strengthening the Japan–US alliance'. However, this does mean that, as Japan strives to include China in its rules-based order, the changing American views of and commitment towards this order causes a dilemma for Tokyo.

For Australia, the alliance with the United States has been a strategic asset not only for the country's defence but also for access to military intelligence and defence technology. Iain Henry finds that as Great Britain began to withdraw its presence in Asia in the early Cold War days, Canberra turned a serious eye toward supporting Washington's global activities. For instance, Canberra's willingness to participate in a possible US-led intervention in Laos was motivated by the worry that if Australia failed to contribute, the United States might not be willing to support Australian security interests vis-à-vis Indonesia. Henry argues, 'decision-makers believed that Australia must demonstrate loyalty to Washington, because Australian disloyalty would only beget American disloyalty in the future'. This sense of reciprocal loyalty runs deep in this particular alliance relationship, helping to mitigate the Australian fear of abandonment.

More recently, Canberra and Washington's opinions frequently diverged during the Obama administration and continue to do so during the Trump administration. Australian frustrations in regard to Obama's rebalancing toward Asia were due to what they perceived as Washington's weak commitment and sporadic assertive approach toward its allies (e.g. with regard to Freedom of Navigation Operations and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank). In regard to the Trump administration, Canberra's wariness is order-centric. Henry asserts,

> As 2017 drew to a close, Australia had responded to President Trump's election by articulating its desired order – a U.S.-anchored, rules-based system which preserved American primacy – and pledging its willingness to work towards this goal. In doing so, it had implicitly acknowledged the relative decline of U.S. power, and promised to increase Australia's own security efforts. (Henry in this issue, 10.1080/13569775.2020.1777043)

Canberra explicitly championed adherence to a rules-based global order (RBGO), and attempted to share this burden with Washington. However, as shown in the official and pundit responses to US national security strategy and through Vice President Mike Pence's speech on China, the Australian establishment has been divided about how to approach and manage China since 2018. For some, the US stance on China appears focused less on managing changes in the international order than on simply sustaining US supremacy. Henry argues, 'Washington appears less concerned about upholding an order which could peacefully incorporate China as a superpower, and more preoccupied with reasserting its place as a regional hegemon'. Australia remains cautious in regard to the illiberal nature of the Chinese statecraft but has refrained from engaging in the US-led attempt to exclude China from inclusive regional order building enterprises.

The Japanese and Australian cases, which represent two crucial US allies, help us to identify a number of similarities in their approaches toward a rules-based order. These countries aim to shape an inclusive regional order in Asia that includes China, and their alliances with the United States should anchor such an order. In their eyes, America's recent policy toward China is too confrontational.

India provides an interesting case for this Special Issue. India is not an official ally, but Washington has endeavored to strengthen the strategic partnership. In return, India has expected additional military cooperation as a result of this strengthened relationship.

The current status of this relationship is historically outstanding when taking into consideration that New Delhi did not trust the United States. However, the 2005 nuclear deal between the two paved the way for a change in their relationship, and there has been a steady development in the countries' security cooperation in regard to communication technology, intelligence, and logistical cooperation over the past five years. For India, the United States is a useful partner for achieving economic development, regional stability, and international status.

As Rohan Mukherjee puts it, New Delhi's national goal is to make the 'new world order a hospitable place for its ambitions of becoming a "leading power" in global affairs', and this fact naturally makes India unique in that it prefers that the post-war global and regional orders be transformed. Also, specific to the Indo-Pacific region, India has sought inclusive order-making with China and even found a role for Russia to help maintain the balance of power. These characteristics deny that the US has a leading role; however, Mukherjee suggests that for India, strategic autonomy is the '*freedom* to pursue certain goals and projects' and that the status of a great power is an essential long-term goal. In fact, he contends, 'President Trump's desire to shift US global strategy to offshore balancing' can be welcomed by India since it 'has perceived an opportunity to play a leading role as the Trump administration continues to withdraw from leadership'. The logic in this Indian worldview is self-centric, not order-centric, since it focuses on growing India's status in international society rather than on shaping international order more broadly. This suggests that there is only a very slim possibility that New Delhi will cooperate with Washington as closely as other US allies might.

Turning our attention west-ward, we have Germany which, through NATO, has relied on both its alliance with and power of the United States. Like Japan, Germany's alliance with the United States served as a crucial foundation for the country to return to international society after the Second World War. With help from Washington, Germany succeeded in regaining its international status. At the same time, striving for a liberal European regional order, Germany has regarded the United States as an indispensable partner. Niklas Helwig points out that such motivation on the part of Berlin to form an alliance for the purpose of order formation provides an alternative explanation to the more general one – that German sought to form an alliance for power accumulation. For Helwig, 'an important driver for Germany's alignment with the US has been and still is to ensure on the European continent the order that is based on regional integration through the European Union (EU) and NATO'. That is why Germany has been so concerned with American military operations since 9/11 and is worried about the emergence of Trump administration. The Obama administration worked on both global warming and diplomacy with Iran, which largely reassured Berlin about Washington's commitment to the rules-based order. But the Trump administration's recent actions and inactions have perplexed Berlin's policy-makers. While there is a growing debate in Berlin about how the country should handle the ongoing rift between the United States and Europe, Germany is more concerned with the future of the regional order in Europe. It appears that German foreign policy is increasingly explicit about the need for Europe's strategic autonomy, but Berlin also remains hesitant to lead Europe in tandem with France in the post-Atlantic era. As Helwig writes, 'the creation of a core Europe centred around Germany and France risks upending the carefully calibrated balance of power on the continent and EU unity'. It could also create a division with the Central European states, which 'fear a Russian

threat and are reluctant to trade the transatlantic alliance over a more uncertain Franco-German security guarantee'.

Of the six cases in this Special Issue, only Poland seeks to forge an alliance with the United States in order to secure its survival from its neighboring countries. In this sense, Poland's motivation to form an alliance is the most traditional, threat-centric one. Alexander Lanoszka states that 'Poland sees its alliance with the United States – and not European institutions – as the primary vehicle through which it can realize its national security interests'. Moreover, he notes that 'the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are wary of Western European efforts to be autonomous from U.S.-led arrangements'. Acknowledging the realist foundations of Polish thinking, Lanoszka contends that 'military power is seen as the bedrock for Polish security, rather than values and commerce'. In addition to perceived threats from Russia, Warsaw's hopes for the US alliance relationship also stem from a longstanding intra-European distrust of Berlin, Paris, and notably Brussels. Therefore, the unipolar international order led by the United States has not presented a problem for Poland. Instead, Warsaw's concern tends to be that the United States might be too distracted or tied down in Asia, at the expense of its European allies. Thus Poland strongly perceives and values the United States' role as security guarantor. While the Obama administration's reluctant leadership placed Poland in an uneasy position, 'the Polish government has actively courted Trump, likely to ensure his engagement in European security affairs'. Such management has been successful, resulting in a new defence cooperation arrangement and raising hopes in Warsaw for a permanent American military presence in its homeland.

Turkey provides us another unique lens through which to ruminate over the regional context in Southern Europe and the Middle East. Didem Buhari argues that for Turkey, participating in NATO and receiving protection and support from Washington was a necessary choice during the Cold War. Because Turkey lacks 'the financial and military capabilities it needed to maintain its self-reliance', NATO membership guaranteed Turkey's recognition in the international arena. Also, Turkey perceives the United States to be an 'ideologically friendly country'. Certainly, between the withdrawal of the Jupiter missiles and American intervention into Cyprus's affairs, Ankara realised that it risked developing 'an unconditional security dependence on the US', but it strove to manage this reliant relationship. Buhari observes that 'Turkey's dual emphasis on strategic autonomy and security dependence on the US ensued throughout the 1980s'.

Since the end of the Cold War, Turkey's regional goals have meant that it needs the United States more than the United States needs Turkey. Turkey has had more troubles with Greece, Bulgaria, and its Middle Eastern neighbors, and Washington has responded positively via its 'strategic partnership' against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). However, Buhari notes that with the rise of the AKP government in 2002, Turkey developed a sense of 'cultural distinctiveness from the West'. In addition, the Arab uprisings and Syrian conflict have multiplied the tension between Istanbul and Washington. Turkey has been less reliant on the United States since the Obama administration supported the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria and refused to extradite US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen. Trump's inconsistent approach toward Turkey is perplexing, but his hostile policy toward Iran certainly runs counter to Turkey's interests. In addition, the AKP holds the worldview that Turkey should dilute Western influence on its foreign policy. Turkey's aspirations for strategic

autonomy and its need to diversify its security partners have been increasing. Hence, Buhari points out, 'Turkey's distancing from the US did not only rely on diverging threat perceptions, but also on diverging worldviews'.

Implications

This Special Issue examines how US allies and partners view the changing international order, and how this affects their perceptions, expectations and policies vis-à-vis the United States and their alliances and security partnerships. Instead of directly discussing the changes in the US alliance system and the future of the liberal international order, we sought to examine how allies are behaving and to understand the worldviews and national purposes that underlie their action and inaction. The postwar US-led order was supported not only by the United States' power but also by how it configured its relationships with its allies and close partners. In other words, US hegemony did not rest solely on US material power preponderance. In addition, US leadership was maintained because its allies and partners supported and endeavored in different ways to facilitate and underpin the dominance of the United States. Understanding their perspectives enables us to grasp why the postwar US-led regional and world orders were established based on mutual consent.

Through each of the six case studies, it became clear that allies and partners are not simple followers of American foreign policy but are instead trying to use US power to meet their own national goals. In addition, these allies/partners are working attentively to shape their own preferred international order rather than simply following US visions of order. This project allows us to examine each case country's specific context, including their political constituencies, social divisions, and social fabrics. The typical image of an alliance network is the US-centered model, which has been referred to as the 'hub-and-spokes' model in Asia. Other studies have argued that the hub-and-spokes model will be enhanced to become a web or network of security partnerships, in which the differences among allies will be diminished (Fontaine, 2017). However, the essays in this Special Issue demonstrate that the 'spokes' (the American allies and partners) are neither identical nor simple responders to changes in the balance of power. This project reveals the complexity within the US allies' and partners' domestic contexts, which in turn determine their choices in response to external changes in power and order.

This project highlights the underlying rationale of these ally and partner states in regard to why and how they have supported a US-led order in the postwar period. Each country's alliance with the United States has been an indispensable, strategic tool. Japan, Australia, and Germany, as larger and indispensable United States allies, have maintained these alliances not only to deter adversaries but also to help re-create their national identities and to sustain particular regional and global orders. For them, the alliance with the United States is not only threat-based but also ontological. They have regarded the American postwar liberal foreign policy to be an important pillar in the creation and maintenance of a certain type of preferred order in their regions and for global politics. Poland is the exceptional case, as it maintains this alliance for its own threat-centric goal. India and Turkey, on the other hand, are motivated more by transactional aims, having historically partnered with the United States to achieve their own material interests, including weaponry and economic assistance.

The Trump presidency's downplaying of alliance loyalty and international institutions have severe fundamental impacts, as key US allies regard these factors to be what underpin the US-led order. Key allies had already criticised the Obama administration's perceived weak commitment in comparison to rhetoric (e.g. the pivot to Asia), and suffered doubts about the credibility of their military pacts. However, those doubts pale in comparison to their concerns over Trump's attacks on liberalism, international institutions, alliances, and (most importantly) their crucial roles in international order-building. As Bacevich (2018) wrote, 'the forty-fifth president does not subscribe to the imperative of sustaining American hegemony because he does not subscribe to the establishment's narrative of twentieth century history' (p. 214). Beyond the president's personality, the country's economic nationalism and unilateralism in economic statecraft against China obstinately persist. Many US allies and partners have no choice but to review their national strategies so that they can start to feel confident in managing the very serious ongoing changes in international order. US allies and partners realise that this changing order is defined by populism, inward-looking domestic politics, and a shifting balance of power in favor of emerging nations. To put it differently, not only has US foreign policy changed but US partners' perceptions are also significantly being modified.

These divergent worldviews held by the United States and its allies/partners could lead to not only political tensions between them but also to the latter becoming motivated to review the role of these alliances and partnerships within their individual state strategies. Some pursue autonomy goals. Turkey's AKP and the US have dissonant worldviews; thus, coupled with their different priorities in regard to the Middle East, Turkey started to warn the US and European partners about its potential shift toward greater autonomy and status-seeking in the East. Currently, India is seeking a higher international status, and it even views the faltering of US global leadership as an opportunity. When we examine these issues, we learn a substantial amount about Asia-Pacific nations, including the ASEAN states, who are endeavoring to maintain their autonomy during this time of US–China competition. Unlike Europe, where Russia is a clear existential threat to some countries' national and energy security, in the Asia-Pacific region, China's political and economic influence is increasing and its global supply and value chains have strongly spread across borders. The interests of private firms and domestic constituencies are quite interconnected with China's rising power. The majority of Asia-Pacific actors keep their hope to ultimately incorporate China into global and regional order if China shows the willingness to play by widely accepted norms and rules. For many Asian countries, too confrontational approach to China can compromise their development and prosperity.

Also, with growing divergence among allies and partners regarding the role of the United States and the changing international order, it is possible that the alliance network of the United States will become fragmented. NATO, for example, will see a widening gap between member states that place a high priority on defending their territory against the threat from Russia and those that look around the world and aspire to a new order. In Asia, while some countries seek to ensure their autonomy through an alliance with the United States, some countries may dislike being involved in such a situation and view the role of the United States as a means merely to contain China. Of course, the United States itself has a good chance of reconsidering its alliance as a means to pursue a new order, depending on developments within its domestic politics. Partners' reluctance

of burden sharing could tempt more US citizens and policymakers to weaken existing commitments, or even retrenchment from global politics.

New patterns of international interactions between the US and its partners, where the lesser powers resist Washington's policies, have started to emerge. Two such examples are Britain's decision to partially introduce Huawei telecommunication devices and France's proposal to develop a European Army. However, there is still a lack of excitement under-pinning so-called Plan B debates, and there is only a slim possibility that these ideas will actually be implemented as policies. The existing international order is being challenged not only by American foreign policy but also by authoritarian challenges from Russia and China. Thus, the US military has maintained its supremacy, and the US partners have yet to find an alternative to deterring any regional challengers other than relying on the long-lived alliance. In the absence of an extreme crisis, the fiscal burden that is associated with developing indigenous and independent defence forces is too enormous to warrant leaving the alliance system. The lesser powers find it difficult to accumulate their power to attain a meaningful balance against potential aggressors. Berlin's emerging reluctance to support Macron's leadership in a direction toward European autonomy is a good example, while Canberra and Tokyo continue to integrate their military assets with the US. National security and economic growth are two important goals, and thus the choice to remain in an alliance is still a necessary one for many.

Yet, we should not overlook the emerging changes in each capital's strategic thinking. They look beyond Washington and the renewal of their alliance/partnership and aim to protect their interests against the ill winds of populism, authoritarian challenges, and the lack of leadership in the current international order. The quality of domestic debates has transformed, and citizens naturally ask their governments to satisfy their vested interests and identities.

An international order's quality rests on how stable, peaceful, and consensual it is. The choices and actions made by allies and partners can impact regional dynamics and order building. Now, we are probably walking towards a new world defined by more govern-ments autonomously aspiring to forge their worldviews, review their relations with the United States, and shape the changing regional and global orders.

Notes

1. For example, Tow and Kasim (2020, p. 11) argue that 'the demise of the San Francisco System in its entirety is an unlikely outcome because the United States will not completely withdraw from the highly developed bilateral strategic ties it has cultivated with two other maritime powers in the Indo-Pacific peripheries—Japan in Northeast Asia and Australia in Oceania'.
2. This Special Issue includes papers on Australia, India, Japan, Germany, Poland, and Turkey. Other papers in the project covered Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thai-land, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, as well as western Europe and Okinawa.
3. For an example, see the detailed discussion of the potentially very significant systemic impact of Japan's strategic choices vis-à-vis China and the United States in Buzan and Goh (2020), chapter 7.

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Notes on Contributors

Evelyn Goh is the Shedden Professor of Strategic Policy Studies at the Australian National University, where she is also Research Director at the Strategic & Defence Studies Centre. She has published widely on U.S.-China relations and diplomatic history, regional security order in East Asia, Southeast Asian strategies towards great powers, and environmental security. Her most recent books include *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2013); 'Rising China's Influence in Developing Asia (Oxford University Press, 2016); and her (co-authored with Barry Buzan) *Re-thinking Sino-Japanese Alienation: History Problems and Historical Opportunities* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Ryo Sahashi is an Associate Professor of International Relations, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, the University of Tokyo. He has published on U.S.-China relations and diplomatic history, regional security order in East Asia, and Japanese foreign policy. His recent works include (with Tomohiko Satake) "Rise of China and Japan's 'vision' for free and open Indo-Pacific," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2020, doi:10.1080/10670564.2020.1766907; "American Power in Japanese Security Strategy," in Andrew O'Neil and Michael Heazle (eds.), *China's Rise and Australia-Japan-US Relations Primacy and Leadership in East Asia*, London: Edward Elger, 2018, 143-166, doi:10.4337/9781788110938.00016. Corresponding Author. sahashi@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp

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