



DIJ Forum

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Japan's Strategic Partnerships and Great Power Competition in South East Asia

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As Great Power competition in the Indo-Pacific accelerates, South East Asia has emerged as an arena in which strategic rivalries are played out. Japan has abiding economic and security interests in the region and is deeply engaged with its multilateral institutional architecture. As part of its more proactive international diplomacy in recent years, Tokyo has sought to strengthen relations with both ASEAN and a number of individual member states through the “Strategic Partnership” mechanism. It has worked to build support for its vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” in tandem with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and anticipates the official announcement of a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” to commemorate 50 years of diplomatic engagement. But attention has become focused on individual bilateral Strategic Partnerships, especially with Vietnam and the Philippines, which share Japanese concerns about maritime security. Security cooperation with the Philippines, for example, has recently been quadrilateralized with the US and Australia. This presentation examines the objectives and activities of these Strategic Partnerships, and assesses their future prospects, to offer insights into how Japan seeks to navigate Great Power competition in South East Asia.

Thomas WILKINS is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney and Scholar in Residence at the German Institute for Japan Studies. His research focuses on Japan's security relations within the Indo-Pacific region. He has authored numerous publications and policy reports on this subject and his most recent monograph is entitled *Security in Asia-Pacific: The Dynamics of Alignment*. He is currently researching a monograph on Japan's Strategic Partnership relations.

Takashi TERADA is Professor of International Relations at Doshisha University, Kyoto. He was previously an assistant professor at the National University of Singapore, professor at Waseda University, a visiting fellow at the University of Warwick, and a Japan scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. His work focuses mainly on international political economy in the Indo-Pacific. His latest works include “Politics on TPP/CPTPP: Turning Japan into One of the World's Major FTA Powers” in *Critical Review of Abe Administration* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Professor Terada will offer a commentary on Professor Wilkins' presentation, before opening the floor to the audience for a Q&A session. The event will be held in English, admission is free. To participate onsite please register at forum@dijtokyo.org, for online participation please click [here](#).