

# Regional Security Architecture: Some Terms and Organizations

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## Security Dilemmas

International security and international relations pose dilemmas. First is the security dilemma itself: the quest for security generates uncertainty and strategic rivalry between states. Many nations mistrust their neighbors' strategic intentions and feel insecure. They seek to overcome these feelings by developing defensive military forces and, if possible, arming these with technologically-superior arms. While this may make the nation arming itself feel more secure, its newfound military capabilities, particularly if these are acquired or developed without transparency about its strategic intentions, may make its neighbors feel insecure. Indeed, nations arming and/or re-arming themselves may provoke an arms race. External powers may get involved for their own ends by providing arms and/or by developing strategic alliances. Overall, therefore, the securitization process may actually cause greater insecurity—not security—in a region, particularly if a nation's capabilities and/or intentions are perceived to be hostile, offensive, or a quest for power or domination. These can be principal causes of war, an activity that most nations abhor and try to resist engaging in.

Added to this security dilemma, relations between nations—known collectively as international relations or IR—are considered to be “anarchic.” That is, the various relations and activities that nations engage in with other nations are unpoliced and unpoliceable. There is no capable or empowered central controlling authority that can regulate and successfully impose law, order and restitution in, and throughout, the world. (This is so, despite the existence of the United Nations and its Security Council, whose resolutions supposedly are binding on all member nations.) This does not mean that, invariably, international relations are unpredictable and chaotic, and that, inevitably, they are unstable and diabolical. Rather, states have long self-organized—as complexity theory suggests they will do—to ensure, as much as they can, their own nation’s security, to promote balanced and mutually-beneficial relations with their neighbors, and to foster peace, prosperity and stability in their particular region.

While we consider international relations to be anarchic, this term is derived from the political theory called “anarchism,” important aspects of which include individual freedom, cooperation and order free from an overarching or overbearing authority. Despite being politically optimistic, anarchism is a misunderstood theory. It is viewed negatively because left-wing anarchists engaged in unsavory practices, such as bombings, assassinations and regicide, to advance their revolutionary causes, to weaken the “bourgeois” state’s monopoly on the use of violence to suppress people, and to inspire others to act. This “propaganda of the deed” dates back to 1866 when anarchists first tried to assassinate Russia’s Tsar Alexander II. (They finally succeeded in 1881.) Their actions spread fear and terror—and provoked negative connotations about anarchy as a political theory. Nevertheless, the same pejorative is applied to international relations: they are anarchic. At times, international relations can be out of control and, when diplomacy fails, violent. Generally, however, they are peaceful, reasonable and organized. So here, “Anarchy means ‘without [entrenched] leaders,’ not ‘without order.’”<sup>1</sup> International relations may lack a central controlling authority, but they do have order, albeit self-organized.

Nations deal with their security issues, insecurities and neighbors by voluntarily engaging, cooperating and competing unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally. They utilize a variety of methods and practices, including diplomacy, trade, international law, involvement with other bodies or entities (such as international non-governmental organizations, domestic non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations) and other exchanges to create “an integrated international society.”<sup>2</sup> Collectively, these actions and networks, which often are state-centric, comprise regional security architecture. A grand architect has not designed this schema. Rather,

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Moore, *V for Vendetta*, New York, Vertigo (DC Comics), p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Sutch and Juanita Elias, *International Relations: The Basics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, p. 56.

it is chiefly the result of nations' voluntary actions, their interactions and cooperation, and their ongoing self-organization into various bodies and entities. This document details some of these aspects.

Specifically, this document hereafter provides some brief descriptions of some, but not all, of the commonly used terms associated with regional security architecture. It then details the sub-regions of the greater Asia-Pacific Region and briefly describes many, but not all, of the international, intra-regional and regional organizations involved with, or impacting on, security—in its narrow and broad senses—in this region and its sub-regions. If you are accessing this document electronically, many of the organizations listed also have a “hot link” that will take you to their website. The major sources consulted to write and compile this document are listed at the end.

## Terms

**Actor:** A person or entity that acts on behalf of another or others, in this case, an independent international state. Increasingly, “non-state actors” (such as international non-governmental organizations, domestic non-governmental organizations and multi-national corporations) are playing a role in international relations.

**Agency:** The ability of an actor—in this case, a state (invariably, regional security architecture is perceived as being “state-centric”)—to make choices and determine their outcomes. These choices, according to classical realists, are based on human nature being egoistical or selfish, with humans or states predominantly pursuing their own narrow interests. There is, however, a direct, and challenging, relationship between “structure” (the international relations system) and “agency,” with each influencing and/or limiting the other’s ability to act.

**Alliance:** Agreement between two or more parties, usually states, to pursue agreed strategic and/or security objectives, including sometimes to limit the power or domination of another nation or bloc of nations.

**Anarchism:** A political theory of social order based on people living freely and cooperatively without any imposed constituted authority or government.

**Anarchy:** Literally in Greek, anarchy means “without” (an) a “ruler” (archy)—that is, a society without a government. In international relations, it refers to the absence of a central or controlling authority or government. Often, the term is also used as a synonym for violent disorder, disarray, confusion or chaos.

**Article 9:** An article in Japan’s “pacifist” constitution stating that “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes” (Paragraph 1). Reinterpreted in 2015 to allow Japan’s Self-Defense Forces to provide material support to allies engaged in combat internationally because not doing so could weaken alliances and endanger Japan.

**“ASEAN Way”:** Consultation, compromise and consensus amongst member nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Specifically, this involves the principles of non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and decision-making by consensus at the regional level.

**Asia:** Covering 30 percent of the earth’s land area, the continent of Asia is traditionally—but not always—defined as comprising those areas located: east of the Red Sea, Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, Bosphorus Strait, Ural Mountains and Ural River; south of the Caucasus Mountains and the Black and Caspian seas; north of the Indian Ocean; west of the Pacific Ocean; and, south of the Arctic Ocean. This includes the islands of Cyprus, Japan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and those in the Indonesian archipelago. Three nations—Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey—have lands in both Asia and Europe. Asia has five sub-regions: Central Asia; Northeast Asia; South Asia; Southwest Asia (also called the Middle East); Southeast Asia.

**Asia-Pacific Region (APR):** Those areas involving the continent of Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Depending on how it is defined, this region could, in its largest form, include nations located in the Americas, Oceania, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia. Generally speaking, this region appears—there are few existing maps of the Asia-Pacific Region—commonly to comprise the sub-regions of Northeast Asia, Oceania, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

**Asian paradox:** Asian nations, particularly in Northeast Asia, have not engaged in meaningful political and security cooperation, despite their deep economic integration.

**Balance of power:** The relative—and ever changing—distribution of power among states in which, ideally, no one state dominates. There are three forms: unipolarity, in which one state does dominate (US post-Cold War); bipolarity, where two states or blocs roughly have equal power (US-USSR during the Cold War); multipolarity, where several great powers compete (the current situation).

**Complexity Theory:** A way of seeing the world (and international relations) as a “complex adaptive system” in which the various parts are: inter-connected; self-organizing without any central control; robust; self-

adapting; random; and, unpredictable. In a complex adaptive system, things/events/issues can, and do, emerge of their own accord. In most instances and circumstances, these issues can only be managed, not resolved.

**Constructivism:** A theory of international relations whereby the variables of national interest—e.g. military power, trade relations, international institutions, domestic preferences/constraints—have certain agreed social meanings which influence and “construct” the behavior of states and their associated relations.

**Containment:** A policy or set of strategic actions and relations aimed to limit or restrict the strategic ability and/or territorial growth of another nation, especially one that is, or potentially may become, hostile.

**Country:** An area that constitutes an independent, self-governing state. Also, the territory of a nation.

**Free association:** A formal relationship between a self-governing entity and a larger nation in which the latter may provide financial, defense and foreign affairs assistance. In the Asia-Pacific Region, Cook Islands and Niue are in free association with New Zealand; the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau are in free association with the United States of America.

**Geo-politics:** The combination of geographic and political factors influencing or delineating a country or region. The influence of geographical factors on state behavior: how location, climate, natural resources, population, physical terrain, etc., determine a state’s foreign policy options and position internationally.

**Globalization:** The (ever-increasing?) involvement, interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals, economies and states throughout the world.

**“Great Game”:** Rivalry between the British and Russian empires, particularly in Afghanistan and Central Asia, in which one empire sought to secure strategic advantages over the other, often by engaging in shadowy, underhanded activities. The term is now sometimes used to describe international rivalry for/over energy, particularly in Central and Southwest Asia.

**Hedging, balancing:** Where one nation seeks to avoid being dominated by another nation, which is usually much larger or powerful, by having relations with another powerful nation or nations.

**Hegemony:** Primacy or leadership. A hegemon is a state possessing preponderant or sufficient power, capability and/or influence to be the leader or leading state of a group of states. Examples are the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth century.

**“Hub and spokes”:** United States-led system of security or “collective defense” arrangements, including treaties with allies (e.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, ANZUS (Australia and New Zealand), Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, etc.) that arose after the 1951 San Francisco Peace Conference. The United States is the hub; its various allies and arrangements are the spokes.

**Independence:** A state exercising exclusive authority over a specific tract of territory, with this authority being recognized by other actors in the international relations system. See also sovereignty.

**Indian Ocean:** World’s third-largest ocean, bounded by Africa, Southwest Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia (eastwards as far as the west coast of Tasmania), and the Southern Ocean. Includes the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Andaman Sea and Malacca Strait. There are 38 littoral states and 13 land-locked states whose trade and transit is oriented mostly towards the Indian Ocean. States on the Indian Ocean: Australia; Bangladesh; Comoros; Djibouti; France (territories: Mayotte; Reunion; others); Kenya; India; Indonesia; Iran; Madagascar; Malaysia; Maldives; Mauritius; Myanmar; Mozambique; Oman; Pakistan; Seychelles; Singapore; Somalia; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Tanzania; Thailand; Timor Leste; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory (Diego Garcia)); Yemen. Coastal states of the Red Sea: Egypt; Eritrea; Israel; Jordan; Sudan. Coastal states of the Persian Gulf: Bahrain; Iraq; Kuwait; Qatar; Saudi Arabia. Land-locked states: Afghanistan; Bhutan; Botswana; Burundi; Ethiopia; Lesotho; Malawi; Nepal; Rwanda; Swaziland; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe.

**Indo-Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific Region:** These terms expand on the term “Asia-Pacific Region” to include the Indian Ocean and its littorals. Some analysts criticize the latter term because it does not necessarily or ostensibly include, or relate to, Asia. That is, it is chiefly a maritime concept.

**Institutions:** International cooperation is achieved using a variety of transnational organizations and practices: through formal bodies, such as the United Nations and various non-governmental organizations; through modes or regimes in which state and non-state actors coalesce to deal with a particular issue, e.g. environmental issues, health issues, or nuclear proliferation; and, through accepted ways of behaving, e.g. the convention of reciprocity, when nations grant corresponding privileges to each other's citizens.

**Liberalism:** A theory of international relations that rejects power politics and, instead, encourages states to cooperate through international organizations, international law, and non-governmental organizations. Propounds the Democratic Peace Thesis: constitutionally-secure liberal democracies do not go to war with each other. Dominant post-World War I but challenged by realists who considered liberalism to be too idealist.

**Littoral:** A coastal or shore region adjacent to a sea or ocean.

**Nation:** A social collective, often located in a particular geographic area, sharing a common identity and other factors, such as a shared history, language, ethnic origins, religion, common economic life, a coherent political base. This may result in the collective having an actual state, e.g. the Japanese and Japan or the French and France, but not always, e.g. the Kurds of Southwest Asia.

**National interest:** An acceptable political or strategic claim of, or justification for an action by, a state. A goal or objective that a state pursues or justifies as part of its foreign policy.

**Norms, standards, rules and laws:** Nations interact using a mix of these factors. Norms are commonly accepted ways to engage and behave; standards are agreed ways to measure and/or operate; rules are practices codified by agreement between governments; laws are binding international agreements and conventions.

**Pacific Ocean:** World's largest ocean bounded by the Arctic Ocean, the Americas, Southern Ocean, Australia, and eastern Asia. The nations located around this ocean comprise “the Pacific Rim.”

**Peace:** State of mutual harmony between people or groups; the absence of war.

**Power:** The ability to do or act; the capability to do or accomplish something concrete and tangible:

- Hard: an actor's ability to coerce or compel another actor, typically using military, political, diplomatic and/or economic means;
- Soft: an actor's ability to persuade or influence another actor, typically by the attractiveness of factors such as the former's history and culture (e.g. Hollywood, Bollywood), national attributes, political ideals and practices, way of life, policies, education, culture, etc.

Elements of national power include: geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character and morale, and quality of diplomacy and government.<sup>3</sup>

**Proxy:** A substitute, agent or deputy who represents another. A war instituted by a major power which itself does not get directly involved in the conflict is considered to be a “proxy war.”

**Rational Actor:** An individual, group, or institution able to reason and formulate preferences, policies and laws, and to choose among these according to their expected utility and likely outcome. Rational actors usually engage in “legal-rational” behavior. By comparison, in traditional authority, authority is legitimate because it “has always existed,” while charismatic authority flows from a leader's perceived or actual charisma.

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<sup>3</sup> Sutch and Elias, *International Relations: The Basics*, p. 49, quoting Morgenthau.

**Realism:** A theory of international relations that considers the nation-state to be the principal actor that seeks to maximize its interests and influence in the continual struggle for power and security in an anarchic world. Challenged by other analyses, including liberalism, constructivism, feminism, neo-realism, post-modernism, etc.

**Region:** A sphere of activity or interest; an administrative area, division, or district. A multilateral institution formed or created by a group of like-minded and/or geographically-contiguous nations to promote cooperation, development and/or security.

**Responsibility to Protect (R2P):** The relatively new, UN-sanctioned concept that the international community can use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other means—possibly including intervention—to protect populations from mass atrocity crimes, such as genocide, war crimes, or ethnic cleansing.

**Security:** Factors and actions undertaken that make places safer and/or that make people in a place or political entity feel safer:

- Traditional: in relation to securing maritime and/or territorial areas, and nations, usually by using military force;
- Non-traditional: in relation to ensuring physical wellbeing, food and/or water security, disaster relief, energy supplies, poverty alleviation, etc.

**Security Architecture:** A system of norms, practices, relationships, alliances and institutions constructed or developed by nations to address, enhance or ensure international and/or regional security. It is often based on sub-regions.

**Southern Ocean:** The world's newest ocean, created by the International Hydrographic Organization in 2000. It extends south from 60 degrees south latitude to Antarctica. (Australia considers this ocean to extend southwest from Western Australia, which waters others consider to be in the Indian Ocean.)

**Sovereignty:** The assertion of a government being the ultimate or absolute authority to determine matters within, and for, a distinct territorial jurisdiction (usually a state). This enables its exclusive control of internal affairs and autonomy in foreign policy. Originated from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The superiority of the sovereign state in international relations since the seventeenth century is considered to be the “modern” period. The “post-modern” period began when other disciplines challenged this “realist” view, particularly since the end of the Cold War.

**State:** Term often synonymous with “country.” States govern people in a territory with boundaries and they claim sovereignty in this territory. Classically defined by the sociologist, Max Weber, as “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.” The state has legal standing. It controls the major organs of violence. May also be a subdivision of a country, such as the “State of Hawaii.”

**Strategic:** Long-term or overall aims and interests, and the means to achieve these, particularly in relation to the use of the military power as an organ of diplomacy or coercion. Also, something clever, decisive or advantageous: a “strategic” move in chess; a “strategic” bombing mission.

**Strategic Dialogue:** Two or more nations’ officials, usually at ministerial level, conversing on topics of strategic importance to these nations. Examples include U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, U.S.-Japan-ASEAN Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, etc.

**Strategic Reach:** Ability of a country to have, or project, power, often military, well beyond its shores.

**Strategy:** A plan, method or scheme of activities to pursue or obtain a specific goal, sometimes political, and, if political, often using military capabilities to achieve the goal, including via war.

**Suzerainty:** When an entity or state has control over a “lesser,” dependent state. This may involve the senior state controlling the junior state’s foreign affairs and guaranteeing its defense as a “protectorate.”

**Taiwan Relations Act (1979):** Defined relations between the United States and Taiwan. Potentially, it requires the United States to intervene militarily if China attacks or invades Taiwan.

**War:** Armed conflict between the armed forces of two or more states or countries. Another definition is any inter-state conflict involving 1,000 or more battle-related deaths. War is often considered to be the “failure of diplomacy,” with the resultant use of coercive military action thereafter deemed necessary.

**Zero sum game:** A situation in which one actor’s gain is another actor’s loss. Its opposite is the variable sum game, which includes win-win (positive sum) and lose-lose (negative sum) outcomes. The “prisoner’s dilemma,” in which two “rational” individuals might choose not cooperate even to their disadvantage, is a lose-lose situation.

### Sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific Region

**Americas** (Pacific Ocean littorals only):

- **North America:** Canada, Mexico, United States;
- **Central America:** Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama;
- **South America:** Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru [landlocked Bolivia obtains access via Chile];
- **Latin America:** Where Romance languages (primarily Spanish and Portuguese) are spoken.

**Northeast Asia:**

- China (People’s Republic of China: PRC), Japan, Mongolia, North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: DPRK), Russia, South Korea (Republic of Korea: ROK), Taiwan.

**Oceania:**

(The information in brackets shows the nation that the territory is affiliated with. If there is an asterisk, it shows the nation that the self-governing entity is in free (or formal) association with.)

- **Melanesia:** Fiji, New Caledonia (France), Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu;
- **Micronesia:** Federated States of Micronesia (\*U.S.), Guam (U.S.), Kiribati, Marshall Islands (\*U.S.), Nauru, Northern Marianas Islands (U.S.), Palau (\*U.S.);
- **Polynesia:** American Samoa (U.S.), Cook Islands (\*NZ), Easter Island/Rapa Nui (Chile), French Polynesia (France), Hawaii (U.S. state), New Zealand, Niue (\*NZ), Pitcairn Islands (UK), Samoa, Tokelau (NZ), Tonga, Tuvalu, Wallis and Fortuna (France);
- **Other:** Australia (which has various territories in Oceania and the Indian Ocean).

**South Asia:**

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

**Southeast Asia:**

- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam.

**Other sub-regions of Asia:**

- **Southwest Asia/Middle East:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.
- **Central Asia** (the “stans”): Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

**Other sub-regions that overlap with the Indo-Pacific or Indo-Asia-Pacific Region:**

- **Eastern Africa** (Indian Ocean littorals only): Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania.
- **Indian Ocean:** British Indian Ocean Territory (United Kingdom), Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte (France), Reunion (France), Seychelles.

## **Regional Organizations/Bodies involved with the Asia-Pacific Region**

### **Supra-regional/International**

**Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS):** Organization of low-lying coastal and small island countries established in 1990 to consolidate voices of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) re global warming. Sixteen (of 39) members in APR: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. Four members are located in the Indian Ocean: Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles.

**Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD):** Created in 2002 to promote Asia-wide cooperation and to help integrate separate regional organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, GCC. 34 members: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam. Headquarters in Kuwait.

**Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC):** Formed in 1989, APEC comprises 21 Pacific Rim “Member Economies” that promote trade: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam. APEC secretariat is located in Singapore.

(Two new bodies may come to rival APEC: (1) Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) of twelve Pacific Rim countries, with the partnership agreed, but not yet ratified by the requisite number of signatory nations comprising: Australia, Canada, Chile, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam; 2) Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) of the ten ASEAN nations, plus the six states with which ASEAN has Free Trade Agreements: Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

**Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP):** Provides an informal mechanism for scholars, officials and others in their private capacities to discuss political and security issues and challenges facing the region.

**G20 (Group of Twenty):** Formed in 1999 by 20 world major economies as an international forum: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.

**G77 (Group of 77):** Formed in 1964, G77 comprises 138 developing nations, including many APR nations. Promotes economic interests and joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations.

**International Criminal Court (ICC):** Independent judicial body with jurisdiction over persons charged with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Located in The Hague, Netherlands.

**International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS):** Independent judicial body established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to adjudicate disputes arising from the interpretation and application of UNCLOS.

**Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):** Formed in 1961 to provide a “middle course” between Western and Soviet-led political blocs. Still operating, but somewhat diminished post-Cold War.

**Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA):** Intergovernmental organization that provides dispute resolution services to the international community. Located in The Hague, Netherlands.

**United Nations (UN)**: International organization founded in 1945 that currently has 193 Member States. (Kosovo and the Vatican are the only states not members.) Headquartered in New York, the Secretary-General is chief administrative officer and a significant world security leader.

The United Nations has a number of major bodies or entities that deal directly with security matters:

- **General Assembly**: UN's chief deliberative, policy making and representative body. Makes recommendations to states on international issues.
- **Security Council**: Comprises 10 non-permanent members who serve a two-year term and 5 permanent members (P5) with veto powers: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States. Primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. Its resolutions are binding on all member nations.
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**: UN's principal judicial arm located in The Hague, Netherlands. Settles legal disputes submitted by states.
- **Other Relevant UN bodies/entities**:  
[UN's 16 peacekeeping operations](#), with only one located in APR: UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan ([UNMOGIP](#));  
[UN Development Program](#);  
[UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#);  
[UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#);  
[UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States](#); and, [World Health Organization](#).

**Other Organizations promoting/enabling “well-being of people”**: [World Bank](#); [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#); [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#).

#### **In Northeast Asia Sub-region**

**Six Party Talks**: Multilateral negotiations held between 2003 to 2009 to peacefully resolve security concerns about North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Involved China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Japan, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Russia, United States.

**Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI)**: A South Korean “trustpolitik” initiative to try to enhance dialogue and cooperation in Northeast Asia. Participants currently comprise: China, Japan, Mongolia, Russia, South Korea, United States. NAPCI hopes that North Korea also eventually will participate.

**Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat**: Established in 2011 by China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to promote economic cooperation. Headquartered in Seoul.

**Ulaanbaatar Dialogue (UBD)**: A 2014 Mongolian initiative for politicians, officials and academics to discuss security issues in Northeast Asia. Core participants from China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and United States. Others from international bodies and non-regional nations.

#### **In Oceania Sub-region**

**Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)**: Formed in 1986 to increase unity and collaboration among its members: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front from New Caledonia. Secretariat is in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

**Micronesian Chief Executives Summit**: Bi-annual summit of leaders from Guam, Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia and its four state governors of Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Started in 2003.

**Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF):** Instigated by Fiji in 2013 in response to its suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum, PIDF claims to be a development—not a political—forum. Has eleven members: Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, [Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organisation](#), and [Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation](#). Secretariat is in Suva, Fiji.

**Pacific Islands Forum (PIF):** Founded in 1971, PIF comprises 16 independent and self-governing states: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Tokelau is an Associate. Secretariat in Suva, Fiji.

**Polynesian Leaders Group:** Formed in 2012 as a response to the Melanesian Spearhead Group. Brings together eight independent or self-governing countries or territories in Polynesia: American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

**Quadrilateral Defence Coordinating Group:** Provides maritime surveillance support in the Pacific Ocean. Members are Australia, New Zealand, France and United States.

**Secretariat of the Pacific Community:** Scientific and technical body supporting development. Has 26 members: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. Founded in 1947. Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia.

### In South Asia Sub-region

**Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal (BBIN):** Four-nation Motor Vehicle Agreement to allow the seamless movement of vehicles across borders (in the poorly-integrated South Asia region).

**Galle Dialogue:** International maritime conference for Asia-Pacific nations and organizations conducted by Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence and its Navy and held annually since 2010.

**International Security Assistance Force (ISAF):** International deployment to Afghanistan established by UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001) and led by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Formed to assist the Afghanistan Government to provide security and to develop new Afghan security forces to counter terrorism. At its peak, ISAF involved 51 nations and 130,000 troops. Replaced in 2015 by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, which currently comprises some 13,000 troops from 39 nations.

**South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC):** Formed in 1985, SAARC seeks to promote economic growth, social progress, collective self-reliance and mutual trust, including through the (ineffective) South Asian Free Trade Area. Members comprise Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Trilateral Maritime Security Cooperation Initiative:** Launched in 2011 to enhance maritime security between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

### In Southeast Asia Sub-region

**Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** Formed in 1967, ASEAN comprises ten nations that seek to promote economic and social progress and peace and stability in the region. Members states are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Timor Leste has applied to join. Headquarters are in Jakarta.

Other ASEAN bodies or ASEAN-led bodies that consult on or promote regional peace, stability and cooperation include:

- **ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)**: comprising ASEAN Defence Ministers.
- **ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)**: ASEAN Members plus ASEAN Dialogue Partners: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, United States.
- **ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)**: comprising ASEAN Foreign Ministers.
- **ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)**.
- **ASEAN Plus Three**: ASEAN plus China, Japan and South Korea.
- **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**: Formed in 1994, ARF is a key forum that promotes security dialogue in APR. It has 27 members: ASEAN's ten member states, plus Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, European Union, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and United States.
- **Committee of Permanent Representatives**: Based in Jakarta, comprises a Permanent Representative, each with the rank of Ambassador, from each ASEAN member nation.
- **East Asia Summit (EAS)**: Formed in 2005, EAS is a high-level ASEAN-led forum for strategic dialogue and cooperation on key challenges facing the East Asian region. It has eighteen members: ASEAN's ten member states, plus Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and United States.

**Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)**: Formed in 2003 by Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, as a political, economic, and cultural organization to bridge the economic gap among these nations and to promote sustainable prosperity.

**MALSINDO**: A trilateral antipiracy patrol force started in 2004 and operated in territorial waters by the navies of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

**Mekong River Commission**: Formed in 1957, this inter-governmental body comprises Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. It coordinates sustainable management and development of water and related resources in the Mekong River basin.

### **Supra Sub-Regional and Other Relevant Organizations**

**Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**: A multilateral development bank instigated by China in 2015 to support the development of infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia. Has 57 founding nations, chiefly from APR and Europe. Does not include Japan or the United States, both of which chose not to join.

**Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**: Brings together for dialogue and cooperation the 28 European Union member states, two other European countries (Norway, Russia), and the European Union with 21 Asia-Pacific countries and the ASEAN Secretariat. Headquarters in Singapore.

**Asia-Pacific Submarine Conference (APSC)**: Established after the Kursk disaster in 2000, regional submarine-operating and other navies discuss issues of submarine survivability, escape and interoperability of rescue assets. Nations involved include Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam.

**Asian Development Bank (ADB)**: A regional development bank established in 1966 to promote social and economic development in Asia. 67 members: 48 in APR; 19 externals. Headquartered in Manila, Philippines.

**Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**: Formed in 1997, promotes mutual cooperation among countries located on, or adjacent to, the Bay of Bengal. Members comprise Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

**BRICS:** A grouping finalized in 2010 comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Their heads of government have annual summit meetings to enhance economic cooperation.

**Economic Cooperation Organization:** Founded in 1985 to promote development, trade and investment. Members are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Headquarters in Teheran, Iran.

**Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA):** Formed in 1971, this is an arrangement between Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom to consult in the event of a threat or attack against a member state.

**Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):** Regional political and economic body comprising all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except Iraq. (Non-Arab) Iran also is not a member. Member states are: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

**Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):** Inaugurated in 2012 to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Has 35 members in four sub-regions: South Asian Littorals: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka; West Asian Littorals: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen; East African Littorals: Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania; South East Asian and Australian Littorals: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste.

**Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):** Formed in 1995 to promote trade, investment and economic co-operation. Has 21 members: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

#### Mekong River bodies:

- **Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS):** Formed in 1992 with assistance from Asia Development Bank by Cambodia, China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, to enhance economic relations.
- **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC):** An initiative in 2000 between Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, to cooperate on tourism, culture, education and transportation.
- **Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI):** Created in 2009 by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States to enhance environment, health, education, and infrastructure development and cooperation. Myanmar joined in 2012.
- **Mekong-Japan Summit:** Created in 2009 by Japan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, to protect cultural heritage and for exchanges of tourism, culture and people.

**Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):** Formed in 1969 as the Organization of the Islamic Conference to represent the interests of the Muslim world. 57 members, including many APR nations—but not India or the Philippines, which have significant Muslim minorities. Headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

**“One Belt, One Road”:** A Chinese infrastructure development strategy that encompasses more than 60 countries from Asia to Europe and via which China seeks to foster global trade and economic development tied to China and create, as Beijing sees it, a “Community of Common Destiny.” Has two elements: the land-based “Silk Road Economic Belt” (SREB) and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (MSR).

**RIC:** A dialogue between the Foreign Ministers of Russia, India and China. Formed in 2001.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):** Formed in 2001, seeks to strengthen confidence, relations and to promote cooperation in politics, trade, economy, education, energy and transportation. Members are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; India and Pakistan are becoming members. Two permanent headquarters: Secretariat in Beijing; Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.

**Shangri-La Dialogue**: Held annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies since 2002 at Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore (hence the name; formerly called the Asian Security Summit). Arguably, APR's most important meeting of top-level defense professionals, with defense ministers, chiefs of defense staff, permanent heads of defense ministries and intelligence chiefs to discuss defense and security issues.

**Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS)**: Inaugurated in 1988, comprises navies whose countries border the Pacific Ocean region. Members are Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, United States, and Vietnam.

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