

Written Evidence submitted by Catherine Jones (TIP0006)

Dear Committee Members,

I am making this submission in response to the call for evidence for the inquiry on 'Implementing the Indo-Pacific Tilt'

I am a lecturer in International Relations at the University of St Andrews and the author of 'China's challenge to Liberal Norms' (Palgrave, 2019) and co-editor of 'China-North Korea Relations: between development and security' (Elgar, 2020) and a special issue on East Asia, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, published with the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*.

The views I am expressing in this written evidence are entirely my own and do not represent the views of the University of St Andrews.

This evidence is principally a response to the following questions posed in the call:

- How should the UK prepare for responding to potential flashpoints like Taiwan and the Senkaku islands?
- What should the UK's approach be to strengthening relations with Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan?
- In what areas should the UK prioritise deeper collaboration with these countries (e.g. trade, education, science and tech, defence and security, development)?
- How can the UK improve its partnership with Indonesia in areas including land and environmental rights, and promoting open societies and rule of law in the region?

Summary of arguments:

1. The UK (alongside a number of Western states) has a credibility problem. The cut to the aid budget and the cuts to specific projects, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the changes taking place due to BREXIT, alongside colonial legacies, have (at least in the short term) all **undermined the view of constancy of the UK and its value driven commitment to allies and friendly states in the world**. Any action that the UK takes in the Indo-Pacific must seek to address and remedy the issue of credibility. This can be done through bureaucratic and microlevel engagements as well as (or even in preference to) large scale announcements. Under promise and over deliver to address the issue of credibility. In this evidence I highlight some areas where this can be done effectively including through peacekeeping training, sustainable responses to climate induced disasters, and through education.
2. The greatest threat to the UK's ability to act and achieve its aims in the Indo-Pacific lies in the context of a fracturing (so called) liberal international order or more accurately multistakeholder fora. Engaging with the CPTPP and as an ASEAN dialogue partner, may be a mechanism to try and mitigate for the disintegration of the liberal order, however, the credibility of the UK engaging with trade relations and regional multilateral institutions has the potential to be an ongoing issue. As a result, engaging with other bi- or multi- lateral spaces, including in emerging security issues (humanitarian, disaster assistance, and peacekeeping contributions) offer additional

spaces for UK engagement (including the ADB and other regional fora) to demonstrate the UK's constancy in their commitments. Taiwan's international status will make engaging with Taiwan in some of these spaces extremely difficult (Jones, 2020b).

3. Leadership is a problem in the region of Southeast and Northeast Asia. Both Indonesia and Japan (for different reasons) have problems in taking a lead and driving forwards an agenda, that may result in a penchant for multilateralism. However, the multilateral form adopted, tends to be consensus driven, slow moving, and frustrating for Western powers (including the UK), the absence of enforcement mechanisms can also be a cause of concern. If the UK seeks to engage with these powers either individually or multilaterally, the UK must move at the speed of the region not the preferred speed of the UK.
4. There is a risk that in the Indo-Pacific there is a tension between achieving non-traditional security successes (especially in relation to climate induced disasters) and achieving effective responses to traditional security challenges. Engagement with Indonesia and other regional partners may help in mitigating this tension.

Developed Arguments:

Response to the questions:

What should the UK's approach be to strengthening relations with Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan?

How can the UK improve its partnership with Indonesia in areas including land and environmental rights, and promoting open societies and rule of law in the region?

In what areas should the UK prioritise deeper collaboration with these countries (e.g. trade, education, science and tech, defence and security, development)?

5. Japan and Indonesia are key contributors to UN peacekeeping operations and contribute to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities. These are areas where there are potential practical synergies between the involvement of the UK with regional partners (both through bilateral and multilateral engagement platforms). They are also key areas where China contributes and engages with regional partners.
6. Following commitments made, Indonesia is a top ten contributor to [UN peace operations](#) (currently 8th, with 2790 troops contributed in July 2021). Of these 178 are female. However, Indonesia – like many troop contributing countries – struggles to achieve the [UN target of 15% in military contingents and 25% in other roles by 2028](#). Despite this challenge, when Indonesia can contribute women to peace operations, and Indonesia's general contribution to UN PKO, their ability to engage with populations (especially in Islamic countries) has been recognised as being exemplary (Capie, 2016; Cook 2014; Jones, 2020a).
7. Indonesia's approach to peacekeeping focuses on engaging with local populations, seeking to build long term sustainable peace initiatives that are resilient after

peacekeepers have left, ensuring the conduct of peacekeepers is of the highest standards and they have had adequate pre-deployment training and experience to be successful in their role. These are all areas where there are potential practical synergies with the UK.

8. In a world where we are reconsidering how to do interventions, their purposes and their practice, regions and particularly regions where there are significant peacekeeping contributing states will become central in the conversations for how peacekeeping is done in the decades to come. The UN has previously recognised the growing role of regions in maintaining their own peace and security (S/2008/186**) and as engines for potential innovation and new practices. Engaging with Indonesia, the peacekeeping training centre at Sentul, and international institutions presents an opportunity to contribute to a new locus of peacekeeping innovation. This engagement could be in providing opportunities to contribute to pre-deployment practice and exercises, supporting the development and acquisition of new approaches, but also adopting a stance of learning from Indonesian experiences in exchanging training with Sentul. It should also be noted that there is a network of peacekeeping training centres across the region of Southeast Asia with different areas of expertise, including (for example) medical training in Thailand. Engaging across these centres in a practical and pragmatic way should help to demonstrate long term commitment, support for initiatives lead by the region, and help to tangibly show the credibility of the UK's engagement.
9. Indonesia's approach to peacekeeping also links to its lessons learnt from responding to humanitarian disasters in Indonesia but also around Southeast Asia. In the decades ahead it is anticipated that due to climate change the Indo Pacific will experience increasing intensity and frequency of climate induced disasters (Jones, 2020a). These disasters, present a significant threat to life, disrupt economic growth and sustainable development. Examples of the hazards this can cause are evident in the Philippines, especially in disaster struck areas including in Mindanao. As a result, in causing these outcomes, there is also the potential to increase intra and interstate conflict. Avoiding loss of life, avoiding conflict, in this region are crucial under-recognised risks in achieving the Indo-Pacific tilt. Yet, they are spaces where the UK can provide concrete deep level engagements with the region, that foster collaboration.
10. What can the UK do to achieve this? Provide more subsidies for regional leaders to train at defence and other establishments in the UK. In many ways the UK does this at the Higher education level (in 2021 there are about 3000 Indonesian students at UK universities), but the reverse exchange is less evident. Supporting partnerships between UK institutions (potentially as an explicit objective through the Turing exchanges) would be very useful. But, also sponsoring (more) places at officer and other training courses for regional leaders has a benefit for all involved, enables the UK's participants to better understand the spaces they may be operating in and builds enduring networks for conflict de-escalation in the future.
11. China's contribution to supporting the regions peacekeepers is tangible. It has helped to train peacekeepers from Cambodia (current deployment of about 665 peacekeepers), has a significant peacekeeping training centre for police personnel near Beijing. As such, Beijing is providing practical support for the initiatives from the region. Similarly, China provides practical and timely assistance after natural and

other disasters (for example, rebuilding after the Boxing Day Tsunami in Indonesia 2004, and after Hurricane Yolanda – also known as Haiyan – in 2014).

12. The intersection of humanitarian-security-development are spaces that Japan has traditionally demonstrated its capabilities and expertise in the region. As a result, one means to deepen engagement with Japan may be to enhance Japan's – already extensive (Mulloy, 2020) – capacities and for the UK to learn more from Japan's expertise in responding to both regional disasters and peacekeeping operations.
13. The UK does not need to compete in these areas. China's provision of training should not be viewed – de facto – as a threat or a challenge. Nonetheless, it should be recognised that this is a space through which China can inform what peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance is, how it should be conducted, by whom and with what resources. In part this may be necessary because China does not hold one of the leadership roles in the major organs of the UN and therefore its ability to shape these actions within the UN system is more limited. It is also a series of places where China and Chinese individuals can build networks for the future.
14. Enhancing offers and places for support and assistance to other regional approaches could form a vital part of the UK's regional engagement. This has the benefit of trying to mitigate for the legacies of colonialism in the region, and may help to address the issue of credibility, by supporting initiatives that the region has already set up and are at the intersection of Japan and Indonesia's current practices and approaches, and subtly challenge the space for action that China has in the region.
15. The essential component of this engagement must be to engage alongside the region, at its tempo for institution and framework building. A useful analogy is to see the region as a multi-lane motorway. Different issues progress faster or slower at different times. Economic engagement has traditionally been 'in the faster lane' whereas traditional security cooperation has been in the slower lane, and non-traditional cooperation is somewhere in the middle. But, they are all on the same motorway, they cannot be treated as discrete from each other, instead they are all interconnected.
16. Practical Actions could include: Provide greater funding and resources for the [AHA centre](#) to support both disaster responses and prediction; Increase engagement and knowledge sharing (including exchanges) with the [National Resilience Council](#) of the Philippines and the [Manila Observatory](#); provide Data driven analysis and engagement – one of the challenges in responding to hurricane Yolanda (Haiyan) in the Philippines in 2013 and in other regional disasters was in having the data and skills to effectively respond. The absence of data impacts on the ability for all regional states and organisations to be able to provide timely and effective support and disaster management. Whereas the UK may seldom be in a position to provide timely responses, the UK can – through education and research links and expertise – improve the information basis to enable other states (including Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia) to more effectively respond. Generating this data and engaging with local populations to create solutions is where the UK has some outstanding expertise. But the key to leveraging this comparative expertise is to connect the dots.

Traditional and Non-traditional security and engagement

17. These spaces of connection also offer the potential for engagement in terms of both traditional security challenges and non-traditional challenges (including environmental / food / health security). There is the potential that there are opportunities to build practical connections with Japan and Indonesia as well as China in the non-traditional spaces.
18. Human Security – Japan has been a leader in terms of providing conceptual thinking on the issue of human security and in providing and developing practical expertise in addressing insecurity. Japanese human security is focused on freedom from wants (including food and development). As a result, the Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency – JICA (Japan’s Overseas development agency) – have developed significant programmes of assistance and support for the region and regional projects. As an engaged party with the ADB, there is a clear opportunity to reinforce the work already done in connection to the region through this body rather than only seeking to develop new connections (through, for example, the ASEAN dialogue partner status). Specifically, using the UK involvement with the ADB to champion areas that can be seen as an addition to China’s offer – for example, Sinovac has been prominent in its distribution in the Asia Pacific, yet the contribution of the ADB to the Asia Pacific Vaccine Facility has been less prominent even though millions has been contributed to the states in the region to support their vaccine roll out addressing this difference in prominence is important as a first step.
19. Supporting longer term projects that aim to rebuild the region, address the challenges of those living in poverty or near poverty, and making their livelihoods more sustainable in the face of emerging threats should be a key priority for the UK in its engagement with these bodies.

Response to the question: How should the UK prepare for responding to potential flashpoints like Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands?

20. The UK can play a leading role in developing new approaches for governing ocean spaces that could inform how flashpoints are responded to but also how they are understood as problems. Although, these spaces are commonly seen as traditional security spaces and sovereignty disputes, they are also contests for resources, and present a critical space to consider the health of the marine environment and ecology.
21. In generating this contribution – to both understanding and usage – it is important to highlight the work that already exists. Geoffrey Till and Geoff Sloan have written extensively on the maritime space and its usage. Yet, in terms of governance and international relations, Bueger and Edmunds (2017) have characterised this space being subject to ‘seablindness’ where there is a focus on ‘hot spots’ – for example the Arctic (Buitrago and Schiender, 2020; Byers 2017) the China’s maritime disputes (Freeman, 2020; Hayton, 2014) without a global and holistic approach. Hence, in responding to the potential flashpoints **the UK can and should convene a new commission on the global oceans.** Deliberately making space and driving forwards change to how we understand these spaces that it more fit for the 21st century. That dialogue must be inclusive of the small island states, but also the emerging powers must have an ability to shape a new framework if it is to survive. This discussion must

include areas of sovereignty, security, climate, marine protection, environmental degradation, and issues of both authority and accountability.

22. Addressing the challenge of the oceans will be a vital contributor to addressing the challenges facing the climate, which in turn increase the existing regional tensions in the Indo-Pacific. The oceans will not be a panacea for other challenges but they play a vital role in either escalating or de-escalating existing issues that are ripe to produce tension and potentially conflict.

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