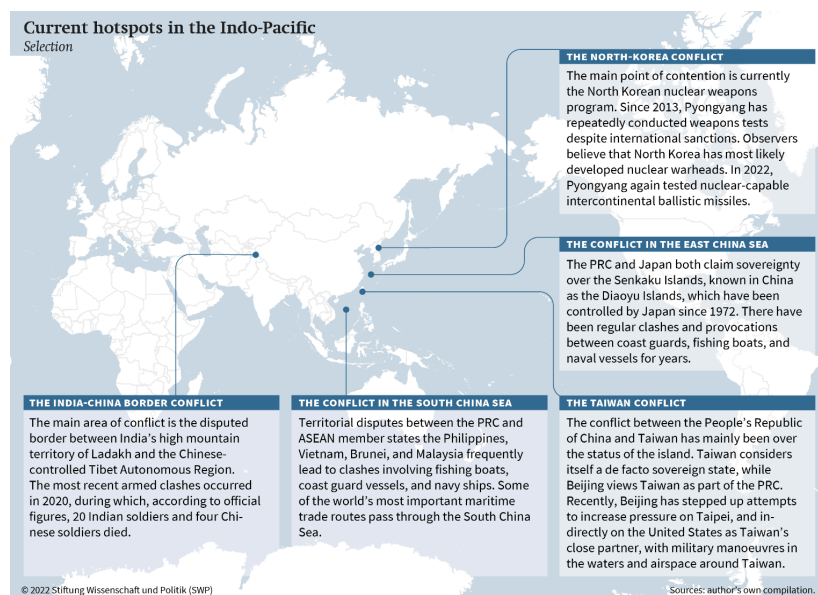


TOPIC B: Security in the Indo-Pacific region

Since the Korean War of 1950–53, the security architecture of the region previously referred to as the “Asia-Pacific” has been based on a US-led system of bilateral alliances known as the “hub-and-spokes” system. A multilateral system of collective defense similar to NATO in Europe has so far not existed in the Asia-Pacific region. Since 2014, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) under Xi Jinping has been developing its own ideas for reorganizing the regional security system. China has also begun to at least partially implement them. This includes an increasing militarisation of the South China Sea and the comprehensive rearmament of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), as well as the expansion of bilateral security partnerships and the establishment of its own multilateral security forums and dialogue formats, for example the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Xi Jinping described the US-led military alliances as a relic of the Cold War, called for a regional security architecture “by Asians for Asians”, and thus directly questioned the future of the hub-and-spokes system.

In response, Washington declared the central strategic goal of US foreign policy in the region to be the preservation of US hegemony against growing Chinese assertiveness, and to engage in balancing China to this end. The concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), which has gradually replaced the long-dominant Asia-Pacific construct, is regarded as a counter strategy to a Chinese-dominated reorganization of the region. The development of regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific is particularly relevant because the region plays host to a number of security hotspots. These include maritime disputes between states bordering the South China Sea and the East China Sea; the Taiwan conflict; and the India-China border conflict. A destabilization of the region would have a direct negative impact on German and European interests, for example if trade-flows on important trade routes were impaired and supply chains interrupted. That is why the German government commits itself to intensify its regional security policy engagement as part of its Indo-Pacific guidelines, as does the EU in its Indo-Pacific Strategy. In order to enable more European engagement in the region in the future, however, German and European security policy must first and foremost address and respond to the changing regional security environment.



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1. Can Asian countries create their own security system without relying on the US?
2. What role should the EU, Germany, Japan, and South Korea play to help keep the Indo-Pacific region stable?
3. Is the idea of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific a good way to balance China's power?
4. How can countries from a different zone work together to reduce tensions in hotspots like Taiwan and the South China Sea?
5. How can the UN respond to China's increased military activity in the South China Sea?

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