# Sjostrom/Verska – NDCA Neg vs MSJ KM

## Our Sole Contention is Security Council Politics

#### Indonesia, the only Muslim-majority democracy on the Security Council, is expected to take up major resolutions during their tenure on the Security Council. Siddharta indicates in 2019 that:

Amanda Siddharta, 1-10-2019, "Indonesia to Put Muslim Issues Forward at UN Security Council," VOA, https://www.voanews.com/a/indonesia-to-put-muslim-issues-forward-at-un-security-council/4736852.html, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

Indonesia says it will use its new position on the U.N. Security Council to focus attention on the Israel-Palestinian conflict. But observers say Jakarta should use its seat to put forward a broader range of issues affecting Muslims and the agenda of developing countries. Indonesia officially became a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council Jan. 1, along with four other countries: South Africa, Belgium, Dominican Republic and Germany. Four areas and Palestine During their candidacy, Indonesia pledged to focus on four issues. The Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi reiterated that they will focus on strengthening the peace ecosystem and global stability, enhancing synergy between regional organizations with the Security Council in keeping the peace, facing the international challenge of terrorism, and establishing a global partnership. “Other than that, the issue in Palestine will also become Indonesia’s focus as non-permanent member in the U.N. Security Council,” the minister said. “Indonesia is very concerned with the countries that changed their stance and it is against some of the U.N. resolutions that should be the basis of solving the Israel-Palestine conflict,” she added. Fitri Bintang Timur, a researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta said it is an opportunity to put forward issues that are important not only for Indonesia, but for countries with similar political interests. “For example middle-power countries and Islamic countries. Indonesia can encourage interventions that are important. Issues such as Palestine, Syria or Myanmar can be handled through an agreement,” she told VOA. Rohingya and ASEAN Indonesian can play a part, not only with the Palestine-Israel conflict, in solving the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, said Hikmahanto Juwana, a professor of International Law at the University of Indonesia. “But that also depends on the U.N.’s intensity in their involvement in the Rohingya issue. We hoped that we could’ve solved it within a regional organization. But ASEAN has already tried and failed, so I think it’s necessary to discuss it in an international forum,” he said. Juwana mentioned that discussion on the Rohingya has started in the U.N. and it has sent a special rapporteur to Myanmar. But he said that bringing up the issue involving a fellow ASEAN member state will also be difficult. “The problem in ASEAN is because the member states must have a consensus in an issue and that they have non-interference principle,” Juwana told VOA. Nevertheless, Marsudi said in a press statement Wednesday that Indonesia will continue to contribute so that the Rohingya issue in Rakhine State will make progress. Timur, of CSIS, said that in this case Indonesia could serve as a buffer for Myanmar when the U.N. decides to intervene in the Rohingya crisis. “In that case, Indonesia can say that intervention must be done through a regional organization within ASEAN. Then Indonesia can create a regional approach through lobbying, to solve the humanitarian conflict the ASEAN way,” she said. And that will put Indonesia in a leadership position in ASEAN. Timur explained that without any Southeast Asian representative in the Security Council, it would be easier for them to make an agreement that might undermine ASEAN. “But now Indonesia is a non-permanent member, they can lobby the UNSC,” she added. Moderate voice of the Muslim world Timur further explained that as a Muslim majority country, Indonesia could portray and voice a more moderate view of Islam. And its position would play out well in the lobbying on conflicts in other Muslim countries. “Such as the situation in the Middle East or conflict in Yemen,” Timur said. But Indonesia’s role as a non-permanent member largely depends on the capacity of the diplomats posted at the U.N. Juwana said the current foreign policy under President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s leadership focuses more on bilateral relations rather than multilateral. “Our foreign policy must be increased in capacity and deploy skillful diplomats,” he said. But Marsudi said the Indonesian team at the U.N. has been strengthened since October 2018. “Moreover, Indonesia will hold the presidency of security council on May 2019 and in the middle of 2020,” she added. Other than contributions in discussions and lobbying, Indonesia will also send 4,000 peacekeepers by 2019. Indonesia currently has 3,500 peacekeepers on different missions with the U.N. Marsudi also said Jakarta will send more women peacekeepers from Indonesia, especially in conflict areas where many of the victims are women and children. “As of now only 3 percent of the total number U.N. peacekeepers from Indonesia are women,” she said. Change of leadership in Indonesia The foreign minister said she had to lobby all members of the U.N. for three years before Indonesia finally won the post against Maldives with 144 votes out of 198. She added the landslide victory showed that Indonesia has gained credibility in international diplomacy. But Timur warned the current presidential election campaign should not undermine the work of Indonesia in the U.N. Security Council. “I’m afraid that things can change depending on the next presidency. We may have a different president, or if not a different minister who might not be as active in the international forum so we’ll see,” she said.

#### However, granting permanent membership only creates power struggles in the region for India. In a world where they are named to the UN Security Council, Indonesia would have their power threatened and decreased since they are regional cohorts. This is because Manish Dabhade indicates that:

Manish S. Dabhade, 12-15-2017, “India’s pursuit of United Nations Security Council Reforms”, Observer Research Foundation, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-pursuit-united-nations-security-council-reforms/>, Date Accessed 4-3-2019, // SDV

India sees itself carrying the necessary abilities, actual and potential, which entitles it to a permanent seat at the Council. Further, the seat on the high table, at the UN’s premier, powerful body would provide [India] it the much needed leverage to expand its global geo-political and geo-economic clout. It would serve as an equaliser to China, its rival and an emerging hegemon in Asia, and an ever increasing strategic and security concern in its immediate neighbourhood and beyond. India has always seen itself as a democratic alternative to the authoritarian China. India’s millennia old civilizational existence also demands it to be at the top of the international hierarchy of states. As India’s international profile and capabilities rise due to its ever expanding global and regional footprint in diverse areas such as politics, development, economics, culture and science and technology, India wishes to shift its international position from a rule taker (a constrained role) to a rule maker (a system shaping role). The Indian attempts at joining various regimes like the MTCR and the ongoing, high-pitched campaign to join the NSG amply indicate that India is no more satisfied with being either the target or a mere follower of various international norms and rules, and now wants to shape and align them to suit Indian ideas and interests. In conclusion, and most significantly, Indian hopes significantly rest on an acknowledgement by the UN itself of the need to expand the UNSC. In an interview to The Guardian (2015), former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the Security Council must either reform or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant: “If we don’t change the council, we risk a situation where the primacy of the council may be challenged by some of the new emerging countries.”

#### Khan argues that empirically, India will use its:

Aamir Khan, 2015, “UNSC’S EXPANSION: PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGIONS AND THE WORLD”, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a632266.pdf>, Date Accessed 4-13-2019 // JM

India is a big country and has remained relatively democratic since its independence in 1947. It has contributed a large troop commitment toward the U.N. peace efforts in the world. India has provided leaders for both civilian and military leadership to the U.N. India has the third-largest military and is bracing to become a rising economic power in the world. India, along with the other G4 countries, is striving for permanent membership in the UNSC, which will [to] further increase its influence in the world and South Asian region. India, however, has a number of disputes with its small regional countries, especially Pakistan. Interestingly, all South Asian countries border India, but do not have contiguous borders with each other. Therefore, most of the South Asian countries, being India’s neighbor, depend on India’s support for their security and economic assistance. For instance, Nepal and Bhutan are landlocked countries and depend on Indian seaports for their trade. Additionally, Bangladesh has unresolved border and water dispute with India. Similarly, Sri Lanka has suffered from Tamil’s insurgency that was supported by India. Both India and Pakistan have failed to resolve their disputes peacefully and have fought four major wars over these disputes since 1947. As an influential regional state, India has failed to play the required leadership role to amicably solve its problems with its small neighbors. India, however, considers that its neighbours are its enemies and regards them as subordinate states. Thus, India’s permanent membership of the UNSC will have serious implications for the South Asian region. India will pursue its own interest and objectives and will not pay any heed to regional issues, involving smaller regional states. In the past, India has violated UNSC’s resolution and is not likely to respect these resolutions in the future as well. India can isolate and intimidate smaller regional states through economic strangulation and by involving them in political problems and disputes. India can politically and militarily interfere in the internal affairs of smaller regional countries on various pretexts, and at the same time can prevent U.N. intervention through India’s influence as a permanent member. Giving a permanent seat to India at this stage would likely raise the chances of serious armed conflicts in the region.

#### Unfortunately, India’s regional leadership means silence on the Rohingya crisis. Niranjan Sahoo indicates that:

Niranjan Sahoo, 10-31-2017, "India’s Rohingya Realpolitik," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/10/31/india-s-rohingya-realpolitik-pub-74590, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

While the international response in general appears to be tentative and evolving, India’s muted reaction is of particular note. Given the country’s democratic credentials, long humanitarian record, and leverage over both the Burmese and Bangladeshi regimes, regional and global expectations were high that India would help diffuse this state-orchestrated humanitarian crisis. However, India has floundered. Its Home Affairs [Ministry declared the Rohingya](https://www.ft.com/content/6df8f4ea-946e-11e7-a9e6-11d2f0ebb7f0) to be “illegal immigrants” and ordered their deportation from India in early August. India’s response lacks the empathy and humanitarianism that the country is known for. Instead, a cold calculation of strategic interests seems to be guiding its response. This augurs ill for India’s attempted positioning as a rising, pro-democracy international power.

#### He continues that:

Niranjan Sahoo, 10-31-2017, "India’s Rohingya Realpolitik," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/10/31/india-s-rohingya-realpolitik-pub-74590, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

At home and abroad, there have been loud calls for India, the region’s dominant power and a country with a long history of providing humanitarian assistance to its neighbors, to play a proactive role in the crisis. India has strong influence in both Myanmar and Bangladesh, and could make a real difference. However, New Delhi has not risen to the occasion in the evolving humanitarian tragedy. Far from being supportive or sensitive to the plight of the Rohingya, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi labeled them as illegal migrants who require deportation. India’s Home Affairs Ministry has issued instructions to concerned states to identify illegal Rohingya and [repatriate them to Myanmar](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/government-firms-up-plan-to-deport-rohingyas/article19511385.ece). In addition, the government has filed a counter petition before the Indian Supreme Court declaring the Rohingya to be both illegal migrants and a threat to national security.2 Coming at a time of great tragedy, when hundreds of fleeing refugees are dying in desperate circumstances, New Delhi’s hardline position has been criticized by the global community and, indeed, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.3 The government’s pronouncements have also provoked a raucous political debate at home. An even bigger shock came when the Indian prime minister visited Myanmar in September. At his joint [press conference with Suu Kyi](https://thewire.in/174681/modi-aung-san-suu-kyi-myanmar-rohingya), Modi said, “We are partners in your concerns over the loss of lives of security forces and innocent people due to the extremist violence in Rakhine State.” Not only did he avoid using the word Rohingya, possibly at the behest of his host, but Modi did not even make a passing mention of the state’s persecution and ongoing displacement of the Rohingya. The only saving grace was the announcement of development aid, including reconstruction programs within Rakhine State, which would be beneficial for the Rohingya. India did make some marginal adjustments to its approach after Bangladesh made its displeasure known. It devised a face-saving program called Operation Insaniyat, offering material aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. In another step to undo the damage, India chose not to disassociate from a UNHRC resolution, which mandated a probe into [crimes by Burmese security forces](https://thewire.in/185718/india-become-party-resolution-myanmar-unhrc). Considering the Indian prime minister’s stance at Naypyidaw, this revised position at the UNHRC indicates a notable shift. Three factors have driven the government’s controversial stance. The first is growing security concerns over global jihadi groups such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State and al-Qaeda, and the actions of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) promoting the rise of ARSA as a new terrorism machine. These developments have made the pro-Hindutva regime in New Delhi wary of the potentially wider security ramifications of the conflict in Myanmar. With intelligence agencies warning of serious emerging threats, and the Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba desperately seeking to arm the Indian Rohingya, New Delhi feels it would be a security risk to have more Rohingya refugees in its territory. Second, Myanmar remains India’s gateway to Southeast Asia, so its cooperation crucial is for New Delhi’s broader regional objectives. India’s strong backing of the current regime in Myanmar, and its reluctance to openly condemn “excessive counterinsurgency measures” following the militant attacks, are linked to the Burmese government’s role in both quelling [insurgencies in northeastern India](http://www.orfonline.org/research/acting-east-through-india-subregions) and assisting India’s Act East policy. Third, China’s overwhelming presence in Myanmar continues to guide India’s dealings with the Burmese authorities. India’s strong stance against the military’s suppression of Burmese democratic movements in the 1980s pushed the junta into China’s arms. India now wants to avoid a repeat of this. With China strongly backing both the military and Suu Kyi’s government on their Rakhine policy, India perceives that geopolitically it has little choice but also to stand by the regime. In short, New Delhi’s response appears to be guided by a cold cost-benefit calculation concerning trade with Myanmar, maintaining its leverage vis-à-vis China, and safeguarding cooperation on counterinsurgency operations in its northeast.

#### Specifically, Sarker indicates that silence means:

Swagato Sarker, 9-19-2017, “India’s role in Rohingya resolution”, [http://www.jsgp.edu.in/article/india%E2%80%99s-role-rohingya-resolution](http://www.jsgp.edu.in/article/india%E2%80%99s-role-rohingya-resolution%3c), Date Accessed 4-9-2019 // JM

The Supreme Court is due to rule on the fate of the Rohingyas facing deportation by the Indian government. We argue that the Rohingyas in India and Bangladesh have the right, under established principles of international refugee law, human rights law, and humanitarian law, not to return to Myanmar until hostilities have ceased and their safety can be guaranteed. They should also benefit from India’s longstanding principle of welcoming refugees. On 8 September 2017, India rejected in the ‘Bali declaration’ of the World Parliamentary Forum a reference to Rohingya and human rights. Notably, India does not have a domestic law on refugees even as India is not a signatory to the Refugee convention of 1951 and the optional protocol. In the wilful absence of a legal definition of refugee in India, the Supreme Court in the Assam Mahasangha case clubbed “illegal migrants” to India as an “aggression on the state”. No wonder, the government plans to deport on “security” grounds some 40,000 Rohingyas living in India. The Indian courts and the government have both taken a thought-out stand on the Rohingyas and other Muslim refugees. Given the lack of a domestic law and the apathy to international law on refugees, India does not have to officially provide any relief to the Rohingya refugees. Consequently, they live in abject poverty in slums of Muslimmajority areas of Delhi, Telengana, Jammu and West Bengal. The UNHCR in 2016 however said that India has always respected the principle of non-refoulement – not sending back refugees to a place where they face danger. Rohingyas have been severely persecuted in Myanmar in the last four decades. The situation has worsened in the last five years. Myanmar has created a so-called “lockdown zone” or “area clearance operation zone” between Taungpyoletwea and Maungdaw. These are virtually internment camps. Tens of thousands of Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh. Bangladesh too considers them as unwanted migrants, yet has hosted about 500,000 Rohingyas over the years. Like India, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has denied that more Rohingyas are inbound. At any rate, for her, Rohingya are a problem for Myanmar and the United Nations to handle. The economic condition of Rohingyas in Bangladeshi camps is grim. In search of better livelihood, they have been taking risky sea voyages to south east Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Australia. Many Rohingyas have been trafficked via Thailand to various countries to work as bonded labour. Many of them have died on the high seas and were killed while crossing the Thailand Malaysia border. In 2017, several Muslim majority nations in Asia have spoken of the plight of the Rohingya. While the Malaysian Prime Minister spoke against the treatment of the Rohingya, the Maldives has severed trade ties with Myanmar in protest. In India, the Rohingyas therefore face two problems: as refugees, they are seeking asylum, and as economic migrants, they want formal permission to work in a host country. With the South East Asian countries and Australia clamping down on entry, India threatening to deport them, and Bangladesh refusing to accept them, the Rohingyas are running out of options to find a safe, secure and economically viable territory to live in. Surprisingly, ASEAN of which Myanmar is a member has been mute since 2009. The triangular ethnic conflict between the majority Burmese, Rakhine Buddhists and minority Muslims, including Rohingyas, has fomented the political crisis in western Myanmar. Rohingyas were offered full and equal citizenship after Burma became independent in 1948. But Burmese nationalists and General Ne Win’s government drastically altered the status of Rohingyas in Myanmar.

#### There are three impacts to this silence. First, South Asian instability. Meredith Arndt argues in 2018 that:

Meredith Arndt, 4-11-2018, “THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: AN HUMANITARIAN AND SECURITY EMERGENCY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA”, <https://www.cesi-italia.org/en/articoli/833/the-rohingya-crisis-an-humanitarian-and-security-emergency-for-southeast-asia>, Date Accessed 4-13-2019 // JM

The Rohingya crisis is more that just a national security problem as it could become an open window for religious extremism and radicalism to penetrate in the region. Indeed, the condition of Rhoynga community has already become part of the propaganda of the two most international jihadist organization: both Daesh and the al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent. The accusation of discrimination and violent treatment that affect the communities are being exploited as recruitment causes by these organizations. ISIS has a history of recruiting persecuted Muslim minorities, and the Rohingya are no different. The jihadist rhetoric, for example, could find consensus among the ARSA, whose militants could start to look at the terrorist organizations as provider of manpower [personnel] and capabilities to combat the Myanmar army. Additionally, the presence of radical Islam may spark a resurgence in Buddhist extremism across Myanmar, with blatant effects on national security for the population and a dangerous spillover effects to other countries. In this framework, the Myanmar government seems currently to have problems in dealing with such an important crisis. Aung Sang Suu Kyi, the de-facto leader of the country, is not reflect the International Community’s expectations. Despite the results of the election held in 2015, won by her party (the national League for Democracy - NLD), the military establishment still have a strong influence inside the institutions. Myanmar was under military dictatorship from 1962 to 2011. A few years prior to the government’s collapse, the Myanmar Army used their executive and legislative powers to prevent democratic transition. One antagonist to the regime was Suu Kyi, whom the Army placed under house arrest for her opposition to totalitarianism in leading the National League for Democracy (NLP) party. Suu Kyi was the recipient of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights. Under house arrest, Suu Kyi had popular support from the Myanmar people for a presidential run. Threatened by this prospect, the army passed a constitutional amendment banning anyone with foreign family members from becoming president. Suu Kyi’s husband was British, and so were her sons. Therefore, despite NLD’s landslide electoral win in 2015, she was unable to hold office on a technicality. As a hybrid regime, the military still holds a quarter of parliament seats, and the Commander in Chief has legislative veto making it impossible to amend the constitution. Since there was no way to change the presidency laws, parliament appointed Suu Kyi to a new Prime Minister-type position created for her, entitled “General Counselor.” As General Counselor, the international community still recognizes Suu Kyi as the de facto leader of Myanmar. However, even with this position, Suu Kyi has no power over the ministries that have a direct impact on the Rohingya persecution. The military still has constitutional jurisdiction over Defense, Borders, and Home Affairs. The most common point of contact is the “General Admissions Department” of Home Affairs, which manages the Myanmar census, marriage licenses, birth and death certificates, and land purchases. This gives the military almost total control in enacting discriminatory policies directly affecting the Rohingya. While Suu Kyi could technically propose constitutional referendums, but as mentioned before, these amendments would be opposed with exorbitant parliamentary aggression from the military. And, not only would Suu Kyi face opposition from the Army, but her voter base would also react negatively to proposals for Rohingya equality. Indeed, Suu Kyi still holds popular support with the Burman Buddhists, a majority group opposed to Rohingya rights. As a delicate nation-state, Suu Kyi may also fear that any response supporting an end to Rohingya discrimination could lead to another military coup or a forced resignation. Moreover, Suu Kyi’s decisions like prohibiting third-party aid in the Rakhine state may be a tactic to maintain her current position, and possibly prevent an even larger outbreak of violence between Muslims, Buddhists, and the military. There have been multiple regional and international responses to the Rohingya crisis. Since nations are barred from sending aid into Myanmar borders, they are finding alternative ways to help. Since 2015, Malaysia has sent aid to Bangladesh to support the construction of temporary housing units, hospitals, schools, and administrative offices throughout south Bangladesh. To minimize violence against the Rohingya, the Thailand government actively arrested refugee traffickers and involved officials after finding a mass grave at a Rohingya refugee site. However, this merely disrupted, rather than halted smuggling activities. Current crackdowns and aid measures are proving insufficient for managing the influx of Rohinga refugees. Thus, regional actors like Thailand are adopting policies that directly violate the “non-refoulement” clause 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. “Non-refoulement” states that a nation cannot turn away asylum seekers if they still have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin. Thailand adopted “naval push-back” campaigns in September, using military capabilities to reroute migrant boats back to Myanmar, where the Rohingya face the threat of violence and death. UN officials, the United States, and Western European nations are calling the Rohingya crisis “ethnic cleansing,” yet little concrete action has taken place. The UN has failed to secure an agreement with Myanmar to place UN Peacekeepers on the ground, mainly because Suu Kyi believes this may upset the Myanmar Army. Instead, she has advocated for UN “capacity building” initiatives, or infrastructural development projects to increase the number of schools and hospitals in local communities in the Rakhine to reduce inequality. However, this still does not solve neither the question of Rohingya legal status, nor the problem of military persecution against the ethnic minority. Also, Western reporters are prohibited from ground-level observance close to the Rakhine-Bengali borders, where there are claims that the army is conducting systematic genocide. Without official reports, the US and other Western states feel limited to providing aid at refugee camps and mediating negotiations between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The most recent proposal between Bangladesh and Myanmar involves repatriating tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees to the Rakhine, where they still are at risk of organized cleansing. The lack of solutions in the short term of the Rohingya crisis is posing a serious humanitarian and security issues for the region. The inefficacy of the policy adopted by governments and by the International Community so far is affecting the management of an high-sensitive issue, that can have repercussions not just on the reputation of national leaders or international agencies but that can foment hates and sectarian violence among communities all over the region.

#### That goes nuclear – Iqbal argues in 2017 that:

Anwar Iqbal, 1-16-2017, “Use of nuclear weapons in South Asia can’t be ruled out: Biden”, Dawn, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1308760>, Date Accessed 4-13-2019 // JM

South Asia is among a few regions in the world where nuclear weapons could be used in a regional conflict, the outgoing US Vice President Joe Biden warned on Saturday. In a recent speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, Mr Biden hoped that the incoming Trump administration would continue America’s leading role in reducing nuclear weapons around the globe. “Not just North Korea, but Russia, Pakistan, and others have made counterproductive moves that only increase the risk that nuclear weapons could be used in a regional conflict in Europe, South Asia, or East Asia,” he said. “Working with Congress, the next administration will have to navigate these dangers and — I hope — continue leading the global consensus to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our world.” Mr Biden urged Republican and Democratic lawmakers in the US Congress to rise above party politics and deal with the nuclear issue with the seriousness it deserves. “Nuclear security is too important to be a party policy, for our nation and for the world. Although we no longer live in the daily dread of nuclear confrontation, the dangers we face today require a bipartisan spirit,” he said. “The challenge is looming on the horizon. While the vast majority of international community understands that the world is more dangerous when more nations and people wield nuclear weapons, there are still those who seek to grow their arsenals and develop new types of nuclear weapons,” he warned before naming Pakistan among the nations that were doing so. Pakistan also has warned against the dangers of a nuclear conflict in South Asia and wants the international community, particularly the United States, to help resolves its tensions with India. Pakistani diplomats in Washington also referred to a recent statement by the Indian army chief, General Bipin Rawat, who publicly confirmed last week that India did have a Cold Start doctrine. Gen Rawat is the first senior Indian official to do so. Previous Indian chiefs avoided using the term Cold Start and preferred calling it a “proactive strategy”. Cold Start is the Indian operational plan for launching ground and air strikes inside Pakistan before its defensive formations launch a counter-offensive. The Indian media described Gen Rawat’s acknowledgment of a Cold Start doctrine, in an interview to India Today, as a radical departure from New Delhi’s previous policy and intended to send a message to Pakistan. Pakistan says it would counter the Indian move by relocating defensive formations close to the Indian border, and warned that it would be forced to use “tactical nuclear weapons” if India ever launched cross-border attacks. Tactical weapons are usually delivered by short-range ballistic missiles and could effectively counter a Cold Start strike. The Pakistanis also welcome international mediation for resolving this and other disputes —particularly Kashmir — with India and warn that ignoring these issues could lead to yet another war between South Asia’s two nuclear-armed nations. The Indians, however, oppose any outside intervention in their disputes with Pakistan, insisting that such disputes should only be discussed in bilateral meetings. But bilateral talks too have failed to produce any results and are rare. India also says that terrorism is a greater threat to peace in South Asia than any other disputes and accuses Pakistan of continuing to encourage cross-border terrorist attacks. Terrorism is one issue in which India welcomes outside intervention and wants the international community to use its influence to stop the alleged cross-border terrorist activities. Pakistan dismisses these charges as part of an Indian propaganda campaign to malign Islamabad.

#### Second, religious nationalism. The crisis will spillover into Pakistan increasing tensions. Didier Chaudet argues in 2018 that:

Didier Chaudet, January 2018, “The Rohingya Crisis: Impact and Consequences for South Asia,” <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/art1dcj22.pdf>, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

For Pakistan, problems are much more linked to the Afghan crisis and the perpetual tensions with India than to the current situation in Burma. The founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself refused a risky proposal by Rohingya leaders to integrate their territory in Burma in Pakistan. He met General Aung San before he was assassinated and reassured him: Pakistanis will not support a revolt of the Muslim minority. On the contrary, Jinnah invited them to live as loyal citizens of the Burmese state.29 Some have even held Jinnah responsible for the suffering of the Rohingya.30 This is inaccurate because first and foremost, the founder of Pakistan expected them to be treated as citizens, equal to other Burmese. Besides, this unfair criticism against Jinnah does not take into account the fact that the Pakistan project was from the start rooted in South Asia.31 From its birth the country has had two serious geopolitical rivals as neighbours: India and Afghanistan. It would have been unwise to make more enemies. It is important to mention that Pakistan has been one of the countries hosting the most Rohingya refugees, with Bangladesh.32 Those are refugees from an earlier exodus, in the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately, here too, these Rohingyas have had difficulties renewing or obtaining Pakistani identification cards without which it is impossible to have access to healthcare, education for the young generation, and employment; and they are said to be harassed by police, especially those living in the Arakanabad slum in Karachi.33 Such criticism can easily be mitigated by taking into account the context: the main concern in terms of refugees, for Pakistan, has been coming from Afghanistan, making issues related to the Rohingyas less visible. Still, like in India, the Rohingya crisis can feed a much-needed national political debate on refugees, identity, and how society, as a whole, deals with its minorities. As reminded by Raza Rumi, the terrorists who targeted Pakistanis themselves, and in particular minorities like the Shia Muslims, are no different than the Buddhist Far Right in Burma.34 The future impact on identity politics, and even foreign policy, should not be underestimated. It is worth noting the diversity of people who have organised protests against Myanmar‟s policy towards the Rohingyas proving that the crisis has had a wide impact.35 It is not only a right-wing/conservative cause célèbre, it is an important issue for the whole society - a reminder that Pakistan is seen as a refuge for Asian Muslims, hence, as a country defined by this particular identity.36 With New Delhi using identity politics when it comes to the Rohingya crisis, political actors in Pakistan might be tempted to do the same. And even the less inclined, in Pakistan, to be vocal on this issue at the international stage might be forced to go with the flow. Indeed, other Muslim countries, like Turkey, have used this crisis to be vocal on the Rohingya crisis, and appear as natural leaders of/for the Muslim world. 37 As an important Muslim country in Asia, Pakistan has been naturally part of the diplomatic pressure on Burma.38 However, identity politics has never truly controlled Pakistan‟s foreign policy - Pakistani elites have rather focused on a realist approach defending the interests of the state. 39 But the specific shock caused by this crisis and the internal and external pressures that it provokes for Pakistan might influence Islamabad‟s choices in the foreseeable future.

#### Sidra Hamidi indicated in March that the root cause of an India/Pakistan war is religious nationalism. They argue that:

Sidra Hamidi, The Diplomat, 3-3-2019, "Don't Overlook the Root Cause of the Latest India-Pakistan Flare-up," Diplomat, https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/dont-overlook-the-root-cause-of-the-latest-india-pakistan-flare-up/, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

Recent tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir have boiled into a full-blown military crisis in the region. The crisis started when a suicide bomber attacked Indian forces in the Pulwama district of Kashmir, killing over 40 Indian soldiers. The attack was claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) group, though Pakistan was quick to deny any involvement. Since then, Pakistan and India have exchanged a series of tit-for-tat military operations, including India’s incursion into Pakistani airspace to target a JeM training camp, leading to Pakistan shooting down two Indian jets. Analysts have been largely examining the crisis from the perspective of India and Pakistan’s nuclear rivalry and the consequences for escalation while ignoring the broader nationalist forces at play. It is easy to depict the unfolding crisis as almost a series of self-contained events — a perfect depiction of deterrence theory. But the evolution of the crisis goes beyond military and strategic significance to implicate the future of South Asian society. The current crisis presents an opportunity for both Indian and Pakistani leadership to shore up their nationalist vision for South Asia. In recent years, the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hindu nationalism have slowly eroded the idea that India represents a home for multiple ethnicities, religious groups, and classes. And Pakistan’s continuing practice of oppressing religious minorities finds acceptance and legitimacy in the leadership of Imran Khan. Of course, both of these trends have a longer history — both India’s multicultural identity and Pakistan’s Islamic identity have been fraught since their partition in 1947. But recent societal trends in India reveal growing communal violence — particularly by emboldened far-right Hindu nationalists targeting the Muslim populace. Some of this violence targets Muslims who eat beef, or are even simply accused of eating beef, resulting in the bizarre moniker [“cow-terrorism.”](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/07/24/will-modi-stop-indias-cow-terrorists-from-killing-muslims/) To be sure, these sorts of attacks have also been perpetrated on [left-leaning Hindu journalists](https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/09/15/india-assassinating-dissent/) in India, indicating that the rise of India’s far right poses a danger to many Indians despite their personal religious beliefs. What’s more, there are explicit attempts to [rewrite India’s rich and complex history](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2018/12/06/indias-dangerous-new-curriculum/) — a history that has political and social origins in both Hindu and Muslim rule — to downplay the history of Islam on the subcontinent. And on the other side, the election of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has only reinforced the pre-existing nationalist tendencies of the [Pakistani establishment](https://www.thenation.com/article/imran-khan-the-armys-choice/), which has often legitimized its rule through the Indian threat. Khan’s ability to triangulate Islam, the Pakistan Army, and a strong nationalist Pakistani identity has made him a popular leader in Pakistan. But his defense of [Pakistan’s blasphemy laws](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/13/asia-bibi-imran-khan-pakistan-blasphemy-law) further alienates and oppresses the few minority groups that remain in Pakistan. What do all of these trends have to do with the current crisis? Nationalist enmity is a constant throughout India and Pakistan’s post-partition history but the specific ways in which Modi and Khan consolidate national identity in their respective contexts drives the responses. The Modi government has blamed the media for highlighting the [rise of hate crimes](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/world/reports-of-hate-crime-cases-have-spiked-in-india/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.1115de8c636c) in India but it has actually been quite effective in bringing a variety of religious leadership in line with its nationalist views. Since the current crisis began, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian leadership in India have used their platform and religious authority to adopt anti-Pakistan rhetoric and to promote a [swift and potentially violent response](https://www.news18.com/news/india/religious-leaders-condemn-pulwama-attack-in-one-voice-2038555.html). Even Bollywood celebrities are getting in on [nationalist fervor](https://twitter.com/priyankachopra/status/1100454040364707840). And on the Pakistani side, prominent politicians purport that India is in a [“war frenzy” and that India’s claim of striking a terrorist camp is a hoax](https://www.dawn.com/news/1466349/we-have-defended-our-borders-politicians-react-to-action-by-paf). An inordinate focus on strategic dimensions of the crisis leads to a kind of military myopia, which limits our ability to see this crisis on a grander scale. It is also in part why the events of the last few days are a “crisis” while the growth in ideological polarization is not identified in the same way. In the aftermath of the crisis, observers should continue to pay close attention to how the incident will affect the ability of Indian and Pakistani leadership to use the events in legitimating their nationalist policies. As a scholar of nuclear politics, it is easy to take the rivalry between India and Pakistan for granted and even to see it as a natural part of either regional power politics or the enmity between Hindus and Muslims. But the rivalry endures because of specific policies and practices that continue to link domestic governance with the threat of the other. And right now, these nationalist policies are being bolstered through the crisis. Rather than falling into the trap of only contemplating the strategic dimensions of the crisis, consider what it means for South Asian society as a whole — not for a separate Pakistan and a separate India.

#### This definitely goes nuclear – Johnston argues that:

Douglass Johnston, 2003, Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik, Introduction, pgs 3-5, Google Books, Date Accessed 4-13-2019 // JM

As the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon so powerfully remind us, the greatest threat facing the world today is the prospective marriage of religious extremism with weapons of mass destruction. Massive amounts of money will be spent in the months and years ahead to defend against this threat, with the bulk of it going to counter symptoms and far less to addressing underlying cause. The time has come—indeed, is long overdue—for taking concrete steps to inspire religious activity in more helpful directions. As the renowned religious scholar Huston Smith has noted, “the surest way to the heart of a people is through their faith.”1 Background Since the founding of the republic, American diplomacy has essentially placed religion beyond the bounds of critical analysis. In recent years, however, the global resurgence of religious militancy and influence has begun to force a reappraisal. As a practical matter, U.S. foreign policy began to acknowledge this with the establishment in 1998 of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom and the later assignment of military chaplains to that department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Yet another manifestation of this new awareness was a recent training program for Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard chaplains in religion and statecraft, an initiative designed to enhance the conflictprevention capability of the sea-service commands. Although such measures show a growing awareness of religion’s political importance, religious imperatives have yet to be incorporated as a major consideration in U.S. foreign policy. They should be. Religion is central to much of the strife that is taking place in the world today.2 Whether it is the root cause of a conflict, as it appears to be in the Middle East, where there are competing religious claims for the same piece of territory, or merely a mobilizing vehicle for nationalist and ethnic passions, as has typically been the case in the Balkans, religion’s potential to cause instability at all levels of the global system is arguably unrivaled. In all likelihood, religion’s importance will only continue to increase in response to the perceived threat to traditional values posed by economic globalization and the uncertainties stemming from rapid technological change.3 To undervalue these realities in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy is to tempt the gods, so to speak. Past reluctance to consider religious factors has not been without its costs. The U.S. failures in Iran, Lebanon, and even Vietnam were due, at least in part, to the fact that policymakers simply did not fully understand or respond effectively to the religious dynamics of the situation. In the case of Iran, the president and top policymakers in Washington were caught unaware by the Islamic revolution.4 They should not have been. State Department reports at the time noted that the Ayatollah Khomeini had emerged as the most outspoken critic of the government, that the shah’s Islamic opponents were in a strong position, and that the shah’s days were probably numbered.5 These observations were effectively suppressed at higher levels by a combination of dogmatic secularism and economic determinism. It is entirely possible that greater recognition of the religious dimension may not have significantly altered the outcome in any of these situations. Had the religious factors been properly considered, however, the improved ability to anticipate and react could conceivably have spared the United States untold embarrassment in Iran (and the embassy staff in Tehran some 444 days of anguish). The same can also be said for Lebanon (and the loss of 241 U.S. Marines). This deep-seated tendency to ignore the religious dimension continues to play out on a number of fronts. South Asia, for example, is replete with ethnoreligious challenges that are being dealt with along traditional secularist lines. Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir stare nervously at one another through the crosshairs of their rifle sights or, more ominously, their nuclear delivery systems—ever susceptible to the flames of nationalism and religious unrest. In Sri Lanka, the tenets of Buddhism have been perverted to justify a stream of military atrocities between the Buddhist majority and the Tamil separatists. Then there is Indonesia, an immense archipelago straddling a number of the world’s vital shipping lanes. Once thought a rock of stability, it is currently wracked with religious violence so severe that some fear the country’s outright disintegration. Further to the west, the predictable consequences of Sudan’s colonial legacy continue to play out in a nineteen-year struggle for power and resources between the predominantly Arab and Islamic north and the largely Christian and African traditionalist south. In the same vein, Muslims and Jews confront one another in the Middle East over their mutual religious claims to Jerusalem, while terrorists find ongoing inspiration to ply their deadly trade. Here, the West was taken aback in July of 2000 when Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, rejected an offer by Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak to relinquish to Palestinian control 90 percent of the West Bank, all of the Gaza Strip, and some outlying areas of Jerusalem. On the face of it, the Israelis were offering the Palestinians more than they had any reason to hope for at the time and, in any event, all that Israel could have conceivably given in light of its domestic political climate. Indeed, Barak was pilloried by Jewish commentators in both the American and Israeli press for having gone too far. Yet Arafat turned him down. Apparently there were several sticking points, among which was the final status of Jerusalem, a topic replete with religious implications that were underappreciated in the West and over which Arafat was obviously not empowered to negotiate. A year and a half later, Barak’s successor, Ariel Sharon, broke off negotiations with Arafat altogether, accusing him of not doing enough to stem the violence. Even here, the religious dynamics may have been more than Arafat could handle. The question then arises: If Arafat cannot negotiate on topics of religious significance, who can? Clearly, religious authorities need to be involved, and the sooner the better, if peace is ever to take hold. Without the earlier bipolar confrontation of the Cold War to suppress historic religious antagonisms, religion has become too critical to vital Western interests to permit its continued marginalization in the policymaker’s calculus. In an age of economic interdependency, high-tech weaponry, and international terrorism, foreign policy practitioners can no longer afford to treat the religious dimension as a geopolitical orphan. The consequences of the West’s longstanding inability to deal with religious differences and demagogues who manipulate religion for their own purposes will only grow more serious with the passage of time. It is also likely that existing doctrines of nuclear and conventional deterrence will become increasingly moot (as might traditional diplomacy) in the wars of identity that are already beginning to plague the twenty-first century.6 In short, it is time to give religion its just due as a defining element of national security. While it is to this larger task that this book is devoted, it is focused more specifically on how the reconciling aspects of religious faith can be brought to bear in operational settings through the practice of faith-based diplomacy.

#### Third, Indonesia’s role on the security council is crucial to solve for the South China Sea conflict. Pandu Manggala argues in 2018 that:

Pandu Utama Manggala, 6-13-2018, “Indonesia’s Chance to Advocate Maritime Security Issues on the Security Council”, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/indonesias-chance-to-advocate-maritime-security-issues-on-the-security-council/>, Date Accessed 4-14-2019 // JM

At the United Nations (UN) Plenary Meeting on June 8, 2018, Indonesia managed to get 144 votes from 190 countries, securing a non-permanent seat on the Security Council (UNSC). This will be the fourth term for Indonesia representing the Asia Pacific group at the UN’s most powerful body (it [previously sat on the UNSC](http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/elected.asp) in 1973-1974, 1995-1996, and 2007-2008). Winning a seat on the Security Council is indeed a testament of diplomatic achievements for many countries, as gives more impetus in voicing issues related to international peace and security. The election of Indonesia also provides a strong statement that Indonesia’s international role is not shrinking and that Indonesia will continue to be a responsible member of the international society, with a deep sense of regional obligation. Shortly after the election at UN Headquarters in New York, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi reiterated Indonesia’s commitment to world peace and to representing the interests of 193 UN member countries to the best of its abilities. As a non-permanent member, there will be four main priorities for Indonesia’s term at the Security Council: (1) advancing peacekeeping and peacebuilding as well as enhanced roles for women in order to create a global ecosystem of peace and stability; (2) promoting engagement between the Council and regional organizations in conflict prevention; (3) forging global partnership in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; and (4) developing a global comprehensive approach to address the root causes of terrorism and radicalism. While these four issues are of importance to peace and stability, there is one other issue still missing that could also be highlighted by Indonesia during its tenure starting next year: addressing maritime security. Advocating Maritime Security Issues Maritime security has become one of the most salient issues in the 21st century. This is because the ocean has become a vital component of global trade and economic growth. Roughly half of the world’s container ships — carrying around $5.4 trillion of trade and two-thirds of the world’s oil shipments — pass through the South China Sea from the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean. All the world’s major economies have stakes in ensuring the safe passage of shipping through the region; any interruption would have tremendous consequences to the global economy. Constant attention and management are thus needed to secure peace and stability in the oceans. As the largest archipelagic country in the world, with around 16,056 islands and 5.9 million square kilometers of water territory by one estimate, Indonesia holds strong credential to actively engage in ensuring the safety of shipping lanes, especially since the Indonesian archipelago is also home to some of the most strategic choke points for global trade such as the Malacca Strait, the Sunda Strait, and the Lombok Strait. Advocating maritime security issues at the UNSC would serve as the articulation of Indonesia’s aspiration to become the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF), to quote a term that has become commonly used under President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo. A seat on the Security Council will give Indonesia an important platform to raise concerns over growing nontraditional maritime security threats, such as piracy and armed robbery, illegal fishing, people smuggling, and terrorism. Of these, piracy has been an increasing problem, particularly in the Southeast Asian region. Despite an overall decline in the number of piracy attacks from 303 reported in 2015 to 221 in 2016, Southeast Asia has replaced the Somali Coast as the area most affected by piracy with 68 incidents happening in the South China Sea and 16 cases involving boarding, hijacking, and kidnapping occurring in the area of the Sulu-Celebes Sea in 2016. The nature of piracy attacks in Southeast Asia takes different forms; they are more related to the theft of oil and linked with black market and organized crime. In light of this, Indonesia can foster a cooperative approach that include naval patrols, joint aerial surveillance, and intelligence sharing. Besides the chance to address maritime security issues directly, Indonesia can make full use of its opportunity at the UNSC to advance the long-term green water ambitions of the Indonesian Navy. This is part of Indonesia’s plan to modernize its military force under the 2024 Minimum Essential Force (MEF) blueprint adopted in 2005. An Indonesian green water navy aspires to be able to do effective policing of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and to have limited regional, and occasionally even international, force projection capabilities. Thus, with awareness about the increasingly volatile strategic environment in the maritime domain, Indonesia should not only enhance the number of peacekeeper personnel up to 4,000 by 2019, but to also ramp up naval capabilities through joint capacity building program and transfer of technology (ToT)-based joint production with foreign vendors, in order to enable the Navy to perform a spectrum of low and high-intensity operations. Being a nonpermanent member of the Security Council, Indonesia is also presented with the opportunity to table its Indo-Pacific Cooperation concept and seize the initiative to propose the “rules of engagement” in two strategic seas, the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. Indonesia can very much follow up on the Jakarta Concord that was put forward under Indonesia’s Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Chairmanship from 2015-2017. With its credentials as the representative of Asia-Pacific group at the UNSC, Indonesia can also spearhead an informal consultation mechanism for security issues in the region among Japan, China, India, and Australia that will serve as the fulcrum of Asia’s stability and prosperity. As an emerging maritime power, Indonesia should continue to play a constructive role in addressing global maritime problems through the application of UNCLOS, maritime diplomacy, naval enhancement, and regional maritime cooperation. Indonesia’s international activism in the maritime domain will not come at the expense of the other four main priorities asserted by Marsudi, but it should be seen as a strategic repositioning in giving a much bigger impact during the short, two-year-tenure on the Security Council as well as strengthening Indonesia’s identity as a maritime nation and an archipelagic state.

#### Zhang Baohui argues that this conflict is deadly --

Zhang Baohui, 11-12-2015, "Rising Tension in the Waters: China, US and Unintended Crisis,” RSIS, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/co15242-south-china-sea-series-rising-tension-in-the-waters-china-us-and-unintended-crisis/#.W4VJOugzqsQ, Dae Accessed 8-28-2018 // JM

RSIS On October 27, USS Lassen, a guided missile destroyer, entered the 12-nautical mile zone of one of the Chinese-controlled features in the Spratly islands, which are currently going through massive land reclamation. China immediately issued strong protests against the US act. However, the Pentagon and the US Navy have stated that the so-called "freedom of navigation patrols" will become routine in the future. Although China did not take concrete actions this time to confront the US warship, future such operations could gravely destabilise the South China Sea situation, even peace and stability of the whole region. They could touch off an unintended escalation and push the two countries towards military conflicts. The logic is quite obvious. Dynamics of escalation More actions by the US Navy will corner the Chinese leadership and force them to respond to perceived provocations to its national interests and power reputation. After all, the South China Sea constitutes an essential part of China's geostrategic interests. Moreover, China's reputation as a great power is at stake when its key interests face a direct and deliberate challenge by another great power. Further, China may feel the urge to stand firm in order to deter future escalation in US challenges to its interests and reputation. Chinese decision-makers may worry that if China does not respond to this perceived US provocation, Washington may escalate pressures on China in the future. The above strategic imperatives could result in Chinese decisions and measures to resist further US naval intrusions into the 12-nautical-mile zones around its claimed islands in the Spratly chain. Indeed, on November 2, 2015, Vice Admiral Yi Xiaoguang, PLA's deputy chief of staff, stated that China "will use all means necessary to defend its sovereignty" if the US takes similar actions. The next day, General Fang Changlong, vice president of the Central Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party, told Admiral Harry Harris Jr, commander of the United States Pacific Command, that any future actions by the US Navy could trigger accidental escalations that harm the interests of both countries. Indeed, the Chinese are also escalating their actions. The PLA revealed that its air force conducted war games on October 30 in the South China Sea. Specifically, the photos released by the PLA suggest the war games involved Chinese J-11b jet fighters taking off from Woody Island, which has the closest airport to support military operations in the Spratlys chain of islands. Then, the PLA Air Force announced that it conducted a joint war game on November 2 that included a H-6k bomber launching cruise missiles in the South China Sea. Finally, on November 3, the PLA released rare photos of the JL-2 sea-based strategic missile, which is borne by China's Type 094 nuclear submarines, lifting out from the sea. Chinese media analyses all suggest that the unexpected release of the photos is meant to deter the US. Therefore, it is obvious that China has stepped up deterrence against a potential repeat of similar US operations in the South China Sea. Various Chinese rhetoric and measures suggest that could resort to more concrete and forceful measures to confront the US navy. If so, [therefore] a face-off between the two navies becomes inevitable. Even worse, [and] the face-off may trigger an escalation toward military conflicts. However, the US military appears oblivious to this scenario. A logical answer lies in the current conventional military imbalance between the two countries. The vast US conventional military superiority in theory discourages China from responding forcefully to the projected scenario. It is highly likely that US decision-makers assume China would adopt of policy of inaction when facing intruding American naval vessels. This US expectation is flawed, as China is a major nuclear power. When cornered, nuclear-armed states can threaten asymmetric escalation to deter an adversary from harming its key interests. The September 3 military parade in Beijing revealed that China's new generation of tactical missiles, such as the DF-26, could be nuclear-armed. Recent information also indicates that China's air-launched long-range cruise missiles can also carry tactical nuclear warheads. Indeed, the latest photos of the JL-2 sea-based nuclear missile lifting out of the sea could be a veiled nuclear signalling by China to deter the US. The challenge for the US is that while the South China Sea concerns China's strategic interests, few would think that these Spratly islands constitute US core interests. The asymmetry in stakes would certainly give China an advantage in "the balance of resolve" over the US. If so, when a crisis situation escalates and starts to involve potential nuclear scenarios, the US faces the stark choice of either backing down first or facing the prospect of fighting a nuclear-armed China. Neither option is attractive and both exact high costs, either in reputation or human lives, for the US. Therefore, it would be imprudent for the US to challenge China. By underestimating Beijing's resolve to defend its interests, reputation and deterrence credibility, this plan could touch off a spiral of escalation that would in the end harm US interests. What is vital for peace and stability in the South China Sea is that all concerned parties should base their strategies and policies on worst-case scenarios. Both China and the US need to consider how their actions may lead to unintended consequences, especially unintended escalation toward military conflict. Prudence is very much needed at this stage of Sino-US relations, when mutual mistrust has reached an all-time high. Imprudent actions by one or both parties may well turn mistrust into bloody military conflicts. Nobody, especially countries in the region, wants this scenario. If the US claims to be the defender of world peace and regional stability, it must do everything to avoid [a] scenario through unintended escalations. Zhang Baohui is Professor of Political Science and Director of #124the Centre for Asian Pacific Studies at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. He is the author of 'China's Assertive Nuclear Posture: State Security in an Anarchic International Order' (Routledge 2015).