



Release

Pacific Center for Island Security to Host International Speakers during “Security and Insecurity in Micronesia” Forum

May 20, 2025 Hagåtña, GU – On May 27 and 28, the Pacific Center for Island Security (PCIS) will be sponsoring a view of the region through the eyes of renown international experts. Six (6) speakers will present on a range of topics focused on geopolitical trends in the region. The presentations will be available on Zoom for all who wish to join.

The speakers include noted experts from the United States, Japan, China, New Zealand and Micronesia. A schedule of the presentations and a brief biography of the presenters is attached.

“This is a vitally important opportunity for us in the Micronesian Region to understand that there are many viewpoints as well as forces at work in the geostrategic maelstrom that islanders find themselves in. Inviting differing perspectives strengthens island governments and communities in our region north of the equator.”

PCIS Chair, Robert Underwood

The international speaker’s forum is a part of PCIS’ event focused on “Security and Insecurity in Micronesia.” In addition to the expert presentations, PCIS will meet with *Security of Micronesia Group* representatives from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei State and Yap State), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. The *Security of Micronesia Group* will examine the challenges and opportunities that the Micronesian region faces in the escalating geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China.

The “Security and Insecurity in Micronesia” meeting is an event that is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York through the Pacific Center for Island Security. The Carnegie grant to PCIS was part of its effort to examine “Understanding the Forces Shaping the Global Order.”

“The discussion we in Guam regularly hear from military commanders about “war footing,” “war fighting” and “war readiness” are reminders that the Micronesian region is at the forefront of the militarization of the global order. As islanders, it is in our security interest, and that of global security, to critically examine the path toward conflict that is being blazed through our homes.”

PCIS Chair

Speaker Schedule

Zoom Link:

https://events.zoom.us/j/AsvJojLI2t5NjHFVtZ9GCm7ru1w52OAqZI4h-R-0gv6BYBEkn_aK~ApvMm5I4jVrcPi3tlegBoLNx4cELWLIc00cAgGS9kNFUbwI0CS60u54IIg

May 27, 2025

11:20-12:00pm: Presentation by Dr. Zack Cooper

Theme: The future of alliances in the Indo-Pacific and the effect this may have on Micronesia.

1:10pm-1:50pm: Presentation by Dr. Van Jackson

Theme: The threat of great-power competition in Micronesia and how Micronesia can help shape its trajectory

2:00-2:40pm: Presentation by Dr. Ankit Panda

Theme: The escalating arms race, the prospects of limited or tactical nuclear conflict, and the role of Micronesia.

May 28, 2025

9:10-9:50am: Presentation by Dr. Gonzaga Puas

Theme: How Micronesian governments can respond to great-power competition

11:20-12:00pm: An External View (China)

Presenter: Dr. Denghua Zhang

Theme: China's view of geopolitical competition and the role of Micronesia

1:00-1:40pm: An External View (Japan)

Presenter: Dr. Hideyuki Shiozawa

Theme: Japan's view of geopolitical competition and the role of Micronesia

Security of Micronesia Speaker Line-Up

May 27

Zack Cooper

Topic: The future of Indo-Pacific alliances and their effects in Micronesia.

Bio Link: <https://www.aei.org/profile/zack-cooper/>

Zack Cooper is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he studies US strategy in Asia. He also teaches at Princeton University, is a partner with Armitage International, and serves as chairman of the board of the Open Technology Fund. He previously served on staff at the White House and Pentagon. Dr. Cooper has also worked at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. He holds a BA from Stanford University and an MPA and PhD from Princeton University. He is the author of *Tides of Fortune: The Rise and Decline of Great Militaries* (Yale University Press, 2025).



Van Jackson

Topic: Great-power competition in Micronesia.

Bio Link: <https://people.wgtn.ac.nz/van.jackson>

Van Jackson joined Victoria University of Wellington in 2017 as a Senior Lecturer in International Relations. He is also a Senior Research Scholar at Security in Context, where he co-directs its "Multipolarity, Great-Power Competition, and the Global South" project. Van holds additional policy research appointments as a Non-Resident Senior

Fellow at the Center for International Policy; a Distinguished Fellow with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada; as the Defence & Strategy Fellow with the Centre for Strategic Studies; and as a Senior Research Adviser with the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Nonproliferation & Disarmament. In 2024-25, Van was appointed as a Havens/Wright Visiting Scholar at the Havens Wright Center for Social Justice, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Van's research broadly concerns the class politics of geopolitics, especially the intersections of U.S. foreign policy with East Asian and Pacific international relations. He is the author of dozens of journal articles, book chapters, and policy reports, as well as five books, the most recent of which is with Yale University Press, called *The Rivalry Peril: How Great-Power Competition Threatens Peace and Weakens Democracy* (2025, with Michael Brenes), as well as *Grand Strategies of the Left: The Foreign Policy of Progressive Worldmaking* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), and *Pacific Power Paradox: American Statecraft and the Fate of the Asian Peace*, with Yale University Press (2023). His two earlier books, both with Cambridge University Press, were *On the Brink: Trump, Kim, and the Threat of Nuclear War* (2018), and *Rival Reputations: Coercion and Credibility in US-North Korea Relations* (2016).

Prior to joining Victoria, Van taught courses on Asian security, U.S. foreign policy, and Korea and Japan at Georgetown University, Hawaii Pacific University, the Catholic University of America, and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. His research has been funded by the MacArthur Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Academy of Korean Studies, and the Council on Foreign Relations, and he has held policy research appointments with the Center for a New American Security, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and Pacific Forum CSIS. Before becoming a scholar, Van was a practitioner of U.S. foreign and defense policy, serving in several positions in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense from 2009-2014, as well as the U.S. Air Force, from 2000-2006. During the 2020 US presidential election, he was an unpaid foreign policy adviser to multiple presidential campaigns.



Ankit Panda

Topic: Limited nuclear conflict, and the role of Micronesia.

Bio Link: <https://www.ankitpanda.com/about-me/>

Ankit Panda is the Stanton Senior Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His research interests include nuclear strategy, escalation, missiles and missile defense, space security, and U.S. alliances. He is the author of [*The New Nuclear Age: At the Precipice of Armageddon*](#) (Polity, 2025), [*Indo-Pacific Missile Arsenals: Avoiding Spirals and Mitigating Risks*](#) (Carnegie, 2023), and [*Kim Jong Un and the Bomb: Survival and Deterrence in North Korea*](#) (Hurst/Oxford, 2020). Panda is co-editor of [*New Approaches to Verifying and Monitoring North Korea's Nuclear Arsenal*](#) (Carnegie, 2021).

Panda has consulted for the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and his analysis has been sought by U.S. Strategic Command, Space Command, and Indo-Pacific Command. Panda is among the most highly cited experts worldwide on North Korean nuclear capabilities. He has testified on matters related to South Korea and Japan before the congressionally chartered U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Panda has also testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Strategic Forces. Before joining Carnegie, Panda was an adjunct senior fellow at the Federation of American Scientists and a journalist covering international security.

Panda is a frequent expert commentator in print and broadcast media around the world on nuclear policy and defense matters. His work has appeared in or been featured by the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *Economist*, the *Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the *Atlantic*, the *New Republic*, the *South China Morning Post*, *Politico*, and the *National Interest*. Panda has also published in scholarly journals, including *Survival*, the *Washington Quarterly*,

and *India Review*, and has contributed to the IISS Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment and Strategic Survey. He is editor-at-large at the *Diplomat*, where he hosts the [Asia Geopolitics](#) podcast, and a contributing editor at *War on the Rocks*, where he hosts [Thinking the Unthinkable With Ankit Panda](#), a podcast on nuclear matters.



May 28

Gonzaga Puas

Topic: Micronesia: Navigating the geopolitical competition between the US and China

Bio Link: <https://www.pacificleaders.com/dr-gonzaga-puas-ph-d/>

Gonzaga Puas (PhD) is the Director, Micronesian Institute of Research and Development (MIRAD), and Research Fellow, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), Brisbane, Australia. His research interests intersect the areas of climate change, the environment, Micronesian history, constitutional law, and international politics. Dr. Puas holds a Bachelor of Arts/Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Law (LLB), Master of Political Science and a Doctorate in Micronesian studies. Born and raised in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Chuuk State on the island of Lukunor in the Mortlock Islands. He is from the Sor clan. His doctorate thesis was published in 2021 entitled, "*The Federated States of Micronesia's Engagement with the Outside World: Control Self-Preservation and Continuity*", by the Australian National University Press. Also, he has written widely on Pacific Affairs particularly in relation to the Federated States of Micronesia.



Denghua Zhang

Topic: China's view of geopolitical competition with the United States in Micronesia.

Bio Link: <https://researchportalplus.anu.edu.au/en/persons/denghua-zhang>

Bio: Dr. Denghua Zhang is a senior fellow at the Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University. His research focuses on Chinese foreign policy, foreign aid and China in the Pacific. He has more than 130 publications, including with journals such as *Third World Quarterly*, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *The Pacific Review*, *Pacific Affairs*, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, *The Round Table*, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, *Security Challenges* and *Journal of Pacific History*. His article 'China's motives, influence and prospects in Pacific Island countries: views of Chinese scholars', published by *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* in 2023, has been promoted by the Oxford University Press as 'High Impact Political Science and International Relations Research'. His article 'China's influence and local perceptions: the case of Pacific island countries' won the Boyer prize as the best article of *Australian Journal of International Affairs* for 2022. His book *A Cautious New Approach: China's Growing Trilateral Aid Cooperation* is among the ANU Press' top ten new releases for 2020.



Hideyuki Shiozawa

Topic: Japan's view of Micronesia in navigating the geopolitical competition between the US and China

Bio Link: https://www.spf.org/iina/en/author/hideyuki_shiozawa.html

Director
Division of Island Nations
Ocean Policy Research Institute
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Previously Shiozawa served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as First Secretary at the Embassy of Japan in Fiji (2012-2015) and as Economic Adviser at the Embassy in the Marshall Islands (2006-2009) in charge of economic cooperation and politics. He was also Associate Program Officer at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (2009-2012) and JICA Volunteer Teacher in the Marshall Islands (2003-2006).

Shiozawa rejoined SPF in November 2015 as Senior Program Officer for the Pacific Island Nations Program and was appointed Director of the Division of Island Nations in July 2024, a position he holds to date.

Since 2003, Shiozawa has been involved in over 70 ODA projects and 30 SPF projects in the Pacific Island Countries and a number of dialogues. Most recently, he has been facilitating projects for Enhancing Human Resources for Maritime Security in the Micronesia Region III, Economic Revitalization in Pacific Island Communities By Boosting Community Based Tourism, Enhancement of Public-Private Partnership For Upgrading Japan's Strategy Toward Pacific Islands Region, Building a Foundation of Human Relationships Between Pacific Islands and Japan for Future Generation, Creation of a New Regional Order Layer in the Pacific Islands Region, and Promotion of Global Synergies under the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

Shiozawa holds an MSc in Earth Science from the Graduate School of Science and Engineering at Ibaraki University in his home prefecture in Japan.

