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Kuik Cheng-Chwee is Professor of International Relations at the National University of Malaysia and concurrently a nonresident senior fellow at Foreign Policy Institute, Johns Hopkins SAIS. He is currently on sabbatical as the Japan Foundation 2025 JFSEAP Visiting Fellow (September 2025-February 2026) at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. Professor Kuik's research focuses on non-great powers' alignment choices, Asian security, and international relations. Cheng-Chwee's publications have appeared in such peer-reviewed journals as

International Affairs, *Pacific Review*, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, and *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. He is author of *Theorizing Hedging: Explaining Shifts and Variations in Alignment Choices* (Cambridge, forthcoming), co-author (with David M. Lampton and Selina Ho) of *Rivers of Iron: Railroads and Chinese Power in Southeast Asia* (California, 2020) and co-editor (with Alice D. Ba and Sueo Sudo) of *Institutionalizing East Asia* (Routledge, 2016). Cheng-Chwee serves on the editorial boards of *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, and several other international journals. He holds an M.Litt. from the University of St. Andrews and a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He has been listed in Stanford University's Top 2% Scientists, subfield International Relations, since 2023.

* Discussant 1

Tomohiko Satake is an associate professor at the School of International Politics, Economics and Communication (SIPEC) at Aoyama Gakuin University. Previously he was a senior research fellow at the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) located in Tokyo. He specializes in international relations, Asia-Pacific security, and Japanese and Australian security policies. Between 2013 and 2014, he worked for the International Policy Division of the Defense Policy Bureau of the Japan Ministry of Defense as a deputy director for international security. He earned B.A. and M.A. from Keio University, and PhD in international relations from the Australian National University. His recent publication includes: "'Kyorin no Sensei' wo Koete: Reisengo no Nichigo Anzenhosyo Kyoryoku" [*Beyond 'Tyranny of Distance': Japan-Australia Security Cooperation after the Cold War*] (Keiso Publishers, 2022); "Explaining the difference between Japan-Australia and Japan-ROK security cooperation", *Pacific Review* (September 2024).

*** Discussant 2**

Antoine Roth is a research fellow at the Graduate School of Law of Tohoku University in Sendai. His research and teachings focus on China's foreign relations, on the international politics of East Asia and on the evolution of international order in the region. He holds a Master in Asian Studies from the George Washington University and a PhD in international politics from the University of Tokyo. He is the author of *A Hierarchical Vision of Order: Understanding Chinese Foreign Policy in Asia* (Bristol University Press, 2023).

*** Moderator**

Ryo Sahashi is a Professor of International Relations, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, the University of Tokyo. Dr. Sahashi specializes on international politics in East Asia. He sits on government panels including the Council on the Use of Real Estate and the Advisory Board for Promoting Science and Technology Diplomacy. He also works as Visiting Fellow of Keidanren Policy Research Institute. He has been visiting scholars with Stanford University, the Wilson Center, and Seoul National University. He sits on the board of Japan Center for International Exchange and National Bureau of Asian Research.

Dr. Sahashi received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Schools for Law and Politics at the University of Tokyo. His recent books are *US-China Rivalry: A Shift of American Strategy and Divided Worlds* (Chuko, 2021) and *In a Search for Coexistence: the United States and Two Chinas during the Cold War* (Keiso, 2015), and he edits *America Under Trump: Divided at Home, Watched by the World* (The University of Tokyo Press, 2025), and *Asia Rising: A Handbook of History and International Relations in East, South and Southeast Asia* (Springer, 2024). He has been on the editorial board on *Asia Policy*, *Japan Studies* (HUFS), and *International Journal of Asian Studies*.