

Editor's Comments

Dear *JTMS* Readers,

Greetings again from Seoul. As the end of another year approaches, territorial issues are as salient as ever. Not only do we have the war in Ukraine, which has become part of the regular news cycle, but now we have the war between Hamas and Israel. Both of these issues involve the assertion of two groups' claims to the same territory and, as history all too often bears out, conflict and bloodshed ensues. The *JTMS* staff sends their thoughts and sympathies to the innocents caught in the middle of these conflicts and to the families of those who have already fallen victim to violence. These conflicts provide grim reminder of the importance of *JTMS*' mission to better understand terrestrial and maritime territorial issues. With this in mind, this issue has some interesting offerings for our readers.

First, Thomas Reilly examines the ongoing causal forces of the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands dispute between Japan and China, arguing that a domestic impetus exists to sustain the crisis while offering a reformulation of the diversionary theory of war. He amends the diversionary theory of war which argues that beleaguered states may be motivated to engage in external crises to divert domestic attention away from negative sentiment. Reilly expands the traditional bounds of the theory to include both autocratic regimes and actions short of war, which represent two impediments to the advancement of diversionary theory, while creating linkages between negative domestic conditions within China to periodic increases in the intensity of the sovereignty dispute. His article represents the first steps in a theoretically stagnant literature to transform the diversionary theory of war from one of strict warfare into a theory of foreign policy, as well as considering alternate political needs and strategies to address them, whilst also representing an alternate explanation to a commonly cited flashpoint of great power conflict.

Second, Sean O'Malley highlights potential changes to the structure of the international system that may stem from recent trends of state and non-state actor interaction with the global undersea communications cable infrastructure (GUCCI). More generally, he wishes to highlight the potential of global technological interaction capacity as an analytical tool by which to hypothesize changes in the international system. Taking a structural approach of English School theory, O'Malley expands the concept of disaggregative technological interaction capacity and offers a new qualitative method by which to analyze the flows of interaction between units and structure in the international system. His analysis demonstrates the utility of the English School concept of interaction capacity for hypothesizing potential changes to the structure of international systems.

Third, in their article, Tarique Faiyaz and Balraj Kaur Sidhu underscore the imperative to prioritize challenges associated with Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU)

fishing and its resultant maritime security threats, focusing on the Bay of Bengal region. They advocate for enhanced regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing and foster a more robust, sustainable, and resilient blue economy. Faiyaz and Sidhu utilize a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from marine ecology, international law, and regional governance. They perform an extensive review of existing regulatory and policy frameworks, particularly international fisheries instruments, to identify gaps and areas for improvement and reveal the multifaceted and interconnected threats posed by transnational maritime criminal syndicates, seriously endangering the conservation of fisheries resources. Faiyaz and Sidhu find that the region's maritime security architectures lack cooperation, collaboration, and regional integration and it is incumbent upon India to forge close collaborative ties with the various littoral states to bolster maritime security within the region.

Fourth, Mirza Zeeshan Baig, Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Khanssa Lagdami, and Maximo Q. Mejia Jr. assess the adequacy of maritime governance for the safety and environmental aspects of domestic ferries from the perspective of a developing country by undertaking the case of Pakistan. Based on a novel approach developed for unified maritime safety onboard in response to IMO's new model safety regulation, Baig et al. employ the standard decision analysis A'WOT hybrid method to carry out the study. To this end, they consulted expert groups at various levels and fora to rationalize the internal and external factors, which were identified as strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats respectively. They find that Pakistan has many opportunities for domestic ferries along with a reasonable level of strength in its governance. However, they identify gaps in several components of the basic governance framework that pertain to policy and regulation, operations, institutional arrangements, innovation and technology, the human element, economics, and performance systems related to safety and environmental protocols at sea, which is due to lack of focused attention.

Fifth and finally, Kerry Liu asserts that the China threat has risen significantly since 2020 and examines the roles of China's territory-related issues, including Senkaku Islands, Xinjiang's Uyghurs, the South China Sea, a threat of war across the Taiwan Strait, China-India border conflicts, and Hong Kong national security law, in contributing to the China threat narrative. Based on weekly Google Trends search results from May 2020 to July 2022, Liu creates a series of time series variables to measure these narratives and adopts an Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model. Liu finds that, except for the South China Sea, all other issues are connected to the China threat by the English-speaking public. Also, the Uyghur issue has attracted the most lasting attention. These conclusions are supported by survey results and fundamental analysis.

In closing, I would like to thank our readers, our authors, and our editorial board and staff for providing the support on another great issue of *JTMS*.

Jongyun Bae
Editor