

Call for Papers

From the “Far East” to the “Indo – P acific”: Crises, Conflicts, and Peace Processes in the Asia-Pacific (20th–21st Centuries)

Annual conference of the journal *Relations internationales*

Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry, 1–2 June 2026

Over the past century, the Asia-Pacific has been one of the most dynamic and influential regions in the world, both economically and geopolitically. Since the late Cold War, the global center of gravity has shifted eastward, with transpacific trade surpassing transatlantic flows and Asian economies driving most of the world’s growth. This transformation has reshaped strategic balances, inspired new geopolitical concepts such as the “Indo-Pacific”, and challenged long-dominant Western frameworks for understanding world order. Yet, this region’s complex histories of conflict, negotiation, and peacebuilding remain comparatively underexplored, particularly in francophone scholarship, despite their centrality to the evolution of international relations in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Today, shifting power relations are once again transforming the Asia-Pacific. China’s ambition to redefine the regional order and challenge American predominance has intensified strategic competition and revived unresolved Cold War legacies. Maritime and territorial disputes, resurgent nationalisms, and widespread rearmament have contributed to a “cold peace”. While the region has experienced four decades without major inter-state war, internal repression, civil conflicts, and ideological rivalries continue to test the resilience of this fragile stability.

Historically, the Asia-Pacific has been a major theater of war, while former ideological allies, such as the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, and Vietnam, clashed when national interests diverged. Between 1946 and 1979, North and Southeast Asia accounted for the majority of global war casualties. Current flashpoints, such as Taiwan, the South China Sea, or the land borders between China, India, and Pakistan, underscore the endurance of Cold War legacies.

Despite this central role, the region’s history remains underexplored and often framed through Eurocentric perspectives in francophone historiography. French international history, shaped by Pierre Renouvin, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, and their successors, has addressed Asia, but only recently begun to decentralize and globalize 20th-century history, as seen in the works of Pierre Grosser and others. To help correct this imbalance, the editorial board of *Relations internationales* has chosen the Asia-Pacific as the focus of its 2026 annual conference, to be held at Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry.

The conference aims to expand the research questions, scales of analysis, and the range of actors considered, while integrating more Asian sources, methods, and perspectives. It seeks to encourage dialogue among historians, political scientists, and area specialists to better integrate Asian viewpoints into the study of international relations. The conference will focus on Northeast Asia (China, Taiwan, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Mongolia) and Southeast Asia (ASEAN members) with possible extensions to the Pacific Islands, India, and the broader Indo-Pacific.

Particular attention will be given to the actors and modalities of negotiation, including the often-overlooked pre-negotiation phases, as well as the memory and legacy of these processes. The role of international (UN) and regional organizations (ASEAN) in post-war reconstruction and peace consolidation will also be addressed. The conference will further examine Asian conceptions of peace, security, and pacifism, as well as the emergence of pacifist narratives in the early 21st century. Building on studies such as Stein Tønnesson's *Explaining the East Asian Peace* (NIAS Press, 2017), participants are invited to examine how the Asia-Pacific has gradually been reframed as a zone of relative interstate stability, sometimes described as a "Pax Asiatica". They are also encouraged to reflect on the role of the major powers in sustaining or challenging this regional order.

Conference Themes

1. Wars, Legacies, and Reconfigurations (20th Century)

- **Imperial and expansionist conflicts:** the World Wars; Western, Russian, and Japanese imperialisms; Cold War conflicts; colonial and decolonization struggles.
- **Actors in war and society:** the roles of national and foreign armies, non-state combatants, civilians, displaced populations, women, and minorities; social and cultural consequences of conflict, including mass violence, reconstruction, and postwar transformations.
- **Transnational and regional perspectives:** official historiographies, commemorations, and the instrumentalization of history for nationalist agendas; cross-cultural influences on war, diplomacy, and memory.
- **Media, literature, and visual culture:** war reporting, propaganda, literature, cinema, photography, and digital media as vehicles of memory, ideology, or mobilization.

2. Tensions and Emerging Conflicts (21st Century)

- **Flashpoints and maritime disputes:** Taiwan, the South and East China Seas, and regional border zones.
- **Strategic competition and realignments:** China's rise, U.S. repositioning, and responses from ASEAN, Australia, Europe, India, and Japan.
- **Intra-state conflicts and political violence:** insurgencies, separatist movements, terrorism, and cyber conflict.
- **Environmental and resource challenges:** climate change, migration, and competition for natural resources.
- **Influence operations and disinformation:** state and non-state efforts to shape perceptions, interfere in domestic politics, destabilize regional relations through misinformation campaigns, covert influence networks, or engage in espionage, and contribute to escalating tensions and crises.

3. Peace Processes, Diplomacy, and Regional Security

- **Institutions and peace mechanisms:** The UN, ASEAN, ARF, EAS, and other regional bodies and their responses to shifts in power and normative challenges.
- **Negotiation and reconciliation:** conflict resolution, mediation, and post-conflict settlements.
- **Non-state diplomacy:** the roles of NGOs, think tanks, peace movements, and citizen initiatives.

- **Transitional justice and reconstruction:** demobilization, reparations, reintegration, and long-term peacebuilding, including the interaction between local, regional, and international standards of justice and security.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals should include:

- A paper title
- A 400–500-word abstract (in French or English) outlining the research question, sources, and methodology
- A short biographical note (institutional affiliation, position, and relevant publications)

Proposals should be submitted by **24 January 2026** to pierre.journoud@univ-montp3.fr
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Selected papers will be considered for publication in two special issues of *Relations internationales* in 2027.

For the original CfP in French see <https://relations-internationales.fr/> or contact ariane.knuesel@unifr.ch.

Indicative Timeline

- Abstracts due 24 January 2026
- Notification to authors 28 February 2026
- Program announced 15 April 2026
- Conference 1-2 June 2026
- Final papers for publication 31 July 2026

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