NUS POLITICAL SCIENCE
Guest Lecture

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"Geopolitical Shifts in the South Pacific: Is the US or ChinaWinning?"

ABSTRACT
In the last two years we have seen intense discussions about the geopolitical situation in the Asia-Pacific region. Doubts about the long term strategic commitment of the United States to this region have increased while China has shown a growing assertiveness. A geopolitical tug of war between these two powers is also taking place on the fringe of the Asia-Pacific region, in Oceania. This lecture draws attention to developments in Oceania which comprises Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Island countries. The focus will be on whether there are changing patterns of the military-strategic and economic engagement between China, the United States and Oceania. Is China about to shift the old power balance in the South Pacific region? Is China with its Belt and Road projects contributing to high and unsustainable debts of vulnerable South Pacific Island Nations? The speaker will analyse these developments and the reactions of the US, Australia and New Zealand to these trends.

BIO
Dr. Anne-Marie Schleich started her career with the German Foreign Service in 1979. Most recently, she was the German Ambassador to New Zealand and seven Pacific Island States from 2012 to 2016. She was the German Consul-General in Melbourne, Australia from 2008 to 2012. Dr. Schleich has also served in Singapore, Bangkok, Islamabad and London. From 1998 to 2001 she was Deputy Head of the Asia Section, Foreign Affairs Directorate in the Federal Chancellery, Berlin. In 2001 she was appointed Head of the Directorate for International Environmental Policies at the German Foreign Office.

She studied Political Science under a Fulbright scholarship from 1972 to 1973 at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts. She was later a Research Fellow in Political Science at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina. Dr. Schleich holds a Masters degree and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Mannheim. Since her retirement from the Foreign Service in 2016 she has been a speaker at several international security conferences in Asia and has been a guest lecturer at the National University of Singapore. She has also written a number of articles on geopolitical trends in Oceania and on the historic maritime border treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia.