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Introduction

As the editor of this international and multidisciplinary monograph on the Pacific, I am equally honored and humbled to present to you the work of great authors, enthusiasts of Oceania, diplomats, security and defense practitioners, academics, lawyers, and a geologist. They are the foundation of this book, and their expertise and experience in highly specific disciplines and geographical areas ensure the perfect end result – the book *21st Century as the Pacific Century: Culture and Security of Oceania States in Great Power Competition*. My minuscule suggestions only made the final effect coherent and comprehensible, minding the technical language and explicit way of presenting arguments used by each author – the unquestionable expert in their own domain.

Pacific Studies is the discipline in which this book has been written. The Pacific region (Oceania, Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific, minding the perspective taken into consideration) is so complex that using only one lens to analyze it would simply be not enough, or perhaps, let me say, gross ignorance. Thus, the authors of the presented monograph represent various disciplines of science and, consequently, diverse methodologies. They have shared with us knowledge and awareness of domestic and international law (diplomatic law, consular law, environmental law, security law, constitutional law, the law of the sea), international relations and political science, security studies and public policy, history and cultural studies, environmental protection, and climate change.

The 21st century is indeed the Pacific century, but not only to the inhabitants of that region. The relevance of geopolitical changes observed across the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Rim remains essential for the security architecture of other regions and the entire world. Cultural aspects, including legal culture, must not be forgotten, or omitted when analyzing this maritime region. The term “Great Power Competition” (GPC) initially described geopolitical perceptions of economic-political-military rivalry between the hegemonic United States and aggressive tactics by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Yet, minding all the dynamics and interdependence of political and

cultural factors, GPC should be seen as a strategic challenge between the Western civilization nations and Chinese allies or like-minded authoritarian regimes. The PRC's ambitions towards Asia and Oceania are successful by virtue of the sea-level rise in those poor, undeveloped, and unstable states, being relatively new democracies.

This book is therefore another effort by the editor¹ to bring to the Polish as well as European readers the knowledge about the Pacific, its inhabitants, and the global powers interacting with the nations of Asia and Oceania – facts, figures, and profound analysis of the intertwined mechanisms conditioning cause-and-effect relationships for the region and, consequently, for the whole international community. The theme of the book was intentionally chosen by me and used as the name of the ANZORA annual international conference organized in association with the Regional Center for International Debate in Cracow (Regionalny Ośrodek Debaty Międzynarodowej, RODM) at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow (Akademia Ignatianum) on December 9, 2022.

In considering the value this publication can bring to decision-makers, diplomats, analysts, researchers, lecturers, and journalists, as well as readers willing to consolidate their knowledge based on reliable pillars, this book was designed to showcase the underrated role of the Pacific. Subsequently, authors were chosen with a bias toward including multidisciplinary, multinational, and gender-inclusive perspectives. Specialists were chosen based on their immense depth of comprehension, uncompromising passion for their work, and, last but not least, their contagious enthusiasm to share the knowledge and spread the truth no matter how bitter it might be. The book is divided into three principal parts: “Culture of Pacific Island States,” “Ocean Change Dilemmas,” and “Great Power Competition in the Indo-Pacific.” The authors of the 17 chapters come from or work in Australia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, French Polynesia, India, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Enjoy diving into the exceptional content of this book!

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¹ See J. Siekiera (ed.), *Security in Indo-Pacific and development of Oceania: Commonwealth's Presence in the Region*, Elipsa, Warszawa 2022; J. Siekiera (ed.), *Regional policy in the South Pacific*, Warsaw University Press, Warszawa 2021; J. Siekiera (ed.), “Australia: Climate, Crisis and Change,” *International Studies. Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* 2/2021; M. Sprengel et al., *New Zealand's Statehood, Security and Economics – History and Present*, Polish Economic Society, Poznań 2020; A. Kandzia-Poździał, J. Siekiera (eds.), *Australia in 20th and 21st century: Politics, History and Culture*, University of Silesia Press, Katowice 2016.