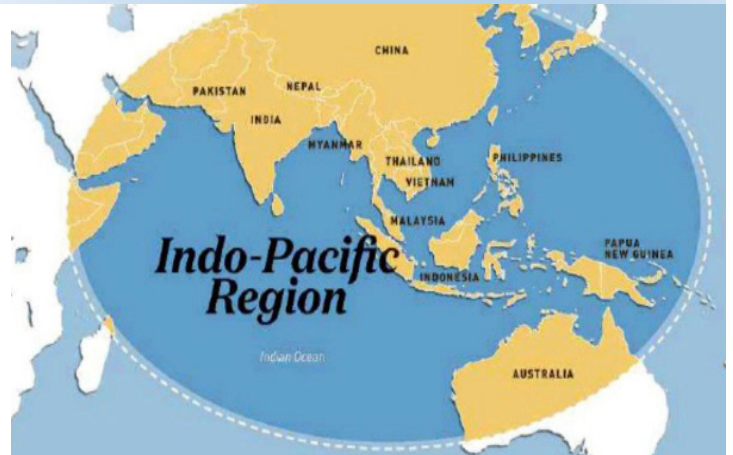




CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

INDO-PACIFIC NEWSLETTER



A Monthly Newsletter on Security and Strategic Issues on Indo-Pacific Region from
Centre for Air Power Studies

From the Editor's Desk

This month on December 12, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to his Canadian Counterpart Melanie Joly with a focus on areas of cooperation between the two nations in the Indo-Pacific amidst China's expansionist behaviour. Japan came up with its revised National Security Strategy (NSS) on December 16 and took a tougher stance to improve its capabilities to defend itself from threats faced by China, North Korea and Russia. One of the notable revisions to the security strategy is that of Japan aiming to possess counterstrike capabilities to forestall an enemy attack. The revised NSS may help Japan in putting forth a concrete stance in pursuing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Moreover, South Korea also unveiled details of its Indo-Pacific strategy on December 28 with a focus on promoting freedom, peace and prosperity through the establishment of a rules-based order and cooperation on human rights.

This month we present specially selected opinions and cherry picks covering all this and more. Do check out our Social Media Corner for some engaging and insightful content, including debates, interviews and podcasts from eminent experts.

Jai Hind

Vol II, No 08, 07 January 2023

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PEEP-IN

Quad pivots India to the Indo-Pacific

Read more about it at :-

<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/quad-pivots-india-indo-pacific>

QUOTE

"The Indo-Pacific signifies the confluence of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans that can no longer be handled as distinct spheres."

*- S. Jaishankar,
Minister of External Affairs*

Opinions/Review/Expert View

The Small Island Developing States in IOR: Challenges and opportunities

Source: Kaira Vartak, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-small-island-developing-states-in-ior/> 15 Dec 2022.



Introduction

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has become pivotal to geopolitics in recent times. The region serves as a connecting hub for global energy and commodity trade and comprises important Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) and major choke points such as the Strait of Malacca. The IOR has become central to the geostrategic aspirations of large powers with vested interests in the region. States such as the United States (US), China, Russia, India, France, the European Union (EU) etc. have started enhancing their engagement in the region by strengthening economic and political relations and demonstrating their maritime prowess. The objectives are mainly to ensure stability and security in the region, freedom of navigation, and that global trade remains uninterrupted. China's increasing presence in the region, its economic engagement for strategic purposes, and geopolitical aspirations have driven the newfound interest of multiple actors in the IOR. As a result, there has been a surge in strategic rivalry and competition

The SIDS need to ensure that they are not viewed as pawns in the geopolitical competition but as important stakeholders in the region.

in the IOR. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) located in the Western Indian Ocean such as Maldives, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles, are being dragged into the great power rivalry as a result. The geographical location of these islands is of strategic importance, ever since the Indo-Pacific architecture materialised. The islands provide easy access to the choke points, are located close to important SLOCs, and can serve as a base for the replenishment of resources for maritime powers conducting surveillance in the region. The bigger powers have been engaging with the islands on a larger scale to boost their presence in this maritime expanse. There is a large difference in the ideation of security interests that drives the bigger powers to the SIDS and the security

interests of these islands. The SIDS have been advocating at various international forums for support and assistance to combat their challenges associated with resources, development, climate change, and most of all, survival. This paper aims to bring out the challenges of the SIDS, and showcase that the geostrategic rivalry and competition is detrimental to their interests.

Challenges and opportunities

The SIDS, by nature, face multiple challenges due to their remote locations, size, fragile ecosystems, small population, and limited resources and capabilities. Most of the SIDS are classified as middle-income states, but SIDS like Comoros are among the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The economies of these states are not diversified and are

highly dependent on a few sectors like tourism and fisheries. Climate change exacerbates their challenges, adding an extra burden on their frail economies. The SIDS account for two-thirds of states that suffer the highest relative losses (1 percent to 9 percent of GDP per year) due to natural disasters. A report prepared by the UNEP in 2014 highlights the impacts of climate change on the SIDS, which have been broadly listed as; rising sea levels, intensification of natural disasters, weather pattern changes and population displacement caused by climate and environmental change. Apart from the threat of the low-lying islands going underwater in the future, rising sea levels directly impact the economic sectors of the SIDS. For instance, saltwater intrusion affects freshwater resources and diminishes the quality of agricultural land. The limited freshwater supplies require the establishment of desalination plants, which are large-scale infrastructure projects, often not feasible on a group of islands that are dispersed in a region. The SIDS are already largely dependent on food imports as 50 percent of the SIDS import more than 80 percent of their food. A further reduction in food production will increase their dependence on food imports. Self-sufficiency is a distant dream for SIDS in this aspect. Fish exports account for a large share of the revenue for these states. The fishery industry faces challenges of loss of Exclusive Economic Zones due to shifting baselines, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Additionally, rising sea temperatures also negatively affect

The islands provide easy access to the choke points, are located close to important SLOCs, and can serve as a base for the replenishment of resources for maritime powers conducting surveillance in the region.

marine biomass in the resource-rich zones of SIDS. Almost 50 percent of the GDP of SIDS like the Maldives and Seychelles, depends on the tourism industry which was hampered by the pandemic. This highlights the vulnerability of the islands to external shocks. The IOR has noticed a sharp increase in climate change-induced natural disasters which are likely to intensify in the coming years. The vulnerability of the SIDS increases exponentially when the effects of climate change come into play. Sustainable development and mitigating the challenges posed by climate change are central to the interests of the SIDS.

Ensuring food, water, economic and climate security should be guiding factors for interactions with the SIDS. Powers such as the US, Japan, Australia, and India are largely concerned with the increasing influence of China in the region. The main focus of their maritime security policies is freedom of navigation, IUU fishing, piracy and uninterrupted trade flows. Islands play a major role in China's maritime security policy, as is evident by its island development strategies in the contested South China Sea and cooperation initiatives with island states in various geographies. The SIDS have welcomed the development and support initiatives from China owing to their vulnerabilities. From a port development project in Madagascar and major infrastructure development projects in the Comoros islands to a Free Trade Agreement with Mauritius and development assistance to Maldives; China has firmly embedded its roots in the region. When Maldives owed a debt of nearly US\$1.5

billion to China in 2018, it had to turn to its traditional partner, India, for assistance to prevent an economic crisis. Madagascar is also heavily surrounded by Chinese presence and involvement in its economy and is worried about being trapped in debt. Chinese-funded enterprises comprise 90 percent of the island's economy. Chinese migrants left very few job opportunities for the locals, disrupted trade and commerce, and established a monopoly of Chinese products in the market. Such a heavy involvement of China in Madagascar puts it at a high risk of instability and political upheaval. This is a clear example of how the strategic interests of large powers can bring the SIDS to the brink of collapse.

It is necessary for the interests of all stakeholders in the IOR to align, and to pursue collective interests of security and stability in the region. The SIDS are already very active in advocacy for climate change and development assistance. There are several forums that have emerged in the recent past that have provided significant space to the SIDS of all geographies such as the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway which is an international framework under the UN umbrella that has initiated a stronger action from the international community to support the vulnerable islands. It guides national, regional, and international development efforts to help these states achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Similarly, the Alliance of Small Island States

Islands play a major role in China's maritime security policy, as is evident by its island development strategies in the contested South China Sea and cooperation initiatives with island states in various geographies.

The SIDS of the IOR can leverage their strategic position and use it to their advantage to make the larger powers acknowledge their security interests and issues.

is a representative body of 39 small island states that provides a platform to voice their grievances. The Indian Ocean Commission is yet another intergovernmental body that consists of the islands; Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Réunion (French overseas region). These forums can be utilised to discuss the effects of geopolitical tensions on their own stability and sustainable development, and engage with other stakeholders in the region. Through this engagement, the SIDS should make use of the opportunity to ensure that the larger powers understand their security interests and include it in the larger security architecture.

Conclusion

In most cases, decisions regarding security in the region have been taken by the influential, and larger powers without the SIDS. The SIDS of the IOR can leverage their strategic position and use it to their advantage to make the larger powers acknowledge their security interests and issues. The need of the hour is for stronger alliances and regional groupings to emerge, with significant participation of the SIDS, so that other actors do not downplay or overlook their issues and interests. On the other hand, the SIDS of this region must strengthen their collaboration with each other. They must make a collective effort to make their challenges and issues known to the other actors. Rather than being viewed as pawns in the geopolitical

competition, the SIDS must be viewed as important stakeholders in the region. This is the main change in the mindset, policies and approaches that are needed for a secure and stable region.

China's First Indian Ocean Region Forum and its Growing Assertiveness in the Region

Source: Dr. Pragya Pandey, ICWA

https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=8760&lid=5728 21 Dec 2022.

On 21 November, 2022, China's important development aid agency, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), hosted an 'Indian Ocean Region Forum', for the first time, in the city of Kunming. The Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson in a regular Press Briefing on November 23, 2022, said that the first 'China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development and Cooperation' was held as part of series of events under the 6th China-South Asia Expo.

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A multi nation forum on the Indian Ocean region (IOR) can be seen as the latest initiative of China's expansive strategy for the IOR. Important to note is that, the Forum was organized by the CIDCA, which is a government agency, established in 2018, directly under China's State Council with an aim to formulate strategic guidelines, coordinate and offer advice, and supervise implementation for foreign aid-related

issues. Luo Zhaohui, the current Chairman of CIDCA, has formerly served as the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China till 2021 and also has been China's Ambassador to India.

In his opening speech at the Forum, Luo Zhaohui mentioned about China's 'Maritime Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Global Development Initiative (GDI)', he also said that "We propose to hold the China-Indian Ocean Region Development Cooperation Forum on a regular basis".

The joint statement put up on CIDCA's website after the Forum meeting, read that "the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation was held in hybrid way under

the theme of 'Shared Development: Theory and Practice from the Perspective of the Blue Economy'. It was also mentioned that, "high-level representatives of 19 countries, including Indonesia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Afghanistan, Iran, Oman, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar, Mauritius, Djibouti, Australia and representatives of 3 international organizations were present at the Forum".

However, soon after the statement was out, Maldives and Australia denied the reports of any official participation at the Forum. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Maldives issued a statement on 27 November 2022, responding to the claims of CIDCA, alleging the participation of Maldives. The statement mentioned that "the Ministry would like to clarify, that the Government of Maldives did not participate in the Forum and

had communicated its decision to not participate to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the Maldives on 15 November 2022".

According to media reports Maldives' former President Mohammed Waheed Hassan and Australia's Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd joined the Forum virtually. Maldives Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement also clarified that "the participation by individuals or group of individuals from the Maldives does not constitute official representation by the Maldivian government".

On the same day, Australian High Commissioner to India, clarified through a tweet, on 27 November 2022, that "contrary to media reports, no Australian Government official attended the Kunming China-Indian Ocean Forum on Development Cooperation". He also added that the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Tim Watts, attended the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Ministerial Council on November 24 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the only ministerial-level forum for the Indian Ocean region.

The Kunming joint statement mentioned that issues including climate change, disaster resilience and blue economy were discussed at the Forum. China proposed to "establish a marine disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation mechanism between China and countries in the Indian Ocean region" and also "a blue economy think tank network". It also mentions that "a few countries expressed their readiness to host the next China-Indian Ocean Region Forum".

The Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming

the focus of strategic and economic attention in regional and international affairs and is perceived as the emerging center of gravity, more so in the context of the Indo-Pacific. One of the key factors that have been consequential in influencing the geopolitics of the region has been China's asymmetric rise and its increasing foothold across the Indian Ocean region. The Ocean plays an important role in the world energy production and global maritime trade. It serves as one of the world's busiest trade corridors, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca are the world's most important strategic chokepoints

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by the volume of oil transit. Given critical economic and geostrategic significance of the Ocean, the littoral countries, as well as extra-regional powers, have been showing greater interest.

In recent years, Beijing, in its bid to become a global power, has been pushing for a greater role in the IOR. China has gradually developed a modern and advanced naval force to project power beyond its shores. PLA navy is well equipped with force projection capability such as aircraft carrier, attack and conventional submarines, long-range reconnaissance aircraft, and a large number of ocean-going platforms coupled with considerable sea-lift capabilities. In recent years, Beijing has stepped up its deployments in the Indian Ocean. Recently, Yuan class of strategic ships of PLA Navy have been frequenting the Indian Ocean like the recent passage of ballistic missile, satellite tracking and seabed mapping ship 'Yuan Wang 5', near Sunda and Lombok Straits. Alongside, China with its 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR), an integral part of its

BRI initiative, is using its financial muscle and economic diplomacy to gain geopolitical clout in the region. Beijing has launched a number of expansive, non-transparent and unsustainable projects under the rubric of MSR in the IOR.

Chinese naval facilities at strategic locations, including in Gwadar, situated near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, in Hambantota in Sri Lanka overlooking the most strategic sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and its first overseas base at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, are not only to serve its economic interests, but also to give it strategic leverage to emerge as a major maritime power in the wider Indo-Pacific region. Many of the ports in Africa being built by China's assistance have also been visited by Chinese naval vessels or are dual-use civilian-military ports. Notwithstanding the actual or stated motive of the projects, it is quite clear that the scope and scale of the projects could bestow China with powerful long-term strategic influence in the IOR, which has regional countries concerned about the projects.

It is important to recall that the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi had visited Maldives and Sri Lanka from 7-9 January 2022. In Colombo, he had announced China's intention of creating a forum for Indian Ocean "island countries" to promote common development.

The recent Kunming forum can be seen as Beijing's attempt to further its reach and outreach in the IOR and probably an attempt to create another platform in the region, which already has established regional organisations,

the most representative being the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), where India has been a founding member and plays an important role and most of the IOR countries are members.

Although, China also is a Dialogue partner of the IORA. In addition, India has launched positive initiatives in the IOR like the 'SAGAR' announced by PM Modi in 2015. Under the vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All), India endeavors to strengthen economic relations and development in the IOR, in a mutually supportive and cooperative manner. This

spirit is further enhanced under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) announced in 2019. India engages with regional partners to help build economic capabilities and improve maritime security, improve connectivity and collective security through multilateral platforms like the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). So clearly, any meeting related to the Indian Ocean where India is not present is, inconsequential.

Conclusion

Of late, China has been bolstering its presence in the Indian Ocean. Chinese belligerence in the IOR has caused apprehensions among the regional countries and has led to a situation where the region is becoming increasingly securitised. The IOR, therefore, is becoming an increasingly contested space, with security balances in the region looking uncertain. By organising an IOR Forum, in the garb of shared development, China intends to widen and assert its sphere of influence in this strategic maritime region.

China with its 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR), an integral part of its BRI initiative, is using its financial muscle and economic diplomacy to gain geopolitical clout in the region. Beijing has launched a number of expansive, non-transparent and unsustainable projects under the rubric of MSR in the IOR.

What South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy Says About the Development of a "Yoon Doctrine"

Source: Scott A. Snyder, CFR

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/what-south-koreas-indo-pacific-strategy-says-about-development-yoon-doctrine> 29 Dec 2022



South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol arrive for the G20 Leaders' Summit in Bali, Indonesia on November 15, 2022. (Mast Irham/Pool via Reuters)

South Korea's December 28 release of its Indo-Pacific Strategy received an early endorsement from U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, who described the strategy as "a reflection of our shared commitment to the region's security and growing prosperity." South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin referred to the strategy as the "de facto foreign policy doctrine" of the Yoon Suk-yeol administration. The strategy clearly reflects the Yoon administration's themes of alignment with the United States based on shared values, stepping up as a "Global Pivotal State," and South Korea's high degree of economic interdependence in the Indo-Pacific. South Korea's effective implementation of the strategy in practice will depend on how it manages regional relations with China, potential economic contradictions between economic growth and supply chain resiliency, and dual security challenges from China and North Korea.

Whether South Korea's recently released Indo-Pacific Strategy will be considered the "de facto foreign policy doctrine" of the Yoon Suk-yeol administration will depend on its implementation.

Sullivan's early endorsement of the strategy reflects that South Korea, simply by issuing an Indo-Pacific strategy, has joined a growing number of countries including the United States, Japan, India, France, Canada, and ASEAN in issuing strategy documents and statements that adopt the Indo-Pacific as a framing mechanism for describing approaches to regional relations rooted in shared universal values. For South Korea, the issuance of its Indo-Pacific strategy underscores the country's commitment to a values-based alignment with the United States and other like-minded countries in its efforts to undergird regional security and prosperity. South Korea's prioritization of the building of a rules-based regional order and promotion of the rule of law and human rights in its Indo-Pacific strategy represent central tenets of this approach.

In addition, South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy further reflects South Korea's aspiration to step up to regional and global leadership by playing the role of a global pivotal state that "advances freedom, peace, and prosperity through liberal democratic values and substantial cooperation." South Korea's commitment to the expansion of comprehensive security cooperation, promotion of science and technology cooperation, leadership on climate change and energy security, tailored development cooperation, and strengthening two-way public diplomacy and person-to-person exchanges reflect South Korea's aspiration to take leadership as a partner and provider in promoting mutual economic growth. Now that South Korea has reiterated its aspirations for leadership, much will depend on how the Yoon

administration resources and manages specific policies to achieve these objectives.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy is its emphasis on the country's trade dependency as a context for framing its strategic approach. The strategy notes that the Indo-Pacific region represents 78 percent of total exports and 67 percent of total imports to South Korea, two-thirds of South Korea's foreign investments is directed to the Indo-Pacific, and 64 percent of South Korea's inbound crude oil and 46 percent of inbound natural gas supplies pass through the South China Sea. These points provide an indirect case for the preservation of geopolitical order in the region that seeks to uphold and maintain inclusiveness, trust, and reciprocity, including with the elephant in the room—China.

But rising geopolitical risks are forcing South Korea to uphold supply chain resiliency and value technological cooperation with like-minded nations rather than continuing to face risks from unfair economic competition and stealth of technology. Despite experiencing such risks at the hands of China, rather than naming China as a “pacing challenge” as the United States does in its 2022 National Defense Strategy or calling out China as “an increasingly destructive, global power” as Canada did in its Indo-Pacific strategy, South Korea appeals to China to “nurture a healthier and more mature relationship as we pursue shared interests based on mutual respect and reciprocity.” Whether it will be possible for the Yoon administration to

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achieve a positive relationship with China based on the principles of inclusion and reciprocity while maintaining its alignment with the United States in favor of the rule of law and liberal international order will be a major test of Yoon's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Furthermore by framing its Indo-Pacific strategy around South Korea's high degree of export dependency, the Yoon administration has highlighted the stakes and risks the country faces from shifting regional geopolitics. The establishment of cross-regional trade and investment relationships that preserve both South Korean and regional prosperity is a critical means by which South Korea may achieve its regional leadership goals as a global pivotal state. This means knowing when to adapt to changing

geopolitical realities created by the rising U.S.-China rivalry and knowing how to build resilient economic relationships with regional partners designed to contain and manage geopolitical risk. South Korea's cultivation of trade, aid, investment, and people-to-people ties with regional partners in Southeast Asia including but not limited to Vietnam (South Korea's leading trade and investment partner in the region) and its ability to manage continued trade relations with China in spite of geopolitical headwinds will determine the success or failure of South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Most significantly, South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy underscores the extent to which South Korea must simultaneously manage both

peninsular and regional security risks through the pursuit of a dual strategy that addresses both the North Korea and China threat. South Korea cannot afford to ignore the North Korea threat, but it also can no longer afford to treat North Korea as a threat to South Korea's security and prosperity to the exclusion of rising dangers to regional security. South Korea's development of an Indo-Pacific strategy alongside robust U.S.-South Korean policy coordination to deter North Korean aggression has become more important as North Korea seeks to export insecurity regionally and globally through continued missile and nuclear development.

The development of regional coordination mechanisms most recently represented by the robust U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral leaders' statement issued in November 2022 offers a new platform for simultaneously addressing peninsular and regional threats. In this respect, South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy will enable the country to gain regional help in dealing with North Korea while expanding cooperation with other countries to address challenges to stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

South Korea's leadership and regional stature have clearly grown in recent years, as has the scope of South Korean interests and capabilities to contribute more broadly to the promotion of regional security and prosperity. But whether the strategy is worthy of being considered as Yoon's flagship foreign policy doctrine will depend not only on the issuance of such a strategy but also on its implementation. That is the challenge that the Yoon administration now faces.

Great Powers and Small Islands: The Democratic Powers Need to "Lean In"

Source: Ian Kemish, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/great-powers-and-small-islands-the-democratic-powers-need-to-lean-in/> 19 Dec 2022



In the first article, we argued that developments in the Pacific are of direct interest to the global community. At the most fundamental level, the region's experience of climate change will signal what is ahead for the rest of the world. And in geo-strategic terms, China's growing activity in the region portends significant changes in the global strategic balance. The democratic powers cannot simply leave it to Australia, their leading "standard bearer" in the Pacific, to support and engage the region amidst an increasingly difficult struggle between two value systems.

In the second of a two-part series, as the Indo-Pacific takes central focus in geopolitics, democratic nations must work to keep the region's strategically located island nations out of China's sphere of influence.

Fortunately, the old-fashioned view that the Pacific should remain "our patch" is hard to find among serious Australian strategists these days. Canberra has always worked willingly in the region with New Zealand, which remains a modest but useful partner in the Pacific and adds particular value in the Polynesian sub-region given its links there. But there is a new openness in Canberra to working in alliance with like-minded others from further afield.

India can make an important contribution by lending its strategic weight to the democratic effort in the region. The inspirational value, to the Pacific Island nations, of India's development story and its status as a major Indo-Pacific power is not to be underestimated. If people-to-people links provide Australia with a solid platform for positive engagement with the Pacific then the same is true of India, with its strong diaspora in the region, focused on the longstanding community in Fiji but extending to more modern waves of migration, business travel and international employment, which have seen people of Indian origin move into positions of increasing influence right across the region. They are making an important contribution and can be thought of as a strategic asset.

Building on these links, India and Fiji announced in October this year that the prestigious World Hindi Conference will take place in Nadi, Fiji, in 2023. This is smart public diplomacy; it supports India's assertion of Hindi as a global language. It also makes the useful point that there is a cultural platform for further economic and security engagement with the Pacific region.

Commitment to this kind of engagement is clearly building, both bilaterally and through the quadrilateral security alliance. Australia and India have lifted their defence and security collaboration very substantially in recent years, in the context of both their bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership and their joint membership, with Japan and the United States, of the Quadrilateral Alliance (the "Quad").

India's role is central to the evolving geopolitical role of the Quad and its clearly stated aim of upholding a "free and open Indo-Pacific".

Their security collaboration has a maritime focus, reflecting the strong complementarity between their navies' respective projections in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Last month, they refreshed their cooperation by coming together with the other Quad members for joint exercises in the Philippine Sea, one of the gateways between the two great oceans. Canberra and New Delhi have built a substantial platform for further bilateral maritime surveillance cooperation through their joint work in the Indian Ocean, which both countries' naval doctrines already define as a region of enduring strategic interest.

In recent times, the pattern of Indian high-level engagement has tilted east perceptibly, towards Australia and the Pacific. Indian Foreign Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, has visited Australia twice this year to strengthen bilateral ties and discuss enhanced collaboration in the region. The PNG Foreign Minister has indicated publicly that planning is underway for a potential visit to the country next year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, presumably in conjunction with his visit to Australia for the Quad Summit. This would be the first visit by an Indian head of government to the Pacific's largest nation.

Each of the Quad partners have been working in parallel to strengthen their bilateral security and development links with each other.

This is all very welcome. India's role is central to the evolving geopolitical role of the Quad and its clearly stated aim of upholding a "free and open Indo-Pacific". There is great potential for the Quad to play an even stronger regional security role, notwithstanding the natural differences between its members' strategic threat perception, risk tolerance and

strategic culture – India, in particular, arguably the most exposed to Chinese retaliation, differs from the other members in terms of its overall strategic alignment. It cannot rest, like the others, on a formal military alliance with the United States, and its determination to maintain strategic autonomy will keep it focused on multi-alignment.

Notwithstanding these differences, cooperation among the Quad members seems set to strengthen as China continues to challenge the rules-based order. In extending its collaboration across both the military and development sectors, the Quad should focus its collective energy a little more on the Pacific, while still maintaining its existing strong collaboration on the “Indo” side of the greater region. The Australian Government will no doubt want to put some of the focus on the Pacific when Prime Minister Albanese hosts his Quad counterparts in Canberra next year.

This collaboration is not limited to the military sphere. The establishment in 2021 of the Quad Infrastructure Coordination Group—an expert panel to identify new infrastructure projects across the region to be part-financed by member countries—signalled a desire to compete with Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to strengthen infrastructure investment across the region.

Each of the Quad partners have been working in parallel to strengthen their bilateral security and development links with each other. The India-Japan relationship is one of the strongest strands in all this, and each member has its own substantial strategic relationship with the US. Over the last year, Australia and Japan, for their part, have

signed a bilateral security partnership and an agreement allowing their forces reciprocal access to each other’s military bases and ports. Australia recognises that Japan has been a consistent supporter of development in the Pacific; it is the third largest bilateral donor there after Australia and New Zealand. And Japan shares Australia’s serious concerns about the detrimental impact of Chinese military engagement in the region. The two countries collaborate extensively on Pacific development projects.

The United States has recently swung in with some additional support, announcing the first ever US-Pacific partnership strategy in September and convincing Pacific Island countries, including the Solomons, to embrace an associated framework agreement underpinned by a significant increase in US development expenditure. This followed

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announcements earlier in the year that Washington would move to expand its diplomatic footprint in the region, establishing missions in Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Kiribati. Each of these countries have, to some extent,

fallen into China’s embrace in recent years.

Show some respect

It’s important that the democratic powers put new energy into working together in the region, but it’s also vital that the Pacific countries themselves feel consulted and respected in the process. The AUKUS partnership, unveiled in September 2021, is an important initiative to strengthen ties between Canberra, London, and Washington in the region. The Australian media leapt on an evident failure of communication with France—this important Pacific partner was

affronted by Australia's abrupt abandonment, in its rush to join the new alliance, of a submarine deal with French industry.

France wasn't the only one. The countries of the Pacific were also surprised by AUKUS. They were not pleased about the announcement of substantial upgrades in defence expenditure in the Pacific, and particularly the headline initiative that Australian nuclear-powered submarines would be deployed in their region. Some of these countries had experienced their own traumas with nuclear testing in the 20th century, and they lashed out. Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said that Australia and its AUKUS partners should shift their focus to what the Pacific sees as the highest priority. "If we can spend trillions on missiles drones, and nuclear submarines" he said, "we can fund climate action". Leaders from across the region said that it would have been nice to be consulted, or at least forewarned.

AUKUS has great potential, but the story of its birth is a useful reminder that if the aim is to build influence in the region, it's important to recognise the people who live there, and to respect their perspective. The Pacific is not a vacant expanse, after all.

Makeover for Japan's Security Strategy

Source: Simran Walia, ISDP

<https://isdp.se/makeover-for-japans-security-strategy/> 29 Dec 2022



The China's military expansion, North Korea's nuclear power and now Russia's invasion of Ukraine have all propelled Japan to revise its National Security Strategy (NSS) in terms of taking a tougher stance on being able to improve its capabilities to defend itself from threat.

Japan's National Security Strategy was revised on December 16, turning away from its long-time pacifist constraints to grapple with security threats.

Japan's National Security Strategy was revised on December 16, turning away from its long-time pacifist constraints to grapple with security threats. The new strategy views China as an immediate and greatest challenge and threat to the security and peace of Japan.

Counterstrike Capabilities and Defense Spending

One of the notable changes in the revised security strategy is that of aiming to possess counterstrike capabilities to forestall an enemy attack and two, increasing the defense budget to 2 percent of the GDP over five years (by 2027) to protect itself from rampant risks from China, Russia, and North Korea. A concept of comprehensive security was developed in the 1970s by the then-Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira and emphasized the broader

scope of security to encompass non-traditional and non-military domains. In recent years, the security environment around Japan has become severe due to which Tokyo is attempting to move towards a comprehensive approach with a major focus on robust military capabilities, technological innovation, and economic statecraft.

The possession of counterstrike capabilities is important for Japan as it aims at achieving certain capabilities to defeat invasions. Japan's current interceptor missile defense system is quite inefficient in deterring North Korean missiles. It is further believed that the use of counterstrike capability is constitutional as it would be in response to an imminent enemy attack. However, opponents feel that this would be against Japan's notion of a pacifist constitution as the same weapons can also be used offensively. The Kishida government has addressed such concerns by stating that the new strategy does not allow for pre-emptive strikes. Japan also considers counterstrike capabilities as a powerful conventional deterrent to countries that have made advances in missile-related technologies. The counterstrike capability would also prepare Japan for an integrated air and missile defense system by strengthening its tracking and interception capabilities.

Japan's security strategy aims to double defense spending to around 2 percent of its GDP, which is about 43 trillion yen. This defense spending target would push Japan's annual budget to around 10 trillion yen. Japan has targeted to purchase the U.S.-made Tomahawks and also

the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles along with the development of hypersonic weapons. Japan has also decided to ensure cybersecurity at Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) and the defense industry, which will work toward the efficient launching of long-range cruise missiles. This five-year plan of increasing Japan's defense spending would make it the world's third biggest military spender after the United States and China.

Turning Point for Regional Security

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida remarked that the National Security Strategy is at a turning point which is vital for protecting the nation. North Korea has recently tested its ballistic missiles several times and also sent one over Japan. Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted Japan to take a stance towards an assertive foreign policy. The Biden Administration has welcomed Japan's new security strategy as one that will bolster the U.S.-Japan alliance. The NSS too referred to the U.S.-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of Japan's security policy.

Furthermore, Japan is deepening its security partnerships with other like-minded countries to counter China's rise in the Indo-Pacific region and the world. Japan's new strategy and its consideration of China and Russia as threats have yet again made the Quad grouping a relevant one. The NSS has shown that the re-balance of power in the Indo-Pacific is vital by describing the grave threat posed by Beijing. China's military activities are of concern to Japan and the entire international community,

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due to which it is required that Japan respond comprehensively in cooperation with its allies and like-minded countries. The revised NSS depicts a drastic change from Japan's 2013 NSS in which Japan attempted to enhance a mutually beneficial relationship with China.

China has intensified its aggressive moves around Taiwan and peace in the Taiwan Strait is important for Japan as well as the Indo-Pacific region. China has further vowed to unify Taiwan by force if needed and increased its military pressure on the island. Beijing's military activities became evident in August 2022 when it fired five ballistic missiles inside Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone near the Okinawa prefecture. The acquisition of long-range missiles such as the Tomahawk would change the dynamics in East Asia with a stronger U.S.-Japan alliance after AUKUS. The revision of the NSS is a bold step for Japan which would also help in strengthening the free and open Indo-Pacific region.

The revision of Japan's security strategy is also beneficial for India as this would further deepen defense cooperation between the two countries as Japan may now share its high-end technology and intelligence with India. Both India and Japan have a common threat: China, due to Beijing's continuous military tensions with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the People Liberation Army's firing missiles into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Japan's new NSS aims at acquiring credible deterrence capabilities and further expanding Japan's role within the U.S.-Japan alliance, which would

also help in strengthening its position in the Indo-Pacific region.

South Korea Unveils First Ever Indo-Pacific Strategy, Terms India as Main Actor

Source: Rachel Gilmore , Global News

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/south-korea-unveils-first-ever-indo-pacific-strategy-terms-india-as-main-actor/ar-AA15Keao> 28 Nov 2022



In the Indo-Pacific Policy, South Korea's National Security Adviser Kim Sung-han detailed that the country aims to strengthen the Special Strategic Partnership as well as economic ties with New Delhi. (Image Courtesy: YONHAP News Agency) © Provided by The Financial Express

In the Indo-Pacific Policy, South Korea aims to strengthen the Special Strategic Partnership as well as economic ties with New Delhi.

“Every issue that matters to Canadians, our national security, our economic prosperity, democratic values, climate change or again human rights will be shaped by the relationship Canada has with Indo-Pacific countries.”

The 24-page report has stated that it plans to increase its engagement with key partners in the region. The report focuses on expanding and strengthening its strategic dialogue and cooperation both within the Indo-Pacific region

and also on the global level.

India & South Korea

With India it is keen to increase its strategic communication and cooperation through high-level exchanges both in defence and foreign

affairs, as well as strengthening its enhanced economic cooperation by upgrading the ROK-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

It also talks about building an open and inclusive architecture in South Asia through different substantive cooperation programmes with sub regional multilateral including the Indian Ocean Region Rim association (IORA). South Korea had joined IORA as dialogue partner in 2018 and the SAARC which it joined as observer in 2006.

In Oceania it states that Australia and New Zealand are like minded partners and share interests and values.

And towards maintaining and strengthening the rules based international order in the region, South Korea is looking at deepening its ties by identifying new cooperation agenda in areas like defence, critical minerals, security, supply chain and climate change response. And with New Zealand it is looking at expanding cooperation in the economic sphere.

Africa and Indo-Pacific

In the new report it has stated that it will host the Korea-Africa Special Summit in 2024 to deepen its ties with countries along the eastern seaboard of Africa and the rest of the African continent.

South Korea since 2009 has increased its support for international efforts on counter-terrorism and maritime safety. And as part of these efforts Cheonghae Unit has been deployed to the Gulf of Eden. There are plans to explore more cooperation programmes with

the countries on Coastal Eastern Africa in the maritime domain. It states that there are plans to support the partners in the region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through development cooperation which are especially tailored and to also increase collaboration on transnational challenges of mutual concern.

Also it plans to further bolster its network with East African countries and others in the Indian Ocean through its dialogue partnership with IORA and new regional organisations like Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

Europe & Latin America

To realise its vision for a free, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific South Korea plans to further deepen its cooperation with the European Union and its member countries like Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Several countries in Europe have unveiled their own Indo-Pacific strategy.

According to the report South Korea is looking for greater linkages and cooperation between the Indo-Pacific and Europe.

“What I’ve seen in there is content-rich, and it’s backed up by dollars. So the intentions are pure,” Hyder said.

It states that Latin America is a major partner and it has plans to expand its collaboration with the countries in the region on matters related to economic security and trade as well as global issues on international stage and also to work towards strengthening multilateral cooperation networks with Latin America and Caribbean like Pacific Alliance, Mercosur, SICA and the CARICOM.

India is already holding talks with groupings like Mercosur for expansion of the trade agreement; with SICA and CARICOM it is

working towards building deeper cooperation and with Pacific Alliance India already holds observer status.

USA & Japan

South Korea states that it has close cooperation with the USA and Japan – a useful trilateral platform of cooperation and this helps in not only addressing North Korea's nuclear and missile threats but also supply chain disruptions, emerging regional and global issues as well as cyber security, health crisis and climate change.

The report states that there is a potential for trilateral cooperation with the US and Australia which will help to tackle different challenges in supply chains, emerging technologies, critical minerals and cyber security among others.

Cherry-Picks of the Month

1. *Maritime Road to 2030: EU'S Indo-Pacific Footprint and India* - <https://www.isdp.eu/content/uploads/2022/12/Jag-Panda-EU-Indo-Pacific-v5.pdf>
2. *Great Powers and Small Islands: An Update from the Pacific and its Engagement with Australia* - <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/great-powers-and-small-islands-an-update-from-the-pacific-and-its-engagement-with-australia/>
3. *Japan's Place in Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy* - <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2022/12/07/commentary/world-commentary/japan-canada-relations/>
4. *Chinese Threat Hurting South Asian Power Balance. But US Support for India can Change* - <https://theprint.in/opinion/chinese-threat-hurting-south-asian-power-balance-but-us-support-for-india-can-change-this/1278025/>
5. *Increasing Maritime Power Among the Quad Nations* - <https://asiatimes.com/2022/12/increasing-maritime-power-among-the-quad-nations/>
6. *Is Japan's New National Security Strategy a Paradigm Shift?* - <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/is-japans-national-security-strategy-a-paradigm-shift/>
7. *Japan-Australia strengthening their security Cooperation* - <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/japan-australia-strengthening-their-security-cooperation/>

CAPS Experts-InFocus

1. *India's G20 Presidency: Challenges and Opportunities* - <https://capsindia.org/indias-g20-presidency-challenges-and-opportunities/>
2. *India-ASEAN Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* - <https://capsindia.org/india-asean-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific/>
3. *China's Technology Resilience with 'Strategic' Partners is Getting Fruition* - <https://capsindia.org/chinas-technology-resilience-with-strategic-partners-is-getting-fruition/>

Debates/Panel Discussions

1. Geopolitics: Indo-Pacific - The New Great Game | Indo-Japan Conclave 2022 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHxplb0yWZo>
2. China in Hollywood, Hollywood in China: A Discussion with Erich Schwartzel and Ying Zhu - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKsyn24DRCM>
3. Naivety On China, Hypocrisy Elsewhere - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BV_Oxi8i07g



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