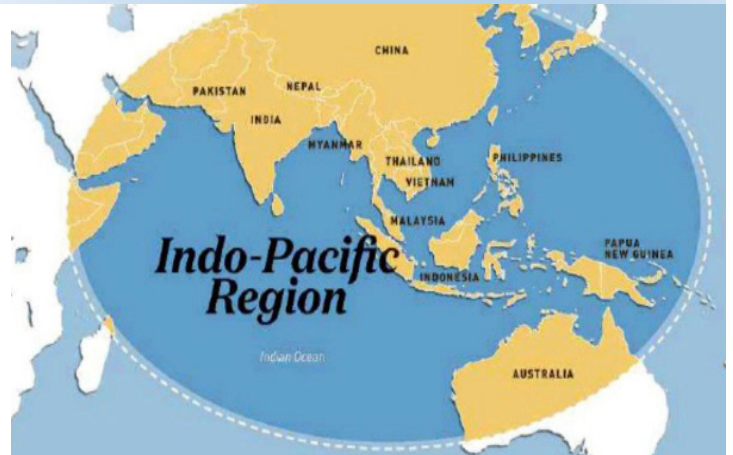




CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

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

As we settle into 2023, tensions in the Indo-Pacific continue to run high. Although both India and China are set to be major engines of economic growth in fiscal 2023, border tensions remain high. The Tawang clash, and continued standoff at Depsang and Demchok, has left little optimism for the year ahead. Alongside preparing for a continued pattern of military tensions and border clashes, India is also raising its international profile. Not only is New Delhi hosting a special negotiation of the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum (IPEF) in the coming days, it is also actively holding various G20 working group events, and championing its digital technology agenda, leading up to the final Summit. In a sign of New Delhi's emerging leadership and self-confidence, India hosted a Global South Summit last month, inviting 125 developing nations to discuss specific issues and policy areas over 10 sessions. With a rapidly growing economy – India likely topped Britain in 2022 – Delhi's importance as an Indo-Pacific power is visible in the importance accorded to it by major regional and global economies. One example of this is the semiconductor sector, where multiple players are looking at India as a manufacturing hub. It is our pleasure to present for you the highlights of the month – happy reading!

Jai Hind

Vol II, No 09, 07 February 2023

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PEEP-IN

IAF and French Carrier Strike Group Conduct Bilateral Exercise off Western Coast

Read more about it at :-

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/iaf-french-carrier-strike-group-bilateral-exercise-off-western-coast-8412194/>

QUOTE

"India is a reliable neighbour, a trustworthy partner, one who is prepared to go the extra mile when Sri Lanka feels the need."

- S. Jaishankar

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-pushes-for-greater-trade-and-energy-links-to-boost-sri-lanka-s-recovery-101674205738336.html>

Opinions/Review/Expert View

India-Australia Defence Cooperation and Collaboration in the Indo-Pacific

Source: Shubhamitra Das, AIIA

<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/india-australia-defence-cooperation-and-collaboration-in-the-indo-pacific/> 30 Jan 2023



The geostrategic positioning of India and Australia on the Indian and Pacific Oceans has helped with the convergence of interests, enabling relations to expand and steadily deepen. Unlike in earlier times when New Delhi and Canberra were searching for equal grounds for cooperation, the concept of the Indo-Pacific has made this easier, enhancing the conviction that greater engagement was an inevitability of their geographic circumstances. It made them partners to jointly take responsibility for maintaining a free, open, inclusive and peaceful Indo-Pacific, which demands a noticeable tilt towards defence and security cooperation.

India has long aspired to be the key protagonist in the Indian Ocean; Australia has wanted to more naturally belong to the region. Moreover, Australia's foreign policy over the years has emphasised playing a

constructive role in the region with enhanced regional engagement. Though China looms large in each nation's strategic calculation, the issues that unite both countries go beyond China and include the multifaceted challenges of maritime security, piracy, armed robbery, smuggling of small arms, protracted internal conflict, illegal, unprotected, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, cyber security, climate change, and ocean-born trade security.

The India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020), upgraded from the bilateral strategic partnership of 2009, is an effort to broaden the scope of their defence and security relationship by finding new initiatives, methods, and mechanisms to sustain mutual security interests. These

The significant rise in defence and security ties between India and Australia has led to an ease in dealing with their responsibilities in multilateral regional forums. The institutionalisation of cooperation has also become more strategic.

have been bolstered to-date through cooperation in the AUSINDEX, Kakadu, Pitch Black, Milan, and Malabar military exercises, and with further collaboration in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, 2+2 ministerial dialogues, Joint Working

Group for research on enhancing defence industry, mutual logistics, and intelligence support and sharing agreements. These have included, for example, the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement and officer exchange programs. In addition, Australia's invitation to India to join Exercise Talisman Sabre, the most important military exercise between Australia and the United States, will set another milestone for cooperation.

Both countries further engage in humanitarian matters, energy security, and

marine and space research. Their commitment to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in Afghanistan and within the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in vaccine distribution, for example, highly has been successful. In energy security, both have agreed to focus on UN Sustainable Development Goals and work on new and renewable technology in solar and wind energy. One potential area for cooperation – being maritime powers – will be wave energy for sustainable and resilient energy sources. The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, in which India and Australia are deeply involved, will work on a whole array of issues involving marine ecology; security of maritime borders; pollutants, like marine plastics; IUU fishing; and marine research for conservation purposes. In addition, India and Australia have updated the Memorandum of Understanding in space programs, technology advancement, and joint space programs. Australia will also be supporting India in tracking the Gaganyaan mission – India’s first space-manned mission – at Cocos Keeling Island.

Currently, India and Australia are at a crucial juncture. The election of the new government in Australia in 2022 is likely to aid the strong relationship between the two nations. But the turn for India to head the G20 is also expected to facilitate greater cooperation, particularly in economic and trade liberalisation and potential reform of economic regimes such as the World Trade Organization. In April 2022, India and Australia signed their first Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement.

What Australia and India can achieve bilaterally to make the comprehensive strategic partnership effective is to engage in dialogue with regional littoral countries on defence and security.

The fast pace at which their trade took off – from US\$13.6 billion in 2007 to US\$24.3 billion in 2020 – shows the many benefits of diversifying their trade. In addition, the elimination of tariffs for nearly 90 percent of Indian exports will further boost the Indian economy.

The question is whether India will continue to engage its economy regionally in multilateral economic bodies. While it declined to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, India has begun a process of seeking bilateral FTAs with most member countries. What Australia and India can achieve bilaterally to make the comprehensive strategic partnership effective is to engage in dialogue with regional littoral countries on defence and security. This engagement will help with confidence-building and familiarity among partners. However, the advantage of this type of institutionalisation of the Indo-Pacific depends upon the degree to which states seek interaction. The littoral states, in this sense, should be included within the Indo-Pacific complex as much as possible.

The emerging paradigm of inclusivity and pluralism within a free, open, and peaceful Indo-Pacific will bring together the littoral and less powerful countries of the region and empower them to join and engage with others; that is, those who otherwise do not have a voice or clout in international political platforms. Along these lines, the Indian Security and Growth for all (SAGAR) initiative seeks to enhance cooperation through information sharing,

capacity building, coastline surveillance, and infrastructure building. The India-Australia-Indonesia trilateral dialogue is another attempt to enhance cooperation in the same direction. Although it was presumed in India that the Labor government in Australia might be more inclined toward China, it was understood that this did not mean a policy and behavioral turnaround. Instead, Canberra's focus will include a mix of continuity and change.

Australia has come a long way in its institutionalisation of the Indo-Pacific, and its ability to diversify its interests by engaging with the littoral countries deserves special attention. To be sure, China's increased aggression in the South China Sea and its diplomatic handling of Australia's COVID-19 inquiry have been influential here. But the process has also been captive to such institutionalisation as mentioned above. Australia's involvement with Quad and its participation in the military exercises with India and other Quad countries in the Indian Ocean will continue to strain its relations with China. In addition, the Russia-Ukraine war will likely continue to drive foreign policy activism and cooperation among like-minded countries, of which Australia figures prominently.

The takeaway here is that regular interaction between the two countries on various defence-related activities has worked to enhance mutual respect and understanding of shared values. This interaction has broader implications. Both nations can support each other in addressing issues of mutual concern

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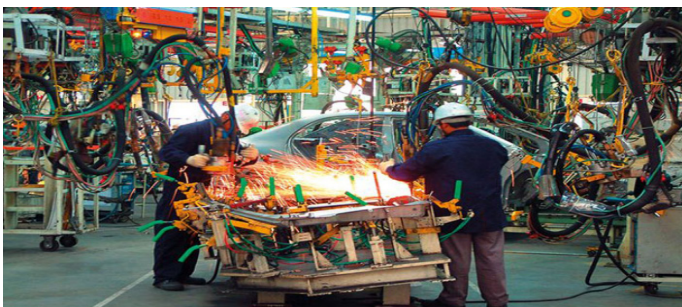
internationally. Their engagement in trilateral groupings like the India-Australia-Indonesia and India-Japan-Australia dialogues, as well as joint engagement in the Supply Chains Resilience Initiative and the Quad with the United States and Japan, represent successful examples of bilateral and multilateral trust and relationship-building. One significant outcome of these growing partnerships will be

to revive and strengthen the Indian Ocean Rim Association in awareness generation, capacity-building, and consensus-building. Lastly, all the above initiatives are government efforts to enhance partnerships. The involvement and regular interaction of academia, think tanks, civil society, and the media have been equally important and will continue to play an important role in boosting these relationships.

Roaring tiger: India's world @ 2023

Source: Nilanjan Ghosh and Soumya Bhowmick, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/roaring-tiger-indias-world-2023/> 27 Jan 2023



The year 2023 is a significant year for India. It marks the Indian presidency for the G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). From the G20 perspective, the Indian presidency is crucial as it is in the middle of the troika from the global south, with Indonesia being its predecessor, and Brazil being its successor.

On the other hand, this also marks the year when India overtakes China to become the world's most populous country in mid-January (India's 1.417 billion versus China's 1.412), according to World Population Review (WPR) estimates. This indeed creates an opportunity for India to convert this massive pool of human capital to a productive factor input in its avowed goal to achieve 5- and 10-trillion-dollar GDP. Despite a deteriorating global geopolitical and financial climate, fears of inflation and dip in forex and the demand slowdown, the World Bank has upgraded growth projections for India from 6.5 per cent to 6.9 per cent, citing the economy's strong resilience to global shocks.

The pandemic and subsequent Ukraine-Russia war had three crucial lessons for the world economy. Firstly, the overdependence of

the Global Value Chains, or GVCs on specific economies must be reduced, and should be diversified. This is because any type of shock emanating from those locations can have a cascading impact on the world economy.

Secondly, the contours of economic partnerships have changed. Countries now strive to strike the right balance between globalisation and localisation, through bilateral and multilateral platforms characterised by leveraging sub-regional comparative advantages. Thirdly, there is no doubt that the pandemic has provided an uptick in the use of technology – ranging from the provision of social security payments at the grassroots to government-level conferences.

The India Story

From these three points emerge the Indian story that should be highlighted in the year of India's G20 presidency. It all began with the Make in India initiative (MII), devised to transform India into a global design and manufacturing hub. Though MII might give the impression of an age-old import-substitution doctrine, on the contrary it is about creating enabling conditions for attracting foreign investment and corporations for setting up their business units in India.

At the same time, the sub-national federal state governments in India were also drawn in the race of projecting their state economies as attractive destinations for businesses to set up their units. In the process of promotion of this competitive federalism framework, the states are continuously bringing about substantial reforms

India has a significant role to play in reducing economic inequalities by converging the wedge between the rich and poor, as technology progresses in the largest democracy of the world.

in their practices and constantly evolving to reduce the transaction costs of doing business on the basis of the Business Reforms Action Plans, or BRAP parameters and those set up by the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT). This has led to development of industrial corridors, opening up of FDI-like defence manufacturing, railways, space, single brand retail, etc.

As such, India received the highest annual FDI in FY 21-22 at \$84.835 billion. There is an expectation that in the forthcoming Union Budget 2022-23, there will be fiscal incentives for some of the MII sectors like the production of toys, bicycles and leather and footwear through extension of the Production Linked Incentive or PLI scheme that was introduced during the pandemic years. This is slated to provide more employment through incentivisation of the high-employment potential sectors.

How Does India Compare?

Over the last two to three decades, western companies invested in China due to their low production costs and enormous domestic consumer markets. Now, the scenario has changed: many western corporates have been thinking of a China+1 strategy, that entails diversifying business into other countries beyond China to reduce their concentrated risks. Here, India definitely has the potential to emerge as a viable alternative. There are at least seven counts where India scores over China.

First, India has a distinct advantage over

China from the perspective of low-cost sourcing primarily due to lower labour and production costs.

Second, continued heavy government investment in physical infrastructure is expected to cut transportation time and also costs by 20 per cent in India. However, for China, it has often been allegedly stated that pick-up, over-the-road transport and final delivery are rarely done by the same company, thereby making tracking of shipments difficult at times.

Third, it is the comparative demographic dividend that will work in favour of India. While more than 52 per cent of India's population is less than 30, the corresponding figure for China stands at around 40 per cent, which will tail off in the next 10 years, while youth in India will promote savings and

India is well placed to adequately provide digital skilling to its young human capital base, in order to leverage the contemporary forms of the industrial revolution that it had missed out in the era of colonisation.

consumption growth. Along with high internet penetration at 43 per cent, India is well placed to adequately provide digital skilling to its young human capital base, in order to leverage the contemporary forms of the industrial revolution that it had missed out in the era of colonisation. The neoclassical, as well as endogenous growth theories point to variations in technology levels as the cause behind poverty in developing countries.

Hence, India has a significant role to play in reducing economic inequalities by converging the wedge between the rich and poor, as technology progresses in the largest democracy of the world.

Fourth, tariffs on many Chinese products have been steadily increasing, which gives India an advantage in this area. Tariffs have increased by

as much as 25 per cent on steel products.

Fifth, India's labour costs and wages are much more competitive as compared to China. Chinese wages were \$1,197.32 per month in 2019 while India's were estimated at \$147.46 per month. More specifically, the average cost of manufacturing labour per hour was four times in China as compared to India as estimated for 2014.

Sixth, it is the English language skill that sets India ahead of China. English is the second official language in India and executives often use it to conduct business, making communication easier for US and many European clients.

Seventh, recent policy interventions indicate that India is ready to grasp the opportunity created by the China+1 strategy followed by many corporates. The Production Linked Incentive, or PLI scheme, liberalisation of the foreign direct investment policies particularly in manufacturing and reform of labour and taxation regimes, have created a conducive policy environment for businesses to flourish, generate employment, and boost the investment climate in the economy.

India has steadily grown to counter China by bringing more investments through policies such as setting up land pools and industrial townships in Karnataka and Telangana, executing tax incentives and fast-track clearance in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, allowing a 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route, and slashing

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Besides, Indian diplomacy is playing an extremely crucial role by responding to an increasingly dynamic world order. Partnerships such as the QUAD and I2U2, trade agreements with Australia, the UAE, UK, Canada and the EU, and enhanced outreach in Africa have provided Indian business access to finance, technology, and markets.

The Roaring Tiger

Many apprehended that India's decision to not join the world's largest trading bloc – the Regional

Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP in 2020 to protect the domestic market and curb trade deficits was a lost opportunity in getting integrated with the broader MSME value chain of the ASEAN. However, there are substantial measures taken on various counts to counteract for that perceived "lost opportunity".

Steering the G20, which comprises approximately 90 per cent of the global GDP, is a uniquely sticky position, but the

Indian leadership couldn't have been at the helm at a better time, when the world needs it the most as one of the strongest voices for the Global South. It is clear that India is the new roaring tiger of the world economic bloc, and prepared to emerge as an important cog in creating a new order from within the pandemonium that the world has been hurled into.

India's G20 Presidency: Decoding the Digital Technology Agenda

Source: Sharinee L. Jagtiani and David Hagebölling, *The Diplomat*

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/indias-g20-presidency-decoding-the-digital-technology-agenda/> 30 Jan 2023



Depositphotos

The Group of Twenty's (G-20) large and heterogeneous membership has always been a double-edged sword: a source of legitimacy on the one hand, a challenge for collective action on the other. Against the background of Russia's war against Ukraine and intensifying China-U.S. competition, avoiding stasis has turned into an exercise of paramount diplomatic skill.

India's 2023 G-20 presidency therefore comes at a decisive moment for the group. As a major economic power, key strategic player, and now the most populous country on earth, India possesses the political heft to carve out a role for the G-20 in a drastically changed geopolitical context – and it is making digital technology governance a centerpiece of its G-20 presidency.

The G-20 digital agenda has proven surprisingly robust despite geopolitical turbulence. In the November 2022 G-20 Bali leaders' declaration, member states recognized the importance of advancing inclusive cooperation on digital trade,

expanding affordable and high-quality digital infrastructure, enabling cross-border data flows and developing digital skills and literacy.

Under no circumstances was this an easy win. Just two months before the November summit, the G-20 digital ministers had left Indonesia without agreement on a joint declaration. But digital is among those areas where careful optimism still prevails.

Yet, more importantly, India's digital governance push signposts its strategic ambitions in this space. At the Bali summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the rollout of digital public infrastructure as “the most remarkable change of our era.” Premised on an agenda of inclusive growth and sustainable development, the Indian government is mobilizing the presidency to bolster its aspirations as a digital powerhouse and leading

India is making digital technology governance a centerpiece of its G-20 presidency. It is a stark signpost of its aspirations as a global digital leader.

power, especially in the Global South. New Delhi's preparations for bringing its “human-centric approach to technology” to the grand diplomatic stage are in full swing.

As one of the world's largest and fastest growing digital markets and consumer bases globally, the scale and pace of India's digital transformation have superseded that of many advanced economies. According to a study by the Reserve Bank of India, India's digital economy grew 2.4 times faster than the overall economy. Given the rate of growth in India's digital sector, it is in the country's interest to sustain and encourage greater investments that can potentially drive the total output of the economy. For these reasons, India sees the digital economy

as fundamental not just to its own developmental project, but also to its international image and status. It has the potential to generate jobs, facilitate citizen-centered inclusive growth, and enhance connectivity.

The country is also building on notable successes at harnessing digital technology to improve its citizens' access to public services and economic mobility. To this end, it is progressing well into its ambitious "India stack" digitization project. It comprises four technology layers designed to provide individuals with digital identities, an interoperable payments system, virtual documents and verification, and personal data management through regulated intermediaries. These efforts also encompass the creation of UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) and the Aadhaar biometric system, where every citizen of the country can obtain a unique, permanent, digital ID. In 2015, India launched its Digital India campaign to showcase its rising digital profile and provide it with added impetus.

India is now further capitalizing on its digitization efforts to present itself as a model and leader for the Global South. Its G-20 digital diplomacy is geared toward both linking and representing the Global South, with an aim to rally it around a wider developmental agenda that centers, among other items, on connectivity infrastructure, digital financial inclusion, and innovative health solutions. Earlier this month at the official G-20 dialogue forum with the global business community (B20), India offered its locally developed 5G technology and India stack application program interface "to the

world as part of its commitment to the "global community."

Indian leaders have often framed the country's digital journey in the context of enhanced traceability to eradicate black money circulation or reducing bureaucracy around citizen-centered services. They therefore demonstrate a transformation of India's own path to modernity – with the ability of shedding some layers of its "developing" status – befitting its image of a "rising power."

More fundamentally, the Indian approach to digital governance echoes its foreign policy doctrine, which, as seen in its view on Russian aggression in Ukraine, is premised on strategic autonomy and the pursuit of an independent voice in international affairs. In the digital

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realm, that translates into an approach centering on "data sovereignty" and countering "data colonialism." The former implies the sovereign right of each country to regulate data originating within its borders, while the latter suggests a view that ensures that a country's data is not used for foreign private companies' profit but for improving domestic public services and economic growth. Evidently, this approach differs from the G-7 countries' commitment to promoting cross-border "data free flow with trust." Although distinctions are more blurred, it is also being positioned by India as an alternative to China's cyber sovereignty model.

Although India comes to the digital governance debate through what it sees as an independent approach, its ability to push this agenda will be limited by the estranged nature of the geopolitical climate that is straining the G-20.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is pressing countries to pick sides. While working to reduce its military dependency on Russia, India has resisted overtly condemning its aggression against Ukraine. Given the likelihood that President Vladimir Putin will attend the G-20 Summit in New Delhi this September, India's presidency will reflect the extent to which it can retain this position and tread the delicate path of leading a summit that includes Russia and the major Western powers. This will also penetrate the area of digital diplomacy.

On the face of it, India's G-20 digital agenda may well succeed at affirming the group's relevance in turbulent times. By doubling down on the opportunities of digital technology for development, de-emphasizing issues such as internet freedom, and promoting what it purports to be an independent governance model, the Indian presidency is increasing its prospects of crafting at least a basic consensus – maybe even a ministerial declaration. But India is walking a tightrope: By declining to use the G-20 as a platform for meaningfully challenging digital authoritarianism, it may reduce its own ability to capitalize on its international stature as the world's largest digital democracy. Whether its digital diplomacy push in the G-20 pays the longer-term strategic dividends that India seeks thus remains far from certain.

India-France Partnership Provides a Model for East-West Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Source: Don McLain Gill, *The Diplomat*

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/india-france-partnership-provides-a-model-for-east-west-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific/> 12 Jan 2023



Indian Foreign Minister Subramanian Jaishankar (right) with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Bonne ahead of talks at New Delhi, India, on January 5, 2023.

Credit: Twitter/Dr. S Jaishankar

Officials During the 36th round of the Indo-French Strategic Dialogue on January 5, Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval met with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Bonne. The discussions aimed at presenting a forward-looking strategic roadmap for the bilateral partnership in the fields of defense and security to address contemporary geopolitical trends.

The time-tested India-France strategic partnership continues to gain momentum given both sides' adherence to peace, stability, and strategic autonomy. In fact, France has not only consistently backed India's position on various international issues, but it has also established itself as India's second-largest defense supplier in 2017-22. Similarly, India has continually come out to defend and support France on issues ranging from its counter-terror policies to its international geopolitical role.

Both countries support an inclusive multipolar order, while also prioritizing the importance of strategic autonomy.

The India-France strategic partnership presents itself as a pragmatic framework of convergence between the major powers of the East and West. Recognizing the complexity of the international geopolitical landscape, both states have managed to effectively deepen and broaden their cooperation to address contemporary trends in international affairs – among such trends are the unfolding strategic complexities taking place in the Indo-Pacific Region. While being a European power, France maintains extensive territories spanning from the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) to the South Pacific, a population of over 1.6 million French people, and a formidable military presence in the Indo-Pacific, making its strategic stakes in the region notably high. Unlike other European powers that seek to deepen their footprints in the Indo-Pacific region largely for economic gains, France's interests are notably political-security in nature, given that only 8 percent of French commercial goods pass through the South China Sea.

China's expansive activities in the Indian and Pacific Oceans continue to provoke France's strategic interests. In the WIO, Indian analyst and author of "The Superpowers' Playground: Djibouti and Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific in the 21st Century," Sankalp Gurjar points to four key dimensions in China's engagements: dual-use infrastructure-building, political-diplomatic relations, connectivity projects, and critical military-motivated activities. Along with the establishment of its offshore base in Djibouti in 2017, China has also significantly ramped up its naval presence in the strategic sub-region.

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Moreover, China's assertive maneuvering and exclusionary policies in the Pacific come at France's expense in the context of freedom of navigation and maintaining the rules-based order. Accordingly, France's perception of China's assertiveness continues to spiral. In fact, according to a 2020 Pew Research poll, France's unfavorable views towards China increased to 70 percent in 2020 from 42 percent nearly two decades prior. Furthermore, French President Emmanuel Macron himself has explicitly emphasized that if left unchecked, China's hegemonic ambitions will come at the expense of freedom, development, and opportunities.

To offset these challenges, France became one of the first European countries to outline a strategy for the Indo-Pacific, which seeks to proactively bolster Paris' diplomatic networks and strategic partnerships in the region. However, despite the policy recalibration, France's Indo-Pacific strategy continues to lack the needed visibility.

It is in this context that India's strengthening partnership with France can play a crucial role.

Being an Indo-Pacific power and a traditional security provider in the Indian Ocean Region, India's growing diplomatic and material capabilities continue to enhance its geopolitical position in the region. Hence, deepening strategic relations with India may open new diplomatic channels for France to solidify its position in the Indo-Pacific, examples of which are the potential trilateral frameworks India and France have with countries like the UAE, Australia, Indonesia, and Japan.

Another significant convergence between New Delhi and Paris is their shared vision for an inclusive multipolar order, while also prioritizing the importance of strategic autonomy. Macron has emphasized how France's Indo-Pacific strategy will not be determined by the binary power competition between the United States and China, rather Paris will seek to practically engage based on shared interests and concerns while also prioritizing the diversification of partners. Similarly, India's emerging leadership role in the region banks greatly on an inclusive and pluralistic approach and an avoidance of bloc politics.

Hence, India's attempt to play a larger role as a security and development partner throughout the developing world is increasingly welcomed given its recognition of the intricate balance between diversity, development, and security. At the bilateral level, both countries have also illustrated their maturity by accommodating and respecting each other's sensitivities and proactively finding a way forward to strengthen and deepen their partnership further.

Therefore, an enhanced India-France partnership will add significant value to a region that is marred by a binary polarization of power brought on by the intensifying U.S.-China competition, which comes at the expense of regional countries that seek to preserve their interests, security, and growth. With both states having significant material capacity and shared interests and concerns in the region, the need

to consistently evolve and operationalize the potentials of their strategic relationship will be necessary to pragmatically address the ongoing shifts taking place in the Indo-Pacific's security and geopolitical architecture.

Macron has emphasized how France's Indo-Pacific strategy will not be determined by the binary power competition between the United States and China, rather Paris will seek to practically engage based on shared interests and concerns while also prioritizing the diversification of partners. Similarly, India's emerging leadership role in the region banks greatly on an inclusive and pluralistic approach and an avoidance of bloc politics.

Cherry-Picks of the Month

1. China's Indo-Pacific Folly: Beijing's Belligerence Is Revitalizing U.S. Alliances - <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/asia/china-indo-pacific-folly>
2. Armed drones in Indian military: Can machines understand the rules of war? - <https://www.orfonline.org/research/armed-drones-in-indian-military/>
3. Does The Aircraft Carrier Have A Future? - <https://www.rebellionresearch.com/does-the-aircraft-carrier-have-a-future>
4. 2023 Indo-Pacific Business Forum Promotes Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in the Indo-Pacific - <https://www.state.gov/2023-indo-pacific-business-forum-promotes-inclusive-and-sustainable-growth-in-the-indo-pacific/>
5. Where Is India in South Korea's New Indo-Pacific Strategy? - <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/where-is-india-in-south-koreas-new-indo-pacific-strategy/>
6. Japan's Emerging Role as the World's Consensus Builder - <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/japans-emerging-role-worlds-consensus-builder>
7. Building the Future of EU-India Strategic Partnership: Between Trade, Technology, Security and China - <https://orcasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ORCAxWICCI-Special-Issue-2023.pdf>

CAPS Experts-InFocus

1. Indo-French NSA level Meet and Strategic Implications (by Air Cmde Savinder Pal Singh) - <https://capsindia.org/indo-french-nsa-level-meet-and-strategic-implications/>
2. Japan's Significant Uprising (by Vedant Saigal) - <https://capsindia.org/japans-significant-uprising/>
3. The Future of US Investment in Africa's Critical Minerals: Securing its Supply Chain (by Neha Mishra) - <https://capsindia.org/the-future-of-us-investment-in-africas-critical-minerals-securing-its-supply-chain/>
4. Use of Air Capability in Maritime Domain Awareness (by Radhey Tambi) - <https://capsindia.org/the-future-of-us-investment-in-africas-critical-minerals-securing-its-supply-chain/>

Debates/Panel Discussions

1. The Year That Was: Russia-Ukraine War; US-China Contestation and Indian Foreign Policy Choices - <https://www.orfonline.org/the-year-that-was-russia-ukraine-war/>

2. Biden's Foreign-Policy Report Card - <https://foreignpolicy.com/live/biden-midterm/>
3. Grading Biden's Foreign Policy | The World Unpacked - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMBsqKtbaOo>
4. Assessing the Future Trajectory of China-Japan Relations - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMBsqKtbaOo>
5. Asia House Annual Outlook 2023 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h30qAeoXvCo>
6. Decoding India and Its Foreign Policy - <https://network2020.org/event/decoding-indias-foreign-policy/>

Podcasts

1. Guarding Contested Skies (with Bradley Bowman and Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh) - <https://www.fdd.org/podcasts/2023/01/27/guarding-contested-skies/>
2. China Insider #8 | Mike Pompeo Never Gives an Inch, Nationalist Rhetoric from Beijing, and the Case of a Missing Boy in China (with Miles Yu & Wilson Shirley) - <https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/china-insider-8-mike-pompeo-never-gives-inch-nationalist-rhetoric-beijing-case>
3. Ukraine and AUKUS: China Maneuvers on the Sidelines (with Patrick M. Cronin) - <https://www.hudson.org/security-alliances/ukraine-aukus-china-maneuvers-sidelines>
4. Singapore's Relationship with China (with Prof Ian Chong) - <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/198-singapores-relationship-with-china/id920247755?i=1000596830018>
5. Glocalise Round-Up 9 | S.Korea Indo-Pacific Strategy/ Indo-Pacific 2022 Review - <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/197-the-philippines-relationship-with-china/id920247755?i=1000594579899>
6. The Philippines Relationship with China (with Prof Aries Arugay) - <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/197-the-philippines-relationship-with-china/id920247755?i=1000594579899>
7. China in the Year of the Rabbit - https://www.cgai.ca/china_in_the_year_of_the_rabbit



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