

---

# Strategic Relevance of the Indo-Pacific: An Assessment

Gautam Sen

## Introduction

At Davos in 2016, John Chipman, Director General (DG) and Chief Executive of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) while participating in a discussion on world affairs, stated that the world during the 20th century had lived tactically but in the 21st century, the world will have to learn to live strategically. What does that mean and how is it relevant in understanding the strategic relevance of the Indo-Pacific?

The Indo-Pacific region<sup>1</sup> as a whole is witnessing major shifts in terms of economics, strategic behaviour, and diplomatic manoeuvring among the major powers. Especially, as each nation competes with the other in order to create its own sphere of influence to exploit the potential of the region as a whole. The creation of a single strategic system in the Indo-Pacific region by combining accelerated economic and security connections becomes the fulcrum between the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Will the concept of ‘Indo-Pacific’ region help in integrating and uniting the major powers into one single strategic system?

---

*This paper is adapted from an address at a Round Table Conference on the Indo-Pacific Region: Emerging Geopolitical Scenario at the UGC Centre for Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati, on August 28, 2018.*

**Gautam Sen** is Distinguished Visiting Fellow at CLAWS as well as Editor-in-Chief of *CLAWS Journal*.

Theoretically, both India and China realise that the normative and institutional architecture of the Indo-Pacific will shape the future international order. Ultimately, India's engagement in the western Indian Ocean must not only protect its own economic, energy, and diaspora interests but also cohesively link with its "Act East" policy to preserve a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>2</sup> There is something Mahanian in the way China is building up its maritime power and increasing its influence over trade in the region. Alfred Thayer Mahan, a 19th century American naval strategist who viewed the domination of maritime routes for both commercial and strategic gains, has become obligatory reading among Chinese naval thinkers. Tracing the logic identified by Mahan a hundred years ago, the Chinese moves look very hegemonic in design, adding the supplemental development twist as bait. This strategy seeks to safeguard and control vital the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs), bringing trade and energy from Europe and the Middle East. In doing so, China also seeks to contain India's rise and stop it from dominating its own 'near abroad', the height of hypocrisy considering the US' support for its own rise and its own strategy in the South China Sea. However, Australian advocates of the so-called 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' (QSD—also known as the QUAD) (which brings together the United States, Japan, India and Australia) must now feel as if the wind is well and truly in their sails.<sup>3</sup>

In this perspective, the paper seeks to examine the theoretical moorings to assess the emerging consensus on a geostrategically important region under the label of Indo-Pacific.

### **Genesis of the Term 'Indo-Pacific'**

On June 01, 2018, addressing the keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India would work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to promote a "rules-based order" in the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>4</sup>

The term Indo-Pacific is not a new concept. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first proposed the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in 2007 during his failed first term, which then fell apart after it was opposed once Australia's Labour Party-led government assumed power. However, the idea of an Indo-Pacific region endured and the notion has constantly resurfaced in the international arena. To say so, as in former US President Barack Obama's Administration, during its pivot to Asia.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, former US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster began using the term Indo-Pacific instead of Asia-Pacific.<sup>6</sup>

From 2010 onwards, the term Indo-Pacific acquired salience within the Indian context and has since been used often by India's apex political leadership. 2011 onwards, the term has been used frequently by strategic analysts and high-level government and military leadership in Australia, Japan and the US to denote the said region. However, an official documented articulation of the term first appeared in Australia's 2013 *Defence White Paper*.<sup>7</sup> It has been argued that the concept of the Indo-Pacific may lead to a change in the popular "mental maps" of how the world is understood in strategic terms. Lately, US officials have begun using the term "Indo-Asia Pacific". This will enable America to maintain its geographic inclusiveness in the new coinage of 'Indo-Pacific'.<sup>8</sup>

The term's profile was raised when it found mention in the joint statement issued by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the United States' President Donald Trump after the former's state visit to the White House on June 26, 2017.<sup>9</sup> In their statement, both sides agreed that a close partnership between the United States and India is central to peace and stability in the region.<sup>10</sup> In marking 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and the United States, the leaders resolved to expand and deepen the strategic partnership between the countries and advance common objectives. Above all, these objectives include combatting terrorist threats, promoting stability across the Indo-Pacific region, increasing free and fair trade, and strengthening energy linkages.

The US vision of the Indo-Pacific strategy was first set out by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson when talking about US-India relations: “Defining our Relationship with India for the Next Century,” at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in October 2017.<sup>11</sup> Tillerson mentioned the Indo-Pacific region 19 times and stressed, “The Indo-Pacific, including the entire Indian Ocean, the Western Pacific and the nations that surround them, will be the most consequential part of the globe in the 21st century,” and that “[t]he world’s center of gravity is shifting to the heart of the Indo-Pacific”.<sup>12</sup> Tillerson heavily criticised China’s provocative actions in the South China Sea as a direct challenge to international law and norms and emphasised that the US is already “capturing the benefits of our important trilateral engagement between the US, India, and Japan. As we look ahead, there’s room to invite others, including Australia, to build on the shared objectives and initiatives”.<sup>13</sup> In his remarks to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation’s (APEC’s) Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Summit at Da Nang, Vietnam, on November 11, 2017, US President Donald Trump defined the strategic scope of the Indo-Pacific as covering both the Pacific and Indian Oceans, including Japan, Australia, and India.<sup>14</sup> However, Trump did not clearly propose the contents of his Indo-Pacific strategy or any goals, potential partners, or its relationship with China.

To note, in linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans into a single geographical space, most scholars and analysts have discussed the vaguely defined Indo-Pacific concept within a geostrategic or geopolitical frame. The flurry of analytical articles (47,000, one link has over 193 other links to the same subject) over the past years, often contain common themes such as: containment, militarisation, and rebalancing vis-à-vis China’s rise and assertiveness. Yet, there is more to gain from a geoeconomic perspective. Further, from a non-traditional security dimension, enhanced Indo-Pacific cooperation will yield significant benefits.

Geopolitics on the Asian continent is organised around the numerous seas, bays and lagoons that fringe its expansive oceans. The Indo-Pacific

idea simply expands the conceptual region of Asia-Pacific to include India and the Indian Ocean. The QSD translates this geopolitical understanding into strategy, envisaging the two oceans as a single security space, which includes India and Japan, is bridged by Australia, and is undergirded by US maritime dominance. The impetus for such a reconceptualisation is simple: Japan and India, isolated as they are in their own oceans, want to balance against the western Pacific's rising power, China, by uniting under a single geopolitical sphere. While Trump's National Security Adviser, General HR McMaster argued that the "term better captures the new regional dynamic", as he stated: "The idea of the Indo-Pacific and the proposition that India must be involved in shaping the Asian balance of power go well back in time. Before we trace the recent evolution of the concept, it is important to note that oceanographers use the term 'Indo-Pacific' to describe the bio-geographic region comprising the warm tropical waters of the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean".<sup>15</sup>

### **The Problematics**

The Indo-Pacific region is undergoing a dramatic transformation and has been in a state of flux. This is witnessed in the undergoing shifts in the Indo-Pacific region, which is far from reaching a settling point. The trends that underscore the dramatic shift in power relativities are as follows: first, China is predicted to overtake the United States by 2030 as the world's largest economy in market exchange rate terms. Second, for its part, India is the fastest growing big economy in the world and is expected to become the world's third largest economy in US dollar terms by 2030. Third, it is predicted that by 2050, Indonesia will leap from the 16th largest economy today into the top 10 economies; Vietnam may be one of the fastest growing large economies; and established economies like Japan, South Korea and Australia will drop in relative Gross Development Product (GDP) rankings. Given these trends at play, though there are speculations over the decline of the US, it is very likely that US primacy in the region will continue for some

time yet. The US is predicted to remain amongst the top three economies by 2050. Furthermore, its military and technological investments provide it a sizeable edge in the future, which is also supported by its immense soft power and influence in the region. In view of this flux, ‘uncertainty’ has become the defining feature of the region.

China’s actions in the South China Sea are adding to the uncertainty and we are again seeing a rise in tensions on the Korean peninsula given North Korea’s attempts to conduct nuclear tests, prompting a strong response from the US. Separately, China has protested the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system in South Korea. In reaction to the growing uncertainty, and with a shift of economic weight, to and within the Indo-Pacific, it is resulting in the rise of military capabilities.

By 2020, combined military budgets in the Indo-Pacific will probably exceed US\$600 billion, matching military spending in North America for the first time. According to the 2016 Defence Outlook by Deloitte<sup>16</sup>:

- The Indo-Pacific is expected to drive 60 per cent of the global increase in defence acquisition, research and development.
- Nineteen countries in our region will account for one-third of global defence budgets by 2020; and, specifically:
- China will build 30 new submarines and another new aircraft carrier.

The threat of terrorism<sup>17</sup> is pervasive, unpredictable and highly adaptive. Prime Ministers Modi and Turnbull acknowledged in their joint statement that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and stability. It preoccupies nearly every government. The same technologies that have enabled greater connectivity, access, communication and economic opportunities have also contributed to the spread of terrorism and radicalisation, particularly among the youth.

Climate change is bringing significant impacts as sea levels rise and weather patterns change, affecting agriculture, industry and critical

infrastructure. Policies to address climate change, for example, expanding renewable energy sources, will also drive changes in the structure of economies in the Indo-Pacific. The pace of technological change and the internet have political and social effects, as well as economic ones. News just travels faster. World leaders communicate by mobile phone, text message and Twitter. Information is more fragmented. People are less likely to be influenced by large institutions, the government or the mainstream media, and political outcomes are less predictable.

In view of this, the two key strategic observations are: first, a secure, stable and connected Indo-Pacific region is crucial for the security and prosperity of all the countries in the region. Creating an order that is flexible, resilient and nimble will be vital to secure our collective future. Second, a comprehensive American-Indian strategic partnership seems unlikely, and a formal alliance comparable to the one that the US has with Japan and Australia is not on the cards. With its long history of non-alignment and traditionally close ties with Russia, India's policy-making elites are loath to compromise its strategic autonomy.

## **Major Actors in Indo-Pacific**

### *Japan*

The Indo-Pacific strategy comprises threat-driven security cooperation among like-minded maritime countries to promote a rules-based regional order. This is in response to the rapid strategic and power structural changes characterised by China's assertive behaviour in the region, which pose increasing challenges to the US and its allies in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In view of this, Japan has been vigorously promoting the QUAD cooperation in carrying out the Indo-Pacific strategy largely to facilitate and institutionalise Japan's maritime security cooperation with the surrounding nations and allow Japan to play a leading role in the region. In addition to bilateral security ties with the US, Australia, India and other countries,

Japan's strategic choice to network with more strategic partners in the region implies a hedging stance to avoid the dilemma of both abandonment and entrapment. A major power struggle between the US and China would allow Japan with more diplomatic and security manoeuvrability. It will also largely decrease Japan's time and the cost pressure of regional security burden-sharing demanded by the US and simultaneously call for higher US engagement in the region, with collective structures. Thus, the Indo-Pacific strategy is not about forming an anti-China alliance of nations but a trilateral, functional and regional coalition against China's provocative actions, by joint exercises and training, capacity-building, and promoting regional communication platforms.

In this perspective, it is necessary to examine the role that Japan seeks to play in the Indo-Pacific Region. As outlined in the "Priority Policy for Development Cooperation FY 2017",<sup>18</sup> Japan seeks to contribute in three key areas, which are: first, in developing an environment for international peace, stability and prosperity and sharing universal values. Second, addressing global issues to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting human security. And third, promoting economic diplomacy that aims at "quality growth," together with the developing countries, and contribute to regional revitalisation.

### *China*

So far, China has not been able to adopt the concept of 'Indo-Pacific' formally. However, at the same time, the use of the term 'Indo-Pacific' is being seen in most of its scholarly writings and analyses. To a greater extent, such usage of the term will pave the way for China to develop an Indian Ocean strategy. China has been completely preoccupied with the disputes on its eastern maritime edge. Such preoccupation has led it to enhance its presence, and reflect its strategic ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. China's overwhelming capabilities and its larger aspiration to become unipolar in Asia in a multipolar world have created competition



among the major powers. China's signalling to the rest of the world about its aggressiveness through its military posturing has fuelled a lot of debates regarding challenges to the successful building of the Indo-Pacific security architecture.

Watching with increasingly alarm, Tokyo and New Delhi pushed hard to resurrect the US-Japan-India-Australia QUAD – as an 'alternative' to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Thus far, the talks have focussed more on the importance of keeping the Indo-Pacific region "free and open",<sup>19</sup> especially with regard to "maritime safety and security", only hinting at an alternative infrastructure strategy; however, this is rapidly changing. This Great Game is less about 'containing' China as Beijing would have us believe, and more about diversifying choices available to countries in the region. Naturally, there is a geostrategic 'balancing' element to this as well. Canberra, bullied by Beijing in a domestic scandal involving Chinese interference in its domestic affairs, has pushed for closer relations with both the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a way of balancing China's interference in its domestic affairs.<sup>20</sup> It is beginning to find the true cost of having China as its largest trading partner, and has begun a national debate on how to respond to this, racked by cynical accusations of racism. While the Trump Administration considers possible policy options in a 'free and open strategy' – see Eric Sayers excellent prescriptions here—Japan and India are already moving forward on their own infrastructure diplomacy.<sup>21</sup>

As countries begin to realise the implications to Beijing's 'debt diplomacy', there's definite scope for Delhi and Tokyo to make headway as an alternative type of development pact. While Sri Lanka has been seeking increased investment from Tokyo and Delhi in recent months to unburden itself from the Chinese loans<sup>22</sup>, the two need to be more forward-reaching in what they can offer. They also need to design a broader strategy, rather than merely reacting to China's development plans on an ad hoc basis. This reactive strategy has already cost them the

‘race’ in countries like Nepal and the Maldives. Due to their geographic locations, both countries have historic ties to India, however, both have aligned with China over infrastructure investment. The BRI is financing a fibre optic network throughout Nepal (with a command centre in Kathmandu), ending the country’s dependence on India for internet bandwidth.<sup>23</sup> The Maldives Ambassador to China, Mohamed Faisal, noted that though India was offered “a number of projects”, they “did not receive the necessary finance” to be brought into the development stage.<sup>24</sup> Now, India is facing a security problem in the region, as China’s ‘string of pearls’ strategy ties up countries right on India’s doorstep.

To note, the Indo-Pacific is swiftly becoming the locus for a reemergence of geopolitics, writ large, and all the professions of “win-win” are fading into the background as Chinese merchants and bankers are increasingly being followed by Chinese Navy vessels.<sup>25</sup> This new Great Game sees India and Japan competing with China for SLOC security in the Indo-Pacific and may see a reemergence of gunboat diplomacy if we’re not careful. Robert Zoellick once called for China to become a “responsible stakeholder”, and while Beijing claims it is not a status quo challenger, the fact is that it is redrawing the rules of the game.<sup>26</sup> While there is some justice in this, China’s authoritarian regime type makes the prospect of a Chinese-led order an untenable one for liberal democracies. How the new Great Game plays out in the Indo-Pacific depends on the willingness of Asia’s other great powers to defend a system, rather than contain a new empire.<sup>27</sup>

### *India*

In the recent years, New Delhi has purposefully intensified its engagement with countries in the Asia Pacific region. Having secured support from the US and some countries in the region, India is now looking to expand its presence in the Asia-Pacific. While for years, India’s position towards the region has not attracted much attention, this is gradually changing. The development also reflects the wider canvas of changing strategic equations

in the region with the rising of China and India. The main argument set forth in this study is that as India carries out its own pivot to Asia-Pacific policy, a role transformation is underway. India is not satisfied with being identified as a mere regional power confined to South Asia. Instead, over the last few years, India has signalled a willingness to play a greater strategic role in the Indo-Pacific, building up partnerships with the US, Japan and Vietnam. India also tries to be a security provider as New Delhi is carefully following developments in the South China Sea. There is a widespread perception that India's role in the region will continue to grow. Beijing will remain alert to the risk of India's Act East policy.

India's efforts to step up its influence in the Asia-Pacific region have been increasingly discernible in recent years. The Act East policy reflects the rapidly changing geopolitical realities in the Asia-Pacific, mainly defined by the rise of China and India, and increased convergence of interest between India and the US. India's eastward maritime attention has been complemented by unprecedented role changes. India is conceiving a new and more ambitious role for itself in the Asia-Pacific. There is a widespread perception that India's role in the region will continue to grow. Meanwhile, India also tries to be a security provider. New Delhi is carefully following developments in the South China Sea though it is not a direct participant in the South China Sea bilateral security discussions with countries, including the US, Japan and Vietnam. Today, there is a conscious effort by the Modi government not only to "Look South China Sea", but also 'Act South China Sea'. As part of its Act East policy, India is helping Vietnam build up maritime capacities. No matter whether Beijing likes it or not, India has emerged as one of key players in the Asia-Pacific strategic landscape. India is well aware of the implications of confronting China, and souring relations with Beijing is not in its economic interest. So, New Delhi will not meddle in the disputes directly. India will adopt a more prudent policy towards the South China Sea in a bid to pressure China while avoiding provocations. Even so, India has

already achieved some success. New Delhi is welcomed in the region by Washington and its partners. With its growing power, India will strive to expand its influence in the South China Sea. There is still plenty left in the tank.

India is ‘pushing back’ on China’s expansion of influence in the Indian Ocean in a number of ways, but each comes with its own challenges, such as: first, India aims to selectively challenge China’s infrastructure projects with Indian alternatives, including economic support, port and energy development. These include Indian investments for port projects in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Iran, and access to an Omani port; the Iranian project is unlikely to be implemented due to US-Iran tensions. Second, India has made a point of appearing as one of the first contributors to humanitarian and disaster relief operations in its neighbourhood. A key unspoken message of these missions is of India’s proximity and preparedness to step in vis-à-vis China. Third, New Delhi has sought to expand bilateral maritime-security and defence cooperation with the island and littoral states, including the provision of defence-related lines of credit, and has overseen the launch of a coastal surveillance radar project in the Seychelles; it plans construction and upgrading of an airstrip and jetty on the Mauritian Island of Agaléga and Assumption Island in the Seychelles for surveillance purposes.<sup>28</sup>

### *United States of America*

One of the new dynamics of the gathering geopolitical turbulence in Asia and its waters is the growing use of the term ‘Indo-Pacific’. During his extended visit to Asia in November 2017, US President Donald Trump defined the region as ‘Indo-Pacific’ rather than the customary ‘Asia-Pacific’. Concepts of geopolitical space are never static, and Trump’s emphasis on the Indo-Pacific underlines the rise of India, China’s assertiveness and its expanding footprint in the Indian Ocean, as well as Washington’s plans to elevate its strategic partnership with New Delhi. It involves America’s

strategic bet on India's future role in shaping the security architecture in the eastern hemisphere. Actively promoted in recent years by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Indo-Pacific conception can be traced back to the decision of the ASEAN to invite India as a founding member of the East Asia Summit in 2005. The durability of the Indo-Pacific dynamic, however, will depend essentially on New Delhi's willingness to work with the US and its allies in the region.

From the end of 2017, the US, too, has been adopting the theme of a free and open Indo-Pacific. In his speech in October 2017, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called for a hundred-year partnership in the Indo-Pacific between the US and an India that was 'rising responsibly', given that the centre of gravity is shifting to the heart of the Indo-Pacific. As Tillerson noted: "The US and India – with our shared goals of peace, security, freedom of navigation, and a free and open architecture – must serve as the eastern and western beacons of the Indo-Pacific. As the port and starboard lights between which the region can reach its greatest and best potential".<sup>29</sup> That is to say, Washington has put the 'Indo-Pacific' firmly in the American strategic lexicon.

## **Conclusion**

For the Indo-Pacific concept to gain traction in the region, it has to move away from the rhetoric of military competition and a zero sum game. Rather, it should move towards a more constructive, cooperative, and inclusive framework. As a geoeconomic entity, there is boundless potential in the Indo-Pacific. Linking the two oceans into one cooperative geographical space is not inconceivable, especially because it is not a new concept in this region. ASEAN has long led the way with its multilateral and inclusive platforms of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 1994 and East Asia Summit (EAS) since 2005. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), even though it is still undergoing negotiations, is another key effort to deepen economic partnership and

integration among countries that fall within the scope of an Indo-Pacific region. The US-China trade war is a great destabiliser and disrupter globally. Amid this atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, cooperation and hope are needed more than ever. A development-driven cooperative framework can bring more optimism and stability to the region.

Japan's quality control methods in manufacturing and product safety are well known globally. However, given its declining domestic workforce, Japan could join forces with the growing ASEAN's young population to expand Japan's manufacturing strength in ASEAN. Together, they could potentially create the next manufacturing miracle – guaranteeing Japanese quality and workmanship at a competitive ASEAN price.

All the major and smaller players in the region have a stake in the stability, growth, and success of the Indo-Pacific region, and it does not make sense economically to prefer containment over cooperation. Furthermore, the perception of whether a country is a partner and whether a country is a competitor is not static, and can change over time. The US-Japan alliance has been relatively stable and strong since the end of World War II. Nevertheless, when Japan was at its economic peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was talk in the US over whether it should be contained. In fact, Japan's economic expansion was described as 'uncontrolled and unbalanced', and hurting American interests. Fast forward 20 years later, China is now perceived as the competitor. And 20 years from now or even earlier, India could be the next rising power, with its economic growth potential. By then, does it mean that India then will become the next competitor, to be contained? Certainly not, as otherwise the region will be in a perpetual cycle of containment.

## Notes

1. The Indo-Pacific can be divided into three zones viz. Central Indo-Pacific, Eastern Indo-Pacific and Western Indo-Pacific. It stretches from the African east coast in the west to southeastern Polynesia to Easter Island and Hawaii in the east. It is inhabited by 61 percent of the world population, has 15 of the 30 megacities of the world, 7 of the top 15 US

- trading partners operate in this region and also 5 US security treaties are embedded in this region. The Indian Ocean is now the world's busiest trade corridor, carrying two-thirds of the world's oil shipment and a third of its bulk cargo, mostly to or from East Asia.
2. Samir Saran and Abhijit Singh, "India's Struggle for the Soul of the Indo-Pacific", May 03, 2018, at <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/india-struggle-soul-indo-pacific>.
  3. Japish S. Gill and Ryan Mitra, "India's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Understanding India's Spheres of Influence", *Sigma Iota Rbo Journal of International Relations*, July 05, 2018, at <http://www.sirjournal.org/research/2018/7/5/indias-indo-pacific-strategy-understanding-indias-spheres-of-influence>
  4. See, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, "Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)", June 01, 2018, at <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>. In his speech, Modi also stated that India will engage with the world in peace, with respect, through dialogue and absolute commitment to international law. India will promote a democratic and rules-based international order, in which all nations, small and large, thrive as equal and sovereign.
  5. "Debunking the Myth of the Pivot", <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/debunking-myth-pivot>
  6. "The Indo-Pacific: Defining a Region", *Stratfor*, November 15, 2017, at <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/indo-pacific-defining-region>.
  7. See, Australian Government, Department of Defence, *Defence White Paper 2013*, at [http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/2013/docs/WP\\_2013\\_web.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/2013/docs/WP_2013_web.pdf).
  8. See, Mercy A Kuo, "The Origin of 'Indo-Pacific' as Geopolitical Construct", *The Diplomat*, January 25, 2018, at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/the-origin-of-indo-pacific-as-geopolitical-construct/>
  9. See, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, "Joint Statement—United States and India: Prosperity Through Partnership", June 27, 2017, at [https://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/28560/Joint\\_Statement\\_\\_United\\_States\\_and\\_India\\_Prosperty\\_Through\\_Partnership](https://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/28560/Joint_Statement__United_States_and_India_Prosperty_Through_Partnership).
  10. *Ibid.*
  11. "Defining Our Relationship with India for the Next Century: An Address by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson", Centre for Strategic and International Studies, October 18, 2017, at [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/171018\\_An\\_Address\\_by\\_U.S.\\_Secretary\\_of\\_State\\_Rex\\_Tillerson.pdf?798XbQxRNjtNhQb\\_upOY383Bct7hQTvV](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/171018_An_Address_by_U.S._Secretary_of_State_Rex_Tillerson.pdf?798XbQxRNjtNhQb_upOY383Bct7hQTvV).
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. See, "Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit", Da Nang, Vietnam, November 10, 2017, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/>
  15. Quoted in C. Raja Mohan, "Donald Trump's 'Indo-Pacific' and America's India Conundrum", *ISAS Insights*, No. 476, November 13, 2017, at <https://www.isas.nus>.

- edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/media/isas\_papers/ISAS%20Insights%20No.%20476-%20Donald%20Trump's%20'Indo-Pacific'%20and%20America's%20India%20Conundrum.pdf.
16. Deloitte, “Global Defense Outlook 2016: Shifting Postures and Emerging Fault Lines”, at [file:///C:/Users/JASH/Downloads/ca\\_en\\_ps\\_global\\_defence\\_outlook\\_2016\\_interactive\\_AODA.PDF](file:///C:/Users/JASH/Downloads/ca_en_ps_global_defence_outlook_2016_interactive_AODA.PDF)
  17. See, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, ASIO Annual Report 2016-17, October 03, 2017, at <https://www.asio.gov.au/sites/default/files/Annual%20Report%202016-17.pdf>.
  18. See, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Priority Policy for Development Cooperation FY 2017”, May 25, 2017, at <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000259285.pdf>.
  19. “India Hosts Trilateral Talks with Japan and Australia”, *SP's Land Forces*, December 15, 2017, at <http://www.spslandforces.com/news/?id=255&h=India-hosts-trilateral-talks-with-Japan-and-Australia>
  20. “Australia’s Balancing Act Between US and China will Prove one of its Greatest Challenges”, *South China Monitor*, December 27, 2017, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2125701/australias-balancing-act-between-us-and-china-will-prove-one>.
  21. Eric Sayers, “15 Big Ideas to Operationalize America’s Indo-Pacific Strategy”, *War On The Rocks*, April 06, 2018, at <https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/15-big-ideas-to-operationalize-americas-indo-pacific-strategy/>
  22. Iain Marlow and Anusha Ondaatjie, “Sri Lanka Seeks India and Japan Cash to Balance China”, *The Economic Times*, March 27, 2018, at [//economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/63478006.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/63478006.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)
  23. “Nepal-China Optical Fibre Link Operationalised”, *Himalayan Times*, January 12, 2018, at <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/sino-nepal-cross-border-optical-fibre-link-starts-operations-today/>
  24. John Hemmings and Genevieve Hull, “The New Great Game in the Indo-Pacific”, *E-International Relations*, April 20, 2018, at <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/04/20/the-new-great-game-in-the-indo-pacific/>.
  25. Ibid.
  26. Ibid.
  27. Ibid.
  28. Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, “Debate: India’s ‘Inclusive’ Indo-Pacific Policy Seeks to Balance US, China”, *The WIRE*, July 05, 2018, at <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/indias-inclusive-indo-pacific-policy-seeks-to-balance-relations-with-the-us-and-china>
  29. n. 11.