

Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region: Role of India

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for award of the degree of*

Master of Philosophy

Submitted By

SIDDHARTH SINGH



Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies

School of International Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi 110067

2017



CENTRE FOR INDO-PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067

Phone : 2670 4350
Fax : +91-11-2674 259

Date: 24 July 2017

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled “Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region: Role of India” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

Siddharth

SIDDHARTH SINGH

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Shankar Sundararaman
24/7/17

Prof. G.V.C. Naidu

CHAIRPERSON, CIPS



Chairperson
Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Ganganath Jha

Prof. Ganganath Jha

SUPERVISOR



Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to my supervisor Prof Ganganath Jha for his constant guidance, support and invaluable suggestions for enriching content and improving upon my dissertation and encouragement, without whom this dissertation would have not been possible. I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my classmates for their valuable suggestions and cooperation. I would also like to extend my thanks to all the faculties in the centre, and library staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University for providing me all possible help and encouragement throughout my work.

I express heartfelt gratitude to my family for perpetual support and love.

Special thanks to Anima Sonkar, Vijay, Manisha, Santosh, and the list is long for their time-tested love, inputs and support all throughout my journey so far in JNU.

This dissertation could see the light of the because of the invisible power which blesses me infinitely.

Index

	Page No.
List of Abbreviations	05
Chapter 1 Introduction	07
Chapter 2 Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region	23
Chapter 3 Role of India in the Maritime Geopolitics of Indo-Pacific	51
Chapter 4 International Order in Indo-Pacific	83
Conclusion	105
Bibliography	122

List of Abbreviations

AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AMF	Asian Monetary Fund
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASA	Association for Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASC	ASEAN Security Community
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
AMS	Agreement on Maintaining Security
ANZUS	Pact involving Australia, New Zealand, and the United States
ASEAN-PMC	ASEAN post-ministerial conferences
CBMs	Confidence-building measures
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMI	Chiang Mai Initiative
CNOOC	China's National Offshore Oil Corporation
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific
EAEC	East Asian Economic Caucus

EAS	East Asia Summit
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EU	European Union
FTAs	Free trade agreements
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
GWOT	Global war on terrorism
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International relations
NPT	Non-proliferation Treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy
OPTAD	Organization for Pacific Trade and Development
PACOM	Pacific Command
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

Chapter 1

Introduction

The emergence of India in the 21st century completes the creation of a composite region which could best be described by the term 'Indo-Pacific'. Sitting atop strategic trade routes linking the West with East Asia, India is the fulcrum of a region spreading from Bab-al-Mandab and the Straits of Hormuz through the Malacca and the South China Sea to Australia and the Western Pacific. The wider Indo-Pacific region, spreading from India to the Western Pacific, is home to over 3.5 billion people, with a combined Gross Domestic Product of over \$20 trillion. It has three of the four largest economies in the world, i.e., China, Japan and India, and a substantive part of the world's seaborne trade, including that required for food and energy security(D. Brewster, 2016).

With globalization and the consequent compression of geographic spaces, 'Indo-Pacific' has come to reflect contemporary reality, and become a good way of describing the region to which the global centre of gravity is shifting. As it assumes its rightful place in the comity of nations, India would provide balance and stability to this region which has historically been an area connected to it through trade and, more importantly, through the dissemination of its ideas. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed India growing at a remarkable pace. We are today in a period of pause before India takes another leap forward. Its people expect this, and the region requires it. India brings with it ideas that are unique to its genius, and which promote peace and harmony. It is this philosophical construct that is contained in the teachings of Lord Buddha, so subliminally intrinsic to the ethos of the region. It is this which encouraged Nehru to dream of 'cooperation in Asia-Pacific', an idea he promoted at the first Asian Relations Conference in March 1947, in New Delhi. It is this idea that informs the concept of Panchsheel, and it is this idea that Nehru took to Bandung. It is armed with this, and its considerable other strengths, that India joins the debate for the construction of the new architecture for the Indo-Pacific(Scott, 2006).

The debate on the Indo-Pacific comes at a time of significant progress in India's 'Look East Policy', an important connect of India to the Asia-Pacific. It is understandable that this concept is assuming growing relevance with the rise of India, and the enhancement of India's engagement with the Asia Pacific. This engagement is of particular importance when, in response to the changing geopolitics and its effects on the countries of the region and on their strategic priorities, Asian countries—including India—are trying to create networks addressing

common challenges, and creating a regional architecture to promote growth and prosperity, peace and stability. This would be done best in an inclusive and holistic manner, and in a composite region represented by the Indo-Pacific. The term Indo-Pacific has been used with increasing frequency since the beginning of this decade, and its increasing usage today is the recognition of India's strengths and its role in the region(Foreign & Journal, 2014).

While speaking at Honolulu in October 2010, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton used it to describe 'a newly emerging integrated geographical and strategic reality'. In December 2012, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh used the term during the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, stating that ASEAN-India's 'future is inter-linked, and a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region is crucial for our own progress and prosperity'. In its 2013 Defence White Paper, Australia mentioned the idea of the Indo Pacific, highlighting the strategic connections between the Indian and Pacific Oceans through trade routes and energy flows. ICWA held a seminar in March 2013 on the 'Indo-Pacific Region: Political and Strategic Prospects' in which similar ideas were articulated(B. Singh, 2016).

Bound by the Himalayas in the north, India has naturally focused on the sea to enhance its connectivity, especially through the Indian Ocean which extends from the eastern shores of Africa in the west to Australia and the Pacific in the east. Over the centuries, the Indian Ocean region, with India as the focus, has seen numerous nations navigating its waters with freedom, promoting trade and fostering cross-cultural influences. Today, through organizations like the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), the region seeks to create a collective community, seeking to deal with contemporary challenges, building collective capacity, and promoting greater cooperation within the region. India is a prime mover in the process. This is in line with its interest in building a peaceful environment, conducive to progress and our developmental priorities. Our perspective of the region is, therefore, more than just an economic and security one. It is about addressing the aspirations of the people of this region, and guiding their destinies on a common path of mutually beneficial progress(A. Maritime & Forum, 2016).

The US pivot to the Asia-Pacific in 2011 underlined its desire to enhance its engagement with the region. While countries of the region continue to consider economic and developmental issues to be of greatest import, peace and stability are increasingly also becoming the principal issues of concern. The dispute in the South China Sea (SCS) is symptomatic of the contradictions which have arisen between them. The dilemma which the

countries of the region face is how to fashion their relationship with China, the largest economic partner of nearly all of them. The asymmetric accumulation of economic power in the region has led to a redistribution of political and military power and an enhancement of mutual contradictions between the rising powers of the region. There is increasing stress on regional fault-lines, boundary tensions, and disputes in the East and South China seas. The Asia-Pacific security order of the last three decades—underwritten to a large extent by the USA—is coming under increasing stress by the rise of China and increasing competition as well as cooperation between China and the USA. This has raised the need for a reordering of the Asian economic and security architecture. In order to address this, the countries of the region need to come together to discuss and give shape to a regional architecture that addresses areas of discord, and promotes peace and stability. Confidence building in the region would require greater coordination, cooperation, and integration between the nations of the region and their economies(Mohan, 2013).

ASEAN has provided an example for the construction of regional institutions based on cooperation and consensus. Today, it has also become the nucleus for the confidence building economic and security structures and institutions that are emerging in the region, such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting plus (ADMM++), and in the negotiations for the creation of a region wide free economic space-RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership).

While there are other bilateral and multilateral arrangements in place, or being negotiated, the ones created by the ASEAN continue to be the most important. ASEAN centrality and leadership—which India supports—has provided the basis for the success of these forums. Closer relations with the countries of ASEAN are at the core of India's 'Look East Policy'. Seen as a force for stability and progress, India has regularly been urged by its South East Asian partners to enhance its engagement both multilaterally with ASEAN as a whole as well as bilaterally with its constituent countries. Today, our ties with each of our ASEAN neighbours are multifaceted marked by expanding trade and economic cooperation. The ASEAN-India partnership promotes the basic objectives of the nations of the region: peace and stability, progress and prosperity. India's deepening bilateral political, economic, security and functional cooperation with ASEAN countries individually and collectively responds well to regional challenges(Mohan, 2013).

In particular, as maritime nations, India and ASEAN members are intensifying their cooperation for the promotion of maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation as well as the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes in accordance with international law. With its efforts toward modernization bearing fruit, the Indian Navy is increasingly cooperating with the navies of the region in anti-piracy and disaster management exercises and efforts. Multinational maritime exercises have been held focused on common concerns in the region, such as piracy, gun running, the smuggling of narcotics, and humanitarian issues, and putting together programmes to enhance maritime security. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is an initiative in this direction. The growth of our political dialogue, the intensification of our consultations in regional forums, and the expansion of our security and counter-terrorism cooperation has had a positive effect on regional peace and stability. India has also developed strategic partnerships with the other major countries of the region—Japan, Korea, China, and Australia. India has given concrete shape to frameworks for dialogue on political and strategic issues with each of these countries. India has entered into Agreements for comprehensive economic partnerships with both Japan and the Republic of Korea. Both are important trade, technology and investment partners. Japan is a major source of capital and technology, and there is considerable scope to jointly participate with it in the economic development in the region. Korean companies are large investors in India. China is our largest neighbour, and a major trading partner with which we are building multifaceted relations. The relations between India and Australia are strengthened by people to people contacts, trade, and partnerships especially in the area of energy and natural resources. The two countries also share a partnership in IORA(Tellis, 2016).

India is engaged in negotiations to enter into FTAs with both Australia and New Zealand. The USA, which has a major presence in the region, is a valued partner. India and the USA share a commitment to democratic values and the rule of law, and have become strong and durable partners. India has a strategic partnership with Russia, a member of the East Asia Summit process. India also cooperates collectively with the EAS member countries under the aegis of the ASEAN-centred political and economic structures. India's major focus has been on promoting economic integration and connectivity, and providing our considerable expertise in areas required by the region, such as dealing with developmental concerns, changing demography, urbanization, climate change as well as non-traditional threats. We have emphasized on the need to work for the evolution of an open, balanced, inclusive and transparent regional architecture, which has been welcomed by ASEAN countries and our

other partners. They appreciate India's balanced approach to regional issues which promotes peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. As the global fulcrum of power shifts further towards Asia, it would also bring about change in the dynamics within the Indo-Pacific region. Taking cognisance of this, we would need to work towards creating a security construct, and an economic architecture that leverages the civilizational linkages to expand cooperation and build partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. India naturally will be an important participant in the process(Tellis, 2016).

Evolving Geopolitics:

The term 'geopolitics' has been employed indiscriminately by both practitioners and scholars in reference to states' zones of interest or influence and how they clash with each other's. The geopolitical dimension of maritime security accounts for the way geography plays the role in maritime security policies, regulations, measures and operations as well as how states take (tacitly or explicitly) geography into account when developing their maritime security strategies. Transnational forces and irregular challenges continue to be the primary threat today and in the foreseeable future, especially in the maritime domain. "Maritime Security" has to be distinguished from "Maritime Safety". "Maritime Security" is "the combination of preventive and responsive measures to protect the maritime domain against threats and intentional unlawful acts"(D. Brewster, 2016).

The waters of the Indo-Pacific region represent an increasingly critical arena for maritime geopolitics, security, trade, and environmental policy action—issues that have transformed the region into a major crossroads of international relations. The interplay of overlapping and intersecting interests in the Indo-Pacific region undergirds a complex strategic environment characterized by growth and integration as well as potential for conflict and vulnerability. Increasing exchanges of goods, people, and ideas throughout the region have spurred vital economic and social growth, both within and between countries. Essential sea lanes in the Indo Pacific region also represent potential chokepoints. Depleting natural resources may endanger the natural environment. New security risks flow from the pressures of climate change and asymmetric threats, such as piracy and terrorism.

While for much of the last decade the US has been focussed on wars in the Middle East, China and India have been rising in the Indo-Pacific region, factors acknowledged by the US President during his 2011 declaration of an American strategic 'pivot' to the Indo-Pacific Region. The US, China and India have all declared, through strategy, an intent to remain

diplomatically, economically and militarily engaged in the region, making it a point of strategic intersection. The extent to which they are in coalition, co-existence or they clash in the region could set the agenda for global security in what many nations have dubbed the ‘Asian Century’(Joshi, 2016).

Today, increasing flows of commerce, investment, and people are linking the Indian Ocean and Pacific nations together and to the rest of the world as part of an emerging global trading network. The Indian Ocean region has long been the primary artery for pumping oil from the Persian Gulf into the global economy. More recently, the Indo-Pacific has been primed to benefit from the expansion of offshore oil and gas exploration, and development along the eastern coast of Africa, as well as off of Myanmar and Vietnam. Its position as the principal conveyor belt for the international coal trade, and its broader geostrategic standing at the intersection of modern economic, natural resource, and environmental issues, likewise adds to the region’s economic value.

The Indo-Pacific’s rising geostrategic profile has boosted demand for maritime activity and infrastructure throughout the region. This has, in turn, resulted in the development of regional industrial hubs, the enabling of technological innovation, the stimulation of regional growth, the facilitation of world trade flows, the formation of global shipping alliances, and an overall upsurge in regional living standards. Port and maritime development, however, can come with their own costs, particularly given the broader geopolitical and environmental circumstances of the region. The existing threats of armed robbery, kidnapping, and sabotage from pirates, organized criminal gangs, and terrorist networks, are likely to increase as the region’s offshore industry expands and the development of possible targets increases. Environmental threats like rising sea levels have highlighted the vulnerabilities of the region’s growing maritime infrastructure(Mukherjee, 2016).

Review of Literature:

a. Concept of Maritime Geopolitics:

Geopolitics is a word that conjures up images. In one sense, the word provokes ideas of war, empire, and diplomacy: geopolitics is the practice of states controlling and competing for territory. The term ‘geopolitics’ was formalised by the Swedish constitutional lawyer Rudolf Kjellen (1864–1922) and systematically developed and raised to a doctrine of international relations by Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) during the period of Europe’s intensifying interstate

rivalries after the turn of 20th century. It had the objective of emphasising the primary determination of the politics by space. It is supposed to capture in its formally neutralised version ‘power struggles over territories for the purpose of political control over space’ (Lacoste 1993). Geopolitics can also be regarded as a —discourse about world politics, with a particular emphasis on state competition and the geographical dimensions of power. According to geographer Kearns, “geopolitics is a discourse that describes, explains, and promotes particular ways of seeing how territorial powers are formed and experienced”. Cohen (2003) has defined geopolitics as: “Geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives and, on the other hand, political processes. (...) Both geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and each influences and is influenced by the other. Geopolitics addresses the consequences of this interaction.” The Indo-Pacific region has been witness to extensive “proxy politics” during the Cold war era. However, currently its importance has been highlighted by the fact that the trajectory of maritime geopolitics in the region will herald the global politics of the 21st Century.

b. India’s aspirations

From a geostrategic perspective, the triangular shape of India’s territory, protruding into the central waters of the Indian Ocean, gives the country a natural position to dominate the ocean’s trade routes. The dependence of India’s economy and energy security on Indian Ocean SLOCs is comparable to China’s reliance on these sea lanes; a fact that is aptly summarized by an IN 2009 maritime doctrine that claims that the Indian economy is ‘at the mercy of the power which controls the sea’ (Erickson et al 2010, 230).

However, unlike China, India does not face a ‘Malacca Dilemma’ in its energy imports; instead, its leaders picture an analogous ‘Hormuz dilemma’ (Winner 2011, 105). Indian maritime doctrines and strategists thus appropriately identify ‘the arc from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca as a legitimate area of interest’ and the Red Sea, the South China Sea and the southern Indian Ocean as ‘secondary areas’ of maritime interest (Erickson et al 2010, 230).

Its geographic predisposition and the increasing weight of its economy are slowly pushing India’s mindset from ‘continental’ to ‘maritime’. Its maritime aspirations are exemplified by the acquisition of the Kiev-class aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya from Russia, which entered service in 2013, and the indigenous development and construction of four Arihant-

class nuclear submarines (the first of which is undergoing sea trials, while others are expected to be commissioned in 2023) and two Vikrant-class aircraft carriers (expected to enter service in 2018 and 2025, respectively)

India's growing ambitions to protect its interests in the Indian Ocean, and to play the role of a regional maritime power and security provider, are explicitly stated in the IN's 2007 strategic document *Freedom to use the seas: India's maritime military strategy*. In its foreword, Admiral Sureesh Mehta asserts that his country's 'primary national interest . . . is to ensure a secure and stable environment, which will enable continued economic development and social upliftment of [India's] masses'. He deems that this 'will allow India to take its rightful place in the comity of nations and attain its manifest destiny'. Mehta then emphasizes that India's maritime military strategy is underpinned by 'the freedom to use the seas for [India's] national purposes, under all circumstances' (Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence 2007, iii).

'Freedom to use the seas' and 'good order at sea' are thus vital components of India's maritime thinking. However, in an ideal scenario for Indians, 'the freedom to use the seas' in the Indian Ocean would apply exclusively to India.

James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara propose that India's perception of its future role in the Indian Ocean looks for insight not to the nineteenth-century European balance of power model, but to America's Monroe Doctrine (Holmes and Yoshihara 2008, 46).

c. The established role of the US

The US has been the dominant power in the Indian Ocean and the protector of SLOCs since the United Kingdom announced its withdrawal 'east of Suez' in the late 1960s. During the Cold War, Washington's primary interest was to curtail Soviet influence in the region and protect oil transportation from the Middle East. In the early 1970s, the US commenced the construction of a naval facility at Diego Garcia—an atoll leased from the British which was strategically located in the centre of the Indian Ocean. With the end of the Cold War, the US became the uncontested guarantor of free passage and 'good order at sea' in the Indian Ocean, extensively using Diego Garcia as a naval support facility during its interventions in the Middle East (A. Brewster & Editor, 2016).

The US protection of vital SLOCs in the Indian Ocean comes with a significant price, though. It has been estimated that the US spends between US\$47 billion and US\$98 billion per year

to secure the Persian Gulf (Delucchi and Murphy 2008, 227). Since both India and China benefit from US-protected SLOCs in the Indian Ocean, the two nations are basically free-riding on US naval forces.

In this sense, India is expected to play a more active role in upholding the stability of its regional security environment, which includes the Persian Gulf. This is a complex dilemma—assigning a larger role to the IN in protecting Indian Ocean SLOCs would foster a negative Chinese reaction. At this point, Beijing entrusts Washington with securing maritime trade routes that are vital for its economy—in part because it does not have a different option, but also because (so far) the US has demonstrated its commitment to the freedom of commercial navigation. India, on the other hand, is an unknown factor in this sense: when dealing with China its approach to such a role could be significantly different from that of the US. Arguably, China would not acquiesce to India’s role as security provider and would attempt to protect its maritime trade on its own account, thus heightening tensions.

d. China’s stakes

In the years since the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, China’s Communist Party (CCP) has increasingly derived its legitimacy of rule from the growing prosperity of the country rather than from communist ideology. This implies that China’s leadership must ensure the factors that have helped China’s rise remain intact. One part of China’s equation for increasing prosperity is sea trade—especially for the import of energy. Indeed, China’s reliance on the import of energy via the Indian Ocean is severe: 89 per cent of its hydrocarbons are transported through these waterways (Erickson et al 2010, 216).

Unlike in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean is restricted to a small number of choke points—namely the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and the Malacca Strait between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. China’s dependence on freedom of passage through these choke points led Chinese President Hu Jintao to declare that his country faces a ‘Malacca Dilemma’ (Lanteigne 2008, 143). The dependence on the Malacca Strait seems analogous to a saying from the fifteenth century which alluded to Venice’s extensive commerce with Asia: ‘Whoever is lord of Malacca has his hand on the throat of Venice’ (Kaplan 2010, 180). Beijing’s anxiety about free passage through Malacca is further exacerbated by remarks of Indian ‘hawks’, such as Bharat Karnad, who is a former member of India’s National Security Advisory Board. Karnad advocates that, in the event of a conflict with China, India would use sea-denial strategies such as naval blockades to sever China’s

energy supply lines—by ‘squeeze[ing] the Chinese oil and trade lanes in the Indian Ocean’ (Joshi 2011a, 159).

The second point of anxiety in Chinese maritime thinking is the so-called ‘first island chain’, constituted by a closed arc that runs from South Korea through Japan and the Philippines to Malaysia and Indonesia. The ‘first island chain’, formed by the US and its partners and allies, is allegedly suffocating China’s nautical activities and obstructing the nation’s entry into the oceanic thoroughfare (Yoshihara 2012, 491). According to Chinese analysts, the US and its allies are using this ‘chain’ to encircle and contain China (Li 2012). It is therefore only natural for China to seek ‘relief’ in the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean, though, contains an alleged ‘iron chain’—India’s Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The geostrategic location of the islands would permit India to ‘seal off Malacca’ and play the role of ‘guardian’ of the Malacca Strait to resist ‘Chinese infiltration of the Indian Ocean’ (Yoshihara 2012, 496). In 2001, India created the Andaman and Nicobar Command based in Port Blair. The Command’s objective is to safeguard India’s interests in Southeast Asia and the Malacca Strait by boosting its ability to rapidly deploy military assets in the region (Raghuvanshi 2013). This step raised further concerns in China about India’s intentions. To bypass its ‘Malacca problem’, China has been active in financing the construction of ports and infrastructure in various Indian Ocean littoral states. These projects include Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Sittwe in Burma and Chittagong in Bangladesh, which serve as transport corridors for Chinese oil and trade. It must be noted that economic prosperity is not the sole source of CCP legitimacy. As Yanqi Tong claims, ‘the current regime legitimacy is maintained because of the historically rooted moral bond between the state and society and the societal expectation that the state would be responsible for the wellbeing of the population’ (Tong 2011, 141). Yet it is quite clear that the party’s current objectives and policies are more ‘prosperity oriented’ than ‘ideology oriented’, which is closely linked to being ‘responsible for the wellbeing of the population’.

China’s policy of constructing port facilities in the Indian Ocean region has come to be labelled the ‘String of Pearls’ strategy and raises concerns in India that these facilities may one day serve as forward deployment bases for the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

To a certain extent, China’s increasingly frequent incursions into the Indian Ocean are a sign of power projection. Beijing’s growing naval fleet, bolstered by the newly operational aircraft carrier (which is currently mainly utilized in posturing), has fostered China’s confidence and

assertiveness in defending its territorial claims and interests in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. The Chinese leadership has been adroit in employing the country's usable past to form a narrative of its naval history. Veneration of the iconic admiral Zheng He, who allegedly discovered America before Columbus, and emphasis on China's successes in naval explorations and trade in the Middle Ages, mixed with the current incidents over territory in the waters around China, have shored up national pride in the navy and domestically legitimized investments in the PLAN.

In June 2013, China released the first 'Annual Report on the Development of the Indian Ocean Region', which came to be labelled the 'Blue Book' in the media. Although it was published by a think-tank—the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)—and not a government agency, the report can be considered a semi-official standpoint of the Chinese leadership, due to the prominence of CASS, whose policy prescriptions have often mirrored the Govt's views (Singh 2013a). The Blue Book observes that the 'changing dynamics of international relations necessitates that China play a more proactive role in affairs of the region', but also acknowledges that China needs to dispel the notion that its activities pose a 'threat' to the region (Singh 2013a). This is in line with the notion that the 'basic aim of Chinese naval power building is to ensure a "harmonious sea" through self-capacity building and international cooperation' (Lou 2012, 631). In this sense, the report emphasizes that China's essential interests in the region are purely commercial and it makes a strong case for deepening economic engagement with littoral states. The book also states that, while India has put forward its own 'Look East' policy, and the US has implemented its 'pivot' or 'rebalancing' strategy towards Asia, China 'has no Indian Ocean strategy' (Krishan 2013).

Given this wide range of strategic interests and potential partners in the area, Beijing is bound to conduct a nuanced policy towards the Indian Ocean region. Nevertheless, its primary stakes in the Indian Ocean seem to be quite clear: China needs to protect the maritime trade routes that are vital to its economy. The PLAN's capabilities are still far exceeded by those of the US Navy, but as China's navy very gradually shifts from its traditional 'coastal defense' role to a more 'forward-deployed blue-water' navy, it will increasingly gain the capacity to protect sea lines of communication (SLOCs) on its own and not need to entrust other powers (mainly the US) with this task (Erickson and Chase 2011; Holmes 2012). Nevertheless, the question remains of whether India's aspirations in the Indian Ocean will permit China to play such a role and whether the US will be willing to give up its portion of the job.

Objective of Research:

The objective of this research is to analyse geopolitics in Indo-Pacific region in the context of India, China and the US and to explore the many policy challenges and opportunities facing this region as this area is emerging as central theatre of 21st century Geopolitics. In particular, the research will try to understand the role that emerging military, commercial, environmental and technological trends will play in shaping relationships among these three countries in the region. This research will focus on various points of national strategic intersection among the three nations in this Indo-Pacific “Strategic Triangle” that could form the basis for formal agreement although a formal coalition between any two of the three countries is unlikely. Coexistence is achievable but there are numerous irritants that may result in clashes. To demonstrate this, the research will first define the geographic boundaries and outline the importance of the Indo-Pacific region. It will then analyse the Indo-Pacific region strategies of India, China and the US and will examine their circumstances and action through their respective national diplomacy, militaries and economies to determine potential points of agreements and disagreements.

Context of the evolving maritime geopolitics in Indo-Pacific

The Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming the point of focus in assessing Asia’s future security challenges. As both India and China are building up their naval presence in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea respectively, as China’s stakes in the region (protecting its maritime trade) interact with India’s aspirations (being the regional dominant power and security provider), tensions are likely to rise. The United States has an established role in the Indo-Pacific region with its ‘Pivot to Asia’ policy, and thus its approach to the contestation between Indian and Chinese interests may play a key role in limiting frictions. This actually points out to the emergence of a balance of power system in the Indian Ocean region(Panda, 2015).

While China is steadily approaching economic parity with the US, India will arguably not allow itself to lag behind Beijing in its power projection in the Indian Ocean region and thus New Delhi will devote much attention to increasing India’s naval power. In an ideal scenario, the contestation between China’s stakes, India’s aspirations and the US’s established role in the Indian Ocean will be settled inside the ‘power triangle’ with respect to the common interests of all three actors and not by forming alliances to advance one’s interests over those of the others.

Varying strategic perspectives on the importance of the Indo-Pacific have been developed by a diverse set of regional actors, including the India, China and USA. This shift of the United States and other countries toward the Indian Ocean region has been driven by the dramatic economic growth of China and the steady rise of India's trade and productivity, the increased importance of raw materials and resource extraction from developing countries, and the escalating crude oil exports of the Middle East to Asia. Accelerating rates of change have created a rapidly evolving security landscape characterized by both of soft and hard power, ranging from maritime partnerships and trade initiatives, to bilateral and multilateral disaster management exercises, to active efforts to demonstrate sea control and credible combat power(A. G. Singh, 2016).

The recent strategic rebalance of the United States towards the Asia-Pacific has included a strong naval presence serving several purposes. Among major US interests are guaranteeing the freedom of navigation for energy and commercial trade, ensuring a stable balance of power, monitoring and deterring threats from actors such as Iran and North Korea, and directing various maritime security operations such as counter-terrorist, counter-trafficking, and counter-piracy missions. Meanwhile, China and India have sought to thread a needle between their strategic cooperative and competitive relations. A host of economic and political interests, and an expanding web of bilateral and multilateral interactions around the region, have changed perceptions both between the two Asian giants and with regards to the United States.

Increased activity throughout the Indo-Pacific due to expanding regional and global trade in goods, ideas, people, and resources has raised a new set of maritime security challenges. Historical state-based concerns such as geopolitical fragility, internal political upheaval, insurgency, inter-state tensions, sea-lane security, and territorial disputes are now coupled with growing threats from non-state sources and asymmetric risks. Among these are growing risks from non-state actors including piracy, terrorism, and trafficking; the impacts of environmental degradation, resource depletion, climate change, and natural disasters; and weak states and failing institutions. These diverse challenges confront an equally diverse set of nations bordering this region, ranging from prosperous states with strong rule of law to low-income countries with feeble or fragmented governance structures. Such diversity in interests and capabilities saddles the Indo-Pacific region with political tensions and brings with it a greater danger of instability and conflict(Hall, 2016).

Today, increasing flows of commerce, investment, and people are linking the Indian Ocean and Pacific nations together and to the rest of the world as part of an emerging global trading network. The Indian Ocean region has long been the primary artery for pumping oil from the Persian Gulf into the global economy. More recently, the Indo-Pacific has been primed to benefit from the expansion of offshore oil and gas exploration, and development along the eastern coast of Africa, as well as off of Myanmar and Vietnam. Its position as the principal conveyor belt for the international coal trade, and its broader geostrategic standing at the intersection of modern economic, natural resource, and environmental issues, likewise adds to the region's economic value. The Indo-Pacific's rising geostrategic profile has boosted demand for maritime activity and infrastructure throughout the region. This has, in turn, resulted in the development of regional industrial hubs, the enabling of technological innovation, the stimulation of regional growth, the facilitation of world trade flows, the formation of global shipping alliances, and an overall upsurge in regional living standards. Port and maritime development, however, can come with their own costs, particularly given the broader geopolitical and environmental circumstances of the region. The existing threats of armed robbery, kidnapping, and sabotage from pirates, organized criminal gangs, and terrorist networks, are likely to increase as the region's offshore industry expands and the development of possible targets increases. Environmental threats like rising sea levels have highlighted the vulnerabilities of the region's growing maritime infrastructure. Climate change endangers not only port and maritime infrastructure in the Indian Ocean region, but also ocean environmental systems and human well-being(Li, 2010).

In the face of varied and heightened threats in the Indian Ocean region, there have arisen increased opportunities for both cooperation and competition. Indeed, prospects for peace in the maritime environment of the Indo-Pacific depend largely on mutual understanding, cooperation, and constructive engagement. Several regional political, economic, development, and security forums maintain an active role in the Indo-Pacific.

From a legal perspective, there are a number of existing frameworks governing maritime activity in the Indo-Pacific, including, most notably, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Though not ratified by the United States, UNCLOS has been ratified by most Indo-Pacific countries and serves to provide a framework for agreements, organizations, and activities, including those addressing territorial claims, managing fish stocks, developing minerals outside of national jurisdiction, and implementing of environmental pacts and security partnerships negotiated through other regional bodies.

The Indo-Pacific is a contested topic in the current context of power equations. The idea has been there for ages and after twists and turns has come back. The phrase 'Asia-Pacific' earlier excluded India but East Asia today has embraced India. The Indo-Pacific region serves India's interests. It takes it beyond just West Asia, South Asia or Central Asia. The geo-political concept helps to understand that the security and development of India is linked with the Pacific.

All three nations seek economic prosperity, India and China to develop and the US to maintain. As Henry Kissinger points out, the desire for continued economic growth is one of the key arguments against a war for anything short of a direct threat to national integrity or core national interest. Conflict is not in any nation's interests, however it will require the US-China-India strategic triangle to commit to transparency, mutual trust and at least co-existence in the increasingly important and increasingly contested Indo-Pacific Region.

Research Questions:

1. What are the evolving maritime geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region?
2. What are the major issues that India needs to look at in the 'Indo-Pacific' concept?
Can India have its own pivot?
3. How can India define the term 'Indo-Pacific' to suit its own geo-political interests?
4. What are the advantages and problems attached to rebalance?
5. When the US talks about the term 'Indo-Pacific', is it innocent? What are the driving interests for the US in the region?
6. If China and India have divergent perspectives, can they cooperate?
7. Will Sino-Indian rivalry be a reality or fictional? If this rivalry is based on Chinese forays in strategic affairs, how can India and the US deal with it?
8. How can India develop the capability to devise a strategic sway in the Indian Ocean?
Will it prefer to be protected by the US or act on its own?
9. Why has the Indo-US strategic partnership failed to provide a joint doctrinal underpinning in the Indian Ocean?
10. What are the self-imposed constraints for India on joining alliances, if any?

Hypothesis:

1. The route to better-governed Indo-Pacific region will be a choppy one, particularly if China continues on its path of challenging the regional order.

2. The emerging maritime geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region actually provides the potential for cooperation in transnational security issues.
3. The rising economies of Indo-Pacific region are acquiring more and more purchasing power and need to secure increasing energy needs. This affects the vital sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean, especially those along the strategic choke points in the region.

Research Methodology:

This research will mostly base on qualitative technique as it is descriptive and analytical. This study intends to use both primary and secondary sources & literature. The primary sources would be the official documents of India, China and US as well as some multilateral organisation's foundational documents & declaration. Apart from this, the secondary sources will be include books and articles in academic journals, relevant internet sources, and reports.

Chapter 2

Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region

The Indo-Pacific region is widely recognised as the global centre of gravity, whether in terms of economic interaction, demographics, transnational security challenges or the strategic balance. The Indo-Pacific region is a vast maritime zone where the interests of many nations are engaged. These powers include India, United States, China and Japan etc. but also substantial medium and smaller powers, including Australia and Indonesia, and stakeholders from beyond the region like Europe. The Indo-Pacific sea-lanes, after all, are becoming the world's principal highways for energy and commerce(Kaushiva & Singh, n.d. 2014).

Despite the name, the Indo-Pacific is not a concept framed primarily or solely by the rise of India. Rather, the evolution of what might be called an Indo-Pacific strategic system has its origins at least as much in the interests of East Asian powers (and not only China), most notably in their dependence on the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean for energy and trade. Thus as Japan, for instance, becomes more active and confident as a strategic player internationally, it can be expected to join the ranks of key Indo-Pacific powers. This has implications ranging from capabilities (long-range and maritime) to partnerships (such as with India and Australia) to policy choices in times of tension. Of course, the Indo-Pacific concept has its problems – for instance, encompassing a region too vast to be managed through a single multilateral institution(Green & Goodman, 2016).

From a national interest point of view, however, it also has its virtues. One of these is that its central sea lanes, notably in the South China Sea, are by their nature a shared space and everyone's business. Another is that the Indo-Pacific is by its nature a multipolar region, too vast for any one power, such as China, to dominate(B. V. Mishra, 2016).

The era of the Indo-Pacific will be a phase in the history of maritime Asia marked by continued contestation and complexity, including the question of how to define the region. What is clear, however, is that this is a regional order that tilts towards multipolarity – too large for any one power to dominate, or to advance its interests in without relying on partnerships. Unilateralism is not the answer to the region's problems – whether transnational or interstate – and accordingly advantages will accrue to those countries open to new forms of security partnership. Whether through new bilateral or multilateral arrangements, or the more effective leveraging of multilateral forums like the East Asia Summit, the players in the

middle (neither the United States nor China) have special opportunities to seize (Upadhyay, 2014). Australia is well positioned to be a hub in such cooperation. Its 2016 Defence White Paper placed striking priority on Japan and India as among the countries with which it should develop security partnerships of effectiveness and trust. There is every reason for that direction to be maintained, as regional powers come to terms with the central strategic problem of the Indo-Pacific: how to manage and incorporate China's interests across this vast region without harming the interests of others (Cook, Schofield, & Tan-mullins, 2011).

Maritime domain of the Indo Pacific region is vital waterways for global commerce, and it will be a critical part of the region's expected economic growth in coming decades. India along with other regional and extra regional powers wants to ensure the Indo-Pacific region's continued economic progress. The importance of Indo-Pacific sea lanes for global trade cannot be overstated. Eight of the world's 10 busiest container ports are in the Indo-Pacific region. Approximately two-thirds of the world's oil shipments transit through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, and in 2016, more than 15 million barrels of oil passed through the Malacca Strait per day (Enclave, Tula, & Marg, 2014).

The Indo-Pacific region is important because it represents the centre of gravity of the world's economic and strategic interests. As the world's most economically dynamic region, it is home to resources that can help power many developed and developing economies. Maritime security in this region is expected to be a key factor in the development of many countries. The integrated region consists of several of the world's important choke-points for global commerce including the Straits of Malacca, through which almost a quarter of world trade passes and is arguably the most critical as the artery of the world economy. It is the transit passage for not just the bulk of China's trade, but also for the entire lot of east-bound commercial traffic and oil and gas shipments from Europe and the Middle East (Trends & Responses, 2014).

Freedom of the seas, however, includes more than the mere freedom of commercial vessels to transit through international waterways. The term under international law, "freedom of the seas" means all of the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace, including for military ships and aircraft, recognized under international law (Maritime & Strategy, n.d. 2015). Freedom of the seas is thus also essential to ensure access in the event of a crisis. Conflicts and disasters can threaten the interests of India and other countries. India has always shown its commitment to ensuring free and open maritime access to protect the stable

economic order that has served all nations in the Indo-Pacific region so well for so long, and to maintain the ability of Indian Navy specifically in Indian Ocean to respond as and when needed(Lang, 2014).

In last 70 years, military presence of many countries in the maritime domain of Indo-Pacific region has played a vital role in undergirding regional peace, stability, and security. This presence has enabled tremendous prosperity and economic growth across the region and facilitated the unimpeded flow of resources and trade across vital waterways in the Indo-Pacific region(Green & Goodman, 2016). It is in the interests of all nations, not only those in the Indo-Pacific region, that the balance of power maintained by the military presence of various nations continues to deter and prevent conflict in this critical region(Tellis, 2016).

As the maritime security environment in the waters of Indo-pacific continues to evolve, this task is becoming more challenging. But there should be no doubt that role of Indian Navy will increase in coming decades so as to maintain the necessary military presence and capabilities to protect the interests of India against any potential threats in the maritime domain.

Adherence to a rules-based system has been critical to furthering peace, stability, and prosperity in the maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific region. The rule based system provides the basis for shared use of maritime waterways and resources, and ensures safe operations within the maritime domain. This is why Indian Navy operates in consonance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Law of the Sea Convention), which reflects customary international law with respect to traditional uses of the ocean. India along with likeminded countries or with its strategic partners, in conjunction with interagency partners, regional institutions, and regional strategic partners, is working to ensure that the rule of law – not coercion and force – dictate maritime Indo-Pacific's future(Scott, 2012a).

From geopolitical perspective in Indo Pacific region, India, China and USA are the significant players and all three countries have their distinctive influence on the present-day Indo Pacific landscape by interacting with different countries of the region. India and China are the key rising powers in the region and both the countries are exploring the possibility of a greater security role in the region and beyond. For years, China has developed complex relationships with both the USA and India. Tensions in the South China Sea have intensified in recent months. Beijing and Washington are at odds over China's apparent claims to sovereignty over the surrounding waters of the newly reclaimed land features and U.S.

freedom of navigation passages through them. There are also growing disagreements over fishery issues and deep-water drillings, making it imperative that the parties to the disputes develop mechanisms and procedures to prevent escalation of conflicts and manage crisis situations. To tackle these issues effectively requires first and foremost a critical analysis of the nature of the problems and then the development of options based on both historical precedents and their applicability in the current environment(A. Maritime & Forum, 2016).

Disputes in the South China Sea are not confined to competing claims for sovereignty, but also revolve around critical issues of access to and control over maritime resources and freedom of navigation in the open sea. Underlying these disputes is the geostrategic transformation and realignment occurring in the broader Indo-Pacific region. This inevitably casts territorial disputes in the South China Sea under the shadow of an emerging China-U.S. rivalry for regional primacy, at once compromising Washington's role as an impartial and neutral player and deepening Beijing's resolve to prevent or minimise internationalisation of the issues. Clearly, managing tensions will require an overall political environment conducive to the discussion and negotiation of mechanisms aimed at lowering tensions, exploring alternatives, and paving the way for eventual resolution of the disputes.

It is widely recognised that, with the Indo-Pacific's rapid development, energy and natural resource security have become important issues in the region's strategic and economic environment. The rapid growth in demand for energy and natural resources could lead to conflicts between regional countries and destabilise energy and resources markets and transportation routes, especially sea lanes. Consequently, as the world's economic centre of gravity shifts to the Indo-Pacific region, the stable supply and transportation networks for regional energy and other natural resources must be secured and developed safely(Trade & Silk, 1991).

However, the Indo-Pacific region faces a variety of traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges even as it develops economically, including through increasing maritime trade. Regional maritime countries need to find ways to create greater stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The most challenging factor in terms of the regional security situation is China. China has been working on the rapid modernisation and enhancement of nuclear weapons, ballistic and cruise missiles, air-sea power, and space and cyber warfare capabilities. In recent years, China has been acting hegemonically towards the East China

Sea, the South China Sea, the Western Pacific and further remote waters such as the Indian Ocean(Kaushiva & Singh, 2014).

More recently, China seems to have shifted its expansionary front to the South China Sea again, and has openly and actively invaded the area. As a result, China has repeatedly entered into disputes and confrontations with other littoral countries, such as Vietnam and the Philippines, over territorial rights in the South China Sea. Around some islands in the Spratly Islands. China has reclaimed reefs and has built runways for large military aircraft and piers for large naval vessels. Moreover, China is assiduously undertaking the development of strategic strongholds for military use by connecting reclaimed lands. Such actions not only obstruct freedom of navigation and flights over the area, but also increase the instability of the regional security environment. Therefore, ASEAN countries as well as the international community as a whole, led by the U.S. and Japan, have strongly criticised China for such activities(Huang, 2014).

Reflecting the developments mentioned above, most regional maritime players should promote collective maritime security cooperation in a free and flexible way. Confidence-building through exchanging official dialogue and security information, and conducting cooperative maritime exercises between the regional maritime forces that need collective maritime security cooperation, will contribute to regional stability by preventing misunderstandings, reducing mistrust, and expanding the scope of common interests, in addition to the efforts through the consultative frameworks mentioned above(Hall, 2016).

Regional maritime players have already demonstrated such collective maritime security cooperation against so called non-traditional maritime threats. They have been making cooperative efforts to tackle common concerns such as piracy and illicit trade (especially trade in materials that could be used to manufacture weapons of mass destruction). In addition, in light of the fact that the Indo-Pacific region is subject to frequent earthquakes, typhoons, cyclones, tsunamis and other natural disasters, a majority of regional maritime players believe that the reliable regional maritime powers (RRMPs) such as Japan, Australia and India, as well as the US, should play more-important roles in countering non-traditional maritime threats in the Indo-Pacific region(Pattanaik, 2016).

RRMPs could be the key players in maritime security and defence in the Indo-Pacific region, because they share not only a wide range of common maritime interests but also a broad responsibility for ensuring the region's security and prosperity as 'public goods.' They are the

players with the will and abilities to contribute to the region's security and stability, despite some differences in maritime policy and capability. The majority of the regional maritime players welcome the RRMPs' initiatives and believe that greater security and defence cooperation can also be pursued through establishing seamless maritime security coalitions involving the RRMPs(Chaudhury & Basu, 2016).

A majority of regional maritime players identify and recommend that the RRMPs take responsibility for areas of security and defence cooperation from the perspective of Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity. They welcome the progress already made in developing cooperation between the RRMPs in the areas of maritime security and defence, as well as the ongoing development of this framework into a seamless collective maritime security coalition.

A majority of the regional maritime players believe it is essential that the RRMPs and other regional maritime players enhance and develop cooperation in both traditional and non-traditional areas of maritime security and defence – including anti-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – not through traditional alliances, but rather in a seamless chain of multilateral maritime security coalitions. These coalitions would not resemble a 'containment alliance' targeting a particular country such as China, but would rather be a loose, voluntary association providing universal maritime security as regional 'public goods'(Wojczewski, 2016).

India is primarily interested in the geo-economic engagement in countries of the Indo-Pacific region to sustain India's economic growth and development. This is as true in 2016 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it was under prime ministers dating back to P.V. Narasimha Rao, who launched the 'Look East Policy' in 1992. Indian policy attempts to connect the Indian economy to its traditional maritime neighbourhood and trading partners, broadly across both sides of the Straits of Malacca(Scott, 2012a).

Implicit in this policy is the desire for free movement of people, goods, services and investments across the region. Security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs), freedom of navigation, availability of port infrastructure and non-discriminatory access to markets are some of the basket of issues that ensue from this definition of interests. In addition, New Delhi sees preserving and promoting the Indian footprint in East Asia, through shared culture, arts and religion as part of its broader interests(Li, 2010).

To safeguard its interests, New Delhi has moved from being a passive ringside observer of East Asian multilateralism in the 1990s to an active, if conservative, contributor to the balance of power. It sees the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) forum as the principal high tables of Indo-Pacific diplomacy (Milner, n.d. 2016).

Concept of Maritime Power in the Strategic Context of Indo-Pacific

Since popularisation of the concept of “Maritime Power” by Alfred Thayer Mahan at the end of the 19th century, the term has been used indiscriminately and has also given rise to many debates. Indeed, this concept is particularly difficult to delineate and to use accurately because it can be understood in many different ways. Mahan’s ‘Influence of Sea Power’ (Foreign & Journal, 2014) identifies six conditions affecting the Maritime Power of nations: the geographical position, the physical conformation, extent of territory, the number of population, the national character, and the character of the government. Thus, Mahan explains how Maritime Power is constituted, but not what Maritime Power practically is (or means), except the connection between a flourishing maritime trade that generates the nation’s wealth and a powerful navy to protect it. Geoffrey Till pointed out that we can interpret Maritime Power in two different ways: either as an input, that is to say the sum of various naval and maritime-related assets, or as an output, that is to say ‘the capacity to influence the behaviour of other people or things by what one does at or from the sea’. Maritime Power can be understood as a means or as an end (E. Maritime, In, & Region, n.d. 2009).

The traditional conception of Maritime Power is mainly framed within the realist approach to international relations. The realist school of thought puts the emphasis on the centrality of States, which are unitary actors and constitute the main unit of analysis. Like human beings, States are depicted by realists as self-interested and diffident, and thus motivated by national interest and driven by power. Within the anarchical international system, each unit/actor/state must put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself and to ensure its own security; since no one else can be counted on to do so. Thus, the function of every State is the same, namely power maximisation, and every State’s highest goal is survival. Consequently, security does matter at the level of the states (national security). So the concept of Maritime Power is important for those nations which have the sovereignty over maritime domain (B. V. Mishra, 2016).

Maritime Power should be understood as a collective final cause and should not be seen only through individual/national material lenses (i.e. national security). This vision better corresponds to the definition of Maritime Power proposed by Till, that is, Maritime Power as an output. Maritime Power offers the capacity to influence others' behaviour and to shape the international system.

From that perspective, the influence of Maritime Power goes beyond the primacy in war and military power; it is intimately linked to the domination of the world order and the spread of globalisation and liberalism. In discourses, many threats and risks are now linked to the sea, such as piracy, arms and drug trafficking, terrorism, illegal immigration, overfishing, and energy insecurity. Maritime Power is not a notion exclusively linked to war and military power. It encompasses various non-military aspects, such as maintaining good order at and from the sea. Navies are used to performing a large range of peacetime missions, including naval diplomacy, humanitarian operations, search and rescue (SAR), and police or constabulary duties(A. G. Singh, 2016).

From a realist perspective, Maritime Power is understood as a sum of assets, that is to say a powerful navy, an efficient merchant fleet (although today the states that possess the most powerful navies are no longer those that possess the largest merchant navies), and some invariable geographical factors which contribute to states' power(Horimoto, 2017).

According to the realist vision, the importance of Maritime Power mainly comes from what navies can do at sea, or from the sea, to contribute to States' national and economic security. Maritime Power is about power maximisation and navies are tools at States' disposal for fulfilling their national interest and pursuing power politics. Their main role is to secure the control or command of the sea, and then to exercise this command. Navies and States' power are intimately linked. Navies have traditionally been an indicator of States' power(Kaushiva & Singh, n.d. 2014).

However, there has been a shift from national policy towards a more globalised vision taking the trans-nationalisation of threats into account. Good order at and from the sea cannot realistically be achieved through national policies only. Consequently, global maritime security 'requires cooperation among many different countries, services, agencies and institutions, since a single state (or a single security entity) alone does not have the capability to cope with such non-territorial threats'.

In sum, the dominant maritime geopolitics discourse is mainly framed by liberal principles, such as the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence at sea (or good order at sea), the freedom of the seas, and stewardship. In practice, it translates into legitimised projection activities, which include classical power and forces projection, exercising the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence at sea, and the promotion of norms and values.

Maritime security protects the sovereignty and maritime resources, supports free and open seaborne commerce, and counters weapons proliferation, terrorism, transnational crime, piracy, illegal exploitation of the maritime environment, and unlawful seaborne immigration. Naval forces provide maritime security in the maritime commons and the seaborne approaches to Nation. Countries manage critical mineral and marine resources in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and maintain internationally recognized search and rescue responsibility in the larger Transit Zone. Operating in and beyond the EEZ, Coast Guard and Navy ships and aircraft are the forward edge of the Nation's layered defence, developing maritime domain awareness, establishing effective maritime governance, and protecting the homeland(Nias, 2014).

Maritime security supports the efforts to uphold the laws, rules, and norms that govern standards of behaviour in the maritime commons for transit, trade, and the pursuit of natural resources. Particularly important is cooperation with other nations to address both military and non-military state-sponsored challenges to sovereign rights. Because all nations share in the collective benefits of maritime security, it is a promising area for expanded cooperation with all countries in the maritime domain.

The sea is crucial in terms of energy security. Firstly, the majority of unexploited oil and gas fields are located under the oceans. With the gradual depletion of traditional deposits, states will increasingly seek their exploitation. It implies securing sovereignty rights over maritime territories that were previously not considered as a priority, or relying upon multilateral agreements(Upadhyaya, 2014).

Securing the sea is not exactly the same as enforcing the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Indeed, securing the sea often requires states to act outside their territorial waters, sometimes within foreign states' territorial waters, in order to cope with terrorism at (or from the) sea, piracy, as well as arms, drug, and people smuggling. Maritime security implies projecting power and norms into the maritime domain and thus fits with the liberal conception of sea-power. In their quest for maritime security, States engage various services

and agencies, not only their navy. Thus, interstate coordination and multilateral operations are crucial in order to secure and protect the sea. Indeed, criminal actors use the maritime frontiers to their advantage, by exploiting legal disparities, as well as inefficient coordination between services within and between the different countries. Consequently, cooperation in the field of the struggle against transnational threats at sea is an imperative requirement, although not so easily achievable(Huang, 2014).

Maritime Geopolitics

The Indo Pacific maritime domain is undergoing some significant changes. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea and increase in competition for strategic space in the Indian Ocean is leading to a hostile security environment. While on the one hand, many countries in the Indo pacific region depends on American security forces to maintain peace and stability in the region, the rise of China and India are quickly emerging as the alternate option for a new security order. The tussle for power and the need to project the same is increasing tension with a higher risk for an armed conflict in Indo-Pacific(Kaushiva & Singh, 2014).

Maritime security revolves around three main domains of action: (1) adopting legislations adapted to the current threats and the nature of the maritime domain (such as port security regulations, pirates' extradition agreements, fisheries protection rules, and marine environment protection norms), (2) maritime surveillance and maritime domain awareness, and (3) enforcement by naval forces and other services(B. Singh, 2016).

The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the maritime strategic hub in the 21st century. The quantum of sea-borne trade of resources and merchandise trade had bestowed the region its strengths and vulnerabilities. The maritime geography of the Indo-Pacific presents the interface of the continental landmass of Asia and the Pacific Ocean and the region is abounded by the maritime flanks of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean constituting its intertwined maritime geographical boundaries.

The rise of new powers in Indo-Pacific has been in competitive patterns of power with growing strategic capabilities with nuclear and missile arsenals even as economic interdependence has ushered in cooperative relations. The Indo-Pacific is known for its dichotomy of growing economies and spiralling arms races that is persistent. Military power remains a robust variable even as the region emerges to displace the Euro-Atlantic region in

terms of the largest trading area and a region of territorial and sovereignty contestations(Nias, 2014).

The Balance of Power in the Indo-Pacific is maritime centric as the contiguity of sea spaces have emphasised the significance of civilian shipping and navies. Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) constitutes the arterial networks of resources and energy flows with the deployment of the regional and extra-regional navies in the region(Foreign & Journal, 2014).

The Indo-Pacific is a region known for its long spans of latitudinal maritime expanse that has rendered the importance of maritime access and forward presence a vital factor in the maritime balance of power. In today's time, the Indo-Pacific maritime strategic trend focuses on:

- The nature and salience of naval transformation that has affected traditional naval doctrines and force postures.
- The transformation of the concept of Forward Naval Presence of extra-regional powers and the regional naval/maritime responses.
- The pertinent issues of security of sea-lanes of communication, challenges of maritime terrorism; energy flows and its security and the containment of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- The evolving naval doctrines and technological templates in the region.
- The operational dynamics evident in the competitive and cooperative maritime strategies in the region.

The Indo-Pacific is known to be the region that is pivoted on geopolitics and geo-strategic factors. While the logic of geo-economics sustains the cooperative relations among the states in the Indo-Pacific, there is strong discernible evidence of geo-political and geo-strategic factors that works as the dynamic of balancing in the region.

The region has emerged as hub of increasing economic development, integration as well as a region of transitional and asymmetric challenges that have been on land and in sea. The increasing prospect of maritime transnational and asymmetric challenges of terrorism, piracy and the vulnerabilities of supply chains has complicated the security of Sea Lanes of Communication. The Indo-Pacific region is a globalised maritime environment with its accents on global maritime trade and pacific cooperation. There has been a growing

significance of transnational maritime issues that has the portents of threats and challenges evident in maritime terrorism and piracy and the cooperative accents in maritime regime building(Kaushiva & Singh, 2014).

As the economic centre of gravity shifts to the Indo-Pacific, it is natural and inevitable that maritime power also shifts to the Indo-Pacific region due to the importance of the sea to regional economies. Again, the shift in maritime power may have already started by observing current trends in the following areas:

- Increasing trade flows into and within Indo-Pacific,
- Increasing energy demand in Indo-Pacific, and
- Increasing strength of the merchant fleets in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The Indo-Pacific region is becoming widely recognised as the global centre of gravity, whether in terms of economic interaction, demographics, transnational security challenges or the strategic balance. The region is also a vast maritime zone where the interests of many players are engaged. These powers include India, China, United States and Japan etc. but also substantial middle and smaller powers, including Australia and Indonesia, and stakeholders from beyond the region, including in Europe. The Indo-Pacific sea-lanes, after all, are becoming the world's principal highways for energy and commerce(A. G. Singh, 2016).

Despite the name, the Indo-Pacific is not a concept framed primarily or solely by the rise of India. Rather, the evolution of what might be called an Indo-Pacific strategic system, has its origins at least as much in the interests of East Asian powers (and not only China), most notably in their dependence on the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean for energy and trade. Thus as Japan, for instance, becomes more active and confident as a strategic player internationally, it can be expected to join the ranks of key Indo-Pacific powers. This has implications ranging from capabilities (long-range and maritime) to partnerships (such as with India and Australia) to policy choices in times of tension. Of course, the Indo-Pacific concept has its problems – for instance, encompassing a region too vast to be managed through a single multilateral institution. From a national interest point of view, however, it also has its virtues. One of these is that its central sea lanes, notably in the South China Sea, are by their nature a shared space and everyone's business. Another is that the Indo-Pacific is by its nature a multipolar region, too vast for any one power, such as China, to dominate(Suri, 2016).

The era of the Indo-Pacific will be a phase in the history of maritime Asia marked by continued contestation and complexity, including the question of how to define the region. What is clear, however, is that this is a regional order that tilts towards multipolarity – too large for any one power to dominate, or to advance its interests in without relying on partnerships. Unilateralism is not the answer to the region’s problems – whether transnational or interstate – and accordingly advantages will accrue to those countries open to new forms of security partnership. Whether through new bilateral or multilateral arrangements, or the more effective leveraging of multilateral forums like the East Asia Summit, ARF etc., the players in the middle (neither the United States nor China) have special opportunities to seize. For example India and Australia etc. are well positioned to be a hub in such cooperation. Australia’s 2016 Defence White Paper placed striking priority on Japan and India as among the countries with which it should develop security partnerships of effectiveness and trust. There is every reason for that direction to be maintained, as regional powers come to terms with the central strategic problem of the Indo-Pacific: how to manage and incorporate China’s interests across this vast region without harming the interests of others.

There is nothing new in the term ‘Indo-Pacific’, if one takes a look at the history of Asia. Till the advent of colonialism, and before the Atlantic Ocean gained prominence after the Industrial Revolution, the Indian Ocean was the prime conduit of global activity. Its influence stretched as far as China, especially the region comprising the eastern Indian Ocean and the West Pacific Ocean—from India to Northeast Asia—was the hub for much of the global activity and interactions, with implications reaching far and wide beyond this region. The Indianized kingdoms like Champa in South Vietnam to Khmers in Cambodia, and from Sri Vijaya and Sailendras in Indonesia to numerous kingdoms in Thailand and Myanmar, are proof of the impact of the Indian influence and also the exchanges that took place in the ‘Indo-Pacific’ region during that time. The resurgence of ‘Indo-Pacific’ in the 21st century can be attributed to the advent of globalisation and the increasing economic links between countries. The economic and military rise of Asia, has led to the revival of ‘Indo-Pacific’. The growing economic links between the nations has led to countries forging both bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)(Ties, 2016).

From geopolitical perspective in Indo Pacific region, India, China and USA are the significant payers and all three countries have their distinctive influence on the present-day

Indo Pacific landscape by interacting with different countries of the region. India and China are the key rising powers in the region and both the countries are exploring the possibility of a greater security role in the region and beyond. For years, China has developed complex relationships with both the USA and India.

Tensions in the South China Sea have intensified in recent times. Beijing and Washington are at odds over China's apparent claims to sovereignty over the surrounding waters of the newly reclaimed land features and U.S. freedom of navigation passages through them. There are also growing disagreements over fishery issues and deep water drillings, making it imperative that the parties to the disputes develop mechanisms and procedures to prevent escalation of conflicts and manage crisis situations. To tackle these issues effectively requires first and foremost a critical analysis of the nature of the problems and then the development of options based on both historical precedents and their applicability in the current environment. Disputes in the South China Sea are not confined to competing claims for sovereignty, but also revolve around critical issues of access to and control over maritime resources and freedom of navigation in the open sea. Underlying these disputes is the geostrategic transformation and realignment occurring in the broader Indo-Pacific region(Joshi, 2016).

This inevitably casts territorial disputes in the South China Sea under the shadow of an emerging China-U.S. rivalry for regional primacy, at once compromising Washington's role as an impartial and neutral player and deepening Beijing's resolve to prevent or minimise internationalisation of the issues. Clearly, managing tensions will require an overall political environment conducive to the discussion and negotiation of mechanisms aimed at lowering tensions, exploring alternatives, and paving the way for eventual resolution of the disputes(Horimoto, 2017).

It is widely recognised that, with the Indo-Pacific's rapid development, energy and natural resource security have become important issues in the region's strategic and economic environment. The rapid growth in demand for energy and natural resources could lead to conflicts between regional countries and destabilise energy and resources markets and transportation routes, especially sea lanes. Consequently, as the world's economic centre of gravity shifts to the Indo-Pacific region, the stable supply and transportation networks for regional energy and other natural resources must be secured and developed safely.

However, the Indo-Pacific region faces a variety of traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges even as it develops economically, including through increasing maritime

trade. Regional maritime countries need to find ways to create greater stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The most challenging factor in terms of the regional security situation is China. China has been working on the rapid modernisation and enhancement of nuclear weapons, ballistic and cruise missiles, air–sea power, and space and cyber warfare capabilities. In recent years, China has been acting hegemonically towards the East China Sea, the South China Sea, Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean(Trade & Silk, 1991).

More recently, China seems to have shifted its expansionary front to the South China Sea again, and has openly and actively invaded the area. As a result, China has repeatedly entered into disputes and confrontations with other littoral countries, such as Vietnam and the Philippines, over territorial rights in the South China Sea. Around some islands in the Spratly Islands, which China seized from the Philippines by force, China has reclaimed reefs and has built runways for large military aircraft and piers for large naval vessels. Moreover, China is assiduously undertaking the development of strategic strongholds for military use by connecting reclaimed lands. Such actions not only obstruct freedom of navigation and flights over the area, but also increase the instability of the regional security environment. Therefore, ASEAN countries as well as the international community as a whole, led by the U.S. and Japan, have strongly criticised China for such activities(B. V. Mishra, 2016).

Reflecting the developments mentioned above, most regional maritime players should promote collective maritime security cooperation in a free and flexible way. Confidence-building through exchanging official dialogue and security information, and conducting cooperative maritime exercises between the regional maritime forces that need collective maritime security cooperation, will contribute to regional stability by preventing misunderstandings, reducing mistrust, and expanding the scope of common interests, in addition to the efforts through the consultative frameworks mentioned above.

Regional maritime players have already demonstrated such collective maritime security cooperation against so called non-traditional maritime threats in the Indo-pacific region. They have been making cooperative efforts to tackle common concerns such as piracy and illicit trade. In addition, in light of the fact that the Indo-Pacific region is subject to frequent earthquakes, typhoons, cyclones, tsunamis and other natural disasters, a majority of regional maritime players believe that the reliable regional maritime powers such as India, Japan and Australia as well as the US, should play more-important roles in countering non-traditional maritime threats in the Indo-Pacific region.

Reliable regional maritime powers could be the key players in maritime security and defence in the Indo-Pacific region, because they share not only a wide range of common maritime interests but also a broad responsibility for ensuring the region's security and prosperity as 'public goods.' They are the players with the will and abilities to contribute to the region's security and stability, despite some differences in maritime policy and capability. A majority of the regional maritime players believe it is essential that all needs to enhance and develop cooperation in both traditional and non-traditional areas of maritime security and defence – including anti-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief but not through traditional alliances, but rather in a seamless chain of multilateral maritime security coalitions. These coalitions would not resemble a 'containment alliance' targeting a particular country such as China, but would rather be a loose, voluntary association providing universal maritime security as regional 'public goods'(Chaudhury & Basu, 2016).

The debate on the Indo-Pacific comes at a time of significant progress in India's 'Look East Policy', an important connect of India to the Indo-Pacific. It is understandable that this concept is assuming growing relevance with the rise of India, and the enhancement of India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific. This engagement is of particular importance when, in response to the changing geopolitics and its effects on the countries of the region and on their strategic priorities, Asian countries—including India—are trying to create networks addressing common challenges, and creating a regional architecture to promote growth and prosperity, peace and stability. This would be done best in an inclusive and holistic manner, and in a composite region represented by the Indo-Pacific(Upadhyaya, 2017).

Bound by the Himalayas in the north, India has naturally focused on the sea to enhance its connectivity, especially through the Indian Ocean which extends from the eastern shores of Africa in the west to Australia and the Pacific in the east. Over the centuries, the Indian Ocean region, with India as the focus, has seen numerous nations navigating its waters with freedom, promoting trade and fostering cross-cultural influences. Today, through organizations like the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), the region seeks to create a collective community, seeking to deal with contemporary challenges, building collective capacity, and promoting greater cooperation within the region. India is a prime mover in the process(A. G. Singh, 2016). This is in line with its interest in building a peaceful environment, conducive to progress and our developmental priorities. Our perspective of the region is, therefore, more than just an economic and security one. It is

about addressing the aspirations of the people of this region, and guiding their destinies on a common path of mutually beneficial progress.

To safeguard its interests, India has moved from being a passive ringside observer of East Asian multilateralism in the 1990s to an active contributor in the balance of power. It sees the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) forum as the principal high tables of Indo-Pacific diplomacy. New Delhi will continue to demonstrate its credibility as a contributor to the Indo-Pacific balance through joint military exercises, patrolling, port calls, anti-piracy missions and humanitarian missions (Kaushiva & Singh, n.d. 2014).

Looking at the evolving geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region, US believes that the maintenance of safe and secure sea lanes, particularly those that link the United States with its partners in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is at the very core of US interests. Therefore, US maritime strategy seeks to sustain credible combat power in the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean so as to preclude attempts at interrupting vital sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and commerce in the maritime domain of Indo-Pacific. Given the strategic imperatives and the capability of both state and non-state actors to disrupt the Indo-Pacific sea lanes critical to global prosperity, the United States has renewed its commitment to maritime security in Indo-Pacific. In recent years, the United States has made significant adjustments to its defence posture in order to bring more maritime forces closer to Indo-Pacific sea lanes and defence officials have stated their intention to further enhance US posture in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean while maintaining US presence in Northeast Asia. Recognizing that the expansive nature of Indo-Pacific maritime territory and the complexity of the region's maritime challenges prevent any one country from resourcing the operations necessary to provide sea lane security, the United States is also strengthening cooperation with its maritime partners by expanding relationships and trust-building efforts, contributing to the capacity of its partners and enhancing interoperability. At the same time, the United States is supporting the strengthening of maritime regional organizations in the Indo-Pacific region as the foundations for the security architectures necessary to ensure the security of Indo-Pacific sea lanes and sustain regional prosperity (Lang, 2014).

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific region is complicated by maritime boundary disputes in the SCS, disagreement over territorial waters in the Bay of Bengal, Great Power competition, in addition to the emergence of non-traditional security challenges such as

piracy, drug and human trafficking, terrorism and climate change. The situation in the Western Pacific region however remains very complex and volatile in contrast to a rather stable situation in the Indian Ocean(Scott, 2012a).

Presently, there are a number of institutional arrangements in the Indo-Pacific region which seek to address both economic and security problems. However, they have limited success in these because of divergent approaches and competing national interests. The big challenge before them is therefore to create effective institutional mechanisms both for promoting collective economic benefits and countering common security threats. Authors in both the volumes emphasise the greater need of clear principles, governing rules and multilateral frameworks for building such regional architectures.

In this regard, the major powers of the region, including India, China and Japan etc., have to play a leading role in formulating a common idea. They need to make sustained efforts and build greater foreign policy coherence. In addition, greater cultural and people-to-people contacts will help in promoting such cooperation. These institutionalisations of the Indo-Pacific could promote overall peace, security and prosperity in the region, which is the common goal of the countries of this region(Krejsa & Krejsa, 2016).

As the global economy's centre of gravity continues to shift from the West to the East (Asia) with growing geostrategic significance of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, it is most likely that the regional and extra-regional countries will find ways to form new economic and strategic partnerships. The countries in the Indo-Pacific region, however, need to intensify their cooperation on maritime safety and security, disaster management, job creation and health, fisheries and marine resources management, science and technology and environment. Importantly, there is huge potential for economic integration of the region. Institutionalisation of an Indo-Pacific Regional Economic Architecture could yield greater economic benefits. Besides, greater cultural and people-to-people interactions will strengthen regional cooperation and can dispel much of the prevailing misperceptions.

With regard to China's growing influence in the region and its security implications for India and other regional countries, there exists a wide pessimism, particularly in the Western analyses. It is quite pertinent to point out here that the India-China relationship is nicely balanced between the elements of cooperation and conflict, like that of the US-China relationship. Especially, there is enough space in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond to

accommodate both rising China and India. They can co-exist and grow peacefully(Mukherjee, 2016).

However, the trends and issues will ostensibly continue to unfold in the region with greater worrying security concerns. In the coming years, maritime security within the Indo-Pacific region will be a key factor in the development of many countries. It, however, remains a major concern in the area because of the growing non-traditional security threats, in addition to maritime boundary disputes. Particularly, events in the SCS will continue to attract much of the regional and international attention.

These could possibly engulf the regional and international stakeholder's capability to maintain peace, security and stability within the region in a sustained and effective manner. Most importantly, countries in the Indo-Pacific region share many of these common concerns. Invigorating greater cooperation and coherence in their strategy could help address the problems collectively. Moreover, establishing an Indo-Pacific Regional Security Architecture will be very handy in addressing the common security concerns and threats. These trends and issues are immensely relevant to the peace, stability, security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region in the coming years. The efforts made in the volumes will definitely help policymakers of stake holding countries in identifying areas of mutual interests and in formulating policies for developing cooperation to address the various challenges collectively(Medcalf, 2016).

The fragile balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region is indeed the dominant narrative on the India–China–US triangular framework in the Indo-Pacific. However, this 'competitive, self-help' system is not an 'unchanging fact.' The convergences in strategic vision between the three actors are also translating into real time cooperation between them, especially at the seas. It is interesting to note how in spite of all the cataclysmic projections about the waters of Indo-Pacific turning into a potential war zone for the three, maritime cooperation and competition is slowly but surely taking roots into this power triangle(Lang, 2014).

There are a number of mechanisms already in place to manage tensions in the maritime domain, however, strategic interests, different interpretation of law and difference in approach to resolution of disputes have rendered them ineffective. What the Indo Pacific region requires is, to establish norms of behaviour on high seas and a structure to implement the same. Given the multitude of differences between the claimants and other regional powers, an international treaty or a legally binding agreement on rules of behaviour is highly

unlikely in the near future. Therefore, maritime security cooperation in Indo-Pacific region is taking a sharp turn toward a multilateral framework to uphold the established norms of behaviour. Territorial disputes and changing power dynamics is essentially creating space for collaborations between the navies of various countries as per the maritime geopolitics in the Indo Pacific region.

As the maritime developments continue to shape the security environment in Indo-Pacific, India stands at an interesting nexus of sustaining the established order and shaping the evolving one. India has been for far too long comfortable with its position in the Indian Ocean which remains the primary area of interest for the Indian Navy. Changing maritime geopolitics in the Indo Pacific region is however forcing Indian policy makers to look toward the maritime domain along with its continental troubles(Suri, 2016).

There is tremendous amount of support from regional powers such as the US, Australia and Japan for India to take on a leadership role shouldering its responsibilities in holding forth the current security order. India is being encouraged to emerge as the net security provider in Indian Ocean region and regional navies stand ready to cooperate and collaborate with New Delhi. Furthermore, China is pushing forward the idea of “Asia for Asians” wherein the Asian security structure is created, sustained and maintained by Asian powers. India appears to be a critical factor in both the frameworks- maintaining the current one or in establishing a new one. However, China’s concept for a new security framework need not necessarily aim to replace or break down the current security order but it does change the status quo.

There is no doubt that India is renewing its maritime engagements and attempting to look at the domain through new lens and want to establish herself as a major player in the maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific. Multilateral collaborations are the most effective model in managing tensions in Indo-Pacific and India is committed to this framework. A coalition of likeminded nations is the best way forward in keeping the Indo-Pacific region stable and deterring unilateral and assertive actions on the high seas. The goal now is to diffuse any tensions that may arise threatening the security order in the Indo Pacific region, leaving enough space for other effective methods of cooperation to emerge. While there may be disappointments regarding the pace of India’s willingness to play a security actor in the maritime geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region, New Delhi nevertheless is committed to being one(“INDIA-CHINA THINK-TANKS FORUM Towards A Closer India-China Developmental Partnership,” 2016).

For decades, the Indo-Pacific region has remained free from major conflicts, allowing nations to continue enjoying the benefits of the maritime domain. However, the security environment is changing, potentially challenging the continued stability of the region. Rapid economic and military modernization, combined with growing resource demands, has exacerbated the potential for conflict over long-standing territorial disputes. In addition, non-traditional threats such as weapons proliferation, human and other illicit trafficking, piracy, and natural disasters continue to pose significant security challenges. On the other hand, we have seen a number of positive trends in recent years as well, including the peaceful resolution of some maritime disputes in the region(Chaudhury & Basu, 2016).

The Indo-Pacific has emerged as a significant strategic space and a theatre of great-power competition. Besides traditional rivalries over maritime territory, sovereignty and resources, the region is also witnessing the rise of non-traditional threats. Maritime security challenges in the region include piracy, terrorism, gun running, illegal fishing, human and drug trafficking, climate change, global warming, and natural disasters. Significantly, the maritime threats have a transnational nature, where events in one part of the system impact another, thereby creating a need for strategic relationships(Bouchard & Crumplin, 2010).

The security of the Indo-Pacific, however, goes beyond a mere consideration of emerging political equations and great-power interplay. Recent developments in the region have shown that maritime security challenges in the region straddle the gamut of traditional and non-traditional issues. These include the scourge of piracy and armed robbery in the Western Indian Ocean and the Malacca Straits; a simmering maritime conflict in the Persian Gulf; terrorism in South and Southeast Asia; drugs, arms and human trafficking; and territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the East Sea. Yet, it is still the Persian Gulf - the world's most important source of crude oil – combined with Northern Indian Ocean SLOCs, the Malacca Straits and the Pacific's sea-lanes which attract the bulk of the security effort.

While the Indo-Pacific's centrality to oil trade renders its stability critical, the looming threat of maritime crime and environmental crises in the region make it an area of vital concern for maritime forces. Even as trends with worrisome security implications continue to evolve in the region, there is a distinct possibility that the maritime challenges could prevail over the international and regional community's ability to effectively respond in a sustained and effective manner(Milner, 2008).

The emerging dynamic in the region is about the simultaneous rise of three maritime powers: India, the US and China. Although the US still remains the most powerful nation in the world, both militarily and economically, the situation is rapidly changing due to China's growing comprehensive national power. Robert Kaplan, a prominent US security analyst aptly describes the strategic scenario in the Indo-Pacific as one "where the rivalry between the United States and China interlocks with the regional rivalry between China and India, and also with America's fight against Islamic terrorism in the Middle East, which includes America's attempt to contain Iran."

It is the slow erosion of American power combined with the rapid rise of China's military capabilities that is leading to an uncertain security situation in the Indo-Pacific. The new balance-of-maritime-power is what has resulted in the increased intensity of conflicts in the South China Sea – impacting regional maritime security at large. In the evolving security matrix, multiple hedging is the order of the day in that there is intense competition even between traditional allies and new partnerships are being seriously forged with old rivals(A. Maritime & Forum, 2016).

Dealing with security in the Indo-Pacific requires states to come to terms with its altered dynamics. For this, nations need to adopt a 'change management' approach in tackling the various challenges. While on the one hand, policy-makers need to account for the growing dangers in the maritime domain - threats from terrorism, trafficking, and piracy – on the other hand, they must also deal with economic and human security issues of trade, employment, connectivity and climate change. The magnitude and complexity of the challenges, demands policy coherence, imagination, resources, and sustained efforts.

From the Geo-strategic point of view, the Straits of Malacca dominates more than the commercial and economic lifelines into and out of the rapidly expanding economies of East Asia. The global strategic growth and expansion of aspiring powers can be contained and regulated through the mere control on the movements of their naval forces through these Straits. With more than 80000 vessels transiting through the Straits every year it is the world's hottest and most crucial strategic choke point and with new 'maritime trading hubs' on the drawing boards in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand, use of the Straits will only grow once this new infrastructure is operational(East et al., 2015).

The security situation in the Indo-Pacific is complicated by maritime boundary disputes. As energy security becomes important for nations, maritime boundary delineation has turned into

a potent source of international conflict. While potentially rich oil and gas resources lie within national maritime zones, they are inaccessible for exploitation so long as the hundreds of overlapping offshore boundary claims remain in dispute. Long standing maritime boundary disputes in the South China Sea attract much media attention. There is a need for clear principles and mutually agreed upon framework on the basis of which such maritime boundary disagreements can be resolved. For some time now there has been concern that the Indian Ocean Region could witness a major military surge by China, turning it into an arena of great power competition in Asia. Well aware of Beijing's efforts towards looking to exploit the string of pearls, the term is used only as a colloquial term for Chinese-funded ports and related infrastructure along the Indian Ocean littorals, to keep Delhi off-balance. As China strengthens its ties with Indian Ocean rim countries India has sought to improve its naval and security cooperation with countries of East Asia including Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines and Japan. However, India's strategic leverage in East Asia is not comparable with China's significant clout in the Eastern Indian Ocean, gained primarily on the basis of the huge maritime infrastructure that it has funded. These facilities may be commercial outposts at present but have a considerable scope for military application. We need to acknowledge that China's ability to put India under strain in the Indian Ocean is a growing factor shaping the broader dynamic of Asian security(Huang, 2014).

Meanwhile, maritime developments in the Western-Pacific region continue to dominate headlines. The vital maritime zone spanning the Asian littorals in the South China Sea and the Western Pacific has been the focus of regional and global attention. With much diplomatic wrangling and military manoeuvring for maritime zones and island territories in vogue, efforts by multilateral governance institutions have failed to find acceptable common ground for a viable framework for governance and dispute resolution. Against this backdrop, East Asian countries have begun beefing up their naval power. From Vietnam to Philippines and Indonesia to Japan, regional navies are all looking to build their offensive and defensive maritime capabilities. Many of these states have expressed fears about China's growing blue water capability and its dominance of the South China Sea and its islands. They have also supported India in its aspiration for naval outreach in South East Asia.

Regional Diplomacy

To enhance regional diplomacy, a case does exist for greater regional cooperation amongst the Indo-Pacific community. Whilst a range of multilateral regional organizations in the IOR

viz. IORA, IONS and BIMSTEC have been working with other groupings in the West Pacific region viz. ASEAN, ARF, ADMM+ and the East Asia Summit, to ensure better governance in the broader Indo-Pacific region, there is need for greater coherence in regional efforts to establish a community of stakeholders. In recent days there have been efforts by countries in South and South East Asia to revive the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) or IORA by giving it an expansive and ambitious mandate that includes security. The idea of such a community is to form an integrated neighbourhood, which could pave the way for the formation of a comprehensive regional economic and security partnership. Such regional cooperation would indeed be fruitful in reducing tensions between the littoral states(Hornat, 2016).

The nations of the region share many of these common concerns. Most States accept the need for greater multilateral and bilateral cooperation and therefore choose to constantly engage each other in addressing their concerns. But there is also the need to harmonize the efforts of all nations in the region in such a way that all can effectively address the multidimensional challenges of the future. It is for this reason that all nations in the Indo-Pacific region need to take a collective consideration of future strategies that would help address the many security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and identify the trends that are likely to shape the Asian strategic landscape over the next two decades(Joshi, 2016).

Maritime Geopolitics of Competing Territorial and Maritime Claims in the Indo-Pacific Region

a) South China Sea

There are numerous complex maritime and territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific region. The presence of valuable fish stocks and potential existence of large hydrocarbon resources under the Indian Ocean, East China Sea and South China Seas exacerbate these complicated claims. A United Nations report estimates that the South China Sea alone accounts for more than 10% of global fisheries production. Though figures vary substantially, the Energy Information Administration estimates that there are approximately 11 billion barrels and 190 trillion cubic feet of proved and probable oil and natural gas reserves in the South China Sea and anywhere from one to two trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, and 200 million barrels of oil in the East China Sea. Claimants States regularly clash over fishing rights, and earlier attempts at joint development agreements have faltered in recent years(Milner, 2009).

Although India takes no position on competing sovereignty claims to land features in the region, all such claims must be based upon land (which in the case of islands means naturally formed areas of land that are above water at high tide), and all maritime claims must derive from such land in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. India has a strong interest in ensuring all claimants seek to address and resolve their issues peacefully, without conflict or coercion. India also encourages and supports the efforts of claimant States to pursue diplomatic and other peaceful efforts to resolve the issues of sovereignty.

In the South China Sea, India has always urged all parties to pursue peaceful means of resolving their disputes, which includes diplomacy as well as third party dispute settlement, such as the Philippines' submission of its claims for arbitration in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures in the Law of the Sea Convention which would provide rules of the road to reduce tension among claimant States.

South China Sea territorial and maritime disputes revolve around three primary issues: (1) competing territorial claims among claimants, (2) competing maritime claims among claimants, and (3) excessive maritime claims asserted by some of the claimants. (Joshi, 2016)

Regarding competing territorial claims, there are six claimants to the land features in the South China Sea: Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. There are three primary disputes over territorial sovereignty. The first is a dispute among China, Taiwan, and Vietnam over the sovereignty of the Parcel Islands, which China has occupied since 1974. The second is a China-Taiwan-Philippines contest over Scarborough Reef. The third is a multi-claimant dispute over the Spratly Islands, which includes more than 200 geographic features. China, Taiwan, and Vietnam claim sovereignty over all of the Spratly land features, while Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines claim sovereignty of only certain land features in the island group. Vietnam and Malaysia have yet to delimit fully their maritime claims in the South China Sea.

Regarding competing maritime claims, claimants assert a combination of sovereignty, resource-related sovereign rights, and jurisdictional claims to the maritime areas located within the South China Sea. Some of these claimants have clarified the nature and breadth of their maritime claims, but others have not. For example, although Indonesia's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone extends into the South China Sea, the Indonesian government does not currently recognize China's so-called "Nine-Dash Line" (which overlaps with that EEZ)

and so does not consider itself a claimant in any South China Sea-related maritime dispute(A. Maritime & Forum, 2016).

Regarding excessive maritime claims, several claimants within the region have asserted maritime claims along their coastlines and around land features that are inconsistent with international law. For example, Malaysia attempts to restrict foreign military activities within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and Vietnam attempts to require notification by foreign warships prior to exercising the right of innocent passage through its territorial sea.

China has not clearly defined the scope of its maritime claims in the South China Sea. In May 2009, China communicated two Notes Verbales to the UN Secretary General stating objections to the submissions by Vietnam and Malaysia (jointly) and Vietnam (individually) to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The notes, among other things, included a map depicting nine line segments (dashes) encircling waters, islands and other features in the South China Sea and encompassing approximately two million square kilometres of maritime space. The 2009 Note Verbales also included China's assertion that it has "indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters and enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the relevant waters as well as the seabed and subsoil thereof." China's actions and rhetoric have left unclear the precise nature of its maritime claim, including whether China claims all of the maritime area located within the line as well as all land features located therein.

b) Indian Ocean

In sharp contrast to the South and East China Seas, the Indian Ocean region has remained relatively free of tensions caused by territorial and maritime disputes in recent years. Although there are a few maritime disputes in the region, they are relatively stable or have been resolved through international tribunals and arbitration.

India has been involved in two maritime disputes with neighbouring countries: Pakistan and Bangladesh. India and Bangladesh had competing claims over a portion of the Bay of Bengal. However, in 2009, both nations agreed to submit their conflicting claims to international arbitration. The July 2014 arbitral ruling largely favoured Dhaka's position, awarding Bangladesh sovereign rights to approximately 7,500 square miles, or about three-quarters, of the sea area of the Bay of Bengal, thereby giving Bangladesh rights to explore extensive oil and gas reserves that were previously held by India. Both India and Bangladesh publicly

supported the arbitration. In a joint statement with Dhaka, New Delhi pledged to abide by the ruling, expressing satisfaction that the settlement of the maritime boundary would enhance mutual understanding and goodwill, bring closure to the maritime boundary issue, and pave the way for cooperation in sustainable exploitation of the maritime resources of the Bay of Bengal.

Role of Military and Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) Modernization in the maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific

Rapid military modernization specifically of the navies across the Indo-Pacific region has significantly increased the potential for dangerous miscalculations or conflict in the maritime domain. Many countries are also significantly enhancing their maritime law enforcement (MLE) capabilities. These assets have become increasingly relevant as countries, particularly China, are using them to assert sovereignty over disputed areas.

China is modernizing every aspect of its maritime-related military and law enforcement capabilities, including its naval surface fleet, submarines, aircraft, missiles, radar capabilities, and coast guard. It is developing high-end technologies intended to dissuade external intervention in a conflict and designed to counter U.S. military technology. Although preparation for a potential Taiwan conflict remains the primary driver of Chinese investment, China is also placing emphasis on preparing for contingencies in the East and South China Sea. China sees a need for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to be able to support China's "new historic missions" and operational tasks outside the first island chain with multi-mission, long-range, sustainable naval platforms equipped with robust self-defence capabilities. As per the naval strategy of Chinese navy documents, although quantity is only one component of overall capability, from 2010 to 2016, China launched more naval vessels than any other country. The PLAN now possesses the largest number of vessels in Indo-Pacific, with more than 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious ships, and patrol craft.

China is also executing the largest military modernization efforts in Indo-Pacific, quantitatively and qualitatively improving its fleet, which is designed to enforce its maritime claims in the East and South China Seas. China's Maritime law enforcement fleet, composed primarily of vessels from the newly formed China Coast Guard, is likely to increase in size by 25% in coming years and is larger than that of all of the other claimants combined in the South China Sea specifically. Other Indo-Pacific nations are also enhancing their maritime capabilities. Japan is improving Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) deterrent capabilities and

realigning military and MLE assets to areas near the Senkaku Islands, which are also claimed by China. Japan plans to acquire and realign Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets to the area; upgrade maritime patrol craft and ground force radar, and missile units; and develop an amphibious assault capability within a joint JSDF task force. The Japanese cabinet has approved a modest increase to the Japan Coast Guard's budget, in part to fund a permanent Senkaku patrol unit.

So in conclusion, the era of the Indo-Pacific will be a phase in the history of maritime Asia marked by continued contestation and complexity, including the question of how to define the region. What is clear, however, is that this is a regional order that tilts towards multipolarity – too large for any one power to dominate, or to advance its interests in without relying on partnerships. Unilateralism is not the answer to the region's problems – whether transnational or interstate – and accordingly advantages will accrue to those countries open to new forms of security partnership. Whether through new bilateral or multilateral arrangements, or the more effective leveraging of multilateral forums like the East Asia Summit, ARF etc., the players in the middle (neither the United States nor China) have special opportunities to seize. For example India, Japan, South Korea and Australia etc. are well positioned to be a hub in such cooperation.

Chapter 3

Role of India in the Maritime Geopolitics of Indo-Pacific

As India moves forward in the 21st century, its development and prosperity will remain closely linked to the maritime domain in the Indo-Pacific region in general and Indian Ocean in particular. History bears out the role and contribution of maritime power in the growth and prosperity of great nations. The effective exercise of maritime power and employment of its primary instruments, especially the Navy and Coast Guard, requires an overarching strategy for achieving the maritime strategic goals. For many years, India tended to view the Indian Ocean as a cohesive entity, which drove diplomatic relations between countries on its periphery, while a fairly dominant Asia-Pacific was seen more through the eyes of regionalism. It is only of late that the integrated arena of the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific, commonly referred to as the Indo-Pacific, has become a key strategic area in the 21st century with the world seeing it as a singular maritime theatre. The shift in the strategic balance of power to the East makes it necessary to explore the emerging security imperatives in the broader Indo-Pacific region, amidst a rising constellation of economic and political stars such as China, Indonesia, Japan, Australia and India, on the geo-strategic horizon(Foreign & Journal, 2014).

As global economic power shifts from the West to the East, the vast geo-strategic and geo-economic realm spanning the western Pacific Ocean right up to the western Indian Ocean along the eastern coast of Africa is rapidly eclipsing the once dominant Asia-Pacific as the centre of trade, investment, rivalry, competition and cooperation. Today, it makes more sense to think of this maritime region of interest as an organic and integrated strategic entity rather than as two separate distinctive geographic and strategic theatres i.e. the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. More significance also accrues from the fact that this newly defined entity places security and commerce at the centre of Asia's strategic matrix. Of course, it connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans in a way that underlines the crucial role that the maritime environment is likely to play in the region's future economic development and strategic planning(Rehman, 2015).

Maritime security and cooperation amongst the Nations of the Indo-Pacific region are the underlying principles for fostering a lasting peaceful order in the region(Scott, 2012b). The Indo-Pacific region already has a host of arrangements in this sphere which are either restricted to countries or sub-regions. A glance at these arrangements will provide an

indicative overview of their capabilities as also their shortfalls. There are a number of mechanisms already in place to manage tensions in the maritime domain, however, strategic interests, different interpretation of law and difference in approach to resolution of disputes have rendered them ineffective. What the Indo Pacific region requires is, to establish norms of behaviour on high seas and a structure to implement the same. Given the multitude of differences between the claimants and other regional powers, an international treaty or a legally binding agreement on rules of behaviour is highly unlikely in the near future. Therefore, maritime security cooperation in indo-Pacific region is taking a sharp turn toward a multilateral framework to uphold the established norms of behaviour. Territorial disputes and changing power dynamics is essentially creating space for collaborations between the navies of various countries as per the maritime geopolitics in the Indo pacific region.

India has been expanding its economic and strategic profile steadily since the starting of 21st century with its growing trade with Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the other countries in the Indo Pacific regions. The expanding trade profile had also witnessed the growth of its strategic capabilities, specifically its naval expansion that has come with modernization and expanding operations. India's expansion in its "Look East Policy" now "Act East Policy" has, however, gone through two stages(Rajendram, 2014). In the late 1990s, it saw India's direction of policy adopt a Southeast Asia focus resulting in the consolidation of its interests; with expanding economic ties and the institutionalisation of India-ASEAN engagement. Second, it witnessed growing economic interdependence, trade ties, diaspora connections, and defense diplomacy. The following decades saw the expansion of India's Look East Policy further eastward with Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the United States, even as India's economic ties swung eastward along with its strategic bilateral and multilateral exchanges. India's continued eastward focus has also been solidly based on its maritime footprint and its expanding ties brought by its engagement with Australia. In 2007, India was engaged in its Malabar Exercises with the US, Japan, Australia, and Singapore signifying this expanding reach(Suri, 2016).

India's Maritime doctrines of 2007 and 2009 have espoused this enlargement in terms of engaging with the Pacific nations with a prominent presence in Southeast Asia. India's engagement with its Look East Policy has evolved in two stages: one has been with India's intermediate neighbourhood of Southeast Asia in the 1990s and the other with the Pacific powers of Japan, South Korea, Russia, and Australia. The dynamics of these relations have been built primarily on economic and trade interdependence that had come along with the

deepening of security relationships. Thus India's security relations and partnerships ride on the bulwark of the economic relations. The patterns of security relationships have been bilateral and also multilateral in Southeast Asia; whereas in Northeast Asia and the Pacific, India's partnerships have been bilateral in scope. India's engagement in trade and security ties has seen a policy and operational shift to the Indo-Pacific more than with any other region in the world. India's membership in the various regional forums and regional economic frameworks has provided a higher level of economic interdependence with the region. The Indo-Pacific context constitutes the new vistas for India's security engagement that spawns a clear maritime vision elucidating its economic and strategic engagement with the Indian and Pacific Oceans. India's engagement with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Russia, and the United States encompasses trade and commercial flows towards the Pacific(Foreign & Journal, 2014).

Freedom to use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy, published by the Indian Navy in 2007, met this requirement for India's maritime military power. It emphasised the growing importance of the maritime environment, and the centrality of maritime security for national development. It provided an insight and rationale for the resurgence of Indian maritime power and postulated a strategy underpinned on "freedom to use the seas for our national purposes, under all circumstances", with a central role for the Navy. The strategy brought out the various ways in which the Indian Navy could serve as a catalyst for peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This strategy has served its role well over the past decade, in providing long term direction and guidance to the Indian Navy in a dynamic environment. The strategy has been revised in order to keep it relevant and contemporary, taking into consideration developments in the geo-strategic environment, and corresponding changes in our maritime strategic imperatives and influences(Sokinda, 2015).

India's Revised Maritime Strategy in context of contemporary maritime geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific

India's maritime strategy 2015 has been titled as Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy, in recognition of two key aspects(Maritime & Strategy, n.d. 2015). First, the rise in sources, types and intensity of threats, with some blurring of traditional and non-traditional lines, requires a seamless and holistic approach towards maritime security. Second, in order to provide 'freedom to use the seas' for India's national interests, it is necessary to ensure that the seas remain secure. The expanded outlook, reflected in the title,

also takes into account the additional mandate of the Indian Navy, which has been entrusted with the responsibility for overall maritime security, including coastal and offshore security.² The strategy employs the various roles and means of the Indian Navy in an integrated manner, and also guides the development of new means. It further utilises the potential for increased maritime cooperation and coordination, across multiple agencies in India and with friendly nations. This strategy, while it is centred on the Indian Navy as the prime maritime force of the nation, also provides a broader framework for synergising actions in the maritime domain with the other stakeholders. The revised strategy follows the previous edition and is based on the principles and concepts of national security and maritime power, enunciated in the Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces and the Indian Maritime Doctrine. It builds upon the Indian Navy's Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, formulated in 2014, which highlight the strategic 'way points' for the next decade. It reviews the key maritime strategic imperatives and influences, articulates the national maritime interests, and defines the related maritime security objectives. It then derives corresponding strategies for attainment of these objectives (Strategy, 2014).

Key Determinants for Shaping the Maritime Security Strategy

The key determinants for shaping the maritime security strategy cover broader maritime strategic imperatives and more specific maritime security drivers. These are, both, important influences in shaping the overall strategy, and also govern the determination of India's areas of maritime interest. The maritime strategic imperatives cover India's relations with the seas that also have a security connotation. These include India's unique maritime geography with a central location and reach across the IOR, which is also the hub of global trade and commerce (Rumley, 2012).

Another important feature is India's relations with its maritime neighbours and role in the maritime neighbourhood, including the fact that these are based on mutual respect for international law and norms, and desire for cooperative, inclusive development. The key imperative, which underscores the development of this strategy, is India's dependence on the seas for national development, which has increased steadily and significantly. The steady shift in global economic and military power towards Asia has contributed to this imperative.

India's maritime economic activities have continued to expand across a large range, including energy security, seaborne trade, shipping and fishing, with substantial Indian investments and citizens overseas. India has an overwhelming reliance on the seas for its external trade and for

sustaining its energy needs. These include crude and liquefied hydrocarbon imports, export of refined products, offshore development, and economic partnerships across the world. India's trade and energy security, development of its deep sea mining areas, and supporting its scientific research stations in Antarctica, are all dependent on its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). This has lent a pivotal role to the security of India's SLOCs and increased the importance of the sea routes, international shipping and freedom of navigation to India's national interests(E. Maritime, In, & Region, 2009). The revised strategy has, therefore, accorded increased focus on the following:-

- The safety and security of seaborne trade and energy routes, especially in the IOR, considering their effect on global economies and India's national interests.
- The importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and strengthening the international legal regime at sea, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), for all-round benefit.
- The considerable scope and value in undertaking cooperation and coordination between various navies, to counter common threats at sea.

India's maritime security drivers have also shown increasing complexity in recent years, covering both traditional and non-traditional threats, with continuing and increased challenges across the regional maritime security environment. There has been no reduction in the potential threat from traditional sources, necessitating continued focus on appropriate military preparedness for all contingencies. However, there is potential for simultaneous cooperation even amidst competition, which can be promoted through maritime efforts and is a focus area in the revised strategy.

In the case of non-traditional threats, in particular, there has been a sharp increase in threat-levels, necessitating higher focus and attention. Maritime terrorism has expanded in recent years, and has developed new ways and means. It poses a serious and continuing threat, with potential for asymmetric and hybrid warfare, with possibility of overlapping traditional challenges. The '26/11' terrorist attacks in Mumbai, in 2008, led to change in mandate of the Indian Navy, which was thereupon entrusted with the additional responsibility for overall maritime security, including coastal and offshore security(I. Maritime & Strategy, 2015). This necessitated some organisational changes and adapting the existing strategy to address requisite ways and means, especially mechanisms for strengthening interagency coordination. These have duly evolved, and the revised strategy provides dedicated focus on:-

- Combating the persisting nature of threats emanating at and from the sea.
- Strengthening mechanisms for interagency coordination and cooperation.
- Developing a seamless, cohesive maritime security framework.

Other non-traditional threats have also been rising in recent years. Piracy and armed robbery at sea have flared up in new regions over the past decade, and remain a significant threat to international shipping and seafarers. The constant challenge of unregulated activities, and inherent limitations in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) on the seas, hold a possibility of their linking with or enabling other threats. There has also been a higher incidence of natural disasters and regional instabilities over the past decade, necessitating increased deployment of the Indian Navy for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). The ways and means to address the range of increased non-traditional threats require a revised focus and suitable augmentation of capabilities in some areas, along with further pursuit of a broader, cooperative approach across the region (Strategy, 2015).

A significant development in this regard has been the growing recognition of India's maritime outlook, capabilities and actions, on the national and international stage. The increased role and involvement of the Indian Navy in strengthening maritime security in the IOR have been in strong evidence over the past decade. Some important features that have been further shaped and incorporated in the revised strategy are:-

- The steady increase in the Indian Navy's operational footprint across India's areas of maritime interest, with a growing cooperative framework and contributions as a 'net security provider' in the maritime neighbourhood, including deployments for anti-piracy, maritime security, NEO and HADR operations (E. Maritime et al., n.d. 2009).
- An expansion in maritime operational engagements, with increased number and complexity of exercises with foreign navies, coordinated mechanisms for maritime security operations, and enhanced training, technical and hydrographic cooperation with friendly maritime forces.
- Continued development of regional cooperative approaches for enhancing maritime security in the IOR, including growth of the operational interactions termed as 'MILAN', evolution of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), and emergence of maritime security cooperation as a priority area for the Indian Ocean Regional Association (IORA).

Another important aspect is the growth and development of the Indian Navy's force levels and maritime capabilities, with steady focus on indigenisation. While this has been in pursuance of the earlier strategy and perspective plans, its steady progress underscores the ongoing resurgence of India's maritime power. The revised strategy has, accordingly, reflected the substantive enhancement in the Indian Navy's capabilities for exercising deterrence, projecting maritime power, providing maritime security and safeguarding India's maritime interests.

These various determinants and developments have been factored into the articulation of the maritime interests and maritime security objectives, and the revised strategy has been formulated to address these requirements.

National Maritime Interests

India's maritime interests that are addressed by the strategy are summarised as follows:-

- Protect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity against threats in the maritime environment.
- Promote safety and security of Indian citizens, shipping, fishing, trade, energy supply, assets and resources in the maritime domain.
- Pursue peace, stability and security in India's maritime zones, maritime neighbourhood and other areas of maritime interest.³
- Preserve and project other national interests in the maritime dimension.

India's Maritime Security - Aim and Objectives

India's maritime security aim is to safeguard national maritime interests at all times. India's maritime security objectives, flowing from the above aim, are:-

- To deter conflict and coercion against India.
- To conduct maritime military operations in a manner that enables early termination of conflict on terms favourable to India.
- To shape a favourable and positive maritime environment, for enhancing net security in India's areas of maritime interest.
- To protect Indian coastal and offshore assets against attacks and threats emanating from or at sea.

- To develop requisite maritime force levels and maintain the capability for meeting India's maritime security requirements.

Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy

Ensuring Secure Seas envisages a coordinated and cooperative set of actions, in consideration of the spectrum of threats and challenges, and the key determinants and developments. In implementing this strategy, the Indian Navy will operate in concert with the Indian Coast Guard, other armed forces, and the various Union/ State agencies that have a role and responsibility for distinct elements of maritime security. The maritime security strategy is, in effect, a combination of five constituent strategies for attaining corresponding maritime security objectives. Each strategy employs a combination of various doctrinal roles of the Navy, viz. military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign, with their associated objectives, missions and tasks.⁴ The various constituents of the strategy describe the range of coordinated and synergised efforts, to maintain and strengthen India's maritime security. Strategy for Deterrence(Scott, 2006).

The strategy for deterrence is the foundational strategy for India's defence. Prevention of conflict and coercion against India is the primary purpose of India's armed forces. The Indian Navy will contribute to national deterrence at nuclear and conventional levels, by strengthening the credibility of its military capability, readiness posture and communication of intent. This strategy shall be progressed through development of appropriate force structures and capabilities, conduct of threat assessment and contingency planning, maintenance of strategic situational awareness and MDA, maintenance of preparedness and presence, and effective strategic communication. The strategy for deterrence is supported and strengthened by the other strategies and will, in turn, reinforce them(Enclave et al., 2014).

This strategy describes the broad manner of employment of India's maritime forces during conflict. The strategy is based on the principles of war, with application of force and focus on strategic effect as additional operational principles. It employs MDA, networked operations, preparedness, jointness and coordination, and operational tempo, as the main operational enablers. The strategy is centered on various operational actions, which include maritime manoeuvre, maritime strike, sea control, sea denial, SLOC interdiction, SLOC protection, coastal and offshore defence, information warfare, and escalation management. These will be undertaken as per the operational plan and situation, in coordination with the other armed forces and national agencies(Scott, 2007).

This strategy describes the ways in which the Indian Navy will contribute to shaping a favourable and positive maritime environment, to enhance net security therein. The strategy covers the wide range of activities undertaken by the Navy in peace time, across all doctrinal roles. These aim to promote security and stability at sea, and enhance cooperation, mutual understanding and interoperability with maritime forces of friendly nations. These include naval deployments for exercising presence in our areas of interest, engagement with maritime forces of friendly nations in a number of ways and at multiple levels, maritime capacity building and capability enhancement through cooperation in training, technical areas and hydrography, cooperative efforts for development of regional MDA, and conduct of maritime security operations, both independently and in coordination with other maritime forces in the region.

This strategy describes the ways by which the cooperative framework and coordinative mechanisms for coastal and offshore security will be strengthened and developed, against threat of sub-conventional armed attack and infiltration from the sea. It articulates the coastal and offshore security framework, measures for development of coastal MDA and coastal community participation, mechanisms for coordinating interagency presence, patrol and operational response, cooperative capability development, and focus areas for supporting maritime governance.

This strategy describes the ways to develop and maintain a combat ready, technology driven, network enabled navy, capable of meeting India's maritime security needs into the future. The capability development covers conceptual, human resource and force level aspects. The major thrust areas for force development have been defined, with focus on indigenisation, MDA, Network Centric Operations (NCO), force projection and protection, maintenance and logistics, and new technologies(Scott, 2012b).

Ensuring Secure Seas has endeavoured to be informative, explanatory and definitive, so as to provide clarity on 'what' and 'how' the Indian Navy will undertake to ensure India's maritime security, in concert with the other armed forces and maritime agencies. While it is aimed at providing insight and guidance primarily to the Indian Navy, it also provides a framework for strengthening jointness and cooperation with the other maritime stakeholders and security agencies. The strategy would further serve to enhance understanding of maritime security issues and approach towards the same amongst both, key stakeholders and the general public.

The maritime security strategy has considered a variety of factors, such as the geo-economic and geo-strategic environment, changes in type and nature of threats and challenges, availability of own forces, capabilities and resources, assessments of intensity, duration, type and tempo of possible conflicts, and the overall political direction. The strategy and its constituents cater for all these factors and a dynamic environment, in which India's relations with the seas have been steadily growing. As India moves further ahead in the 21st century, its employment of maritime power for safeguarding national interests and meeting national aspirations would also increase. Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy will shape and guide this employment, over the next decade(Suri, 2016).

India's Maritime Outlook

Although land has been the primary and natural habitat of mankind, and is central to political, economic, military and social activities, the oceans have directly and indirectly influenced events on land. Over the past two centuries, in particular, technological and maritime developments have significantly altered the role and influence of the maritime environment. From a medium of transportation for trade, economy and the projection of power onto land, the oceans have become the primary conduits of international trade and are central to the global economy(Nias, 2014).

The oceans and seabed are increasingly looked upon today as resource providers and critical contributors to national growth and prosperity. Maritime power is an important component of national power and is a key enabler for national growth and development. These aspects have prompted a steady, global shift of attention from land to the seas and an expanding maritime outlook, including for India. The maritime outlook of a nation is shaped by the growth of population, industry, infrastructure and politico-economic power along the coast, and the ensuing dependence on the seas for national growth and prosperity. It is a central determinant of a nation's maritime interests and strategy. The key drivers of India's maritime outlook are its unique and advantageous geography, the need for sustained economic growth, a dynamic geo-strategic environment, the need to ensure safety and security of its SLOCs, and the security of Indian investments and other interests overseas, including Indian diaspora(Ties, 2016).

Geography is a vital aspect, which can aid but also complicate maritime security, depending on the nation's geographic characteristics and the prevailing geo-strategic environment. India has a vast coastline extending to more than 7,500 km, with more than 1,200 islands, and a

large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about two million sq. km. The anticipated addition of approximately 1.2 million sq. km of continental shelf would make India's total seabed area almost equal to the land mass.

The Indian Ocean, through which much of the world's shipping transits, is distinguished by a land rim on three sides, with maritime access to the region possible only through certain 'choke points' leading to and from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and from the southern Indian Ocean. India flanks the first two regions and has a central position overseeing the third. Its peninsular feature provides a natural reach across wide sea spaces in all directions, extended by the islands in the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Island groups.

India's central position in the IOR, astride the main International Shipping Lanes (ISLs), accords distinct advantages. It places the outer fringes of the IOR and most choke points almost equidistant from India, thereby facilitating reach, sustenance and mobility of its maritime forces across the region. India is, therefore, well positioned to influence the maritime space, and promote and safeguard its national maritime interests, across the IOR. At the same time, India's vast coastline and maritime zones require significant resources and investments to ensure their security. (Ji, 2016)

Maritime Challenges

Although many claimants are using their military and maritime law enforcement capabilities in a responsible manner, recent provocative actions have heightened tensions in the region and raised concerns in areas like South China Sea. Actions such as the use of maritime law enforcement vessels to coerce rival claimants, unsafe air and maritime behaviour, and land reclamation to expand disputed features and create artificial islands hamper efforts to manage and resolve territorial and maritime disputes peacefully. Several nations have expanded their use of non-military assets to advance their territorial and maritime claims specifically in the East China Sea and South China Sea. Most notably, countries like China is using a steady progression of small, incremental steps to increase its effective control over disputed areas and avoid escalation to military conflict (Scott, 2012a).

The growing efforts of claimant States to assert their claims has led to an increase in air and maritime incidents in recent years, including an unprecedented rise in unsafe activity by China's maritime agencies in the East and South China Seas. Military aircraft and vessels

often have been targets of this unsafe and unprofessional behaviour, which threatens the objectives of safeguarding the freedom of the seas and promoting adherence to international law and standards. China's expansive interpretation of jurisdictional authority beyond territorial seas and airspace causes friction with forces of those nations who are operating in international waters and airspace in the region and raises the risk of inadvertent crisis.

China's recent efforts involve land reclamation on various types of features within the South China Sea. At least some of these features were not naturally formed areas of land that were above water at high tide and, thus, under international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention, cannot generate any maritime zones (e.g., territorial seas or exclusive economic zones). Artificial islands built on such features could, at most, generate 500-meter safety zones, which must be established in conformity with requirements specified in the Law of the Sea Convention (Jakobson & Medcalf, 2015).

All territorial claimants, except Brunei, maintain outposts in the South China Sea, which they use to establish presence in surrounding waters, assert their claims to sovereignty, and monitor the activities of rival claimants. All of these claimants have engaged in construction-related activities. Outpost upgrades vary widely but broadly are composed of land reclamation, building construction and extension, and Defense emplacements.

At all of its reclamation sites, China either has transitioned from land reclamation operations to infrastructure development, or has staged construction support for infrastructure development. As infrastructure development is still in its early stages, it remains unclear what China ultimately will build on these expanded outposts. However, China has stated publicly that the outposts will have a military component to them, and will also be used for maritime search and rescue, disaster prevention and mitigation, marine scientific research, meteorological observation, ecological environment conservation, navigation safety, and fishery production. At the reclamation sites currently in the infrastructure phase of development, China has excavated deep channels and built new berthing areas to allow access for larger ships to the outposts. China is also completing construction of an airstrip at Fiery Cross Reef, joining the other claimants with outposts – Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam – that have an airstrip on at least one of their occupied features, and may be building additional ones (Huang, 2014).

Though other claimants have reclaimed land on disputed features in the South China Sea, China's latest efforts are substantively different from previous efforts both in scope and

effect. The infrastructure China appears to be building would enable it to establish a more robust power projection presence into the South China Sea. Its latest land reclamation and construction will also allow it to berth deeper draft ships at outposts; expand its law enforcement and naval presence farther south into the South China Sea; and potentially operate aircraft – possibly as a divert airstrip for carrier-based aircraft – that could enable China to conduct sustained operations with aircraft carriers in the area. Ongoing island reclamation activity will also support MLEs’ ability to sustain longer deployments in the South China Sea(Milner, 2009). Potentially higher-end military upgrades on these features would be a further destabilizing step. By undertaking these actions, China is unilaterally altering the physical status quo in the region, thereby complicating diplomatic initiatives that could lower tensions.

Many of the aforementioned issues have the potential to place the hard-won stability of the Indo-Pacific region at risk. Continued territorial and maritime disputes, combined with rapid military modernization, have led to the development of a more contested and potentially risky maritime environment. Although many states are pursuing efforts to reduce risk and resolve their disputes peacefully, the potential for miscalculation and instability remains high. Accordingly, in light of these challenges, India and other likeminded countries should enhance their efforts to safeguard the freedom of the seas, deter conflict and coercion, and promote adherence to international law and standards(Foreign & Journal, 2014).

Role of Indian Navy in the evolving maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific region

The idea of having the Indo-Pacific as a part of India’s maritime geo-strategic orientation involves two separate requirements: the need for control of the chokepoints and the necessity of securing command of the sea; together, these would help to achieve the major requirement of keeping the Sea Lines of Communication open.

The maritime security strategy of Indian Navy 2015 signalled both the subtle importance of the document itself and also placed naval strategy as a subset of India’s maritime strategy. In a way, this was a shift from the 2007 strategy document, ‘Freedom to Use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy’. The earlier document focussed predominantly on maritime strategic aspects, including their military dimension, though not explicitly on naval strategy.

Unlike the Pacific or the Atlantic Oceans, the Indian Ocean is predominantly controlled by maritime powers which have command of the chokepoints. In that context, the Indian

maritime security strategy document has identified nine important choke points as a part of India's maritime security strategy perspective in the Indian Ocean: the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, the Mozambique Channel, the Cape of Good Hope, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Sunda Strait, the Lombok Strait and the Ombai and Wetar Straits. The nine chokepoints are divided into five in the western Indian Ocean and four in the eastern, with the force structure of the Eastern Fleet getting the greater level of attention. (Scott, 2007)

On the other hand, when it comes to Sea Lines of Communication, the greater importance is given to the broader Indo-Pacific region (including both the western and eastern theatres of the Indian Ocean), which reflects the geo-political perspective of identifying the primary and secondary areas of interest in India's overall maritime strategy.

The dual methodology proposed to both secure the chokepoints and gain command of the sea, is interesting and one of the important variations in India's maritime strategic orientation. Unlike China's island chain strategy of having a permanent blue-water presence in the whole of the Indo-Pacific as a part of its maritime disposition; India's planning seems to envisage having command of the sea in the Indo-Pacific, with a sub-policy of controlling the identified chokepoints. This would enable India to co-operate with other maritime powers in the Indo-Pacific as an overall part of its maritime strategic orientation. One similarity with China's planning will involve the acquisition or use of overseas naval bases, first in the Indo-Pacific and then expanded to the whole of the Indo-Pacific region(Khan, 2017).

The above position could also be altered if India eventually upgrades its facilities on the strategically-located Andaman and Nicobar Islands and integrates the forces there as a part of its strategic fleet operations. This would reduce India's need to expand its navy, by increasing the number of available vessels by roughly 40 per cent, from 137 to about 200.

This subtle shift is important when we consider that earlier versions of the Indian Navy's publications focussed on diplomatic aspects of the maritime strategy, including naval diplomacy. The security strategy document, however, has focussed more on the hard power aspects, in an effort to signal a robust posture to both its adversaries and allies.

The Ensuring Secure Seas document stresses the importance of controlling both the Sea Lines of Communication and the chokepoints as a part of India's maritime strategy. This is despite the fact that, to date, India's politico-military orientation, especially its maritime policy, has

predominantly been focussed on expanding its reach in the Indo-Pacific regions (including the western theatre of the Indian Ocean); that expansion, of course, increasing the importance of the Sea Lines of Communication(Bhavthankar, 2016).

The variation in India's maritime strategy policy to give greater importance to the chokepoints and Sea Lines of Communication reflects the innate variety in India's maritime strategic thinking, between its geo-political perspective and its external geo-strategic orientation. It also affects India's maritime force posture internally, including the Navy's co-operation with the other two services; for example, in acquiring external bases as a part of controlling the Sea Lines of Communication. This also involves, of course, diplomatic manoeuvring with countries such as the United States, Australia, France, Japan and Indonesia, each of which has its own maritime military presence in the Indo-Pacific regions.

This approach is important, as the politico-military orientation of India's Grand Strategy seems to encompass the whole of the Indo-Pacific region as a part of its geo-political perspective. The Indo-Pacific region is included as a subset of the proposed maritime geo-strategic orientation, in line with India's perceived continental commitments(Upadhyaya, 2014).

Making that change as a stop-gap arrangement, before India embarks on a three-fleet navy, would greatly increase the range and scope of its existing naval command infrastructure based in the Andamans and Nicobars, which, at present, is the face of India's engagement with South-East Asia. It would provide greater scope for increasing India's maritime engagement, using a flexible command option to reach across South-East Asia to the South-West Pacific and, possibly, beyond. So far, India has no permanent military presence in the Pacific, but this could change in the next five years to at least include the South-West Pacific(Motulalo, 2013).

In the South Pacific, India should increase its maritime engagement diplomatically, which should be extended to having a military presence in one of the Pacific Island countries, probably in Fiji. This would not contradict India's subtle mixing of its maritime strategy with its politico-military vision of joining an explicitly maritime alliance with those countries wary of Beijing's maritime expansion, especially towards the "Second Island Chain" running south from Japan to West Papua. On the other hand, India's efforts towards maritime expansion in the North Pacific may complicate its continental commitments.

To be sure, the above arrangement would enable the Eastern Fleet to undertake both tasks of sea-denial and sea control, with the power-projection and command of the sea resting with the Andaman and Nicobar command. Further, to help achieve favourable fleet operations and sustainable command of the sea, India would need to acquire bases, or access to bases, in the western Indian Ocean, such as in the Seychelles. It will also need to convert its present naval outpost in Lakshadweep into a fully-fledged operational base, with capability for power-projection, sea-denial and command of the sea, especially in relation to Pakistan.

Increased pressure on its eastern seaboard, however, will push India towards such an arrangement with other countries in South-East Asia and, perhaps, beyond to the South-West Pacific. Such an arrangement – if it were to eventuate – would include a ring of bases around the Indian Ocean, from the Cape of Good Hope to Mozambique, up to Mombasa and across to the Maldives, Trincomalee and Penang. If India had to further increase its operational reach, it might then extend the eastern and western chokepoints of the Indian Ocean and maybe even reach towards the islands of the South-West Pacific(Motulalo, 2013).

In that context, the Indian Navy has started operating its largest naval base in Karwar, which will help to secure command of its western Indian Ocean seaboard and the Indo-Pacific region more generally. The addition of the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and over 30 support ships to that naval base, means that India is concentrating both on expanding its reach in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean and also doing the required work to get command of the sea and the capability for sea-denial and seaborne strikes against Pakistan in the western Indian Ocean.

India's strategy for the Indo-Pacific region is therefore different to the pivot approach of the US, for instance, but it does envisage co-operation with the pivot strategy in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, with a view to checking an increase in the ambitions of the Pakistani Navy. Overall, this strategy may involve having a permanent blue-water naval presence in both the western and eastern theatres of the Indian Ocean. Such a strategy may involve India co-operating with other countries which have military assets in the Indian Ocean, such as Australia, Indonesia, Iran, France and the United Kingdom apart from US. This would require more port visits and co-operation on the high seas.

On the other hand, the maritime strategy document stresses the importance of force projection as a part of controlling the Sea Lines of Communication, which can be achieved through the deployment of aircraft carriers. India's ultimate ambition is eventually to establish a five-

carrier fleet, comprising a mix of large and small carriers, doing full justice to its power-projection capabilities. For example, India plans to deploy the locally-built aircraft carrier INS Vishal as a part of the power-projection capabilities envisaged in the maritime security strategy document(Scott, 2015).

Four other basic issues were identified in the document as a part of its force projection policy: Maritime Manoeuvre, Maritime Strike, SLOC interdiction and amphibious operations. Interestingly, the security strategy document also mentioned the importance of sea control and sea denial as a part of operational requirements. Predominantly, the sea control and sea denial strategies are variations of the Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett theories of maritime strategy. Further, as envisaged by the document, as a part of seeking to gain sea control, co-ordinated efforts will be made in conjunction with the other services. This reflects, in part, India's maritime strategic thinking, which requires maritime preponderance for overall military operations.

India's maritime sea denial is predominantly oriented towards the importance of denying China's South China Sea Fleet an operational domain in the Indian Ocean. Sea control strategy is oriented towards establishing the Indian Navy's maritime predominance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond in conjunction with a range of countries, including Indonesia, Australia, Vietnam and the United States.

In the Indo-Pacific region, Indian Navy (IN) has been at forefront in indigenisation of its platforms, systems, sensors and weapons so as to maintain its regional power capabilities specifically in the Indian Ocean region. In the field of indigenous development of naval armament, Indian Navy had adopted a two pronged approach. Firstly, it was self-reliance which has helped in harnessing potential of DRDO establishment and industries. Secondly, wherever technology was readily available and collaboration was possible, Indian Navy has considered the option of partnership in the form of either Transfer of Technology (TOT) or Joint Venture (JV) between the appropriate players and the national industry. This has resulted in bridging the time gap between development and exploitation of a weapon system which in turn has further enhanced the hard power capabilities of India in Indian Ocean(Scott, 2007).

India-US cooperation to balance China's growing maritime power in the Indo-Pacific

Looking at the evolving geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region from the perspective of US, the maintenance of safe and secure sea lanes, particularly those that link the United States with its partners in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is at the very core of US interests. Therefore, US maritime strategy seeks to sustain credible combat power in the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean so as to preclude attempts at interrupting vital sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and commerce in the maritime domain of Indo-Pacific. Given the strategic imperatives and the capability of both state and non-state actors to disrupt the Indo-Pacific sea lanes critical to global prosperity, the United States has renewed its commitment to maritime security in Indo-Pacific. In recent years, the United States has made significant adjustments to its defence posture in order to bring more maritime forces closer to Indo-Pacific sea lanes and defence officials have stated their intention to further enhance US posture in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean while maintaining US presence in Northeast Asia. Recognizing that the expansive nature of Indo-Pacific maritime territory and the complexity of the region's maritime challenges prevent any one country from resourcing the operations necessary to provide sea lane security, the United States is also strengthening cooperation with its maritime partners by expanding relationships and trust-building efforts, contributing to the capacity of its partners and enhancing interoperability. At the same time, the United States is supporting the strengthening of maritime regional organizations in the Indo-Pacific region as the foundations for the security architectures necessary to ensure the security of Indo-Pacific sea lanes and sustain regional prosperity (Upadhyay, 2014).

Due to the assertive stance of China in East Asia and its increasing naval presence in the Indian Ocean, the US and India had both been continually vocal about freedom of navigation and have been concerned about the operational manoeuvrability of their respective navies. In the inaugural meeting of the maritime security dialogue between India and the US, both countries discussed “issues of mutual interest, including exchange of perspectives on maritime security development in the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean region as well as prospects for further strengthening cooperation between India and the United States”. It is quite evident that both the Indian and US navy are wary of Chinese naval might. The interest and goals of both the Indian and US navy converge as far as protecting sea lanes of communication and countering the growing threat of deeper Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean region are concerned. A rising great power with revisionist tendencies like China,

which has already staked its claim for almost the whole of South China Sea, is now increasingly looking towards the Indian Ocean and integrating blue water capabilities.

One of the most noticeable features of the Indo-US maritime co-operation is the Malabar naval exercises. Japan, Australia and Singapore have also participated in the exercises, with Japan being added as a regular member of the exercise alongside India and US. According to some Chinese scholars, the Malabar exercises are a precursor to a more formal multilateral anti-China naval grouping. How good the argument holds is a matter of further speculation, but in spirit, the Malabar exercises can be seen as a foundation upon which further Indo-US naval co-operation can be built. In the field of anti-submarine warfare (ASW), there has been significant cooperation between India and US. In May 2016, Indian and US authorities discussed building strategies on how to keep track of Chinese submarines making inroads into the Indian Ocean.

This joint formulation of strategies hints at how the two navies are aware of the benefits of Indo-US naval synergy in countering China. In 2016, US defence Secretary Ashton Carter and defence minister Manohar Parrikar in a joint statement vowed to deepen Indo-US military ties and the focus was on ASW co-operation. One of the key areas for future ASW co-operation will be naval aviation, where both the Indian and US navy operate Boeing P-8 maritime patrol planes. One of the overriding elements upon which the nature and scope of future Indo-US military cooperation hinged upon was the signing of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). In 2016, the signing of LEMOA, which allows both countries to access each other's facilities for repairs and supplies, between India and US can be seen as an agreement just short of a formal alliance. It is one the four "foundational agreements" that the US enters into with its defence partners. The signing of LEMOA has opened doors for further Indo-US maritime synergy and co-operation in the Indo-Pacific. With the signing of LEMOA and the existing maritime co-operation, it can be said that a naval entente has emerged between the two navies in the Indian Ocean(Bhavthankar, 2016). In the coming years, an increasingly confident Indian navy, which aims to be the "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean, will seek to ensure "secure seas" in partnership with the US navy, which is looking for a "co-operative strategy" to rebalance China in the maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific. Without entering into any rigid alliance framework, a tactical understanding has formed between India and the US. If the tactical entente indeed strengthens, then in the coming years it may define the true scope and meaning of US "rebalancing" in the Indo-Pacific(Rajendram, 2014).

Given the growing array of challenges the United States and India are facing in the maritime domain, one of the top priorities of both nations should be to enhance the maritime security capacity so as to respond to threats within their own territories as well as to provide maritime security more broadly across the Indo-Pacific region. Both nations should not only focus on providing enhanced capabilities, but also on helping other partners to develop the necessary infrastructure and logistical support, strengthen institutions, and enhance practical skills to develop sustainable and capable maritime forces. This partnership can be helpful to enhance the maritime domain awareness and establish a common maritime operating picture that would facilitate more timely and effective regional responses to maritime challenges.

In particular, India and US should focus on several lines of effort: working with partners to expand regional maritime domain awareness capabilities, with an effort to work towards a regional common operating picture; providing the necessary infrastructure, logistics support, and operational procedures to enable more effective maritime response operations; further strengthening partner nation operational capabilities and resilience by deepening and expanding bilateral and regional maritime exercises and engagements; helping partners strengthen their maritime institutions, governance, and personnel training; and identifying modernization or new system requirements for critical maritime security capabilities. To support this initiative, both the nations should work together to maximize and rebalance security cooperation resources to prioritize the Indo-Pacific region more effectively.

A key element of India and US approach to maritime security in Southeast Asia is to work alongside capable regional partners. There is broad regional agreement on the importance of maritime security and maritime domain awareness, and both have worked closely with friendly countries like Australia, Japan, South Korea, and others to coordinate and amplify the efforts toward promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in Indo-Pacific.

In Southeast Asia, India and US sees a strategic convergence between India's "Act East" policy and the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, and thus US is also seeking to reinforce India's maritime capabilities as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region and beyond. Given US broad shared interests in maritime security, they have developed a three-pronged approach to maritime cooperation with India: maintaining a shared vision on maritime security issues; upgrading the bilateral maritime security partnership; and collaborating to both build regional partner capacity and improve regional maritime domain awareness(Jakobson & Medcalf, 2015).

United States and India's shared vision for maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region is reflected in the January 2015 U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. India and the United States affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. The Joint Strategic Vision and the September 2014 U.S.-India Joint Statement also called on all parties to abide by international law, including the Law of the Sea Convention, to resolve maritime disputes and to avoid the use, or threat of use, of force.

Department of Defense, US and the Indian Ministry of Defence are upgrading their bilateral maritime security partnership, through growing bilateral exchanges between military personnel and by engaging in military exercises. To bolster operational maritime cooperation, India has participated in the RIMPAC multilateral exercise, and the two sides conduct the annual flagship naval exercise MALABAR. Since 2007, the JMSDF also have participated when the exercise has taken place off of the Japanese coast and near Guam. The exercise has grown in complexity and improved participating countries' abilities to operate together in a collaborative environment, and the US has been supportive of including other partners on a regular basis, hoping to see the return of previous partners in future iterations of the exercise. US is also actively working to support the Indian Navy through the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). The two sides agreed to enhance maritime technology cooperation, in part, by forming a working group to explore aircraft carrier technology sharing and design (Strategy, n.d. 2014).

United States and India are also active in building regional partner capacity and maritime domain awareness (MDA) in the region. Both countries are contributing to these goals individually with other partners, and are mutually contributing to counter-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean. US also continue to seek opportunities to consult with Indian counterparts about these efforts where possible. By doing so, the two countries will bolster the shared vision laid out by their respective governments and contribute to overall peace and security in the region (Chaudhury & Basu, 2016).

In addition to building maritime capabilities of allies and partners to deter and address regional threats, US is actively seeking India's help to mitigate risk in maritime Asia. US is pursuing a two-pronged approach to achieve this objective, one focusing on the bilateral relationship with China, and the other addressing region-wide risk reduction measures. The

combination of these two approaches will reduce the likelihood of miscalculation and conflict, which would have a detrimental effect on the Indo-Pacific region.

Establishment of a Collaborative Maritime Security Mechanism

Indo-Pacific region does not have a pan-regional maritime security structure wherein all the major stakeholders are involved. Anti-piracy efforts have been largely by India in Indian Ocean along with other countries and US led in the entire Indo-Pacific region. India is not a part of the Coalition Maritime forces (CMF) currently deployed in the Gulf of Aden. ASEAN-based regimes have also not proved effective beyond the immediate sub-region(Suri, 2016). Consequently, issues requiring a common approach tend to get neglected which in turn affect the environment.

Enhanced engagement utilising both bilateral and multilateral approaches, at the regional and sub-regional levels are the way forward. Common linkages between the various actors like trade, ethnicity, and shared economic interests will enhance cooperation. Differences on account of territory, boundaries, conflicting aspirations and the like could be set aside for resolution at a suitable stage later. Security challenges especially the threats of piracy and terrorism are common meeting ground for states. The development of a comprehensive mechanism and requisite security infrastructure which are inclusive, efficient and adequately representative is the requirement of the hour.

The diversity of the region and the geographical expanse precludes development of all-encompassing security architecture. Moreover, the security imperatives for the various sub-regions are also at variance. It will therefore be appropriate if the regional leaders take the mantle, for sub-regions, in addressing common security imperatives of the region would infuse the required impetus towards generating a regional security construct. These regional leaders can then interface with other regional leaders for the entire Indo Pacific on common issues concerning the region at large. The various sub-regions of the larger Indo-Pacific have also historically had larger nations like India, Australia and Japan taking the lead in sub-regional development(Trends & Responses, 2014).

The United States with its military, financial and political clout in the region will continue to remain the primus inter pares in the region, at least in the foreseeable future. The four countries also have a comprehensive security dialogue amongst them, albeit bilaterally. Expanding this dialogue and leveraging the already existing linkages to the larger context of

the Indo-Pacific would be a logical step towards developing a common security framework to address the various maritime security concerns affecting the entire region.

Bilateral and multilateral naval exercises

For several years now, India has been performing regular maritime military exercises, among them the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC, the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise), with different countries. India is reluctant to stage multilateral exercises near its coast to avoid being drawn into military alliances, because it wants to stay true to its non-alignment tradition and refrain from provoking China's sensitivities. For instance, New Delhi is not in favour of expanding the circle of participants in MALABAR – it's most important naval exercise, originally a bilateral one with the USA – in order not to give it the character of a maritime entente aimed at containing China. While it was eventually agreed that Japan would join MALABAR permanently (and no longer as an invited observer) in October 2015, India was reluctant to grant Canberra permanent participation, which it had requested during the first high level India-Japan-Australia trilateral dialogue held in New Delhi in June 2015. In February 2016, India hosted the international fleet review, which included several events together with the navies of another 47 countries, including France, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom(Rajendram, 2014).

India's partners in maritime issues

The USA is New Delhi's main partner in maritime issues. Indo-US naval cooperation began back in 1992 with the MALABAR naval exercises. During former US President Barack Obama's second visit to India, in late January 2015 as chief guest at Republic Day ceremonies, a 'US-India joint strategic vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region' was issued. It underlines the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation throughout the region, with special mention of the South China Sea, and calls on all parties to use peaceful means to address maritime disputes, avoiding the use of force. The two countries also announced a joint working group to share aircraft carrier technology and design.

Former US President Barack Obama supported a 'pivot to Asia' policy aimed at enabling the USA to remain the strategic anchor and security provider in the Indo-Pacific region. It is still unclear whether President Donald Trump will retain this course of action. In recent years, Washington has been looking at India as a strategic actor in the balance of power in the South

China Sea, and had been advocating enhanced cooperation with Japan and Australia. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe seems to have shared this view when shaping the third pillar of his theory of Asia's democratic security diamond. India and Japan have already held a bilateral naval exercise (JIMEX) and New Delhi eventually accepted Tokyo's permanent participation in the MALABAR exercises. While India has not accepted Australian participation in MALABAR but in September 2015 both the countries held their first bilateral naval exercise (AUSINDEX-15)(Suri, 2016).

The 'Act East' policy is expected to give fresh impetus to New Delhi's relations with ASEAN members. For instance, Indian company GRSE is to build frigates for the Philippine navy. Similarly, in recent times, India and Indonesia expressed their willingness to increase cooperation on maritime security and defence procurement. The two countries are already conducting joint patrols in the Andaman Sea.

Vietnam has taken a special place in India's maritime policy, as it is strategically placed on the southern flank of China in the South China Sea. For this reason, Vietnam has been referred to as India's 'diamond on the South China Sea'. New Delhi and Hanoi have developed military cooperation and Indian Navy vessels frequently call at Vietnamese ports. During his visit to Hanoi in September 2016, India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, offered Vietnam a US\$500 million credit for defence purchases. Formally, India has not taken sides in the South China Sea disputes, but has called for the application of international law and arbitration to resolve them. In joint India-Vietnam statements, the two countries have advocated freedom of navigation in the South and East China Sea and for the resolution of disputes through international law.

India also maintains maritime cooperation with countries in the south-western flank of the Indian Ocean. India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka are parties to an agreement on trilateral cooperation on maritime security (TCMS), signed in Colombo on 9 July 2013. The agreement aims to address common maritime security threats and challenges and to enhance security through cooperative measures. This initiative affirms India's role as the net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region.

Narendra Modi's March 2015 trip to the Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka allowed him to strengthen the maritime security network of strategic Indian Ocean coastal countries and to raise their awareness of India's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, on the one hand, and of India's navy and coastguard, on the other. On 11 March

2015 in Victoria (Seychelles), the Indian prime minister publicly launched the first of a planned 32 coastal surveillance radar (CSR) stations in the Indian Ocean, to be further deployed across the region, including in Mauritius and the Maldives. In Port Louis (Mauritius) he attended the launch of the MCGS Barracuda, the first Indian manufactured warship built for export. India has a long-standing relationship with the Seychelles and the IN provides training to Seychelles' security forces and assists with maritime security in the Seychelles exclusive economic zone (EEZ), including in the form of anti-piracy patrols. In Mauritius, Modi signed a long-awaited memorandum of understanding for developing the tourism infrastructure of the Agalega Islands and for upgrading the Agalega airstrip for surveillance aircraft.

The Indian Navy is believed to have set up an electronic monitoring facility in northern Madagascar and to have been awarded limited docking rights for its vessels. The Indian Navy provides maritime security to Mozambique and the two countries' 2006 defence cooperation agreement provides for joint maritime patrols, supply of military equipment, training and technology transfer(Panda, 2015).

In the maritime domain, the EU-India summit held in Brussels in 2016 adopted the EU-India agenda for action 2020, which lays out the roadmap for the EU-India strategic partnership especially in maritime domain. In the field of maritime security, the two partners agreed on strengthening cooperation on counter-piracy, counter-terrorism apart from other general agreement on cyber security; on exploring possibilities for sharing information between Europol and Indian counterpart agencies in the context of transnational threats, including terrorism. The agenda focuses on deepening and considering cooperation in areas like promoting maritime security, freedom of navigation in accordance with international law, peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict assistance, and fighting transnational organised crime. The above mentioned steps may pave the way to fruitful cooperation at a time when EU-India relations are lagging and need a new boost. This is even more strongly justified, given that the EU already has a strategy on China, New Delhi's big regional competitor.

EU and India may jointly develop maritime cooperation in the following way: developing the India-EU high-level dialogue on maritime cooperation, following the example of the EU-ASEAN high-level dialogue; agreeing on a declaration of intent on maritime security, similar to the 2015 USA-India joint strategic vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region; increasing coordination between EU NAVFOR and the Indian Navy and starting regular

India-EU naval exercises; promoting cooperation under the framework of the IORA; collaborating on capacity-building in the Indian Ocean region and concentrating on issues like disaster management, early warning systems, maritime tourism and the 'blue' economy. One of the problems highlighted by experts has been India's reluctance to look at the EU as a significant regional player, except for some counter-piracy operations(Rehman, 2015).

In the past years, India's role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean has increased. However, major, often overlapping challenges in terms of economic development and security are in the pipeline, and the sea will be their main theatre. For instance, it has been calculated that to meet India's consumption demand for 3.1 million barrels of oil a day (a figure set to drastically increase by 2025), at least two very large crude carriers (VLCC) coming from the Arabian Sea must unload daily at the Vadinar port in Gujarat. This raises issues related to India's capacity for guaranteeing sea-lane security and to its domestic shipbuilding capabilities. The importance of the sea implies a comprehensive maritime policy, which has never been conceived: India's maritime agenda 2010-2020 is deemed an agenda for consideration and decision, rather than for action. Additionally, there is no specific government agency in charge of coordinating Indian maritime policies and interests. At present, 16 different bodies including the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard have responsibilities in ocean-related matters(Upadhyaya, 2014).

With more than 90% of Indian trade by volume travelling by sea, it would be strategic for India to have a major shipbuilding (and ship-repair) sector. On the contrary, Indian shipyards contribute just 1 % of the global market share and are outpaced by Chinese and Korean shipbuilders (India has 28 shipyards, China has over 800). Cost differentials are among the reasons making Indian dockyards less competitive, though the government reduced coastal taxes in 2015 to encourage local shipping. Through the offset rules adopted in recent years, the Make in India policy, and the adjustment of the caps on foreign direct investment in the defence sector from 26 % to 49 %, new opportunities have arisen to improve domestic defence manufacturing capabilities, encouraging joint production with foreign players bringing expertise and capital. These new conditions will certainly create opportunities for the private defence sector which for the time being occupies only 15-20 % of the domestic market provided it proves able to handle them. Focus of the government is to develop domestic defence production capacities, and to send a signal to those foreign players who are eager to invest in such an untapped market(Ji, 2016).

The increasing connection of the Indian Ocean with the western Pacific; the growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, reaching as far as east African coasts, and Beijing's plans for a maritime silk road; China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and the positive way in which several ASEAN countries see the Indian presence there; and the de facto revival of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's quadrilateral security dialogue between Asia's maritime democracies (Australia, India, Japan and the USA) are all elements that reinforce the strategic character of New Delhi's maritime assets.

Maritime Relations

India's maritime neighbours are not only those sharing common boundaries of our maritime zones – but also nations with whom we share the common maritime space of the high seas. Accordingly, India has a vast maritime neighbourhood, which extends across the IOR. Maritime relations with the nations in our wider neighbourhood and beyond are an important facet of our broader politico-economic relations, in which the Indian Navy also plays an important role. This was reflected in the “Look East” policy, wherein the Indian Navy was a key instrument in India's diplomatic outreach to countries in East and South-East Asia, particularly ASEAN members. The “Look East” policy has now been transformed into the “Act East” policy, to expand India's engagement and relations to its East, across the Indo-Pacific, with emphasis on economic and security cooperation. India has also launched Project Mausam in 2014, to renew the cultural links and contact among countries in the IOR. It has further projected the vision of SAGAR – ‘Security And Growth for All in the Region’, in 2015, as part of India's endeavours to strengthen economic relations and development in the IOR, in a mutually supportive and cooperative manner (R. Mishra, 2010).

International law and norms provide a proven template for conduct of maritime relations and resolution of maritime issues between nations, which include handling divergence and enabling maritime security cooperation. Respect for international law and promotion of its principles at sea would, therefore, continue to be accorded due attention by the Indian Navy. However, it is recognised that there have been instances where some states have not respected the established international legal regime or even their own commitments, and others where non-state actors have been able or enabled to operate outside state jurisdictions. In such cases, the risks of maritime instability and insecurity could suddenly rise, and will need to be catered for in our security matrix. The Indian Navy will remain prepared for contributing to, and continue to play an important role in, national efforts towards enhancing

India's relations and engagement with friendly countries, and strengthening the international legal regime at sea, for all-round benefit.

Maritime Economy

Maritime economy covers the range of economic activities related to the maritime domain, including for ports, coastal infrastructure, shipping, fishing, seaborne trade, offshore energy assets, undersea pipelines and cables, and seabed resources. These have been growing in importance and value for India. Maintenance of a secure maritime environment, which enables unhindered pursuit of these economic activities, is an essential purpose of the maritime security strategy.

India's energy security has a vital role in national development, and is highly dependent on the seas. Nearly 80% of the country's crude oil requirement is imported by sea, using the ISLs across the Indian Ocean. Another 11% of national crude oil requirement is met from offshore energy sources within the Indian EEZ. Offshore gas fields also contribute to 80% of India's domestic natural gas production. In addition, India has built up substantial refining capacity and exports refined petroleum products to many other countries by sea. The products of the petroleum industry account for about 15% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Taking into account the total oil imports by sea, offshore oil production and petroleum exports, the country's cumulative 'sea dependence' for oil is estimated to be about 93% (Budihas, 2016).

India has sovereign rights for exploitation of living and non-living resources in its EEZ, which essentially comprise the offshore energy sector and fisheries sector at present. India has been promoting exploration and production of hydrocarbon energy in its EEZ under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), which has seen expanded investments in recent years. Merchandise trade constitutes 42% of India's GDP, and can be expected to increase in the future. More than 90% of India's international trade by volume and over 70% by value is carried over the seas. The total size of the Indian shipping industry has been growing over the years, even as the relative share of Indian flagged shipping in the country's external trade has declined, from about 40% in the 1980s to approximately 8.5% by 2014. This is largely because the growth of our seaborne trade, post economic liberalisation, has been relatively higher and faster than the growth of our shipping industry. While the Indian shipping industry is set to grow, the pace and needs of national development indicate that our dependence on foreign shipping would continue over the coming years. There is also a significant presence

of Indian nationals in the international seafaring community, operating on both Indian and foreign ships, with approximately 6.6% of the world's merchant mariners being Indian. The overall safety and security of Indian seaborne trade and seafarers, on both Indian and foreign ships, require that international shipping and sea routes remain safe, secure and free for navigation and legitimate uses(Bhavthankar, 2016).

India has 12 major and 200 non-major ports, spread along its East and West coasts, as also its islands.¹⁵ Ports play a vital role in the overall economic development of the country, as they provide the trade hubs where sea and land trade routes meet and the cargo moves from one medium into the other. These are both the destination and the source of the maritime leg of global supply chains. The cargo handling capacity of the ports, the infrastructure in these ports and cities, and the development of support services therein have a direct link to the economy. These are presently being developed under India's Sagarmala project, which is estimated to boost the nation's GDP growth by 2%.

India is the second largest producer of fish in the world, accounting for 5.68% of the world's fish production. There are about 2,45,000 fishing vessels in India and the annual marine fish landings amount to about four million metric tonnes. India's fisheries sector contributes about one percent of the national GDP and 4.6% of the agricultural GDP.¹⁸ It is estimated that the fishing communities along the coast comprise over 8,60,000 families and number about four million, with livelihood from fishing extending to approximately 14.5 million people.

Sea Lines of Communication

The importance of SLOCs to a nation may vary, as per its geography and dependence on specific routes, both for transportation of essential commodities and for conduct of maritime operations. There has been increased movement of trade and goods by sea in recent decades, along with increased dependence on energy imports for sustaining developmental goals. The higher density of shipping, traversing through relatively narrow areas of maritime space, has focused most nations' dependence on their SLOCs, including India. Consequently, safety and security of SLOCs has become a key national interest. During peace, the SLOCs would generally coincide with the ISLs. Hence, the safety, security and freedom of navigation along ISLs assume high international importance.

In the case of India, there has been increasing dependence on sea routes for import and export of essential cargo, including crude and refined energy products, trade and other commodities,

and for support to Indian interests overseas. India's interests and linkages have also expanded over the years, from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, to the IOR, thence across the Indo-Pacific Region, and now also into the Atlantic Ocean. The ISLs to these areas have, accordingly, grown in importance for India, with sea routes through the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, South-East and South-West Indian Ocean, and the Indo-Pacific region contributing to India's SLOCs. There are several potential threats and challenges to India's SLOCs from both traditional and non-traditional sources, which can impact our national interests. The security of these SLOCs would require that the main ISLs, through India's areas of maritime interest, remain safe, secure and free for movement of shipping, as prescribed by international law. This emphasises the importance of maritime cooperation and universal respect for international law, promotion of which would, therefore, be in India's interests. At the same time, India will also need to undertake measures for maintaining security and unhindered movement of shipping in its maritime zones and adjacent waters, and across its areas of maritime interest. In times of heightened readiness or conflict, for conduct of maritime operations, SLOCs would acquire increased importance, both for India and the adversary, necessitating measures for protection and interdiction respectively(Sokinda, 2015).

The Indian Navy's exercises with Southeast Asian navies have varied levels of scope with the different naval forces of the regions, demonstrating the increasing importance of interoperability. Indian naval operations have the objective to develop capacity for interoperability with the various Southeast Asian navies, although each force varies in terms of different operational capacities and platform capabilities. Interoperability may not always be feasible with the vast differences in training, operations, and platforms, yet the exercises with each of the navies provide the Indian Navy familiarity of operations and development of capacity. Although the exercises cannot accrue real offensive capability, the scope in terms of cooperative and constabulary elements remains high. From the Indian Navy's point of view, these exercises enhance maritime domain awareness, sharing of maritime intelligence, and increase the benign scope of ties. India's hosting of the MILAN and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium reciprocally brings in the Southeast Asian navies to Indian waters for similar exercises that serve to enhance interoperable features of the various operational capacities of the different navies with the Indian Navy. Interoperability serves as the benchmark of the closer degree of naval cooperation and operational capacity. The Indian Navy's operational capacity and its doctrinal focus endeavour towards greater cooperative capacity between its force and the navies in the region.

In conclusion, as India wakes up to the great game unfolding in the maritime domain of Indo Pacific region, it is beginning to take stock of its own strategic interests and adapt to the changes occurring in its primary area of interest which is Indian Ocean. There appears to be shift in New Delhi's maritime strategy reflected through its participation in the debate on the South China Sea and its growing maritime linkages in other part of the world. India is forging new naval ties and strengthening older ones suggesting its political will to take a stand in the changing security matters in the maritime geopolitics of the Indo Pacific region. India's stand is unlikely to be in favour of or against any policy or group of powers and more so with its own take toward the developments in the maritime domain in the Indo Pacific. At present India is struggling to establish itself as a credible security provider with a mild backlash regarding its lack of presence throughout in the water of Indo-Pacific. This sentiment is particularly being echoed by India's ASEAN friends embroiled in heated territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea in general and Indo Pacific region in particular in the larger context. While India will not engage in any direct confrontation with China or other disputing nations in the South China Sea, it is being increasingly vocal about the need to resolve the issue. India is also setting examples by resolving its own maritime boundary disputes in the Bay of Bengal which is emerging as a benchmark while discussing dispute resolution mechanisms in Indo-Pacific.

Essentially for India, the changing dynamics of the region is creating viable ground for maritime security cooperation with other countries. Both in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region, the Indian Navy is taking steps to strengthening its maritime links. India signed the "US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean region", continues to strengthen its ties with Vietnam and the Philippines, regularly held its first bilateral naval exercise with Australia and invited Japan to participate in the MALABAR exercises. Additionally, India is also looking to renew its ties with Indonesia, underlined its commitment to its ASEAN friends through the Act East or Look East Policy and furthering its relationship with the Indian Ocean littorals, going as far as the South Pacific islands(Motulalo, 2013).

The challenge lies in sustaining the momentum and taking it forward rather than losing its ground and getting caught unaware in the changing security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region. As the security architecture in Indo-Pacific continue to evolve, New Delhi's maritime policies will bear significant consequences in the road ahead for the region. The analysis of India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific has been premised on India's growing trade,

commercial investments, and economic interdependence that has directed the strategic engagement with the region. India's role in the region is expanding in terms of how its presence and partnerships could shape the Asian security architecture that has important strategic implications.

India's imperatives lie in sustaining its economic development and growth, while cultivating strong commercial and technological partnerships with Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Enduring partnerships with these powers encompass a crucial system-shaping diplomatic synergy for India and are extremely vital for India to be taken seriously in the region.

India's crucial balancing role in a prospective US-China duopoly of the Indo-Pacific regional order would serve to enhance its presence and would augur a meaningful role for its power. With the discontents of an assertive China and a dilemma ridden American power, India's role and stabilizing impact would build a regional order that is not entirely swayed to the ruthless hegemony of China nor suffers from the pangs of the US strategic challenges of staying engaged in the region. In an obvious power transition, India's normative leadership backed by its pragmatic calculus of economic strength and strategic capacity would provide the necessary foundations of India's place in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Chapter 4

International Order in Indo-Pacific

In the broader Indo-Pacific region, which stretches from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Pacific in the east, the post-world war 2 rules-based order is under stress as a result of several altered and intertwined factors. In operational terms, two major changes have caused confidence in the authority of the rules that have underpinned the regional order throughout the post-war period to wane over the last decade. The first of these is India and China's emergence as a competitor as well as partner to US leadership and power in the Indo-Pacific region. The second and more recent change is the growth of concern among states in the region about the extent and nature of the US's commitment to safeguarding the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. This diminishing confidence in the regional order in the Indo-Pacific region is perhaps at its clearest point in the contemporary dispute over understanding and interpretation of the rules & principles covering freedom of navigation and over-flight; the "lawful" ways of solving contradictory territorial claims, especially in the South China Sea, as well as rights under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) regarding the exploration and use of marine resources; the deployment and use of military & paramilitary forces into contested areas in both the South and East China seas; and the management of unplanned encounters between navies and other vessels at sea, including coastguards and fishing boats, in these contested areas. In each of these domains, a strong tension has arisen over the proper source of authority for interpreting and applying existing rules and principles as set out under UNCLOS and customary practice. In addition to questions of proper authority, discontent over the treatment of historical rights and the negotiation of contemporary international law's earlier treaties and agreements (e.g., the UN Charter, the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty) also underlies the region's current tensions but are not explicitly part of the formal arguments made by disputing governments.

Many territorial disputes and conflicts in Asia are long standing. At the current time, however, disagreements over the authority and the legitimacy of maritime law's ahistorical jurisprudence are being escalated by China's expansive maritime claims in East Asia. As a consequence, disputes over territorial claims and the sources of legitimate authority for resolving them are now a feature of regional international relations, which means that the stakes involve much more than only ownership of one or another piece of territory but rather

the ability to determine how all such disputes are “legitimately” resolved under international law.

A rules-based international order provides a standard against which one’s own behaviour and that of other states can be measured. This creates shared expectations about how other states are likely to conduct their affairs. The benchmarking of acceptable and non-acceptable ways of conducting security, political and economic affairs gives states a basis on which to anticipate and interpret the actions of others. International law thus provides ‘rules of the game’ by which bilateral, regional and global relations can be conducted and by which to mitigate the effects of the differences that inevitably arise during the course of any relationship. International institutions are underpinned by international law insofar as international organisations are established by treaty. Such treaties contain substantive law but also specify mechanisms by which to enhance their effectiveness and resolve disputes through peaceful means. Since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, the global rules-based order has prohibited the use of military force to pursue national agendas and obliges states to resolve their disputes through peaceful means. It offers a catalogue of ways for doing so, from bilateral negotiations through to conciliation, arbitration, mediation and judicial settlement. The selection of a dispute resolution mechanism is an art as much as a science, insofar as there’s no one method that’s appropriate for every dispute and welcomed by every player. This helps explain why the International Court of Justice has jurisdiction to hear only cases to which states have consented. A core principal of the rule of law is that all are equal before the law. A rules-based international order therefore tends to be more stable than a political order based on naked power(Lang, 2014).

Although a rules-based international order is important, it has some limitations. First, as in any system of law, its subject matter and even the content of its rules may to some extent reflect the norms and preferences of those most influential in its creation. This is significant insofar as states that didn’t contribute to the shaping of specific legal regimes may regard those regimes as less legitimate for that very reason. It’s difficult to achieve compliance with international law through military force, although military force may sometimes play an enforcement role. Legitimacy is therefore an intrinsic characteristic of a genuine rules-based international order. Second, the issues being addressed by policymakers inevitably change over time, which means that the law must necessarily adapt, grow and expand if it’s to remain relevant to changing circumstances; international law can be regarded not only as an entity but as a process. A true rules-based international order must therefore contain an optimal

balance between change and stasis: too much change to the rules, and the order can no longer be said to be based on those rules; too little change relative to the context in which it functions, and the order will become brittle and susceptible to fracture. Managing that balance requires careful judgement by those assuming leadership roles in the order. Third, because the international political system is ‘anarchic’ (that is, without a supranational authority) at both the regional and global levels, there are systemic constraints on a rules-based order. Most fundamentally, it’s more difficult to enforce laws against the most powerful within the regional or global system than it is for the most powerful to enforce law, or to ensure that law is enforced, against others. This is to a certain extent inevitable, but if law becomes no more than a synonym for power, the basis of the international order is no longer law, but power. Given the integral nature of international law and contemporary world politics, such an outcome would be likely to detract from the legitimacy not so much of the legal system itself, but of the regional or global power that refused to subject its policies and actions to the system of law (Leslie, n.d.).

In the post-Cold War international system, the United States (US) has been maintaining its hegemonic status and dominating the order of international politics specifically in the Indo-Pacific region. According to realist thinking, however, every dominant power has to be balanced through alliances. In this sense, realists think it is a matter of time before other powers in the international system begin to pursue both challenging and balancing policies against the US (Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama, 2002). In fact, the US is already experiencing both challenging and balancing policies against its dominant position. This, points to a change in the international system in the Indo-Pacific.

China has become a potential challenge to the US hegemony in the international system and mainly in the Indo-Pacific region. China experienced alliance diplomacy in the 1950s, when she agreed mutual defence with the Soviet Union. In the current international system, China has begun to pursue cooperative policies with the “smaller powers” of the Indo-Pacific region, to both consolidate its regional position and balance the dominant position of the US. In other words, the US faced a powerful challenger to its hegemonic position, not only in the Indo-Pacific region but also in the international system. This requires a new balance in the region and the system alike, as envisaged by realist thinkers. In this sense, the US has been trying to maintain its dominant position (Twining, 2007) in the international system and balance the rising power of China in the Indo-Pacific region. There is no doubt that the US has had an influence on China, particularly in terms of economic issues. China has been

pursuing a capitalist market economy since 1978 when the reformation process began and changed the economic structure of China. China's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) is symbolic of this development. However, China may be avoiding challenging and balancing the US dominance "overtly" because Chinese leaders see a possibility of overtaking the US trade superiority in world markets (Beeson, 2009). Considering the relationship between the US and China in the ambiguity of the post-Cold War period, it is clear that the Indo-Pacific region, with its smaller powers and multilateral institutions, has gained importance. Thus, the US and China, as major players in the current international order, are trying to consolidate their powers on the one hand and challenge the other's power, through non-military means, on the other. In this sense, the arena for both powers is the Indo-Pacific region. In fact, both the US and China have maintained close relations with smaller and middle powers in the region and formed affiliations with multilateral institutions in the region. Therefore, understanding the nature of the relationship between the US and China in the current international order in the Indo-Pacific region and comprehending the new dynamics of the new order of the international system requires a focus on the smaller powers' relations with the two major powers and examination on the role of the multilateral institutions in this context. Smaller powers of the region have been balancing both the US and China through the strength of multilateral institutions.

Importance of the Indo-Pacific Region in the Restructuring of the International Order

In understanding the concept of "institutional balancing" and the restructuring of the international system, the Indo-Pacific region has become a focal point and the epicentre of interaction between the US and China and India – a multilateral relationship that is likely to exert a defining influence on the evolution of the global system in the 21st century. China is a growing regional power as well as a possible challenger and balancer for the US. Regional powers, Middle powers and Smaller powers of the Indo-Pacific region aim to maintain peace and stability in the region through multilateral institutionalism(Lang, 2014).

The Indo-Pacific or Asia Pacific region has played a key role in "globalization, regionalism, and re-equilibration of the balance of power" since the end of the Cold War. Regionalism has become a growing trend in the eye of regional governments because they have suffered a great deal from the stringent conditions of Western-oriented global financial institutions, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). For instance, during the 1997-1998 financial crises, which began in Thailand, the IMF imposed very "humiliating" terms on the regional

countries. Thereupon, regionalism and regional institutions have gained importance for regional states, instead of the US-led global institutions. With the exception of Thailand and Japan, one European power or another colonized all of East Asia and South Asia, and most countries were “keen to jump on the accelerating bandwagon of decolonization in the aftermath of the Second World War” (Beeson, 2009). For the last couple of decades, however, the visions of regional states have diverged. In this sense, the Indo-Pacific region has benefited much from globalization, including economic prosperity, since the 1990s (Medcalf, 2016).

The Indo-Pacific region encompasses a diverse mixture of rival great powers, thorny territorial disputes, unresolved historical memories, competing political ideologies, painful economic transitions, shifting military balances and divergent cultures. Moreover, the Indo-Pacific region has faced security threats such as global terrorism, energy shortfalls, and the existence of poorly managed states; no country in the region could deal with these alone. Thus, re-examination of strategies and policies is on the agendas of all the states in the region. In this context, the asymmetric multi-polar security order of the Indo-Pacific and relations between the major powers and the smaller powers of the region simultaneously allow the US to be the dominant power in the region and enable China as the balancing power. Thus, economic and political interplay between the major powers and the smaller powers of the region, the formation of new institutions, the acceptance of a new form of (modified) hegemony, and balancing efforts are other characteristics of the Indo-Pacific region. Within the framework of all the above-mentioned characteristics of the Indo-Pacific region, the major policy of the regional powers is to gather the states together so they can all come together and pursue cooperative relations. This policy strives to include all major powers in regional affairs, to tie them down with regional memberships, and to bind them to peaceful norms of conduct. A number of common threats faced by the major powers have facilitated the constitution of this major policy. For instance, the regional powers in the Indo-Pacific region have come together against terrorism, and this initiative has triggered institution building in the region and contributed to the improvement of cooperation, leading to the formation of new opportunities for new balance of power policies in the Indo-Pacific. In this context, regional institutions in particular, based on multilateral dialogues, have grown in value throughout the Indo-Pacific region (Xavier, 2013).

Indo-Pacific region has been mostly stable in the past two decades, first of all because China has tried not to escalate tensions in the region in order to become the dominant power. In fact,

both China and the US are aware that the US cannot challenge China easily in its region as it did Russia in the Cold War period although China is twenty years behind the US in terms of technological sophistication. China's bilateral relations with regional powers and its increasing presence in multilateral institutions in the Indo-Pacific region have also served the purpose of balancing the dominant position of the US, but without directly challenging its hegemony. In fact, China has complicated relationships in the region. Some prominent regional powers such as South Korea and Japan etc. have close economic ties with China and derive considerable benefits from these relationships. In this context, it is not possible for these states to ignore these vulnerable relations and seek alternatives or options, in trade matters in particular in the Indo-Pacific. This means these countries keep the US at a distance in their relationships. However, the US provides overt defence to South Korea and covert defence to Taiwan. In other words, although these regional powers feel closer themselves to China, in economic terms, they still prefer keeping on the hegemony, the US, in providing security. In this sense, it is important to understand that an ascendant China is not a problem; rather, a failing China could spoil stability and order in the region. For others, however, China's rising power may signal efforts to acquire dominance in the region and could trigger conflicts both in the region and beyond. Thus, for them, China should be contained on the basis of the logic of the orthodox balance of power. Either way, China's balancing act is significant for regional states in the Indo-Pacific region. In this context, China has increased its military power in the region. In fact, China has the highest defence spending in Asia, and ranks third for defence spending globally, behind the US. China has expanded its proactive defence strategy with the concept of "rapid reaction" and "limited war" in the context of the use of high technology (Kamennov, 2010). Middle Power and Smaller powers of the Indo-Pacific region are economically more dependent on China, than on the US, although they also need the US market to consolidate their growing economic positions in the region. In addition, China has worked to keep the US out of regional organizations in the Indo-Pacific, in order to cut ties and any possible support against China between the US and smaller powers in the region (Spatafora, n.d. 2014).

Some of the regional organisations which are important in shaping the international order in the Indo-Pacific region are as follows:

- **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** is a regional government-to-government agreement, brought into force in September 2006 to promote and enhance cooperation

against piracy and armed robbery in Asia. It is a multilateral agreement between 20 countries in Asia, namely Australia, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It includes the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), an initiative for facilitating the dissemination of piracy-related information. As can be seen, the ReCAAP does not have a mandate to initiate direct action nor is it incumbent on the signatories to take action for enhancing maritime security.

- **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** The objectives of the ASEAN Regional Forum are to foster dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and make efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. There has been a reasonable degree of success in these two main objectives though the same degree of success has not been seen in the efforts of ASEAN with China since China has largely stayed away from multilateral resolution of disputes.
- **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** was launched in 1997 for promoting intra-regional economic cooperation and development. However, the Charter of the IORA is a less-than-treaty level document and is therefore not legally binding on the signatories. The IORA now has six priority areas to promote the sustained growth and balanced development of the region out of which maritime safety and security is the first priority. The IORA had also indicated that it was important that IORA's work on maritime security and safety and disaster management should be aligned with and complement possible IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium) initiatives in these areas. However, not much seems to have been done in these important areas. The IORA does not have a working group to deliberate on these issues or an institutional link with IONS.

- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** is a voluntary initiative formed in 2008 that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region. The IONS also aims to establish a variety of multinational maritime cooperative mechanisms designed to mitigate maritime security-concerns among members. However, this is a purely naval initiative and is therefore hampered by an absence of official sanction from other government agencies in the signatory countries. Moreover, there is no governmental obligation to adhere to the Charter of the IONS.

Role of Multilateral Institutions in shaping the international order in the Indo-Pacific Region

International institutions began to emerge in the 19th century, when the sovereign state system consolidated its position. In particular, the Concert of Europe system, following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, and The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 contributed to the establishment of international institutions. In this context, the first example of international institutions, in the modern sense, was the League of Nations, established to prevent further wars in the international arena. The United Nations, founded after the Second World War, is the most important international institution in the world. In this sense, regional institutions, including the organizations of the Indo-Pacific region, were all established in the second half of the 20th century. According to Keohane and Nye, non-state actors have played an important role to constitute international agenda. This means that the absence of non-state actors and institutions outside of the state may limit the types of coordination and cooperation that are possible. Since the world is moving into an era of ever-increasing ‘globalization’, in which the benefits of maintaining cooperative interstate relations are perceived to be higher than was the case in the earlier years, international institutions have gained importance in the Indo-Pacific region and in the world, in general. In this context, regional institutions play a role in the operations of the overall international system to the extent that they can also be considered global institutions (Beeson, 2009). Although the impact of regional institutions seems rather limited, institutions like ASEAN or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) provide a template for further institutional development (Beeson, 2009).

ASEAN has increased its own diplomatic influence and capabilities in the region and managed to form positive relations with big powers. Actually, maintaining good relations with the US and ensuring its continuing strategic engagement with the region are major

policy priorities for the ASEAN grouping as a whole. Moreover, “ASEAN members have used ‘non-coercive’, open exchanges at multiple levels and over multiple issue areas to persuade China to think differently and less confrontationally about security and its relations with the ASEAN members” (Ciorciari, 2009). ASEAN has played an important role to establish defence industries among some of its members. Although it has faced some challenges such as distrust among participating states and doubts regarding full reciprocity, it can be considered as an important attempt to control the major states and therefore balance their powers through regional institutions in the Indo-Pacific region. In fact, ASEAN has taken prominent steps to enhance security collaboration and defence cooperation among its members, in the 1990s. In these attempts, it has accepted major powers to different forums not only for benefiting from their vast experiences in security and defence issues but also for controlling their powers in institutions and therefore preventing their overt intentions on influencing the region, both politically and militarily. For example, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which has been active since 1994, has taken the lead in discussing a wide range of security issues in a multilateral setting among its participants, including the United States and China. By the same token, the ASEAN Plus Three has promoted political and security coordination between the ASEAN members and three East Asian Nations, namely China, Japan, and South Korea. All these multilateral efforts have intended to control major powers under the aegis of multilateral institutions and provide balance of power in the region.

APEC, as the other largest institution of the region, was established to promote free trade and economic cooperation among the regional states of Asia-Pacific. APEC was the first multilateral institution to contain China. It has also provided a forum in which Japan has been able to improve its relations with both China and South Korea, and the US could consolidate an institutionalized presence in the region (Beeson, 2009). APEC is divided between the Anglo-American and East Asian economies. By comparison, ARF members are divided on the basis of how much they favour greater transparency and openness in security issues. In this context, APEC provides an important insight into the difficulties of institution building in a part of the world that contains very divergent political systems; economies that are wildly different in size and degree of development; and different ideas about what sort of policy frameworks might be appropriate for managing domestic development and intra-regional relations (Beeson, 2009).

In addition, both ASEAN and APEC have brought former enemies together. In ASEAN, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have come together with Vietnam, Cambodia and

Myanmar, while APEC in the Indo-Pacific region has become a platform on which the US, Russia, and China meet with the other states of the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific. In this sense, “institutions can also provide a functional problem-solving mechanism that brings leaders and specialists together across the region to find common solutions to general problems” (Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama, 2002).

The growing interest in developing intergovernmental organizations and cooperative institutions suggests that there is an appetite for institutional consolidation at a political level, and perhaps a growing “need” for such mechanisms because of the greater economic interdependence that now characterizes parts of the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific region may require a period of institutional consolidation. It is obvious that the Indo-Pacific region is now developing institutional interactions that must be having some impact on the behaviour and policy calculations of regional political, business, and even strategic elites. In fact, “the establishment of a multilateral institution can help to bring about a workable balance of influence on which the institution’s success depends. Since the smaller states have focused on both soft institutionalism and economic issues, non-US forums have become more important for them. Of course, institutionalism has not decreased the importance of the possibility of a classical balance of power mechanism. Instead, these developments have softened the main structure of the balance of power system in the Indo-Pacific region.

The two major powers in the international arena – the US, as a hegemonic power in the system, and China, as a growing global power – meet in the Indo-Pacific region. It seems China, as a growing world power, has no intention of explicitly challenging the dominant position of the US. However, Chinese leaders have been pursuing soft balancing policies to control the US power, implicitly. The US, meanwhile, has been trying to balance the growing power of China by using covert policies. In this context, the Indo-Pacific region has become the site of balancing acts between the major powers, as well as a focus of attention of the restructuring of the international system. More importantly, smaller powers of the region have been playing an active role in the implementation of both balancing the powers of the major actors and contributing to the restructuring of the international system. In fact, the smaller powers of the Indo-Pacific region have pursued not only bilateral relations with the major powers but also “a lot more” multilateral relations through regional multilateral institutions. More interestingly, these efforts by the smaller powers have been restructuring the international system. In other words, the smaller states of the Indo-Pacific region and multilateral regional institutions have gained importance in both the balancing behaviours of

the major powers and the reordering of the international system. Although multilateral diplomatic negotiations and using the opportunities provided by multilateral institutions are new concepts for regional countries, there is a growing willingness among regional states for regional institutions. In other words, “pan-regional institutionalism” has become important among the region’s middle and smaller powers(Clarke, 2017).

Multilateral institutionalism has positive aspects for both the major power, middle power and smaller powers of the region. On the one side, major powers find institutions useful because they can contribute to the establishment of coalitions; facilitation of the exercise of powers; and concealment of the level of exercising power, softening the impact. Meanwhile, on the other side, smaller states find institutions useful and persuade major powers to join the institutions. Moreover, smaller states can act independently of the hegemonic power, even delaying a major state’s plans for war, giving the weaker side more time to prepare. Consequently, smaller states of the Indo-Pacific region have been playing a crucial role in balancing the major powers of the system, thereby contributing to the restructuring of the new international order. In this sense, it can be said that the concept of “institutional balancing” may feature increasingly on the political agendas of powers in the region and therefore should be studied further.

The next decades will certainly witness a contest for primacy between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region along with India. A regional order predicated on the premise of US primacy will be ill-equipped to manage this contest. What are the likely implications of China’s rise for regional order, peace, and war? This question has been debated for two decades. A large bloc in the debate, represented by realists, argues that Indo-Pacific is destined for conflict. According to the realist logic, China will expand its interests in accordance with its growing capabilities and will ultimately aspire for regional hegemony. As Washington will not easily give up its position of primacy and India will also try to prevent China from becoming the regional master in the Indo-Pacific region and so the region will be divided into opposing camps and conflict will be inevitable. Scared by these gloomy prognoses, others have proposed alternative ways to manage peaceful change. Some liberals call for strengthening the web of liberal institutions that has underpinned the US centred and Western-led international system since the end of World War II. They argue that, buttressed by economic interdependence, characterized by liberal rules, and led by a wide coalition of Western democracies, this international order in the Indo-Pacific is capable of assimilating China. Some other liberals and realists suggest the creation of a concert of major powers in

the Indo-Pacific region modelled on the Concert of Europe, which is thought to be responsible for the long peace in nineteenth-century Europe. Also inspired by what happened in Europe, this time the long period of peace and prosperity after World War II, constructivists advocate the building of a regional community in which member states are bound together by a collective regional identity and shared political values. Finally, drawing on East Asia's own history of a long peace from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, an argument is made that, if the United States withdraws from Asia or Indo-Pacific region, the region will likely return to a stable hierarchical system similar to the tributary system, which is led by China and sustained by a shared geopolitical culture featuring restraint by the superior and submission by the lesser states. None of these options appears viable for managing the coming primacy competition in the Indo-Pacific region. The Western-led liberal order is anchored in Western democracies that are also bound together in the U.S. alliance system. In Asia, these anchors – Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and, to some extent, South Korea – are located at the margins of the region and not with the region's rising powers. Unless ASEAN members are transformed into Western-style democracies and, together with India, become US allies, a China that is powerful and self-confident will successfully resist rather than be assimilated into the liberal world order led by the West. More important, as the US-centred, Western-led international order does not allow Chinese primacy; it is unacceptable to a China that is approaching parity with the United States (Clarke, 2017).

A concert of major powers seems, at first glance, to provide an appropriate framework for managing primacy competition among great powers, but, in actuality, its costs outweigh its benefits. If a concert of powers excludes the United States, its internal balance of power will tilt irresistibly toward China. It is not in the interests of Japan, India, Russia, or any other major powers to join such a concert, as it is no different from using its resources to cement Chinese leadership. If a concert includes the United States, it must be larger than a G-2 coalition of Washington and Beijing. A Sino-US condominium will be faced with relentless resistance from all powers in the region, including America's and China's closest allies and friends. Both Washington and Beijing will have to reassure their allies, and the only way to do so will be to include the allies into the framework, which will, in effect, transform the Group of Two into a Group of Many. A recent attempt by the former US President Barack Obama to create a US-China co-leadership has failed due to both the quiet resistance of US allies and the more vocal resistance of China. The costs for China in such a G-2 are threefold.

One part of the costs is material, as China must shoulder the burden of responsibility. Another part is symbolic, as Beijing does not accept the role of a junior partner to Washington. A third part of the costs is structural, as the mechanism of the US-China co-leadership is to cement US primacy and Chinese playing second fiddle to America. Although Washington may think it is fair game, as the United States is still superior to China in every aspect of power, Beijing, anticipating the advent of its era, does not think so. The competition for primacy and leadership will be peacefully managed within the framework of a regional community. However, given its historical experience, Asia is not ripe for a regional community. For a community of nations to work, individual national identity must be superseded by collective regional identity. Most of the modern Asian nations are born out of colonial legacies and find themselves in the midst of the process of nation-building. A coherent national identity is thus of paramount importance for nation building in these newly built, oftentimes even arbitrarily made, states. Unlike Europe, where nationalism has been inflicted decisive damage by the horrifying events of two world wars, Asia, which has been trying to rectify its colonial past, sees nationalism much worthier than regionalism, whether subnational or supranational. A community of nations is further characterized by shared political values. With a China that remains authoritarian and a Japan that is liberal, an East Asian community by nature, but not by name, is impossible. Although the tributary system that governed China's relations with its neighbours was relatively stable in the pre-modern past, a similar hierarchical order centred on China is unlikely to be stable in the modern era. First, the Chinese world order of the past is based on a form of geopolitical self-perception and self-expression that can be called "culturalism"(Tay, 2015). State elites perceived their country as a domain of civility rather than a nation. This way of self-definition was completely replaced by nationalism during the past two centuries. Nationalism has become both a core element of the ongoing process of state formation in Asia and an entrenched feature in the foreign-policy culture of many Asian states, most notably China, India, Japan, the Koreas, Vietnam, and Indonesia. A tributary system of the twenty-first century will face fierce and undying challenges from nationalist forces in the lesser states. Second, the stability of the Chinese world order of the past was made possible partly by China's preoccupation with threats coming from the nomads of Inner Asia. Due to the concentration of resources and attention to the northwest front, China had little time to intervene in the south-eastern frontiers and had to tolerate foreign dominance in the maritime domain. This condition is reversed in the twenty-first century, as China's largest external threats are perceived to come from the east and the south.¹⁰ China has shifted its primary focus to these fronts and there are

signs that Beijing does not shy away from adopting a confrontational posture toward India and the maritime neighbours in East and Southeast Asia. Third, the neo-tributary order centred on China is conditioned on US and Indian disengagement from East and Central Asia as well as Russian withdrawal from Central Asia. Although Chinese power is rising relative to those of the other major powers, Washington, New Delhi, and Moscow all are responding to the rise of Chinese power by increasing their interests and influence in the region (Clarke, 2017).

The most viable option for peace and stability in Indo-Pacific region is a form of shared regional leadership that is inclusive not only of the major powers but also of other key players in the region. The shared and inclusive mode of regional leadership is the best form of international governance to peacefully manage primacy competition and power transition. The strengths of inclusive leadership rest on two pillars. First, it has the support of the largest number of key actors. Second, it is flexible about primacy. The existence of a coalition of lesser states that can even handily facilitate great-power rivalry makes it possible that inclusive leadership can accommodate different primacies and facilitate the peaceful transition of primacy.

ASEAN, for example, constitutes a sizable coalition of small and middle powers that is able to play the role of a benign centre of regional architecture building in the Indo-Pacific. Inclusive leadership is more viable than a strengthened Western liberal order, a concert of major powers, a regional community, and a Chinese-centred, neo-tributary hierarchy, because it is able to manage primacy competition peacefully and because it takes nationalism and national sovereignty seriously. While not drawing from any established precedents of regional governance, inclusive leadership has found some prototypes in recent developments in the Asia-Pacific. The key multilateral dialogue forums present in the Asia-Pacific region are mechanisms of shared and inclusive regional leadership. Chief among them are the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the extended East Asia Summit (EAS), and the newly established ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). These regional forums have demonstrated a remarkable capability to nimbly adapt to changing balances of power in the region. Created in the late 1980s in anticipation of a new multipolar world that would replace the bipolar Cold War, APEC was deftly adaptive to U.S. unipolarity, which emerged in the 1990s and was dominant in the early 2000s, while maintaining its core principle of shared and inclusive leadership. This adaptive resilience is manifest in APEC's adoption of security issues and endorsement of the fight against

terrorism in its agenda despite its initial definition as an economic forum that excludes security issues(Lang, 2014).

EAS is another example of how shared and inclusive regional leadership is adaptive to a changing balance of power. The original idea of EAS was to have a forum of “Asian” leaders, which meant to exclude the United States. It was originally thought to be an avenue toward regional community rather than a mechanism of inclusive leadership. At its inaugural meeting in 2005, Singapore’s Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong argued that “East Asia cannot be extending to countries in the Pacific, for then even the political definitions would get stretched beyond belief.” Notwithstanding the original vision, five years later, the ASEAN states decided to invite the United States and Russia to join EAS. From a stepping stone for Chinese primacy, EAS has smoothly and, in a timely manner, morphed into a mechanism of inclusive regional leadership under US primacy. What is worth noting here is that the decision was made by a group of small states, ASEAN, which has gained significant credibility for being benign and even-handed. As Goh Chok Tong stated at the Kuala Lumpur summit, “ASEAN does not threaten anybody and the big countries in the region will want ASEAN to play that facilitating role.” Although currently reflecting US primacy, the shared and inclusive leadership mechanisms could one day easily endorse Chinese primacy. That is why China sees a strategic advantage in taking part in those forums. Unlike the G-2, they do not forestall Chinese primacy. There is a place under inclusive leadership for various leadership roles played by great powers and small states alike. For example, while emphasizing its own leadership in the region, the United States also endorses ASEAN’s central role in regional architecture building.

As China and several other Asian countries are growing in power and activism, Indo-Pacific in general and Asia in particular is heading toward a new regional order. The central task of the emerging regional order is to manage the Sino-US contest for primacy. The vital strategic choices that are likely to face the region are a “new Cold War” and “inclusive leadership.” Indo-Pacific will be peaceful and stable only if key players in regional affairs make inclusive leadership effective. One thorny issue in international relations in the Indo-Pacific region is the territorial disputes between China and its neighbour’s in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and along the Sino-Indian borders. If mechanisms of inclusive leadership fail to solve these problems, states will likely resort to balance-of-power politics, thus strengthening the trend toward a new Cold War. There is a considerable chance for peace and stability, but the choices will be painful.

The Indo-Pacific is currently driven by the centrality of China's economic and military rise. However, this rise then sets off challenges for the U.S., which is the current superpower, and other ambitious powers such as India. Indeed, the U.S.' creation of the 'Indo-Asia-Pacific' is also about bringing in 'help' from India and to force other regional powers such as Japan to construct their political and security matrixes with a wider geographical focus. However, even without this U.S. push, China's economic and political rise and the concomitant increase in its regional and global interests would make an 'Indo-Pacific' framework inevitable to understand and deal with political and security challenges in Asia and the world.

Meanwhile, from the Indian perspective, it is to be noted that official use of the term 'Indo-Pacific' has also been rather limited and sporadic. There appears to be a degree of wariness to committing wholeheartedly Role of Major Powers in the Indo-Pacific to the concept, even if Indian scholars are increasingly comfortable using the expression. This official stance might well arise out of doubts about whether India is a 'major power' in the Indo-Pacific domain as opposed to just the Indian Ocean half of the formulation. Despite the many meetings and bilateral visits involving 'Quadrilateral' of India, US, Japan, Australia, visible results are far from forthcoming and appear stuck at various stages of negotiation over various issues.

The key dynamic in the Indo-Pacific at present is the 'rise of China' and the response of the United States to the emergence of what realist IR scholars describe as genuine 'peer competitor'(Tay, 2015). Whether this presages some sort of hegemonic transition is a moot point, but it is clear that the basis of this new dynamic is primarily material rather than ideational. In this regard, at least the realists are undoubtedly correct: the reason we are all interested in China, and the cause of its prominence in the world's economic, political and strategic affairs, is its historically unparalleled economic development. China asserts an influence over its neighbours because of its economic importance, not because of the attractiveness of its ideas. On the contrary, China's 'soft power' is minimal, but this does not mean that the views of its political and economic elites are without influence. It does mean, however, that the actions and beliefs of China's policymakers may produce outcomes that are more likely to accord with realist rather than constructivist interpretations or reality – however impoverished that 'reality' may be conceptually.

For both critical and IR realists, regions are either not terribly important in themselves, or simply arenas in which great power rivalries may play out. For critical realists, questions of regional formation and identity are largely epiphenomenal expressions of underlying

structural realities, albeit indeterminate ones reached through dialectical interplay. For realists such as Mearsheimer, institutions are given short shrift and judged to be incapable of changing the underlying dynamics that have always shaped competition between great powers. Such views are in stark contrast to constructivists who argue that the creation of regional institutions and even identities can have a major – perhaps a decisive influence – on the way international relations are practiced and actually play out at the regional level. The implication of this argument is that regional development, and even the behaviour of great powers is susceptible to being influenced, perhaps even changed, by the behaviour of secondary states with little obvious claim to significance. The quintessential example of this possibility is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Given the attention, ASEAN attracts in debates about the evolution of international relations in the Indo-Pacific, a few brief observations are in order. First, ASEAN was itself a product of a specific geopolitical environment that was distinguished by a bipolar contest between rival great powers. While ideological contestation played a much larger role than it does in contemporary regional contestation, the structural bifurcation of the large parts of the world, and of East Asia in particular was especially noteworthy. ASEAN was a direct consequence of this structurally-embedded demarcation as weaker, newly independent states sought to achieve greater security and a collective presence in a geographic area dominated by extra-regional powers. The creation of ‘Southeast Asia’ was the geographically and institutionally limited expression of this pursuit of security. Despite ASEAN’s famously lofty rhetoric, its real driving force had very little to do with shared visions, cultural attributes or ideas – even if they came to provide a convenient legitimating discourse (Krejsa & Krejsa, 2016).

The consequent preoccupation – even obsession – with preserving national sovereignty and the inviolability of the state is one of the defining features of regional polities of all types, and of the institutions that they have created. Consequently, there are path-dependent constraints on state behaviour that have an underlying structural component. Even if we accept that the inter-state system in East Asia is a relatively recent creation and artifact of European imperialism that does not exclude the possibility that its existence will have real effects and influence the behaviour of the elites that lead these states. Second, and relatedly, the possibility that the ‘Indo-Pacific’ could actually exist, much less play an impactful role, of a sort that sees as vital to effective regional action, was effectively foreclosed. With China on the ‘wrong’ side of the Iron Curtain, there was simply no possibility that a wider regional

order of any sort, be it economic, political or strategic, could actually come into being, much less play a determinative role in regional relations. Consequently, it is not sufficient or illuminating simply to look at the rhetorical declarations that accompanied the formation of ASEAN, or of the ideological justifications that underpinned America's prominent strategic engagement in the region, for that matter. There is a need to adopt the sort of structurally based account of hegemonic influence that has emerged out of critical realism. Such an approach allows us to take seriously both the material properties emphasised by conventional IR realists, as well the ideational/ideological influences that have been highlighted by constructivists, and by those operating in a broadly Marxist tradition (Medcalf, 2016).

In this structurally constrained context, therefore, one that includes strategic, economic, and political factors, there are clear limits to the ability of less powerful actors such as ASEAN to play an influential role, despite claims about the organisations ability to modify international norms and even influence the behaviour of more powerful states. Certainly the so-called 'ASEAN Way' of voluntarism and consensus has been influential, at least at the level of providing a rhetorical template and veneer of legitimacy for regional institutions. However, the fact that subsequent regional institutional initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit, have all felt obliged to subscribe to the ASEAN style of diplomacy has meant that very little of any substance has been achieved. While constructivists may usefully highlight the discursive importance of particular ideas about regional identity and institutional practice, accounting for the relatively limited impact of such ideas requires us to acknowledge the influence and structural impact of material factors, too. The sheer number of competing regional initiatives and visions of one sort or another in the Indo-Pacific is also a contributing factor to their relative ineffectiveness. There are simply too many proposals and organisations with overlapping agendas and claims to authority for any to act effectively. A more fundamental explanation, however, may be found in the profound structural transformation that has occurred in the political-economy of the region – no matter how it is defined. The flurry of rival institution-building is symptomatic and reflective of this underlying change; the real drivers of change may be found in the larger contest that has been sparked by the so-called 'rise of China', itself a manifestation of long-term structural transformations that organisations such as ASEAN have little capacity to influence.

International Order in South China Sea

The escalating tensions in the South China Sea are inevitable and all too predictable according to realists. For many such observers, America's strategic presence and its role as an 'offshore balancer' –rather than Asian cultural practices or diplomacy – is the explanation of the long peace of Asia. Without this role in the past and in the future East Asia would have been a far more unstable place, the argument goes. Importantly, it is not even necessary for Asian states to become democracies to enjoy the benefits of this stability. Even now, it is claimed, it is the balance of power itself, even more than the democratic values of the West that is often the best preserver of freedom. That also will be the lesson of the South China Sea in the twenty-first century – one more that the humanists do not want to hear. Whether 'freedom' was best preserved by propping up repressive authoritarian regimes and fighting the two bloodiest wars in the region's history is a moot point. But whatever one thinks of this rather cold-blooded strategic calculus and justification of American foreign policy on normative grounds, China seems to be fulfilling many of the expectations realists have about its likely behaviour as a rising power. China is modernising its military; it is behaving more aggressively in pursuit of territorial claims; and it is not unreasonable to assume that its strategic planners would prefer it if the US retreated to its own hemisphere and left the PRC free to exert a greater sway over its 'core' sphere of influence. Indeed, this is precisely the sort of strategy that has been advocated by at least some strategic thinkers in China itself(Lang, 2014).

The limited significance of norms, ideas, and even laws has been thrown into sharp relief by China's actions. On the one hand, China refuses to contemplate any multilateralisation of its manifold territorial disputes. China's leaders recognise – rightly – that they will be the stronger party in a bilateral negotiation and thus potentially able to browbeat a 'pathetic adversary' like the Philippines. On the other, extant institutions that ought to be well placed to influence Chinese behaviour according to constructivists have had almost no influence. This is hardly surprising. Not only are there doubts about the ability of institutions to constrain powerful states at the best of times, but organisations in the Indo-Pacific are actually designed to have minimal impact and to encourage sovereignty enhancement rather than sovereignty pooling. The ASEAN Regional Forum is the principal manifestation of this

possibility. As if this was not enough of a problem, ASEAN itself has been divided by China's foreign policy as mainland Southeast Asian states like Cambodia are showered with aid and assistance, making it reluctant to criticise China as a consequence. ASEAN's vaunted solidarity has looked threadbare when members have been forced to choose between national and collective interests.

The net effect of ASEAN's inadequacies and China's increased assertiveness has been to encourage a rather traditional-looking response from the US, albeit one that may not have the effects its architects hoped. In part as a consequence of its own desire to 'pivot' or 'rebalance' toward a relatively neglected region, and in part at the urging of insecure maritime states such as the Philippines and even Vietnam, the US is exhibiting a growing willingness to directly push back against China's expansionary policies. It is not necessary to take a view on the relative merits of this case to recognise that this does, indeed, look like precisely the sort of confrontation between a rising and relatively declining power that realists have predicted. This does not mean that it will play out in the way that realists predict, or that the US hoped, but it is evident that this interaction has its origins in a long-running material and structural transformation of the region, nevertheless.

The principal insight that critical realism offers – social reality has an inherited, pre-existing structural quality that delimits the context of contemporary actions – may not be entirely novel, but its significance is generally overlooked or wilfully ignored by those who emphasise the power of ideas and voluntarism, or simply the power of power. Nowhere are the shortcomings of such approaches more evident than in contemporary East Asia and the more broadly conceived Indo-Pacific. Critical realism provides a framework for making sense of the complex, dialectical interactions between political, economic, cultural, and strategic forces that ultimately constitute the different structural legacies that distinguish one region from another. Unpacking these structures not only helps to explain which ideational and material factors are important at different times in different places, but such an analysis can also suggest why some ideas and institutions do – or do not – have an impact and influence (Krejsa & Krejsa, 2016).

In this context, at least, it is important to recognise that traditional realists have some important points to make. There is no doubt that China's material transformation has had a profound impact on the region of which it is the most important part. This enhanced impact would have obtained if China's influence had been confined to the economic sphere. Now,

however, it is clear that China is actively pursuing a larger, more aggressive role in pursuit of what it takes to be its national interests. Such interests may be socially constructed, malleable, and contingent doesn't make them any less consequential. It certainly doesn't mean they are reflective of regional norms or some generalised cultural inheritance that is likely to encourage stability and a cooperative approach to problem solving. On the contrary, China displays a resolute unwillingness to adhere to practices or agreements it judges likely to impinge on its sovereignty or ability to act autonomously, as its recent response to the decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on its territorial claims in the South China Sea reminds us. While this does not mean that war is inevitable, it does mean that when the possibility of conflict in the Indo-Pacific region – intentional or otherwise – looks increasingly possible, we need theories that can explain what is happening, not what we would like to happen. This is, of course, the familiar dichotomy between 'is' and 'ought' that traditional realists have often highlighted. While realists may have a point about this – a good deal of analysis of the region's security dilemmas does contain large amounts of wishful thinking – the future is not predetermined, nevertheless. The circumstances in which we make our collective history may be constrained, but they are not foreclosed. Critical realism offers an important but comparatively neglected way of unpacking and accounting for the differing structural constraints that shape and delimit divergent security outcomes and practices in different parts of the world. Recognising our pre-existing social inheritance for what it is could be an important part of changing it for the better.

There is no doubt that the emergence of new international order in the Indo-Pacific like new bilateral strategic partnerships etc. will involve rapidly intensifying security cooperation, and new plurilateral arrangements, is complicating an already complex security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. In terms of the rules-based order, this evolving architecture and the emergence of new bilateral and plurilateral arrangements are having a number of effects, some positive and some arguably less positive. First, the expansion of ASEAN-centric security institutions and forums has drawn some potentially influential players that were once marginal to the security dynamics of the region – notably India – into regular dialogue and discussion. Second, and more controversially, that expansion has been in large part about reaffirming commitments to the existing orders principles by 'socialising' states to the advantages of affirming, following, and upholding them. The extent to which this process of highlighting mutual advantage through greater institutional engagement has influenced China now appears minimal at best. Resistance among many ASEAN states to Regional Outlook strengthening

the order by making it more liberal, is also unlikely to change. Third, turning to the emergence of new bilateral and plurilateral arrangements, broader and deeper strategic partnerships may have a positive impact on reinforcing the authority of the regional rules-based order and help extend it to the broader Indo-Pacific. Joint exercises on a range of security issues (including disaster management, fisheries, and piracy) intelligence sharing, defence technology transfers, and strategic dialogue could all fulfil these objectives. Fourth, it may, however, also be the case that broader and deeper strategic partnerships, and indeed even exclusive plurilateral arrangements, will further raise tensions with China and in particular North Korea, and potentially be of concern to some ASEAN states, raising suspicions about strategic intentions.

Countries like US, Australia, India, and Japan have much in common, but they are also quite distinct and different players in the Indo-Pacific region. All four are democratic states and all are clearly committed to the rules-based order at both the regional and international levels. But their capacity to maintain and shape that order differ, as do their relationships with other major players in the region, and these differences will shape their approach to strengthening it.

Conclusion

The core aim of this research as stated in the research questions was to study ‘how maritime geopolitics and security politics in the Indo-Pacific region will affect international security or will, in turn, be influenced by global events and structures’. International relations theories, including theoretical perspectives on regional order, are only partially helpful in addressing this question.

The existing literature on the research topic pays far more attention to how global forces shape regional orders, than to examining the other side of the coin, how regions determine global order, a question that ought to figure prominently in a genuinely two-way relationship. For example, two major recent contributions to the study of regional orders (which have also been discussed in chapters 2 and 4 of this research study), Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver’s (2003) *Regions and Powers*, and Peter Katzenstein’s (2005) *A World of Regions*, both claim the centrality of regions in the geopolitics of world. They emphatically endorse David Lake and Patrick Morgan’s earlier assertion that with the end of the Cold War, Indo-Pacific regions has become ‘substantially more important’ sites of conflict and cooperation than in the past (Lake and Morgan 1997b: 7). But a closer look at these works (both theory and empirics) shows that they pay far more attention to how systemic forces, especially global power configurations, affect regional maritime security, than to how regional actors and processes shape global security politics and economics. Despite their valuable contribution in identifying the regional dimension of global order and offering helpful categories and concepts to study regional power structures and interactions in the Indo-Pacific region, they fall short of demonstrating any significant measure of new security architecture that might be expected in a more regionalised world, or a ‘world of regions’.

It was also a matter of exploring during this research that how the regional level shapes the global, or what might be termed the ‘local construction of global order’ including the relationship of resistance and feedback that regional actors and processes offer to the global security structures and actors. The overall relationship is one of mutual constitution between the regional and global dynamics. In the sections below, I identify five key areas that define this nexus, areas that do not simply show how global forces shape regional order, but also how regional dynamics shapes global order. These are:

1. Indo- Pacific as a site of great power interactions with the potential for affecting the distribution of power in the global system.

2. Indo-Pacific's place and role in shaping post-Cold War regional institutional structures and dynamics, and the extent to which these can mitigate the competition (global as well as regional) among the rising powers of the twenty-first century.
3. Indo-Pacific Region's response to new organising principles of global order, including democratic peace, cooperative security and human security.
4. Indo-Pacific as a source of increasing global interdependence, and as a test case of the liberal proposition that economic interdependence is a force for peace.
5. Indo-Pacific as a transmission belt for transnational security threats, such as global warming, pandemics, drug trafficking, piracy and terrorism, and so on.

All five of these components have been explained in the chapters 1, 2 & 3 in various ways. The intent is to synthesise them into a sufficiently coherent explanation of what the great power nexus is and to prompt further theoretical research and policy analysis of how the concept might be better incorporated into future studies of overall Indo-Pacific security politics.

With so many of the emergent Asian regional powers claiming recognition, with increasing justification, as global-level players, Indo-Pacific security politics will be a key element of the global distribution of power. Great powers from outside Asia already find it increasingly difficult to place Asia after Europe and the Middle East in the 'ranking' of regions in their grand strategies. This used to be the case with the US during much of the Cold War period. Contestable as it was then, it is even more so now. And globalist strategic frameworks that treat Asia just as another region would no longer work. Research also analyses the US role in Asia and shows that while global security interdependence has grown, in the sense that developments in one region affect others, the framework of a single 'global' US strategy for different regions – Asia, Europe and the Middle East – is increasingly obsolescent.

There was a time when European regional politics, such as the Concert system which took shape in 1814, was synonymous with global ordering. Twenty-first century Asia or Indo-Pacific region could well come close to being in a similar position. This is not just a matter of recognising the US as an Asian power, rather than an extra-regional one, but also looking at the rise of China, Japan and India as both systemic-level economic and military players of the global security order in the twenty-first century. Hence, global and regional dynamics are now becoming intertwined to an extent not seen since the advent of European colonialism destroyed Asia's pre-eminent role in the world economy and power structure.

Asia's growing salience in the global distribution of power could produce different outcomes, ranging from hegemony to cooperative balancing. Some neo-realists, especially John Mearsheimer (2001: 41), argue that hegemony or attempted hegemony of rising powers starts and probably remains primarily confined to the regional level. If this applies to China, then we need to look beyond American global hegemony as the basis of Asian regional security hierarchy. In twenty-first century Asia, an Asian regional hierarchy underpinned by China could become the basis of a new global hegemony. If one disagrees with the neo-realist formulation, it is still possible to argue that unlike in the past, when American powers acted as the main bridge between global and regional (Asian) levels of security ordering, Indo-Pacific in the twenty-first century will see the opposite trend. While America's global power, even at its post-hegemonic state, will continue to shape regional order, Chinese along with Japanese and Indian power will work in a reverse direction, by shaping global order from a regional vantage point. But hegemony is not the only, or even the most likely outcome of Indo-Pacific's growing salience in the global distribution of power. Indo-Pacific will also define the prospect for great cooperation in the twenty-first century international system. Research also establishes the fact that future regional and international stability would depend on a Sino-US 'condominium', in which these two regional heavyweights agree to share power in Indo-Pacific. Other possibilities for a cooperative outcome might include the aforementioned Concert-like system, involving the region's other great powers, such as India, Japan and Russia, which could be managed through institutional mechanisms created and maintained by the great powers.

Role of institutions leads us to the second aspect of the global–regional security nexus in the Indo-Pacific: the role of Asia's regional institutions in shaping post-Cold War global security order. Here, the key traditional question has been whether and to what extent Asian institutions are distinctive enough (relative to their West European counterparts) to merit special consideration and thereby serve as a model for other regions of the non-Western world. But this volume opens up new ways of looking at the manner in which Asian regional institutions can shape, and be shaped by, global security dynamics.

Global powers may affect regional institutions in two main ways. First, they can inhibit regional multilateral institutions, showing instead a preference for bilateralism. Or they could assert their influence through regional institutions. In Asia, the former has been the preferred mode of the US, the dominant global power, in pursuing its security interests in Asia since the Second World War. The US preference for bilateralism, known as the San Francisco

system, has in turn impeded the development of multilateralism in Asia. Even the late development of multilateralism remains stunted due to (among other factors) American reluctance to fully engage these institutions.

There has been occasional US interest in the second approach, i.e., asserting its regional influence and pursuing its interest through regional institutions. In the security sphere, the main example would be SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), but its anaemic and short lifespan attests to difficulties, political and ideological, that the US faced in making multilateralism a vehicle for its Asia-Pacific strategy. In the economic sphere, the brief but significant interest shown by the US in making the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) an instrument of its global trade liberalisation agenda in 1993–94, offers a similar lesson.

Efforts by other great powers or regional powers such as Japan (Greater East Asia) and India (Asian relations circa 1947, and Bandung 1955), to develop regional influence through multilateral institutions have fared little better. In short, multilateral institutions have not been particularly useful as instruments of great power (global-level powers) or regional power policies in Asia. Instead, regional institutions in Asia have been far more useful in the hands of the region's weaker states (such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN) in acquiring a measure of voice and influence in the global councils.

Will this change? This research tries to establish the possibility of 'great power manoeuvring within some regional institutions' that reflects an attempt by them 'either to build or reduce others' spheres of influence'. Such manoeuvring is more likely if, as noted earlier, Indo-Pacific develops a Concert like institution which is dominated by a handful of great powers (in contrast to the current pattern in Asia whose institutions are 'led' by its weaker and smaller nations like the ASEAN members). But it is too early to determine whether such efforts would succeed in overcoming Asia's long-standing aversion to great power-led regional multilateral structures.

As the experience of the East Asia Summit shows, where Australia, India and New Zealand were given a seat at the table over Chinese reluctance, Asia's multilateral norm of inclusiveness might thwart tendencies towards competitive and sphere of influence regionalism. In addition, regionalist concepts can act as sites of resistance to global level institutions, a fact reflected in the failed and fledgling East Asian constructs and institutions, such as the East Asia Economic Group, ASEAN+3 (ASEAN plus China, Japan and South

Korea) and East Asia Summit, which were, as Wesley correctly observes, born out of ‘a strong narrative of grievance against Western countries and Western-dominated institutions’ that followed the 1997 crisis. The rising prominence of these institutions, which reflect aspirations for regional autonomy, and which to some degree seek to displace more inclusive institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and APEC, suggests that identity and autonomy are key drivers of Asian regionalism; even if regional institutions in Asia do not serve as the model or basis for global multilateralism, they have a capacity to inhibit the regional propagation and influence of global institutions or institutions created, maintained and dominated by Western global powers.

Indeed, the observations mentioned in chapter 3 and 4 concludes that the role of regional multilateral institutions in mediating the global and regional levels of security politics works in both directions. While global powers, the US and now China, theoretically retain an ability to play out their systemic rivalry through Asian regional institutions, and hence turning the latter into little more than what Michael Leifer (1996, 78) describes as ‘adjuncts’ to balance of power geopolitics, regional institutions in Asia also affect global security politics by giving Asia’s weaker states a greater voice in the world councils than what they might otherwise muster through individual efforts. This may fall short of the scenarios wherein Asian institutions actually moderate global great power rivalry, although they certainly have a chance to do so, given that institutions such as the ARF and ASEAN count as their members of interlocutors *all of the great powers in the contemporary international system*. Indeed, exerting a moderating impact on the competitive balancing behaviour of the great powers in Asia is one of the foremost objectives of Asian regional institutions, and to some extent they have already fulfilled this role, at least counter-factually, i.e., without cooperative security institutions, one might have seen a US containment policy towards China, prompting more nationalist Chinese policies that would have made the China threat a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’.

Another important element in understanding the geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region is the role of ideas and norms in Indo-Pacific’s security politics. Global–regional interactions are not just materially derived, but are also ideational. Unfortunately, social constructivist explanations have had little to say about the mutual constitution (for examples of norms) between global and local ideas. The overwhelming trend has been to present norm diffusion as a one-directional affair, from global (Western) to the local (Asian). But as the ‘constitutive localisation’ perspective argues, local ideas do matter, and local beliefs and practices often

are crucial mediums through which global ideas and norms are perceived and accepted (Acharya 2004, 2008).

The design and practice of the Indo-Pacific security order has certainly been influenced by global security ideas and norms: including multilateralism, common security, humanitarian intervention and human security. But Asia is often seen (and criticised) as a site of resistance rather than facilitation of principled ideas advanced by the West, including human security and humanitarian intervention ('responsibility to protect'). This perception is not without basis, given that many new norms of global governance challenge traditional dominance of state sovereignty, on which Asia among all non-Western regions has been especially reluctant to compromise (Moon and Chun 2003, 36). But this critique cannot be pushed too far. Asia has also been at the forefront of normative innovation, as exemplified by the idea of human security, which, at least in its 'freedom from want' (human development) formulation, can be said to be Asian in origin, constituting an example of how an idea conceived by Asian proponents has acquired global prominence and begun to affect global security thinking, if not security politics outright.

Moreover, Indo-Pacific region's role in the global transmission of ideas and norms cannot be said to have been a one-way process. Instead of viewing Asian local actors as passive recipients, there is a good case to be made for conceptualising their role as active borrowers and localisers. The development of cooperative security institutions in Asia after the end of the Cold War was not a case of simple adoption of the European common security idea. Rather, the idea was localised by Indo-Pacific states, including Australia and ASEAN members, with inter-governmental and second track levels playing a key role. Cooperative security is one example of the crucial role that local actors and beliefs play in the transmission and spread of global ideas.

States in the Indo-Pacific region have become more receptive to the notion of human security. What is noteworthy is that region's receptivity to human security was partly due to its own experience with transnational threats, such as SARS and the Indian Ocean tsunami. This suggests that ideas that seem alien (rightly or wrongly and certainly wrongly in the case of human security) at the outset could become more amenable to local adoption if they resonate with the interests and needs of local actors.

Another important finding of the research in the maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific is that between global and regional security politics concerns, the role of Asia is increasing as a

source of increasing global interdependence, and as a test case of the controversial liberal proposition that economic interdependence is a force for peace. The debate over the pacific effects of economic interdependence has been heavily influenced by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European experience. Critics of the liberal argument argue that interdependence failed, or might even have contributed to, the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars. To these critics, economic interdependence is irrelevant to peace and security at best, or a catalyst of conflict at worst (Buzan and Segal 1994, 67).

Yet, economic interdependence in twenty-first century Indo-Pacific region is different in nature and scope than the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European pattern because of the transnational reorganisation of production, the content of trade flows and the dispersion of global capital centres' (IDSS 2006: 3). Economic interdependence in Asia today is driven by transnational production, a relationship that is far costlier to break than simply intra-regional trade. Moreover, as Dale Copeland (1996, 2003) argues in his reformulation of interdependence theory, it is not the level of trade *per se*, the expectations of future trade, that is the critical factor in deciding the link between interdependence and war. The economic interdependence in the Indo-Pacific region is being managed through global multilateral rules, including the World Trade Organization, which, despite periodic crises and setbacks, continues to provide usable mechanisms for settling trade disputes that were not available to late nineteenth-century trading partners.

Another important finding in the research is the role of Indo-Pacific region as a source and/or a transmission belt for global transnational security threats. The threat emanating from transnational security threats are ranging from nuclear proliferation, global warming, pandemics, drug trafficking, piracy, terrorism and energy insecurity. The line between transnational and trans-regional threats is thin indeed. They provide many examples where Asian 'regional' problems remain at the heart of the global spread of these threats, as exemplified in the US policy-makers' dubbing of Southeast Asia as global terrorism's 'second front' (supplementing the Middle East and Central Asia as a source of radical Islamist *jihad*), North Korea's centrality in global proliferation concerns after it became the latest nation to join the nuclear club, and Asia as the 'cradle of [global] pandemic influenza'. Asia is also the hub of the so-called second Nuclear Age.

In contrast to the first Nuclear Age, efforts to acquire nuclear weapons now are driven as much by regime security concerns (North Korea and Pakistan) as by the traditional notion of

national survival and security. More important, whereas the first age was transatlantic and European (only one of the five original nuclear weapons states was Asian), all three of the subsequent additions to the nuclear club (excluding Israel, an undeclared nuclear power) have been from Asia. As a result, Asian nuclear powers are far more proximate to each other, hence capable of causing as much damage to their rivals despite their relatively smaller arsenals as the larger Soviet and American nuclear force capabilities during the Cold War. This is yet another distinctive feature of the second Nuclear Age. Moreover, these Asian proliferation cases, despite differences among them, have the potential for seriously altering global security order: by altering the global nuclear balance, by sparking a strategic missile defence competition between India and China, by breaking the 'nuclear taboo' (if nuclear weapons are used in a future India–Pakistan conflict) and by undermining the global proliferation regime through their demonstration effect.

More piracy incidents happen in the waters of Indo-Pacific than anywhere else in the world, and as has been pointed out in chapters that Indo-Pacific region's sea lanes are arguably the Achilles heel of global commerce. In energy as well as environment, Indo-Pacific is at the centre of the global problem and the solution to it. The spectacular economic growth of China and India not only fuels the shortage of energy resources, but also becomes a potent aggravating factor in global climate change. Hence, regional dynamics in these areas heavily influence the global extent of the most pressing transnational threats of our time and the possible solutions to them.

Regions are not just a source or transmission belt of the transnational dangers, but also part of the solution to them. Research has highlighted that in analysing the problems of energy and environmental security in the Indo-Pacific, while regional solutions are not always adequate and excessive reliance on them might be counterproductive, they have often proved to be more appropriate and effective in addressing these issues than exclusive reliance on global norms and approaches. In a related vein, while many contemporary threats are transnational and trans-regional, this does not mean their analysis and understanding is best done through simplifying globalist narratives.

While terrorism is a global challenge, the roots of terror in Indo-Pacific region, as in other parts of the world, have deep and lasting local roots. The same can apply to the analysis of piracy, whose cultural and historical roots are often ignored in the post-11 September

discourses about global and regional maritime security. The foregoing observation conforms that many Asian ‘regional maritime security concerns are quite distinctive and autonomous’.

Although this research in chapters 3 and 4 has identified a significant and growing nexus between Indo-Pacific security and global order, it is unlikely that Asia will simply ‘learn’, embrace or adjust to the principles and practices of ‘global ordering’ as defined and established during the long era of Western dominance. Rather, Asia’s engagement with, and contribution to, the existing global security (as well as economic) order is best described as one of *contingent globalism*. Asian actors, both states and peoples, are acutely aware of the impact of global forces on regional security, be it American military presence, in its global and Asian dimensions, the global economy which sustains regional interdependence, or normative forces such as the ideas of security community and human security to which Asians are increasingly exposed and even sympathetic. For the most part, they see no necessary contradiction between global dynamics and the requirements of regional order. But tensions do exist in some important areas, and here, Asians have been reluctant and incomplete globalists. This reluctance is evident in the rejection or partial acceptance by several Asian governments of ideas of democracy and human rights, free trade, and cooperative and human security. They have consciously sought to balance exposure to and interaction with global actors and processes with an aspiration for regional identity and autonomy. One example in the institutional arena would be the tension between APEC and East Asian regional frameworks (Higgott and Stubbs 1995). Another example would be their greater willingness to accept human security in its ‘freedom from want’ dimension as opposed to its ‘freedom from fear’ dimension (Evans 2004). Yet another can be found in Indo-Pacific region’s security multilateralism, where the notion of cooperative security goes hand in hand with the persisting sanctity of non-intervention.

Drawing upon the chapters in this research, chapter 2 and 4 highlights various pathways in which Indo-Pacific region will shape the twenty-first-century global order. But these pathways are framed in conceptual terms that come straight out of the prevailing conceptual inventory of international relations theories, theories which are dominated by Western ideas and historical experiences. There are other, regionally indigenous approaches to security and order that will also be evident and hence must be taken into account in Indo-Pacific region’s transnational and trans-regional security politics in the twenty-first century (Acharya and Buzan 2007, 69).

Already, as chapters 2 in this research makes clear, emergence of Indo-Pacific region challenges many of the dominant concepts and theoretical approaches to understanding and analysing global order that are derived from Western ideas and experiences. Tow's remark in chapter 1: 'None of the major and contending approaches in international relations theory – realism, liberal institutionalism or constructivism – is sufficient to effectively embrace this range of transnational security dilemmas' in Asia today, resonates through the chapters.

Based on an assessment of China's maritime activities in the Indian Ocean, it would be fair to assume that by around 2020, the PLA Navy would have graduated to a permanent/long-term presence in the Indian Ocean region with one or more carrier-based groups and/or amphibious groups deployed in the region for SLOC protection and other missions such as HADR operations. The implications of an expanded and permanent PLAN Navy presence in the Indian Ocean for India are significant.

Hypothetically, a permanent PLA Navy base(s) in the Indian Ocean; in Pakistan and/or Middle East or Africa could also greatly offset China's vulnerability in the Straits of Hormuz and impose a Hormuz "dilemma" upon India which imports nearly half of its oil from the region (EIA 2016). Contrary to the common refrain that the Pakistani ports are vulnerable and exposed to Indian offensive, it is opined that the deployment of Chinese DF-21D missiles within Pakistan could alter the balance of maritime power in the Arabian Sea in China's favour. A PLA Navy carrier based group and numerous surface action groups comprising of destroyers operating out a base in Pakistan or the western part of the Indian Ocean could potentially overwhelm any opposition from the Indian Navy in the region, rendering India trade vulnerable. However, even though such a contingency is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future, it is clear that the Andamans could be India's "trump card." While India would also need to rely on the support of the United States and other powers to tackle this plausible scenario in the future, it is clear that strengthening the Andamans is the only viable strategic solution to growing Chinese maritime power in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian maritime strategy for peacetime is aimed at projecting India as the net security provider for the region and promoting bilateral security ties with regional states so as to establish a "favourable environment." However, a permanent presence of the PLA Navy in the Indian Ocean region has an impact in peacetime as well. An enhanced Chinese presence in the region will inevitably lead to greater involvement of the PLA Navy in various security issues of the region, hitherto overseen by the Indian Navy, thus potentially diluting India's

role as the primary net provider of security for the region. The deployment of the PLA Navy Type 920 *Anwei*-class hospital ship *Daishandao*, also known as the *Peace Ark* in 2010, on an 88-day military humanitarian aid trip covering Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, the Seychelles and Bangladesh (Walsh 2011), followed by its deployment to assist with the rehabilitation efforts post Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in early November 2013 are examples of how the PLA Navy could make a difference. China is one of the few countries with the ability to provide medical care and emergency rescue capabilities on the high seas, a capability conspicuously lacking with the Indian Navy (Walsh 2011). Once again in March 2014, following the disappearance of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370 in the Southern Indian Ocean, it was a Chinese commercial bulk carrier, the *Tai Shun Hai* that was the first ship to reach the scene of the accident. Subsequent search efforts by the PLA Navy expanded to 18 ships at one point in time including two Type 071 LPDs, a Type 052C destroyer, a Type 903 replenishment ship, and a Type 925 submarine support ship (HIS Janes 2014). The employment of PLA Navy for evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya and Yemen in 2011 and 2015, respectively, is another illustration of China's involvement in the affairs of the region. During the evacuation of its nationals from Yemen this year, Chinese ships also rescued over 270 foreigner nationals. Further, in 2014 when Maldives was overwhelmed by a water crisis following a major fire in the country's desalination plant, it reached out to India, China, United States and Sri Lanka for assistance. India was the first to respond, pressing into service five air force planes and two naval ships, however, within days of India's assistance, China was also able to deliver over 1000 tons of freshwater using civilian aircraft and a PLA Navy auxiliary ship (*Economic Times* 2014).

It is obvious that China would seek to leverage its contributions to the Indian Ocean region to dispel the perceived mistrust and build friendly ties with the regional states. Once China has established a base in the region, it would be prepared to take on greater security responsibilities and also provide support in crises situations, gradually displacing the Indian Navy from its position as the sole potential net security provider and also driving a "wedge" in India's regional security relationships.

The Indian maritime doctrine along with the Joint Doctrine – Indian Armed Forces (classified document not available in open source) read in conjunction with the latest version of India's maritime strategy, *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy* (IHQ MoD 2015) superseding the earlier document, *The Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy* of 2007, provides the framework for employment of the Indian Navy (IHQ

MoD 2007). The maritime strategy of 2007 was revised and the new version was released in late 2015, evidently to align it with the national vision of the government for India to emerge as the net security provider for the Indian Ocean region. The Indian maritime strategy advocates a modern, robust and balanced navy, capable of operating across the entire spectrum of naval operations from peacetime to total war while emphasising on the peacetime role of the navy to maintain “deterrence” at the strategic, nuclear and conventional levels. Broadly, this translates into the creation and maintenance of a favourable environment while maintaining a strategic control of the SLOCs and chokepoints in the region through which passes China’s maritime trade.

Evidently, the extant strategic thinking seems to advocate a determined bid for leadership in the Indian Ocean in the twenty-first century, by taking over complete responsibility for regional security. In this context, achieving a “favourable environment” in the Indian Ocean – as enunciated in the maritime strategy document – tacitly implies ensuring that all regional states accept India’s leadership in the Indian Ocean. Thus, India’s ambition to be the region’s net security provider is aimed at building trust and confidence amongst the regional states about maritime security or perhaps even develops a long-term dependency for itself. By strengthening its leadership role in the Indian Ocean, India also seeks to counterbalance a fast growing and increasingly assertive China which is dependent on the shipping routes of the Indian Ocean. The strategy for shaping a favourable and positive maritime environment or to maintain net maritime security includes the following actions:

- Presence and rapid response including presence and surveillance mission independently or in coordination with friendly maritime states.
- Maritime engagement through formal engagements such as port visits, naval exercises, staff talks and strategic interactions.
- Capacity building and capability enhancement by providing training, technical and hydrographic support to friendly regional states.
- Develop Regional MDA.
- Maritime security operations through conduct of EEZ surveillance missions, anti-piracy patrols, humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HADR) operations and non-combatant evacuations operations (NEOs) by the Indian Navy for India and the rest of the region.
- Strategic communication for net maritime security (IHQ MoD 2015).

Connecting the dots in India's maritime strategy: a coherent strategy

An analysis of India's bilateral naval engagements with the Indian Ocean states clearly reveals a coherent national strategy at work.

Firstly, based on the range and depth of naval ties with each state, three distinct levels of priority accorded to the regional states can be identified as follows:

Tier 1 States: Australia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Mauritius, Seychelles, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Mozambique and South Africa.

Tier 2 States: Bangladesh, Bahrain, Iraq, Kenya, Egypt, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania.

Tier 3 States: Yemen, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan, Timor Leste

Second, a clear pattern of naval cooperation aimed at capacity building, centred on supply of military hardware, hydrographic assistance and naval training is evident. The Indian Navy provides high quality training in several areas at various levels for officers and ratings. The medium of instruction is English, an area where the Chinese could never hope to compete with India.

Third, it is clear that India has sought to maintain the highest level of cooperation with its South Asian neighbours – exempt Pakistan – particularly Sri Lanka and the Maldives, with considerable success. While China has sought to make inroads in the region, barring Pakistan, with whom China has a de facto alliance, it has met with limited success and its influence is considerably limited. India's defence relations with Bangladesh are yet to mature.

Fourth, even though, China has much closer economic integration and political influence in South-east Asia relative to India, its "muscular" approach in the South China Sea over the territorial disputes with various South-east Asian States, seems to have pushed the regional states closer to India. This is evidenced from the fact that India's is now closely integrated with all regional institutions under the ASEAN framework including security fora such as the ASEAN +8 Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), a regional forum aimed at addressing non-traditional security issues like counter terrorism, maritime security, HADR, Transnational crimes and securing of SLOCs (Ghoshal 2013). The Indian Navy has participated in several combined naval exercises under the aegis of the ADMM+ forum. Furthermore, the Indian Navy conducts regular coordinated patrols with all the key ASEAN states including Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand. Also, India's Act East policy,

supported by the United States as it complements its “pivot” strategy to East Asia, appears to strengthen India’s position in the region.

Five, it is evident that India is seeking to enhance its relations with West Asian navies. However, a large presence of the US Navy and Pakistani influence in the Arab states has precluded close defence ties with the region. It also appears that India has preferred to cultivate close ties with Iran even though India’s proximity to Iran is viewed suspiciously in the Arab states. Evidently, this seems to be driven by India’s strategic interest in the port of Chahbahar which could potentially allow India to counter a Chinese presence at Gwadar. Further, India’s limited maritime engagements in West Asia clearly indicate a strategy for hedging with US in the region while prioritising its relations with South and South-east Asian states.

Finally, India’s ties with the East African states has been relatively curtailed, ostensibly due budgetary limitations, except in the case of Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa. The lower of levels of maritime engagements with the East African states could also be attributed to lack of regional naval capacity which demands greater contribution by India. Overall, it is appreciated that China has greater influence over the African states relative to India.

Strategic risks for India

From the above, it is clear that the Indian maritime strategy for the Indian Ocean region is centred around building a network of security relations with the various littoral states to create a favourable environment to counter growing Chinese economic influence and a tacit partnership with the United States, as a hedging strategy, particularly in areas where India’s security ties are relatively weak such as the Gulf States and South-east Asian. However, such a strategy has inherent risks.

Firstly, an attempt to establish a network of exclusive security relations with all the littoral states could be expensive and difficult to sustain in the long term for India. A long-term strategic engagement with the region would entail involvement in various complicated security dynamics of the region, going beyond the routine ship deployments and training assistance programmes. The long-term trends in maritime security in the Indian Ocean region are clearly worrisome and a sensitive issue with most littoral states who are increasingly finding themselves vulnerable to the various forms of threats such as climate change, transnational crimes and illegal fishing. As a net security provider for the region, the regional

states would expect India to meet all their maritime security requirements including conduct of surveillance missions, hydrographic assistance and supply of defence hardware. A similar strategy followed by Australia with respect to the Pacific island countries (PICs) involving supply of the Pacific Patrol Boats to PICs and regular maritime surveillance missions by the RAN, proved difficult to sustain. Evidently, ADF commitments in the Middle East and other areas around Australia, led to a decline in Australia's contribution to maritime security requirements for the PICs (Bateman and Bergin 2011). Australia's operational limitations were viewed as indifference on their part to augmenting regional maritime security (Bateman and Bergin 2011). Thus, the Indian strategy to be the net security provider could face similar challenges in the future and possibly "backfire" on India in the long term. This could even provide China a chance to step in as a more dependable net security provider.

Secondly, the success of the current strategy is largely dependent upon intangible or notional support from regional states, with unforeseeable implications, rather than something more than substantial and enduring. After all, any national strategy is about leveraging a nation's own resources to meet national objectives rather than relying on support from others. The Australian experience of providing similar support to the PICs does not seem to have earned them unconditional support or goodwill with some littoral states critical of their commitment and suspicious of their intent. Thus, there is no guarantee that strong security ties would ensure continued political support in the long term, even with the closest of partners. The involvement of the Sri Lankan Government in hosting a Chinese submarine visit to Hambantota proves this point, notwithstanding the subsequent actions of the new government to reassure India by curtailing naval engagements with China. Furthermore, the recent volte-face by the Sirisena Government to turn back to Chinese funding for infrastructure projects is indicative of the strength of China's financial clout exercised over smaller nations.

Third, a withdrawal of the United States from the Indian Ocean, already being advocated by leading American thinkers as an "offshore balancing" strategy (Preble 2014), hastened by a declining defence budget or changing political priorities, could result in fresh alignments between the littoral states and China. Finally, going ahead, a Sino-US rapprochement (Pant and Joshi 2015), however remote it may appear at the moment, could be potentially dangerous for India.

On the whole, India as the largest resident maritime power in the Indian Ocean appears to have made rapid progress in establishing its position as a security provider in the region,

based upon the range and depth of maritime security cooperation established with various regional states. Evidently, India's maritime strategy seeks to build regional maritime capacity and provide security assistance to the littoral states as and when required, including humanitarian aid and disaster relief measures. In return, India expects the regional states to refrain from supporting Chinese efforts to establish a military presence in the region. As noted earlier in the chapter 3, the fall of the Rajapakshe Government in Sri Lanka, responsible for allowing access to Chinese submarines, with likely tacit support to the opposition party by India and the United States, seems to serve as a quiet warning for potential "rogue" behaviour. Manifestly, such a strategy requires constant investment and commitment by India to the region and could prove to be unsustainable and uneconomical in the long term.

China's strategic military interests in the Indian Ocean are driven by a sense of vulnerability of its maritime trade, and security of its growing worker population and large-scale investments in the region. Manifestly, the Chinese strategy for the Indian Ocean region has been largely based on building strong economic ties with littoral states that could potentially provide political leverage in the future. In comparison, India has established a wide network of security ties and its relations with certain countries notably; Mauritius, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Maldives have since blossomed into robust security partnerships. It is unlikely that these states would choose to side with China in the foreseeable future. While it is difficult to prognosticate when and which way the regional states would swing in the future based on current behaviour, though it would be fair to assume that a few states would certainly join the "Chinese bandwagon." For instance, the proclivity of certain Indian Ocean regional states including some Middle East and East African countries towards India and China can best be judged to be ambivalent. In addition, Pakistan is already open to hosting the Chinese. It is these states where China's economic influence could translate into long-term security partnerships, particularly once China has established itself as a dependable provider of security.

While this could likely change the balance of maritime power in China's favour, India's geographic advantage and China's "Malacca dilemma" would prevail in the long term. Therefore, strengthening of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, an area that has been neglected by India, could be a viable long-term strategy that needs to be accorded priority over building security relations with various Indian Ocean states.

Indo-Pacific is still finding its feet in the practice of world politics. For the American policymakers, Indo-Pacific seems to be an attempt to integrate India in an Asian architecture that seeks to serve US interests. The Indian side, however, has welcomed the concept because it provides space for India to follow its strategic autonomy. India can continue to engage with countries all across in flexible interactions and not form alliances. Indo-Pacific concept allows India to be a direct stakeholder rather than being an alliance partner of the US. Thus, India can take foreign policy decisions that sit in consonance with its national interests. On one hand India has opted for a common thread with the United States on the issue of 'unhindered freedom of navigation in international waters' and has joined in defence dialogues with Washington and Tokyo. Alongside it has called for 'real concert of Asian powers' that includes both China and the United States to ensure maritime security in the Indian Ocean and the need to create a more balanced security architecture in the region.

Bibliography

(* indicate the primary sources)

Valedictory Address by Secretary (East) at Asian Relations Conference IV: 'Geopolitics of Indo-Pacific Region: *Asian Perspectives* 22 March 2013,

<http://icwadelhi.info/asianrelationsconference/images/stories/Valedictoryaddressbysecretaryeast.pdf>

'Realising the ASEAN-India Vision for Partnership and Prosperity: Translating the Vision Statement', abstract of the presentation of Sanjay Singh at DDVI-IDSIA, February 2014

Opening Statement by the Prime Minister at the 11th ASEAN-India Summit in Brunei Darussalam 10 October 2013: <http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22307/Opening+Statement+by+Prime+Minister+at+11th+ASEANIndia+Summit+in+Brunei+Darussalam>

Opening Statement by the Prime Minister at the Plenary Session of the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, 20 December 2012: <http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/20981/Opening+Statement+by+Prime+Minister+at+Plenary+Session+of+India+ASEAN+Commemorative+Summit>

Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister at the 10th India-ASEAN Summit, 19 November 2012:<http://mea.gov.in/media-advisory.htm?dtl/20825/Opening+Remarks+by+Prime+Minister+at+10th+IndiaASEAN+Summit>

Statement by the Prime Minister at the 9th ASEAN-India Summit, 19 November 2011: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=77320>

Vision Statement-ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, 20 December 2012: <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/20982/Vision+StatementASEANIndia+Commemorative+Summit>

Confluence of the Two Seas'. Speech by Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, in the Parliament of the Republic of India, 22 August 2007, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>.

K.M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1945.

Kevin Rudd, 'The Indian Ocean: in need of a regional organisation to match its growing influence', *The Hindu*, November 14, 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-indian-ocean-in-need-of-a-regional-organisation-to-match-its-growing-influence/article2627557.ece>

Secondary sources:

Bhavthankar, A. (2016). SPS Insight India broadens strategic canvas , establishes role in Aniket Bhavthankar.

Bouchard, C., & Crumplin, W. (2010). Neglected no longer: the Indian Ocean at the forefront of world geopolitics and global geostrategy. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6(1), 26–51. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2010.489668>

Brewster, A., & Editor, D. (2016). *INDO - PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY : CHALLENGES AND COOPERATION* Edited by David Brewster National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry.

Brewster, D. (2016). The Indo-Pacific century.

Budihas, C. L. (2016). Is India's Military Modernization Evidence of an Aggressive National Security Policy?, (110).

Chaudhury, A. B. R., & Basu, P. (2016). Meeting with China in the Bay of Bengal. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 12(2), 143–160. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2016.1226751>

Clarke, M. (2017). Griffith Asia Institute, (50).

Cook, T., Schofield, C., & Tan-mullins, M. (2011). maritime energy resources in asia, (december).

East, L., Black, C., Blank, J., Moroney, J. D. P., Rabasa, A., Lin, B., ... Jennifer, D. P. (n.d.). *Look East, Cross Black Waters*.

Enclave, D., Tula, R., & Marg, R. (2014). Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, (1).

Foreign, I., & Journal, A. (2014). " INDO-PACIFIC " : AN EMERGING GEOPOLITICAL

- CONSTRUCT India ' s Interests , Stakes and Challenges, 9(2), 93–137.
- Green, M. J., & Goodman, M. P. (2016). After TPP : the Geopolitics of Asia and the Pacific, 19–34.
- Hall, I. (2016). Multialignment and Indian Foreign Policy under Narendra Modi. *The Round Table*, 105(3), 271–286. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2016.1180760>
- Horimoto, T. (2017). Ambivalent Relations of India and China : Cooperation and Caution
Ambivalent Relations of India and China : Cooperation and Caution, 1028(July).
- Hornat, J. (2016). The power triangle in the Indian Ocean: China, India and the United States. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29(2), 425–443. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2014.974507>
- Huang, X. (2014). The Emerging Security Landscape in the Asia-Pacific : Where ASEAN Fits Paper for GKS CSC Seminar 2014 The Emerging Security Landscape in the Asia-Pacific : Where ASEAN Fits Xiaoming Huang.
- INDIA-CHINA THINK-TANKS FORUM Towards a Closer India-China Developmental Partnership. (2016), (December).
- Jakobson, L., & Medcalf, R. (2015). The Perception Gap : Reading China ' s Maritime Strategic Objectives in Indo- Pacific Asia. *Lowy Institute for International Policy Report*, (June), 1–35.
- Ji, Y. (2016). China's Emerging Indo-Pacific Naval Strategy. *Asia Policy*, 22(1), 11–19. <http://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2016.0035>
- Joshi, D. (2016). *maritime Perspectives 2015*.
- Kaushiva, P., & Singh, A. (n.d.). The Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Pradeep Kaushiva Abhijit Singh Feb 2014.
- Khan, Z. (2017). Conceptualizing China and India's Transforming Strategic Force Postures under the Essentials of Minimum Deterrence. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26(105), 403–418. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1245898>
- Krejsa, H., & Krejsa, H. (2016). NASSP Issue Brief Series : The South China Sea : A Challenging Test of the International Order, (1), 1–10.

- Lang, A. B. and D. (2014). Strengthening rule based order in the Asia Pacific. *Aspi*, (December), 48.
- Leslie, J. (n.d.). The Problem with the Concept of a Rules- Based Global Order as Strategic Policy, (2), 1–4.
- Li, Z. (2010). *China–India relations, strategic engagement and challenges. Asia. Visions*. Retrieved from <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:China-India+Relations+Strategic+Engagement+and+Challenges#2>
- Maritime, A., & Forum, S. (2016). Revisiting and Innovating Maritime Security Order in the Asia-Pacific.
- Maritime, E., In, G., & Region, T. H. E. I. (n.d.). Sea change.
- Maritime, I., & Strategy, S. (n.d.). *Ensuring Secure Seas* :
- Medcalf, R. (2016). Foreign Policy in a Troubled World Australia and the United States : Navigating Strategic Uncertainty, (July).
- Milner, A. (n.d.). *REGIONAL SECURITY*.
- Mishra, B. V. (2016). India and the Rise of the Indo-Pacific 旬耀c Subscribe to Diplomat All-Access, 5–6.
- Mishra, R. (2010). *Power Realignment in Asia: China, India, and the United States* by Alyssa Ayres and C. Raja Mohan. *Strategic Analysis* (Vol. 34). <http://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2010.501608>
- Mohan, C. R. (2013). Emerging Geopolitical Trends and Security in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the People’s Republic of China, and India (ACI) Region, (412).
- Motulalo, T. (2013). India’s Strategic Imperative in the South Pacific, (October).
- Mukherjee, A. (2016). Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific: perspectives from China, India, and the United States. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 12(2), 232–233. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2015.1119977>

- Nias, J. R. D. T. A. (2014). Asia-Pacific Power Dynamics : Strategic Implications And Options For India, 1–4.
- Panda, J. P. (2015). Alignment Minus Alliance: India’s China Quandary on Alternative Institution Building. *Georgetown Journal of Asia Affairs*, 2(1), 21–30.
- Pattanaik, S. S. (2016). Indian Ocean in the emerging geo-strategic context: examining India’s relations with its maritime South Asian neighbors. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 12(2), 126–142. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2016.1226750>
- Rajendram, D. (2014). India ’ s new Asia-Pacific strategy : Modi acts East. *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, (December), 24. Retrieved from <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/>
- Rehman, I. (2015). Murkey Waters: Naval Nuclear Dynamics in the Indian Ocean.
- Rumley, D. (2012). *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, (June 2015), 37–41. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2012.730755>
- Scott, D. (2006). India’s “Grand Strategy” for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 13(2), 97–129. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13439000601029048>
- Scott, D. (2007). India’s Drive for a “Blue Water” Navy. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 10(2), 23–51.
- Scott, D. (2012a). India and the Allure of the “ Indo-Pacific ,” 49, 1–24. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0020881714534038>
- Scott, D. (2012b). The “ Indo-Pacific ”— New Regional Formulations and New Maritime Frameworks for US-India Strategic Convergence, (November), 37–41.
- Singh, A. G. (2016). India, China and the US: strategic convergence in the Indo-Pacific. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 12(2), 161–176. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2016.1226752>
- Singh, B. (2016). INDO-PACIFIC : CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS FOR INDIA, (2009), 1–7.
- Sokinda, C. S. (2015). India ’ s Strategy for Countering China ’ s Increased Influence in the Indian Ocean, (October), 1–12.

- Spatafora, G. (n.d.). Geopolitical Dynamics and Regionalism in East Asia by Giuseppe Spatafora Geopolitical Dynamics and Regionalism in East Asia.
- Strategy, M. S. (n.d.). ASIA-PACIFIC.
- Suri, G. (2016). Case for a Regional Maritime Security Construct for the Indo Pacific, (January).
- Tay, S. S. C. (2015). Law Approaches : Prospects and Cooperation.
- Tellis, A. J. (2016). India as a Leading Power, 1–11.
- Ties, E. (2016). ECONOMIC TIES THE WAY FORWARD.
- Trade, T. T., & Silk, M. (1991). Emergence of Indo- Pacific & India ' s role in Geopolitics & Maritime Security of the region.
- Trends, E., & Responses, R. (2014). Geostrategic Imperative of the Indo-Pacific Region Emerging Trends and Regional Responses, *10*(1), 89–102.
- Upadhyay, S. (2014). The Indo -US Relations Geopolitics of Cooperation, (November), 1–8.
- Upadhyaya, S. (2014). Maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region: The role of the Indian Navy. *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, *6*(4), 173–190.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2014.920945>
- Upadhyaya, S. (2017). Expansion of Chinese maritime power in the Indian Ocean: implications for India. *Defence Studies*, *17*(1), 63–83.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2016.1271720>
- Wojczewski, T. (2016). China's rise as a strategic challenge and opportunity: India's China discourse and strategy. *India Review*, *15*(1), 22–60.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2015.1092748>
- Xavier, C. (2013). India's Strategic Traditions and Options in the Indo-Pacific Security System. *Nação E Defesa*, *134*(5), 247–262.