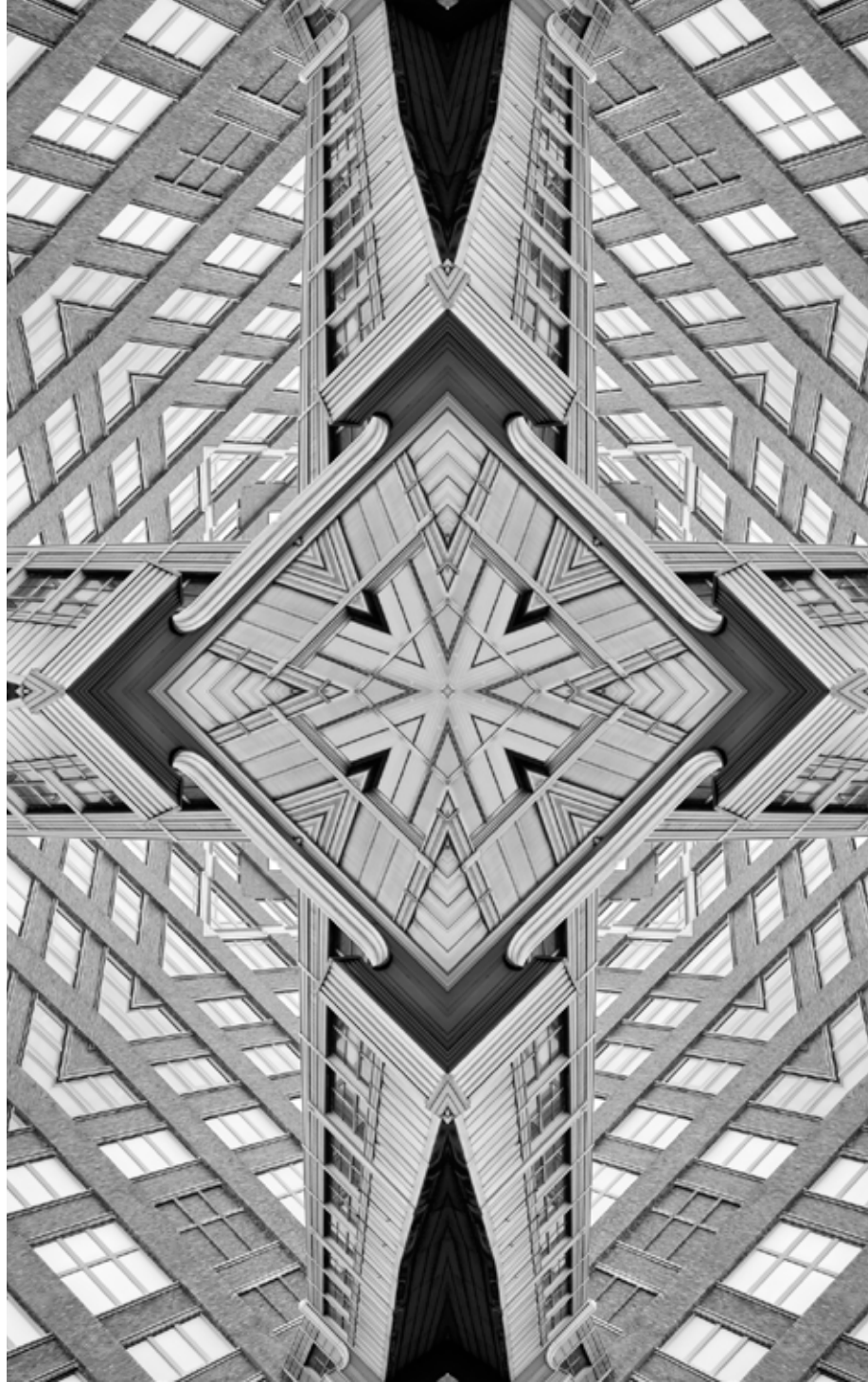


Issue

Brief

ISSUE NO. 615
FEBRUARY 2023



Understanding America's Enduring Interest in the Indo-Pacific

**Harsh V Pant and
Anant Singh Mann**

Abstract

Amidst the prolonged Russia-Ukraine war, the continuing attention being given by the United States (US) to the Indo-Pacific region has been remarkable, belying widespread expectations that it would refocus its resources. This brief posits that the US interest in its Indo-Pacific strategy has not diminished as the region continues to represent an important pillar of overall US geostrategy. Its involvement in the region is not simply being provoked by a rising China; rather, it is grounded in the realisation that the Indo-Pacific is increasingly becoming a pivotal, multipolar region where multiple actors are staking their claim.

The landmark decision by the Biden administration in early 2023, to send in 31 M1 Abram tanks to support Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion, indicates a significant accentuation in the United States' (US) geostrategic posturing.¹ While the US had maintained its condemnation of the Russian invasion and supplied Ukraine with funds and an assortment of weapons,² it had fallen short of supplying battle tanks which would not only symbolise the extent of US support but also prevent a Russo-NATO escalation.³

Against the backdrop of heightening tensions in Europe, and the increasing requirements of 'men, money, and material',⁴ the question arises as to why US interest in its Indo-Pacific strategy has not declined, even temporarily. Attempting to find answers to the question, researchers like Luis Simón⁵ have pointed out that the Indo-Pacific is important in US strategy to counter any Chinese 'opportunistic aggression' amid the war in Ukraine.⁶ Although this logic has its merits in the China-US *realpolitik* struggle for influence in the Indo-Pacific, as well as the region's ongoing rebalancing, it is negated by the absence of any new US military alliances in the Indo-Pacific since the start of the war in February 2022.

This brief argues that the US' interest in its Indo-Pacific strategy has not diminished amidst its European preoccupations since early 2022 because the Indo-Pacific has always, and continues to represent a pillar of US geostrategy. Its involvement in the region is not simply a deterministic consequence of Machiavellian necessities for containing a rising China. The brief makes a case for how the Indo-Pacific has increasingly become a pivotal, multipolar region with multiple stakeholders.

The rest of this brief provides an overview of the historical approach of the US to the Indo-Pacific region, appraises its key policies and their drivers, and surveys the trajectory of US Indo-Pacific policy beginning from the Obama administration. It describes the Biden administration's anti-China posturing and China's reactions, and explores the implications for regional players like Australia, Japan, and India.

From Obama to Biden: Key Drivers of US Indo-Pacific Policy

The strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific cannot be stressed enough. The US administration has acknowledged the region's pivotal nature, underlined in the preamble of the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy released in February 2022.⁷ The document notes that the region accounts for half of the world's population and 58 percent of its youth, approximately 60 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and two-thirds of global economic growth; it is home to 25 percent of the world's land and 65 percent of its oceans.⁸ The region is also the arena for some of the most critical challenges that have occupied the US' attention over the past recent decades, including keeping maritime trade routes open, North Korea's nuclear threat, China's disputes in the South China Sea and its claims over Taiwan, maritime terrorism, and climate change.⁹ The document declares that the US recognises "that American interests can only be advanced if we [the US] firmly anchor the United States in the Indo-Pacific and strengthen the region itself, alongside our closest allies and partners."¹⁰

The relevance to US strategy of the region now known as 'Indo-Pacific', can be traced to the past 200 years: the region is where the US exported its Christian missionaries and headquartered its commercial enterprises; it has also provided a platform for US global power projection.¹¹ This brief focuses on the trajectory of the past two decades or so, when the region's governance frameworks began to transition with the growth of a multipolar system.

Since the end of the Cold War, and elaborated by the US' *East Asia-Pacific Strategy Reports* of 1990, 1992, 1995 and 1998,¹² US position in the Indo-Pacific has transitioned. From having a dominant role—seen in various bilateral ties with stakeholders in the region—the US has shifted to a more multilateral nature of 'shared responsibilities' where it is just one of the many stakeholders involved.¹³

The earliest notable pivot, or 'rebalance', took place during the first term of the Obama administration (2009-2012) and is best encapsulated in then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2011 article for *Foreign Policy*, titled "America's Pacific Century".¹⁴ Apart from officially shifting the focus from the 'Asia-Pacific' to the wider 'Indo-Pacific', Clinton framed issues of the region as "shared problems"—a notable departure from American bilateralism in the

From Obama to Biden: Key Drivers of US Indo-Pacific Policy

region. Repositioning the locus and ownership of the regional challenges as a multilateral issue, Clinton declared the US' intent to expand cooperation across the Indo-Pacific through the following strategies:

1. Strengthening bilateral security alliances;
2. Deepening working relationships with emerging powers, including with China;
3. Engaging with regional multilateral institutions;
4. Expanding trade and investment;
5. Forging a broad-based military presence; and
6. Advancing democracy and human rights.¹⁵

Evidently, what had changed in the US approach was not only its conception of the region's geographical expanse, but also the recognition of the rise of a multipolar system within the region and the importance of engaging with a range of stakeholders in a variety of formats. This change was significant as the US was coming to terms with the fact that it simply did not have the means to engage with each stakeholder and address each regional challenge bilaterally, as it had largely done since the end of the Cold War. Clinton's article identified these key stakeholders as China, India, Australia, Japan, most of southeast Asia, and the countries of the Pacific Islands.¹⁶ It noted the key multilateral initiatives in the region in the form of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). (At that time, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad of the US, Japan, Australia and India was experiencing a hiatus, which would last a decade from 2007.¹⁷)

This posturing by the Obama administration had essentially set the stage for a new kind of American pragmatism in the Indo-Pacific region. It was a stance that aimed to leverage multilateral initiatives to share the burden of its challenges in an increasingly multipolar region. The 'rebalance' helped articulate the broad issues that shaped US initiatives in the Indo-Pacific—i.e., promoting regional prosperity through trade, investment, and inclusive growth;

From Obama to Biden: Key Drivers of US Indo-Pacific Policy

deepening and networking relationships with existing allies, emerging powers, and China; advancing a rules-based regional order which include the spheres of regional institutions, counterterrorism, cyber, maritime, and good governance; and promoting cooperation on global issues like climate change, global health, and sustainability.¹⁸

The beginning of the Trump administration in 2017 saw the further strengthening of the aforementioned Indo-Pacific policies, with the crucial addition of a reinvigorated Quad.¹⁹ A key driver of Trump's strategic decisions in the region was Beijing's increasing regional influence in the form of its flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which was being perceived as a threat to the multilateral structure of the Indo-Pacific. Added in the mix was Trump's election rhetoric of putting 'America First' in its strategies. The Trump administration carried forward all its inherited policies towards the region with an accentuated focus on advancing the rules-based regional order, refashioned with more emphasis as the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP).²⁰

Understandably, the multilateral forum of the Quad, which had been disbanded in 2007, was the perfect means by which to propagate the FOIP policy without further overreaching the already strained resources of the United States. The three other Quad states were similarly motivated, as all of them faced equally formidable policy challenges within the region. It was further towards the end of Trump's term that the Quad was given a military angle with the inclusion of all four members in the Malabar exercises, which had initially begun in 1992 as a bilateral manoeuvre between the US and India.²¹ The Trump Administration had also continued to lobby for the FOIP policy within other important regional multilateral frameworks like the ASEAN, often mentioning the centrality of the ASEAN in Quad meeting agendas.²²

The adoption of the FOIP also represented the proverbial crossing of the Rubicon for US policy in the region in terms of it directly confronting China's influence and its idea of a "common destiny" for nations within the region.²³ Files from the Assistant to President Trump for National Security Affairs (NSA), declassified in 2021, provide evidence that the US did in fact recognise the Chinese threat to the rules-based world order in the Indo-Pacific.²⁴ President Trump's Assistant for NSA stated in an official document that FOIP policy finds common ground across the region with:

From Obama to Biden: Key Drivers of US Indo-Pacific Policy

Japan's *Free and Open Indo Pacific* concept, Australia's *Indo-Pacific* concept, India's *Security and Growth for All Regions* policy, the Republic of Korea's *New Southern Policy*, Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy*, and the [ASEAN's] *Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* with countries such as France and Germany publishing their own policy frameworks for the Indo-Pacific.²⁵

The Biden Administration has built on these policies, maintaining the ante and US posturing in the region. Its objectives are to: [1] advance a FOIP; [2] build connections within and beyond the region; [3] drive regional prosperity; [4] bolster Indo-Pacific security; and [5] build regional resilience to transnational threats.²⁶ To implement this strategy, the government has created an 'Indo-Pacific Action Plan' which aims to drive new resources to the Indo-Pacific, lead an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), reinforce deterrence, and strengthen the ASEAN. The Plan also seeks to support India's regional leadership, deliver on the Quad, expand US-Japan-ROK cooperation, build resistance in the Pacific islands, support good governance, and promote the development and use of open, resilient and secure technologies.²⁷

The US emphasis on collaboration with regional stakeholders to share the burden of policies like FOIP has often provided insight into the fact that the Indo-Pacific has increasingly become a stage for organic cooperation amongst its stakeholders in the form of bilateral and multilateral forums.²⁸ While the US has aimed to play a leading role in these forums, it has not had the manoeuvrability to disengage from the region based on more immediate challenges like the war in Ukraine. The American interests in the Indo-Pacific span far and wide, beyond the narrow confines of *realpolitik*, focusing on a region that has regularly been placed along with Europe as two of the most pivotal regions in the world. To reduce American policy in the region to simply the containment of China, misrepresents the region—where the US and China comprise key pieces on, but not the entirety of the geopolitical chess board.

Heightedened US attention, coupled with persistent anti-China rhetoric throughout the Trump and Biden administrations has led, not unexpectedly, to a change in Beijing's geostrategic policies.²⁹ China has specifically called out the FOIP strategy, referring to it as a policy for containing China. It also continues to be outspoken on the phraseology of the 'Indo-Pacific', with its Foreign Minister Wang Yi quoted to have said:

the Indo-Pacific Strategy concocted by the United States is keen on creating various sorts of small cliques by ganging up on others under the banner of 'freedom and openness'. While claiming to 'change China's surrounding environment', the strategy aims to contain China and attempts to make Asia-Pacific countries 'pawns' of U.S. hegemony the U.S. [has] unscrupulously played the 'Taiwan card' and 'South China Sea card', trying to provoke tensions ... [in the] ... Asia Pacific [The] Indo-Pacific Strategy is in essence a strategy that creates divisions, incites confrontation and undermines peace ... The people of this region should warn the United States sternly that the outdated Cold War script must not be repeated in Asia.³⁰

Statements from Chinese officials, such as this one above, reflect China's shifting of its foreign policy approach to what analysts call 'wolf warrior diplomacy'.³¹ It speaks out on any initiative that it feels is counterproductive to its regional blueprint. Wang Yi has similarly called out the US' participation in the Quad, both in 2007 and after 2017, describing it as a "foam in the Ocean, destined to dissipate soon."³² Commenting on Biden's IPEF, Yi said in May 2022: "The one trying to use a framework to isolate China will eventually isolate itself. The one making up some rules to exclude China will be abandoned by the times."³³

Underlining Beijing's transitioning strategy towards the Indo-Pacific is a rise in attempts to intimidate other regional stakeholders and establish its regional supremacy while dissuading any unfavourable bandwagoning within the region. These include more frequent standoffs and skirmishes with Indian forces along the Himalayan borders,³⁴ continuous violations of Taiwanese sovereignty,³⁵ and naval manoeuvres and patrols in disputed territories in the South and East China Seas.³⁶ As far as Beijing is concerned, Washington's Indo-Pacific policy has drawn the battle lines and forced it to exert all means to protect its interests in the region. Beijing has created a binary: if an Indo-Pacific nation is not with Beijing, it is necessarily against it.

China's Reaction

Yet notwithstanding Beijing's rhetoric, Washington's evolving Indo-Pacific strategy simply serves as a scapegoat for revealing Beijing's largely unchanged geopolitical strategies. China's revisionist policy towards the region has continued along the same lines, albeit with reinvigorated enthusiasm, of expanding its influence within the region. The costs are huge: to other regional stakeholders, and to the global commons. The importance of the Indo-Pacific cannot be emphasised enough, given its role in providing key lines of communication, and in trade and other forms of cooperation—all framed by what is described as a rules-based world order. The foundations of this order are being eroded, with the rise of Beijing's competing hub-and-spoke model of cooperation, at the core of which it lies while the rest of the world sits on the peripheries.³⁷ Proof of this model is in the BRI, and its subsequent Health Silk Road initiative, both of which represent a fundamental normative challenge to the 'American way'.

“For China, US Indo-Pacific policy has drawn the battle lines: if an Indo-Pacific nation is not with Beijing, it is necessarily against it.”

Implications for Other Key Stakeholders

A number of Indo-Pacific stakeholders like Australia, Japan, and India have found common ground with the US in their desire to protect the prevailing rules-based world order. Subsequently, they reinvigorated the Quadrilateral security agreement in 2017. This ‘normative alliance’ is perhaps the closest the US has come to creating a military alliance in the region in the last couple of decades. And although the inclusion of Australia in 2020 to the annual Malabar exercises along with Japan, the US and India added a military dimension to the Quad, the platform continues to be devoid of any formal military element.

More specifically, this transitioning US Indo-Pacific strategy has had implications for each of the Quad members. Australia was initially ambivalent regarding its role in protecting the rules-based world order, and it became the first country to withdraw from the Quad when it was first conceptualised in 2007. Canberra believed that its relationship with Beijing was developing and was apprehensive of damaging it. Its defence minister at that time stated that he had “reassured China that the so-called Quadrilateral dialogue with India is not something that we are pursuing.”³⁸

By the latter half of the 2010s, Canberra’s China policy had entered a period of disillusionment that coincided with Obama’s Rebalance strategy. Australia had witnessed in the 2010s both an increasing overdependence on China and a rise in Beijing’s interference in Australian politics.³⁹ The prospect of a “weaponized interdependency”⁴⁰ was met with Canberra’s ‘Pacific set-up strategy’ with which it aimed to bolster regional economic and military projects to counter Beijing’s influence.⁴¹ The Trump administration’s FOIP policy further provided a conducive environment to bolster Canberra’s regional posturing with the re-establishment of the Quad in 2017. The Biden administration’s policy continuity in the Indo-Pacific enhanced military ties with Canberra with the establishment in 2021 of the AUKUS forum, a trilateral security partnership between the US, Australia and United Kingdom (UK).⁴²

Japan’s reaction to the Rebalance and, subsequently the FOIP, has remained consistent with its initiatives over the last few decades as it has been a key ideologue for the preservation of the rules-based world order and the one that ideated the Quad in 2007. Japan’s maritime proximity to China, and their prevailing territorial disputes, have remained at the centre of Japanese Indo-

Implications for Other Key Stakeholders

Pacific policy and an important reminder of the critical importance of a rules-based order in the region. Japan remains a key US ally within the region, and their cooperation has expanded with the signing of the landmark US-Japan Competitiveness and Resilience (CoRe) Partnership in 2021.⁴³

India's Indo-Pacific strategy, meanwhile, has matured over the past few decades and today is giving greater attention to connectivity, trade, and security.⁴⁴ New Delhi has remained cognisant of the critical importance of protecting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, especially in the backdrop of China's increasing border violations, its rising influence within the region through the BRI, and its potential encirclement of the maritime commons where it has disputes. New Delhi and Washington also retain the legacy of the Malabar exercises which began as a bilateral Indo-Pacific naval exercise in 1992 and has become an annual event since. The rapidly developing US Indo-Pacific strategy has led to the expansion of membership in the Malabar exercises, and also the increase in their intensity.⁴⁵ Moreover, India—with its rapidly growing economy, burgeoning military capabilities, and vibrant democracy—has come to form a key element in US Indo-Pacific strategy. For Washington, supporting New Delhi in a leadership role in the region would effectively reduce the burden on its own resources.

Given the converging regional interests and aligning normative outlooks, the Quad provides US policy in the Indo-Pacific with the appropriate platform on which to engage in the region. The Quad's centrality in the Indo-Pacific policy has notably expanded, with meetings progressing from the level of Assistant Secretary to that of Senior Official, to ministerial and currently, leader level.⁴⁶ The remit of the Quad has also expanded to cover diverse areas of collaboration. An important feature of the Quad has been its underpinning value of a 'free and open' Indo-Pacific, which has remained an agenda item right from its revival in 2017. The Quad has so far functioned as an efficient method of US policy in the region, helping it magnify the agency of key regional stakeholders and consolidate support for the rules-based world order. The aim is to create a scenario in which every stakeholder can function freely within the existing normative framework of the region.

Conclusion

This brief explored the question of why the US focus on the Indo-Pacific has not diminished amid the more urgent war in Ukraine. The idea that the US is working to prevent so-called ‘opportunistic aggression’ in the Indo-Pacific does not hold water as no new military alliances are being created in the region. This brief proposed that US interest in the Indo-Pacific remains consistent because the region still represents an important and independent pillar of US geostrategy.

US involvement in the region is not simply a deterministic consequence of Machiavellian requirements for containing a rising China. Rather, the Indo-Pacific has become a far more pivotal, multipolar region with a variety of key stakeholders, which the US continues to recognise. [ORF](#)

Harsh V Pant is ORF’s Vice President for Studies and Foreign Policy.

Anant Singh Mann has an MSc in International Political Economy and writes extensively on the Indo-Pacific.

- 1 Via Teleconference, The White House, “Background Press Call by Senior Administration Officials on U.S. Support to Ukraine,” *Briefing Room: Press Briefing*, January 25, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2023/01/25/background-press-call-by-senior-administration-officials-on-u-s-support-to-ukraine/>.
- 2 U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine,” *Bureau of Political-Military Affairs: Fact Sheet*, January 25, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/>.
- 3 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- 4 Essentially the central elements of the state’s fiscal-military structure, as noted by Christopher Storrs, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy 1690–1721* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 5 Luis Simón, “America’s Indo-Pacific Strategy Runs Through Ukraine,” *War on the Rocks*, December 16, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/12/americas-indo-pacific-strategy-runs-through-ukraine/>.
- 6 Evan Braden Montgomery, “Posturing for Great Power Competition: Identifying Coercion Problems in U.S. Nuclear Policy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 6–7 (November 10, 2022): 1021–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2021.1886932>.
- 7 The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States” (The White House, Washington, February 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.
- 8 The White House.
- 9 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, “Declassified: U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific” (The White House 000174, January 5, 2021), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>.
- 10 The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”
- 11 For analysis on the historical relationship between the US and the Indo-Pacific, see Michael R. Anderson, “United States Strategy in the Asia Pacific,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, by Michael R. Anderson (Oxford University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.401>; and Michael J. Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783* (Columbia University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.7312/gree18042>.
- 12 The Secretary of Defence, “The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region” (Department of Defence, Government of the United States of America, 1998), <https://ryukyu-okinawa.net/downloads/usdod-casr98.pdf>.

- 13 Department of Defence, “Summary of the 2018 National Defence Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge” (Government of the United States of America), accessed January 29, 2023, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.
- 14 Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>.
- 15 Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century”
- 16 Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century”
- 17 Harsh V. Pant and Anant Singh Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma,” *Observer Research Foundation*, ORF Issue Brief No. 393, August 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/indias-malabar-dilemma/>.
- 18 Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, “Fact Sheet: Advancing the Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific,” *The White House, Briefing Room, Statements and Releases*, November 16, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/16/fact-sheet-advancing-rebalance-asia-and-pacific>.
- 19 The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” December 2017, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.
- 20 The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America”
- 21 Pant and Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma”
- 22 Pant and Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma”
- 23 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (The White House, January 5, 2021), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/OBrien-Expanded-Statement.pdf>.
- 24 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, “Declassified: U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific” (The White House 000174, January 5, 2021), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>.
- 25 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”
- 26 The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”, p. 7.
- 27 The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”
- 28 Harsh V. Pant and Kashish Parpiani, *America and the Indo-Pacific: Trump and Beyond* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).

- 29 Weixing Hu and Weizhan Meng, “The US Indo-Pacific Strategy and China’s Response,” *China Review* 20, no. 3 (2020): 143–76.
- 30 Foreign Minister Wang Yi, “Wang Yi: The U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy Is Bound to Be a Failed Strategy,” *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, May 22, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202205/t20220523_10691136.html.
- 31 Harsh V. Pant and Anant Singh Mann, “Wolf Warrior Vanguard: The Global Times Is a Perfect Metaphor for China’s Rise and Current Adventurism,” *The Times of India*, July 26, 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/wolf-warrior-vanguard-the-global-times-is-a-perfect-metaphor-for-chinas-rise-and-current-adventurism/>.
- 32 Foreign Minister of the People’s Republic of China, Wang Yi quoted in Ashok Rai, “Quadrilateral Security Dialogue 2 (Quad 2.0) – a Credible Strategic Construct or a ‘Foam in the Ocean,’” *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 14, no. 2 (March 11, 2019), p. 139.
- 33 Foreign Minister Wang Yi, “Wang Yi: There Should Be a Big Question Mark on the U.S. Indo-Pacific Economic Framework,” *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, May 22, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202205/t20220523_10691134.html.
- 34 Ministry of Defence, Government of India, “Text of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Statement in Rajya Sabha on September 17,” *Press Information Bureau*, September 17, 2020, 17, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1655521>.
- 35 The White House, “Via Teleconference: On-the-Record Press Call by Kurt Campbell, Deputy Assistant to the President and Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific,” *The White House*, August 12, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/08/12/on-the-record-press-call-by-kurt-campbell-deputy-assistant-to-the-president-and-coordinator-for-the-indo-pacific/>.
- 36 Office of the Spokesperson, “U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea,” *U.S. State Department*, December 19, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-for-the-philippines-in-the-south-china-sea-2/>.
- 37 Harsh V. Pant and Anant Singh Mann, “India’s Challenge to the BRI: Shaping the Global Normative Consensus,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Globalization with Chinese Characteristics*, ed. Paulo Afonso B. Duarte, Francisco José B. S. Leandro, and Enrique Martínez Galán (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023), 459–73, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6700-9_27.
- 38 “Nelson Meets with China over Military Relationship,” *This Is a Transcript from PM. The Program Is Broadcast around Australia at 5:10pm on Radio National and 6:10pm on ABC Local Radio.*, July 9, 2007, <https://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2007/s1973940.htm>.

Endnotes

- 39 Pant and Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma”
- 40 Rory Medcalf, *Indo-Pacific Empire: China, America and the Contest for the World’s Pivotal Region* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).
- 41 Pant and Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma”
- 42 Office of the Spokesperson, “Fact Sheet: The United States and Australia: A Vital Partnership for the Indo-Pacific Region and the World,” *U.S. State Department*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-australia-a-vital-partnership-for-the-indo-pacific-region-and-the-world/>.
- 43 The White House, “Joint Statement of the United States and Japan,” *The White House*, January 13, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/13/joint-statement-of-the-united-states-and-japan/>.
- 44 Rajesh Rajagopalan, “Evasive Balancing: India’s Unviable Indo-Pacific Strategy,” *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020): 75–93.
- 45 Pant and Mann, “India’s Malabar Dilemma”
- 46 The White House, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement,” *The White House: Briefing Room: Statements and Releases*, May 24, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>.



Ideas . Forums . Leadership . Impact

20, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area,
New Delhi - 110 002, INDIA
Ph. : +91-11-35332000. Fax : +91-11-35332005
E-mail: contactus@orfonline.org
Website: www.orfonline.org