THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: GEOPOLITICAL CONNECTEDNESS TO THE INDIAN OCEAN

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SOUTH CHINA SEA:
As Viewed from the Indian Ocean

Arena of Economic Opportunities

Arena of Competition and Rivalries
LEGEND: 2007 STATUS

X  Not an Area of Interest (Now, it is Secondary Area)
S  Secondary Area (Now, it is Primary Area)
INDIA’S EXPANDING ‘GEO-STRATEGIC FRONTIER’

Must India be reliant upon ‘Asia-Pacific’ construct or the US PACOM?
ININDIA’S NEED FOR BALANCED GEO-STRATEGY


SAGAR Vision (2015)

ACT EAST + SAGAR = INDO-PACIFIC
GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF THE ‘INDO-PACIFIC’

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Differing national strategic geographies...
2. ... but significant geo-strategic overlaps
3. A ‘maritime’ region, necessitating maritime solutions
ORIGINS OF ‘INDO-PACIFIC’ CONCEPT

Early Usage

Context of Marine Biography

Common marine eco-system in the tropical swath of the oceans

Is the ‘geopolitical’ context of Indo-Pacific a conceptual aberration?
Contribution to World's GDP by Major Economies (1 AD TO 2008 AD)

Source: Angus Maddison

Not Really... GEO-ECONOMIC LINKAGE has existed since long!

GDP (China + India) > 50%
THE ‘INDO-PACIFIC’ CONCEPT

Early Usage

Geopolitical Context

“Indopazifischen Raum” (1920)
Impact of the historical concentration of humanity and culture of India and China on the future power relations in the “Greater Indo-Pacific Ocean.”

Karl Haushofer
(German geopolitical)

Chinese and Indian civilisations did not have a continental interface

HAUSCHOFER’S “PAN-REGIONS” THEORY
Contribution to World’s GDP by Major Economies

Source: Angus Maddison

‘Rise’ of Asia?... Or ‘Resurgence’ of Asia...?

China + India > 50%

Asian GDP falls due to Industrialisation of the WEST and Asia’s Colonisation

....Indeed, the Resurgence of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ (GEO-ECONOMIC LINKAGE)

Contribution to World's GDP by Major Economies
(1 AD TO 2008 AD) Source: Angus Maddison
Some Reflections on Maritime Developments in the Indo-Pacific During the Past Sixty Years

Peter Cozens*

Introduction

The Indo-Pacific region extends through the landmass of Eastern Asia, the archipelagos of Southeast Asia, the sub-continent of South Asia and Australasia. It is important from a maritime perspective to view it in a wider oceanic context. In this regard, the Indian Ocean and South Pacific and Antarctic Oceans have an implicit importance. In geographic terms, therefore, and from a maritime perspective, the Indo-Pacific extends from the northern extremities of the Indian Ocean to include the sub-continent of South Asia, Southeast Asia (formerly termed Indo-China), Australasia, the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, and the eastern countries of Asia. Within the
‘INDO-PACIFIC’ CONCEPT: CONTEMPORARY GENESIS (2006-07)

Resurgence of Asia/Indo-Pacific is not pre-ordained

Leading to security challenges & Indo-Pacific linkage

OBJECTIVES

Meeting geo-economic ends to achieve shared prosperity

Common interest in free and open maritime order

Premised on SECURITY LINKAGE since the turn of 21st Century

Restraining disruptive forces, both state and non-state
‘INDO-PACIFIC’ CONCEPT: CONTEMPORARY GENESIS

IDSA-JIIA Track-2 Dialogue (Oct 2006, New Delhi) on “Emerging ‘security’ linkage between IOR & West Pacific”.

2004: US’ PSI to curb WMD Proliferation (Iran... DPRK)


2006 - China’s new-gen SSN (093 Shang) inducted

For Japan, threat to SLOCs

For India, a new (seaward) dimension of threat

For both, an unstable and unfavourable regional BoP
Introduction

The increase in economic interdependence among states in recent years has led to vigorous flows of trade, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. This has accelerated economic growth and industrial development in the

Notes

1 The term ‘Indo-Pacific’ refers to the maritime space comprising the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific. Littoral to it are the states of Asia (including West Asia/Middle East) and eastern Africa.
ADDRESS BY JAPAN’S PM SHINZO ABE TO THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT (AUGUST 2007)

“Confluence of the Two Seas”
Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India
August 22, 2007

“... The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity... By Japan and India coming together, this “broader Asia” will evolve into an immense network spanning the entirety of the Pacific Ocean, incorporating the USA and Australia. Open and transparent, this network will allow people, goods, capital, and knowledge to flow freely... as maritime states, both India and Japan have vital interests in the security of sea lanes”.
CHINA’S MARCH WEST STRATEGY
THE U.S. APPROACH

The ‘Asia-Pacific’ construct was inadequate, due to:

- China’s strategic footprint expanding to the I.O.R.
- Need for India’s proactive role in pan-Asian security architecture

Continued use of “Asia-Pacific”. Linked to ‘Rebalance to Asia’ (till 2013)


Nov 17 - US President polarises “Indo-Pacific” during his Asia tour
NEW DELHI — On his recent tour of Asia, U.S. President Donald Trump offered the world a first glance into his formative geopolitical strategy. Both in Vietnam at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and at his earlier meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Japan, he spoke of the “Indo-Pacific” instead of the “Asia-Pacific,” the term used most often by previous American administrations.

The new term changes the mental map that has prevailed since the end of the Cold
President Trump’s ‘Indo-Pacific’ statement, & it temporal coincidence with launching of the ‘Quad’ made ASEAN apprehensive

ASEAN: “Indo-Pacific will force the smaller countries to take sides”

Singularly, key ASEAN members support the concept

Eg. Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam
INDIA’S APPROACH

“Indo-Pacific (is) free, open, inclusive region... not directed against any country... with SE Asia at its centre... all have equal access to use of common spaces on sea and in the air that would require freedom of navigation, unimpeded commerce and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law.”

Emphasis on ‘security’, through in a subdued and ‘inclusive’ manner

Persuasion, dissuasion & deterrence vis-à-vis China remains implicit

Followed by the US Secy of State endorsing ASEAN centrality (Aug 18)

An effort to tone down the rhetoric!
THE EVOLVING INDO-PACIFIC ARCHITECTURE

(Notional)

**CONCEPTUAL LEVEL**
- Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Concept

**POLITICAL LEVEL**
- East Asia Summit (EAS)
- ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)/ ADMM+
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
- Bilateral Partnerships

**FUNCTIONAL LEVEL**
- National Agencies/ Stakeholders operating & cooperating in the Maritime Domain
  - West Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS)
  - Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

EAS needs to lead, with ARF and IORA as supplements.
The Quad also holds value.
## RECOMMENDED PRIORITISATION

### 1: Geo-economics and Confidence-Building
- Economic connectivity, trade issues…
- Conservation of Marine Environment, Blue Economy…
- Maritime Safety and Security (against non-traditional threats)… and
- Political and Military Confidence Building Measures (CBM)

### 2: Legal Pressures upon China
- Common interpretation of International Law on FoN…
- Dispute Resolution through International Arbitration…
- …For persuasive and dissuasive pressures upon China

### 3: Balance of Power
- Coordinated Capability-enhancement (including Capacity-building) of regional countries…
- to reduce military asymmetries

### 4: Military Security
- ASSURANCE/ DETERRENCE: Military Presence, Shaping Ops, Combined defence exercises…
- INSURANCE: Preparedness… Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)… operational compatibility…. naval sustenance…. etc.
LEGAL PRESSURES ON CHINA
(Perceptions matter, but so does Power!)

- Maritime laws (including “historic rights”) existed in Asia long before European (Roman/Nordic) Laws were formulated.

- Must China adhere to European laws codified in UNCLOS?
MARITIME DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Cases/ Potential Cases in the Indo-Pacific

- Bangladesh-Myanmar (Maritime boundary, ITLOS) 2012
- Bangladesh-India (Maritime boundary, PCA) 2009-2014
- Philippines-Indonesia (Maritime boundary, Bilateral) 2014
- Mauritius-UK (Marine Protected Area, Chagos, PCA) 2015
- Philippines-China (China’s “historic rights” in SCS, PCA) 2016
- Mauritius-UK (Status of Chagos, ICJ) Ongoing (Began in 2017)
- Vietnam-China (SCS claims) ?
- Malaysia-China (SCS claims) ?
- Indonesia-China (China’s 9-dash line overlap in Natuna Sea) ?
### Common Interpretation of International Law on Freedom of Navigation

**Innocent Passage of Foreign Warships (TS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US, Australia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>India, Bangladesh, Malaysia</th>
<th>Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Oman, Iran</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Restrictions</td>
<td>No Restrictions</td>
<td>Prior Authorisation</td>
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**Foreign Military Activity in EEZ**

- **US, Australia**: No Restrictions
- **Thailand**: No Restrictions
- **India, Bangladesh, Malaysia**: Prior Notification
- **Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Oman, Iran**: Prior Authorisation
- **China**: “Advance approval or Prior Notification” as determined by China
  - “Consent” (not applicable to PLA Navy)

Reconcile divergences to prevent China’s exploitation of this ‘fault-line’
Thank You for your Attention