

This article was downloaded by: [David Scott]

On: 21 November 2012, At: 05:41

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Asia-Pacific Review

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/capr20>

The “Indo-Pacific” –New Regional Formulations and New Maritime Frameworks for US-India Strategic Convergence

David Scott

To cite this article: David Scott (2012): The “Indo-Pacific” –New Regional Formulations and New Maritime Frameworks for US-India Strategic Convergence, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 19:2, 85-109

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2012.738115>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

The “Indo-Pacific”—New Regional Formulations and New Maritime Frameworks for US-India Strategic Convergence

DAVID SCOTT

This article argues three things. First, it argues that at the conceptual level there has been a strategic rediscovery of a maritime regional framework, the Indo-Pacific. Second, it argues that at the policy level there is a significant regional security convergence, a degree of strategic balancing, between India and the United States in this Indo-Pacific. Third, it argues that at the causal level there is a common maritime challenge from China faced by India in the Indian Ocean and by the United States in the Pacific Ocean, a common Indo-Pacific strategic challenge which is generating this significant US-India naval convergence. In order to deal with such matters, the article looks at the strategic discourse employed around the concept of the Indo-Pacific, and the related maritime assets deployed in the Indo-Pacific by the United States and India.

Introduction

In June 2012 the Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith publicly stressed at the high-level Shangri-La Dialogue the importance of a term, which is the subject of this article:

As some now say . . . the Indo-Pacific. Whatever the label . . . The implications of the historic shift to the Indo-Pacific continue to unfold . . . between key players – such as China, India and the United States . . . The Indo-Pacific has risen as a region of global strategic significance including the growth of military power

projection capabilities of countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean spanned by the South East Asian archipelago is emerging as a single strategic system.¹

Analysis of the “Indo-Pacific” is important as involving a concept which generates policies, a strategic framework of reference in the making for Ashley Tellis:

The Indian Ocean is going to be increasingly integrated with the Western Pacific. In fact, the concept of “Indo-Pacific” is not as fantastical as one would have thought a decade or two decades ago, because . . . economics and politics will combine to push a much tighter integration of these two ocean spaces than before.²

This article picks up on such comments and pinpoints three related themes concerning what Tellis described elsewhere as “the diplomatic, economic, and security architectures of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical space.”³

The first theme to be discussed is the strategic rediscovery of what one Indian commentator called “the wider Indo-Pacific region.”⁴ This spatial perspective combines the Indian and Pacific Oceans, especially the eastern Indian Ocean and western Pacific, with the South China Sea as a further overlap. From this comes the second theme, Indo-Pacific regional security convergence, a degree of softer strategic balancing by India and the United States (US) in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This is driven by the third theme, Jae-Hyung Lee’s sense of “China’s expanding maritime ambitions in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean;” in other words a common Indo-Pacific maritime challenge emerging from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to India in the Indian Ocean and to the United States in the Pacific Ocean.⁵ Hence Raja Mohan’s talk that “the rapid expansion of Indian and Chinese naval capabilities and the United States’ own search for maritime partners have lent a special significance to the expanding cooperation between New Delhi and Washington in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.”⁶

In order to deal with these three themes, this article looks at the, often China-centric, strategic discourse employed and the maritime assets deployed by India and the United States in the Indo-Pacific. This wider Indo-Pacific discourse is reflected among commentators, analysts, military figures and politicians in both India and the United States; and is reflected in the wider range of materials cited in this article.

The Indo-Pacific as a “region”

Punch in “Indo Pacific region” on *Google Scholar* and we find that marine biology studies generate a myriad of related links, including many concerning the Blue Nosed Indo-Pacific Dolphin. Typical was this search, carried out on December

12, 2011, in which the first article link indicated was Randall's 1998 article "Zoo-geography of Shore Fishes of the Indo-Pacific Region"! However, in terms of geopolitical studies, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean have generated their own terms: the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Region. They appear as separate, albeit adjacent, regions.

In reality, regions are less fixed. Geography has become more conceptually grounded in recent years, classical *geopolitics* ("position" as physical location in a region) overlaps with *critical geopolitics* ("position" as perceptual aspirations, hopes and fears in a region). The stakes are high argues former Ambassador Chas Freeman:

Since the end of the Cold War, the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as the world's most dynamic geopolitical zone. Shifting balances of power there are reshaping international perceptions ... the Indo-Pacific region is the world's new economic center of gravity and that balance of power within it is evolving ... The Indo-Pacific region is now the fulcrum of global geopolitics.⁷

Regionalism has been affected by the insights from international relations (IR) *constructivism* in which Peter Katzenstein argues that "regions are, among other things, social constructions created through politics ... cognitive constructs that are rooted in political practice."⁸ It is striking to find the Australian ambassador to India, Peter Varghese, arguing in similar terms about "this new construct of the Indo-Pacific;" which "connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans, thereby underlining the crucial role that the maritime environment is likely to play in our future strategic and defence planning ... Today, it makes more sense to think of the Indo-Pacific."⁹

Political practices in the Indo-Pacific involve institutional frameworks and inter-state operations that mesh the two oceans together, where an Indo-Pacific maritime region is now being shaped through the conceptualization of the region and the related strategy to then operate in that region. The latter (Indo-Pacific strategy) represents making the former (Indo-Pacific concept) operational: tangible deployment of assets and practical arrangements made, in this case, between India and the United States in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific. It is the argument of this article that US-India formal agreements and informal understandings are being constructed and carefully calibrated in the Indo-Pacific, with China considerations very much in mind (and in deployment patterns), even if not in official speech. India-US naval cooperation across the Indian and Pacific oceans reflects a sense of an Indo-Pacific maritime region in which to organize, but which also further facilitates that regional conceptualization.

A telling comparison is with the 1980 to 1990s period. This witnessed a noticeable *Rimpseak* centered around "the discourse of 'Pacific Rim,'" with attendant economic opportunities and institutional arrangements like the

Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC), and talk of the 21st century being “the Pacific Century.”¹⁰ In comparison, the 2010s period is now witnessing an equally noticeable *Indo-Pacific* emerge centered around a “discourse” of the Indian and Pacific Oceans as one coherent framework, with attendant security considerations and arrangements emerging, and with evocation in India and the US of the 21st century as being the “the coming Indo-Pacific century.”¹¹ In such a discourse on region, the Indo-Pacific illustrates “intersecting . . . maritime narratives” and “maritime mental maps” in play for India, and the US (and also China), intangible concepts which generate tangible maritime deployments in the Indo-Pacific.¹² Australian voices, perhaps unsurprisingly, given Australia’s own Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean location, have been also quick to pick up on this emergence of Indo-Pacific rhetoric and strategies.¹³ Voices from Singapore and Indonesia, states that also look towards the Indian and Pacific Oceans, have also picked up on this “reconceptualising” shift.¹⁴

This Indo-Pacific framework is not a new creation. Rather, it a rediscovery of what Karl Haushofer once called the *Indopazifischen Raum* “Indo-Pacific region/space” in his geopolitical ruminations in the 1920s and 1930s. It is significant that he made a point about “the geographic impact of the dense Indo-Pacific concentration of humanity and cultural empire of India and China, which . . . are geographically sheltered behind the protective veil of the offshore island arcs” of the western Pacific and Bay of Bengal, offshore island arcs through which they are now both actively and competitively deploying.¹⁵ These maritime waters are what another geopolitical strategist Nicholas Spykman considered in 1944 as the “circumferential maritime highway which links the whole area together in terms of sea power.”¹⁶ This also brings another geopolitical strategist to mind, Alfred Mahan and his stress on *seapower* considerations in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. Such geopolitical considerations now bind these two Oceans together in operational and deployment terms for the US and India, as can be seen in their official statements and wider commentarial analysis. Consequently, “the strategic communities in India and the US are increasingly reverting to the use of a new phrase ‘the Indo-Pacific’ in their analyses and discourses covering Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific regions.”¹⁷

On the US side, specific US defence doctrine now talks of how US “security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific . . . into the Indian Ocean region.”¹⁸ In terms of command structures, one long-standing reflection of this Indo-Pacific strategic arc has been the US Pacific Command (PACOM), based at Hawaii, whose jurisdiction and field of operation stretches from the Pacific Ocean into the Indian Ocean, including the entire Indian coastline and the base of Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean. This was why PACOM Commander Robert Willard pointed out that “I think it’s important to keep the balance between the Pacific and Indian

Oceans in perspective as, in this global environment, there is more and more interaction [across and between the two oceans] occurring.”¹⁹ The Indo-Pacific has been embedded in PACOM jargon, for example in their co-sponsorship of the *Indo-Pacific War Game*, hosted by the US Naval War College in March 2012.

Emerging strategic links with India underpin US perceptions of the region. This is why it is PACOM that co-chairs the US-India Military Cooperation Group along with India’s Integrated Defence Staff. Hence, the US Senate Committee on Armed Services judgement in summer 2011 that “with regard to the Indo-Pacific region, the committee notes that combined naval exercises, conducted between the United States and India, have become a vital pillar of stability, security, and free and open trade, in the Indo-Pacific region.”²⁰ This was the reason for the testimony also in February 2012 to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee by Nancy Powell, ambassador-designate to India: “we see India as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific region.”²¹ It also supported evocation in July 2012 by Senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner, co-chairs of the Senate India Caucus, about the bilateral relationship’s “expanded opportunities to conduct joint military exercises, and contributing to security in the Indo-Pacific region.”²²

Indo-Pacific formulations are being used by the US government. At the State Department, the challenge was explained in 2012 by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Kurt Campbell:

In terms of operational concepts, the linkage between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and how to think about that, and how to design strategy and operations and training routines that reflect these new strategic realities is really the challenge of the next phase of American strategy.²³

Here, William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State, had noted that “India’s strong presence across the Indian and Pacific Oceans is a source of comfort [for the US] and affirms its potential as a net security provider in the maritime domain. Toward this end, the United States is interested in working with India . . . as we explore future maritime security cooperation.”²⁴ His superior, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, pushed forward an Indo-Pacific vision in the Obama administration: strategic formulations for “two oceans—the Pacific and the Indian—that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy.”²⁵ Strategic rethinking around Indo-Pacific regional conceptualization generated practical imperatives in her mind to “translate the growing connection between the Indian and Pacific oceans into an operational concept.”²⁶ Making the concept operational involved closer links with Australia in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans: “we are also expanding our alliance with Australia from a Pacific partnership to an Indo-Pacific one.”²⁷ It also involved Clinton’s stress on closer relations with India: “we are expanding our work with the Indian navy in the Pacific, because we understand how important the Indo-Pacific basin is.”²⁸ Similar moves were apparent at

the Department of Defense. Leon Panetta's talk in June 2012 of US "rebalancing" was an Indo-Pacific one: "we will expand our military partnerships and our presence in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia. Defense cooperation with India is a linchpin in this strategy."²⁹

Two US decisions in 2011 illustrated this growing Indo-Pacific rationale for deploying assets. First was the announcement that the US would be placing littoral combat ships at Singapore, from where they could be deployed northwest up the Strait of Malacca into the eastern Indian Ocean (Bay of Bengal) or northeast into the South China Sea and into the western Pacific. Second was Obama's trip to Australia in November 2011, which brought his talk of "new opportunities to train with other allies and partners, from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean," in other words, across the Indo-Pacific.³⁰ The practical reflection of such talk was agreement to strengthen the US presence at Darwin on Australia's northwestern coast—a power projection jump "Indo-Pacific nexus" point onto the western Pacific (including the South China Sea) and the eastern Indian Ocean (including the Strait of Malacca).³¹ In Indonesia, itself facing both the Indian and Pacific oceans, the Darwin announcement was judged as part of a "rebalancing of power in the Indo-Pacific region . . . in a move that could alter the security contours of the Indo-Pacific."³² In a similar manner, Indian commentators like Ashok Malik reckoned that the Darwin announcement reflected how "the game for the Indo-Pacific—the geographical intersection and strategic confluence of the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans—is afoot."³³ The Darwin announcement was quickly noticed, and criticized, in China.³⁴ One Australian scholar saw these Darwin arrangements as part of an emerging US "Indo-Pacific war plan for fighting China."³⁵

The discussions in March 2012 about basing US P-8 surveillance planes and drone planes in the eastern Indian Ocean (at Australia's Cocos island) for operation over the South China Sea were another example of Indo-Pacific strategic thinking shaping tangible deployment of assets, and was quickly noticed in India as pointing to "the fusion of the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea into a single strategic theatre."³⁶ The *Congressional Research Service* report in March 2012 considered that these moves reflected an "underlying . . . broader geographic vision of the Asia-Pacific region that includes the Indian Ocean."³⁷ This indicates, in other words, the Indo-Pacific.

Within the wider Washington policy community, particularly those of a robust IR *realism* orientation, a similar Indo-Pacific emphasis is now noticeable. There is an emerging sense, as James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara put it at the US Naval War College, of "the Indo-Pacific theater as a seamless operating area."³⁸ Elsewhere at the Naval War College came Andrew Winner and Peter Dombrowski's analysis of "United States maritime strategy and implications for the

Indo-Pacific Region.”³⁹ At the American Enterprise Institute, Michael Auslin has discussed the “conceptualization” of a “broader Indo-Pacific;” the “Indo-Pacific commons” and “the struggle for power in the Indo-Pacific.”⁴⁰ Concerning such struggles, the Center for a New American Security reckoned on “a new American grand strategy, one that increasingly leverages relationships with like-minded countries [like India] to share the burden with the United States of managing China’s rise;” in which “as India and other centers of power also emerge, the region itself is transforming from an Asian-Pacific to an Indo-Pacific region.”⁴¹ At the Heritage Foundation, Walter Lohman judged “the greatest challenge to American leadership in the Indo-Pacific region: the rise of China.”⁴² India-US cooperation underpinned Twining’s Indo-Pacific sense of region.⁴³ Auslin’s prognosis of stronger alliance-making between the US and India, was such that, as he admitted, “from China’s point of view, my Indo-Pacific strategy may be seen as containment.”⁴⁴

Robert Kaplan’s analysis of the publicly proclaimed US “pivot” to Asia was replete with Indo-Pacific contextualization:

The United States . . . is attempting to pivot its focus to the geographical heart of the global economy: the Indian and Pacific oceans . . . China is an altogether dynamic society that is naturally expanding its military and economic reach in the Indo-Pacific region . . . Make no mistake, the Indo-Pacific is in the midst of an arms race that complicates the security of the region’s sea lanes. Were the United States not now to turn to the Indo-Pacific, it would risk a multipolar military order arising up alongside an already existent multipolar economic and political order . . . U.S. military power in the Indo-Pacific is needed not only to manage the peaceful rise of China but also to stabilize a region . . . Clinton’s diplomatic overture to Myanmar and Obama’s plan to rotate 2,500 Marines through Australia are symbolic of the political and military effort to distribute U.S. power throughout the Indo-Pacific.⁴⁵

As to the South China Sea, Kaplan reckoned that “an Indo-Pacific without a strong U.S. military presence would mean the Finlandisation by China of countries in the South China Sea.”⁴⁶

A similar Indo-Pacific emphasis is also noticeable in Indian leadership circles. The *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (2004) recognized “the shift in global maritime focus from the Atlantic-Pacific combine to the Pacific-Indian Ocean region.”⁴⁷ This led the former Chief of Naval Staff (2004–6) Arun Prakash to argue for “having the ‘Asia-Pacific’ label replaced by the term ‘Indo-Pacific.’”⁴⁸ In terms of command structures, one reflection of this trans-oceans sense of region is India’s Far Eastern Naval Command (FENC) situated at Port Blair in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, at the entrance to the Strait of Malacca, the choke-point stretch between the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. As such, FENC is a

bridge between the Indian and Pacific oceans. Indonesian commentators see the Andaman & Nicobar Islands as playing a key role in ensuring security and US-India convergence, in “initiating the Indo-Pacific corridor.”⁴⁹

Such a sense of overlapping Indo-Pacific maritime space underpins the biannual *Milan* exercises run by FENC since 1995. By 2012 the *Milan* exercise had grown to involve 15 participants from across the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, and Pacific Ocean, in the shape of Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, Philippines, and Australia. China has never been invited, but keeps a careful concerned eye on this development.⁵⁰ Another example of cross-oceans deployment can be seen in the annual India-Singapore *Simbex* naval exercises carried out in the Bay of Bengal since the 1990s, and in the South China Sea since 2005. In the last decade, the Indian navy has regularly deployed powerful five-ship flotillas across the Bay of Bengal, down the Strait of Malacca and eastern Indian Ocean rim, across the South China Sea and into the western Pacific. Other deployments have gone from the eastern Indian Ocean into Oceania and the south Pacific. India’s now regular presence in the South China Sea has at times generated friction with China, as exemplified in the summer of 2011 where India’s oil deal struck with Vietnam, and the visit of INS Airavat to Vietnam brought Chinese comments about India trespassing into Chinese-claimed waters.

Indo-Pacific formulations are now being used by the Indian government. Nirupama Rao, India’s Minister for External Affairs, emphasized to an American audience in December 2011: “we also have an increasing convergence of interests with the United States . . . linked to the Indo-Pacific region.”⁵¹ A month later she noted how “in the broader Indo-Pacific region India is working with the US . . . to address traditional and non-traditional security challenges. One such challenge is maritime security.”⁵² Similar sentiments on India-US links were then expressed by the Foreign Secretary, Ranjan Mathai, in February 2012: “our partnership is important for building a stable, prosperous and secure Asia-Pacific region—or, as some here have begun to call it, the Indo-Pacific.”⁵³ Later that month, Arackaparambil Antony, the Defence Minister, noted the current “relevance of the Indian Ocean-Pacific or the Indo-Pacific” in Great Power relationships.⁵⁴

Within the wider Indian policy community, a similar Indo-Pacific emphasis is now noticeable. The former Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, was particularly clear on this in the autumn of 2011; “over the past year, the term ‘Indo-Pacific’ has gained currency in strategic discourse in India.”⁵⁵ The former Chief of Naval Staff, Sureesh Mehta told the Indian Maritime Foundation in 2012 of “particularly strong maritime connectivities between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, and consequently, the term Indo-Pacific would find more relevance.”⁵⁶ Among such strategic analysts, Harsh Pant talks of how, geopolitically, “tectonic

plates are shifting in the Indo-Pacific.”⁵⁷ For Nitin Pai, it is a maritime call; “in the emerging geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific . . . the Indian Navy’s presence in East Asian waters is a good example of such a capacity . . . to project power in the Indo-Pacific.”⁵⁸ Raja Mohan has been a powerful Indian voice in this perceptual-strategic shift. He argues that although “traditionally the Pacific and Indian Oceans have been viewed as two different and self-contained worlds,” nevertheless “a number of developments have begun to compel a more integrated view of the Pacific and Indian Oceans . . . The traditional clear distinctions, then, between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific are beginning to blur.”⁵⁹

Strategic opportunities are noticed by Indian commentators; for Sakhujia, it is a question of regional security in which India’s “strategic alliances” and “the maritime interoperability with the Indo-Pacific region will be India’s enduring and visible leverage of power.”⁶⁰ Specific quasi alliances and specific threats involve both oceans. If we return to Raja Mohan, he analysed India’s security convergence with Australia in 2011 in specific Indo-Pacific terms.⁶¹ He similarly deployed such terms for India’s strategic convergence with the US: “the United States is now seeking a strong security partnership with India in the Indo-Pacific;” and that “as the American and Indian navies . . . work together in the waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the traditional differentiation between these two theatres is likely to rapidly disappear.”⁶² Indo-Pacific conceptualization reflects very tangible strategic concerns, which is why for Ajai Shukla, “fear of an increasingly aggressive China provides an opportunity for India to develop the concept of the ‘Indo-Pacific.’”⁶³

From concept come actions and Saran’s sense how China’s “more assertive posture of the past couple of years had triggered a rapid and continuing build up of countervailing coalitions in the strategic Indo-Pacific theatre.”⁶⁴ Two such emerging coalitions involve both India and the US. One coalition is the India-US-Australia triangle.⁶⁵ The other coalition is the India-US-Japan triangle. Each triangle comes complete with its associated Indo-Pacific rhetoric.⁶⁶ Within this Indo-Pacific theatre there is a parallel Chinese challenge to the US in the western Pacific and to India in the Indian Ocean, both of which are now to be examined.

Sino-Indian competition in the Indian Ocean

As China’s blue water navy has taken shape, it is not surprising to find the Chinese navy starting to appear in the Indian Ocean since the 1990s.⁶⁷ The consequences have been noticeable: “Beijing’s recent appearance in the northern Indian Ocean has effectively unified the Indo-Pacific strategic space in a way that strengthens New Delhi and Washington’s already converging interests.”⁶⁸ As the US concedes some ground to India’s rise in the region, it is China that now poses the only real challenge to India’s otherwise growing role in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁹ The Indian

Navy's *Maritime Doctrine*, announced in 2004, explicitly highlighted "attempts by China to strategically encircle India" and warned of Chinese encroachment into "our maritime zone."⁷⁰ The then Chief of Naval Staff (2006–9) Sureesh Mehta called for "countering the growing Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean Region."⁷¹ Indian comments on news of China's sea trials for its refitted aircraft carrier in August 2011 were that "the carrier will add a new dimension to a burgeoning Chinese navy, which could provide a major challenge to India in its backyard, the Indian Ocean."⁷²

Encirclement is the specific word often bandied about in India to describe this perceived threat from China, the so-called "string of pearls" strategy being pursued by Beijing.⁷³ The argument from ex-Chief of Naval Staff Prakash was simple and clear. He warned that as "China has provided sufficient indications of her plans for 'containment' of India," it "should come as no surprise to us if in the next few years PLA Navy ships and nuclear submarines are put regularly into harbours like Chittagong, Sittwe, Hambantota or Gwadar in our immediate neighbourhood, in pursuit of their grand design."⁷⁴ India has taken particular exception to China's financial underpinning of Pakistan's development of Gwadar as a deep water port, a development which also potentially offers the Chinese navy long range berthing rights for the future.⁷⁵ Since 2009, the fact that Chinese naval units regularly stop at Gwadar before completing their deployment into the Gulf of Aden is a pointer in Indian eyes to such future developments.

China's presence has extended still further out into the western parts of the Indian Ocean, with Indian analysts arguing that "China's island strategy in the Indian Ocean [is] breaching India's sphere of influence," and Sarabjeet Pamar describing it as Beijing's "islandic hop-scotch."⁷⁶ Chinese visits to the Maldives in 2001 by Zhu Rongji, and in 2011 by Wu Bangguo increased Indian suspicions.⁷⁷ Hu Jintao's visit to the Seychelles in 2007 brought concerned comments from India, as did news in December 2011, following the visit of the Chinese defence minister, of future resupply and recuperation facilities being offered by the Seychelles to China.⁷⁸ India's dispatch of one destroyer to patrol the Gulf of Aden in October 2008 was overshadowed by the subsequent dispatch of two Chinese naval vessels to the Gulf of Aden, and some disquiet in Indian circles. Chinese naval penetration further south among other Indian Ocean island and littoral states has become noticeable. Mauritius has long been within India's sphere, in part because of its Indian-majority population, yet China's diplomatic presence has been noticed there by New Delhi.⁷⁹ India's privileged security links with Mozambique, including its 2006 *Defence Cooperation Agreement* and agreed patrolling of Mozambique waters, are also being brought into question by China's growing presence in Mozambique.

Not only does this Chinese penetration of all quadrants of the Indian Ocean provide a degree of maritime encirclement of India's coastlines and challenge

Indian hopes for pre-eminence in the Indian Ocean, it also surrounds the US stronghold at Diego Garcia. Thus, “the PLAN could under certain scenarios develop something closer to the presence and power-projection capabilities necessary to contest the Indian Ocean . . . as a peer competitor to India or the United States in the Indian Ocean.”⁸⁰ This common challenge is why the US is welcoming India’s growing role in the Indian Ocean. The US 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* accepted that “as its military capabilities grow, India will contribute to Asia as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond.”⁸¹ India is following a two-fold approach in response to this challenge from China. First, India is increasing its own presence in the Indian Ocean. Second, India is also pushing forward its presence (the *Quadrennial Defense Review*’s “and beyond”), into China’s equivalent, the South China Sea and into the western Pacific alongside the US and Japan, much to China’s concern.⁸² It is to the Pacific, and Sino-US competition there, that we can turn.

Sino-US competition in the Pacific Ocean

Sino-US competition in the Pacific Ocean is centered geopolitically on the western Pacific. Competition and friction in China-US military relations were noticeable in the way various maritime issues erupted during 2009 to 2012. These included the USS *Impeccable* Incident of March 2009, the cutting of military-to-military links during 2010–11 (in the wake of US arms sales to Taiwan), diplomatic spats over their respective “interests” in the South China Sea in 2010, US military exercises in the Yellow Sea in September 2010; US joint “activities” in the South China Sea with Vietnam in 2011, as well as more explicit US joint exercises elsewhere around those waters with the Philippines in 2011 and 2012. Chinese suspicions were evident of US balancing against it.⁸³ The initial attempts by the Obama administration to inject greater engagement into their relations with China, which resulted in perhaps some neglect of India in the first couple of years of his presidency, were replaced by greater robustness towards China and a renewed diplomatic charm offensive towards India. In effect, this renewed the strategic logic underpinning the preceding Bush presidency outreach to India.

At a general level, China’s drive for a blue water navy with offshore oceanic-capabilities is bringing it out away from its earlier restricted brown water coastal deployment. In geopolitical terms, China’s increasing naval strength is bringing it up against the “first island chain” (*diyī daolian*), identified in the 1950s by Dean Acheson and Douglas MacArthur as the US “forward defence perimeter,” running from Japan through the Ryukyus and Taiwan down to the Philippines. These concerns were why the PACOM chief Robert Willard warned the Senate Armed Committee in 2011 that China “does seek to restrict or exclude foreign, in particular, U.S., military maritime and air activities in the near seas—an area that roughly

corresponds to the maritime area from the Chinese mainland out to the first island chain.”⁸⁴ In 2010, the deployment of Chinese naval units through and beyond the Ryukyu island chain in March (North Sea Fleet) and April (East Sea Fleet) was a significant step forward in such a Chinese drive beyond the first island chain. June 2011 saw further Chinese deployments through the first island chain, their naval units passing between the Japanese islands of Okinawa and Miyako.

PRC sources have argued that “to make a breakthrough into the chain is also the first step for Chinese Navy to achieve its blue dream,” given that “the first island chain has long acted as the first protective screen for the US maritime hegemony in the region . . . to prevent Chinese Navy from going blue and enhancing its clout in the Pacific waters.”⁸⁵ The PRC perspective is geopolitically-nuanced, “the island chains in the western Pacific cannot [be allowed to] block China from entering the open waters . . . the US must allow China space.”⁸⁶ For PRC-based scholars like Zhang Zenmu, the US was attempting “containment of China’s sea power from expanding out onto the Western Pacific,” in which “China’s command of the sea is currently limited by the ‘First Island Chain,’ a sea zone established by the United States.”⁸⁷ Zhang considered this US position as unsustainable in the long run since China’s own maritime drive would change the balance of power, leaving a situation in which “China would control the eastern and western sides of the First Island Chain.”⁸⁸ Amid these Chinese naval deployments in 2010 to waters east of Taiwan, PRC figures argued that “Taiwan, however, seems to be one of the more corroded [geopolitical] links in this island chain;” and that “the U.S. political elite should no longer view Taiwan as part of its sphere of influence in the western Pacific or as a strategic lever against China.”⁸⁹

Further out, deeper into the western Pacific, is another geopolitical zone of encounter between the US and China. Here, running south from Japan are the Japanese-held Bonin Islands, and the US-held Northern Marianas, Guam, Palau and the Carolines. They are what China calls the “second island chain” (*di’er daolian*). The appearance of Chinese submarines in the waters off Guam (US sovereign territory) in December 2004 generated immediate US concerns of Chinese naval deployments creeping to these further lines. This is the longer-term challenge in US eyes; what the Pentagon considers as “Beijing’s desire to protect and advance its maritime interests up to and beyond the second island chain.”⁹⁰ In 2009, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, publicly warned “I am concerned about . . . their [China’s] clear shift of focus from a ground-centric force to a naval- and air-centric force that seems to, now, push off-island, if you will, beyond the first island chain and out to the second island chain.”⁹¹

Meanwhile, on its immediate southern flank, China claims various rights over most of the South China Sea, an area identified in 2009 by some PRC figures like Dai Bingguo as a “core interest” (*hexin liyi*) to be secured through its maritime

forces. As a counterpoise, in 2010 the US raised the South China Sea matter at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), as a matter of US “national interest,” much to China’s ire.

China’s claims in the South China Sea, and its growing deployment of strength and assertiveness, were again raised at the ARF in 2011 by the US (and India) as a threat to its own freedom to navigate and deploy in what it considers to be international waters. The discovery of Chinese nuclear submarine facilities at Sanya in 2009 caused concern in US (and Indian) circles. In a practical vein, the US has also (like India) been reinforcing naval links with South China Sea states such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore.⁹² The US also (like India), continues to actively deploy into the South China Sea for unilateral and bilateral exercises of strength, as with the friendly visit to Vietnam of the nuclear aircraft carrier USS George Washington in 2010 and 2011, as well as the USS Blue Ridge in 2011. US concerns with Chinese claims in the South China Sea have strengthened US cooperation with India in the approaches to it, namely the Strait of Malacca and in turn the wider Indian Ocean.

Indo-US cooperation in the Indian Ocean

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, India’s political alignment with the Soviet Union, coupled with its distrust of US arrival at Diego Garcia in 1971, left the US and India as “estranged democracies.”⁹³ The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 removed that particular Cold War impediment, and gave way during the 1990s to the gradual growth of US-India security cooperation. India’s rise is seen in Washington as being in US interests; democracy and anti-terrorism being two explicit planks of common interest, and with mutual concerns about China as implicit but apparent.⁹⁴ As one Indian analyst put it; “a strong relationship with the United States not only balances off China but forces Beijing to behave in a way that is more acceptable to Indian interests.”⁹⁵ The same logic, and benefits, also applies to the US.

Maritime cooperation between India and the US was flagged with the initiation of the bilateral *Malabar* naval exercises in 1992. This was also flagged with the downgrading of the Diego Garcia issue as a bone of contention between them. Admittedly, in the wake of India’s nuclear test explosions, the *Malabar* exercises were suspended from 1998–2001. However, US-Indian military cooperation rapidly revived post-9/11. From April–September 2002, India formally took over from the US navy in escorting US ships through the Strait of Malacca into the Bay of Bengal, thereby freeing the US navy up for deployments further westwards against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Repetition of such cooperation was envisaged for the future by another commentator, Iskander Rehman, who speculated on an “Indo-Pacific Future”:

In the unhappy event of a Sino-US conflict breaking out in the Western Pacific, India could be eventually called upon to provide a stabilising, flanking presence west of the Malacca Straits, ensuring the safety of sea-lanes of communications while American naval strength is concentrated elsewhere. It is through such initiatives, which focus on shared concerns and perceived threats, that the Indo-US strategic partnership will reveal its true potential.⁹⁶

The *New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship* (NFDR) agreement, signed in June 2005, put US-India defence links on a substantive new footing. US-Indian maritime cooperation was further laid down in the *Indo-U.S. Framework for Maritime Security Cooperation* signed in March 2006.

In this setting of renewed security convergence, the US-India *Malabar* naval exercises were renewed in 2002. These exercises progressed from small scale basic passing manoeuvres among naval vessels and replenishment-at-sea drills in 2002, to larger scale anti-submarine (China-centric?) exercises in 2003, with mutual deployment of aircraft carriers from both sides in 2005 serving as a visible demonstration of mutual combined power projection potentiality. The *Malabar-2* exercises held in September 2007 were important for two reasons. First, they were not held in the western zone of the Indian Ocean, as previously was the case with the *Malabar* exercises. Instead, they were held in the eastern zone, in the Bay of Bengal. Second, they involved a greater range of participants; in which elements of the Japanese, Australian and Singapore navy joined the main Indian (eight warships, again including the aircraft carrier INS *Viraat*) and US (thirteen warships, including the aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk*) elements. Bilateral US-India *Malabar* formats were followed in October 2008 in the Arabian Sea, and again there in April 2010. Indian commentary was plain enough on the significance of *Malabar 2010*; “it became clear the two countries [India and the US] would further cooperate in the Indian Ocean to counter the rise of China in the years to come.”⁹⁷ The *Malabar 2012* exercises were held in the Bay of Bengal in April 2012.

Smaller scale, but equally widely located *Salvex* exercises have been held between the US and India navies since 2005. They have ranged over the Arabian Sea (in 2005), Bay of Bengal (in 2011), and as shall be seen in the Pacific (in 2012). It is to Indo-US cooperation in the Pacific that we can turn.

Indo-US cooperation in the Pacific

The significance of the September 2007 US-India naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal was that it formed *Malabar-2*, called -2 because *Malabar-1* exercises had been conducted in the western Pacific earlier that year in April 2007 between US and Indian naval units. Such India-US *Malabar* naval exercises

have also involved the Japanese navy in 2007, 2009, and 2010; all were conducted in western Pacific waters near the “forward defense perimeter” (US) or “first island chain” (China). The *Malabar 2011* exercise remained a bilateral exercise between the US and India, Japan being unable to attend as originally planned due the disasters (natural and nuclear) that had struck it in 2011. *Malabar 2011* took place in the western Pacific, east of the Luzon Strait, and involved the American Seventh Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge as well as five powerful Indian warships. It generated Chinese media comment on *Malabar 2011* being an “anti-China military block.”⁹⁸

India has also been drawn further into other US-led operations further afield in the Pacific. Indian officers participated with the US navy in the *Habu Nag* amphibious landing simulation exercises for the East China Sea in September 2010, to Chinese concern.⁹⁹ The Indian Navy accepted the invitation to send observers for America’s *Valiant Shield* exercises off Guam in 2006. Indian naval officials joined US naval personnel in Hawaii for the *Salvex* exercises in Hawaii in February 2012. It is of some significance that whereas India was invited as an official observer to the US-organized *Rimpac* naval exercises off Hawaii in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010, China was not. *Rimpac 2012* saw direct Indian military participation juxtaposed with continuing Chinese absence, although China does look set to be invited to *Rimpac 2014*. US commentators on *Rimpac 2012* noted its Indo-Pacific character: “we’re starting to look at the Indian and Pacific oceans as a single theater, if you will, and that clearly underscores the importance of India.”¹⁰⁰ Other elements of India’s armed forces have been sent into the Pacific. In September 2006, India flew in officers and soldiers to Hawaii for *Operation Yudh Abhyas* “Preparing for War,” bilateral bi-annual cooperation repeated in Hawaii in 2008 and Alaska in 2010. *Operation Cope Thunder* similarly saw Indian Air Force units flying across the Pacific in February 2004 to take part in joint exercises with American units in Alaska, which were followed up in its successor the *Red Flag* exercises there in 2008.

Although India’s arrival in Pacific Asia is generally not officially described or admitted in China-related terms, Indian commentators are ready, rightly enough, to see its China-related rationale:

In this great game, competition and rivalry with China has become a significant component. . . . A critical review of India’s Look East strategy as part of her overall foreign policy in Asia reveals that one of the important objectives behind this strategy is to play a new balancing game against China in the South-east Asian and the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁰¹

Such a balancing game involves closer cooperation with the US, with their respective naval assets a significant mechanism for practical cooperation. In looking east, “the key to the Indian Navy’s new engagement of Asia lies in its

assessments of and interactions with the US and Chinese navies.”¹⁰² The assessment of China by India reflects Stephen Walt’s *balance of threat* logic (with its criteria of aggregate power, offensive military capabilities, geographical proximity, and perceived offensive intentions); and from that a significantly higher level of cooperation with the US navy than with the Chinese navy.

American politicians have been vocal in welcoming India’s arrival in the western Pacific. For Obama it was simple in 2010; “we want India to . . . ‘look East,’ we want India to ‘engage East’ . . . the United States and India can partner.”¹⁰³ Similarly, for Secretary of State Clinton, it was a question in 2011 of converging security interests:

India straddling the waters from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean is, with us, a steward of these waterways. We are both deeply invested in shaping the future of the region that they connect . . . The United States intends to collaborate with India . . . and high on this list should be maritime security.¹⁰⁴

The explicit stated aspect of this envisaged maritime security was the threat from piracy and jihadist destabilization of sea-routes, but the implicit unstated aspect was keeping the South China Sea open from Chinese domination, and generally constraining China’s blue water naval expansion in the western Pacific and Indian Ocean. Indian commentators saw Clinton’s speech as showing that “Washington is aspiring for a closer maritime partnership with the Indian Navy in the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca and finally the Pacific Ocean.”¹⁰⁵ Both India and the US pushed in December 2011 for maritime security to be discussed at the East Asia Summit, and for international law to be applied in the South China Sea, code word for their similar criticisms of China’s position.

Conclusions

What this article has shown is what Indian and American commentators like Hemant Singh and Karl Inderfurth have jointly recognized:

Keeping pace with this ongoing shift in economic and strategic clout, the regional nomenclature is changing from East Asia to the Asia-Pacific and now to the Indo-Pacific . . . the Indo-Pacific as an inter-linked and integrated geo-political and geo-economic space from India to the Pacific.¹⁰⁶

Both the Indian and US leaderships evoke closer cooperation across such Indo-Pacific maritime reaches. In their 2010 *Joint Statement* the US and Indian leaders referred to how India and the US had a “shared vision for peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia, the Indian Ocean region, and the Pacific region.”¹⁰⁷

To repeat, in terms of security, the explicit issue is the challenge from transnational international terrorism, but the implicit issue remains the state-level challenge of China.

Relations between the US and Indian navies are now close, a firmly embedded part of their wider military-security relationship, itself part of their still wider political relationship. Admittedly India still is shying away from some elements. On the one hand, India sent a temporary liaison officer to PACOM headquarters in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, but yet almost a decade after its first broaching by Washington, New Delhi is still to post a mid-level officer on a permanent basis to PACOM. India remains ready to officially stress “our desire for strategic autonomy . . . India is too large a country to be dovetailed in alliance type relationships.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, “at the very point defense interoperability assumes the trappings of quasi-informal military alignment New Delhi tends to reflexively shrink from such engagement.”¹⁰⁹ India-US cooperation remains extensive but ad-hoc. New Delhi remains averse to signing a *Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMoa)* that would facilitate regularized tactical communications system interoperability, and it has also stepped back from initialing a mutual *Logistics Support Agreement (LSA)*. The result is that “practical arms-length collaboration with, as opposed to integrating within . . . appears to be the ceiling to such bilateral defense cooperation.”¹¹⁰

Moreover, both India and the US are involved in some engagement with China, and do not want to restrict their relations with China to just an antagonistic balancing against it. Both India and the US continue to say that their own cooperative convergence with each other is not aimed at China. However, that is perhaps to be expected, since any such announcement could antagonize China all the more. In strategic terms, as a concept and policy, *hedging* includes an element of engagement, exemplified in the March 2012 announcement of a *Maritime Dialogue* mechanism between India and China, which involved Indo-Pacific issues in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.

Hedging though also includes balancing. This can be with regard to *internal strengthening* (building up your own strength), which is precisely what the US is doing in the western Pacific and what India is doing in the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, as a concept and as a policy, hedging also includes *external balancing*, which is what in a China-centric fashion India and the US are doing with each other on the maritime stretches of the Indo-Pacific. However, such insurance elements of US-India balancing is not hard balancing (John Mearsheimer’s *offensive realism*) in the explicit containment Cold War sense where the Soviet Union was the named foe for the US. Rather, it is a post-Cold War softer balancing of understandings and arrangements of an implicit rather than explicit nature—but external balancing it is on the part of the US and India in the Indo-Pacific, their zone for strategic convergence.

Notes

- 1 Stephen Smith, "Deterrence and Regional Security," June 2, 2012, <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2012/06/02/minister-for-defence-deterrence-and-regional-security-at-the-11th-international-institute-for-strategic-studies-singapore/>. Smith used the term "Indo-Pacific" seven times in his "Speech" on the 2013 *Defence White Paper*, August 9, 2012, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/paper-presented-stephen-smith-mp-minister-defence-lowy-institute-2013-defence-white>. Gareth Evans, Australia's Foreign Minister 1988-1996, similarly reckoned that "the Asia Pacific is gradually becoming the Indo Pacific. The rise of India is becoming as visibly important a phenomenon as that of China," "The Asian Region in 2011: Trends and Tensions," February 21, 2011, <http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech433.html>.
- 2 Ashley Tellis, "Indian Ocean and U.S. Grand Strategy," January 17, 2012, <http://maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/Ashley.pdf>. Ashley Tellis, the senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a previous advisor to the US government, delivered these remarks in India at the National Maritime Foundation.
- 3 Tellis, "Obama in India. Building a Global Partnership: Challenges, Risks, Opportunities," *Policy Outlook* (Carnegie Endowment), October 28, 2010, p.26
- 4 Brahma Chellaney, "Build Japan-India Naval Ties," *Japan Times*, 28 December 2011.
- 5 Jae-Hyung Lee, "China's Expanding Maritime Ambitions in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2002, pp.549-568. Similar China challenge discerned by James Boutillier, "Reflections on the New Indo-Pacific Maritime and Naval Environment," in *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, No. 114, Spring 2004, pp.21-27.
- 6 C. Raja Mohan, "Rising India: Partner in Shaping the Global Commons?," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2010, p.142. Also Saurav Jha, "U.S., India Inch Toward Naval Partnership," *World Politics Review*, July 9, 2012, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12132/u-s-india-inch-toward-naval-partnership>.
- 7 Chas Freeman, "Indo-Pacific Dynamics in Trans-Pacific Perspective," April 16, 2012, <http://www.mepc.org/articles-commentary/speeches/indo-pacific-dynamics-trans-pacific-perspective>
- 8 Peter Katzenstein, "Regionalism and Asia," in Shaun Breslin (ed.), *New Regionalism in the Global Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.105.
- 9 Peter Varghese, "Australia and India in the Asian Century," *Special Report* (ICPS), May 2012, p.2.
- 10 Bruce Cumings, "Rimspeak; or the Discourse of the 'Pacific Rim'," in Arif Dirlik, ed., *What is in a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea* (2nd ed., Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp.53-72.

- 11 Daniel Twining, "Is the Obama Administration Willing to Back up Clinton's Talk with Action?," *Foreign Policy*, October 14, 2011. Also Rajeev Srinivasan, "Putting China in its Place: Towards an Indo-Pacific Century," *First Post. India*, December 26, 2011, <http://www.firstpost.com/world/putting-china-in-its-place-towards-an-indo-pacific-century-165428.html>.
- 12 Iskander Rehman, "An Ocean at the Intersection of Two Emerging Maritime Narratives," *Issue Brief (IDSA)*, July 11, 2011, p.18.
- 13 For example, Michael Wesley, "Irresistible Rise of the Indo-Pacific," *Australian Literary Review*, May 4, 2011, pp.6–7; Nick Bisley and Andrew Phillips, "The Indo-Pacific: What Does it Actually Mean?," *East Asia Forum*, October 6, 2012; Rory Medcalf, "The Era of the Indo-Pacific," *Indian Express*, October 6, 2012.
- 14 For example Singapore's then Senior Minister, Goh Chok Tong's talk that "with India's rise it will be increasingly less tenable to regard South Asia and East Asia as distinct strategic theatres interacting only at the margins," "Reconceptualising East Asia," January 27, 2005, <http://www.isanus.org/events/addresses/1.htm>.
- 15 Ernst Haushofer, *An English Translation and Analysis of Major Karl Ernst Haushofer's Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean*, tr. Lewis Tambs and Ernst Brehm, (Lampeter: Edwin Mellor, 2002), p.141.
- 16 Nicholas Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944), p.38. UK military planners also referred to the Indo-Pacific theatre of operations in the fight against Japan, which covered both the Bay of Bengal and the Western Pacific.
- 17 Sukh Muni, "Obama's Asia-Pacific Doctrine: India's Options," *ISAS Insights*, No. 144, November 22, 2011, p.4.
- 18 *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington: Department of Defense, 2012), p.2. Note evaluation of the document in India, "US Identifies China as Security Threat, Seeks India partnership," *Times of India*, January 5, 2012. Also John Bradford, "The Maritime Strategy of the United States: Implications for Indo-Pacific Sealanes," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2011, pp.183-208.
- 19 Robert Willard, "Asia-Pacific U.S. Military Overview," January 27, 2012, <http://fpc.state.gov/182684.htm>.
- 20 US Senate (Committee on Armed Services), *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. Report (to authorize Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2012)*, June 22, 2011, p.211.
- 21 Nancy Powell, *Statement* (to Senate Foreign Affairs Committee), February 7, 2012, www.foreign.senate.gov.
- 22 Immediately noted in India, as cited in "US Senators Seek Closer Defence Ties with India," *Indian Express*, July 21, 2012.
- 23 Kurt Campbell, "Campbell Joins Bloomfield at Stimson's Chairman's Forum," January 19, 2012, video at <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/asst-secretary-for-east-asian-affairs-kurt-campbell-speaks-at-stimsonschairmans-forum/>.

- 24 William J. Burns, "U.S.-India Partnership in an Asia-Pacific Century,"
December 16, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/2011/178934.htm>.
- 25 Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, October 11,
2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/10/175215.htm>.
- 26 Clinton, "America's Pacific Century".
- 27 Clinton, "America's Pacific Century".
- 28 Clinton, "America's Engagement in the Asia-Pacific," October 28, 2010,
<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/10/150141.htm>.
- 29 Leon Panetta, "The U.S. and India: Partners in the 21st Century," June 6,
2012, <http://www.defense.gov//speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1682>.
- 30 Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian
Parliament" [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament)
remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament, November 17, 2011.
- 31 Leighton Luke "US Interest Confirms Australian Strategic Importance in
Indo-Pacific," *Asia Pacific Security*, May 2012, [http://www.](http://www.australiansecuritymagazine.com.au/2012/05/us-interest-confirms-australian-strategic-importance-in-indo-pacific/)
australiansecuritymagazine.com.au/2012/05/us-interest-confirms-
australian-strategic-importance-in-indo-pacific/.
- 32 Anindya Bakrie, "US Pivot to the Region has Changed the Game,"
Jakarta Globe, January 3, 2012. Also Vibhanshu Shekhar, "Rising
Indonesia and Indo-Pacific World," *Issue Brief (ICWA)*, September 26,
2012 for Indonesia-related "discourse on the Indo-Pacific," in which
"the new geo-political construct [Indo-Pacific] constitutes a much more
integrated unit of analysis, when compared to rather huge and unwieldy
classification of Asia-Pacific."
- 33 Ashok Malik, "Pacific Partners," *Deccan Chronicle*, November 22, 2011.
Also Saibal Dasgupta, "US Naval Move in Australia May Help India Take
on China," *Times of India*, November 17, 2011.
- 34 "Beijing Questions US Military Boost in Australia," *People's Daily*,
November 17, 2011. Also "Australia Could be Caught in Sino-US
Crossfire," *Global Times*, November 16, 2011.
- 35 Raoul Heinrichs, "A Cold and Clever U.S. Base Move," *The Diplomat*,
November 17, 2011. Earlier talk by Medcalf, "An Alliance for the Indo-
Pacific," *The Interpreter* (Lowry Institute), March 7, 2011, [http://www.](http://www.lowryinterpreter.org/post/2011/03/07/An-alliance-for-the-Indo-Pacific.aspx)
lowryinterpreter.org/post/2011/03/07/An-alliance-for-the-Indo-Pacific.
aspx.
- 36 C. Raja Mohan, "Cocos Islands and Sino-US Rivalry in the Indian Ocean,"
Indian Express, 2 April 2012. Also Leighton Luke, "US Interest Confirms
Australian Strategic Importance in Indo-Pacific," *Future Direction*,
March 28, 2012, [http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publications/](http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publications/indian-ocean/29-indian-ocean-swa/452-us-interest-confirms-australian-strategic-importance-in-indo-pacific.html)
indian-ocean/29-indian-ocean-swa/452-us-interest-confirms-australian-
strategic-importance-in-indo-pacific.html.
- 37 Congressional Research Service, *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama
Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia*, p.5, [http://www.fas.org/](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf)
sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf.
- 38 Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes, "Don't expect much from Japan in
the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, No.
2, 2011, p.10.

- 39 Andrew Winner and Peter Dombrowski, "United States Maritime Strategy and Implications for the Indo-Pacific Region," in Andrew Forbes (ed.) *Australia and its Maritime Interests: At Home and in the Region* (Fyshwick: Union Offset Printers, 2008), pp 67-94.
- 40 Michael Auslin, "Tipping point in the Indo-Pacific," *The American Interest*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2011, pp.17-24, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article-bd.cfm?piece=924>; Auslin, *Security in the Indo-Pacific Commons. Toward a Regional Strategy* (Report, American Enterprise Institute, December 2010); Auslin, "The Struggle for Power in the Indo-Pacific," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2011, pp.145-151.
- 41 Center for a New American Security, "The Emerging Asian Power Web," <http://www.cnas.org/asian-power-web>, as accessed April 1, 2012.
- 42 Walter Lohman, "Shaping U.S.'s future in the Indo-Pacific," *Washington Post*, April 20, 2011.
- 43 Daniel Twining, *As Asia Rises. How the West Can Enlarge its Community of Values and Interests in the Indo-Pacific Region* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010). Also Twining, "Not a Chinese Century, an Indo-American One," *Global Asia*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2011, pp.24-29.
- 44 Auslin, "Is the Indo-Pacific a Cage to Hold Down China?," *The Enterprise* (American Enterprise Institute), December 22, 2010, <http://blog.american.com/2010/12/is-te-indo-pacific-a-cage-to-hold-down-china/>.
- 45 Robert Kaplan, "America's Pacific Logic," *Stratfor Analysis*, April 4, 2012, <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/americas-pacific-logic>.
- 46 Kaplan, "The US Navy Fostered Globalisation: We Still Need It," *Financial Times*, November 29, 2011.
- 47 Government of India, *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, 2004), pp.65-67.
- 48 Arun Prakash, "A Moment for India," *Force*, July 2009, p.7.
- 49 Novan Santosa, "Planned US Deployments Aimed at China," *Jakarta Post*, December 17, 2011. For a similar, Singaporean, voice, see Ristian Supriyanto, "Indo-Pacific Grand Design a Recipe?" *Jakarta Post*, December 8, 2011.
- 50 Rahul Singh, "China may be Monitoring Navy's Milan," *Hindustan Times*, February 5, 2010.
- 51 Nirupama Rao, "India and the Asia-Pacific: Expanding Engagement," December 5, 2011, <http://www.indianembassy.org>.
- 52 Rao, "Address" (Seminar, *India as a Global Power*), January 23, 2012, <http://www.indianembassy.org>.
- 53 Ranjan Mathai, "Building on Convergences: Deepening India-U.S. Strategic Partnership," February 6, 2012, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530118985>.
- 54 Arackaparambil Antony, "Address," Annual Maritime Power Conference, February 26, 2012, <http://maritimeindia.org/article/address-shri-k-antony-hon-raksha-mantri>.

- 55 Shyam Saran, "Mapping the Indo-Pacific," *Indian Express*, October 29, 2011.
- 56 Sureesh Mehta, "Opening Address" (Maritime Power Conference), February 26, 2012, <http://maritimeindia.org/article/opening-address-adm-ret-d-sureesh-mehta-chairman-nmf>.
- 57 Harsh Pant, "Reading Myanmar's Reforms," *India Express*, February 7, 2012.
- 58 Nitin Pai, "Dealing with a vulnerable China," November 21, 2011, <http://www.sify.com/finance/nitin-pai-dealing-with-a-vulnerable-china-news-analysis-llvcmfjjaic.html>.
- 59 C. Raja Mohan, "Indispensable India," *American Review*, November 2011, <http://americanreviewmag.com/stories/Indispensable-India>.
- 60 Vijay Sakhujia, *Asian Maritime Power in the 21st Century* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), p.284.
- 61 Raja Mohan, "India and Australia: Maritime Partners in the Indo-Pacific," *AsiaLink Essays*, Vol. 3, No. 7, November 2011, pp.1-4; "Indo-Pacific Naval Partnership Open to Delhi and Canberra," *The Australian*, November 2, 2011.
- 62 Raja Mohan, "Indispensable India." Also Rukhmani Gupta, "India Puts the Indo in 'Indo-Pacific'," *Asia Times*, December 2, 2011.
- 63 Ajai Shukla, "China in a Corner at the East Asia Summit," *Business Standard*, November 19, 2011.
- 64 Saran, "Talking down the tension," *Business Standard*, January 18, 2012.
- 65 Joint report by analysts from India's Observer Research Foundation, the US' Heritage Foundation, and Australia's Lowry Institute; namely Lisa Curtis, Walter Lohman, Rory Medcalf, Lydia Powell, Rajeswari Rajapolalan and Andrew Shearer, *Shared Goals, Converging Interests: A Plan for U.S.–Australia–India Cooperation in the Indo–Pacific*, November 3, 2011, <http://www.orfonline.com/cms/export/orfonline/html/paper/pdf/Shared-Goals.pdf>, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/11/shared-goals-converging-interests-a-plan-for-u-s-australia-india-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific>; Lohman and Curtis, "Indo-Pacific Triangle can be a Regional Force," *The Australian*, December 23, 2011.
- 66 Brahma Chellaney, "Asia's New Tripartite Entente," *Project Syndicate*, January 10, 2012, <http://beta.project-syndicate.org/commentary/asia-s-new-tripartite-entente>. Also Walter Ladwig, "A Trilateral Foundation for Indo-Pacific Security," *Japan Times*, December 27, 2011.
- 67 David Walgreen, "China in the Indian Ocean: Lessons in PRC Grand Strategy," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2006, pp.55-73; Holmes and Yoshihara, "China's Naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2008, pp.367-394.
- 68 Tellis, "Obama in India," p.25.
- 69 Swaran Singh, "China's Forays into the Indian Ocean: Strategic Implications for India," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2011, pp.235-248.

- 70 Government of India, *Indian Maritime Doctrine*, pp.54, 71. Also Pant, "China's Naval Expansion in the Indian Ocean and India-China rivalry," *Asia-Pacific Journal*, No. 18-4-10, May 3, 2010.
- 71 Sureesh Mehta, "India's National Security Challenges – An Armed Forces Overview," August 10, 2009, http://maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/CNS_Lec_at_Habitat.pdf.
- 72 "China's Aircraft Carrier Begins Sea Trials," *Times of India*, 10 August 2011.
- 73 Khurana, "China's 'String of Pearls' in the Indian Ocean and its security implications," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2008, pp.1-39.
- 74 Prakash, "A Vision of Maritime India 2020," in *From the Crows Nest* (Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2007), p.70.
- 75 Sudha Ramachandran, "China's Pearl in Pakistan's Waters," *Asia Times*, March 4, 2005; Chellaney, "China Covets a Pearl Necklace: Dragon's Foothold in Gwadar," *Asian Age*, April 7, 2007.
- 76 Amit Kumar, "China's Island Strategy in the Indian Ocean: Breaching India's Sphere of Influence," *Analysis* (ORF), September 11, 2009; Sarabjeet Parmar, "Islandic Hop Scotch in the Indian Ocean Region," *IDSA Comment*, December 15, 2011, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/IslandicHopScotchinthelIndianOceanRegion_ssparmar_151211. Also Raja Mohan, 'Sino-Indian rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean,' *ISAS Insights*, No. 52, February 24, 2009.
- 77 Rajat Pandit, "China's Stepped up Moves in Maldives Worry India," *Times of India*, October 10, 2011.
- 78 Saibal Dasgupta, "Chinese Military Base in Indian Ocean?," *Times of India*, December 13, 2011; Mandip Singh, "The Proposed PLA Naval Base in Seychelles and India's Options," *IDSA Comment*, December 15, 2011, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TheProposedPLANavalBaseinSeychellesandIndiasOptions_msingh_151211; Pant, "Chinese Military Bases are About More Than Just Naval Supplies and Protecting Trade Routes," *Japan Times*, January 3, 2012.
- 79 Raja Mohan, "Circling Mauritius," *Indian Express*, February 11, 2009.
- 80 Michael Green and Andrew Shearer, "Defining US Indian Ocean Strategy," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2012, p.181. Hence Tellis' comment that "when one talks of China in the Indian Ocean, one has to start off recognizing that China's principal strategic competition—if it chooses to pursue that path—will not be with India but with the United States," in "Indian Ocean and U.S. Grand Strategy," January 17, 2012, <http://www.maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/Ashley.pdf>. Also Holmes and Yoshihara, "China and the United States in the Indian Ocean: An. Emerging Strategic Triangle?," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 61, No. 3, 2008, pp.41-60; Greg Yellen, "Holding the Tiger by its Tail: Chinese Maritime Expansion and the U.S. 'Hedge' Strategy in the Indian Ocean," *The Monitor*, Summer 2011, pp.1-49.
- 81 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington: Department of Defense, 2010), p.60.

- 82 For example, Li Hongmei, "India's 'Look East Policy' Means 'Look to
Encircle China'," *People's Daily*, October 27, 2010.
- 83 Liu Tian, "Proposed U.S.-Philippines Drills Raises Questions About U.S.
Intentions in Asia," *People's Daily*, January 23, 2012.
- 84 Robert Willard, "Statement" (Senate Armed Services Committee), April
12, 2011 p.10, [http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2011/04%
20April/Willard%2004-12-11.pdf](http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2011/04%20April/Willard%2004-12-11.pdf).
- 85 Li, "Can We Manage Without Carrier?," *People's Daily*, April 22, 2010.
- 86 "Watch Out for China-US Tension at Sea," *Global Times*, July 12, 2010.
- 87 Zhang Wenmu, "Back to Yalta. A Roadmap for Sino-US Relations," *China
Security*, Vol. 19, December 2011, pp.51,50.
- 88 Zhang, "Back to Yalta," p.54.
- 89 Xinbo Wu, "A Forward-looking Partner in a Changing East Asia,"
Washington Quarterly, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2008, p.158; Li, "Can We Manage
Without Carrier?"
- 90 *Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2009* (Washington:
Department of Defense, 2009), p.28.
- 91 Mullin cited in Jim Garomone, "Chairman Calls U.S.-Japan Relationship
'Vital'," *American Forces Information Service*, October 24, 2009.
- 92 Bronson Percival, "US-India: Parallel Links along China's Southern
Periphery," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 114, June 1, 2010.
- 93 S. P. Seth, "The Indian Ocean and Indo-American Relations," *Asian
Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 8, 1975, pp.645-655.
- 94 Evan Feigenbaum, "India's Rise, America's Interest," *Foreign Affairs*,
Vol. 89, No. 2, 2010, pp.76-91.
- 95 Amit Gupta, "Partnering the United States: India's Window of
Opportunity," *Security Research Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, August 2005.
- 96 Rehman, "AirSea Battle and its Indo-Pacific Future," *Analysis* (ORF),
March 13, 2012, [http://www.orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/
analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=34446&mmacmaid=34447](http://www.orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=34446&mmacmaid=34447).
- 97 Balaji Chandramohan, "US Courts India in the Indian Ocean," *Asia
Times*, May 6, 2010.
- 98 "India Making Anti-China Military Block and Preparing to Attack China,"
Forum (*People's Daily*), February 16, 2011. Also "Indo-US Joint Naval
Exercise Worries China," *Times of India*, Feb 16, 2011.
- 99 "Indian Navy to Join U.S Amphibious Exercise in Western Pacific,"
People's Daily, September 22, 2010.
- 100 Brad Glosserman (Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International
Studies), cited in William Cole, "Largest-ever RIMPAC Headed to Isles,"
Honolulu Star-Advertiser, June 23, 2012.
- 101 Anindya Batabyal, "Balancing China in Asia. A Realist Assessment of
India's Look East strategy," *China Report*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2006, p.179.
Also Pant, "India in the Asia-Pacific: Rising Ambitions with an Eye on
China," *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2007, pp.54-71.
- 102 "India's Naval Posture. Looking East," *Strategic Comments* (IISS), Vol.
11, No. 1, 2005, p.1.

- 103 Obama, "Remarks by the President to the Joint Session of the Indian Parliament," 9 November 2010, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/08/remarks-president-joint-session-indian-parliament-new-delhi-india>. Also Manjeet Pardesi, "India, US in East Asia: Emerging Strategic Partnership," *Commentary* (RSIS), No. 54, April 8, 2011; Sourabh Gupta, "The US Pivot and India's Look East," *East Asia Forum*, June 20, 2012, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/06/20/the-us-pivot-and-india-s-look-east/>.
- 104 Clinton, "A Vision for the 21st Century," July 20, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/07/168840.htm>.
- 105 Sandeep Dikshit, "Hillary's Leadership Call to India not Aimed at Pakistan," *The Hindu*, August 9, 2011.
- 106 Hemant Singh and Karl Inderfurth, "An Indo-Pacific Triangle of Consequence," *Issue Brief* (ICRIER), Vol. 1, No. 2, December 20, 2011, p.1.
- 107 "Joint Statement of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama," November 8, 2010, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530516632>. Also Tellis, "US and Indian Interests in India's Extended Neighbourhood," in Alyssa Ayres and Raja Mohan (eds.), *Power Realignments in Asia: China, India and the United States* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009), pp.221-248.
- 108 Nirupama Rao, "Transcript of Foreign Secretary Smt. Nirupama Rao's speech at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), Paris," May 5, 2011, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117612>.
- 109 Sourabh Gupta, "US-India Ties: The Limits to Defense Cooperation with New Delhi," *Pacific Forum* (CSIS), No. 38, July 25, 2011, p.1.
- 110 Gupta, "US-India Ties," p.2. Also Ajaya Das, "India-U.S. Maritime Partnership: Time to Move Forward," *Policy Brief* (RSIS), August 2012.

About the author

David Scott is a lecturer in International Relations at Brunel University. His interests involve Asia-Pacific international relations, with particular reference to the interplay between India, China, and the United States, and with further reference to marine geopolitics at play in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific Ocean. He has published articles on these matters in journals including *Asia-Pacific Review*, *Asian Security*, *Asian Survey*, *Geopolitics*, *India Review*, *Indian Ocean Survey*, *International Relations*, *International Studies*, and *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*. He has also written a trilogy on Chinese foreign policy, namely "*The Chinese Century*"? *The Challenge to Global Order* (Palgrave, 2008); "*China Stands Up*": *The PRC and the Modern International System* (Routledge, 2007); and *China and the international system, 1840-1949: Power, Presence and Perceptions in a "Century of Humiliation"* (SUNY, 2008). He has also edited one book on India's international relations, namely *Handbook of India's International Relations* (Routledge, 2011). The author can be contacted at david.scott@brunel.ac.uk.