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**Maritime Geopolitics in the Asia-Pacific:  
Aligning and Differing Interests of Regional and Non-Regional Players**

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**Abstract:**

The Asia-Pacific has special characteristics including diverse political, strategic and economic interests in its geographical aspect. The aim of the research is to examine the growing trends in maritime power politics and the struggle for dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. The three methods of geoeconomics, geostrategic and geopolitical synthesis are combined in the theoretical model to serve as variables and tools for maritime power politics. Inside-out and outside-in strategies serve as a dynamic for the complex interaction of regional and supra-regional actors and stakeholders in the maritime space. This study used a hermeneutic method to understand and analyze the power dynamics of this emerging maritime region where India, Pakistan, the US and China have become important players with their national interests. The US has a range of convergence of interests with India, including elevating India to regional leadership, controlling the geopolitics of the region and countering China. Thus, the article analyzes the maritime power politics of the Asia-Pacific region and illustrates the converging and diverging interests of regional and non-regional powers in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** China, India, the US, Asia-Pacific, maritime, power politics

**INTRODUCTION**

The term 'Asia Pacific' is used to refer the parts of Asia situated in the Pacific Ocean. Asia's Pacific powers proposed the term to define Asia's common interests. It includes three main parts or sub-regions: north-east Asia, south-east Asia, and Oceania (Southwestern Pacific). The Asia Pacific is more related to an "economic concept" than a security concept (Xinhua, 2023). In the late 1980s, it

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emerged as a zone of economic growth due to its rapid economic growth. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is its multilateral institution, effectively representing it. India is neither a part of the Asia-Pacific region nor a member of APEC (Doyle, 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2016, 116-117).

Indo-Pacific describes the integrated area or region that joins the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and the surrounding area. Its geographical area, though undefined, seems to include East Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and the Western Pacific, including Japan and Australia. It includes important communication lines in sea waters for maritime trade, so it's an important strategic and economic domain that connects the two significant oceans and sea waters. Thus, the domains of Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific connect to maritime security and cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific region is a large and diverse region of the globe, home to a wide range of nations, cultures, and economies. East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Islands are all included. It connects the west coast of the Americas to the east coast of Africa. They also refer to it as Indo-Pacific Asia, which comprises the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, Western Pacific Ocean, Central Pacific Ocean, and connecting seas (Bhatia & Sakhuja, 2014).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The geographical transformation of Indo-Pacific to Asia-Pacific has emerged after the USA policy of pivoting to Asia and rebalancing to Asia (Amin & Krishnan 2021, 216). The term has a more geographical concept than a geopolitical sense, and it is not only a convergence of regions of Indian Ocean states and Pacific Ocean states, but it also includes the states along the rim of the Asia-Pacific Ocean. Till the 1980s, the Indian Ocean was strategically not so important, and it was used for commercial trade represented by the US-influenced region. However, the conceptual and geographical meanings of Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific changed as soon as the China-US rivalry moved its power struggle and dominance from territorial areas to oceanic seas. This concept has transformed into the "Asia-Indo-Pacific" idea (He 2018, 117), a convergence of interests, including the containment of China in the blue waters. The US Indo-Pacific policy has been described as the geo-economic and geopolitical space in the Indo-Pacific waters, which is central to its interests (Jash, 2021).

With over 60% of the world's population living there, Asia-Pacific is the region on the globe with the highest population. There are over 4.5 billion people. The region is renowned for its extensive cultural heritage and its diverse terrain, which includes hundreds of islands dispersed across the Pacific, towering mountains, vast deserts, and dense forests. The Asia-Pacific area has some of the world's fastest-growing economies. China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam are a few of them. Australia, South Korea, Japan, and other developed nations are also in this region. These nations are global economic powerhouses with extensive commercial and trade ties to other nations. (Sulaeman, 2020).

The Asia-Pacific region confronts several concerns, including global issues, border conflicts, environmental degradation, and the consequences of climate change, despite its economic success. This region is home to some of the poorest and most vulnerable people on earth, and inequality is still a major issue in many nations. In persuading geo-strategic and geo-economic interests, the West has developed its engagement in the Indo-Pacific Ocean, symbolizing the shift of influence and power from the West to the East. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has given rise to the term 'Asian Century,' as Asia

is expected to dominate or lead the international order, much like how America and Europe dominated and shaped the international order in the twentieth and nineteenth centuries. The Asia-Pacific region is important to the United States, China, Japan, and Australia, and their policies and actions have a significant impact on how the region develops and maintains stability. As a result, authorities and specialists from all over the globe continue to rank the Asia-Pacific region (Summers, 2023).

The objectives of the research paper are as follow: To investigate the changing patterns of maritime power relations in the Indo-Pacific area; To analyze the changing patterns of maritime power relations in the Indo-Pacific area; To evaluate the ways where the maritime interests of non-regional and regional powers in the Asia-Pacific context overlap and diverge.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This paper employs a qualitative methodology relying mostly on the secondary sources, such as scholarly papers, books, research reports, articles and media coverage. A hermeneutic approach has been used to comprehend and analyze the changing power structures in the Asia-Pacific maritime area. This entails analyzing official records, statements from the concerned countries, and their strategic plans for interpreting their underlying meanings, intentions, and implications. This study has Contextualized the recognized power relations in the larger historical, sociopolitical, and regional framework of the Asia-Pacific region by utilizing particular case studies that highlight significant occurrences or efforts that represent the maritime power dynamics in the region in order to support and explain more general claims. Apart from that, it uses a comparative analysis technique by highlighting the similarities and differences between the main stakeholders' convergent and divergent maritime policies.

### **HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

Over thousands of years, several diverse countries, powers, and cultures have influenced the history of Asia and the Pacific. For hundreds of years, the area has served as a hub for commerce and cross-cultural interaction and has been home to some of the most powerful nations and powers in the world, including the Chinese, Japanese, and Indians (He 2018, 118). The Asia-Pacific region served as the epicenter of maritime commerce in antiquity. Indian and Arab merchants traveled as far as Southeast Asia and China, while Chinese traders traveled as far as India and the Middle East. These trading routes facilitated the development of several diverse communities and countries in the region, which made it simpler for people to exchange goods, ideas, and cultural traditions. European soldiers conquered the Asia-Pacific region in the 19th century. Spain, the Netherlands, Britain, and France all established outposts in the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia. Using the workforce and resources of the region, these colonial powers brought about significant changes in the region's economy and culture (Zou, 2013).

The Asia-Pacific region saw some of the deadliest battles in history during World War II. The Japanese invasion of China, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were among them. After the war, new powers, most notably the United States, took control of the region. It had significant economic growth and development after World War II. The economies of nations like Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan became some of the most developed in the world. However, there was also a great deal of political unrest in the area. Conflicts, including the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War, altered the political landscape of the region.

Officials and professionals from all over the globe still give the Asia-Pacific area a lot of attention today. This is so that they may all exert influence and control over the region, as big countries like the United States, China, and Japan are doing. The area's lengthy and complex history, as well as its many diverse cultures, continue to influence its development and global relevance (Medcalf, 2018).

### **Significance of Asia Pacific Region**

Due to its geopolitical, economic, and cultural aspects, the Asia-Pacific, or Indo-Pacific, area is a center of global importance.

#### ***Military and Strategic Significance***

This region, which is strategically located between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, is home to some of the most powerful economies in the world, including those of Australia, South Korea, China, Japan, and India. Taken as a whole, they control almost half of global commerce and GDP (Khan & Amin, 2015). The South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, which connect Europe and Asia, are important commercial routes that guarantee the region's prominence in world trade. Political stability has been significantly improved by the transition to democratic governance in many nations, despite enduring issues like territorial conflicts and the development of nuclear weapons. The geopolitical significance of the region is reflected in the large military presence of major powers such as the US, China, Russia, and Japan (Youn 2023, 64). The region's strategic importance is further highlighted by the abundant reserves of natural resources, including minerals, gas, and oil, which might lead to conflicts centered around these resources (Doyle, 2013).

#### ***Geoeconomic Importance***

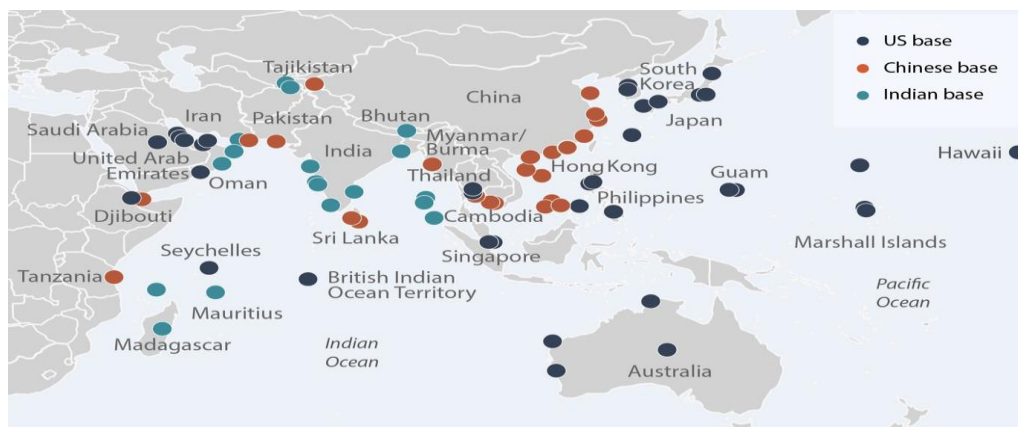
The Asia-Pacific area is home to more than 60% of the world's population, making it an economic powerhouse (Ajami, 2017). Large multinational companies are drawn to countries like China and India because of their sizable consumer bases. Rich natural resources in countries like Indonesia and Australia power the world's industrial and energy sectors. Although the region has a variety of economic models—from market-driven economies in Japan and South Korea to communism in China—it has challenges bringing these various structures into harmony. Important trade agreements like the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) promote global investment and economic cooperation (Park, et. al. 2021, 2-3). Due to its location between two large seas, the area is a vital hub for global tourism and commercial activities.

In addition to connecting Asia, the Asia-Pacific, and India-Ocean also connect North and South America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Both Asia's economy and trade are based on it. Important SLOCs located in the Asia-Pacific region facilitate the oil traffic between the main Asian economic nations. With important SLOC, it is the third-largest body of water in the world. However, compared to other major bodies of water, it has fewer choke points: 40% of worldwide oil traffic is sent via the Strait of Hormuz, 35% through the Strait of Malacca, and 8% is shipped through the Bab el-Mandab Strait. Additionally, according to Holmes and Yoshihara (2008), this region observes more than half of all armed confrontations worldwide.

### ***Geo-cultural Depth***

The Asia-Pacific region is a cultural goldmine that extends beyond its strategic and economic importance. Its many languages—from Mandarin to Bahasa Indonesia—have impacted literature and the arts around the world (Medeiros, 2005). Similarly, faiths from this region, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Islam and Hinduism, have influenced intellectual and social discourses across the world. The region's ancient sites, such as Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Great Wall of China, bear witness to its rich history (Reilly, 2007). The Great Wall of China, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and Kyoto and Nara in Japan are just a few examples of the region's cultural heritage. Its artistic pursuits, whether in dance, music, or visual arts, are appreciated across the world. An example of the region's historical importance in promoting cross-cultural contacts is the ancient Silk Road (Chan, 2012). Modern forms, such as anime and martial arts movies, nevertheless captivate the attention of audiences globally.

Overall, the Asia-Pacific region is significant in terms of geo-culture because of its diversity of languages, religions, traditions, art forms, and historical periods. Its cultural contributions to the rest of the globe have had a significant influence, and its ongoing cultural interchange continues to alter the world today.



Source: EPRS, based on Aubry and Tétart; Graphic: Györgi Macsai.

### ***Maritime significance of Asian-pacific region***

With major countries like China, the US, Russia, and Japan located in its strategic position, the Asia-Pacific area is of great military significance. Global trade depends heavily on vital marine lines, including the Strait of Malacca, the South China Sea, and the Sea of Japan. These maritime channels are crucial for international trade and commerce (Blair & Hanley Jr, 2001). The region's military presence is increased by ongoing conflicts, such as tensions between India and Pakistan, North Korea's nuclear aspirations, and territory disputes in the South China Sea. As a result, countries like the US and China have demonstrated their military might, fostering military alliances and raising defense spending, including the People's Liberation Army of China and Pacific Command of the United States. We have spent more money on the military, arms races, and struggle for dominance and influence because of the region's growing military presence. The region's strategic positions, vital trading routes, and powerful militaries highlight the significance of the global military (Kamales & Knorr, 2019).

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## MARITIME GEOPOLITICS AND INTERESTS OF REGIONAL AND NON-REGIONAL POWERS

Geopolitically, the Asia-Pacific area is home to important countries such as China, the US, Japan, and Russia. China faces territorial conflicts with countries like Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines despite its growing economy and naval strength. After the Cold War, the United States emerged in the world theater as a superpower (Ali, 2012). However, China's growing clout and projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are posing a threat to the US's hegemony. Given that both countries see the twenty-first century as "Asia's century," Russia's expanding relationship with China brings a fresh perspective to international affairs (Rana, 2017).

This power struggle revolves around marine and economic concerns. China is cautious about US naval supremacy because it is highly dependent on imported oil, especially via strategic maritime lanes like the Strait of Malacca. Through military and security alliances with regional states located along the sea rims, the US has established a policy to enhance its military footprint in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions, which is a larger one (Ali, 2012). China is the world's top energy importer, and its economy depends heavily on energy imports. About 80% of the oil needed by China's industry is imported by ships via the Strait of Malacca, the South and East China Seas, and the Indian Ocean. By agreement from 2002, Indian naval security assists US ships in policing the Strait of Malacca (Zhao, 2013). The US-led AUKUS security alliance and QUAD provide guardians to the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions. As a result, China did not feel comfortable, and the USA was keeping an eye on its shipments. Chinese perspective is that the United States is fortifying its ties with the coastline states of the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific Ocean by forming military and economic alliances, particularly with India, to gain control over strategic chokepoints and deter China's rapidly growing naval power (Mehbubani, 2014).

The sea lines of communications (SLOCs) are lifelines for future economic development and trade of China through BRI, proposed in 2013, for regional economic development and interregional connectivity. The USA sees the rise of China in the Asia-Pacific Ocean as to dominate the region and it will bring the removal of the USA from the region (Chalivet, 2022). To balance and counter the rapid rise of China in maritime waters, the USA adopted a more aggressive strategy and moved from the "Rebalancing to Asia" doctrine presented by the Obama administration, to "enhancing quadrilateral cooperation," in terms of Quad" (the United States, Australia, Japan and India), under Donald Trump era. The Trump adopted a more anti-China policy in the Indo-Pacific Ocean and in December 2017 National Security Strategy Report declared China as a "rival" (Zarrar & Gichki, 2022).

Additionally, President Biden's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) policy seeks to promote an open and free Indo-Pacific region by highlighting the significance of strategic partnerships, prosperity, and regional stability. By promoting collaboration with allies and partners, maintaining the rules-based international order, and encouraging infrastructure development, trade, and investment in the Indo-Pacific, the FOIP policy aims to contain China's increasing influence in the region. Although the policy does not specify "China's containment" overtly, it is often interpreted as a response to Chinese assertiveness and seeks to offer a unique perspective on the region. Important allies including Japan, Australia, and India have backed the FOIP policy, which highlights the US commitment to the Indo-Pacific region as a central pillar of its foreign policy.

Moreover, India aligns with the US since it considers the Indian Ocean as its strategic domain, although Some Indian scholars also think that India could help maintain strategic equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific, if it is prepared to broaden its thinking (Bose, 2009; Panda 2018, 133). Beyond political rivalry, the region is important because it is the nexus of international trade routes. Notably, three crucial chokepoints for the oil traffic are the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, and Bab el-Mandab. Because of this, almost half of all armed conflicts worldwide occur in this region, which is indicative of its geopolitical instability.

China has serious geopolitical goals for its maritime realm in addition to economic ones. China is investing in port infrastructure as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to protect its energy supply lines from Pakistan to Myanmar (Malik 2018, 67-82). The BRI's main port, Gwadar in Pakistan, provides Central Asian nations with access to warm waters, easing the export of energy. But there are worries about China's maritime development, which includes missile destroyers, aircraft carriers, and sophisticated submarines. Tensions within the region are heightened by this military modernization and its strategic positioning in the Indo-Pacific.

In summary, there is a geopolitical realignment taking place in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific areas. China's maritime aspirations are driven by its economic climb, while the US, supported by allies, aims to preserve its naval superiority. In this context, countries such as India continue to play key roles, and important trade routes continue to be vital to the dynamics of global power. The changing "great game" in these blue seas emphasizes how important this region is to geopolitical in the twenty-first century.

### **Convergence of US Interests with India in Asia-Pacific**

To define its strategic interests, the USA has made a distinction between the Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific areas. The phrase 'Indo-Pacific' highlights India's significance in US geopolitical calculations, particularly in view of China's increasing power (Medcalf, 2018). Since 2009, the US has increasingly focused its regional policy around the Indo-Pacific, a move that was stressed by Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton in 2010 and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in 2009. This is especially true since China's influence has grown since 2010.

The US and India have deepened their relationship in response to China's growing influence, and this has resulted in the 2020 BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) for improved geospatial collaboration. An agreement was made earlier in 2002, according to which India would provide US warships in the Strait of Malacca with naval security. Considering that commerce flowing through these waters accounts for 65% of US GDP, the region's significance was underscored in 2019 with the creation of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) policy in response to the growing US-China competition (Clinton, 2011; Li, 2020).

Concerned about China's multipronged growth, the US Department of Defense points to its "One Belt-One Road" and "Polar Silk Road" programs (Fong, 2022). Russia's growing influence in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in energy exports, significantly complicates the US's geopolitical landscape. The US faces increased strategic rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region because of this obvious convergence between China and Russia. To counter China's influence, the United States is strengthening alliances and partnerships such as the QUAD (with Japan, India, and Australia) and AUKUS (with Australia and the United Kingdom) (Hemmings, 2022; Roychoudhury, 2021). The

primary goal is to protect US interests in the Asia-Pacific area in the face of projected Chinese and Russian ambition.

### **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)**

Shinzo Abe, the prime minister of Japan, proposed the concepts of QUAD and FOIP. During a speech on peace, freedom, and safe navigation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans at the Indian Parliament in 2007, he presented the idea of FOIP. Japan is deeply concerned about China's increasing connectivity across continents through the BRI (Road and Belt Initiative) and has issues with China in the South China Sea. Four countries—Japan, Australia, India, and the United States—formed QUAD in 2004 with the goal of saving and rebuilding lives following the tsunami. The summit in February 2021 stated that its objectives overlapped with FOIP (Walton, 2022). The Asia-Pacific region's tensions and shifting strategic landscape have turned the Quad into a military alliance. China has cautioned the US against joining an Asia-Pacific military alliance akin to NATO. Fact Sheets on the Quad Leaders' Summit, White House Briefing Room, September 2021, November 2021 (Panda, 2021).

### **Australia, United Kingdom and the US (AUKUS)**

Australia will receive nuclear submarines from the US under the terms of the trilateral agreement known as AUKUS, which was formed in 2017. According to Cheng (2022) France saw this as a "stab in the back" since it superseded a 2016 agreement for diesel-powered submarines. According to Tang and Petri (2014), the AUKUS alliance has strengthened US influence and positioned the US against China, redefining the strategic dynamics of the Indo-Pacific. This is especially true in the South China Sea. The US sharing nuclear propulsion technology with a partner is noteworthy because it is the first time since World War II. Strong relations with countries like Japan, South Korea, and Australia allow the US to maintain its historical dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and guarantee regional security. Being closely aligned with major powers like the US and Japan, India has become a pivotal player in the region, owing to its expanding economy. The United States and its partners in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) have worked to strengthen economic ties; these partners include some of the world's fastest-growing countries (Laksmana, 2021). Nonetheless, given China's growing military presence and territorial concerns, the region is increasingly vulnerable to potential flashpoints for conflict, such as Taiwan, the South China Sea, and the Korean Peninsula (Supriyanto, 2021). China has diverse interests spanning political, economic, and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Convergence of Interests with Japan**

Japan is deeply involved in the Asia-Pacific region on an economic, political, and military level. Several regional nations view Tokyo as a vital trading partner, and its businesses have significant investments throughout these economies (Lim, et. al., 2012). Regional trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have also received a lot of support from Japan. Japan has a history of supporting security cooperation and alliances with the US and other regional countries by putting a strong emphasis on human rights advocacy and democracy. Fears over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have led Japan to work closely with the US and other surrounding countries (Inagaki, 2016). Furthermore, Japan and China and South Korea have territorial disputes concerning the



Takeshima/Dokdo Islands and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Japan fosters cooperation on problems like climate change and marine security by playing a crucial role in regional development and crisis relief operations. Japan's diverse involvement in the Asia-Pacific region makes its continuous leadership and involvement essential to the region's security, prosperity, and cohesiveness (Backer, 2014).

### **Convergence of Interests with Australia**

Australia has much to gain and much to lose in the Asia-Pacific area in terms of politics, economy, and military power. Australia is well-positioned to collaborate with the region due to its close proximity and diligent efforts to establish strong relationships with its neighbors. Australia and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region have close trade ties. China is Australia's top trading partner, and the region is its biggest commercial partner (Brook & McGrew, 2013). Australia is a party to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which also includes 11 other Asia-Pacific countries and aims to lower trade barriers and improve economic cooperation. Regarding politics, Australia works with other countries in the region on matters such as maritime security, internet security, and counterterrorism. The country participates in regional gatherings such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS) (Connors, 2004). Defense ties between Australia and major regional players South Korea, Japan, and the US have existed for a long time. These ties help to preserve safety and stability in the area even though the world's issues are getting worse. The Asia-Pacific area is important to Australia's political, military, and economic stability, as seen by the country's diverse range of interests in the region (Jennings, 2013).

### **Convergence of Interests with South Korea**

South Korea has a strong interest in the Asia-Pacific area due to its central Asian location. It has long viewed North Korea, its neighbor to the north, as a threat. To improve its security and economic prosperity, it has thus sought to establish strong ties with other countries in the area. South Korea maintains close economic ties with the Asia-Pacific region. The United States, China, Japan, and the European Union are among the many countries in the region with which the country has free trade agreements. It is a participant in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC. According to Ho and Raymond (2005), South Korea has participated in regional politics. The country has held a number of esteemed occasions, such as the 2018 Winter Olympics, which drew competitors from all over the world. In order to address North Korea's nuclear development, South Korea participated in the Six-Party Talks, one of the regional security initiatives. Strategically, South Korea maintains tight defense ties with both Japan and the United States. These ties uphold security and stability in the region in light of North Korea's threats. The other participants in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), which also includes South Korea, are the US, Japan, India, and Australia. The goal of this group is to improve security and trade relations within the Indo-Pacific area. The goals of South Korea are to create the Asia-Pacific region, advance economic growth, and preserve stability (Synder, 2017).

### **Convergence of Interests with India**

India is a major player in the Asia-Pacific area, with substantial interests in the armed forces, economy, and politics. India is an important trading partner for many countries in the region

because it has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. India is vital to preserving the security of the area due to its potent fleet and advantageous location between the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. Among the many ways that New Delhi has participated in the Asia-Pacific region are its membership in regional organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). India enjoys mutually beneficial relations with many of the major countries in the region, such as the US, Japan, and Australia. India's geopolitical goals in the Asia-Pacific area are to fight terrorism, prevent instability in the Indian Ocean, maintain maritime security, and advance economic unification (Scott, 2012). Additionally, India wants to work more closely with its neighbors to connect its people, build infrastructure, and guarantee the security of its energy supply. India's actions in the Asia-Pacific area have been greatly influenced by its relationships with China. The two countries have a delicate relationship because they compete in some areas and cooperate in others. Because of this, India has also been keeping an eye on China's expanding influence in the area (Ahmad, 2022).

### **Russian Interests in Asia-Pacific**

Russia is becoming an important diplomatic and security player in the Asia-Pacific region despite not being geographically part of it. It has strong economic, political, and military interests in the area. Its influence in Southeast Asia is increased by its connections to China. Due to its large territory, Russia has historically engaged in commerce and business relationships throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Russia's main goals in the area are to combat threats like terrorism, promote economic integration, and maintain security. The country aims to foster friendly ties with important regional players like China, Japan, and the United States. Russia has participated in the Asia-Pacific region in a number of ways, such as by attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference and joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional security organization that also includes China and many Central Asian countries, in 1998. Russia maintains close relations with North Korea, Vietnam, and India in addition to other nations. By boosting trade and investment in the energy sector, Russia has attempted in recent years to deepen its connections with the Asia-Pacific region (Kanaev & Pyatachkova, 2015). In an attempt to encourage economic unification in the region, Russia organized the Eastern Economic Forum, which is an annual gathering that takes place in Vladivostok. Russia has increased trade and investment, particularly in the energy sector, to strengthen its regional engagement. Russia's strategy in the Asia-Pacific region is shaped by the close ties between the two countries, which coincide in terms of security and economic objectives. However, Russia also aims to preserve military independence and balance with other regional powers, which reflects its complex interests in this crucial region (Prabhakar et. al, 2006).

### **Maritime Power Politics: Opportunities and Challenges**

China and the United States face a wide range of complex and challenging competitive opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region. China and the US may work together on regional economic matters such as trade, investment, and infrastructure growth. This would be advantageous for the two countries as well as the area. In an effort to reduce hostilities and advance regional peace, the U.S. S. and China may collaborate through global organizations like the UN or ASEAN (Vermeer, 2017). China and the US have similar goals when it comes to stopping terrorism, protecting the environment, and helping those affected by natural disasters. There may be a chance for cooperation here. In the

South China Sea in particular, the U. S. and China each assert different territorial claims over the area. If this isn't handled correctly, it could lead to violence. Both countries are sending more troops to the area, which is fueling an arms race and raising the possibility of hostilities. There is a strategic competition between the US and China for influence and power in the area. If this is handled incorrectly, it could start a new cold war. Ultimately, it is hard to say whether China and the United States will fight each other in the Asia-Pacific area. There are opportunities as well as difficulties. Political dialogue, economic cooperation, and a shared commitment to regional stability are the best ways to handle this rivalry (Bryden, 2006).

### **Future Prospects for the Asia-Pacific Region**

Over the coming years, it is anticipated that the Asia-Pacific region will continue to grow and expand. A number of significant trends and obstacles will influence the region's future. Some of the fastest-growing economies in the world are found in the Asia-Pacific region, and this trend is predicted to continue in the years to come. As long as the region's nations keep making investments in infrastructure, knowledge, and creative thinking, they will be in a strong position to support the growth of the world economy. Asia-Pacific is becoming more urbanized as millions of people relocate from rural to urban areas in search of work. It is anticipated that towns will continue to encourage innovation and development in the area in the coming years. Some of the most creative and dynamic technology companies in the world are based in the Asia-Pacific region, and this trend is expected to continue in the years to come. As long as they continue to invest in research and development, nations in the region will be well-positioned to lead global advancement in industries like biotechnology, robotics, and artificial intelligence (Anwar, 2020). The Asia-Pacific area was beset by a number of environmental problems, such as pollution, climate change, and forest degradation. It is imperative to address these issues if both the region and the world are to have a bright future. Numerous geopolitical conflicts, such as territorial disputes, security concerns, and economic rivalry, are currently plaguing the Asia-Pacific region (Bhatia & Sakhuja, 2014).

### **CONCLUSION**

Maritime politics and economy are centered on the Asia-Pacific region, which presents opportunities for growth as well as challenges. Maritime power politics have undergone new developments with the recognition of the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region (IPOR). The present research employs both inside-out and outside-in methodologies to investigate the dynamics of maritime power politics via three distinct lenses: geo-economics, geo-strategic, and geopolitics. The significance of geo-economics is emphasized as it is argued that a realist perspective alone is insufficient to comprehend IPOR dynamics. New strategic directions have been prompted by the changing power dynamics in the IPOR, which are characterized by the US's hegemony and China's growing naval might. In order to balance China's aspirations, the US views India as a crucial ally as attention on the maritime sector grows internationally. India wants to lead the region and use sustainable maritime development to influence IPOR's future and pave the way for a possible change in the world order.

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