

The Rise of Indo- Pacific: Responses of the Quad and ASEAN

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Abstract

Due to geo-economic, geopolitical, and geostrategic importance, the Indo-Pacific has appeared as the centre of gravity in world politics for the 21st century. The Indo-Pacific is a geo-strategic term used to the extent of the diplomatic relation in Indian and the Pacific Ocean countries based on the common values, free and rule-based 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP) and the term has been used recently. Before that the term Asia Pacific had been used for over decades, and geographical idea moves to a geopolitical context by using the Indio-Pacific (*Scott, 2013*). The confluence of the 'Pivot policy' of the USA, Indian's 'Act East policy', the Quad and free and Open Indo-pacific (FOIP), as well as ASEAN's East Asia policy have resulted in a new international security framework and institutional mechanism in Indo-Pacific. Here geography unifies into the geopolitics where global and regional superpowers like China, India or middle powers like Australia, Japan, and other ASEAN counties have shaped their geo-strategy through bilateral and multilateral engagement in different arena, economic, diplomatic and, military to counter China's territorial expansion strategy of the BRI in Indo-Pacific. The main objectives of the article are to understand geo-strategic complexity in Indo-Pacific because of China's geostrategic expansion policy over the region and the responses by regional and global superpowers to counter China's influence through coalition diplomacy and strategy. This research is entirely ~~conducted~~ based on secondary sources.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, FOIP, China, the US, India, Japan, Australia and, ASEAN

1. Introduction

Indo-Pacific is a battleground of supremacy and the center of global power competition. The power structure and balancing framework become so complex regarding China's rising, assertive role, and proactive expansion policy in Indo-Pacific. China's strategy to extend the geopolitical dogma and provide equipment of regulation the PLAN's battle reaches a long SLOC line in Indo-Pacific.

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China's diplomatic and military strategy had covered the three major areas in Indo-pacific. These are Near Seas (the West Pacific), Intermediate Seas (South China Sea), and Far Seas (the Indian Ocean) (You Ji 2018). Rising China with its assertive regional expansion policy makes the complex power relation and balancing and rebalancing power structure in Indo-Pacific. It (power structure) turn to unipolar to bipolar and China is implementing deep economic driven geopolitical expansion policy through the gigantic infrastructural initiative 'One Belt One Road (OBOR)' later it introduced by the PRC as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), comprises two roads, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The BRI is an ambitious plan and the keystone of President Xi Jinping's and the communist party of China's foreign policy to recover the historical global power as a continent power and maritime power from South Pacific to the Indian Ocean (Ishida 2018), Where the US has taken the balancing strategy to counter China by making alliances in this regions with others middle powers based on the new liberal world order principle, democratic and rule-based Indo-Pacific as referred to as 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP). Adm. Philip S. Davidson, commander of the U.S. in Indo-Pacific, told that 'all powers (regional or global) in Indo-pacific are engaged themselves in a geo-strategic race, entirely power structure and framework has visibly divided into bipolar, China-centric order and a free and open Indo-Pacific led by the US and its alliance. He mentioned China's development project and periphery economic diplomacy under the BRI in Indo-Pacific as a 'stalking horse to advance Chinese safety and security anxieties.' (The Economic Times 2020). It is an innovative approach and grand strategy plan of Beijing to the extent the naval power and influence of the PRC over the sea. The MSR— pass through the South China Sea (SCS) to the Indian Ocean and touch different sea harbors, moves through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean then it extending to Europe. It touches different important coastal ports such as Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Kolkata, Chittagong and Colombo, Nairobi, Athens, and Venice. China's policy toward the Indo-Pacific particularly Indian Ocean are considered as a 'Debt Trap Diplomacy' and the MSR match with the concept of China's "String of Pearls" tactic (Chaturvedy 2017).

2.1 China and Indo- Pacific

The territorial extensions policy is not new for China, but it was mainly based on the continent for the decades, but since 1980 China has taken open-up economy policy and redefined its geostrategic policy by including naval strategy, which ultimate goal to make the PLAN a powerful navy and take the absolute control over the sea by 2050 (Ji 2008). China and its blue naval strategy have

broadly defined a three-island chain in Indo-Pacific, According to Andrew S. Erickson: the *first island chain* and it encompasses the area from the southern part of Japan include Ruckus islands in Japan and northern archipelagos, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Taiwan is the center of the first island chain. The *Second island chain* extending from the Japanese archipelago to the Micronesian islands to the tip of Indonesia. The *third island chain* runs from Hawaii to the Alaskan coast. Some geopolitical experts have mentioned fourth and fifth island chains would better define emerging PLANs' naval strategy in the Indian Ocean (Stavridis 2019). The *fourth island chain* extending from the Gwader port of Pakistan to the western coasts of India to Hambantota port in Sri-Lanka, finally it passes Diego Garcia. The *Fifth island chain* passes through the Gulf of Aden to the coast of South Africa, it will cover China's influence over Africa to western parts of the Indian Ocean (Vorndick 2018).

China has taken the geo-strategic expense tactic to dominate the Indo-pacific. There are three geopolitical maritime rotate has divided by China, namely the South China Sea, Indian Oceans, and Pacific Oceans and for each maritime zone, Beijing is implementing the different strategy and technique, regarding the SCS, China has taken maritime expansionism to ensure absolute doctrine in this region, in this regard China has taken "took and talk policy". In the case of IOR, China has taken the drab trap diplomacy or String of Pearl's policy. By the name of huge investment, port development ultimate policy of the PRC to ensure the military presence in IOR to ensure entire control over the Indian Ocean. Concerning the Pacific Ocean, China's policy is assertive rather than balancing, and it is almost replacing strategy. As a part of the BRI, the Maritime Silk Road is a master plan of the Chinese government to establish its influence over Indo-pacific. The SCS is the nucleus of China's maritime plan and strategy through control over this important sea checkpoint and the region, China's vision to control the Indo-pacific. Geo-strategically, geoeconomically the South Chain Sea is an important sea route and it like a bridge between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. To control over the SCS and Southeast China Sea, China's ambition to access into the Western Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean and acquire the dominant position in Indo-Pacific (Scott 2019).

China has taken geographical expansionism in the SCS. This region abounds of natural resource, there are almost 11 billion drums of unexploited oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas are reserved. Beside it, this sea is one of the busy sea route and home to fishing ground across the regions. China claims almost all the largest portion of the maritime zone including the Spratly,

Pratas, and Paracel in this region- *are defined by the nine-dash line* (BBC News 2016). Although the PRC's nine-dash line or "U-Shaped Line" is not clear and it has no legal base particularly it violates the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which had approved by 160 countries including China. The PRC has taken took and take policy regarding the SCS. In this regard, China has taken to technique claims over the island or make the artificial island and expend the maritime territory. For example, the Spratly artificial island had made by the Chinese government and build an oceanic rescue Centre to the facilities on this landmass and this Centre would afford stronger and more widespread logistic support in the South China Sea (Zhen 2019). By acquiring the island or maritime territory that means the country got sovereignty over the territory including distinct parts: the sea, the islands, and the seabed, and got the right to exercise the power over the maritime route. This is the concern for regional and international actors in Indo-Pacific. Nine dash line violates the international low of the sea makes a dispute China with other ASEAN contending petitioners Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam of fixing the EEZ and Island (Roy 2016).

China has dramatically changed its traditional sphere of influence and activities in IOR. Beijing has shaped it's IOR's strategy for serving the three border interest commercial, diplomatic, and geostrategic. China's overwhelming strategic commanding in IOR by expanding infrastructural links and logistic support to shelter of it Sea Lines of Communication (it's so-called SLOC) and to protection and promotion of regional geopolitical and geostrategic interest. The Indian Ocean is geo-strategically very important sea route, it links the Pacific Ocean and East Asia to the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, with 74.9 million square kilometers, the IOR is important for energy resources, raw materials, and trade transportation. There are around 100,000 ships and container passing annually through IOR, it has covered 50 percent of the globe's sea line trade, almost 40 percent globe's oil supply. The Strait of Malacca and Strait of Hormuz both carry around 33 million barrels of oil each day. This region is full of natural resources around 58 percent global oil and 46 percent of global natural gas reserved in IOR. On the other side, before 1990 China was the energy importer county, but for industrialization, China is a top country according to oil energy import from outside, particularly from the GCC states. Around 80 percent of imported energy passes through the Indian Ocean, especially through the Strait of Malacca. As for the importance and dependency of this checkpoint, former president Hu Jintao had mentioned and so-called 'Malacca Dilemma' (Brewster 2018). The Indian Ocean is one of the important maritime zones

and the third-largest Ocean with limited access points, one entry point with a combination of some “chokepoint” and denies the naval access to key ports of the sea. The most important at strategic choke points in the Indian Ocean are the Malacca Straits, the Gulf of Manner, the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Cana, Babel Mandeb (Djibouti-Yemen).

Today the major powers in the Indian Ocean are struggling for maritime supremacy. The Indian Ocean is considered a battleground of supremacy, here China, the United States, and India are major players and as subsidiary players (powers) such as Australia, French, and Japan, Russia and ASEAN are also involved themselves. Geo-strategically India got more advantage and India is staying the central position of power strategy in IOR, regarding strategic calculus, China is geographical vulnerable to domineering the Indian Ocean. Linter Author and famous Journalist, has mentioned in his book *“The Costliest Pearl – China’s Struggle for India’s Ocean”* the Beijing’s strategy to take over the control for the Indian Ocean, as mentioned as *“The Costliest Pearl”* Where China purposefully is increasing maritime power, influence, capacity and access in the Indian Ocean, to get the superpower crown in Indo-Pacific particularly the Indian Ocean and streaming march over India by replacing others Ocean power like the US, the UK, and French, through the massive investment in the periphery counties under the BRI, and 21 Maritime Silk Road, marine influence in Djibouti, Mauritius, Seychelles, the Maldives, Sri- Lanka, Myanmar, and Christmas Island near Indonesia (Haidar 2019). China has taken a long-standing strategy, to counter the Quad and capture the ocean power by avoiding an archaic and entrapping method of costly military conflict. The Chinese “String of Pearls” policy is a geopolitical influence or military strategy explicitly guided by the PRC, to extend the sphere of military power and make a strong diplomatic relationship through the investments and port development project in difference checkpoint in the Indian Ocean to counter the others superpower and establish it maritime doctrine in this region (Pehrson 2006), for example, the Chinese seaport development in at the Gwader seaport development in Pakistan, the Hambantota in Sri-Lanka, Chittagong seaport development in Bangladesh, and port development in a different point in Myanmar, these are strategically important location in IOR (Ashraf 2017). Western world coined it as a China’s ‘Debt Trap Diplomacy’, where Beijing’s strategy to establish PLAN presence through a series of stations along the IOR.

As an important maritime zone, the West pacific is a zone of the battlefield, the major world power and regional stakeholder like ASEAN, they always try to establish the control over the western

pacific zone, because geo-strategically this zone included the coastline two Asian sub-region, which are very important to ensure their economic and geopolitical interest. Historically this region had been dominated by different super power, before and during WWI or WWII the Japanese imperialist power took control over this zone, after WWII or during the cold war two superpowers the USA and the USSR, their alliance NATO and Warsaw also exercise the power in a different phase. But after the cold war, the USA took over the absolute power in Indo-Pacific particularly the western Pacific (Olsen 1987). The Post 9/11 the USA leadership turn their attention from the Pacific Ocean to the Middle East specifically on Iraq and Afghanistan, and during this time China became powerful and engaged itself in the race of super power before that China was a balancer to balance the power relationships among or between the different maritime power in Pacific region but China wants to be a security provider rather than the power balancer in Indo-Pacific, and this is an issue of great concern for other regions as well as global powers (Carney 2014).

China has a close cultural, economic link with the west pacific Island nation, Beijing has increased relationship significantly with other pacific countries in recent year, through the economic, diplomatic, and cultural relation with around the eight of the fourteen Pacific Island nation these are Cook Island, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu (Mukhopadhyay 2018). The BRI has to play a vital role to make a strong tie because of China's massive investment in different development projects.

2.2 The USA and Indo-Pacific

After 9/11 the USA foreign policy had changed drastically, Washington turned the focused the Middle East rather than the Indo-Pacific or the Asia-Pacific. But China's rising and its military modernization, geographic expansion, through economic colonization in Indo-Pacific is a great concern for other superpowers in this region. The USA again has taken the "US is Back in Asia" Policy, to counter China rising in Indo-Pacific in recent. The Obama Administration declared the Pivot to Asia strategy or the rebalancing strategy and turn the focus from Central Asia to Asia-Pacific. China had taken initiative to make a free-trade region ASEAN+3 (plus China, Japan, and South Korea).

To counter China led the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, and free trade agreement, in 2012 the USA declared free trade mechanism, named the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

among the Indo-Pacific countries by including the major economies of the Asia-Pacific, it was just a rebalancing rather than the Pivot (Lieberthal 2011). But recently Trump administration withdrew the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and had taken American First Policy under this policy, new strategies have been implementing by including Australia, India, Japan and proposed Indo-Pacific Partnership (IPP) to counter the BRI or MSI with the new concept 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP) through making a democratize alliance the Quad (Demir 2018).

The Donald Trump administration has passed the US National Defense Authorization Act 2020 and the Pentagon has given a clear road map regarding Indo-Pacific to counter China and its interventionist moves. US President Donald Trump has approved \$738 billion to the extent of the navy power and capacity in Indo-Pacific for the year 2020. As a part of military command in Indo-Pacific, Pentagon has taken an extension of the airplane fleet and the F-35 program and make a friendly relation with other countries in this region. (The Economic Times 2019). USA Navy has deployed battleship near the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea in January 2020. The USA believes in equal rights of every partner of the sea, freedoms of navigation, and rule-based Indo-Pacific. The US-led freedom of navigation operations becomes a daily routine for the US Navy in disputed regions to counter China (JOHNSON 2020).

The trump administration affirmed a "New Era" of economic diplomacy and declared an economic package with \$113 billion for the Indo-Pacific. Mr. Mike Pompeo the Secretary of state of the US mentioned Indo-Pacific as a subject of great significance to US foreign policy. He claimed this economic package as a great engine of the future global economy and for peace and prosperity for these regions. This package has announced for multi-purpose, such as infrastructural development, digital connectivity, energy resources management, and logistic support to help partners for establishing peace and prosperity in Indo-Pacific (ARIANA KING 2018). Although the USA not directly mentions China, this package has been announced during the time of trade war is going on between China and the USA.

The USA has been engaged in Indo-Pacific for around 150 years. After the Second World War US had taken the policy to counter the other opposition powers to enhance the influence by allying. After the cold war, the USA unilaterally committed to establishing peace and security in Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific. As for that, Washington involves Indo-Pacific through different bilateral and multilateral treaties or engagement in different cooperation levels such as economic,

diplomacy, and security. For example, Navy Initiated Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), Talisman Sabre, Cobra Gold, Pacific Partnership and the Quad alliance and Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism, better known as SEACAT are important initiative led by the USA in Indo-Pacific to tackle the traditional and non-traditional threads (Carney 2014).

2.3 India and Indo-Pacific

In 1990 after the cold war world economic and political order had changed with a large scale. After the collapse of the USSR, the USA had become the superpower in world politics. India also reforms its economic, political, and diplomatic relations. Since independence, Indian policymakers try to pursue the neutral foreign policy and kept the distance from the supper power block. Non-alignment and democratic values, based on these values India implement and apply its foreign policy and diplomacy with the rest of the world, Indo-Pacific policy is not an exception from that. Indian response against China`s repercussion and domination in the Indian Ocean have been multi-split, multilateral engagement with middle powers, and crucial powers in Indo-Pacific. New Delhi had shaped its strategy to counter China with multilateralism.

The first and primary strategy of India`s to increase and restore its power in the IOR. Indian is pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy regarding Indo-pacific. Southeast Asian, South Asia, and West Asian counties are the center of Indian foreign policy and strategic outlook in Indo-Pacific. Six months after taking to the power in May 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 12th at the India-ASEAN Summit in Myanmar and declared the BJP government believe in cooperation and extend the relationship with others regions, India has moved with a great sense of importance and extent to turn our “Look East Policy” into “Act East Policy” (Macquarie 2015). The main object to change the term of LEP into ACP, LEP only limited with ASEAN countries but as Act East Policy, New Delhi wants to extend relation with East Asian nations including Japan, Australia, South Korea and look on more strategic flavor and promoting economic collaboration, maintain cultural relation, and strengthen strategic cooperation with Indo-Pacific through constant engagements at the regional and global level. BJP government also declared “Neighborhood First Policy” and recently announced “Far East Policy” to enhancement Delhi`s engagement with Moscow and its neighbors.

India`s old spice route and India`s project of Mausam in Oman is a new strategy to counter China`s growing decisive track with Maritime Silk Route and China`s geo-strategic influence from East

Asia to Central Asia in the Indian Ocean. Oman is a crucial business partner in the Gulf region, the trade volume between them is more than \$ 6 billion (Rajat 2015).

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a joint mega project has introduced jointly by Russia, India, and Iran in 2000, it was signed in May in 2002. INSTC has proposed a designed to link the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and then it covered Northern Europe via Petersburg in Russia. It is a mega plan for India to counter China`s BRI in Central and Northern Europe. INSTC proposed two types of routes, primary route, and an additional route. As a primary route has designed to involve moving freight from India to Iran, Afghanistan to Russia, first step this route and corridor will connect the major city such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Bandar-e-Anzali, Astrakhan, other regions of the Russian Federation, and further into Europe by Russian Railways.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed in his Speech at Shangri-La Dialogue and disclosed the Indian inclusive maritime strategy, where India wants to make diplomatic, economic, and strategic relationships with ASEAN, Japan, China, the USA, Russia, and African countries. India is a strong supporter of Pan-Asianism (Koldunova 2019).

Second, New Delhi has explored great power diplomacy by actively promoting economic ties and pursuing security partnerships with other majors and a middle power in the Indo-Pacific based on rule-based and the principle of FOIP. New Delhi has shown her interest and formed security partnerships with other key democracies counties such as Japan, Australia, the US, South Korea, and many ASEAN counties, particularly with Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia. India has signed many bilateral and multilateral MOUs and defense treaties with major and middle power in Indo-Pacific to counter the China influence across the IOR. New Delhi has close strategic relations, defense programs, nuclear cooperation with Washington, and the annual Malabar exercise in Indo-Pacific as key milestones in recent years.

Although rising China is a great thread for India in Asia. but India`s responses is continued engagement with China, where both neighbors share similar interest. After Narendra Modi came to the power two counties had started high-level diplomatic relations in a different arena. For example, both counties started small scale military exercises on anti-piracy or counter-terrorism in the Indian Ocean. Indian Nave cooperates with the PLAN to secure maritime transportation through SLOC (Breweter 2018).

2.4 Japan and Indo-Pacific

China rises and reemerges as a superpower ambition in Indo-Pacific to be the major geopolitical challenge for other regional power in this region. Japan has pursued the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI) and Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Strategy based on the principle of liberal world order and democratic values. Shinzo Abe's the PM Minister of Japan introduced a new concept combination of diplomatic, economic, and strategic as mentioned as an "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond (ADSD)" to the extent the relationship with its partner and alliance as a part of Japanese defense strategy through multilateral engagement to counter China's influence as a part of Japan's FOIP strategy in Indo-Pacific. FOIP has three significant dimensions, regarding of Japan's tactical purposes in Indo-Pacific, these are *balancing*, *connectivity*, and *order-building*. Japan has taken a defensive approach and *balancing* strategy in Indo-Pacific with a collective security framework or multilateral engagement. Since the Second World War, Washington and its alliance are committed to providing Japan's national security, but in the contest of China raising and aggressive maritime policy and on the other side American First Policy or American relative deterioration and dilution American capacity in Indo-Pacific, is a great security concern for Tokyo and it led to force ally with others power in Indo-Pacific. In the contest of power balancing in the Indo-Pacific, India is another best choice for Japan. If we analyze and then compare the overall capacity and strategic advantage among China, India, and Japan with the Asian strategic triangle, we will get the real balancing scenario in Indo-Pacific. If China shares the long side A of a triangle and India and Japan share another two sides B and C. So B+C is higher than A. the nonexistence of a Tokyo- New Delhi coalition, the expansion of a Sino-centric Asia could become inescapable. So in this calculation to counter China and balance the power in Indo-Pacific or Asia Pacific, for Japan none have a suitable choice than India (Kaura 2016).

Table 1 The Comparison of power among The USA, China and other middle powers in Indo-Pacific

Countries	Population	GDP US\$	Defense Spending
USA	316.5 Million	16.78 trillion	640.21 billion
China	1.36 billion	9.18 trillion	188.46 billion

Middle Powers	1.64 billion	9.23 trillion	127.80 billion
Australia, India, Japan and Indonesia			

Source: R. M. (Mohan 2014)

Connectivity is the core focus of Japan`s strategy to build up the resilience and the secure Indo-Pacific and this is the core buzzword for the economic components of Japan`s FOIP strategy. Japan has taken greeter development projects and region-wide engagement strategies. In this regard Japan`s divided three important special *connectivity* project these are “1) the East-West and Southern Economic Corridors in Southeast Asia in Pacific Ocean 2) the North East Connectivity Improvement Project (India) and the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Zone in Southwest Asia in the Indian Ocean and 3) the Southeast Asia to Southeast Africa Northern Corridor through Southwest Asia and the Middle East” (Yennie-Lindgren 2019).

Another objective of Japan`s policy in Indo-Pacific is *the Order building* or value base approach, ‘embedded in the importance of common principles like rule of law, democracy. ‘Quadrilateral Initiative,’ ‘Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond’ and the latest ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ are collective security arrangement mechanism and visions for leveraging the basic principle of Japan`s foreign policy.’ (Basu 2020) These are Japanese concepts in Indo-Pacific to ensure security and resolving the disputes based on the UNCLOS. Tokyo has proposed a new concept ‘Broader Asia’ in the Indo-pacific, and it is a new geographic strategy where not only focuses on the pacific or East Asia but also focuses on South Asia. The initial point of Japan`s policy in East Asia, then extending to the Middle East and Africa, in which Japan and India are key players, would develop a network with the USA, Australia, and ASEAN in Indo-Pacific (HARUKO 2020). *“The Quad” in the expanded “broader Asia”, which covered the eastern Indian Ocean and the entire Pacific Ocean.*

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) is an informal security dialogue, “strategic autonomy” and multilateral engagements with alliances or formalized military arrangements among the USA, Japan, Australia, and India. The Quad like minored democratic alliance in Indo Pacific, alliances believes in the international order and the principle of seeing management, regional stability, and collective security to ensure open and free trade in Indo-Pacific (Pratap 2019). Quad is considered as a NATO of Indo-Pacific.

2.5 Australia and Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific denotes the Centre of gravity of Australia's economic, diplomatic and geo-strategic interests. Australia had shown its interest in the Asian region since 1991 under Paul Keating's Labor Government and had been used the Asia-Pacific to show the interest to make the Asia-Pacific Ocean framework. Australia is an active channel or bridge between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and between Washington and New Delhi. As for this strategic logic and geographical advantage, Australia has exposed its interest to build coalition diplomacy and bilateral cooperation with India and the US to establish alliance or trilateral framework and institutional linking with the United States and its strategic alliance, such as the Trilateral Security framework among the US-Japan–Australia Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (2002), Australia-US-China Trilateral Exercise “Kowari” in 2014 or Multilateral architecture Such as Quad, and provide a potential source of order preservation in Indo-Pacific (Scott 2013).

Canberra had shaped the regional order based on democratizing values with four major democratize countries-Japan, India, Indonesia, and South Korea, as well as Southeast Asian counties and New Zealand. On the other side, Australia involved a different alliance, but the US remains dominant in Australian's security, strategic, and defense planning (Híjar-Chiapa 2018).

Australia is one of the strategic anchors in this region because of its geographical location and Australia lies in the middle of the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean. To ensure the maritime security and stability in Indo-Pacific particularly North-East Asia, South East Asia, and the southwest Pacific is the key aim of Australia's strategy. Australia is engaging itself in difference levels of diplomacy, and shaping its foreign policy and security through many channels multilateral, trilateral, and the bilateral initiative and involved partnership with differences governmental, nongovernmental organization. (Observer Research Foundation 2020). Australia has taken initiative to engage neighborhood policy to ensure national security.

Australian had started diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries recently. Canberra makes a good relation in differences policy arenas, such as economic ties, diplomatic relations, and strategic partnership South East and South Asian counties. Australia has signed MOUs, and treaties with ASEAN countries and others, including Fiji, India, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea. Australia had started its major's annual maritime activity in Indo-Pacific Endeavour since 2019 and extended the maritime sphere of influence over the Indian Ocean.

The Southwest Pacific is another center of Australian's foreign policy and strategic outlook in the Indo-Pacific. Australia recently has announced a package of an initiative to enhance the relation with Pacific partners under Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP), Canberra has announced \$2 billion over 30 years for maritime logistic support in the Southwest Pacific region. The Australian Defense Force plays a crucial role to ensure maritime safety in this region. Northeast Asia and North Pacific are other centers of Australia's Indo-Pacific strategy. Australia always maintains good diplomatic and strategic relationships with South Korea to counter North Korea's in this region (Hardy 2019).

2.6 Indo-Pacific and ASEAN

ASEAN or Southeast Asian countries is considered a center point in Indo-Pacific, South East Asia has emerged the central of regional multilateralism in global politics because of its geographical and geostrategic location. These Countries believe in regional security based on Pluralism. Southeast Asian countries have implemented ASEAN outlook and regional architecture on the Indo-Pacific called the ASEAN style of Indo-Pacific based on the initiative has taken by Indonesia. Its core themes are "inclusivity" and "ASEAN centrality." (Oba 2019). Southeast Asian countries particularly ASEAN have the interest to build up the regional based institutions to ensure regional security and prosperity, through cooperation with internal and external powers in Indo Pacific. ASEAN countries believe in cooperation rather than competition with regional and global powers. ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ARF, EAS, ASEAN+3 (APT), RCEP, ADMM+, are a great example for regional base security mechanism, where ASEAN countries open the door for internal and external states to participate with them for regional development as well as establish a balancing regional security framework in Indo-Pacific. Southeast Asian countries are playing a positive role in regional politics through coalition diplomacy with small and middle powers in Indo-Pacific (KOGA 2019). Within superpowers and regional powers competition, ASEAN attitude to build liberal types of foreign policy based on international rules and norms, without ignoring China, other regional and global powers in this region (Isa 2018).

Table 2: The Summary of Key Objects, Strategies and Policies between China and Others Stakeholder in Indo-Pacific

	China	Others the US, Japan, India, Australia and ASEAN)
Vision/objectives	China`s ambition become a traditional continental as well as maritime supper power in Indo-Pacific.	Every major powers and middle power have a common vision, A Free, Open and Rule –based Asia and the peaceful Indo-Pacific.
Strategic Concept	Replace the US and others major powers, checking the India, Japan, Australia by integrating the China`s with peripheral states in Indo-Pacific.	The Quad`s counties, others maritime powers, strengthening ASEAN integrity and India`s role in Indo-Pacific to counter the China
Main Policies	The restructuring of the global governance, periphery diplomacy, pan Asianism (Asia for Asia)	Common security concept, power balancing strategy, democratic values, liberty and freedom based common global/regional security framework in Indo-Pacific.

3. Conclusion

Indo-Pacific is a battleground of supremacy and battlefield of central of global powers competition. Major`s global and regional powers are functioning here and geo-strategically the Indo-Pacific is becoming a dichotomous region in the world, the major powers are engaging themselves to build new security frameworks with counter and anti-counter, balancing and rebalancing strategy. China is playing an assertive role to ensure its national security as well as become a global superpower through territorial expenses and debt trap policy in Periphery nation under the BRI, where others major powers or middle powers (India, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and ASEAN) in Indo-pacific are playing alliance strategy led by the US-based on the principle of FOIP to counter the PRC absolute influence in Indo-Pacific.

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