THE NEW GREAT GAME AND THE EMERGING GEOPOLITICS OF INDO-PACIFIC REGION

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Abstract: Indo-Pacific region has become the center of gravity, the most important hub of global economic, commercial, military, diplomatic and cultural activities of the 21st century. The center has the potential to influence issues of war and peace. This is where competing military power comes in with potentially dangerous consequences, as do powerful economic and market forces, and actors engage in diplomatic content and the use of cultural diplomacy to influence attitudes and politics in the region and beyond. Actors in this field have the scale and importance of this region compared to other regions (e.g., Europe, Middle East, Africa and South America). The revolutionaries of today's world politics - the creators and organizers of the new textbooks - will be forced to operate in the Indo-Pacific world. The prime sign of this region's growing importance is trillions of dollars' worth of trade and economic activity, and China's growth is regional and global. There are five nuclear powers - China, North Korea, India, Pakistan and Iran and among the actual actors there is a pattern of illicit trafficking in missiles and nuclear weapons. Diplomatic activity between Indo-Pacific countries has increased, reflected in changing patterns of relationships that are no longer tied to sub-regional agreements**.** For example, connectivity is increasing between countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the coastal states of the Gulf/Middle East and Indian Ocean.

The methodology used in this research paper is historical, analytical and descriptive. Both primary and secondary sources were used in the study, with most of the research material consisting of secondary sources. The research followed a mixed approach, representing a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research study came to logical conclusions with the validation of the research topic through careful use of credible sources and rigorous methods. Particular attention was paid to the ethical dimension of the research and to obtaining unbiased and objective conclusions.

Keywords: - Indo-Pacific, Maritime, Geo-political, Conflicts

Introduction

The Indo-Pacific contains close to the half the world's population, including in its ambit the dynamic subregions of Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia and the resource rich and sometimes volatile Middle East and Africa. The integrated region consists of several of the world's important choke points for global commerce including the Straits of Malacca, through which almost a quarter of world trade passes and is arguably the most critical as the artery of the world's economy. It is the transit passage for not just the bulk of China's trade, but also for the entire lot of east bound commercial traffic and oil and gas shipments from Europe and Middle East.

One reason for the growth of Asia in past decade has been increasing flow of raw materials, including energy from Middle East. It has also led to an increase in the flow of Asian labour, capital, and consumer goods particularly to the rich countries in the Arabian Peninsula. With growing trade, port infrastructure in the region has grown exponentially serving to expand economic ties. New ports, airports, roads, rail systems and pipelines now traverse Asia from West to East and are making access between the landmass of Eurasia and the Indian Ocean much easier. The pace and scope of infrastructure development has been so dramatic that sometimes entirely new ports have been developed on sites that were earlier little more than fishing harbours such as Gwadar in Pakistan or Hambantota in Sri Lanka. The boom in port construction has only heightened the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific and this in turn is likely to generate greater commercial traffic and the possibility for greater strategic competition.

Geo-strategically, the Straits of Malacca dominate more than the commercial and economic lifelines into and out of the rapidly expanding economies of East Asia. The global strategic growth and expansion of aspiring powers can be contained and regulated through the mere control on the movements of their naval forces through these Straits. With more than 80,000 vessels transiting the Straits every year it is the world's hottest and most crucial strategic choke point and with new "maritime trading hubs" on the drawing boards in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand, use of the Straits will only grow once this new infrastructure is operational.

This research paper aims to analyze the regional conflicts and regional diplomacy in the recent changing dynamics of this area. This paper enquires about the international and translational concerns of Indo-Pacific region and what are the geopolitical implications of the regional anxieties of this area.

Geography of the Indo-Pacific Islands

Research Methodology

The methodology used in this research paper is historical, analytical and descriptive. Both primary and secondary sources were used in the study, with most of the research material consisting of secondary sources. Data sources and background information were obtained from various published reports (online) and from previously conducted interviews with political and defense leaders, naval doctrines, defense annual reports, joint statements, press releases from spouses, and other official reports of State Department affairs and Department of Defense. Secondary sources include books, articles in various journals, defense white papers, national security strategy papers, journals, journals, internet sources, newspapers, and working papers from various teaching and research institutions such as the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis (IDEA). , National Maritime Foundation (NMF), Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISP), Indian Council of World Affairs (IOWA), National Defense Research Institute (DRI), United Service Institution of India (USI), Observer Research Foundation (OF), Institute for Peace and Conflict Research (PCs), etc. Study questions in the right direction to get necessary information.

Dealing with Regional Conflict

The security situation in the Indo-Pacific is complicated by maritime boundary disputes. As energy security becomes important for nations, maritime boundary delineation has turned into a potent source of international conflict. While potentially rich oil and gas resources lie within national maritime zones, they are inaccessible for exploitation so long as the hundreds of overlapping offshore boundary claims remain in dispute. While long-standing maritime boundary disputes in the South China Sea attract much media attention, disagreements over territorial waters and in the Bay of Bengal are also on the rise. India, Bangladesh and Vietnam find themselves today find themselves in the middle of such a dispute. There is need for clear principles and mutually boundary disagreements can be resolved.

Worries have also been expressed about the developing relationship of great power competition between U.S., China and India. It is sometimes suggested that the intense rivalry between India and China will result in an India-US alliance to counter China. This is, it must be said, not the most accurate portrayal of the trilateral partnership as there are elements of cooperation and confrontation apart from collaboration between India and China that are rarely spoken about.

Indeed, India official take on its bilateral relationship with China is that there is space enough in the region for both nations to co-exist and grow.

Regional Diplomacy

To enhance regional diplomacy, a case does exist for greater regional cooperation amongst the Indo-Pacific community, Whilst a range of multilateral regional organizations in the IOR, viz., IOR-ARC, IONS, SAARC and BIMSTEC have been working with other groupings in the West Pacific region, viz., ASEAN, ARF, ADMM+ and the East Asia Summit, to ensure better governance in the broader Indo-Pacific region, there is need for greater coherence in regional efforts to establish a community of stakeholders. In recent days there have been efforts by countries in South and South East Asia to revive the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) giving it an expansive and ambitious mandate that includes security. The idea of such a community is to form an integrated neighborhood, which could pave the way for the formation of a comprehensive regional economic and security partnership. Such regional cooperation would indeed be fruitful in reducing tensions between the littoral states.

The nations of the region share many of these common concerns. Most of us accept the need for greater multilateral and bilateral cooperation and therefore choose to constantly engage each other in addressing our concerns. But there is also the need to harmonize ourselves in such a way that we can effectively address the multidimensional challenges of the future. It is for this reason that we need to take a collective consideration of future strategies that would help address the many security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and identify the trends that are likely to shape the Asian strategic landscape over the next two decades.

A Brief History

Prior to the cataclysmic wars of the twentieth century, the Indian and Pacific Oceans were rarely considered as a contiguous whole. The voyages of Zheng He briefly connected the Chinese Empire with the Indian Ocean region Portugal and the Netherlands created trade empires that spanned the Indian Ocean region and opened trade with China and Japan. The British Empire eventually exerted control over the entire Indian Ocean, and established outposts at the seams of the Indo-Pacific in Singapore and Australia. British control over the Indian Ocean, and the emergence of the United States as a Pacific-focused power, effectively precluded the consideration of the Indo-Pacific as a contiguous region in the early twentieth century. The primary exceptions to the concept of regional exclusivity were theorists-Halford Mackinder in the United Kingdom, and Alfred Thayer Mahan in the United States. It took an aggressive regional power-Imperial Japan and its notion of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere-to begin to conceptualise the Indian and Pacific Oceans as inherently linked for both economic and security purposes. That concept, however, was both imperial in nature and shattered by the Second World War.

The end of the Second World War re-shaped international relations in both the Atlantic and Pacific, but the impact on the Indian Ocean was much more gradual. The emergence of the Persian Gulf as the critical node in global energy production and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted a major superpower presence in the Indian Ocean region for the first time in the late 1970s. Even a global struggle with the Soviet Union, however, did not create a US policy priority for viewing the Indo-Pacific as a contiguous theatre-the ungainly seam" between Pacific Command and Central Command essentially divides the Bay of Bengal from the Arabian Sea.

It is only in the post-Cold War world, and particularly in the first decade of the twenty-first century, that the idea of an "Indo-Pacific" emerged. This idea evolved primarily as a result of non-military trends, but reflects concerns about global security that will be addressed below. New centers of economic and, eventually, military power emerged in Asia. These new centers demanded energy-conveniently available in the Persian Gulf, and easily shipped by sea across the Indian Ocean and South China Sea (across major choke points in the Straits of Hormuz, and the Indonesian archipelago). Finally, the end of the Cold War slowly facilitated reconsideration of old foreign policy preferences, hastened by domestic, economic and political changes in key states. Concern over US intentions, as the leading military power with global reach, have gradually mitigated in many states

As regional states grow in power and capacity, their interests and capability naturally expand. This creates new threats across traditional boundaries within and across regions, as Chinese Korean, and Iranian naval vessels carry out anti- piracy missions off the east coast of Africa, for example Economic and geopolitical shifts create a rationale for ne-examining the traditional concept of the Indian and Pacific Oceans as separate political ecosystems. Common international and transnational concerns crisscrossing this broader region prompt governments to focus on interests and challenges outside their immediate neighborhood. The emergence of new security threats based on expanding capabilities and interests create a desire for both policymakers and academics to view the Indo-Pacific as a contiguous and critical theatre in the international security system.

International Concerns

Two sets of factors drive international concerns regarding the maritime geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific. The first is the presence, and rise, of great powers with interests and capabilities that influence affairs beyond their immediate neighborhood The second are global trends that influence perceptions of security across the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

The Indo-Pacific represents the one arena where almost all the great economic and military powers intersect. The United States, of course, maintained a permanent force in the Pacific and a growing force in the Persian Gulf throughout the Cold War US presence in the Indian Ocean increased throughout the 1920s and early twenty-first century as a result of Operation Desert Storm dual containment of Iraq and Iran, and most recently the multi-theatre war on the 1990s and early twenty-first century as a result of Operation Desert Storm, dual containment of Iraq and Iran, and most recently the multi-theatre war on terror.

The rise of China as an economic and, increasingly, a military power also contributes to the conceptualization of the Indo-Pacific as a unitary theatre. China's expanding maritime capabilities, close political connections with Pakistan and Burma, and economic interests in energy flows in the Indian Ocean create a security connection between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In addition, recent Chinese aggressiveness regarding territorial claims with virtually all its neighbors, including India (Arunachal Pradesh and Vietnamese economic agreements), Japan (Senkaku Islands), and ASEAN states (the famous "nine- dashed line" claims in the South China Sea) creates greater insecurity throughout the region. It also contributes to new political arrangements and security agreements as uncertain states seek collective security.

India is a growing economic and military power with traditionally strong interests in the Indian Ocean. India's "Look East" policy established new political and economic ties with Southeast Asia and ASEAN, and Indian military exercises with Japan, the US, and Vietnam suggest a growing acceptance of the links between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and the importance of those links for Indian national interests and security. Japan and Russia are two potentially powerful players in the Pacific, but each is currently constrained in terms of geography and capability from playing a major role in the Indian Ocean. Both share an interest in energy flows from the Persian Gulf-Japan as a consumer. and Russia as an alternate supplier-and each has powerful military capabilities that could be deployed in the Indian Ocean if necessary.

Global trends that affect the entire international community begin with the increasing demand, particularly in Asia, for Persian Gulf energy supplies. These shipments must cross the Indian Ocean and several choke points, as well as waters--the South China Sea-where territorial disputes increase the likelihood of military confrontation. Emerging industrial economies in China, India, and Indonesia require machinery and other technology from the West, and will compete for the export of finished goods back into the Indian Ocean region. Ensuring the free passage of goods across the maritime commons is critical to

Asian economies and, in turn to the global economy as a whole additional global trends that will affect the Indo-Pacific maritime environment include the effects of climate change, which is related to energy use. The rise of sea levels, particularly in the Indian Ocean, will strain littoral states- in Bangladesh, salination of arable land is already Becoming a problem, and the Maldives may disappear. Two

other related trends-demographic growth, particularly in Africa and the Islamic world-and deteriorating fresh water supplies, will combine to make many states in the region much more dependent upon overseas food imports from Australia, Canada, South America, and the United States. The global economy will be more important than ever across the Indo-Pacific, will increase and encourage new trade linkages, and will be an increasing concern for states throughout the region as critical sectors of their economies depend on maritime trade.

Transnational Concerns

In addition to broader global trends, new factors have emerged in particular areas of the Indo-Pacific that affect the broader whole and knit the region together more closely. The rise of Al Qaeda in the late 1990s as a transnational terrorist network is one powerful example of this phenomenon. Al Qaeda provided the network and leadership that linked together groups from all over the Middle East and Asia. The rise of Al Qaeda prompted US responses not only in Afghanistan, but also across the Indian Ocean and into the Pacific as well, including support for counterterrorism efforts in Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Al Qaeda's development of a maritime terrorist cell, which successfully attacked the USS Cole, does not constitute a trend, but does suggest-along with the Mumbai attack later in the decade-that this is a threat across the region with potentially serious strategic impact.

The Indo-Pacific is also the intersection of the world's most recent nuclear powers, from China (1964) to North Korea (which recently successfully tested a 3- 15 kiloton device), but also including India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa (programme destroyed in the 1940s) and potentially Iran. Nuclear proliferation is an international concern, but weapons programmed tends to be developed in response to regional threats. Maritime trade has been the primary means of transport, although air flights in and out of Pakistan have also been linked to the proliferation network of Dr. A. Q. Khan Linkages between these programs and the illegal proliferation networks that carry out this trade, therefore knit the region more closely than ever before North Korean nuclear and missile technology is found in Syria, Iran, and Pakistan; Pakistan transferred nuclear region more closely than ever one North Korean Our and sis technology is found in Syria, Iran, and Pakistan, Pakistan transferred nuclear technology to China, Iran, North Korea and Libya, and Chinese nuclear technology enables Pakistan to develop plutonium weapons capabilities. Iran and North Korea remain imminent proliferation threats. Pakistan's links to both programs and its high rate of fissile material production mark it as a potential proliferation threat as well, particularly give concerns about the physical security of its nuclear materials.

The transfer of conventional arms-particularly from China-also links the Indo-Pacific, and creates longer-term complications for the maritime) environment. The relative capabilities of ship-based and shore-based armaments fluctuate throughout history. It appears today that the relative balance may be adjusting in favor of shore-based defences, due to increases in the range of shore-based weapons and the development of new sensor networks that allow precision attack at greater distances. In addition, the vast increases in unit costs for major combat vessels and carrier-based air power limit the force projection capabilities of even the largest navies. At both ends of the Indo-Pacific, powerful anti-access capabilities, are now positioned in the hands of Iran (a lower- technology complex intended to interdict or close the critical Straits of Hormuz) and China (a sophisticated layered complex of missiles, sensors, aircraft and electronic warfare capabilities, possibly including anti-satellite weapons, focused for the moment on the East and South China Seas). Expansion of either network could significantly threaten Indian Ocean Sea lanes.

Another important trend that may affect the Indo-Pacific maritime environment is the Arab Spring-the wave of political protest and change that has swept from the Maghreb to the Levant, but which has echoes across the Islamic world. New regimes in Egypt, continuing civil war in Syria, and ongoing internal unrest in Iraq create a greater sense of instability in the Middle East. The Gulf monarchies-particularly Bahrain-face internal uncertainty, Iran's "Green Revolution," which may have been the first act in a broader wave of political resentment and change, suggests some level of popular unrest and dissatisfaction. In Pakistan, the "Lawyer's Revolt of 2007 demonstrated popular dissatisfaction with existing order and the potential for significant political change. Bangladesh faces political stagnation between the two major parties, providing poseable opportunities for Islamist parties to make inroads into the political system. And Afghanistan, of course, faces an uncertain future, including Presidential elections a US drawdown of forces, and negotiations with the Taliban all in the offing. Political change throughout the region, therefore, is almost certain-but the form it takes, and the impact on maritime security and trade, remains unpredictable Since both the United States and China have relied on stable governments to support their foreign and economic policies, especially in the Indian Ocean region, political instability potentially threatens the interests of the two major powers as well.

Regional Anxieties and Geopolitical Implications

A last set of factors impacting maritime security is the impact of local concerns that have second and third order consequences that impact the entire region. Examples include political instability in Yemen, which has led to it becoming a haven for Al Qaeda remnants. The "failed states" problem, which has received so much attention from the academic community, could create similar waves Major political change in Bahrain would fundamentally affect US basing and presence throughout the Indian Ocean Regime change in Burma may, over time, change the relative influence of China in Burmese foreign and domestic policy.

One particularly important example of this type of event is the impact of the collapse of governance in Somalia Lack of governance led to an inability to carry out basic preservation of sovereignty, including policing of its waters. National fishing industries from across the Indo-Pacific have therefore exploited Somalia's EEZ and territorial waters, effectively depriving the fishing community in Somalia of the opportunity to make a living. This contributed to the emergence of pirate enterprises in Somalia that threatened the shipping routes around the Hom of Africa. This threat prompted a major international naval presence in the region, which has protected shipping but proves incapable of eliminating the pirate problem. Shipping firms moved their routes further from the Somali coast and Somali pirates changed tactics to using "mother ships" and patrolling much further into the Indian Ocean-to the point where pirates have been captured within 100 miles of the Indian coast.

Other local problems can have impacts across the Indo-Pacific region. North Korea's chronic economic situation has become a tool in the hands of the regime North Korea extorts humanitarian aid from the international community by teetering on the brink of famine and disaster. It successfully extorts temporary influxes of aid by negotiating limited changes in its international behavior. In effect, because of its dangerous economic situation, nuclear arsenal and dangerously erratic behavior, North Korea has made itself too important to fail. The international community keeps it on life support in order to prevent a worse outcome, even though North Korea regularly violates human rights i and international law, and exports dangerous technologies across the entire Indo- Pacific region.

Findings

While potentially rich oil and gas resources lie within national maritime zones, they are inaccessible for exploitation so long as the hundreds of overlapping offshore boundary claims remain in dispute. While long-standing maritime boundary disputes in the South China Sea attract much media attention, disagreements over territorial waters and in the Bay of Bengal are also on the rise.

Worries have also been expressed about the developing relationship of great power competition between U.S., China and India. Indeed, India official take on its bilateral relationship with China is that there is space enough in the region for both nations to co-exist.

To enhance regional diplomacy, a case does exist for greater regional cooperation amongst the Indo-Pacific community, While a range of multilateral regional organizations in the IOR, viz., IOR-ARC, IONS, SAARC and BIMSTEC have been working with other groupings in the West Pacific region, viz., ASEAN, ARF, ADMM+ and the East Asia Summit, to ensure better governance in the broader Indo-Pacific region, there is need for greater coherence in regional efforts to establish a community of stakeholders. In recent days there have been efforts by countries in South and South East Asia to revive the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) giving it an expansive and ambitious mandate that includes security and growth.

In addition, recent Chinese aggressiveness regarding territorial claims with virtually all of its neighbors, including India (Arunachal Pradesh and Vietnamese economic agreements), Japan (Senkaku Islands), and ASEAN states (the famous "nine- dashed line" claims in the South China Sea) creates greater insecurity throughout the Indo-Pacific and it is also the intersection of the world's most recent nuclear powers, from China (1964) to North Korea (which recently successfully tested a 3- 15 kiloton device), but also including India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa (program destroyed in the 1940s) and potentially Iran. Political change throughout the region, therefore, is almost certain-but the form it takes, and the impact on maritime security and trade, remains unpredictable. Since both the United States and China have relied on stable governments to support their foreign and economic policies, especially in the Indian Ocean region, political instability potentially threatens the interests of the two major powers as well. the region.

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Conclusion

The broad geopolitical contours of the Indo-Pacific are fairly predictable. Asian demand for energy supplies will continue, and the Indian Ocean shipping routes will be ever more closely linked with economic prosperity in Southeast and Northeast Asia Asur's relative contribution to the global economy will continue to expand. India and China will each gradually expand their interests and reach gradually intruding into areas the other considers immediate and vital. The United States will continue its historic role in the Western Pacific, will maintain and perhaps even expand its presence in the Indian Ocean within the limits of domestic economic events, Japan, Russia and the European Union will continue to have interests in the Indo-Pacific, but are unlikely to pursue enduring military presence across the entire region.

Some major states will experience population decline (Russia, China and Japan). The Islamic world and Africa will grow rapidly, creating youth bulges that will create significant economic and political stress. India will have healthy population growth, but must still deal with income inequality and hundreds of millions below the poverty line. Demography alone is likely to create unpredictable domestic political pressures, which may be handled more flexibly in democratic societies than in autocratic regimes.

Other factors also contribute to geopolitical unpredictability. The rate of climate changes the relationship between energy consumption and the rate of change, and the potential rate of sea rise remain uncertain. If rates of change are significant, they will raise the chance of political uncertainty in many states, and may also raise tensions on the international scene in climate change negotiations Water shortages, affected by climate change as well as other factors, will create stresses as well. Pakistan, for instance, will double its population in the next twenty yours, probably leading to greater demands for water from the Indus River-a shrinking resource whose headwaters are in Chinese territory, creating complications across multiple conflicted borders.

The most important determinants of geopolitical stability, however, will remain in the traditional security realm. The Indo-Pacific contains many traditional rivalries-the Koreas India-Pakistan, Iran and neighbors, Israel and other states. Ethiopia Somalia, and the growing interests and security concerns of the United States and China. These regional competitions are unlikely to be resolved in the next two decades, as the political causes run deep and the states engaged seek incompatible solutions These rivalries remain a major potential cause for instability, both because they might escalate beyond their immediate neighborhoods and because in some cases, they might involve the use of nuclear weapons.

The most significant potential cause of instability, however, will be rapid shifts in the presence of the United States and China in the region. It domestic economic difficulties instigate a rapid reduction in US deployments in the region. it will create both real and perceived power vacuums, and remove a potential asset in providing collective security. The Indian Ocean, one of the most under institutionalized regions in the world, would be particularly at risk in the absence of a US presence to ensure the maritime commons, other states would be tempted to increase their own regional capabilities to protect their interests. This could lead to a cycle of arms race and exacerbation of existing security dilemmas throughout the region.

China has interests throughout the Indo-Pacific region, and both these interests and China's reach and potential to pursue them will increase in the next two decades. The way China pursues its interests will dramatically affect the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific China's economic rose through 2005, was generally perceived as relatively benign by its neighbors and most of the international community Certain events of course, raised international attention -the brutal suppression of protesters at Tiananmen Square the Taiwan Straits generally perceived as relatively benign by its neighbors and most of the international community. Certain events, of course, raised international attention -the brutal suppression of protesters at Tiananmen Square, the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1995-1996-but each crisis passed and China deliberately chose to pursue a non-confrontational international posture based primarily on the pursuit of economic development.

Since 2007, however, China has reversed policy. It has adopted a confrontational approach policy with nearly all of its neighbors over territorial disputes-the Senkakus, the Spratleys, economic zone issues in the South China Sea, Arunachal Pradesh, and most recently reported consideration of drone strikes into Burma to kill a drug dealer. Single incidents might not raise concern, but Chinese actions suggest a much more aggressive, coordinated policy. China's neighbors, unsurprisingly, are modernizing, their militaries, gradually increasing coordination with traditional partners and seeking new relationships with external powers. In addition, Chinese policy in the past has ignored regime types as it negotiated economic deals throughout the region. The wave of political reform in the Islamic world, however, may overturn many regimes on which China relied, threatening relationships and long-term economic commitments.

It is conceivable, therefore, that China could continue to assert not only more aggressively its territorial claims but also its economic interests in the Indo- Pacific-becoming, in effect, the classic revisionist rising power. Combining an aggressive China with an economically constrained United States, sweeping political change across the region, and growing environmental pressures creates a "perfect storm" of regional instability. It should be noted that this is a worst-case scenario, but as a recipe for Indo-Pacific instability, it is both plausible and very dangerous. Finding ways to calm China's more aggressive tendencies while acknowledging its regional interests, of compensating for declining US presence (which is not a given, but is a possibility), and of finding ways to more closely integrate the region's existing institutions to provide greater security in the maritime arena represents a difficult challenge, but a critical one for global security and development.

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