

STRATEGY



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From Hollywood to Bollywood?

Recasting Australia's Indo/Pacific strategic geography

Andrew Phillips

October 2016

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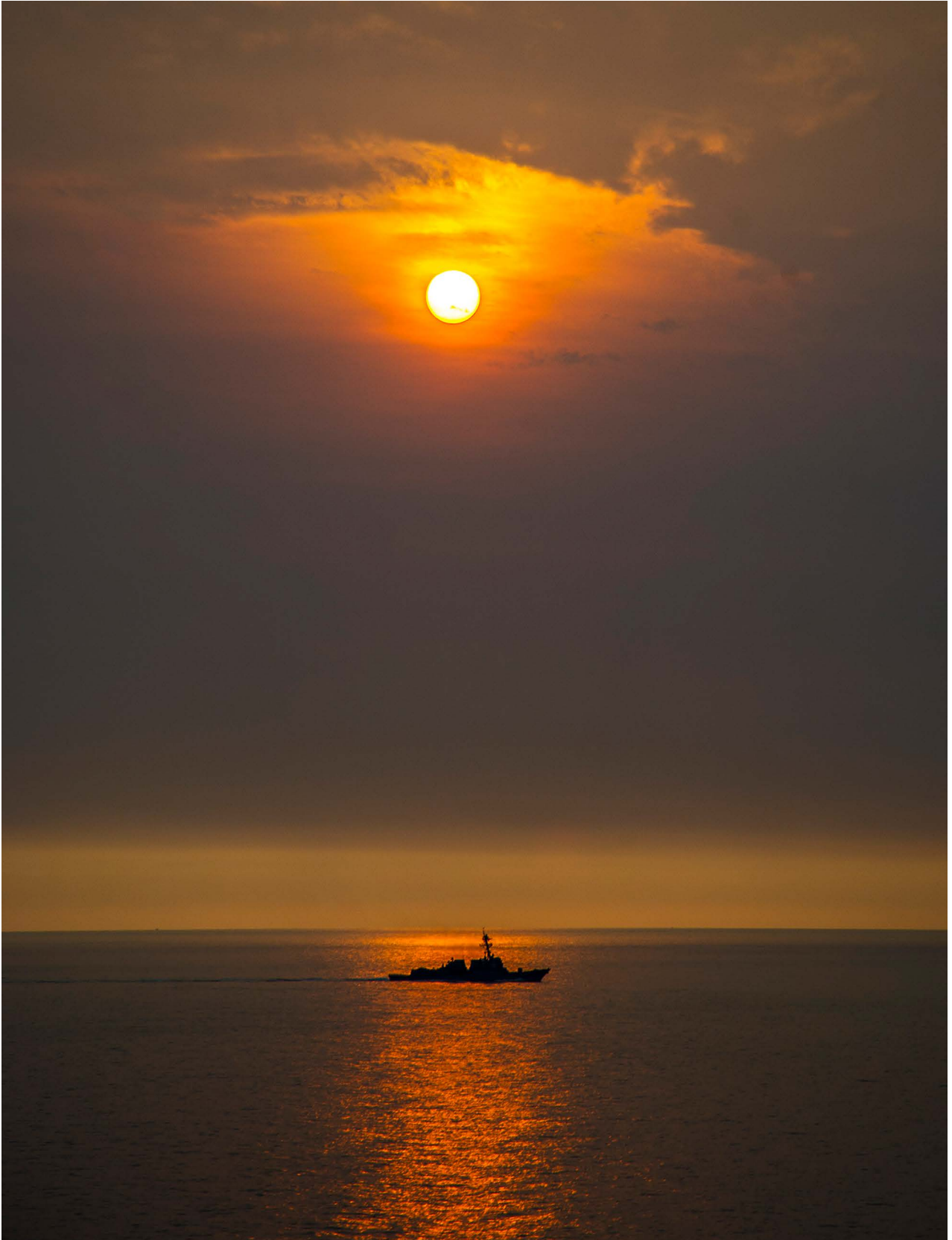
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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	6
CHAPTER 2 Strategic geography—what it is and why it matters for Australia	8
CHAPTER 3 The case for an Indo-Pacific revolution in Australia’s strategic geography	10
CHAPTER 4 An Indo/Pacific alternative for Australia’s strategic geography	13
CHAPTER 5 The Indo-Pacific spectrum: assessing Australia’s strategic options	18
CHAPTER 6 Indo/Pacific hedging—a triple-track grand strategy for Australia	27
REFERENCES	31
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	35



SOUTH CHINA SEA (24 June 2014) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd (DDG 100) on patrol in the 7th Fleet area of operations supporting security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. US Navy photo Flickr 140624-N-ZS026-006.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's strategic geography is being revolutionised. China and India's rising maritime power, coupled with a Eurasia-wide 'connectivity revolution', is drawing together two formerly disparate theatres: the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region. Moreover, 'Indo-Pacific' language now pervades official characterisations of Australia's strategic geography. But is the Indo-Pacific a reliable characterisation of Australia's neighbourhood? What might a genuinely Indo-Pacific strategy of regional order-building look like? And what are the alternatives to an Indo-Pacific grand strategy for Australia?

This report argues against the Indo-Pacific idea and presents the case for a more regionally differentiated 'Indo/Pacific' alternative. The Indo-Pacific idea is a crucial intervention in Australian foreign and defence policy debates and captures fundamental megatrends now reshaping our region. Nevertheless, it also overstates the magnitude, speed and scope of integration between the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region and offers a bold but ultimately flawed regional template for Australian foreign and defence policymakers. Specifically, the hyphen at the heart of the Indo-Pacific *aggregates* two distinct regional security orders that have differed widely in their historical evolution and that today present different challenges and regional order-building opportunities for Australia.

By contrast, an Indo/Pacific strategic geography explicitly *differentiates* the Asia-Pacific from the Indian Ocean region and calibrates Australia's strategies for regional engagement accordingly.

In the Asia-Pacific, Australia participates in a security order marked by an entrenched and heavily institutionalised US presence and by a well-established multilateral architecture for facilitating economic and security cooperation. China's rise and increasing assertiveness, meanwhile, present a powerful and immediate challenge to the current order and a clear focal point for collaboration between like-minded states seeking to preserve that order.

Conversely, the US's order-building role in the Indian Ocean region has historically been shallower, less ambitious and less institutionalised. Moreover, the region's historic role as the cradle of the Non-Aligned Movement has inhibited alliance-based forms of security cooperation, while Indian Ocean states' record of multilateral cooperation remains modest at best.

The Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region thus present increasingly interconnected—but still durably distinct—security orders. For this reason, Australia should pursue a regionally differentiated 'triple track' strategy of order-building.

Within the Asia-Pacific, this would primarily focus on helping to refurbish the San Francisco alliance system to deter armed revisionist attempts to challenge the current rules-based order.

In the Indian Ocean, it would entail developing 'bottom up' forms of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation to incrementally cultivate Asia's collective capacity to manage traditional and non-traditional challenges.

Finally, as a longer term project, Australia should work with like-minded states to develop an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue. This platform would be sufficiently inclusive and expansive to facilitate cross-regional security dialogue and cooperation. It would ideally further supplement existing efforts (in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region) to forge an international order that's strong enough to resist armed challenge, supple enough to accommodate the legitimate demands of rising powers, and sustainable enough to manage the inevitable long-term transformation in Asia's security order that will follow America's long-term hegemonic decline.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Australia's strategic geography is being revolutionised. Historically, Australians have conceptualised our strategic geography as one firmly fixated on the Asia–Pacific. Concerned from Federation onwards with the threat of invasion from the north, and oriented to the Asia–Pacific more recently by the vast commercial opportunities offered by East Asia's economic ascendancy, Canberra has traditionally devoted much less attention to the Indian Ocean region. But the past decade has seen a supersizing of Australia's strategic geography. Wary of the destabilising consequences of China's rise and alive to India's burgeoning military and economic potential, commentators and influential policy practitioners are increasingly urging Australia to adopt an Indo-Pacific rather than an Asia–Pacific strategic orientation (for example, Medcalf 2014, Varghese 2015).

Not merely a semantic change, this pivot would amount to a transformation in the way Australia looks at the world and implies correspondingly radical adjustments in our defence and foreign policy. Though the Indo-Pacific idea is of recent origin, it has already percolated into Canberra's policy vernacular, featuring in successive Defence White Papers (Defence Department 2013, 2016), as well as in ministerial speeches (for example, Bishop 2016, Payne 2016).

The popularity of the Indo-Pacific idea testifies to its utility in capturing important megatrends transforming our region. But what would a genuinely Indo-Pacific Australian grand strategy look like? Would an Indo-Pacific reorientation really be preferable to our continued self-definition as an Asia–Pacific power? And, if so, how might we reconcile an Indo-Pacific supersizing of our geography with a long-term decline in our relative strategic weight? In a bigger neighbourhood, how might a relatively smaller Australia best marshal its finite power to advance the national interest?

This report aims to refine rather than completely rebut the Indo-Pacific idea, to help clarify the contours of debate on what an Australian Indo-Pacific grand strategy should be. The Indo-Pacific concept is an important development in Australia's defence and foreign policy conversation. It enables us to think more systematically about how we might integrate non-traditional partners (notably India and Indonesia) into our regional order-building strategies. And it foregrounds the growing connectivity between Asia's different subregions: from the manufacturing powerhouses of Northeast Asia to the energy superpowers of the Persian Gulf and the increasingly contested sea lines of communication (SLOCs) linking the two (Khanna 2016, Wesley 2015).

Notwithstanding these strengths, an uncritical embrace of the Indo-Pacific idea remains problematic. This is because the hyphenation at the heart of the Indo-Pacific overstates the degree of integration between the Indian Ocean and Pacific theatres. With the exception of the maritime energy superhighway linking the two regions via the Strait of Malacca (Prakash 2013:276), the East Asian and Indian Ocean halves of the presumed Indo-Pacific super-region remain durably distinct regional security orders.

The East Asian security order remains defined by an American presence that's both historically longstanding and comprehensively institutionalised. Centred on America's 'anchor' state partnership with Japan (Katzenstein 2005:73), America's power and presence in East Asia are manifest in its 'hub and spokes' alliance system, forward-based military presence and provision of extended nuclear assurance to its regional partners (Lyon 2013). Alongside this entrenched US presence, the Asia–Pacific region is also characterised by an increasingly sophisticated multilateral governance architecture in both the economic and the security domains (Goh 2013).

By contrast, America's presence in the Indian Ocean region is historically shallower and is today both less intrusive and less institutionalised. America lacks a regional anchor-state of equivalent strategic weight to Japan in the Indian Ocean. In contrast to its extensive provision of 'hegemonic services' (Ikenberry 2016:3) in East Asia, Washington has confined itself in the Indian Ocean to the missions of securing the developed world's access to Persian Gulf oil reserves while assuring maritime freedom of navigation. The region's historic role as the epicentre of the Non-Aligned Movement has meanwhile precluded the development of a counterpart to America's hub-and-spokes East Asian alliance system. Moreover, the Indian Ocean region's anaemic multilateral architecture reflects and reinforces the lack of a region-wide tradition of meaningful security and economic cooperation.

The stark differences between East Asia and the Indian Ocean region fundamentally shape Australia's opportunities to advance its interests in those environments.

The stark differences between East Asia and the Indian Ocean region fundamentally shape Australia's opportunities to advance its interests in those environments. Accordingly, efforts to foster a holistic 'Indo-Pacific' grand strategy that downplays these differences are likely to fail. I propose as an alternative an 'Indo/Pacific' strategy, which acknowledges these differences and reflects them in a differentiated strategy of regional engagement. In East Asia, this strategy concentrates on minimising the instability occasioned by China's rise through an expanded consolidation of Australia's strategic partnership with the US and its core regional allies. In the Indian Ocean, by contrast, the absence of an alliance system precludes a direct translation of Australia's established strategies for regional engagement into this new context. The greater prominence of non-traditional security threats in the Indian Ocean places a premium on fostering bilateral and minilateral *customised* partnerships with local powers. Beyond their functional value, building those partnerships could also help build habits of cooperation between Australia and local powers, thereby promoting a 'bottom up' regionalism (Tow & Taylor 2010:112) over the longer term.

The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- Chapter 2 defines the concept of strategic geography and explains why it's so important for Australia to develop a strategic geography properly scaled to our circumstances, interests and capabilities.
- Chapter 3 presents the case for an Indo-Pacific reimagining of Australia's strategic geography.
- Chapter 4 critiques the Indo-Pacific idea by foregrounding the distinctiveness of East Asia and the Indian Ocean region as discrete security orders, rather than two halves of an increasingly unified Indo-Pacific theatre.
- Chapter 5 critically surveys four alternative regional grand strategies for Australia: 'Asia–Pacific first', balance-of-power Indo-Pacific 'minimalism', a 'maximalist' Indo-Pacific concert of powers, and an Indo-Pacific functionalism grounded in joint management of the region's Indo-Pacific SLOCs.
- Chapter 6 presents an alternative grand strategy—Indo/Pacific hedging—as constituting the best means by which Australia can effectively reconcile our finite capabilities with our expanding strategic neighbourhood.

CHAPTER 2

Strategic geography—what it is and why it matters for Australia

Strategic geography refers to the core spatial assumptions underpinning a state's grand strategy. A country's strategic geography delineates the geographical remit of its security ambitions and identifies those parts of the world that are (and are not) of most relevance to its security outlook (Dibb 2006, Gray 1999).

Strategic geographies are the key to identifying a state's core interests, ambitions and vulnerabilities as they relate to the physical environment. But, while a country's strategic geography is conditioned by its physical geography, it isn't dictated by it. Instead, strategic geographies are interpretive schemas that policy entrepreneurs develop to make better sense of the world and their country's place in it. Precisely because they are conceived by policy entrepreneurs, they are changeable and often fiercely contested. This changeability is most pronounced during periods of rapid power transition. Then, the rise of new powers, disruptive new technologies or some combination of the two makes old strategic geographies redundant, compelling strategists to formulate alternatives that better fit emerging realities.

Strategic geography serves three key purposes for policymakers (Bisley & Phillips 2013:98). In distilling the spatial assumptions of a state's grand strategy, it allows governments to more readily identify and clarify the purposes informing their foreign policies and to prioritise their commitments accordingly. For example, an Indo-Pacific strategic geography suggests a need to more equally weight Australia's engagement with the Indian Ocean and Pacific theatres than does an exclusively Asia-Pacific alternative. Strategic geographies also provide a common language for policymakers and thus a shared intellectual horizon within which defence and foreign policy can be formulated and coordinated. Finally, strategic geography provides a shorthand to communicate to allies, neutrals and adversaries the geographical remit of a country's interests and current or prospective commitments.

Good strategic geography matters because it can reframe a state's security and economic interests in ways that best align with its interests, capabilities and vulnerabilities. Two historical examples illustrate this observation.

Following World War II, the US for the first time embraced a North Atlantic strategic orientation, which it later institutionalised in 1949 with the founding of NATO (Hemmer & Katzenstein 2002). With NATO's establishment, Washington entrenched a commitment to serve as Western Europe's security guarantor. The rise of the Soviet Union as a would-be hegemon in Eurasia, combined with the invention of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, had demanded an end to American isolationism. Correspondingly, American strategic geographers (for example, Herz 1957, Spykman 1942) worked hard to reorient the US from an exclusive focus on the Americas towards a more expansive globalist posture. This paved the way for a North Atlantic commitment that proved central to America's successful prosecution of the Cold War.

By contrast, the rise of the 'New Order' in Indonesia saw a significant downsizing of Indonesia's strategic geography. From at least the 1955 Asian-African 'Bandung' conference onwards, President Sukarno conceived Indonesia's strategic geography in globalist terms in the binary struggle between neocolonial 'old established forces' and the

‘new emerging forces’ of the newly independent Afro-Asian world (Sukma 1995:310). This worldview propelled Jakarta into disastrous foreign policy forays such as the *Konfrontasi* against Malaysia, which helped pave the way for Sukarno’s ouster in September 1965. By contrast, the Suharto regime adopted a far narrower strategic geography, prioritising Southeast Asian reconciliation over global anticolonial revolution (Sukma 1995:311). The result was a grand strategy focused on building national and regional ‘resilience’ (Emmers 2009:161–162), which helped cultivate the more stable regional environment necessary to foster Indonesia’s economic development throughout the New Order period.

These examples show how crucial it is for states to properly calibrate their strategic geography with their core interests, capabilities and vulnerabilities. This lesson is especially relevant for Australia now, when policy entrepreneurs are trying to entrench the Indo-Pacific as Australia’s new strategic geography.

The last time Australia transformed its strategic geography was in the 1970s, when we embraced an Asia–Pacific conception of our region.

The last time Australia transformed its strategic geography was in the 1970s, when we embraced an Asia–Pacific conception of our region. The British announcement in 1968 of the UK’s pending liquidation of all military commitments east of Suez, followed in 1969 by Nixon’s articulation of the ‘Guam doctrine’ insisting on greater allied self-reliance, prompted Australians to reach for a more independent grand strategy less exclusively dependent on great-power patrons. Simultaneously, East Asia’s (particularly Japan’s) growing commercial importance for Australia dramatised our accelerating dependence on Asian markets as our primary source of prosperity. Anxious to keep America involved in the region following its retreat from Vietnam, and determined to preserve access to Asian markets, Australian policy entrepreneurs from the late 1970s fostered an Asia–Pacific definition of the region (Katzenstein 2005:80).

Australia’s redefinition as an Asia–Pacific power yielded major dividends. Conceptually, it laid the basis for a ‘dual track’ grand strategy (Tow 2008:30) predicated on continued maintenance of ANZUS as the cornerstone of our defence policy, alongside a commitment to promoting ‘open’ multilateralism as the foundation for regional cooperation. Moreover, an Asia–Pacific strategic geography naturalised America’s continued presence as East Asia’s security guarantor. This helped to secure local powers’ continued acceptance of American hegemony in the aftermath of major power shifts, including the post-Vietnam withdrawal and the end of the Cold War period. Critically, it also provided a common language for Australia to harness in conjunction with like-minded states when promoting ‘open’ regionalism over more exclusively East Asian alternatives (Katzenstein 2005:80).

Australia was far from alone in advocating an Asia–Pacific strategic geography. Indeed, the concept’s success depended on its attractiveness to major regional powers, notably the US and Japan. The point nevertheless stands that the Asia–Pacific turn marked a major innovation in Australian strategic thinking, which was key in enabling us to reconfigure our grand strategy to accommodate East Asia’s economic ascendancy.

Is the Indo-Pacific turn a comparable transformation in Australian strategic thinking? The Indo-Pacific concept represents a further broadening of our strategic horizons. This is a potentially daunting prospect, given our small population, limited power projection capabilities, and inevitable long-term decline in power and influence relative to our large and rapidly developing neighbours. More fundamentally, what would a renovation of Australia’s grand strategy on Indo-Pacific lines look like? The next chapter delineates the key changes in our region that have prompted the Indo-Pacific turn, preparatory to a more critical engagement with the Indo-Pacific concept in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

The case for an Indo-Pacific revolution in Australia's strategic geography

Advocates of an Australian embrace of an Indo-Pacific strategic geography base their case on three key transformative trends currently reshaping Asia: the power shift towards Asia's 'rising giants', especially China and India; Asian great powers' growing commercial and military extraversion, evident most particularly in the maritime domain; and an ongoing connectivity revolution in infrastructure that's rapidly integrating both continental Eurasia and the maritime Indo-Pacific.

The proposed shift to an Indo-Pacific framework rests first on a recognition of the rapidly growing strategic heft of the region's emerging Asian great powers, most notably China and India. From 1978 and 1991, respectively, China and India reversed their earlier commitments to autarky in favour of selective market liberalisation and greater engagement with the global economy. These shifts have yielded a dramatic increase in both countries' GDPs and a commensurate growth in their economic and military capabilities. From a position of relative insignificance in the late 1970s, China now possesses the world's second largest economy measured by nominal GDP, and the largest if measured by purchasing power parity (World Bank 2014a, 2014b). India's growth trajectory, while more recent and less spectacular, has likewise catapulted it from a comparable position of marginality to a ranking as the world's ninth largest economy measured by nominal GDP, and third largest if measured by purchasing power parity (World Bank 2014a, 2014b).

The rapid growth of Asia's rising giants is now restoring the nexus between population and economic and military power—one that the West's early industrial revolution only temporarily decoupled in the 19th and 20th centuries (Buzan & Lawson 2015, Wesley 2015, White 2010:11). Corresponding with this rapid growth, Asia's emerging powers are now also becoming far more outward-looking. Having consolidated its position at the centre of regional production networks, China has emerged as the world's top partner in merchandise trade (Thirlwell 2015), eclipsing the US as the first-ranking merchandise trading partner for the largest number of countries (Holodny 2015). China's hunger for resources to fuel its industrialisation has also consolidated its trade and investment links with countries further afield, most notably Australia, the Persian Gulf energy producers and East Africa.

While less central to global production and trading networks, India has likewise expanded its commercial reach dramatically in the past two decades. Lacking the resource endowments necessary to fuel its rise, India has followed China's example in consolidating its trade and investment ties with major resource producers. The Modi government's 'Make in India' campaign aims to kickstart India's emergence as a manufacturing superpower. Central to this initiative is growing India–Japan economic cooperation, including Tokyo's provision of extensive infrastructure investments aimed at hastening India's rise as a counterweight to Chinese power (Rajendrum 2014:6–7).

In contrast to an earlier era of stagnation and introspection, Asia's two demographic giants are now more economically dynamic and outward-looking than they have been at any time in the past two centuries. Crucially, this new extraversion hasn't been confined to the commercial realm. On the contrary, a more outward-looking economic orientation has prompted both China and India to redefine their security interests more expansively—especially in the maritime domain. China's growing assertiveness throughout its immediate maritime periphery (the East and South China seas) is the leading-edge indicator of this new extraversion. But China's growing naval activities in the Indian Ocean show that its strategic horizons increasingly extend well beyond the East Asian littoral. Motivated at least in part by its concerns over the 'Malacca dilemma'—the risk of adversaries interdicting China's commercial shipping in the Strait of Malacca in the event of armed conflict—the Chinese Navy has begun to dedicate more time and resources to 'far sea defence' planning (Ramadhani 2015). This has manifested itself in Chinese participation in multinational anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, but also in efforts to develop commercial ports and associated infrastructure throughout the Indian Ocean littoral, much to India's consternation (Brewster 2010:6).

New Delhi has quietly exploited regional anxiety over China's assertiveness in the South China Sea to develop local security partnerships aimed at containing Chinese ambitions.

India's naval involvement in East Asian waters has been more limited. New Delhi has of course quietly exploited regional anxiety over China's assertiveness in the South China Sea to develop local security partnerships aimed at containing Chinese ambitions. But it has nevertheless scrupulously avoided direct involvement in the South China Sea dispute (Rajendrum 2014:5) for fear of overtly antagonising China. That caveat aside, under Prime Minister Modi's 'Act East' policy, New Delhi has assiduously pursued strategic partnerships with East Asian powers to offset growing Chinese power. Initiatives have included its partnership with Japan, which extends beyond trade and infrastructure assistance to encompass substantial and growing defence cooperation as well (Rajendrum 2014:7–8). Likewise, India has forged strategic partnerships with Vietnam, Australia and ASEAN. The first two of those partnerships promise to strengthen defence cooperation between the parties, lending further credence to characterisations of the Indo-Pacific as an increasingly integrated strategic space (Rajendrum 2014:10–12). India's strengthening of its Eastern Naval Command (and particularly the build-up on the Andaman and Nicobar island chain close to the Strait of Malacca) meanwhile testifies to New Delhi's determination to respond vigorously to growing Chinese involvement in the Indian Ocean region (Miglani 2015).

As China and India have grown more enmeshed with the global economy, and as their economies have rapidly developed, their overseas commercial interests have correspondingly expanded. More expansive commercial interests—which depend on a stable maritime security order—have enlarged both states' strategic horizons. This has in turn prompted increased Chinese and Indian naval activity in each other's maritime peripheries and increased efforts to cultivate defence partnerships with local powers to supplement that activity.

Beyond these drivers towards increased strategic integration, a vast pan-Asian expansion of infrastructure networks—an ongoing 'connectivity revolution' (Khanna 2016:11)—provides a final warrant for adopting 'Indo-Pacific' as Australia's preferred strategic geography. Aware of the vulnerability of its commerce to maritime interdiction, China has established the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund to assist in the mammoth task of upgrading Asia's physical infrastructure. To date, the centrepiece of this ambitious program has been the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative. This program calls for Eurasia's integration by land through a major expansion of its roads and railway networks, alongside the development of a 'maritime Silk Road' of ports and associated infrastructure (Fukuyama 2016). Not coincidentally, Chinese plans for a 'maritime Silk Road' dovetail neatly with Indonesia's efforts to position itself as the fulcrum of a 'global maritime axis' (Shekhar & Liow 2014) linking the Indian and Pacific oceans. Should these visions of expanded intercontinental connectivity come to

fruition, they'll do much to confirm the case for embracing an integrated 'Indo-Pacific' conception of the regions' strategic geography.

China's and India's economic resurgence and growing commercial and military extraversion, combined with current and expected increases in pan-regional connectivity flowing from large-scale infrastructure investments, provides strong *prima facie* reasons for conceiving Asia in Indo-Pacific terms. That three-quarters of Asia's population lives within 200 kilometres of the Indo-Pacific littoral (along which 80% of the continent's major cities are situated) further attests to the importance of Indo-Pacific Asia as a concentrated and increasingly integrated commercial and strategic space (Wesley 2015:130).

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to extrapolate from these trends and assume that an Indo-Pacific revolution in Australia's strategic geography is either imminent, inevitable or desirable. The Indo-Pacific idea foregrounds themes of pan-regional integration and aggregates two theatres (the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region) that have historically constituted radically distinct regional security orders. Central to this report is the claim that an effective Australian grand strategy depends on recognising the distinctiveness of those two orders and calibrating and differentiating our engagement with those regions accordingly. I now turn to an examination of the historical development and contemporary configuration of those orders.

CHAPTER 4

An Indo/Pacific alternative for Australia's strategic geography

The Indo-Pacific concept captures irrefutably real and gargantuan shifts now reshaping Asia. Nevertheless, Indo-Pacific advocates overreach in their claim that the Indo-Pacific either is already or will soon become a single integrated strategic system, stretching 'from Hollywood to Bollywood' (Harris 2015). On the contrary, rather than aggregating the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region as a single strategic system, we're best served with an 'Indo/Pacific' conception of Australian strategic geography that clearly differentiates the two regions. Such differentiation is essential to enable us to prioritise our interests in the two regions and to recognise the regionally distinct opportunities for advancing those interests.

The Asia-Pacific regional order

Any analysis of the Asia-Pacific strategic system must begin by recognising the defining role the US has played in shaping the regional order since World War II. Despite China's rise and the growing strategic contestation that's followed in its wake, the regional order remains for now defined by the dominant role of the US. America's hegemonic presence has shaped this order in myriad ways. The broad lineaments of the order that Washington built are as follows.

The key feature of international order in East Asia is a US-dominated security architecture, built on the foundations of:

- a 'hub and spokes' alliance system, grounded most importantly in the patron-client relationship between America and Japan
- a significant forward-deployed American combined arms military presence, built around a network of permanent bases
- the provision of extended nuclear assurance by the US to its junior allies, including Japan, South Korea and Australia.

Turning to the first of these elements, the security order in East Asia remains grounded in a series of highly asymmetric—but also highly institutionalised—bilateral alliances linking America to client states in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania. From the early 1950s, America has secured order in East Asia by formally committing to the defence of regional clients on a bilateral basis. During the Cold War, forgoing the multilateral security architecture it favoured in Western Europe from 1949, the US preferred to deal with its regional allies on a one-on-one basis. This enabled Washington to maximise its leverage and its restraining influence over each ally (Cha 2010). In the light of East Asia's unresolved historical grievances, the hub-and-spokes alliance model also enabled America to sidestep the challenging task of coaxing local clients—most notably Japan and South Korea—to reconcile (Goh 2013:155). The bilateral model finally allowed the US to customise its security commitments to each client's needs. This facilitated the development of densely institutionalised arrangements, which over decades have

cultivated shared habits of cooperation and robust levels of trust between the US and key local intermediaries, both military and civilian. Undeniably, America's relationships with its Asia-Pacific clients have hardly lacked friction. Nevertheless, the longevity of those alliances, coupled with the undiminished urgency of threats that they confronted in both the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, has produced a robust security architecture with few counterparts elsewhere, excepting NATO.

To underpin the credibility of the US alliance structure in Asia, America deploys an extensive forward-based conventional military presence and encompasses its clients within the US nuclear security umbrella. On the conventional forces front, it continues to base major troop concentrations in Japan and South Korea, the latter providing a key trip-wire pre-committing the US to defend South Korea in the event of northern aggression. The 7th Fleet—which remains the US's primary means of force projection throughout the East Asian littoral—is home-ported in Yokosuka, Japan, and cooperates intensively with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to uphold freedom of navigation throughout the Pacific (Bisley & Phillips 2013:103). Further afield, in Southeast Asia and Australia, the US is modestly fortifying its regional position through enhanced pre-positioning of equipment and increased rotations of US forces (Graham 2015:66–67). Regular military exercises over decades have ingrained habits of security cooperation between the US and its local clients.

On the nuclear front, the US continues to shape the regional order through the extended assurance it has provided to its clients via the US nuclear umbrella. Historically, the US has played a crucial role in inhibiting nuclear proliferation throughout East Asia (Gavin 2015). America's provision of extended nuclear assurance to Japan discouraged the latter from developing its own independent nuclear deterrent in the 1960s, while a combination of American inducements and threats also discouraged South Korea and Taiwan from acquiring nuclear weapons in the 1970s (Gavin 2015:29). Before it ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1973, Australia had likewise considered developing nuclear weapons (Leah & Lyon 2010). But since becoming an NPT signatory, Australia (like Japan) has maintained its nuclear abstinence and emerged as a conspicuous advocate of global nuclear disarmament—a position it awkwardly seeks to reconcile with its explicit reliance on America's extended nuclear deterrent as a keystone of its defence policy. Admittedly, the US has radically changed its regional nuclear posture since the end of the Cold War, moving from a Cold War position of having 3,000 nuclear warheads forward-deployed in the region to none at present (Santoro & Warden 2015:149). Nevertheless, America has worked intensively with Japan and South Korea in particular to shore up the credibility of its extended nuclear assurance to both countries. This has entailed measures such as the 2010 establishment of the US–Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue and the US – South Korea Extended Deterrence Policy Committee, which have institutionalised bilateral consultations aimed at fortifying US-sponsored deterrence in Northeast Asia (Santoro & Warden 2015:151).

The US-sponsored security order in East Asia has nourished the growth of an integrated Asia-Pacific economic space, which again has a counterpart only in the highly interconnected economies of the North Atlantic. From the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 1989 at the initiative of US allies Japan and Australia, the region has seen a surge in trade and investment ties. Occurring roughly in tandem with China's economic liberalisation, this has produced, in 'factory Asia', a vast zone of economic interdependence, combining the manufacturing expertise of Northeast Asia, the highly skilled and low-cost labour of China and Southeast Asia, the resources of Australia and the huge consumer market of the US (Wesley 2015). China's emergence as the largest trading partner for most Asia-Pacific countries has admittedly diminished the formerly US-centric character of the regional economy. Nevertheless, Washington's sponsorship of the Trans-Pacific Partnership reflects the hegemon's longstanding commitment to an 'openness mission' in East Asia (Gavin 2015:14) and its determination to maintain a trans-oceanic economic order that remains open to American capital, trade and influence.

Acknowledging America's centrality in the Asia-Pacific shouldn't detract from the key order-building role that local states have also played in constructing the Asia-Pacific region. At its base, the Asia-Pacific order rests on the US's relationship with Japan and on Japan's key role as a catalyst for regional economic integration. This was especially so following the yen's appreciation in the aftermath of the 1985 Plaza Accord, which stimulated a surge of Japanese foreign direct investment throughout Southeast Asia (Katzenstein 2005:62). Further afield, a succession of regional

crises, from the interminable North Korean nuclear challenge to the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis, have meanwhile inspired the growth of a raft of multilateral governance mechanisms, driven largely (though not exclusively) by local Asian states' initiative. In particular, ASEAN states—through mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum—have been especially proactive in seeking to shape the regional order in ways conducive to the perpetuation of an inclusive Asia–Pacific economic order, in which America continues to play a preponderant security-providing role (Goh 2013).

This survey hammers home the point that the Asia–Pacific regional order stands today as a genuinely integrated strategic system, characterised by a robust security architecture, dense webs of economic interdependence and relatively well-developed (if only partially effective) multilateral governance structures. At its core, this order reflects the US's decades-long involvement as the regional hegemon and its willingness to provide a range of 'hegemonic services' (Ikenberry 2016:3) to client states in exchange for their acquiescence in American preponderance. The Asia–Pacific order rested first on the asymmetric security partnership between the US and Japan, the region's most technologically sophisticated power and until 2010 the world's second largest economy. More recently, growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea has fortified many Southeast Asian states' support for a reinforced American presence, notwithstanding ASEAN's earlier commitment to a strategy of 'omni-enmeshment' (Goh 2007/08:119) aimed at ideally socialising great powers equally into conformity with an ASEAN-centric security community.

Despite regional concerns about the substance of the American 'rebalance', then, America's *order-shaping capacity* in the Asia–Pacific remains strong. Existing alliance structures, an extensive forward-based military presence, longstanding relations of extended nuclear assurance and America's continued economic centrality together provide the US with a formidable platform for influence, even as a growing China increasingly contests its primacy. Washington's longstanding self-conception as a 'Pacific power'—underpinned by the reality of its physical status as a resident power with a presence ranging from Alaska to Hawaii to Micronesia—further fortifies its *commitment* to the region. The combination of a strong American capacity and commitment to shape the Asia–Pacific regional order—derivative of its history and geography—contrasts significantly with its far more attenuated relationship to the Indian Ocean region.

The Indian Ocean region—a regional order without an orderer?

In contrast to America's presence in the Asia–Pacific region, its presence in the Indian Ocean developed later and is currently less persistent and pervasive. A focus on this basic difference is essential to grasp the distinctiveness of the Indian Ocean region and to recognise the limits of an Indo-Pacific concept that too readily conceives the Asia–Pacific and Indian Ocean regions as forming a unified strategic space.

From the early 19th century to the mid-20th century, the Indian Ocean region essentially constituted a 'British lake', over which Britain presided as the reigning hegemon (Bose 2005:274). Across the breadth of the Indian Ocean littoral, from the Trucial States in the Persian Gulf through India's princely states to the sultanates of the Malay Peninsula, Britain ruled the region, often in uneasy alliance with conservative local clients (Bayly 2007). The shock of the Japanese blitzkrieg in Southeast Asia in 1942, combined with growing demands for self-rule in the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere, nevertheless brought an unexpectedly sudden end to the *Pax Britannica* after World War II. Thereafter, Britain continued to try to shape the regional order well into the 1960s, abandoning that pretence only with the Wilson cabinet's 1968 decision to liquidate Britain's strategic commitments east of Suez by 1971. Those efforts notwithstanding, following the collapse of British hegemony, the initiative largely fell to local powers to develop a new security architecture for the region. With Nehru's India and Sukarno's Indonesia playing leading roles, the order that these local powers sought to sponsor differed profoundly from the American-centred order then taking shape in East Asia.

In East Asia, the postwar regional order developed under American leadership as first World War II and then the Korean War drove Washington to cultivate a hub-and-spokes regional security system built on customised bilateral

alliances (Ikenberry 2004). Conversely, in the immediate postwar period, both India and Indonesia pursued an alternative vision of order for the Indian Ocean region, to be grounded in Afro-Asian collaboration and a shared commitment to non-alignment among the region's indigenous powers. At a succession of anticolonial conclaves culminating in the 1955 Asian–African conference in Bandung, Indonesia, pivotal local states sought to insulate their immediate neighbourhood from great-power interference and to cultivate more self-consciously independent foreign policies instead (Acharya 2016:343, Phillips 2016:334).

The South–South cooperation that evolved from this activism was decidedly modest. The India–China war of October 1962 scotched meaningful hopes of pan-Asian cooperation, while the rise of the New Order in Indonesia after September 1965 put an end to Sukarno-era anticolonial revisionism (Sukma 1995:311). But, although promises of Afro-Asian cooperation fell well short of local expectations, the activism of the immediate postwar period did frustrate Western attempts to introduce alliance-centred security architectures into the region. To cite one example, Amitav Acharya has credited the long-term failure of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) to the efforts of activist states at Bandung to delegitimise meaningful local participation in Western-sponsored collective security structures (Acharya 2016:348). More generally, subsequent local efforts at security cooperation were notable for their hostility to traditional alliances. Both the ASEAN-sponsored conception of Southeast Asia as a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality' and later attempts to establish the Indian Ocean as a nuclear weapons free zone attest to this tendency.

The larger significance of these historical patterns is that the Indian Ocean region developed as a cradle for the Non-Aligned Movement at the same time that East Asia was polarising around Cold War antagonisms. While US-dominated alliances emerged as the primary collective security vehicle in non-communist East Asia and Oceania, Indian Ocean states largely eschewed alliance-based forms of security cooperation. Compounding this difference between the Indian Ocean region and East Asia, India—the region's demographic heavyweight and the world's largest democracy—embraced a strategic outlook radically different from that of America's East Asian clients in the immediate postwar decades. Whereas non-communist East Asia largely aligned with the US and eventually pursued prosperity through export-oriented industrialisation, India pursued 'strategic autonomy' (Hall 2016:273) and committed to a development model based on import-substitution industrialisation down to 1991.

India's postwar orientation was significant for two reasons. First, Indian estrangement from the US (driven in part by America's alignment with Pakistan) foreclosed the early development of a regional security order grounded in American hegemony. Whereas the East Asian *Pax Americana* rested on Washington's alliance with Japan as a powerful regional anchor-state supporting American dominance, India under Nehru and his successors was predisposed to resist American power. Second, India's economic turn inwards—effectively abdicating its historical role as the flywheel of the Indian Ocean regional economy—fundamentally inhibited the development of the region-wide flows of trade and investment that eventually knitted together the Asia–Pacific as a coherent geo-economic space.

In contrast to East Asia's well-developed alliance-centric architecture and high level of economic integration (both between East Asian states and between East Asia and North America), no equivalent history of cohesion united the Indian Ocean region. This lack of cohesion manifested itself in the post-Cold War period in the anaemic character of region-wide multilateral cooperation. The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation and its successor, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, both generally failed to promote a robust sense of shared regional identity, much less spur meaningful multilateral efforts to address collective problems (Michael 2013:1). Instead, when Indian Ocean littoral states have aspired to cooperation, they have generally done so through subregional groupings, such as ASEAN or the Gulf Cooperation Council. Indeed, when contrasted against the experience of the Asia–Pacific, the very notion of conceiving the Indian Ocean as forming a cohesive regional order seems contestable, further sharpening the distinction between the two putative halves of the 'Indo-Pacific' strategic system.

The manifold differences distinguishing the historical experiences of East Asia from those of the Indian Ocean region are worth noting in their own right, but one final point of differentiation bears special emphasis: the qualitatively greater level of American interest and investment in East Asia compared with the Indian Ocean region.

As noted above, America has long considered itself a Pacific power. This was especially so from the 1890s, when its annexation of Hawaii and conquest of the Philippines made it a resident power in the Western Pacific. Since that time, Washington has consistently pursued an 'open door' to East Asian markets as a vital national interest and has underwritten that interest through alliances, forward-deployed military assets, basing networks and extended nuclear assurances to regional clients.

In contrast, America has harboured no such ambitions in the Indian Ocean. Certainly, the 7th and 5th fleets have shared between them responsibility for assuring freedom of navigation throughout the region. From the promulgation of the 1980 Carter doctrine, the US has also harnessed its military power to ensure the developed world's unimpeded access to Persian Gulf energy reserves (Yetiv 2008:46). But, beyond those objectives, America's intrinsic interests in the Indian Ocean region have been limited. Correspondingly, the US hasn't developed the alliance networks, extensive forward-deployed military assets or large-scale bases (excepting Diego Garcia) that underwrite its presence in East Asia. And the American extended nuclear umbrella is largely absent in the Indian Ocean region, where an escalating Indo-Pakistani nuclear arms race dramatises the limits of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime (the NPT).

It's clear that America lacks the deep historical roots in the Indian Ocean region necessary for it to possess regional order-shaping capacities or commitments comparable to those that it wields in East Asia.

It's clear that America lacks the deep historical roots in the Indian Ocean region necessary for it to possess regional order-shaping capacities or commitments comparable to those that it wields in East Asia. Some Indo-Pacific advocates profess confidence that the US will be able to extend its order-shaping capacities into the Indian Ocean region, in partnership with a newly extraverted and economically dynamic India (for example, Twining 2007:82–83). The Indo-Pacific case rests on the projection that growing strategic interdependence between the Asia–Pacific and the Indian Ocean region will in any case necessitate such a reorientation in America's posture. Those projections are plausible, given the recent surge in interconnectivity between the eastern Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific, but they are far from predestined.

Moreover, the divergent historical development of regional orders in the Asia–Pacific versus the Indian Ocean region significantly shapes opportunities for Australia to pursue security cooperation within each theatre, let alone across them. Whether growing Indo-Pacific connectivity will trump divergent Indo/Pacific historical legacies in shaping Australia's emerging strategic environment will be crucial in shaping our grand strategy in coming decades. Accordingly, I now consider a range of possible future grand strategies for Australia, predicated on different assessments of maritime Asia's likely trajectory, before concluding in Chapter 6 with policy recommendations for the way Australia might best navigate its Indo/Pacific future.

CHAPTER 5

The Indo-Pacific spectrum: assessing Australia's strategic options

The preceding chapters foreground two trends that are germane in assessing the evolution of Australia's strategic environment. Indo-Pacific advocates rightly emphasise an ongoing connectivity revolution that's incorporating portions of the Indian Ocean region more directly into webs of strategic and economic interaction formerly confined to the Asia-Pacific. But the divergent histories of the two regions have generated distinct regional orders, which present meaningfully different opportunities for security cooperation.

Whether those differences will endure or be swept away by the connectivity revolution and the continuing rise of powers such as India and Indonesia remains to be seen. The future's inherent indeterminacy notwithstanding, we can identify a range of possible futures for Asia that imply correspondingly different grand strategies for Australia. Those options encompass distinct strategic geographies, models of international order and policy imperatives for Australia.

1. Asia-Pacific first—the *Pax Americana* endures

This vision of Asia's future proceeds from the assumption that the *Asia-Pacific* rather than the *Indo-Pacific* will remain Asia's main locus of strategic and economic interaction for the foreseeable future. For proponents of an 'Asia-Pacific first' (AP1) strategy, the security and economic links coalescing between the eastern Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific won't increase sufficiently to warrant an Indo-Pacific characterisation of Australia's strategic environment. Instead, Northeast Asia will remain our trading centre of gravity—a development that our recent bilateral preferential trading agreements with China, Japan and South Korea will consolidate.

Through an AP1 lens, the challenge of accommodating China's growing power and ambition in East Asia will remain Asia's defining problem. China's economic ascendancy has already reshaped the region, such that even a stalling of its continued rise would still leave a China far more powerful than it's been at any previous time during the modern era. China's growing assertiveness and its increasingly sophisticated anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities have already significantly sharpened East Asia's maritime security dilemmas (Brooks & Wohlforth 2016:49).

From an AP1 perspective, China's rise and the fear that it has aroused in others therefore eclipses all other Asian security challenges in scale and urgency. At the same time, the US's forward-engaged role in East Asia and the sophisticated and institutionalised character of the regional security architecture provide the current order with important sources of resilience. As a key beneficiary of the status quo, an Australia that focuses its energies primarily on the Asia-Pacific is well placed to help preserve that order, in the first instance by intensifying defence cooperation with the US and other regional US allies. Institutions such as the Trilateral Security Dialogue provide a ready-made medium for Australia to coordinate its posture with the US and Tokyo, while Washington's support for greater 'spoke to spoke' cooperation (Wainwright 2016:3) provides a facilitative context for pushing the

hub-and-spokes alliance system towards a more integrated 'webs and wheels' architecture (Bisley 2008, Blair & Hanley 2001). At the same time, the region's multilateral architecture provides an additional potential resource for order preservation, especially given the widespread regional support for American engagement that infuses that architecture (Goh 2013).

Conversely, whereas Indo-Pacific advocates anticipate a far greater role for India in Asia's emerging strategic order, from an AP1 vantage point, India is likely to remain unable and unwilling to play the counterbalancing role that many Westerners (for example, Twining 2007) have optimistically assigned to it. Despite the fact that India will soon eclipse China as the world's most populous nation, the Indian economy remains a fifth the size of China's (World Bank 2014b). India's endemic internal governance challenges pose formidable obstacles to its pursuit of an East Asian-style, manufacturing-led, export-oriented industrialisation development path. This in turn inhibits its growth trajectory, as well as its capacity to develop the indigenous defence industrial base necessary to balance China militarily over the longer term. Much to the frustration of negotiating partners anxious to promote reciprocal trade liberalisation with India, Indian protectionist sentiments remain strong. To give one example, New Delhi's reluctance to countenance major concessions as a putative partner in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership jeopardises the success of the most conspicuous current effort to liberalise trade between India and major East Asian markets (Priya 2016). Without a transformation in India's trade policy, its rise is likely to be more protracted, and the growth in economic ties linking India to East Asia slower, than Indo-Pacific advocates hope.

Moreover, even assuming that India is able to overcome domestic obstacles to its continued economic rise, an AP1 perspective notes that India's longstanding commitment to 'strategic autonomy' makes it unlikely that New Delhi would be enlisted into a China-balancing coalition. India's reluctance to involve itself in the ongoing South China Sea dispute (Rajendrum 2014:5) provides one early indicator that its genuine consternation about China's rise mightn't nudge New Delhi towards a coordinated response with Western and East Asian powers. Instead, Indian energies are as likely to be channelled bilaterally in the first instance towards managing the terrestrial balance of power with China along India's contested northern border. The challenge of containing Pakistan and conciliating India's neighbours in South Asia—a necessary precursor to more expansive Indian ambitions—will also remain an urgent priority for the foreseeable future, consistent with the Modi government's 'Neighbourhood First' foreign policy (Jaishankar 2016). This constrains India from wholeheartedly embracing an 'Indo-Pacific' worldview, placing an important medium-term limit on the concept's transition from idea to reality.

An AP1 strategy presumes that regional strategic and economic integration will remain primarily focused on the East Asia – North America nexus, rather than broadening out to encompass an Indo-Pacific horizon. It also expects that regional support for an American-led security order will remain high and that the institutions of that order will prove adaptive enough to meet the challenges of China's rise without needing to enlist India as part of a balancing coalition against China. From an Australian vantage point, an AP1 strategy finally offers the virtue of counselling a continued concentration on East Asia as our primary focus of regional engagement. Although an AP1 perspective doesn't proscribe Australian efforts to cultivate cooperation with Indian Ocean states, it assigns them secondary status to a more urgent and enduring threefold mission—to keep America 'in' as East Asia's hegemonic security provider, to encourage China's continued socialisation into the existing rules-based order, and to keep Asia (China included) open to Australian trade and investment.

2. Indo-Pacific minimalism: an Indo-Pacific balance of power

The AP1 grand strategy is the most conservative perspective considered here, in that it counsels Australia to double down on its traditional 'dual track' (Tow 2008:30) strategy of alliance management with the US and its regional partners, alongside maintaining Australia's continued support for Asia-Pacific multilateralism.

Proponents of a grand strategy centred on an Indo-Pacific balance of power (what I call 'Indo-Pacific minimalism') would agree with AP1 advocates on the need to manage the disruptive impact of China's rise in East Asia. But they would differ in their assessment of America's long-term willingness and capacity to uphold the present security

order in East Asia, even with the assistance of Japan, other hub-and-spokes allies and non-traditional security partners, such as Vietnam. This pessimism is grounded first in recognition that the US remains for now a global power with global interests and commitments. Even keeping in mind the Asia-Pacific 'rebalance', America will be unable to devote itself exclusively to superintending the East Asian security order. This is especially so in the light of persistent instability in the Middle East and Russian revisionism in the post-Soviet space. Conversely, China remains free to dedicate the bulk of its military modernisation to A2/AD efforts aimed at circumscribing America's scope for intervention in China's maritime periphery, while also undermining the credibility of American commitments to regional allies.

The lacklustre success of 'Abe-nomics' in reviving the Japanese economy provides a further warrant for pessimism about the durability and resilience of East Asia's current security order (Glosserman 2016). To recap an earlier observation, the US's dominance in East Asia remains fundamentally tied to its asymmetric partnership with Japan. In the context of increasingly open Sino-Japanese rivalry, the Abe government has succeeded in revising Japan's security posture. This potentially enables it to play a more forward-leaning role as a regional security provider, as the US, Australia and others have long wished. Nevertheless, Japan's limited economic revival under Prime Minister Abe raises the real risk that Japan won't regain the dynamism necessary to balance against China in the long term. The smaller strategic weight of other regional allies provides further grounds for doubting the collective balancing capacity of the hub-and-spokes alliance system. Added to these risks is the unlikely but real possibility of a future US turn to populism and protectionism, which could stymie the Trans-Pacific Partnership, undercut regional allies' faith in the credibility of the US commitment to East Asia and accelerate the decline of the existing regional order (Kehoe 2016).

In the face of the current order's fragility in East Asia, then, Indo-Pacific minimalism recommends enlisting India to assist in balancing against China and so to reinforce strategic stability in the face of prospective long-term US relative decline. Unlike the AP1 position, Indo-Pacific minimalism evinces greater confidence in India's long-term growth prospects. In particular, minimalists point to India's youthful and increasingly educated population and to governmental efforts to overcome the stultifying legacy of the 'licence Raj', which has historically limited India's international competitiveness (Green & Twining 2008:9). The efforts of Japan, in particular, to strengthen India's manufacturing capacity through centrepiece initiatives such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (Rajendrum 2014:7) provide further grounds for Indo-Pacific minimalists' optimism about India's capacity for economic transformation.

India's enormous potential as an economic and military player in the region recommends it to Indo-Pacific minimalists as the most logical counterweight to Chinese power.

India's enormous potential as an economic and military player in the region recommends it to Indo-Pacific minimalists as the most logical counterweight to Chinese power. No other emerging power in Asia possesses as much prospective strategic weight as India. Pointedly, from an Indo-Pacific minimalist standpoint, India's historical commitment to 'strategic autonomy' and its more recent embrace of 'multi-alignment' (Hall 2016) don't rule it out from playing a balancing role against China. Given its enormous latent power, India doesn't need to be a *formal ally* of the US and the region's other maritime democracies—it simply needs to *be*. Through this lens, India's existing anxieties about China's rise should be sufficient to motivate its continuing military modernisation. The growth of Indian naval power in the Indian Ocean region and beyond will constitute an important check on Chinese revisionism, while the two countries' interminable border dispute and the Sino-Pakistani 'all weather friendship' will preclude a Sino-Indian rapprochement. These factors should make India amenable to participation in a soft *entente* to balance China in a manner that preserves India's foreign policy independence while mitigating the insecurities about China's rise that India shares with other regional actors.

From an Australian vantage point, Indo-Pacific minimalism counsels meaningful shifts in Australia's regional posture. Most significantly, it stresses the need to redouble our efforts to cultivate a more robust strategic partnership with India to help nurture its nascent balancing role against China. Our decision to reverse our ban on uranium sales to India is an important milestone in this process, as are more recent maritime security cooperation initiatives (Brewster 2015a). Consistent with Australia's larger objective to moderate China's ambitions, a regional strategy grounded in Indo-Pacific minimalism would also entail accelerated Australian efforts to encourage greater Indian cooperation in minilateral security initiatives involving the US and other 'spoke' allies, such as Japan (Brewster 2015a).

The failure of the 2007 'democratic quad' has made many in the region wary of revisiting such an ambitious enterprise. Nevertheless—shorn of its idealistic rhetoric—an informal alignment of this kind would form the core idea and logical endpoint of a minimalist Indo-Pacific grand strategy. This is because Indo-Pacific minimalism rests on the conviction that, in the face of declining American hegemony and Chinese revisionism, international order in Asia can be maintained only through the operation of the balance of power. And a balance of power most favourable to preserving Australia's interests can be engineered only by encouraging India's entry as a fully-fledged great power in East Asia. Indo-Pacific minimalism assumes that Asia's core strategic antagonisms (between the US and China, Japan and China, and China and India) will prove enduring. Therefore, the best we can hope is that these antagonisms are managed in ways that contain great-power rivalry within manageable bounds while preserving the open maritime order that sustains Australia's access to the global markets on which our prosperity depends. Enlarging Australia's strategic geography to an Indo-Pacific (or even more narrowly India-Pacific) framework provides a means of advancing this goal. And it does so not least by concentrating Australia's energies on the task of strengthening India as the counterweight potentially most capable of tilting the regional balance of power in favour of the region's maritime democracies.

3. Indo-Pacific maximalism—an Indo-Pacific great power concert

Indo-Pacific maximalists agree with minimalists on the necessity of redefining Australia from an Asia-Pacific to an Indo-Pacific power. Nevertheless, key differences distinguish Indo-Pacific maximalism from its minimalist counterpart. First, Indo-Pacific maximalism places greater weight on the speed and breadth of the connectivity revolution linking the Asia-Pacific with the Indian Ocean region. Second, because of the comprehensiveness of this transformation, Indo-Pacific maximalists prescribe far greater changes for Australia's foreign and defence policy than do minimalists. Whereas minimalists focus on drawing India into a balancing role in East Asia, maximalists see Australia's engagement with India as part of a far more expansive program of regional order-building. Finally, Indo-Pacific minimalism enjoins an exclusionary order, oriented primarily towards moderating China's ambitions by balancing its rising power against an *entente* of maritime democracies. Conversely, maximalists aspire to a more inclusive order that acknowledges China's legitimate interests as a major maritime trading nation (Medcalf 2015) and is grounded in China's incorporation within an Indo-Pacific 'concert of powers'.

For Indo-Pacific maximalists, the trend towards a broader, more integrated and more multipolar Asia is clear. Surging trade and investment ties linking a swathe of territory from the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Japan constitute a critical dimension of this shift. But this integration is both a reflection and a reinforcement of a larger cause—the growing extraversion of the region's established and emerging great powers (Varghese 2015). This extraversion has already manifested itself in numerous ways, such as India's attempts to consolidate its partnerships with small Indian Ocean states while simultaneously strengthening its bilateral ties with maritime democracies, notably the US, Japan and Australia (Jaishankar 2016, Lang 2015). Likewise, the Abe government's efforts to foster trilateral cooperation with Australia and India (Lang 2015) testify not only to Tokyo's new extraversion but also to its broadening of its strategic geography beyond a Northeast Asian frame. Meanwhile, China's naval activism in the Indian Ocean, combined with the massive increases in Asian connectivity promised in its 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, reinforces the maximalists' claim that the patterns of interaction linking Asia's great powers are acquiring an Indo-Pacific character (see, for example, Medcalf 2014).

Beyond noting the more extraverted strategic behaviour of the region's great powers, maximalists also note changes in rhetoric that point to those states' embracing a more expansive Indo-Pacific strategic geography. Thus, in the US–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia–Pacific and the Indian Ocean, Washington and New Delhi cast their expanded strategic partnership in capacious terms that encompassed both maritime theatres (White House 2015). The Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025 also identifies the 'Indo-Pacific' as its geographical focus. Such language foregrounds an apparent convergence in Tokyo's and New Delhi's thinking towards an Indo-Pacific consensus in their shared strategic geography (MEA 2015). Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natelagawa's calls for an 'Indo-Pacific' maritime treaty (Georgieff 2013) and the Jokowi government's stress on Indonesia as a 'global maritime axis' linking the Indian Ocean to the Pacific (Shekhar & Liow 2014) are further evidence that Indo-Pacific ideas have begun to influence the outlook of Southeast Asia's largest indigenous power. Finally, while China has snubbed 'Indo-Pacific' language, its increased stress on 'far sea defence' similarly indicates a broadening of its strategic horizons beyond East Asia (Ramadhani 2015).

For maximalists, then, the region's powers are confirming—in actions and language—the emergent reality of the Indo-Pacific as an integrated strategic theatre. China and India—historically continentalist in their strategic orientation—are now jockeying with established maritime powers such as the US and Japan for naval power and influence (Phillips 2011, Wesley 2015). Confident about China's and India's continued rise, Indo-Pacific maximalism questions the AP1 stance that today's American-dominated security order can accommodate those powers without radical revision. Maximalists also doubt the wisdom of ignoring India or, alternatively, following minimalists' counsel to try to enlist India as part of an anti-China containment *entente* (Medcalf 2015).

From a maximalist viewpoint, the region's chief challenge isn't China's rise *per se*. Rather, it's the need to craft a security order that's larger, more comprehensive, more inclusive and therefore more sustainable in the long term than the *Pax Americana*. This order must be large enough to accommodate all the region's established and emerging great powers. It must be comprehensive in its design, enabling regional powers not only to avoid the risk of armed conflict but also to cooperate in suppressing non-traditional security challenges, such as piracy and terrorism. And it must be inclusive, incorporating China especially as an active participant, rather than the target of power balancing by an ad hoc *entente* of maritime democracies.

In its ordering assumptions, Indo-Pacific maximalism conforms neither to the renovated American hegemony of AP1 nor to the minimalists' model of an Indo-Pacific balance of power. Rather, it most closely (if imperfectly) approximates a 'concert of powers' arrangement. An Indo-Pacific concert would ideally incorporate the region's established and emerging powers within a common security architecture. This inclusive architecture—possibly centred on an existing platform, such as the East Asia Summit or the ASEAN Regional Forum—would provide regional powers with a forum to negotiate shared principles of security cooperation. In particular, it would seek to catalyse the development of confidence-building measures between the region's major naval powers with a view to reducing regional maritime tensions, for example by promoting shared incident-at-sea protocols (Heinrichs et al. 2011).

If successful in its primary aim of defusing tensions between the region's main maritime powers, the maximalist vision for regional order *might* evolve over time from a great-power concert to an Indo-Pacific 'security community' (Adler & Barnett 1998). This would entail in the first instance the cultivation of more issue-specific minilateral and bilateral initiatives aimed at fostering habits of cooperation to address the non-traditional security challenges noted above. It would also involve a longer term move away from an exclusively great-power-centred concert arrangement towards a more inclusive security architecture providing greater opportunities for order-shaping influence for the region's smaller powers. But a maximalist vision would first have to focus on the central challenge of accommodating established and emerging naval great powers within a common security architecture with a view to mitigating the tensions arising from a more crowded and contested Indo-Pacific seascape.

Translating the maximalists' vision of an Indo-Pacific great-power concert into policy reality presents immediate challenges for Australia. Most obviously, if regional order depends on forging such a concert, our middle-power status ostensibly precludes us from playing anything more than a supporting role in pushing for that outcome.

Admittedly, our historical entrepreneurship in sponsoring regional order-building initiatives partially qualifies this pessimism. Nevertheless, for Australia to become a credible champion of Indo-Pacific maximalism, we would need to comprehensively reorient our foreign and defence policies, signalling our unequivocal self-identification as a truly Indo-Pacific power.

At a practical level, Indo-Pacific maximalism would counsel Australia's enhanced engagement with India and Indonesia.

At a practical level, Indo-Pacific maximalism would counsel Australia's enhanced engagement with India and Indonesia. On its face, this imperative is consistent with Indo-Pacific minimalism, but the maximalist vision would encompass far more sustained, institutionalised and comprehensive engagement and foreground a special focus on maritime security cooperation. Specifically, it would involve moves to permanently upgrade bilateral relations, for example by institutionalising annual 2+2 meetings between Australia's foreign and defence ministers and their Indian counterparts, complementing existing annual 2+2 meetings between Australia and Indonesia. Such a move would symbolically affirm the centrality of these relationships to Australia's regional vision, institutionalising an Indo-Pacific rather than Asia-Pacific orientation. Additionally, Australia would need to build on existing initiatives to strengthen bilateral (and perhaps even trilateral) naval cooperation with both countries (Brewster 2015a). To compensate for the current heavy Asia-Pacific lopsidedness of Australia's regional engagement, a maximalist Indo-Pacific foreign policy would also potentially involve cultivating stronger relations with smaller Indian Ocean island states, such as the Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles and Sri Lanka. Such initiatives would aim to strengthen those states' capacities for contributing to Indian Ocean maritime surveillance and could potentially be pursued in coordination with India, which is already advanced in upgrading its own engagement with them (Brewster 2015b:234). Australia's membership of organisations such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the Indian Ocean Rim Association also provides us with a platform for advocating for an inclusive maritime security architecture, which remains sensitive to China's interests, while remaining steadfast in opposing any armed attempt to revise Asia's maritime order (Phillips 2013a).

Beyond these initiatives, a maximalist Indo-Pacific posture also implies efforts to increase Australia's strategic and economic heft as a genuinely Indo-Pacific (rather than Asia-Pacific) power. Internationally, this would involve increased Australian activism to promote the success of efforts, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, that aim to consolidate a more open trading and investment order across Indo-Pacific Asia. Australia would also seek to underwrite this openness agenda through enhanced support for regional projects—such as the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity—that aim to facilitate the expansion in infrastructure necessary to support Indo-Pacific economic integration.

Domestically, meanwhile, Indo-Pacific maximalism would necessitate accelerated efforts to develop Australia's north, consistent with the ambitious goals outlined in the Australian Government's White Paper on developing northern Australia. As the White Paper acknowledged, northern Australia is both 'a gateway for our defence and security cooperation into the Indo-Pacific region' and a 'trade gateway' to key Asian markets (Department of Industry 2015:2). Accelerating the development of the north would be a prerequisite for Australia to cultivate the credibility, capacity and strategic and economic weight necessary to spearhead a maximalist Indo-Pacific vision of regional order, and would be an essential corollary to the international order-building initiatives outlined above.

4. Indo-Pacific functionalism—an Indo-Pacific maritime condominium

The strategies considered above have a 'big picture' focus embodying 'architectural' solutions (Green & Shearer 2012:177) to the challenge of regional order. By contrast, Indo-Pacific functionalism demarcates a position that is *agnostic* about Asia's long-term trajectory and *sceptical* about the possibility or desirability of securing stability

through resort to big-picture solutions. Abjuring grand designs, Indo-Pacific functionalism advocates pursuing more focused and issue-specific forms of security cooperation. It acknowledges growing maritime connectivity between the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific and the need to foster cooperation to mitigate the nascent rivalries arising from this integration. Nevertheless, in contrast to Indo-Pacific maximalists, functionalists also stress the *limited* and *issue-specific* character of Indo-Pacific integration to date and the need to calibrate regional security cooperation initiatives accordingly.

In their characterisation of Asia's strategic geography, maximalists place great emphasis on the importance of the maritime energy 'superhighway' tying the Indian Ocean region together with littoral East Asia. They see growing pan-regional energy interdependence as a leading-edge indicator of a more general process of integration that will rapidly yield an Indo-Pacific regional security order (Brewster 2015c:49, Medcalf 2014, Wesley 2015). And they also see this energy interdependence—and the growing tensions arising over control of major inter-regional SLOCs—as an urgent near-term source of rivalry in its own right.

Indo-Pacific functionalists share the maximalists' concern over the growing intersection between energy security concerns and SLOC-focused maritime rivalries. But they don't extrapolate from this challenge to presume that a more system-wide reorientation from an Asia-Pacific to an Indo-Pacific regional security order is imminent. By itself, growing pan-regional energy interdependence may or may not presage a more general transformation of Asia's strategic geography. This is not least because the very vulnerabilities that interdependence has produced are already prompting attempts at risk mitigation (such as the One Belt, One Road initiative) by great powers such as China (Rolland 2015:3). Moreover, even if we assume the medium-term salience of energy-related maritime vulnerabilities, that doesn't by itself demand a wholesale pivot towards an Indo-Pacific strategic reorientation. On the contrary, if the Indo-Pacific security dilemma coheres primarily around the nexus of energy and maritime security, then that recommends a more focused policy response, tailored with this challenge in mind.

From a functionalist perspective, the primary purpose of an Australian Indo-Pacific policy should be to work with regional partners to mitigate rivalries arising *specifically* from the energy – maritime security nexus, rather than seeking a comprehensive architectural solution to the region's rivalries. The focus of such an initiative would be on trying to remove Asia's pan-regional energy interdependence as a source of strategic anxiety for the region's great powers, especially in relation to the SLOCs passing through the Strait of Malacca.

Such an initiative might comprise Australian support for:

- a desecuritisation of regional energy security perceptions, especially those relating to sea-based trade in oil and petroleum products
- a diversification of pan-regional energy sources and supply routes
- building on these first two elements, an attempted demilitarisation of regional maritime disputes, especially in relation to the South China Sea.

Desecuritisation refers to the need to encourage regional partners to conceptualise seaborne trade in energy commodities as mainly a commercial rather than strategic concern (Phillips 2013b). Northeast Asian states have long fretted over the 'Malacca dilemma'—the risk that seaborne energy supplies might be disrupted through naval blockade. Indeed, observers have acknowledged the Malacca dilemma as a primary motivator for China's investment in 'far sea defence' capabilities, and thus a key driver of Indo-Pacific maritime rivalries (Kennedy 2010:142, Rolland 2015:3). But, despite genuine alarm about the Malacca dilemma in parts of China's foreign policy establishment, the spectre of a maritime energy blockade is more illusory than real. This is in part because such fears overestimate the capacity of even the US Navy to sustain a targeted energy blockade against adversaries while simultaneously keeping disruption of allies' energy supplies to a minimum (Kennedy 2010:142–143). In the specific case of oil, fears of an energy blockade around Indo-Pacific chokepoints overlook the fact that oil is a globally priced commodity. Consequently, efforts to engage in a targeted blockade would be likely to drive oil prices higher globally, to the detriment of all parties involved in a regional conflict (Kennedy 2010:142–143).

Efforts to stabilise Indo-Pacific maritime rivalries around the region's main SLOCs might therefore begin with more concerted efforts to reframe seaborne energy trade as primarily a commercial rather than a strategic issue. Given the widespread (if largely misplaced) character of energy blockade fears, however, Australia would need to reinforce desecuritisation efforts by supporting initiatives that aim to diversify energy supply routes and energy sources. For the former, this might entail support for China's initiatives to develop its trans-Eurasian road, rail and pipeline networks, conceivably through investment funds channelled through Australia's participation in the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. Such commitments wouldn't necessarily eliminate the danger of China's energy supplies being interdicted, especially given the arguably greater ease of disrupting fixed land-based energy supply routes versus their maritime counterparts. Nevertheless, to the extent that such projects diversify China's energy supply routes and thus mitigate Beijing's concerns about the supposed threat of maritime interdiction, they may help to further reduce security concerns about Indo-Pacific chokepoints, strengthening strategic stability. More general efforts to support a diversification of energy sources away from Middle Eastern oil, in particular, would likewise potentially mitigate Indo-Pacific maritime security anxieties.

Given Indonesia's interest in positioning itself as a 'global maritime axis', a focused Indo-Pacific functionalist strategy may also dovetail with the existing imperative of consolidating a more robust Australia-Indonesia security partnership.

A functionalist Indo-Pacific strategy would also logically aim to work towards a long-term demilitarisation of Indo-Pacific Asia's maritime disputes, particularly those centred on the SLOCs traversing the South China Sea. On this score, Australia's scope for independent action is limited, and the immediate-term prospects of a happy outcome are remote. Nevertheless, confining an Indo-Pacific strategy in this way would focus Australia's energies on a discrete and proximate subregion of Asia—maritime Southeast Asia, in which our vital security interests are already engaged. It would also concentrate Australian efforts on addressing the specific type of security competition (maritime and SLOC-focused) that Indo-Pacific enthusiasts most frequently foreground in making the case for reframing Australia's strategic geography in Indo-Pacific terms. Finally, given Indonesia's interest in positioning itself as a 'global maritime axis' (Shekhar & Liow 2014), a focused Indo-Pacific functionalist strategy may also dovetail with the existing imperative of consolidating a more robust Australia-Indonesia security partnership.

Indo-Pacific functionalism offers a strategy for Australia that's more modest than its maximalist alternative, less confrontational than balance-of-power minimalism, and attuned to the Indo-Pacific's increasing integration in ways an AP1 strategy ostentatiously neglects.

Nevertheless, Indo-Pacific functionalism remains open to criticism. With its discrete focus on addressing SLOC- and chokepoint-centred security dilemmas, Indo-Pacific functionalism arguably seeks to remedy a symptom of great-power competition rather than confronting its causes. If peacefully managing China's rise constitutes Asia's main challenge, then tensions arising over Asia's seaborne energy commerce become mere reflections of a much larger contest for regional influence. Efforts to mitigate this one challenge in isolation will therefore be difficult to advance and potentially inconsequential and impermanent even if successful.

Indo-Pacific functionalism also potentially sits at odds with the perceived imperative of constraining China's rise within the parameters of the existing order. At its core, it's a strategy of assurance directed primarily at China. It aims to reduce regional tensions generally, but it does so in the first instance by addressing the specific concerns over vulnerabilities arising from Chinese dependence on the Indo-Pacific seaborne energy trade. However, from the perspective of those seeking to induce greater Chinese restraint, such assurance efforts potentially run directly counter to the need to deter Chinese revisionism. Regardless of the practical feasibility of imposing an energy

blockade on China, the perceived reality of this threat may be valuable for those who seek to limit Chinese activism by forcing Beijing to disperse its energies by planning for a wider range of contingencies. If 'constraint' (Segal 1996) and deterrence are to be the touchstone of regional efforts to manage China's rise, then functionalists' pursuit of a SLOC- and chokepoint-centred maritime condominium isn't merely naive but may be counterproductive to the task of socialising China into acceptance of the present order.

From a feasibility perspective, the pursuit of an Indo-Pacific maritime condominium may in any case be problematic for Australia. This is in part because the success of such a project depends on an alignment of great-power interests—and a willingness to accommodate one another—over which we have limited influence. The condominium idea would also potentially depend on unprecedented cooperation between Australia and Indonesia. While it's easy to argue in principle for Australia to seize the opportunity to align itself with Indonesia's maritime aspirations, the challenges of translating that aspiration into policy are profound. This is partially due to historically entrenched differences in Australian and Indonesian order-building strategies in maritime Southeast Asia. Whereas we have historically sought to integrate Southeast Asia within Western-dominated security architectures, Indonesia has since ASEAN's establishment sought to insulate Southeast Asia from great-power influence as much as possible (Phillips & Hiariej 2016:427). This difference in orientations qualifies hopes that Indonesia and Australia might meaningfully cooperate to co-sponsor an Indo-Pacific maritime condominium.

Ongoing Chinese revisionism in the South China Sea may of course nudge Jakarta to reconsider its order-building approach to maritime Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, Indonesia's modest naval capabilities limit its strategic heft (Shekhar & Liow 2014), diminishing its prospective value as a would-be co-sponsor of an Indo-Pacific maritime condominium. Additionally, despite earlier calls from Jakarta for an 'Indo-Pacific maritime treaty' (Georgieff 2013) and the Jokowi administration's stated desire to position Indonesia as a 'global maritime axis', little has been done to date to translate those aspirations into reality. This casts doubt on Jakarta's commitment to this vision and further qualifies hopes that Australia might find the diplomatic partners necessary to make Indo-Pacific functionalism viable.

CHAPTER 6

Indo/Pacific hedging—a triple-track grand strategy for Australia

The grand strategies examined in Chapter 5 all have significant limitations. ‘Asia–Pacific first’ (AP1) gestures towards acknowledging India’s rising prominence in a more contested Asia, but it remains too rigid in its commitment to doubling down on Australia’s traditionally highly East Asia-centric approach to regional order-building. It also assumes too readily the resilience of the US-centric security order and pays insufficient heed to the need to renovate that order to allow for the constructive involvement of rising regional powers.

Indo-Pacific minimalists are more open to the urgency of bringing in additional powers to balance China and to the need to hedge against the risk of US retrenchment in Asia. Nevertheless, Indo-Pacific minimalism is also the most confrontational strategy considered here. In advocating an exclusionary balance-of-power order, Indo-Pacific minimalists risk cementing China’s estrangement, priming the region for continued confrontation. Indo-Pacific minimalism also too readily assumes India’s willingness and capacity to join a balancing coalition rather than continue its own hedging strategy of ‘multi-alignment’ (Hall 2016).

Conversely, Indo-Pacific maximalism embraces a far more inclusive vision of regional order resembling a great-power concert rather than a balance-of-power arrangement. Maximalism is the most bullish strategy in its assessment of the speed and extent of Indo-Pacific integration and the most ambitious in the order-building project that it advocates. Nevertheless, this great ambition is also its great weakness. Despite maximalists’ optimistic prognostications, India’s and Indonesia’s rises are not foreordained. This uncertainty should warrant caution and guard against order-building projects that are too dependent on India’s and Indonesia’s triumphant emergence as fully-fledged regional great powers.

More generally, the vast scope of the maximalist project raises important questions about its feasibility. Indo-Pacific functionalism seeks to remedy this defect by advocating that Australia concentrate its energies on addressing the energy – maritime security nexus that an Indo-Pacific strategic geography most strongly foregrounds. But this more discrete focus brings its own problems, not least its potential inconsistency with the larger imperative to constrain Chinese revisionism and its potential over-reliance on non-traditional partners (principally Indonesia) to help co-sponsor an Indo-Pacific maritime condominium.

Given the irresolvable uncertainties manifest in a rapidly changing Asia, I don’t wholeheartedly endorse any of the strategies examined in Chapter 5. Instead, I advocate an alternative ‘triple-track’ strategy of regional order-building, centred on the concept of Indo/Pacific hedging.

The modifier ‘Indo/Pacific’ (as opposed to ‘Indo-Pacific’) foregrounds the fact that maritime Asia is composed of increasingly interconnected but nevertheless durably distinct regional security orders. While conceding maritime Asia’s ongoing connectivity revolution, an Indo/Pacific strategic geography acknowledges that the economic ties drawing the Indian Ocean region and littoral East Asia together remain for now primarily confined to the arena of the seaborne energy trade. This could change rapidly depending on the speed of India’s industrialisation and integration into regional production networks, although that development is far from inevitable in the medium

term. Contrarily, the historical legacies of America's differential integration into the East Asian and Indian Ocean regional security orders are likely to prove durable. Within East Asia, the hub-and-spokes alliance system constitutes a heavily institutionalised security arrangement. This system structures local powers' opportunities for defence cooperation in ways that have no analogues in the Indian Ocean region. At the same time, littoral East Asia remains more crowded by established and emerging great powers and is the setting for a far higher number of militarised maritime disputes than the Indian Ocean. For this reason, any sensible Australian grand strategy must begin by acknowledging the distinctiveness of the 'Indo' and 'Pacific' halves of our maritime environment, and the priority of the latter over the former.

Besides endorsing an Indo/Pacific strategic geography, I also advocate a hedging posture for Australia. By hedging, I don't mean a move away from the US as Australia's primary security patron or an abandonment of the commitment to open multilateralism that has characterised our Asia-Pacific regional engagement since the 1970s. Both ANZUS and our commitment to inclusive multilateralism have served Australia's interests well and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Rather, a hedging posture simply acknowledges that we confront significant uncertainties, especially concerning China's potential future orientation towards the existing order. Accordingly, Australia must work with like-minded states to support an Indo/Pacific security order that's *strong* enough to guard against the threat of armed revisionism while still being *supple* enough to accommodate the legitimate ambitions of rising Asian great powers. Additionally, this order must also be *sustainable*. Tomorrow's Indo/Pacific order must draw more comprehensively on regional states working in partnership with Washington and each other, rather than relying on the US to continue to bear the overwhelming burden of upholding regional peace and security.

With these imperatives of strength, suppleness and sustainability in mind, I propose a triple-track strategy, centred on three policies:

- In the Asia-Pacific, a focus on helping to refurbish the San Francisco alliance system to deter armed revisionist attempts to challenge the current rules-based order.
- In the Indian Ocean, the cultivation of 'bottom up' forms of bilateral and minilateral security cooperation to incrementally develop Asia's collective capacity to manage traditional and non-traditional challenges.
- As a longer term project, working with like-minded states to develop an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue, aimed at preserving and expanding an open and inclusive economic and security order.

Consistent with the recognition that the threat of armed Chinese revisionism constitutes the most significant near-term threat to peace in Asia, an Indo/Pacific hedging strategy would entail a combination of ANZUS alliance modernisation together with intensified efforts to strengthen 'spoke to spoke' cooperation between America's regional treaty allies. The imperative to move from a hub-and-spokes to a 'wheels and webs' security architecture in East Asia stems from the need to maintain the credibility of the existing US-centred security system in a context of rapidly shifting power relativities ostensibly favouring China (Bisley 2008, Wainwright 2016). There remain considerable grounds for optimism about China's successful accommodation within the existing order in the longer term, but its growing A2/AD and power projection capabilities threaten to shift power perceptions in the region in ways that potentially undercut the credibility of American security guarantees and thus contribute to regional instability. Conversely, more integrated security cooperation among America's allies would not only strengthen the deterrence power of the San Francisco system in relation to China, but also potentially enhance the assurance credibility of the alliance system as a whole. The East Asian littoral includes most of Asia's great powers, most of its conflict flashpoints and most of Australia's top trading partners. Concentrating effort first on strengthening East Asia's security architecture is therefore prudent. And fortifying 'spoke to spoke' (Wainwright 2016:3) security cooperation provides an efficient means of distributing effort more evenly between America and its allies, thus enhancing the credibility and long-term sustainability of the only coalition collectively strong enough to constrain the potential threat of Chinese revisionism.

Alongside the urgent imperative of refurbishing the San Francisco alliance system, Australia should also pursue policies of *à la carte* security bilateralism and minilateralism in the Indian Ocean, with India and Indonesia as priority partners.

The objectives and prospective benefits of *à la carte* bilateralism and minilateralism in the Indian Ocean are threefold. Most immediately, such initiatives would help build both partner capacity and habits of cooperation between two states that are of increasingly vital strategic importance to Australia, but with which our previous history of cooperation is modest at best. Although a range of security challenges recommend themselves as focal points for increased cooperation, maritime security (especially maritime surveillance) stands out as one area in particular where Australia could benefit from more systematically engaging New Delhi and Jakarta. Investment in maritime security initiatives (at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels) is consistent with the imperatives deriving from Australia's increasingly Indo/Pacific strategic geography and could potentially also provide the near-term practical policy gains necessary to build momentum for more ambitious efforts at security partnership.

A second benefit of increased *à la carte* bilateral and minilateral security cooperation in the Indian Ocean lies in its capacity to test the potential for Australia to develop more comprehensive security partnerships with India and Indonesia over time and to identify the major impediments to such an enterprise through trial and error. Establishing comprehensive security partnerships with India and Indonesia would significantly expand Australia's capacity to proactively shape the regional order. Nevertheless, in the absence of a major exogenous shock, such partnerships would need to be built incrementally over time and may prove in the last instance too difficult to consolidate enough to be useful in contributing to regional stability. There's no guarantee that successful partnerships in one issue area (such as Australia and Indonesia's counterterrorism partnership following the 2002 Bali bombings) will 'spill over' into a larger *entente* (Phillips & Hiariej 2016:434). Regardless, while increased *à la carte* security cooperation may not prove sufficient to build the more comprehensive partnerships some seek from India and Indonesia, it is likely to prove a necessary first step in working towards such an outcome.

The third advantage of pursuing 'bottom up' (Tow & Taylor 2010: 112) regionalism in the Indian Ocean through *à la carte* initiatives with India and Indonesia is that it could modestly hasten India and Indonesia's emergence as net security providers actively invested in upholding regional strategic stability. For Australia to help secure and sustain a regional order that's peaceful, inclusive and resilient, both India and Indonesia must be included in the longer term as key stakeholders and net security providers within that order. India is the world's largest democracy and world's ninth largest economy, and will soon also be the world's most populous state. Indonesia, meanwhile, is the Muslim world's most populous state and the world's third largest democracy. It also remains maritime Southeast Asia's pivotal state and the hinge linking the Indian Ocean and Pacific theatres. If we make the plausible assumption that maritime Asia's connectivity revolution is set to continue, it will be necessary to forge an order that successfully integrates and accommodates both of these states. Attempting to enlist India and Indonesia as fully-fledged allies in an anti-China coalition is a fool's errand: even if successful, it would merely cement an exclusionary and polarised order, which China's power and dissatisfaction would in any case render unsustainable. Nevertheless, integrating India and Indonesia more fully as regional security providers is both desirable and necessary. *A la carte* bilateral and minilateral initiatives provide a further means of promoting this integration, potentially expanding the coalition of states interested and actively engaged in preserving an open and peaceful Asian order.

The key differences between the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions demand an ambidextrous approach that acknowledges these differences, and reflects them in an Indo/Pacific strategy grounded in customised policies of alliance refurbishment and *à la carte* bilateral and minilateral security cooperation initiatives.

This imperative of an ambidextrous approach notwithstanding, Indo/Pacific hedging need not and should not come at the expense of Australia's longstanding commitment to open multilateralism. Australia should remain steadfastly dedicated to the inclusive and expansive 'big picture' conception of Asia that has traditionally informed its regional order-building strategy. Accordingly, while I reject the outsize ambition of Indo-Pacific maximalism, I do recommend complementing alliance refurbishment and *à la carte* security cooperation with support for an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue, albeit as a *supplement* rather than a *centrepiece* of our strategy.

As Indo-Pacific maximalists rightly acknowledge (see, for example, Medcalf 2014), there are compelling reasons for Australia to help sponsor a regional security architecture that brings India, in particular, squarely into an Asia-wide security system. Regardless of whether India aspires to balance China *militarily* in the longer term, officially

recognising India as a fully-fledged security player in maritime Asia has the advantage of potentially *institutionally balancing* (He 2008) Chinese influence merely by ensuring India's presence in regional security discussions. This could in turn work as a form of diffuse reassurance for smaller Southeast Asian states, foreclosing their risk of bandwagoning in the face of Chinese threats or inducements.

Indo-Pacific security multilateralism—perhaps cohering around the existing nucleus of the East Asia Summit—would provide a useful vehicle for enmeshing the region's great powers into a common security framework.

More generally, Indo-Pacific security multilateralism—perhaps cohering around the existing nucleus of the East Asia Summit (EAS)—would provide a useful vehicle for enmeshing the region's great powers into a common security framework. Indeed, the EAS offers a range of advantages as a platform out of which an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue might develop. These include the fact that it is an established structure, which already includes all the key Indo-Pacific players as participants (Cook and Bisley 2016:6). Additionally, at the last EAS meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015, delegates explicitly stated a desire to consider maritime cooperation as a priority future focus (East Asia Summit 2015). This commitment clearly gels with the maritime security concerns that Indo-Pacific advocates have rightly foregrounded, and that should in any case be a focus for Australia in its developing bilateral and minilateral security partnerships. Finally, the EAS has the additional advantage of possessing the same membership as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). This correspondence is advantageous. For in the long term it would help participants to more easily operationalise any specific defence cooperation proposals that might emerge from an Indo-Pacific framework developed out of the existing EAS structure.

I must nevertheless stress that the point of such a framework wouldn't be to contrive some artificial consensus, along the lines of a fully-fledged great-power concert. Rather, a dedicated Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue would provide in the first instance an inclusive platform for regional actors to debate issues of common concern (Cook and Bisley 2016:6). In the longer term, such an institution could potentially broaden its mandate along lines comparable to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, providing for Indo-Pacific powers a common institutional trellis around which collective responses to shared non-traditional security challenges might cohere.

The reality of strategic contestation in Asia today constrains (but doesn't preclude) Australia's capacity to promote an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue. Our failed attempt to sponsor an 'Asia-Pacific security community' moreover counsels the need to avoid diplomatic overreach. We lack the capacity and credibility to unilaterally propose and promote a new 'grand design' for Asian security architecture. Consequently, we'd need to pursue any long-term attempt to institutionalise an expansive Indo-Pacific security architecture in conjunction with other regional actors.

In light of these caveats, for now, our efforts must focus first on refurbishing alliances in East Asia to deter the threat of armed revisionism, and second on engaging priority Indian Ocean partners to enlarge the number of net security providers across Asia, particularly in the maritime domain. An Indo/Pacific hedging strategy—which recognises the diversity of the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean theatres and the need for customised approaches to each—provides us with the clarity necessary to confront these challenges with the limited resources at our disposal. At the same time, it also remains open to the long-term possibility and desirability of an Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue, even while recognising it as being aspirational for the foreseeable future. In so doing, it remains consistent with Australia's commitment to an expansive and inclusive vision of Asia, which must rightly remain central to our regional diplomacy in the Asian Century.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	anti-access/area-denial
ADMM+	ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus
AP1	Asia–Pacific first
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EAS	East Asia Summit
GDP	gross domestic product
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
SLOCs	sea lines of communication

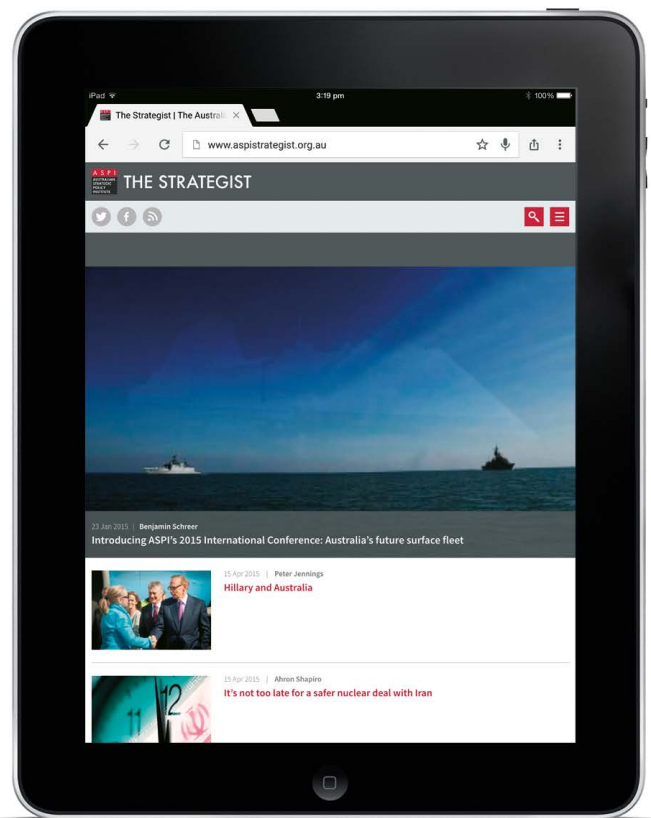
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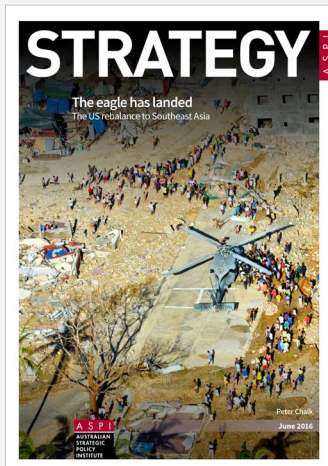
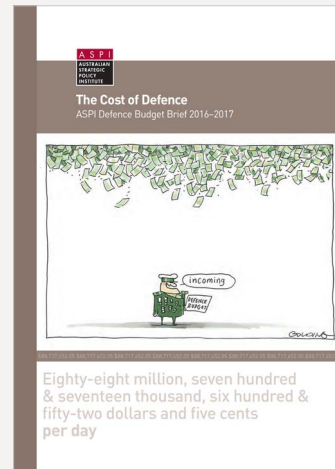


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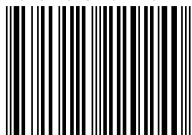
Recasting Australia's Indo/Pacific strategic geography

Australia's strategic geography is being revolutionised. China and India's rising maritime power, coupled with a Eurasia-wide 'connectivity revolution', is drawing together two formerly disparate theatres: the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region. Moreover, 'Indo-Pacific' language now pervades official characterisations of Australia's strategic geography. But is the Indo-Pacific a reliable characterisation of Australia's neighbourhood? What might a genuinely Indo-Pacific strategy of regional order-building look like? And what are the alternatives to an Indo-Pacific grand strategy for Australia?

This report argues against the Indo-Pacific idea and presents the case for a more regionally differentiated 'Indo/Pacific' alternative. The Indo-Pacific idea is a crucial intervention in Australian foreign and defence policy debates and captures fundamental megatrends now reshaping our region. Nevertheless, it also overstates the magnitude, speed and scope of integration between the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region and offers a bold but ultimately flawed regional template for Australian foreign and defence policymakers. Specifically, the hyphen at the heart of the Indo-Pacific aggregates two distinct regional security orders that have differed widely in their historical evolution and that today present different challenges and regional order-building opportunities for Australia.

By contrast, an Indo/Pacific strategic geography explicitly differentiates the Asia-Pacific from the Indian Ocean region and calibrates Australia's strategies for regional engagement accordingly.

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