

# Is India Ready for the Indo-Pacific?

One of the key geopolitical developments in 2017 was the first-ever formal enshrinement of the “Indo-Pacific” as a unified strategic theater in the U.S. National Security Strategy.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, the U.S. National Defense Strategy also adopted this terminology, suggesting buy-in across the Executive Branch.<sup>2</sup> The development was arguably the result of the growing realization in Washington, D.C., and other capitals that it cannot be business-as-usual going forward with China, given its increasingly assertive foreign policy since 2013. As analysts have noted, it is hardly an accident that this new term was introduced in the same document that officially termed China as a “revisionist” power for the first time.<sup>3</sup> The idea of the Indo-Pacific received further validation when the quadrilateral security dialogue (colloquially, the quad)—involving the United States, Australia, Japan, and India—reconvened for the first time in a decade in Manila in November 2017. Most significantly, in June 2018, the U.S. Pacific Command—one of the oldest and largest unified combatant commands—was renamed the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command while its area of responsibility remained the same.

The normative significance of the formal adoption of this nomenclature for India cannot be overstated. The moniker firmly and officially situates India in U.S. grand strategy. The expansive maritime space that is the Indo-Pacific, per the U.S. definition, includes the Pacific and part of the Indian Ocean, up to India’s western coastline. In contrast, while India is yet to publish an official statement delineating its own definition, the 2015 Indian Maritime Security Strategy’s “primary” and “secondary” areas of responsibility (AOR) put together indicates

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that the Indian definition is broader, including all of western and central Pacific and the entire Indian Ocean. (According to that document, the Indian navy's primary AOR includes the western Indian Ocean and all of India's territorial waters and sea lines of communications, while its secondary AOR includes the southeastern Indian Ocean, South and East China Seas, and the western Pacific.<sup>4</sup>) India remains wedded to the idea of it being a leading power in the Indian Ocean.

As we argue in this article, while India endorses the idea of the Indo-Pacific rhetorically, three issues prevent actual operationalization of the concept for New Delhi. These issues geographically pertain to India's east, north, and west. On its east, strategic, naval capability, and normative deficits prevent India from playing a larger role in the western Pacific. To its north, a manifest power differential with China—and an uncertain future trajectory of India-China relations—further contributes to India's reticence to play a larger and more robust role in regional security. Finally, to its west, divergent Indian and American positions in the western Indian Ocean, in particular on Pakistan and Iran, prevent the creation of a unified cohesive view of the Indo-Pacific that both countries share. These divergences have concrete consequences for the future of U.S.-India regional cooperation. We conclude with some policy recommendations on how the United States could indeed help India become a leading power in the Indo-Pacific.

### **Whither India in the Pacific?**

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India has significant interests in the western Pacific and in the South China Sea (SCS). These include a consequential stake in the Sakhalin-I offshore energy field in the Russian Far East, as well as in offshore energy blocks in the South China Sea, in collaboration with Vietnam.<sup>5</sup> Politically, India recognizes the importance of the region. Its erstwhile "Look East" policy—through which India sought to engage with Southeast Asia—was expanded to include the Pacific as early as 2003, with ongoing deepening strategic partnerships with key regional players—a position the successor "Act East" policy also carries forward.<sup>6</sup> India also remains conscious of the security of its sea lines of communications (specific maritime routes for shipping and naval movement) in the SCS, especially in the face of China's strategy of "active defense," which calls for sea control that could push foreign navies out at-will in order to create anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) bubbles in the region. A June 2017 joint US-India statement has tacitly recognized this problem, calling on all SCS stakeholders to uphold freedom of navigation in that maritime space.<sup>7</sup> The Indian navy could also carry out forward presence operations

in the western Pacific to counter the Chinese navy's increasing forays in the Indian Ocean region.

Despite all this, India remains reluctant to play a more robust naval role in the western Pacific as demonstrated by its refusal to join the United States when Washington has called for joint U.S.-India patrolling of the SCS.<sup>8</sup> There are three interrelated “deficits” behind India's reticence in playing a more robust role in the region: strategic, capabilities, and normative.

The strategic deficit is both ideational as well as practical. At the ideational level, while the Indian navy recognizes that its interests stretch the entire span of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans, it continues to make a difference between its “primary” and “secondary” areas of interest, in effect splitting the unified strategic construct of the Indo-Pacific.<sup>9</sup> But, it is the practical strategic deficit that prevents a greater Indian role in the Pacific. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the case of India's sole SSBN INS *Arihant*. The delayed deadlines in commissioning the vessel, as well as a lack of clearly circumscribed roles for it, is symptomatic of the lack of an Indian grand strategy.<sup>10</sup>

It has also been argued that implementation of a grand strategy—assuming it exists, albeit informally—needs a “coordinating policy infrastructure that integrates and applies resources to meet national interests,” something India lacks at present.<sup>11</sup> Currently, India does not have formal national security and defense strategies that delineate and prioritize core strategic objectives and provide policy direction. The separate functioning of the military service headquarters and the Ministry of Defence has also contributed to the lack of defense policy coordination.<sup>12</sup> The persistent inability of successive governments to reform higher defense management, crucially the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff—who would be empowered to resolve inter-services squabbling about resource allocation, for example—further contributes to this problem.

Absent a formally articulated grand strategy, the Indian establishment's default position has been to overemphasize continental threats. Nowhere is this more clearly visible than in last year's joint doctrine for its armed forces—the first-ever such public document—which was notable for its near-absent discussion of force projection and perfunctory attention to naval power.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile Pakistan, given its relationship with India is at its lowest point in the past 15 years, looms large over the official Indian strategic imagination or lack thereof. This means that India will likely continue with a naval doctrine that is either continentalist or area-defensive in orientation, with a diminished role for a blue-water navy.<sup>14</sup> These strategic deficits will prevent the recreation of, as some had hoped out of

**India remains reluctant to play a more robust naval role in the western Pacific.**

a strong U.S.-India partnership, a pan-oceanic “India Center’ that organized peace and stability in much of the Eastern Hemisphere during the 19th and early 20th centuries.”<sup>15</sup>

The second deficit is with India’s naval force-projection capabilities. It is estimated that India will spend a measly 1.62 percent of its GDP on defense in financial year 2018-2019.<sup>16</sup> Given that the navy is the smallest Indian armed service in terms of budgetary allocation, this low ceiling restricts its actions considerably. Moreover, the Indian navy is dwarfed by its Chinese neighbor. For example, in 2017, China had 58 tactical submarines to India’s 14. More alarming, however, is the fact that the size of the Indian fleet has remained constant while the corresponding inventory in the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has grown. India even lost a frigate between 2015 and 2017 while the PLAN added five.<sup>17</sup>

It has been observed that India “possesses fewer attack helicopters, transporters, tankers, and AEW/C aircraft than any one of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council, and in many cases fewer than other Asian powers like Australia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.”<sup>18</sup> For India to maintain a more robust constabulary role in the Indian Ocean alone, New Delhi would need as many as three to six aircraft carriers, given that only one out of three can be at sea at a time.<sup>19</sup> But this is not just an issue of quantity. The Indian navy has been slow to modernize and much of its equipment is dated. And the lack of strategic guidance from the political leadership is so weak that, according to some, “[a]n institutional consensus in the [Indian] navy is that it neither possesses the assets nor the operational mandate to be a substantial presence in the Pacific.”<sup>20</sup>

The third and final deficit is normative. Freedom of navigation (FON) refers to an international-legal assertion that “ships of all states, including both civilian and military vessels, enjoy the right of innocent passage [defined very concretely] through the territorial sea of other states.”<sup>21</sup> New Delhi’s understanding of what constitutes FON often differs sharply with the United States, leading to pathologies such as the latter carrying out FON operations (or FONOPS) against the former as late as 2014-2015. (FONOPS are naval movements that seek to challenge the target state’s maritime claims that could impede FON.)<sup>22</sup> The problem lies with the fact that, like China, India does not accept unannounced passages of foreign navies through its territorial waters or exclusive economic zones (which “extends 200 nautical miles from land and encompasses both the territorial sea and the contiguous zone” where states have special rights over resource exploitation<sup>23</sup>) as part of those navies’ freedom of navigation.<sup>24</sup> This position has practical consequences for any putative Indian FONOPS in the South China Sea. New Delhi worries that if it shifted to a more relaxed position on FONOPS, China might do the same and start foraging near India’s strategically placed Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India also makes a sharp distinction between “resident” and “extra-regional powers” in the Indian Ocean<sup>25</sup> in order to implicitly

advance the claim that the Indian Ocean is indeed *India's* ocean. This stance cuts both ways given that, in many ways, China too makes a similar normative distinction when it comes to the South China Sea.

Each of these three deficits, in turn, reinforce each other. For example, the absence of strategic ideation around the precise role of the western Pacific in Indian grand strategy implies that force-projection capabilities acquisition remains directionless. The normative deficit—where India's perception of its own role in the Indian Ocean differs significantly from that of its partners—implies that India is reluctant to codify its position on the SCS beyond anodyne statements. Finally, pragmatic strategic considerations, such as lack of state capacity as well as persistent land-based contingencies, continue to box India in the South-Asian subcontinent.

### Changing Tune on China

Beyond these proximate deficits to its east, a more fundamental reason to its north exists why India—despite all its public exhortations—may be unable to play a larger role in advancing the strategic construct of the Indo-Pacific. This has to do with both structural and normative imperatives that shape and often constrain India's foreign policy. To begin with, over the last two years India has been caught off-guard by Beijing's intransigence and by China leveraging its considerable material differential over India to advance positions that have often directly impinged on Indian national interest. Whether that be Chinese leverage over smaller states in India's traditional sphere of influence—Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives included—or China's deepening entente with Pakistan that directly challenges India's territorial claims, New Delhi has found itself utterly unprepared to deal with an assertive Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping.

**New Delhi has found itself utterly unprepared to deal with an assertive Chinese foreign policy.**

In June 2017, Indian troops stationed at the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction in Doklam, a Himalayan region claimed by both Bhutan and China, spotted a Chinese military construction team trying to extend a road which would have, in effect, moved the tri-junction. This new tri-junction, should it have been established, would have allowed the PLA to threaten a narrow sliver of land that connects mainland India to its Northeastern states.<sup>26</sup> The Indian army, in consultation with the Bhutanese forces in the area, prevented the PLA from carrying out the construction activity, setting into motion the worst border crisis between India and China in over three decades.

The standoff ended in August 2017 with a delicate solution that allowed both sides to save face: they simultaneously disengaged from the location. By then, however, the damage to the relationship was done. Coming as it did on the heels of several high-profile spats between the two countries in 2016 and 2017, the Doklam stand-off once again highlighted the fraught peace between two countries that share a disputed border of more than 4000 kilometers.

Despite jubilation in India over China having been literally stopped in its tracks, it took a sharp U-turn on its policy toward China in January 2018. This change reflects both New Delhi's structural anxieties and the stickiness of its strategic-autonomy posture. The latter—a version of India's non-alignment posture during the Cold War—posits that India should not be swayed by any single power to shape its foreign policy preferences. In practice, strategic autonomy in the recent years has meant that India continues to engage with all major powers, including China, on equal terms so that no single actor (the United States) can influence India's foreign policy. Sold as a “reset” of India-China ties after the Doklam crisis, the Indian government has embarked on an intense high-profile outreach to Beijing which has included an announced visit by the new Indian foreign secretary and a string of planned bilateral meetings, including one between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping in June.<sup>27</sup>

The reset has also included a very public snub to the Tibetan government-in-exile<sup>28</sup>—which is based in India—as well as what critics perceive to be looking the other way while the PLA continues its military buildup in the Doklam region.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, when the Beijing-backed president of Maldives cracked down on the opposition and, in direct defiance of New Delhi, declared and then extended a state of emergency in February 2018, New Delhi's inaction was read either as a lack of options in dealing with an errant neighbor or—worse—bowing to Chinese pressure.<sup>30</sup> Either way, India did not come across as a regional behemoth able (or willing) to impose its will on defecting smaller states in its sphere of influence. By fact or optics, New Delhi let Beijing emerge as the winner in the latest round of shadow boxing between the two countries.

To be sure, structural issues—and realism—dictate that a materially weaker India must do what it can to stabilize a relationship that has been going downhill on most fronts since 2016. This includes increasing areas in which India and China can cooperate in order to balance out areas of serious differences. The problem with this argument though is that this is precisely the approach New Delhi tried *before* Doklam—and it didn't help. In many ways, the 2018 “reset” is turning the clock back on India's policy toward China to 2014, when Xi became one of the first leaders to visit India after Modi's election that year, and 2015 when—during a high-profile visit to Beijing—Modi made a set of

concessions to the Chinese such as a unilateral offer for visas-on-arrival for Chinese citizens.

India's inconsistent approach vis-à-vis China will have significant implications for the future of India as an Indo-Pacific lynchpin aiming to uphold the regional order in the face of Chinese revisionism. Plurilateral and multilateral balance-of-power coalitions are plagued by problems of free-riding and defection,<sup>31</sup> the newly revived quad being no exception. Does the attempt to “reset” ties with China also imply that, in order to make gains in its continental disputes with China, India would tacitly push for a softer quad that is, in effect, no different from the Russia-India-China grouping (a foreign-minister level consultation that is yet to yield any concrete results)? Do note that the Indian foreign ministry has gone on record making this precise equation as an example of India's foreign policy “flexibility.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, India's continental compulsions will have a large and uncertain bearing on its role in the Indo-Pacific.

## Western Discord

Recently retired commander of the erstwhile United States Pacific Command (PACOM) Admiral Harry Harris is fond of reminding his Indian audiences that PACOM stretches from “Hollywood to Bollywood.”<sup>33</sup> One of the main discordant notes in situating India in the Indo-Pacific is divergent Indian and U.S. positions on happenings off the coast of Bollywood (Mumbai), and into the western Indian Ocean and the troubled littorals there—Pakistan and Iran, in particular. The U.S.-India-Pakistan dynamics also have had second-order effects on the U.S.-India defense relationship to the east, in terms of hindering greater interoperability between the Indian and American militaries. Much of this has to do with India's position, sitting as it does between the erstwhile U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

The basic problem with the American desire to situate India as a leading power in the Indo-Pacific is organizational, and lies with the peculiarity of India being in the erstwhile PACOM's area of responsibility (AOR). India's troubles have historically been with Pakistan, which is in CENTCOM's AOR. India also has significant energy security and diaspora interests in that area. Forty-five percent of India's crude oil imports are from the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) alone.<sup>34</sup> Between seven and eight million Indians live in Gulf countries, sending back more than 35 billion dollars each year.<sup>35</sup> CENTCOM's lack of institutional interest in India is a problem that had been noted by analysts as early as 2005, when Indian elites perceived that their country was being placed in a “strategic ether between the two powerful unified commands.”<sup>36</sup> This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that

while the Indian Navy and the erstwhile PACOM have developed a close working relationship, such is not the case between CENTCOM (and its naval subordinate, NAVCENT) and India's Western Naval Command.<sup>37</sup>

When it comes to Pakistan, India and the United States continue to have significant differences. Indian elites often articulate the view that the United States

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has not done enough to rein in Pakistan. They also see the United States as continuing to placate Pakistan, ostensibly to secure the latter's support on Afghanistan. When news broke in 2017 that the Pentagon had persuaded Congress to delink reimbursements for Pakistan's counterterrorism expenses (for deploying its forces along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border) from its support for *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (an extremist outfit both India and the United States blame for a massive attack on Mumbai in 2008),<sup>38</sup> many in New Delhi saw

it as further proof of CENTCOM's favorable disposition towards Pakistan.

As noted earlier, the Indian conception of the Indo-Pacific includes the entire Indian Ocean, with the implication that Pakistan is an Indo-Pacific littoral, albeit a troubled one. And, if the United States urges regional stakeholders to accept that North Korea is a trouble spot in the Indo-Pacific, it can be argued that Pakistan should also be marked as such in the U.S. strategy for the region (and not just in its South Asia strategy).<sup>39</sup> Admiral Harris, at a recent conference in Delhi, suggested that "terrorism is real in the Indo-Pacific region in 2018."<sup>40</sup> Whether India fully signs on to the United States' conception of the Indo-Pacific will depend on whether counterterrorism—and modifying Pakistan's behavior—can be brought to its regional agenda. This, in turn, will require greater coordination between the rechristened PACOM and CENTCOM, counterterrorism being predominantly the latter's domain (due to its AOR).

Pakistan's close working relationship with CENTCOM as well as its status as a "major non-NATO ally" of the United States has also complicated efforts to further strengthen interoperability between the Indian and U.S. navies.<sup>41</sup> One of the key requirements for this is that India and the United States have the ability to exchange classified data securely. Both countries have been negotiating an agreement—first called Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and now rechristened Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)—for some time now that would lay the foundations for such a capability. This agreement, in turn, would pave the way for India to join a U.S. Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System (CENTRIXS) network—a protected data network that the

United States uses to communicate with allies. For example, CENTRIXS-J is a protected military communications network between the United States and Japan.<sup>42</sup>

Part of India's hesitation to sign COMCASA—and be a permanent part of the U.S. CENTRIXS architecture—is the fear that Pakistan, through its presence in NAVCENT,<sup>43</sup> will be able to intercept highly sensitive Indian military information. Pakistan remains a coalition partner of CENTCOM and, as such, may be part of a CENTRIXS network for CENTCOM Coalition Partners. Specifically, the Indian fear—as expressed to one of us by a former Indian navy officer—is that all CENTRIXS networks automatically interface with each other, giving Pakistan deep insights into Indian military operations in event of a conflict, should India also be part of that architecture.<sup>44</sup> However, based on open-source information, this fear appears unfounded. For example, South Korea and Japan were part of two separate and unconnected CENTRIXS networks that did not interface before November 2016 when both countries signed a General Sharing of Military Intelligence Agreement.<sup>45</sup> Whatever the case, India's reluctance to sign CISMOA is a good example of how the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has higher order effects that may circumscribe the possibility of deeper U.S.-India military cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

The final point of contention between India and the United States, when it comes to a common Indo-Pacific strategy, is Iran. India's apparently cordial relationship with that country was subject of much worry in the West, especially when the landmark U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement (inked in 2008) was being debated in Washington, DC. The ties between India and Iran almost assumed the character of a “litmus test” to see how far the United States was willing to go to accommodate India into the global nuclear order.<sup>46</sup>

**When it comes to a common Indo-Pacific strategy, Iran is a point of contention.**

Today, India has different priorities regarding Iran. New Delhi would like Teheran to let it develop the strategically significant Chabahar port there, as India contemplates an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),<sup>47</sup> as well as develop an alternative route to reach landlocked Afghanistan. The port lies near the strategically important Strait of Hormuz; India pledged 500 million dollars for its development in 2016 under the India-Iran-Afghanistan “Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor.”<sup>48</sup> While the U.S.-Iran ties were on the path toward normalization following the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, India's ties with Iran, admittedly one of a transactional nature, did not interfere with its relationship with the United States. Now however, with the Trump administration's increasingly hard line on Iran and recent withdrawal from the JCPOA, it is unclear

how far the United States will let New Delhi pursue Tehran before it starts affecting the U.S.-India bilateral relationship. A concrete challenge here for Delhi would be to manage its commercial dealings around the Chabahar port after the Trump administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions on Iran in May 2018.<sup>49</sup> This would be yet another instance of how divergences on India's west could fracture the emergence of a common consensus between India and the United States about a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy.

### Pathways to an India in the Indo-Pacific

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As this article has argued, there remain significant structural, political, and ideational difficulties impeding India from living up to its full potential as an Indo-Pacific power. There are, however, four potential pathways that could bring India closer to this goal. First, if there were a military confrontation between India and China (not merely a Doklam-like standoff), this could prompt India to seriously expand its military capabilities and enter into a *de facto* alliance with the United States as well as other western powers in order to embark on a containment strategy directed at Beijing. Even absent a serious provocation, New Delhi could choose to reciprocate Chinese forays into its own maritime

**Four potential pathways could bring India closer to its potential as an Indo-Pacific power.**

sphere of influence by regularly carrying out presence operations in the South China Sea.

A second pathway would involve India and the United States carrying out frequent consultations to obtain a common understanding and definition of the Indo-Pacific, in addition to consulting on other issues in the region. From New Delhi's point of view, Washington would be well advised to expand its current definition of the Indo-Pacific to include all of

the western Indian Ocean as well. The United States should also put terrorism front-and-center as a key challenge to the Indo-Pacific order, which would induce India to play a larger role in the region. One can conjecture that one of the reasons why that has not happened is because international counterterrorism post-9/11 has been the turf of CENTCOM (along with the Special Operations Command), while the renamed PACOM has emerged as the champion of the Indo-Pacific construct. The erstwhile PACOM-CENTCOM gap (discussed earlier in the paper) has had an unfortunate effect of terrorism being pushed down on the Indo-Pacific agenda. At the political-military level, such consultations should include both PACOM and CENTCOM on the U.S. side and the Western, Eastern, and Southern Indian Naval Commands. This could supplement the

recently instituted “2 + 2” (defense as well as foreign ministers and secretaries) mechanism designed to address key common security challenges faced by both countries,<sup>50</sup> but would be directed solely at maritime-political issues. Finally, as mentioned earlier, there should be further interactions between the Indian navy’s western command and CENTCOM in order to develop a common understanding of maritime security issues in India’s west. India’s decision to station an Indian defense attaché in NAVCENT is a welcome first step in that direction.<sup>51</sup>

Third, the United States should address some of the core anxieties that drive India’s vacillations regarding China. A common refrain from the Delhi strategic community during the Doklam standoff was that India found itself alone, and the United States did not do enough to support India’s position on the matter. There is a germ of truth to this. That standoff was a strategic opportunity for the United States to clearly signal its commitment to an Asian balance-of-power arrangement with India as a counterweight. The United States could have come forward to denounce China’s attempt to alter the status quo in Doklam forcefully. Given that the standoff took place during the early days of the Trump administration, this would have provided Washington an opportunity to reassure New Delhi that the new administration would seek to unequivocally stand by India’s side. Indian strategists also worry about the possibility of a U.S.-China “G2” arrangement which would be detrimental to India’s relative position in Asia.<sup>52</sup> Trump’s vacillations on China coupled with his deal-making temperament could lead to a return of this arrangement, many in New Delhi worry. The recent reversal on the Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE serves as a case-in-point for many Indian analysts and policymakers.<sup>53</sup> Washington’s often inconsistent stance on Beijing remains a key uncertainty in the minds of Indian policymakers.

Finally, yet another complaint often heard in Delhi is that the United States remains fundamentally reluctant to share sensitive technology with India. While there may be good reasons for this, such as the fact that such a technology transfer would require congressional approvals, an American recommitment to what strategist Ashley Tellis calls “strategic altruism”<sup>54</sup>—doing more for India and expecting less in return—would be welcome. This would go a long way in assuring Delhi, especially at a time when India finds itself unclear about the U.S. foreign policy position after the unusual American election of 2016. Ultimately, a strong India in the Indo-Pacific is a powerful balancer for the United States in a critically important region.

The replacement of Obama’s “Pivot to Asia” plan by Trump’s “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy consolidates India’s position as a key partner in U.S. grand strategy. As such, as the concept gains salience, the Indo-Pacific strategic construct could also strengthen the U.S.-India bilateral relationship. However, as we have argued in this paper, India still has a long way to go before it can become a central power in the Indo-Pacific theater. This deficit stems from strategic, naval

capability, and normative limitations that prevent India from playing a larger role to its east, in the Pacific. To its west, India and the United States often find themselves on different pages, whether that is on terrorism, Pakistan, or Iran. With the Trump administration adopting a harsh line on Tehran, these differences are likely to be exacerbated. Finally, after a tumultuous two years in the India-China relationship, New Delhi has embarked on a vigorous program to mend fences with its northern neighbor. One consequence of this “reset” in the India-China relationship could be a more cautious India when it comes to challenging Chinese intransigence. For the normative Indo-Pacific to have any real substance, the United States and India should carefully delineate and calibrate their expectations for each other when it comes to developing a congruent strategy for the region.

## Notes

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