

***Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Perspectives from China, India and the United States.* Edited by Mohan Malik. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014. Hardcover: 294pp.**

Against the backdrop of the shift in global economic power to Asia, the emergence of Asian Great Powers — China and India especially — and America’s “pivot” to Asia, the Indo-Pacific concept has gained salience. *Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Perspectives from China, India and the United States* could not, therefore, have been more timely. Organized into four distinct parts, this volume captures the essence of contemporary debates on the prospects for and challenges to multilateral cooperation in a geostrategic construct straddling two of the world’s most important oceans. Contributors from the academic and policymaking communities, representing Chinese, Indian and Western perspectives, make for a balanced analysis.

In a concise Introduction, Mohan Malik provides an overview of contemporary Indo-Pacific security developments and key research questions which neatly sets the stage for subsequent discussions.

Part One, “Mapping the Indo-Pacific Region”, represents a noteworthy attempt to make sense of the Indo-Pacific concept that has found salience in academic and policy discourses. Rory Medcalf gives an excellent overview of the historical and contemporary background to the concept. In the following chapter Yang Yi and Zhao Qinghai go on to argue that its emergence has been closely linked to the evolving strategic agendas of New Delhi and Washington. The two chapters in Part I shed light not just on the conceptual underpinnings of the term “Indo-Pacific”, but also highlight that this concept itself is not entirely new. As Medcalf succinctly puts it, this concept is “back in name and substance”. The Indo-Pacific — which he describes as a strategic system with fluid boundaries but some clear defining features — include the economic and security connections between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and intersecting interests and reach of several key powers such as China, India and the United States. (p. 45) Recent developments, for instance the growing prominence of this term being used in the policy discourses of these key powers and the rapidly-growing economic and strategic importance of the region *vis-à-vis* Europe, thus far attest to this observation.

Part Two, “US, Chinese and Indian Perspectives on Maritime Security”, provides a concise treatment of issues revolving around national perceptions of and outlook for the Indo-Pacific security

milieu. Scott W. Harold's exposition on the "opportunity-pull/demand-push" factors, looking at, for example, the growing energy reliance of the East Asian economic powerhouses on the Middle East, Chinese and Indian naval build-ups, shifts in the US security posture, and common security challenges, provides an interesting framework for analysing the driving forces behind possible maritime cooperation among China, India and America. From a Chinese perspective, Zhao Gancheng utilizes the angle of Great Power geopolitical dynamics and makes an interesting observation that Beijing has no Indian Ocean strategy. This point deserves more attention, judging from China's more recent moves in the Indian Ocean including the deployment of its 19th naval task force to the Gulf of Aden counter-piracy mission since December 2008, its military-assisted non-combatant evacuation operations in the Middle East and North Africa and its military aid to the Maldives during its water shortage crisis in December 2014. In the following chapter Sureesh Mehta expounds on the Indian perspectives from a similar geopolitical angle, but sets his analysis within a broader framework of Sino-Indian geopolitical dynamics. On the whole, all three chapters agree that while trilateral cooperation is desirable for dealing with a myriad of Indo-Pacific transnational security challenges, the lack of strategic trust among the three major players constitutes a key challenge to realizing that cooperation.

Part Three, "Traditional and Nontraditional Security Challenges", furnishes a broad, largely descriptive, overview of contemporary Indo-Pacific security challenges and the prospects for cooperation. Most contributors agree that transnational, non-traditional security challenges provide a potential platform for trilateral cooperation. But the issues raised in Part Three can be found elsewhere in this volume. Yet it is also interesting to note that the chapter by Jeff M. Smith specifically deals with maritime security challenges from the legal standpoint of the debates surrounding the jurisdictional rights of coastal states and foreign military activities in exclusive economic zones (EEZs). Surveying a broad swath of Chinese literature, Lora Saalman touches on Chinese perspectives of India's sea-based strategic deterrence. This perspective is especially useful in view of the sea-based nuclear build-up by the Chinese and Indian navies, not to mention recent forays by Chinese nuclear submarines into the Indian Ocean.

Part Four, "Multilateral Mechanisms and Cooperative Measures", explores the prospects for multilateral cooperation to tackle the multitude of security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, focusing on a possible trilateral framework as well as the possibility of expanding

the institutionalization of maritime management and governance in the region. On the whole, Part Four does not appear to prescribe the possible way forward for Indo-Pacific cooperation; rather, it lays out the various enablers and limiters to such an enterprise. Altogether the five chapters posit a balanced and pragmatic analysis of not just prospects for but also strategic impediments to multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The chapter by Vijay Sakhuja deserves particular attention. Examining existing multilateral mechanisms in the region such as the overlapping security architecture revolving around the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (previously the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation), Sakhuja questions the necessity of broadening the existing scope of frameworks, arguing that in fact they perform well enough to address challenges in the Indo-Pacific despite being overburdened and deprived of resources.

As the title suggests, this volume focuses on the three major Indo-Pacific players — China, India and the United States — with much less emphasis given to other actors. This may disappoint keen watchers of the evolving regional security milieu. The role of other major players certainly cannot be ignored, particularly Japan given the upswing of Indo-Japanese strategic relations which has added another layer of complexity to the Indo-Pacific landscape. Save for Sakhuja's treatment (which could preferably have been more extensive) of ASEAN's role in his chapter, there was no discussion about the organization's perspectives on maritime security issues in this volume — a strange omission given the geostrategic significance of Southeast Asia within the Indo-Pacific construct. The inclusion of these perspectives would have made for a more holistic discussion in this volume.

Nonetheless, within its ambit of discussion focused mainly on the three major regional players, *Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific* is without doubt an excellent collection of diverse perspectives which deserves attention from the academic and policymaking communities. Moreover, the rich array of information and sources contained within this volume will allow those interested to research more deeply into the heart of this increasingly crucial subject matter.

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