

POLICY SERIES: 11

GLOBAL MARITIME GEOPOLITICS

Edited by Hasret Çomak, Burak Şakir Şeker, Mehlika Özlem Ultan

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Conclusion

As a buzzword, Maritime Security is one of the security concepts that has been studied and discussed by states in recent years. Major components of international relations such as the United States, United Nations, NATO, European Union have developed their security strategies to protect their maritime environment and interests. As a liberal state, the United States created policies based on cooperation in different regions. This is because the main problems such as terrorism, human trafficking, and illegal markets can only be solved through cooperation. On the other hand, it is clear in the strategies of the United States that the national interests of the United States and its allies have primary importance. Japan, which is an emerging power in the region Indo-Pacific, states that its maritime strategies are based on cooperation with the mentorship of the United States. Japan has a significant position in this region but still does not have enough military power and sources to ensure its security. This situation creates dependence on the US for Japan. The dependence on the great powers is also seen in the case of the countries of Pacific Island and even for Australia. Therefore, it can be said that even the liberal approaches of the states have parts of the realistic view due to the concern of the states for their sovereignty and security.

All states seek cooperation in this area to ensure their survival and protect their national interests. In the securitization process of maritime security, this need for protection interests can also be seen. Declaring and creating strategies for Maritime Security by threats created advantages for actors to decide what is worth protecting according to their interests. These diversified strategies make it even more difficult for actors to find common definitions. The Pacific Ocean is one of the maritime environments where many important components have an influence. Therefore, converging strategies of these components can easily lead to conflicts among these actors. Finding a common definition and creating guidelines for the common good can make it easier for stakeholders to protect their maritime environment.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF INDO PACIFIC REGION

A. İnci Sökmen Alaca¹

Introduction

The new center of gravity of the world, the Indian Pacific region, is the subject of this article. "Free and Open Indian Pacific Policy", adopted by the USA in 2017, is on the foreign policy agenda. By addressing the geopolitical, geo-economics and geostrategic importance of the region, it will be explained why the USA has implemented this policy. The fact that the competition between China and the US in the global system can result in war is the subject of the article that the dual containment strategy applied to the Soviet Union during the Cold War period and it is a geopolitical area that has gained importance in the context of the alliance relations established with the countries in the region. The importance of the geographical area will be evaluated from the US perspective.

Indian Pacific Region in terms of Geographical Aspect

The Indian Pacific region has gained significance with its American strategic document since 2017 in the field of international policy. This region has become one of the most important geostrategic, geo-economics and world power center regions of the world in terms of the economic, military and political forces of the countries in the Indian Ocean and the Western and Central Pacific Oceans, including the East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and Oceania regions on a common border. It is the area where the Pacific and Indian oceans merge with trade, infrastructure and diplomacy at the point of the Malacca Strait. In the ancient period, the Indian-Pacific sea region, such as the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean in the 20th century, came to the forefront as the main international sea road in the 21st century. Asia connects Africa, Europe, Oceania and the Americas globally in energy and trade. Geographically, it is also referred to as the Indo-West Pacific and Indo-Pacific Asia. There are also those who use the concept of the Great Indian Ocean as a single integrated geopolitical domain.² Approximately 38 countries, 44% of the world's lands and 65% of the world's population are located in this region.³

It covers the western and central areas of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It is subdivided into three subdivisions as Central-East-West Indian

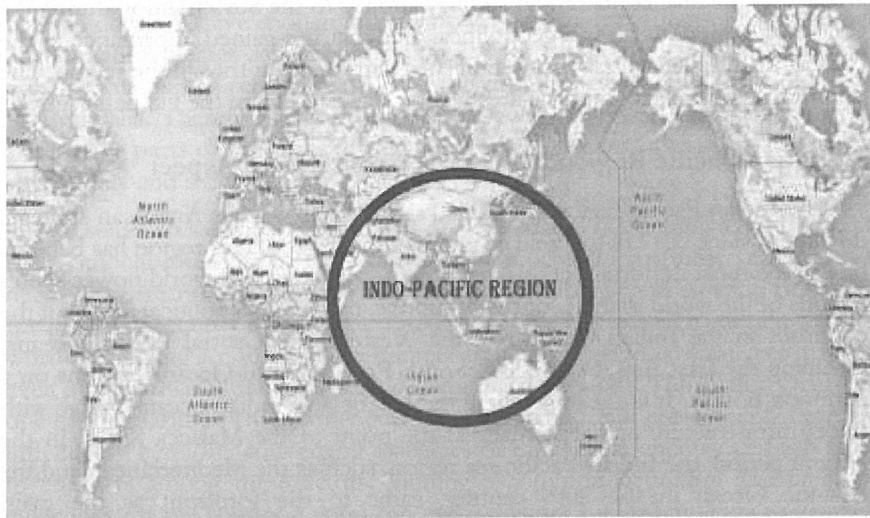
¹ Associate Professor, İstanbul Arel University, the Department of International Relations, incisokmen@gmail.com.

² Raja Mohan, C. Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012.

³ De, P. "Reshaping Indo-Pacific Cooperation", The Economic Times, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/reshaping-indo-pacific-cooperation/> (Access 22.05.2020)

Pacific. The *Central Indian Pacific* Region has many straits and seas that connect the two oceans. These are the archipelago of Indonesia, the South China Sea, the Philippine Sea, the northern coasts of Australia, the seas surrounding New Guinea, the islands of Micronesia, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Tonga Islands. Centrally located between the two oceans, this area also boasts a vast marine diversity. Within the *Eastern Indian Pacific*, it originates from the volcanic islands of Marshall, and includes central and south eastern Polynesia, Easter Island, and Hawaii. The *Western Indian Pacific* region covers the western and central parts of the Indian Ocean, which includes the eastern coasts of Africa, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, Madagascar, the Seychelles, Comoros, the Mascarene Islands, the Maldives and the Chagos archipelago.

Map 1. Indo Pacific Region⁴



The boundaries of the region are very variable. Most sources include the Indian-Pacific region, Japan to the north, Australia to the south, the Western Pacific islands to the east and India to the west. The eastern coasts of Africa are also located within the borders. Inclusion/removal of China/ Africa within the borders of the region is carried out by politicians who built this new geopolitical area as a competition area of power. Despite this territorial definition that America is not involved in, it is accepted as a part of the region in the USA as a country that carries military and alliance relations to the international policy agenda as a new geopolitical area. The region is of *strategic primary* importance to the American government in terms of its national interest. As a country in the Pacific region, Hawaii, California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska with five

⁴ Kumar, A. "Indo-Pacific Security", 2014, <http://www.indopacificsecurity.com/2014/05/about.html> (Access 22.05.2020).

U.S. states are located on the islands of Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island, and Northern Mariana. It is seen by the American administration as the new center of gravity of the world. It directed the axis of its foreign policy from the Middle East to this region. Chinese authorities refrain from using this definition because it reflects too many American spheres of influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Importance of the Indian Pacific Region in terms of International Policy

The Indo-Pacific region, which has started to be seen in geopolitical studies since 2011, is not a new conceptualization. In 1920, for the first time, German geopolitical expert Karl Haushofer handled an academic study titled "*Indopazifischen Raum (Indo-Pacific Area)*" and examined the Indian and Chinese civilizations that developed independently of each other as Tibetan borders. Within the conditions of that day, both countries realized more than 50% of the world's gross production and determined that this situation was reached as a result of their activities in sea and ocean areas.⁵ Haushofer's evaluations can be argued to have led to the inclusion of India and the Indian Ocean as an element of balance against China in today's American Indian-Pacific strategy. Two very similar countries in terms of population and technological developments, India as a country governed by British colonies and democracy in the past, were chosen as the strategic country to balance America's rival. During the US-India Security dialogue meeting in June 2013, the concept of the *Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor* was adopted. India is connected to East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia via Myanmar. Myanmar is of strategic importance as a gateway. "*Look East*", which gained importance in India's foreign policy in 1992, was organized as "*Act East*" in 2014 and it was aimed to be a diplomatic initiative that would increase economic, strategic and cultural relations with Asian Pacific countries at different levels⁶. In September of the same year, China announced its "*One Way One Belt*" project to the world from Kazakhstan Nazarbayev University.

The *geostrategic* importance of the region stems from the fact that it is a buffer zone between the USA and China, that is, between the Atlantic and Pacific regions, which are in great power competition. In addition, by highlighting maritime safety issues, certain transition straits, Bap al-Mandeb and Malacca Straits, have gained strategic importance and regional power conflict areas, especially the South China Sea and East China Sea, have been included.

The three important economies of the world in terms of geo-economics are the USA, China and Japan, and the countries of India, Russia and other

⁵ Haushofer, E. K., Tambs, A. L. and Brehm, E. J. An English Translation and Analysis of Major General Karl Ernst Haushofer's Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean: Studies on the Relationship between Geography and History, Lewiston, New York, Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

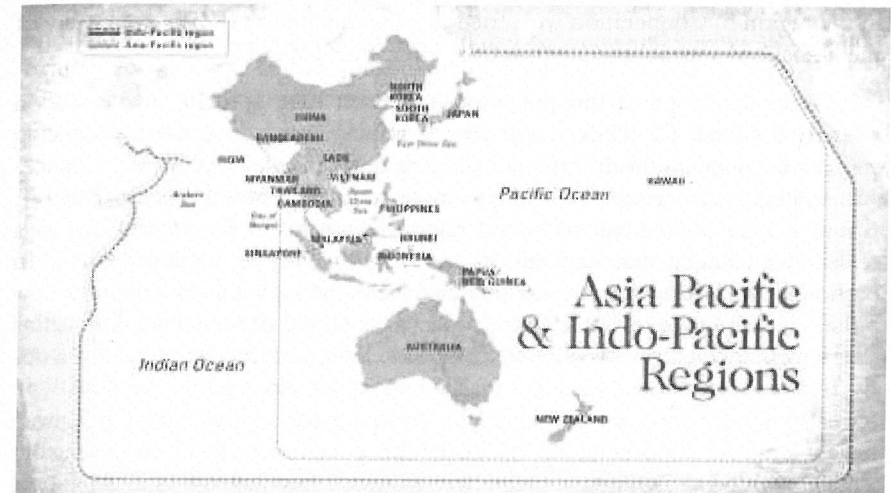
⁶ Kesavan, V. K. "India's Act East Policy and Regional Cooperation", Observer Research Foundation, (2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-act-east-policy-and-regional-cooperation-61375/>) (Access 15.05.2020).

Geopolitically, the countries with the largest population in the world are the region with the highest number of Muslims and China and India. Three permanent members of the UN Security Council are within the borders of the United States, China and Russia. The fact that the six countries of the world with nuclear power capacity, the USA, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, are located within the borders of the region constitutes a *nuclear war risk area* in terms of international and regional security. Sub regional diplomatic formations are available in ASEAN and Quad Security Dialogue (Australia-Japan-India-U.S.). The fact that there are islands under the political rule of France in the Pacific region and that Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are members of the British Commonwealth causes both England and France to be included in the region. The free market, led ideologically by the USA, includes pluralism, the liberal world order involving democracy and the economic capitalist, Socialism model encounter based on China's unique communist single party system. At the same time, there are North Korea, Vietnam and Laos communist regimes in the region.⁷

For the United States, which defines itself as a country belonging to this region, it has been determined as the first important strategy to prevent the emergence of countries/countries that may be rivals/enemies in the region in order to maintain national security and the continuity of its power in the world. Historically, America, which participated in three wars in the Pacific region with World War II, Vietnam War and Korean War, continues to maintain its influence in the region within the framework of a strategic plan based on economy, geostrategy and security/defence.

⁷ Akanksha “Indo-Pacific: The New Geopolitical Construct” Next IAS, 2019, <https://blog.nextias.com/indo-pacific-the-new-geo-political-construct> (Access 15.05.2020).

Map 2. Asia Pacific and Indo Pacific Regions ¹⁰



As part of the “*rebalancing*” policy under President Obama, the Asia Pacific region covered the yellow dotted area on the map below. The newly developed

¹⁰ Gopalaswamy, B. and Ramachandran, A. "The Shifting Balance of Power in the Indo Pacific", *China & US Focus*, 2017, <https://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/the-shifting-balance-of-power-in-the-indo-pacific> (Access 20.05.2020).

Indian Pacific region shows the red dotted area. This area includes both the Middle East and the eastern coasts of Africa with the addition of the Indian Ocean and India. It has emerged as an important strategic area in terms of including the route of world oil shipment.

The US "Free and Transparent Indo-Pacific Policy" consists of six main issues; 1) Opening of international waters and airspace to everyone without hindrance 2) Elimination of obstacles to international trade and investments 3) Ensuring political liberalization in the region 4) Preventing aggressive behaviour in the region 5) Cooperation with friendly governments 6) II. The continuity of the liberal order established by the USA after World War II.¹¹

Within the scope of this policy published on June 1, 2019, in the section related to China, the USA stated that it implemented an external balancing strategy by pursuing both internal balancing and policy of developing alliances and strategic partnerships by trying to increase its own power against China.¹² China is seen as a threat to liberal regional security in the region and as a revisionist country that expands its sovereignty with its military power. In particular, the USA wants the sea and airspace in the region to be safe in its new policy. This policy reveals that China's special privileged rights in the South China Sea, which are not approved by UN Maritime Law, and the declaration of a no-fly zone over the East China Sea in 2013 were not accepted by the USA.¹³ In terms of South China Sea problems, the Taiwan Strait and the island of Taiwan have a strategic importance for the American government to reach the region. The Taiwan Strait is also a strategic area in which free passage as international waters should be ensured for American politics and the power diplomacy they apply here is therefore legitimate. The continued flights of the Chinese Air Force on the island and naval exercises in the East China Sea are considered as a demonstration of power for Taiwan by increasing its military presence in the Taiwan Strait and its immediate vicinity, where both Taiwan's independence and the third country involved in this incident are tried to be deterred.¹⁴ The diplomatic alliance relationship he established with Vietnam and the Philippines also brings China and the United States against each other in terms of the South China Sea apart from the Taiwan problem.¹⁵

In terms of the US, China is seen as an unfair, based on economic intelligence and theft, creating a new addiction relationship by lending, making unfair profits in international trade by decreasing the value of its money, and bringing countries to its environment with coercive practices. This country, which wants to revise

¹¹ Roy, D. Taiwan's Potential Role in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy: Convergence in the South Pacific, *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 77, March 2019, pp. 9-10.

¹² FOIP Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, The Department Of Defense, (01. 06. 2019) pp. 7-11, <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF> (Access 20.05.2020)

¹³ FOIP, Ibid, p. 8.

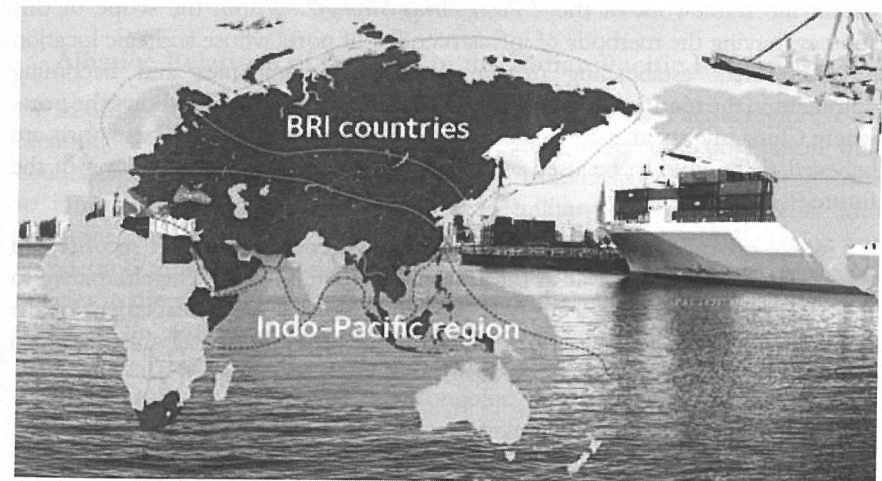
¹⁴ Ibid, p. 31

¹⁵ Carpenter, G. Ted, *America's Coming War with China: A Collision Course Over Taiwan*, St. Martin's Press, 2006.

the rules-based international order in favour of its own interests, has taken control of the Indo-Pacific region and implicitly referred that China will not be allowed to be the world leader.

In the new global geopolitical environment, the multipolar political structure of the Indo-Pacific region also creates uncertainty and instability due to the power struggle between the United States and China. It is suggested that conflicts may arise in the subjects of land/maritime political domains competition between the two powers, their own space boundaries, expansionism (China annexing Taiwan), encirclement strategy (USA surrounding China with missiles), intervention in their internal affairs (Hong Kong, Tibet and Uighur autonomous regions for China). The establishment of new bilateral and multiple alliance relations with the conflict creates diplomatic solution areas. The United States formed an alliance with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand in the Indian-Pacific region. China, on the other hand, carried out economic cooperation with 51 countries within the scope of the "One Road One Belt" project and made serious agreements with France, Germany, Italy and the UK. However, the geographical location of the United States is able to control all three as Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans by ensuring that it is more effectively located in the seas than in China. Being a global naval force, which is one of the conditions to be a global hegemony, is in favour of America. We can see the two projects on the map below.

Map 3. One Belt One Road Project Countries and Indo Pacific Region¹⁶



China considered itself a land power rather than a naval power and determined its dominance in the Eurasian continent as a critical region for world

¹⁶ Khadka, D. "Caught Between Indo-Pacific Strategy and BRI", 2020, <http://english.lokaantar.com/articles/caught-indo-pacific-strategy-bri/> (Access 25.05.2020).

domination.¹⁷ With the concepts of “strategic borders” and “living space” developed by the Chinese army since the 1990s, it aims to achieve the national interest goals of China in the lands under the sovereignty of other countries that cross the borders of the state and spread over a wide area. China has implemented a foreign policy and security strategy that combines nationalism and geography and is called “geopolitical nationalism.”¹⁸ Considering the views of the American historian Alfred Thayer Mahan on being a naval force, the aim of creating a navy with Chinese characteristics was realized.¹⁹ It is among the primary duties of the Chinese army to ensure the safety of energy and commercial goods, especially when transporting by sea. Thus, within the scope of the “two ocean strategies” developed, naval activities in the areas of the South China Sea, the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean have increased their capabilities.²⁰ The sea bridge road between the lands reaching Indonesia, especially from Thailand via Malaysia and Singapore, is a strategic area in terms of reaching South East Asia. Chinese authorities have adopted the view that a country wishing to control the Pacific and Indian Oceans should keep this region within its political sphere of influence. Chinese leader Xi Jinping's statement that we are *reshaping the geopolitical area* creates the opportunity to penetrate Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to medium-sized states in the region by controlling this strategic area and connecting both important sea routes and China to Indonesia.²¹

As an energy-dependent country, he determined to make the Indian Ocean effectively safe for the safety of ships coming from the Middle East and Africa within the framework of the “*Pearl Array Strategy*”. Within the scope of this strategy, having the methods of infrastructures of ports whose strategic location is determined, establishing maritime transport companies and becoming dominant in the maritime container are included. The map below shows the ports where China invests in accordance with the Pearl series strategy. These ports are believed to be able to be used as military bases for the Chinese army in the future.²²

While providing access to the global market, energy transport security and the US/India control power in the Indian ocean are broken. The alternative to the Malacca Strait transit security is the acquisition of the management of the Gwadar port in the southwest of Pakistan in the province of Baluchistan, which is a very important strategic move against the US/India policy.²³

¹⁷ Kaplan, R. D. *The Revenge of Geography*, New York, Random House, 2012, p. 222.

¹⁸ Hughes, C. “Reclassifying Chinese nationalism: The geopolitik turn”, *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 20, No. 71, 2011, pp. 602,607.

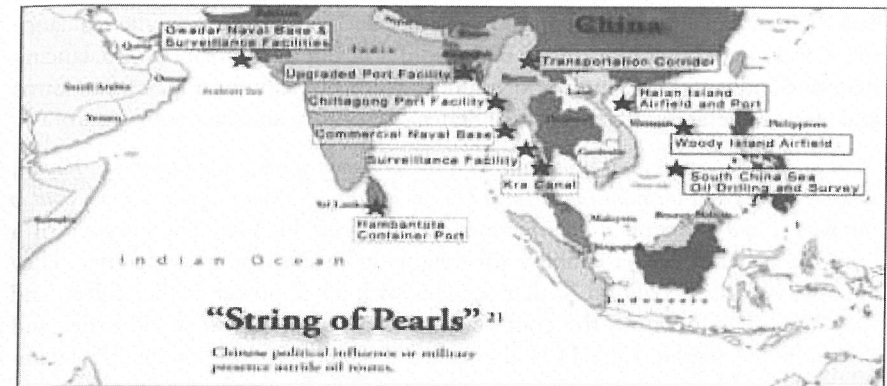
¹⁹ Diakidis, N. “An assessment of China’s defense strategy in the post-Cold War era: What role for bilateral defense cooperation with Russia?”, *Piraeus*, December 2009, pp. 43-46.

²⁰ Kaplan, op.cit., pp. 53-54.

²¹ Fallon, T. “The new Silk Road: Xi Jinping’s grand strategy for Eurasia”, *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2015, p. 140.

²² Kaplan, op.cit., pp. 50-55.

²³ Khurana, S. G. “China’s *String of Pearls* in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications”, *Journal of Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2008, p. 4.

Map 4. Chinese Pearl Array Strategy and Important Ports²⁴

The second country after China in the Indian-Pacific region was shown as Russia, and it was mentioned that it reduced its political isolation after the Ukrainian events by increasing its economic, military and diplomatic relations in the Asian region. During U.S.-China competition and trade/financial wars, it tends to act as an impartial third country. Another country is North Korea. The communist regime, which conducts intercontinental ballistic nuclear missile trials and whose range can reach the US continent, is considered a national threat to the US. Nuclear disarmament and unification with the south is a top priority both for the Korean peninsula, for the region and for the US.

Alliance Relations of the USA in the Indian Pacific Region

In order to achieve America's national goals in the Indo-Pacific region, it has identified a tripartite strategy of being prepared, increasing cooperation with countries, and establishing regional networks. An intensive effort has been made to improve cooperation in the economic, military and defence fields with countries that see China's economic and military strengthening in the region as a competitor/threat against their own interests and that are close to American policies in the region. Japan, India and Australia have been identified as priority countries. In addition, efforts have been made to strengthen their cooperation with South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, New Zealand and Mongolia. The establishment of cooperation with communist Vietnam is a turning point in terms of American foreign policy. Of all these countries, the most critical country is Taiwan, which is on China's primary expansion strategy. This country, which is divided into two as pro-independence and unification within the country, is seen as a hot conflict issue that can bring China and the United States against each other from a military point of view. The United Kingdom, which has island dominance in the Pacific

²⁴ Pejic, I. “China’s String of Pearls Project”, Map & Conflict Database, 2016, <https://maps.southfront.org/chinas-string-of-pearls-project/> (Access 25.05.2020).

and Indian Ocean region, is thought to be within the regional security network that the United States wants to build in France and Canada. Anti-Chinese alliance relations are not strict blocking as in the cold war, but an opposition or balancing that takes advantage of the opportunities offered by China in economic terms and also cooperates with the United States on security and defence issues.

The most important thing about security is the formation of the Quad-Diamond Alliance, which is formed by Australia-Japan-India-US, as a strategic alliance against China, both to surround it and to prevent it from becoming the only one in Asia. The absence of a unipolar structure under Chinese sovereignty in Asia is a primary priority. They are also seen as a coalition of democracies with naval power in the region, and they also operate within the continuity and spread of liberal world order and values in the region. QUAD is also called “Three Plus One” as the US-Japan-Australia and India with a strategic autonomy.²⁵ India was part of the group of “Non-Aligned” during the Cold War period. In addition to economic cooperation with China-Russia-India and within the BRICS, it is also included in the QUAD in a balanced manner without being a full part of a party. The country concluded strategic cooperation agreements in the economic, defence and political fields with Japan (2000), Russia (2000), USA (2001), China (2005), Australia (2009). In the 1962 war between China and India, due to the support of the USSR, Russia is seen as a more important strategic partner country than the United States.²⁶ This is considered as a part of multiple alliances in India's foreign policy. It can be argued that the US could not provide the exact unity it wanted against China in the QUAD and that Japan and Australia had intensive economic relations with China and that India was one of the multiple alliances we mentioned.²⁷

While the former British colonial India was brought to the forefront as a regional power by the United States, it was also named as the leader of the world economy in 2050 due to low workforce and high technology studies with the second largest world population. India views the Indian ocean as its own geopolitical geographic sphere of influence. The country, which follows a nationalist line in foreign policy, has the idea of uniting with Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Burma within the framework of the “Greater India (Akhand Bharat)” ideal of far-right nationalist political opinion. In this ideal developed by Arthashastra Chanakya, it was thought that the countries in the region should be under a single administration.²⁸ Built on Turkish nationalism, this ideal can only allow different religions to coexist with a secular state structure. If Buddhist nationalism prevails in the aforementioned countries,

²⁵ Doyle, T. and Rumley, D. *The Rise and Return of The Indo-Pacific*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 54.

²⁶ Hall, I. “Multi-alignment and Indian Foreign Policy under Narendra Modi”, *Round Table*, Vol. 105, No. 3, 2016, pp. 278.

²⁷ Mohan, *ibid*.

²⁸ Parekh, V. “Why “Akhand Bharat” is a pipe dream”, *Huffington Post*, 17 March, 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.in/varun-parekh/why-akhand-bharat-remains_b_9461132.html (Access 23.05.2020).

unification seems difficult to realize. The same India is included in the concept of economic partnership of Indian-Chinese markets, which is defined as “Chindia” in economic cooperation with China.²⁹

The US-Japan alliance relationship has been shown to be the most important factor for peace and development in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan views the North Pacific Ocean, the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea regions as its own sphere of influence. While strengthening its army on the way to re-armament, the policies pursued by China in the East China Sea in the perception of threat to its security, the problem of Russia and the Kuril Islands and the nuclear activities of North Korea on the Korean peninsula, which has geographical proximity to its territories, are considered. In its region, Kuril Islands with Russia, Diaoyu/Senkaku with China and Dokdo/Takeshima island problems with South Korea are still not solved. Japan is of importance in the possible war and defense strategy of the USA in the region due to its geographical proximity in the mainland of China. There are American naval bases and army on the territory of the country. On the island of Okinawa in Japan off the coast of Taiwan, wiretapping systems and American military units carry out the most strategic military missions on the front line. The tripartite defence agreement between the US and South Korea and Japan, the 2007 security agreement with Australia, both strategic cooperation with India in 2000 and unity within the QUAD can be considered as Japan's foreign balancing policies despite China's economic and military rise.

Australia considers the South Pacific region as its own sphere of influence. It attaches importance to its relations in the South Pacific islands and South East Asia. China is Australia's biggest trading partner, but the country is more dependent on the United States in terms of economic and defence/ national security. Joint intelligence sharing is carried out between two countries under the formation of five eyes. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, the country supported US operations. America has more investments in Australia than China on mining, agriculture, and company basis. The SARS-Covid 19 outbreak has increased racist actions against Chinese and Asian individuals in the country. White Anglo-Saxon identity is seen as a threat due to migrations from Asia to its country.³⁰

Possibility of War in the Indo-Pacific Region

The Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean regions are of two distinct strategic importance to the United States. After the war with the Spanish government in the Pacific region in 1898, the United States became a force, including the island of Hawaii. Geographically and geopolitically, it is in a structure that allows American military forces to operate easily. For America, the boundaries of the

²⁹ Ramesh, J. and Talbott, S. *Making sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*, India Research Press, 2016.

³⁰ *Global Times*, “Wolverines represent Washington more than Australia in antagonizing China”, 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1189993.shtml> (Access 22.05.2020).

Pacific region start from Alaska and the Arctic region, extending to Australia. Hawaii, the 50th state of the country, is located in the center of this area. In operations in the Pacific region, the Alaskan and Western coasts, which provide access to the Arctic, are two key regions. What makes the Pacific an important area in terms of national security is the western coasts of the United States and their cities located on these coasts. With the advancement of technology, distances have eliminated their importance, while space capabilities and long-range missile systems have put the preservation of the American mainland at risk.

The Indian Ocean, on the other hand, is the transit route of the energy line from the Middle East and Africa, so a problem here can disrupt all energy needs. China, its biggest rival, is a foreign-dependent country in terms of energy. It is among the priority areas for the continuity of the Middle East and African economy. It can be considered as the most critical region that will determine the result in this period when it competes closely with the USA and China.

American command based in the Indian-Pacific region, USINDOPACOM operates over a wide area. As far as possible in the military defence of the United States, the islands in its own possession close to Asia and India, such as Guam and Diego Garcia, and their bases are trying to stop the arrival towards their own country (such as Japan, Australia). The central point of defence is the island of Hawaii. If the enemy forces cross this line quickly, the eastern coast of America is at risk. For this reason, Hawaii Island was considered on the US defence line as a strategic triangular resistance force field connecting the territory of Guam and Japan and as a manoeuvring area in the equilateral rectangular area connecting the land areas of South Korea, Australia, Singapore and Japan.³¹

The Indian-Pacific region has six nuclear weapons, including China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea, including the United States. Outside India, in a nuclear missile war within the Chinese-Russian-North Korean alliance, American defences may be insufficient. The missile, which was launched with a one-on-one country during the Cold War, could provide an easier defence. However, the lack of a multi-mechanism system that can neutralize three countries and simultaneously launched missiles may not create the opportunity to realize the second strike capacity of the United States in nuclear missile firing. It may be possible for the United States to be defeated by hitting.

For this reason, it has gained importance that North Korea ceases to be a threat by becoming a nuclear-free country. The country's nuclear capability intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM-range 5000/5500 km) and submarine ballistic missile (SLBM) trials have led to the implementation of this policy. In 2019, bilateral negotiations between American President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on the purification of North Korea from nuclear weapons did not achieve the desired result. Although it is not clear that the North

³¹ Timberlake, E.; Laird, F. R. and Weitz, R. *Rebuilding American Military Power in The Pacific: A 21st – Century Strategy*, Praeger Security International, 2013.

Korean leader has a health problem and his leadership can be maintained, this issue is of great importance for the US. The goal of uniting the two countries as a single country, which cannot be achieved with the Korean War, may become possible with a new leader after Kim Jong-un. In the South Korean democracy model, it is thought that a threat to the American ally, the new United Korea, the Korean peninsula and US national security will be eliminated by the positive change of the country.

China tries to be prepared for war with a possible America based on asymmetric tactics, which implements the strategy of not giving A2/AD gates as a military system, submarine fleet, satellite warfare exercises in space. China, which is an economic power like Japan but is thought to have no effect on international policy and supported, has assumed the role of the production center of the world economy in accordance with this plan and has followed a foreign policy that determines the principle of peaceful rise and non-interference in internal affairs based on multilateral cooperation as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. In fact, the goal is for the US-China to manage the world economy together. Two economically dependent countries have entered a process that has become more tense after the SARS, Covid-19 outbreak and is even thought to be completely completed by the US. In addition to China's spying activities in the field of military and strategic technology, the US Trump government is sceptical of hidden space, artificial intelligence and genetic/bio-technology studies and sees a threat to the national security of the country.

As the leading country of the authoritarian capitalism model, China is also shown to cause the weakening of the liberal political order in the world. Waiting for the outcome of the struggle between globalization and the nation-state/priority-strong US-protective policy lovers within the United States, China is seen as a structural force that will create a revisionist new world order. It is predicted that the British-American interests in many issues will be contradicted, the British-Jewish global capital will take a stand in favour of China and will cause a decrease in its economic and political power for the lonely US. China-India unity comes to the fore for the world economy. The economy of the two rising worlds is thought to place the United States in third place, as Joseph Nye (2015)³² states in his book *The American Century Is Over?*. It was thought that the US might have problems in its economy, which made China an important force today, before it entered into a hot conflict with China, as its power fell. Decreasing growth rate, high inflation, and rising production costs may shake China economically. The recession of the world economy, the contraction of national economies and the economic collapse of nation states will also have a negative effect on China. It has been considered in counter-policy such as experiencing major natural disasters among the scenarios of experts, being exposed to crises that threaten public health such as SARS and today's SARS Covid-19, failing in armed conflict with any country or internal stability issues related to itself. Hong

³² Nye, J. *Is the American Century Over?*, Polity Press, 2015.

Kong incidents are an example. An operation that can question its power on global leadership and be exposed to every event in the economic, social and political fields is being implemented against China.

The United States, which still has the strongest army and defence structure in the world, is at risk of losing the islands on which it is located in the Pacific region in sea level rises that will occur with the meltdown of the Arctic region. In addition, the SARS Covid-19 epidemic caused a disease on the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier crew, which is located on the open sea and the transmission of which cannot be solved. It has been revealed that its power at sea can be ineffective against a possible virus. Likewise, the epidemic that may spread to the islands may end life in Guam, Mariana, Wake, Midway, Hawaii, Johnston, Howland Baker, Palmyra, Jarvis. It can reset obstacles to accessing the American West Coast. In addition, typhoons in the Pacific Ocean, which they experienced in previous wars, can weaken air and sea defence. The American army, which did not experience wars on its own mainland and distributed its military power to the world under various commandments, carries a risk for the national security of the Pacific region within the scope of the new security threats that emerged in 2020.

In the possible war in the Pacific region, Russia is a key country with approximately 6500 nuclear-headed missiles. Like the Soviet Union, which changed the fate of the war in favour of the allies during World War II, the nuclear power capacity will also determine future wars. Using tensions between Cold War-era People's Republic of China leader Mao Zedong and Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin, the American government visited China in 1972, where President Richard Nixon pioneered the transition to free capitalism in the Chinese economy and initiated a breakthrough in the eastern bloc. China established economically strong ties in the countries within the former Soviet Union, which Russia called the *immediate environment*, and came to an active position in the Eurasian region with Russia's permission. By drawing Russia to their side this time, the Cold War strategy is tried to be applied to a policy aimed at ending China's activities in the Eurasian region. Charles A. Kupcan's (2010)³³ *How Do Enemies Become Friends?* This policy change reminiscent of How Enemies Become Friends seems difficult for Russia. Although the Pentagon waged a limited air and naval war against China in the Pacific region, there is a possibility that this war would turn into a nuclear war and that Russia would be involved. Since submarines are decisive in naval warfare, China aims to improve itself in this field and turn it in favour of superiority.

Today, the Russians experimented in early 2020 and no defence system was established to neutralize the *hypersonic missile systems* in the strategic weapon category faster than the sound entering the military weapon inventory. It is rapidly developing these missiles in China, while in the USA, these missiles are first being tested in the missile firing area in Kauai, one of the Hawaiian Islands,

and are being prepared to enter them into its inventory. It is planned to develop hypersonic missiles launched from the sea for submarines as well as those launched from the land. In short, military war development competition between the three countries continues rapidly in order to turn the military balance in its favour.

It can be argued that in a possible new Pacific war (such as a low-intensity and conventional hybrid war, information war, cyber war, algorithmic warfare, electromagnetic warfare, space warfare, nuclear war and biological warfare), where more than one war model is used at the same time, it may be difficult for the United States to achieve a definitive victory over China-Russia-North Korea.

Conclusion

With the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Policy, which became the official policy of the USA in 2017, the region has emerged as a new center of gravity in the world's new economic and security issues. The American government, which directed its axis from the Middle East to this region in its foreign policy, aimed to increase its military power and economic cooperation. China, which is in intense competition for the leadership of the world economy in a multipolar international system, North Korea, and Russia, which has become global again, expanded its sphere of influence, reveals the importance of the region for American national interests.

³³ Kupcan, A. C. *How Enemies Become Friends*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010.