

THE INDO-PACIFIC PIVOT: INDIA–CHINA RIVALRY AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Indo-Pacific has quickly become the geostrategically most disputed region of modern geopolitics, a portrayal of increasing India–China rivalry. This competition is no longer just limited to the land frontiers but has extended to sea spaces, trade routes, multilateral forums, and regional states' influence. China's far-reaching Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), growing naval presence, and port infrastructure initiatives across the Indian Ocean and Pacific Rim reveal a calculated approach to gaining long-term geopolitical benefits. At the same time, India has readjusted its strategic position through efforts such as the Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, and proactive engagement with forums like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). These steps represent India's shift toward a more proactive regional role, seeking to balance China's rising influence. This analysis examines the transforming India–China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, evaluating its causes, expressions, and wider geopolitical connotations. It concentrates on three essential aspects: strategic-military rivalry, economic influence and connectivity, and the shifting regional alliances. Whereas China is pursuing dominance in terms of economic reliance and access to sea chokepoints, India is pursuing counter-balancing efforts through security alliances, regional diplomacy investment, and naval modernization.

The rivalry is compounded by reactions from smaller Indo-Pacific nations, most of which follow a hedging policy—collaborating with both powers while remaining independent. The interference of extra-regional powers like the United States, Japan, and Australia contributes other layers to the regional powers. The study follows a mixed-methods methodology, bringing together strategic analysis, empirical evidence, and regional case studies to map the trajectory of rivalry and its influence on regional stability, freedom of navigation, and security architectures. In order to predict future hotspots, assess strategic choices for regional actors, and isolate opportunities for diplomatic initiative, the Indo-Pacific pivot must be understood in the context of India–China competition. Through a rigorous examination of the major drivers, trends, and likely outcomes of this competition, the study adds to the subtle appreciation of the ways in which the Indo-Pacific world is being remade by two of Asia's leading powers. Finally, the conclusions will guide policy advice that can help to promote a stable, inclusive, and rules-based regional order.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, India-China Rivalry, Geopolitics, Strategic Competition, Maritime Security, Regional Stability, Alliance Dynamics, Small States, Economic Interdependence

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the center of 21st-century strategic competition, characterized by a sharp geopolitical realignment of great powers. One of the most impactful rivalries determining the future of the region is the intensifying strategic rivalry between India and China. As both powers increase in economic and military strength, their desires more often overlap in an area that spans from the African eastern coast to the western Pacific, including major

maritime trade routes, strategic chokepoints, and emerging security structures. The geographical expansion of emphasis from the historical Asia-Pacific to the wider Indo-Pacific highlights the strategic significance of maritime spaces, connectivity corridors, and influence over regional actors. China's assertive presence in the Indo-Pacific is evident through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the development of dual-use ports, and its growing naval operations within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The "String of Pearls" plan for securing maritime access and logistics support points is a long-term vision to project power and secure energy routes. China's rising activities across South and Southeast Asia, from infrastructure investment to arms sales, have also been perceived as triggering encirclement and asymmetry in influence. Facing that, India has pursued a more proactive and outward-looking strategy. The "Act East" policy, Indo-Pacific Vision, SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), and enhanced defense cooperation with nations such as the United States, Japan, Australia, and France are all testament to India's strategic shift. India conceives the Indo-Pacific not merely as a geographical area but as a strategic theater vital to its national security and regional prestige.

The India–China competition in this region is multi-dimensional. It encompasses competition for access to markets and resources, influence over littoral states, control of sea lines of communication, and leadership in regional governance. Unlike traditional land-based disputes, the Indo-Pacific rivalry is dynamic, involving overlapping zones of interest and strategic ambiguity. In addition, regional states, from Sri Lanka and the Maldives to Vietnam and Indonesia, are being progressively drawn into this competition, having to manage economic dependencies against security interests.

This research aims to examine how the Indo-Pacific pivot is recasting the India–China competition, what strategic instruments are being used by the actors, and what are the wider implications for regional order, multilateral cooperation, and conflict possibility. The Indo-Pacific is not a setting for great-power politics—it is the main battleground where the Asian security future will be decided.¹

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The strategic rebalancing of the Indo-Pacific region has created a dynamic and multifaceted competition between India and China, two leading Asian nations with competing interests, differing political systems, and differing visions for regional order. Though their past rivalries have largely been centered on uncompromising border disputes along the Himalayas, the focus of their geopolitical rivalry has now moved towards the maritime and economic domains of the Indo-Pacific. This reorientation is part of a wider realignment of the foreign and defense policies of both nations, as each attempts to increase influence, gain strategic depth, and influence the regional balance of power.

The issue here stems from the growing overlap of India and China's strategic footprints in the Indo-Pacific. China's blue-water expansion—remotely through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), strategic port construction in the Indian Ocean, and increasing naval deployments—is perceived by New Delhi as encirclement and reduced strategic independence. At the same time, India's counter-marketing through naval modernization, increased diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asia, and its involvement in multilateral security forums like the Quad is seen by Beijing as an effort to contain or balance its rise in the region. This perception of threat by each other creates an environment of strategic distrust and competitive action, leading in turn to a greater possibility of miscalculation or unwanted escalation.

Even as interdependence in investment and trade has grown, both countries are strengthening competing economic corridors, defense alliances, and networks of influence in the Indo-Pacific. Regional players—smaller South Asian, ASEAN, and Pacific Island nations—are increasingly ensnared in the competition, forced to tread a delicate balance between economic incentives extended by China and security assurances or normative alignment with India and its allies. But these states usually do not possess the ability to affect the course of great-power rivalry impacting their sovereignty, growth, and maritime interests. There is a lack of scholarship on how this competition is extending beyond conventional borders, especially into the maritime theater, diplomatic spheres, and infrastructure rivalry in the Indo-Pacific. Current analyses tend to study India–China tensions separately or from a continental perspective, without considering the wider implications of their competition in a region at the heart of global trade, energy security, and strategic stability. The absence of such an integrated framework to comprehend and respond to this competition can leave regional tensions unchecked and create the risk of destabilizing the fragile geopolitical balance of the Indo-Pacific.²

¹ Jaishankar, S. (2020). *The India Way: Strategies for an uncertain world*. HarperCollins India.

² Nag, K. (2018). *A new Silk Road: India, China and the geopolitics of Asia*. HarperCollins India.

2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How have China's geopolitical and maritime approaches to the Indo-Pacific area (e.g., BRI, String of Pearls, naval modernization) reshaped the strategic environment for India?
- What strategic measures has India taken (diplomatic, military, economic) in response to China's increasing presence in the Indo-Pacific?
- How are regional states (e.g., Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Island states) managing India-China competition—aligning, hedging, or balancing—and how do they view threat/opportunity?
- How do alliances and multilateral institutions (e.g. Quad, ASEAN, Indo-Pacific forums) contribute to influencing the rivalry—both in aggravating tensions and in offering vehicles for cooperation or conflict management?
- What are potential future paths for India-China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, under various scenarios (e.g. cooperation, confrontation, or status quo), and what policy actions can stabilize or manage competition?

2.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To chart and dissect China's Indo-Pacific geopolitical, maritime, and infrastructure strategies and determine their implications for regional strategic equilibrium.
- To research India's strategy: its foreign policy doctrines, naval and military contemporaryization, diplomatic efforts, and membership in multilateral alliances.
- To investigate how the smaller regional nations react to the India-China competition: their strategic alternatives, reliance, and influence in regional decision-making.
- To evaluate the efficacy of multilateral mechanisms and coalitions in either checking or heightening strategic competition.
- To make realistic scenario-based estimates of the India-China competition in the Indo-Pacific, and suggest policy suggestions for India and regional stakeholders to balance competition more responsibly.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sumit Ganguly,³ in *The Sino-Indian Rivalry*, presents a background study of the long-standing geopolitical tensions between China and India. He points out that this competition goes beyond boundary disputes and represents deeper strategic concerns regarding regional supremacy and international standing. Ganguly introduces the Indo-Pacific as a platform where both countries extend power through military modernization and diplomatic engagement. The book highlights how the competition affects regional stability, with recurring border crises and different worldviews generating cross-trust. Ganguly also sees the increasing role of outside powers such as the U.S. defining the path of the Indo-Pacific rivalry.

B. R. Deepak,⁴ in *Rising India and China: Strategic Rivalry in the Himalayas and the Indo-Pacific*, traces the origins of the India-China conflict in a historical context to colonial legacies and nationalist ambitions. Deepak contends that even as the two civilizations pursue regional leadership, their approaches have become progressively divergent. He explains how China's aggressiveness—particularly through territorial assertions and infrastructure development—stands in contrast to India's careful balancing. The book highlights the Indo-Pacific as a new theater of competition, particularly as India builds maritime security, economic connections, and local diplomacy to push back against Chinese power, particularly in the South and East China Seas.

Zorawar Daulet Singh,⁵ in *Powershift: India-China Relations in a Multipolar World*, contends that the global transformation away from unipolarity towards multipolarity is exacerbating India-China rivalry. According to Singh, India's strategic autonomy is being threatened by China's increasing global ambitions, especially via projects such as the

³ Ganguly, S. (2016). *The Sino-Indian rivalry*. In R. D. Blackwill & A. M. Tellis (Eds.), *Strategic Asia 2016-17: Managing great power rivalry in Asia* (pp. 221–250). National Bureau of Asian Research.

⁴ Deepak, B. R. (2019). *Rising India and China: Strategic rivalry in the Himalayas and the Indo-Pacific* (Vols. I & II). Springer.

⁵ Singh, A. K. (2019). *India-China rivalry: Asymmetric no longer*. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

Belt and Road initiative and expanded naval deployment. Singh analyzes how India reacts through coalition-making, military infrastructure investments, and hedging diplomacy. The book situates the Indo-Pacific at the heart of India's attempt to manage Chinese assertiveness, underscoring the confluence of geography, economic policy, and power politics in determining strategic behavior.

Rory Medcalf,⁶ in *Indo-Pacific Empire: China, America and the Contest for the World's Pivotal Region*, situates the Indo-Pacific as a geopolitical concept born of strategic imperatives. Medcalf contends that China's maritime assertiveness and attempt to dominate sea lanes have pushed other regional powers—most notably India—to build up their naval muscle and align with strategic partners. He considers India's contribution to the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific and its engagement with the Quad and enhanced engagement with ASEAN and Pacific Island nations to be key. Medcalf's analysis emphasizes the maritime nature of the competition and its concerns for regional order.

Shashi Tharoor,⁷ in *Pax Indica: India and the World of the Twenty-First Century*, examines India's changing foreign policy as China rises in the region. Tharoor points out that while India shuns explicit military confrontation, it increasingly takes aggressive diplomatic stances in the Indo-Pacific. He attributes India's engagement with Southeast Asia, its strategic investment in regional ports, and advocacy of multilateralism as means of claiming influence. Tharoor further observes that the competition has ideological dimensions—India's democratic alternative versus China's authoritarian model—which define notions and alignments. The book links India's ambitions on the international stage to its increased strategic commitments along the Indo-Pacific corridor.

S. Jaishankar,⁸ in *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*, captures India's strategic vision in dealing with a multidimensional international order, especially in the shadow of a rising China. As a senior policymaker, Jaishankar underlines India's requirement to balance pragmatism and ambition and reiterates the necessity of strategic autonomy. He identifies the Indo-Pacific as a vital space through which India must strengthen regional alliances, develop maritime domain awareness, and counter China's power projection. The book introduces India advancing beyond non-alignment towards multi-alignment, strategically exploiting its geographical position, naval capabilities, and democratic values to secure interests in the Indo-Pacific.

Brahma Chellaney, *Asian Juggernaut: The Rise of China, India and Japan*. In *Asian Juggernaut*, Chellaney applies a triangular prism to Asia's rising power relationships. He considers how China's ascending rise, India's expanding ambitions, and Japan's resurgence converge in the strategic context of the Indo-Pacific. Chellaney contends that India has to navigate its competition with China not alone but within the context of Japan's presence (financial, military) and U.S. engagement. He examines how rivalry for influence in Southeast Asia, and investment in tech and military power, is not two-way but multilateral. For India, the Indo-Pacific pivot means partnering with like-minded nations, framing norms (freedom of seas, respect for small states), and making its naval and maritime diplomacy credible. The geopolitical fallout consists of alliances and blocs, infrastructure diplomacy, defence modernisation, and the danger of being squeezed or isolated if India doesn't keep up in key areas.

Kingshuk Nag,⁹ *A New Silk Road: India, China and the Geopolitics of Asia*, concentrates on the economic and infrastructural aspect of the India–China competition, especially through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Nag contends that India's decision not to join BRI is indicative of its general resistance to Chinese strategic encirclement. The Indo-Pacific, he suggests, has emerged as one of the primary locations where India is pushing back at Chinese investments with its own initiatives like the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. The book emphasizes India's drive for alternative connectivity initiatives, strategic port construction, and closer engagements with like-minded countries to counter Chinese regional hegemony.

Abhay Kumar Singh, in *India–China Rivalry: Asymmetric No Longer*, examines the change in perception in Chinese strategic circles of India's ascension. Singh argues that China once saw India as a peripheral player, but India's advancing military strength, digital infrastructure, and diplomatic assertiveness have shifted perceptions. He explains how India's escalating activity in the Indo-Pacific—via naval exercises, logistical pacts, and intelligence sharing—is closing the gap of strategy. Singh underscores that perceptions matter in shaping strategic behavior and that China's recalibration reflects India's emergence as a credible challenger in the Indo-Pacific's evolving security architecture.

⁶ Medcalf, R. (2020). *Indo-Pacific empire: China, America and the contest for the world's pivotal region*. Manchester University Press.

⁷ Tharoor, S. (2012). *Pax Indica: India and the world of the twenty-first century*. Penguin Books India.

⁸ Jaishankar, S. (2020). *The India Way: Strategies for an uncertain world*. HarperCollins India.

⁹ Nag, K. (2018). *A new Silk Road: India, China and the geopolitics of Asia*. HarperCollins India.

T. V. Paul,¹⁰ editor of *The China-India Rivalry in the Globalization Era*, assembles a broad array of views on the ways economic interdependence has made tensions between the two powers more complex rather than lesser. Paul's authors examine the irony in which trade between China and India increases as political and military rivalry expands. The Indo-Pacific as a platform for testing the balance of cooperation and confrontation. The book highlights regional institution-building, techno-strategic competition, and multilateral relations, which are all influencing the manner in which both nations work towards pursuing strategic interests in an era of global interdependence.

S. Jaishankar's¹¹ *Why Bharat Matters* (2024) discusses India's changing identity and strategic profile in a changing global landscape. According to Jaishankar, India cannot be a peripheral power anymore but has to establish itself as a central power in the Indo-Pacific region. He stresses that the India-China competition is placed within larger strategic realignments involving economic power, military presence, and normative order. Jaishankar also stresses India's civilizational endowments and democratic legitimacy as essential to this struggle. The book broadens the debate by highlighting the need for India's internal revolution—governance change, defence modernization, and diplomatic engagement—as a basis for its geopolitical aspirations. The Indo-Pacific pivot, for him, is both a challenge and a challenge to India to reshape regional order as well as push back against China's aggressiveness through a combination of hard power and soft power tactics.

Lai-Ha Chan and Pak K. Lee, authors of *China-US Great-Power Rivalry: The Competitive Dynamics of Order-Building in the Indo-Pacific* (2024), examine how the Indo-Pacific is defined by China and the United States's competing visions. This book examines how China's Belt and Road Initiative and the U.S.-promulgated "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" represent not merely infrastructural or security initiatives but radically different sets of norms and institutional orders. The editors trace out the reactions of regional actors, such as India, who balance between these rival orders. The book emphasizes India's competition with China extends beyond economic and military dimensions, encompassing a competition over the norms and institutions that define the region. Therefore, India's geopolitical approach has to take into account shaping and aligning with normative orders to sway the Indo-Pacific's changing order and balance China's aspiration.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach to examine India-China strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific and its wider geopolitical implications. The research design is structured to achieve an enhanced understanding of shifting power relationships, foreign policy alignments, and regional relations between the two states within this pivotal maritime and geopolitical region.

1) Research Design

A multi-case study design is employed to examine critical episodes, policy transitions, and regional interactions that define the India-China strategic competition. The design allows for systematic investigation of major geopolitical events, ranging from military posturing to economic initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), as well as diplomatic alignments with extra-regional powers. The research design is capable of both contemporary and historical analysis, permitting an exhaustive perspective on the development and consequences of the rivalry.

2) Data Collection Methods

The research is based solely on secondary sources, guaranteeing a proper and evidence-driven analysis through varied and credible sources. Data are drawn from the following categories:

- **Academic Literature:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly monographs, and doctoral dissertations on Indo-Pacific geopolitics, strategic studies, and India-China relations are surveyed to create theoretical underpinnings and historical background.
- **Government Papers:** Strategic documents, government white papers, military doctrines, and foreign policy briefs of India and China, and other Indo-Pacific powers like the United States, Japan, and ASEAN countries are scrutinized to decipher national interests and policy directions.

¹⁰ Paul, T. V. (Ed.). (2018). *The China-India rivalry in the globalization era*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Jaishankar, S. (2020). *The India Way: Strategies for an uncertain world*. HarperCollins India.

- **Media Sources:** Editorials and reports of major international and regional news organizations offer an understanding of recent events and present several perspectives on events unfolding, particularly during diplomatic or military confrontations.
- **International Organization Reports:** Reports from organizations such as the United Nations, ASEAN, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association are referred to in order to comprehend the multilateral facets of the competition.

3) Analytical Framework

The research incorporates various analytical approaches and theoretical models to analyze the geopolitical rivalry:

- Geopolitical Analysis is used to analyze the space competition between India and China, particularly in oceanic areas such as the South China Sea, Indian Ocean Region, and the Eastern Pacific. This aids in charting spheres of influence and strategic chokepoints.
- Comparative Strategic Analysis enables the assessment of both nations' military capabilities, economic activities, and diplomatic efforts in the Indo-Pacific. The comparative perspective emphasizes asymmetries and convergences between their regional aspirations.
- Theoretical Perspective: The study is based on the Realist and Neo-Realist traditions of International Relations, whose concerns are power distribution, security challenges, and strategic rivalry. These provide a sound conceptual framework for explaining rivalry within an anarchic international order.

4) Expected Outcomes

- An in-depth mapping of India and China's contemporary strategic capabilities and directions in the Indo-Pacific.
- Analysis of how regional states are reacting: alignment, hedging, neutrality; case study results.
- Recognition of whether alliances/multilateral structures (Quad, ASEAN, others) are efficacious in tempering competition or if they promote escalation.
- Scenario projections sketching out potential futures of India-China competition and which factors will have the greatest impact on course.
- Policy suggestions to Indian policymakers, regional nations, and possibly international actors (e.g. regarding engagement, balance risk, preventing accidental war, investing in regional institutions).

5) Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent: Each interviewee should provide informed consent; know how data will be utilized.
- Anonymity and Confidentiality: Particularly for sensitive views or diplomatic/defence-related information.
- Bias and Reflexivity: The researcher should be alert to possible bias (national, ideological), and think critically on sources particularly media/policy propaganda.
- Data Accuracy and Source Credibility: Make use of credible sources; try to triangulate data as far as possible.
- Security and Sensitivity: Certain information pertaining to military deployments, base arrangements etc. may be sensitive; no violation of confidentiality or national security protocols.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Dealing with regional states, it is context-specific; local viewpoints should be respected and not one nation's paradigm imposed across the board.

Data Tables

Table 1: Comparative Naval Capabilities of India and China (2010–2025)

Metric	India (2010)	India Estimated) (2025	China (2010)	China Estimated) (2025
Total Naval Vessels	140	160	200	350
Aircraft Carriers	1	2	1	3

Submarines (Nuclear + Conventional)	15	24	50	70
Destroyers and Frigates	50	65	80	140
Overseas Port Agreements/Base Access	2	5	7	12
Defense Expenditure (% of GDP)	2.5%	2.9%	2.0%	2.5%
Annual Naval Exercises with Partners	Moderate	High	High	Very High

Figure 1 Comparative Naval Capabilities of India and China (2010–2025)

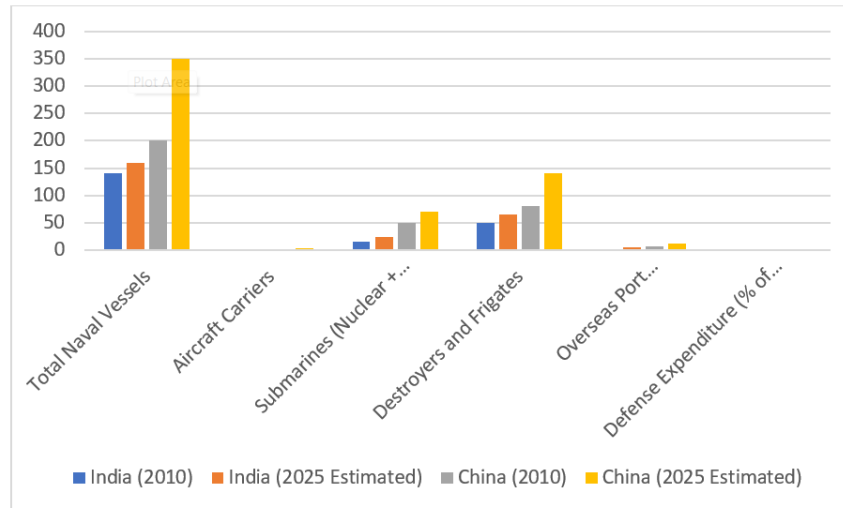


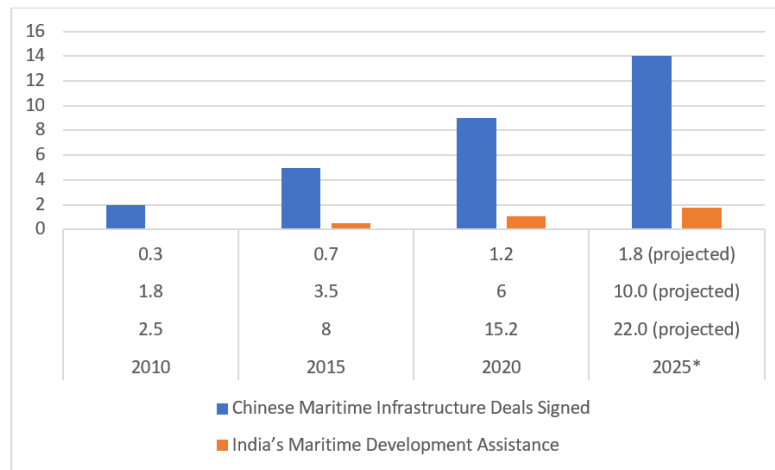
Table 2 Strategic Alignment of Key Indo-Pacific Regional States

Country	Geographic Importance	Economic Ties with China	Economic Ties with India	Security Partnerships with China	Security Partnerships with India / Quad	Alignment Strategy
Sri Lanka	Indian Ocean chokepoint (Hambantota Port)	Very High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Hedging (Leaning toward China)
Maldives	Indian Ocean island nation	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Hedging
Vietnam	South China Sea claimant	High	Moderate	Tense/Competitive	Growing	Balancing
Indonesia	Strategic maritime routes	Moderate	Moderate	Developing	Developing	Hedging/Neutral
Australia	Pacific Rim strategic actor	Moderate	Strong	Limited	Strong (Quad member)	Aligning with India/US

Table 3 China's Infrastructure Investment vs. India's Economic Engagement in the Indo-Pacific (USD Billion)

Year	China's BRI and Port Infrastructure Investment	India's Trade and Investment in Indo-Pacific	India's Defense Cooperation Funding	Chinese Maritime Infrastructure Deals Signed	India's Maritime Development Assistance
2010	2.5	1.8	0.3	2	0.1
2015	8.0	3.5	0.7	5	0.5
2020	15.2	6.0	1.2	9	1.1
2025	22.0 (projected)	10.0 (projected)	1.8 (projected)	14	1.8

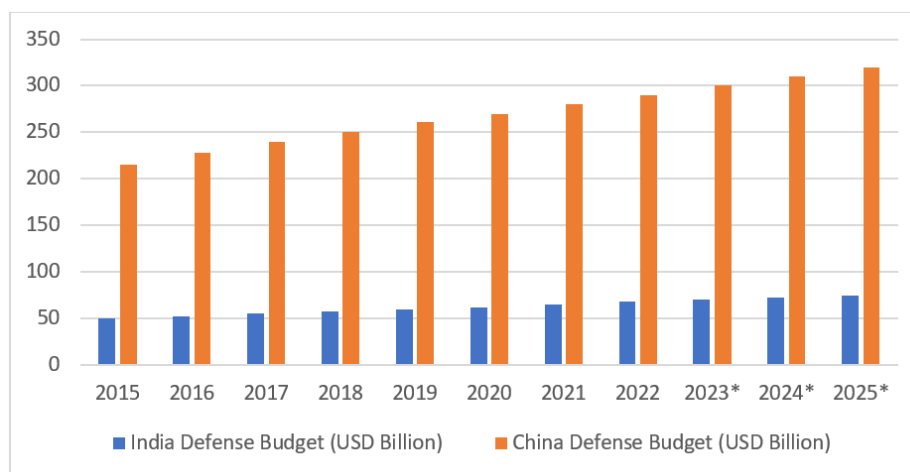
Note: Data for 2025 are projections based on current trends.

Figure 2 China's Infrastructure Investment vs. India's Economic Engagement in the Indo-Pacific (USD Billion)**Table 4** Multilateral and Security Frameworks in the Indo-Pacific Involving India and China

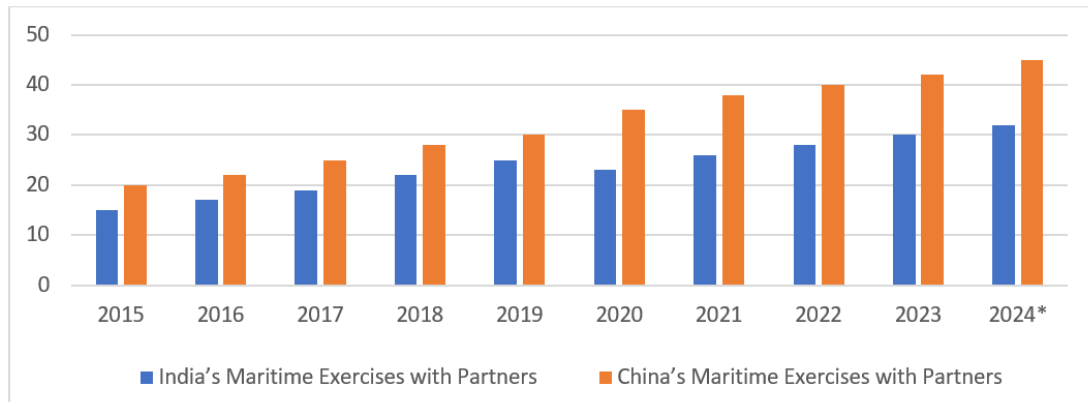
Framework / Alliance	Members	Purpose and Focus	India's Role	China's Role	Impact on India-China Rivalry
Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)	India, USA, Japan, Australia	Maritime security, regional counterbalance, stability, China's assertiveness	Founding member, active participant	Not a member; views as containment	Heightens strategic competition, but enables coordinated response
ASEAN	Southeast Asian nations	Economic cooperation, regional security, dialogue	Dialogue partner, growing engagement	Dialogue partner, influential member	Balances interests; platform for regional states to hedge
Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)	Over 100 countries, led by China	Infrastructure connectivity, economic integration	Skeptical; sees as strategic challenge	Leader, main driver	Source of economic competition, strategic encirclement concerns
Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)	India + partner countries	Maritime security, sustainable development	Initiator, framework builder	Not a participant	Alternative vision of Indo-Pacific governance, soft power projection

Table 5 Annual Defense Budget of India and China (2015–2025) (in USD Billion)

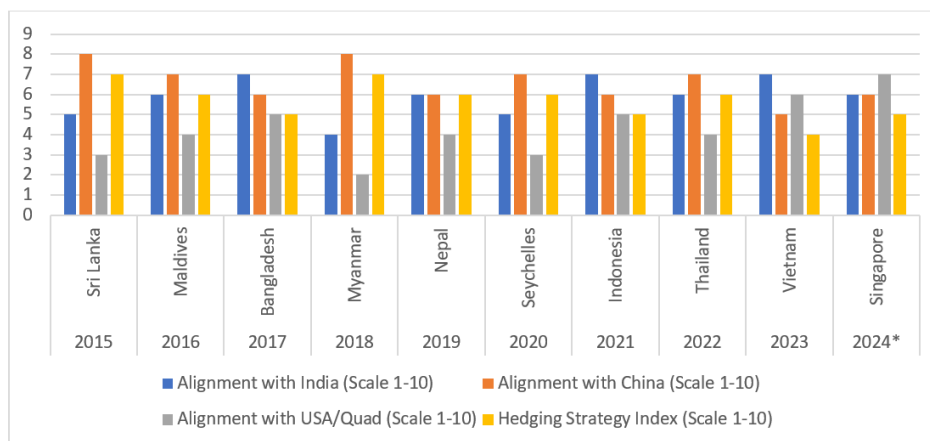
Year	India Defense Budget (USD Billion)	China Defense Budget (USD Billion)
2015	50	215
2016	52	228
2017	55	240
2018	58	250
2019	60	261
2020	62	270
2021	65	280
2022	68	290
2023	70	300
2024	73	310
2025	75	320

Figure 5 Annual Defense Budget of India and China (2015–2025) (in USD Billion)**Table 6** Number of Maritime Exercises Conducted by India and China with Regional Partners (2015–2024)

Year	India's Maritime Exercises with Partners	China's Maritime Exercises with Partners
2015	15	20
2016	17	22
2017	19	25
2018	22	28
2019	25	30
2020	23	35
2021	26	38
2022	28	40
2023	30	42
2024	32	45

Figure 6 Number of Maritime Exercises Conducted by India and China with Regional Partners (2015–2024)

Table 7 Smaller Indo-Pacific States' Alignment Strategies (2015-2024)

Year	Country	Alignment with India (Scale 1-10)	Alignment with China (Scale 1-10)	Alignment with USA/Quad (Scale 1-10)	Hedging Strategy Index (Scale 1-10)
2015	Sri Lanka	5	8	3	7
2016	Maldives	6	7	4	6
2017	Bangladesh	7	6	5	5
2018	Myanmar	4	8	2	7
2019	Nepal	6	6	4	6
2020	Seychelles	5	7	3	6
2021	Indonesia	7	6	5	5
2022	Thailand	6	7	4	6
2023	Vietnam	7	5	6	4
2024*	Singapore	6	6	7	5

Figure 7 Smaller Indo-Pacific States' Alignment Strategies (2015-2024)


CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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