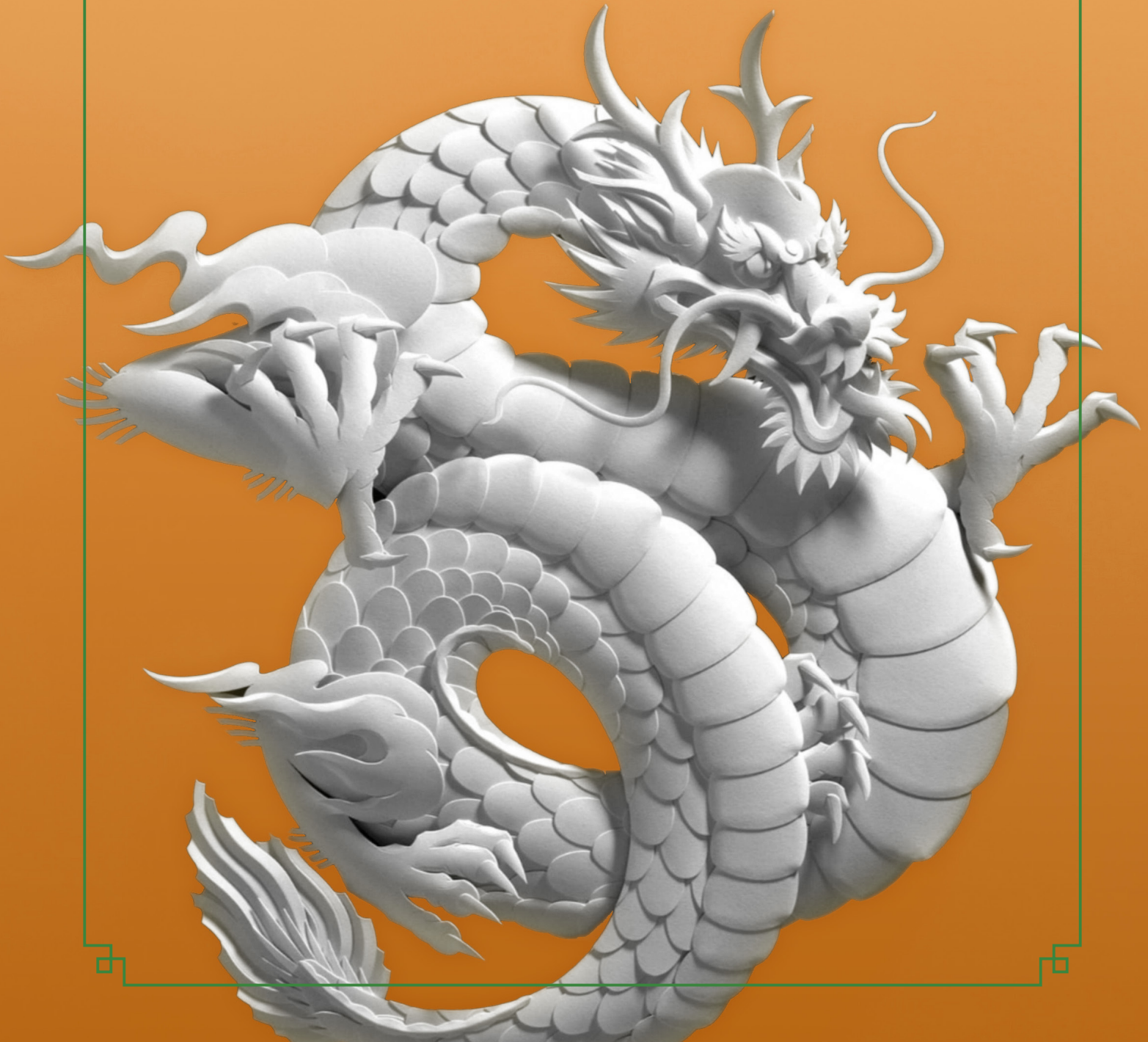


Between Geography and History: Delhi and Canberra in Indo-Pacific Security

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Analysis Paper 28

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Introduction

Deeply estranged throughout much of the Cold War, Delhi and Canberra have struggled to improve relations since then. But significant change is in the air. The relationship between India and Australia has grown rapidly in the past few years. Of particular importance has been the expanding security partnership between the two nations. This in turn has been rooted in a slow but steady convergence of interests in the newly-constructed strategic geography — the Indo-Pacific. Their bilateral security cooperation has been complemented by their membership of the revived Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) that includes Japan and the United States. The Quad has emerged as a major new element of the security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Yet the unfolding transformation of the relationship between Delhi and Canberra remains poorly understood.

Consider the continuing scepticism in Australia about the merits of partnering with India for its security. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating has cited Henry Kissinger to suggest that India “would never be part of the East Asian system.”¹ That view is arguably based on contemporary Indian policies between the late 1960s to 1980s. But Indian history before and since then has been about an active engagement with East Asian security politics. In any case, the conviction that India is marginal to Asian security has been upturned in Washington. Successive administrations in the early 21st century have bet on the centrality of India’s role in the Indo-Pacific. This paper is an attempt to understand the new context of the India-Australia relationship and how it provides a fresh basis — rooted in both geography and history — for a durable security partnership between Delhi and Canberra.

The paper is structured in five parts.

- i) The first part examines the centrality of India in the newly-constituted Indo-Pacific geography and the Quad framework to shape its future architecture. The two innovations are rooted in the recognition that Asia and its waters cannot be secured within the geographic framework of the Asia-Pacific and that longstanding US bilateral alliances must be complemented by an effective Indian role.
- ii) The second part asks why India — traditionally non-aligned — is now ready to join hands with the US to construct a new security order in the Indo-Pacific. It argues that the US ‘pull’ on India has been reinforced by the ‘push’ of a growing power gap with China and mounting security challenges from an increasingly assertive Beijing.
- iii) The third section reviews the evolution of the India-Australia partnership in recent years. It points to the growing convergence of Indian and Australian security interests in the Indo-Pacific that has helped overcome the traditional estrangement between Delhi and Canberra.
- iv) The fourth section offers a brief scrutiny of specific Australian concerns about India’s domestic trajectory: India’s opposition to the Asian free trade agreement, the RCEP, and the question of Delhi’s democratic backsliding under Modi.
- v) The concluding section parses the tension between geography and history that troubles the Asian policies of both India and Australia and how growing strategic cooperation between Delhi and Canberra can transcend that tension.

Rediscovering Geography: Putting India back into the Pacific

The institutionalisation of the Indo-Pacific as a new strategic geography by US President Donald Trump, and its whole-hearted reinforcement by President Joe Biden, has surprised most Asian foreign policy elites who had become so comfortable with the Asia-Pacific framework. Many of them are deeply ambivalent about the shift in the geographic frame of reference. South Korea, a treaty ally of the US, has been hesitant to embrace the new geography. The premier regional forum, ASEAN, has adopted an Indo-Pacific framework, but its premises are different from those of Washington. The idea that India would become

central to the new architecture — the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue — was even more disconcerting to many in the region. Although India was one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit set up in 2005 and was steadily integrated into the ASEAN-led regional institutions, the presumption of a special place for India in the regional architecture was not easy for some Asian elites to digest. Inertia and resistance to new concepts is quite common. But when a great power continues to push the idea, it is bound to get traction sooner rather than later.

Taking a longer-term perspective though, it is not difficult to see that the Asia-Pacific is itself a relatively new term that became popular in the 1990s as the US and Latin American economies began to integrate with those of East and South East Asia.² But the terms East and South East Asia are also not too old. The term South East Asia was not used until halfway through the Second World War, when the allies set up the South East Asia command (at Kandy in the mountains of Sri Lanka) under Lord Mountbatten to reverse Japanese aggression in the region.³

And contemporary 'Asian identity' is itself a political construct that dates back to the early 20th century when pan-Asianism began to emerge as a political force in the East. But it was never easy for the Asianists to define where exactly Asia began and where it ended. For many of the Western chancelleries, the terms Near East, Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, East Indies, and Far East were some of the more common ways of describing these regions well into the second half of the 20th century. That should tell us that regions are politically, economically and ideologically constituted rather than through fixed geographic markers. As the economic and political realities in a space change, regions are constructed and deconstructed.⁴

Recent scholarship has shown that the Indo-Pacific geography has a long lineage⁵ (see Box 1). Although the idea of the Indo-Pacific was first articulated in the contemporary period by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007⁶ — and was soon adopted by Indonesia⁷ and Australia — the term became a definitive geography only after Washington embraced it in 2017 when it figured prominently in the US National Security Strategy issued by the Trump administration.⁸

Throughout his visit to Asia at the end of 2017, Trump consistently used the term Indo-Pacific rather than the Asia-Pacific. Trump's national security aides had apparently concluded that drawing India into the Pacific was necessary to construct a balanced Asia that had been destabilised by China's rise.⁹

The idea of drawing India into the Pacific was not just an impulsive decision of the Trump administration. A bipartisan political consensus has been steadily emerging in Washington on the importance of strategic cooperation with India in shaping the Asian security order. The administration of George W. Bush — which posited potential conflict with China before getting distracted by military interventions in the Middle East — saw India as a critical factor in constructing a new "Asian balance of power that favours freedom."¹⁰ The tenure of Barack Obama saw the US describing India as a "lynchpin" in the US pivot to Asia.¹¹ The first ideas of Indian salience for Asian and Pacific security also emerged under the Obama administration.¹² While many thought that the Indo-Pacific and the Quad might not survive the Trump administration, Biden and his team have doubled down on those concepts.¹³

The ever-bolder assertion of Chinese power made it clear that the old framework of US bilateral alliances in East Asia, and ASEAN-centred multilateralism rooted in South East Asia, were no longer sufficient to secure the regional order. Bringing India into the Asian equation had become vital — hence the Indo-Pacific and the construction of the Quad involving India, the US, and two treaty allies of Washington, Japan and Australia.¹⁴ But the big question was whether India would welcome the ideas of the Indo-Pacific and the Quad.

Box 1: Back to the Future

Looking back and ahead, the Indo-Pacific can be seen as a reprise of the 19th and early 20th century when the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific were deeply-connected waters. Within that vast geography, dominated by the British empire, India had a pivotal role. India was at the heart of the British imperial defence system as well as the economic globalisation of the era.¹⁵ Independent India's withdrawal from post-World War II security politics in the name of non-alignment, and its inward economic turn in the name of self-reliance, broke up this integrated region.

If the Indo-Pacific is a reconstitution of a strategic geography that was familiar until the mid-20th century, the Quad is a reconstruction of strategic military cooperation between India and the West. British primacy in the East during the 19th and early 20th century was founded on the massive mobilisation of Indian military resources. While the British Royal Navy dominated the seas, the Indian Army was the principal instrument of providing security in the Indian Ocean and the abutting regions from the early 19th century. The mobilisation of a million soldiers in the First World War and nearly two million in the Second underline the extraordinary contribution of the Indian Army to the Allied war efforts.

In the past, India's collaboration with the West was under the aegis of empire, with little agency for its nationalist elite. India today comes to the Quad as a power in its own right and with political agency to shape the regional balance of power. The Indo-Pacific and the Quad are not just about India helping the West to achieve its objectives in the East. They are also about India gaining from that collaboration and realising its own great power ambitions. As the only non-treaty partner of the US in the Quad, it is India that sets the pace and scope of this security cooperation. While the terms of military engagement between India and the West have changed, their partnership has once again become central to the management of geopolitics in the East.

India, the US and Asia: Overcoming History

If Washington surprised Asia with its new overtures, traditionally non-aligned India did much the same by embracing the US initiatives. That did not come about so easily. There was much hesitation and internal argumentation in Delhi over whether India should go full steam with the ideas of the Indo-Pacific and the Quad. The questions of India's non-alignment and strategic autonomy were front and centre of this domestic debate.¹⁶ As India's relations — political, economic and military — with the US began to improve through the early 21st century, the question of a rising China and the Asian balance of power inevitably began to figure in the debate.¹⁷ Would India actively shape the Asian balance power? And might it do so in collaboration with the US and its allies? The very suggestion of such ideas was anathema to the traditionalists in Indian foreign policy who saw non-alignment and strategic autonomy as unchaining principles of India's international identity and foreign policy.¹⁸

Linked to this was also the deeply-held Asianist sensibility of the Indian foreign policy elite that saw partnership with China as a critical element in building a post-World War II global order. It is a tradition that goes to pan-Asianist sentiments in the early 20th century and India's support to the Chinese nationalist movement's resistance against Japanese occupation in the inter-War period. India's romance with China did not end with the brief border conflict between the two nations in 1962, with India turning to the Soviet Union rather than the West to balance China during the Cold War. Sino-US engagement since the 1970s further deepened India's political distance from the West. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the unipolar moment, and the normalisation of India-China relations led India to a modified version of non-alignment — a coalition with Russia and China (and later with Brazil and South Africa) to promote a multipolar world. Although India's engagement with the US steadily improved in the 21st century, Delhi was reluctant to consider explicit balancing strategies against China.¹⁹ Four important factors changed this and nudged India closer to the West.²⁰

One was the concerted effort in Washington, across successive administrations — Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden — to overcome India's suspicion of the United States. This involved setting aside Western activism on the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, resolving differences over the nuclear non-proliferation question, liberalising the transfer of advanced weapons and dual-use technologies, and offering strong cooperation on counter-terrorism to India. This US 'pull' was compelling, but not enough to break India's commitment to non-alignment.

It needed a Chinese 'push'. China's growing assertiveness on the Himalayan boundary dispute with India provided the second impetus to India's US partnership.

A series of military crises over the long and contested border in 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2020 underlined the Chinese determination to change the territorial status quo by military means. There was no way Delhi could duck this issue of balancing Chinese military power. Beyond the disputed boundary, China's great power ambition began to undermine India's regional primacy in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. In both regions, China's economic weight, political influence, and military presence began to grow at a quicker pace, shaking India's strategic complacency. Similarly, Delhi had long believed that bilateral and regional differences with China would not get in the way of Sino-Indian cooperation on global issues. That premise too was shattered in the past decade after China actively blocked India's attempt to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group and opposed India's quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.²¹

A third factor was India's growing worries about the imbalanced economic relationship with China. As Delhi normalised relations with China since the late 1980s and launched economic reforms in the early 1990s, there was a new basis for commercial cooperation between the two nations. As trade volumes between the two rose rapidly in the 2000s, Delhi believed deeper economic cooperation would help India overcome political differences with China. That assumption too turned out to be false amidst the growing recognition that Beijing was not going to change its policies towards Delhi or the region in the name of protecting its economic stakes in India. China was now too big an economic power and the power gap with India too wide.²² Even more consequential was the large and persistent trade deficit with China and its impact on India's manufacturing industries. By 2019, Delhi decided that it could not afford to be sucked into China's orbit and chose to walk out of trade talks to finalise the ASEAN-initiated — but China-centred — Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).²³

Finally, under the tenure of Narendra Modi as India's Prime Minister from 2014, Delhi shed the old baggage of non-alignment, discarded its historic hesitations over security cooperation with the US, and was ready to stand up against China's bullying.²⁴ Together these four factors saw Delhi embrace the Indo-Pacific idea and the proposed architecture to shape this vast littoral: the Quad.

Colonial Cousins: From Estrangement to Partnership

As 'colonial cousins', India and Australia inherited shared history, geography, and much Anglo-Saxon heritage.²⁵ But the general conditions of the Cold War did not leave much room for Delhi and Canberra to construct a sensible relationship.²⁶ As India campaigned against post-War alliances and Australia became part of them, Delhi and Canberra ended up on opposite sides of the Cold War. The political distance that emerged between India and the White settler colonies in the early decades of the 20th Century was reinforced in the decades after the Second World War. The shared British colonial history, the common commitment to democracy, a legacy of cooperation between the armed forces, and membership of the Commonwealth were not enough to overcome the political and strategic differences in the post-War era. To be sure, occasional attempts were made by Delhi and Canberra to work together. But they did not go too far during the Cold War.

Ironically, just when Australia started coming to terms with its geography from the 1970s, India was largely out-of-step with the rest of Asia. The normalisation of China's relations with the US and its Asian allies in the 1970s coincided with India's border conflict with China, greater association with the Soviet Union, and further divergence with the US and the West. In the 1980s, India's military ties with the Soviet Union were seen as a major threat in Canberra; Delhi was viewed as an appendage to Moscow, causing much resentment in India and deeper distrust between the political and military establishments. The only positive element of this period was the gathering trickle of Indian immigrants, which had started after Canberra officially ended the White Australia Policy in the 1960s. This trickle would eventually become a flood and an important driver of the India-Australia relationship in the 21st century.²⁷

More immediately, the end of the Cold War provided a whole new basis for engagement between India and the US. As India opened up its economy and began to recalibrate its foreign policy to a post-Soviet world, ample opportunities opened up for bilateral engagement. But there would be one big problem yet to overcome — the nuclear question. As Canberra made non-proliferation a major domain of its international activity, Delhi was debating an end to its nuclear ambiguity. So when India announced itself as a nuclear weapon power in 1998 with a series of nuclear tests, there was an inevitable and headlong confrontation with Canberra.²⁸ Attempts to find common ground in other areas — such as the construction of an Indian Ocean Regional forum in the 1990s (now called the Indian Ocean Rim Association) — did not really overcome the gap in security perceptions. India's economic reforms of the

1990s, a major departure from the Indian perspective, also paled in comparison to the dramatic opening-up of the Chinese economy after Beijing cracked down on the Tiananmen Square protests in the summer of 1989. If China was a new force that would enormously boost Australia's economy, India — despite its vast potential and promise — remained a difficult place to do business.

The larger context of Delhi-Canberra ties began to change only in the 2000s. As Delhi began to engage with Washington on resolving the nuclear issue and putting bilateral ties on a different new footing, the door also opened for a more productive engagement between India and the US's allies in Asia: Australia and Japan. It might have been a coincidence that Prime Minister John Howard's visit to India in 2000 occurred just as Bill Clinton's trip to India — the first visit by an American president in 22 years — came to a close. Since then, successive Australian prime ministers have taken the initiative to engage to resolve the nuclear dispute, build mutual trust, and expand the areas of engagement.²⁹ Although India was slow to respond with specific deliverables, Canberra sustained the initiative.³⁰ If the centre-left United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government struggled with the new possibilities that were opening up with the US and its allies, the right-of-centre Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government was far less inhibited. In 2014, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to travel to Australia in almost three decades. Since then, the pace and intensity of engagement has increased, especially in the security domain. Beyond the focus on the bilateral relationship, Delhi and Canberra have also engaged in a variety of minilateral settings — with Japan, France, and Indonesia — as well as in the Quadrilateral format with Japan and the United States.³¹

Although the scope and substance of the bilateral relationship expanded in the first two decades, there was no doubt it remained way below potential. It was also clear there was no urgency on either side for an intensification of the strategic partnership. That began to change in 2020 amid the rapid deterioration of Indian and Australian relationships with China. To be sure, China was an important factor that shaped Asian international relations in the 21st century, but neither side saw a clear and present danger from China. Both emphasised engagement, despite the many differences. Australia's 'thumbs down' to the Quad under the Rudd government in 2008 was matched by India's own ambivalence about the Quad.³² Those attitudes were rooted in deepening economic interdependence with China and the political need to cooperate with the most dominant Asian power.

Despite steady progress in the bilateral ties between India and Australia, neither side was willing to face up to emerging problems in their China relationships. That reluctance, ironically, was overcome by China's aggressive actions against India and Australia in 2020. China's economic coercion of Australia was launched with much ferocity after Canberra's call for an international investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 virus.³³ Delhi, preoccupied with managing the virus, was shocked by the PLA's bid to change the disposition of the disputed boundary in eastern Ladakh. That forced Delhi and Canberra to take a fresh look at their respective ties with China, emphasising the importance of deeper partnership with the US, both bilaterally, and more actively pursuing minilateral partnerships.³⁴ Delhi discarded its ambivalence about the US, the Quad and Australia. Canberra was no longer willing to fudge the China question.

The digital summit between Modi and Morrison in the summer of 2020 set the stage for an ambitious agenda under the auspices of the jointly-announced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, injecting a new level of energy and urgency to advance the Partnership across a broad front — from trade, technology and resilient supply chains to defence cooperation and maritime security.³⁵ India also

invited Australia to re-join the annual Malabar naval exercise with the US and Japan in October 2020 after an absence of 13 years; further underscoring the hardening Indian position on China and the alignment of interests among the four Quad countries.

India neither welcomed nor criticised the emergence of AUKUS in September 2021 as a new grouping in the Indo-Pacific. India appreciates the strengthening of regional deterrent capabilities to limit China's maritime assertiveness. Delhi's apprehensions are about the unfortunate rift between Australia and France — a major strategic partner for India — and its likely impact on building a regional coalition. Deeper involvement with the Quad and strong ties with France puts India in the unanticipated position of acting as a bridge between different Western partners in the Indo-Pacific.³⁶ Delhi is also quite comfortable with the Biden Administration's decision to shift the focus of the Quad to non-military issues, while AUKUS takes an explicitly military character. Delhi knows that a non-military Quad will have greater acceptability in the region. A non-military Quad does not, however, prevent deeper bilateral and minilateral military cooperation with Australia, Japan and the United States. That is the reason India seeks to separate conceptually the Quad and the Malabar exercises.

Trade and Democracy

Under Prime Minister Modi, India has largely overcome its past worries about the reliability of Australia as a partner and is deeply impressed by Canberra's political defiance of Beijing. But there are two concerns that cast a shadow over some of India's Western partnerships, including with Australia and the United States. One is about India's presumed return to economic protectionism and the other is about its illiberal political turn at home under Modi.

India's decision to walk out of the RCEP at the end of 2019 has drawn widespread criticism across Asia as well as within India. For the Modi government, it was a strategic decision to pull out of a China-centred Asian economic order and prevent the further hollowing out of its domestic manufacturing sector from the onslaught of cheap Chinese imports. Since then the government has emphasised the importance of rebuilding national industrial capabilities. Much of the concern over India's protectionism comes from the uncritical embrace of the globalisation mantra that is under stress not just from India, but from other quarters including the United States. Australian academic, James Curran, wrote with much confidence in early 2021 that Modi is unlikely to undertake sweeping economic reforms. But that is exactly what

the Indian Prime Minister has done — bold moves at privatisation of state enterprises, inviting foreign direct investment into manufacturing, reforming the farm sector and labour laws.³⁷

Having walked out of the RCEP, Delhi is now trying to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with key strategic partners; including Australia, the UK, Europe, Israel and the UAE.³⁸ The US at this point is not into negotiating trade agreements. India's new trade bilateralism is no substitute to being part of larger regional arrangements nor is India an alternative to the China market. But as an economy that is well on its way to becoming the third largest in the world, it offers multiple opportunities to Australia, given the deep structural complementarities. A bilateral Free Trade Agreement would go some way towards addressing the scepticism in Australia about India as an economic partner.³⁹

Much of the international debate on India's domestic politics is an amplification of the nation's own internal arguments over the state of Indian democracy, the rise of Hindu nationalism, the abuse of state power, and the stress on various institutional checks on the executive. While these concerns are growing,

it is easy to underestimate the resilience of Indian democracy and the limits on the power of Modi, who has struggled to extend his party's political sway over large parts of the country.⁴⁰ As former Australian High Commissioner to Delhi, Peter Varghese, puts it: "there is nothing wrong with Indian democracy that can't be corrected by what is right with Indian democracy."⁴¹

While many in the US have expressed serious concerns about the state of Indian democracy, the Biden administration has taken a cautious approach to the issue. Washington recognises the "need to put values back into the US-Indian relationship without

severing the strategic ties that have flourished over the past two decades."⁴² This trend towards deepening Western strategic cooperation with Delhi is unlikely to be reversed any time soon and certainly not due to concerns about Indian democracy.

As multiple challenges from China intensify, the strategic salience of democratic India — warts and all — will continue to rise for the US and its Asian allies including Australia. For they all share deep interests in a stable balance of power and preventing any single state from dominating the region.

Between Geography and History

The revived Quad and AUKUS were 'made in China' and have drawn much support within the foreign policy establishments in Delhi and Canberra. But there is no denying enduring concerns in both capitals about the sustainability of a strategy that seeks to balance a large and rising neighbour, China, with the support of a distant power, the United States. That Prime Minister Modi continues to sit stoically in meetings with President Xi Jinping in such forums as RIC (Russia-India-China), the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation without raising bilateral problems is a recognition of the need to keep channels of communication open with Beijing. Australia, too, would prefer to sustain engagement with Beijing on disputed issues — but remains in the diplomatic freezer.

Critics of the Quad and AUKUS in Delhi and Canberra insist these forums are about an irresponsible effort to contain China. But the fact is that neither was enthusiastic about any confrontation with China, let alone containment. As they found themselves at the receiving end of Chinese unilateralism, they have had no option but to turn to the construction of a balancing coalition. In the past, Delhi and Canberra deferred to the sensitivities of Beijing and were willing to impose constraints on their own policy options. After 2020, neither is willing to cede a veto over their security policies to Beijing.

If Delhi has had a long dalliance with the idea of Asian solidarity, Canberra's romance with the region is of more recent origin. What both these traditions underestimate has been the difficulty of realising Asian unity. Whether defining the region's geography or constructing common approaches to regional development and security, the differences have always been deep.⁴³ The widespread conviction that Asian economic integration and regional institution-

building were on an irreversible trajectory is only recent. And they were premised on China's peaceful rise and Beijing's support for cooperative security and economic prosperity in Asia. Both those assumptions have been shattered by the policies of Xi Jinping, who has sought political dominance and weaponised economic interdependence. Like imperial Japan in the early 20th century, Xi Jinping's China seeks to promote the idea of 'Asia for Asians'.⁴⁴ Delhi and Canberra no longer have difficulty in seeing through that rhetoric.

At the end of the Cold War, the Indian political class eagerly embraced Russian and Chinese efforts to promote a 'multipolar world' and limit American unilateralism. Today, they see the equal or even greater importance of constructing a 'multipolar Asia' that would prevent the emergence of a new political hegemony in the region. For Delhi, expanding strategic cooperation with the US, bilaterally and with its Asian allies — Australia and Japan — is critical in securing a non-hegemonic region. Canberra, too, has realised its historic partnership with the US (and UK on the nuclear submarines) is of considerable value in securing Australian interests.

Canberra's turn to the US and UK has drawn much derision in Australia and highlighted the danger of relying on historical ties and the neglect of geographical realities.⁴⁵ But there is no denying that AUKUS widens Canberra's options. Delhi, too, sees the involvement of Britain and Europe — from the old colonial West — as necessary to correct the imbalance of power in Asia triggered by the rise and assertion of China. India under Modi has begun to shed its traditional allergy to the Anglosphere and is eager for more wide-ranging cooperation with its constituent parts.

Finally, implicit in Canberra's endorsement of the American bet on the centrality of India's role in

Indo-Pacific security is the proposition that a strong partnership with India will help Australia overcome the tension between its history and geography. It is also a bet that Tokyo has made. Jawaharlal Nehru, who headed the interim Indian government before full independence, invited Australia to participate in the 1947 Asian Relations Conference that would lay the foundations for post-War Afro-Asian solidarity and the non-aligned movement.⁴⁶ Nehru's view that Australia's geography is more important than its history was perhaps premature. Nehru and his successors — who were in thrall of Asian geography — viewed the West and Anglosphere with some disdain. But Delhi has had its comeuppance, thanks to its underestimation of Chinese power potential and its consequences. Today

both Delhi and Canberra have the chance to take a more balanced view of their geography and history.

Asia is not synonymous with China, and neither Delhi nor Canberra can be compelled to accept deference to Beijing as the only option in their regional policies. Both have a stake in a multipolar Asia that can only be sustained today with the presence of the US and the involvement of Britain and Europe. At the same time, India brings the necessary material heft and political will to strengthen — over the longer term — the regional dimension of the Asian balance of power. Deeper security, political and economic cooperation between Delhi and Canberra will contribute to the emergence of a more resilient Asia in the decades ahead.

Endnotes

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- It defines the US goal as ensuring that India remains "pre-eminent in South Asia and takes the leading role in maintaining Indian Ocean security, increases engagement with Southeast Asia, and expands its economic, defence, and diplomatic cooperation with other US allies and partners in the region".
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