

An Analysis of the United States Policy Shift between “Asia-Pacific” and “Indo-Pacific” and India's Strategic Orientation in It

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Abstract: In recent years, the India and the Pacific region has become an essential foreign policy focus for many countries around the world, as a new growth point in the global economy and a center of power interaction. The shift from the American "Return to Asia-Pacific" strategy to the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" reflects not only the expansion and deepening of the US policy framework in Asian region, but also the enhanced strategic role and changing attitude of India, as an opportunity and focus point for the construction of the new "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in this framework. For the time being, however, India's strategic role is still constrained by many factors, both domestic and external. This paper will therefore analyze the reasoning for the change in American strategy toward the Indo-Pacific area as well as the evolving position of India within it, analyzing its role and potential in the area in the context of India's situation.

Keywords: India, Indo-Pacific, China-India Relations

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The 21st century has witnessed the accelerated growth of the Asia, as well as the Pacific region and the regional development of China and India, which has attracted the attention of Washington. The major US policy shift in Asia began with the Obama Administration's Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy, after which the America gradually ended the “Anti-Terrorism” operations waging around the world, reoriented its tactical concentration to the Asia and Pacific region. After Trump took office, he officially used the term “Indo-Pacific” in Government documents Unprecedentedly, replacing the traditional concept of "Asia-Pacific." Moreover, eventually, Trump expanded it into the Indo-Pacific Strategy and made it a core principle in handling U.S. relations with Asia. Soon after Biden took office, he released the American Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, which fully inherited the Indo-Pacific

Policy of the former administration and placed the Indo and Pacific region at the center of gravity of American global strategy. Therefore, a definition of “Indo-Pacific” has emerged from the American government's official communication system, which has aroused the interest of international research.

As another significant country in the Indo and Pacific region, India's response to the American policy change between the “Asia-Pacific” and the “Indo-Pacific” has undergone a dynamic change from passive acceptance to active integration and independent construction. Since 2014, it has successively proposed the “Act East Policy,” the “Eastward Strategy,” and the “Indo-Pacific Vision.” India's role in the American Indo-Pacific Strategy has always been attracting a lot of attention of significant powers. Its strategic positioning and degree of intervention will significantly affect the regional status quo and future.

1.2. Research Content and Significance

As another major power in the Indo and Pacific Region, India's reaction to the change in American policies between “Asia-Pacific” and “Indo-Pacific” has undergone a progressive process from passive acceptance to active integration and autonomous construction. Therefore, this paper focuses on the policy shifts of the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations in the context of the major regional growth from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific and the current strategic positioning of India in the American Indo-Pacific Strategy. At the same time, as this paper finds that India has not yet had an integral status in the new Strategy, it analyses the constraints on India's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Finally, it assesses its strategic potential in the light of its circumstances.

This article takes a realist approach by analyzing and summarizing the three U.S. administrations' Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific) policies over time to find the more profound logic of their policy shifts and India's position. It also analyses India's function in the American Indo-Pacific Strategy through the policy interactions with the U.S. and India, with theoretical and practical implications. The purpose of analyzing the policies and behaviour of the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations in the Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific) Area is to complement, and enrich traditional realist theory. Furthermore, the paper will analyze the pursuit of U.S. leadership and national interests in the Asia-Pacific through realist paths, which will foster the development of Asia-Pacific studies.

2. Literature Review

At present, academic research on the American Indo-Pacific policy focuses on three aspects: the reasons for its implementation, whether the Indo-Pacific policy is a complete evolution of the Asia-Pacific policy, and the impact of the American Indo-Pacific policy. Shengli Ling and Yanfei Wang (2022) argue that the main reason for the implementation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy is to maintain absolute US leadership in this region and to deal with a potential threat posed by the rise of China [1]. The Chinese scholar Wang Peng (2021) summarizes the shift in American strategic focus as a “clear purpose” and a “hidden purpose,” the “clear purpose” being the American perception of its domestic crisis and the threat of China's rise; the “hidden purpose” being the historical “eastward shift” of the global economic center brought about by China's opening up and accession to the WTO and a series of other moves to actively participate in the world market [2]. Regarding implementation, some scholars, such as Wei Da and Xin Wang (2021), point out differences between two strategies in terms of implementation [3]. However, scholars such as Chaobing Qiu (2019) argue that the policies of the three administrations are primarily the same, focusing on containing China's development in East Asia and ensuring American regional hegemony in the above areas [4]. Regarding the impact on China, Chinese scholars Qiang Xin and Jing Yi Xu (2022) suggest that the Indo-Pacific policy will threaten China in three aspects: political, economic, and ideological [5]. Xiaochen Chen and Yudi

Chang (2022) suggest that the American Indo-Pacific Strategy will bring orderly changes to the Pacific Island region in three ways: the externalization of regional power patterns, the complication of regional institutional practices, and the proliferation of Western norms [6].

3. Between " Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy " and "Indo-Pacific Strategy": the U.S. Policy Shift

3.1. The Obama's "Return to Asia-Pacific" Strategy and Its Impact

Since the Obama-led administration took office in 2009, its policy departments have made a series of changes to US global strategy, the most obvious of which has been to begin to focus on the US presence in Asia. And then, the U.S. has formalized its "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing" regional strategy, which involves three dimensions: economic, military and diplomatic. In practice, t The United States attaches great importance to strengthening ties with ASEAN countries, particularly in the areas of trade, commerce and military security. To ensure absolute US leadership of the Asian region, the US has worked to increase cooperation with ASEAN countries through diplomatic channels, such as APEC, to strengthen its dominance over its traditional allies and to promote American values in East Asia [7]. On the military front, the United States has increased its input in the region on three fronts: Gradually deploy its military in the region, increase the frequency of military exercises with its Asia-Pacific allies, and enhance military interactions such as exchanges with countries in the Asia and Pacific area. The core of the policy deployment is to "consolidate old friends and find new partners" "by strengthening the security commitment to allies, increasing the military investment in East Asia. Among these, America alliance with Japan, South Korea, Philippines plays a crucial role. The "search for new partners" is a new step in military cooperation with Australia and India, including joint exercises, military exchange missions, and training and sales contracts for new equipment. It seeks to amplify U.S. influence in the South Pacific. As for economic actions, the U.S. is most interested in the TPP: the U.S. hopes to build an East Asian economic cooperation mechanism with itself as the core so that the U.S. and its allies can be economically independent of China, trying to exclude China's influence in East Asia and integrate ASEAN and APEC resources. At the 2011 APEC Summit, U.S. President Barack Obama affirmed in his speech, covering issues such as the RMB exchange rate, SME financing, TPP and so on.

The move shows that the "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" strategy is a comprehensive strategy that includes economic, diplomatic and military security, and the influence of which is by no means limited to one field. It also shows that the U.S. will use this strategy to encircle China in several ways, thus reducing China's space for development and forcing it to slow down its pace of development. Therefore, the U.S. hopes to use this strategy to revitalize the U.S. economy and eliminate diplomatic difficulties. Secondly, to balance and restrain China in the Asia and win the leadership and control at the regional level. Although the "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" strategy is not entirely aimed at China, stopping China must be its primary motivation.

3.2. Impact of the Trump Administration's Anti-Globalization and "Make America Great Again" on the Asia-Pacific Region

On November 9, 2016, Trump clearly announced in his "100-day New Deal" speech that the United States would withdraw from the 12-member TPP and replace it with a bilateral trade agreement that would bring jobs and factories back to the United States. Trump portrayed China and Mexico as America's most prominent economic rivals and the culprits of stealing American jobs. For the Trump administration, the TPP and WTO regimes have cost the U.S. in trade, threatening to withdraw from both trade arrangements. For the Trump administration, withdrawing from multilateral relations does not mean giving up U.S. diplomatic hegemony; rather, according to Manning (2018), the Trump

administration has made India a fulcrum of its Asia-Pacific strategy. In his first and has introduced the terminology of an "Indo-Pacific strategy" [8].

3.3. The Biden Administration's Foreign Policy Shift to the Indo-Pacific Region

The Biden administration shared the Trump administration's understanding of China and inherited the basic ideas of its China containment strategy while intensifying its "alliance strategy" against China, bringing in more allies, using international rules and laws, and continuing to suppress China in the fields of intellectual property rights and industrial policies. Compared to the Trump era, the Biden administration's China policy has both continued and changed: it has endorsed the principles and basic position of the Trump's diplomatic strategy towards China, which is to consider China as the most threatening strategic competitor of the United States while adopting a different set of competitive strategies and policies. The Biden administration presents a moderate, rational, soft and hard approach to tactical means. Its diplomatic security team is aware of the need to deal with China from a position of strength. According to Satoru (2021), unlike Trump's all-encompassing containment and "extreme pressure" approach, the Biden administration's policy toward China has adopted a more pragmatic strategy of "competition when it is time to compete, cooperation when it is possible, and confrontation when it is necessary" [9]. The combination of "competition, cooperation, and confrontation" is a strategic tool for the Biden administration to maximize its interests and has become the tone of the Biden administration's China policy. U.S.-India relations have been greatly enhanced in terms of relations with India since the U.S. pursued the so-called "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in 2017. In White House documents, India is considered a cornerstone of the American Indo-Pacific policy framework. The U.S. wants to help "India rise" by providing military, intelligence and diplomatic support to India, a regional power neighbouring China, to "help India meet the challenges of the continent." The United States also wants to work with India in South and Southeast Asia "to maintain maritime security and counterbalance Chinese influence". White House documents indicate that the U.S. supports Prime Minister Modi's "Eastward Initiative Policy," the strategic extension to the east, and India's dream of becoming a global great power [10].

4. Analysis of India's Strategic Orientation

4.1. India's Shifting Strategic Role in the New Indo-Pacific Strategy

The changing strategic role of India in the Indo-Pacific Strategy is a dynamic historical process. Using 2017 as a benchmark, during the Obama administration, India was only a minor player in the US Asia-Pacific alliance system. After Trump took office in 2017, India took the initiative to integrate and construct the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and the US-India relations rapidly warmed up. India joined the Quad built by the United States and continued to strengthen cooperation with the United States and its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region for the first time. Since Biden took office in 2021, the United States has paid more attention to the role of cooperation among allies in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, so the U.S. has drawn more attention to India. As a result, the Modi government has responded more positively to the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy than before, regarding the breadth and depth of cooperation that have greatly improved.

4.1.1. Limited Engagement During the Obama Administration

After Obama took office, in the face of the weakening of US combined power and the rising status of China after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, he gradually ended the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the Bush Administration, promoted the eastward shift of American strategic focus, and increased the geostrategic value of the Asia and Pacific region. When it comes to the "Indo-Pacific"

concept, it has been repeatedly stated that the United States welcomes the important role India plays in the Asia-Pacific region and hopes to strengthen bilateral US-India military cooperation and deepen the strategic partnership [11]. Hence, the scale of U.S.-India arms sales continued to grow, and military exercises have been frequent. India was defined as a “Major Defense Partner” of the United States and enjoyed equal treatment with the United States Asia-Pacific Allies. However, the Obama Administration only used “Indo-Pacific” as a replacement concept for “Asia-Pacific”. It did not incorporate India into the Asian-Pacific alliance network system constructed by the United States. India at this time was only a South Asian “pawn” outside the American Asia-Pacific alliance system to contain China's rise.

Despite the relatively frequent military defence cooperation with the United States during this period, India remained cautious and lagged in its response to the U.S. Asia-Pacific Rebalance Policy. The Singh government has made this decision for three reasons. First, India, as a traditional power in South Asia, has always insisted on its strategic autonomy. Second, Singh's government has been too preoccupied with economic reform and poverty alleviation in India to pay much attention to America's Asia-Pacific initiatives. Third, Sino-Indian relations at that time were on the rise, and China had become India's largest trading partner, which meant that India would not rashly follow the Obama Administration's policy and cut its economic interests.

Because the Singh government wavered, the Obama Administration believed that its actual actions were far from the role expected by the United States for India. Generally speaking, the U.S.-India interaction during this period was limited to the military defence field, while the U.S.-India cooperation was not very optimistic in the important economic and trade fields.

4.1.2. Active Integration and construction in the Trump and Biden Era

When Trump took office in 2017, he brought India into the traditional 'Asia-Pacific' sphere and upgraded it to the geopolitical concept of 'Indo-Pacific' in order to deal with China's emergence as the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific region and to distinguish it from the Obama administration's Asia-Pacific rebalancing policy, and formally proposed the “Indo-Pacific Strategy” based on the Quad. For India, the Trump Administration paid enough attention to it to continue to move the U.S.-India relationship forward, defined it as a “Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership,” and made India's role in the Indo-Pacific region more prominent. In response to it, the Modi government responded positively, took the initiative to integrate into the Indo-Pacific strategy, restarted the “four-sided mechanism,” and signed a larger arms purchase agreement with America. The United States and India stepped onto a new level in military security cooperation [12].

When Biden came to power in 2021, he inherited the tattered Indo-Pacific strategy left by the Trump and his government made several amendments. The first is to fill the loopholes in the economic and trade cooperation of Indo-Pacific allies, and to this end, IPEF negotiations and the “Blue Dot Network” have been launched to benchmark the China-led RCEP and the “Belt and Road,” respectively. The second is to win over and consolidate the military defence relations of traditional Indo-Pacific allies, such as the Quad and the FVEY. The third is to adjust the strategic focus to contain China in all directions, downplay the economic interest disputes with allies, and build allies into “front positions” against China, for which Biden increased the scale of arms sales to India; supported the Modi government's border territorial disputes with China, and encouraged India to implement the Eastward Strategy and assume greater responsibilities and obligations in the Indo-Pacific Strategy [13].

Correspondingly, India's role in the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy has increased significantly compared to the previous situation, and is more actively integrated and, in terms of the breadth and depth of cooperation, has greatly improved. Although some differences between the United States and India on the Indo-Pacific Strategy still exist, India has changed its previous position

and embraced the strategic and institutional choices provided by the United States. For example, the Modi government not only declared that India should leverage the strengths of leadership in the Quad but also put forward that the Quad should expand new areas of cooperation such as medicine, technology, and the economy. These Indian initiatives have received positive responses from the other three countries, which also shows that the Indo-Pacific Strategy is no longer a product of the United States' complete leadership, and its implementation must take into account India's interests and discourse power.

4.2. Reorientation of India's Bilateral or Multilateral Relationships under the Indo-Pacific Strategy

India's changing strategic role in the US Indo-Pacific Strategy affects the assessment of its current geopolitical competitive advantage in the Indo-Pacific region and the future repositioning of its multiple relationships with other key countries, international organisations and multilateral cooperation platforms in the region. Changing relations with China, the US and the Quartet are key considerations driving the Indian government to reposition its Indo-Pacific bilateral and multilateral relations. Deadlocked and estranged China-Indian relations

China-Indian relations are the most important pair of major power relations in the Indo-Pacific region, but the development situation is full of twists and turns, which are mainly caused by three major factors. First, the factor of border disputes, which is mainly due to the different concepts of the Chinese and Indian governments on the demarcation of the border line, has been the cause of many border firefights between the two countries. Second, the factors of geo-security, which are reflected in the increasingly close all-around cooperation between China and Pakistan, India believes that China's continuous provision of low-interest loans, military equipment and infrastructure construction assistance to Pakistan will threaten India's national security. Third, economic factors, during the two governments of India, Singh and Modi, China, which has developed into a major manufacturing country, has long been in a superior position in trade with India, which has seriously damaged the economic interests of India, which is still in the stage of industrialization. Based on the above situation, India has repositioned China-India relations, viewing that the objective rivalry between China and India will persist, so the relationship between the two countries can only be a long-term stalemate and estrangement.

4.2.1. Closer U.S.-India Relations under Strategic Autonomy

Since Obama took office in 2009, the US and India have gradually formed a selective strategic partnership based on complementary interests, reaching consensus to contain China's growing power and international influence. The rapid development of China's comprehensive national strength in the past decade has made this strategic consensus between the United States and India continue to expand [14]. Therefore, starting from the theory of realism, as long as China's power in the Indo-Pacific region continues to increase, India will continue to insist on seeking closer U.S.-India cooperation within the framework of strategic autonomy in order to seek to narrow the gap in China's power share in the region.

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From another point of view, the United States and India do not have the same reasons for this closer cooperation between the two countries. Specifically, India wants to strengthen its cooperation with the United States in moving away from economic dependence on China., transferring technology, sharing intelligence, and to use the power of the "Offshore Balancer" (the United States) to expel "Chinese power" from the Indian Ocean region, Central Asia and Southeast Asia to achieve India's great power ambitions [15]. The United States hopes to tie India more closely to its chariot by

establishing a closer U.S.-India relationship, using some of its military and financial assistance and exerting the strategic enthusiasm of its Indo-Pacific allies, to ultimately achieve the goal of containing China as a regional leader.

Under such circumstances, the United States and India have unanimously recognized China as the main source of strategic threats, and future cooperation between the two countries will mainly focus on two major areas. First of all, military cooperation is the most important area, including signing military agreements; large-scale arms sales to India; increasing the frequency of military exercises; and achieving mutual visits by senior military officials. The second is the political and diplomatic fields, mainly including the construction of the Quad and the launch of IPEF. The U.S. and India have high expectations in this area, which is a key element of the Indo-Pacific strategy and a key driver for closer cooperation and bilateral relations between the US and India.

4.2.2. Selective Development of Multilateral Relations

In any case, India's strong belief in world power and the principle of strategic autonomy means that it will not fully fall to the United States and its alliance. However, India will develop closer relations with the United States to prevent itself from being controlled by the Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States and seek to maximize the interests of the Eastward Strategy. Therefore, India must maintain a certain degree of contact with international organizations and multilateral cooperation platforms in the region, in addition to carrying out political games with many vital countries like Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific region, and selectively develop multilateral relations with India based on its national interests.

Over the past decade, as competition between China and the United States has become increasingly fierce, more and more undersized and medium-sized countries have flexibly opted for "wall-riding strategies" the number of international organizations and multilateral cooperation platforms established by key countries in the Indo-Pacific region has also increased considerably. For example, the Belt and Road Initiative and AIIB were initiated by China; the Quad, IPEF and Blue Dot Network were initiated by the United States; Southeast Asian countries led ASEAN and RCEP, and Japan led CPTTP [16]. However, India only chose to participate in the Quad and IPEF, which indicates that India will still choose to participate in political and military security rather than international economic organizations or multilateral cooperation platforms in the Indo-Pacific for a long time.

There are two main reasons why India has taken such a position in multilateral relations. First, for economic reasons, India's economic and industrial development level is low, the manufacturing industry ranks low, and the market mechanism is immature. Under such conditions, if India rushes to join international organizations such as RCEP and CPTTP, its domestic economy must be bound by organizational rules, such as reducing domestic tariff and non-tariff barriers and implementing reforms of mature market mechanisms adapted to the world, which is easily opposed by domestic industrial and commercial monopoly giants and small traders. For example, the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party attack each other; the revitalization of politics is becoming more and more obvious; business interest groups frequently interfere in the political situation, and the government's corruption problem is getting worse, all of which have led to India's inability to actively integrate into large-scale comprehensive multilateral economic organizations in the Indo-Pacific region and its inability to provide a good and stable political environment for the introduction of foreign investment.

Based on this situation, India can only make selective positioning trade-offs in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, that is, avoid multilateral organizations of an economic nature and prefer multilateral organizations of political and military security. At the same time, given the long-standing strategic rivalry between China and the United States and the volatility of Sino-Indian relations, coupled with the fact that IPEF still has no actual progress, India will rely strategically on the Quad that has made

substantial progress and build its own small multilateral and small bilateral cooperation mechanisms in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy.

5. Constraints to India's Strategic Role

Whether from positioning the American Indo-Pacific Strategy or its geopolitical location, India is of great strategic importance. Still, compared to the American Asia-Pacific allies, such as Australia and Japan, India does not seem to play an undeniable role in the strategy. In addition to India's deliberate balancing of its relations with China, the U.S., and Russia, it also has important implications for India's domestic and international environment.

5.1. The Complex Domestic Environment in India

National capacity is the government's ability to effectively control and use all social, political, economic and military resources. So that the state is constituted as a unified whole in its foreign policy. Peter Evans believes that national capacity is a country's "ability to achieve specific goals, not just to respond to the needs or interests of a particular group, class or society in the country." [17]. According to Chinese scholar Qingji Huang, state capacity is "the overall performance of the state in accumulating resources from society and transforming them into a force that can be applied to meet the competition and challenges of other countries" [18]. India's lack of national capacity and the weakness of the central government have always been the main constraints to India's performance as a "great power" in the international community.

One of the most prominent problems in India is the deep division of society, not only how the caste system divides caste groups, but also the irreconcilable contradiction between race and religious beliefs. The caste system has been an insurmountable constraint to the development of Indian society, as it has the most rigid hierarchy in the world. It has not only affected the election of political parties and the functioning of the government. However, it has also led to a deeply divided society: the creation of separate caste groups and the awakening of lower caste groups has led to increased social conflict, which has seriously affected the integration of Indian society and the government's ability to govern. It has seriously affected the integration of Indian society and the government's ability to govern.

In addition, there are many different religions and ethnic groups in India, and the different communities bring with them vast differences in habits. Different religious beliefs have led to a long-standing and fragmented system of local governance in India, which has caused a serious fragmentation of Indian society and greatly weakening the central government's power. This deficiency in state capacity will largely limit the Indian central government's ability to draw on social resources and will be a shortcoming in India's overall national strength and its role in the framework of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

At the economic level, India's economy has long been focused on high-tech industries and services, and although it has created the legendary "Indian model" of economic development, its de-industrialization has caused serious systemic problems. Although the Modi government has vigorously pursued economic reforms since coming to power, the process of industrialization has been severely hampered by the strength of domestic interest groups: land reform has been restricted by "landlord" groups, strong trade unions have hampered labor reform in various sectors, and national industrial consolidation has been hampered by the political operation of "small factory owners," the political operation of which made it difficult to change the long-standing inefficiency and competitiveness of small-scale production. The presence of powerful interest groups not only makes it difficult for the government to implement industrialization policies, limiting the competitiveness and development potential of Indian industry but also hinders the spontaneous regulation of the

market, making it difficult for India to make substantial progress on the path to industrialization despite its good resource endowment and highly qualified human resources. Furthermore, in the process of participating in the "Indo-Pacific economy" framework, India's weak agricultural and industrial competitiveness has led to a strong "protectionist" national economic policy. It severely limits its initiative to develop economic cooperation within the framework of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, which also has severely limited its "substitution effect" on China in the region.

5.2. India's Conflicting Diplomatic Strategies

In addition to the strategic balance between the United States and China, India's participation is restrained by its relationship with Russia in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. India and Russia developed a "strategic partnership" during the Cold War, and India has long received significant military assistance and technology transfers from Russia, with most of its active weapons coming from military orders from Russia. The unique partnership with Russia has become essential to US-India security and defence cooperation. To prevent India from buying Russian-made S-400 air defence systems, the Biden administration proposed to impose sanctions on India through the "Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act." According to a report on the Indian Defense News website, India's \$5.43 billion purchase of Russian S-400 air defence systems would present a severe obstacle to closer political and military ties between the U.S. and India [19]. Instead of joining other U.S. allies in sanctioning Russia after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India voted against the condemnation of Russian military action at the U.N. General Assembly. It imported large amounts of oil from Russia, among other actions, all of which seriously affected strategic cooperation between the U.S. and India.

Secondly, the Indo-Pakistani relationship has also affected India's influence in the Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific) region. On the one hand, the special relationship between Pakistan, China, and the U.S. has profound implications for India's strategic security. While China's close relationship with Pakistan has put India under intense geopolitical pressure, forcing India to choose political and security proximity to the U.S., the U.S. "swing tactics" between India and Pakistan are eroding the strategic trust between the U.S. and India, increasing India's sense of insecurity. On the other hand, the fact that Pakistan is already nuclear-armed and the "security dilemma" that has developed over time between India and Pakistan (either side increasing its military capabilities would create a great deal of insecurity for the other). This fact makes it difficult for India to make a significant breakthrough in its existing military capabilities and thus limits the possibilities for India to become a more important player in the military framework of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Moreover, India's foreign policy has long faced a mismatch between ends and means. Traditional realism defines state power as the ultimate goal of the state's foreign policy, and the status of 'great power' is only a means of maintaining state power and interests. However, in India's foreign policy, the pursuit of international recognition of its "great power" status is an important objective, especially India's desire to be on an equal footing with China and the United States and to avoid being classified as the same type of country as Pakistan. In this quest for 'great power' status, India is unwilling to become a 'pawn' of the U.S. in its efforts to counterbalance China and a subordinate to the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and will not cooperate in all aspects of U.S. policy. Considering the above will also result in India's limited role in the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Key Findings

This paper is inspired by reading the literature on the Indo-Pacific Strategy by relevant scholars in recent years. In the course of its research, the paper finds that in the process of shifting from the

"Asia-Pacific Rebalancing" strategy to the "Indo-Pacific Strategy", US policy in the region has shifted from a vision based on the old cooperation mechanism to a strategic structure with overlapping political, economic, military and security policies and a "multi-pronged approach". In the process of transforming the U.S. policy in the region from a vision based on old cooperation mechanisms to a largely complete strategic architecture with overlapping political, economic, military and security policies and a "multi-pronged" approach. On the one hand, India has opted for a more pro-US foreign policy, playing an active strategic role in the US Indo-Pacific framework. On the other hand, India's complex national circumstances and multilateral relations limit its strategic role.

6.2. Future Outlook

Based on the truth that the US-China strategic rivalry stands growing, the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and India's involvement will be permanent. India may adopt a more aggressive and confrontational stance toward China regarding its economy (especially in the supply chain), geopolitics, military security (especially in the North area of the South China Sea), ideology, and values. The U.S. is also interested in shaping India as a regional power that can counterbalance China, thus forming a small circle at the regional level with India as the center of the circle and "crowding out" China.

However, India has not yet become a formal "ally" of the U.S. government, and its participation in the Indo-Pacific Strategy lacks enthusiasm and strength. Moreover, India's role in U.S. Indo-Pacific policy will be primarily limited as it struggles to find a balance between China and the U.S., the impact of India's complex multilateral relations with Russia and Pakistan, and the constraints of India's independent public policy and its pursuit of great power status.

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