

Evolving Maritime Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific

Authors : Pragya Pandey

Abstract : A major discussion in the 21st -century international affairs has been around the shifting economic and political center of gravity to Asia. In the maritime realm, it translates into a shift in focus from the Atlantic to the Pacific-Indian Ocean region or what is now popularly called the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific is rapidly eclipsing once dominant Asia-Pacific as center of trade, investment, competition and cooperation. The growing inter-connectivity between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean is bringing forth the 'confluence of the two seas'. Therefore, the Indo-Pacific strategic arc is acquiring greater salience in consonance with the changing realities of the time. The region is undergoing unprecedented transformation in its security outlook. At present, the region is at an interesting historic epoch- witnessing the simultaneous rise India and China, their economic growth, naval modernization and power projection capabilities, alongside the continued presence of the United States, particularly with its rebalancing strategy. Besides the interplay among the three major stakeholders, other regional players like Japan, Australia, and Indonesia, would play a crucial role in the geopolitical re-arrangement of the Indo-Pacific region. The region will be the future theater of activities to determine the shifts and distribution of sea power, by the virtue of its strategic location, intrinsic value of the energy resources and significant maritime trade routes of the region. Therefore, the central theme of the paper would be to scrutinize the maritime security environment of the region against the backdrop of the tricky geopolitical landscape, contributing to the change in the regional and global balance of power.

Keywords : China, geopolitics, India, United States

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