*Russo-Indian Tryst with Emerging Regional Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific Region: Cooperation or Competition; and its further Implications (2010-2024)*

**Introduction:**

The India-Russia relationship can not be reduced to bilateral relations(Sullivan de Estrada, 2023). The decades-long relationship between the two has been the story of cooperation and competition at different stages and concerts of global politics. This proposed research aims to study Russo-Indian engagement in one of such concerts, Indo-Pacific.

With the passage of time and space, the meaning of the Indo-Pacific changed over time. The first use of the term in a geopolitical sense has been by Karl Haushofer in the 1920s (*Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean* (1924). The German geopolitician Karl Haushofer first used "Indo-Pacific" in the 1920s in multiple works on geography and geopolitics: Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean (1924), Building Blocks of Geopolitics (1928), Geopolitics of Pan-Ideas (1931), and German Cultural Politics in the Indo-Pacific Space (1939). Haushofer justified the integration of the two oceans based on evidence in marine biology, oceanography, ethnography, and historical philology. He envisioned an "Indo-Pacific" that included anti-colonial forces in India and China, which Germany could ally with to challenge the maritime dominance of Britain, the United States, and Western Europe. (Li, 2022)

The usage of the word Indo-Pacific started vigorously in policy-making in 2011. But the contemporary use of geopolitics began in August 2007, when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe delivered a speech to the Indian Parliament, in which he mentioned the "confluence" of the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a "dynamic coupling of seas of freedom and prosperity" in the context of a "broader Asia." Abe, Shinzo (2007). This speech focused on the security of sea lanes connecting the two oceans. The idea of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific was first expressed in a paper published by the Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in January 2007, following consultations between the IDSA and the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in New Delhi in October 2006(Khurana, 2007). Since 2010, the term "Indo-Pacific" has been frequently used by India's top political leaders, as well as strategic analysts and high-level government and military officials in Australia, Japan, and the United States, to refer to the region. The term was first officially documented in Australia's 2013 Defense White Paper and is associated with the

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal group of like-minded democracies in the region that includes Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

This research is significant because it addresses a critical gap in the existing literature on whether Russia and India cooperate or compete in the Indo-Pacific Region concerning regional security structure. The study's findings will contribute to the understanding of the strategic calculations of Russia and India in the region and shed light on the broader implications of their engagement for regional and global security.

**Review of Literature**

**The debate of Asia Pacific vs. Indo-Pacific.**

The debate over the Asia Pacific vs. Indo-Pacific is more than semantic and superficial differences. (Medcalf, 2018). How this region is named can impact, among other things, the regional security structure, cooperation, and competition among the dominant powers and even the diplomatic relations among the states (RORY MEDCALF, 2013).

According to sources like Koldunova (2019) and Trenin (2020), Russian policymakers are pretty familiar with the term "Asia-Pacific" but are uncertain about what precisely the term "Indo-Pacific" encompasses. This new concept has presented unique policy challenges, as illustrated by a speech given by Sergey Lavrov, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Lavrov described the Indo-Pacific region as "another artificially imposed construct." He went on to express a preference for calling it the Asia-Pacific Region (APR), which he argued has become the "driver of global growth" due to partnerships between countries with varying political and socio-economic systems (Mid.Ru, 2020).

The notion of an Indo-Pacific area encompasses acknowledging that the increasing economic, geopolitical, and security ties between the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean regions establish a unified "strategic system." Essentially, this refers to the power dynamics among different nations within a more extensive system, where changes in one part of the system can affect the others. Therefore, the Indo-Pacific can be seen as a maritime "super-region" based in Southeast Asia. (Buzan, 2003). This doesn't diminish the role of Asia; instead, it is a

a region with maritime Asia at its core.

The Russian policymakers view this region differently than dominant powers, including India. The foreign minister of Russia, Sergey Lavorov, stated that "the Indo-Pacific region is another

artificially imposed construct we preferred to call it Asia Pacific region which has become the driver of global growth and constructive partnership between the countries with different political and social economic systems.

Also, when Russian analysts speak about the Indo Pacific region, they emphasize Asia continental rather than Pacific Maritime dimensions (Lo 2019). Also, they consider the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, and France outsiders in Asian affairs (Lo 2019).

**The emerging Regional Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific Region**

In recent years, the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a critical hub for economic and strategic interests. With the region's growing importance, major powers like Russia and India are increasingly seeking to establish their presence and secure their interests in the area. As a result, understanding the nature of their engagement with the emerging security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region has become a crucial area of study.

The Indo-Pacific region is characterized by its complex geopolitical landscape and rapidly changing security environment. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on developing regional security architectures to address shared security challenges and maintain stability in the region. Some of the emerging regional security architectures in the Indo-Pacific region are:

1. The Quad: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or "Quad," is an informal grouping of like-minded democracies in the region comprising the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. It aims to promote a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific area, enhance regional connectivity, and address shared security challenges.

2. ASEAN-led architecture: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been a driving force in shaping the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific region. ASEAN-led regional forums, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asia Summit (EAS), provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation on security issues.

3. Bilateral and trilateral security partnerships: Many countries in the Indo-Pacific region have formed bilateral and trilateral security partnerships to address shared security challenges. For example, Japan has established trilateral security partnerships with the United States and Australia, and India has formed similar partnerships with the United States and Japan.

4. Maritime security cooperation: Given the importance of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, there has been a growing emphasis on developing cooperation among countries in areas such as maritime domain awareness, counter-piracy, and disaster response.

5. Economic and trade cooperation: Economic and trade cooperation can also contribute to regional security by promoting stability and prosperity. Initiatives such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) can potentially shape the economic and security landscape of the Indo-Pacific region.

6. AUKUS- India's relationship with the Quad has remained caveated, leading some US analysts to refer to India as the Quad's 'weakest link' (Grossman, 2018; Lee, 2021). To eliminate this weakness, the trio made an alliance called AUKUS. It is a trilateral security pact between Australia, UK, and USA. It has envisioned being a security community that does not seem to happen with India as a member.

7. India-led Security structure- India also developed regional security structures based on inclusiveness and striving for a respectable place in the Indo-Pacific region. (S. Jaishankar, 2020). The Indian-led structures such as SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) are based on inclusive and pluralistic values(S. Jaishankar, 2020). India prefers only those collective security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region that respects the code Norma of states and is the foremost priority. (Sullivan de Estrada, 2023)

8. Post-Russia-Ukraine War Structure- the recent Russia-Ukraine war is also impacting the security architecture in the region. (Gabuev, 2016; Korolev, 2016; Lukin, 2021). States are renegotiating and reformulating their policies towards Indo-Pacific after the outbreak of this war.

**Contesting Visions and Aspirations of Indo-Pacific Security Structure**

Apart from all the regional security architecture, QUAD has become dominant in the region. The Quad is a grouping of four Indo-Pacific democracies—Australia, India, Japan, and the United States—that reconvened in late 2017 following a failed effort to develop a cooperative grouping a decade earlier (Tow, 2019). But its effectiveness diminishes due to the ambiguity

and different visions and aspirations in the Indo-Pacific region among the QUAD and non-QUAD members. Even Russia and India, which seem to cooperate on other platforms, are not in tandem regarding the Indo-Pacific vision. Although India's Indo-Pacific strategy is not based on the principle of exclusion, Russia considers the latter as a western ally due to increasing depth of relations between USA and India. This can be substantiated by Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavorov's statement that the Indo-Pacific region is another artificially imposed construct. We prefer to call it the Asia Pacific region, which has become the driver of global growth and constructive partnership between countries with different political and social economic systems. Even the Russian academic communities prefer calling this region Asia (continental) rather than Pacific (maritime) dimensions (Lo, 2019). Therefore, they consider the United States, United Kingdom, and France outsiders in Asian affairs since they are not continentally linked with the region.

**India's approach towards Regional Security in the Indo-Pacific Region**

India indeed envisions security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region mainly to counter the growing presence of China in the area but against the strict security community being pushed by the other three QUAD members. India voices for free, open, and liberal Indo-Pacific region. According to Madan (2022), Indian officials have formally separated a particular exercise from the Quad. India has resisted the idea of the Quad being viewed as an alliance that engages in collective defense. It has also forbidden the offers from the United States to conduct patrols in the South China Sea to enforce freedom of navigation.

Additionally, India has continued to purchase Russian defense equipment, which hinders interoperability with Quad partners. It has asserted its desire to pursue an independent foreign policy, contrasting with the other Quad partners, particularly regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, India has presented its distinct ideas on how to provide security in the region. This shows that India is part of the QUAD yet has successfully pursued strategic autonomy in the region.

**Japan's approach towards Regional Security in the Indo-Pacific Region**

Japan considers Australia and India its primary security partners in the Indo-Pacific region, second only to the United States. However, the nature of the security relationships differs between the two alignments regarding the extent of institutionalization and depth of security cooperation (Atanassova-Cornelis, 2020).

The security partnership between Japan and India is based on the 2008 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, marking the third agreement between Japan and another country. In recent years, the two nations have increased bilateral naval exercises, defense engagements, and high-level security dialogues. In 2014, the relationship was elevated to a Special Strategic and Global Partnership, and a GSOMIA was signed. Additional agreements in 2018 included a ministerial-level 2+2 meeting and negotiations on an ACSA to enhance logistical interoperability between the two militaries. The bilateral military cooperation has previously focused on naval engagements but has expanded to include joint land and air exercises. While the security ties between Japan and India have deepened, their partnership has not reached the same level of policy coordination and military interoperability seen in Japan's defense cooperation with Australia. The primary focus of improving interoperability is joint naval exercises, as there are currently no substantial joint defense production agreements or technology transfers from Japan to India(Mukherjee, 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

The proposed study must be analyzed by multiple theoretical frameworks to understand comprehensively. It will be explored through the Realist school of thought, the Constructive approach, the Balance of Power theory, and the Security Dilemma theory.

Realism is a theoretical perspective that views states as the primary actors in the international system, where the pursuit of power, security, and national interests are paramount (Goodin, 2010). This perspective sees international politics as a constant struggle for power and security, where states use various tools to ensure their survival, such as alliances, military buildups, and economic cooperation. In the context of this research, the Realist perspective can be used to analyze the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region and their strategic calculations to ensure their power, security, and national interests.

The Security Dilemma theory, which is a subset of the Realist school of thought, argues that states' efforts to enhance their security can often lead to a security dilemma, where one state's efforts to increase its security can be perceived as a threat by another state, leading to a cycle of suspicion, mistrust, and arms race (Jervis, 1978). This theory can be applied to the research to examine how other regional and global actors perceive the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region and whether their engagement leads to a security dilemma in the region.

Furthermore, the concept of the emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific Region can be analyzed through the lens of the balance of power theory. The balance of power theory suggests that states will try to prevent any other form from becoming too powerful. This can lead to forming alliances, counter-alliances, and other measures to maintain the balance of power (Walt, Stephen, 1987). This theory can be used to examine the strategies adopted by different states, including Russia and India, to maintain the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The constructive approach, which is a social theory that asserts that significant aspects of international relations are shaped by ideational factors (which are historically and socially constructed) Wendt, (1999), not simply material factors, will be used to study India's construction of Indo-Pacific strategy as it claims to have historical and civilizational relationships with the region Tilak, (1903).

Overall, this theoretical framework based on Realism, Constructivism, Security Dilemma theory, and the balance of power theory will help to analyze the complex interplay between Russia and India in the Indo-Pacific Region and their engagement with the emerging regional security architecture.

**Definition, Rationale, and Scope of the Study**

**Indo-Pacific-** Geographically, it is a vast region connecting the Indian and Pacific oceans. But geopolitically, the emergence of a strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific can be attributed to two primary factors. Firstly, China's expanding presence throughout the region, the gradual weakening of the US-led alliance system, and its efforts to reassert itself.

**Regional Security Architecture**- An international or regional security architecture can be described as a system encompassing a set of norms, practices, relationships, alliances, and

institutions created or developed by nations to promote, improve or guarantee international and international and regional security. This architecture involves a range of strategies, policies, and mechanisms designed to manage and respond to various security challenges, including conflict, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber threats, and other emerging risks. An international or regional security architecture aims to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between nations, enhance transparency and confidence-building measures, and promote stability, peace, and security within and among nations.

**The rationale** of this research is to study the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and whether the two countries cooperate or compete in regional security architecture. The study will contribute to understanding the strategic calculations of Russia and India in the region and shed light on the broader implications of their engagement for regional and global security.

Indo-Pacific was first used in the 1920s by German geopolitician Karl Haushofer and gained significant attention in policy-making circles in 2011. Since then, India, Australia, Japan, and the United States have frequently used the term to refer to the region. However, there is a debate over the use of the time Asia-Pacific versus Indo-Pacific, which has implications for the regional security structure, cooperation and competition among dominant powers, and diplomatic relations among states.

Russian policymakers are familiar with the term Asia-Pacific but are uncertain about the time Indo-Pacific. Russian analysts view the region differently than the dominant powers, including India, and consider the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and France outsiders in Asian affairs.

The emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region is critical, and major powers are increasingly seeking to establish their presence and secure their interests in the area. The study will examine the nature of the Russo-Indian engagement in the region and how it will impact regional and global security.

Overall, the proposed research will address an important gap in the existing literature on the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and provide valuable insights into the strategic calculations of both countries.

**The scope** of the proposed study will cover the period from 2010 to 2024. It will be based on extensive research of relevant literature, policy documents, and interviews with experts in the field. The study's findings will contribute to understanding the strategic calculations of Russia and India in the region and their engagement in the emerging regional security architecture. The study will also shed light on the broader implications of their engagement for regional and global security.

## Research Problem/Question

The proposed study will answer the following research questions-

1.  To what extent are Russia and India cooperating or competing in the emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region, and what factors are driving their strategic choices?

2.  What are the emerging regional security architectures in the Indo-Pacific region post?

3.  What are the implications of the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region for regional and global security, and how can these implications be managed to promote stability and peace in the region?

4.  How has the meaning and usage of the term "Indo-Pacific" evolved over time, and how has this impacted regional security structure, cooperation and competition among the dominant powers, and diplomatic relations among the regional states?

5.  What are the differences in how Russian policymakers view the Indo-Pacific region compared to other dominant powers in the region, such as India, and how does this impact their engagement and strategic calculations in the region?

6.  How has the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal group of like-minded democracies in the Indo-Pacific region that includes Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, impacted Russia and India's engagement in the region?

7.  What role can regional organizations and institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), play in promoting cooperation and managing competition among major powers in the Indo-Pacific region?

8. What are the prospects for regional integration and economic development in the Indo-Pacific region, and how can Russia and India contribute to these efforts while balancing their security interests?

9. What are the potential risks and challenges associated with the emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region, and how can they be mitigated or addressed by major powers like Russia and India?

**Hypothesis**

1. The power dynamics will shape the emerging regional security architectures in the Indo-Pacific region among the dominant players, including the United States, China, Japan, India, and Russia.

2. Regional organizations and institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Indian Ocean Rim Association, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, can be crucial in promoting cooperation and managing competition among non-QUAD members in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Research Methods:**

**Research Philosophy**:

The research philosophy adopted for this study is interpretivism, which recognizes that social phenomena are subjective and multi-dimensional, shaped by the perceptions and experiences of individuals and groups. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the meanings individuals and groups attach to their actions and decisions and the contextual factors that influence these meanings.

**Research Approach**:

The research approach for this study is qualitative, as it seeks to explore and understand complex social phenomena such as cooperation and competition in the Indo-Pacific region and their implications for regional and global security. Qualitative research is well-suited for investigating such phenomena, as it allows for in-depth exploration of individuals' and groups' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences and the broader social, political, and economic contexts that shape these phenomena.

**Research Strategy:**

The research strategy for this study is a case study approach, as it allows for the in-depth exploration of multiple cases (Russia and India) and the development of rich, nuanced accounts of their strategic choices, motivations, and implications for regional and global security. The case study approach also allows for the identification of similarities and differences between the two cases and the broader regional and international trends shaping the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific region.

**Time Horizon**:

The time horizon for this study is from 2010 to 2024, as this period marks a significant shift in the regional security landscape of the Indo-Pacific region, with the rise of China as a substantial power and the increasing strategic competition among the dominant forces in the region.

**Research Techniques and Procedures**:

The research techniques and procedures for this study will involve the following steps:

**Literature Review:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on the Russo-Indian tryst with emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region and the broader regional and global trends shaping this landscape.

**Sample Size:**

The sample size for this study will be determined through purposive sampling, as the aim is to select participants who have direct or indirect involvement in the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. The sample size will depend on the availability and accessibility of the participants, but it is expected to be between 30-40 participants.

**Data Collection:** This study's data collection methods will include primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with key policymakers, experts, and academics from Russia and India, as well as other regional powers such as China, Japan, and the United States. Secondary data sources include academic literature, government reports, and media.

**Validity and Reliability:**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, triangulation will be employed by using multiple sources of data and perspectives. Additionally, member checking and peer debriefing will be conducted to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

**Data Analysis:** The data analysis for this study will be conducted through thematic analysis, as it aims to identify patterns and themes within the data to answer the research questions. The analysis will involve coding the data, categorizing the codes into themes, and interpreting the findings.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**: Final findings will be drawn with conclusions from the study, highlighting the main findings and their implications and providing recommendations for managing the implications of the Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region to promote stability and peace in the region.

**Ethical Considerations:**

This study will adhere to ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and minimizing harm to participants. The study will also follow ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects.

**Tentative Chapters**

**Chapter 1: Introduction: This chapter will provide an overview of the research topic and its significance. The sub-topics would be-**

   a) Background and context of the study
   b) Purpose and significance of the study
   c) Research questions and objectives
   d) Scope and limitations of the study
   e) Overview of the chapters

**Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

This chapter will critically examine the existing literature on the Indo-Pacific region, specifically focusing on Russo-Indian engagement in the region. The chapter will analyze the theoretical

frameworks and concepts relevant to the research questions, such as regional security architectures, strategic choices, cooperation, and competition.

The subtopics of this chapter would be-

a) Historical background of Russo-Indian engagement in the region
b) Review of the current security challenges and risks in the region
c) Overview of major powers' policies towards the Indo-Pacific region

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology:**

**This chapter will discuss the following in detail-**

a) Research philosophy and approach
b) Research design and strategy
c) Data collection and sources
d) Sampling techniques and sample size
e) Data analysis and interpretation

**Chapter 4: Russo-Indian Cooperation and Competition in the Emerging Regional Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific Region:**

This would include the following-

a) Overview of Russo-Indian strategic partnership
b) Examination of cooperation and competition between Russia and India in the region
c) Analysis of factors driving strategic choices of Russia and India in the region

**Chapter 5: Emerging Regional Security Architectures in the Indo-Pacific Region**

This chapter will examine the emerging regional security architectures in the Indo-Pacific region, including the factors that have contributed to their development. The chapter will analyze the role of Russia and India in shaping these architectures and their strategic choices. The subtopics would be-

a) Overview of regional security architectures in the Indo-Pacific region

b) Analysis of the implications of the evolving security architecture on regional and global security

c) Examination of the role of major powers in shaping the emerging security architecture in the region

**Chapter 6: Implications of Russo-Indian Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region**

This chapter will explore the implications of Russo-Indian engagement in the Indo-Pacific region for regional and global security. The chapter will analyze how the implications of this engagement can be managed to promote stability and peace in the region.

**Chapter 7: Differences in Views and Strategic Calculations of Russia and India in the Indo-Pacific**

This chapter will analyze the differences in how Russian policymakers view the Indo-Pacific region compared to other dominant powers in the region, such as India, and how this impacts their engagement and strategic calculations in the region.

**Chapter 8: Impact of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue on Russo-Indian Engagement in the Indo-Pacific**

This chapter will examine how the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal group of like-minded democracies in the Indo-Pacific region, including Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, has impacted Russia and India's engagement in the region.

**Chapter 9: Role of Regional Organizations and Institutions in Promoting Cooperation and Managing Competition**

This chapter will analyze the role of regional organizations and institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in promoting cooperation and managing competition among major powers in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Chapter 10: Prospects for Regional Integration and Economic Development in the Indo-Pacific**

This chapter will explore the prospects for regional integration and economic development in the Indo-Pacific region and how Russia and India can contribute to these efforts while balancing their security interests.

**Chapter 11: Mitigating Risks and Addressing Challenges Associated with Emerging Regional Security Architecture**

This chapter will analyze the potential risks and challenges associated with the emerging regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region and how significant powers like Russia and India can mitigate or address them.

**Chapter 12: Conclusion**

This chapter will summarize the study's main findings, highlight their implications, and provide recommendations for future research.

Appendices

List of Abbreviations

Glossary of Terms

Map of the Indo-Pacific Region

List of Interviews and Participants

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