

BOOK REVIEW

Indo-Pacific Strategies: Navigating Geopolitics at the Dawn of a New Age, ed. Brendon J. Cannon and Kei Hakata. New York: Routledge, 2021, 270 pp.

Indo-Pacific Strategies is a highly readable edited collection that addresses the complexities of the Indo-Pacific arena, China's efforts to assert dominance in the region, and the United States' and partner nations' efforts to compete against potential or perceived threats from China. Brendon Cannon is an assistant professor of international security at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and coeditor of *Conflict and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* (2020). His research focuses on international relations and geopolitics. Kei Hakata serves as a professor at Seikei University, Japan. He previously served in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Professor Hakata's experience and areas of expertise encompass international politics, security affairs, and Japanese relations with Africa. This edited collection immediately catches attention with a foreword from the late Abe Shinzō, former Prime Minister of Japan. Several contributors, such as academicians, research fellows, and other experts, also aided on various topics, widening the readers' perspective and making this book more enjoyable.

The publication examines and defines the Indo-Pacific theater as a social construct where geographical boundaries blur. It presents a complex web of alliances, trade, and political-military issues that pose geopolitical challenges for all nations with interests in the region. This book enriches readers' understanding of China as a significant Indo-Pacific player and emphasizes the importance of effective global power competition. Moreover, *Indo-Pacific Strategies* investigates key Chinese initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as One Belt One Road (OBOR), and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The essays illustrate that China operates with the strategic objective of earning the backing of the nation-states Beijing supports. Furthermore, the BRI's infrastructure investments often result in countries becoming indelibly linked to China (often politically) due to financial indebtedness.

Remarkably, *Indo-Pacific Strategies* focuses on alternatives to counter China's expansion and spheres of influence. The book weighs the roles of the Indo-Pacific lynchpins, specifically the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), the diplomatic partnership among Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. A careful examination of China and other relevant Indo-Pacific players highlights the Quad as a viable mechanism to dissuade China from becoming the lead global power. The publication also examines the Quad's foreign policies and strategies, juxtaposing the theoretical paradigms of a *Pax Americana* or *Pax Sinica* in the Indo-Pacific, where either the United States or China will drive the peace and prosperity of the region.

Perhaps the two most valuable parts of this publication are the analyses of the United States' contemporary efforts to position itself in the Indo-Pacific region (Part II) and the historical evolution of China's foreign policy and its effects (Part III). Part II examines the policies and strategies of the Obama, Trump, and Biden presidencies. The research delves into continuities and discontinuities in the US government and military command structures. It also addresses enigmatic challenges associated with allocating resources and executing military operations supporting the vast Indo-Pacific geography. The authors contextualize the strategic value of reinforcing existing alliances and building new ones to counter China. Most importantly, this edited collection postulates a paradox where the United States increases power projection in the region, including deployments and increased military cooperation with partners, but neglects geographical areas like the Indian Ocean and does not transmit a clear message in terms of political commitment for military intervention if China invades Taiwan.

Part III focuses on China's foreign policy evolution, mapping its historical progression since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong's legacy, the transformations of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, and China's subsequent modern rise. It exposes a China that adopted a "hide one's capability" (keep a low profile) doctrine after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but then emerged with the announcement of a "peaceful rise" doctrine in 2003. This part also examines issues like the "Chinese Dream" foreign policy (no longer adopting a low profile and becoming a strong power), the "US Trade War," and the "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy (anyone who stands against China will pay the consequences). Part III concludes by discussing Xi Jinping's current foreign policy efforts, including his "strive for achievement" stance, revealing that China seeks political support from others; maritime control of the Yellow, East, and South China Seas; economic globalization; and technological transformation to achieve its strategic goals.

This publication significantly enhances scholarly discourse within the Asian Studies field. It stands out due to its profound insights and thorough analyses of regional cultural intricacies that scholars must understand when investigating Chinese policies and strategies. The descriptive essays offer ample historical context, enabling further comparative analyses to strengthen our knowledge of China as a major global competitor and its regional posture. Furthermore, this book contributes notably to Chinese historiography by expanding upon state-centric narratives and analyzing geopolitical dynamics. However, this edited collection falls short of addressing how societal factors and nonstate actors influence the development of Chinese foreign policy and military strategies. *Indo-Pacific Strategies* is indispensable for scholars engaged in strategic studies, international rela-

tions, and economics, providing valuable knowledge of the complexities of Chinese regional engagements.

Two recommended areas for improvement include evaluating its sources and monochromatic visual content. Although well-documented sources support each chapter, most references stem from speeches, transcripts, government documents, books, articles, and open sources. Consequently, the information could be accessed via the Internet, and the tradecraft utilized did not unveil groundbreaking research techniques. Second, the limited number of maps may inhibit visual learners from fully comprehending the arguments when examining complex historical background events, military strategies, foreign policies, trade nodes, and political issues. However, this book addresses valuable perspectives on global strategic studies that should be considered. *Indo-Pacific Strategies* certainly elevates the knowledge of any undergraduate scholar aspiring to appreciate how diplomacy, economics, and military strategy, combined with transregional challenges, will shape the international policy outlook of the next 50–100 years. 📖

Maj Gilberto “Gil” Sambolin Perez, USAF

Major Sambolin Perez is an instructor of history of modern warfare at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado.