

SCUSA 71 POLICY PAPER

Countering Revisionism: Strengthen and Preserve a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A hub of United States trade and the home of many treaty allies and partners, the Indo-Pacific faces threats from a lack of trust from partners in the region, a revisionist China, and rapidly changing demographics. It is the United States' responsibility as the leader of the free world to set the example in pursuing open and fair economic practices, global security, and a rules-based world order structured on liberal-democratic values.

SITUATION:

The Indo-Pacific is the most important region to US national interests. The region contains over half of the world's population, accounts for 60% of the global GDP, and receives a quarter of US exports. Four of the nation's top ten trading partners are Indo-Pacific nations (Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, 2019).

The Indo-Pacific is the world's most volatile region. The US faces China, a revisionist power, rogue states such as North Korea, and eroded trust among allies and partners. Rapidly shifting demographics and climate change further complicate the region (National Security Strategy, 2017).

The region requires strong US leadership. We must ensure regional security and stability, build opportunities for diverse economic growth, and promote the free and open rules-based values at the core of our republic (US Global Leadership Coalition, 2012).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Area 1: Pursuing a Rules-Based World Order

The US should enforce Freedom of Navigation in the South China Sea and increase US military presence in the region with the help of partner nations. These actions will enforce international law by recognizing international waters and airspace and supporting valid claims to UNCLOS, demonstrating the US does not recognize illegitimate claims in the region (UN General Assembly, 1982).

The US should continue to preserve democracy at home. We recognize that the US leads the free world by example. The health of our own democracy reflects on our foreign policy and impacts our credibility around the world (Freedom in the World, 2019).

The US should urge nations to seek resolution of migrant issues while respecting the rights of all groups. Regional stability and economic opportunity in the Indo-Pacific are threatened by the mass migration of refugees from climate and conflict. We advocate for the rules-based methods within the *2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*.

The US should lead the climate change effort by creating the Indo-Pacific Green Energy Coalition (IGEC), to collaborate with regional partners on clean-energy technology. A two-meter rise in sea level could displace around 180 million people, mostly in the Indo-Pacific, posing an existential security threat to US national security interests (Jakarta Post, 2019).

Area 2: Pursuing Free and Open Economics Practices

The US should join the TPP and incentivize our values. Our membership in the TPP will enable US firms to diversify their supply chains to our partners while decreasing China's

economic influence in the region. Additionally, the US should provide bilateral economic incentives for the implementation of policies that promote democratic values and human rights (National Review, 2018).

The US should increase in the Overseas Private Investment Corporation's (OPIC) capacity to assist and insure American companies' investments in strategic sectors. An expanded OPIC would lower the costs and risks for American companies investing in the Indo-Pacific. This would diversify American supply chains and act as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (OPIC, 2019).

The US should support regional partners' alternatives to the Belt and Road Initiative. For example, Japan and India's Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) provides an alternative to the BRI for developing nations (Brînza, 2018).

The US should increase instruction of Indo-Pacific language and culture, and exchange programs with regional partners. Such educational partnerships will promote regional familiarity, economic cooperation, and the spread of democratic values in the long term (Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, 2019).

Area 3: Ensuring Regional Security

The US should strengthen Japan-South Korea Relations: Japan and South Korea are both close allies, vital to the American economy and to countering revisionist powers like China and North Korea. We must push the two countries to seek better relations and to heal historical wounds by incorporating them in regional security and economic cooperation (Arrington, 2019).

The US should continue sanctions against North Korea and should seek to expand nonkinetic

options. The US should prosecute firms that break sanctions and expand our cyber capabilities to respond to aggression from a North Korean regime newly confident in its nuclear umbrella (Rosenberger & Johnson, 2019).

The US should foster dialogue between India and Pakistan and work to build stronger ties with India. Offering ourselves as a mediator is vital to minimize the possibility of conflict between the two nuclear-armed nations. We must also continue to seek ever-closer ties with India as a strategic counter to China (Wroughton, 2019).

The US should limit the spread of unreliable 5G network providers. The US should help to develop and direct partner nations toward more reliable suppliers from European and Korean technology companies, with the option of OPIC support (Fung, 2019).

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