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Indo-pacific strategy on Sagar an Indian approach and FOIP the global approach: An overview

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Abstract
The Indo-Pacific Strategy is a broad framework used by several countries and organizations, primarily the United States, India, Japan, and Australia, to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. This region, which spans from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, includes key global trade routes and is home to some of the world's most dynamic economies, including China, India, Japan, and Southeast Asia. The Key Components of the Indo-Pacific Strategy is Security and Defense Cooperation, Freedom of Navigation and Maritime Security: The strategy emphasizes freedom of navigation in key waterways, particularly the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, ensuring that international trade routes remain open and secure. Military Alliances: Strong emphasis on strengthening alliances like the Quad (U.S., India, Japan, and Australia) and new agreements like AUKUS (Australia, UK, U.S.). These aim to counter China's assertiveness and ensure regional security through joint military exercises, strategic dialogues, and defence cooperation. The present paper emphasis on Indo- Pacific strategy in SAGAR an Indian Approach and FOIP global approach on overview

Keywords: Psychiatric disorders, suicide, suicide attempt, first admission, recurrent admission

Introductions

- **Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):** Collaborative efforts between regional powers to track maritime activities and safeguard territorial integrity and sovereignty. The strategy supports an open, transparent, and rules-based trading system that is free from coercion and fair for all nations. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), promoted by the U.S., is aimed at improving supply chains, digital trade, and clean energy collaboration. Infrastructure Development: The Blue Dot Network, spearheaded by the U.S., Japan, and Australia, offers a transparent, high-quality alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), focusing on sustainable infrastructure projects in developing countries. Regional Economic Partnerships: Emphasizes free trade agreements (FTAs) and supports regional organizations like ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). (Brewster, D. 2015) [1].
- **Rule of Law and Human Rights:** Democracy and Governance: Promotes democratic values, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, focusing on freedom of speech, governance, and anti-corruption measures. Countering Authoritarianism: The strategy often positions itself as a counterbalance to China's authoritarian model, particularly in regions where China has been increasing its political and economic influence. Environmental Cooperation: Climate change is a significant aspect of the strategy, especially in countries like the Pacific Islands, which are vulnerable to rising sea levels. Countries like India, Australia, and Japan are collaborating on clean energy solutions, climate resilience, and marine conservation initiatives. Blue Economy: Promoting sustainable ocean resources for economic growth, food security, and environmental health.
- **Independence of Action:** Each country in the strategy maintains its strategic autonomy, meaning nations like India may pursue their own interests (e.g., through SAGAR), while also cooperating with other countries in the broader Indo-Pacific framework.
- **Balancing Power Dynamics:** The strategy aims to maintain a multipolar regional order, encouraging the participation of middle powers (e.g., South Korea, Vietnam) while managing the influence of (China. Collin, K. S. 2018) [2].

Countries and Key Players in the Indo-Pacific Strategy

- **United States:** The U.S. has been a major advocate of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, particularly since 2017 under the Trump administration, and continues to support it under the Biden administration. The U.S. emphasizes freedom of navigation, regional alliances, and economic partnerships while countering China's growing influence.
- **India:** India's Indo-Pacific Strategy emphasizes security cooperation, regional economic integration, and maritime stability. India has been a key partner in the Quad, and its own initiatives, like SAGAR and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), complement the broader strategy.
- **Japan:** Japan has been active in promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, focused on strengthening rule-based order, infrastructure development, and maritime security. Japan has invested heavily in regional infrastructure and is involved in maritime security initiatives to counter China's territorial claims in the East and South China Seas.
- **Australia:** Australia, as a member of the Quad and AUKUS, supports a rules-based Indo-Pacific order and focuses on strategic security, economic growth, and climate resilience. Australia is deeply involved in maritime security and regional economic initiatives.
- **China:** While not a formal part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and military presence in the region (especially in the South China Sea) are key points of concern for the Indo-Pacific Strategy, particularly in terms of regional competition and influence.

3. Challenges to the Indo-Pacific Strategy

China's Growing Influence: China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, its military build up, and the Belt and Road Initiative challenge the U.S. and its allies' vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Geopolitical Rivalries: India-China tensions, North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and territorial disputes complicate security dynamics in the region. Economic Competition: While the U.S. and its allies offer alternatives to China's BRI, they often lack the scale and speed of China's investments. Lack of Unified Strategy: Different countries have varying levels of commitment and interests, which can create inconsistencies in the implementation of the strategy. Environmental and Climate Challenges: The region's vulnerability to climate change (e.g., rising sea levels in the Pacific Islands) requires collective action that transcends political differences (Khurana, G. S 2008) [8],

Approach

Regional and cooperative: India engages with Indian Ocean nations (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, etc.), focuses on infrastructure, maritime security, connectivity works with ASEAN, Africa, and the Pacific Islands. Complements India's other initiatives like Project Mausam, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), and Blue Economy programs. (Chatterjee, A. 2014) [2].

That Could Limit SAGAR's Success

Limited Resources Compared to China

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) provides massive infrastructure investments, which some IOR nations prefer; India struggles to match China's economic and financial outreach;

Geopolitical Tensions in the Indian Ocean

China's growing naval presence (bases in Djibouti, Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port) challenges India's influence.
Rising instability in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Maldives affects regional cooperation.

Slow Implementation & Bureaucratic Hurdles

Infrastructure projects under SAGAR and Sagarmala face delays, funding issues, and policy roadblocks.
India's bureaucracy and political shifts could impact long-term commitment;

Competition from FOIP & Other Regional Strategies

The U.S.-led FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) and China's BRI both influence Indo-Pacific geopolitics;

ASEAN countries may prefer larger economic or military frameworks over India's SAGAR approach

The working of SAGAR: SAGAR working with limitations. SAGAR has strengthened India's leadership in the Indian Ocean, but challenges like China's influence, economic constraints, and regional instability could slow its progress. For success, India must:
Expand maritime infrastructure investments to compete with China. Strengthen naval security partnerships while maintaining strategic autonomy. Improve implementation speed of SAGAR-related projects (Hornat, J. (2015) [4].

Advantages and Disadvantages of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

SAGAR, introduced by Indian PM Narendra Modi in 2015, focuses on maritime security, regional economic growth, and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). While it has strong advantages, it also faces key challenges.

Advantages of SAGAR

1. **Strengthens India's Regional Influence:** Positions India as a key player in the Indian Ocean, countering external influences (China's Belt and Road Initiative);
   Builds stronger diplomatic and trade ties with Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Africa;
2. **Enhances Maritime Security:** Improves naval cooperation, anti-piracy efforts, and disaster relief operations. Strengthens partnerships with ASEAN, African nations, and Quad countries (U.S., Japan, Australia).

Supports freedom of navigation and rule of law (UNCLOS) in the Indian Ocean

- Promotes Economic Growth & Infrastructure Development: Invests in ports, connectivity, and the Blue Economy (fishing, marine resources, tourism);
- Initiatives like Sagarmala and Chabahar Port improve regional trade and connectivity. Provides an alternative to China's BRI, offering sustainable financing.
- Focus on Regional Cooperation (Non-Confrontational Approach): Unlike FOIP, SAGAR is not explicitly anti-China, allowing India to engage diplomatically with all countries. Encourages multilateralism and strategic autonomy.

Supports Climate Resilience & Sustainable Development
Focuses on disaster risk reduction, marine conservation, and sustainable fishing practices; and Aligns with India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (K.M. Pannikkar, 1951) [6]

Disadvantages of SAGAR

1. **Limited Financial & Infrastructure Capabilities**
   India lacks financial power to match China's massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) investments. SAGAR-related projects face funding shortages and slow implementation.
2. **Geopolitical Challenges & Regional Instability**
   China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean (bases in Djibouti, Hambantota, Gwadar) threatens India's dominance; Political instability in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Maldives complicates regional cooperation.
3. **Lack of a Strong Institutional Framework**
   Unlike ASEAN or NATO, SAGAR lacks a formal alliance or security agreement: No binding commitments, making cooperation voluntary and inconsistent.
4. **Competition from FOIP & Other Regional Strategies**: The U.S.-led FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) attracts more global attention;
   ASEAN and African nations may prefer China's BRI or FOIP's security umbrella.
5. Bureaucratic & Policy Challenges in India: Slow decision-making and bureaucratic red tape hinder infrastructure and trade projects; and Long delays in port development and connectivity projects reduce India's credibility.

Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)
The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) is a strategic vision emphasizing regional stability, economic prosperity, and freedom of navigation across the Indo-Pacific region—which includes the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. The concept was first formally introduced by Japan and later adopted by the United States and other democratic nations.

Origins and Evolution
Japan's Role (2007 & 2016): The concept was first articulated by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 in his speech to the Indian Parliament titled *"Confluence of the Two Seas."* In 2016, Japan officially launched the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) as a framework for regional cooperation. 2. United States' Adoption (2017). The Trump administration formally adopted FOIP in 2017 as part of U.S. foreign policy. The Biden administration continues to support FOIP but with a greater focus on alliances, economic partnerships, and environmental challenges (Jaishankar, D. 2016) [5],

Principles of FOIP

- Freedom of Navigation & Rule of Law
- Ensuring that international waters remain open for trade and security.
- Opposing any unilateral attempts to alter the status quo (e.g., China's actions in the South China Sea).
- Economic Prosperity & Connectivity
- Supporting infrastructure projects (e.g., Blue Dot Network as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative).
- Encouraging free trade and investment under transparent and fair rules.
- Peace & Security Cooperation
- Strengthening alliances (e.g., Quad Alliance: U.S., Japan, India, Australia).
- Enhancing defense cooperation and maritime security.
- Respect for Sovereignty & International Law
- Promoting ASEAN centrality and upholding international norms like UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

Challenges and Opportunities of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)
The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy presents both challenges and opportunities for regional and global stakeholders. While it promotes economic prosperity, security, and the rule of law, it also faces significant geopolitical and economic hurdles.

Challenges to FOIP

1. China's Growing Influence & Assertiveness;
   South China Sea Disputes: China's militarization of artificial islands and territorial claims challenge freedom of navigation;
   Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): China's infrastructure investments create economic dependencies that may counter FOIP principles;
   Taiwan Strait Tensions: Increased military activity raises concerns about stability;
2. Diverging Interests Among Regional Partners:
   ASEAN's Balancing Act: Southeast Asian nations rely on China for trade but support FOIP's security goals, leading to policy ambiguity;
   India's Cautious Engagement: While a key FOIP partner, India prioritizes strategic autonomy and is careful about deep U.S. alignment;
   Europe's Unclear Commitment: The EU supports FOIP but has limited military involvement in the region;
3. Economic and Infrastructure Competition:
   FOIP lacks a structured economic framework like China's BRI;
   The Blue Dot Network (U.S.-Japan-Australia) aims to counter BRI but is still in early stages;
   Developing nations may find Chinese investments more attractive due to immediate funding and fewer conditions;
4. Security and Military Challenges:
   Naval Military Build-Up: China, India, and regional players are increasing military capabilities, raising risks of conflicts;
   Maritime Piracy & Cyber Threats: Growing cybersecurity risks and piracy in the Indo-Pacific add security concerns;
   North Korea's Unpredictability: Missile tests and nuclear ambitions add complexity to regional security;
5. Lack of Institutional Framework:
   Unlike NATO or ASEAN, FOIP lacks a formal governing body for decision-making; and
   No clear economic or security treaty binds participants together;

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP): The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy has both strengths and weaknesses,

depending on how effectively it is implemented. Below is a balanced analysis of its

Advantages of FOIP

1. **Ensures Freedom of Navigation & Maritime Security:** FOIP promotes free trade and safe sea routes, preventing any single nation from dominating crucial waterways;
   It strengthens naval cooperation through joint military exercises (Quad, AUKUS, ASEAN), enhancing regional security.
2. **Provides an Economic Alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** FOIP-backed initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and Blue Dot Network offer investment alternatives;
   Encourages transparent infrastructure financing to counter China's debt-trap diplomacy in developing nations.
3. **Strengthens Regional Alliances & Defence** Cooperation. Quad (U.S., Japan, India, and Australia) and AUKUS (Australia, UK, and U.S.) improve military readiness and regional deterrence;
   Enhances maritime security cooperation with ASEAN, the EU, and Pacific Island nations.
4. **Supports Rule of Law & Democratic Values:** FOIP emphasizes sovereignty, international law (UNCLOS), and democratic governance. Strengthens diplomatic ties with countries that share these values, like Japan, India, Australia, and the EU;
5. **Encourages Supply Chain Resilience & Economic Growth:** Reduces dependency on China by promoting alternative supply chains in key sectors like semiconductors and rare earth materials; and Encourages fair trade agreements and infrastructure development in Indo-Pacific countries

Disadvantages of FOIP

1. **Lacks a Clear Institutional Framework:** Unlike NATO or ASEAN, FOIP is not a formal treaty or organization, making coordination difficult;
   No binding commitments mean that countries can change their level of participation based on national interests.
2. **Risk of Geopolitical Tensions with China:** FOIP is often seen as an effort to counter China's influence, leading to diplomatic and military tensions;
   China has responded with aggressive military posturing in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait
3. **Economic Challenges & Funding Gaps:** FOIP countries struggle to match China's massive infrastructure investments under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Developing nations may prefer Chinese investments, which often come with fewer conditions compared to Western-backed projects;
4. **Diverging Interests among FOIP Members:** India prefers strategic autonomy, limiting deeper military cooperation; ASEAN countries are cautious, as they rely on both China and FOIP nations for economic growth; Europe's role is unclear, with the EU balancing economic ties with China and strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific.
5. **Possibility of Military Conflicts:** Increased military presence in the Indo-Pacific raises the risk of clashes between FOIP members and China; and Taiwan, South China Sea, and North Korea remain flashpoints that could escalate into regional conflicts (Scott, D. 2013) [14-15],

Difference between SAGAR and FOIP

Both SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) are strategic frameworks focusing on the Indo-Pacific region, but they have different origins, objectives, and approaches (Singh, S. 2018) [17]

Table 1: Differences between SAGAR and FOIP

Feature	SAGAR (India)	FOIP (U.S., Japan, India, Australia, EU, ASEAN)
Origin	India (2015, PM Modi)	Japan (2007, Shinzo Abe); U.S. adopted in 2017
Geographic Focus	Indian Ocean Region (IOR)	Entire Indo-Pacific (Indian + Pacific Oceans)
Main Goal	Regional security, economic growth & sustainable development	Ensuring a rules-based order, countering China's influence
Approach	Cooperative & development-focused	Strategic & security-driven
Security Aspect	Maritime security, disaster relief, regional stability	Military alliances (Quad, AUKUS), countering China's military expansion
Economic Focus	Blue Economy, connectivity, regional trade	Supply chain resilience, alternative infrastructure to BRI
Key Partners	Indian Ocean nations (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Africa, ASEAN)	U.S., Japan, Australia, ASEAN, European Union, Pacific Islands

Source: Relationship between SAGAR & FOIP

Table 2: Comparisons Based on Key Factors

Factor	SAGAR (India)	FOIP (U.S., Japan, India, Australia, etc.)
Geographic Scope	Indian Ocean Region (IOR)	Entire Indo-Pacific (Indian + Pacific Oceans)
Primary Focus	Economic growth, regional development, maritime security	Strategic balance, freedom of navigation, countering China
Security Approach	Cooperative, focuses on local maritime security	Military alliances (Quad, AUKUS), naval operations
Economic Focus	Blue Economy, trade, connectivity, sustainable development	Alternative to China's BRI, supply chain resilience
Main Supporters	Indian Ocean nations (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, ASEAN, Africa)	U.S., Japan, Australia, India, ASEAN, European Union
China's Role	Neutral, seeks cooperation where possible	Strategic counterbalance to China's expansion
Institutional Framework	Led by India, flexible engagement	Multilateral approach (Quad, IPEF, ASEAN partnerships)

Limitations

Limited global reach Focuses only on the Indian Ocean and lacks wider Indo-Pacific engagement. Less military deterrence cannot counter security threats alone without

partnerships like FOIP.

- May escalate geopolitical tensions Perceived as anti-China, increasing risks of confrontation.
- Less focus on local economic needs more security-driven, with limited direct benefits for small nations.
- Fragmented approach No binding agreement or common economic framework like China's BRI (Mann, B. S. 2017) [9].

Conclusion

The Indo-Pacific Strategy holds significant promise in promoting a free, open, and inclusive regional order but faces considerable challenges in implementation. Its success depends on cooperation among regional powers, managing tensions with China, and balancing economic, security, and environmental concerns. The Quad, IPEF, and AUKUS are key pillars, but regional diversity may require tailored solutions for different countries. In the broader framework of the Indo-Pacific region, both SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) offer distinct yet complementary approaches to promoting stability, security, and prosperity. SAGAR represents India's regionally focused strategy aimed at fostering economic growth, maritime security, and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It emphasizes cooperative partnerships, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth, prioritizing regional sovereignty and non-confrontational diplomacy. SAGAR positions India as a leading player in the Indian Ocean, addressing regional challenges through initiatives like the Blue Economy, port development, and disaster relief, while balancing China's growing influence through strategic autonomy. On the other hand, FOIP is a broader global strategy, promoted by countries like the United States, Japan, Australia, and India, aimed at ensuring a free, open, and rules-based order across the entire Indo-Pacific region. It addresses security concerns, freedom of navigation, countering China's territorial expansion, and promoting global economic partnerships. FOIP focuses on strengthening multilateral alliances (e.g., the Quad, AUKUS), enhancing maritime security, and ensuring a fair trade environment across both the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Uthaya Suriyan. R, 2024) [18]

In essence, SAGAR is India's regional approach, deeply rooted in the Indian Ocean and emphasizing cooperation, security, and sustainable growth within the region. In contrast, FOIP provides a global framework that brings together multiple powers to counter geopolitical challenges and secure a free and open Indo-Pacific. While both strategies have distinct focuses, their synergy can strengthen the overall vision of a secure, prosperous, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, where regional cooperation under SAGAR complements global initiatives like FOIP, working together for a balanced and peaceful future.

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