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Thank you very much for having me here today. I participated in this conference online last year and I felt very lonely in my room a long way from Abu Dhabi, so I am very glad to finally be here today. In my five to seven minutes of comments, I would like to make a few points about the concept of the Indo-Pacific. The first point is about the three different kinds of concept that come to my mind. The second is about three different approaches based on three different concepts.

The first point is three different types of concept. I am not an expert on French painting, but I know there are three categories of painting. One is portrait painting, which is very clear, almost like a photograph. The second is Impressionist painting like Renoir and Manet, and I hope my French pronunciation is not too terrible, which is a bit vague. Third, there is the Pointillism of Georges Seurat, with dots on white canvas which lead to a very vague painting. Portrait, Impressionist and Pointillism are the three different concepts on the Indo-Pacific, and I support the Impressionist concept, which I will explain later.

The second point is a specific approach to the Indo-Pacific based on the three different kinds of concept. The first approach is a sharing interests approach, almost like putting a dot on a canvas, so almost like a Georges Seurat approach. Under this approach, every country can cooperate with each other as long as there is a shared interest, economic, political or security, and you do not care if they are a democracy, autocracy or whatever. For example, joint economic infrastructure projects in several other key areas could be a sharing interest project, so under this approach we cooperate with, for example, China or the Kingdom of Brunei, or Vietnam, a communist regime; it does not matter. The second level of the approach is Impressionist, that is a sharing norms approach, for example, sharing common norms means the rule of law, or freedom of navigation under the UNCLOS. Or if it is an economic infrastructure project, maybe sharing no common norms would be transparency or sustainability, governability, etc. Then, the highest and most difficult approach is the sharing values approach. Under this approach, likeminded countries that can share values, maybe from the Western point of view, the value of democracy, and will cooperate with each other and try to promote common values. I think to some extent the Biden administration has tried to adopt the sharing values approach but in this approach you cannot cooperate with potentially important partners, like Vietnam, because it is not a democracy, and obviously not with China.

For me, the best approach is sharing norms. The sharing interests approach is good and very comfortable, you can cooperate with everybody, including China and it leads to economic prosperity, but it does not create any order, just sharing interests. The sharing value approach is good but also cannot incorporate a lot of countries, so in-between sharing norms, freedom of navigation, the rule of law, transparency of infrastructure projects, sharing norms can be a reasonable approach. I think that is an approach I support and also the one that the Japanese



government is trying to promote. Under this, we can maybe also cooperate with China and ask China to accommodate UNCLOS in the South China Sea, etc. That is my comment, thank you.

Thierry de Montbrial, Founder and Executive Chairman of Ifri and the WPC

Thank you very much for your fundamentally impressionist approach to geopolitics. The problem, but maybe we will discuss that a bit later, is that sometimes when there is a real confrontation we have to make real choices.