

DEBATE

John Andrews, Author, journalist and contributing editor to *The Economist*

We only have 15 minutes left so we will go to questions.

Michel Foucher, member of the Center for Higher European Studies, Senior Advisor to the Compagnie Jacques Cœur

I have a question for Jean-Pierre Cabestan. As we understood from the panel, the Indo-Pacific is rather a floating concept but as far as I know, it is not used as such by Chinese diplomats and they even refuse to use it. What is the Chinese term for the same region, maybe the limits are not exactly the same, and what arguments are there for refusing the Indo-Pacific concept that came out of Japan?

Jean-Pierre Cabestan, Senior Researcher Emeritus at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) attached to the French Research Institute on East Asia (IFRAE) of the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations, Professor Emeritus at Hong Kong Baptist University

Thank you for the question. I did not mention it at the beginning, but as you said, China does not like the concept of the Indo-Pacific because it sees in it the intention to contain China. An alternative concept that China has proposed and uses is the Asia-Pacific region where China is in a much stronger position. The irony is that China is increasingly active in the Indian Ocean, now it has a base in Djibouti and seven or eight of its naval ships sail the Indian Ocean every day. India is also important to China because most of its oil comes from the Middle East or Africa, so even if it has tried to diversify its energy resources and import more [inaudible].

John Andrews

It has access to the Indian Ocean through Gwalior, from China-Pakistan.

Jean-Pierre Cabestan

Through Burma. It has also diversified its energy sources, importing more from the central area and, of course, more recently from Russia. It has doubled its trade with Russia, mainly through importing more oil than before. That is where we are and the fact that the US PACOM has been renamed INDOPACOM in Honolulu, has also contributed to China's suspicion about the Indo-Pacific Council. Also the fact that it was Shinzo Abe who coined the expression in 2007 and it was then picked up by the Trump administration in 2017 when they decided to launch a new open Indo-Pacific strategy targeting China more than anything else, so there is clearly no reason for China to promote that council, in fact the opposite.

Cristián Rodríguez, Senior Advisor at Boston Consulting Group



In a previous life, I was a lead negotiator for Chile for the TPP so I felt impelled to speak given that you have talked a lot about the agreement. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, the CPTPP, the Transatlantic Treaty between Europe and the US, the China-US Bilateral Investment Treaty which was negotiated for 10 years, and others, are agreements and rules, like the World Trade Organization, everything we see today is a deal, understanding or alliance. The question for anyone on the panel is, do you see space in the short-term or even the medium-term for a return to rules, trade agreements and actual treaties with provisions that become international rules that all countries need to abide by at bilateral or plurilateral level? I am not dreaming about multilateral agreement any time.

Yim Sung-joon, Senior Advisor at Lee International IP & Law Group

I think we have had very important discussions about the new trends in the Indo-Pacific and the panel represented very important stakeholders in the region. However, I would like to draw your attention to the role Canada can play in the Pacific. As latecomers, Korea and Canada released their important foreign policy and security guidelines in the Indo-Pacific strategy last December and we will act according to that. Last week there was a forum between Korea and Canada and Canada emphasized that they will play an increased role in the Pacific region by bringing in more resources than before to help some underdeveloped Indo-Pacific countries to improve welfare and economic development.

I think we heard some very important points about Quad from the Indian participant, my friend Narayanan and he emphasized that we look at Chinese military advances or potential threats in quite different ways from other Indo-Pacific members. Quad is a very important component of the security policy of all Indo-Pacific nations. Korea thought about joining the Quad as Quad+ but in the forum last week some members mentioned the same point as Narayanan just indicated. With threats in the North Pacific threats from North Korea, China and Russia, what about forming a new Quad with the US, Japan, Korea and Canada?

John Andrews

That is a good question and there was also the trade question.

Douglas Paal, Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Program Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

As the TPP negotiator you will recall that in the early days, the question was why do a TPP and the answer from the negotiators at the time was that if they created a high-quality trade agreement it would not be universal at the outset. Trying to get the WTO to do the Doha round was a great failure because consensus was the enemy of practical progress, but to do a TPP among the world's largest trading partners at a high-level equality would be an attraction for others to join. The idea is you start as big as you can with a coalition of willing partners and then you build on that by creating something with a strong gravitational pull. I think as we go into a new period of reconstructing the world in this post-Cold War era, we are going to take things bit by bit, step by step, practical measure by practical measure. It is sort of the way Jean Monnet, George Marshall and others made small steps in the aftermath of World War Two to rebuild Europe. We should view the trade world as something we can not do overnight but we can create momentum towards an outcome that in the long run will lead to a global consensus that it is the right way to go.

John Andrews

Thank you very much. Of course, Canada are always everybody's favorite North Americans.

Mayankote Narayanan, former Senior Advisor and National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India (Manmohan Singh), former Governor of West Bengal

There is no magic wand to deal with China but I think the answer on how to do it is not to have more and more pacts. I think enough pacts are available and the United States has taken a greater role than it should have in these matters and I think we need a concerted strategy on how to reduce Chinese influence across the Region. You can bring down China in many ways and the other way is for other nations to understand how Chinese minds work, which I think is really complex. I would think that countries like Japan and India that have dealt with China over the years can play a major role. It is not really a question of guns and butter sort of things, it is dealing with an ancient civilization that has been divided and split in many ways and it is about whether we can do something to reduce that. If there is a confrontation the Chinese population will come together and the question is how you separate Xi Jinping from the rest of the Chinese. There are a lot of people in China who want a different kind of system and I think we should emphasize that and that is where some of the thinktanks and others can play a major role. I do think it is counterproductive to add more and more pacts.

Hervé Mariton, Mayor of Crest, Chairman of the Franco-British Council, Chairman of the Federation of Overseas Companies (FEDOM)

I would be more pessimistic than Douglas. Since the concept is really a floating concept and it is very difficult to assess situations, I believe that the multiplicity of organizations and schemes today is convenient for many partners, major, medium and more, and I do not see why this should evolve in the short and medium-term.

Riad Tabet, President of Berit International Holding SA

Why was South Korea excluded from the quadrilateral alliance between the UK, US, Australia and Japan?

John Andrews

Why was South Korea excluded from AUKUS?

Riad Tabet

From the Quad.

John Andrews

The Japanese invented the Quad. If I heard the question correctly, why was South Korea excluded from the Quad?

Yuichi Hosoya, Professor of International Politics at Keio University in Tokyo

From the start, South Korea did not really want to join a group that could be considered to be a confrontation with China. China is an extremely important trading partner for South Korea, so at the beginning I think they thought it might not be wise. However, wisely, the four countries, particularly India and also Japan, have been transforming the nature of the Quad. At the beginning the Quad was much more a security cooperation organization as a group but since then they have focused much more on technology, Covid-19 vaccinations, etc., these kinds of technical issues. That is why the Quad is now much less confrontational with China so I think it is acceptable to many more countries in the region.

Kim Chang-beom, Vice Chairman and CEO of the Federation of Korean Industries



Just to add to what Professor Yuichi Hosoya said, I think there were myriad issues for the reasons behind the decision for Korea not to be involved at the very beginning and take part in the whole discussion about joining the Quad. I think the main factors were how to deal with China and the bilateral relations between Korea and Japan at the time, which were not that comfortable and had soured a bit. Also, South Korea has a rock solid alliance partnership with the United States, and I think this bilateral security alliance has been the foundation of South Korea's foreign policy. Those are the reasons why South Korea did not join the Quad discussions.

John Andrews

We are almost out of time but we have a few seconds left. At the beginning, I mentioned that the Indo-Pacific region has plenty of flashpoints, which by definition are at risk of exploding. On a scale where 10 is they will explode somewhere, Taiwan, Australia, whatever, or zero, they will not explode, where do you put your mark for the next 5 years?

Douglas Paal

When it comes to the Taiwan question it is about two.

Mayankote Narayanan

I think there is enough wisdom in the world to avoid a flashpoint on Taiwan, so I would put it at one or two.

Hervé Mariton

Two.

Kim Chang-beom

Is it about the Taiwan issue or any of them?

John Andrews

It could be any flashpoint in the Indo-Pacific.

Kim Chang-beom

For me it is the South China Sea and I think it is a five.

Yuichi Hosoya

I am optimistic that is why I say seven for Taiwan.

John Andrews

You are expecting a big explosion.

Jean-Pierre Cabestan

I have two marks, one for the South China Sea with a three and four for Taiwan.

John Andrews



The outlook with a five-year time horizon is kind of sobering. There will be an important election in the United States next year and the term will be for four-years and I suppose that adds another perspective to the number.

I would like to thank the audience very much and thank Song-Nim and Thierry for getting this excellent panel together. I think the panel have been very good and deserve a round of applause.