

# Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Origins, Implications, and Impact

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## **Abstract**

Canada's proposal of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) in the end of 2022 is considered as a new strategic approach to its relationship with China and a changing security environment in the Indo-Pacific. This paper examines the origins, implications, and impact of Canada's IPS. Canada's IPS is rooted in its strong relationship with the U.S., as well the threat posed by Beijing, the downturn in Canadian-Chinese relations, as well as encouragement by the U.S. and shared allies and partners. As to the implications of the IPS, Ottawa's position is important to the U.S.-led democratic alliance and suggests that Beijing may fail in its efforts to create a wedge between Washington and its allies and partners. Finally, in terms of impact, the bilateral relationship between Canada and China is and will continue to be influenced, and Beijing will react to that. The U.S.-led alliance against China is and will be consolidated. Yet, the future of the Indo-Pacific will remain uncertain.

**Keywords:** Indo-Pacific Strategy, Great Power Competition, U.S.-led Democratic Alliance, Canada, Russia-Ukraine War

## **I. Introduction**

On November 27, 2022, Canada released its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). The policy framework is considered a new Canadian strategic approach to a security environment that has undergone drastic transformations. The key challenge is the threats generated by China's emergence, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region. Chinese intimidation of Canada and democracies is comprehensive, which implies that

Beijing's confrontation with Washington and its allies is not merely in the political-diplomatic realm, but also in the dimensions of economy, military, technology and ideological values. In addition, although members of the U.S.-led alliance are developing their strategies toward the Indo-Pacific, the risks and confrontations are likely to be rooted not only in the region, but also on a global stage. As a good neighbor and critical ally of Washington, Ottawa's new strategy was developed in the context of "great power competition" between the United States and China and a significant downturn in U.S.-China relations. All of this undeniably influenced Canada's position and direction toward Beijing.

Starting with an emphasis on the rise of Asia, Canada's IPS values the economic potential of the region and looks to its trade and investment with Asian countries.



**Figure 1. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy Echoes Democratic Allies in Their Response to Beijing's Challenge**

Source: Depositphotos.

But the strategy *per se* is much more than economic. The document proposes five strategic goals: (1) promoting peace, resilience and security, (2) expanding trade, investment and supply chain strength, (3) investing in and connecting people, (4) establishing sustainable development and reducing the impact of climate change, and (5) improving Canada's engagement with the Indo-Pacific.<sup>1</sup> All of these components demonstrate Ottawa's intention and interest in a changing world on the one hand and also echo democratic allies in their response to Beijing's challenge.

Canada's participation in a "big family" of Indo-Pacific strategies is very important to both the United States and the U.S.-led democratic alliance. In a sense, it is reasonable to anticipate that Ottawa keeps up with Washington's pace to cope with Beijing in terms of the U.S.' proposal of "a free and open Indo-Pacific." Not only do these two countries have a strong relationship historically, but they also share common interests and challenges (threats) in the era of so-called power transition. Canada's IPS is clearly supportive of U.S. leadership in uniting the front against China's coercion. As a result, Beijing's strategy, especially through an economic approach, of creating a wedge between Washington and its allies might be failing. China's "sharp power" against Canada and other democracies is actually generating a counter-effect, leading to the formation of a stronger coalition against China. Therefore, as Ottawa implements its IPS, Washington and the alliance will be more confident and more powerful in competing with and confronting Beijing. This paper looks at the origins, implications, and impact of Canada's strategy toward the Indo-Pacific. It first explains why Ottawa did an apparent U-turn in its China policy. It then looks at the implications of Canada's IPS for U.S.-Chinese strategic competition. Finally, it discusses the impact of Canada's IPS and prospects for future developments in the Indo-Pacific.

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1. Government of Canada, "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy," November 27, 2022, *Government of Canada*, <<https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng>>.

## II. Origins of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy

Ottawa's decision to change its position and direction toward Beijing and the Indo-Pacific region is rooted in a number of reasons: (1) the nature of a strong relationship between Ottawa and Washington, (2) the threat posed by Beijing, (3) a turn-down in the Canadian-Chinese relationship in recent years, and (4) a wake-up call and encouragement by the Indo-Pacific strategies of the United States and other democracies. The China factor is definitely strongly associated with the transformation of the security and economic environments in the Indo-Pacific. To some countries, both regional and extra-regional, their concerns about China's impact on their prospects and interests in the region are highly interdependent of each other. That is certainly the case for Canada.



**Figure 2. Canada and the U.S. Have Shared Values of Democracy, Human Rights, Freedom of Speech, Free Market Economies and so on**

Source: Depositphotos.



Canada's ostensible U-turn in its attitudes toward China and the Indo-Pacific is deeply rooted in its strong relationship with the United States. It goes without saying that the United States plays an important role in Canada's foreign policy and encouraged Ottawa to move in this new direction with regard to its relationship with China. Since both Canada and the United States share a common history, interests, and challenges in the region and around the globe, they work together to overcome problems they have at home and abroad. Throughout history, Canada and the United States were allies against invaders and Fascism during World War I and World War II, among other conflicts. Their cooperating on transnational issues has stood the test of time. Two other factors — political systems and cultural-lingual characteristics — are a vital foundation for Canada's decision to change its attitude toward China and the Indo-Pacific. From the perspective of regime type, because Canada and the U.S. are liberal democracies, they have shared values of democracy, the separation of powers, checks and balances, rule of law, human rights, freedom of speech, openness and transparency, free market economies and so on. Those political, economic, societal, and ideological features explain why the two countries stand together. From the perspective of culture and language, both Canada and the United States are primarily Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking nations. This is a strong cultural element which supports a common identity on numerous issues, and which drives them to develop a tough coalition against external challenges.

Another reason that explains why Canada changed its policy is the threat and challenge posed by China in all dimensions in recent years. Beijing has become more confident and assertive since Xi Jinping took power in 2013. Its harsh confrontation with the United States and the West is not just about geopolitical and geostrategic advantage, but also touches on economic, societal, cultural, technological, and ideological areas. Additionally, Beijing's apparent ambition to become a regional and global hegemon does not merely endanger Washington's leadership, but also raises the specter of domination over Washington's allies, including Canada and other partner countries. Although China does not pose a direct military threat to the security of Canada, it has used "sharp power" to infiltrate Canadian politics and policy, as well as the United States and other democracies. According to media reports, fake Twitter and Facebook accounts were created to allow pro-Chinese agents in Canada to protest on

the development of rare earth mines there, as well as in the United States.<sup>2</sup> According to an investigation by Robert Fife and Steven Chase, Beijing intended to influence the outcome of the 2021 Canadian Federal Elections in favor of the ruling Liberal Party to defeat the opposition, the Conservative Party.<sup>3</sup> In fact, similar stories are too many to tell.

The downturn in Canadian-Chinese relations also had a profound impact on the people and government of Canada, accelerating the need for a restructuring of the nation's policy toward China and the Indo-Pacific. Canada's detention of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Huawei telecommunication company, Meng Wanzhou (also known as Cathy Meng and Sabrina Meng) on December 1, 2018, was a critical moment in the deterioration of relations between Ottawa and Beijing. The U.S. Department of Justice alleged that Meng was under breach of trust of bank and wire, and was charged with fraud and conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions on Iran. In response to this collaboration between the U.S. and Canadian law enforcement, on December 10, 2018, nine days after Meng was arrested, China detained Michael Kovrig, a former Canadian diplomat in China, and Michael Spavor, a Canadian businessman in Beijing, on charges of "harming the national security of China." This "back and forth" shows that bilateral relations between Canada and China were going downhill and those events compelled Canada to launch an Indo-Pacific strategy that would prepare itself to face a changing relationship with China and seek to strengthen its relationship with the United States and other countries in the region. Beijing's "sharp power" against Canada and other democracies is a larger and longer context for the potential transformation of bilateral relations.

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<sup>2</sup> Margi Murphy, "Pro-China Agents Posed as Activists to Protest US, Canada Mines," *Bloomberg*, June 29, 2022, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-29/pro-china-agents-posed-as-activists-to-protest-us-canada-mines#xj4y7vzkg>>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Fife & Steven Chase, "CSIS Documents Show China Warned 'Canadian Friends' of Foreign-Interference Investigations," *The Globe and Mail*, February 18, 2023, <<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-chinese-diplomats-warned-canadian-friends-to-scale-back-influence/>>.



**Figure 3. China Detained Two Canadians, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, on Charges of “Harming the National Security of China”**

Source: Librero2109, “Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor,” September 30, 2021, *Wikimedia*, <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=110595680>>.

Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy was also inspired by the United States and its democratic allies. In recent years, a number of countries and transnational organizations have proposed or launched Indo-Pacific strategies. The United States under both the Trump and Biden administrations, has spearheaded this initiative and was followed by Australia (2017), India (2018), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (2019), New Zealand (2020), France (2021), the United Kingdom (2021), the European Union (EU) (2021), Germany (2022), and South Korea (2022).<sup>4</sup> More recently, the EU defined China as both a partner for cooperation and negotiation and an economic competitor and a systemic rival.<sup>5</sup> This change in direction has

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<sup>4</sup> Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, “Canada Joins the Indo-Pacific Strategy Club,” November 29, 2022, *Diplomat*, <<https://thediplomat.com/2022/11/canada-joins-the-indo-pacific-strategy-club/>>.

<sup>5</sup> Diplomatic Service of the European Union, “EU-China Relations Factsheet,” January 4, 2022, *Diplomatic Service of the European Union*, <[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-china-relations-factsheet\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-china-relations-factsheet_en)>.

reflected changes in many countries' attitudes toward China, with a demonstrative effect on Canada to adopt its own Indo-Pacific Strategy.

### **III. Implications of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy**

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy has strategic implications for both the United States (a democratic alliance) and China (an authoritarian-revisionist coalition). Clearly, Ottawa's attempt to catch up with Washington's policy toward China is an important force multiplier in support of the U.S.' competition with China. It also demonstrates that the U.S.-led democratic alliance, to some extent, is united in its resistance to Chinese aggression against the prevailing international order. In contrast, to China, Canada's strategy signals that Beijing's use of disinformation, bribery, censorship, and other measures within Canada may be failing. Finally, the change in Canada's policy also implies that Beijing might be unable to succeed in creating a wedge between Washington and its allies.

#### **1. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy is a Strong Sign of Support for U.S. Competition with China**

In response to the strategic competition with Beijing, Washington has realized that it cannot act alone and needs to work with its allies and partners. This understanding appears to have been much clearer to the Biden administration. From the perspective of U.S. foreign policy and alliance politics, there is an obvious difference between Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

The Trump administration did not advocate a complete cut in all of Washington's ties with its allies and partners, and sought cooperation with them on geopolitical and other security issues. For instance, in responding to Chinese military expansion in the South China Sea (SCS), the Trump administration continued to conduct military activities with its allies Japan, Australia, the Philippines, as well as with its partners within ASEAN, such as Vietnam and Singapore. In reacting to Chinese military and non-military threats in the Taiwan Strait, the Trump administration also called for its allies and partners, both inside and outside the region, to increase international assistance to Taiwan. The major controversy was that President Trump focused on the



“unfairness” of alliance relations and requested that all member states in bilateral and multilateral military coalitions shoulder defense expenditure together and impartially. As we look at Trump’s position on a free but (and) fairer international trade with the United States, this makes sense in understanding the reevaluation of U.S. relations with its allies. Still, this does not mean that the administration was preparing to get rid of the alliances. Instead, the Trump administration put an Indo-Pacific Strategy forward and called for participation by its strategic partners.

During the election campaign and after taking power, the Biden administration continued the Indo-Pacific Strategy launched by its predecessor and repeatedly stressed the need to repair relationships between the United States and its allies and partners. President Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken have frequently emphasized the reality that the United States cannot ensure its strategic interests alone



**Figure 4. The United States Has to Cooperate with Its Allies and Partners to Deal with China’s Challenge**

Source: Depositphotos.

even if it is still the most powerful country in the world. Thus, Washington needs to revitalize relations with its allies and partners, particularly in a tough strategic competition with China and Russia, looking for more cooperation and assistance among like-minded countries.

In this respect, Canada's support for the United States is very important, and its Indo-Pacific Strategy is an encouragement to Washington as well. The United States has to cooperate with its allies and partners to deal with China's challenge in a number of areas. The more friends Washington has, the more powerful and confident it will be in its face-off with Beijing. In other words, not only the support of Canada, but also that of other democracies and transnational organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the EU, and ASEAN, is equally critical to the United States. Even if countries are non-democratic but share common strategic goals with Washington, such as Vietnam and Singapore, they are still welcome to join the U.S.-led coalition against the Chinese threat. Canada is a significant case, and perhaps the first, in assessing the progress of Indo-Pacific strategies. Because of its unique and strong relationship with the United States and common interests and values, it is difficult to imagine how Ottawa could refuse to participate in the Washington-led Indo-Pacific strategy club.

## **2. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy Sends a Signal to U.S. Allies and Partners**

The diplomatic statement made by Canada's decision to adopt a new Indo-Pacific Strategy also sends a signal to other strategic allies and partners of the United States. The great power competition between the United States and China is not just in terms of hard power, such as military strength and economic performance, but also in the areas of soft power and smart power, primarily the expansion of influence within alliances, partnerships and institutions at all levels of international society.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, China was very active in seeking to create a divide between Washington and

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<sup>6</sup> Richard L. Armitage & Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America," November 6, 2007, pp. 27-36, *CSIS*, <[https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/media/csis/pubs/071106\\_csissmartpowerreport.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/071106_csissmartpowerreport.pdf)>.

its allies and partners through international propaganda, such as “say good-bye to Taiwan” and “the East is rising and the West is declining,” and so on. The logic of this type of public opinion warfare was simple and clear: once the United States loses its credibility with allies and partners, the democratic or strategic alliance against China will quickly collapse, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy will fail. In defending the Indo-Pacific Strategy to prevent China’s expansion and assertiveness, the case of Canada is a critical demonstration to other states.

Additionally, some allies and partners are more important to the United States and are considered as a core of the U.S.-led alliance. These countries are the United



**Figure 5. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Held a Summit Meeting with the Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand on April 21, 2022, in Tokyo**

Source: Prime Minister Office of Japan, “Japan-New Zealand Summit Meeting and Other Events,” April 21, 2022, *Prime Minister Office of Japan*, <[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101\\_kishida/actions/202204/\\_00013.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/actions/202204/_00013.html)>.

Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. As with Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand are also Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking nations. They are also fully consolidated democracies. Based on these factors, their participation and mirroring of the Indo-Pacific Strategy are significant to Washington. The Five Eyes is a good example of how these countries work together and share intelligence. Japan is in a unique position. Although it is not an Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking country, Japan has substantial common interests in matters of security and development in the region with the U.S., and has thus emphasized the need to strengthen the U.S.-Japan Alliance again and again. Japan is also a democracy, a “Britain of the Far East.”

### **3. Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy Suggests that Beijing Might Fail to Create a Wedge Within the U.S.-led Alliance**

China understands that alliances are vital to the United States for it to accomplish its strategic interests and foreign policy. It also understands that Washington has a significant lead over Beijing in terms of the number of allies in its international coalition. In order to break Washington’s advantage on this matter, Beijing has used various means, including diplomacy, economic dependence, public opinion manipulation, and co-optation/elite capture in an effort to derail relations between the United States and its allies and partners.

One key difficulty for the United States, especially under the Biden administration, for re-engagement with its allies and partners is that members of the alliances have differing perceptions of the security environment in the Indo-Pacific and distinct positions on their complex relationships with the United States and China. For example, since Japan is geographically closer to China as well as highly dependent on its huge market, in general Tokyo is more relatively hesitant to confront Beijing. In the case of South Korea, because Seoul considers Pyongyang instead of Beijing as a real threat to its security, South Korea continues to have, on the whole, a warm relationship with China. The U.S.’ European allies are another matter. Due to a far geographic distance and a deep economic relations with China, they have very different views of China compared with the United States and some of their Asian



counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Some of these Washington's allies might prefer to hedge between the United States and China, or they might adopt a policy of "leaning on Washington for security and on Beijing for the economy." Under such circumstances, it is difficult for the United States to reduce the gap in perceptions of the China's threat theory, which gives space for China to create some distance between the United States and its allies. However, the situation has changed as Canada and other democracies follow the U.S. in promoting their Indo-Pacific strategies. This implies that Beijing may be failing in its attempts to create a wedge within the U.S.-led alliance.

### **III. Impact of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy**

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy has several impacts: (1) the bilateral relationship between Canada and China will be influenced and Beijing will react to that; (2) the U.S.-led alliance against China's challenge will be more consolidated; and (3) the future of the Indo-Pacific will be both more certain in some areas and less so in others.

#### **1. The Canadian-Chinese Relationship Will Be Influenced and China Will React**

The bilateral relationship between Ottawa and Beijing has changed markedly since Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou and China's retaliatory capture of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in 2018. In recent years, Canada has realized that China has been increasing its economic and military expansion in the region, as well as projecting its influence all over the globe, leading Ottawa to restructure its policy toward China.

The main purpose of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy is to reduce the risk of over-dependence on China, where Beijing would take advantage of economic dependence on its manufacture and market to create political-diplomatic leverage over Canada and its other democratic counterparts. To avoid such a situation, Canada needs to look for alternative trade and investment partners, ranging from Japan and South Korea in

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7 Liang-chih Evans Chen, "Pre-assessing the Biden Administration's Foreign Policy: Its Views, Challenges, and Strategies," *Taiwan Strategists*, No. 9, March 2021, pp. 15-16.

Northeast Asia to ASEAN countries in Southeast Asia and India in South Asia.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that another intention of Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy is seeking security and stability, since at the same time China is challenging the established and rules-



**Figure 6. U.S. President Joe Biden Meets with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on November 13, 2022, in Cambodia**

Source: Adam Schultz, “President Joe Biden participates in a trilateral meeting with South Korean Prime Minister Yoon Suk-Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida,” November 13, 2022, *Flickr*, <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse/52651361035/in/album-72177720303921268/>>.

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<sup>8</sup> John Garrick & Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, “Canada’s New Indo-Pacific Strategy Is Clear-eyed on China,” *Strategist*, December 1, 2022, <<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/canadas-new-indo-pacific-strategy-is-clear-eyed-on-china/>>; Hugh Stephens, “Canada’s New Indo-Pacific Strategy and China,” *China-US Focus*, January 31, 2023, <<https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/canadas-new-indo-pacific-strategy-and-china>>.

based international order. Therefore, Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy will influence its relationship with China in a negative direction. Although so far Beijing has not reacted clearly to Ottawa on this matter, there is a very high likelihood that China will take some countermeasures against Canada in future.

## **2. The U.S.-led Alliance Against China Will Be More Consolidated**

Canada's decision to follow the United States' lead, that of its democratic allies and other international organizations in adopting an Indo-Pacific strategy is a sign of support for Washington. It implies that the U.S.-led alliance's competition with an authoritarian and revisionist coalition of China and Russia is gaining strength and will be consolidated in the coming years. Canada is absolutely a touchstone, and the first case, to examine how Washington can succeed in forging unity to confront Beijing and Moscow. The United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan are three other priority countries to the U.S. grand strategy against the Chinese-Russian coalition. As Canada, as well as Australia, India, ASEAN, New Zealand, France, the United Kingdom, the EU, Germany, and South Korea, participate in a big family of Indo-Pacific strategies, their engagement demonstrates that the United States is back at the wheel on international leadership on global issues and building up a more powerful alignment aimed at promoting "a free and open Indo-Pacific." It is still too early to tell whether Washington will win in the strategic competition with Beijing, but overall the U.S. has a relative advantage.

The U.S.-led democratic alliance has gained precious experience during the Russia-Ukraine War. Even though they had disagreements on many issues, the U.S. and the West moved quickly to form a united front in assisting Ukraine as it fights back against Russia. Canada also took the same position on this matter. Its performance in the war between Russia and Ukraine is a real reflection of its new policy toward China and the Indo-Pacific. Ottawa's decision to stand with Washington and its allies illustrates the U.S.-led alliance's ability to face challenges in two theaters — the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic — simultaneously.

### 3. The Future of the Indo-Pacific Will be Certain in One Way and Uncertain in Another

Since Canada’s release of its Indo-Pacific Strategy and participation in the U.S.-led alliance against China’s threat to the region and the globe, there are clear signs that the alliance is becoming stronger and that members of the alliance are, and will be, more united in coping with challenges generated by China and Russia. Greater involvement by democracies in the Indo-Pacific strategy club and their converging attitudes toward Russia’s invasion of Ukraine suggest that an anti-China and -Russia coalition will be more powerful in the future.

In contrast, because the anti-China and -Russia alignment is becoming more powerful, they will place more constraints on China’s expansion and assertiveness. Under this circumstance, we can predict a number of potential uncertainties in the coming stages. Because Xi Jinping’s authority has been much more consolidated

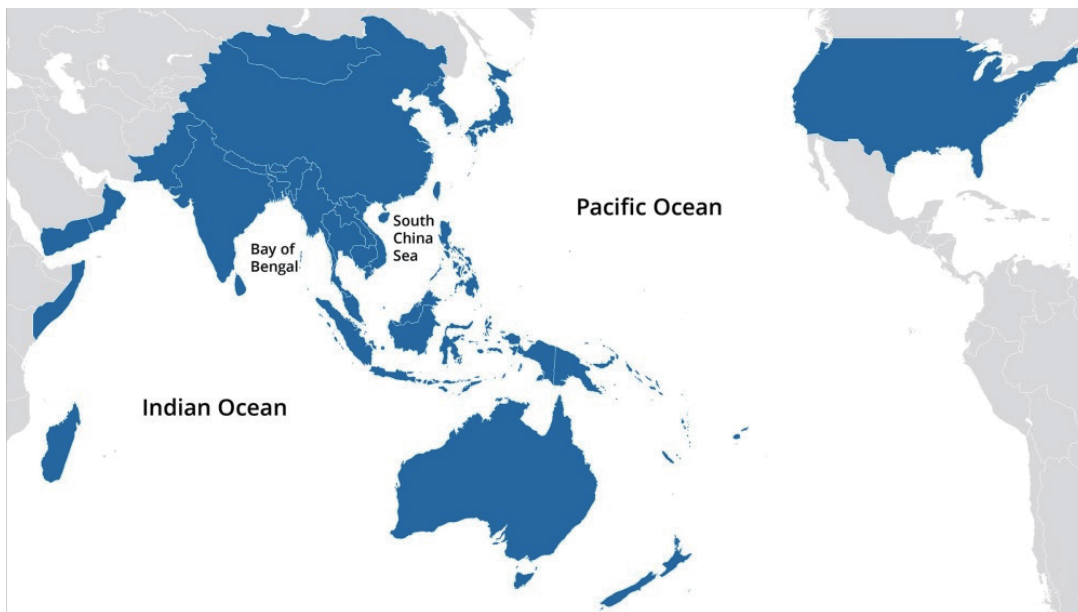


Figure 7. Map of Indo-Pacific

Source: Randolph Mank, “Canada finally releases its long-awaited Indo-Pacific Strategy,” *Troy Media*, November 30, 2022, <<https://troymedia.com/politicslaw/canada-finally-releases-its-long-awaited-indo-pacific-strategy/>>.



since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Chinese Communist Party last October, it is also expected that China will seek to widen its expansion to accomplish its “China Dream,” and to displace U.S. global leadership and the established and rules-based international order. Therefore, the spiral of a security dilemma between the anti-China coalition and China will increase, and a potential military conflict in the Indo-Pacific is more likely.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Canada's release of its Indo-Pacific Strategy is regarded as a new policy framework to address a rising power and the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. Similar to the United States and other democratic allies, Canada has been unable to ignore China's expansion and growing influence around the world, even though it is unlikely to cut off all of its political, economic, social, cultural, and business relations with it. In response to that challenge, Ottawa needed its own Indo-Pacific Strategy. Thanks to its shared history, political system, and cultural-linguistic elements, a good neighbor relationship with the U.S. meant that Canada would end up with a very U.S.-like vision of the Indo-Pacific.

Canada's participation in the family of Indo-Pacific strategies is important to both the United States and the U.S.-led democratic alliance. Although it looks in a positive direction to the U.S. and the anti-China coalition, there are numerous difficulties ahead for peace and prosperity, not only in the Indo-Pacific but also in Europe and other places around the world. Thanks to Canada's decision to join the group, Washington and its allies and partners are relatively more united, confident, and in a more powerful position to engage in a struggle with a rising China.

