

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2024 · 10 marks

Discuss the rationale behind replacing the “Asia-Pacific” strategy with the new term “Indo-Pacific” strategy.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro
routes

R1 Asia-Pacific: 1960s origin, APEC 1980s → rim-centred map, India outside, Indian Ocean read apart → renaming = deciding who counts **R2** a region is a strategic choice, not a coastline → the old map left out India and the Indian Ocean → the new name written to bring India in

Body flow

Hormuz + Malacca, half of maritime oil trade → India's weight cannot sit off the map → **Khurana** 2007, alternative that takes India in → **Abe's** confluence, Australian + American support → both oceans one theatre → Quad's premise → India past South Asia

Counter-
view

resistance mirrors adoption → Beijing prefers Asia-Pacific, keeps China central → Moscow: artificial → **Chacko**: trade density stayed Asia-Pacific, region built from anxiety over China, India as balancer

Conclusion
routes

R1 strategic, not cartographic → 2025 NSS hemisphere first, 2026 NDS deterrence second-order → the name holds only while the strategy is funded **R2** renaming decided who counts → India gained standing, China lost centrality → a map survives on its sponsors' investment, not on its logic

Asia-Pacific took shape in the 1960s and was institutionalised by APEC in the 1980s. That map arranged Asia around the Pacific rim, kept India outside, and read the Indian Ocean separately.

Hormuz and Malacca carry more than half of maritime oil trade, and India could not stay off the map. Gupreet Khurana proposed Indo-Pacific in 2007 as an alternative that would take India in. Shinzo Abe's confluence of the two seas, with Australian & US support, carried it into policy. Both oceans as one theatre is the Quad's premise, and it lifts India past South Asia.

Beijing prefers Asia-Pacific, which keeps China at the centre and Moscow calls the Indo-Pacific artificial.

Priya Chacko argues that trade stayed concentrated in the Asia-Pacific, and the new region was built out of anxiety about China, with India as balancer.

The 2025 US security strategy places the Western Hemisphere first, and the 2026 defence strategy makes Indo-Pacific deterrence a second-order aim.

Therefore, renaming decided who counts and the name will hold only while the strategy behind it is funded.