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ALIGNING INDIA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY WITH MILITARY INDUSTRIAL POLICY

BY

COL (DR) D LAKSHMANA KUMAR,
PROF. VIRBHADRA SINGH RAWAT AND
DR JASMEET KAUR

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
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The Indo-Pacific, now the focal point of global economic growth and strategic rivalry, particularly with the rise of China, is central to India's security calculus and diplomatic outreach. India's vision for the region is to act as a champion of a free, open, and rules-based order, ensuring stability and inclusivity across the maritime domain. Policies such as the Act East initiative, the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision, the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), and the MAHASAGAR doctrine reflect this commitment to maritime security and strategic autonomy. Simultaneously, the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme, supported by reforms in defence procurement, export promotion, and the creation of defence industrial corridors, seeks to reduce import dependence, foster innovation, and strengthen India's role as a defence exporter.

India's Indo-Pacific strategy and its pursuit of defence self-reliance are converging in a mutually reinforcing trajectory. Collaborations with QUAD partners and ASEAN nations are actively strengthening regional security while simultaneously driving the growth of India's defence industrial base. This dual-track approach enhances India's strategic credibility and economic resilience. However, to sustain momentum and global influence, critical structural challenges must be resolved. Ambiguous indigenisation standards, persistent gaps in naval shipbuilding capabilities, and regulatory bottlenecks continue to undermine progress. Addressing these issues with clarity and urgency is essential to fully realise the potential of this strategic alignment.

Transforming the Indo-Pacific into a secure, inclusive, and resilient regional order demands the immediate implementation of forward-looking policy frameworks. Central to this effort is the JAI Indo-Pacific Initiative—a strategic trilateral model that synergises Japan's technological leadership, India's manufacturing capabilities and ASEAN's regional demand. This initiative presents a cost-effective and credible pathway to enhance maritime capabilities, strengthen defence supply chain resilience, and foster shared security responsibilities. By leveraging complementary national strengths, the JAI framework offers not only sustainable security solutions but also

reinforces multipolarity and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Prioritising such cooperative models is essential to shaping the region's strategic future.

India must institutionalise collaborative defence models with key regional and global partners while simultaneously strengthening its domestic defence ecosystem. This dual approach is essential for transforming India's role in the Indo-Pacific—from a net security consumer to a dependable and preferred security partner. By embedding structured cooperation and accelerating internal reforms, India positions itself as a central contributor to regional stability, strategic resilience, and the long-term security architecture of the Indo-Pacific.