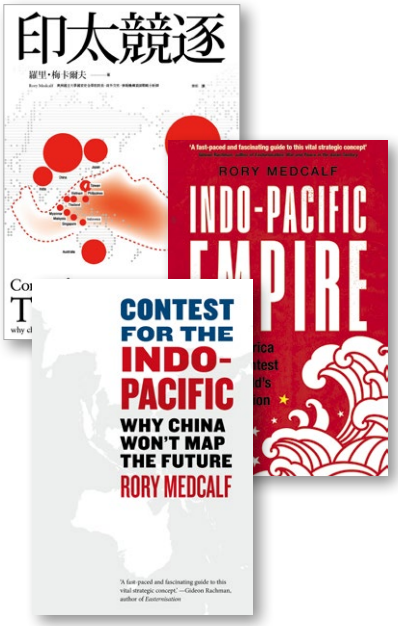

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Contest for the Indo-Pacific

Why China Won't Map the Future

Rory Medcalf

The Indo-Pacific is both a place and an idea. It is the region central to global prosperity and security. It is also a metaphor for collective action. If diplomacy fails, it will be the theatre of the first general war since 1945. But if its future can be secured, the Indo-Pacific will flourish as a shared space, the centre of gravity in a connected world.

What we call different parts of the world – Asia, Europe, the Middle East – seems innocuous. But the name of a region is totemic: a mental map that guides the decisions of leaders and the story of international order, war and peace. In recent years, the label "Indo-Pacific" has gained wide use, including among the leaders of the United States, India, Japan, Australia, Indonesia and France. But what does it really mean?

Written by a recognised expert and regional policy insider, *Contest for the Indo-Pacific* is the definitive guide to tensions in the region. It deftly weaves together history, geopolitics, cartography, military strategy, economics, games and propaganda to address a vital question: How can China's dominance be prevented without war?

RORY MEDCALF is a professor and Head of the National Security College at the Australian National University. His experience as an Australian diplomat includes postings to New Delhi, Tokyo and Papua New Guinea. He was a senior strategic analyst in Australia's peak intelligence agency, the Office of National Assessments, and was the founding director of the international security program at the Lowy Institute. He has been published widely, including in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *The South China Morning Post* and *The Hindu*, as well as on the ABC, BBC and CNN.

International Praise for *Contest for the Indo-Pacific* by Rory Medcalf

"Rory Medcalf has written a masterful tutorial on the Indo-Pacific, which even the US recognizes is a holistic geopolitical force. Tightly organized and appealingly written, this is a superb primer on understanding the history, the power and the future implications of this potential economic juggernaut. A must-read, in my view, for laymen and experts alike."

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"The complexities of our region can easily bewilder those used to the Manichaean simplicity of the Cold War. Rory Medcalf's book is an elegant, keenly insightful tour of the Indo Pacific's strategic horizon."

—Malcolm Turnbull, former Australian prime minister

"The Indo-Pacific is an idea whose time has come. Rory Medcalf has been crucial to both defining and promoting the idea of an Indo-Pacific region – and has now written a fast-paced and fascinating guide to this vital strategic concept."

—Gideon Rachman, author of *Easternisation* and *Zero-Sum Future*

"Medcalf's book is essential reading for any scholar or practitioner seeking to understand the geopolitics of a region that will define all our futures."

—Michael J. Green, Center for Strategic and International Studies and Georgetown University, author of *By More Than Providence* and *Arming Japan*

"Rory Medcalf gives us a fast-paced ride around the world's newest, and most important, strategic arena. He has done more than anyone to introduce the world to the idea of the Indo-Pacific and this book is a convincing manifesto for a new vision of connectedness. This is the world with all the difficult bits left in."

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"All of us struggling to understand great power competition need to become ambidextrous if we are to develop policies to cope with a rising – or a collapsing – China, and learning from Rory Medcalf's *Contest for the Indo-Pacific* is a great place to start."

—Kori Schake, Deputy Director-General, International Institute for Strategic Studies