Chapter-5
Conclusion
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India is becoming an increasingly influential international power strategically, politically and economically. India’s adoption of liberal economic policies starting in the early 1990’s has led to successful engagement with Southeast Asia in particular. The relationship with the neighbours on India’s east has been smooth and harmonious. So has it been with the Australia, although there are differences in political style, in social history, in attitudes towards nuclear issues to name a few; they do not always remain significant but do manifest themselves into irritants. Both have stronger ties with high-growth East Asia and are forging regional alliances for strategic and economic purposes. Australian trade interests have led them to seek new markets abroad, and India’s large market has been crucial after India’s liberalization. Besides they have common aspirations to have a stable neighbourhood, which for both encompassed Southeast Asia and East Asia. The transformation in Australia’s relations with East Asia and India were, initially, borne out of necessity. Complementarily, proximity and shared interests have been pulling the two countries towards East Asia since 1980’s, there was widespread public recognition in Australia of the notion that the ‘the tyranny of distance’ had become the ‘advantage of proximity’. Australia, long concerned with its status as an isolated nation on the periphery of world politics and commerce, found itself in the fortunate position of being on the rim of the most dynamic region on earth. These transformations were of course in Australia’s historic reorientation from Europe to Asia.

Besides, they along with Southeast Asian states have common aspirations to have a stable region and regard security issues- traditional and non-traditional as top priority. Today, the kind of threats that have emerged demand integrated approach in combating them. Almost all ASEAN countries are modernising their armed forces to keep pace with changing security needs. The new range of threats could be the use by terrorists of inter- model shipping containers to transport weapons and dangerous materials, or the use of these containers themselves as weapons of mass destruction. Since, it is not possible to fight these “asymmetrical wars” alone, ASEAN
nations see both India and Australia as regional players cooperating in supporting them in fighting nontraditional threats especially terrorism.

India is expected to have the third largest economy in the world by 2050. Already its highly educated population and technological competency sees it achieving enviable growth rates. It has significant military might with an annual defence budget around 50% larger than Australia’s. India is now Australia’s sixth largest export market, with almost half of its exports to India concentrated in coal. India is potentially an even more significant energy market, especially for LNG, as its need for oil and gas over the next 20 years is expected to triple. Australia, in turn, is India’s ninth most important source of imports. India is playing a bigger role in global trade negotiations, where Australia has vital interests. In May 2005, Australia and India agreed to begin work on a bilateral trade and economic framework agreement, which some believe may be a precursor to a fully-fledged free trade agreement. India is also playing a more prominent role in Asia-Pacific, where Australia also has security interest. India has signed Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) with ASEAN and has been accepted as an ASEAN dialogue partner at leader level. The relationship was further strengthened with India signing FTA with ASEAN on after delay on non negotiable items.

It is active in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Both Australia and India have common interests in being involved in the East Asian Summit. India is also developing a much closer relationship with Australia’s major ally, the United States. India will inevitably come to play a larger role in the United Nations as it seeks a seat on the UN Security Council. In short, India is a country that Australia needs to engage regular dialogue between the governments of Australia and India is well established. Exchanges of views take place through the Foreign Ministers’ Framework Dialogue, the fourth meeting of which occurred in June 2005 during the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister’s visit to India, as well as through the Annual Strategic Dialogue between senior officials, the latest meeting of which was held in March 2005.

Despite these efforts to strengthen relations, many influential Indians have not forgiven Australia for its reaction to India’s nuclear tests in 1998 and whenever the issue of Australia’s hesitation of export of uranium comes up the Australian abrasive behavior after the tests are remembered. Interconnected is Australia’s agreement to sell uranium to China. The differences
in history and culture are often emphasized although Asia is a major source of immigrants in
Australia, a development unthinkable just four decades ago. Most foreign students in Australia
come from Asia East Asia and India. Australia is the third largest destination for Indian students.
In two-way tourism flows, India and the region assumes an even more prominent profile, as it
does also in strategic thinking and public debate on international affairs more generally. These
trends are crucial building blocks for the development of true regional engagement.

The maritime threats, sea piracy, smuggling and terrorism – in the region are matters of
common concern and both India and Southeast Asia cooperate to grapple with those threats.
India welcomed Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to have joint naval exercises at Andamans in
the post—cold war era (1991). This proved a good exercise for confidence building between
India and the ASEAN states. India was encouraged to establish defence ties with some of the
ASEAN states and Malaysia was the first to sign MOU for defence cooperation in 1993. This
was for training Malaysian air force personnel and at least 100 pilots came for training. In the
same year, India and Singapore made arrangements for training and joint exercises of their naval
personnel with Indian counterparts. India had agreed to provide anti-submarine warfare training
to Singapore’s naval personnel also. Thailand has availed the strategic expertise of the Indians
after acquisition of an aircraft carrier. On the other hand, Vietnam is trying to build up its navy
with Indian expertise, and seeking technological support for upgradation of MIG-21 fighters.
Similarly defence cooperation with Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar has also started. India had
supplied anti-insurgency defence equipments to Myanmar and has transferred two BN-2
Defender maritime aircraft to Myanmar (2007). There is coordination of search and rescue
operations at sea and establishment of inter-operability with navies of other ASEAN states. The
most important aspect of Indian navy’s role is the protection of sea lanes of communication in
the Indian Ocean region. As articulated in India’s Naval Doctrine of April 2004, India’s maritime
policies have been made clear. The doctrine is premised on the necessity to build cooperative
maritime security with the countries on the shores of the Indian Ocean with regard to challenges
encompassing safe flows of trade and energy as well as threats of terrorism.

After ASEAN-India summit in 2003, both sides have given focussed attention on security
coopera tion. They agreed for joint operations to protect sea lanes and pooling resources in the
war against terrorism. The military contacts and joint exercises that had already started in 1991,
was expanded into full fledged defence cooperation. India has got access to various ports in Southeast Asia for enhancing the level of cooperation. India and ASEAN have signed a joint Declaration for Cooperation in combating international terrorism (October, 2003) and accordingly they have agreed for (a) exchange of information (b) legal and enforcement matters (c) institutional capacity augmentation and (d) training. India has also signed Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2003 and repeated its commitments for peace and stability of the region. The ASEAN countries are convinced about India’s benevolent role in the region and they have looked for complimentarity to support one another.

However, combating terrorism is a difficult task. The terrorists have their concealed network and websites and they are active in India and Southeast Asia. In certain cases they have popular support also, and it is difficult to contain them. India has a long history of fighting terrorism, but they have succeeded only in few cases. Kashmir, for example, has been a center of terrorist activities led by Laskar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) and their political settlement is not in sight. They get regular supply of arms and ammunitions from across the border and Pakistan has been supporting them at the international for a without any hesitation. It is understood that Al-Qaeda had funded the establishment of training and indoctrination centers for the spread of terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia to create jihadi forces. They were also supported by the government in Pakistan, and Bangladesh initially. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines had Al Qaeda connections. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in Indonesia was also inspired by Al Qaeda, which had several groups to spread terror in different parts of Southeast Asia. Again Kumpulan Militant Malaysian (KMM) and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Pattani National Liberation Front (Thailand) had jihadi squads, suicide bombers and indoctrinated fanatics to be sacrificed in name of Islam.

Following 9/11, Asia became the main focus of counter-terrorism and the terrorists began to retaliate. Their attacks on Indian Parliament (2001), suicide attacks at the tourist resort in Bali (2002) and also in 2005, the bombing of Marriot Hotel (2003) and Australian Embassy (2004) in Jakarta, the explosion in Super Ferry 14 in the Philippines (2004) and various suicide attacks on security establishments in Kashmir, Jaipur, Bombay, Bangalore and Delhi are big challenges for the security establishments. The threats of transnational terrorism and the imperatives for global
coordination have been a challenging task. The terrorists in the ASEAN region have revealed that they were trained in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Whether it is JI, Let or HUJI they have got specialized training and at present most of them are based in SAARC countries. On the other hand, the intelligence reports suggest that criminal groups in Southeast Asia do supply arms and ammunitions to insurgent groups in India's northeast such as ULFA as well as to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka (Acharya, 2006). The ULFA in Assam and other separatist groups are using sophisticated weapons which are regularly supplied through the porous borders at the Myanmar frontiers. It is difficult to recognize various criminal outfits which supply arms to rebels. Again the countries in the region have not been able to stop the source of their funding, which very often comes in the name of welfare activities from inside and outside the country. There are number of West Asian countries which have been sending assistance to promote Mosque and Madrasa activities and it is difficult to exercise surveillance over its expenditure and place them for audit.

With the establishment of ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994, cooperation on security issues was established. It gave ASEAN the advantage to interact with global players on its own turf. Even though there are many analysts who dismiss the Forum as a talking shop, the importance of ARF meetings in bringing nations together in an informal way has helped in diffusing tension. The objectives of the ASEAN Regional Forum were outlined in the First ARF Chairman's Statement (1994), namely: “to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern; and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region.” Both India and Australia are members of this forum. However, it is clear that, ASEAN has not lost its focus that it must establish ASEAN Community which would strengthen the regional organisation so that no external power is able to marginalize its role. ASEAN is moving ahead with closer political, economic and security integration.

For ASEAN countries the close integration with East Asian countries is economically, strategically and politically beneficial. By themselves, they do not have the military or economic capability to play a global role, yet there geo-strategic location, with important sea lanes through which major trade flows, has given especially those that straddle these straits, an extra leverage. For China, Japan South Korea, Australia and New Zealand these are there life lines. Although
the economic giants of East Asia, especially China are looking beyond the ASEAN countries in order to secure energy for their booming economy, this does not adversely impact the ASEAN region which continues to benefit from close economic engagement through the ASEAN +3 resulting in FTA’s and Closer Economic Relations.

ASEAN has evolved sophisticated mechanism to resolve separatist movements and a reference to them would be in order here. They at the outset tried to understand the genesis of secessionist movements and made an effort to effectively contain them through a coordinated action in which national efforts were supported by regional initiatives. Again acceptance of the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries desisted all the partners from supplying weapons to insurgents or provides sanctuaries. In this context, the reference to ASEAN’s two important resolutions, namely, “Declaration of ASEAN Concord”, and “Treaty of Amity and Cooperation” (1976) is important.

It can be observed that the ASEAN has evolved mechanism for conflict resolution and confidence building, which works. They have consensus over matters of regional concern and for issues of sustainable development. South Asians, on the other hand, are left far behind in that endeavour. They always take one step forward and another backward, and hence there is stagnation and underdevelopment. The endeavour to bring gas pipeline from Myanmar to India via Bangladesh or Iran Pakistan and India gas pipeline proposal proved a failure due to the opposition of one or other SAARC partners. The endavour of free trade, upgrading of roadways, highways and railways and other communication network amongst SAARC countries are delayed because of political and strategic differences.

In Southeast Asia, the China factor looms large. India’s growing economic integration with the region is welcomed by the ASEAN countries; they see in India the capability to balance China’s presence as an ‘economic centre and competitor’. Although, China’s economy is much ahead and showed 9.9% growth and is growing very fast. Southeast Asia it is an economic giant and with the signing of “the ASEAN-China Accord in November 2004, the world’s biggest free trade area has been created removing all tariffs for 2 billion people. The tariff cuts that began in 2005 will be completed by 2010 drawing the ASEAN’s combined economies of US $ 1 trillion closer to China’s US $ 1.4 trillion. The two-way trade is expected to surpass $ 100 billion this
year. The outline agreement indicates removal of tariffs on manufactured goods and farm produces and creates a “plan of action” for closer cooperation in services such as transportation, information technology and tourism”. In a recent comment, the managing director of the world’s second largest beer company expressed what many have felt when doing business in India. He stated: “Despite India’s reputation as the world’s biggest democracy where business is booming, we have found it a difficult place to do business compared with China”.

Knowing it has a negative image in Southeast Asia, China has gone out of its way to assuage the perceived fears of ASEAN countries. In other words, China has played by the rules, especially as part of the ASEAN +3 processes. However, in spite of China’s “workable and cooperative relations with its neighbours”, the South China Sea dispute and the Taiwan issue are still regarded as potential flashpoints. Realising the suspicion regarding their earlier behaviour in the South China Sea, China signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. The Agreement states: “The Parties concerned undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.” Earlier, China had signed the Southeast Asia Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in a bid at CBMs.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao’s comments on East Asia Summit “the East Asia summit should respect the desires of the East Asian countries and should be led by East Asian countries” reflected China’s aspirations. China also has the material strength of its extensive economic engagement with the region and growing military capabilities to buttress its claims to do so, but a Chinese insistence in this respect, beyond a limit will arouse hidden apprehensions about China’s possible desire to dominate the region. This may provoke anti-Chinese forces in the region to stoke the smouldering fires of regional rivalries to weaken and sabotage the EAS movement. The EAS, accordingly should avoid the so called “class differences” between “ASEAN+3” and “ASEAN+1”. Malaysian Prime Minister and the host of the summit did well to reiterate that “the East Asia Summit together with the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN+1 process could play a significant role in community building in the region.” The essence of unity lies in aggregating interests and aspirations and not in asserting them. The Summit Declaration, therefore, rightly
emphasised the “principles of equality, partnership, consultation and consensus”. The Declaration also made it clear that the ASEAN remains the “driving force” of the EAS and the community building endeavour will be “consistent with and reinforce the realisation of the ASEAN community”.

Yet another challenge before the EAS is to work faster for bridging economic differences in the region. The EAS was a gathering of rich as well as poor countries, of the faster developing and slow growth economies. The economic divide within the ASEAN, which the former Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong termed as the “digital divide” between the old ASEAN 6 and the new ASEAN 4, namely Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam, is wide and striking. There are also questions of political order (democracy) and human rights that insert divergence in the emerging community. These questions will have to be addressed within the parameters of sovereignty and freedom of internal affairs. Here again ASEAN has evolving mechanisms, which can be improved and implemented in the interests of the whole community.

India looks at the EAS as a firm move in the direction of realising its long cherished dream of building Asian community. India strongly supports ASEAN as core of the EAS as it has been supporting the ASEAN Regional Forum to remain ASEAN driven. India’s Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh made this clear on the eve of his departure to Kuala Lumpur on 13 December 2005 when he described ASEAN as the “experienced driver”. He also emphasised the growing co-operation with the other Asian giant, China, rejecting the speculation that India is interested in containing or balancing China in the region. The emphasis on constructive engagement with China was evident during his meeting in Kuala Lumpur with his Chinese counterpart. India sees the EAS as an Asian arc of advantage. To concretise this perspective, India has committed itself to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region. To fulfill its prevailing and future commitments, India has to reform its economy faster so as to prepare itself for active participation in the Pan-Asian Free Trade Agreement that found echo during the summit. It has also pledged all possible support, ranging from credit lines to building human resource and technological capabilities, to the weaker members of the region. India will welcome the opportunity, as and when it comes, to join the APEC in reinforcing its commitment to the whole region. In playing its positive role in the region, India will be guided by its legitimate
interests in conformity with “peace, stability and prosperity of the region” as a whole, and not by old animosities or new affinities.

The EAS is the first step in the direction of a vision of the Asian people. Through bilateral and multilateral interactions and dialogue on “broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interests and concerns”, the members would “strive to strengthen global norms and universally recognised values”. India’s participation in the EAS is a real opportunity to broaden and deepen its engagement with the emerging Asia.

As Australia and India have reengaged with each other on defence and security matters, the world around them has been transformed in an elemental way. The attacks on the United States on September 11 2001 brought the issue of terrorism to the centre of international security and indeed world politics. India, which had been combating terrorism for much of the last two decades, found its national security impacted upon in contradictory ways by the new global focus on terrorism. Australia, for its part, discovered new vulnerabilities in the aftermath of the October 2002 terrorist bombing in Bali. Thus, terrorism has emerged as the most pressing security concern that Australia and India share.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, terrorism presents a ‘clear and present danger’ to both Australia and India. Furthermore, terrorism is intrinsically inimical to the democratic principles that are the bedrock of politics in both countries, and to which both are firmly committed. Thus, Australia and India have a common interest in working together—in concert with the international community—to combat (i.e., prevent, deter and mitigate) all forms of terrorism. Reflecting the shared security concern, an MOU on Terrorism was signed between the two countries during the Indian External Affairs Minister’s visit to Australia in August 2003. There is much that Australia and India can do together in the field of counter-terrorism; indeed, they have barely scratched the surface of cooperation on this issue-area. Enhanced intelligence sharing, especially actionable intelligence transmitted in real time, is of paramount importance in the counter-terrorism campaigns of both countries. Intelligence sharing can be enhanced, in the first instance, by exchanging police liaison officers. Dialogue between the police forces of both countries, at both the federal/union and state levels, with a view to developing effective counter-terrorism cooperation, would be another important step in the right direction. Regular
consultation on the nature and level of terrorism in regions of common concern, such as South and Southeast Asia, is also essential. Both countries have a common interest in cooperating to break the nexus between organised crime and terrorism, as also in stemming all kinds of resource flows to terrorist organisations. As Australia–India counter-terrorism cooperation matures, enhanced links between the special forces of both countries could also become a possibility.

Clearly, the salience of terrorism as an issue-area in world politics will diminish with the passage of time. Nevertheless, counter-terrorism is likely to remain very high on the security agenda of liberal democracies like Australia and India for a long time to come. The two countries will therefore continue to share this common security concern.

From a geopolitical perspective, the strategic horizons of Australia and India obviously converge in the eastern Indian Ocean. The two countries should therefore find ways to work together as elements of stability in a region that has seen increasing turbulence in recent years. Closer maritime cooperation between Australia and India would thus promote regional stability, safety at sea and a cleaner Indian Ocean. As a first step, discussions should be held between the Royal Australian Navy and the Indian Navy to explore the possibility of joint naval activity in the eastern Indian Ocean, preferably in collaboration with naval forces in Southeast Asia. The establishment of direct communication links between Maritime Commander, Australia and the General/Flag/Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command would be a concrete contribution to regional stability. Going beyond the naval forces of the two countries to maritime policy more broadly, practical cooperation between India’s Department of Ocean Development and the agencies that manage Australia’s Antarctica and Ocean policies is essential and needs to be more fully explored. The eastern Indian Ocean is especially prone to a range of transnational threats that Australia–India maritime cooperation could do much to ameliorate and prevent. For instance, there could be active collaboration between the two countries to combat piracy/terrorism at sea, and also human trafficking/people smuggling in the Indian Ocean region. Australia and India could work toward the creation of mechanisms and procedures for disaster management and environmental protection in the eastern Indian Ocean, particularly with regard to oil spills.
Apart from maritime cooperation, there are other issues on which Australian and Indian interests coincide. For instance, both countries have a common interest in the stability and unity of Indonesia and support the further development of Indonesia's democratic institutions. Both Australia and India support measures to maintain a peaceful transition process in Afghanistan and efforts to bring stability to Iraq and other states in transition. Thus, the two countries could work together—within the Commonwealth, for example—to strengthen security, administration and governance in states in transition. Looking beyond the eastern Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, both Australia and India have a shared interest in promoting multilateral security forums in the Asia Pacific region. In the area of arms control and disarmament, both countries could embark on greater information exchange and sharing of expertise on chemical and biological weapons, including working together to ensure that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are implemented effectively.

Nevertheless, significant issues still remain to be worked out in the bilateral security dialogue. Most important of all, from an Indian perspective, is whether India is likely in the coming years to be considered an integral part of the democratic core of states. If yes, then Australia–India security cooperation should blossom over time into an alliance relationship. If not, India will probably intensify its quest for security self-sufficiency and strategic autonomy, maybe in the overall context of a cooperative security arrangement in the Asia Pacific–Indian Ocean region. While the latter possibility would not necessarily be inimical to Australia's security, it would sharply constrict the possibility of Australia–India security cooperation. Thus, Canberra perhaps has a vested interest in India's entry into the security community of liberal democracies.

The fact that Australia and India have force structures that are so fundamentally different in shape and size is a factor that must be acknowledged. Australia's military has been described as a 'boutique' force—small in size, highly mobile, superbly trained, high-tech and lethal in its performance of certain critical niche tasks. India's military, on the other hand, is one of the world's great 'militaries of mass'—enormous, manpower-intensive; yet, for all that, a highly trained volunteer force with an age-old martial culture and a long tradition of war fighting. How can two military establishments, that are as self-evidently unalike as chalk and cheese, actually cooperate?
In the first place, there are many areas in which the defence establishments and armed forces of the two countries, despite their obvious dissimilarities, share expertise: Special Forces, naval operations and peacekeeping duties are just three of the areas in which useful exchange of training procedures and sharing of operational experience is possible. In areas where the two military establishments are dissimilar, the two sides potentially have even more to learn from the experiences of the other. Thus, the scope for regular consultations on defence planning and force structuring is vast and needs to be thoroughly explored. The increased cooperation between the two countries in the higher education sector could be expanded to include a security focus, particularly in the respective military schools and colleges, and also in partnerships between universities and research institutes. Regular exchange programs between Indian and Australian strategic centers and institutes, with the express purpose of enhancing links and broadening the understanding of each country in the strategic community of the other, need to be set in place. This initiative would have a direct impact in terms of more comprehensive and realistic reporting on each country in the news media of the other. In this respect, commemorating the shared military history of Australia and India in the First and Second World Wars could also be an important 'cementing factor' between the armed forces of the two countries.

Australia and India share an immediate common security concern—terrorism. Their respective strategic horizons, in the eastern Indian Ocean and beyond, are fast converging. Their military establishments—a 'boutique' force and a 'mass' force—are complementary: they have much to learn from the other, both in areas where they share expertise as well as in areas of glaring dissimilarities. There is therefore significant scope for closer strategic and security cooperation between Australia and India.

In the post Cold War period, the interests of Australia and India converged on both trade and security matters. This was mainly due to two factors. First, India's dialogue partnership of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in December 1995 and membership of Asian Regional Forum (ARF) in July 1996, as well as membership of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) brought Australia and India together in a region, where both have trade and security interests. India acknowledged that participation in IOR-ARC has been inspired by the Nehruvian vision of Afro-Asian solidarity, which included Australia.
strategic levels got energised when Prime Minister Howard visited India in 2000, and also with the first India- Australia Strategic Dialogue of 30 August 2001. Since then a number of MOU’s have been signed to expand and enhance economic and defence cooperation.

The key factor underlying India and Australia’s growing ties are based on the realization that both need to review their strategic options in the new political landscape emerging in the region and their shared security interests in the profoundly transformed international strategic environment, especially after 9/11. The safety of the sea-lanes and their choke points like Malacca straits are crucial to both. The search for energy security is another challenge shaping the foreign policy of all major powers in the twenty-first century. India is looking for alternatives sources of energy to deal with its immediate energy needs. The South China Sea dispute and the Taiwan issue are still regarded as potential flashpoints. In fact, it is a complex region facing tumultuous changes and future uncertainties that is having a significant bearing on the security relations of India and Australia, gives credence to variables that are essential for building linkages with likeminded countries. Pragmatism has contributed to India and Australia making a determined effort at expanding their bilateral relations.

India and Australia have converging strategic horizons; their strategic interests meet in the eastern Indian Ocean. In confronting terrorism, both face a common security threat, even though it does not always emanate from a common source. Finally, the two countries have complementary force structures: there is much that their militaries can learn from each other. India and Australia have converging strategic horizons; their strategic interests meet in the eastern Indian Ocean.

Key factors which could lead to further commonality of interests between Australia and India in Southeast Asia can be summed up as following:

• The rise of China, and the reshaping of Asia through the development of new regional structures such as the East Asia Summit.

• The future role of the United States in the region.

• The stability of Indonesia which is of considerable importance to both the countries.