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Asia is headed toward an uncertain and potentially volatile future in the maritime arena. The two rising Asian powers, China and India, dependent as they are on seaborne commerce for their economic well-being, have clearly set their eyes on the high seas. Yoshihara and Holmes offer a stark warning that many strategists in Beijing and New Delhi appear spellbound by the more militant visions of sea power. Indeed, both powers appear poised to develop the capacity to control the sea lanes through which the bulk of their commerce flows. If they enter the nautical environment with such a martial mindset, Asia could very well fall victim to regional rivalries that give rise to a vicious cycle of competition.

Yoshihara and Holmes provide the first examination of the simultaneous rise of two naval powers and the potential impact that such an oceanic reconfiguration of power in Asia could have on long-term regional stability. Their study analyzes the maritime interests and strategies of the littoral states in Asia as they prepare for the expected reordering of nautical affairs. This long-overdue assessment revisits underlying assumptions that have prevailed among strategy-makers and provides a concrete policy framework for reducing the risk of confrontation in Asian waters.

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Editorial Review

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