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Britain has a major role to play as the Indo-Pacific enters a new era

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The pace of modernisation in the Indo-Pacific region continues to increase, bringing both opportunities and challenges to the countries of Asia. Indeed, when I first began discussing the concept of the “Indo-Pacific,” in 2007, the region was far less integrated than today.

Over the past generation, millions of ordinary Asians have been lifted out of poverty while the nations of the region increasingly have taken their place in the global economic and political order. As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, the Indo-Pacific is now truly part of the wider world, as well as a region that more and more shares a common identity at the “confluence of the two seas,” as I put it over a decade ago.

Stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific will only be assured when all nations seek to work together, sharing common aims, and enjoying the fruits of common efforts. Capitals from Tokyo to New Delhi, and from Beijing to Canberra have great opportunities to resolve common challenges, so as to ensure a bright future.

It is vital that we defend the rules and norms that have helped enrich the countries of the Indo-Pacific over the past two generations. In doing so, we should not only build on

the efforts of all Asians over the past several decades, but welcome new partners to this cause.

That is why I warmly welcome today's report from the Policy Exchange Indo-Pacific Commission. In charting out a path of renewed British engagement in the region, this report points the way towards a truly globally co-operative era. As a leading global power, Britain has a major role to play in the Indo-Pacific.

As the world's sixth-largest economy, increased trade between the UK and Indo-Pacific nations will contribute to overall economic growth. Britain can also work with countries throughout the region on upholding democratic values and supporting the multinational institutions that have developed in recent years. On the security front, the British military, and the Royal Navy in particular, will be a welcome presence in the seas of the Indo-Pacific.

The partnerships between the UK and Indo-Pacific nations envisioned in the report will help usher in a new era of innovative thinking, expansion of economic opportunity, and strengthening of stability. I strongly endorse its findings and proposals and look forward to their adoption by Britain and its new partners.

Shinzo Abe was prime minister of Japan 2006-7 and 2012-20