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Sommario/riassunto	China seeks geopolitical space in the Western Pacific. The spearhead of China's expansion is the navy which is now the world's largest with an expanding carrier force to enforce its maritime claims in the South China Sea and to push the US back from the Western Pacific. In view of China's constricted maritime geography, Southeast Asia is the one place that can provide access for its expanding navy allowing China to expand in different directions. Southeast Asia is a geopolitical pivot for China. Control of this region would deprive the US of a positional advantage in the Western Pacific, and would separate Japan from India, nullifying the Quad grouping which brought together the US, Japan, Australia and India to counter Chinese expansionism. Because of its

strategic value, Southeast Asia has become a key region in the rivalry between China and the US with its partners in the Quad. Whether China can achieve control of this region is of great concern to the US and the Quad as it relates to Chinese long-term ambitions and its challenge not just to the region but to the global liberal order. Leszek Buszynski is Honorary Professor with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra Australia. He has published widely on the security of the Asia Pacific and the theme of regional geopolitics. He is the author of *Geopolitics and the Western Pacific: China, Japan and the US* (Routledge 2019), with Do Thanh Hai, he was editor of the *South China Sea: From Regional Maritime Dispute to Geostrategic Competition*, (Routledge 2020), and also with Do Thanh Hai, *Maritime issues and Regional Order in the Indo Pacific* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021). He is the author of "Australia's Geopolitics and the South China Sea", in Gordon Houlding et al (editor), *Security, Strategy, and Military Dynamics in the South China Sea*, (Bristol University Press, 2021) and "The Geopolitics of Southeast Asia" in Zak Cope (editor) "The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Geopolitics" (Palgrave Macmillan 2024) He was also general editor of *The Handbook of Japanese Security*, (MHM Press, Tokyo 2023).
