

STRING OF PEARLS AND NECKLACE OF DIAMONDS: SINO-INDIAN GEO-STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Jahanzaib Mengal*
Muhammad Nadeem Mirza†

Abstract

The Indian Ocean holds immense vitality for its strategic trade routes and choke points. China and India are Asia's two rising powers, who aim to dominate the Indian Ocean to satisfy their regional and global ambitions. This competitiveness for regional influence has resulted in geo-strategic competition in the Indian Ocean. China, through the strategy of 'String of Pearls', has increased its naval footprint by building ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. India has similarly responded with an alternative counterbalancing strategy 'Necklace of Diamonds' by deepening its relations and partnership with Iran, Oman, Singapore, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and other regional countries. This qualitative exploratory comparative case study finds that: China through its String of Pearls strategy intends to achieve great power status, boost its economy, and address its security concerns, especially those related with the Malacca Dilemma. India, through its Necklace of Diamonds strategy, is trying to counterbalance Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, India intends to enhance its political and economic clout – being the rising power of the region.

Keywords: *Indian Ocean, String of Pearls, Necklace of Diamonds, Sea lines of Communication, Sea Power*

*Graduate International Relations, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad.

† Faculty member at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad Email: mnadeemmirza@qau.edu.pk (Corresponding Author).

INTRODUCTION

‘Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas’ (Alfred Mahan, quoted by Gupta, 1987, p.195). China and India, which are Asia’s two rising powers, aim to dominate this region of water to satisfy their regional and global ambitions. Both states have intentions to increase their strategic influence to secure and challenge their competitor/s. This competition for regional influence between India and China has adversely resulted in geo-strategic competition in the Indian Ocean.

China does not acknowledge the existence of such strategic competition with India in the Indian Ocean Region [IOR], and India also does not confirm such rivalry with China. However, China’s strategic competition can be demonstrated by its growing naval presence in the Indian Ocean and developing military and strategic ties with regional countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The Indian leadership takes the Chinese assertive presence in the Indian Ocean as a strategic challenge. India has, similarly, responded with an alternative and balancing strategy, ‘Necklace of Diamonds’, to counter the Chinese initiatives by deepening its relations and partnership with Sri Lanka, Iran, Myanmar, and other regional states.

The demand for crude oil in China increased twofold between 1995 and 2005 (Kaplan, 2009); and also for the next twenty years the demand will increase manifold. China imports, on average, 10 million barrels of crude oil in a day and during peak times it increases by 12 million barrels per day (Collins, 2016). India is also following China for security and regional ambitions. India is already enlarging its trade links and economic activities in the IOR—for protecting its interests and extending its influence (Kaplan, 2009). Even though India and China do not admit the presence of a strategic competition between them, their initiatives and postures do indicate their strategic rivalry and competition in the Indian Ocean.

This study tries to answer the following questions: Why do India and China quest for dominance in the Indian Ocean Region? What are the strategies of String of Pearls and Necklace of Diamonds? This is a qualitative comparative exploratory case study, for the conduct of which mostly secondary data is utilised.

MAHAN'S CONCEPTIONS OF SEA POWER

Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of 'Sea Power' is used for the conduct of this study to understand the importance of the Indian Ocean and the Sino-Indian rivalry in the region. 'Modern' naval thinking began during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan. His writings' primary focus was the study of sea power as a whole and the naval strategy (Paret, Craig, & Gilbert, 1986). Mahan's book '*The Influence of Sea Power upon History*' explores sea power during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with many different factors of achieving sea power. His inspected works are relevant from the British conflicts with the French from the 1660s to the Napoleonic era of wars which help to illustrate the impact of sea power upon the events of history and the success of nations. Britain's prevalence in the maritime domain during the nineteenth century was a vivid example of Mahan's Sea power theory. In each conflict between France and Britain, from the period of 1668 to the Napoleonic wars, the command of sea power through naval domination was important which determined the upshots of the conflict (Vego, 2009).

Alfred Mahan while demonstrating the functions of the navies emphasizes that the control of maritime commerce by the command of the sea is a major lesson in history that has helped Britain's triumph in the continental wars. Mahan outlined six general elements of sea power that help a nation to project naval power: the geographic location of the country, its physical configuration, country's expansion (extent) of the seashore (coastline), the number of population, and the character of government (Vego, 2009).

CHINA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

China's exponential economic growth over the past four decades has been rapid while making it the world's second-largest economy after the US. China, over the years, has made manufacturing and exporting a rudimentary asset for its exponential growth. However, its GDP has increased from \$1.2 trillion in 2000 to \$ 17.73 trillion in 2021 (WB, 2021).

China has geo-strategic interests and concerns in the Indian Ocean to protect its trade and sea line of communication (SLOC). Its significant apprehension in the Indian Ocean is to protect the maritime trade routes from where the oil and gas supplies pass—which the Chinese economy depends upon. Beijing is cognizant of potential dangers from different state-actors and non-state actors through the straits from where its maritime trade passes. Approximately forty per cent of China's oil imports pass through the 'Hormuz chokepoint', at the gateway of the Persian Gulf, and around eighty-two per cent of oil traverse the Malacca Strait. This 'Strait' indicates China's 'Malacca Dilemma' (Lanteigne, 2008). Chinese strategists and policymakers are apprehensive that in case of a war any adversary might be inveigled to interdict the Chinese maritime trade from the Malacca chokepoint.

China's increasing growth may significantly enhance its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean Region in recent years. China is mitigating the strategic vulnerabilities in the IOR—particularly the oceanic trade and SLOCs: first, by building up its naval capabilities to project in the IOR; second, by achieving the right access to ports or evolving its relations with several Indian Ocean states; third, with the alternative routes—overland roads from Southern China to the Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2014). However, there is also the view that by the strategy of 'String of Pearls', China is systematically extending its naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region which could endanger Indian interests.

CHINA'S OUTREACH IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

To resolve the 'Malacca Dilemma' Chinese President Hu Jintao, in 2004, stretched out the strategy of a "new historic mission" that necessitated Chinese marine forces to be placed in offshore waters for major military tasks. It signified China's determination of building a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Ever since, China has embarked to expand its naval presence in Indian Ocean Region by linking a 'patronage of network' together in the Indian Ocean littoral states (Kostecka, 2011). China has started a project of ports development and diplomatic support in littoral states like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka in its Maritime Silk Road Initiative all of which has affected India's strategic interests and has caused apprehension of encirclement in the Indian Ocean.

China's String of Pearls: A Foray into The Indian Ocean

Over the years, China has successfully built up a patronage network of various Asian littoral states through different strategic port builds, multiple investment programs and the establishment of diplomatic ties. However, this patronage of networks [String of Pearls Strategy] has brought China's marine forces into the offshore waters of South Asia, particularly in the Indian Ocean.

The term 'String of Pearls' was first coined by Booz Allen, in 2005, in his report named 'Energy Futures in Asia'. Booz anticipated the Chinese naval expansion by the building of infrastructural projects and different investments in littoral states of Asia to increase its naval clout in IOR. However, over the years, Booz's analysis has been taken as an analytical tool to dissect and explain China's evolving interests and assertiveness [China's plan to install military facilities and intelligence stations] in South Asian littoral regions. China has developed, over the years, closer and more diplomatic relations with the coastal states of the Indian Ocean Region—however, to expand its naval clout. The 'String of Pearls' is mainly aimed to expand China's economic, political, and diplomatic clout in the Indian Ocean Region.

And each 'Pearl' in this string signifies a domain of power which China is having to secure in the Indian Ocean Region.

China, in the years, has heavily invested in the viable ports of Bangladesh (Chittagong), Myanmar (Sittwe and Kyaukpaya), Pakistan (Gwadar) and Sri Lanka (Hambantota and Colombo). The propagators of this narrative sense that with the modernization of the Chinese Navy, these commercial ports would be turned into permanent military naval bases. Moreover, it is also held of the opinion that with such purported 'encirclement' with bases, China might in a future conflict threaten Indian interests, put the international Sea of Line of Communications at risk and might endanger the U.S oceanic superiority (Kostecka, 2011).

Gwadar Port (Pakistan)

Gwadar is the strategic imperative of the 'Pearls' due to its vital location. It provides a substitute overland transportation route from the Indian Ocean to China. A huge number of Chinese maritime trade pass from the Strait of Hormuz on way towards the Strait of Malacca; however, this maritime route of transportation causes a huge loss of time and has vital security risks for China. China has a greater concern to reach the Arabian Sea [Indian Ocean] via mainland Pakistan to avoid the security risks and re-compensate the time-absorbing path.

The construction of the Gwadar Port is strategically vital for China because the Port is very near to the major oil supply route—some seventy km away from the Iranian border and four hundred km away from the Strait of Hormuz. Many Indian analysts have raised concerns about China's presence in Gwadar because it would create a 'Hormuz Dilemma' for India—from where most of India's trade passes (Khurana, 2008).

Gwadar provides China with a significant location to watch the US naval movement in the Persian Gulf, India at the Arabian Sea, and the future U.S-India maritime cooperation. The building of Gwadar Port

would serve China in three ways:

- It would further strengthen China and Pakistan's alliance and economic bond.
- It would assure the safety of energy and trade [bypassing the Malacca Dilemma].
- It would emerge as 'a regional hub port' connecting China and Central Asia with rest of the world (Malik, 2016).

Hambantota Port (Sri Lanka)

China's acquisition of the Hambantota Port in 2017 is crucial due to their strategic location. Sri Lanka's location is very significant for China because the island country is located on the route of the world's busiest shipping lanes. The Hambantota project was initiated in 2008 and in December 2017, China took the Port for a 99-year lease as the country was not able to pay the debts.

Chittagong Port (Bangladesh)

In Bangladesh, China has also invested heavily in the Chittagong Port located in the Bay of Bengal. The port would help China to connect the south-western province of Yunnan via road and rail links (Tariq, 2016).

Bangladesh, for China, also holds significant worth due to its vital location in the Bay of Bengal and its proximity to India. The juxtaposition of Bangladesh between India, China and Southeast Asian countries not only makes it a significant location in South Asia but the wider geostrategic aspect of Asia.

The port would help China to gain electronic intelligence in the Indian Ocean Region and to monitor India's assertiveness in its backyard with the help of Hambantota Port (Pant, 2009).

Kyaukpyu Port (Myanmar)

Over the years, Chinese investments and infrastructural projects in Myanmar have gathered steam. China has invested in the ports of Myanmar. In the Rakhine State, China has made great investments in the Kyaukpyu port—located in the Bay of Bengal [IOR]. Burma [Myanmar] plays an imperative role because it helps China to get access to the Bay of Bengal, and the interior regions of India. China is evolving an energy and trade passage from Kunming, China, to the Kyaukpyu port—that is on the way to be one of the significant energy and trade passages to IOR for China.

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR INDIA

The Indian Ocean Region is taken by Indian thinkers as India's backyard and its natural sphere of influence (Brewster, 2010). It is also been viewed that India in this region acts as the ultimate leader and the uppermost influence—the single most ocean or the region in the world named after the country (Brewster, 2018; Jaishankar, 2018). The Indian thinkers are of the view that this part of the ocean [Indian Ocean] is 'India's Ocean' (Scott, 2006). Since the independence, Indian leaders and thinkers distinguish the formation of complete control over the after-named ocean as its 'manifest destiny'.

Over the years, Indian maritime strategists have overlooked the oceanic dominancy (Chaudhuri, 2015). But, in recent years, the focus of maritime thinking has shifted to give the country a 'mental map' with greater emphasis on maritime precedence—with principle concern on Indian oceanic trade, protection of Economic Exclusive Zones [EEZ], and the expansion of Indian strategic depth in the IOR.

Apart from its geo-strategic importance, the Indian Ocean is also significant to India for energy security. Same as China, the oil demand has surged the country, over the years, along with its growing economy and population. The consumption of oil has increased, and the resources of the country are insufficient to meet the demands, so

it has become an energy-importing country. India has become the third largest oil-importing country in the world [2019] and its import oil dependency is 80% [for crude oil] and 45% for natural gas [LNG] (Government of India, 2019). Same to China, India is greatly dependent on the marine trade that passes from the international shipping lanes across the IOR. Most of the energy required [80% of crude oil] is imported through the Indian Ocean Region—which makes it a vital region for India to monitor and dominate.

India which considers itself the preponderate state in the IOR is apprehensive over the Chinese increasing assertiveness in the Indian Ocean Region and its close alignment with littoral states of the ocean through various infrastructural and investment programs (Khurana, 2008). Many of the Indian maritime strategists and policymakers have stated China's relation and its port investments as posed against India: The Chinese oceanic 'encirclement' of India or to keep India strategically lopsided and isolated in its sphere of influence. The strategists are of the view that the Chinese increasing presence in the IOR [India's backyard] is a vital threat to India's aspiration in the region, and the ports that China is heavily investing at the littoral of the ocean would not only be used for the maritime trade or other commercial activities but also major military purposes. For the purpose to alleviate the Chinese strategic depth and strategy, India has taken to counterbalance China's expanding impact in the region and uphold and merge the Indian arch in the region.

Over the increasing Chinese naval footprint and its assertiveness in the Indian Ocean Region, India has taken up a counterbalance strategy to balance, deepen and broaden its cooperation with countries like the USA, Iran, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Indonesia as a part of its counterbalance policy against China (Chaudhuri, 2015).

INDIA'S STRATEGY OF 'NECKLACE OF DIAMONDS'

Necklace of Diamonds is a counterbalance strategy initiated by India. Indian former foreign secretary first time coined the term 'Necklace of Diamonds' in 2011 (AU, 2022). This strategy aims to thwart and counterbalance China's increasing assertiveness and its build-up of ports and other infrastructural projects with the littoral states of IOR considered a direct threat and 'encirclement' of India in its very vicinity (Ramachandran, 2007). However, over the years, India has embarked to modernize its naval and maritime strategy to counterbalance the Chinese strategy of String of Pearls (Scott, 2006). Under the Modi administration, India has openly advocated the Indian Ocean, Look East Policy, as its backyard and has taken to build its years-old relations with littoral states and strategic partnerships with key littoral countries—Iran, Singapore, Indonesia, US and Japan (Brewster, 2018).



Source: Sheershoo Deb (2020, November 11). Charbahar Port & Its Strategic Importance. DefenceXP - Indian Defence Network.

Chabahar, Iran

Iran is strategically vital for India. For many reasons, Iran is important either for its energy security or for its commercial interests, or for counterbalancing China. The turbulent relations of India with Pakistan and China make it vital for India to counterbalance it with Iran and have access to the untapped markets and routes to Afghanistan and Central Asia—for energy goods and other commercial interests. Under the regime of Narendra Modi, India has attempted to build up its bilateral relations with Iran and has stepped up other infrastructural projects.

To counterbalance the China-Pakistan cooperation in the Indian Ocean [CPEC and Gawadar], and to increase India's strategic vitality with the development of:

- Chabahar Port of Iran
- Conjoining it with Afghanistan to expand it to Central Asia.

India [in 2016] pledged to invest worth of \$500 million in the port. The location of the port at the doorstep of the Hormuz strait would help India to counter any posed challenges and threats.

Trincomalee, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is in the backyard of India. The littoral state of Sri Lanka is the nearest state to India—for which the distance between them is only thirty nautical miles.

In recent years, Sri Lanka has been more China-centric and has joined the Chinese Maritime Silk Road (MTSR). China has heavily invested in Sri Lanka because of its proximity to India and its strategic location in the Indian Ocean. China has made Sri Lanka a part of its 'String of Pearls' strategy which India views as an encirclement threat. China has built up ports like Hambantota and Colombo and the Hambantota port for a 99-year lease.

Under the Modi regime, the maritime outlook of India changed. India has started to build up its relations with neighbours and key strategic countries to counterbalance the Chinese initiatives in IOR. In 2016, India signed bilateral agreements with Sri Lanka to improve its relations. India has also planned to build up the Trincomalee Port of Sri Lanka to counterbalance the Chinese port of Hambantota. India signed a Trincomalee Oil Tank deal with Sri Lanka which is heralded as a landmark achievement (Macan-Markar, 2022). India is looking forward to making the port an opportunity to expand its influence in Sri Lanka – thus limiting China’s influence therein.

Sittwe and Dawai Ports, Myanmar

The littoral state of Myanmar is one of the salient countries, at the doorsteps of the Bay of Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands which proves strategically vital for India. It is one of the most important states for India to counterbalance the Chinese strategy of String of Pearls. The Indian analysts believe that if China can completely penetrate the littoral state of Myanmar, then it will be able to completely contain India which makes Myanmar a ‘Chinese client state’ (Than, 2003).

India has already developed Myanmar’s Sittwe Port (Bhaumik, 2020) and over the years, it has also shown greater interest in Myanmar’s port of Dawai (Khalid & Gul, 2017). And has embarked on further tightening its relations and strategic partnership. Myanmar is part of India’s counterbalancing strategy of China’s String of Pearls and its inroad ambitions in the littoral state.

Duqm, Oman

Under Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s tenure, India has embarked to widen its footprint in the Indian Ocean. As a part of the counterbalancing strategy, India has gained the access to the strategically vital port of Duqm, Oman which India aims to use for its military purposes (Roy, 2018).

During Modi's visit to the region, the deal was finalized which will give India access to the port of Duqm located on the southern tip of Oman. However, the port is strategically vital for India which will give it easy access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Strategically, the port can be India's crown in the jewel of the Indian Ocean. Its proximity is very close to India's Chabahar port and also holds an advantageous position from the Assumption Islands of Seychelles and Agalega in Mauritius—while on the whole making India's assertive marine security roadmap. The port can be used by India to counter China's String of Pearls (Basak, 2022).

Assumption Islands, Seychelles

The Assumption Islands are located in the Indian Ocean in the north of Madagascar. Seychelles is India's closest strategic partner after Mauritius and has signed various MoUs in 2015 including defence pacts. India's access to the Assumption Islands might give India a leverage point in the Indian Ocean Region. And India has embarked to build naval bases at the Islands of Assumption (Revi, 2020, 2021). Besides Assumption, India also has been trying to develop strong relations with Seychelles.

Sabang, Indonesia

In 2018, months after Narendra Modi visits Indonesia, Indian naval vessels visit the port of Sabang. Modi's visit to the region of Indonesia enhanced India's footprint in the littoral state and further boosted India's bilateral partnership with Indonesia (Gurjar, 2022). The visit crystallized and revealed India's growing attention in the Indian Ocean Region and gave access to the port at the tip of the Strait of Malacca (Panda, 2018; Shekhar, 2020).

Changi, Singapore

In 2018, the Indian premier Narendra Modi signed a bilateral agreement with Singapore for naval cooperation. The agreement will allow the Indian navy for military and logistical support at the port

and refuelling (EurAsian Times Desk, 2020). The Changi port will give India a vital position in its strategy of “Necklace of Diamonds” due to its strategic location. The port is located at the doorstep of the South China Sea and in the backyard of the Strait of Malacca.

SINO-INDIAN GEO-STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Over the past years, strategic consolidation has become a common theme between India and China in marine waters. Spreading from the northern part of the Indian Ocean to the Western part of the water of this ocean is flecked with the deployment of navy and maritime competition by India and China (Brewster, 2018).

Marine Dynamics of India and China

Over the past decades, India and China conflict and hostility have remained on land. As India and China have opened up their doors to world markets and global commerce, their economies have also exponentially increased, which has compelled them to gaze their eyes on maritime trade and commerce. However, this has also increased their dependency on marine trade. Both countries have recognized the significance of marine force and have established different strategic ports and linkages in the Indian Ocean to protect their sea line of communication (SLOC) and have uninterrupted access to energy from oil-rich countries of the Middle East. For this reason, both, Beijing and New Delhi, have taken the path to rebuilding their marine strategies and have sketched out a modernization plan to build a ‘blue-water navy’ which can perform from offshore waters for a longer period (KILIÇ & KAYA, 2017). Whenever China’s marine security interests bear down on India’s, there is a linear upsurge between both marine forces which leads them to a geo-strategic competition in the Indian Ocean.

THE SHIFTING OF STATUS QUO IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

The Chinese posture in the Indian Ocean has resulted in two major challenges that have altered the status quo of the marine theatre of the Ocean. The first one is the regular development of Chinese submarines for the 'anti-piracy operation' in the Gulf of Aden which unveiled Chinese intention for a future marine force and naval domination. This move of China made India apprehensive about Beijing's intentions for Indian Ocean Region. However, the second one was the installation of Chinese first naval base in Djibouti in 2017 which proved tangible evidence that the Chinese investments in the littoral states' ports can also be used for future logistical and military networks in the Indian Ocean.

India's Countermove to China's Proactivism in the Indian Ocean

India's geographical location provides advantages to it and its central position in the Ocean. In recent years, India has embarked on a friendly environment with the littoral states of the Ocean. The Indian Navy and its marine strategists hold the view that India provides net security to the Ocean—protecting the country from foreign factors and protecting the major sea line of communications (SCOL) and chokepoints of the Indian Ocean Region. With the China factor, India has taken up to improve its relations with littoral states of the Ocean and its marine dominance awareness (MDA). It has maintained closer marine cooperation with countries that are apprehensive of Chinese naval presence in the Ocean (KILIÇ & KAYA, 2017).

With their geo-strategic competition, both countries have made efforts to arm themselves with new technologies and equipment, this Sino-Indian marine competition and rivalry in the Indian Ocean bring a major concern about the upcoming hostility between them in the Ocean.

CONCLUSION

In the coming decades, the geopolitical environment of the Indian Ocean may unfold in different ways, and it will have a greater impact on international politics. India and China's increasing reliance on trade from the Indian Ocean and the security to protect their Sea Line of Communications (SLOC) have compelled them to increase their strategic influence in the IOR. Both countries have intentions to increase their strategic influence to secure and challenge their competitor. This competitiveness for great power status between India and China has adversely resulted in geo-strategic competition in the Indian Ocean.

China's strategy of 'String of Pearls' aims to build strategic ports with key littoral states of the Indian Ocean. This strategy of China is twofold: Firstly, it serves China's security challenges and secondly, it also quenches China's intention of great-power status. For security, it gives alternative route access to China to secure the uninterrupted flow of seaborne trade. Through this strategy China will be in a position to station its military forces in the ports in order to address the 'Malacca Dilemma'. Through this strategy, China will achieve a greater political hold in the Indian Ocean Region that will be of its geopolitical advantage. It will place China in a political and strategic advantageous position in the IOR.

China's proactive diplomacy with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean is a clear indication that it aims to control and dominate the strategic environment of the Indian Ocean. However, India which is apprehensive about the Chinese initiatives and strategy of String of Pearls—has embarked on counterbalancing strategies like the 'Act East Policy', 'Neighbourhood First Policy' and the policy of 'Necklace of Diamonds'. Though India is facing some problems in realising its 'Necklace of Diamonds' strategy, yet it aims to counterbalance the Chinese increasing naval footprint and its growing outreach in the Indian Ocean and to deepen India's clout, both economically and politically, in the Indian Ocean Region. Both the strategies of India

and China and their growing naval footprint in the Indian Ocean promise a geo-strategic competition in the Indian Ocean. This might deepen security dilemmas and also alter the world's maritime politics.

REFERENCES

- AU. (2022, August 2). India's "Necklace of Diamonds" Strategy. Air University. Retrieved from <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Office-of-Sponsored-Programs/Research/Article-Display/Article/3113633/indias-necklace-of-diamonds-strategy/> (Accessed: November 26, 2022)
- Basak, S. (2022, February 2). How Is India's Access to Oman's Duqm Port Linked to China's Maritime Schemes? The Quint. Retrieved from <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/how-india-access-oman-duqm-port-china-maritime-schemes> (Accessed: November 24, 2022)
- Bhaumik, S. (2020). The India-Myanmar Kaladan Project: Vision and Reality. Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher (TOAEP), *Policy Brief Series No. 106*.
- Brewster, D. (2010). An Indian Sphere of Influence in the Indian Ocean? *Security Challenges*, 6(3), 1–20.
- Brewster, D. (2014). Beyond the 'String of Pearls': Is there really a Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean? *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 10(2), 133–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2014.922350>
- Brewster, D. (2018). *India and China at Sea: Competition for naval dominance in the Indian Ocean*. Oxford University Press.
- Chaudhuri, P. P. (2015, January 10). Churning of the Indian Ocean. Hindustan Times. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/11091280/_Churning_of_the_Indian_Ocean_Hindustan_Times_review_of_Indias_Ocean (Accessed: December 10, 2022)

- Collins, G. (2016). *China's Evolving Oil Demand: Slowing Overall Growth, Gasoline Replacing Diesel as Demand Driver, Refined Product Exports Rising Substantially*. Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.
- EurAsian Times Desk. (2020, July 15). From Singapore's Changi Naval Base to Oman's Duqm Port, How Is India Countering Chinese String of Pearls? Retrieved from <https://eurasianimes.com/from-singapores-changi-naval-base-to-omans-duqm-port-how-is-india-countering-chinese-string-of-pearls/> (Accessed: October 14, 2022)
- Government of India. (2019). Data. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Retrieved from http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Energy%20Statistics%202019-finall.pdf (Accessed: June 06, 2022)
- Gupta, P. S. (1987). The Indian Ocean in World Politics: Reflections On Its Future. *India Quarterly*, 43(3-4), 195-212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097492848704300301>
- Gurjar, S. (2022, July 1). Why is India Enhancing its Engagement with Indonesia and Vietnam? India Narrative. Retrieved from <https://www.indianarrative.com/opinion-news/why-is-india-enhancing-its-engagement-with-indonesia-and-vietnam-37346.html> (Accessed: September 02, 2022)
- India-Sri Lanka ties: Relations improved in 2016, but China's influence a cause for concern. (2016, December 23). First Post. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpost.com/world/india-sri-lanka-ties-relations-improved-in-2016-but-chinas-influence-a-cause-for-concern-3170374.html> (Accessed: November 11, 2022)

- Jaishankar, D. (2018). Review of “India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean” by David Brewster. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 40(2), 346–348.
- Kaplan, R. D. (2009). Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean. *Foreign Affairs*, 88(2), 16–32.
- Khalid, I., & Gul, A. (2017). Indian Response to Chinese String of Pearls Doctrine. *Global Political Review*, 2(1), 27–35.
- Khurana, G. S. (2008). China’s ‘String of Pearls’ in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications. *Strategic Analysis*, 32(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160801886314>
- KILIÇ, F., & KAYA, T. Ö. (2017). Sino-Indian Strategic Rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region. *Insan ve Toplum*, 7(2), 155–172.
- Kostecka, D. J. (2011). PLACES AND BASES: The Chinese Navy’s Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean. *Naval War College Review*, 64(1), 59–78.
- Lanteigne, M. (2008). China’s Maritime Security and the “Malacca Dilemma”, *Asian Security*, 4(2), 143–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799850802006555>
- Macan-Markar, M. (2022, January 28). India gains foothold in Sri Lanka with Trincomalee oil tank deal. Nikkei Asia. Retrieved from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/India-gains-foothold-in-Sri-Lanka-with-Trincomalee-oil-tank-deal> (Accessed: March 22, 2022)
- Malik, A. R. (2016). Impact of Gwadar Port on the Economy of Pakistan under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, In M. M. Khan, A. R. Malik, S. Ijaz, & U. Farwa *China Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Game Changer* (Eds.) Islamabad: The Institute of Strategic Studies.

- Panda, A. (2018, July 17). India Makes Moves at Indonesia's Strategic Sabang Port. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/india-makes-moves-at-indonesias-strategic-sabang-port/> (Accessed: September 16, 2022)
- Pant, H. V. (2009). India in the Indian Ocean: Growing Mismatch Between Ambitions and Capabilities. *Pacific Affairs*, 82(2), 279–297. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2009822279>
- Paret, P., Craig, G. A., & Gilbert, F. (Eds.). (1986). *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Princeton University Press.
- Ramachandran, S. (2007). China moves into India's back yard. *Asia Times*, 13.
- Revi, V. (2020). Seychelles and Assumption Island project: Another test for India. Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/seychelles-assumption-island-project-another-test-for-india-66551/> (Accessed: March 22, 2022).
- Revi, V. (2021). India's approach towards Seychelles in the Indian Ocean Region. Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-approach-towards-seychelles-in-the-indian-ocean-region/> (Accessed: March 20, 2022).
- Roy, S. (2018). India gets access to strategic Oman port of Duqm for military use, Chabahar-Gwadar in sight. *Indian Express*, 13.
- Scott, D. (2006). India's 'Grand Strategy' for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 13(2), 97–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439000601029048>

- Shekhar, V. (2020, August 20). The Sabang and Aceh-Andamans Initiatives: Beyond Base, Access and Balancing. National Maritime Foundation. Retrieved from <https://maritimeindia.org/the-sabang-and-aceh-andamans-initiatives-beyond-base-access-and-balancing/> (Accessed: October 11, 2022)
- Tariq, S. (2016). Sino-Indian Security Dilemma in the Indian Ocean: Revisiting the 'String of Pearls' Strategy. *Regional Studies*, 34(3), 3–28.
- Than, T. M. M. (2003). Myanmar and China: A special relationship? *Southeast Asian Affairs*, (1), 189–210.
- Vego, M. (2009). *Naval classical thinkers and operational art*. Naval War College Newport United States.
- WB. (2021). China. World Bank Data. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/china> (Accessed: December 13, 2021).