

Pakistan-China Strategic Relations in the Context of Geopolitical Dynamics of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

■ DOI: 10.31703/gsssr.2022(VII-I),01

■ URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2022\(VII-I\),01](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2022(VII-I),01)

■ Vol. VII, No. I (Winter 2022)

■ Pages: 1 – 12

■ p-ISSN: 2708-2121

■ e-ISSN: 2708-3616

Sumaira Rehman *

Rana Eijaz Ahmad †

Abstract: *The international system is strongly influenced by economic globalization in the 21st century. During this century, the emergence of regionalism is strengthened, and regional alliances are considered as security to the so-called modern "Cliché of Globalization." In the current study, relations between Pakistan and China are discussed in light of enhanced regionalization in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). There are three regional blocks in Asia; Far Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The phenomenon has strengthened due to rapid geopolitical changes after the initiation of BRI and CPEC by China. Both Pakistan and China had developed mutually beneficial cooperation as a basic principle to observe globalization, contribute to in global affairs, and to establish relations. In this study, I would make an endeavor to analyze the challenging situation that arose in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) after China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is going to become functional in the foreseeable future..*

Key Words: CPEC, Maritime, Indian Ocean, QUAD, Geopolitics

Introduction

Integration of regions is considered globalization's alternative, or it can be taken as a substitute for globalization. In this century, everything is reforming itself. The most important factors, which are supporting regionalism to control the world, are the capital, consumers, communication, and corporations (Ohmae, 1996). Henry Kissinger has already described the changing nature of international politics. The states' relations are not in a stagnant position, and there is no permanent enemy in the international system. States' relations are strongly influenced by the international system, and all states are actors, and changing environment of global politics changes the relations from friends to foes and vice versa. A new era is an era of globalization; states are economically interdependent on each other in order to maintain and stable their

position in the system (Rizwan Naseer, 2012). The post-9/11 era led to important changes in China and Pakistan's South Asia policy. China's passive posture during the Indo-Pak crisis of the 1990s has exhibited a unique interest in peaceful conduct in South Asia in the post-9/11 period. The major concerns about the post-9/11 Indo-Pak tension have served a proactive share at the diplomatic level in order to ensure peace in South Asia (Siddiqi, 2014).

In 2013, China started the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, which is considered the 21st century's Marshall Plan. It will not only include the development of road infrastructure but also includes the expansion of Sea routes. China's quest for greater maritime influence and the security dimension of the Maritime Silk Route (MSR) can be developed along various thematic contours.

* Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: Sumararehman.003@gmail.com

† Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Punjab, Pakistan.

Adoption of Mercantilism-cum-Expeditionary Approach

This approach has been practiced by the Colonial Powers in the past. It is still in practice with some globalized restrictions by Western and Eastern naval powers.

Security-Development Nexus

This narrative could be based on the tension-suppressing effect of enhanced economic engagements on competitive-conflicting issues and the disagreement on the exclusion of ideological-cum-informational aspects (Brief on India-U.S. Relations, 2017).

'Long Cycle' Framework

The oft-quoted 'long cycle framework' can enhance the external foreign policy orientation' of the rising power ([Senior US Diplomat to Visit to India for Talks on Defense Cooperation, 2019](#)).

Usage of Geography to Trump Strategic Limitations

This approach was espoused by the German Admiral Wolfgang Wegener during the interwar years ([Malik M. , 2016](#)). In this context, the relevance of hyphenated constructs like Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific, and others, mentioned earlier gain salience.

The strategic location of Pakistan, between the forces of struggle and partnership in the region, holds three regions; Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. After the 9/11 attacks, US forces attacked Afghanistan to combat the war on terror, and China, as an emerging economic power, attracted the attention of these two sub-regions. Central Asia is an adjacent strategic sub-region of South Asia. Russia and India have developed relations in the post-Cold War period. The US war against terrorism was certainly to achieve strategic goals in Afghanistan and to eliminate the negative responses. Pakistan and China are working to minimize all differences between each other and make their partnership stronger for the betterment of the region. The regional geopolitical position of Pakistan is distinct, and its strength affects the complexity of the national politics and policymaking process in Pakistan ([Owais Ahmed Ghani, 2013, p. 10](#)).

China's stance after 9/11 should be understood in the context of its heightened security apprehension due to some important geopolitical changes in the region. The US forces' arrival in Afghanistan for Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) was viewed by the Chinese as a troublesome development in its broader internal and external security concerns. Chinese military commanders warned the United States that the 'counter-terrorism' ploy should not be used to practice hegemony' ([Siddiqi, 2014](#)).

For Pakistan, the objective is to guarantee peace, security, advancement in trade, and economic development within and without the border through effective collaboration with its immediate neighbors and regional stakeholders. China and Pakistan are strategic and economic partners. The bilateral strategic partnership is further deepened by economic support to expand and extend areas of shared cooperation. China's peaceful development model is a positive factor for domestic and regional peace, progress, and prosperity. With the US, China seems set to continue the policy of peaceful co-existence, mutual trade-based interdependence, and preemption of misunderstandings. China builds an example with respect to the regional states' rise, shared confidence, and pursuit of collective peace by ignoring differences, maintaining peace and stability, and resolving disputes, including those over territorial rights, naval rights, and welfare, through friendly negotiation. China neither pursues regional supremacy or domination nor does it want to halt any country from contributing to regional cooperation. China's enlargement and long-term constancy signify an opportunity rather than a menace to neighbors ([white paper: China's Peaceful Development, n.d.](#)).

Issues of Convergence between Pakistan and China

Pakistan and China both share security, military, and financial concerns. Advancing and reinforcing conventional and agreeable relations with China is an essential component of Pakistan's foreign strategy from a security point of view. China and Pakistan have common discernments of the international situation and strategic trends. China is a

significant force that shares Pakistan's concerns with respect to Indian territorial aspirations. Both have concerns with respect to India's nuclear strategy. Pakistan completely supports China's vision of the multipolar world. Both support a simply fair global economic order and change in the international financial system.

In 2013, when China disclosed, publicly, BRI

strategy, its relations with other regional powers were not stable, like affairs with Japan were at extreme escalation. A bilateral agreement between Japan and USA further escalated the environment, and China raised its concerns over the "US Pivot to Asia" as a root cause of the re-emergence of territorial and maritime disputes and perceived the same as an encirclement of China. In 2013, the Philippines launched a formal complaint against China at International Arbitration under UN International Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and also challenged the historical claim of the Chinese over the Nine-Dash Line. Hence relations with the Philippines and Vietnam had become strained due to the Chinese stance over the Islands and exploration of resources in the South China Sea. USA engaged Australia, Japan (Trans-Pacific Partnership; TPP), and India and left no room to maneuver for China towards the East, thus leaving China with only one option to steer towards west or "March West," commonly known as "Strategic Westward Orientation". Other regional players like Russia, Pakistan, and Iran have already sensed this sinister plan. Apart from international political implications, domestic political and economic compulsions also motivated Chinese leadership to define the new strategy of connectivity and integration, and the same is substantiated by the Chinese 'Two Centenary Goals' i.e., the first goal derived in 1921 "to develop China as a moderate prosperous Society by 2021, and second goal set in 1949, "to become a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and modern socialist country" by 2049.

In the same context of embroiling regional economies for mutual benefits, China very evidently influenced to upgrade following in order to counter the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and European Union (EU),

and US-led Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as well as US-led Quadrilateral Alliance (QUAD):

- a. China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)
- b. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)
- c. Free Trade Agreement of Asia Pacific (FTAAP)
- d. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

US and Indian Concerns about Partnership

As Pakistan has an India-centric policy on the Kashmir issue and the aggressive nature of the neighboring state. Pakistan and India fought three wars, and USA and China supported India and Pakistan, respectively. Although Pakistan was a member of military alliances, even then China extended strategic support to Pakistan despite the concerns of India and the US. The common perspective is that Pakistan is taking China as a counterbalance, and India takes the US against Pakistan and China. After 9/11, China has always supported Pakistan's role in the war on terrorism.

Pakistan, in this condition, offers regional support to the affirmative geopolitical connectivity of China and other regions. The Chinese contribution is the achievement of strategic growth in South Asia, its national progress, and improved infrastructure, energy, and economic relations through Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Pakistan's stance to help China in increasing the general outcome of China's involvement in Central Asia for the improvement of trade, energy, and economic corridors foremost to larger multidimensional regional link that China would get benefit in the region. Meanwhile, Pakistan can get advantage from the regional connectivity and access to China and the rest of the world.

The strong infrastructure development would facilitate China to provide a channel through the land for the trade to and from China, poses another setback to US-controlled global sea waters. Gwadar in Pakistan offers the straight and most cheap oil supply course from the Persian Gulf to China to provide quick access to sea contact to the rest of the world.

China-Pakistan cooperation, as shown above, would, therefore, emphasize on South Asia to extend cooperation with China. The neighbors in South Asia, India, and Pakistan will make their relationship more stable and deferential. The developing countries of this region, particularly energy-rich states, are essentially distrustful of powerful states. This assurance will create a durable partnership and cooperation between China and Pakistan. A practical and equally useful China-Pakistan partnership will embolden Pakistan's sovereignty.

China: A Stumbling Block in India's Maritime Strategic Ambitions

Indo-China rivalry is going on in the Indian Ocean by becoming the talk of the town, in a strange way of love-hate relationship. China is going to use its economic position to counter the Indo-US impact in the region by shaping and devising different strategies which last from moral to material and from intellect to improvisation. Chinese expanding influence in the north and south of India is like a hanging sword on India's head, as it goes on increasing day by day. Chinese mega-projects like Maritime Silk Road and Silk Road Economic Belt in the south and north, respectively, have reflected the growing Chinese vision and view to erect lofty infrastructure for the promotion of trade, commerce, and other commercial activities in the region.

India is struggling to halt the growing Chinese expansionist menace as one aspect of its regional policy viz-a-viz to come on the fore for its growing competition at the world level. India is quite apprehensive of the mushrooming Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Indian establishment is heading towards accomplishing its own initiative outreach by giving the name of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) after the name of Hind Maha Sagar. India seeks to attain cooperation in economics, security, collateral peace, and sustainable development of the region by curtailing Chinese influence to the minimal level in the Indian Ocean. Indian Prime Minister visited the countries of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in this regard. Maritime assets could be given to

these countries to upgrade their naval capability viz-a-viz strategic maneuvering of India. Indian project Mausam is going to compete with the Chinese project Maritime Silk Road in Indian Ocean littoral countries.

The aforementioned Project Mausam: Maritime Routes and Cultural Landscapes across the Indian Ocean would be likely to restore the old maritime routes of India. This project also finds out cultural connections with regional states through this transnational initiative. Monsoon winds would be used to run this project. All the Indian Ocean Region, from Sri Lanka to Southeast Asia, from the Arabian Peninsula to the Indian subcontinent, and up to East Africa, would be discovered under the project Mausam. Besides this, the India-US Joint Strategic Vision Statement of 2014 employs that in the South China Sea, the freedom of navigation, over-flight in the entire region, and security in maritime affairs would be ensured for all the regional states. It was taken as a consensus to obstruct Chinese assertion in the fixation of disputant boundary lines ([Roy, 2015](#)).

Chinese Interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

China released its defense white paper in 2014, which presented a quite contrary picture to the white papers previously published. China, in the past, was not in favour of warm conflicts with others, especially global players.

Volcanic factors of instability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), as elaborated in the White papers published by the Chinese defence department in 2014, are as under:

1. Unresolved border disputes with India
2. Tension with states in the East China Seas
3. Escalation with countries in South China Seas
4. Conscious concern about separatists in Xinjiang
5. Conscious concern about separatists in Tibet
6. Conscious concern about separatists in Taiwan.
7. Acute concern about the Korean Peninsula

8. Tension with Japan
9. Tension with the US
10. Uncomfortable position with Russian Federation
11. Challenge of maintaining security and stability
12. Imminent danger from multiple directions

Chinese Solutions of the Problems

The following could be the potential solutions to these problems by China:

Active Defence

Mao Zedong, the great revolutionary leader of China, stressed that preparations for military struggle were mandatory.

Advancement in Technological Warfare

The advanced technology of war is rudimentary to modern warfare.

Broader Economic Changes

Broader economic changes are the key to winning wars.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA)

Strong People's Liberation Army is the need of the day. Chinese leadership focuses on its military-strategic missions because Chinese leadership sees itself under threat from multiple directions.

Paradigm Shift Policy from "Offshore Waters Defence" to "Open Seas Protection"

This paradigm shift in policymaking emphasizes greater deference to the seas and a change from "Offshore Waters Defence" to "Open Seas Protection". The language is strong, suggesting that the Chinese grand strategy now includes the IOR. China is also investing heavily in submarines and warships and manufacturing a second aircraft carrier ([Chellaney, 2015](#)).

Prospects of India's Ocean Strategy

Indian ambition and potentiality in the

maritime field is quite conducive to be understood to get a ready-made estimation of Indian power projection in the Indian Ocean. There is a wide chasm between perceived accomplishments and desired destinations in international affairs on the part of India due to its fluctuated power status. India has a perceived vested approach that acquires all the basic ingredients required to become a world power. These include sophisticated weapons (Nuclear weapons), a massive population, a huge army, economic strength, and military might. Indian Think Tanks are of the opinion that India has no need to underestimate its world power disposition. India is going to overestimate its real position in world politics. India, it looks like, does not ready to locate the gap found between its potential power and the factual power is attained. There is a pole apart distance between illusion and reality so far as Indian consciousness is concerned.

Regional powers do not seem to be in a mood to acknowledge the special status of India. Whereas small regional states are concerned, India is displaying a more liberalist view to tackle them by trying to exert its soft image. India is quite reluctant to conceive of Chinese hegemony in the Indian Ocean. The domination of any extra-territorial power in the Indian Ocean is in direct conflict of Indian vested interests in the region. To this option, India is in consultation with its South Asian neighbors. Middle powers of the region might pose a serious challenge to Indian hegemonic designs in the region, which is not out of the question. Ironically speaking, it is quite possible that a lot of states in the region encourage the US presence in the region in terms of security by one or the other way around. China could be a probable legitimate contestant for regional superiority.

India has realized that it could attain the status of big power by extending its sway over the maritime domain. Maritime domination, in probability, would give India an influential and actual position in regional affairs. Indian enhancement in maritime affairs in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is being sponsored by the United States to stand India on equal footing to China to contain the Chinese influence from spreading in the region unbridled. The substantial US support to India makes it

possible for India to attract approval from other littoral states which are in alliance formation with extra-regional powers already. In this context, it is hoped by Indians that their fabulous fascination would become true.

Many covert and overt hurdles would likely, hamper the Indian ambitions. India strives for to shun the perception of the regional states that it is going to be a proxy power of the USA in the IOR. Washington is quite willing to assign India a wider role in security measures in IOR to keep US military predominance intact in the region. US-Iran soared relations are another important source of tension for India, as India is looking forward to making Iran a strategic and economic partner in the IOR. US-Pakistan relations are also another important constraint in Indian ambitions to become a formidable regional power.

Indian errands to establish cordial relations with smaller powers of IOR, like Mozambique, Oman, Mauritius, and the Maldives, have got success in security arrangements. India is still lingering behind the required leverage in gaining ample support from the middle powers of IOR namely, South Africa, Indonesia, and Australia. There are two apparent reasons in India's way forward to become a regional power which include, firstly, the egotistic attitude of self-proclamation of the Indian establishment and, secondly, having no well-articulated strategic sense of direction of India. Global players in the region have some inclinations towards India to bestow it with a leading security role. It could be a conditional arrangement, provided India would have to conceive and recognize their vested demands in the regional affairs of IOR.

Pakistan's Role in the IOR with Respect to Indian Ambitions

India's strategic ambitions in the IOR could be halted due to strengthened relations of Pakistan with the northwestern countries despite the fact that Pakistan has not posed any direct threat to India in IOR. Pakistan has closer security ties with oil-rich Muslim states of the Gulf. India, being an overwhelmed Hindu state, cannot penetrate into this security system unless there is an upheaval change in the security environment of the region. India does not hold a cherished position in economic

terms as compared to China which emerged as an economic dragon in the region so far as economic progress and prosperity is concerned. It can safely be stated that India made gigantic economic progress in the post-Cold War period, but it is a daylight fact that India still has to go a long way down to equalize its economic development to that of China. Politico-strategic advantage can only be achieved by dint of the enhanced economic status.

India is very cautious to enter into military alliances with other states, with the only exception of the treaty of friendship and peace with the former USSR concluded in August 1971. Even the relations with America are thought to be a great hurdle in Indian ambitions to become a big power which is quite obvious from Indian approach than Indian action. Indian instinct to appropriate cooperation from other stakeholders in secret ways or to utilize benign traditional methods has enunciated an unbridgeable gap between clamor and practice.

India's benign image in the region has paved the way to realize the Indian dreams in the Southeast Indian Ocean region. Extra-regional powers are looming-large in IOR with, carrying a shackle of their own claims and aspirations. Indian intrusion in the Southeast Indian Ocean has been retarded by the strong presence of the United States and China in the Southeast Indian Ocean. Island states in the Northeast Indian Ocean region have extended their cooperation with India in the region due to India's lenient view toward these Island states. India has provided them due to space to perform their role in regional affairs. The United States has maintained a maritime security system with Pakistan and the Gulf States in the Northwest of Indian Ocean Region-IOR, resultantly diminishing the chances for Indian maritime maneuvering in the region. India is not looking for any down-to-earth penetration into the Northwestern region due to US hegemonic presence in the region.

As far as India's role in Africa is concerned, Pakistan and China are consolidating their position in Africa. Indian ideological standpoint of 'Non-Violence' regarding liberation movements in Africa did not support its devised maritime strategy-cum-security policy in IOR. China's growing Economy might

poses an uphill challenge to Indian aspirations in Africa. Chinese economic influence in Africa intruded to put constraint to Indian ambitions. Australia feels that India could be a potential strategic partner in the Indian Ocean. US military intrusion is always favored by the Australian establishment in the IOR, which dimmed chances of India to be accepted as a security provider in the maritime affairs of the IOR.

It can be concluded that IOR is going to be a pool of multiplicity of a strategic order for extra-regional powers. China would be a potential beneficiary out of this complicated scenario in the region. India should have to engage China to strengthen its position in the maritime security sway of IOR. Reclamation of India to be a legitimate regional power would be interrupted by Chinese rise in the region. Indian policymakers have to evolve out a double-pronged strategy, of accommodating Chinese interests at one hand without going into a hostile situation with China, and of taking into confidence the smaller powers of the region viz-a-viz Indian maritime understanding, to get their hegemonic dreams in IOR accomplished (Roy, 2015).

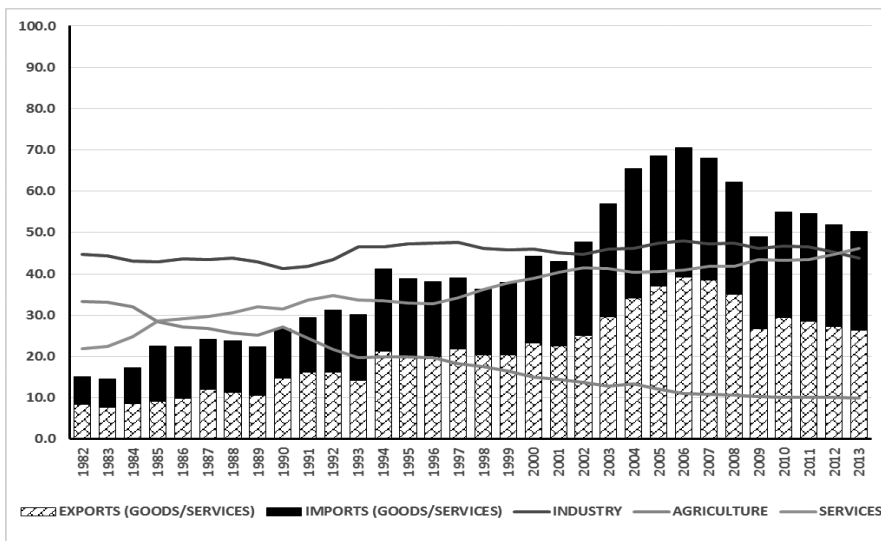
China's Maritime Strategy in the Context of Indian Ocean Region

It is apparent that in the contemporary

environment of enhanced economic meshing and globalized nature of strategic transactions between states, the factor of 'geoeconomics' is the driver for the politics and the security policies of major powers. In this case, it is argued that that the classical geopolitical concepts of 'Heartland' and 'Rimland' can be replaced by an emerging paradigm of seeking 'dominant access and influence' through a new geographical contextualization of 'Ireland' (Natural Resource Lands).

It is also argued that China is attempting to replace the traditional great powers like the US and Russia by positioning itself as a 'viable alternative strategic partner'. It is considered useful to examine the validity of this novel paradigm by applying it to the Chinese MSR concept, with particular reference to the IOR. As the world's leading exporting nation, second-largest economy and trading nation by any yardstick of measurement and, as the largest shipbuilder, the oceans have become critically important for its continued economic development. This can be best farmed by examining the sectoral distribution of its Economy and the part played by exports and imports in the post-liberalization period.

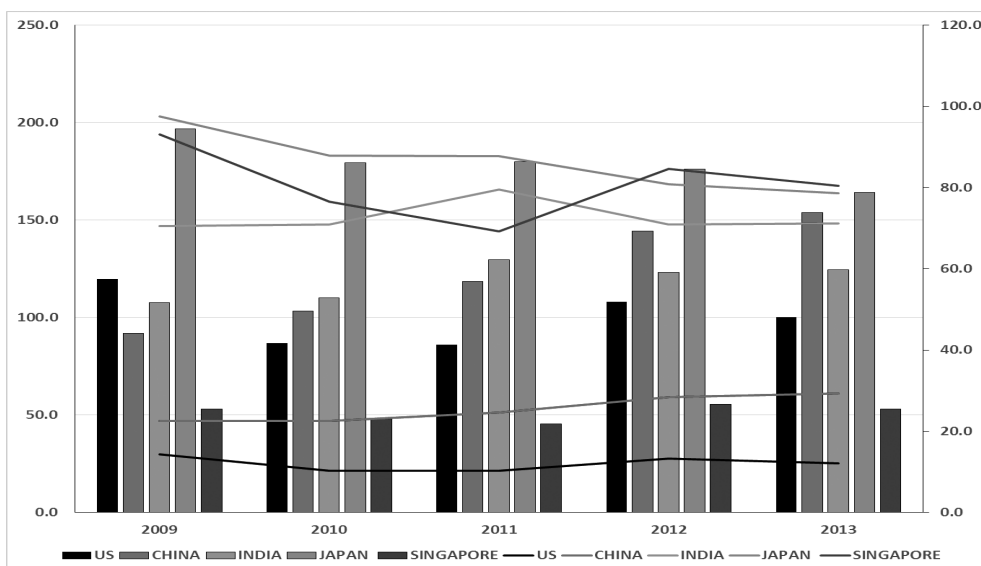
Figure 1 Sectorial distribution and contribution of exports/imports to Chinese Economy (percentage of GDP),



Source: World Bank Database, Authors Compilation

China's regional trade statistics during 2003-2013 indicate that Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Pacific Islands are the three regions where Beijing has an unfavorable trade balance. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR), comprising the littoral and the landlocked/Geographically Disadvantaged States (GDS) that are proximal to its coast, contribute nearly 20 percent of China's international trade in value terms.

Beijing's dependence on Middle East oil imports of around 29 percent, as the share of its total consumption, is relatively less as compared to India (70 percent), Japan (76 percent) and Singapore (80 percent). However, the oil imports sourced from the Middle East Figure 2 Middle East Oil Dependence (2009-13): Select Countries (in Million Tonnes)



Source: Annual BP Statistical Reviews of World Energy, author's Compilation

China has inducted, in 2003, multidimensional accretion program and long-reached sustainable defensive and offensive capacities (Compiled from various annual editions of IHS Group, Janes Fighting Ships and IISS, Military Balance.).

Some examples are:

1. Four Sovremenny class destroyers' export from Russia.
2. Type 052 B/C/D (Luyang I/II/III) and Type 051C (Luzhou) class destroyers and Type 054A (Jiangkai II class) multi-purpose frigates.
3. Type 056 (Jiangdao class) missile corvettes and Type 022 (Houbei class) missilecraft.
4. Type 903 (Fuchi) class replenishment ships, and; Type 071 (Yuzhao) and Type 072A (Yuting III) class amphibious assault ships.
5. Type 094 (Jin) class SSBN (nuclear powered ballistic missile capable), Type 093 (Shang) class SSN (nuclear powered attack), and Type 039A (Yuan) class SSK (conventional diesel-electric) submarines.

6. Development of J-15 carrier-borne strike and multirole Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance version of H-6 aircraft.
7. DF-21D Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM).
8. Conformal radars and multifunctional vertical launch systems onboard the aircraft carrier, and Luyang III destroyers.

Reasons for Uniqueness of Chinese Modernized Naval Program

1. According to *IHS James Defence Budget* analysis, the importance of the navy has grown and its share of the national budget is expected to increase from 18.6 percent in 2012 to 20.7 percent by 2020.
2. The Chinese navy is expected to see the largest expansion of manpower and budgetary resources over the next decade and is expected to command an annual budget in the region of US \$ 30 billion by 2016". Due to the proposed expansion plans the expenditure pattern on various sub-heads within the Navy is not likely to see a major shift, except for cutting down on miscellaneous expenses to improve operational effectiveness (Janes, 2014).

A Systemic-Regional-Bilateral Comparative Analysis

A systemic-regional-bilateral perspective is offered through which China's activities can be analyzed in Western Pacific and the IOR by tracing similarities and dissimilarities in maritime affairs. In a systemic global sense, China has participated in the RIMPAC series of exercises off Hawaii for the first time and signed the Conduct on Un alerted Encounters as Sea (CUES) agreement at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) at Qingdao, in 2014.

Examples of Assertive Actions of China in South China and East China Seas

At the regional level, China has continued with its 'assertive' actions in the South China and East China seas. Some recent examples are given below:

Promulgation of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)

This program has outshined the Japanese plan-ADIZ in the East China Sea in November 2013.

HaiyangShiyou-Oil Exploration Platform

This oil exploration platform of HaiyangShiyou was planted in the disputed waters with Vietnam in May 2014 leading to adverse reactions from Hanoi besides rioting and arson directed against Chinese business interests in Vietnam.

US Navy Cruiser Cowpens

Close quarter situation with the US Navy cruiser Cowpens was emerged in November 2013.

P8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft

Close quarter situation with the P8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft was aroused in August 2014.

Large-Scale Reclamation and Development Dynamics

China is facing tough resistance from the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, the United States and other regional players because of its unceasing activities in South China Seas (Jane's, 2015).

China-India: Strategic Anxieties in Asia

China has stopped the Indian interference in the South China Sea (SCS) by taking the initiative of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and Maritime Silk Route (MSR) ([Sputnik, 2018](#)). India has shown acute concerns relating capitalization of \$47 billion of Chinese investment to link western province of China to Gwadar port of Pakistan. Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping declared that infrastructural facilities and special economic zones would be constructed by maintaining international standards. China will, with the completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), be able to import Iranian and Middle Eastern natural resources like oil and gas, uninterruptedly. Pakistani occupied Kashmir, according to Indian argumentation, will be

liaised to economic zones, railway lines and highways constructed by China under the auspices of the CPEC project which runs exclusively against Indian interests ([Education, 2018](#)). India is also interested to join Kolkata-Kunming highway zone connecting mainly with Southeast Asia named BCIM ([Aneje, 2016](#)).

American Strategic Interests in IOR

United States stands for the only global power with multidimensional force, long-ranged security interests and sophisticated war mechanism in the IOR. It is a familiar perception in scholarly ambits that United States did not give preferred importance to Asia ([Malcolm, 2008](#)). Contrary to the perfected fear, the United States proclaimed its self-avowed claim to fulfill the commitments promised the region to counter increasing Chinese influence by consolidating and strengthening its status in the region ([John, 2009](#)). United States focused on Asia in the wake of horrid regional developments in the form of the phenomenal rise of China, Islamic terrorism and nuclear proclamation of North Korea. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted this in his speech at the 2008 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore: "For those who worry that Iraq and Afghanistan have distracted the United States from Asia and developments in the region, I would counter that we have never been more engaged with more countries." Later in this same presentation, Secretary Gates noted "America plays many roles in Asia: as an ally, partner, and friend; as a routine offshore presence; as a resident power; and as an agent of professionalism" ([Gates, 2008](#)).

Non-NATO Designation to Japan, South Korea and Australia (1989)

In order to go way forward, United States allocated Japan, South Korea and Australia the status of being non-NATO allies in 1989.

Territorial Defense Pact with Japan (1996)

Territorial Defense Pact with Japan was renewed and reoriented by including the reference of the Taiwan Strait problem in 1996.

Visiting Forces Agreement with Philippines (1999)

In 1999, Manila and Washington signed the Visiting Forces Agreement. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, American security engagement with the Philippines increased sharply.

Non-NATO Status of Thailand and Philippines (2003)

By 2003, Thailand and the Philippines joined the other three US alliance partners in the region as major non-NATO alliance partners.

Singapore-US Agreement on Changi Naval Base (1998)

In 1998, Singapore announced that the new Changi Naval Base would be made available to the US Navy.

Debt Trap

The debt-servicing terms on Chinese grants often fall outside the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development loan principles and are a source of increasing distress in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Chinese aid usually comes in the form of concessional loans. The situation is shown to be complex due to the existing disparity between the common gains, famous structural plans in Asia, and the problems posed in the developmental support by Chinese classification in infrastructure. China made immense outsourcing of investment in Sri Lanka to outpace India here. Sri Lanka successfully resolved internal contentions in 2009. China took drastic steps in pumping ample investment in Sri Lanka by giving spiked soft loans (Concessional loans) in 2011. China has built a close relationship with the Sri Lankan former president. Sri Lanka has constructed an airport, seaport and a cricket stadium in the island of Hambantota with the massive Chinese financial assistance. China contributed largely in Sri Lanka to exert its influence upon the islanders by understanding the internal determinants of Sri Lankan politics. A tactical cognized scenario has been reflected through the enhanced relationship between the two states in 2013 ([Forbs, 2017](#)).

Regional Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism

To decrease the threats of terrorism in the regional states, an effective countering policy is necessary to combat terrorism. The Pakistan role in post 9/11 scenario is vital as a strong partner in the war against terrorism. The challenge to regional states is to maintain peace, and to discourage the array of distrust. Pakistan and India must take steps to ease distrust, invest full support to each other to contain the religious extremism. Regional and national level of states' struggle to combat terrorism is very important. The regional states, specifically India and Pakistan, must accept the requirement of durable peace to curb the threat of terrorist activities as the threat to both states is the same. The main goal of terrorists is to work on the same ideology in the region and heighten the conflict between the two nuclear states. Their collaboration in prosecution through SAARC organization would struggle to improve analysis and trial capability in the South Asian region to attain regional strength than any military resolution ([Thapa, 2012](#)).

Conclusion

Pakistan and China have seventy three years history of bilateral relations which has entered into a new phase of engagement after the commencement of Belt and Road Initiative by China. BRI integrates almost 65 States from the outset with almost US \$ 900 Billion Dollars of initial investment bounds the connected states to pursue its success and to align according to their mutually agreed upon common areas of interest for economic gains. China is providing economic revival to many developing states through a well-orchestrated land and sea routes connectivity to address her vulnerabilities, i.e. Strait of Malacca and Hormuz. The important source of development in South Asia is CPEC which also provides China an alternative of these Chokepoints. USA and India are suspicious about the stance taken by the Chinese in developing an integrated community which would be based on areas of common interest at the regional level. Considering the importance of geo-economic interconnectivity and interdependence, Pakistan, through Gawadar port and energy corridor, will act as a reliable channel for integrating EEU, CARs, South Asia, Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan and China. CPEC will provide economic launch pad within and beyond the region.

References

- Chellaney, B. (2015). *China's Indian Ocean Strategy*. The Japan Times Opinion.
- Education, D. D. (2018). *Impact Of CPEC on India And The World*.
- Forbs, T. (2017). *The Real Reasons Behind China's Big Investments In Sri Lanka*.
- Gates, R. (2008). *Challenges to stability in the Asia-Pacific*. Asia Security Summit Shangri-La Dialogue. Singapore: 7th International Institute for Strategic Studies.
- John, L. (2009). *Why America will lead the 'Asian century'*. Executive Highlights No 898. Centre for Independent Studies.
- Cook, M. (2008). The United States and the East Asia Summit: Finding the Proper Home. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 30(2), 293-312.
<https://doi.org/10.1355/cs30-2f>
- Malik, M. (2016). Balancing Act. *World Affairs*, 179(1), 46-57.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0043820016662742>
- Ohmae, K. (1996). *The End of Nation-States: The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., New York.
- Ahmed, O., & Ghani, M. A. (2013). Regional Geo-Strategic Challenges and Opportunities for China-Pakistan Cooperation. *China Pakistan Joint Think Tink*, 6.
- Rizwan, & Naseer, L. D. (2012). Balance of Power and Order in International Relations. *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences*, 3.
- Roy, C. R. (2015). *Five Reasons the World Needs to Pay Heed to India's New Maritime*. The Wire.
- Siddiqi, R. A. (2014). *China's Evolving Posture in South Asia. Some Reflections*. IPRI, 7.
- Siddique, Q. (2014). *Deeper than the Indian Ocean? An Analysis of Pakistan--China Relations*. Oslo: Centre for International and Strategic Analysis.
- Sputnik. (2018). India Continues to Oppose Chinese BRI.
- Thapa, C. J. (2012). Counter-terrorism and Regional Cooperation in South Asia. The Terror Challenge in South Asia and Prospect of Regional Cooperation, 128.