

THE CONVERGENCE OF AMERICAN AND INDIAN STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

By

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DEDICATION

With utmost devotions, I dedicated my whole work to my beloved and affectionate Parents, Sisters, Brother, Friends and Respected Staff of International Relations Department who have always been source of encouragement, knowledge, illumination and wisdom for me, whose pray and guidance showed me the right path and made the blessing of Allah shower on me.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

IOR	Indian Ocean Region
MSRI	Maritime Silk Road Initiative
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
SREB	Silk Road Economic Belt
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ADB	Asian Development Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
SEZ	Special Economic Zone

Abstract

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has become a combat zone for the global powers due to its geopolitical and geostrategic significance. The Indo-US strategic alliance is the key development in geopolitics of IOR. Indo-US navy-to-navy cooperation has emerged as the “best performing area of bilateral relationship”. A series of joint military exercises, developments, agreements and understandings are steadily advancing in the Indo-US maritime cooperation. The aim of this research is to analyze the dynamics of IOR fulfilling the requirements of new emerging international order. The research also aims at understanding the Indo-US maritime cooperation and its possible implications for Pakistan. In this environment full of friction, the bilateral maritime cooperation between India and US is an alarming development in the IOR vis-à-vis its strategic competition with China which is disturbing the balance of power in the region at large. The economic and seaborne transportation needs of all these countries on which these countries are heavily dependent on the Indian Ocean Sea Lines of Communications, and heavy maritime resources (living and non-living) have made the IOR a strategic hub for these countries as well for the rest of the world. Keeping in view the complex political and strategic transitions and the vitality of sea affairs, Pakistan needs to revise its maritime policy by strengthening its military and naval capabilities. Pakistan also needs to develop its naval and military potential to maintain a deterrent position in the IOR. Pakistan also needs to expand its diplomatic exposure and to find out alternate options for naval cooperation and joint ventures.

INTRODUCTION

“The Indian Ocean area will be the true nexus of world powers and conflict in the coming years. It is here that the fight for democracy, energy independence and religious freedom will be lost or won.”

Robert D. Kaplan¹

Indian Ocean Region (IOR), as a third largest geographical body of water, has become the hub of strong global activity over the decades for many reasons. The most important trade routes of the world pass through this region. Three busiest straits are present in Indian Ocean, Malacca Strait in Southeast Asia, Strait of Hormuz between Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman and Bab-el-Mandeb between Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The Malacca Strait is a critical choke point and oil transportation route for the West coast of USA, China, Japan, Australia and many countries of South-East Asia. Current estimates shows that the annual value of bilateral global trade passing through Indian Ocean sea lines is about USD 1 trillion.²

The IOR is not all about economic co-operation and competition, rather it has another distinct feature that is strategic. According to Kaplan “this ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters.”³ There are 36 states around littoral belt of the IOR, with extra eleven hinterland states. The major routes in this region connect the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the US.⁴ It is expected to grow in importance as a transportation hub over the next two decades. As oil dependence continues to grow, the Central Asian republic’s exports through Mediterranean will have to pass through the region’s ports.

Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar are the important actors of this region and all the states have their own stakes in the IOR. Due to the resources, important choke points

¹ Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2011), 13.

² “Freedom To Use The Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy,” Compiled by Concepts and Transformation the Directorate of Strategy (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence Navy, 2007), accessed on July 12, 2020. <http://aldeilis.net/mumbai/1686.pdf>.

³ Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 67.

⁴ Saira Rehman, Sohail Amin and Mushir Anwar, *Major Powers’ interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan* (IPRI: Islamabad, 2015), 34, accessed on July 12, 2020. <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Indian-ocean.pdf>

and trade routes extra-regional actors also have their interest in the region. For instance, the US, China, Japan and Australia these are all the world powers who have many interest in the Region to pursue.

The US has been controlling important sea routes, especially in Indian and Pacific Ocean Regions since the World War II. The main objectives of the US in the IOR are the protection of its trade and energy SLOC, which is strong enough to balance or counter most of the events in the Middle East and along the other littoral states. It also wants to make sure that naval primacy it has retained in the ocean since the World War II. In order to achieve its objectives the US has established military bases at Diego Garcia in the British Indian Ocean Territory and in the Persian Gulf. Other major bases are located at, in the Horn of Africa, in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Singapore.⁵ Further the US has declared its strategic partnership with India to pursue its interest in the IOR.

There has been witnessed a drastic change in the traditional status quo within the IOR as Chinese presence has increased significantly in the IOR in recent years due to its maritime Belt-Road Initiative (BRI).⁶ In 2013 the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) was launched by the China's President Xi Jinping in two stages. First step was “Silk Road Economic Belt” in Kazakhstan and second step was “Maritime Silk Road” in Indonesia in October 2013. At the end of the year, the Central Economic Work Conference of the Communist Party of China (CCP) envisioned the BRI as a platform for new thinking on China's open development and foreign investment.⁷ The “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “Maritime Silk Road” was primarily known as the “One Belt One Road” initiative”, later name was changed to BRI. Xi Jinping has claimed this as the “Project of the Century” in mid-2017.⁸

BRI is a long term policy and investment program of China, which aims to build connectivity and co-operation across six main economic corridors encompassing China

⁵ Gurpreet Khurana, *Maritime Forces in Pursuit of National Security: Policy Imperatives for India* (New Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008), 110.

⁶ Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, “China’s Massive Belt and Road Initiative,” *CFR*, January 28, 2020, accessed on July 29, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

⁷ Lauren A. Johnston, “The Belt and Road Initiative: What is in it for China?” *WILEY*, February 19, 2018.

⁸ Liu Xin and Yang Sheng, “Initiative ‘project of the century’: President Xi,” *Global Times*, May 15, 2017, accessed on August 3, 2020. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1046933.shtml>

and: Mongolia and Russia; Eurasian countries; Central and West Asia; Pakistan; other countries of the Indian sub-continent; and Indochina. The BRI emphasis largely in five areas: (a) coordinating development policies; (b) forging infrastructure and facilities networks; (c) strengthening investment and trade relations; (d) enhancing financial cooperation; and (e) deepening social and cultural exchanges.

Under this initiative, Chinese investments in the littoral states of the IOR have increased multiple times which resulted into the increased influence of China in the recipient states of MSRI. Moreover, parallel to the MSRI, the military foot prints of China has also gained significant expansion in the region. This increasing influence and presence of China has raised concerns among US and Indian policy makers. This has become the major factor in convergence of the Indo-US strategic interest. China has invested heavily in foreign oil and gas exploration in countries such as Kenya, Sudan, Iran, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. In order to secure these investments China is strengthening the legitimacy of its naval presence in these waters.

The Indo-US shared a history of turbulent relations. Their Relations were influenced by the US policies towards Pakistan, Indian non-alignment policy, and its ties with Soviet Union. It becomes easy to understand the actual reasons behind this mistrust and misunderstandings between both democracies under the lenses of Cold War. The Indo-US relations gradually improved as a result of the end of the Cold War, these changes came to a halt in May 1998 when India and then Pakistan conducted nuclear tests and the US imposed extensive sanctions on both countries.⁹

The 21st century started by marking a significant breakthrough in the Indo-US relations, it started with Clinton's visit to India in the late 20th century and the Bush administration's also continued this during his both terms. The current Indo-US strategic partnership is called "irreversible", and both states have taken a number of steps to promote strong strategic bilateral ties. A wide range of areas are covered under this strategic partnership, which includes economic, commercial, economic, space, missile

⁹ Leighton G. Luke and Tas Luttrell (eds.), *Indian Ocean: A Sea of Uncertainty* (Nedlands: FDI, 2012), 49-50, accessed on August 3, 2020. <http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IndianOceanASeaofUncertainty-.pdf>

and nuclear technology, and defense cooperation. There are several mutual interest behind the Indo-US convergence of strategic interest in the IOR, the elimination of terrorism, global trade route security, peace and stability in the region, piracy, maritime terrorism, and control over the Indian Ocean and most important containment of China in the IOR.

The US has maintained a significant presence in the IOR. The US has been controlling the region and Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) since the end of the Cold War.¹⁰ The US is not a direct stake holder in Indian Ocean, so the US needed to incorporate India into the region wide security framework to control Indian Ocean. The Indo-US relations have been improved significantly during the past few years. India wisely have managed its ties with the US and it extended its inspiration across the IOR through trade and geo political partnership with the US.

The Indian and the US Navies are jointly operating in the IOR. During 2017, militaries from both countries have participated together in three major exercises, executed more than 50 other military exchanges, and have signed the 2016 Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).¹¹ The purpose of the LEMOA was to enhance their naval capabilities in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific under the US “pivot to Asia” strategy. The role of the India was very clear in America’s Asia policy from its 2002 National Security Strategy which declared that “the US had undertaken a transformation of its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that US interests require a strong relationship with India.”

The rising Indo-US strategic partnership in the IOR is posing strategic implications for Pakistan. The US has always changed its policies towards Pakistan as according to its own interest, whereas India is intending to isolate Pakistan regionally and globally. On regional ground India is eager to strengthen ties with the IOR states. India for the first time in its history visited the exclusive Indian Ocean nations like Mauritius, Sri-Lanka and Seychelles to make strong regional influence. Being an economic partner of

¹⁰ “Indo-US nexus in Indian Ocean & Beyond,” *GVS*, June 1, 201, accessed on August 3, 2020. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indo-us-nexus-in-indian-ocean-beyond/>

¹¹ Anwar Iqbal, “US-India defence pact to impact Pakistan, China”, *Dawn*, August 30, 2016, accessed on August 12, 2020. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1280873>

China, Pakistan is not very favorite of India and America. Although Pakistan has always promoted peace in the region. Even though Pakistan was not made part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), it has maintained its friendly relations. Being a significant actor of the IOR, it is important for Pakistan to secure its interests but also not to get involved in any potential conflicts which is becoming difficult due to the political power play in the IOR.

The enmity between China and India and the Indo-US strategic partnership have made Pakistan a party to the conflict. China and Pakistan have established strong ties where the two countries are working for regional connectivity. In addition, the two countries have come out in support of each other in various international forums. A visible example of this cooperation is the placement of Pakistan in the BRI. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Gwadar port is flagship project of BRI in Arabian Sea. It also raised direct security concerns in the IOR. It is at distance of 500km from Strait of Hormuz, but there is an argument that whereas our nearness to strategic choke point of Strait of Hormuz carries opportunities for economic exploitation, this can very easily become a challenge and over shadow our security concerns if security situation is destabilized in the area.

Due to the traditional animosity between Pakistan and India (major states of the region), the security environment of the IOR has always been prominent. The whole security structure of the IOR depends upon the nature of the relationship between the two states. The rise of one of them as a regional power is destabilizing the region. In this context, cooperation between the Indo-US high-tech defense equipment has raised concerns in Pakistan that could force Pakistan to seek advanced weapons technology. Such compulsions could pave the way for destabilizing the strategic balance in the IOR. Pakistan is already wary of India's growing capabilities of conventional warfare. This concern will be enhanced further through defense cooperation between India and the US. Pakistan has raised concerns from the day first that granting special immunity to India would have a negative impact on security issues in the entire region.

Pakistan's security and foreign policies have always been India centric; the security

dilemma of Pakistan has built on the concerns about how to counter, balance, or fight Indian security threats. Pakistani leaders have sought to resolve this dilemma in two ways: by allying themselves with major world powers to enhance their defense capabilities, and (since the 1970s) by ending India's traditional supremacy over its nuclear program.

The Indo-US security co-operation is raising concerns for Pakistan, because it could undermine Pakistan's capabilities against India and upset the balance of power in India's favor, as Regional Security Complex Theory suggests that the securitization and de-securitization of the states with geographical proximity is interlinked, and the increased security capabilities of one state affect security of other state.¹² India is increasing its military capabilities with help of the US, so it is impacting the military capabilities of Pakistan without any doubt. Furthermore, cooperation with India through the US may persuade Pakistan to arrange similar agreements with China, and China may also be persuaded by the US intention to counter China through this cooperation with India in the IOR. This could not only be detrimental to Pakistan but also upset the strategic balance in Asia, which would affect international politics as a whole.

This research is focused on the convergence of American and Indian strategic interests in the IOR and analyzed the policies which show collective struggle of the US and India to achieve their common interests in the region. Moreover, the implications for Pakistan due to converging interests of India and the US have been discussed and evaluated in detail. The research has also included the response of Pakistan to challenges emerging from Indo-US strategic alliance in the region.

Statement of Problem

India has always been a country with great national ambitions. But India preferred to stay non-allied till the new millennium. The new millennium has witnessed a dynamic shift in Geopolitics of the IOR. Since then, India has emerged as one of the most important strategic partner America in Indian Ocean. As India is considered an important player in

¹² Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 167-175.

the IOR, India can take this opportunity to promote the legitimacy of its interest by strengthening its political, economic and military cooperation with the US which can increase India's influence comprehensively in international affairs.

The convergence of American and Indian strategic interests wants to strengthen India's control over Indian Ocean. Pakistan has raised concerns over increasing strategic cooperation between the US and India because Indo-US nexus is posing serious challenges for Pakistan in the IOR.

Core Argument

The converging interests of India and the US within the IOR have potential to convert the region into an arena of enhanced strategic competition causing serious implications for Pakistan, and can tempt other regional and extra regional actors to become part of this competition further engaging the region in complex maritime power politics.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of this study:

1. To analyze the dynamics behind converging interests of US-India in the IOR.
2. To evaluate impact of Indo-US strategic partnership on the geopolitics of the IOR.
3. To analyze implications for Pakistan of Indo-US converging interests in the IOR.

Literature Review

Literature review is an important part of a research because the literature helps the researcher to develop the understanding of the existing data and research which is available on a specific topic of study or research. Moreover, the literature review is also useful to find the gap in research and also avoid the duplication. It highlights the need for the specific research and also makes a case for the further need of research and study in specific area. Several books and research articles have been reviewed for this research. This part has been divided into three categories in which first category is about the

literature related with importance of the IOR and historical background of Indo-US convergence of strategic interest in this region; second category is related to the interests of India and the US in the IOR, and third category is regarding reviewing of the literature discussing implications for Pakistan and Pakistan's response.

The first category reviews the literature about importance of the IOR. In *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, Robert D. Kaplan has highlighted the significance of Indian Ocean in the world's politics in the 21st century. He is of the view that Indian Ocean will be the center of gravity for the global politics in contemporary world. Moreover, the fight for religious freedom, democracy and energy independence will either be won or lost in the waters of Indian Ocean. Indian Ocean will play decisive role in the future of global politics. Therefore, the author has suggested the US to focus in this area if it wants to remain relevant in the changing patterns of global politics.¹³

Admiral James Stavridis, in *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, has urged the US to have strong ties with India in the IOR.¹⁴ The author has argued that Indian Ocean has central importance in diplomatic and maritime affairs of the world in the 21st century. Furthermore, while highlighting significance of Indian Ocean in the global trade, the author has stated that 70 percent of the global supplies of oil pass through the sea routes of Indian Ocean which are bloodlines for the world's economies. Given the economic, political and strategic importance of Indian Ocean, the author has suggested the US to have more involvement in Indian Ocean and should be aligned with India.

In second category, literature, related to the American and Indian interests in the IOR has been reviewed. Paul M. McGarr, in *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965*, has briefly discussed the early history of the cold war and the interaction of newly established states, India and Pakistan, with the world's powers in the region. Moreover, the author has also explained the influence over

¹³ Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2011), 17

¹⁴ Admiral James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2017), 40-60.

Indian subcontinent even after the withdrawal from the continent.¹⁵

Roger Buckley, in *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945*, has mainly discussed the US engagements with China and India in the region. The author has further highlighted the Chinese and Indian cooperation for non-aligned movement which was unfavorable for the US interests in the region. Moreover, the politics in South East Asian and the US role has been explained.¹⁶

Changing US Foreign Policy towards India: US-India Relations since the Cold War is an in-depth analysis of Carina van de Wetering on the evolution of strategic alliance between the US and India.¹⁷ The author has said that the cold war witnessed strained and sometimes uncomfortable relations between the US and India but in the post-cold war era especially under Bush administration the ties between these countries turned into a strategic alliance.

The New India-US Partnership in the Indo-Pacific: Peace, Prosperity and Security is written by Abhijit Singh, Aparna Panday, Samir Saran, Sunjoy Joshi, Walter Lohman, and Jeff M.Smith. This research has briefly explained the history of Indo-US nexus and evolution of their alliance after Cold War era in the world, more specifically in South Asia.¹⁸ Moreover, it has discussed Indian interests in the IOR in detail.

Jim Mattis in his article “Indo-US nexus in Indian Ocean & Beyond” published by GVS, stated that the Pentagon is renaming its oldest and largest military command to reflect the Growing importance of the Indian Ocean in US strategic thinking, another statement by Admiral Harry Harris is that the India is the biggest strategic opportunity for the US.¹⁹ We share the same concerns, and we operate more frequently in the Indo-Pacific region together. Experts also said in this report that the US has made India a strategic partner

¹⁵ Paul M. McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 33-40.

¹⁶ Roger Buckley, *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2002), 70-75.

¹⁷ Carina van de Wetering, *Changing US Foreign Policy towards India: US-India Relations since the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 44-50

¹⁸ Abhijit Singh, et al, *The New India-US Partnership in the Indo-Pacific: Peace, Prosperity and Security* (New Delhi: ORF, 2018).

¹⁹ “Indo-US nexus in Indian Ocean & beyond,” *Global Village Space*, June 1, 2018. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indo-us-nexus-in-indian-ocean-beyond/>

against China as it had declared Pakistan a strategic partner against Russia in Afghan war.

The third category has included the literature on the role of major powers especially the developments due to the convergence of American and Indian interests in the IOR and its implications for Pakistan. *Major Powers' interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan*, written by Ambassador (R) Sohail Amin, Khalid Chandio and Khurram Abbas is based on the conference papers presented at the two days international conference.²⁰ This volume has briefly explained the importance of the IOR that how it became important after the soviet invasion in Afghanistan to get access to warm waters of Indian Ocean. Author further has explained the main interests of great powers in this region, security implications for Pakistan, and how it can strengthen its economy by using living and non-living marine resources.

Leighton G. Luke and Tas Luttrell edited a book named as *Indian Ocean: A Sea of Uncertainty* in 2012. The book has discussed the critical issues of Indian Ocean which have significant and determining role in the Indian Ocean Region. Moreover, the author has highlighted nuclear flashpoints, extremism, growing population, piracy and unstable states as major problems in the region.²¹

Bertil Lintner, in *Great Game East: India, China, and the Struggle for Asia's Most Volatile Frontier*, highlighted the Indian Ocean as new frontier for the rivalry between China and India.²² The author has argued that Chinese presence in Indian Ocean is now perceived as a major concern in India in India's way to become a dominant actor in region.

Fazal Rabbi, in "Pakistan's Security Concerns over Indo-US Post 9/11 Strategic Engagements", has discussed the strategic engagements between the US and India in the post 9/11 period. The author has further highlighted the security concerns of Pakistan due to the US role in the empowerment of India especially in the military capabilities which

²⁰ Sohail Amin, Khalid Chandio and Khurram Abbas, *Major Powers' interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan* (Islamabad: IPRI, 2015), 44-67.

²¹ Leighton G. Luke and Tas Luttrell, *Indian Ocean: A Sea of Uncertainty* (Nedlands: Future Directions International, 2012), 67-89

²² Bertil Lintner, *Great Game East: India, China, and the Struggle for Asia's Most Volatile Frontier* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2015), 220-233.

are increasing imbalance of power between India and Pakistan.²³

Vivek Mishra in his article “Indo–US Security Cooperation: Implications for the Indian Ocean” has argued that the US sees India as a significant balancer of China in the region, and the Indian Ocean as a maritime opponent to the South China Sea.²⁴ As the US–China rivalry continues in the Asia-Pacific, the Indian Ocean remains the stable pivot from where the Asian power balance will be string-held. More importantly, going forward the Indian Ocean could be divided into maritime sub-regions of influence based on two emerging opposite power axes.

Yasir Malik, in his article “Indo-U.S Aspirations To Dominate Indian Ocean Region Mainly Through India And Its Implications On Regional And Extra Regional Powers” has highlighted that the increasing influence of Indian Navy and interests of extra regional forces in IOR. He further suggested that Pakistan needs to adopt an offensive naval strategy; making the Pakistan Navy capable enough to conduct self-sustained operations in IOR to support its allies. By allowing China to establish a naval base at Gwadar can minimize Pakistan’s concerns regarding Indian naval advancements and the presence of 5th U.S Naval Fleet in Persian Gulf. It will also provide Pakistan Navy time

²³ Fazal Rabbi, “Pakistan’s Security Concerns over Indo-US Post 9/11 Strategic Engagements,” *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, 2017, accessed on November 4, 2020. http://www.nihcr.edu.pk/Latest_English_Journal/38-2,2017/8.%20Pakistan's%20Security%20Concerns,%20Fazal%20e%20Rabbi.pdf

²⁴ Vivek Mishra, “Indo–US Security Cooperation: Implications for the Indian Ocean,” *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, January 2, 2017, accessed on November 4, 2020. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/54303561/Indo_US_Security_Cooperation_Implications_for_the_Indian_Ocean.pdf?1504194199=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DIndo_US_Security_Cooperation_Implication.pdf&Expires=1612942018&Signature=fN~F2fNBh3z7n2BtL80wvGBnT2Czsy9gXJIPVokIs1i9zsHKCb4aKFcop8jrG0q4VYulK_oNMrH0yGzs z96RI3FpGdaOcyBKrx78ScZnthzaFxDq-ss7HilbQzGfJ7O1Y~FZRURzZbFLdmzny3i4uq2CVy8SiRkRW8xRgoQ5I5EirobhLMKD-mOsPkOP01P~-8WFC5X~xJRxXnYZqV4QigB-kaEHs x2iMdvMynJh1GovhdaaOiKa8LtA7V1DG~FApr lefo76Uz61TGwSJISYa wThspP41r6sqGPPL3FZ1NdtuTpHF0dz2r~P3q37evJohSdPGeS6~7vcszhJTwaZUyA&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

and opportunity to improve its offensive capabilities.²⁵

Muhammad Ishaque Fani, in his research article titled “The Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Implications for Pakistan,” has briefly analyzed the implications emanating from the Indo-US strategic alliance in the region. He has argued that the increasing cooperation between the US and India is enhancing the imbalance of power of in the region which will directly affect Pakistan’s national interests.²⁶

Although, abundance of written literature is available on the convergence of American and Indian strategic interests in the IOR but the literature available related to the implication of US-Indian alliance on Pakistan is insufficient according to the Pakistan’s perspective. None of the Pakistani researchers has done sufficient research on this. A very limited work has been done in this regard.

Research Questions

1. Which are the grounds of convergence of interests between India and the US in the IOR?
2. How is Indo-US strategic partnership shaping the geopolitics of IOR in the 21st century?
3. How are the evolving features of power politics in the IOR affecting Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework

The most appropriate theory to study the convergence of American and Indian strategic interests in the IOR in the wake of the recent geo-political developments in the region is the “Regional Security Complex Theory” (RSCT) presented by Barry Buzan and Ole

²⁵ Dr. Hassan Yaser Malik, “Indo-U.S Aspirations To Dominate Indian Ocean Region Mainly Through India And Its Implications On Regional And Extra Regional Powers,” *Muslim Perspectives*, Volume I, Issue 2, 2016.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319329391_Indo-US_Aspirations_To_Dominate_Indian_Ocean_Region_Mainly_Through_India_And_Its_Implications_On_Regional_And_Extra_Regional_Powers

²⁶ Muhammad Ishaque Fani, “The Indo- US Strategic Partnership in Post 9/11: Implication for Pakistan,” *Pakistan Vision* Vol. 10 No. 2. December 20, 2015. http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/studies/PDF-FILES/Artical%20No-7-V10,%20No.2%20Dec_015.pdf

Wæver which is based upon the analysis of security, military, political, economic, and societal concerns and threats affecting the actors in a region on the basis of close proximity and territorial connections, and their interplay with different intervening sub-systems. However the extra territorial actors can also be part of the regional security complex.²⁷ As according to the concept of RSCT, states make alliance on the basis of their mutual interest. The emergent geo-politics in the region and Pakistan's geo-strategic location makes its security vulnerable. The competing interests as well as the shifting patterns of convergence and divergence of the regional and international actors/stakeholders of this complex have direct impact on Pakistan which is one of the key actors in the IOR.

The RSCT is a theory of international relations which was developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver and advanced in their 2003 work "Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security". Buzan and Weaver are possibly the most important figures behind the influential Copenhagen School of Security Studies, where examining security as a social construct is the basic principle. The RSCT suggests that international security should be observed from a regional perspective, and that relations between states (and other actors) exhibit regular, geographically clustered patterns. Buzan and Weaver introduced this term "Regional Security Complex" to define such structures.²⁸

The national security concept had been restricted to military dimension for over years. However, the approach of Barry Buzan towards concept of security has broadened the scope. Since ages, the concept of national security had been limited to military aspect. However security debate has been largely redirected since Barry Buzan's approach towards the concept of security. Buzan describes security as a relational phenomenon and due to its specific nature, asserts that the national security of any state could not be comprehensible "without understanding the international pattern of security interdependence in which it is embedded. Buzan has linked the concept of national Security with how the states do respond to the emergent or existential threats coming from outside. These are different social groups which ascertain the nature of any issue

²⁷ Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 167-175.

²⁸ Barry Buzan, 175

and designate it as threat. Hence the authority of social groups to present any issue as threat or not makes security “a social construct with different meanings in different societies and states.”

While determining and measuring issues regarding security and designating the parameters of threats, the region lies between the state and international system, and it becomes easier for researcher to analyze security situation or crisis of any state when organized in the form of security complexes at the level of region. As there is no overarching authority in the world to control or supervise the international politics and the states have to ensure their security through their own measures. In such environment, the regional security complexes provide opportunity to evaluate specific kind of security interests or interactions between/among the states of security complex where all security complexes within a region are considered as “sub-systems with their own structures and patterns of interaction” whereas the importance of these sub-systems cannot be denied as every sub-system or security complexes in the region do provide “a useful benchmark against which to identify and assess the changes in regional security.”²⁹

Buzan believes that existent or emergent patterns of interaction like cooperation, cordiality, or enmity between/among the states of a region do play a decisive role and determine the building elements of regional security complexes and their intermediary sub-systems. The fundamental prerequisite of these security complexes is geographical proximity which lately becomes the reason of interdependence or interlinking of their national security concerns either having cordiality and cooperation or competitiveness.³⁰

The RSCT basically describes interaction between/among states within a region on the basis of their security interests and concerns. Therefore this concept of region is clearly defined by Buzan as “a distinct and significant sub-system of security relations that exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into close geographic proximity with one another.”³¹ According to the theory of regional security complex, the

²⁹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* 1st edition (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 187.

³⁰ Ioannis Stivachtis, *Co-Operative Security and Non-Offensive Defense in the Zone of War: The Greek-Turkish and the Arab-Israeli Cases* (York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2001), 15.

³¹ Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, 188.

security region has four major attributes: i) there must be two or more states constituting the security region. ii) The states making a security region must be situated close to each other geographically. iii) If there would be instability or insecurity in the proximal states, it is considered more conspicuous than any disturbance at level of the international system. This is why it is inescapable from the security concerns of each other for the states within a regional system. iv) The interaction patterns of states' security define the features of security region. Particularly if the security region comprises upon strong states and weak states, it will provide opportunity to the actors of other sub-systems to play for their interests.

Therefore, the security complexes within regions are largely linked with the geographical proximity and mechanisms of threat perception due to the minimal distance; whereas power and capabilities of the states are prerequisites for the structuring of these complexes. Nevertheless, the extra-territorial actors can also be the part of security complex due to their converging or diverging interests with the complex. Such inclusiveness of extra-territorial actors makes the study of this phenomenon more remarkable yet complicated.

Buzan extends the idea of securitization to another level of “macro-securitization” which is based upon same perception but it encompasses incidents happening on much larger scale in terms of the actors involved in them, the complex nature of such incidents and their impacts on other actors, which will largely include the universalist approach toward those macro-securitized issues making it universal threat. Buzan considers that “macro-securitizations are aimed at, and up to a point succeeding, in framing security issues, agendas and relationships on a system-wide basis.” Macro-securitized issues have capability to involve number of states within its influence giving them a universal nature and to change the dynamics of their security perceptions and policies. Such issues have prolonged impacts on the world at individual, state, and international system, like the Cold War, and the War on Terror.³²

The convergence of American and Indian interests in the IOR has emerged as security

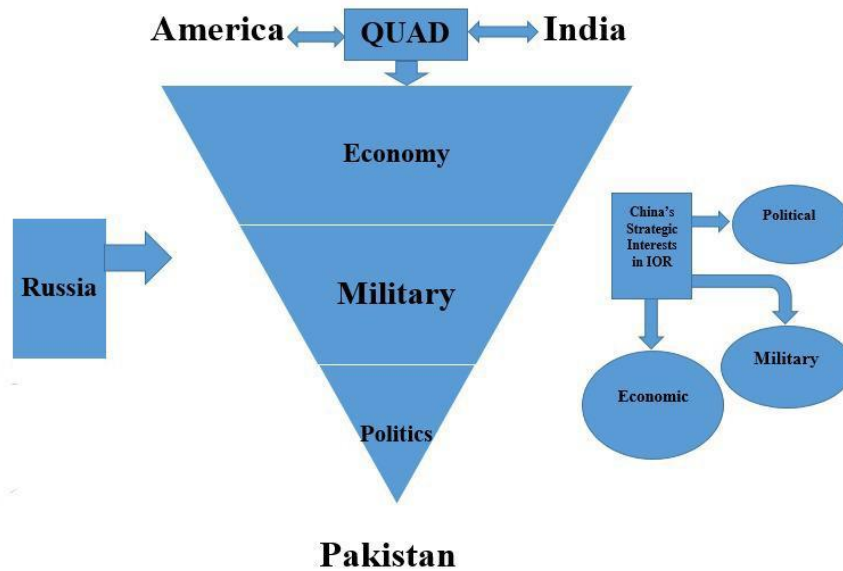
³² Barry Buzan, “The ‘War on Terrorism’ as the New Macro-Securitization,” Oslo Workshop Papers, Oslo, 2006, 1.

complex in the region. The dynamics behind the convergence of American and Indian Interests are strategic significance of Indian Ocean in terms of its water bodies connecting with other oceans and seas through choke points as well as the land linkages, and increasing presence of China due to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Pakistan, a key player in Indian Ocean, is immediate neighbor of India which has hostile relations with Pakistan since beginning. Whereas India also has territorial conflict with China and has fought war in 1962, India perceives China's maneuvering within the IOR as a threat to its strategic interests in the region.

China's strategy of economic connectivity in the form of BRI which has involved - countries has provided it with a reason of its presence in the IOR under Maritime Silk Road Initiative which is part of BRI. The presence of extra-territorial actors is not a new phenomenon in the region as the US has been a dominant actor in Indian Ocean since 1950 when it established its first base in Bahrain. On the other hand, since 2013 Pakistan and China have further strengthened their relations as CPEC is flagship project of BRI. The strategic interests of America and India in the IOR do converge on the basis of mutual goals, largely focusing at empowering India politically, economically and militarily to contain China and to enhance their strategic posture in the region which could have implications for Pakistan.

The Indo-US convergence has adopted collective strategies to contain China and preserve their larger interests in the IOR. Moreover, China's presence, BRI, QUAD and the role of other extra regional actors like Russia and Germany are included as sub-systems in regional security complex of Indian Ocean which have determining impact on the regional security arrangements and order. RSCT says states are in regional cluster who are not necessarily to be a neighborhood, states make alliances on base of their interests.³³

³³ Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 185.



This is how the convergence of Indian and American strategic interests has established in the IOR. Pakistan is a significant actor in the IOR, and its relations with India are based on enmity and at the same time cordial relations and strong partnership with China which is perceived common threat for India and the US in the region, therefore, the convergence of Indian and American interests has implications for Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative, based on non-numerical data. It has used grounded research method by using primary data in form of interviews and discussions with experts, and secondary data collection which includes books, research papers, reports, and websites, and analysis of data. This study is interpretive in nature for which analytical research method has been used to get to conclusion. The main purpose of such research is to gain understanding of particular area of interest with the deep and detailed understanding along with recommendations. This study is aimed to find the rationale behind convergence of American and Indian interests in Indian Ocean Region and its implications for Pakistan. Since the undertaken research is deductive, the framework of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) has been used to evaluate and seek answers

to the research questions for which there have been identified three variables; independent, dependent and intervening for the sake of analysis and testing the theory. The IOR environment is an independent variable, whereas the US, India and Pakistan are dependent variables. Intervening variables are the subsystems in the IOR, such as EU, QUAD, Russia, and China. These are the identified variables with the help of which this research has been conducted.

Significance of Study

In the 21st century, IOR has become an epicenter for power politics. The growing Indo-US strategic partnership in the region is one of the key developments taking place in the IOR. India is also one of the key player of US' Indo-Pacific policy which is an initiative of the US in the Pacific and Indian Ocean to counter Chinese influence in the region. US-India navy-to-navy cooperation has emerged as the “best performing area of bilateral relationship”. A series of joint military exercises, developments, agreements and understandings are steadily advancing the Indo-US maritime cooperation.

This research proposes to make it clear that the Indo-US maritime cooperation is the primary goal of their bilateral relations. This proposition will only get stronger going forward. By analyzing the mutual interests of both countries in the region, this research aims to highlight the rationales for such cooperation; China's increasing presence in the IOR, balance of power and specifically how Indo-US partnership in the region is posing implications for Pakistan. So, the study would help the policy makers to understand the magnitude of threats which are coming from Indo-US alliance in the IOR. This study will contribute to the already existing knowledge in the research field.

Delimitation

The undertaken study has focused on the Indo-US converging interests in the IOR and its strategic implications for Pakistan. The study has considered three areas for this research as dimensions of strategy; economy, security and politics in the IOR. Therefore the research is based on these three dimensions reference to studying the implications of converging interests of India and the US, neither environmental nor social implications

are discussed in this research.

Organizational Structure

Following the Introduction, this study is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is “EVOLUTION OF INDO-US STRATEGIC ALLIANCE: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW” in which the importance of Indian Ocean Region and a historical view of Indo-US convergence of interest has been discussed. Chapter two is “INDIA’S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION” which is focused on the US strategic interest in the IOR. Chapter three is “US STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION”. In this chapter the strategic interest of India has been discussed in detail. Chapter four is “IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN” in which the implications for Pakistan as a result of Indo-US strategic partnership have been discussed.

Chapter One

Evolution of Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Historical Overview

The oceans have been important in geopolitical history of the world. Indian Ocean has never been very important for global politics rather it has been nefarious for piracy. The revolution in science and technology has expedited the trade and commercial activities across the globe. In the 21st century, oceans have undeniable importance for the sustainable development and geopolitics in world. In the contemporary world, Indian Ocean has central importance and it is said that the future of the global politics will be decided in the IOR. The Region (IOR) has become the hub of the world trade, it has very important strategic choke points like Strait of Malacca, Strait of Hormuz and sea trade routes.³⁴ Half of the world's trade passes through the sea routes of Indian Ocean and it also provides lifeline for the major economies of the world like China, India, Japan and South Korea. The strategic, economic and political importance of Indian Ocean makes it attractive for the regional as well as extra regional powers to have their say and prominent role in affairs of the IOR. After the end of WWII, the US replaced UK and became dominant extra regional power in the region. In addition, India emerged as major regional actor, after partition of British India, in the region due to its size of territory and population. India dominates the northern Indian Ocean and it has its own interests in the region. History of the Indo-US relations has witnessed gradual convergence interests which eventually resulted into the Indo-US strategic alliance in the IOR.

This chapter discusses and analyzes the historical overview on the evolution of the Indo-US strategic alliance in the IOR and has been divided into two main sections; (i) Indo-US Relations during Cold War, (ii) Post-Cold War Era.

1.1 Indo-US Relations during Cold War

This section explains the evolution of Indo-US alliance during Cold War. Cold War was rise of two Super powers, Soviet Union (USSR), and the United States of America. Cold

³⁴ James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2017), 27-28.

War shifted the Unipolar world into bipolar. On 15th August 1947, India appeared as an independent country on the global stage. At the time of partition of British India, the world was majorly divided into two blocs; Communist and Capitalist bloc. The Cold War was taking shape in the post WWII period. India did not join any bloc in the initial years of its history as an independent state and followed the nonaligned movement which was aimed to stay neutral in Cold War.³⁵

Although, democracy was a common ground for the US and India but Indian decision to join the non-alignment movement was taken as unfriendly gesture by the US administration of that time. Therefore, the American policy makers were upset with the Indian government on this decision. The US and USSR were promoting their ideologies and expanding their influence. Moreover, they formed security alliances such as Warsaw Pact and NATO to resist each other in European region and beyond. Several countries were joining the blocs and even the newly emerged state Pakistan also joined the Western bloc led by the US, but India did not make alliance with any major power and stayed neutral.

Despite the US efforts to make alliance with India, India managed to maintain its non-interference position. As Nehru said that, “India wants World Peace rather than to join any bloc”. India succeeded in thwarting the two blocs of power and refraining from any major decision on the world stage by adopting the non-alignment policy. During the independence of China, India built very good ties with it by supporting China and the slogan “Asia for Asians”. India also voted for China to get a permanent seat in United Nations.

Nehru who was in friendly relations with the Nasser (Egypt), Tito (Yugoslavia), Nkrumah (Ghana), and Sukarno (Indonesia). This good relation was based on the non-interference concept as Nehru was supporting the non-alignment foreign policy. Non-aligned leaders supported the multipolar world order against the bi-polar world order

³⁵ Buckley R, *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2002), 258, accessed on November 10, 2020.
<https://hrdy7spfcn.pdcdn1.top/dl2.php?id=184881229&h=deaa4302a819e477695d3f262dc3652c&u=cache&ext=pdf&n=The%20united%20states%20in%20the%20asia-pacific%20since%201945>

which was led by the US and USSR.³⁶ As a staunch opponent of the coalition and bloc system, they ran their movement on the rules of freedom and sovereignty. Nehru's policy was to compete with American interests.

With the Indo-US separation the US changed its policies towards South Asian Region. Due to the geographical and ideological importance of the India, its value increased in the international arena, and it was recognized by the US as a new potential partner to counter USSR and a communist China. But India decided not to change its non-alignment policy. In order to shift the balance of world power in its favor, so the US made alliance with other Asian countries to contain the China and USSR in South Asian Region.

1.1.1 Tilt in Indian Policy towards China

For several weeks in early 1951, the level of mistrust between India and the US remained high. Nehru took a stand against the US and supported China when the US rejected the peace resolution, Nehru supported the slogan “Asia for Asians” and convey a clear message that Asian countries can solve their problem on their own and western powers do not need to interfere in the Asian affairs.³⁷

Before the Cold War the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research was established by the British Government in Mumbai for the nuclear development of India. This institute was controlled by the then executive of Indian Atomic Energy Committee, Homi Bhabha. The committee was supported by Nehru with an explanation that “the India has developed atomic energy peaceful purposes only”. When India was pressurized by the British government to join the commonwealth then it made the US confused about its allies in South Asia and as a result the US started to monitor the nuclear developments in India. After a month, George C. McGhee, the Assistant Secretary of US for near eastern Affairs arrived in South Asia to explain the invasion policy of the US in Korea and Tibet.
Dwight

D. Eisenhower, won the 1952 US elections, and Republicans came in power. The

³⁶ Sinha R, *Sino-American Relations: Mutual Paranoia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2003), 255.

³⁷ Brands H.W, *India and the United States: The Cold Peace* (Texas: Twayne Pub; 1990), 195.

Eisenhower administration sent Secretary of State Dulles to South Asia, and he visited India and Pakistan in the same year.³⁸

During the fifties, the US wanted to make alliance with both the Asian rival states, India and Pakistan. With the US declaration of Washington pact with Pakistan, Nehru called this a double game and said that the basic purpose of the US is to become a hegemon in the region and the containment of China and USSR. India signed an agreement with China, in which India recognized Tibet as an independent part of China. Moreover, both the countries (India and China) signed Panchsheel treaty and avoided involvement in the Korean War.

Nehru remained consistent in his point that “it is necessary to maintain peace in Asia, and it is not possible in absence of good ties with China”. After this, China’s Prime Minister Zhou Enlai came to India, where he received a great welcome from Nehru. During this meeting, leaders from both countries agreed on five points which include peaceful co-existence, equality and mutual benefit, non-interference in domestic affairs, non-aggression and respect for sovereignty and territory.

Right after signing the agreement, Nehru made the Panchsheel the benchmark of India's foreign policy, and showed his desire to implement these five principles internationally. Furthermore, Nehru called this Panchsheel as a base for the friendly ties between India and China in an Asian Conference in 1955, he further said that under this principle we will resolve any future mistrust.

Towards the US, critical behavior and non-alignment policy of Nehru, and friendly ties with China, caused a sharp turn in the Indo- US relations. Which resulted in the formation of Baghdad Pact. Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, US and Britain signed this pact. Then SEATO was established by the US, Pakistan and Taiwan, US kept signing agreements with other countries including South Korea, New Zealand and Japan. But the purpose remained the same, containment of communist bloc, holding India from making any alliance with any communist country and to become hegemon in Asia. But India successfully established amity relations with China and the slogan “hindi-cheeni bhai-

³⁸ Brands, *The Cold Peace*, 186.

bhai” became the center of this relation.”³⁹

The cordial ties between India and China were a major setback for the American leadership, as they feared that India would join the Communist bloc, which ultimately would increase the Soviet influence in the IOR, particularly in South Asian region. However, when the Tibet issue began in 1962, Sino-Indian relations deteriorated. China invaded India, and diplomatic relations between the countries were non-existent for the next 14 years.

1.1.2 Improvement in Indo-US Relations

The Sino-Indian border conflict became a reason for the beginning of the Indo-US ties. The US took advantage of this situation and provided India with full economic and military support against China. Nehru at this situation said “that China is a strong and powerful country with many resources, but it can’t frighten India by their military resources and threats. The US provided B-47 bombers to the Indian troops and sent their technicians and military advisors to India to defeat the China.”⁴⁰

Thus, in addition to having the Trump card of responsibility for India's full economic and military support in its clash with China, the US also criticized the Soviet Union’s action in Cuba. With the USSR’s withdrew from Cuba on December 19, China also decided to end the war with India and to solve the border issue peacefully.⁴¹ At this time the relations between US and India were quite friendly but still India was consistent on the non-alignment policy, and did not want to become part of any bloc.⁴²

The US supported Pakistan politically and militarily in 1965 war against India, and the Indo-US relation once again took a downturn and tensions rise between both countries. The Indian leadership demanded that the US should not provide military assistance to its rival, Pakistan. Though, the US supported India in its war with China but this support

³⁹ T N Kaul, “Indo-US Relations: An Assessment,” *India International Center Quarterly* 1 (1974): 9-11.

⁴⁰ R. D. Nisar, “India-US Relations Through the Lens of Cold War: The Time of Estranged Relations,” *RUDN Journal of Public Administration*, 2019.

⁴¹ Buckley, *The United States in the Asia-Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2002) 224.

⁴² Shri Ram Sharma, *Indo-US Relations 1947-71: Fractured Friendship*, (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1999), 25-29.

could not change the Indian stance about Non-Alignment Movement and also did not help the US to gain support of India against its anti-communist policies.

War between Indo-Pak in 1965 tested American loyalties. As on one side, US has been treating Pakistan as a reliable ally, whereas on the other side the US wants to make relation with India also. The US provided assistance to India from 1954 to 1965, under the Agribusiness Development and Relief Act, PL-480. This program created new market opportunities for the products of the US, while the PL-480 revolutionized the direction of the India's economy. A new farm program was announced by the Indian Government, as 1.5 million tons of US wheat was imported to India.⁴³

A number of factors such as rapprochement policy, China's Cultural Revolution, helped in establishing US-China relationship, and good relations with as well as the normalization of the US and China. Relations with Pakistan, which played a key role in the development of US-China ties. India, on the other hand, became victim of Nixon and Kissinger's trilateral diplomacy and got intertwined in the relation of the US, Russia and China.

The growing ties between China and Pakistan, Kissinger's visit to China as an effort to normalize the relation with China, these events were like warnings to India. Likewise the US leadership eliminated their containment policy, and the new diplomacy was aimed at managing the relations between USSR and China.⁴⁴ China welcomed the US efforts to develop good relations with it, and Nixon clearly announced that he will make efforts to make the relation better in both countries (US and China). In short US supported Pakistan and the Indo-US ties reached its weakest level on the beginning of the 1971 war between India and Pakistan.

1.1.3 Bilateral Strategic Relation between India and USSR

After 1971, Indira Gandhi signed an agreement of friendship, peace, and cooperation, with USSR, the purpose of this agreement was to counter the expected alliance between

⁴³ M. Rasgotra, *The New Asian Power Dynamic* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 210.

⁴⁴ Shri Sharma, *Indo-US Relations, 1947-71: Fractured Friendship* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1999), 25-29.

China, US, and Pakistan against India. The bilateral agreement defines strategic cooperation in the event of a military strike over the next 25 years.⁴⁵

Later in 1971, the military engagement of Indian forces in East Pakistan led to the defeat of the Pakistani army. This resulted as the emergence of another independent state, Bangladesh. However, Indira Gandhi got a title of "Iron Lady" for her actions, which made India win the war against Pakistan and aggression against the US. Furthermore two factors turned regional crisis into a global conflict, first the Nixon and Kissinger miscalculated the intensity of crises in East Pakistan, and second their tilt towards Pakistan. Consequently ties between India and USSR strengthened further.

India became an important ally of USSR, and got full military and economic support from the Soviet Union, further more USSR also supported India on UNSC and Kashmir issue. India returned the favor by supporting the USSR on their Afghanistan invasion in 1979. In order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, USSR and the US held two conferences ('Salt 1' and 'Salt 2') in 1972, and signed the treaty on the main documents ("The Basic Principles of Relations") which were related to the bilateral relations of the US and USSR. After bilateral talks, the US succeeded in establishing lasting relations with the USSR Pakistan and China. However, the US sidelined India. Thus, Indian leadership perceived it as the US changed the global structure from bipolar to a triangular by adding China in it. This triangle created an alarming situation for the India, which was already tired of China's security threats. During the 1973 to 1974, the Indo-US relation became stabilized to some extent due to the bilateral negotiations and efforts of Kissinger and Nixon.

But it lasts for very short time as the US imposed an embargo for a span of ten years on the lethal arms sale to South Asian Region, which resulted in cancellation of all scheduled visits from India. Again in 1977, Indo-US relations made some progress with the formation of Janata Government in India. The US president, Jimmy Carter, came to India in 1978, and the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai made a return visit to US in

⁴⁵ McMahon R.J, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 432.

the same year.⁴⁶

Somehow the US managed to maintain the partially good relation with India in 1980s. But in 1979, the world has witnessed significant changes with the USSR invasion in the Afghanistan. This invasion created an alarming situation for the US, it was a clear threat for the US dominance in the South Asian region as an extra regional actor. Therefore the US found Pakistan as the most suitable actor to contain USSR in the region. The US provided economic and military support to Pakistan, and facilitate the “freedom fighters” with advanced weapons. This was clearly a proxy war which was fought from the Pakistan to achieve the US interest to contain Soviet Union. Indian leaders were not happy with the US presence in Indian Ocean, and they declared that Pakistan is being used by the US to achieve its objectives to defeat USSR in Afghanistan.⁴⁷ But the US leader stated that containment of communism in South Asian Region is their basic purpose.

India realized the weak position of USSR, during the 1982-1985. It was time when India realized the importance of good relation with US, the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi made an effort to restore friendly relations with the US, they visited US and as a result, cooperation began in the fields of science, security, and technology. The officials from both countries made multiple visits during the 1985, to further strengthen the cooperation. But India was not trying to restore the relations with the US only, it was also trying to solve the border disputes with China. Rajiv Gandhi visited China to clear the mistrust issues and the Chinese leader Li Peng visited India in 1991 to establish good diplomatic relations with the India, it was his first official visit after a duration of 31 years.

To prevent the nuclear proliferation, the US was mainly focusing on the India and Pakistan in the South Asian region. According to India, along with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, the Samsungton Amendment, Pressler Amendment, F-16 aircraft and weapons supply to Pakistan during soviet invasion in Afghanistan increased the arm race

⁴⁶ McMahan, 427.

⁴⁷ Aijazuddin F.S, *From a Head, Through a Head to a Head: The Secret Channel Between the US and China Through Pakistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 163.

in the subcontinent and made India and Pakistan a playground for the extra regional powers.

In such circumstances the collapse of the Soviet Union brought misfortune to India. With the collapse and withdrawal of USSR, India reconsider its foreign policy towards its rival states such as Pakistan and China, as India needed to make alliance with another strong actor. The Cold War came to an end in 1991 with the Gorbachev's reforms, which led to the failure of communism and defeat of the USSR. This ended the fifty-year-long turmoil in the South Asian Region and history of the Indo-US relations. The US has maintained the title of only superpower whose democratic ideology has won over Marxist communism.

1.2 Post-Cold War (1991-2008)

After the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Cold War-dominated bipolar world order eliminated, and was replaced by the US-led unipolar system, especially from a political and military point of view.⁴⁸ The US and India were still the largest democracies in the world, but this fact was not presented as a model for future cooperation as in the past⁴⁹ A number of factors have contributed to the establishment of the Strategic Partnership between India and the US since the 1990s.

1.2.1 Economic Factors

In the Indian history, India faced a worst financial crisis in 1991, it was a very serious Balance of Payment crisis, when the Indian PM Rao's government, under the patronage of Manmohan Singh, who was finance minister at that time, introduced major reforms to liberate the Indian economy. These reforms resulted into foreign private investments in India, the major portion of these investments was American. Foreign direct investment in India reached to 2.14 billion USD in 1997 which was just 165 million USD in 1992, this

⁴⁸ Muzaffer Ercan YILMAZ, "The New World Order: An Outline of the Post-Cold War Era," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relation* 7, no4 (2008): 45.

⁴⁹ H.M.Sanjeev Kumar, "Dynamics of Post-Cold War U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shaping of Indo-U.S. Relations," *Indian Political Science Association* 69 (2008): 677-678.

was 13 times increase in these investments.⁵⁰

In addition to it, during this time period, the bilateral trade between the US and India witnessed significant rise. It was amounted to 30.6 billion USD in 2006.⁵¹ In 2006, the US accounted for about one-sixth exports of India. The progress of India's knowledge economy and global outsourcing industry has created a number of connections for the private sector. Therefore, economic relations played an important role in testing new relationships.

The nuclear tests were delayed by the government of India in 1994 as there was great chances of the US sanctions on India which could surely affected the Indian economy. Therefore, while talking to the deputy secretary of the state of the US, Strobe Talbott, and the Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao stated that the government of India did understand the importance of India's ties with the US and also the integration of Indian economy into global financial system. He was of the view that the nuclear card might jeopardize the security of Indian economy.⁵²

Furthermore, there are a number of dialogue mechanisms to enhance trade and economic engagement between India and the US, which also includes a ministerial-level economic and financial partnership, and a ministerial trade policy forum. Their last meeting was in 2016 in India. For the greater engagement of the private sector in trade and investment issues, there is a mutual forum of both countries.

1.2.2 Security Partnership

India and the US made the 18th July, 2005, a historical day by announcing their most comprehensive partnership in the history of their bilateral ties, this alliance covered the energy security, economy, democratic development, defense cooperation, space cooperation and advanced technology. The most controversial aspect of the agreement was the US commitment to “work with friends and allies to adjust international

⁵⁰ “FDI in India statistics,” Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Industrial Policy and Promotion, government of India, www.diplnic.i

⁵¹ “Export import data bank,” Ministry of Commerce, government of India, <http://commerce.nic.in>

⁵² Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington: Brookings, 2004), 31.

governments to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India.”⁵³ In fact, the US clearly recognized and cast itself as ready to legitimize a non-NPT state's nuclear weapons program, which has consistently opposed the non-proliferation regime globally.

The developing strategic relations between the US and India passed through a critical test when the US and India voted against Iran in a resolution which was proposed against Iran's nuclear program at the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2005. Though, this has exposed the double standards of India. In addition to nuclear cooperation, India and the US have worked in a several areas since the announcement of their strategic partnership, it includes trade and investment, aviation, agriculture, business, energy, defense, S&T, disaster relief, maritime cooperation and democracy elevation. India hosted a major naval exercise round in the Indian Ocean as a part of the "Malabar" series in 2007, 27 warships were involved from countries including the US, Singapore, Japan, and Australia.

The final stage in the Indo-US negotiations towards a nuclear control agreement came to light in late 2006. Until then, the Bush administration's foreign policy had very few achievements, as the Iraq war was generally taken as a strategic disaster for the US (although the increase in troops in 2006-08 resulted in improved ground strategy). The US Progress in Afghanistan has also been disappointing, and as a result the NATO alliance came under some pressure, the President's team identified success on the Indian front as one of the most positive foreign policy prospects in the Bush administration. Tough negotiations over the detailed outcome that India has often witnessed in the presence of international observers to blockade the US, though the critics in India have swayed their views on “123 Agreement”, in 2007, according to them the India has sold out its sovereignty in turn of this so called agreement.⁵⁴ Until the mid-2008, neither side succeeded to get their agreement approved nor the related safeguard clauses of the agreement by NSG or IAEA were approved, this shows that how controversial this deal

⁵³ “Joint statement between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh,” White House, 18 July 2005.

⁵⁴ “Chronology of the Indo-US nuclear deal,” *Times of India*, October 9, 2008, accessed on September 12, 2020. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Chronology-of-the-Indo-US-nuclear-deal/articleshow/3575350.cms>

had become at that time. Anyhow, in July 2008, the government of India led by Manmohan Singh defeated the no confidence vote in the parliaments which was brought up by the opposition against the agreement. Later on 1st August 2008, the International Atomic Energy Agency approved the safeguards of the agreement and the NSG also granted India a clean waiver from the fundamental rules of the group on 6 September 2008. Moreover, this deal was approved by the senate of the US on 1st October 2008 with the vote of 86 to 13 and this move was followed by the approval of agreement by House of Representatives. These major developments between the US and India not only strengthened the strategic ties between these two states but it also had impact on the global positioning and standing of India.

Although many vague Chinese statements were made from Indian observers during the IAEA talks, China caused no hurdle in IAEA approval. Nor did countries like Australia and Canada, which had taken long and strong stand in defense of non-proliferation treaties and broader non-proliferation governments. Indian diplomacy played an important role in the success of this treaty. The discipline and proficiency of the US negotiating team was also amazing and specifically under Nicholas Burns.

In fact, during the year 2005-08, India's global diplomatic tactics on the nuclear file suggested the extent to which Indian diplomacy has become practical (and focused) in the face of the right incentives. Perhaps in order to save its diplomatic power for this issue, India has not shown undue creativity or energy to non-files during these files, except Nepal, during these years, has softened its relations with China. Convinced to move forward, closer ties with one another, Asian partners, a cautious stance on West Asian challenges, and the emergence of new partnerships with Brazil and South Africa.

1.3 Political Factors

Economic interdependence does not balance the political differences between most nations. On top of that, a new element was running. In the 1990s, there were several names who came on surface of wealthy Indians, who had learned to be politically active and engage in the US Congress in order to influence the South Asian and Indian policy.

The US survey in 2007 counted 2.5 million Americans of Indian origin. The average family income in this group is about 79% higher than the national average.⁵⁵ After the 1992 election, Indian Americans raised a growing amount of money from political candidates. This has led to a high level of interest within the Congress in matters relating to India, as more than a quarter of the members of the House of Representatives have joined an informal Congress with an aim to promote the Indio-US relations.

As a result, the traditional legislative feud with India was characterized by the defeat of the "Burton Amendment" (since 1996), which were passed every year traditionally and were developed to reduced foreign assistance to India. Indian Americans in 2005-2006, also sought a major mission to promote the passage of legislation which allows the civilian nuclear collaboration with India. The Indian policy makers also start rethinking their anti-American and nonaligned policies. In 1980s, a rapidly disintegrating multi-faceted political system emerged that created political and ideological gaps for new voices in India's foreign policy discourse.

The manifesto of Bharatiya Janata Party's election (1991) already rejected the nonalignment policy by calling it an outdated ideology. The Indian approach to foreign policy was realized in the 1990s, and it became the forerunner of the "Strategic Partnership" era for India. India had severed its long-standing defense ties with Russia in 2005, as well as partnerships with US, China, Japan, Iran, and Japan, which remain in a modified form. This indicates a new practice and inclination to establish relations with other global powers. India changed the style and content of its diplomacy. Vajpayee and then Foreign Minister of India, Jaswant Singh opted for the "quiet diplomacy", at least in their bilateral relations, over ethical rhetoric.

India was carefully making ties with countries including US. Two years after the visit of Chinese premiere Li Peng to India in 1991, an agreement was signed between both the countries, and it was about maintaining peace and resolving the border disputes between both countries. Later in 1992 India developed its "look east" policy, under this policy

⁵⁵ Website of the US India political action committee, www.usinpac.com

India tried to make good relation with the Southeast Asian countries. After few years of this policy India became a full dialogue partner at ASEAN. But the differences between the US and India remained as they were on nuclear and regional security issues.

India realized that despite some progress in its relations, the US continued to pursue an inappropriate policy in South Asia. As the US resumed its arm supply to Pakistan under some congressional amendment in 1995, which had been strained since the USSR defeat in Afghanistan. India didn't like this act of US, especially under the Watch report of Human Rights in 1994, which linked the weapons used in attacks on Kashmir and Punjab from militants, with the sources supplied to intelligence agencies of Pakistan from US during Afghan war.

Moreover, the US gave limited access to India to high technology of America as it feared that this access could be misused. In 1995, a permanent extension of the NPT (Nonproliferation treaty) was supported by the US and it was strongly opposed by the government of India. Moreover, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was also rejected by India. The government of India called this CTBT as biased agreement which favored the major powers. Anyhow, it can be concluded that formulation of Indian policies in post-cold war period was more independent and exclusive in its nature.

1.3.1 Pokhran-II and its Impact

Pokhran is a site where India tested his first nuclear device, and again in May 1998, In India exploded five nuclear devices at the Pokhran. Hardly two weeks after this event, had Pakistan tested its six nuclear devices at the Chagai Hills. These both events alarm the US administration and President Clinton responded to these nuclear tests immediately and imposed economic sanction son both the South Asian countries. But, in a controversial conclusion, as Raja Mohan (Indian foreign policy analyst) argues, that actually the Indian nuclear tests in 1998, were the beginning of the end of disagreement on the nonproliferation issue between the US and India. As long as there is controversy over what are Indian objectives related to its nuclear weapons, the US concerns were real and they will do anything possible to stop India from becoming a nuclear power in the

South Asian region.⁵⁶

The US began a high-level dialogue process with three long-term goals, nonproliferation, progress relations with India, and Pakistan as a pro-Western Islamic state will continue getting the US support. In order to pursue the interest to maintain peace in an unstable nuclear subcontinent, the US sidelined the strategic and Ideological differences with India. This corroborated India's view that "the world respects nuclear-armed countries." The next year, US provided an evidence of respecting the India's concerns, when Pakistan launched a valiant operation on Indian Territory in Kashmir's Kargil district. Opposing to historical experiences, the US favored the India and took the responsibility to free the area from Pakistani troops, the US then pressured the Pakistani Prime Minister to free the area from his troops.

The domestic lobbies and Indian American groups forced congress to lift the sanctions from India in the wake of nuclear question. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was rejected by the Republican-majority Senate, and this also was in favor of India. The post-Pokhran rapprochement was supported by these developments for Indo-US. The 21st century took many positive changes for the Indo-US ties. The US president, Clinton visited India in 2000 and became the first US president who made an official visit to India in past two decades. His visit played an important role in transforming the relation between both democracies. India also supported the controversial nuclear missile defense initiative of George W. Bush and stood among the first and few countries who supported this initiative.

Subsequently, as the events of 9/11 happened, India took this opportunity and offered the US its full operational support to fight the US declared war on terror. Immediately after this the US lifted all the sanctions from India and the Bilateral Defense Policy Group, which had been suspended since 1998, had been revived by the end of 2000. After the terrorist attack in 2001 on the Indian Parliament, India accused Pakistan for this act and the US again put pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting terrorist activities in India. The US started regional security talks with India in 2002, seeking common interests in

⁵⁶ C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New York: Viking, 2003), 89

neighborhood of India, which included an end to Sri Lankan war, a political stable Bangladesh, and restructuring the Afghanistan from the after effects of cold war in the subcontinent.

1.3.2 Impact of Indo-US Strategic Partnership on Balance of Power and Regional Peace

Regional and global factors also contributed to the strengthening of the relations between the US and India. The growing economy of India and the powerful rise of China in the region became driving factors for development of Indo-US strategic partnership in the IOR. While meeting with secretary of state of the US Strobe Talbott, then the foreign minister of India, Jaswant Singh stated that Pakistan is not suitable for the US and India is the right choice for the US to form strategic ally in the region. Anyhow, Pakistan was declared as a major non -NATO ally by the US in 2004 and also agreements were signed between the US and Pakistan in 2006 for the transfer of arms worth 3.5 billion USD in Pakistan's war against terrorism. At the same time, the US was also more significantly building the relations with India.⁵⁷

China, instead of Pakistan, has appeared as a decisive factor for the development of strategic alignment between the US and India. This development has been described as "a new triangle" by Varshney which is based on realist logic that when the top two powers fight with each other, then the first usually runs after the third to establish an alliance.⁵⁸ Though, the stated policy of China is the peaceful economic growth, but as with the rapid economic growth, China has also been increasing its defense expenditures exponentially. Now, China is standing at the second position after the US in the list of top military spending countries in the world.

It was natural and understandable to see the US strategic alignment with India to use India as counter balance to China in the region. Secretary of state Condoleezza Rice had argued that India should be paid attention by the US as the latter can exploit the regional rivalry between China and India in its favor. The Bush administration was keen to

⁵⁷ Teresita C. Schaffen, "Building a new partnership with India," *Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 41.

⁵⁸ Ashutosh Varshney, "A new triangle: India, China, and the US," Seminar 557, January 2006.

develop strong ties with India and giving India greater role in Indian Ocean. These developments showed that India might get the support from the US in the international political system and India would act as a junior partner of the US which would control Indian Ocean.⁵⁹

However, the aims and objectives of India were not similar to the US in the region. China was perceived as major threat to India and the Vajpayee government also recognized China as one of key reasons behind the nuclear program of India. But, the government of India also made engagements with China and preferred the cooperation over confrontation with China. In this regard, a high-level dialogue was developed to settle the issues and explore new aspects of cooperation with China. First joint military exercise with China was organized by India in 2007 and the first annual defense dialogue between China and India was hosted by China. But, the strengthening strategic partnership between the US and India might be taken by China more seriously as the US was already making efforts to counter China in the Indo-Pacific region. A former foreign secretary of India, Shyam Saran, had talked about such possibilities, he had said that the stronger relations between the US and India would also impact on India's relations with the other countries.

Pakistan is a predominant challenge in the foreign policy objectives of India, according to some in India while many Indians are of the view that China is a political and economic opportunity for India rather than civilizational or strategic issue. Moreover, China and India have been sharing common grounds on the issue of human rights, arms control, labor laws, trade and climate change as they were against the interests of the western countries. Anyhow, the US and India has more potential for cooperation as compared to India's cooperation with China.

As a strategic partner of the US, India's deep internal divisions over the Indo-US nuclear deal indicate a national reluctance to play the second swindle. Despite its anti-Iranian votes in the IAEA, India wanted to keep good relations with the country through bilateral channels. Furthermore, India's pursuit of energy security through the proposed Iran-

⁵⁹ Achin Vanaik, "Post-Cold War Indian foreign policy," Seminar 581, January 2008.

Pakistan-India gas pipeline caused a rift between India and the US, consequently India left the project after signing a Civil Nuclear Agreement with the US in 2008.

According to Nagi, QUAD ministers met in Tokyo in October 2020, but not much alignment was seen in QUAD leaders, as the Japanese and Indians were not very satisfied with the ideological and the anti-Chinese concept of Trump administration. But the Biden administration is really systematic and it was seen in last summit with the QUAD leaders, as they covered area like acceleration of vaccination, infrastructure connectivity and other productive projects. Referring to the then upcoming G7 meeting according to him, it would have to be organized a QUAD meeting on the sidelines of the G7. 'So this would be the first time with all the QUAD country leaders will come together and it is about more public good they can provide to the indo pacific and less about security they can provide to the indo pacific so I think the focus is going to be infrastructure connectivity open digital system and E governance probably health infrastructures, and they all will focus on maritime law and free and open sea lines of communication. This meeting will be focused on public goods for the region these four countries working together. So in that sense it's quite positive and even for Pakistan, as I don't think they want exclude Pakistan, at least the Japanese, Australian and the United States don't want to exclude Pakistan. About India I don't think they will be interested to exclude Pakistan, and they can provide goods to Pakistan which is a good thing. So this convergence is going to be critical about more and more traditional public goods and countries in south Asia in particular and more choices they can do in terms of infrastructure connectivity'.

According to Kewalramani, interest is a compliment territory, because India and china's and even India and Pakistan's interest are in this region. He added that, 'I am certain that India, China and Pakistan all don't want piracy and certainly they all want trade to flow without any interruption. And I am certain that all want to ensure security of their shores and their assets. The challenge is that with regard to the role of the non-state actors and role of in conflicts what do u do, the challenge in regard to strategic sort suspicions of each other's with regard to what we do in the IOR if there is conflict in the border with each other. So those are the kind of things and challenges which are going to exist but if you see broadly in these domains that is a strong commonality of interests to come up

with a common set of rules with each side to work together can actually to come up on a broad range of issues. Yet there will be certain suspicions because of our inherent problems which are territorial and political'. While talking about the US, he added that US has and will continue to remain the biggest power in the region. Nobody has the capacity to match American military power in the IOR. The US however needs more allies and partners to work within the region to be able to project power in the oceans. And that has become primary interest for the US with china's rise and china projecting far greater power in the IOR. So in that sense the balance of power shifting has begun with the china's rise and Chinese increased focus on the IOR. further talking about how the Indo-US strategic partnership will impact that balance of power in some ways, he added that, 'this is not a military partnership, right now it is a defense partnership with regard to working together on largely military drills with regards to humanitarian disaster and relief, anti-piracy, non-state actors and combating those sort of things, and that is what it is right now we are not conducting warfare drills and I don't think you will see that being done any time in near future. Most of the drills are improving operational flexibility and operational ability between the different sites. So that is largely where the balance of power is and I think that is important to keep in mind that right now this is the balance of power. China's increasing role is shifting the balance of power and I think both these sides along with the others is prime to figure out how do you compete in certain areas and how do u accommodate in certain areas. As I said there are commonality of interest'.

According to him, 'in terms of competing in certain areas the US seeing the potential for who provide security in the region or who has the increased military capability in the Indian Ocean. In that sense there is a shifting balance of power where the US and India are together and obviously have far greater military capabilities in the IOR, actually at present India is known in IOR is far stronger than china because the china's supply lines are so stretched, but as china builds navy basis in the region if not hard basis soft basis that will change. So I think we need to look how China is behaving to understand how balance of power is changing. Because if China was not doing what it is doing you would not see this degree of cooperation between US and India specifically with regards to rules and military capacity'.

1.4 Main Drivers Behind Indo-US Strategic Convergence

According to Nagi,⁶⁰ the US has been engaged trying to court India for at least 20 years, under the bush administration that his decision to export nuclear technology to India, to accept India as a nuclear power and that effort was part of the broader strategy for understanding the importance of India in balancing China as in its role for more powerful.⁶¹ This was enhanced under president Obama as he tried to strengthen relation in the region, Trump of course and PM Modi shared a good relationship, now Mr Biden will also try to strengthen the relationship with India so from American stance this is part of long-term balance of power game they are thinking about from decades.

According to Nagi, India is primarily focused on economic development, they look to fight the security challenges from China and Pakistan. China from the other point regarding its territorial disputes with India which they are having over inland plateau, or Pakistan over Kashmir and the long-standing disagreements about many issues, all those were Pakistan's equation; and those were not real driving force behind India having growing strong alliance with the United States and its other partner, primarily China. Due to unstable economy, Pakistan will be least economically much less significant for India. So Pakistan doesn't represent that excess attention issue that china may. further he added that 'India is trying to avoid being squeezed between china and America but recent Chinese behavior made that much more difficult not to retain the position of centrality but Indians are no way going to form an alliance with the Americans, interviewee shared his view about India that they be like the Chinese that tilt to the United States but not forming any alliance or any military commitment with US. Because primarily Indians are domestically focused and they focus on development and, further he added that post pandemic they are going to be more fragile society that is going to have to deal with the domestic issue, and they see America as a partner to help them but India's global ambitions are mostly talks only and not reality.'

⁶⁰ Dr Stephen R Nagy is a Senior Associate Professor at Department of Politics and International Studies, International Christian University, Tokyo.

⁶¹ Interview was conducted on zoom meeting at 15 may, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Draft of interview has been attached at the end as annex 1.

On the other side, Kewalramani,⁶² explained that Indian drivers are very straight forward. The IOR is much more important to both India and US in terms of economic future and security, and strategic engagement with regards with the rules accumulation in the region. A bulk of the world's trade passes through this region, energy supply pass through this region. He added that, 'it is extremely important in that sense and from Indian point of view, because of our periphery, so of course we are much more in interest.'⁶³ From American point of view it is a place where you are going to see rules the future but China wants to break through the islands chain and break through the Malacca dilemma to be much more active and as those sort of changes happen due to the strategic dimension shift, so it is significant for both sides in those region yet there is a difference in what we want to achieve and what Americans want to achieve. What Indians want to achieve is security and to be able to frame rules in the region without entering any sort of great power competition. India wants to secure economic security physical security and we want to ensure sovereignty along with partners. From American point of view this is partly to do with their economic and military sort of prosperity going forward and trade prosperity, also to do with strategic competition with china. So there are different drivers for each side. There are point set which they each set and that's where we are being able to work together'.

1.5 Evolution of Indo-US Strategic Partnership under Obama and Trump Administrations

During the period of 2000s, there was a substantial development in the Indo-US relations though, still the Obama administration did not have a very favorable start with the India during its first year in the office. Even in the beginning, administration, nearly caused distress in its relation with the Indian government, when seasonal diplomat Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, declared that the Kashmir issue can also be included in his portfolio. An aggressive and rapid response erupted from the Indian administration, in response to these rumors. There was an impression, the new US administration is not going to value, the Indian's concerns over a

⁶² Manoj Kawalramani is Fellow-China Studies at the Takshashila Institution, Bangluru, India.

⁶³ The interview was conducted on zoom on May 05,2021at 12:00 PST. The draft of interview has been included as annex 2.

long-lasting issue of their sovereignty. Having this feeling, the Indian officials had hired campaigners and even utilized their personal relations in order to restrain the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, from including India in his portfolio.⁶⁴

During July, 2009, the Secretary Clinton made a four-day visit to the India, which helped to improve the India-US relations, it could be called a first major development. The visit helped to reduce the Indian government concerns and also changed the perception that the new US admiration does not see India as an impotent factor in the international matters. This visit by the foreign Secretary Clinton was the lengthiest and it also proved to be the basis for an important visit by the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh's visit to US during the month of November, 2009. The US administration made it quite obvious that they attach a higher significance to India-US relations, by inviting Indian Prime Minister to the US, for the first state visit of the Obama presidency, it was also obvious that Indian concerns over the threats of terrorism, faced by the India are also taken into consideration. It was stated by the president Obama that India's leadership is enhancing prosperity and security across the region and the US promotes the leadership role by the India in the region to outline the rise of progressive and peaceful Asia.'⁶⁵

After a year of Obama's visit to India, the Indian Prime Minister Singh's visit to the US happened. The US president, Obama declared, during his visit, that the India permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) would be supported by the US administration. The support from Obama for India at the UNSC can be seen in the context of public diplomacy. These comments depicted the US administration's intentions & seriousness to build strong ties with India, in many areas. Though it demonstrated to be a limited diplomatic gesture, considering the fact that China would veto another permanent member of the UN Security Council. The US president Obama also declared India to be a crucial partner of the US in the 21st Century.

Furthermore, Obama announced that the US would help India become a member of four

⁶⁴ J. Kirk, 'India's season of discontent: US-India relations through the prism of Obama's "Af- Pak" policy, year one', *Asian Affairs*, 37:3 (2010), 153.

⁶⁵ R. Kumar, 'New potential for US- India relations under Obama', *The International Spectator*, 44:4 (2009), 21.

non-proliferating regimes, which included the Wasenar Group, a missile technology management system, Australia Group, and a nuclear supplier group. It was another strong gesture by the US new administration. During the same period, there were various visit from both sides, at the top diplomatic levels as well as the heads of states. Two prominent visits were the, September 2014 visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the second was the visit of the US president Obama to Indian during January 2015.

1.5.1 Economic Ties under Obama

For most of the 20th century, India was not taken seriously by the US, on account of its poor economic situation. The situation of US trade in India was described as a curve as flat as a chappati, by Robert Blackwell, the US Ambassador to India in 2002. During the 2nd regime of the Bush administration, bilateral trade of goods started to increase, it reached to USD 43 billion in the year 2008 which was USD 21 billion in 2004. By the completion of Obama's 2nd term as the US president, trade relations between the two countries were expanding swiftly. As the trade expansion was more than 600 per cent from 2000–17.

Although the statistics demonstrates that economic ties between the US and India were growing, still less economic dependence was seen during the regime of Obama administration. One of the main reasons behind slower economic integration was Indian domestic political scenario. Moreover, Indian administration started imposing discriminatory taxes on foreign investors and taking protective measures in 2012-13, when Indian economy slowed down. Trade dispute between both countries aggravated after with American firms started complaining against Indian protectionism, and both nations recording suits within the World Exchange Organization (WTO). The imports of more than dozen Indian plants was banned by the US which were previously utilized by the pharmaceutical industry.⁶⁶

At the start of President Obama's second term, tariffs on all goods in the United States were 3.5 percent, while in India it was 48.6 percent. At this point when it is compared with the average GDP in each country, the Indian administration opposes the opening of

⁶⁶ S. Ganguly, *India's Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 251– 74.

the Indian market because of the political production cost and the inability of Indian firms to compete with high-yielding American companies. Simple average bound tariff is one basic measure to compare the relative openness of the US and Indian business sectors. Toward the beginning of the president Obama's second term, tariffs on all goods in the US was 3.5 percent, on the other hand it was 48.6 percent in India. At the point when this is compared with the average GDP in each country, with the US at USD 53,000 and India at USD 1,500, the attraction of the Indian market reduced for American firms substantially. The Indian administration was not in favor to open the Indian market on account of the political costs and the incapability of Indian enterprises to stand against the competitive US firms.

1.5.2 Security Ties

Under the Obama administration, the America's political and economic relations faced difficulties, security ties between the two nations were vigorous and even enhanced during Obama's eight years as the US president. This segment shows that the US's strategic embrace of India can be described as it's hedging efforts against growing China. The US and India are both in strategic competition with China, and, over the past decade and a half, the two separate conflicts have become increasingly interlinked. The Chinese People's Liberation Army and Navy (PLA and PLAN),s increasing power as well as China's overall growing influence, making all Asian states to review their security strategies.

Increasing influence of China in the region provide opportunities as well as threats to both the US and India. The threats lies in the strategic conflicts that both countries has with China while the possibility of economic benefits through trade & working with China provides the opportunities For the US, cooperation with India in the field of security helps maintain US dominance in the regions as well as helps India in its enmity with China. On one hand India is vigorously working with China to enhance economic cooperation, as well as preparing for the worst security situation in the region.

The security relation between India and the US represent two important strategic convergences, one of them is that the Indo-US interests are broadly intertwined in the IOR and Asian security. The US and India both want to develop productive ties with China, at the same time both countries are worried due to the growing influence of China in IOR. According to Indian strategists, China has become a great strategic challenge for India, even though it is a point of view that the government does not like to state publicly as a policy. This alignment policy of the Indo-US was made clear in a joint statement issued by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit of Obama to India in 2015.

The number second convergence is that India sees its economy as a power source, so it has made the security of Indian Ocean very important for the Indian strategic point of view. The US presence in the IOR is also providing the security to the growing Indian economy. Indian economic boom, which began in the 1990s, has shifted naval and maritime affairs from backwater to a key area of Indo-US security ties, both the countries have launched an annual maritime security dialogue.

Due to the deep strategic understanding between both countries, the US and India extended their defense cooperation framework agreement for another span of ten years in 2015. The cooperation areas have been expanded in every agreement. And the technology transfer and defense co-operation (two of India's top priorities) has given the high priority this time. Significantly, the proposed Logistics Support Agreement, a desirable feature of the US defense trade in general, which was abandoned for the dead almost two years ago, was revived in another parasitic form for India during the visit of Secretary Defense Ashton Carter to India in 2016.⁶⁷

The US and India both have been working on the projects related to the design and operation of aircraft carriers and jet engine technology. The US constructors have lost bids for a huge order of medium-range fighter jets, but the defense trade has grown, increasing by \$9 billion during the years of 2008 and 2013. Barry Buzan suggested in his concept of RSCT that states no longer make alliance only on the basis of their geography,

⁶⁷ Teresita C. Schaffer, "India-U.S. relations: Security ties," *Brookings*, June 4, 2016, accessed on September 23, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/india-u-s-relations-security-ties/>

but they make alliances on the basis of their mutual interests. To help each other to pursue their own security interest in the regions. So the key parallels between Indo-US security interests national interests will always push them to move forward with each other, despite of any kind of challenges.

1.5.3 Rivalry Dynamics

Deep doubts have been expressed by the Indian leaders about China, which dates back to the time when both states were founded in the late 1940s. The incidence of war between China and Indian in 1962, where P.L.A. forces quickly defeated the Indian army also had a distressing effect on the Indian leaders. The threat sensitivity in India has multiplied intensely, with the recent increase in the Chinese military powers as well as, its capability to project power in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). China's rise is likely to change the geopolitical landscape in a number of ways that can be disadvantageous to the interests of the United States and India. Under this scenario, it is understandable that the US and India are working together to deal with an increasingly powerful and assertive China. India's policies towards the United States and China are tangled as argued by Paul Kapoor and without understanding its position on the one, it is impossible to understand the Indian position on the other'.⁶⁸

The US president, Obama's pivot was an approach to shift US's strategic attention from Asia to Asia-Pacific region. There was an important aspect behind this that encouraged US allies to work together to balance China's growing influence. An important part of this was the escalation of military cooperation between the US and its allies. India was an important part of the axis for American strategists. US Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta specifically called India the "Linchpin" of the strategy, while Secretary of State, John Kerry spoke about India as playing critical role.

1.5.4 Arms Sale during Obama's Both Terms

The US administration played a vital role for provision of advance weapon system to India during the years between 2009 and 2017. High-level purchases included the C-

⁶⁸ J. D. Schmidt, "The Asia-Pacific strategic triangle: Unentangling the India, China, US relations on conflict and security in South Asia," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 1:2 (2014), 214.

130JS Super Hercules and ten C-17 transport aircraft; 24 Harpoon Block II missiles; Eight P-8Is (important for anti-submarine combat) and Apache helicopters gunships. Furthermore, the Pentagon assisted the Indian Army in less noticeable methods, such as sharing data about main control points in the IOR, where PLAN submarine traffic is possible, working with the Indian Navy on undersea sensors and assisting in the manufacture of catapults of new Indian aircrafts carriers. Although the US is not the largest source of foreign military equipment, the US arms exports to India increased dramatically during the Obama administration.

Through collaboration of US in security domain, India not only have access to the knowledge and technology of the US, but also improves its military strategies, in military exercises like RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific Exercise), Malabar, and Salex, (India has been an observer of RIMPAC from 2004-2007, but a partner since 2012). Government of China is fully aware about the enhancing security relations OF Indo-US, but also seems less worried about the Indian concerns of Chinese encirclement. Xi Jinping's state visit to India in September 2014 was a prominent example of this, during this Chinese military crossed the Line of Actual Control, which separates India from territory under Chinese control in Tibet. This movement was seen as a major insult to the Indian PM Modi, and it also left Indians wondering that why the crossing was ordered. The case of the China's BRI, whereby huge amount of USD dollars would be invested in the region's infrastructure development, intensifies Indian's fears of a Chinese encirclement. The BRI's flagship project, CPEC crosses the disputed land in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. And India has boycotted this initiative by considering it as a violation of Indian sovereignty in Kashmir.⁶⁹

1.5.5 Trump Administration

During the last meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Obama at the White House in 2016, the US promoted India as a key defense partner that no other country was ever. Both countries renewed their ten years defense agreement which was first signed in 2005. The Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) is the most important part of

⁶⁹ A. Liff, 'Wither the balancers? The case for a methodological reset', *Security Studies*, 25:3 (2016), 420–59.

this agreement, which aims to increase the defense and security cooperation between both countries, and it would pave the way for future defense cooperation. India would have access to the US defense technology under this agreement.⁷⁰

In the next year (2017) then US President Donald J. Trump had a meeting with Indian PM Modi in white house. Although Trump has strongly disagreed with India on trade, H-1B visa, and climate change, these issues have been ignored during the Leaders' Summit, and according to their joint statements they seemed to be focused only on strengthening the defense partnership, containment of terrorism and economic ties between both countries. But still the Donald Trump called the Modi a “true friend” in a tweet and in this meeting both the leaders made a clear effort to promote a warm relationship, they were focused on converging Indo-US interests rather than escalating differences over immigration and the Paris climate agreement.

Later on, an agreement was signed between India and US in 2018, The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), according to this agreement India got an access to use the advanced communication technology, which was used in U.S. defense equipment. Under this agreement the US would enable to provide its own secret communications system and equipment to India for Indo-US military commanders, and the two countries' naval and aircrafts, would be able to communicate through a secure network in all kind of circumstances. They would be allowed to share the real time information with each other. Signing this agreement developed the smooth ways for communications security equipment transfer from the US to India and enabled "mutual intervention" between their security forces. The Malabar Naval Exercises and initiatives for the new bilateral tri-services are the real results of this strategic alliance. According to Nirmala Sitharaman, a former Defense Minister, and this defense cooperation has become the key element of this Indo-US bilateral relationship.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “India, US renew defence framework pact for 10 years,” *India Today*, January 25, 2015, accessed on September 23, 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/obama-modi-defence-framework-pact-india-us-renew-10-years-237378-2015-01-25>

⁷¹ Benjamin E. Schwartz, From inertia to integration: Getting serious about U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Schwartz, B. E. (2019, June 24). From inertia to integration: Getting serious about U.S.-India Defense Cooperation. *The National Interest*.

In parallel with these advances, the Trump administration has eliminated India's privileged trade status, which was part of a program which was developed in 1970s. The developed countries were allowed to enter their products duty-free in the US market duty-free. Trump objected India for not giving "equal and reasonable access" to its Indian market. Few weeks after this, India reduced tariffs on twenty-eight American products as a response of imposing duties on aluminum and steel from the US in 2018. India earlier enlisted the reciprocal tariffs but their implementation was halted during trade talks.⁷²

Mr. Donald Trump praised Modi's action and leadership several times. Both the leaders announced their plan to work on joint efforts for mental health and counter-narcotics. India has agreed to buy \$3 billion worth of military equipment from the US, in return the ExxonMobil, a US based Oil Company, announced a deal with Indian Oil Corporation. The issues remained unresolved over products especially agricultural and tariffs issues, the authorities have not been able to reach an agreement despite years of negotiation on resolving those issues related to trade between both countries.

Furthermore the Trump Administration as compared to Obama Administration seemed more concerned for the containment of China. Donald Trump made a clear statement that containment of China is their priority now. Trump was more willing to challenge China on every front, including the trade practices and economic management of China in South and Southeast Asia. Afterwards, Rex Tillerson's, the State Secretary, criticized China bluntly during a speech in Washington (2017) according to him China has been violating the international rules. He also praised India by stating that even countries like India are operating within a framework where they provide protection for the sovereignty of other states. He further criticized the China's "provocative actions in the South China Sea" and its economic developments in IOR and Indo Pacific region. He called this a "debt trap" which has trapped the economy of many countries.

The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) was signed between the Indo-US, it was signed when the Trump tenure as a president was ending, it has been considered as a major development in the defense cooperation of these strategic allies in

⁷² Joshi, M. (2018, January 12). A strong India-US partnership is the best balancer to China's growing power. Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/>

the IOR. The US Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper and Michael R. Pompeo, the State Secretary made a visit in 2020 to India hardly before the few days of Presidential Elections in the US. Both the officials met their Indian counterparts and signed five agreements. The most important of the bilateral agreements was the BECA.⁷³ Under this agreement India will have access to American geospatial intelligence, (a real time access), which will increase the accuracy of weapons and automated systems. Under this agreement both the countries are able to share information, satellite data and high-end military technology with each other.

Conclusion

The US is an extra-regional actor in the IOR and has been dominant since 1950s. During cold war, Indo-US relations did not see much progress due to Indian inclination towards Soviet Union. In the post-cold war era, Indo-US ties witnessed significant progress and the relations between them have turned into a strategic partnership in the region. Despite the ups and downs in Indo-US relation, both countries are on the same page now. The recent progress in defense cooperation agreement, “Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.” In 2015, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the renewal of Defense Framework Agreement between both countries, and the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and BECA, these are all important advancements in the Indo- US partnership. All these agreements have strategic advantages for both countries, which seems further strengthening the Indo-US strategic partnership.

No doubt that the US has provided strategic support to India many times, but according to the international relation and Barry Buzan’s concept of RSCT, states keep their interest foremost and make alliance on the basis of similar interest. They never compromise on their national interest. The US has its own interest in the IOR, which became the reason behind this alliance. The undeniable strategic importance of the sea routes and choke points of Indian Ocean and China’s factor played decisive role for the convergence of

⁷³ Sanjeev Miglani and Nigam Prusty, “India, U.S. clinch defence pact on satellite data as Pompeo, Esper hold talks, Reuters, October 26, 2020 accessed on September 25,2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUSKBN27B10K>

Indian and American Interests in the region.

Chapter Two

India's Interests in the IOR

The Indian Ocean Region has always been and will remain, on the strategic focus of world great powers. Its strategic location with abundant oil, mineral resources and fisheries, maritime trade, and oil routes, has led to geopolitical competition between world powers and regional states.⁷⁴ Without any doubt, for India, the Indian Ocean has huge and growing strategic significance, and it is most concerned with the ocean as a geostrategic space. As the Indian Ocean has now become part of Indian security policy. As an international trade route, the Indian Ocean is now more strategically and economically important than ever before. India is heavily dependent on maritime trade and as a result, its security interests have an important maritime dimension. Security and trade are linked to each other, and navies are not only controlling the military platforms but also serving as a protector for the trading vessels and the policing of SLOCs.⁷⁵ India has a large and vulnerable coastline of 7500 km with the Indian Ocean, and sees itself as the natural preeminent regional power in the IOR. It has a dense population in the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean, which are economically dependent on the Indian Ocean waters. Indian Ocean plays an important role in the security and economic growth of India. Roughly 95% of the country's trade by volume and 70% by value are moved through SLOCs of the Indian Ocean. However India has many challenges to face by internal and external factors, like large population, ethnic issues, security concerns, regional and extra-regional actor's growing influence in IOR, to maintain its dominating role in the region and to achieve its great power ambitions, India sees the IOR as critical to achieve its national interests.

This chapter explains the major Indian interests in IOR and has been divided into five sections; (i) Economic Interests, (ii) Security Interests (iii) Political Interests, (iv) Hegemonic/Global Interests, (v) India's Significant Initiatives in Pursuit of Interests.

⁷⁴ Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11-130.

⁷⁵ Amit A. Pandya, Rupert Herbert-Burns and Junko Kobayashi, *Maritime Commerce and Security: The Indian Ocean* (Washington DC: Stimson Center, 2011), 5-7.

2.1 Perspective about Comprehensive National Interest

Nations make alliance and cooperate with other countries on the base of their national interest and perception of their security. There can be different types of interests, which guide states in formulating their policies particularly extending their foreign policy towards others. As one perspective comprehensively national interests on the basis of security perception can be discussed in multiple ways. Raging from traditional to non-traditional. During the interview conducted with Manoj Kewalramani, he has explained that Indo-US interests can be discussed into four ways, economic interest, political interest, and humanitarian and disaster relief interest, and strategic interest. Both countries have different point of view on these interests.

From economic interest point of view, the US wants freedom of navigation and it wants to ensure the continuous flow of energy supplies and free trade through the indo pacific region. From Indian economic point of view India is looking for trade, as from last two three decades trade has become much more important and a lot of Indian trade has been happening through the ocean because it's a peninsula country. So trade security is very important, along with the security of sea lanes, India also has security concerns with regards to piracy, non-state actors, those are all economic interest from Indian point of view. From HADR point of view it connects with the security and economic where after the tsunami there was a lesson learnt particularly with regard to that the climate change have the potential to raise sea levels, it has more humanitarian and economic consequences. So there is common interest in working on that. He added that, 'Strategically we see then US wants to maintain its preponderance in the region where as Indian interest is not necessarily to maintain America's preponderance, India's interest is to be able to develop its capacity to be able to perform the role of net security provider in the region. And to be able to be in the position that it can guide rule formation in the frame rules in the region.'⁷⁶

2.2 Economic Interest

The IOR is rich in resources, especially in the fields of fisheries, aquaculture, marine

⁷⁶ Manoj Kewalramani. Zoom interview.

energy, offshore mining and minerals, and also offers great economic opportunities to promote shipping activities and maritime tourism. The fishing and minerals are the most commercially viable industries among all these resources. More than 38 million people around world depend on the fisheries and commercial to earn their livelihood. The fish production in Indian Ocean has increased to a drastic level, as fish production in 1950 was 861,000 and in 2010 it was recorded as 11.5 million tons. A report by Food and Agriculture Organization of the US (FAO) says that while other oceans around the world are limiting their fishing in some areas, but the resources in Indian Ocean have the capacity to withstand the growing production.

In the Indian Ocean the biggest commercial interest for the developers are Polymetallic nodules and polymetallic sulfide. Polymetallic nodules similar to the shape of golf or tennis ball, these nodules contain magnesium, iron, nickel and cobalt, which has been formed on the seafloor for millions of years and usually found at a depth of four to five kilometers in the water. The exclusive rights to exploit these nodules were given to India in 1987, in the basin of Central Indian Ocean. Since then, India has set up two mines and have explored the 4 million square miles area.

A nation must be provided with a strong impetus on Research and Development, and Innovation in areas of Ocean Energy, Marine Biology and Biotechnology, to achieve important market shares in these sectors. The Indian Ocean based blue economy has all the potential to provide India with a successful economy and the blue economy development can help India to become an economy of \$10 trillion by 2032. Furthermore, the IOR is strategically very important for Indian economic development as it is the largest source of importing gas and oil. Furthermore, this dependence is expected to increase rapidly by 2025.

The IOR have a remarkable trade potential for India. The IOR countries have shown significant trade improvement in the last few years, as the trade increased four time in 2012 as compared to 2003. In 2003 it was US\$ 302 billion whereas it increased to US\$ 1.2 trillion in 2012. The Indian shipping ministry launched a project with the name of Sagarmala, to modernize the Indian ports. The basic purpose of the Sagarmala project is

to promote direct and indirect development through ports and to develop infrastructure for fast, and efficient delivery of goods from ports. This project basically aims to contribute to India's economic growth.

There are more than 571 projects which have been identified for implementation under this project from 2015 to 2035, these projects are worth of Rs. 6.01 Lacs Cr, in the areas of new port development and port modernization, enhanced port connectivity, industrialization connected to the ports and the development of the coastal community. As on September 2019, a total number of projects completed were 121 with cost of Rs. 30,228 crore, and more 201 projects are under construction within the project of Sagarmala with a cost of Rs.309, 048 crore.

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Under the government's "Make in India" program, the shipbuilding industry can make profit to a significant level. This industry has a massive impact on speculation and can enhance the industrial development with its enormous number of related enterprises. India had a fleet back in 2014, which had strength of a little more than 1,200 boats, which is relied upon to reach more than 1,600 by year 2025. A solid push in India's business of shipbuilding and ship repairing areas, supplementing the Sagarmala undertaking of port improvement can possibly drive monetary change. The Indo-Pak rivalry and difficult geography are the factors which separates India from China and Burma, and it guarantee

that 97% of Indian trade depends on the sea routes.⁷⁷ So keeping the SLOCs open is the main Indian interest. India's interest in the region is due to its dependence on crude oil and petroleum products imports from the Persian Gulf region to meet its energy needs. Moreover, India looks to set up economic ties with CARs as a team with Iran and wants to enter its market. Hence, India has consented to an arrangement with Iran for the development of the Chabahar port, which will help India arrive at Afghanistan by means of Iran and avoiding Pakistan.

2.3 Security Interests

Increased economic integration has further complicated security situations in the IOR, which is affecting the flow of maritime trade. India being an important actor of this region is concerned about its interests, which includes energy security, economic development, and the protection of sea lanes, and has a key role to play in determining the security structure of IOR. The maritime policy of India in the IOR is to provide overall security & political stability to the other small regional actors such as the Seychelles, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius, against the China's growing maritime and strategic activities in this region. In fact, India has been keen to provide overall security in IOR.

There are many security challenges for India from multiple sources, which includes its neighbors and non-state actors such as maritime terrorists, pirates and equipped robbers. But China's entrance has become the major challenge for Indian security in IOR, as China continues to increase its influence through economic means in the IOR. India is expanding its strategic partnership with major powers such as the US, Australia and Japan and other maritime neighbors to address these challenges.

India was mainly focused on the security of Indian Ocean territorial waters and island territories during Cold War era. Demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, and to declare sovereignty on territorial waters and island territories for resources, as well as claims to

⁷⁷ Vice Admiral MP Muralidharan, "Economic and Strategic Importance of Sea in Modern Indian Context," February 28, 2019. <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/economic-and-strategic-importance-of-sea-in-modern-indian-context/>

sovereignty over the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) were main concerns of India towards Indian Ocean. India was a developing economy and was focused on basic maritime security needs due to four major hindrances. First, India's national security strategy was occupied with continental security challenges, the land borders with Pakistan, China, and Myanmar rather than from marine orders.

Second, India's import-alternative model of development, the Indian Ocean had limited efficacy in its overall strategy of economic growth during the Cold War era. Third, India was lacking resources and ambitions to move beyond its territorial waters and island territories. Fourth, the power structure in the Indian Ocean was not conducive to expanding the supply of Indian ships as the US succeeded Britain as a dominant power in Indian Ocean during the Cold War.⁷⁸

India started focusing on the maritime security in 1970s after its war with Pakistan (1971). Then in 1990s, officially a maritime National strategy was formed by the policymakers, which resulted in a huge shift in India's policy towards Indian Ocean and national security policy. And now Indian Navy is being ranked as the third-largest navy of the world. Without any doubt, the Indian Ocean is strategically very important for India and it has become part of Indian security policy.⁷⁹ India is most concerned with the Indian Ocean due to economic, political and security interests. Indian trade largely depends on the maritime routes, thus, now its security interests have gained a vital maritime dimension.

Security and trade are linked to each other, and navies are not only controlling the military platforms but also serving as a protector for the trading vessels and the policing of SLOCs. In the past, India has been skeptical of any country or development that has challenged its ability to dominate the maritime arena. But now, the Indian Ocean has become a competition ground for the great powers, like rising China and the US (India's strategic partner). And India, being one of major actors in the IOR, also has its aspirations

⁷⁸ Baljit Singh Mann, "Changing Dynamics of India's Indian Ocean Policy," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 13 (2017): 6-7.

⁷⁹ Amit A.Pandya, Rupert Herbert-Burns and Junko Kobayashi, *Maritime Commerce and Security: The Indian Ocean* (Washington DC: Stimson Center, 2011), 33-40.

vis-à-vis Indian Ocean. India security interests in the Indian Ocean Region include Security of Maritime Territory of India, Choke Points, SLOCS, Eliminating Piracy, Regional Stability, Control Trafficking, and Counter Maritime Terrorism.

2.3.1 Security of Maritime Zones

India possesses a vast coastline of about 7517 km and around 1200 islands. Many of these islands are very far from the coast line, Andaman & Nicobar Islands are the farthest at the distance of 1,600 km from the mainland. The territorial sea of India has an area of 193,834 sq. km. whereas the EEZ covers 2.02 million sq. km. The living and non-living resources are very unique to India and covers the two-thirds of the country's landmass in this zone, as they are the trade and transport facilities that rotate around the region. The 51% of proven oil reserves and 66% of natural gas reserves of India are in this area. The conservation and protection of this natural resource doesn't mean only to ensure its territorial integrity but also protects it from unnatural predators.

2.3.2 Security of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)

The sea lines importance can be measured from the fact that in 2014, the oceans have supported about a quarter of world trade. Over the last few years, the maritime trade of India has more than doubled to a global growth rate of 3.3%, with marine vessel trade over the past ten years 6.5% above the world average of 5.4%. During the past decade (FY 2005–2015), cargo traffic at Indian ports has increased to 1 billion tons annually and is expected to reach 1.7 billion tons every year by 2022. It accounts for 95% of India's total trade volume, with the importance of the Indian Ocean SLOS and international shipping lanes in India's maritime security calculations. This shows that security of SLOCs are how much important for India and its economy.

2.3.3 Security of Choke Points

There are several chokepoints in the Indian Ocean, who are geographically controlling the entrance to the Indian Ocean. These Choke points are located in the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and the Southern Indian Ocean, which are critically important for the maritime interests of India. India is almost at the central point of these choke points, so this makes

India to play a significant role in the security of this vast maritime area. Iraq's war with Iran in 1980s posed a serious threat to the energy imports of India through the Strait of Hormuz.

Similarly the Gulf of Aden and Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb are critical for the security of energy flows in Indian Ocean. In 2002, an incident occurred in the Indian Ocean, where a French tanker Limburg was attacked by al-Qaeda boat in Yemen. Such kind of events can disturb the energy supply lines of India, which could directly impact the Indian economy and can damage the shipping business also.

The Malacca Strait recalls the memory of the Dutch's disruptive control over the trade in Indian Ocean during 17th and 18th centuries. Therefore, freedom of these straits is very important, there should be no control of hostile interests on these chokepoints and that the practice of sea traffic should remain free and normal. India has always participated equally in the world's efforts to restore independence on these important sea lanes. Though, most of these regions suffer from instability, as seen in the past, which could have a weakening effect on regional and international trade. The SLOCs in IOR has been hampered in recent years by various conventional and non-conventional threats. However, India's dependence on the seas for trade is increasing and interference may be needed to secure these SLOCs from these kind of threats.

In order to secure these SLOCs in this huge ocean, the regional and extra regional states cooperation is necessary. After the attack on the USS Cole in Aden, an Indian ship was leading the Indian Navy via Malacca Strait in 2002 carrying a US-flagged ship. The operation in the Gulf of Aden almost over the last ten years, where the Indian Navy has assisted ships of all nationalities, is a testament to these all efforts.

2.3.4 Elimination of piracy

The piracy has remained an important issue in Indian Ocean. With the rapid increase in trade activities in the IOR, piracy become a very serious concern for all regional and non-regional trading countries. For instance the Somalia-based piracy, has been a global concern for the international community since the end of 1990s. Now the piracy issue has

reduced to a significant level, and this is the result of collective efforts of the global community.⁸⁰ India has not just accompanied various merchant ships of all nations yet purposeful endeavors of its sea security powers have guaranteed that this issue of piracy, which successfully was spreading as Far East as the Maldives and Lakshadweep islands, has been controlled and the past High-Danger Zone was moved more towards west of India in 2015.

Notwithstanding, political flimsiness in Somalia combined with any decrease in counter-theft endeavors can become the reason of its resurgence. While piracy in Somalia has been on the decline, statistics show an increase in piracy with large-scale anchorages off the coasts of Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. Although the efforts against piracy are not enough from the international community, efforts by the littoral states are very important. The governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have taken a decision for the joint patrolling in 2017, which seems a right decision, which will contribute to eliminate the pirate's activities in the Indian Ocean. The commitment from India on the piracy efforts in the IOR has been drawn towards efforts such as the Indian Ocean Naval Conference, launched in 2008 by the Navy, and the modalities and methods to deal with these threats.⁸¹

2.4 Political Interest

India always has ambitions to become a leading power in the Indian Ocean. While many Indian officials may be reluctant to publicly acknowledge this, many in India believe that the Indian Ocean should be known as India's Ocean. According to an American analyst, 'India considers the Indian Ocean as its backyard and considers it both natural and desirable. This view of Indian role in the Indian Ocean unites a few strands of Indian key reasoning. Solid defensive strand is one of them. The experience of colonialism prompted a view that India should either set up a forward safeguard edge in the Indian Ocean to block mediation in the subcontinent or those extra-territorial forces should in any case be

⁸⁰ Vivek Mishra, "India-US maritime cooperation: Crossing the Rubicon," *Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 14(2019): 4-5.

⁸¹ "36 member nations, 1 shared vision: What is the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium?" *India Today*, November 14, 2018, accessed on September 5, 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/ions-indian-ocean-naval-symposium-1387711-2018-11-14>

barred from the region of India. This is labeled as India's 'Monroe Doctrine sometimes.⁸²

The idea is reminiscent of the ideas introduced by Britain during their period of colonialism, but also evidently appeals to the Monroe doctrine which was proposed by the US as a way to reject the presence of European colonial powers in the nineteenth century. Monroe's ideology is at the forefront of strategic thinking in modern India and as an expression of Jawaharlal Nehru's commitment to a new independent India to free the subcontinent from the colonialism influence and eliminate extra regional powers from the whole region of South Asia. This is not government policy but makes Indian strategic thinking an important core issue.

This view has been articulated in many versions, but it usually involves the claim that the military presence of 'external' forces in India's neighborhood is necessarily illegitimate and the neighbor states of India should rely India only as the net security provider and as a regional manager. The presumptions, which have been mentioned in the doctrine, clash with the concept of absolute sovereignty of the state. Pakistan, specifically rejected India as net security provider in the region. But the other regional actors also disliked this Indian perceived hegemonic propensities, they are well aware of the extent to which their security relations with non-regional powers should be enhanced. Though India's nominal Monroe theory applies only to South Asia and its maritime borders, but it also had an important impact on Indian strategic thinking about the entire IOR.

KM Panikar, who was a famous writer of India, early gave an idea in 1940s, he writes that the Indian maritime thinking is quite similar to the Monroe ideology. Later in 1970s India's proposal for peace in the Indian Ocean Zone was also based on the similar thinking, the extra regional naval powers will be excluded from Indian Ocean under that peace proposal. But the strategic thinking of India about its leading role in the Indian Ocean cannot be considered defensive only, as it also shows that Indian aspirations to become a dominant actor in regional level or even at global level. Indian aspirations and maritime ambitions to become a global power are interlinked with each other according

⁸² Priyanjoli Ghosh, "India's Indian Ocean Region Strategy," *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 31 August 2020. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2331112/indias-indian-ocean-region-strategy>.

to some Indian strategists. In fact, the dominant strategists like K. Subrahmanyam claimed that leadership role in Indian Ocean is the important part of “Manifest destiny” of India.⁸³

In current era, the Indian strategic leadership aspirations in the region have reflected its claim to perform the role of a “net security provider” in the Indian Ocean region. The Indian PM Manmohan Singh announced this role officially in 2013 and now is followed by senior officials more or less. It is not very clear that what constitutes India's 'region', but it contains South Asia and its maritime boundaries, Bay of Bengal and, some of the south western island states for sure. But India so far doesn't have claimed the Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula, and East Africa to include in its strategic leadership.

2.4.1 Containment of China

China has become a powerful extra regional actor in the IOR due to its economic cooperation with littoral states of Indian Ocean. So the containment of China's significant rise and influence in the IOR, has become a major concern for India. India wants to rule the region since ever, but the US strong presence in the Indian Ocean along with the other factors never allowed India to fulfil this dream. Although the US power still dominates the Indian Ocean, now China is slowly gaining ground in the region. According to China, the MSRI aims to enhance the economic connectivity, infrastructure development, and regional integration but it has increased Chinese influence and presence in Indian Ocean. India has taken many steps to counter the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, few major steps include Indo-US strategic partnership, construction of Chabahar Port, QUAD development, and its role in IORA⁸⁴.

China's entry into the IOR is significantly altering regional dynamics through its economic investment, political influence and military presence along the MSR. In 2013, China launched its major project, concept of maritime cooperation and economic connectivity through the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and Initiative (MSRI). This

⁸³ David Brewster, “India and China at Sea,” *National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)*, July 2016, accessed on September 13, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24905133?seq=1>

⁸⁴ M. Rasgotra, *The New Asian Power Dynamic* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 212.

project is a development strategy to promote infrastructure connectivity in Southeast Asia, the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and East Africa. Disclosing the maritime routes under the BRI, China's officials said that China would seek to designate three maritime economic routes, namely, the China-Indian Ocean, Africa, and the Mediterranean Economic Route. China Oceania - South Pacific Blue Economic Corridor and one that will travel to Europe via the Arctic.

The Blue Economic passage, named as China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean Sea, is aimed to connect Mediterranean Sea, the East Coast of Africa, Middle East, South Asia, South East Asia and South China Sea with territory of China. Most of the part of this passage lies in Indian Ocean, therefore, Indian Ocean has unmatched importance for the Maritime Silk Road Initiative. Moreover, China has major interests in the IOR, most of the MSRI projects are based in IOR. The economy of China largely depends upon the oil imports, and it imports 80 percent of its oil from Persian Gulf. The Indian Ocean sea routes are the source of this transportation. The region is also very important for exports of China. The littoral states and Sea Lanes of Indian Ocean both are significantly important for China.

The Chinese perspective about the MSRI is, that this project intended to enhance the economic connectivity and increase economic development across the regional states of this region. Accordingly, it intends building of transport networks which would connect the major regional ports. This project is developed to go Europe from China's coast through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean using the same route, and to the South China Sea from China's coast by using other route. The Chinese authorities also emphasized that the intentions behind the MSRI and BRI projects are not any strategy to capture the Eurasia's "heartland" or not even a "string of pearls", or not anything like the Trans Pacific Partnership. According to them these projects are a part of China's "opening up" to the entire world, which will also provide help in developing the undeveloped states in the region. The MSRI has enabled China to enhance cooperation in various fields, such as economic development strategy, to improved transportation sector, related infrastructure, smooth flow of global trade, and enhance people-to-people interaction.

There are multiple working groups and mechanisms operating in Indo pacific region such as, ASEAN plus China (10+1), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). China is using these mechanisms to promote and enhance the efficiency of this BRI project. China is investing in infrastructure development projects and developing ports in many countries of the IOR under MSRI. It is developing ports like Gwadar in Pakistan, Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar, and Hambantota in Sri Lanka, these ports are not fully functional so far and are under construction by Chinese companies with Chinese investment. But it is understood that China will not limit itself to economic activities, but to protect its investment on economic projects, China is increasing its military footprints in the IOR. The 2015 Defense White Paper set out the ambition of China to become a major maritime naval power and increases the Chinese navies' duties from "offshore waters defense" to "open seas protection" for the very first time. This is clear indication that China is eager to increase its military presence in the IOR.⁸⁵

Prior to 2008, the Chinese ships rarely visited the IOR, and their operations were largely confined to coastal waters of China and the western seas. But from 2008, the PLAN is not only present there, but also have been seen in countries where China was hardly present before. The personnel of Chinese Navy are sometimes present in, Pakistan Bangladesh, Iran, and several African countries, where they participate in training, and support the newly acquired platforms. China has also become the third largest global arms supplier, which has increased the Chinese influence in the IOR as there are any regional states which are buying arms from China. The intelligence-gathering ships of China have been spotted several time in the Northern the IOR, which in the past had been difficult to spot.

Apart from the Chinese increasing presence due to its Maritime Silk Road Initiative, the military activities has also increased in the region in recent years. The Shang-class submarine was deployed by PLAN in 2013 as a part of its anti-piracy mission. This submarine used Malacca Strait to go to waters of Indian Ocean and also for coming back to its home from Indian Ocean. The objective of the deployment of this submarine cannot

⁸⁵ Garima Mohan, "Great Game in the Indian Ocean," *Global Public Policy Institute*, June 11, 2018, accessed on September 20,2020. <https://www.gppi.net/2018/06/11/great-game-in-the-indian-ocean>

be limited to the anti-piracy mission missions. Rather, it would have helped to get experience for the deployment of submarine for a long period of time and also gather the intelligence about the operating environment which is prevailing in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, a Song class submarine was sent to Sri Lanka in 2014 and another submarine Yuan was called at Karachi port in May 2015, these visits would have also provided further experience for the deployment of Chinese submarines in Indian Ocean.

The PLAN also conducts regular exercises with the Pakistani and Royal Australian Navy in IOR. “Aman” is an international collaborative exercises series conducted by Pakistan every two year, China is a regular participant of these exercises. These exercises have ensured a high level of cooperation with other navies of the world and have also given the required exposure to the China to prepare the scenario for the forthcoming battle. These developments have raised many challenges for the Indian ambitions in the IOR. It has fostered animosity between India and China, which is overlapping with the US-China rivalry. The other regional and extra regional actors like Japan and Australia are also concerned about the increasing influence of China in the IOR. So they have formed QUAD to contain China in this region. According to the RSC there are multiple subsystems which impacts the RSC in any region, the Indo-US strategic partnership and Pakistan are forming RSC in the IOR, and QUAD is one of the subsystems, which is impacting the influence of China in the region. As the main purpose of the QUAD is to contain China.

In the wake of these challenges, to keep China out of IOR has become the foremost and strategic interest of India. As Kliem explained,⁸⁶ that Indian strategic interest are based on the national security conciliations. Indian government particularly the BJP and Jay Shanka foreign ministry are thinking very much like international relations realists. So they perceive their strategic interest in terms of national security and territorial integrity. India feels sandwiched on land as Chinese military from north and Chinese navy in south. And anti-piracy is a mission of every state and this is not because we want to fight pirates but it is because you can save your navy, ships and can cooperate with other states,

⁸⁶ Dr Frederick Kliem is a Research Fellow at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore.

fighting pirates is in interest of every state. China can say that we are fighting pirates in the Indian Ocean and how Indians have issues with that, so it is kind of tricky.⁸⁷

In addition, India is playing a leading role for promoting IORA, which intends to enhance the links between littoral states of IOR. The port of Chabahar is being developed to provide an alternative route to the Central Asian Republic. The Indo-US alliance is also part of the goal of overcoming China in the IOR. In addition, India has stepped up its efforts to establish closer ties with Southeast Asian countries, and in this regard a number of naval exercises have been introduced by India in the IOR.

According to Nagi, India has free and open inclusive indo pacific vision and they focus on maintaining an inclusive relationship with China. India wants an increased presence of US and other partners in the region to ensure that Indian Ocean remains primarily under India's influence, they are concerned Chinese growing influence particular in Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal. Indians have changed the point to see the growing challenge from china and as a result they are becoming increasingly willing to support some shared initiatives with the US and other partners like japan and Australia through the QUAD arrangement. This is mostly being done for public's good and not for so much security. So the acceleration of the distribution of vaccine, infrastructure connectivity, digital economy, enhancing trade relationships, all of this primarily strengthening relationship between India and the US.⁸⁸

Whereas Kewalramani disagree with this idea of Chinese containment, he explained that the idea of china's Containment is not possible, China cannot be stopped from operating in the region. India wants trade with china, so why it would try to contain China. He said that, 'idea of containment is not feasible and it is not even doable not even desirable. What is desirable is to make sure that china does not act aggressively in the region to undermine others interest. As per Chinese activities in South China Sea it seems like it is willing to use force to achieve its objectives and that is something that needs to be kept in mind. So when china operating in the IOR for anti-piracy then exactly India and us wants

⁸⁷ Interview was conducted on zoom meeting at date 20 May at 01:00 PST. The draft of interview has been included as annex 3.

⁸⁸ Stephen R Nagy, Zoom Interview.

chins to do more. Even if there is economic resource related something of course India opens the negotiation. There is actually no issue with that, Indian Ocean is not India's ocean but you need to have rules how you access those doable commons'.

Further he added that India wants to create the set of rules where it want to involve china to work together. But the fear is because china's expansion has come with military expansion. And there was no collaboration between Indo-US in indo pacific region in last ten years, but due the changed capacity and behavior of china in last ten years, India and US are collaborating now. So basically this is like a counter reaction on the aggressive acts of China, so in many ways it depends on china's behavior.⁸⁹

2.5 India's Significant Initiatives in Pursuit of Interest

India is showing its leading role in the IOR by cooperation with other regional states such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). In the recent years India adopted a cooperative approach to pursue its hegemonic aspirations. India started making partnerships with other important regional states such as Indonesia, South Africa, and Australia. At the same time India succeeded to preserve the exclusiveness in these organization, for instance India didn't allow Pakistan to become a member of IORA and resisted China to get a full membership of IONS.

2.5.1 Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) gives ideal stage to India to fabricate its security strategy plans. India by promoting bilateral and multilateral collaboration with the Indian Ocean rim states has made sure about its military presence in Indian Ocean. Realizing the significance of such unification, India proceeds with its help on the extension of IORA. The IORA has had a fundamental role in advancing Asian, African and Australian regional integration. For India to manage its security and strategic challenges, it gets significant for it to draw in with Indian Ocean Rim states. In mid 1990s, the Indian Ocean Island states set forth their own thoughts regarding sovereignty of large and little Island states as an obligation which did little to advance agreement

⁸⁹ Manoj Kewalramani. Zoom interview w

among the countries inside the Indian Ocean.

This doctrine was mostly connected with South Africa's previous President, Nelson Mandela. With the development of IORA, this association assumed a significant part in embodying and catalyzing the standards of sovereignty among the Indian Ocean rim states. These moves by South Africa and India helped shape the advancement of the part of IORA and its mandate after its commencement. IORA comprises of 21 nations at different phases of improvement and diversity.

Out of the 21 countries India is the biggest with a population surpassing 1.3 billion. From the beginning it was clear that India's position was instrumental as far as clarifying why IORA was significant for the Indian Ocean Rim States. The cultural affinities among the residents of the part countries, keeps on giving the bedrock to bilateral relations. Starting with the tourism, the IORA has advanced into an ever-increasing number of territories of the Ocean strategy going from fisheries to sea to regional development and security. The Indian Ocean Rim states are politically, economically and diplomatically associated through the Indian Ocean.

The member states of IORA involving around 2.7 billion individuals are very much associated through the Indian Ocean in spite of being culturally assorted, linguistically unmistakable and changing significantly as far as religion, art, traditions, and foods.⁹⁰ Indeed, even the status of economic development, population and geological area of these part states vary significantly. This current affiliation's part countries have had the chances lately to be maintainable and there are significantly more odds of open rivalry among the part states. In spite of these distinctions and diversities, the Indian Ocean intently incorporates these part states through economic collaboration and maritime links in the Ocean.

The IORA has been a functioning multi-regional association with an always expanding significance in the Indian Ocean. Through the strategy of non-interruption in the quick dynamic setting of the region, the IORA has been given to developing the understanding

⁹⁰ Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) <https://www.iora.int/en/about/about-iora>

and participation among its part countries. India being the biggest in size and economy in this organization practices the best impact in this association. Subsequently, IORA goes about as a significant platform for India to fortify its security strategy objectives.

The powerlessness of part countries of IORA to assume liability in its initial years of commitment and to build up a lucid strategy has likewise been a significant disappointment in the security strategy arrangement of a few IORA part countries. In this manner IORA ought to be viewed as a distinctive vision of the future, addressing the six regions in Asia, Africa and Australia to adjust the ascent of China as a regional and a worldwide giant. So far, IORA has assisted India to additionally reinforce its bind with littoral states of Indian Ocean Region. However, these solid ties can't assist India with halting expanding impact of China in the region, as China has more to provide in terms of technology and foreign direct investment than India.

2.5.2 Revival of QUAD

China's growing maritime strategy and the expanding assertiveness of its land recovery and claims in disputed territories in South and East China Seas over the previous decade have been a critical driver of this fortifying arrangement among the QUAD members. Unflinching by the international arbitration judgment refuting a large number of Beijing's legitimate claims in the South China Sea or by global pushback, President Xi Jinping has plotted an eager regional maritime plan, urging Southeast Asian states to help China in building a twenty-first-century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) to supplement an overland Silk Road to be worked with Central Asian companion.

Furthermore, the Chinese Military Strategy White Paper, delivered in May 2015, announced that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) would "gradually shift its focus from 'offshore waters defense' to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection,'" requiring improved force projection abilities effectively obvious in expanding patrols of the Indian Ocean by PLAN surface task groups and submarines.

Likewise, with the overland Silk Road, building up the Maritime Silk Road includes

critical interests in both financial and security-related framework around the Indian Ocean littoral, including states, for example, Burma, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Djibouti. Regularly these exercises include ruthless loaning practices that feed corruption and domestic political and social divisions, adding to more extensive regional worries about China's long-term expectations. The restoration of the Quadrilateral Security Dialog should be perceived in this more extensive geopolitical context. The Indian interest of containing China matches with QUAD's definitive plan; in this manner, it has been a critical defender of QUAD.

According to Kliem,⁹¹ QUAD is getting stronger day by day. And this is not going to change the fact and this is trajectory that is only going on. QUAD countries have exactly the same goals which is china. He further added about future, 'that Indian Ocean is still remain less important than the western pacific that's probably in the case. the western pacific is really going to be the strategic focus of the QUAD but because of India the Indian ocean is going to be high agenda, and now it is going to be a QUAD issue so you will see that the more of the Malabar exercises would be taking place more in Indian Ocean generally more exercises will be taking place in the Indian Ocean. QUAD countries want India to help them in that strategic balance against china and India wants something in return. And this course has been moved to Asia pacific from the indo pacific and this puts India right in the center of the strategic discourse.in the strategic development. Kliem shared his views about future of Indian Ocean, that coming next 10 to 15 years the Indian Ocean will remain the less important than the western pacific. He further added that there would be greater convergence among the QUAD countries about trying to keep the Chinese out of the Indian Ocean, as they want to prevent the Indian Ocean from the becoming the next south china sea. It's not that Indian Ocean suddenly becoming South China Sea. People have to learn from the past experiences. Obama has been active and over the whole Obama term the artificial island and militarization has really accelerated. They are now realizing that Indian Ocean may become next big thing for China. So India would do anything to get the QUAD committed to keep the Indian Ocean free and open. In the short hand to keep the Indian Ocean free from China.'

⁹¹ Dr Frederick Kliem, zoom Interview.

2.5.3 India's Security Mechanisms

In the recent years, India has developed several security mechanisms with regional as well as extra-regional actors in the Indian Ocean Region. These include several exercises and Patrols which include PASSEX in which USA and India are participants, SLINEX-II (Sri Lanka and India are participants), JIMEX (Japan and India), CORPAT (Coordinated Patrols of India, Thailand and Indonesia), IBSAMAR Joint Exercises (South Africa, Brazil and India), MALABAR exercises include the US, Japan and India and more importantly the MILAN naval exercises in which Thailand, Tanzania, Mauritius, Malaysia, Kenya, Maldives, Oman, New Zealand, Myanmar, Seychelles, Australia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and India participated in the last time in March 2018.

2.5.4 Construction of Basis on Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Andaman and Nicobar, Islands are strategic Indian islands located near the Straits of Malacca (the world's largest trade route). The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are 450 km from the Andaman Peninsula and the Coco Island of Myanmar is 42 km from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The mentioned islands are India's farthest military outpost. They are located 1200 km from the Indian coast. India has deployed Harpoon Block 2 missiles, MK-54 lightweight torpedoes, rockets and depth compensation in these islands, which could play a diversionary role in countering China's strategic activities in the IOR and they ensure the sea lines security towards the Malacca Strait.⁹²

In January 2009, India made a deal worth of \$2.1 billion, under this deal India obtained eight Naval Poseidon 81 aircraft. These aircraft are specifically designed to collect information and to detect threats in the IOR. It can also render enemy warships and submarines ineffective. The Indian activities to control the Malacca Strait can become a serious concern for the Chinese trade activities in IOR.

2.5.5 Recipients States of MSRI in the IOR and Indian Role

⁹² Sohini Bose, "The Andaman Sea: India's Geostrategic Gateway in the Indo-Pacific," South Asian Voices, 3 July 2019, accessed on October ,2020. <https://southasianvoices.org/andaman-sea-indias-indo-pacific-gateway/>

Geographically Myanmar is among the key player states for India, which can play an important role for the balancing policy of India against China in IOR. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Bay of Bengal, Myanmar has been indispensable to Indian security interests. It also forms a land bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia and a key buffer zone that separates India's tumultuous northeast and southern provinces of China.

China seems very active to strengthen the bilateral ties with Myanmar. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Myanmar in January 2020, made the China's intentions more visible about making inroads into the Bay of Bengal. A total of 33 agreements have been signed between both countries during this visit and most important and prominent projects are the deep-sea port development on the shores of the Bay of Bengal in Kyaukphyu, a railway project which will connect the Yunnan (Chinese Province) to coastal cities of Myanmar, a mega-hydropower dam project an inland-water-way through the Irrawaddy River. All these projects will not only enhance the influence of China in the region but also improve the infrastructure projects in Myanmar.⁹³

Under these projects and improved bilateral ties between China and Myanmar, if China will become able to make Myanmar a Chinese "client state," then China will be able to complete the siege or prevention of India. Except the 'China factor', Myanmar has a great importance in Indian Foreign Policy. What makes it important for India are its massive natural resources, strategic location on the East Asia transit line and its potential partner role in addressing issues in north-east neighborhood of India. It is very important for India in achieving its national goal to become a leading actor in IOR.

On the other hand, Myanmar relations with India has improved significantly under the Modi Administration. India has stepped up its infrastructure commitments in Myanmar as part of its "Neighborhood First Policy" and "Act East Policy".⁹⁴ The Kaladan Multi

⁹³ Col (Dr) P K Vasudeva, "Implications of China's Dark Shadow in Myanmar," *Indian Defense Review*, October 20, 2020.

<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/implications-of-chinas-dark-shadow-in-myanmar/>

⁹⁴ Archana Atmakuri and Mustafa Izzuddin, "Why Myanmar Should Matter to India," *The Diplomat*, 08 January 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/why-myanmar-should-matter-to-india/>.

Modal Transit Transport Project has been developed by India in Myanmar, it includes a 109 km long road in Mizoram State from Paletwa to Zorinpui on the India-Myanmar border and waterways component of 158 km on the Kaladan River from Sittwe to Paletwa. The project, which connects the Indo-Myanmar border with Myanmar's Sittwe Port, is expected to open the sea route for goods in the economic development of the northeastern state of India. It will also ease the pressure on the Siliguri Corridor by provide a strategic link with the North-East. It is also understood that in the absence of an alternative route, the development of this project is not only beneficial to India's economic, trade and strategic interests, but also contributes to the Myanmar's development.

There is another grand project, "India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway", this is expected to complete in 2021, will enhance the economic connectivity between India and Myanmar, and will also connect Moreh in India's Manipur state to Mae Sot in Thailand via Tamu in Myanmar. It is believed that the highway will give the northeastern states easy access to the sea via Myanmar, and help improve connectivity between the far Southeast part of India and northeastern Asia. Although Indian infrastructure initiatives appear to be based on economic and trade motives, in short these initiatives are the part of Indian balancing strategy to counter Chinese activities related to BRI in IOR, which would increase the Influence of China in Myanmar.

Sri Lanka is also an important actor in IOR, and another significant country for the balancing policy of India. Sri Lanka plays an important role in china's BRI, and it also has historical, common economic and cultural ties with India, further its geographical proximity, these are all the factors which makes it more important for India. The Indian analysts perceived the Chinese actions in Sri Lanka as an attempt to control India strategically. These measures forced India to forge closer ties with Sri Lanka. India has provided financial assistance to Sri Lanka to deal with the devastation caused by the 2004 tsunami and to rebuild the damaged infrastructure of the country. This cooperation helped to improve the ties between India and Sri Lank significantly. In addition, a Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) and a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed by India with Sri Lanka, this agreement aimed to boost the Sri Lankan economy

and increase bilateral trade relations between both countries. Intelligence sharing, defense cooperation, warship modification and supply of defense equipment are other areas of mutual cooperation. The two countries have been conducting joint military exercises every year like the “Mitra Shakti” since 2013.⁹⁵

According to the annual report of Indian Foreign Ministry, Indian bilateral relations with the Maldives are "close and friendly" and that it gives the utmost importance to its ties with the Maldives. India has committed to help Maldives to develop its health system and human resource department. India and Maldives, since 1990s, have also been conducting series of exercises with a title of “Dosti” at the Coast Guard level. Apart from all the maritime and other activities the India have been involved in the political affairs of the Maldives on the call of Maldivian leaders to stable the political situation in the country. India was a suitable source for Maldives to get help due to its geographical proximity, resources, democratic system and capability of providing help on quick basis.

For example, Indian government launched an operation “Cactus” in 1998, on the request of the then president of Maldives. When a group of Maldivians attempted Maldives coup d'état, but the intervention of Indian troops made this coup d'état failed.⁹⁶ Now, a trilateral naval cooperation agreement has been signed among Maldives, India and Sri Lanka. In order to help Maldives to protect the atolls, India has granted a naval craft to Maldives. Even if China's political influence in the Maldives is growing, India cannot be ignored given its close, regional significance and capabilities. India has provided immediate assistance to the Maldives in times of need in past. For instance, Maldives was hit by a major tsunami in December 2004, Indian helped in this tragic time by sending ships, planes, and helicopters with relief supplies, medical teams, and special personnel and provided emergency assistance. China, on the other hand, provided aid "in its capacity"

⁹⁵ “Armies of India, Sri Lanka begin joint exercise in Pune,” *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2018, accessed on October 19, 2020. <https://economictimes.com/news/defence/armies-of-india-sri-lanka-begin-joint-exercise-in-pune/articleshow/61073421.cms>

⁹⁶ Vicky, “Maldives Crisis: Can India take Another ‘Operation Cactus?’” *One India*, February 6, 2018, accessed on October 19, 2020. <https://www.oneindia.com/india/maldives-crisis-can-india-undertake-another-operation-cactus-2635789.html>

and in cash. Again in 2014, when Maldives appealed for international help due to a huge damage of desalination plant which caused an extreme shortage of water supply to capital Male, India first sent emergency supplies by air and then 900 tons of water were sent through sea.

Maldives and India strengthened its ties by signing a crucial action plan on defense cooperation in 2016. According to authorities, the Defense Action Plan is very important for the common strategic and security interests of the bilateral ties of Maldives and India.⁹⁷ Indian PM Modi stated that this Defense Action Plan will play an important role to strengthen the defense cooperation between both countries and ports development, continuous raining, capacity building, maritime surveillance , equipment supply are the main elements of this action plan. Indian warships and Dornier scouting aircraft assist the Maldives in maritime patrols and surveillance on regular basis. Due to China's relentless efforts to expand its strategic footprint in Male, India has established a defensive engagement with Male as well as other countries in the IOR.

Conclusion

India has been aspiring to become a leading player in Indian Ocean for over many years. The main Indian interests in Indian Ocean are related to security of its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), resources and dominance of India over Indian Ocean to become a major power in the world. It is facing challenges to its interests from the Chinese initiatives in the region; therefore, it has adopted various new policies such as 'Act East' policy and further developed strategic partnership with the US in the region.

⁹⁷ Shubhajit Roy, "India, Maldives sign six pacts, resolve to expand defence cooperation," The Indian Express, 12 April 2016, accessed on January 2, 2021, accessed on October 19, 2020. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-maldives-sign-six-pacts-resolve-to-expand-defence-cooperation/>

Chapter Three

US Strategic Interests in the IOR

Indian Ocean Region holds significant position in global politics as it possesses important sea trade routes, chokepoints and natural resources. The significance of Indian Ocean in global geopolitics makes it attractive for the regional and extra-regional actors. Therefore, the US also has its interests in the Indian Ocean Region. The US, as an external power, has been playing a dominant role especially as security provider in the Indian Ocean Region for several decades. With the passage of time, the US' interests have further increased in the region. Twentieth century witnessed that mainly three factors dominated the US policies towards the Indian Ocean Region, open Indian Ocean highway, defending the chokepoints of Indian Ocean and projection of Indian Ocean as a secondary front in broader Asian regional competition. Twenty-first century is observing further increase in the US interests in the region with the rise of China and India as the fastest growing economies in the region.

This chapter highlights the US interests in the Indian Ocean Region. This chapter is divided into three sections: (i) Economic Interests, (ii) Security Interests (iii) and Political Interests.

3.1 Economic Interests

This section discusses the economic interests of the US in the Indian Ocean Region. Economic interests can never be ignored especially in today's world where economy has also become an important tool against the enemies. The economic interests of the US in Indian Ocean are mainly centered on the trade routes which are used to carry the imports of the US from the surrounding region and the resources which are present in the region. Indian Ocean supplies 18 critical materials, aside from oil, to

the US which has crucial importance for the US. Indian Ocean Region offers a huge market for the finished products of the US, at the same time, 77 percent of natural rubber and Uranium is imported by the US from the region. It is said that the IOR has been a potential market for the US products especially arms and will remain in foreseeable future.

There are 46 states in Asia in which 4.2 billion reside and it amounts to 60% of the global population. China and India are the largest and fastest growing economies in Asia. In the Indian Ocean Region, India is the largest economy and over 40% population is living in the Indian Ocean Region which is also counted as consumer market of the region. The volume of the consumer market explains the reason behind the US interests in the region.

Furthermore, bilateral trade between the US and India can be a glaring example for analyzing the significance of the region for the economic interests of the US. The estimated GDP of India was around 2.9 trillion USD in 2019 and the population of India is 1.35 billion. In 2019, the bilateral trade including goods and services between the US and India amounted to 146 billion USD, in this trade, the US exports to India were 58 billion USD and Indian exports to the US were 87.4 billion USD. The trade deficit of the US with India amounted to 28.8 billion USD in the same year.

India stands at 9th position in the list of top trading partners of the US. The US exported goods to India were 34.3 billion USD and the goods imported from India amounted to 57.7 billion USD, hence the goods trade deficit of the US, in 2019, with India amounted to 23.4 billion USD. Similarly, the US also faces services trade deficit with India. As per data in 2019, the services imports of the US from India were 29.7 billion USD and exports amounted to 24.3 billion USD which led to services trade deficit to 5.4 billion USD. Anyhow, the US Department of Commerce estimated that around 197 thousand jobs have been created due the US services and goods exports to India.

The exports of the US to India has witnessed exponential rise in the recent years.

These exports contribute 2% in the overall exports of the US. The top categories of the US exports include organic chemicals (1.9 billion USD), machinery (2.4 billion USD), stone and precious metal (6.4 billion USD) and mineral fuels (8.2 billion USD). India is the 13th largest market for the agricultural exports of the US. The agricultural exports of the US to India include pulses (37 million USD), dairy products (60 million USD), fresh fruit (62 million USD), cotton (587 million USD) and tree nuts (823 million USD). The exports of services have seen significant increase of 144% from 2009. The US main services exports to India include transport, intellectual property and the travel.

Moreover, India stands at 10th position in the top countries for the US imports. The imports from India have also seen significant increase in the recent years. The imports from India include organic chemicals (2.8 billion USD), mineral fuels (3.6 billion USD), machinery (3.7 billion USD), pharmaceuticals (7.6 billion USD) and stone and precious metal (11 billion USD). The US has also been importing agricultural products from India and India has become 14th largest supplier to the US for agricultural products. The important agricultural products imported by the US from India include essential oils (184 million USD), rice (230 million USD), spices (271 million USD), vegetable oils (133 million USD) and processed vegetables and fruit (142 million USD). The services imported by the US from India have also increased significantly in recent years. These imports reached to 864 million USD in 2019 and include travel, R & D, information services, computer and telecommunications.⁹⁸

The US economic growth has been dependent on its military industrial complex and it still plays crucial for the US economy. The states in the Indian Ocean Region, importantly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and India are major buyers of the US weapons. India has bought weapons of worth 3.2 billion USD in the last year of

⁹⁸ “US-India Trade Facts,” *Office of the United States Trade Representative*, 2 October 2020, accessed on January 7, 2021.

<https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/south-central-asia/india#:~:text=U.S.%20goods%20and%20services%20trade,was%20%2428.8%20billion%20in%202019.&text=Services%20exports%20were%20%2424.3%20billion%3B%20services%20imports%20were%20%2429.7%20billion.>

Trump administration. This development will surely be a relief for the military industrial complex of the US and overall economy of the US as well because it was the time when the arms purchase have dropped significantly by the other countries from the US. The arms sale of the US was 55.7 billion USD in 2019 which dropped to 50.8 billion USD in 2020.

Furthermore, in 2020, the main and prominent buyers of the weapons from the US included the United Arab Emirates (3.6 billion USD), Taiwan (11.8 billion USD), Singapore (1.3 billion USD), Poland (4.7 billion USD), Morocco (4.5 billion USD) and India (3.4 billion USD). Kingdom of Saudi Arabia bought weapons from the US which Worth 1.2 billion USD.⁹⁹

3.2 Security Interest

The security interests of the US are also associated with the politico-economic interests of the US in the region. The White House released a document titled “US National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement” which stated that the US policy aimed at increasing the US security. As per the document, the US security would be enhanced by promoting security cooperation and maintaining the strong defense capability. Furthermore, the naval strategic doctrine of the US witnessed transformation in the post-cold war period. At initial stage, the US focused on development a fighting force on the sea but later the strategy was shifted to “projection of power and deployment of naval forces in the sea with the aim to have influence over the events happening around or in the littoral regions.”

The US Navy (USN) uses the Naval Operations Concept which incontrovertibly emphasizes that the US forces should maintain forward presence in the region. The practical manifestation of this concept can be seen in case of the fifth fleet of the US which is present in the Persian Gulf and the establishment of the US naval & military

⁹⁹ “US arms sales to India zoomed to \$3.4 billion in Trump govt's final year,” *The Week*, 09 December 2020, accessed on January 11,2021. <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2020/12/09/us-arms-sales-to-india-zoomed-to-3-4-billion-in-trump-govts-final-year.html#:~:text=Sponsored%20by-.US%20arms%20sales%20to%20India%20zoomed%20to.in%20Trump%20govt's%20final%20year&text=India's%20weapons%20procurement%20from%20the.administration%2C%20according%20to%20official%20data.>

assets/bases in the western part of Indian Ocean. In a nutshell, the significant naval presence of the US will remain in the region due to importance of the IOR for the US as well as its allies and friends in the region.

According to Nagi, the US has primarily securitized view in Indian Ocean about sea lanes of communication and particularly about china's presence in ports around India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Gwadar and of course Djibouti. According to American point of view IOR is a place with potential for China, where it can put the naval power and eject naval power from those particular positions. Even this is not that much useful for Chinese but it is more import export hubs about the Malacca dilemma, this is how US can primarily attain a dominant position in IOR as their primarily interest is global competition.¹⁰⁰

3.2.1 Ensuring Continued US Role as De Facto Security Provider in IOR

The US, as an extra-regional actor, has maintained naval primacy in Indian Ocean since the World War II and the core security interests of the US include the safety and security of energy and trade SLOCs and maintenance of tangible force in western Indian Ocean to counter events which can affect the interests of the US and its allies in the region. In the pursuit of these objectives, military bases have been established by the US in Persian Gulf and at Diego Garcia. In addition, the US has also established its military bases in Ethiopia, Horn of Africa and Djibouti. The number of personnel, which can be accommodated in each of these bases, is between five hundred and five thousand which will be placed strategically to counter any event in the region in a very short period of time. Due to strategic importance of these bases, the US does not need further measures because these bases have the potential to secure the US interests in the region and particularly to mitigate the threats from Iran.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, the number of personnel and military bases of the US is greater in the Persian Gulf than any other part of the IOR. The US Military Strength Index shows that

¹⁰⁰ Stephen R Nagi. Zoom interview

¹⁰¹ Lindsay Hughes, "The United States and the Indian Ocean Region: The Security Vector," *Future Directions*, June 23, 2016, accessed on December 15, 2020. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-United-States-and-the-Indian-Ocean-Region-The-Security-Vector.pdf>

seven thousand US troops are stationed in Bahrain, five thousand in the UAE and nearly fifteen thousand personnel are present in Kuwait. Moreover, the largest regional air logistics point of the US military is in Kuwait. The number of US mine-resistant tactical vehicles is 2200 which are stationed at Kuwait. Kuwait is considered as a “major non-NATO ally” of the US in Middle East.

Interestingly, the Jebel Ali port of the UAE is an important port for the US Navy which is the largest port of call, outside of America, for the US. A small base has also been established in Fujairah. The fifth fleet of the US has its headquarters in Bahrain. In addition, surveillance aircraft and fighter jets of the US are present at Sheikh Isa Air Base and the US has also established center for the US Special Forces operations at this air base. Bahrain is considered as significant and prominent ally of the US in the region.

Most of the US security personnel have been withdrawn from KSA. As the US, now, is not using Omani facilities for air support operations, therefore, it has reduced the number of troops to just two hundred in Oman. Though, the US has no permanent military base in Jordan but training exercises have been conducted with the armed forces of Jordan. The Central Command of the US’ military has forward headquarters in Qatar specifically at Al Ubeid Air Base. There are around 13000 troops of the US which are present at headquarters.

Last but not the least, there were around 150 personnel of the US forces in Iraq which were charged with the duty to protect the embassy of the US in Baghdad but it has increased to 1600 as these troops have been employed to train the forces of Iraq to fight against ISIS. The number of the US troops present near Iran was around 125,000 in 2012: between 15000 and 20000 on the naval vessels, 20000 troops were deployed ashore and around 90000 personnel were present around or inside Afghanistan. The bases of the US in Persian Gulf are capable to host fighter jets, naval ships and also the modern aircraft carriers. Iran, which is considered as an aggressor in the region by the US and its allies, is surrounded by these bases of the US. Iran was not the main target when these bases were established by the US. The purpose of these bases was to provide security to energy resources of allied countries, protection of Israel and mitigate the threats which could

undermine the US interests in the IOR. Anyhow, the distrust on Iran provides reason for the US to keep its bases operation in the region for foreseeable future. In 2015, it was also reported that Pentagon was allegedly planning to fight ISIS by creating network of military bases in the Middle East.

In Africa, the largest military base of the US is Camp Lemonnier which is located Djibouti and nearly four thousand US troops are stationed at this base. The base is situated at very important strategic location because Djibouti is located near one of important choke points in the world, Bab el Mandeb Strait. Bab el Mandeb strait connects Gulf of Aden to Red Sea, which leads to Suez Canal, and the shipping route of these waters is among the busiest routes in the world. As the greater traffic attracts the pirates, pirates especially the Somali pirates attack the ships which pass through this shipping route, therefore countering the pirate attacks is considered as a major function of the US troops present at Djibouti. The French and Japanese personnel, who are based in Djibouti, also join counter piracy missions of the US troops in the area. The location of the US base in Djibouti holds strategic importance as it can keep its eye on the events in Yemen which is around 30Kms away from the base. Moreover, it can also keep check on Somalia's situation and other nearby areas. Recently, China has also built its first overseas military facility at Djibouti.

Furthermore, the US military base at strategically important island Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean also has significant importance for the US interests as this base helps the US to keep an eye on the shipping traffic between the eastern coast of Africa and Diego Garcia and also monitor the energy and trade SLOCs of China in Indian Ocean. The US has been allegedly using its base at Diego Garcia to control its some operations in Afghanistan and Yemen and this base has also been a stopping place for the rendition program of the CIA. The Camp Justice, the US' base at Diego Garcia, was also used during the cold war to keep an eye on South Asia.

Moreover, there could be plans for the establishment of new bases in future. A military base on Cocos (Keeling) Islands can be an important base for the US. These Islands are located at 2900Kms away from Perth and the Royal Australian Air Force is already using

airstrip on these Islands. It has been reported that the US could use these Islands to launch drones. After the Obama's visit to Australia, Australian Defense Minister Stephen Smith stated that this group of Islands could be utilized as joint base of Australian and the US Air Force. The construction of military base on these Islands will be of equal importance as the base at Diego Garcia.

The base on Diego Garcia enables the US to monitor the Chinese shipping which passes between the base and Sri Lanka which leads towards Strait of Malacca and then reaches China via South China Sea. If the similar base is established on Cocos Islands, then the US would also be able to keep an eye on maritime traffic which bypasses Strait of Malacca and uses the sea trade route which passes through Sunda Strait. China is also well aware about the challenges it can face in case of conflict with the US or India, particularly the potential threat to disruption of energy supplies to China at Strait of Malacca. This vulnerability of China in the region is known as "Malacca Dilemma."

With the development of a military base on Cocos Islands, the US would be able to block energy and trade SLOCs which can use the route via Sunda or Lombok Straits. Therefore, it is believable that this threat perception can be considered as an important factor which compelled China to work on alternative options. For example, the overland pipelines, which will pass through Pakistan, that fulfill energy needs of China and are lifeline for Chinese economy.

Since the end of WWII, the US has been maintaining permanent presence in the IOR to protect and secure its interests in the region. These vital interests of the US include maintaining dominance over Indian Ocean especially in Middle East, Southwest and South Asia, to secure Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), the presence of military in forward area for the rapid response to any military intervention, containment of nuclear aspirations and regional agenda of Iran and to limit Chinese influence in the region.

3.2.2 Containment of China in IOR

Bilateral ties between the US and China carry significant importance for regional and global politics as well. Due to rise of China as challenging power for the US at regional

and international level, the world is witnessing change in order from unipolarity to multipolarity and the focus of global politics is also moving towards East. This scenario has brought new era of risks as well as mutual interests in the international political system. China is perceived as threat to the US dominating role in the international political system. To contain Chinese influence, the US is actively pursuing the strategies in the regions and domains wherever the US finds the opportunity.¹⁰²

According to Kliem, 'US always say that India is a democracy that's why we are friends, in my views India is not a democracy. Main strategic interest of US is containment of China and whoever can help us against china is our friend. So forget about the democracy.'¹⁰³

The US has been dominant external power in the IOR since Second World War. Now, China is expanding its presence in this region through increasing naval presence and Maritime Silk Road Initiative. The US sees these developments as detrimental threats to its influence in the IOR. The US has taken various initiatives to contain China in the IOR including the US enhancing ties with littoral states of Indian Ocean under Multilateral engagement and Bilateral Partnerships, revival of QUAD and several naval exercises to counter threats with aim to ensure freedom of navigation.

Moreover, naval exercises named as Malabar Exercise were initially conducted by the US and India in Indian Ocean. Japan became permanent member in these exercises in 2015. Anti-air warfare operations, cross-deck helicopter landings, counter-piracy operations, amphibious operations, anti-submarine warfare, maritime interdiction operations and diving salvage operations have been included in these exercises. In 2020, Australia participated in the drills which became a major development as it was first time when all the members of QUAD were engaging militarily in the IOR.

3.2.2.1 Multilateral Engagement

¹⁰² Afifa Kiran, "China's Containment Syndrome: Revisiting the Issue from Pakistani Perspective," ISSRA, 2014, accessed on January 24, 2021. https://ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/issra-paper/ISSRA_Papers_Vol4_IssueI_2012/06-China's-Containment-Afifa.pdf

¹⁰³ Dr Fredrick Kliem. Zoom Meeting Interview.

The US has been increasing military engagements in the region to enhance its sphere of influence over the littoral states of Indian Ocean to achieve its goal of containing Chinese influence. Member states of ASEAN hold economic as well as strategic importance for the US to contain Chinese influence in the IOR. The beginning of US-ASEAN ties can be traced back to 1977 and later on these ties have significantly strengthened. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) between the US and ASEAN was signed in 2009. The US became the first non-ASEAN state which established permanent mission and a resident ambassador to the association. In 2011, the US participated in East Asia Summit (EAS) and in 2012 the US began to organize ASEAN-US Summits. The US-ASEAN ties reached to level of strategic partnership in 2015 and the year of 2016 witnessed the first ever leader-level summit of ASEAN-US in California. The US and ASEAN planned celebrations for completion of 40 years as partners in 2017.

Nuclear non-proliferation, anti-trafficking, disaster management, maritime security and governance are key areas of coordination between the US and ASEAN member states. ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) are used for the discussion and coordination on security activities between the US and ASEAN states. The US-ASEAN Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) was signed in 2006 which formalized the economic relations between ASEAN member states and the US. The participation of the representative of the US Trade (USTR) in annual consultations is now normal during meetings of the ASEAN Economic Ministers. In the Indo-Pacific, the US signed its first Free Trade Agreement with Singapore which entered into force in 2004.

The Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative is aimed to provide equipment and training and also host cooperative activities, through this initiative the US is enhancing cooperation with ASEAN member states in the domain of maritime security. Moreover, over 5.6 million people got access to clean drinking water with the help of the US and 64 million acres of coastal areas and forest lands have also been protected with the grants

provided through US Agency for International Development (USAID).¹⁰⁴ Heavy investments are being done by the US in ASEAN member states. In the Indo-Pacific Region, ASEAN has become top destination for the investments from the US. For example, the US invested 271 Billion USD in ASEAN in 2018 and this figure is more than the US investments in Japan and China combined. Resultantly, this will enhance the influence of the US in the member states of ASEAN.

3.2.2.2 Bilateral Partnerships

The US has been engaged with the littoral states of the IOR but now it is further strengthening its relations with these states to preserve their interests in security complexes of the IOR. Aside from the member states of ASEAN, relations with the other regional actors are also being developed by the US in the region. From these actors, India carries greater importance for the US to contain the Chinese influence in the region. Due to the growing strategic importance of India for the US, India has been declared as strategic ally of the US in the region. India is being empowered by the US to counter China's influence in the IOR.

3.2.2.3 US-India Strategic Partnership to Counter China

In 2017, while addressing to the US Congress, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi stated that a new chapter is being opened in the history of strategic relations between India and the US. He was of the view that a strong bond between the US and India would peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific Region. The strategic cooperation between the US and India is not restricted to geopolitics in the region but these two countries also have mutual interests in other areas as well. For example, civil nuclear cooperation, technology, the space program and defense are included as common areas of interests between the US and India. The ultimate aim of India to develop strategic ties with the US is to get the status of great power in the IOR. On the other hand,

¹⁰⁴ "The US and ASEAN," US-ASEAN Business Council Inc., July 22, 2019, accessed on December 15, 2020. <https://www.usasean.org/why-asean/united-states-and-asean>

the US wants to empower India for the containment of China in the region. India has got strong support from the US to become member of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), this will help India a lot to gain benefits from nuclear trade at global level. In addition, it will also enable India to access the modern technology and boost its nuclear power status.¹⁰⁵

3.2.2.4 Information Technology Sector

India has been working very rigorously on its cyber and space program for over many years. Cooperation between the US and India in domain of cyber security can be traced back to 2001 when Indo-US Cyber Security Forum was established.¹⁰⁶ This forum played the leading role in bringing representatives of the US and Indian governments and other relevant private sectors together to cooperate for the resolution of the issues related to cyber security and upgrade the technology. This program faced criticism and three Indian nationals were arrested by the Indian authorities who were among participants in this forum and they were charged with the allegation that they were working for the US intelligence services.

Anyhow, later on, in 2011, the undeniable significance of cyber security was recognized by the US and India and they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and it is considered as formalization of ties between Indian Department of Information Technology and the US Department of Homeland Security. This MOU paved the way for increasing collaboration in broader domain of security between these two countries as it was also related to sharing cyber information and cooperation on the issues related to cyber security. Moreover, a yearly commercial and strategic dialogue was also inaugurated by the US and India which covers the issues related to cyberspace.¹⁰⁷

Another major development happened in June 2016, when the Indian and the US

¹⁰⁵ Mahrukh Khan, "Growing India-US Strategic Cooperation: An Analysis," ISSI, No. 4, 2017, accessed on December 18,2020. http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-SS_Mahrukh_Khan_No-4_2017.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Srijith K Nair, "The Case for an India-US Partnership in Cybersecurity," Takshashila Institution, July 14, 2010,accessed on December 18,2020. <http://takshashila.org.in/wpcontent/uploads/2010/03/TDD-CyberCollab-SK>

¹⁰⁷ "Joint Statement on the First US India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue," US Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, September 22, 2015,accessed on December 18,2020. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247192.htm>

government jointly stated they would cooperate in cyberspace and a framework was finalized.⁹⁶ This framework defined 21 areas for the collaboration to promote the common interests and 13 mutually recognized principles. In short, the framework was a joint commitment for the cooperation for the governance of Internet.¹⁰⁸

3.2.2.5 Maritime Cooperation

Among the areas of cooperation, maritime security is considered as a key area of common interest between India and the US. The Indo-US launched Maritime Security Dialogue in 2016 and the second dialogue was launched in the US in May 2017.¹⁰⁹ the objective of this Maritime Security Dialogue is to enhance collaboration between the US and Indian maritime forces at operational level. Therefore, both India and the US has agreed to increase navy-to-navy discussions on anti-submarine warfare and submarine safety and they have also concurred to make technical arrangements with the purpose to improve the efficiency of data sharing related to traffic of commercial ships.

At the same time, China is heavily investing in the Indian Ocean Region which is seen as threat to Indian interests in the region. It is perceived in India that Chinese Belt and Road Initiative will expand the footprint of Chinese military in the Indian Ocean Region, the region which is considered as a key region for Indian regional aspirations.¹¹⁰

3.2.2.6 Joint Exercises

Joint military exercises is another area in which the US and India are showing significant cooperation. They are taking part in various military exercises such as army exercises, the Marine Corps exercises and the naval exercises. The service-level exercises are regularly conducted by the US and India, these include Shatrugjeet in which the Indian Army and the US Marine Corps participate. An annual army-to-army exercise is named as Yudh

¹⁰⁸ “Fact Sheet: Framework for the US-India Cyber Relationship,” White House, June 7, 2016, accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/07/fact-sheet-framework-us-india-cyber-relationship>

¹⁰⁹ “US India Maritime Security Dialogue,” Media Note, Office of the Spokesperson, US Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/05/270817.htm>

¹¹⁰ “An Historic Opportunity to Partner with India,” Atlantic Council, June 22, 2017, accessed on December 24, 2020. <http://www.publications.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/AnHistoric-Opportunity-to-Partner-with-India-web-0622.pdf>

Abhyas and training exercise of Special Forces is called as Balanced Iroquois.

At the same time, the US and India were initially the participants in Malabar exercise. In this exercise thousands of personnel, Indian and US submarines, surveillance planes and the US carrier strike group took part. Japan became a permanent member in 2015; the assets of Japan which were used in these exercises included 100 aircrafts, 20 major warships, 50 antisubmarine warfare helicopters and the super carrier Nimitz class. Moreover, in Africa, the US and India, along with the other countries, are also training the peace keeping forces.

3.2.3 Containment of Iran

Iran had been a strong ally of the US and played key role for the US interests in the Middle East during the cold war till 1979. Since 1979, US-Iran ties have been facing serious issues. Over the period of 40 years, many events in and around the Middle Eastern region have taken place which have significantly affected the relations between the US and Iran. Since May 2018, the tensions have been exponentially raised between these countries. The US considers Iran as threat to its interests in the region and therefore Iran is among the key concerns of the US in the region particularly in the Western Indian Ocean.

3.2.3.1 Evolution of Iran-US Hostility

The war or even a slight confrontation between the US and Iran was not imaginable during the Cold War because both enjoyed good strategic relations during this period. The friendly ties between these states were multidimensional. Iran was an important key actor in the US strategy towards the region especially for the policy of containment of the US against the communist bloc. Shah of Iran fully supported the US strategy and the US was supporting Shah Regime in the region. But, the revolution in Iran in 1979 changed the things entirely.

Anti-American sentiments spread rapidly in the Iranian society in post-revolution period. In November 1979, Crisis generated between the US and Iran when the students in Iran surrounded the embassy of the US in Iran. Since 1979, the world has been witnessing

hostile interactions between the US and Iran and at present stage a war between these states would not be taken as surprise. Iran, which was a friendly country and strategic ally of the US, has now become strategic enemy of the US in the region. The US, which considered as a close friend of Iran, is now seen as an enemy of Iran. On 5 November 1979, the revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, during his speech, stated that the US is Great Satan.¹¹¹

Threats, swearing and insulting words have been used in political literatures and speeches in both the US and Iran for over four decades. In these forty years, one of the most popular slogans used during the meetings in Iran is “Death to America.” On the other side, Iran has always been accused of sponsoring terrorism in the region and countering Iran has become the mainstream stated policy of the US in these years. During these forty years, the major events which took place between the US and Iran are; from 4 November 1979 onwards, for 444 days, more than 50 diplomats of the US remained hostage in Iran. Efforts for negotiations, try for a coup in Iran and to plan attack for the release of American diplomats were pertinent to mention during this period. Moreover, Iraq-Iran war, which lasted for over eight years, was supported by the US as the US supported Saddam Hussain, former president of Iraq, to impose war on Iran.

Furthermore, non-military airplane of Iran was attacked by the US in zone of the Persian Gulf. A passenger flight, Iran Air Flight 655, was going from Tehran to Dubai and the US Navy fired surface-to-air missile which shot down the airplane which resulted into killing of 290 people including 66 children. Moreover, National Security Advisor of in Reagan Administration McFarlane visited Iran, which later came to be known as Iran-Contra Affair, with the purpose to sell arms to Iran via Israel and the administration of Reagan was also of the view that this deal would also help the US to release the American nationals who were in captured by the Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The US policy towards nuclear program of Iran has been the more aggressive than other areas. From Bush to Trump administrations, several steps have been taken by the US to

¹¹¹ Saeed Kamali, “US had extensive contact with Ayatollah Khomeini before Iran revolution,” The Guardian, June 10, 2016, accessed on January 2, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/10/ayatollah-khomeini-jimmy-carter-administration-iran-revolution>.

deal with the issue and Iran has paid heavy costs due to these actions of the US in terms of economic crisis especially. To resolve the nuclear issue, Iran and world powers US, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China Plus Germany (P5+1) and European Union have been in constant engagements.¹¹²

The US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a violent action which deteriorated the relations significantly. President Trump announced the withdrawal from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018 and accused Iran that the Iran is following an agenda which is harming the vital interests of the US in the region. In this way, the nuclear deal which was claimed as great victory by Obama administration and five other countries got a big blow. While announcing the decision of withdrawal, Trump imposed allegations on Iran that Iran is leading actor which is sponsoring terrorism in the region and further stated that Iran is fueling the conflicts in the region by exporting missiles, supporting the militias such as Hezbollah. Mr. Trump also said that the core of the Iran nuclear deal was faulty as even if Iran completely follows the provisions of the deal it would be able to make nuclear weapons eventually. Since 2018, the tensions have been escalated between the US and Iran which are threatening the peace in the region.¹¹³

A US RQ-4A Global Hawk BAMS-D military drone was shot down on June 20 2019, over the Strait of Hormuz which is the most important choke point in the world, with surface-to-air missile by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).¹¹⁴ The officials of Iran said that this drone violated the international rules and entered airspace of Iran without permission, while the official statement from the US claimed that the drone did not enter in airspace of Iran rather it was in international space. Such events between the US and Iran are not new nor their root. Strategy of dual containment was

¹¹² Katz, B., "Axis rising: Iran's evolving regional strategy and non-state partnerships in the Middle East," CSIS Briefs, October 11, 2018. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/axis-rising-irans-evolving-regional-strategy-and-non-state-partnerships-middle-east>

¹¹³ Jones, S. G., "War by proxy: Iran's growing footprint in the Middle East," CSIS Briefs, March 11, 2019. <https://www.csis.org/war-by-proxy>

¹⁰³ Joanne Stocker, "Iran shoots down US RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drone," The Defense Post, June 20, 2019, accessed on November 11, 2020. <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2019/06/20/iran-shoots-down-us-drone-strait-of-hormuz/>

¹¹⁴ Joanne Stocker, "Iran shoots down US RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drone," The Defense Post, June 20, 2019, accessed on November 11, 2020. <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2019/06/20/iran-shoots-down-us-drone-strait-of-hormuz/>

officially announced by the Clinton administration on 24 February 1994. This strategy was aimed to contain Iraq and Iran by isolating these countries from the trading and economic system of the world.

Former US- President Bush, during his state of the Union address in 2002, called Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an “Axis of Evil.” Iranian forces captured an unmanned aerial vehicle named as Lockheed Martin RQ-170 Sentinel of the US on 5 December 2011 and stated that this UAV entered airspace and the cyber warfare unit of Iranian forces forced it to land. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy seized the two riverine command boats of the US Navy on 12 January 2016 and stated that they were navigating in the territorial waters of Iran near Farsi Island of Iran. These events show that the clashes between the US and Iran in political as well in security domains.

3.2.3.2 US-Iran Tensions

Iran factor played key role to increase the deployment of the US troops in the Middle East and three areas can be enlisted which are worrisome for the US. These are Iranian influence in the region, Nuclear Program of Iran and Iranian missiles. Nuclear program of Iran is the most important issue for the US. Though, Iranian officials have always stated that the nuclear program of Iran is only for peaceful and civilian purposes but the US and its allies in the region have always been suspicious about the nuclear program. While addressing to a press conference in June 2018, head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar said that nuclear activities of Iran are peaceful as it has been always stated.

The Supreme Leader of Iran, in his fatwa (decree), has clearly Islam does not favor the production, development, use of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons therefore Iran shall not develop nuclear weapons. In 2012, the supreme leader also openly stated that: “The Iranian nation has never pursued and will never pursue nuclear weapons. There is no doubt that the decision makers in the countries opposing us know well that Iran is not after nuclear weapons because the Islamic Republic, logically, religiously and theoretically, considers the possession of nuclear weapons a grave sin and believes the

proliferation of such weapons is senseless, destructive and dangerous.”¹¹⁵

Moreover, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) published its report on Verification and Monitoring of the Iranian Nuclear Program in February 2019. According to this report, Iran is fully abiding the rules which were defined in the JCPOA and it further stated that there are no chances that Iran can violate the provisions and even it cannot develop the weapons secretly under prevailing scenario.

The reports of IAEA and the assurances of Iran’s officials could not satisfy the objections of the US and its allies in the region. The Trump administration is of the view that there are secret facilities established by Iran which is violation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231 and also the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). A recent report by the US intelligence agencies has also concluded that nuclear weapons are not being produced by Iran even after the US withdrawal from the JCPOA. Moreover, while analyzing the situation an American analyst John Dale Grover has said, “Iran never got a nuclear weapon and still does not have one”.

Iranian government allowed International Atomic Energy inspector to visit and monitor the nuclear facilities of Iran under the nuclear deal and also transferred 98 percent stockpile of Uranium to Russia. Several facilities were destroyed by Iran to do away with the 66 percent of centrifuges of uranium-enrichment. Iran continued to follow the provisions of Iran nuclear deal even after the US withdrawal from the deal and re imposed the sanctions on Iran. Congressional Research Service has also published report, on 23 September 2020, that Iran is still showing compliance to the provisions under Nuclear Deal.¹¹⁶

The missile program of Iran has also been serious concern for the US. Capable medium and long range ballistic missiles have been developed by the military establishment of Iran. The missile program of Iran has been repeatedly declared as a threat to the interests of the US and its allies in the region by US officials. US projected that the missile program of Iran is a big threat to the region. Iran has tried to assure the world that it has

¹¹⁵ “Iran will never seek nuclear weapons,” Iranian Press TV, February 22, 2012.

¹¹⁶ “Iran’s Nuclear Program: Tehran’s Compliance with International Obligations,” CRS, September 23, 2020, accessed on December 2, 2020. <https://fas.org/s/gp/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf>

developed missile and improve the capability of their missile solely for national security purposes and the missiles do not have capability to carry the nuclear warheads.

Iran support to militias in the region and Syrian regime is another contention between the US and Iran as US and its allies consider it as detrimental threat to security interests in the region especially national security interests of KSA and Israel. Though Obama administration did ignore or for instance did not prioritize the interests of its allies in region but the Trump administration took the concerns of the US allies more seriously. Trump was of the view that the increasing influence of Iran in the region does not only threaten the US interests but also pose challenges for the security of KSA and Israel, therefore the influence of Iran should be contained in the region.

Though, the war group and the War Cabinet have been attempting to push the US to wage war against Iran, but the US will resist the war plans because the war with Iran will not surely guarantee the interests of the US and also has huge costs for the people of the US. Similarly, war with the US will not make the things easier for Iran; therefore, Iran will also not choose war as an option to preserve its interests in the region. Given the pros and cons of the situation between the US and Iran, it can be said that situation might see escalation and de-escalations but neither peace would be established nor the war would be happened. In short, they do not want to fight but they do not want peace too. The Trump administration has been following confrontational strategy against Iran. Mr. Trump took bold decisions which escalated the tensions between the US and Iran. Anyhow, to conclude, it can be said that both states have logical reasons to escape from peace and also have good grounds to avoid war against each other.

3.3 Political Interests

The US has been dominant extra regional actor in the geopolitical history of the Indian Ocean Region for over sever decades. The US would like to support the status quo which is dominated by the US. Anyhow, the US policies towards India and the region, in the last decade, have clearly shown that it has decided to give India major role in the region and wanted to empower India to counterbalance China in the region. This has been the practice of the states that they do compromise on small interest for their larger interests.

The US has several political interests in the region and also has specific political objectives in the key actors of the region.

China is increasing its political influence in the region due to its Maritime Silk Road Initiative in Indian Ocean. This has become challenge for the US. To counter this challenge, the US is strengthening its diplomatic ties with states in the region and also encouraging the India's policies such as Look East Policy to increase India's political influence over the states in the region. Moreover, the US wants Indian political support for the presence of the US in Indian Ocean. The US also wants to contain the Iranian influence in Middle East as it is threatening the US and its allies' interests in the region.

Moreover, Indonesia is being supported by the US to make Indonesia a regional leader in South East Asia which can play an effective role against the increasing political influence of China in South East Asian countries. Therefore, it can be said that the ties between the US and Indonesia will witness further positive developments as Indonesia will continue to have significant importance in the foreign policy preferences of the US in South East Asia.

The relation of the US with Pakistan has been facing ups and downs for over several decades. Pakistan was being accused of supporting the militants in Afghanistan. When the US decided to withdraw from Afghanistan, it requested Pakistan to bring the Afghan Taliban on negotiating table. Due to Pakistan's efforts the peace process started and efforts were appreciated by the US. Now, the peace process of Afghanistan is going through its crucial phases.

Conclusion

The US has been enjoying strong influence in Indian Ocean and still has the dominating role as extra-regional actor in the region. The major interests of the US in the region revolves around Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), resources of Indian Ocean, strategic importance of the IOR and the economic markets of the littoral states of Indian Ocean. The rise of Chinese influence in the region has further made the US more interested in the IOR which has brought significant changes in policies of the US towards

the IOR. The convergence of American and Indian strategic interests is a prime example in this regard.

Chapter Four

Implications for Pakistan

Barry Buzan states that the states make alliances to pursue their national interests. India has been tilted towards the Soviet Union during cold war but after the collapse of Soviet Union India made broad changes in its foreign policy and began to strengthen ties with the sole super, the US, in the world.¹¹⁷ The response from the US has also been very fine as the US has openly announced India as its strategic ally in the Indian Ocean Region. The US is supporting India on diplomatic and political fronts and also empowering the military capabilities of India which has direct impact on Pakistan, with which it has hostile relations since 1947, as it is further increasing the imbalance of power between Pakistan and India. Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver truly explain this scenario in Regional Security Complex theory that the actions of India for improvement of security will have immediate effects on Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan has been an ally of the US during the cold war and was declared as major non-NATO ally during the war on terror in the region. But, now as the India is declared as strategic ally of the US, Pakistan has lost priority in the US policies towards the IOR particularly South Asian Region. Furthermore, new structure is emerging in the region due to the rise of China in the IOR. Pakistan has developed strong partnership with China and grabbed billions of dollars as Chinese investments under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India and the US consider China as a common threat to their interests in the IOR and to counter Chinese influence they have taken several steps. As Pakistan is an important participant in Chinese BRI and it also has hostile relations with India, therefore, it is facing implications due to the convergence of Indian and American strategic interests in the region.

This chapter has briefly discussed and analyzed the implications for Pakistan due to the Indo-US strategic alliance in the IOR. Moreover, it has included the response of Pakistan to mitigate the challenges which are emerging due the India-US nexus in the region. The chapter is divided into four sections: (i) Economic implications, (ii) Security implications,

¹¹⁷ Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 167-175.

(iii) Political implications (v) Pakistan's Changing Approach towards Russia.

4.1 Economic Implications

The convergence of American and Indian strategic interests has economic implications for Pakistan. Pakistan is already facing economic crisis and the people are experiencing harsh and unprecedented inflation, in such situation, triggering the arms race is further worsening the economic conditions of the country. Significant portion of the budget is required for betterment and development of infrastructure and to improve the life standards of the common people in the country. But, the increase in military budgets due to security threats has badly affected the economy and disrupted the social infrastructures.

Moreover, the US is collaborating with India in the space domain. With the help of technology from the US, India can get better production in agriculture sector and also predict the climate change. This will give India advantage over Pakistan and will further increase asymmetry between India and Pakistan in agricultural domain. In addition, the deal between the US and India has opened the markets of the US for Indian agricultural products. The exchange of technology and the increase in trading relations between the US and India is beneficial for both countries. For India, it will be resulted in stronger economy of India.¹¹⁸

Nonetheless, the US is at more advantageous position because the increased cooperation between the US and India has opened new market for the US business to sell its technologies. The cooperation has benefits for the contractors of the US defense who have got access to bigger market and on the other hand India can be seen as alternative market for the people who are interested to buy US technologies at cheaper rates. With the increased cooperation between the US and India, India has got access to latest technology from the US has not only improved the security of India but also significantly boost the Indian economy. As the US has strategically aligned with India, therefore, it is reluctant to cooperate with Pakistan in the transfer of technology to Pakistan.

¹¹⁸ Sanjeev Miglani, "India, U.S. nearing industrial security pact for defense tech transfers," *Reuters*, June 24, 2019, accessed on August 17, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-usa-pompeo-idUSKCN1TP1ZH>

Despite the fact that India and the US has developed strategic ties in the region, many Pakistanis expect that the US would not overlook Pakistan as it has been a close friend for over many years and Pakistan played key role for the protections of the US core interests in the region. Compromising the long-rooted relations, due to strategic alignment of the US with India, with Pakistan would not be a sane and mature decision by the US administration.

Furthermore, China's increasing influence in the IOR has played leading role for the convergence of American and Indian interests in the region. As Pakistan is a key participant of Chinese BRI in the IOR, therefore, it has further deteriorated the situation for Pakistan. All the possible means are being used by the Indo-US nexus to destabilize the already trembling economy of Pakistan. For example, Pakistan has been accusing India for using the US' influence to blacklist Pakistan by the FATF. Pakistan is placed on grey list which already has severe implications for Pakistani economy and Pakistan is trying to exit the grey list. Moreover, the US investments in Pakistan have also significantly declined in the recent years.

4.2 CPEC

According to the Kewalramani, the Indo-US and Pakistani interest in IOR are fundamentally diverging. Pakistan is an important actor in IOR and will continue to remain an important actor. The challenge will come in this context with regard to Pakistan's relationship with china. Further he added that, 'If you see Chinese basing in Gwader or Jiwani, then you are likely to see much more friction even between US and Pakistan, because US will not be appreciating something like that, so it depends again on how Pakistan engages with china. The Chinese are helping Pakistan develop its naval capacity which is fine. That is not an issue from my point of view at least. The issue comes when you see Chinese basing happening in the region, or when you see Chinese warships coming in the region whether it's in Gwader, Jiwani or Karachi . And whether safe facilities being provided to Chinese then you will see challenges between Indo-US and Pakistan in IOR'. Further he added that, relation in Pakistan and India are in so continental focused at present and water have not played a huge role. In last few years

Pakistan has suspicions with regard to Indian naval development and India has suspicions regards to Pakistani naval developments. At present India's coast is so large and it is not a case that it is any primary threat perception. The primary threat for India and Pakistan from each other is basically on the land border. So it depends on how Pakistani navy develop and what role china has in this development and also what basing facilities soft or hard Pakistan provides china, those will determine the role. He added that, 'Lastly obviously the most important thing is whether you see non state actors using the seas and how what they do, that will then create tensions but until that point of time I don't think this is a massive issue for India and Pakistan right now. Or even between the American and Pakistanis until it depends on how the Pakistan deals with China'.¹¹⁹

According to Nagi, 'the world is going against China due to some real and fake reasons. So it is going to make some implications for countries including Pakistan, which are trying to maintain ties with China. So Pakistan needs to be careful in balancing the relationship with China and somehow improved relations with India and other countries'. About mentioning the Pakistan's unstable politics he added that, Pakistan has been facing unstable governments from last many years, and now the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr Khan is modern, respected and well liked overseas. So without any steady leadership it is difficult to start to create a visions and build trust with other countries. further he added,' that Pakistani PM is someone you can talk to and someone that is less beholdng to some traditional stake holders in Pakistan in political context for example Musharaf and others, he is very difficult for them. So they can get more benefit from Pakistan with more investment, more comparative competition but they have to improve the governance and support the some of the initiatives that US and other countries are trying to start to strengthen the region'.¹²⁰

4.3 Security Implications

From the strategic perspective on the partnership between the US and India, it is concluded that the partnership will increase the imbalance of power between India and Pakistan. The observers who are focused on the India-US civil nuclear deal are of the

¹¹⁹ Manoj Kewalramani. Zoom Interview.

¹²⁰ Stephen R Nagi, Zoom Interview.

view that the non-proliferation of the US has become irrelevant after the nuclear deal of the US with India.¹²¹ The nuclear deal of the US with India raised serious questions. For example, one of the questions is that how the US can sign deal with a country which has not signed non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Therefore, many experts are of the view that this nuclear deal is detrimental threat to base of non-proliferation treaty. The first article of the treaty states that the states cannot help those who do not have nuclear weapons.

India is a nuclear state but it not under the jurisdiction of NPT because it has not signed this treaty therefore the nuclear between the US and India has challenged the basis of the treaty. Every signatory of the non-proliferation treaty has agreed that it would not transfer anything related to nuclear weapons such as nuclear explosive devices, nuclear weapons or even it cannot assist or encourage the state, which does not have nuclear weapons, to acquire nuclear weapons.

Although, the word civil has been used in the title of the deal but the critics of this deal are of the view that the purpose of this word is to avert the questions which could be raised on the nature of the deal. Moreover, the probability of diverting the civil technology into military cannot be ignored. The insignificant difference between the military and civil nuclear reactor provides the logical ground to the argument that India can easily use this technology for military objectives. In addition, this nuclear deal also allows India to buy the US conventional weapons, and the Indian side would necessarily buy American weapons. In fact, India has purchased weapons of worth over 3 billion USD in 2020.¹²² These developments are not only intensifying the enmity between Pakistan and India but also increasing the imbalance of power between these two countries. Similarly, the differences between India and Pakistan will further increase and the chances of resolving the issues between Pakistan and India will vanish.

¹²¹ Saira Bano, "Pakistan: Lessons from the India-US Nuclear Deal," *The Diplomat*, June 22, 2015, accessed on November 19, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/pakistan-lessons-from-the-india-us-nuclear-deal/>

¹²² "India's weapons procurement from US jumps to \$3.4 billion in 2020," *Business Standard*, December 09, 2020, accessed on December 15, 2020. https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/india-s-weapons-procurement-from-us-jumps-to-3-4-billion-in-2020120120900273_1.html#:~:text=India's%20weapons%20procurement%20from%20US%20jumps%20to%20%243.4%20billion%20in%202020.Press%20Trust%20of&text=India's%20weapons%20procurement%20from%20the,administration%2C%20according%20to%20official%20data.

The nuclear cooperation between the US and India has not only raised the level of competition in arms procurement but it has also increased the probability of war between nuclear-armed countries, Pakistan and India. The Pakistani policy makers are of the view that the strategic cooperation between the US and India has given India a reason to justify its hegemonic ambitions in the IOR. The nuclear deal is interpreted as a plan which reinforces the Indian claim that it is superior to the other states in the region.

The Indian narrative of exceptionalism has got another reason in shape of the nuclear deal between the US and India to promote the narrative. The deal has clearly changed the strategic equilibrium as it has disturbed the balance of power between Pakistan and India. In addition, it has also become a key source getting preference over Pakistan in the power corridors of the US. There is a little space for the view that the US might plan the induction of Indian personnel in the US-driven conflict across the world.

Despite the fact that Pakistan sacrificed a lot in fight against terrorism and has been declared as non-NATO ally of the US, the US signed nuclear deal with India this showed the unpredictability of the US foreign policy which can be changed at any given time. This action has truly exemplified the Kissinger's words that there are no permanent friends or enemies in international system, only national interest remains permanent. Actions of the states are guided by the national interests within the global system which is anarchic in its nature. Anyhow, it is also fact that the US like the other states pursues its own national interest by using all the possible and available means. Whether India joins the US for the larger global scheme or not but it will have impact on Pakistan as RSCT explains that actions of a state has direct impact on its immediate neighbor.

While analyzing the broader sphere of the deal, India will be able to have more efficient hardware such as Patriot Advanced Capability-3. It is said that this PAC-3 has more capability than the PAC-2 and it also has longer range. The US has been promoting the agenda of disarmament but giving access to India to the latest technologies is generating arms competition and also increasing imbalance of power in the region.¹²³

¹²³ Sanjeev, "India, U.S. nearing industrial security pact for defense tech transfers," *Reuters*, June 24, 2019, accessed on August 20, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-usa-pompeo-idUSKCN1TP1ZH>

Moreover, it has been said that, in response to this asymmetry, Pakistan would struggle to have similar weapons and deal either with the US or elsewhere probably Russia or China. For example, JF-17 is joint venture of Pakistan and China and China has transferred technology to Pakistan and provided assistance for the manufacturing of these fighter jets.¹²⁴ The Indo-US has created a confusing environment in the region. With the advancement of weapons systems in India, there will be reduction in the value of nuclear deterrence of Pakistan. The induction of missile defense system and advanced missiles in Indian defense assets would help India to emerge as major and decisive power in the region. The concrete legal obligation is not present against nuclear testing of India; therefore, Indian nuclear testing can enable India to handle nuclear weapons which would have greater explosive power than the nuclear weapons which are now in the arsenal of India. These developments would bring changes in the nuclear strategy of India. India can target the nuclear sites of Pakistan which would in turn compel Pakistan to change its restrained strategy for the use of its nuclear weapons.

The US support to India has enabled India to put further pressure on Pakistan and it has also spread the Indian narrative of accusing Pakistan for cross-border terrorism in India. The tag of being “the largest democracy” has always been exploited by India to convince the world to accept their narrative that the “democratic” India is being threatened by the sponsored terrorism of Pakistan. This is also another tactic to delay the resolution of Kashmir issue where Indian forces are involved in gross human rights violations. In the US fight against terrorism, Pakistan appeared as a front state and fully supported the US and also paid huge cost by joining the war on terror in terms of lives of soldiers and civilians, destruction of infrastructure and economy. The US had repeatedly asked Pakistan to do more, while India, on the other hand, now enjoys exceptional support from the US. India has been given the task by the US to play the role in the region on the behalf of the US.

The recent progress in the defense cooperation agreement, “Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.” In 2015, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum

¹²⁴ “First indigenously manufactured JF 17 Thunder handed over to PAF,” Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, November 24, 2009, accessed on August 17, 2020. <http://pk.china-embassy.org/eng/zbqx/t628784.htm>

of Agreement (LEMOA), the renewal of Defense Framework Agreement between both countries, and the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and recently BECA, these are all important advancements in the Indo-US defense cooperation. All these agreements have strategic advantages for both countries, which seems further strengthening the Indo-US alliance and also contributing to increase strategic and power imbalance between Pakistan and India in the region.

Recently, the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) has been signed between the US and India which has raised serious concerns in the policy makers of Pakistan who are focused on the security issues of Pakistan.¹²⁵ The Foreign Ministry of Pakistan, after the signing of this agreement, issued the statement that BECA agreement between the US and India will have serious repercussions for the peace and stability in the region. Moreover, the Biden's administration has also given the clear indication that they will continue the legacy of previous presidents in case of India and further strengthen strategic ties with India.

4.4 Political Implications

Pakistan has been raising concerns over the Indo-US cooperation in the region since 2005. The foreign office of Pakistan has vehemently stated that the cooperation between the US and India is bound to promote instability in the region. For example, Pakistani Foreign Office, on 30 June 2005, gave a press release in which the office reiterated that the Indo-US strategic partnership would create strategic imbalance and result in the arms race in the region. It further stated that the Bush administration had already been informed about the negative aspects of the strategic partnership between the US and India.¹²⁶

Though, the importance of Pakistan was proved rightly when the war on terror was at peak point but nuclear deal between the US and Iran had made Pakistan seriously

¹²⁵ S.M. Hali, "BECA — a new Indo-US bilateral agreement," *The News*, November 2, 2020, accessed on December 12, 2020. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/737917-beca-a-new-indo-us-bilateral-agreement>

¹²⁶ Muhammad Ishaque Fani, "The Indo- US Strategic Partnership in Post 9/11: Implication for Pakistan," *Pakistan Vision* Vol. 10 No. 2, 20 December 2009, accessed on January 109, 2021. http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/studies/PDF-FILES/Artical%20No-7-V10,%20No.2%20Dec_09.pdf.

concerned. The US exploited the situation before the announcing of war on terror and Pakistan took this as a challenge and proved to be a responsible state in the world. This decision by Pakistan resulted into two major benefits. First, Pakistan stopped India to deep engage in Afghanistan and secondly it avoided the global accusation of being called as state which sponsors terrorism.

A new wave of terrorism and extremism was epitomized by the 9/11 incident. Pakistan is still carrying the weight of this wave as it has damaged the social fabric of important parts of the country, martyred thousands of people across Pakistan including security personnel and resulted into over 100 billion USD loss to Pakistan's economy.¹²⁷ Pakistan's efforts to curb the menace of terrorism should be appreciated and acknowledged by international community. Pakistan also had the opportunities to secure deals from the US during the NATO forces in Afghanistan. Even, today, Pakistan can get benefits as it is helping the US for safe exit from Afghanistan. The US has firmly stated that the cooperation between India and the US is aimed to contain China and not meant for disturbing the balance between Pakistan and India.

The traditional realist says that the above argument has never been taken seriously by Pakistan. The cooperation between the US and India is empowering India and also authorized India by the US to play its role to contain the Chinese influence in Indian Ocean. India is playing its role in the region to contain the Chinese influence, though; it has limited options as compared to China's stature in the region. Building relations with others does not necessarily mean that a state should completely abandon its close old friendly state. From the realistic perspective, it can be said that the US still has interests in Pakistan as it needs safe exit from Afghanistan. For this the US cannot completely ignore Pakistan.

The US and Pakistan, both, are concerned about the Afghanistan crisis. The peace in Pakistan is linked with the peace in Afghanistan and the US wants to safely exit from Afghanistan. For peaceful and safe exit, Pakistan is helping the US and playing its role in Afghan Peace Process. It would be tough for the US to acknowledge the Pakistan's

¹²⁷ Israr Khan, "Pakistan suffers \$123.1 bn losses in terror war," The News, May 26, 2017, accessed on August 17, 2020. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/206709-Pakistan-suffers-1231-bn-losses-in-terror-war>.

efforts as it has been accusing Pakistan for supporting Afghan Taliban in the past. Moreover, Pakistan has been customer of the defense products of the US. The US support to India has lost a customer on one hand and Pakistan lost a source of military weapons in the other. The US constant and biased favors to India has compelled Pakistan to further strengthened its ties with China and develop relations with Russia. The Indo-US strategic alliance has resulted into further anarchic situation in the region. Pakistan which is among the key actors of the region is facing challenges but the smaller states are also facing repercussions. The anarchic environment and cobweb of alliance is disturbing the peace in the entire region. In the states of developing world, military and civil systems take years to evolve to fine level. Therefore, Pakistan is also not a rare example where military has determining role.

The military establishment is an undeniable force in Pakistan whose importance and role cannot be ignored. It has been an important part of the institution for over seven decades since the country came into existence. The democratic growth of Pakistan has faced obstacles due to the militarization of politics in the country. In today's world democracy is considered as one of the international norms and the authoritarian system are being rejected by the people. Therefore, it has become a parameter to judge the society and progress of a country.

Though, after Modi's appearance on the driving seat of India, the democratic values in India have been vanished significantly but India has successfully avoided the direct military rule. As democracy has become an international norm and millions of people across the globe consider it as a parameter to judge the socio-economic development and political evolution of a country, India is privileged in this case against Pakistan. President Bill Clinton had praised the democracy of India which was then 52 years old and the ancient India's civilization."¹²⁸

The US perceives that there certain values which are common in India and this is also a key reason behind the partnership between the US and India. Till now, India has not fully accepted that it would act as US proxy in the region but if it accepts it will be act like a

¹²⁸ Carina van de Wetering, *Changing US Foreign Policy toward India: US-India Relations since the Cold War*, Springer, 26 October 2016.

viceroy of the US in the region which might not have the same influence as the British viceroy had in the past. India has always been promoting itself as regional power in the IOR and the support of the US will significantly help India to pursue its regional Hegemonic agenda in the region.

India has been trying to destabilize Pakistan since its inception but Pakistan has resisted successfully on many fronts, therefore, it would be difficult for India to subdue Pakistan as now Pakistan has become an invincible power which has acquired nuclear weapons. There is strong possibility of clash if the India subjugates Pakistan at a level where it cannot bear and it would react to stop Indian aggression against Pakistan. The full fledged war between Pakistan and India will endorse the concept of Huntington which was “clash of civilization” as it can also be viewed as clash between Islamic civilization and India’s civilization.¹²⁹

The cooperation between the US and India can be proved as blessing in disguise. The US is supporting India so it can be used to counter China in the region. This development can bring change in India’s policy and India can shift its focus from Pakistan to China. In this way, Pakistan can be able to reduce its military budget and spend it for socio-economic development of the country which will improve the living standards of the common people of Pakistan who have been more concerned about inflation and economic situation of the country rather than the geopolitics in the region. The foreign policy of Pakistan has been India centric and it did not help Pakistan to improve its economic growth and resolve governance issues. The Indo-US alliance in the IOR can be proved fruitful for Pakistan to divert its attention from India and work on the economic, societal and other issues in the country. The security threats from India have detracted Pakistan from path of economic progress.

4.5 Pakistan’s Changing Approach towards Russia

The strategic alignment between the US and India has push Pakistan to look towards available alternative options. Pakistan has further strengthened its ties with China and

¹²⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York City: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 110-121.

developing ties with Russia. Pakistan has taken practical measures to improve the relations with Russia. Pakistan and Soviet Union had also occasional engagements during the Cold War. In the international political system it is the national interest which plays key role for the interaction of states with each other, Pakistan and Russia did not succeed to develop a common policy even when their interests were matched. Though China has been all-weather friend of Pakistan and in the recent years Pakistan has further strengthened its ties with China but due to growing strategic partnership of the US and India Pakistan is also developing ties with Russia. The relations between Pakistan and Russia are not developing due to the efforts of Pakistani foreign office but the Indo-US alliance in the region was one of the main reasons behind the desire of Russia to have good ties with Pakistan. It is believable that Indian significant inclination towards the US is also among the factors which have played the role for improving Pakistan-Russia ties because India has been inclined towards Soviet Union during Cold War despite its mantra of non-alignment.

Furthermore, the foreign secretary of Pakistan Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary stated that Pakistan completely supports the territorial sovereignty of Syria and is also against any intervention by the foreign military in Syria. This statement was not meant to mere show Pakistan's support to Assad's regime in Syria but it was a clear indication that the foreign office Pakistan is making its path to develop ties with Russia. Countries in international political system normally try to diversify their foreign policies. Same is the case with Pakistan. Pakistan is slowly withdrawing from its Western-oriented policy, developing relations with Russia and over-concentrated on China.

While formulating the foreign policy in the present geostrategic environment, the policy makers of Pakistan must not fall prey to dramatic and emotional exposition and must maintain relations with countries based on mutual interest. Hassan Askri is of the view that Pakistan needs to diversify its foreign policy. While talking about Pakistan's relations with Russia, which gradually witnessing improvement, he has said that Pakistan must avail the new opportunities. In the recent years, Russia has been showing great interest to have friendly and strong ties with Pakistan.

Moreover, the government of Pakistan has also shown positive gestures for the development of its relations with Russia. Pakistan and Russia are yet to improve their ties in economic domain but they have begun cooperation in the security domain. Military Exercises between Pakistani and Russian Special Forces can be a prominent example in this regard which aimed to share the experience of countering terrorism. MI-35 helicopters have also been supplied to Pakistan by Russia. Though, it was a good start for the opening relations with Russia but ties between Pakistan and Russia will continue to grow at slow pace until economic and trade ties do not see significant improvement.

The visit of head of the state to the other state plays significant role in improving the relations between the states. For example, in March 2000, Bill Clinton visited India and this visit resulted into changing the narratives in post-Cold war period between the US and India, completely. Therefore, the Putin's visit would have significant impact on the ties between Russia and Pakistan. The statement of Rustam Shah, who was ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, supports these arguments. He stated that Pakistan should have improved and strengthened its ties with Russia many years ago. He also added that Putin's visit would play important role in the strengthening of relations between Pakistan and Russia. The visit will result in the development of political contacts and trade connections and it is also not essential that Pakistan has to bring changes in its policy towards the US.

The declining support of Pakistan and the US for each other is being observed very closely and Russia can be more interested to see this development. In support of the argument of having cordial relations with both Russia and the US, the statement of former advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz can be quoted. He said, "As you know, India's relations had expanded with the United States, although India had good ties with Russia, "it is no longer like Cold War, obviously Russia is watching the Pakistan-US tension and might be thinking of restoring some balance." Moreover, developing and strengthening ties with Russia is not something new for Pakistan.

During Cold War, Pakistan has been aligned with the US and protected the US interests in the region against the Soviet Union. But it also succeeded to establish friendship with

the Soviet Union. The efforts during the Ayub's era and the struggle of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to develop good relations with Russia (former Soviet Union) are important examples in this regard. Moreover, it is undoubted that the US had significant influence over the foreign policy of Pakistan during the Cold War period and it resulted into weakened relations between Pakistan and Russia. In addition, the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan raised serious concerns among the policy makers of Pakistan. Pakistan adopted a defensive strategy to counter the challenges emerging due to the presence of Red Army in its immediate neighborhood, Afghanistan. Though, it is generally considered that Pakistan acted as a proxy of the US to fight against Soviet Union in Afghanistan but it was also in the interest of Pakistan to defend its territorial integrity which was expectedly to be challenged by the Soviet Union.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan should have made efforts to repair the relations between Russia and Pakistan but it did not happen. Pakistan has been making decision on the base of need which is often realized due to the specific events and situations. In the history of Pakistan's relations with the US, Pakistan dramatically started to look towards other options when its relations with the US got affected. Pakistan-US relations have witnessed many ups and downs in the history of over seventy years. For example, the incident of 9/11 and the US declaration of war on terror improved the relations between the US and Pakistan and therefore the government led by General Musharraf had good ties with the US as the US needed Pakistan's assistance. Pakistan was also declared as a major non-NATO ally of the US.¹³⁰ It is often said by the analysts that as soon as the interests of the US fulfill, it changed its attitude towards Pakistan. The administration of Musharraf tried to establish relations with Russia to reduce the dependence of Pakistan on the US. The visit of Musharraf to Russia was part of these efforts.

In Musharraf's view, the relations of Pakistan with Russia should not be mixed with the relations of Pakistan with other states especially Afghanistan and India. He was also of the view that Pakistan and Russia should work collaborate for the exploration of energy

¹³⁰ K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pak-US Relations," *FAS*, February 6, 2009. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33498.pdf>

and trade. Moreover, Pakistan considers that its relations with Russia also will help Pakistan in the domain of aerospace. As Russia had influence over India, therefore, the government led by Musharraf thought that the improved relations with Russia could also help Pakistan to initiate the discussions on Kashmir Issue which has not been resolved for over several decades.

After the end of Musharraf administration, Pakistan People's party made the government. The government led by President Asif Ali Zardari followed the plans which had been unleashed by Musharraf's government and launched the policy called as 'look beyond the West'. Several significant steps were taken by the PPP government to improve and strengthen the ties of Pakistan with Russia. Moreover, the recommendations given by National Security Committee of Pakistan were not only ratified by the government of Pakistan but the President Asif Ali Zardari also visited Russia to enhance cooperation between the two countries. The PPP government used all the available options which could help to improve ties between Pakistan and Russia.

In 2012, Russia showed that it was interested to participate in the proposed project of Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India (TAPI) pipeline. Moreover, there is abundance of coal in the Sindh province of Pakistan and the Russian interest in this project also shows that Russia wants to enhance cooperation and strengthen ties with Pakistan. When Russian consular General paid a courtesy visit to Governor House in Karachi, the governor of Sindh Mohammad Zubair appreciated and praised the Russian technical air which made the construction of Muzaffargarh and Guddu Power Plants and Pakistan Steel Mills possible. He further stated that Russian investment is welcomed by Pakistan for Thar Coal Project.¹³¹

The relations between Russia and Pakistan have been witnessing significant developments in the recent years. There are constant engagements between these two countries since the PTI has formed the government in Pakistan. While talking to the reporters in Islamabad last year, Denis Valentinovich, Trade Minister of Russia, stated that the government of Russia is willing to cooperate in several fields including

¹³¹ "Pakistan-Russia Relations," Embassy of Pakistan, Russia. <http://parepmoscow.com/en/pakistan-russia-relations/>

manufacturing of aircrafts and also looking for the joint collaborations between Russia and Pakistan, it will help the boost the economy of Pakistan.

Hammad Azhar, Minister of Industries and Production of Pakistan, welcomed the statement of Russian minister and also said that there is huge potential of collaboration in people-to-people contacts, business to business ties and trade between Pakistan and Russia. He further stated that the government of Pakistan wishes to develop strategic partnership with Russia. Both Russia and Pakistan, during a delegation level meeting which held at MOFA, agreed to enhance the bilateral trade by increasing the cooperation and also by promoting the business activities of private sector of both states. Moreover, Pakistan was also invited to Moscow for the organization of a road show which would help private companies of Russia to explore the opportunities to do business in Pakistan. On the other end, Russians were also given invitation to attend trade fairs in Pakistan.¹³²

Furthermore, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, Alexey Dedov, asserted that Pakistan has great importance in the foreign policy of Russia towards South Asia. In the recent years, the frequency of high-level meetings between the officials of Russia and Pakistan have increased significantly. The delegation exchanges have also witnessed rise between Pakistani and Russian agencies and several ministries. Moreover, the representatives of Pakistan and Russia are actively interacting with each other in international organizations for the core issues at global level. In addition, Mr. Dedov further stated that Pakistan also holds importance for Russia in the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Russia is showing interest to take part in energy projects including electricity and gas pipelines. In this regard, Russia announced that it would invest 14 billion USD in the energy sector of Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan and Russia are doing cooperation in the Afghan Peace Process as constant engagements between Pakistan and Russia are evident in this case. It is natural that Pakistan is developing its ties with Russia as India has developed strategic partnership with the US and in fact joined the US camp to counter China in the region. Russia is a resurgent power on the global stage which has an

¹³² “Pak-Russia growing relationship,” *The News International*, August 18, 2020, accessed on January 1, 2021. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/702237-pak-russia-growing-relationship>

important role to play for the peace and stability in the region. Having common interest in Afghanistan and the cooperation on the issue is a narrow convergence between Pakistan and Russia, but it will result in more strong ties between these two countries.

Moreover, it is understandable that the formation of new structures has significant impact on the already present structures. And the formation of the new structure has security connotations too then it becomes more concerning for the other structures and also for individual states in the region as it has been explained by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver in their Regional Security Complex Theory. The new strategic alliance between the US and India in the region will have significant impact on the regional security, political and economic environment. Pakistan is among the key actors in the region and it is also immediate neighbor of India, therefore, there are implications for Pakistan.

The alliance between India and the US has turned into a linear yet asymmetric equation. India-US are at one side of the equation whereas Pakistan is at the other side. This equation has created a loss for both Pakistan and the US, as they both lose allies in shape of each other. One important thing to mention is that as a result of Indo-US alliance, Pakistan has to deal with a number of defense and military issues. The US is committed to provide lots of benefits to India under many bilateral agreements which will create implications for Pakistan specifically regarding to the Indo-US defense deals. To mitigate the challenges emerging from Indo-US strategic alliance in the IOR, it is in the Pakistan's interests to develop and strengthen relations with Russia as it can be an alternative to the US defense technology.

Conclusion

The convergence of American and Indian strategic interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has significant impact on the geopolitics of Indian Ocean. Pakistan, being a key actor in the region and an enemy state of India, is facing implications from the strategic alliance of India and the US in the region. Due to the economic, strategic and political implications from the US-India strategic alliance, Pakistan is further strengthening its ties with China, developing ties with Russia and also looking for other alternative options to meet its foreign policy objectives.

Conclusion, Findings and Recommendations for Pakistan

The Indian Ocean is more important today than ever before. This includes international trade, especially energy. Its littoral is extensive, densely populated, and one of the fastest growing regions in the world. The Indian Ocean is also an important source of mineral resources and fishing. And yet its order and security is under constant threat, whether from non-state actors such as smugglers, pirates, and terrorists, or through fierce maritime competition between states.

Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, Iran, KSA, Malaysia, Maldives are the significant regional actors of the IOR. There are extra regional actors also involved in the IOR for the sake of their own interests. The US is an extra-regional actor in the IOR and has been dominant since 1950s. During Cold War, the Indo-US relations did not see much progress due to Indian inclination towards Soviet Union. In the post-cold war era, Indo-US ties witnessed significant progress and the relations between them have turned into a strategic alliance in the region. The undeniable strategic importance of the sea routes and choke points of Indian Ocean and China's factor played decisive role for the convergence of Indian and American Interests in the region.

After the 9/11 incident, world has witnessed so many changes, the US declared a war on terror and India offered US all its support in the war on terror. After this the US declared its strategic partnership with India in 2005, under the presidency of Bush. This started a new era of a partnership which never seen in history before. The Indo-US strategic partnership is covered a wide range of areas such as trade, economic, space, missile and nuclear technology, and defense cooperation. Both the countries are on the same page. The development in the defense cooperation agreement, "Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Region." In 2015, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the renewal of Defense Framework Agreement between both countries, and the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and BECA, these are all the key developments in the Indo-US strategic partnership. All these agreements are strengthening the Indo-US cordial ties.

China is also an extra regional actor, which has been involved in economic activities in

IOR. China has launched its MSRI in 2013, and the most of the important states in the IOR welcomed the Chinese initiative for the infrastructure development and economic connectivity. According to China these initiatives are mostly economic based but India has perceived them as a threat for its aim of dominance in the IOR. China has heavily invested in these economic projects, and in order to secure those investments China is increasing the military foot prints in the region. The rise of China has played a major role in the Indo-US convergence. Pakistani port Gwadar is the flagship project of Chinese BRI, this has strengthened the ties between China and Pakistan. Further China is involved in infrastructure development of Pakistan and also investing in the energy sector. This has strengthened the partnership between China and Pakistan.

The undertaken research being based on deductive reasoning has tested the RSCT by establishing a complex consisting on the US, India and Pakistan in an independent environment of IOR. The convergence of American and Indian strategic interests in the IOR is based on the nature of their mutual interests in the region, i.e. economic, political and security interests to be particular, which are perceived to cause implications for Pakistan. In the IOR, Pakistan is a significant actor and has also developed strong partnership with China; while China is being perceived as a common and significant threat in the power corridors of India and the US.

India is an arch rival of Pakistan and the US support to India is increasing the imbalance of power between Pakistan and India in the region. Due to changing US foreign policy preferences in South Asia, Pakistan, which has once been non-NATO ally of the US in War on Terror, has now inclined toward multilateralism. Pakistan has significantly shifted its focus from establishing traditional alliances and has started looking into other options like strengthening its ties with China, deepening its relations with Turkey which has overtly shown its re-assertive policy toward Middle East, and last but not the least is re-defining of its relations with Russia.

Findings

- Indian Ocean has emerged as hub of global politics in 21st century due to its strategically important trade routes, choke points and resources. Regional as well

as extra-regional actors are actively engaged in the Indian Ocean Region to preserve their own interests.

- The US perceives China as a challenger to its global power status, therefore it is establishing and strengthening ties with countries in the region to contain China.
- India is major regional actor in the IOR which aspires to be hegemon in the region, it also considers Chinese rise in the region as detrimental threat to its ambitions in the region. India has opted for alliance with the USA as a strategy to counter China.
- Pakistan is a significant actor in the IOR due to its geographical location, and has developed strong economic partnership with China which is being interpreted by the US and India as strategic partnership. Due to this perception, Pakistan is facing implications mainly from the Indo-US strategic partnership in the region in economic, political and strategic domains.
- To mitigate the challenges emerging from the convergence of American and Indian interests in the IOR, Pakistan is further strengthening relations with regional countries especially with China, developing ties with Russia and also improving its military capabilities to keep the balance of power with India.

Recommendations for Pakistan

The US has established close ties with India in the IOR, which has several implications for Pakistan. Therefore, in order to cope with these challenges, Pakistan should take steps to ensure its national interests are being taken care in every possible way.

Pakistan does not possess a strong economy, and the challenges and Indian efforts to isolate Pakistan on international front are further tensing the situation. Pakistan should make policies where a good portion of the budget should go for the betterment and development of the poor people of Pakistan.

The marine and coastal resources have an important share in Pakistan's economy, these are also playing the role of strategic gateways of the country. Key urban and industrial centers and three working seaports are the center for the economic activities and development and have become a great potential for emerging economic opportunities

such as CPEC. Although cooperation with China is being criticized to a large extent from India and the US, However relations between Pakistan and China are based on positive economic cooperation. Pakistan should focus on keeping cordial relations with China without compromising on its own national interest. CPEC is a flagship project of the Chinese BRI in IOR, which is not only creating economic opportunities for Pakistan but developing the infrastructure also.

Huge fish stocks, and mangroves are the main living resources which can be used to boost Pakistan economy to a large extent. Pakistan needs to make wise policies to use these resources in a way which can create the employment for people who are living under poverty line. But the issues like overfishing, mangroves deforestation, dredging, land reclamation, and pollution from disposal of solid waste and sewage are creating the alarming situation, they are harming the sea life. It is essential to take measures to deal with this issue to save these ocean-based assets.

The Indo-US strategic partnership is posing multiple security challenges for the Pakistan on regional level. Pakistan should formulate a well-planned military and diplomatic response against these developments. The military response from Pakistan should be defensive, disproportionate and aimed at preventing and retreating a conventional attack from India, and nuclear deterrence reliability should be maintained. Along with the army and air defense Pakistan should also focus on strengthening the maritime security. Although, it would be difficult for Pakistan to buy the expensive aircraft carriers; so its maritime defense will be dependent on the submarines, huge number of fast missile boats, and anti- submarine warfare proficiencies. Pakistan needs to maintain a credible nuclear deterrence and should continue to expand its capabilities of short, medium and long-range missile. Finally, the deployment of nuclear submarine-based missiles offers the second most reliable strike option.

There are implications on political front also, although Pakistan always supported the peace keeping movements. And always prefer to talk instead of war. But the Kashmir dispute has remained the center of disputed relations between India and Pakistan, so Pakistan should never stop raising voice against the suppression of Kashmir. The

diplomacy of Pakistan should be visionary and dynamic.

Furthermore, the developing ties with Russia are also very important. Russia is also an emerging actor on the path of re-assertiveness, and maintaining good relation with Russia would be in favor of Pakistan. Since Russian has established naval base in Sudan and soon would be taking foothold in Red Sea and then Indian Ocean, it has potential to play role in maritime power politics. Russia has the world's best weapon systems, the S300 anti-ballistic missile and the SU-31 fighter-bomber are considered best in world. Pakistan should keep trying to increase the diplomatic and military cooperation with this country and other countries in IOR to strengthen its position and gain support at global level.

Pakistan has always given the peace gestures and desired for regional stability. Pakistan has shown its intentions by participating in different international peace keeping missions, Combined Task Forces 150 and 151, various indigenous initiatives and multilateral exercises like Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and AMAN exercises. AMAN series of multi-national naval exercises were initiated by Pakistan Navy in 2007. The aim of this exercise was to enhance naval cooperation, promote regional stability and strengthen interoperability with regional navies. It also aims to strengthen mutual understanding and areas of common interests. The significance of AMAN exercises grew with the participation of major naval powers. It is one of the most important initiatives taken by Pakistan Navy in combating threats at sea. Pakistan should further enhance cooperative military and naval measures to strengthen its naval capability and worth in IOR.

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Annexure 01

Questionnaire:

1. What are Indian and American strategic interests in Indian Ocean Region?
2. What are the drivers for India and the United States behind their convergence of interest in Indian Ocean Region?
3. How do you see Indo-US strategic partnership in terms of impact on the regional peace and balance of power in Indian Ocean Region vis-à-vis other states with contrary interests?
4. As China has emerged as a Challenger to the status quo, main factor of Indo-US strategic partnership is seemingly containment of China, so what kind of implications Pakistan can face due to its relations with China in the Region particularly since initiation of CPEC?
5. After conducting a successful first-ever Quad summit in November 2020, how do you see the future of Indo-US strategic partnership in the wake of the US naval operation into India’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for freedom of navigation (FONOP) without seeking prior approval from India;?

Annexure 02

Interview with Stephen R. Nagy.

Q1: What are Indian and American strategic interests in Indian Ocean region?

Answer: There are converging and diverging interests. Each country is looking at their indo pacific vision. The Americans under Mr trump had something called indo pacific strategy and I think they have primarily securitized view in Indian ocean particularly china in mind and thinking about sea lanes of communication and china's presence in ports in around Indian, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Gwadar and Djibouti. So I think from the American point of view this is potentially place is where the Chinese can put the naval power and eject naval power from those particular positions. In my point of view this is not that much useful for Chinese but it is more import export hubs about Malacca dilemma , this is how American can primarily understood the importance of the Indian ocean region and ensuring that they attain a dominant position in IOR.

From Indian point of view they have free and open inclusive indo pacific vision and they really focuses on try to maintain an inclusive relationship with china. They would like to increase the US presence in other partners in the region to ensure that Indian Ocean remains primarily under India's influence, I think they are concerned about the growing Chinese influence in particular Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh Nepal. And as a result their primarily interest is in Indian Ocean whereas American interest is much more, they are thinking about global competition. That is changed with the coincidence last year actually on this day and I think Indians are fundamentally changed the position to see the growing challenge from China and as a result they are becoming increasingly willing to support some shared initiatives with united states and other partners like Japan and Australia through the QUAD arrangement, and this is for public's good and not for so much security. So the acceleration of the distribution of vaccine, infrastructure

connectivity, digital economy, enhancing trade relationships, all of this primarily strengthening relationship from both point of view.

Q2: What are the drivers for India and the United States behind their convergence of interest in Indian Ocean Region?

Answer: The United States has been engaged trying to court India for at least 20 years, under the bush administration that his decision to export nuclear technology to India, to open up the door to accept India as a nuclear power and that effort was part of the broader strategy for understanding the importance of India in balancing China as in its role for more powerful. This was enhanced under president Obama as he tried to strengthen relation in the region, Trump of course and PM Modi shared a good relationship, I think there is India first and America's first agenda aligned clearly and I think Mr Bidden will continue to try to strengthen the relationship with India so from American stance this is part of long-term balance of power game they are thinking about from decades.

On the Indian side according to me really, they try to avoid take part between China and United States, India is primarily focused on economic development, and they look to fight the security challenges from China and Pakistan. China from the other point regarding its territorial disputes with India which they are having over inland plateau, or Pakistan over Kashmir and the long standing disagreements about many issues, all those were Pakistan's equation; and those were not real driving force behind India having growing strong alliance with the United States and its other partner, primarily China. Due to unstable economy, Pakistan will be least economically much less significant for India. So Pakistan doesn't represent that excess attention issue that china may. In my view Indian are doing that they can avoid being squeezed between China and America but recent Chinese behavior made that much more difficult not to retain the position of centrality but I think that the Indians are no way going to form an alliance with the Americans, I think they be like the Chinese that tilt to the United States but not forming any alliance or any military commitment with united states. Because primarily Indians are domestically focused and they focus on development and I think post pandemic they are going to be more fragile society that is going to have to deal with the domestic issue,

and they see united states as a partner to help them but India's global ambitions are mostly talks only and not reality.

Q3: How do you see Indo-US strategic partnership in terms of impact on the regional peace and balance of power in Indian Ocean Region vis-à-vis other states with contrary interests?

Answer: In October 2020 the QUAD ministers met in Tokyo and they had some alignment but in reality there was not much alignment because the administration in United States may compare on Mr Trump and their ideological and their anti-Chinese, and this is not something Indians and Japanese really want. But with the bidden administration is really systematic and their diplomacy and their engagement, and we have saw that summit with the QUAD leaders and they have very strong take away. Acceleration of vaccination, infrastructure connectivity and other productive projects. At the G7 next month going to have QUAD meeting on the sidelines of the G7 because India and Australia and South Korea also have been invited to the G7 meeting. so this would be the first time with all the QUAD country leaders will come together and it is about more public good they can provide to the indo pacific and less about security they can provide to the indo pacific so I think the focus is going to be infrastructure connectivity open digital system and E governance probably health infrastructures, and they all will focus on maritime law and free and open sea lines of communication. that meeting will primarily result in revolve around what kinds of public goods these four countries working with other countries can provide to the region so in that sense its quite positive and even for Pakistan, as I don't think they want exclude Pakistan, at least the Japanese the Australian the united states don't want to exclude Pakistan, about India I don't think they will be interested to exclude Pakistan, and they can provide goods to Pakistan which is a good thing. So this convergence is going to be critical about more and more traditional public goods and countries in south Asia in particular and more choices they can do in terms of infrastructure connectivity.

Q4: As China has emerged as a Challenger to the status quo, main factor of Indo-US strategic partnership is seemingly containment of China, so what kind of

implications Pakistan can face due to its relations with China in the Region particularly since initiation of CPEC?

Answer: As per my discussions with few Chinese friends the world is going against china due to some real and fake reasons. So it is going to make some implications for countries which are trying to maintain ties with china, like Pakistan. So Pakistan need to make a calculation about how to balance the relationship with china and somehow improved relations with India and other countries. I think it will be difficult, the current PM of Pakistan Mr. Khan is modern respected and well liked overseas, but I don't how is he about managing the internal balance of power in Pakistan with military and religious groups and kind of the modern liberal Pakistanis right?

And if he is a sustainable leader I think I can remember in the past ten years at least four or five governments, right? So they are almost competing with the Japanese. So without any steady leadership it is difficult to start to create a visions and build trust with other countries so in my sense he is someone you can talk to and someone that is less beholdng to some traditional stake holders in Pakistan in political context for example Musharaf and others he is very difficult for them. So they can get more benefit from Pakistan with more investment in Pakistan more comparative competition but they have to improve the governance and support the some of the initiatives that America and other countries are trying to start to strengthen the region.

Question 5: After conducting a successful first-ever Quad summit in November 2020, how do you see the future of Indo-US strategic partnership in the wake of the US naval operation into India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for freedom of navigation (FONOP) without seeking prior approval from India;?

Answer: It is no any kind of threat for India and I don't see India see it as a threat about US. United States and India are good partner they are getting engaged in new projects. So this incident is not going to be a game breaker for them.

Annexure 03

Interview with Manoj Kewalramani

Q 1: What are Indian and American strategic interests in Indian Ocean Region?

Answer: There are four ways in which their interest can be classified. There are economic interest, political interest, and humanitarian and disaster relief interest, strategic interest. There are difference in each of these between India and US. So from economic interest point of view the US would like free flow of trade to take place. The US would like to ensure that energy supplies that flow through the indo pacific region, continue trade that flows through the region continues without being interrupted, it would like to ensure freedom of navigation. These are kind of things from economic point of view. From Indian economic point of view increasingly we are looking for trade, as from last two three decades trade has become much more important and a lot of our trade has been happening through the ocean because we are a peninsula country. So trade security is again important. So economic sort of comes too that point of view. I spoke about security with regards to sea lanes, India has very similar sort of concerns regard to sea lanes being open. But it also has security concerns with regards to piracy, non-state actors, being able to use the coast to be able to sort any stress it will have tension with regards to if there is potential for undersea resources those kinds of things are under the common interest , from Indian point of view those are all economic interest . from HADR point of view it connects with the security and economic where after the tsunami there was a lesson learnt particularly with regard to that the climate change have the potential to raise sea levels , it has more humanitarian and economic consequences. So there is interest in working on that. Strategically we see then US wants to maintain its preponderance in the region where as Indian interest is not necessarily to maintain America's preponderance, India

interest is to be able to develop its capacity to be able to perform the role of net security provider in the region. And to be able to be in the position that it can guide rule formation in the region. So that the sort of primary those are all interest and there are also some divergences there. India wants to maintain its security and ability to frame rules in the region.

Q 2: How do you see Indo-US strategic partnership in terms of impact on the regional peace and balance of power in Indian Ocean Region vis-à-vis other states with contrary interests?

Answer: In many ways I think interest there is a compliment territory, because India and China's interest in the IOR and even India and Pakistan's interest. I am certain that India and China and Pakistan all don't want piracy and certain they all want trade to flow without any interruption. And I am certain that all want to ensure security of their shores and their assets. The challenge is that with regard to the role of the non-state actors and role of in conflicts what you do, the challenge in regard to strategic sort suspicions of each other's with regard to what we do in the IOR if there is conflict in the border with each other. So those are the kind of things and challenges which are going to exist but if you see broadly in these domains that is a strong commonality of interests to come up with a common set of rules with each side to work together can actually to come up on a broad range of issues. Yet there will be certain suspicions because of our inherent problems which are territorial and political. How does US fitted to all of this, US has and will continue to remain the biggest power in the region. Nobody has the capacity to match American military might in the IOR. The US however needs more allies and partners to work within the region to be able to project power in the oceans. And that has become the much more pressing interest for the US with china's rise and china projecting far greater power in the Indian Ocean region. So in that sense the balance of power shifting has begun with the china's rise and Chinese increased focus on the Indian Ocean region. how the US and India's relationship will impact that balance of power in some ways it creates, this is not a military partnership, right now it is a defense partnership with regard to working together on largely military drills with regards to humanitarian disaster

and relief, anti-piracy, non-state actors and combating those sort of things, and that is what it is right now we are not conducting warfare drills and I don't think you will see that being done any time in near future. Most of the drills are improving operational flexibility and operational ability between the different sites. So that is largely where the balance of power is and I think that is important to keep in mind that right now this is the balance of power. China's increasing role is shifting the balance of power and I think both these sides along the others is prime to figure out how do you compete in certain areas and how do you accommodate in certain areas. As I said there are commonality of interest. In terms of competing in certain areas the US seeing the potential for who provide security in the region or who has the increased military capability in the Indian Ocean. In that sense there is a shifting balance of power where the US and India together and obviously have far greater military capabilities in the IOR, actually at present India is known in IOR is far stronger than china because the china's supply lines are so stretched, but as china builds navy basis in the region if not hard basis soft basis that will change. So I think we need to look how china is behaving to understand how balance of power is changing. Because if China was not doing what it is doing you would not see this degree of cooperation between US and India specifically with regards to rules and military capacity.

Containment of China is not possible, how you can stop china from operating in the region. We want trade with china. So idea of containment is not feasible and it is not even doable not even desirable. What is desirable is to make sure that china does not act aggressively in the region to undermine others interest. As per Chinese activities in South China Sea it seems like it is willing to use force to achieve its objectives and that is something that needs to be kept in mind. So when china operating in the IOR for anti-piracy then exactly India and us wants china to do more. Even if there is economic resource related something of course India opens the negotiation. There is actually no issue with that, Indian Ocean is not India's ocean but you need to have rules how you access those doable commons.

And the idea is to create the set of rules where we want to involve china to work together but the fear is because china's expansion has come with military expansion and that military expansion has been as seen china using force far more willingly then if you will

do such things then the other side will think making about buffer so in many ways what is happening you did not see India and us collaborating in indo pacific region in last ten years but china's behavior and capacity has changed in last ten years so they are collaborating now. So this is like a counter reaction if that china was not acting aggressively then you will not see counter reaction so in many ways it depends on China's behavior

Q 3: As China has emerged as a Challenger to the status quo, main factor of Indo-US strategic partnership is seemingly containment of China, so what kind of implications Pakistan can face due to its relations with China in the Region particularly since initiation of CPEC?

Answer: In my views I don't think that Indian, American and Pakistani interests in IOR are fundamentally diverging. Pakistan is an important actor in IOR it will continue to remain an important actor in region. The challenge will come in this context with regard to Pakistan's relationship with China. If you are going to see Chinese basing in Gwader or Giwani then you are likely to see much more friction between even US and Pakistan, because US will not be appreciating something like that, so it depends again on how Pakistan engages with China. The Chinese are helping Pakistan develop its naval capacity which is fine. That is not an issue from my point of view at least. The issue comes when you see Chinese basing happening in the region, or when you see Chinese warships coming in the region whether it's in Gwader, Giwani or Karachi. And whether you see such safe facilities being provided to them then you will see challenges between US, India and Pakistan in IOR. At present honestly India Pakistan relations are in so continental focused and water have not played a huge role. In the last few years, you have seen something's happen and those are also been friction related because Pakistan has suspicions with regard to Indian naval development and India has suspicion regards to Pakistani naval developments. At present India's coast is so large and it is not a case that it is any primary threat perception. Our primary threat from Pakistan is on the border and Pakistan's threat India is on the land border. So it depends on how Pakistani navy develop and what role China has in this development and also what basing facilities soft or hard Pakistan provides China, those will determine the role. Lastly obviously the most

important thing is whether you see non state actors using the seas and how what they do, that will then create tensions but until that point of time, I don't think this is a massive issue for India and Pakistan right now. Or even between the American and Pakistanis until it depends on how the Pakistan deals with China.

Q4: After conducting a successful first-ever Quad summit in November 2020, how do you see the future of Indo-US strategic partnership in the wake of the US naval operation into India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for freedom of navigation (FONOP) without seeking prior approval from India?

Answer: Under Indian law US should have taken permission. I don't see it as a threat. US interest in region is very different. It would be very different if it was an activity from Pakistan or China that would have been seen direct challenge to sovereignty. But in American case of course it is sovereign jurisdiction under Indian law and that is problematic. But it is not any kind of threat for India. All the thing is that US should have taken permission as it is not acceptable for India but there is no any direct threat with the America.

Q5: What are the drivers for India and the United States behind their convergence of interest in Indian Ocean Region?

Answer: Indian drivers are very straight forward as the IOR is much more important to both of us in terms of our economic future or security and obviously strategic engagement with regards with the rules accumulation in the region. A bulk of the world's trade passes through this region, energy supply pass through this region. It is extremely important in that sense and from Indian point of view it is, because our periphery so of course we are much more in interest. From American point of view it is a place where you see yourself ruling in future but China wants to break through the islands chain and Malacca dilemma to be much more active and as those sort of changes happen due to the strategic dimension shift, so it is significant for both sides in the region. Yet there is a difference in what we want to achieve and what Americans want to achieve. What Indians want to achieve is security and to be able to frame rules in the region without entering any sort of great power competition. We want to secure economic security physical security and we want to ensure sovereignty along with partners. From American

point of view this is partly to do with their economic and military sort of prosperity going forward and trade prosperity, also to do with strategic competition with china. So there are different drivers for each side. There are point set which they each set and that's where we are being able to work together.

Annexure 04

Interview with Fredrick Kleim

I think India is pretty clear it is a country which naturally connects its border with the ocean and it has precisely strategic interest in the region, so of course its first interest is territorial and integrity, and United States I would presume only has secondary interest in strategic interest in Indian Ocean. But in the region China is the problem. India got problem with the rise of China.

From Indian perspective it is actually quite troublesome, their strategic interest are based on the national security conciliations and particularly the BJP government and jay shanka foreign ministry. You can see that they are thinking very much like international relations realists. So they perceive their strategic interest very much in terms of national security and territorial integrity. So what is happening here as Indian policy maker, you look at the rise of China and you can immediately feel sandwiched on land as Chinese military from north and Chinese navy in south. So it improves the economic cooperation potential for smaller states in IOR. Another example is anti-piracy mission, it is a mission of every state and this is not because we want to fight pirates but it is because u get your military exposure, save your navy and ships, and you can cooperate with other states, fighting pirates is in interest of every state. China can say that we are fighting pirates in the Indian Ocean and how can we possibly have issues with that, so it is kind of tricky. And this is something India feels very strong about. From Indian policy factor you can better understand that when they are sandwiched by their potential rivals from north and south. So recently we are talking about last six months or so for the first time the military

forces of Indian army are stronger on the Chinese side than they are on the Pakistani side. So from Indian public opinion polls we can find that China is now a threat for India on the same level as Pakistan. So from United States perspective China is a problem and whoever can help them with China is their friend.

In case of Pakistan, from Indian perspective it has become very much a subset of India China relationship. If you consider that Pakistan has been number one security issue for India, from Indian perspective, from day one even before partition. And now this issue of Pakistan has, from the Indian perspective become subset of China India relations because for the way Indians look at how China interacts with Pakistan is actually.

Basically, the notion here is China cooperates with Pakistan and invests only so that they can get some advantage against India. This is how very much Indians look at it. So United States associates China problem with Pakistan but it's slightly different. From the American perspective, China is of course the number one competitor in the whole Indo Pacific region. And Indian Ocean is actually secondary they are much more concerned about the western Pacific. Indian Ocean has now become slowly but surely because of India, become more important. So now they have this concept of Indo Pacific has emerged and this really important to India. Which also creates some problems for Pakistan. But the main strategic interest of US is containment of China, and whoever can help them against China is their friend. My personal opinion is that India is not a democracy anyway but that's secondary. They always say that India is a democracy and that's why we are friends.

Japan India relationship are going strengths to strengths, Japan and India have the strongest bilateral relationship ever had. And the reason is China as their common enemy. The problem for Pakistan is really is that it is bit of part of the game now. For US Pakistan has always been not necessarily a big problem and not a trust worthy state, so relations are bit tricky. For India it is quite a convenient situation. India is actually in a very good situation strategically. Because they can tell the American look you need us. India needs the Americans too, It's a two way of relationship. So the problem with Pakistan will inevitably become secondary subset of broader problem that exists with China. So Pakistan is in relative weak position I would say. Terrorism has been main problem for US always and US always say that Pakistan is a home for terrorists and we

need to keep Pakistan in check, this is where all the Islamic terrorism originates. They don't say it anymore because they don't need to anymore. Because now they say look china and Pakistan are good friends which automatically make Pakistan avoid any benefit. You don't need to come up with this idea of terrorism, because it no longer looks relevant.

The main problem is that Pakistan doesn't have many options, Pakistan never Make many friends with great power. The international community assumes Pakistan as an ally of China and a dependent on China, this will become a problem for Pakistan in future. So, what Pakistan really needs to do is what India use to do during the cold war. Pakistan needs to show its nonalignment. And at the same time, they must make sure that they do not get too comfortable with China, that's really the problem. And by understanding the strategic perspective I can tell you that it would be a big mistake to get too comfortable with China, I understand that you need money but it would be strategically a big problem because eventually (we are talking here about ten to 15 years maximum) this strategic situation is going to come to an end. This is something Pakistan is not thinking to do but eventually it would have to do this. From my strategic understanding on the regional would be quite smart to position itself as a nonaligned power. Which may cause some problems in the short term with China but I think it worth it. So, they should study how the south East Asian countries has trying to play this game. I think they have done it relatively well. So the problem here with Pakistan is rather its severe relationship with India and US. That's off course is bit of a problem. That's the only option really, I can see. The problem is that I can really not count on actual real economic benefits of the economic corridor. I am not too sure about that. When that worth to trouble or not. That's something I need to argue with other people there.

India is going to remain the partner of US for a very long time, if you look at it from American perspective, Americans does not care about Pakistan, they care all is China. Whoever can help them manage their China problem will be their friend. The Americans relationship with India is always the priority for any American government simply because of China and that is something Pakistan need to accept.

The strategic relationship between US and India is part of what would be called a military alignment, security all we getting here in this region. QUAD is really getting

stronger day by day. And this is not going to change the fact and this is trajectory that is only going on. It makes perfect sense that all four countries of the QUAD and the most relevant major powers, they all have exactly the same goals which is china. So, in foresee future I would predict that Indian Ocean is still remain less important than the western pacific that's probably in the case. The western pacific is really going to be the strategic focus of the QUAD but because of India the Indian Ocean is going to be highly agenda, and now it is going to be a QUAD issue so you will see that the more of the Malabar exercises would be taking place more in Indian Ocean. Because India wants something so other QUAD countries want India to help them in that strategic balance against China and India wants something in return. And you can see that this course has been moved to Asia pacific from the indo pacific and this puts India right in the center of the strategic discourse.in the strategic development I would predict that coming next 10 to 15 years the Indian Ocean will remain the less important than the western pacific. I could foresee the greater convergence among the QUAD countries about trying to keep the Chinese out of the Indian ocean so the idea here we see they want to prevent the Indian Ocean from the becoming the next South China Sea. It's not that this is eminent, this not matter of fact that Indian ocean suddenly becoming South China Sea. People have to learn from the past experiences. Obama has been active and over the whole Obama turn the artificial island and militarization has really accelerated. They are now realizing that Indian Ocean may become next big thing for China. So, India would do anything to get the QUAD committed to keep the Indian Ocean free and open. In the short hand to keep the Indian Ocean free from China

