

EVOLVING SECURITY COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

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Dedication

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Abbreviations

BMD.....	Ballistic Missile Defence
BRI.....	Belt and Road Initiative
CPEC.....	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
EIA.....	Energy Information Administration
IEA.....	International Energy Agency
IOR.....	Indian Ocean Region
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
LNG.....	Liquefied Natural Gas
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBOR.....	One Belt, One Road
PLA	People Liberation Army
QUAD/QSD.....	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
RAN.....	The Royal Australian Navy
VLS.....	Vertical Launch System
WWII.....	World War Two

ABSTRACT

This study examines the status of evolving security order in the Indian Ocean Region and its ramification for Pakistan, which has its geostrategic, politically essential, and critical role in the Indian Ocean region. This study uses the realist approach and theory of offensive realism under the evolving security competition in the Indian Ocean region. This study finds out China is expanding into the Indian Ocean region, and the US, with the help of India and other regional countries, is trying to counter China. Due to Chinese economic growth, China is spending a significant amount on military modernizing and extending its influence in the Indian Ocean region through Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, China is also developing bases in the Indian Ocean. Eventually, it can change the status quo in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the US and India are also coming together to contain China. Pakistan can also face a negative impact. US support is increasing its position of power and control in the Indian Ocean and deploying naval forces around the region, establishing favorable relations with the countries in the Indian Ocean region. It can have negative repercussions for Pakistan.

Introduction

The Indian Ocean in terms of size is the third largest Ocean in the world. Like the Pacific and Atlantic, it is a warm body of water. On three sides, the Indian Ocean is bounded by the continents of Australia, Asia, and Africa. On the fourth edge, is the Arctic Ocean? India is separated from China and the more critical section of continental Asia to the north by the enormous Himalayan Mountain range. The lengthy East African coastline shields it from the west. Malaysia and Indonesia act as guardians to the east. East and west have access to the Strait of Malacca and the narrow waterways of Yemen and the Horn of Africa, respectively. Sri Lanka is like a colossal airplane carrier floating amid the IOR.

According to Alfred Thayer in his book 'The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783, about the power of the sea, governments with superior naval forces can exert more control over a wider geographic region. From Vasco da Gama's 1498 journey through the end of the Second World War, the British Navy held sway over the Indian Ocean. Given its maritime position, America continued to utilize the Navy to advance its national security goals throughout the Cold War.

The French and British struggled to control this Ocean in the 18th century. After Controlled the Indian Ocean Region gave the British a naval edge against the French, which ultimately prevented Napoleon's plans to invade India from coming to fruition. The British Empire had a firm grip over the whole Indian Ocean region. British military stations in these areas helped to stop further eastward expansion by Japanese troops during World War II. Having already occupied Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia, the Japanese would have been able to push on to India and even North Africa if the British navy base at Colombo, Sri Lanka, had not been there to stop them.

Because of these factors, the Indian Ocean became ground zero in the Cold War conflict between the USA and USSR after the Second World War. Even now, the USA, China, and Regional and Extra regional Countries compete for control of the IOR due to its strategic significance of the IOR. The IOR was once known as the British Lake. The British maintained nearly unchallengeable control over Singapore because of its strategically placed naval ports at Suez, Aden, and Colombo. The British famously defended the canal from attack by the Ottoman

Empire in 1915 during World War 1. This rivalry between the superpowers persisted until the USSR disintegrated into many fragments.

The Indian Ocean is a Sea of strategic significance because of its location and characteristics. Two crucial waterways in the Western Indian Ocean meet near Pakistan. The Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandeb. This area is strategically located on major international commerce routes. This Ocean is called the Indian Ocean because of its proximity to India. According to Henry L. Stimson (1867-1950) in his book, *Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security and Policy Challenges*, The Indian Ocean occupies roughly 20% of all ocean space. It is the third biggest Ocean, encompassing over 14 percent of the planet. Mozambique Channel, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea, Strait of Malacca, and Laccadive Sea are only some of the marginal waters that border the vast Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean is significant, it is strategically located between the world's two economic powerhouses, the North Atlantic and the Asia-Pacific regions. In this day and age, when global trade has expanded, this is more important than ever. About 90,000 ships make up the world's commercial navy, and they transport 9.84 billion tons annually. One notable effect is the transmission of power from the Indian Ocean. The entrance routes into the Indian Ocean, which include the Straits of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, and Bab al-Mandeb, According to a report submitted by the Petroleum Division to the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), out of the oil reserves of 1,234 million barrels, Pakistan has consumed 985 million barrels, which constitutes 79.8% of the total. Almost 36 million barrels of oil per day, or roughly 40% of the world's oil supply, and 63% of the oil commerce. Compared to oil, Pakistan has been a major producer of gas to meet domestic needs. The country was self-sufficient in the past, according to a report by the Petroleum Division, Pakistan has so far tapped 66.6 percent of its total gas reserves, leaving 33.4 percent untapped reserves.

China and Pakistan have had nothing but friendly ties. They established diplomatic ties in 1951 despite having different histories, governmental systems, and ideologies. After achieving independence, Pakistan continued to participate in anti-American security alliances. In 1954, Pakistan joined the US-led Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and in 1955, it joined the USA-led Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). In 1959, it also entered into a mutual defense

pact with the United States. Contrarily, China supported the communist bloc headed by the Soviet Union. As a result of these divergent approaches, the two nations' relationship continued to flourish. As a result of its proximity to vital shipping lanes, the Indian Ocean has maintained its prominence throughout history.

Several ancient cultures established permanent bases in this region, including the Egyptians, the Sumerians, and the Indians of the Indus Valley. The enormous Ocean extends from West Africa to East Asia and south to the deep Southern Ocean. From the southern tip of Africa to the easternmost tip of Australia, the Ocean extends to the Red Sea, the South China Sea, and the Australian continent. The Indian Ocean has historically served as a hub for commerce and security among nearby and faraway nations. It has been a critical factor.

The Indian Ocean is surrounded by South Asia, and the Middle East, towards the north. The eastern islands of Indonesia and Australia have likewise fallen to the Indian Ocean. It merges into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of southern Africa and the Pacific Ocean in the east and southeast. Pakistan, India, and Iran have coastlines that meet the Arabian Sea. In addition to the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman, the Andaman Sea, the Red Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the Sea of Oman, the Laccadive Sea, the Mozambique Channel, the Persian Gulf, and the Timor Sea are all considered parts of the Indian Ocean. Choke Point is the geographical name for the intersection of two major shipping channels.

Some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world are located at Maritime Choke Points or Oil Choke Points. The Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, and Bab-ul-Mandeb are three of the most vital chokepoints globally, and they are all located in the Indian Ocean. These narrow straits are an essential marine route connecting the Middle East South Asia and Africa to East Asia and Europe. Large quantities of petroleum are transported via the Indian Ocean from the oil resources in the Persian Gulf and Indonesia.

New geostrategic importance for the Indian Ocean in business, trade, and energy is growing. It is important for reasons of economy, defense, and politics. Seventy-six percent of the crude oil and condensate that passed through the Strait of Hormuz in 2018 was headed for Asia,

according to the EIA. The largest consumers of crude oil sent across the Strait of Hormuz are China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Hormuz crude oil and condensate flows in Asia reached 65% in 2018. All of the world's oil shipped across the Indian Ocean's confined waterways. In recent years, the Indian Ocean Area has been a focal point for regional and international business shifts, disputes, and power conflicts. Every major nation aspires to prove its superiority over the Ocean and subjugate it to its will.

The safety of the Indian Ocean Region is of paramount importance to all nations in the world, both within the region and outside it. It is an ocean where almost every nation has some stake. Pakistan is an essential geopolitical player in the Middle East. This Ocean serves as the primary conduit for international commerce. The Russia has long sought land routes to this area Russians are trying to get a foothold in areas controlling the Red Sea, the vital international waterway leading from Indian Ocean to Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. China is now actively seeking equivalents. Due to its diversity, the Indian Ocean region needs a Peace. In this region (IOR) Pakistan, China, Indian have become significant powers, and new national alliances (QUAD, IORA, CPEC, and BRI) are changing the scene. But current global realities have introduced maritime security problems that are influencing security in the region directly and fundamentally. The security doctrine in China (to control the IOR) helps the country's economic progress. The importance of interdisciplinary work and novel approach to security analysis. Pakistan Navy Maritime security, comprising domain security and other associated actives, is focused on protecting the regional SLOC and Pakistan's maritime connection with the rest of the globe. The restoration of law and order and safeguarding national sovereignty in the marine economy are all critical goals.

China's presence in the IOR and Indian efforts to counteract its influence in the area. Since Gwadar is the key to connecting Central Asian nations and boosts ties between Pakistan and China, it is quickly becoming a regional commerce center. The port connects China and Central Asian nations to the Indian Ocean; hence it is strategically vital. Much of the oil sent to China, South Korea, and Japan comes from the Middle East and Africa, entering the Indian Ocean. When taken as a whole, these developments establish the Indian Ocean as the world's financial and geopolitical nerve center.

Almost 80% of the oil from the Middle East to China flows via the Strait of Malacca and Hormuz, two of the most well-known straits in the Indian Ocean. Thanks to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China can now reach the Indian Ocean by land. China's closest ally is Pakistan. The relationship between Pakistan and China has been described as "higher than mountains, deeper than oceans, stronger than steel, and sweeter than honey." Because both countries can maintain their control over this region with Pak-China friendship, their interests are the same. India-USA ally, possesses the Nicobar and the Andaman Islands near the mouth of these straits, which the Chinese may deploy to impede the passage or create other issues. Russia and China will not jeopardize their national interests. They will instead employ the processes of tact, communication, military, and economics to rule their massive technique in the Indian Ocean Region.

The Indian Ocean may once again become a battleground as the Great Game heats up; the sea may continue to be a valuable commodity, but more and more military hardware and military strategies will be deployed in this region as the great powers seek to protect not only their vital domains but also the commerce and trades that form the basis of this new round of conflict. Alliances like the Quad (the United States, India, Australia, and the United Kingdom) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) are crucial in the current situation in the Indian Ocean in opposition to Pakistan and China. Regarding the Indian Ocean, Pakistan and China are indispensable partners. They are fostering long-term expansion and equitable development in the Indian Ocean area. Community Australia, Bangladesh, French, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen are all part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association's streamed alliance and discussion in Athens.

The US has vital interests in the Indian Ocean. China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean has prompted the United States, India, Australia, and Japan to increase their military and economic cooperation. The Indian Ocean area is projected to be the world's fastest-growing geopolitical hub. Thus, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States have forged a new strategic relationship.

Competing with China, the United States sees access to the Indian Ocean as crucial. Because it helps the US military develop as well. While the Indian Ocean is vast, the South is important to the United States' efforts to expand its sphere of influence. Areas where the US hopes to use India against China. The Indian Ocean is synonymous with success. It will soon be known as "Wide Asia," a term that denotes its intention to transcend existing borders. Japan, the United States, and Australia advocated for cooperation with India to counteract the influence of the Sino-Pakistani alliance in the Indian Ocean around the turn of the millennium.

Problem Statement

Due to the geostrategic and geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean, regional and extra-regional countries want to dominate this region. In the past decades, China has grown economically, and according to estimates, China will take over the US economically. With it, China is also increasing its defense budget. China also started a belt and road initiative in which massive infrastructure projects in the different parts of the Indian Ocean region.

The USA also increased its influence in the Indian Ocean region to counter China. The Indian Ocean is vital to the USA interests. The United States, India, Australia, and Japan (QUAD) decided to expand their reach to the IOR. The USA also considers that the Chinese projects are not limited to the economic domain but have strategic implications. China is investing billions of dollars in Pakistan, including the construction of Gwadar port. These infrastructure projects are significant for Pakistan. The exacerbation of conflict between China and the USA can have repercussions on Pakistan's national security.

Significance of Research

This study's in-depth analysis of the changing security landscape in the Indian Ocean and its implications for Pakistan is crucial. The Thesis also examines the effect on Pakistan and the region as a whole, as well as the role of the powerful regional and extra-regional Countries in maintaining regional security. Offensive realism is being used in this investigation the growth of the Quad in the Indian Ocean Region is the subject of this research. China is becoming more involved in island

nations. Build Back Better (B3) and Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) Competitive Projects are also studied in this Thesis.

This study analyses the effects of the changing marine environment in the Indian Ocean on Pakistan. Additionally, the thesis analyses Pakistan's position in the numerous international security efforts in the Indian Ocean Region. It makes a case for China and other extra-regional actors to become involved in regional maritime security.

There has been a strategic rapprochement between India and the United States. India and the United States have signed multiple military agreements, with the latter allowing the former to acquire American submarine-fighting technologies. In India's eyes, the most significant cause for alarm is the country's rising global profile. Nevertheless, India's naval footprint in the Indian Ocean has grown. Along with Pakistan, China is ramping up its influence in the Indian Ocean.

The Pakistan Navy recognizes the strategic and economic value of the Arabian Sea and the rest of the Indian Ocean. The Pakistan Navy maintains solid relationships with other regional fleets to promote international and regional security.

Pakistan faces many security concerns as its military rapidly modernizes and gains access to cutting-edge technology. As well as introducing nuclear weapons to South Asia, India has made the Indian Ocean a potential nuclear battlefield. The targets of India's three-pronged military expansion are its neighbors. The region's stability is threatened by its continuing naval modernization. If the Navy has anti-submarine capabilities, it will have more freedom of movement in the Indian Ocean.

Objectives of the Study

To understand the evolving security situation in the Indian Ocean Region

To examine the reasons behind security competition in the Indian Ocean Region

To understand the implications of this competition for Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. How are the US-China and India competing in the Indian Ocean region?
2. How can competition between India, the US, and China impact the national security of Pakistan?
3. How should Pakistan respond to competing trends in the Indian Ocean Region?

Hypothesis

Tripolar security competition in the Indian Ocean region will negatively affect Pakistan's economic, military and human security.

Literature Review

Secondary data have been gathered and validated by analyzing scholarly publications, top researchers, individual contributions, and online library catalogs. This study aims to link the shifting resource politics of the Indian Ocean region with the expanding resource needs in the region. In this study China-Pakistan strategic goals in the region. And America's strategy to establish its dominance in the region along with India and other regional countries has also been reviewed. ¹Maintaining the nation's global military superpower is essential to national security. In our interest to promote an international order conducive to our safety and prosperity, its top objective is to engage in a long-term strategic struggle with India and its supporters. Pakistan and its partners face growing challenges to the country's security and economy, and these concerns will need growing and manageable spending to counter. Further, Pakistan is committed to maintaining its current activity level to prevent and respond to security challenges in the area. It is

¹ Saira Yamin, "Strategic Competition: Why Pakistan Matters" (Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25702>.

a strategic response to India and its allies' threats in the area and an effort to consolidate Pakistan's meager gains.²

Prior studies have primarily focused on domestic conflicts within the Indian Ocean area. This study, however, sheds light on a hitherto overlooked aspect: the vitality of the Indian Ocean's marine resources. The state of peace and security in the area is shifting rapidly. The part that nations inside and outside of the region play in the region's economy and security. Furthermore, it is an attempt to bring something fresh to the table. Reviewing the existing literature, we find that most studies center on the political and economic conflict between China and the dominance of the United States and India in the IOR. Less attention has been paid to Pakistan's significant contribution to regional stability and security. This study is more pertinent and explores Pakistan's essential role.³ Security at sea might signify several different things. Compared to more traditional understandings of naval might, the security risks associated with maritime security defense plans are more remarkable. The term "operations" describes the goals of maritime safety operations, such as protecting the freedom to navigate and trade across international borders and safeguarding the marine resource and domain systems from external threats.

Navy strength relies on its ability to exert dominance at Sea. The freedom to act while at Sea is achieved by keeping a naval force within ground distance to neutralize a threat from land to maritime access. The Navy's ability to influence the maritime, space and internet environments are ensured by the interdependence of navigational control. 'Strategic handshake,' Ashton Carter, Secretary of State, in his book also referred to it. Indian strategy toward the eastern seaboard and the Indian Ocean is "act east," with the USA serving as a balancer and axis power. Make sure marine interests are safe and unrestricted—locational navigation in this area.⁴ The USA has put its trust in India to protect it from China. When weighed against a rising China, the geographic and economic spheres will be a good counterweight. It equips India with cutting-edge hardware to take on the Chinese Navy. India is making administrative efforts in the Indian Ocean. It will significantly help India's hopes for blue with India's progress. Establish yourself as a powerhouse

² Ibid., 7.

³ Johan Bergenas and Ariella Knight, "Secure Oceans: Collaborative Policy and Technology Recommendations for the World's Largest Crime Scene" (Stimson Center, 2016), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10868>.

⁴ Michael N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, Repr, Seas in History (London: Routledge, 2010).

with superior naval might. This alliance will bolster the Indian Navy's capacity to wage war, and India's policy will continue reverberating throughout the Indian Ocean. There is a common understanding of the marine connection between India and the USA.⁵

"By 1960, the Sino-Soviet divide started to manifest," writes Abdul Sattar in "Pakistan's Foreign Policy (1947-2012): A Concise History" (2013).⁶ There was already hostility between the USA and China due to the proximity of USA naval and aviation power to China's coastline. China, which had previously shown no fear of confronting any superpower, was suddenly worried about India because it supported Tibetan separatists and its arrogant stance on the border dispute. Beijing had a deeper appreciation for the challenges Pakistan faced at the hands of India with Soviet support than before. These two nations became closer through their shared experience of hardship. Pakistan was not so arrogant as to engage in the clash of giants. However, it did show bravery by accepting China's hand of friendship over the Karakorum Range and breaking the ring that the USA, the Soviet Union, and India had built around China.⁷

According to Holmes and Yoshihara, China worries that the USA will block the Malacca Strait, a vital shipping lane through which the vast majority of China's sea trade passes, in the event of a crisis involving security concerns and dilemmas caused by American naval dominance in the high seas extending from the Persian Gulf. By cultivating relationships with the Governments in the Indian Ocean, China is utilizing soft power to take preventative action. The most famous pearl is Gwadar, Pakistan's port on the Arabian Sea. China has poured resources into this port to monitor the Strait of Hormuz and ensure it is not threatened. China's actions in the South China Sea are influenced by the United Government's changing relationship with states along the Indian Ocean's coast. These states include Vietnam, Singapore, and India. There is no question that China's assertiveness is limiting the capabilities of neighboring states.⁸ A notable realist named Kenneth N. Waltz has the notion that the will to survive is a sequential warning of argument, contesting the risk and failing to let one's defenses down. The four pillars around which the realist argument rests

⁵ Bergenas and Knight, "Secure Oceans." 7.

⁶ Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 1947-2019: A Concise History*, Fifth edition (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

are deterrence, containment, alliances, and a delicate balancing act of strength⁹. The geographical and resource differences that contribute to the complexity of international relations only bolster this notion. According to defensive realists, nations may develop the ability to self-protect when put in threatening situations, and the improvement of their power-maximizing capabilities is a result of external factors.¹⁰

According to Vivek Mishra, the USA and China are equally dependent on the Indian Ocean's natural resources to further their respective national agendas. India and the USA may be confused by China and Pakistan's friendly-sounding rhetoric towards the Gwadar region because of Washington's apparent preference for India in pursuit of American interests¹¹. Compared to China's non-intervention strategy, which may provide regional nations greater flexibility, the united government's active intervention policy makes it harder for regional states to trust it. It is becoming more well-known worldwide because of its role in China's economic and diplomatic attempts to project soft power.¹² Colin said that the United States views India as a "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean Area (IOR) due to India's goal of expanding its regional influence. India's position is determined mainly by the fact that it contains the only Ocean to bear the name of a state. India's goal in the IOR is to centralize it, making it more manageable for Indian interests. The United States sees it as a net facilitator thanks to its Navy's collaboration with other countries to maintain maritime security in the IOR. China's goal with its "string of pearls" strategy is to surround India. India is worried about China's increasing clout in the Indian Ocean. India cannot stop China's push into the IOR, and the only way to stop it would be for the United States to assist Indian efforts to block any such development actively. While the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor seeks to improve ties with Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, the Indian-American-Australian-British bloc seeks to counter this initiative by allying with the region

⁹ Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reiss (Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, 1979).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Abuja Borah Hazarika and Vivek Mishra, "Soft Power Contestation between India and China in South Asia," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 11, no. 2 (2016): 139–52, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45341093>.

¹² Abuja Borah Hazarika and Vivek Mishra, "Soft Power Contestation between India and China in South Asia," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 11, no. 2 (2016): 139–52, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45341093>.

and competing in the economic arena that promotes new realities of global and regional politics. Capable of creating positive change in India's social and economic landscape.¹³

China and Afghanistan are trying to secure the country's political and economic stability. China "is acting more and more like a conventional big power," signaling the maturity of Chinese foreign policy. China is best understood as a hybrid power since it is reactive and passive in international forums (such as the United Nations Security Council, the Group of Twenty, international summits, etc.) However, the Chinese government's diplomatic approach has remained cautious and focused on domestic concerns. Since it prefers to wait for others to show their positions before making any decisions, China has sought the lowest common denominator and, to the extent possible, has kept to the least confrontational stance. However, this general rule is subject to various caveats when it comes to what are seen as nationalistic interests. First and foremost, concerns involving Taiwan and other potential threats to China's sovereignty (including maritime territorial claims in the South and East China Seas and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region).

China has been active and watchful in this area (Tibet, Xinjiang, and maritime territorial). Despite sharing a geographic location, governments around the Indian Ocean have widely varying levels of economic growth and wealth. Australia, which ranks second on the UN human development index (HDI), and Mozambique, which ranks 184, fourth from last, are both included in this area. Based on the findings of Stimson's research published in 2012: The choke spots in the Indian Ocean have historically had a significant impact on the safety of shipping across the Ocean. Dr. Jyotsana Mishra said in his book 'India's Maritime threats' 'Arab and Malay pirates benefitted from the choke points in the Strait of Hormuz and Malacca throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'. The world's seas have traditionally served as a means of shipping. The Indian Ocean has been a vital link between East and West for ages. The increasing importance of the Indian Ocean as a strategic region might be attributed to the growing reliance of nations on global commerce. International commerce is carried over the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) like blood via arteries. The Middle East's proximity to the Indian Ocean is strategically important since it is next to the world's largest oil reserves. Indo-China issues, sometimes referred to as the "rise of India" or the "rise of China," are the primary driving force behind the increased

¹³ Ibid.

focus on the Indian Ocean Region. India is worried that China will expand its territory into the Indian Ocean, encircling India. Since its critical geographical locations and major waterways have made the Indian Ocean the primary focus for both central and regional nations, it is often regarded as the most crucial body of water in the modern world and from the historical era. The Indian Ocean attracts the international community's attention due to its strategic location, unique topography, and proximity to the world's other oceans and seas. People began trading and settling in the coastal areas because of the strategic location of the straits.

When discussing the importance of the world's oceans, we must consider the Indian Ocean and its six key choke spots. These bottlenecks are also very important to the maritime trade that the other central states rely on. Samir Tata said in his book "Reflections on Grand Strategy" The Great Powers in the twenty-first Century "Some of the most important shipping lanes and bottlenecks in the Indian Ocean are as follows: Mozambique Channel, Cape of Good Hope, Sunda Lombok Strait, Bab-ul-Mandeb, Strait of Malacca, and Strait of Hormuz.

In his book 2012 *Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific*, Raja Mohan evaluated the effects of both countries' rise in Asia on the "world's marine areas," both oceans.¹⁴ He started his examination in the late twentieth century when the two nations' naval growth was motivated by increasing commerce and a need for raw commodities.¹⁵

In review Based on the history of warfare and the close geographical area of these two countries Mohan claimed that Sino-Indian ties present an ongoing security issue. He predicted that India and China would compete a lot with each other and with the extra-regional power, as they both increased their naval presence in the Indo-Pacific. There is a rising power struggle between China and India, and the book predicts that this will lead to a deeper maritime relationship between India and the United States. He is also concerned that China would respond negatively to robust security cooperation between India and the US. As both big powers aim to strengthen their influence over the island nations, the author posits that island states will be drawn into the Sino-Indian

¹⁴ C. Raja Mohan, *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt6wpjb4>.

¹⁵ Ibid.22

contestation. Some island governments, he says, may try to play one power off against the other as a result.¹⁶

Samudra Manthan suggests that India be more accommodating to extra-regional powers in the Indian Ocean and promotes the creation of mutual confidence-building measures to lessen the likelihood of an escalation of Sino-Indian competition in the maritime domain.¹⁷ However, Raja Mohan concedes that the wider geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific, in which he thinks the United States plays a vital role, will ultimately influence the trajectory of Sino-Indian ties. Despite its relative fall, the United States still has a dominating role in shaping the overall security framework of the Indo-Pacific region, according to the author.¹⁸

The future security order in the Indo-Pacific region is expected to be determined mostly by the nature of the USA's relationship with China and India and the emerging dynamic between China and India. While numerous regional countries will impact the littoral's political development, the USA will most impact the developing Sino-Indian contestation in the Indo-Pacific.

At the end of his talk, Raja Mohan suggested three potential solutions for the Sino-Indian competition in the Indo-Pacific: cooperative security, a great power concert, and a balance of power system. Although he analyses all possible future scenarios between India and China in the twenty-first century, he appears to place a premium on the United States maintaining a presence in the area in support of India. In any case, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is seen as potentially altering the regional equation if a future Sino-American rapprochement occurs or the United States gradually withdraws from the region, with China taking on a more prominent role as the region's security provider in the Indian Ocean. David Brewster's *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership*, published in 2014, was another recent work concerned with India's maritime power.¹⁹ It analyzed India's "strategic ambitions" as a rising world economic and military power and its network of security relations in the Indian Ocean region. Brewster's book was an attempt to find an answer to the issue, "Does India have the money to become the

¹⁶ Ibid.33

¹⁷ Mohan, *Samudra Manthan*.

¹⁸ Ibid.44

¹⁹ Rory Medcalf and C. Raja Mohan, "Responding to Indo-Pacific Rivalry: Australia, India and Middle Power Coalitions" (Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2014), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10182>.

preeminent force in the Indian Ocean?" A total of 10 countries in the Indian Ocean area have what are considered to be strong fleets, complete with a large number of submarines, a large number of fighter aircraft, and a large number of coastal patrol boats. India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Singapore, Egypt, Israel, Australia, and Thailand are all part of this group of countries. These nations have something in common: they all pay the IOR much strategic attention. Some are unique in ways that go beyond where they live. There are competent major countries out there.²⁰

Peace and security are paramount in the northern Arabian Sea, where Pakistan is located. Additionally, the Pakistan Navy understands that it must confront the threats from across the border via joint operations with its counterpart in the Indian Navy. A year and a half later, Enterprise established the first regional Navy. A first in a series of nuclear-powered submarines is the most worrying regional development since it means the race for civilian nuclear weapons is not confined to land. The Indian Navy is now putting it through its paces in the coastal states of the Indian Ocean as part of operational testing at sea. It is believed that the spirit of cooperation will win and that Pakistan will resist the need to respond harshly. The triangle formed by Pakistan, India, and China is a crucial geopolitical triad. There is a trilateral interaction among Asia's major powers in geopolitics.

According to UNCTADstat There are 36 of the world's 149 coastal states, 13 of the world's 43 landlocked nations, and 11 more island territories under the control of the United Kingdom and France that make up the Indian Ocean as a geostrategic entity. Due to its proximity to Central Asia and China, Pakistan was seen as a haven for US citizens. As a result of its proximity to the Persian Gulf to the west, it has become an important economic hub for the area.

According to Dr. David Brewster,(Dr. David Brewster, is with the National Security College at the Australian National university, his book include India as an Asia Pacific power which considers India's Strategic role in the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean) the Indian government believes it is destined to become a major regional power and a major global force. In light of the tense history

²⁰ David Brewster, *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014).

between the two countries, Brewster observed that China is "firmly opposed to India's ambitions" in the Indian Ocean. He said that India has two strategic alternatives when dealing with China: to try to contain Chinese dominance in the Indian Ocean or to include China as a responsible participant in the area's security. However, he thinks it is very improbable that China would be willing to depend on India to safeguard its security interests.

Brewster concluded that while India may amass the financial means to dominate the Indian Ocean in the coming years, it may be hampered by several factors, including the United States' position as the preeminent military power in the region and India's relations with middle powers like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and South Africa, which may not wish to cede complete control to India. Brewster also claims India would be hampered in its capacity to build security ties due to China's rising economic might and influence.²¹

Regarding capabilities and maritime security, several extra-regional parties in the Indian Ocean are well ahead of the curve. Big political and economic actors, such as the United States, China, Japan, and the European Union, can assist those less competent parties in capacity development. Workshops, training, and the provision of maritime assets or financial help are all options for those who want to protect shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean. It is more efficient to train and equip local forces to ensure maritime safety and security rather than to send foreign soldiers for lengthy durations. India's marine security policies and influence are in jeopardy. In terms of strategic enmity and possible war, the Indian Ocean is a major source. The Indian Ocean is the primary focus of the diplomatic efforts between the two nations. To dominate the Indian Ocean is a fundamental goal of India's maritime strategy. India does not want this to happen. If the United States can indefinitely maintain its monopoly over the Indian Ocean, it will approve of the status quo.

While Brewster's book comprehensively evaluates India's position in the Indian Ocean, his assessment of the roles played by other powers suggests that Australia, Indonesia, and South Africa overestimate their maritime power and relative influence in the region exaggerates India's growing maritime influence. According to Brewster, Australia's unwillingness to give uranium to India is

²¹ Ibid.

a rejection of India's rising influence. After conceding that the unwillingness to sell uranium to India has been an "obstacle" to gaining a bigger share of the advantages of the expanding Indian economy, Australia has now decided to deliver uranium. India's activities in the area are perceived as more favorable since all three major nations in the middle are believed to be allied with the USA.

Numerous points of view were used to perform this research. Each author presented their perspective. The increasing rivalry between India, China, and the United States was discussed. All agreed that the containment strategy was becoming more relevant due to China's rising influence. They spoke about it from various perspectives. Security, economics, the military, and other perspectives are all on the table. Pakistan is used as a case study in this study. No study considered it from the broader context of Pakistani national security. Quad's growth into the Indian Ocean is also included in this study.

Research Methodology

A qualitative study method is designated for this study as it contains narrative and non-numerical data. Concerning the asymmetrical power equation in the Indian Ocean region, the study uses a descriptive and explanatory method as it analyzes the relations of regional and extra-regional countries in the recent international development analysis of the particles created in the form of official declarations, articles, statements, research journals and books. This is helpful as it contributes applicable conclusions by analyzing complex and interrelated phenomena.

The descriptive research aims to recognize the aspects and directions and their interrelation to characterize when and how the ties between regional and Extra-regional countries in this region came to normalize and progress momentum. Secondary data is involved in the study. The analysis mainly comprises secondary data for this; various stories, magazines, articles, research journals, National and International TV Channels, books, and websites have been used to help the statements of this study. The websites of the different Ministries, Ministries of port and shipping, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Different Embassies, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the chain, USA, Australia, India, and their tweeter accounts. This research will use descriptive and explanatory tools to explain the situation.

Delimitation

It is only focused on the Indian Ocean region. It is just seeing implications on Pakistan and the incident after 2010.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the evolving security competition in the Indian Ocean region, this study will use the notion of realism and the Theory of offensive realism advanced by John. J. Mearsheimer, in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.²² The following are the most fundamental presumptions of this theory. Anarchy permeates the international system. Consequently, there is no imminent danger to the international order. This implies that if any state were to attack, another state would have no reliable ally in the international system to come to its aid. The second premise is that major powers can attack smaller governments because of their superior military. Conflicting states pose a threat to one another. In addition, a state's threat to another might increase if its power is much more than that of the latter. No nation-state knows the true motives of any other, so instead, they focus on their relative military might. One cannot know the verdict with absolute confidence. Even if a state knows its relative strength is about to rise, it does not mean its goals will not shift. Intention cannot be determined with absolute certainty. Fourth, this Theory takes as given that a state's very existence is of paramount importance. Protecting its borders and preserving law and order inside its borders are two of a state's top priorities. A state's priority is to ensure its continued existence; without that, the state can pursue no other objectives. The sixth premise of this Theory is that governments always act in their citizens' best interests. They are perceptive of the world and have learned to adapt accordingly.²³ Observing and trying to make sense of the acts of other states is a common activity among states. When taken collectively, these beliefs provide considerable powers and substantial motivation to be aggressive against one another. Consequently, people tend

²² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

²³ Ibid.

to follow one of three broad behavioral patterns: defensiveness, assistance-seeking, or power play. Multiple tools, including diplomacy and economics, are at a state's disposal in the international system to increase its influence. When the authority of one state rises, the power of another state falls because the power differential between the states narrows. The objective is to triumph over other states and establish one's hegemony.²⁴ In a nutshell, it suggests that rivalry between nations can never benefit any of them. When states strive for hegemony, they seek to consolidate their authority to the point where they can maintain the existing quo. Absolute power nations act differently, and other states' might is of little significance to them. The state must consider other states' power structures and capabilities because of its preoccupation with its relative strength. They are making an effort to go ahead of the competition. The Chinese government is working to bring the economy up to date. Since economic and military might are intertwined, the United States would do well to pay close attention to both the latent power balance and the balance of power.²⁵

Organization of the Study

Chapter -1 Geopolitical History of the Indian Ocean Region;

This Chapter discusses the brief history of the Indian Ocean and the region's historical analysis of the topic.

Chapter -2 Rise of Asia and the Contemporary Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region.

Chapter 2 discusses how China, India, and the US compete with each other. It says that China has started different projects to counter these projects, and countries of the Indian Ocean region have started their Projects.

Chapter -3 Reasons for Competition in the Indian Ocean Region

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

This chapter discusses the different reasons competition is happening in the Indian Ocean region. Chinese rise as an economic power and its reach in the Indian Ocean is creating competition in the Indian Ocean.

Chapter -4 Implications for Pakistan

Chapter -5 Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions

CHAPTER -1

1. GEOPOLITICAL HISTORY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

1.1. Historical Analysis

In the first chapter, we examine the historical growth of the Indian Ocean and the regions it contains. The European Portuguese were the first to sail the Indian Ocean in pursuit of the oil richness, followed by the Dutch, the English, and the French. The greatest oil field in the world was found in the 1930s off the coast of the Persian Gulf. After WWII, the price of oil production dropped, and new oil fields were discovered regularly. National revenue was low since global oil capitals like the United States and the United Kingdom dominated oil development initially. Nationalization has been rising since the 1960s due to rising oil prices.²⁶ Countries that export oil has seen significant improvements in their economy. Recent years have seen extraordinary industrial and urban development fueled by oil profits. Yemen stretches from the southwest to the south and from Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman to the southeast of the Persian Gulf; Saudi Arabia occupies the Arabian Peninsula.²⁷

Before and after the prophet Mohammad's (SAW) birth in the Sixth Era, the Arabians sailed to the southern limits of India, where their descendants continue to dwell to this day. Indian merchants and priests engaged in cultural interchange with their Malay and Indo-Chinese neighbors, bringing Buddhist and Hindu ideas that they incorporated into their societies. To reach Madagascar, Indonesians threw themselves over the barren central Ocean. Arab craftsmanship had developed to an important level by the seventh era.²⁸

²⁶ Prasannan Parthasarathi and Giorgio Riello, "The Indian Ocean in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48, no. 1 (2014): 1–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24690369>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Gus W. van Beek, "Pre-Islamic South Arabian Shipping in the Indian Ocean-A Surrejoinder," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 80, no. 2 (1960): 136–39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/595591>.

By the 15th era, they had extended their trading post from Mozambique on Africa's eastern coast to the Indonesian islands in the Far East.²⁹

The Chinese launched several big incursions into the Ocean in massive state-controlled ships throughout the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, they were unable to challenge the Arab hegemony of the region. Arabs, Persians, Indians, Malays, and Chinese were all regulars by the 15th century CE, turning the region into a massive interior marketplace that served as a primary source of goods for the rapidly expanding markets of sophisticated medieval Europe.³⁰ By the thirteenth century, China was a part of the Mongol Kingdom, and Kublai Khan attempted to expand his authority to Japan and Southeast Asia through naval control.

The Ming Dynasty started China's involvement in the Indian Ocean. Islamic cultures revitalized ship traffic between East Africa and East Asia. Muslim merchants sailed clockwise across the Indian Ocean. By the fourteenth century, Islam had established itself as the dominant religion in the western Indian Ocean region. This exceptional moment of fierceness captures the unanticipated increase of Indian Ocean commerce over a few swift periods compared to the corresponding emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in 622 and the arrival of the Tang kingdom in China in 618.³¹ Fast-growing Islam had a pivotal conversion across the western Indian Ocean from its origins as a land-based spiritual and communal upheaval in the Hejaz area of the Arabian Peninsula. When three unexpected periods in 632, Islam was regarded as the supreme confidence of the Red Sea, the Gulf, and the Arabian Sea coastlines after it suddenly defeated Egypt to the west and Persia to the east. By the middle of the ninth century, Islam under the Umayyad Caliphate had spread east of the Indus River channel.³² As a counterpoint, merchants from the Gulf's Islamic ecosystem had begun exploring the bazaars along the eastern African and western Indian coastlines. There were two dramatic increases in India's population throughout the sixteenth century. Social materials in the society were impacted by the early phases of European engagement

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Eryan Ramadhani, "China in the Indian Ocean Region: The Confined 'Fat-Seas Operations,'" *India Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2015): 146–59, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45072769>.

³¹ Barbara Bennett Peterson, "The Ming Voyages of Cheng Ho (Zheng He), 1371-1433," *The Great Circle* 16, no. 1 (1994): 1371–1433, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41562881>.

³² Ibid.

in India's international skills and the building of the Mughal Kingdom.³³ The military component of marine power was first outlined to India during Vasco da Gama's 1498 arrival in Calicut.³⁴ After the Portuguese entered Indian waters, the Dutch, the British, and the French followed suit on the strength of their 'blue water' naval prowess. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, the coastal Navy of Indian kingdoms, known as "brown water," posed a threat to the regional and global maritime powers. Colonial dominance and cash crop economies dominated the region's economy as British industrialization grew in importance from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth.³⁵

The significance of the region's economic activity was solidified at the turn of the twentieth century thanks to a growing dependence on oil supplies. There was a rise in economic activity when the government changed hands or when there was peace and security in the region. The dynasties and governments whose policies determined the flow of commerce and transportation across the Indian Ocean are the focus of Alpers's discussion.³⁶

The Indian Ocean serves as the backbone of 21st-century global commercial marine activities. Due to Asia's recovery, there has been a systematic shift in global focus from the west to the east. Because of the Indian Ocean's abundance of oil and minerals, the region is becoming more important to the supply and demand of energy worldwide, gradually shifting economic power to Asia. The area connects the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west, making it a crucial geopolitical hub.³⁷

In addition, this area has become a strategic hub for marine commerce, linking the nations that create natural resources with the ones that consume them. Oil for about 80% of China and Japan's needs is transported via this area, accounting for more than two-thirds of all oil transported worldwide. About half of all container cargo shipped worldwide passes through these seas. India

³³ Kenneth Mepheron, "The History of the Indian Ocean Region: A Conceptual Framework," *The Great Circle* 3, no. 1 (1981): 10–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41562359>.

³⁴ Ibid.19

³⁵ Zafar Imam, "The Indian Ocean and Decolonization," *Social Scientist* 9, no. 5/6 (1980): 36–43, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3520401>.

³⁶ Ibid.39

³⁷ Ibid.40

is also a rising economy; therefore, they are also importing a lot of oil from the Middle East³⁸. For the twenty-first century, this Ocean is the doorway to the seven seas; it is here that the planet's fate will be determined. Many Persian dynasties established new ports to the east of the Arabian Gulf. If one country control the Indian Ocean she has absolute power over Asia. The Strait of Hormuz is vital to maintaining access to the Persian Gulf because of its strategic importance. It is significant for the US, China, Pakistan, as well as India.³⁹

A gulf on the Arabian Peninsula started to form. You are free to sever as many water lines as you see fit. With the help of ports and harbors, they constructed; the Persians maintained their dominance over the area for almost 2000 years. The globe, symbolized by the small knee, represents the current moment. The Arabian Gulf is the most strategically important of all the narrow passages.⁴⁰

A sincere desire to protect tankers operating in hazardous seas. The United States was a dominant military and economic force during the Cold War era. The Soviet Union and the strength of Eurasian land masses. China's political and economic landscapes are maturing after the Cold War. The Indian Ocean is considered a part of Eurasia's maritime area. The United States Navy already has a position of preeminence. In the face of Chinese might, it has attained the pinnacle of its authority.⁴¹

1.1.1. Strategic Importance on a Global Scale

The Indian Ocean, the world's third-largest Ocean (after the Pacific and Atlantic), covers an area of around 73.56 million square miles, or about 20 percent of the total sea surface. Latitude 60°S marks the northern limit of the area covered by the original Antarctic Treaty, which is bounded to the North by the Indian Subcontinent, to the West by the East African coast, and to the Northwest

³⁸ McPherson, "The History of the Indian Ocean Region."

³⁹ William D. O'Neil and Caitlin Talmadge, "Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (2008): 190–98, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40207146>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 195

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 197

by the Arabian Peninsula, to the east by Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, and Australia, and to the South by the oceanic margin with the Southern Ocean (1959).⁴²

The Suez Canal and the meridian that runs south from Cape Agulhas in South Africa mark the westernmost point of the Indian Ocean, separating it from the Atlantic Ocean. The 147°E meridian, which extends south from South East Cape on Tasmania to 60°S latitude, is the easternmost point where the Indian Ocean meets the Pacific Ocean. Bandar Imam Khomeini, an Iranian port in the Persian Gulf, marks the northernmost point of the Indian Ocean. The Andaman Sea, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Great Australian Bight, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Oman, Laccadive Sea, Mozambique Channel, Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea are all included in the Indian Ocean.⁴³

The Mozambique Channel, Bab ul Mandeb, Suez Canal, Hormuz, Malacca Straits, Sundra Strait, and Lombok Strait are the seven major bottlenecks in the Indian Ocean Region. One of the most crucial parts of the world's Oceans is the Indian Ocean and its shipping channels. More than eighty percent of global oil transport goes via three narrow passages in the Indian Ocean: The Strait of Hormuz (40 percent), the Strait of Malacca (35 percent), and the Bab-el-Mandab Strait (eight percent). Countries in the Indian Ocean have engaged in international commerce, cultural exchange, and military competition for centuries. Indian Water's historic role as a major thoroughfare for international commerce is more important than ever. The Ocean has never seen such a massive military presence worldwide. There is one-third as many people living in this area as there is land area, and forty percent as much oil and gas. Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Djibouti, East Timor, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen form the IOR's land borders and have varying influences there.⁴⁴ For the same reason that France and the United Kingdom have island territory in the Indian Ocean, they, too, are considered littoral nations. It is estimated that the coastlines of Indonesia,

⁴² Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*.

⁴³ Ibid.33

⁴⁴ Ibid.44

Australia, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, Thailand, Somalia, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia alone account for over 40% of the whole coastline of the planet.⁴⁵

Competition between regional and extra-regional nations for control of the Indian Ocean started with the Europeans' arrival. By the 1800s, Britain had firmly secured its position as the world's preeminent naval power. During this historical period, the water was seen as a "British lake," and Britain became a major naval force in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁶

Before recently, the IOR was seen largely by other nations as a maritime commerce route, a long canal connecting the west and the east. Politically, the IOR is seen as a group of smaller marine and coastal areas rather than a unified whole. As a result, the IOR is difficult to approach as a unified entity in terms of strategic policy. The world's reliance on the Persian Gulf's hydrocarbon supplies and the Indian Ocean's growing importance has propelled the region to the forefront of global geopolitics. The growth has contributed to the widespread acceptance of the area as a single political entity.⁴⁷

The fundamental strategic threats that determine the stability and security of the Indian Ocean Region are the focus of this investigation (IOR). Some 32 countries, some inside the Indian Ocean's borders and others that play a crucial role in determining the security of the states in the IOR area and the protection of its sea lanes and petroleum exports, are being considered as potential targets for these means. This whole region of the IOR consists of emerging nations. However, even within a specific Sub region, there is a wide disparity in their degree of development, stability, and security.⁴⁸ Possibilities and dangers cannot be reduced to a few simple words. Some countries' actions and interactions with their neighbors are prompted by internal strife, while a regional armed war is possible for others. Regarding human complexity, the IOR is among the world's most difficult places to live. There are people of many various ethnicities and religious persuasions. Each country faces its unique combination of opportunity and risk, depending on factors such as its level of political stability, quality of governance, demographic pressures, ethnic and sectarian

⁴⁵ Ibid.96

⁴⁶ Brewster, *India's Ocean*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.24

⁴⁸ Ibid.39

tensions, and economic growth rate. These factors can have far-reaching effects on a country's medium- and long-term progress and immediate consequences for its peace. Because of this intricacy, there are limitations to what can be determined about the risk level.⁴⁹ It is limited in its ability to provide comprehensive coverage worldwide. As a result, this analysis primarily emphasizes the more systemic strategic threats that pose the greatest threat to regional security, influence international politics, or affect the global economy. The similarities and commonalities among the states of the IOR are then highlighted.⁵⁰ The research breaks the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) down into its five constituent sub regions to examine each area's threats and developments more precisely. East Africa and the Sahel, South Asia, Southeast Asia/Oceania, the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East and Gulf. They may entail local disputes and humanitarian concerns, which can impact trade and investment difficulties in a nation. However, they have little effect on the world economy, major power issues, and even the security and stability of adjacent nations.⁵¹

With the balance of power shifting to the Indian Ocean, there is a need for new frameworks that account for the region's competing and converging security interests. The marine regional and extra-regional powers, including Australia, Japan, China, India, and the United States, notably define the Indo region's fulcrum. There is a simultaneous effort on both sides to control and influence each other in pursuing their national objectives. Pakistan's strategic importance to US foreign policy was again bolstered by the Soviet military's engagement in Afghanistan.⁵²

The success of American efforts to oppose Soviet adventurism in Afghanistan relied on Pakistan's support. The United States sought to make Pakistan a bulwark against Soviet expansionism,' thus, they courted and praised Pakistan with the designation of 'Frontline state. Geographical Setting: the Indian Ocean, The geopolitical significance of the Indian Ocean region makes it a target for aggression from regional and non-regional powers. Pakistan is a major regional player that seeks regional stability. USA, India, and Oceania In this part of the world, Japan has many friends and allies. The states of Central Asia and Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan. They want to build a land

⁴⁹ Ibid.44

⁵⁰ Bimal N. Patel, Aruna Kumar Malik, and William Nunes, eds., *Indian Ocean and Maritime Security: Competition, Cooperation and Threat* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2019).

⁵¹ Ibid.29

⁵² Ibid.80

bridge between Afghanistan and the Muslim kingdoms of Central Asia and the Indian Ocean. With its location as a major trade route into and out of Central Asia, Pakistan is a key geostrategic player. Because of the growing interest of regional and extra-regional powers in the Indian Ocean, maritime security dynamics have changed in Pakistan, a country with a sizable coastline.⁵³

1.2. Efforts towards a Unified Concept of Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreement was signed in April 2015. The resultant \$46 billion project is a 3000 km network of highways, railway lines, energy pipelines, and fiber optic cables linking Kashgar in China's Xinjiang region with Gwadar, a deep sea port in Pakistan's Baluchistan province. 16 The two nations see this initiative as a means of regional economic integration that will revitalize historic commerce and transit corridors. Efforts are already underway in this strategic area to gain access and influence. Half of China's ambitious "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) plan is dedicated to improving commercial connections between the country and the rest of the world across the Indian Ocean, connecting China, Africa, and Europe. Even though the 'Maritime Silk Road' is promoted as a peaceful economic initiative, strategic locations along it have been exploited for military operations. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is tasked under China's latest military policy to "safeguard the security of China's foreign interests," and the PLA Navy (PLAN) is directed to "move its priority from offshore waters defense to the Combination of "offshore waters defense" with "open seas protection." China is not content to only fortify its claims in the South China Sea; it has also begun construction on its first overseas military station in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, opposite crucial lines of communication in the Indian Ocean. Chinese naval assets have been present off the coast of East Africa since 2008 as part of ongoing anti-piracy operations. In addition, in 2015, Chinese submarines docked at a Chinese-owned terminal in the port of Pakistan, and in 2014, Chinese submarines docked at a Chinese-owned terminal in the port of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Three Chinese warships visited Pakistan this month for a planned joint naval drill.⁵⁴ A Chinese navy commander claimed of past drills with Pakistan in November 2016 that they would 'enhance the naval capacity

⁵³ Malik Qasim Mustafa, "Maritime Security: The Role of Pakistan Navy," *Strategic Studies* 25, no. 4 (2005): 158–90, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45242687>.

⁵⁴ Ramadhani, "China in the Indian Ocean Region."

of both nations to safeguard Gwadar port activity. The port city of Gwadar in Pakistan serves as a major terminal on the Maritime Silk Road, an important component of BRI. Pakistan has a good understanding of its local and extended IOR neighbors. The Gwadar Port, at the end of the projected "Pakistan-China Economic Corridor," is the quickest way for China to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Thus Pakistan must assess its alternatives and devise a plan to tackle any obstacles that IOR could bring shortly.⁵⁵

USA policymakers are interested in Pakistan because of its closeness to the Gulf area and its historical, cultural, economic, and, most importantly, security relations with Gulf nations. This is an objective shared by Pakistan. Sustaining pro-Western regimes and ensuring a steady oil supply to the West and Japan are among the United States' top priorities in the Gulf area. The US sees Pakistan's policy toward the Gulf area as useful in achieving its aims. Its Makran coast, and the port of Gwadar in particular, are strategically significant, and an adversary's control of them may hurt American interests in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean.⁵⁶

Pakistan's economy has come up against several challenges. Pakistan's economy is precarious, and its citizens want to know how to fix it. Pakistan has some options to get out of its financial jam. However, the nation will no longer be able to take recompense of chances unless it attempts long-term duties and challenges decisively. Pakistan's budget is up against challenges, including an increase in debt and imports, a drop in exports, savings, assets, and tax groups, a failure to implement policies effectively, and high taxes. For example, the state's budget may benefit from a lower interest rate.⁵⁷ To make it easier for shareholders to borrow money from banks and invest it in their businesses, the administration might provide cheap interest rates to the community. The budget request might rise with low-interest lending and investment. The need for workers to keep

⁵⁵ Mir Sherbaz Khetran, "The Potential and Prospects of Gwadar Port," *Strategic Studies* 34/35 (2014): 70–89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48527476>.

⁵⁶ David Brewster, "India and China at Sea: A Contest of Status and Legitimacy in the Indian Ocean," *Asia Policy*, no. 22 (2016): 4–10, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24905133>.

⁵⁷ Shahid Amjad Chaudhry, "Pakistan's Economy: Potential and Challenges," *The Pakistan Development Review* 39, no. 4 (2000): 287–92, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41261110>.

up with the increased output in manufacturing will increase. There will be an uptick in GDP and people's level of life.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Ibid., 34.

CHAPTER -2

2. RISE OF ASIA AND THE CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Recent years have seen Asia's growth due to increased imports of raw materials, oil, and gas. Along with people and money, Asia is becoming a major exporter of consumer products. The area is crucial to the expansion and improvement of the global economy. Future prosperity is possible in this area. People in this area tend to be younger than 30 on average.⁵⁹ One-third of the world's population, or 2.5 billion people, live in countries that border the Indian Ocean. China is the largest producer of food at home in East Asia, a region that has mostly done away with agricultural subsidies and kept farms modest. The average income in urban areas is three times that in rural areas.⁶⁰

The Persian Gulf supplies over 60% of India's crude oil, 90% of the oil used by Western European nations, and 50% of the oil used by the United States. Around 70% of the world's crude oil is found in China, and by 2030, that number is projected to increase to 11 million barrels per day. They will need around two-thirds of them in the Middle East. In addition, the area is home to 40% of the country's natural gas reserves.⁶¹ The average amount of oil passing through the Strait of Hormuz daily is 17 million barrels. LNG vessels take many months to bring natural gas from Middle Eastern nations. With the shift to an energy war, oil and gas production will rise. (EIA) (Energy Information Administration.) Regional nations and their approach toward the Indian Ocean area are discussed from the viewpoint of the Rise of Asia in this chapter. To do this, they analyze the rising power's response to the widespread recognition of its "rise" in recent years and the primary issues that inform its regional strategy. At last, the emerging powers' regional strategy is discussed in light of their ties to other regional and extra-regional states.⁶²

⁵⁹ David E. Bloom, David Canning, and Pia N. Malaney, "Population Dynamics and Economic Growth in Asia," *Population and Development Review* 26 (2000): 257–90, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3115219>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Oil in the Persian Gulf," *The World Today* 20, no. 7 (2022): 305–13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40393631>.

⁶² Ibid.35

2.1. Importance of the Indian Ocean for China and Chinese Moving into the Indian Ocean

The progress China has made in the previous three decades is mind-boggling. Most economists had expected that China's GDP would surpass Japan's no earlier than 2020; that did not happen until 2010. In 2004, China's GDP only placed sixth, one above Italy's. Since then, the country's development has accelerated, allowing it to overtake France in 2005, England in 2006, and Germany in 2007. Since China's reforms began in 1978, its GDP and trade volume has expanded by more than 100 times their 1978 levels. A global uproar would be expected in response to such a rapid growth rate. China is expanding its influence in the IOR by using its economic might.⁶³

In 2015, China shifted its military focus from Offshore Water Defence to Offshore Water Defence in addition to Open Seas Protection. This strategy acknowledges the importance of the oceans and seas to protect the nation's marine rights and interests. The creation of a modern maritime military force structure is driven by several factors, including national and development interests, the need to protect SLOCs and overseas interests, the desire to participate in international maritime cooperation, and the desire to preserve the country's sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.⁶⁴

China's 2019 Defence White Paper recognizes the importance of China's overseas interests to China's overall national security. The Chinese military focuses on ensuring security and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese persons, communities, and organizations. Chinese naval planners want to bolster their force by increasing their operations in uncharted waters, modernizing their overseas supply chain, and taking on more direct combat roles.⁶⁵

China has made great gains in growing its economy and expanding its influence in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. In addition, several nations in Oceania are warming up to China.

⁶³ *China's 40 Years of Reform and Development: 1978–2018* (ANU Press, 2018), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv5cgbnk>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 1978–2018.

⁶⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman, "China's New 2019 Defense White Paper: An Open Strategic Challenge to the United States, But One Which Does Not Have to Lead to Conflict" (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2019), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22570>.

China and Iran have signed a 25-year cooperation agreement in recent years to deepen and expand their alliance. Since the end of the nuclear talks, Iran has focused on its foreign policy, in which China plays an important role. Despite USA sanctions on Iran, Iran's entry into the global energy market has made China a major consumer of Iranian oil. As energy security becomes an important geopolitical issue for an increasing number of emerging countries, strengthening relationships with major energy providers is critical.⁶⁶

Iran can advance its strategic aims via energy restraint. To safeguard its commercial and financial focus, Iran will be more and more prepared to create a strong case for a more substantial particular existence. This increased presence has the potential to develop into a blue-water capability for the Iranian Navy, which raises strategic issues for other countries having a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Iran's efforts at greater regional involvement and integration reveal a yearning to play a leading role in the Indian Ocean as they interact with the region's driving regional goals.⁶⁷ Relationships between China and Iran may be crucial in countering the rising USA. Hegemony. Besides its tight relationship with Saudi Arabia, China also maintains friendly ties with other Middle Eastern nations.⁶⁸

Over the last three decades, relations between China and Saudi Arabia have strengthened along several fronts. Saudi Arabia has not only replaced Venezuela as China's leading supplier of crude oil, but it has also surpassed Egypt as China's most important mercantile partner in the Middle East and North Africa. 1 Conversely, China is Saudi Arabia's most important trading partner and a major importer of crude oil. A record 1.75 million barrels per day (mb/d) of Saudi crude oil was shipped in 2016, up 3.4% from 2015.⁶⁹

China's overall yearly oil imports fell for the first time in almost 20 years, yet this nevertheless took place. Almost a quarter of all chemical exports from the Kingdom are sent to China, making the country the largest trading partner for Chinese companies in Saudi Arabia. Despite the large

⁶⁶ Fuzuo Wu, "China's Puzzling Energy Diplomacy toward Iran," *Asian Perspective* 39, no. 1 (2015): 47–69, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43738114>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Makio Yamada, "Islam, Energy, and Development: Taiwan and China in Saudi Arabia, 1949–2019," *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 22, no. 1 (2015): 1949–2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44289075>.

sums of money that flow between the two countries, the range of their bilateral trade is narrow; in 2021, more than 95% of China's imports from the Kingdom consisted of petroleum products, plastics, and organic chemicals.⁷⁰ China is also improving ties with other nations in the Middle East. China's ties to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, among other nations, are particularly robust. More than that, China and Israel are close allies. China has formed organizations such as the China-Arab Corporation forum to support its connections institutionally. All member nations of the Arab League belong here.⁷¹

China has built relationship pattern with Arab nations, and the Belt and Road Initiative is an important part of China's efforts to improve ties with the Arab world. The Chinese president used the above equation to underline the importance of the partnership in 2014. In this equation, 1 represents the energy company, 2 represents the infrastructure, and 3 represents the company's other areas, which include green energy, space, and satiates.⁷²

The development of the Belt and Road Initiative requires modesty and foresight from all parties involved, which the Chinese president emphasized throughout his speech. This demonstrates China's desire to build lasting ties with Arab nations. Humanitarian relief and infrastructure development were two other areas where China spent considerably. Furthermore, it has a "two wings, two wheels" strategy, meaning that it collaborates with other organizations on matters of emerging technologies and the energy industry. At a time when the United States was withdrawing its military presence from the region, several initiatives were implemented.⁷³

China's ties to Pakistan are among its strongest in South Asia, and the two countries have begun working together to build an economic corridor.⁷⁴ In addition to its close ties to Bangladesh, the country participates in the Chinese Flagship initiative. Additionally, a military agreement has been

⁷⁰ Joseph Y. S. Cheng, "China's Relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Multilevel Diplomacy in a Divided Arab World," *China Review* 16, no. 1 (2016): 35–64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43709960>.

⁷¹ Lillian Craig Harris, "Chinese Politics in the Middle East," *Current History* 74, no. 433 (2019): 10–37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45314503>.

⁷² Degang Sun, "China and the Middle East Security Governance in the New Era," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 10, no. 3 (2017): 354–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599927>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Shiv Poojan Prasad Pathak, "China and Pakistan Relations In The Post-Cold War Period: Trusted Friends, Willing Partners," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 75, No. 3 (2014): 543–56, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26575528>.

inked between the two countries. Nearly 70% of Bangladesh's military hardware came from China. The Belt and Road Initiative now includes Sri Lanka. Bangladesh is getting two new ports thanks to Chinese investment. It is working to build a port in Sri Lanka that will be useful for various reasons, not least of which is getting around the Malacca Dilemma, which threatens the reliability of energy transport. Thai and Cambodian ports are open to Chinese shipping.⁷⁵

China's ties to the nations in the Western Indian Ocean area are likewise quite strong. China's connections with the IOR nations of Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, and others, are excellent. The Chinese government is funding infrastructure projects and other endeavors in these nations. In addition, China is building ports and roads and engaging in technology and other business sector mergers and acquisitions. China has permanent footholds in various nations thanks to this agreement.⁷⁶

The Chinese navy is expanding. China has become a major provider of maritime hardware in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, it has already become the primary arms supplier to Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. The purchase of Chinese submarines by Bangladesh has potential repercussions for the whole Indian Ocean.⁷⁷

China relies on the Indian Ocean as a lifeline for its imports and exports. If oil is cut off to China and its commerce items are blocked from being sent to other areas, the economy would be put under even more strain.⁷⁸ If China is serious about safeguarding its interests, it must demonstrate more strength. China is showing the USA and other world powers that it has just as much to defend as the United States. China's influence is growing in the center, the south, the southeast, and beyond. China is using all his efforts to establish his dominance in the Indian Ocean. Over the last decade, China's influence around the Indian Ocean has grown significantly. Emerging out of the Indian Ocean is a new threat.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ US. Institute of Peace, "China–Smaller South Asian States Relations," *China's Influence on Conflict Dynamics in South Asia* (US Institute of Peace, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27534.9>.

⁷⁶ David Brewster, "India and China at Sea." *Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean* (oxford university press)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁸ Sun, "China and the Middle East Security Governance in the New Era."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

The present situation in the Indian Ocean is complicated by China's presence there. To combat pirates, the Chinese navy made its maiden foray into the Indian Ocean in 2008–09. The Chinese navy's footprints in the Indian Ocean have arrived at Djibouti, Africa. China and Iran have just concluded a landmark agreement.

2.2. The Response to China's Growth:

2.2.1. US-India Partnership

China and Russia were the primary adversaries of the USA. USA's foreign and military policies are now organized on the concept of great-power rivalry. Since 2017, the USA has used the phrase Indo-Pacific to refer to the region between "the west coast of India and the western coastlines of the USA." This demonstrates how the United States' approach to the area has changed over the last decade, particularly as the Indian Ocean has grown in prominence.⁸⁰

Since China and India are becoming more competitive, the Indian Ocean is rapidly becoming a geostrategic key area for both countries. While China looks at safeguarding access to vital ports for economic and geopolitical gain, the United States wants Indian influence in the Indian Ocean Region, especially when maintaining open borders. The right to regulate ships and the Sea.⁸¹ The Indian Government formerly maintained a "no Hegemony" policy in the Indian Ocean Region, but it now recognizes the United States as the region's undisputed dominant power. Therefore, the United States is assisting India in countering China.⁸²

India's ultimate goal is not simply the containment of China but the growth of Indian dominance. It plans to enter the Internet security market in the Indian Ocean area. India's influence in the IOR is being threatened by China's growing presence there. With the aid of its ports, China might

⁸⁰ Robert Sutter, "America's Bleak View of Russia-China Relations," *Asia Policy* 13, no. 1 (2018): 39–46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26403229>.

⁸¹ Brewster, "India and China at Sea."

⁸² Muhammad Abbas Hassan, "Growing China-India Competition in the Indian Ocean," 2019. (Volume 39, Issue No 1, 2019 Journal of Strategic Studies)

challenge India. India is responding with a variety of countermeasures. China's expanding dominance in the Indian Ocean prompted India to take action.⁸³

India is bolstering its navy to counter China's increasing influence. It is boosting its investment in the Navy and engaging with democratic friends and neighbors in the area. More specifically, it is finalizing the building new aircraft carriers and attack submarines. The modern Indian Navy is up to the challenge of countering China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean. India has just added its first purpose-built aircraft to its fleet.⁸⁴

The USA and India are rapidly expanding their cooperation in various areas to counteract China's increasing clout in the IOR. The USA has committed to assisting India in becoming a major naval force, as stated in both formal agreements and joint statements. They have begun construction on aircraft carriers to improve India's naval might and have held a combined naval drill. In addition, it engaged in naval exercises with several nations.⁸⁵

Foremost among them is the push by the USA for India to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group. To further address security concerns in the Indian Ocean, the USA, India, Australia, and Japan cooperate in fortifying the QUAD Partnership. They are four major democracies that have worked together for a long time. They are hard-working and up for the task.⁸⁶The (QUAD) Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) has been resurrected in the Indo-Pacific region. Initially, QUAD could only be used in the Indo-Pacific. However, QUAD has recently broadened its focus to include the area around the Indian Ocean region. The USA is maintaining a vigilant vigil in the region. It is crucial to this region's power balance that you do so. The USA is being watched by India, Japan, and South Korea. They support a USA presence in the region of some kind. The USA is strengthening its naval presence in the region around the Indian Ocean region. The USA, Australia,

⁸³ Zeba Fazli and Achyut Bhandari and Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy and Azra Naseem and Chulanee Attanayake and Delwar Hossain and Dinesh Bhattarai and Achyut Bhandari and Azra Naseem and Chulanee Attanayake and Delwar Hossain and Dinesh Bhattarai and Zeba Fazli, "India-China Competition: Perspectives from the Neighbourhood," ORF, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-china-competition/>.

⁸⁴ Baljit Singh and Neetika Verma, "India's Needs and Naval Capabilities: A Symbiotic Relationship," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2015): 52–74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48602124>.

⁸⁵ Vijay Gokhale, "The India-China-U.S. Triangle," *The Road from Galwan*: (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30024.8>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

and India have allied to stay in the region and challenge China. Most of these nations, however, previously paid little attention to the Indian Ocean region. According to Lee Corder (Journal Article, The Future of Maritime Forces in an integrated Australian Defence Forces Vol. 12, No. 1, The 2016 Defence White Paper 2016, JSTOR) When defining Australia's area of influence, the Indian Ocean was left out of the country's National Security, Document. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) has regularly and actively supported the Combined Task Force. The Australian Navy force structure allows for the deployment of frigates with replenishment assistance throughout the Indian Ocean Region. New amphibious ships, enhancements to the Collins-class submarine fleet, and the Hobart-class air warfare destroyer are at the focus of the Royal Australian Navy structure's current phase of modernization. The United States is working to deepen its ties with India.

The USA has been India's closest commercial partner as trade between the two countries has increased over the years. In 2001, the value of trade was valued at \$20.2 billion, and it is expected to reach \$147 billion by the end of 2019. If trade policies are further liberalized, experts predict that world trade will quadruple in the next five years. In 2019, US direct engagement in India reached \$46.46 billion. However, overall, the USA. Investment in India was substantially greater because of the USA. Firms have become the top investors in India. In addition to spreading technology and boosting the Indian economy, this investment has also created jobs for the country's citizens.

According to BP's statistical Review of world energy latest report (2020). The USA became the fourth-largest supplier of crude oil to India in 2020, and USA e-commerce firms have helped Indian businesses export items worth about \$1 billion to the USA. Starting in 2017, the USA has become one of India's most important petroleum and natural gas suppliers. US crude oil shipments to India rose from zero in 2016 to 93 million barrels in 2019. Similarly, shipments of liquefied natural gas surged by more than five times between 2016 and 2019. Most businesses are moving their money and resources from China to India. Consequently, people have found work in India's formal economy, links between the two nations have strengthened, and the country's technology sector has expanded.

2.3. Conclusion:

China is trying to increase its presence in the Indian Ocean region. Through BRI, it is creating a complex network with different countries. It also increases military presence in the region. To counter China, the USA and India are coming together. India has close coordination with the USA in the Indian Ocean region. The Indo-US alliance system has placed India on a strategically dominant pedestal where India gets access to the global technological market in this backdrop India is modernizing its military forces and technology to create influence in the IOR and broader Indo-Pacific Region India has become the 5th largest economy. The indo-US alliance system and their obstruction of the rising of China lead to the creation of a competitive environment in the IOR which is discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 3

3. REASONS FOR COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

In Chapter 2, it was described that China and the US are taking different measures to compete in the Indian Ocean region. This chapter describes the reasons for this competition in the Indian Ocean region. The reason for the competition is not limited to the Indian Ocean region. Overall structural changes are compelling countries to compete in the Indian Ocean region.

Why are countries competing with China?

Chinese economic growth, increase in the defense budget, ability to make new weapons, modernizing its navy and air force, and the establishment itself in the different parts of the Indian Ocean region are the basic reasons for the competition in the IO. Because China can use its power to challenge the status quo, the US and India are trying to stop it.

3.1. Economic Rise of China

Experts anticipate that China will surpass the United States in the following decade, high-tech growth, and domestic consumption rather than its former pillar, export manufacturing. Forecasts from the Economic Consultancy firm of the UK indicate that China's GDP would expand by 5.7% yearly until 2025 and by 4.7% annually until 2030. By 2030 China's GDP will have grown larger than the United States. Euler Hermes, a credit insurance company, also issued a similar prediction.⁸⁷ China's top brass, according to official media, has been pushing for the country to shift its economic focus away from conventional industrial exports and toward value-added services during the last decade. Trade conflict and Covid19 impacted the growth of the Chinese and American economies. Market Research Company IHS Markit predicts that China's GDP will hit \$18 trillion in 2019 due to increased export production and financing for new projects, up from its \$15.92 trillion projection for 2020.⁸⁸ Around \$23 trillion was recorded for the American

⁸⁷ Roberta N. Haar, "Will China Replace the USA as the World's Predominant Power?" *Atlantisch Perspectief* 44, no. 3 (2020): 9–13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48600550>.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 8

economy. Economists have claimed that China's status as the world's biggest economy does not provide it with any inherent advantages over others. However, that nations are economically reliant on China will take notice. "There is no gold medal or anything like that," McWilliams of CEBR said to VOA.⁸⁹ He said that China would be in a stronger position to push forward its Belt and Road Initiative, plan to construct land and maritime trade links across Asia, Europe, and Africa in the form of infrastructure projects and investments if it had more money to spend. Roy, from the East-West Center, claims that Chinese officials are already using the country's economic might in diplomatic disputes. Since 2017, China has been involved in territorial disputes with India, Japan, and four countries in Southeast Asia over claims to various reefs and islets. China's foreign policy has become more assertive due to the belief that China will soon overtake the United States economically. This strategy aims to resolve regional issues in China's favor and undermine US regional and global leadership.⁹⁰

3.2. Chinese Dependence on the IOR for Energy Needs:

As the world's second-biggest economy, the increase in energy demand is a major side effect of China's fast development. Recent years have seen a slowdown in economic growth, which may be traced back to structural and policy shifts and a wide range of issues. Coal, produced locally, has had its overall demand decrease over the last twenty years, while oil, mostly imported, has seen its share of demand increase.⁹¹

Historically, this trend also happened when the British decided to make a ship that worked on oil during the First World War. There is now a Chinese echo to the narrative of how this choice had important strategic ramifications, notably for Britain's involvement in Iran. Since 1993, China has been importing oil; in 2004, it surpassed the United States as the world's second biggest petroleum user; in 2017, it imported over 70% of its oil.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ralph Jennings, "China's Economy Could Overtake US Economy by 2030," News and Analysis, VOA, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/chinas-economy-could-overtake-us-economy-by-2030/6380892.html>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Prachi Aggarwal and Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, "China's Energy Policy: Energy Needs and Climate Change," Indian and Chinese Energy Policies (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2017), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09398.5>.

⁹² Ibid.5

The International Energy Agency (IEA) released oil market predictions for 2017 to 2023. Their figures show that Chinese oil demand would expand more than double that of global consumption. Chinese use of petroleum products will increase, and domestic supply will decrease between 2017 and 2023.⁹³ This means that China will become even more dependent on foreign goods. It is worth noting that the United States, China's main rival, is and will remain the world's fastest-growing oil production.⁹⁴

According to IEA projections, by 2040, the gulf region will provide over half of China's oil, while China will receive around a quarter of Middle Eastern exports. As investment flows in both directions, economic linkages will grow. The Saudi oil company also has shares in Chinese oil refineries. Opportunities for Chinese upstream investment in the Middle Eastern region are actively sought. Twelve percent of Abu Dhabi's biggest oil concession was given to Chinese businesses in 2017⁹⁵.

There will be an increase in China's demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG), which may provide chances for suppliers in the Middle East such as Qatar, Iran, Iraq, and others. Middle Eastern oil and gas play a significant role in the Chinese economy, ensuring that the area will remain a priority for Chinese foreign policy. China imports more gas than the US.⁹⁶ In 2018, it imported 44% more gas as compared to 2017. It imported 47 million tons of gas. Furthermore, it imported thirty-two percent more gas than the previous years. Its total gas import was 90.4 million.⁹⁷

China's rising economic power and government efforts to curb air pollution have made it the world's most likely contributor to the projected rise in worldwide use of natural gas from 2017 to 2023. China's 13th Five-Year Plan calls for greater use of natural gas, officially regarded as a less polluted source than oil, across the board of the Chinese economy. This is because local production cannot keep up, making China also take the lead in exporting more gas than any other country by

⁹³ IEA, "Oil Market Report - June 2022 – Analysis," Organization's website, IEA, 2022, <https://www.iea.org/reports/oil-market-report-june-2022>.

⁹⁴ Ibid.4

⁹⁵ Ibid.3

⁹⁶ Erica Strecker Downs, "Energy Demand and Supply in China," in *China's Quest for Energy Security*, 1st ed. (RAND Corporation, 2006), 3–10, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1244af.9>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.7

2019.⁹⁸ Annualized growth in Chinese consumption is expected to average 8 percent, making up more than a third of the worldwide demand rise. The percentage of China's supply from outside is expected to increase from 39% to 45% in the coming years. In addition to developing their local markets and infrastructure to import additional LNG, other growing Asian countries will boost their natural gas consumption for creating electricity and other vital industries. Exports have played a significant role in China's economic development, with many global businesses setting up assembly units in China to re-export their goods and take advantage of the country's cheap labor costs.⁹⁹

The capital was mostly sourced from FDI, which unprecedentedly fueled export growth. Midway through the 21st century, this tendency leveled off as an increasing number of international corporations began seeing China as a market rather than merely a production place due to rising living standards and labor costs.¹⁰⁰

When it comes to oil and, to a lesser degree, natural gas, China has been and will continue to rely heavily on the Middle East. It plans to keep looking to the area as a potential customer base for finished and raw items. As domestic oil production in the USA has expanded from 6 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 2008 to 15 mb/d in 2018, the country has become less reliant on supplies from the Middle East. Despite this, a geopolitical paradox remains: USA soldiers in the Gulf have safeguarded Chinese oil shipments and other transactions. So far, the USA is facing no challenge in keeping an army in the Gulf region.¹⁰¹

China has a military outpost in Djibouti, guarding the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a significant connecting point between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and onward to the Suez Canal, one of the three major bottlenecks for global maritime passage. The United States maintains a naval

⁹⁸ Luigi Tomba, "What's The Plan?" in *Control*, ed. Luigi Tomba, Jane Golley, and Linda Jaivin (ANU Press, 2017), 1–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1sq5tvf.4>.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 11

¹⁰⁰ Chih-Hai Yang, Mei-Chun Cheng, and Chun-Hung Lin, "What Drives China's Outward Direct Investment?" *Acta Oeconomica* 65, no. 3 (2015): 431–53, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24857587>.

¹⁰¹ John Calabrese, "China Prioritizes Short-Term Energy Security: Implications for Sino-Middle East Relations," Think Tank Website, Middle East Institute, 2022, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/china-prioritizes-short-term-energy-security-implications-sino-middle-east-relations>.

outpost in Djibouti. Rivalry with America is a significant concern for China as its ties with oil-rich countries are developing.¹⁰²

China has a vested interest in purchasing Iranian oil and exporting its goods to Iran, it seems China has mostly followed USA sanctions on Iran.¹⁰³The country's interests were considered alongside its ties to the USA. China and the USA seem to depend on one another, as reflected in their policies. In January this year, China possessed more than \$1,127 trillion in USA Treasury securities than any other foreign power. In addition, the USA exported \$120 billion in commodities to China in 2018 and purchased \$540 billion from it. One reason for implementing tariffs on Chinese imports is the growing USA trade imbalance with China. In 2018, Chinese companies invested half of what the USA companies invested in the USA.¹⁰⁴The USA companies invest around 250 million dollars in China, while Chinese companies just invested 150 million dollars. Mutual investment has slowed in recent years due to political tensions.¹⁰⁵

3.3. Strength in Arms:

China's diplomatic stance has hardened under President Xi Jinping, and the country has been more inclined to use military force to back up its claims to land that is the subject of territorial disputes. Xi is also increasing the defense budget to give the military greater resources. Defense spending in the 2021 fiscal year was 1.36 trillion yuan, or about \$209.16 billion, a 6.9 percent increase over the previous year.¹⁰⁶

The USA and other nearby countries have been closely monitoring the situation. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) ground force has long served as China's primary means of projecting

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Steven Lee Myers, "Lasers and Missiles Heighten U.S.-China Military Tensions," *The New York Times*, May 4, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/04/world/asia/china-united-states-lasers-pilots.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Frank Mouritz, *The Influence of Economic Interdependence on US-China Relations: An Analysis of Economic Incentives for Continued Cooperation*, 1st ed. (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1kr4n5p>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph. Powell, *Rise of the Chinese Military Power* (Princeton University Press, 1955), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183pgpm>.

influence in the area. For instance, it has in 1955 assumed leadership roles with India on its shared Himalayan border issues.¹⁰⁷

At this year's National Day military parade, China debuted the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, which analysts claim is capable of reaching any location on Earth. The DF-17 hypersonic missile, however, was the show's focal point.¹⁰⁸

Chinese Government white paper describes the Chinese navy as the biggest in the world in terms of size. In addition, it has submarines that can fire missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Furthermore, the Chinese navy also supports its paramilitary force, and recently, the Chinese government has authorized its coast guard to fire on their countries' ships.¹⁰⁹

Yin claims that adding several new weapons to the Chinese military's arsenal, particularly the Navy force, has considerably increased China's military capability. The military is expanding faster than in other parts of the nation. According to the most recent annual report from the DOD, the department responsible for matters of defense in the USA Air Force now has more than 2400 aircraft, including more than 1950 combat aircraft, which makes it the largest air force in the Asia Pacific region; moreover, it makes the USA air force the third largest in the world.¹¹⁰

China's newest and most advanced aircraft, the J-20, is now part of the air force's inventory of stealth fighter fighters. It was built to rival the American-made F-22 and was created without outside influence. As regional rivalry heats up, China is also increasing its global arms shipments to other developing countries to foster closer ties with friendly states.¹¹¹

According to China's National Defense Strategy, published in February 2019, the country's conventional might is expanding faster than Russia's. China is so wealthy that it can afford to keep

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen J. Cimbala, "Chinese Military Modernization: Implications for Strategic Nuclear Arms Control," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (2015): 11–18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26271072>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 13

¹¹⁰ Edward Wong, "Chinese Military Seeks to Extend Its Naval Power," *The New York Times*, April 23, 2010, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/world/asia/24navy.html>.

¹¹¹ Roger Cliff et al., "Chinese Concepts for the Employment of Air Forces," in *Shaking the Heavens and Splitting the Earth*, Chinese Air Force Employment Concepts in the 21st Century (RAND Corporation, 2011), 47–84, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg915af.11>.

its army branches, notably the PLA, on the cutting edge of military technology. When speaking to China, senior USA Air Force members no longer use the term "near-peer enemy."¹¹²

Over the last two decades, the PLA has taken a "great leap ahead," gradually replacing its aging fleet, which was built on the license of older Soviet generations of combat aircraft, with a contemporary, fourth-generation force that has analogs for almost every piece of USA Air Force equipment. It now has the most advanced aircraft, drones, and transport planes. Furthermore, it also has a missile with similar capabilities to the USA missiles. It was also able to make exact copies of the aircraft used by the USA.¹¹³

Over the previous decade, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Algeria received the lion's share of China's military shipments. Over the same time, SIPRI reports that China has been a top supplier of armed UAVs (drones) to countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The nations bordering the Indian Ocean are listed below.

3.4. Expansion of the Chinese Navy:

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of ships being launched. According to reports, between 2017 and 2019, China constructed more ships than India, Japan, Australia, France, and the United Kingdom combined. Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schonbach said of Germany observed in 2021 that China is adding the size of the whole French fleet every four years to its navy. At least 28 ships were commissioned into the Chinese navy in 2021, whereas the United States only commissioned 11. Seven ships were ready to be commissioned into the Navy that year. If current trends continue, China might commission 425 combat force ships by 2030.¹¹⁴

Chinese shipyards have increased the output of corvettes of the Jiangdao class (Type 056). By the end of 2021, 72 of the Type 056 corvettes will have been commissioned since their introduction in 2013. About 20–22 were transferred to the Chinese Coast Guard, leaving between 50 and 52 in

¹¹² Cordesman, "China's New 2019 Defense White Paper."

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹⁴ Alexandra Stevenson, "China Launches Third Aircraft Carrier in Major Milestone for Xi Jinping," *The New York Times*, June 17, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/17/world/asia/china-aircraft-carrier.html>.

PLAN service. According to reports, China finished its last Type 056 corvette in early 2020 and ceased manufacturing to prioritize its blue-water capabilities.¹¹⁵

The Chinese navy's capabilities are expanding in dynamic areas. According to RAND report, the percentage of "modern" ships in the PLAN fleet increased to above 70% in 2017 from less than 50% in 2010. Larger Chinese ships can carry more sophisticated weapons and technological features. For example, the PLAN's first Type 055 cruisers (which displace more than 3900 and 4900 tones heavier than the Type 052D destroyer) have only become part of its navy (in 2019).¹¹⁶ The Type 055 can contribute to area defense while accompanying Chinese aircraft carriers on blue Seas because of its 112 Vertical Launch System (VLS) missile cells. China is likewise in the lead when it comes to the total tonnage of newly launched ships. Between 2014 and 2018, China launched ships with a total tonnage of 678,000, which is more than the combined tonnage of the fleets of France and Spain. In a positive development, the PLAN's overall tonnage is still less than that of the USA Navy, in 2018, it was projected that there was a three million tone disparity between the two fleets. The USA has 11 aircraft carriers, each displacing about 100,000 tones, which is a major factor in the disparity.¹¹⁷

China's rising shipbuilding capabilities have supported the PLAN fast growth. During the mid-1990s, China could update its shipbuilding facilities and operating procedures because of a booming economy and joint ventures with two key USA allies in the region. Modernizing and expanding these shipyards has greatly magnified the Chinese ability to produce all kinds of ships that can be used for transport and war, as stated by the Department of Defense.¹¹⁸ These developments have also aided China's ascent to the status of a commercial shipbuilding superpower. From a low of 1 million gross tones in 1996, China's merchant shipbuilding output soared to a peak of 39 million gross tones in 2011, more than double Japan's output that year. By

¹¹⁵ Bruce A. Elleman, *The Making of the Modern Chinese Navy: Special Historical Characteristics* (Anthem Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvndv98k>.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁷ Stew Magnuson, "China's Navy Takes Great Leap Forward," *National Defence* 98, no. 725 (2014): 22–24, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27020331>.

¹¹⁸ Jude Blanchette et al., "Hidden Harbors: China's State-Backed Shipping Industry" (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25234>.

2020, Chinese shipbuilders had seized more than 40 percent of the worldwide market (by tonnage).¹¹⁹

For almost fifteen years, the idea of a series of bases in the Indian Ocean has been discussed. The idea stems from the assumption that China is constructing these ports in India's neighbors as part of a larger strategy to limit the country's influence in the region. Though the motivations for this kind of infrastructure development might be debated, numerous Chinese experts have offered considerable commentary on the topic.¹²⁰

According to Liang Meng, because the USA and India are making efforts to contain China, therefore, it is reasonable for China to start BRI. Shi Hongyan, while discussing China's reliance on the Indian Ocean, makes the point that the Indian Islands are playing the role of an iron wall preventing China from accessing the IOR.¹²¹

Three experts from the Naval Academy of Military Science argue that the only option for China to increase its sea power is via the expansion of the IOR, which directly addresses China's desire for military facilities in the region.¹²² They argue that the absence of grounds is a nutritional deficiency that has remained short of the development of interest of the Chinese nation in their writing. They think China should build a place that gives it a strategic advantage in the area, but that it must be selected through careful consideration. These outposts have the potential to play significant roles in the strategic development of China's maritime might as supply and support hubs. Along with Pakistan's Gwadar, the Chinese have ports in Tanzania, Sri Lanka, and other places of the IOR¹²³

They recognize the potential for raised eyebrows and advocate for a methodical approach to cutting into Indian and American sea power. China has already established a strategic strongpoint in

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Darshana M. Baruah, "Introduction," *India in the Indo-Pacific*: (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24919.5>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Raja Menon, "India's Response to China's Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean," *Asia Policy*, no. 22 (2016): 41–48, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24905107>.

¹²³ Ibid.

Djibouti, and a new deal grants the PLAN access to a Cambodian naval port which also gives it important access to the IOR so that any possible sites would be in addition to those.¹²⁴

Several official Chinese papers and insightful academic studies of Chinese perspectives on the Indian Ocean Region have been highlighted above. The issue of whether these are just test flights or part of a well-defined strategy for the area is crucial. The PLAN's limited but everlasting presence in the northern Indian Ocean and the Chinese facility in Djibouti show that China and India have clear Indian Ocean ambitions.¹²⁵

A PLAN berth is one of six at Djibouti's Doraleh Multipurpose Port, conveniently located near the Chinese facility. However, these actions show little investment and lack a defined strategic goal. This is most readily available in the many Belt and Road Initiatives now underway on the continents bordering the Indian Ocean. Several areas' governments are building ports, which might signify economic and connectivity priorities rather than establishing long-term military installations.¹²⁶ The size of China's navy and the measures being made to provide blue Sea capabilities are more accurate indicators. For its carrier fleet, the PLAN has constructed two Type 901 quick combat support ships and eight big supply ships, some of which have seen action in the Indian Ocean. Before a fleet is fully operational in the Indian Ocean, Beijing is unlikely to proclaim one openly, and even then, it may not name it a fleet for political reasons.¹²⁷

The Government's official papers, Belt and Road port developments, and most significantly, a consistent and expanding effort to equip blue water-qualified battleships suggest that the PLAN is gathering all the required requisites to maintain such a fleet. These three components are the foundational pillars of such an endeavor's political, logistical, and security support. For a China that views the USA as an adversary committed to obstructing China's growth, an armada and

¹²⁴ "Chinese Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean Region on JSTOR," accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45341073>.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²⁶ Muhammad Abbas Hassan, "Growing China-India Competition in the Indian Ocean: Implications for Pakistan," *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 1 (2019): 77–89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544289>.

¹²⁷ Nan Li, "China's Evolving Naval Strategy and Capabilities in the Hu Jintao Era," *Assessing the People's Liberation Army in the Hu Jintao Era* (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2014), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11946.10>.

prospective base structure like this would be a vital bulwark for actual or suspected American hegemony in the area.¹²⁸

Professor Sarosh Bana, of a Chinese university, openly admits the difficulties of producing aircraft carriers ready for combat and cautions that the new aircraft carriers would not quickly transform China's naval capabilities when discussing using a carrier in the IOR.¹²⁹

Not only does he warn that unprepared carriers can be taken hostage, but those weak ones can be easily located, mapped, and attacked from the air, the surface, and the depths. Some Chinese experts have raised worries about the dangers they will face in the IOR, prompting the issue of why the PLAN would want to have it in the IOR.¹³⁰

During the last several decades, China has been steadily building up a fleet of land- and sea-based anti-ship missiles and anti-submarine missiles. Over-the-horizon missiles give the PLAN a significant advantage over a hulking aircraft carrier that must be constantly protected if wars occur in international waters.¹³¹

It was not the first time these issues were discussed. It was also discussed in the US, where experts argued that missile technology has become so advanced that the usefulness of carriers is in question. Because missiles can easily hit aircraft carriers. Although China does not have a carrier in the IOR, it still has good ships in the Indian Ocean.¹³²

Several Chinese maritime security experts have expressed that by deploying an aircraft carrier, China is going to send this message to the world that China is considerable power in world affairs. Many of them are well aware of the risks associated with operating a carrier; however, having

¹²⁸ Weixing Hu, "The United States, China, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy: The Rise and Return of Strategic Competition," *China Review* 20, no. 3 (2020): 127–42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26928114>.

¹²⁹ Sarosh Bana, "Sea Power: The Rise of the Aircraft Carrier in the Asia-Pacific," *World Affairs* 178, no. 3 (2015): 43–50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24888114>.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ David C. Gompert, "Technological Change," in *Sea Power and American Interests in the Western Pacific* (RAND Corporation, 2013), 119–54, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt2tt8zr.12>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

prestige is more important for them.¹³³ The vastness of the Indian Ocean also makes it hard to imagine how useful a carrier would be. A carrier may be thousands of miles away if fighting breaks out, making its arrival days or weeks away at best.¹³⁴

Smaller boats, in case of war, can provide more coverage to Chinese interest in the IOR than the big carrier. China is also adopting this policy so far in the IOR. According to the Naval War College, China possesses about a hundred ships and submarines that can operate in the Indian Ocean. They might be an effective deterrent if combined with regional bases. The PLAN's footprint in the area is rapidly growing.¹³⁵ The Indian Navy claims that between 5 and 7 Chinese naval warships are always present in the Northern Indian Ocean. The vast majority of these ships are engaged in enforcing the law against pirates, which is a valuable public service. The PLAN learns invaluable lessons from these drills about how to conduct operations in the open ocean because they get the experience of managing logistics away from home ports and familiarizing themselves with the ocean currents in this region. In contrast, any PLAN flotilla in the area would be helpless against a state armed with naval aviation or close-by land-based fighter planes if they had adequate air protection. Furthermore, these deployments remain pale compared to the area's massive American and Indian naval forces.¹³⁶

The Chinese navy's power to expand its power in the IOR is obstructed by its air force. China does not have a strong air force compared to the USA or India in IOR. While the PLAN will ultimately perfect carrier-based aviation, it will remain limited to low-risk missions like evacuating civilians and dealing with pirates.¹³⁷

¹³³ "The Illusion of Power: Aircraft Carriers and US Military Strategy on JSTOR," accessed September 9, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep04854#metadata_info_tab_contents.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Zack Cooper, "Security Implications of China's Military Presence in the Indian Ocean" (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2018), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22300>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ "Yes, China Has the World's Largest Navy. That Matters Less Than You Might Think.," accessed September 9, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/yes-china-has-the-worlds-largest-navy-that-matters-less-than-you-might-think/>.

3.5 Chinese Influence in the Indian Ocean Region:

China is using its economic and military power to seek a strategic place in the Indian Ocean Region of the IOR. It was shown by the Chinese Foreign minister's visit to these island nations at the start of 2022. These island nations include Comoros, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, China is also making an effort to increase relations with other African countries.¹³⁸

Even in India's maritime backyard, and South Asian waterways, Wang's visit is an effort to challenge the Indian claims of its relations with the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The Himalayan border dispute has been the most visible manifestation of India's worsening relations with China in recent years. However, Beijing has maintained study pressure on India via investment and security support extended to the Maldives and Sri Lanka.¹³⁹

India has long considered these two island republics part of its influence as these two states are its closest neighbors. Despite some ups and downs in relations, China has considerable importance in these two countries.¹⁴⁰

Beijing uses the inherent inclination of smaller countries to strive to balance a larger neighbor to its advantage, even though New Delhi technically benefits from closeness due to geography.

In addition, India's closeness creates issues since close neighbors tend to have repeated disagreements while a country that does not near handles relationships with countries strategically. Disputes between Asia's two superpowers have seeped into local politics like the Maldives and Sri Lanka, where rival parties rally support from India or China.¹⁴¹

While Beijing remained greatly focused on its backyard in East Asia, it is keeping a wary eye on the Indian Ocean. China considers an imaginary term spread by the USA. Despite rising tensions

¹³⁸ Andrew Wasike, "Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Arrives in Kenya," News and Analysis, AA, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/chinese-foreign-minister-wang-yi-arrives-in-kenya/2466576>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ N Sathiya Moorthy, "India and Maldives: Towards Consolidation" (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2010), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09079>.

¹⁴¹ Anthony Bergin, David Brewster, and Aakriti Bachhawat, "Indian Ocean Island States," Ocean Horizons (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2019), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23122.6>.

at home as China threatens Taiwan, Beijing has never stopped working to promote Chinese interests in IOR. There is little doubt that China is pursuing a two-ocean policy, even though the Pacific is more important to Beijing than the far western frontier.¹⁴²

Located inside the traditional Anglo-American orbit, Nairobi has deep military links to its previous colonial power, Britain and the United States. Regarding competing with Beijing in the Indo-Pacific, Washington and London are coming to regard East Africa as a vital component of the puzzle. Beijing has been closely watching the Seychelles, Comoros, Mauritius, and Madagascar in the western Indian Ocean as China's interest in Africa's expanding economy grows. China has been increasing its interactions with the island states in the Indian Ocean because they might all play an important role in a future Chinese naval force.¹⁴³ Comoros, which overlooks the Mozambique Channel, a vital waterway connecting the southern African continent with Madagascar, may suddenly be a Chinese target. The Chinese Foreign minister is also trying to increase its relations with Comoros. This was his first visit to Comoros.¹⁴⁴

Wang visited Eritrea, a strategically located country on the Red Sea, and Kenya, the biggest economy in East Africa and a historical nexus of commerce between the Indo-Pacific regions. China has established a substantial commercial footprint in Kenya, while Eritrea has just joined China's Belt and Road Initiative. However, once a USA naval installation was located in Kenya, Beijing and Nairobi denied rumors that they were planning to build a Chinese navy base there. A recent analysis of Chinese military strength by the USA Department of Defense has shown that the Chinese government is exploring the possibility of establishing military facilities in many African nations, including Kenya.¹⁴⁵

By visiting the Maldives and Sri Lanka after leaving Comoros, Wang demonstrates Beijing's holistic view of these island nations in the western and central Indian Ocean. It's not only China

¹⁴² David Scott, "China's Indo-Pacific Strategy: The Problems of Success," *The Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies* 6, no. 2 (2019): 94–113, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26912752>.

¹⁴³ Oscar M. Otele, "Rethinking African Agency within China-Africa Relations through the Lens of Policy Transfer: A Framework for Analysis," *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development, and International Affairs* 43, no. 1 (2016): 75–102, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45342127>.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Wasike, "Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Arrives in Kenya."

and Japan that consider the islands of the IOR to be part of their extended neighborhood; India is doing the same. India is engaged in a heated geopolitical conflict with China in neighboring countries, but it has yet to affect Comoros.¹⁴⁶

The Maldives came under British rule, and after gaining independence in 1965, both countries established strong ties. When China began to focus its military attention on the Indian Ocean at the start of the 21st century, it didn't take long for the country to recognize the Maldives' strategic location near numerous important water routes. Rangoli Mitra said in his article published in "The Diplomat" on January 19, 2022, China made significant inroads into the Maldives when President Abdulla Yameen, who took office in 2013, reversed the country's long-standing policy of friendly relations with India. In 2014, the Chinese President visited both island countries and established close ties with them. Free trade agreements also happened between these countries, and the number of Chinese tourists visiting these countries also increased. Furthermore, China also started many projects after this visit.

After voters in the Maldives toppled Chinese inclined president in 2018, the new administration of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih prioritized paying down the country's enormous debt to China, put a hold on the free trade agreement, and started adopting the old foreign policy and opposed China. It was now New Delhi's time to take swift action by providing substantial financial aid, launching infrastructure projects, and otherwise strengthening connections with the Maldives. However, some recent presidential opponents at home have begun a campaign against India, claiming that India is undermining Maldivian sovereignty by maintaining a military presence and actively pushing to establish a navy base there.¹⁴⁷

While the Maldives' government has denied the allegations, the campaign's success cannot be denied. The Maldives' volatile support for China and India stems from infighting among the country's tiny political elite. Sri Lanka, with a population of over 21 million people, is almost 40

¹⁴⁶ Christian Bouchard and Shafick Osman, "Indian Ocean Islands: Geopolitics, Ocean, Environment," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 13, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 131–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2017.1328017>.

¹⁴⁷ N. Sathiya Moorthy, "India-Maldives Relations: Solih's Recent Visit to India," ORF, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-maldives-relations/>.

times that of the Maldives; thus, the balancing act between New Delhi and Beijing is more difficult and sensitive there.¹⁴⁸

When the civil conflict between the government and opponents was still in its early stages in the early 2000s, China had its time in Sri Lanka. New Delhi backed the Tigers in the 1980s and advocated peace talks between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils in Sri Lanka. Although New Delhi pushed for better treatment of Tamils in Sri Lanka, Beijing fully supported the administration in Colombo and helped it fight the rebel group.¹⁴⁹ New Delhi's approach should capitalize on the country's comparative advantages while preventing Beijing from gaining strategic leverage. Large infrastructure contracts in Sri Lanka, such as those for the construction of Port City Colombo, Hambantota port, and Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, were awarded to China after Colombo's insurrection was crushed in 2009. This was largely seen as a huge strategic success for China. Beijing merely declared "nonintervention."¹⁵⁰

While New Delhi kept up the pressure on Colombo to include the Tamil minority in a federal Sri Lanka, Colombo sped up Chinese projects while halting most significant Indian investments, causing concern in New Delhi. As Colombo sees the risks of taking too much stance on China's side, the tide looks to be moving in favor of New Delhi. Though first directed at India, the Sinhalese majority is starting to direct its sovereignty worries toward China. Sri Lanka asked India for financial help after becoming estranged from the West due to calls for justice for atrocities committed during its civil war against the Tamils and a subsequent profound economic crisis.¹⁵¹

Sri Lanka has started to approve long-delayed Indian projects in Sri Lanka. New Delhi has responded with its assistance package, which gave it the facility for currency and money for other important items.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Gulbin Sultana, "India-Sri Lanka Relations in the Context of India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 12, no. 3 (2017): 227–42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45341995>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 72

¹⁵¹ P. Sahadevan, "India's Changing Relations with Sri Lanka," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 14, no. 1 (2019): 9–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48636695>.

¹⁵² Ibid.9

To expand its port infrastructure, Sri Lanka has extended an offer to the Indian company Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone to build a new terminal in Colombo. The island's underdeveloped western coast, near Trincomalee, is also set to receive clearance for the joint modernization of a strategic oil storage facility. The cancellation of a contract handed to China to establish an energy project on three islands in the oceans dividing Sri Lanka and India was another example of Sri Lanka bending to Indian sensitivities.¹⁵³

Suppose northern Tamils' demonstrations against the energy project were a major factor in abandoning the Chinese project close to Indian Territory. In that case, Beijing is now making overtures to the Tamil elites it long ignored. In the middle of December 2021, the Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Qi Zhenhong visited Jaffna, the capital city of Northern Province, which is home to a large and growing Tamil population. Qi visited a local Hindu temple in addition to meeting with government officials, and he did so in the traditional garb and without covering his chest as is the norm there.¹⁵⁴ If China's ambassador to Sri Lanka is any indication, it is prepared to push the envelope in its geopolitical sparring with India in this region. The current situation in the Maldives and Sri Lanka is more favorable for India. How well India seizes the prospects presently arising in both states is crucial.¹⁵⁵

The tour serves as a warning that China has no intention of backing down, and neither the Maldives nor Sri Lanka can afford to seem antagonistic to Beijing or to reject any Chinese suggestions. Long-term, India won't be able to keep China, the world's second-biggest economy and a significant source of military equipment, away from the islands to its south and east. Playing to New Delhi's strengths is essential while preventing Beijing from gaining strategic leverage. India should strengthen its ties to the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Comoros. India may achieve this by protecting bilateral connections from domestic power struggles and giving these countries more

¹⁵³ Shantanu Roy-Chaudhury, "China, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Hambantota Port Project," *St Antony's International Review* 15, no. 1 (2019): 153–64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27027759>.

¹⁵⁴ Nitin A. Gokhale, "Sri Lanka and the India-China Conundrum," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 10, no. 1 (2015): 9–13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45341005>.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*10

access to its enormous domestic market, promoting cross-border investments, resolving long-standing political conflicts, and decreasing its meddling in these countries internal affairs.¹⁵⁶

3.5. Conclusion:

China is growing economically, and as a result, it is also growing militarily. In recent years, China has been modernizing its military forces. Especially, it is putting more effort into reviving its blue water navy. China also can produce ships faster than any other country. Furthermore, it is also building military bases in different parts of the Indian Ocean region. All these developments lead to creating challenges for the USA presence in IOR. The USA already holds dominance in the maritime domain of Asia. Thus, to maintain its hold in IOR, the USA uses India as an anchor to outweigh China's growing influence. Thus, in turn, the Indo-US alliance system against China's response to rebalance the order certainly create a more intense and competitive security environment in the region.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

Pakistan is an important country in the Indian Ocean region. It has a vast coastline and an important geostrategic location. Therefore, geopolitical competition in the Indian Ocean impacts Pakistan as well. As a result of this geopolitical competition India is becoming strong and which is creating a strategic imbalance for Pakistan. First, this chapter discusses the stakes for Pakistan in the Indian Ocean.¹⁵⁷

4.1. Pakistan's Stakes in the Indian Ocean Region

As a land bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia/the Middle East, Pakistan is well situated to become a hub for Trade and transportation in the area. Six nations in Central Asia and Western China have no other way to reach the ocean but via Pakistan. Pakistan has opened a third port at Gwadar, which is located near the Gulf and should help with traffic flow.¹⁵⁸ It has plans to build a massive train network that would connect several areas, most notably Central Asia. Pakistan also wants to develop oil and gas pipelines with Central Asian Countries like (TAPI) and power grids to meet our growing energy demands and serve as energy corridors for the surrounding region.¹⁵⁹

Pakistan, straddling South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia with borders to Afghanistan, China, India, and Iran with a population of over 160 million, has an area of around 800,000 square kilometers and a per capita national GDP of around 520 U.S. dollars. For the last half-century, Pakistan has held the 161st spot on this list. The population of Pakistan has been growing at a pace

¹⁵⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman et al., “The Indian Ocean Region: South Asia Subregion” (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2016), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23394>.

¹⁵⁸ Qazi Shakil Ahmad, “Pakistan-India Relations: Some Geostrategic Considerations,” *Pakistan Horizon* 57, no. 3 (2004): 13–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41394054>.

¹⁵⁹ Mir Sherbaz Khetran, “The Potential and Prospects of Gwadar Port.” Vol,35, no 1(Winter 2014 and Spring 2015)Journal Article (JSTOR)

of around 2.9% each year, and important social and cultural considerations mean that this trend is not expected to stop very soon.¹⁶⁰

Since 1950, the average yearly rate has been 6%, however, this number is highly dependent on textiles, defense expenditure, and international assistance. The government of Pakistan allocated over 22% of its total expenditures for defense and almost 29% toward debt servicing in the fiscal year 2002/2003, while just 18% was allocated toward internal expenditures for domestic development. While the physical features of the country have not changed, the evolving regional and international dynamics have led to more nuanced understandings of the interests to which they are tied. Pakistan has traditionally helped maintain peace and safety in the Indian Ocean due to the region's strategic significance.¹⁶¹

Pakistan is the only country in the area to have participated in ISAF CTF 150 from its inception in 2004 and to have led the international fleet eight times. In the same way, Pakistan is a part of CTF 151. In addition, Pakistan may potentially become the sixth different nation to command the CTF 151 Navy.¹⁶² Because of the Pakistan Navy's efforts, Pakistan's maritime boundaries are no longer considered dangerous for international commerce and shipping. It's a great step forward for the maritime industry's growth. In a similar vein, we can only hope that Pakistan is a peaceful nation that actively works to strengthen regional stability.¹⁶³

Pakistan's commitment to maintaining peace in the Indian Ocean region has never wavered. This is a clear example of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has always supported international efforts to reduce maritime crime and has advocated for the use of political and military power to advance a just and lasting peace. It is admirable that measures have been done so far to safeguard marine

¹⁶⁰ Jonah Blank, Christopher Clary, and Brian Nichiporuk, "Introduction," in *Drivers of Long-Term Insecurity and Instability in Pakistan*, Urbanization (RAND Corporation, 2014), 1–4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287mdc.9>.

¹⁶¹ Muhammad Azfar Anwar and Zain Rafique, "Defense Spending and National Security of Pakistan: A Policy Perspective," *Democracy and Security* 8, no. 4 (2012): 374–99, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48602724>.

¹⁶² Noman Bashir, "The Pakistan Navy's Role in Peacetime Diplomacy: Emerging Scenario in the Indian Ocean," *Pakistan Horizon* 63, no. 3 (2010): 1–7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24711004>.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

borders and regional and international interests. Looking at the big picture, it is obvious that Pakistan is playing a crucial role in the area due to its position and resources.¹⁶⁴

Examples include working together with friendly nations on marine hazard planning, anti-piracy operations, publicizing the dangers of these risks, and naval security arrangements. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor remained a key aspect for Pakistan, particularly for the development of Balochistan, after the launch of the Belt and Road program.¹⁶⁵

4.2. Importance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for IOR :

The \$46 billion 'China Pakistan Economic Corridor' project, dubbed a 'game changer', is more than a set of highways connecting the Chinese city of Kashgar to the Gulf States via Gwadar in Pakistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides Pakistan with enormous potential for energy and trade development.¹⁶⁶ To date, it is the most valuable product of Pakistan due to its strategic location. Gwadar and other coastal communities will benefit from the expanded economic opportunities made possible by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. As a result of this move, Gwadar is now recognized as a major port and economic hub. Apart from being essential for Pakistan's economic development, the project will also promote local, national and international shipping. To such an extent due to this Pakistan Navy now has to play a major role in maintaining maritime security.¹⁶⁷

After completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Chia will have the quickest path to the markets in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. China sees this as a way to further its long-term strategic goal of replacing the United States as the dominant power in the area, which may be seen as a net positive for Pakistan.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Mustafa, "Maritime Security."

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Muhammad Zahid Ullah Khan and Minhas Majeed Khan, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Opportunities and Challenges," *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 2 (2019): 67–82, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544300>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, and the Gwadar Port in Pakistan allows access to both. Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq all border this gulf. All of these energy-rich nations may be reached via Gwadar port's proximity to the Persian Gulf. Pars Gas Field, the biggest natural gas reserve in the world, is located in the Persian Gulf and is jointly owned by Iran and Qatar.¹⁶⁹ When Pakistan has been in an energy crisis for a long time, its locational advantage rises because of its closeness to mega-fields of natural resources.¹⁷⁰

Due to its position and abundance of resources, Pakistan is crucial to the area. An excellent illustration of this is taking part in multilateral naval exercises, coordinating with other nations to address maritime hazards, and establishing new measures to ensure maritime safety. Nonetheless, the government must develop a thorough plan to safeguard marine commerce and the advantages it brings to the area.¹⁷¹

Promoting connectivity, developing a comprehensive regional framework, and ensuring its successful functioning all depend on building a foundation of trust and confidence amongst the nations in the area via political, commercial, and diplomatic encounters. Through CPEC, Pakistan may potentially serve as a regional connector.¹⁷²

4.3. Opportunities to Connection Countries through Gwadar:

4.3.1. Pak-Russia Connections

Pakistan is eager to work with Russia to strengthen regional stability and advance commercial and economic growth on a global scale. China and Russia have joined the fray as well. Their goal is to secure Afghanistan's peace and stability so that CPEC may be extended there. Russia and

¹⁶⁹ Moonis Ahmar, "Strategic Meaning of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor," *Strategic Studies* 34/35 (2014): 35–49, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48527474>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, "China Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Chinese Dream Being Materialized through Pakistan" (Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2016), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02843>.

¹⁷² Ibid.22

Pakistan's relationship has not always been smooth sailing.¹⁷³ Russia's long-term strategy in South and Central Asia is reflected in its many strategic contacts with neighboring countries. Russia is interested in steel mills and pipeline projects in addition to forging connections in the military sphere. Russia influenced Afghanistan, and Pakistan also collaborated with Russia.¹⁷⁴

In 2017, Russia made its first contact with the Taliban to bring up the problem of drug trafficking from Afghanistan. Now, however, instead of working with the United States to address the Afghan situation, he is advocating for a regional coalition of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. Russia's growing strategic cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan, on top of its existing presence in Central Asia, will have a significant impact on geopolitical dynamics in Eurasia. Through the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan, Russia might join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project at Gwadar.¹⁷⁵

4.3.2. Pakistan-Afghanistan and Central Asian States Connectivity:

The location of Afghanistan in Asia is also quite significant. Afghanistan connects South and Central Asia to the rest of Southwest Asia. The wealthy nations of Central Asia and Iran. Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, and India all have large power reserves. Nations that need to have access to Central Asia since they use a lot of energy. Via way of Afghanistan, one may easily reach Central Asia by land. Similar access to Central Asia is provided by Pakistan. With an area of 652,000 square kilometers, it is the 41st-largest nation in the world¹⁷⁶. This hilly, landlocked nation has a flat, lowland region in its southwestern corner. In terms of global geography, the Northern Hemisphere serves as a kind of hub. The trail to China through Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China. Its length of the border with Pakistan is 2430 kilometers, and with Tajikistan, it is 1206 kilometers. Along with a distance of 936 kilometers with Iran, 744 kilometers with Turkmenistan, 137 kilometers with Afghanistan, and a distance of 75 kilometers

¹⁷³ Muhammad Owais, "Pakistan-Russia Relations: Economic and Political Dimensions," *Pakistan Horizon* 60, no. 2 (2007): 125–39, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41500067>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.50

¹⁷⁵ Tahir Amin, "Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Unfolding 'New Great Game' in South Asia," in *The Regional Security Puzzle around Afghanistan*, ed. Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, 1st ed., Bordering Practices in Central Asia and Beyond (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2016), 191–206, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvbkjzm0.13>.

¹⁷⁶ Mir Sherbaz Khetran, "Economic Connectivity: Pakistan, China, West Asia and Central Asia," *Strategic Studies* 36, no. 4 (2016): 61–76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48535974>.

north and south of Uzbekistan and China.¹⁷⁷ Large Mountain ranges divide most of Afghanistan. The Pamir is related to the Hindu Kush Mountains to the northeast. The countries of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and China are connected, it cuts through Asia from West to East.¹⁷⁸

The processes and obstacles that have arisen after the Alliance of over 40 nations pulled out of Afghanistan are difficult. Afghanistan's future circumstances are seen as potentially having far-reaching implications by the international community, especially the nations in the area. Despite several preventative steps regarding security and border concerns, it is not simple to declare that whatever the situation in Afghanistan will be, it will not affect Pakistan, since Pakistan is most impacted by the situation in Afghanistan. It's also happening on the international level: nations are talking to one other.¹⁷⁹

The new Afghan administration will be inclusive of all social strata. Mentioning the difficulties posed by China and Russia in Afghanistan also appears to signal the beginning of a new tug-of-war.¹⁸⁰ The most pressing concern is whether or not cutting off funding to Afghanistan or preventing Afghanistan from accessing its assets in a US bank would benefit the country. Afghanistan's contribution to regional peace and security, as well as its potential as a center of commerce and economic growth, make it imperative that the international community provide the support necessary for the new Afghan Government to stand on its own.¹⁸¹

Despite the problems mentioned, Afghanistan presents a huge potential as the link between resource-rich central Asian republics and Africa. The world's youngest people will be found in Africa, while the wealthiest nations will be found in Central Asia. Pakistan has the potential to serve as a link between Eurasia and Africa.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.65

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.68

¹⁷⁹ Ali Haider Saleem, "Central and South Asian Energy Projects: Prospects and Challenges for Pakistan," *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 3 (2018): 57–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48539384>.

¹⁸⁰ *Modern Afghanistan: The Impact of 40 Years of War* (Indiana University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv8j6dx>.

¹⁸¹ Chayanika Saxena, "The American Exit, the Fall of Afghanistan and the Indian Dilemmas," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 13, no. 4 (2021): 8–13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48618777>.

¹⁸² Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Lucian Reinfandt, and Yannis Stouraitis, "Migration History of the Afro-Eurasian Transition Zone, c. 300–1500: An Introduction (with a Chronological Table of Selected Events of Political and

4.4. Challenges for Pakistan due to Security Competition between Regional and Extra Regional Countries.

The relationship between Pakistan and India is tense and frosty. To this day, though, bright areas are ruled by the inability to resolve problems. Both nations have shown to be sensible in the face of adversity by handling disagreements and crises amicably and making progress on matters of mutual concern. There have been other instances in the past when the two nations have shown each other their rivers.¹⁸³

Make it official; these two neighbors are developing nuclear power. War is too damaging now to risk with weapons. When handling a crisis, what steps may be taken to lessen the potential for a clash between parties? Stable bilateral ties. When the USA backs India, it creates major problems for Pakistan in the IOR.¹⁸⁴

Countries like Pakistan and India are crucial to the stability of the whole Indian Ocean Region. By working together, the two nations may make considerable progress on global, regional, and national concerns such as rising poverty, high unemployment, and environmental degradation. When that happens, mutual respect is restored, and things may go ahead. Pakistan and India conduct up to \$1.5 billion in legal commerce each year, with another \$2.5 billion passing via smugglers in foreign nations like Dubai, Singapore, etc.¹⁸⁵

The economy of India is expanding at a quicker rate than that of Pakistan. The two nations combine to produce 80% of South Asia's GRP. Pakistan's access to China's massive market of one billion people is contingent on the two nations repairing their strained relationship and working together in commerce and investment. A 10–20% increase in Pakistan's standard of living would double

Migration History),” in *Migration Histories of the Medieval Afroeurasian Transition Zone*, ed. Johannes Preisler-Kapeller, Lucian Reinfandt, and Yannis Stouraitis, Aspects of Mobility between Africa, Asia and Europe, 300-1500 C.E. (Brill, 2020), 1–49, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv2gjwxf8.5>.

¹⁸³ Muhammad Sajjad Malik, “Pakistan-India Relations: An Analytical Perspective of Peace Efforts,” *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 1 (2019): 59–76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544288>.

¹⁸⁴ Sadaf Farooq, Sadia Kazmi, and Javaria Javed, “Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Implications for Pakistan,” *Policy Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2018): 3–20, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13169/polipers.15.1.0003>.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

the size of the country's GDP. Is. India's yearly growth rate is over 8%, whereas Pakistan's is between 2.5% and 3%.¹⁸⁶

Even Nevertheless, it is a truth that India has a greater poverty rate than Pakistan. India continues to have the backing of the United States, Europe, and even the vast majority of Muslim nations in international affairs. However, the geopolitical rivalry is making India stronger, which is posing a security problem for Pakistan. The atmosphere has become hostile, and the Indian administration has taken an aggressive stance against ¹⁸⁷Pakistan. Since this happened, economic ties between Pakistan and other countries have been strained. Because of this, Pakistan's economy is in a lot of trouble.¹⁸⁸

Accordingly, easing measures and regulations would allow Pakistan to import steel, pharmaceuticals, information technology, commodities, and raw materials for a wide range of goods. Coal and iron for Pakistan's steel mills and steel requirements are imported from Australia and Brazil. Pakistan may save 30–40% of its current import expenses if similar products are instead brought in from India. Throughout its history, India has sought to establish its sovereignty over the whole Indian Ocean.¹⁸⁹

New threats in the Indian Ocean are a cause for worry for Pakistan and the surrounding area. This arms race between security threats is significantly aided by India. India's goal has always been to rule the whole Indian Ocean. Has collaborated with several historical powers to make this dream a reality.¹⁹⁰ That whole thing just happened in my head. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister after independence, sided with the Soviet Union against the United States so that Moscow might expand its influence in the Indian Ocean. As a result, India's expectations were

¹⁸⁶ “The Indian Economy on JSTOR,” accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvnjbfk1>.

¹⁸⁷ Martin Ravallion, “A Global Perspective on Poverty in India,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 43 (2008): 31–37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40278099>.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*34

¹⁸⁹ Kishore C. Dash, “India-Pakistan Trade: Opportunities and Constraints,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2013): 169–80, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43134397>.

¹⁹⁰ Colin Geraghty, “India in the Indian Ocean Region: Re-Calibrating U.S. Expectations” (American Security Project, 2012), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06008>.

dashed. In modern times, India has challenged Pakistan by seeking regional domination with the support of the United States.¹⁹¹

More than a thousand kilometers of coastline may be found in Pakistan and its two provinces, Sindh and Baluchistan. Pakistan's territorial sea is mineral and resource-rich along this sliver. Eighty percent or more of Pakistan's commerce is conducted across the ocean. The Pakistan Navy has the important mission of defending regional peace, freedom, and sovereignty. The Pakistan Navy has to beef up its strength and capabilities in light of the rising significance of the Pak-China Economic Corridor and Gwadar. Even Nevertheless, relations between the two countries are improving, particularly in the region around the Indian Ocean. To counter India's expanding naval force in the Arabian Sea, a crucial section of the Indian Ocean, Pakistan has no alternative but to seek closer cooperation and partnership in the maritime sector with China.¹⁹²

India cares deeply about maintaining and improving its military might. Failures in the Design of Rescue Systems and Nuclear Projectile Classification. India's nuclear status prevents it from dealing a significant military blow to Pakistan. Although India desperately needs defenses, introducing a BMD behemoth may not be the answer. This is a genuine battle, but it has the potential to destabilize global affairs. The missile defense system is dual. Swords with blades may be used as a shield against projectiles. But the proliferation of powerful ballistic missiles has the potential to ratchet up tensions.¹⁹³

Due to India's expanding economy and its access to western markets. Pakistan's presence in the Middle East, and notably in the Gulf, will contribute to regional stability and peace and expand Islamabad's sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean. But when India gets the backing of the West, Pakistan has little chance of winning. This will lead to the nuclearization of IOR.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Ibid.111

¹⁹² Ali Zaman Shah, "Geopolitical Significance of Balochistan: Interplay of Foreign Actors," *Strategic Studies* 37, no. 3 (2017): 126–44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48537561>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ G. P. Manish, "Market Reforms in India and the Quality of Economic Growth," *The Independent Review* 18, no. 2 (2013): 241–62, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24563309>.

Strategically, both India and Pakistan are only getting started with their modernization efforts. Both sides have sufficient information to make an educated guess about the other's security. The ability to launch a second attack, as both the size and speed of armies continue to grow. There is no way to defend against the missiles that an enemy is firing using survival techniques. It makes no difference how far away they were previously; they are now completely useless.¹⁹⁵

Therefore, India and Pakistan's nuclear modernization and technological maturity have only just started. Establish strategic stability. For the time being, this is excellent news since it eliminates our greatest vulnerability. For several reasons, including the magnitude of power required to either fulfill or prevent ballistic missile defence, its development is inevitable.¹⁹⁶ It is expected that Indian and Pakistani forces would continue to exercise leadership for some time. Structures for grownups Regardless of how difficult it is to prevent confrontations, they will occur. Despite the debate, there are now less legitimate reasons to start strategic nuclear exchanges than ever before. Pakistan faces threats from several directions, not only from the military.¹⁹⁷

4.5. Challenges to Pakistan's Comprehensive Security

Pakistan is facing many traditional security threats in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan alone cannot fight these challenges. Therefore, a regional corporation is important to overcome these challenges. Due to geopolitical competition, corporations between regional countries can be greatly impacted. For instance, now, QUAD is moving towards the Indian Ocean. China considers NATO of Asia. This will create troubles for Pakistan in dealing with non-traditional security threats when countries' corporations will be based on their geopolitical consideration.¹⁹⁸ Climate change is reducing fisheries resources in Pakistan waters, pollution is destroying biodiversity, and also other forms of NTS threats and other evils need a regional approach. However, geopolitical competition can impact the progress on all these issues.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Aiden Warren and Philip M. Baxter, eds., *Nuclear Modernization in the 21st Century: A Technical, Policy, and Strategic Review*, Modern Security Studies (London ; New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Masood Khan, "Pakistan: Security Challenges and Opportunities," *Pakistan Horizon* 68, no. 3/4 (2015): 9–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44988235>.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Secondly, Pakistan can face challenges in the completion of CPEC. This project is important to Pakistan for the development of the least developed project in Balochistan. Pakistan can become a gateway to the Euro-Asian Afro connectivity. China and Pakistan consider these projects for purely economic purposes.²⁰⁰ However, the USA and India think that these ports can be used for military purposes as well. These ports are the way through which China can challenge America and India in the IOR. Baluchistan is facing low conventional warfare for a very long time. Pakistan always maintained that India is behind the insurgency in Balochistan. Therefore, if geopolitical competition intensifies then these projects can be impacted in two ways: first, the US can sanction these projects and companies associated with the, and secondly, proxy warfare can intensify.²⁰¹

These challenges can impact the comprehensive security of Pakistan. It will impact the economic security of Pakistan because Pakistan's economy is in bad shape. It needs foreign direct investment and also Pakistan can use its location to become a connecting point in the region. American sanctions can impact both of these dimensions. If economic security impacts, then human security will also get impacted by these issues.²⁰²

Human insecurity can create challenges for the social contract between the state and the people. Resentment already exists against the Pakistani state in these areas. Therefore, foreign actors can easily exploit this resentment and create security issues. It will impact the development of the blue economy. Coastal communities which are already facing challenges can be impacted. All these issues are endangering the security of Pakistan.²⁰³

4.6. Conclusion:

The Indian Ocean is important for Pakistan because Pakistan can utilize its geostrategic location to enhance its economy and provide comprehensive security to the people. However, due to the

²⁰⁰ Muhammad Faisal, "CPEC and Regional Connectivity: Navigating the South Asian Politics," *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 2 (2019): 1–17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544296>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ishrat Husain, "Economic Highs and Lows of Pakistan: Analysing the Last 70 Years," 70 Years of Development: (Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2019), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24393.7>.

²⁰³ Masood Khan, "Pakistan: Security Challenges and Opportunities," *Pakistan Horizon* 68, no. 3/4 (2015): 9–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44988235>.

geopolitical competition, India is becoming stronger which is creating strategic instability. This creates a security dilemma for Pakistan and makes corporation difficult for Pakistan with India, which results in economic loss. Intensified competition in the IOR can further impede cooperation on NTS issues and also can create comprehensive security challenges for Pakistan.

Pakistan's 70% of energy trade passes through the blue water and IOR. This trade potential can be challenged during intense environments. More weaponization of the IOR leads to creating military threats for Pakistan too. To rebalance its position in IOR Pakistan has to initiate a renewed policy to maximize gains and minimize threats.

CHAPTER 5

5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Findings:

1. The Indian Ocean is Pakistan's primary trading route. It has a sizable economic zone, the seaports of Karachi, Bin Qasim, and Gwadar, as well as a lengthy coastline. Pakistan has prioritized maintaining a strong naval presence in the Indian Ocean area for political and economic reasons. Safe shipping channels are the backbone of every sustainable economy. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under BRI has altered public perceptions of China's global ambitions.
2. Central Asia, Russia, and China will find Pakistan among the most appealing international trading routes. Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed upon a 103-kilometer-long railway route between Chaman and Kandahar, with plans to expand it to Turkmenistan and beyond. Regarding opening up commerce and transportation routes and gaining access to ports, Pakistan is a crucial country for neighboring governments.
3. At the mouth of the Gulf, Pakistan, and China have constructed a new port known as Gwadar. Utilizing existing infrastructure and developing new ports and infrastructure are top priorities for Pakistan such as Gwadar port. Looking at a map, Pakistan's proximity to the Indian Ocean seems inescapable. Passing via Afghanistan to Pakistan is the quickest way to reach any Central Asian republic. In this way, Pakistan becomes significant. With the help of Afghanistan and China, Pakistan is strengthening its alliance with CARs. After completing the necessary feasibility studies, Pakistan will construct a railway track extending from Quetta to Kandahar, a distance of about 10 to 12 kilometers (km).
4. It is planned that Pakistan constructs a \$90 million road across Borugal Pass in the Yarkhun Valley to link it to the CARs. Brutal Pass is the most direct and least steep route from the Chitral province into Afghanistan.
5. After winter, it shuts for a few months. The route will reach Wakhan, a key area in northeastern Afghanistan that ranges in width from 13 km to 65 km.

6. Pakistan's northern and western borders are defined by the narrow Wakhan Belt in Afghanistan, while its northern and eastern borders are defined by Tajikistan and China, respectively.
7. The Central Afghanistan route has been de-emphasized in favor of the Wakhan-Borukhel route, number 13. The road will go from the Boroghal Pass, located northwest of Markham Valley in Chitral, to the 95-kilometer-long border crossing at Wakhan and the Saksham district of Tajikistan, and then on to the country's capital, Dushanbe.
8. Pakistan (KPK/GB) is linked to Tajikistan through Afghanistan (Wakhan Corridor) and China's narrow belt. The construction of many roads between Gilgit and Chitral has already been authorized. Trade between the member nations along the Karakoram Highway is projected to rise due to a quadrilateral agreement between Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.
9. In the Indian Ocean, Pakistan faces a wide range of non-traditional security risks. Pakistan's efforts to overcome these obstacles are doomed to fail. Since these difficulties are regional in scope, regional cooperation is crucial. Corporations between regional nations may be significantly influenced by geopolitical rivalry. For example, at the moment, Quad is heading into the Indian Ocean. China views Asia's NATO as a potential threat.
10. Secondly, there may be obstacles to CPEC's completion in Pakistan. Pakistan needs to invest in this project so that the least developed region of Balochistan may be improved. Pakistan has the potential to serve as a crossroads for trade between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Both China and Pakistan see these projects as having a solely commercial motivation.
11. Nevertheless, the United States and India are concerned that these ports may be exploited for military operations. These harbors are key to China's strategy for competing with the United States and India in the Indian Ocean. For a very long time, Baluchistan has been at low risk in conventional combat. Pakistan has claimed that India is funding and supporting the conflict in Balochistan.
12. Therefore, if geopolitical rivalry heats up, these projects will be affected in two ways: first, the United States will penalize these projects and corporations linked with them, and second, proxy warfare will increase. All-around security in Pakistan may be threatened by

issues like these, as stated on the 23rd. In light of Pakistan's already precarious economy, this will affect the country's safety.

13. Pakistan needs to attract FDI, and the country may also leverage its strategic position to serve as a hub for trade in the area. Both of these factors may be affected by the United States sanctions. If economic security is threatened, human security will also be threatened.
14. Twenty-fifth, the breakdown of trust between the state and its citizens due to insecurity might threaten the social compact. There is preexisting animosity against the Pakistani state in these regions. This animosity may be readily used by other parties to create safety concerns.

5.2. Recommendations:

1. Pakistan has to work more closely with China and other regional and extra-regional powers to ensure the safety of its seas and land.
2. Because of the Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, more shipping and docking will happen along our coasts. The government invests heavily in updating the Navy and its land channels, acquiring new weapons, and drafting regulations for maritime safety.
3. . Abroad seeks larger safety relationships with Russia and China, including joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean, the exchange of navy officials, and the ratification of military alliances and strategic coalitions to maintain a stable balance of power. Defense and regional capacities need to be bolstered in Pakistan to better respond to threats to maritime security.
4. When it comes to the events unfolding in the Indian Ocean, point four, you cannot turn a blind eye.
5. Pakistan's strategic alliance with China must be protected and expanded upon as it has no other option. Another viewpoint is to acknowledge American and Indian preeminence. Pakistan and China have worked together for quite some time, but they need to take drastic and urgent measures to preserve, strengthen, and grow their partnership.

6. The East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement, which threatens China's security, is one of the terrorist organizations targeted by these actions, along with foreign funding to C-Pak in Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (which is the lifeblood of CPEC).
7. Seventh, Pakistan has to create a foreign policy that considers various factors, not only its ties with a select few nations.
8. As stated in the eighth paragraph, Pakistan must ensure that Gwadar is solely utilized for commercial purposes and not for military purposes.
9. Pakistan must take on much responsibility in the Indian Ocean. Our location is strategically important. As a crossroads, three distinct cultures converge here. India and other countries like it have had to rethink their marine plans in response to China's development in this region.

Pakistan must fix its problems and improve its economy and social safety net before other countries may take advantage of the country's divisions.

5.3. Conclusion:

Historically, the Indian Ocean remained an important route for trade. Different empires ruled it. Its significance increased after the discovery of oil in the Middle East. When China started growing its economy, its dependence also increased on the IOR. Furthermore, China also started BRI, which led to the development of different port facilities in the IOR. In addition, China also started growing economically and will replace the US economically. In addition, it started modernizing its weapon program and developing its navy. To counter these developments, the US started balancing approaching the Indian Ocean region, supporting India to stop China from changing the status quo. India has also started developing its navy and establishing relations with different countries. The US and India consider Chinese projects in IOR as strategic; however, China considers them for economic purposes. Pakistan is also a CPEC and a close ally of China. Intensified geopolitical competition can create multiple challenges for the comprehensive security of Pakistan.

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