

# INDIA - CHINA RELATIONS MARITIME RELATIONS AND DIMENSIONS

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## Abstract

Chinese interest in its maritime neighbors can be traced to ancient times and this has included not just the south China Sea but also the distant corners both the Pacific as well as the Indian Ocean. If that was the case with ancient sea Farers from China six centuries ago. Closer home, the Kingdoms at Southern India established their sway over large parts at South east Asia. Not only them, western India also housed the great admiral Kangoji Angre, who successfully kept all attendees, including later day colonial master at bay due to .... powers. India and China understood the Importance of Sea and made determined attempts to conquer them and exercise control in distant areas since times immemorial. Though both nations were characterized by a reduced interest in maritime affairs for some time, a sustained GDP growth and robust economy have revived this interest in these two Asian giants, in this Indian era.

**Key words :** Maritime, Strategic Nuclear Deterrence, Energy dependents, Encirclement, Mercantile Trade.

## Introduction

The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean. A large percentage at the world's Shipping Transits the Indian Ocean, Mostly through choke points such as Strait of Hormuz, Babb-el-Mandeb, The Malacca strait, the Six Degree Channel and the Nine Degree Channel, to name a few. The huge resources of the middle East, East Africa and Western Australia heed enormous beigest to the geopolitical significance of the Indian Ocean Region. Although China and India have Land border disputes in the Kashmir and Arunachal Sectors, the two countries have no contesting claims in the Indian Ocean. There is, however, unease and distrust in India about the presence and interties of China's people's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the Indian Ocean.

China's economic development is beadily dependent on energy products that are sourced from the Persian Gulf and East Africa that are

transported across the Indian Ocean. Oil imported from the Persian Gulf State and African Comprises to 70 percent of China's total oil imports. China is the world largest oil importer and consumer. Transporting oil from the Persian Gulf and East Africa via the Indian Ocean coil remain its primary mode of energy import for the fore seeable future. Energy security is China's stated reason for HS anti - piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia. To safeguard China's

Commercial interests and energy security, it is necessary for the plan to be present in the Indian ocean Regions. Equally, for India's Commercial Interests, it is necessary for the Indian Navy (IN) to deploy in the Indian Ocean. These measures are not adversely and should not be perceived as being so.

The modernization of PLA Navy was caused a lot of not just in its neighborhood but in the distance corners of the world. China's maritime powers is growing in strength with sustained economic positives. China have a well oriented police to increase their maritime clout particularly in the Indian Ocean.

### **Energy Dependence**

The acute dependence of China on energy products from around the world is yet another factor that has compelled the Chinese to start stepping out of the confines of the Malacca Strains. Over 80 percent of the energy flow into China is through the Malacca Strains. China's economy is dependent on the ability of the Chinese Government to maintain sustained energy supplies through the seas. The most popular handle used is the investment in the target country and a dedicated effort to build linkages that could serve as leverages in the hour of need.

### **1. India's Emergence as a Regional Power Centre**

Indian Navy's growth in the region has been quite impressive and there is no one within the immediate neighborhood who could match the might of the Navy. At the time when the Indian Navy was growing at a rapid pace, China went to the extent of publicly declaring that Indian Ocean is not India's ocean clearly indicating that it would challenge the maritime supremacy of India in its backyard. China which is dependent on the critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) would want to address issues of vulnerability of SLOCs that crise-cross under the watchful eyes of Indian surveillance architecture.

### **2. Policy of Encirclement**

China has been assiduously building spheres of influence in India's neighborhood to further its national objectives. Pakistan has remained a strong ally for over five decades and there is convergence of ideas and thoughts about containing India. In a calculated move, China has invested heavily or is planning to build deep water ports not only in Pakistan but also in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. It is also looking at Bangladesh as a friend who would perhaps open up its port for the use by the Chinese in need. That is their strategy and they are doing it to come over here and

we present in the Indian Ocean in large numbers.

### **3. Fears of Strategic alliance of those preserved as inimical to growth of China**

China has always viewed with suspicion the US led initiatives in the Indian Ocean - Bay of Bengal for co-ordinate Naval exercises. The accompanied exercise conducted in 2007 a month US, Japan, Australia, UK, Singapore and India was seen as groping of those who wanted to convey a message to China about the coming together of democratic against what was preserved as the undemocratic government that ignored human rights.

### **4. Requirement of Tackling maritime terrorism**

The number of attack in the Malacca straits has come down dramatically, the increasing incidents of Somalia Water is a matter of serious concern for all maritime nations including China. While many nations did send their men of whiter to patrol the water of Somalia, India send a strong message by asserting nation by singing a commandeer vassal that was bring used for hijacking ships. China did not want to be left behind as the opportunity presented China to test out for itself its own capacity to operate in distant water and also to send a strong message to observes around the world. After its successful and sustained operations in Navy but also its intentions

### **5. Peaceful Development :**

The Chinese have publicity adopted a strategy of peaceful development for growth. However under the garb of peaceful development, China is spending a lot of money towards military modernization with a view to be able to possess the military might that would provide the essentiality tool of foreign policy. The main adversary is US with its known displeasure with China on may counts including the human rights record. However, both China and US have dependent economics and there are limits to posturing. That would remain within a certain sphere of actions that would not go out of hand. Depending on the situation, definitive amount of saber rattling would be witnessed with self imposed restraint on both sides to see that the situation does not go out of hand. Indian Ocean therefore forms part of this peaceful development in which China would continue to invest in the Indian neighborhood economically, politically and also in other spheres of mutual interest. The response of India and other nations would depend on how they view military modernization and economic growth as threats or as opportunities for mutual cooperation.

### **6. Ship Building and Mercantile Trade :**

China is way ahead in terms of its ship building capacity and in terms of its mercantile trade. The ports serve the import export needs of the country not merely for energy but also for receiving raw materials and exporting finished products which have captive markets in

the west and also in many other parts of the globe. Unlike India, China's shipping is completely state owned and is fully supported in its expansion plans. Chinese are competing with the best ship yards for ship production. It may be recalled that in a global tender, China was kept out of a port only on security considerations.

### **India's Maritime foreign policy in the Indian Ocean Region**

China has an edge in the IOR region. However, a dispassionate analysis clearly illustrated a straightly different point of view. A closer examinations of the maritime relations in the IOR would reveal facts which may actually place India in a slightly better place.

### **Srilanka**

Historical and cultural relations that have existed for the centuries, the relation between two neighbors have been good. There were a of course phases of strained relations view to the Tamil factor. However this remained a factor only till for the former prime minister of India Rajeev Gandhi. Successive government including coalition governments at the centre have not given any quarter to the supporters of the LTTE. India provided material and moral support the fight against the LTTE with full knowledge of its tracker record of violence extortion, child recruitment, illegal trade and drug peeling.

Sri Lanka has gained from its friendly relations with India, Pakistan and China in its war against the LTTE.

### **Bangladesh**

The Arabian sea is the port of the origin in the scheme of pings for the Chinese, ports in Bangladesh are on the radar scan of China for the developing dependency ports. There is talk of accessing some of the ports of Bangladesh through the network of road and rivers from China. Depending on the government in power in Bangladesh, the relation with India go through a cycle of up and down. The Chinese would have plans for engaging Bangladesh investments and also by supplying essential military hardware including ship. Bangladesh also has maritime border disputes with both India and Myanmar. It is not that the Bangladesh may be would be in a position to take on the might of the Indian Navy. It is here that the Chinese initiatives are the importance in the bay of Bengal.

### **Myanmar**

India's distanced itself from the military junta for a long time as it felt that democratic processes were suppressed and human rights were constantly abused. The Chinese had no great respect for human rights and found it easy to engage with the military rules Myanmar. The supply of arms and ammunition and excellent relations that China enjoyed wither Myanmar was not comforting for India. It appears that not much can be built on the coco island, yet it is significant that this island bears the first footprint of China in the Bob.

## Pakistan

China and Pakistan have enjoyed excellent strategic and military cooperation for many decades due to India being identified as a common enemy. The opportunity for getting foot holder close to the strait of humus cum the chimes day when Pakistan was looking at developing another port along the maharini coast. The China readily jumped at the opportunity and investment he ably in the port development. Unlike Sreelanka, Pakistan did not providing all facilities to China who has stood by Pakistan in its honor of need through all the sixty two years of Pakistan's existence.

## Coclusion

India has also done well in initiating a forum called 'Milan' which has been active for over a decade now and has brought together the natives from the region and allowed come to them to interact on professional, social and cultural platforms provided at port of blair Andaman & Nicobar group of Islands. Also the offer of India for conducting training in combating terrorism has been well received and the Indian coast guard have been regularly conducting the necessary training for the participants from several countries identified in the ASCIAN regional forum. From the point of maritime strategy, whatever moves are initiated by China in the Indian Ocean, all need to be countered not only in our backyard but should also be complimented by our proactive but non offensive actions in the China's backyard.

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