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**SINO-INDIAN RIVALRY FOR REGIONAL  
DOMINANCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

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**MASTER OF ARTS THESIS**

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## ÖZET

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Bu tez, Hint Okyanusunda hakimiyet kurabilmek için Çin ve Hindistan arasında yaşanan rekabeti incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Hem Çin hem de Hindistan, Hint Okyanusu'nda ekonomik, politik ve askeri açıdan hâkim güç olmak için büyük bir rekabet içerisindedirler. Dünyanın en kalabalık iki ülkesi olan Çin ve Hindistan arasındaki güç mücadelesi özellikle Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde artış göstermiştir. Birbiri ardına gerçekleştirdikleri ekonomik reformlarla, her iki ülke Asya'nın en büyük iki gücü konumuna gelmişlerdir. Ekonomilerinde de bu reformlara bağlı olarak hızlı bir yükseliş görülmüştür. Fakat bu hızlı yükseliş beraberinde aşırı bir enerji tüketimini getirmiştir. Enerji gereksinimlerini karşılamak için kullandıkları deniz ticaret yolunun güvenliğini sağlamak her iki ülkenin en öncelikli amaçları olmuştur. Bu bağlamda Çin kendi enerji güvenliğini sağlayabilmek için deniz ticaret yolu üzerinde "İnci Dizisi" stratejisi adında bir denetim mekanizması oluşturmuştur. Bu denetim mekanizmasıyla Çin bölge ülkelerinde birtakım girişimlerde bulunmaktadır. Fakat bu girişimler, Hindistan tarafından kendi ulusal çıkarlarına karşı bir tehdit olarak algılanmaktadır. Çünkü yıllık petrol ihtiyacının yaklaşık % 70'ini Hint Okyanusu üzerinden gerçekleştiren Hindistan için Hint Okyanusu'nun önemi oldukça fazladır. Ayrıca, bölgesinde coğrafi ve stratejik açıdan birçok avantaja sahip olan Hindistan, ekonomik yükselişini sürdürme ve Hint Okyanusu'nda egemen güç olma arzusunda. Hindistan, komşularıyla sıkı ilişkilerde bulunan Çin'in artan etkisinden fazlasıyla rahatsızlık duymaktadır. Bu yüzden, bölgesindeki Çin etkisini kırmak için dâhili, harici ve ekonomik bir dengeleme politikası izlemeye başlamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çin, Hindistan, İnci Dizisi Stratejisi, Dengeleme Politikası, Deniz Ticaret Yolu, Enerji Güvenliği, Dahili Dengeleme, Harici Dengeleme, Ekonomik Dengeleme.

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### ABSTRACT

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	Department	International Relations / South Asia Studies and International Relations		
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The purpose of this thesis is to examine Sino-Indian rivalry for regional dominance in the Indian Ocean. Both India and China are in competition to become a regional hegemon in the Indian Ocean in economic, military, and political terms. The power struggle between China and India has increased especially in the post-Cold War era. Both countries became the major powers of Asia thanks to their economic reforms. Both countries owe their power to a large extent, to their rapidly growing economy. But this rapid growth led these two giants to consume extremely high energy. Accordingly, the continuity of the energy supply and the safety of the maritime trade route have become the primary purpose of both countries. In this regard, China has established an inspection mechanism called as the "String of Pearls" strategy on the maritime trade route to ensure its energy security. However, these initiatives have been perceived by India as a threat to its national interests. Since nearly seventy percent of its annual oil need is transported via the Indian Ocean, it is crucial for India. Having many geographical and strategic advantages in the region, India wants to maintain its economic growth and become a dominant power in the IO. India is quite uneasy with the growing influence of China that has established close economic and military relations with its neighbors. In order to neutralize Chinese influence in the region, India has launched a balancing policy that includes "internal balancing", "external balancing" and "economic balancing" strategies.

**Keywords:** China, India, String of Pearls, Balancing Policy, Maritime Trade Route, Energy Security, Internal Balancing, External Balancing, Economic Balancing.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	Asia Cooperation Dialogue
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BAE	British Multinational Defense, Security, and Aerospace Company
BBIN	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Bhutan
BCIM	Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Association
BIMSTEC	The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation
BP	British Petroleum
BPC	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
BRICS	The Informal Grouping of Emerging Economies Brazil, Russia, India and China
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CORPAT	Coordinated Patrols
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
DTAA	Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement
EADS	European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G20	Group of Twenty
HAL	Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
IEA	International Energy Agency
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IN	Indian Navy
IO	Indian Ocean
IOC	Indian Oil Corporation
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
IRIGC-TEC	India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission Technological and Cultural Cooperation
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JIMEX	Japan-India Maritime Exercise
JV	Joint Venture
KIO/A	Kachin Independence Organization/Army
L&T	Larsen & Toubro Limited
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MALSINDO	Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia
MOU	Memorandums of Understanding
MSR	Maritime Silk Route

NDFM	National Democratic Freedom Movement
NLFT	National Liberation Front of Tripura
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OBP	Oceans beyond Piracy
PASSEX	Passage Exercise
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PLGA	Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCS	South China Sea
SIMBEX	Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLINEX	Sri Lanka-India Exercise
SLOCs	Sea Lanes of Communication
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USS	United States Ship

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

India and China are the two largest developing countries in the world; together they represent 2/5 of the world's population.<sup>1</sup> Both nations are the biggest members of BRICS and SAARC, which have been seen as the representatives of the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Between 1978 and 1991, China and India began to liberalize their economies respectively. Industrialization and urbanization have grown considerably and their economies have grown accordingly.<sup>2</sup> This transformation has increased the geo-political weight and influence of the two Asian giants in the world. However, this economic growth has created enormous energy consumption for both countries. Due to the lack of their own natural resources to sustain their economic growth, foreign energy demand of both countries has accordingly increased. In order to maintain their growth, they have tried to find the easiest and safest ways to access to energy resources. This has greatly increased the significance of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) for both countries.

The IOR has many advantages and disadvantages. This region contains twenty-five percent of the world's land, forty percent of oil and gas reserves and one-third of the global population.<sup>3</sup> It hosts one of the world's busiest and most important shipping lanes,<sup>4</sup> which supply East Asia with the bulk of crude oil in the Middle East. It also hosts some of the world's most critical chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. More than eighty percent of world oil trade and strategic raw material reserves pass through these chokepoints.<sup>5</sup> The region with such intense trade volume and rich resources are

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables. Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP.241, [https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key\\_findings\\_wpp\\_2015.pdf](https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf), Accessed on: 11.11.2016.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Zeng, X. Deng, J. Dong and P. Hu, "Urbanization and Sustainability: Comparison of the Processes in "BIC" Countries", *Sustainability*, 8(4), (2016): 400.

<sup>3</sup> Wade Shepard, "Bangladesh's Deep Sea Port Problem", (2016), <http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/bangla-deshs-deep-sea-port-problem/>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.navy.gov.au/>. Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Paul Rodrigue, *The geography of transport systems*, (Fourth Edition). New York: Routledge, 2017.

essential for not only India and China but also for other regional and global powers alike.

Beside all these unique advantages, seventy percent of world's disasters and about half of the world's armed conflicts occur in this region.<sup>6</sup> The increasing threat of piracy around the Horn of Africa, global terrorism and illegal militant groups are the main security threats for the IOR. The interests of China in the IOR are closely linked to 'economy'. As China keeps growing, its demand for energy increases accordingly. More than seventy percent of petroleum that China imports from the Middle East and Africa are conveyed by sea.<sup>7</sup> This makes China subject to international sea-lanes, the Strait of Malacca, and other narrow choke points. China has been seeking ways to secure lines and reduce its dependence on a limited number of energy suppliers.

China desires to be a dominant power in the IOR to protect its energy transporting lanes and contain whoever threatens its energy trade. Nevertheless, when compared to other major powers such as the United States, Japan, and India, which dominate the Indian Ocean (IO), China's warship capacity in the IOR seems inadequate. This is one of the primary causes of concern for China. In addition, many Chinese strategists claim that the USA imposed a containment policy against China in the region.

To cope with all these problems, China has enhanced its naval power in the IO and established strong economic and military relations with the countries in the region such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, by building port facilities, rail link, pipeline and a sigint base etc. US analysts called this geopolitical strategy of China as the 'String of Pearls'<sup>8</sup> crucial to meet its energy requirements. Each pearl on this string, extending from the Hainan Islands to Gwadar, is a part of an interlocking control mechanism of China. With this control mechanism, China

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<sup>6</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan, *The IOR: a strategic net assessment*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Yogesh Joshi and Harsh V. Pant, "Indo-Japanese Strategic Partnership and Power Transition in Asia", *India Review*, 14(3), (2015), 312-329.

<sup>8</sup> The "String of Pearls" describes the manifestation of China's rising geopolitical influence through efforts to increase access to ports and airfields, develop special diplomatic relationships and modernize military forces that extend from the SCS through the Strait of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean and on to the Arabian Gulf.



aims to both boost its geopolitical influence and maintain its military presence in the region. However, China's politico-diplomatic engagements with the IO littorals and its naval activities in the region have raised doubts among other regional powers, particularly India.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the establishment of a nuclear partnership between China and Pakistan resulted in further concern for India about Chinese intentions. Despite Indian concerns, there has been a growing commercial and economic interaction between India and China. Beside their participation in regional and international organizations such as ACD and BCIM, bilateral Sino-Indian relationship seems to be a complex mix of cooperation and competition.

In the post-Cold War era, China and India are scrambling for establishing superiority over one another, particularly over the waters between the IOR and the SCS.<sup>10</sup> Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the signing of a memorandum of understanding to join SCO at the Tashkent Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit on June 23, 2016 and said that the bilateral relations between two countries would increase rapidly in this framework.<sup>11</sup> However after a while, the entry of India's to the NSG was hindered by China and other NSG members due to Indian failure to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which increased tension between two countries.<sup>12</sup> This complex relationship with China leads India to struggle to establish a dominant status in South Asia.

In order to increase its influence in the region, India has pursued an active diplomacy to establish security and economic cooperation with the US and Japan under the premiership of Modi.<sup>13</sup> India views any Chinese attempt to strengthen relations with its neighbors as a threat to its objective of becoming a regional leader.<sup>14</sup> The geographical proximity, short lines of communication to its own bases

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9 Gurpreet S. Khurana, "China as an Indian Ocean power: trends and implication", *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 12.1, (2016): 13-24.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Yongjin Zhang, "Dynamism and contention: understanding Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping", *International Affairs*, 92:4, (2016): pp. 769-72.

12 Xiaoyu Pu, "Ambivalent accommodation: status signalling of a rising India and China's response", *International Affairs*, 93: 1, (2017): 147-163.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

and resources enable India to control choke points and reject the rival's access to key ports. In this respect, India defines itself as the natural leader of the IOR, and considers Chinese initiatives as illegitimate and its close relations with Indian neighbors are alarming.

As a consequence, India decided to take some preemptive actions to protect its national interests and established a balance of power in the region against China. In defiance of Indian rapid rise, the power gap between the two countries is still rather large.<sup>15</sup> That is because; China is a stronger and deep-rooted country with its material capabilities and prominent positions in major international organizations. It seems unlikely for India to cover the gap between China within its capabilities. On account of that, it employs internal, external and economic balancing strategies to balance the influence of China within IOR.

As a part of internal balancing strategy,<sup>16</sup> India has raised its defense spending, initiated a military modernization program and developed a new maritime strategy. It has geared up military capabilities by building a nuclear capability, aircraft carriers, new fighter aircrafts, and new warships to be a deterrent force against China's advancing naval power in the IO.

In external balancing strategy,<sup>17</sup> India has developed defense cooperation in cooperation with the USA, Japan, and Israel. It tries to improve defense capabilities, by building and installing marine infrastructures such like port development through Sagarmala Project.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, India tries to revive its ancient maritime routes and a cultural linkage with other regional countries by means of Mausam Project.<sup>19</sup> India

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<sup>15</sup> Peter V. Raven, Xiaoqing Huang and Ben B. Kim, "E-business in developing countries: a comparison of China and India", *International Journal of E-Business Research*, 3.1 (2008).

<sup>16</sup> Internal balancing means the development of one's own economic or military power.

<sup>17</sup> External balancing means the forming or strengthening existing alliances or weakening those of an opponent.

<sup>18</sup> The key objective of Sagarmala project develop port infrastructure in India that results in quick, efficient and cost-effective transport to and from ports. It also includes establishment of rail / road linkages with the port terminals, thus providing last mile connectivity to ports; development of linkages with new regions, enhanced multi-modal connectivity including rail, inland water, coastal and road services.

<sup>19</sup> Project 'Mausam' is a Ministry of Culture project with Archaeological Society of India (ASI). This project aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' – collating archaeological and historical research in order to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions

also negotiates a deal with Mauritius for leasing of Agalega islands, setting up a Naval listening post in northern Madagascar and possessing small posts in Mozambique and Comoros.

As a part of economic balancing strategy, India aims to ensure naval stability and reduce maritime tensions among regional countries via the IORA.<sup>20</sup> The government of India is also struggling to gain support from the islands in the IO, as experienced in the recent visits paid to Seychelles and Sri Lanka. It establishes tripartite dialogues with the IO countries such as Maldives and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it endeavors to undermine the Chinese economic influence above its neighbors through economic organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, and BIMSTEC.

### **1.1. The Subject and Problem of the Research**

The IOR and SLOCs are the most critical factors for India's energy trade and their closure or denial would impact its energy security adversely. China's rising influence in the IOR has been perceived by India as a threat to its national security. Therefore, India tries to balance Chinese influence in the IOR. The main objectives of this thesis are to investigate the impact of Chinese influence in the IOR and to identify Indian balancing policy against Chinese influence in the IOR.

### **1.2. Purpose of the Research**

This study will answer these questions:

1. Why is the IO strategically important for both China and India?
2. What are Chinese initiatives to increase its influence in the IOR?
3. What are the strategic interests of India in the IOR.

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in the Indian Ocean – extending from East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka to the Southeast Asian archipelago.

<sup>20</sup> The IORA is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean, including Australia, The People's Republic of Bangladesh, Union of the Comoros, The Republic of India, The Republic of Indonesia, The Islamic Republic of Iran, The Republic of Kenya, The Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, The Republic of Mauritius, The Republic of Mozambique, The Sultanate of Oman, The Republic of Seychelles, The Republic of Singapore, Federal Republic of Somalia, The Republic of South Africa, The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, The United Republic of Tanzania, The Kingdom of Thailand, The United Arab Emirates, The Republic of Yemen The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.

4. What are India's counter-strategies to balance Chinese influence in the IOR?

### **1.3. Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is consisted of an introduction, four main chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 gives an outline of the thesis. It lists the contents of other chapters.

Chapter 2 examines the geostrategic significance of the IO for both India and China. In particular, it provides information about the IOR and explains the critical points of the region.

Chapter 3 studies Chinese influence in the IO in the post-Cold War era. It examines Chinese initiatives in the IO through the "String of Pearls" strategy to ensure open and secure trade routes. It gives detailed information about the China's infrastructure facilities in the region to access to alternative energy sources. Following that, it focuses on economic and military relations between China and the countries in the IOR.

Chapter 4 explores India's strategic interests in the IO. First, this chapter begins with India's dependence on imported oil and gas trade to sustain its economic growth. Then, it examines Indian measures to ensure its energy security. Next, it explores Indian efforts to cope with contemporary regional security challenges. Finally, the chapter ends with the examination of Indian active policies to protect its strategic interests.

Chapter 5 analyses the Indian balancing strategy aiming to contain Chinese influence in the IOR. It looks at the India's efforts to reduce the military gap with China through 'internal balancing' strategy (naval buildup, military modernization). It studies India's 'external balancing' strategy (with the USA and Japan) to counter China. Finally it examines Indian 'economic balancing' strategy (with economic organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, BIMSTEC) to undermine Chinese economic clout above its neighbors.

Finally, the thesis ends with a concluding chapter, which provides a summary of the main findings of the thesis and compares current situation between the two Asian giants and mentions about possible future problems.



## CHAPTER 2

### GEOSTRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

The IO has been attracting a great deal of attention as an important waterway in East-West trade for centuries. Asian seafarers have used this ocean to trade their goods since the Roman Empire period. With the industrial revolution of the 19th century, just like the other oceans around the world, growing energy needs of the IO have doubled. Extending 10,000 km from the southern tip of Africa to Australia and covering 68.56 million square kilometers, the IO is the third largest ocean, after Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.<sup>21</sup> Its geographical position and waterways provide the shortest and economical lines for accessing to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Roughly 100,000 ships pass through the IO each year and carry one-third of the world's total cargoes, half of the containers and two-thirds of the oil. Such features increased vitality of the IO for regional states. For instance, the IO is used intensively by India and China, the world's fastest growing two countries, when compared to other states in the region.

The IO is strategically important for China, for ensuring the future security of its energy supply and trade routes. The more China is integrated with the global economy, the more its dependence on the IO increases. The IO and the SCS play important roles as the world's key energy and bulk Cargo transit passage routes and also as the littoral states. These waters themselves are rich in crucial hydrocarbon resources as well.<sup>22</sup> Today, China is heavily dependent on the waterways in the IO, due to transporting eighty-seven percent of its hydrocarbon energy via these ways.<sup>23</sup> It is clear that China's national security depends on the safety and protection of these sea lanes to maintain its economic development and growing power. China has mainly focused on maintaining its regional existence, naval power and become more assertive in the IOR for two decades.

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<sup>21</sup> Shishir Upadhyaya, "Maritime security cooperation in the IOR: The role of the Indian Navy", *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 6:4, (2014), 173-190.

<sup>22</sup> Sidra Tariq, "India and china in the Indian Ocean: A complex interplay of geopolitics", *Spotlight-Institute of Regional Studies*, (2014): 1-41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

In many respects, the IO is very important for India, too such as an economic, political, and regional interest. India is on all the transit passage routes in the IO and cuts this ocean exactly like an extending pendulum.<sup>24</sup> In order to increase its economic strength and secure its national security and geopolitical aspirations, India urgently needs Middle East oil, natural gas, and raw materials transported through the IO. Therefore, India aims to take the control of the IO trade.

### **2.1. Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**

With its unique features and strategic location, the IOR having many advantages and disadvantages is one of the most important regions of the world. The IOR covers 68.5 million square kilometers area, which equals to fourteen point four percent of world's surface.<sup>25</sup> The Andaman Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal the Gulf of Aden and the Laccadive Sea are sub-seas of the IO. The Gulf of Aden and the Great Australian Bight are extending as a part of the IO. The size and strategic location of the IOR, which is a connection point with Africa, Asia, and Oceania plays a strategic and vital role for international maritime traffic and energy trade. The IOR is an important trade and energy center. Every year nearly 100.000 ships transporting sixty-one percent of the total global container load and seventy percent of the petroleum products cross the IO.<sup>26</sup>

The coastal states around the IOR are rich in oil and natural gas reserves. The IOR has more than sixty-six percent of the world's oil and thirty-five percent of natural gas reserves as well.<sup>27</sup> These coastal states are South Asian Littorals, West Asian Littorals, East African Littorals, Southeast Asia and Australian Littorals.<sup>28</sup>

- South Asian Littorals: Seychelles, India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Pakistan;

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Niclas D. Weimar, "Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia: a (re-) source of conflict in the Indian Ocean and SCS", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 25(1), 2013): 5-26.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Bob Dudley, "BP Statistical Review ofWorld Energy June 2016". Bp.com/statisticalreview, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2016/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2016-full-report.pdf>, Accessed on: 01.11.2016.

<sup>28</sup> Upadhyaya, op.cit., "Maritime security cooperation in the IOR", p. 173-190.

- West Asian Littorals: Iran, Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait;
- East African Littorals: Comoros, Egypt, Djibouti, Eritrea, La Reunion Island<sup>29</sup>, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, Sudan and Somalia;
- Southeast Asia and Australian Littorals: Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Timor Leste.<sup>30</sup>

Besides advantages above-mentioned, the IOR has also some disadvantages. In addition to the fastest growing human population, some parts of the region are facing a number of problems such as impoverishment, political instability, natural disasters, food and water insecurity, piracy deficits and extremist ideologies and environmental degradation. Moreover, 11 unstable countries<sup>31</sup> of the world are in this region.<sup>32</sup> With the weak governance, high population growth rates, political and economic instability, the IOR states are located in the most unstable and complicated region.<sup>33</sup>

The IOR is also at the center debates on the future of the Asian regional security. Some political tension, border disputes between the states around the region has increased the IOR's strategic importance. Some of these border disputes are territorial claims on Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh between India and China, unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, controversial maritime boundaries between India and Bangladesh, Indonesia and East Timor and competing sovereignty claims over the Tromelin Island.<sup>34</sup> These tensions and conflicts resulted in increasing security concerns and arms race, such as the Sino-Indian arms race. Both India and China are enlarging and fortifying their naval forces.

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<sup>29</sup> La Reunion Island is an overseas territory of France.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Unstable countries of the region are Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Eritrea, Kenya, Burma/Myanmar, Nepal and Timor Leste.

<sup>32</sup> Krishnappa Venkatshamy, "The IOR in India's strategic futures: looking out to 2030", *Journal of the IOR*, 9(1), (2013): 17-41.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



All these developments and important features of the region make the stability in the region indispensable for countries in this region. Furthermore, the prominence of the strategic choke points previously mentioned become more apparent. More than eighty percent of oil and liquid natural gas is transported over the IO through these choke points.<sup>35</sup> They connect the IOR with the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the SCS.

## 2.2. Critical Choke Points in the Indian Ocean

The IO has narrow choke points used for transportation energy that makes it difficult to take the shipping under control. (Figure 1) These narrow gateways that make the region strategically one of the most significant in the world are vital for regional states to be able to sustain their own existence. The primary choke points in the IOR are Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and Strait of Malacca.

The Strait of Hormuz is the main oil distribution choke point of the world. 17 million barrels of oil that accounts for thirty percent of all maritime oil are transported daily through the Strait of Hormuz in 2013.<sup>36</sup> The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is a valuable strategic waterway linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the IO. In 2013, about 3.8 million barrels of crude oil were transported each day through this waterway.<sup>37</sup> The Strait of Malacca is the essential maritime trade route that connects the IO to the SCS and the Pacific Ocean. Almost 15.2 million barrels of crude oil coming from the Middle East going towards Indonesia, China, and Japan pass through the Strait of Malacca daily.<sup>38</sup>

Connects the Middle East with Africa and the SCS, the IO is very important for China's interests. Hu Jintao, former president of China, stated that these straits should have been clear and safe, especially the Strait of Malacca was very important for China and possible obstruction of the Strait of Malacca would be too costly for China.<sup>39</sup> China is taking a number of military measures to protect its interests. This

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> "World Outlook Energy 2015", International Energy Agency, <https://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/WEO2015SUM.pdf>, Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Marc Lanteigne, "China's maritime security and the "Malacca Dilemma", *Asian Security*, 4.2, (2008): 143-161.

means that China will not leave the security of the trade route in the hands of other powers. Compared to the US, Japanese and Indian maritime power in the region, Chinese naval power does not seem that strong. But, it has strong connections with 51 coastal states of the IOR and uses these three important transit passage points to take advantage of it.

Waterways are economically, politically, and militarily very important for India. Since almost ninety percent of world trade is carried out through maritime trade, it is highly probable that unexpected incidents may occur in these busy trade routes. Thus, India has begun to pursue a more active policy to become a dominant power in the region to ensure the survival of its growing economy. These choke points are playing very significant role in India's economic policies. Moreover, in many respects, each of these choke points on the maritime trade route is important for ensuring the stability of the region. Due to their strategic location, there is a great contention between countries such as China, India, the USA, and Japan.

### **2.2.1. Strait of Hormuz**

The Strait of Hormuz has been a strategic focus in world affairs for thousands of years. Approximately twenty percent of the world's oil and about forty percent of the Middle East's oil pass through this strait.<sup>40</sup> A large portion of the world crude oil imports are made through oil pipelines located within this strait. (Table-1) Iran had attracted global attention, when it threatened that it would close the Strait of Hormuz for the fear of sanctions imposed on Iranian oil. Due its strategic importance, the USA has deployed a fleet in the Persian Gulf to ensure the safety of the passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Because interference or a threat with the free flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz could be likely to harm not only US interests, but also the interests of the entire world. Thus, in response to the threat of Iran, Chinese premier Wen Jiabao has asked Iran not to show such an overreaction and not allow an unexpected situation to occur.<sup>41</sup> Because approximately one-third of China's oil imports has transported via the Strait of Hormuz.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=7830>, Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

<sup>41</sup> Jagannath P. Panda, "China's Tryst with the IORA: Factoring India and the Indian Ocean", *Strategic Analysis*, 38(5), (2014): 668-687.

**Table 1: Crude Oil Pipelines that Bypass the Strait of Hormuz**

Pipeline	Kirkuk-Ceyhan (Iraq-Turkey) Pipeline <sup>1</sup>	Petroline (East-West Pipeline)	Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline	Total
Owner	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	United Arab Emirates	
2011 (average)				
Capacity	0.4	3.0	0.0	3.4
Throughput	0.4	2.0	0.0	2.4
Unused Capacity <sup>2</sup>	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
2012 (mid-year) <sup>3</sup>				
Capacity	0.4	4.8	1.5	6.7
Throughput <sup>4</sup>	0.4	2.0	0.0	2.4
Unused Capacity	0.0	2.8	1.5	4.3

Source: US Energy Information Administration.

Since India is importing a large proportion of crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, the UAE, and Kuwait, the Strait of Hormuz is vitally important for India. India, the world's fourth-largest oil consumer, purchases approximately twelve percent of oil that it needs from Iran alone.<sup>42</sup> It is clear that the Strait of Hormuz is vitally important for the countries of the region, especially India and China.

### 2.2.2. Bab-el-Mandeb

The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is one of the world's most crucial oil transit passage chokepoints. Apart from connecting the Red Sea with the IO, most of global energy is transported to Asia through this gateway. About thirty percent of the world's oil and natural gas is transported from the Persian Gulf to the west through this strait daily.<sup>43</sup> This strait has both advantages and disadvantages. It enables all cargo ships a shortcut from Western Europe to the IO. Many countries use this strait rather than going around Africa. Pirates, rough water and navigation are the disadvantages of this strait. For this reason, ensuring the safety of the strait is important for the continuity of global oil trade.

Beijing is heavily dependent upon the oil transported from the south of Sudan on the Red Sea. It aims to diversify its energy resources to provide its needs. The

<sup>42</sup> "A shut Strait of Hormuz will hit India's oil supply as Iran threatens to close transit route", <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2091306/Strait-Hormuz-Irans-threat-close-transit-route-hit-Indias-oil-supply.html#ixzz4XcP7yzML>, Accessed on: 09.10.2016.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.oil-marketing.com/Backup-27-10/index.php/news/188-major-oil-transit-chokepoints-an-eia-overview>. Accessed on: 04.01.2017.

presence of untouched oil resources in Yemen attracts many great powers, especially China.<sup>44</sup> To gain an access to resources, Beijing increases its initiatives in the region. In this context, China proposed to establish a military base in Djibouti, which was welcomed by Djibouti government. China proposal of establishing a naval base in Djibouti, which is still under construction, was welcomed by Djibouti government. Djibouti's foreign minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf said that the primary objective of China was to use the naval base to protect its national interest — monitoring its merchant vessels passing the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and for naval refueling and restocking.<sup>45</sup>

For India, this gateway is quite precious, too. Since India's oil demand is expected to increase three percent a year until 2030,<sup>46</sup> India is heavily dependent energy resources in the Gulf region to sustain its economic growth. The Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb's security is also indispensable important for India's trade and energy security. Hence, India is very keen to involve in a close interaction with the GCC States. Alongside the economic cooperation, India and the GCC share the desire for political stability and security in the Persian Gulf and South Asia.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, India and GCC States have cooperated in many areas, such as regular naval port visits, regular meetings of the Joint Defense Cooperation and training of military personnel. In addition, IN has carried out a series of naval exercises with a number of Gulf States in recent years.

**Table 2: India and GCC States Defense Cooperation**

India and the UAE	The security and defense and for annual meetings of Strategic Dialogue was signed in June 2003. The subsequent meeting of the Joint Defense Coop.Committee was held in April 2006.
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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Katrina Manson, "China military to set up first overseas base in Horn of Africa", Financial Times, 31 Mar 2016, <http://www.cnbc.com/2016/03/31/china-military-to-set-up-first-overseas-base-in-djibouti.html>, Accessed on: 04.03.2017.

<sup>46</sup> Zahra Abotorabiardestani, "The GCC States and India Relations (The Relations Between GCC States and India)", *International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issue 6, (2015): 1-8.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

	<p>UAE defense personnel have also been undergone defense training in India under Self Financing Schemes.</p> <p>In November 2010, Indian President Pratibha Singh Patil visited UAE and urged the UAE government to invest in the Indian infrastructure.</p>
India and Oman	<p>Oman is being offered training cooperation of its officers and men in Indian military training institutions.</p> <p>In December 2006, an agreement on Defense Cooperation was signed between India and Oman.</p> <p>In November 2008, India and Oman was agreed to step up defense cooperation by upgrading their participation in naval exercises.</p>
India and Qatar	<p>A defense agreement was signed with Qatar, which includes the possibilities of stationing Indian troops in the Arab country. Both countries have also joined in a maritime security arrangement, which will be extended to other countries.</p> <p>In June 2007, both countries had agreed to produce weapons and equipment.</p>
India and Saudi Arabia	<p>Following (the former) Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit in February 2010. March 2010, he signed the most significant Riyadh declaration with the Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.</p>
India and Kuwait	<p>The significant agreements on the field of education, science and technology and cultural exchange program was signed during the Vice President Hamid Ansari visit in April 2009.</p>

Source: International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences (IMPACT: IJRANSS)

### 2.2.3. Strait of Malacca

Another important transit passage point that plays a key role in maritime transport to the IOR is the Strait of Malacca. It is one of the shortest shipping channels between the IO and the Pacific Ocean that serves as a transit passage point to the SCS.<sup>48</sup> According to Reuters, the 900-km long (550 miles) Strait of Malacca (Figure 2) carries about forty percent of the world's trade and enables more than 50,000 merchant ships to pass thorough every year.<sup>49</sup> The narrow and congested waterway is becoming increasingly and strategically important not only for China, but also for Japan, the USA and other states of the region. Approximately ninety percent of Japan's and eighty percent of China's crude oil is provided from the Middle East and is indispensably transported via this strait.<sup>50</sup> China and Japan, who want to diversify its energy supply to feed growing economies, attach great importance to the safety of the strait. The direct security control of the strait is maintained by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. But the naval power of these countries is not strong enough to control the strait completely. Therefore, Australia, India, Japan, the USA, and China offered military assistance at various times in to ensure full safety in the strait.

China, seeking to maintain its economic growth has undertaken the construction of a number of facilities under the pretext of securing trade routes in the SCS and the IO. These military and economic initiatives are perceived as the national security threats by the countries in the region especially India. Therefore, related regional countries and the USA threaten to block the Strait of Malacca at every opportunity against Chinese aggressive infiltration into the region. On account of that, China knows that the Strait of Malacca is very important for itself and in case of any blockage in this strait it will have great difficulties.

According to Chen Shaofeng, China is facing many concerns in the Strait of Malacca.<sup>51</sup> These are threat of piracy and transnational crime, maritime terrorism and

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<sup>48</sup>Chen Shaofeng, "China's Self-Extrication from the "Malacca Dilemma" and Implications", *International Journal of China Studies*, 1.1, (2010): 1-24.

<sup>49</sup> "Malacca Strait is a strategic 'chokepoint'", <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-46652220100304>, Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Shaofeng, op.cit., "China's Self-Extrication", p.7.

the US active presence in the Asia-Pacific waters.<sup>52</sup> Former Chinese President Hu Jintao declared that China is facing a ‘Malacca Dilemma’.<sup>53</sup> In short, the Malacca Dilemma<sup>54</sup> indicates the constraints of China’s dependence on ocean imports. It can be argued that the Strait of Malacca is the Achilles’ heel of China’s energy security.

When compared to the past, in recent years, although Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand have taken effective measures such as forming common naval exercises and increasing patrols to ensure the security of Malacca gateway, it is not seen that there is full protection against piracy and maritime robbery.<sup>55</sup> To overcome these problems and ensure a safe passage from the Strait of Malacca, China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, began to argue that countries in the region needed support one another. Thus, China has established close partnerships with the states of the IOR and pursuing an active foreign policy such as financing the construction of ports and infrastructure in various the IO littoral states. These projects are Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, Gwadar Port in Pakistan, Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and Sittwe Port in Burma and they are served as transport corridors for Chinese oil and trade.

Other than China, the Strait of Malacca is important for India as well. India wants to ensure the security of the Strait of Malacca because of the strategic partnership between India and the coastal states of the Strait of Malacca. It is clear that any problem that may arise in the Strait of Malacca will probably have a negative spillover effect on India. On the other hand, the strait is vital for the implementation of Indian “Look East” policy<sup>56</sup> and Chinese total control on transit passage through the Strait of Malacca is an unacceptable situation, for both regional countries and India.

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<sup>52</sup> Shaofeng, *op.cit.*, “China’s Self-Extrication”, p.8-9.

<sup>53</sup> Lanteigne, *op.cit.*, “China’s maritime security”, p.149.

<sup>54</sup> The “Malacca Dilemma” is a term coined by their President Hu Jintao (2003) on the over-reliance on the Malacca Straits(sea-route) where 80% of their energy needs(oil imports) pass en-route from the Middle East, Angola etc(shipping lanes); through the Malacca Straits(between Malaysia and Indonesia).

<sup>55</sup> Venkatshamy, *op.cit.*, “The IOR in India’s strategic futures”, p.17-41.

<sup>56</sup> India’s Look East policy represents its efforts to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with the nations of Southeast Asia in order to bolster its standing as a regional power and a counterweight to the strategic influence of the People’s Republic of China.

In the face of all these possible developments in the region, India participates in different cooperative mechanism with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to secure Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These islands are controlled by India today and are being used against threats such as piracy, terrorism and arms smuggling in the region. In his article, Lee Cordner states that some of the common strategic objectives in the IOR are as follows.

- Obtain and preserve maritime border sovereignty rights.
- Ensure freedom of navigation according to UNCLOS.
- Perform successful protection of the marine environment.
- Encourage economic progress and improve the maritime trade.
- Assure the collectivity of energy maritime trade routes across the IOR.
- Promote political order in the IOR states and ensure the regional stability.
- Support regional maritime security conversation and cooperation initiatives in the IOR.<sup>57</sup>

To summarize this chapter, even though most of the countries in the region have a seafaring history, no regional power, including India, has dominated the IOR. Therefore, the IO has been under the dominance of external forces for a long time.<sup>58</sup> The IOR coastal states have continued to live as colonies of Portugal, Holland, France and England, respectively until gaining their own independences. Even after India became a fully colony of Britain, the IO began to be called a ‘British Lake’. In the pre-World War II period, Great Britain, which was the dominant power in the world in international relations, lost its position during the Cold War and the power gap created there was filled with the USA and the Soviet Union.<sup>59</sup>

The power struggle that began in the USA and the Soviet Union and prevailed throughout the world during the Cold War, which lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union had also influenced the IOR. In that time, while the Soviet Union sent war ships to support the anti-imperialist movements in the region, the USA settled in

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<sup>57</sup> Lee Cordner, “Risk managing maritime security in the IOR”, *Journal of the IOR*, 10(1), (2014): 46-66.

<sup>58</sup> Lou Chunhao, "US–India–China relations in the Indian Ocean: a Chinese perspective", *Strategic Analysis*, 36.4, (2012): 624-639.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



the Diego Garcia airport, which was left behind from the British.<sup>60</sup> In this process, both countries have formed allies in the region in the interests of their own interests. But, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union, the USA remained sole superpower in the region. Then the USA shifted its balancing strategy in the region to becoming a hegemonic power. For that reason, the USA deployed its naval expeditionary forces in the IO, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Basra by building up the ‘forward deployment’.<sup>61</sup>

According to the strategic concept of the US:

*“The Cold War may be over, but the need for American leadership and commensurate military capability endures. Many of our most vital interests remain overseas where the Navy and the Marine Corps are prepared for new challenges—forward deployed, ready for combat and engaged to preserve the peace.”*<sup>62</sup>

When the influence of the other powers in the region is examined, it is seen that France has come to the fore. The control of France’s La Réunion, Mayotte and French Southern and Antarctic territories is still under French control, although France lost their colonial rights in India, Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles.<sup>63</sup> The former colonel of France, Djibouti remained close to France economically and militarily while United Arab Emirates hosted a French military base in Abu Dhabi.<sup>64</sup>

Seeing that Westphalian System has been accepted all over the world, the world has been dominated by the policies of the western Powers. Atlantic and Pacific oceans have been placed at the center of the world. Thanks to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan, the global financial crisis, the “Jasmine Revolution” in the Middle East, the Iranian nuclear crisis and the United States’ economic sanctions against Iran, the balance of power shifted from West to East.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> “Forward From the Sea”, US Department of the Navy, 1997, <http://www.dtic.mil/jv2010/navy/b014.pdf>. Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bruno de Paiva, “France: National Involvement in the IOR”, Future Directions International (Australia), Indian Ocean Research Program (2011): 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, “Monsoon: the Indian Ocean and the future of American power”, Random House Incorporated. (2011).

The increased significance of energy policies and serious non-traditional threats has placed the IO at the center of world politics. Due to high trade volume, the region began to be called the “heart of trade” all around the world. By virtue of the successful administration of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party in 1998, India has been increased maritime power, continued its economic growth and became a powerful equilibrium in the IO by using its geographical advantage in the region. With its initiatives, China has begun to diversify its energy resources and become a dominant force in the IO. All these developments point to a power balance between India and China. They will try to gain supremacy on the IOR to be able to control energy trade. It is explained that why the IOR is so important for both China and India in this chapter. The next chapter will examine the influence of China in this region.

## CHAPTER 3

### CHINESE INFLUENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

This chapter will examine the measures taken by China to ensure that energy trade in the IO will continue safely and uninterruptedly. First, projects undertaken through partnerships formed by China's strategic relations with regional countries will be examined. Later, it will explain why the activities carried out by China led his neighbors to worry.

Throughout history, China has always been a major power in the international system with its huge land, resources and population. After the reform package implemented by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, China has become a major economic power on the world arena. Since the end of the Cold War, China has become a country that can produce almost everything for global market by taking advantage of its young population and cheap labor potential. China's integration into the global economy, with the effect of the increase in urbanization and industrialization, has boosted its energy consumption substantially. Thus, China's oil and natural gas demand has begun to play an important role on the Chinese economy. For example, while China's energy consumption increased by two-hundred-forty-five percent in 2004, its energy output increased by only one-hundred-ninety-four percent.<sup>66</sup> The energy production of the country could not meet its energy requirement. And this situation has made China heavily dependent on energy imports.

Today, China meets a large proportion of its energy need from the Middle East. China imports a large quantity of energy resources by maritime trade route. This route has stretched from the Strait of Hormuz to the SCS through the IO. On this route, the Strait of Malacca is very crucial for China to transport energy. Because, it is the shortest route between the Indian and Pacific Oceans from China's coast and known as one of the world's most important waterways. However, this choke point has some disadvantages, too. Among these, the strait is far from being a secure one, which can be blocked easily by hostile naval forces and is constantly under the threat of pirates and transnational impacts. Another concern for China is

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<sup>66</sup> Fan He and Qin Donghai, "China's Energy Strategy in the Twenty- first Century", *China & World Economy*, 14.2, (2006): 93-104.

the US dominance of this maritime trade route. Beijing worries that ships carrying energy resources to China could be hindered by US naval forces. This interruption in the free flow of energy resources could destroy its economic growth. The main difficulty securing the energy lines is the Malacca Dilemma. On the ground that eighty percent of China's energy imports are carried via this waterway, energy route's security has turned into a major concern for China in recent years. However, China's control over this chokepoint is inadequate. At present, China lacks of the naval power to protect its SLOCs. Hence, China begins to seek ways to overcome all these worries.

The Chinese government took a number of measures to overcome the "Malacca Dilemma". These measures included upgrading the naval power, diversifying the sources of energy imports and building alternative ports for maritime avoidance of the Strait of Malacca. Furthermore, China took a number of initiatives to break the hegemony of the USA in the region, which is called "String of Pearls." The String of Pearls, combination of important points in the IOR is constituted to protect China's economic and military interests. (Figure 3) The most important points of this pearl stretching from Taiwan to the Straits of Hormuz and East Africa are the Strait of Malacca, Myanmar, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan, Maldives, Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Aden.<sup>67</sup> Beijing believes that securing maritime trade route for an uninterrupted energy transfer will only be ensured by having a dominant naval force in the region. It boosts the maritime power in the IO, the SCS and Africa to secure initiatives.

### **3.1. Dependency on Open Trade Routes and Uninterrupted Access to Energy Resources**

With the economic reform policy enacted in December 1978, the Chinese economy has grown tremendously. However, rapid industrialization has led to a steady increase in energy demand, especially on limited domestic sources such as oil and natural gas.<sup>68</sup> In Chinese total energy consumption, the rate of oil increased from seventeen point five percent in 1995 to twenty-three percent in 2003 and seventeen

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<sup>67</sup> Gurpreet S. Khurana, "China's 'String of Pearls' in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications", *Strategic Analysis*, 32:1, (2008): 1-39.

<sup>68</sup> Weimar, *op.cit.*, "Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia:", p.6.

point six percent in 2011. According to the BP statistical review 2016 report, China's energy production increases by forty percent while its consumption expands by forty-eight percent.<sup>69</sup> China takes the place on the top with the plus six point three percent, or +770,000 b/d consumption rate.<sup>70</sup> In terms of energy, China meets sixty percent of its oil and natural gas from the Middle East and Central Asia/Caspian reserves. More than eighty percent of China's imported oil and gas is supplied by long-time sea routes; a large proportion of these routes pass through IO and the SCS.<sup>71</sup> According to Erickson et.al, eighty-nine percent of China's hydrocarbon need is carried by these maritime trade routes.<sup>72</sup>

China meets its energy needs not only from the Middle East through maritime trade route but also from Central Asia by overland transport routes as well. Both geographical conditions and other international powers prevent China from reaching to these energy resources in Siberia and Central Asia easily. This has naturally increased the importance of the IO maritime trade route for China. The insatiable demand for energy sources obliges China to maintain an uninterrupted flow of energy and this increases political pressure on Beijing. Thus, Beijing looks for ways to secure the IO trade route, starting from the Chinese coastline and accessing to the Middle East and Africa. This is the most important policy for Beijing. Furthermore, the possibility of manipulation of oil prices through American companies, who control oil and natural gas reserves in the Middle East and Caspian Sea, poses a significant risk for China. Since the rise in oil prices can cause great difficulties for China, Beijing is trying to diversify its energy sources as much as possible. In the event of possible energy shortage, the Chinese government designates three strategic regions to increase the diversity of energy resources targeted by Chinese oil companies.<sup>73</sup> These three strategic regions are Central Asia and Russia, the Middle East and North Africa and South America.

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<sup>69</sup> Weimar, *op.cit.*, "Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia:", p.7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Weimar, *op.cit.*, "Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia:", p.9.

<sup>72</sup> Andrew S. Erickson, Ladwig C. Walter III and Justin D. Mikolay. "Diego Garcia and the United States' Emerging Indian Ocean Strategy", *Asian Security*, 6.3, (2010): 214-237.

<sup>73</sup> Xu Yi-Chong, "China's energy security", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60(2), (2006): 265-286.

Depending on all these developments, Kazakhstan becomes China's largest energy partner in Central Asia. China imports about twenty percent of Kazakhstan's oil production through one of the world's longest oil pipelines at a distance of 2,300 km from the Caspian Sea to Xinjiang Province.<sup>74</sup> China has launched a new expansion program to Africa to reduce its energy dependence. Many Chinese companies have invested in Africa, including energy, mining, construction and manufacturing. China has also built some significant investments in Latin America, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Canada.

The countries, which have industry-based economy such as China, need uninterrupted flow of energy sources to continue their economic growth. While states increase their production on the one hand, they have tried to guarantee their energy security on the other hand. Becoming almost "the manufacturing center of the world" today, China needs high levels of energy and energy resources to continue its production. As a consequence, energy security is the most critical issue for China. China takes a number of strategic overseas investments,

- To meet rising its energy demand
- To ensure the security of energy transfer routes
- And to increase the diversity of energy sources.

China has also initiated alternative trade routes from its mainland to the IO and the Middle East regions, in the event of a blockage in routine energy trade routes. In addition to these, China has established close relationship with Saudi Arabia and other overseas countries to break US influence in the region. Many Chinese analysts think that the US presence in the region aims not only to ensure international trade security, but also to control crucial energy trade routes. Such a situation can be considered as the main reason behind China's activities in the region.

China's rapidly growing trade and investment associations seem to increase its strategic interests significantly in the region. According to Brewster, major

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<sup>74</sup> Michael Hart, "Central Asia's Oil and Gas Now Flows to the East", The Diplomat, August 18, 2016 <http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/central-asias-oil-and-gas-now-flows-to-the-east/>, Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

infrastructure threats such as the pipeline infrastructure (which tends to be highly vulnerable to both state and non-state actors), can create significant additional requirements to sustain China's presence in the region.<sup>75</sup> China is looking for ways to cope with its weakness in the region through the initiatives that have launched.

Building port facilities in the South Asian countries is one of initiatives of China in the IO. Since sustaining open trade routes and easy access to energy resources are crucial for China, it has intensified economic and strategic relationship with Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar located on its maritime trade route. These countries have uneasy relations with their close neighbor, India. China has benefited from this situation and formed strategic partnerships with these states.

### **3.2. Security of SLOCs and China's Maritime-Strategic Presence in the IOR**

The IORA countries including Bangladesh, Mauritius, the Seychelles, the Maldives and Sri Lanka and non-IORA countries including Pakistan and Myanmar, are critical for China's security policy. China has been studiously developing strong ties with them. For securing its presence in the IO, China has started to build strong political, economic and defense relationships with Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand.<sup>76</sup>

China has also begun to pursue an aggressive foreign policy in the region. It has improved their strategic cooperation with Pakistan through building the port of Gwadar in Baluchistan. (Figure 4) China is interested in the Gwadar Port to consolidate its relationship with Pakistan. It has been expected that this would enable Beijing to diversify and secure its crude oil import routes and extend its presence across the IO. The other initiatives of China are to upgrade a program at Maldives' airport and build a bridge which will connect the capital Malé with the international

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<sup>75</sup> David Brewster, "Beyond the 'String of Pearls': is there really a Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean?", *Journal of the IOR*, 10(2), (2014): 133-149.

<sup>76</sup> Panda, *op.cit.*, "China's Tryst with the IORA", p.682.

airport island Hulhulé.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, Sri Lanka has received \$1.4 billion from China to build the “Colombo Port City.”<sup>78</sup>

China’s rising energy transportation in the IO is necessarily made through the SLOCs and these transportation lines are great strategic assets for China. These SLOCs is stretched from the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance of the Persian Gulf to the Indian subcontinent into the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca.<sup>79</sup> The security of SLOC’s is vital for China. Owing to the geographical proximity to the IO, China feels obliged to secure these trade routes.

Apart from these problems, China believes that securing energy trade routes could be affected significantly by the other states in the region. For instance, a possible conflict between Iran and the USA, either through sanctions or by military action, can lead to a restraint in the shipments of oil from the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>80</sup> Another growing concern of China is the rising strength of the Indian naval forces in the IO. Because China provides neighboring countries with military, nuclear and economic aid especially. Among these, Pakistan comes in the forefront. China is building air bases and marine ports to use limited sea and air power effectively in the IO. It aims to create an economic and political influence over many IO states. Despite the strategic fragilities in the IO, it seeks to secure the SLOCs, which are vital for it. In this respect, China aims to contribute to the economic development of the countries in the IO, and thus securing the trade routes in the region. In his speech, Chinese President Hu Jintao who launched the concept of “Harmonious Oceans” in 2009 delivered at the 60th anniversary of PLA Naval Forces;

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<sup>77</sup> Ahmed Naish, “With Chinese grants and loans Malé-Hulhulé bridge inches closer to reality”, (2015), <http://maldivesindependent.com/politics/with-chinese-grants-and-loans-male-hulhule-bridge-inches-closer-to-reality-100706>, Accessed on: 01.09.2016.

<sup>78</sup> Wade Shepard, “Sri Lanka’s Colombo Port City: The Frontline Of China And India’s Geopolitical Showdown”, (2016), <http://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/08/12/a-look-at-colombo-port-city-the-frontline-of-china-and-indias-geopolitical-showdown/#163848517d1b>, Accessed on: 09.08.2016.

<sup>79</sup> David Brewster, “An Indian Ocean dilemma: Sino-Indian rivalry and China’s strategic vulnerability in the Indian Ocean”, *Journal of the IOR*, 11(1), (2015): 48-59.

<sup>80</sup> John W. Garver, “China and South Asia”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 519.1, (1992): 67-85.



*“From now on, the Chinese Navy will be more open, pragmatic and cooperative to actively participate in the international maritime security cooperation and go to great lengths to realize the lofty purpose of the harmonious ocean.”*<sup>81</sup>

According to Khurana, the ‘Blue Book’<sup>82</sup> expressed that China would never hesitate to countercharge the enemy forces, if its economic and commercial goals in the IOR should be prevented in any way.<sup>83</sup> Within this context, China stationed warships in the Gulf of Aden to fight against piracy. It has also shared intelligence with other naval forces and used for the security of the World Food Program vessels since December 2008.<sup>84</sup>

Although China’s activities in the IO are just intended to ensure the security of energy trade, many Indians believe that China’s increasing naval power in the IO is not only for energy security but China itself intends to contain India by implementing the “string of pearls” strategy as well. Indians also believe that the existence of the Chinese fleet threatens the interests of India and other countries.

### **3.3. China’s “String of Pearls” Strategy**

With the rapidly growing economy after the Cold War, China has quickly become a major power by filling power vacuum left by the Soviet Union in the new world order. As mentioned earlier, China becomes dependent on external energy suppliers and needs energy to sustain its rapid economic growth. Since more than seventy percent of its imported oil comes from the Middle East and Africa via the SCS, all of them are transferred by sea.<sup>85</sup> This makes China a highly dependent state on international sea lanes, particularly, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. China has many security concerns in the IO such as piracy, international

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<sup>81</sup> Li Yunqing, “Strengthening Exchange, Deepening Cooperation and Building the Safe and Harmonious Indian Ocean”, A Presentation for Logistic Department of PLA Navy, at 3rd IONS Conference at Cape Town, South Africa, (2012), <http://ions.gov.in/sites/default/files/Presentation%20by%20China.pdf>, Accessed on: 03.01.2017.

<sup>82</sup> “The Blue Book” is typically a special report published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China’s premier think tank, which discusses and analyses subjects important to Chinese interests.

<sup>83</sup> Gurpreet S. Khurana, “China’s Maritime-strategic Presence in IOR: Geopolitical, Geoeconomic and Security Import”, *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 10.2, (2014): 1-15.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Brewster, *op.cit.*, “Beyond the ‘String of Pearls’”, p.141.

terrorism and the US naval dominance. China has strategically cooperated with some regional countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore and Thailand in the IO to overcome these increased security threats.

Moreover, China has built up some alternative trade routes such as container ports, road links, pipelines and overland energy transport connections to gain access to the IO directly from its mainland to the IO. China does not want to depend on the US naval power for accessing to energy resources. Therefore, it has deployed its naval power at choke-points along the sea routes from the Persian Gulf to the SCS.<sup>86</sup> For an easy access to the IO, China has been constructing a number of facilities such as container ports in Bangladesh at Chittagong and in Sri Lanka at Hambantota, transportation projects in Nepal, road links between Kunming and Chittagong via Myanmar and alternative overland energy transport connections from southern and western China to the IO through Pakistan and Myanmar. (Figure 5) China's evolving maritime power shows that the PLAN is interested in protecting the SLOCs to ensure the safety of trade routes and to keep open the "choke points" for uninterrupted flow of energy resources.

However, the littoral countries of the SCS, especially Japan, South Korea, Cambodia and Vietnam have the opinion that China plans to become a dominant force by showing aggressive attitude to the region due to these security concerns. For India, this situation has a slightly different meaning. India is concerned that one day these facilities will be used as forward shipping bases for the PLAN.<sup>87</sup> New Delhi considers China's "String of Pearls" as an attempt to contain India and a possible point of Sino-Indian conflict in the IO. China's initiatives have a different significance for other South Asian countries. China has been seen as a stabilizing actor against the USA in geopolitical, geo-economic and security areas by other countries of the region, except for India. Over the last few years, China has been seeking for a permanent naval-strategic presence in the IOR. China's previous naval strategy focused heavily on the modernization of the PLA for a potential conflict

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<sup>86</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "Rising China in India's vicinity: a rivalry takes shape in Asia", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (2013): 1-18.

<sup>87</sup> Jan Hornat, "The power triangle in the Indian Ocean: China, India and the United States", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (2014):1-19.

against Taiwan to establish its superiority in Western Pacific and in the SCS. It has now reached global dimensions through the ‘String of Pearls’ strategy in the IO.

China strengthens its relations with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia by building container ports. To consolidate its access to the IO, China signed an agreement with Sri Lanka to finance the development of the Hambantota Development Zone composed of a container port, a bunker supplying station and an oil refinery. It is possible that China’s construction of these ports and facilities around India’s periphery can be explained on purely economic and commercial grounds. India, however, claims that China’s initiatives are intended to contain it.<sup>88</sup> These initiatives in India’s neighbors are perceived by India as an open threat to its strategic interests. This part of the study explains the initiatives of China in the South Asian countries, including Nepal, Myanmar Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

**Nepal:** Nepal is a strategic country located between India and China. Both India and China are trying to keep Nepal on their side. Although Nepal has rich natural resources, such as a large hydroelectric power potential, it is not able to use these advantages due to domestic instability. Therefore, Nepal has to follow a two-way policy between India and China. Despite its disadvantageous geographical location, Nepal has an important position in the China’s South Asia policy. In fact, China’s greatest interest in Nepal is due to its concern about the large Tibetan refugee community approximately in the number of 20,000 people.<sup>89</sup> China is also worried about US influence on its neighboring countries.<sup>90</sup> China thinks that the USA aims to limit itself with this attempt.<sup>91</sup> China is investigating ways to improve existing relations with Nepal in an effort to alleviate these concerns. Their relations are advancing both in economic and military fields. China has pledged economic and

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<sup>88</sup> Harsh V. Pant, “Narendra Modi’s UAE Trip Highlights India’s Shifting Middle East Approach”, *The Diplomat*, August 13, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/narendra-modis-uae-trip-highlights-indias-shifting-middle-east-approach/>, Accessed on: 11.11.2016.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> “Periphery countries” usually receive a disproportionately small share of global wealth. They have weak state institutions and are dependent on more developed countries. They are also usually behind because of obstacles such as lack of technology, unstable government, and poor education and health systems.

<sup>91</sup> Dhruv Katoch, “Is China Encircling India?”, *CLAWS Journal*, (2009): 27-37.

military assistance to Nepal's hydroelectric projects and the security sectors in return for rejection of US \$2.6 million military aid.<sup>92</sup>

China has also initiated a railway project to connect the Lhasa with the Khasa in Nepal.<sup>93</sup> The main objective of this rail link is to speed up the economic integration of Nepal with China by improving the transport infrastructure in the Himalayan region.<sup>94</sup> China aims to reduce Nepal's dependence on India with this project as well. Another initiative of China in Nepal is the railway project that will link Golmud in Qinghai province to Lhasa in Tibet.<sup>95</sup> The main purpose of this railway is to integrate Tibet into the Chinese economy.<sup>96</sup>

**Myanmar:** Myanmar is strategically and economically significant state for China. Because it is geographically close to the Strait of Malacca, China exports the goods that it produces directly to this country and it is an alternate passageway for China to transport its goods through it. China is making a great effort to create influence on Myanmar. The effort to establish this domain actually has many purposes. These are:

- To reduce energy dependence by providing direct access to the IO,
- To increase Chinese influence in the region by ensuring stabilization of the region,
- To distance Myanmar from India,
- To help rebel groups in Northeast India using the KIO/A and Chinese rebellious regions of Myanmar to use them against India.

Myanmar is important for China in terms of security, energy resources and economic issues. From the perspective of security, China and Myanmar have an increasing military cooperation since 1988.<sup>97</sup> China has begun to build and upgrade road and rail network systems that range from Yunan in South China to several ports

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Sudha Ramachandra, "Nepal to get China Rail Link", May 15, 2008 [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/JE15Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/JE15Df01.html), Accessed on: 04.12.2016.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Garver, op.cit., "China and South Asia", p.69.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

along the Myanmar coast in Bay of Bengal.<sup>98</sup> In 1992, Beijing pledged that the PRC would provide great assistance for the modernization of the marine facilities in Myanmar, including the Hainggyi Island and the Great Coco Islands.<sup>99</sup>

Great Coco Islands has a very strategic position for the PLAN. They are only about 30 km north of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands controlled by India. They provide the PLAN for an easy access to the IO.<sup>100</sup> China has established a modern reconnaissance and electronic intelligence system on Great Coco Island in 2003<sup>101</sup> to monitor India's military movements, including missile testing in the IO.<sup>102</sup> From the perspective of energy resources, with its rapid growing economy, China has begun to worry about meeting the demand for increasing energy resources. In this way, the presence of oil and gas fields discovered in Myanmar attracts a great deal of interest from China. To benefit from these reserves, production sharing agreements were signed between Chinese National Offshore Oil Company and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise between October 2004 and January 2005.<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, China has also invested heavily in Myanmar's oil and natural gas pipelines for the purpose of forming an alternative energy transfer route. (Figure 6) China has been trying to reduce the intense dependence on energy source from the Strait of Malacca. The deep-water port at Kyaukpyu on Ramree Islands in the Bay of Bengal and construction of a railway between Kunming and Lashio are the other attempts of China in Myanmar to enhance bilateral economic relations.<sup>104</sup> Economic issues are the last perspective of China's Myanmar policy. Economic ties between China and Myanmar have strengthened gradually since 1988. China aims to increase economic activity by stabilizing Myanmar. It aims to facilitate energy transfer through oil and natural gas pipeline projects expected to pass through the near future.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Lixin Geng, "Sino-Myanmar relations: analysis and prospects", Culture Mandala: The Bulletin of the Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies, 7.2, (2007): p.1.

<sup>101</sup> Geng, op.cit., "Sino-Myanmar relations".

<sup>102</sup> C. S. Kuppaswamy, "Myanmar-China Cooperation: Its Implications for India", South Asia Analysis Group, Paper 596, (2003): 3.

<sup>103</sup> Jan Willem Van Gelder and Howard Law, "Financing of oil companies in Burma", A research paper prepared for Arakan Oil Watch, DRAFT: 31 August 20http://www.banktrack.org/download/financingofoil\_companies\_in\_burma, Accessed on: 11.01.2017.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

**Bangladesh:** Having more than 118,000 km<sup>2</sup> of maritime territory, 200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone,<sup>105</sup> Bangladesh is another strategic state for China in the IO. Bangladesh lacks of qualified labor power, necessary technology and sufficient economic resources. Thus, it does not have a chance to access to rich marine resources. This circumstance offers lots of opportunities to China and it has established closer ties with China to make Bangladesh feel secure against India. China has improved its relations with Bangladesh by way of benefiting its problems with India in the region. Hereby, China made very important initiatives for itself in the Bay of Bengal. As far as Bengali Gulf is considered, China encountered two very critical consequences: the first is related with security of the transportation of energy, the next is regarded with the critical location of Bay of Bengal in China's string of pearls strategy. That is why China has become the largest supplier of military equipment to Bangladesh in the last decade, especially naval forces.

China is also trying hard to improve its commercial interests in the maritime area. China intends to benefit from recently discovered massive oil and gas deposits in the region, using the advantage of geographical proximity of Bangladesh to Myanmar and plans to transport these reserves to the Chinese market via Myanmar pipelines. Stepping up a competition with India for regional influence, China have signed 27 deals on cooperation with Bangladesh in a number of sectors, including coastal disaster management and construction, communication technology, investment, maritime cooperation, disaster management and cultural and people-to-people contacts, during the Chinese president's Dhaka visit in October 2016.<sup>106</sup>

China and Bangladesh are also making great efforts to increase their bilateral trade and tourism through developing routes between Kunming and Chittagong via Myanmar and airline connecting Kunming and Dhaka.<sup>107</sup> Chittagong port has an important place in the Chinese project of establishing network of ports, stretching from its coasts to Southeast Asia, the IO, the eastern shore of Africa and the

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<sup>105</sup> “ <http://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/177463/Beacon-of-the-Blue-Economy>, Accessed on: 12.01.2017.

<sup>106</sup> “Bangladesh and China signed 27 deals as President Xi visits Dhaka.” Senior Correspondent bdnews24.com, <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2016/10/14/bangladesh-china-sign-27-deals-as-president-xi-visits-dhaka>, Accessed on: 09.09.2016.

<sup>107</sup> Katoch, op.cit., “Is China Encircling India?”, p.27-37.

Mediterranean Sea to Greece, so-called the 21st Century Marine Silk Road.<sup>108</sup> In the early 2010, China promised to make \$9 million worth of efforts to publicize the expansion and modernization of the Chittagong port.<sup>109</sup> Although it was designed as a commercial project, the Chinese possible use of the Chittagong port for military purposes is a major concern for India. In November 2016, Bangladesh received the first submarines from China to boost sea power in the Bay of Bengal and the submarines would be supported by Chinese troops for some time that caused great concern for India.<sup>110</sup>

**Sri Lanka:** Sri Lanka, which is perhaps the most important point on energy transit lines, is crucial for China. China considers Sri Lanka as a shipping center in the IO in its Maritime Silk Road project. (Figure 7) With the MSR project, China aims at controlling access to the seaside ports linking the rich Basra Bay and the economic centers of east China. In fact, Chinese-Sri Lankan relations have been growing since the 1990s. China's weapons sales to Sri Lanka, which began during civilian war in Sri Lanka, have increased significantly since 2007 with the sale of Jian-7 warplanes, anti-aircraft guns and JY-11 3D weather surveillance radars.<sup>111</sup> China is also building a new port in Sri Lanka's southern coast, Hambantota very close to the world's busiest trade routes, at a cost of \$1 billion,<sup>112</sup> which has resulted in the deterioration of Indian-Sri Lankan relations. According to many experts like Chittagong, Hambantota can possibly be used by China as a military port in the future. China plans to use this port as a refueling and docking station for its patrol ships to protect the oil supply in the IO.<sup>113</sup> Since the Hambantota's location is very close to the sea lanes on the southern tip of India and Sri Lanka, it has been

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<sup>108</sup> Shepard, *op.cit.*, "Bangladesh's Deep Sea Port Problem".

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Saurav Jha, "The Bay of Bengal Naval Arms Race", <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-bay-of-bengal-naval-arms-race/>, Accessed on: 07.08.2016.

<sup>111</sup> Brahma Chellaney, "China fuels Sri Lankan war", The Japan Times, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2009/03/04/commentary/china-fuels-sri-lankan-war/#.WGvtHIOLTIU>, Accessed on: 19.10.2016.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Katoch, *op.cit.*, "Is China Encircling India?", p.29.

considered by some analysts as a part of Chinese string of pearls that PLAN could use against the India.<sup>114</sup> According to Global Times news;

*“India has long worried that the project would serve as a platform for the expansion of China’s military power in the IO, posing a threat to its national security.”*<sup>115</sup>

**Pakistan:** There is a close relationship between Pakistan and China for decades. In 1962, the Sino-Indian War further strengthened the relations between two countries and in 1963 Pakistan agreed to leave a part of Kashmir to China. From Pakistan’s point of view, the uneasy Sino-Indian relations are an important element for the establishment of close Sino-Pak relations, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Indeed, India is perceived as a threat by both China and Pakistan because of India’s close relations with the Americans in many respects. Therefore, it is seen that there is increasing economic, military and political relations between China and Pakistan. Moreover, especially the Kashmir issue, have made Sino-Pak relations more powerful because of China’s attitude towards Pakistan. Pakistan wants to prevent increasing terrorist incidents in its territories and stabilize its economy, so it seems quite satisfied with its close relations with China.

Pakistan aims to balance its relations with the USA and China to cope with the problems in the region. Pakistan is seen as an indispensable ally by China. Because China feels uneasy about India’s strategic alliance with the USA and thinks that this alliance aims to contain itself. China strengthens its relations with Pakistan to neutralize the Indo-US partnership. Moreover, China’s policy towards Pakistan is also related with its economic interests. China considers Pakistan as an important bypass line. Thus, it initiated some infrastructure projects in Pakistan. The main purpose of the infrastructure established in Pakistan by Chinese workers is to speed up the export of Chinese goods to world markets. Thanks to this bypass route, China aims to access to the IO directly, instead of using long maritime trade route stretching out from its coast to Middle East.

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<sup>114</sup> Brewster, *op.cit.*, “Beyond the ‘String of Pearls’”, p.141.

<sup>115</sup> Hu Weijia, “China’s investment in Colombo Port City has always been commercial, not military”, Global Times 04.08.2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/998254.shtml>, Accessed on: 19.10.2016.



A large part of the China's trade is carried out by the Strait of Hormuz- IO-SCS transportation line in a very long distance, so it causes to a great loss of time and important security risks. China aims to reach the Arabian Sea by passing through the Kashmir and Pakistan from its mainland instead of using this long slog route. Another importance of Pakistan for China is the concern of the stability in Xyiping. China is very disturbed by extreme groups infiltrating Autonomous Region of Xinjiang where Muslim population of China lives and creates confusion in the region. Therefore, China increases its relations with Pakistan for defensive purposes to tackle with this security threat. The most striking development in the strategic alliance between the two countries is the CPEC. The CPEC is one of the most important projects of the 'single-generation, one-way' project aiming to link China to Europe and Africa. (Figure 8) It aims to link Xinjiang in the northwestern region of China with the Kashmir region of Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan and Gwadar Port of Pakistan. CPEC consist of a number of roads, transportation infrastructures, industrial cooperation, railways, port construction and pipeline initiatives in Pakistan.

Located at the southern end of CPEC, the Gwadar Port near the Ocean mouth is the most important project of China. China is very interested in the construction of the Gwadar Port due to its proximity, 70 km from the Iranian border and 400 km east of the Strait of Hormuz and its strategic location on the major oil supply route.<sup>116</sup> China and Pakistan has agreed on the establishment of a "single corridor, multiple passages" aiming to establish an effective link to Gwadar Port to ensure that all regions in Pakistan benefit from economic and social development.<sup>117</sup> In this way, they aim to develop economically underdeveloped regions of Pakistan. Moreover, with regard to the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability, as well as nuclear power, China has made a great contribution. In fact, some reports claim that China conducted a nuclear test for Pakistan in 1980.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Pant, *op.cit.*, "Rising China in India's vicinity", p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor", <http://www.cpecinfo.com/10-questions-on-cpec>, Accessed on: 14.11.2016.

<sup>118</sup> Gareth Price, "Subject: China Pakistan Relations", Background Brief Number 1. (2011). [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/division\\_ecran/ecran\\_is1\\_china\\_pakistan\\_relations\\_gareth\\_price\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/division_ecran/ecran_is1_china_pakistan_relations_gareth_price_en.pdf), Accessed on: 19.11.2016.

While both China and Pakistan argue that CPEC has only economic dimensions, India and the USA argue that the project not only has an economic dimension, but also is designed for gaining a strategic position in the region. As an evidence of this claim, According to an internal undisclosed CIA review report prepared for former US Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, it is claimed that Beijing has prepared electronic eavesdropping messages in Gwadar, which stated that the Strait of Hormuz and shipping vessels in the Arabian Sea are monitored from this port.<sup>119</sup> India believes that it has already been surrounded by China by way of trade and defense relations with various countries such as Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Somalia. It also claims that this encirclement is strengthened by CPEC. India is not welcoming China's this project, because it has passed through the Kashmir region.

**Table 3: Chinese Transportation Infrastructure in Pakistan**

Enterprise	Name of the Firm	Present Condition	Stage
Joint Feasibility Study for Upgradation of ML1 and Establishment of Havelian Dryport	China Railway	Completed	100%
Karachi-Lahore Motorway (Sukkur-Multan Section),392 km	China State Const. Engineering Corpor. Ltd.	Under construction	60%
KKH PhaseII (Havelian-Thakot Section),120 km	China Road and Bridge Corporation	Under construction	60%
Upgradation of ML-1 (Multan-Lahore Section,339 km; Hyderabad-Multan Section,749 km; Kemari-Hyderabad Section,182 km)	TBD	Government Framework Agreement under discussion	40%
New Havelian Dry Port	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Khuzdar-Basima Highway (N-30), 110 km	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%

<sup>119</sup> Bill Gertz, "China builds up strategic sea lanes", The Washington Times - Monday, (2005). <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/jan/17/20050117-115550-1929r/>, Accessed on: 17.11.2016.

KKH Phase III(Raikot-Thakot Section)280km	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
D.I.Khan-Quetta Highway (N-50), 533km	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%

Source: Pakistan-China Institute. <http://www.cpecinfo.com/pci-cpec-founder>

**Table 4: Gwadar Initiatives**

Enterprise	Name of the Firm	Present Condition	Stage
Gwadar Primary School	China Comm. Constr. Comp. Ltd.	Completed	100%
Gwadar Free Zone	COPHC	Under construction	50%
Gwadar New International Airport	TBD	Framework Agreement Signed	40%
Gwadar Eastbay Expressway (19 km, connecting Gwadar Port to Mehran Coastal Highway)	TBD	Framework Agreement Signed	40%
Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Expansion of Multi-purpose Terminal including Breakwater and Dredging	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Gwadar Eastbay Expressway II (19 km, connecting Eastbay Expressway I to New Gwadar International Airport)	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Fresh Water Supply, Wastewater Treatment Plants for Gwadar	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Gwadar Pak-China Friendship Hospital Upgradation	TBD	Feasibility study under way	10%
Gwadar Pak-China Friendship Technical and Voc. College	TBD	Feasibility study under way	10%

Source: Pakistan-China Institute. <http://www.cpecinfo.com/pci-cpec-founder>

**Table 5: Industrial Cooperation**

Enterprise	Name of the Firm	Present Condition	Stage
Lahore Orange Line Metro Train	China Railway-China North Industries Group	Under construction	60%

	Corporation(CR-NORINCO)		
Lahore Orange Line Metro Train	China Railway-China North Industries Group Corp.(CR-NORINCO)	Under construction	60%
Optical Fiber Cable from Rawapindi to Khunjrab	Huawei Technology Co., Ltd.	Under construction	50%
Optical Fiber Cable from Rawapindi to Khunjrab	Huawei Technology Co., Ltd.	Under construction	50%
Gwadar-Nawabshah LNG Terminal and Pipeline, 700 km	China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau	To be inaugurated	40%
Gwadar-Nawabshah LNG Terminal and Pipeline, 700 km	China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau	To be inaugurated	40%
Haier & Ruba Economic Zone PhaseII	Haier Electrical Applications Corporation Ltd.	Feasibility stage	15%
Promotion of TD-LTE commercialization in Pakistan	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Promotion of TD-LTE commercialization in Pakistan	TBD	Feasibility stage	15%
Haier & Ruba Economic Zone PhaseII	Haier Electrical Applications Corporation Ltd.	Feasibility stage	15%
DTMB Demonstration Project	TBD	MOU Signed	5%

Source: Pakistan-China Institute. <http://www.cpecinfo.com/pci-cpec-founder>

### **3.4. The “Malacca Dilemma” and the Expansion of China’s Naval Capabilities**

Following the two Gulf Wars and Afghan operation, many Chinese analysts began to discuss any possible naval blockade that could be applied to China by the USA in Taiwan or the Middle East. This blockade would be a major bottleneck in China’s energy trade. China has been worrying about the expanding US military presence in both the IOR and the SCS. It has establishing close ties with regional countries to contain Indian influence in the region and cope with rising chaos at maritime choke-points and maritime terrorism.

Over the past two decades, China has launched a major naval expansion activity to change the balance of power in the Western Pacific and to become a dominant power especially in the IO. However, China's ability to deploy force in the IO seems to be troubled do to remote ports and air bases.<sup>120</sup> The closest Chinese naval base is in Hainan Island in the SCS. Moreover, even if China deploys any naval base in the region, it will have to use the transit passage points to support this base logistically. Furthermore, according to security experts, China has little experience and ability to operate well beyond coastal waters. These deficiencies have caused China to remain weak strategically in the IO. In order to alleviate these strategic vulnerabilities, China tries to develop new land links to the IO through Myanmar and Pakistan.

Despite the fact that the US presence in the region has been a serious challenge to the Chinese Navy, China has strong submarine warfare capabilities known to be superior to that of America.<sup>121</sup> The Chinese Navy tries to increase its power by focusing on operations constantly off the coast of China. In addition, China has embarked on a wide range of arms acquisition and domestic weapons development programs, such as:

- Cruise Missiles;
- Short- and Medium range Ballistic Missiles;
- High Performance Aircraft;
- Amphibious and Airborne Assault,
- New Intermediate- and Medium-range Conventional Ballistic Missiles, as well as Long-range, Land-attack, and Anti-ship Cruise Missiles.<sup>122</sup>

It has been also reported that China's investment in oceanographic research and surveillance ships will increase, the number of nuclear submarine fleets and

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<sup>120</sup> Brewster, *op.cit.*, "Beyond the 'String of Pearls'", p.137.

<sup>121</sup> Venkatshamy, *op.cit.*, "The IOR in India's strategic futures", p.32.

<sup>122</sup> United States Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2010", Annual Report to Congress,(2013). [https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015\\_China\\_Military\\_Power\\_Report.pdf](https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015_China_Military_Power_Report.pdf), Accessed on: 06.03.2017.

amphibious warships will also increase by 2030.<sup>123</sup> Thanks to current expansion program, China will boost to the top of the list of states that could threaten the US influence or hegemony in the region.<sup>124</sup> When compared to India, in general, China's maritime capacity exceeds India in both quantitative and qualitative terms and is expected to increase much more in the coming years.<sup>125</sup>

**Table 6: Current and projected maritime expenditures of India, China and the USA**

IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS	2014-2015	2020-2021	2025-2026	2025-2026	2030-2031
<b>INDIA</b>					
GDP [1, 2]	1908,3	2398,82	3210,16	3823,35	4295,92
DEFENSE [3]	46,1	58,01	77,62	165,57	103,88
DEFENSE BUDGET % GDP	2,42%	2,42%	2,42%	-	2,42%
NAVY [3]	-	-	-	-	-
NAVY - FUTURE TREND	2,92	3,67	4,91	5,84	6,57
NAVY AS % OF GDP	0,15%	0,15%	0,15%	0,15%	0,15%
NAVY AS % OF DEF. BUDGET	6,33%	6,32%	6,32%	-	6,32%
<b>USA</b>					
GDP [1,4]	17419,3	16392,71	17354,00	18507,00	19310,00
DEFENSE [5]	624,0	575,00	560,00	605,00	-
DEFENSE BUDGET % GDP	3,58%	3,51%	3,23%	3,27%	-
NAVY [6]	-	-	-	-	-
NAVY - FUTURE TREND [6]	170	157,56	153,45	165,78	
NAVY AS % OF GDP	0,98%	0,96%	0,88%	0,90%	-

<sup>123</sup> "The Maritime Future of the Indian Ocean Putting the G back into Great Power Politics", The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. Future Issue No:13.09.10, [http://hcsc.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/HCSS\\_FI-13\\_09\\_10\\_Indian\\_Ocean.pdf](http://hcsc.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/HCSS_FI-13_09_10_Indian_Ocean.pdf), Accessed on: 13.12.2016.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

NAVY AS % OF DEF. BUDGET	27,40%	27,40%	27,40%	27,40%	-
<b>CHINA</b>					
GDP [1, 7]	8283,3	8252,34	8946,57	9948,00	10677,15
DEFENSE [8]	122,6	122,22	132,50	147,33	158,13
DEFENSE BUDGET % GDP	1,48%	1,48%	1,48%	1,48%	1,48%
NAVY	-	-	-	-	-
NAVY - FUTURE TREND	18,4	18,33	19,87	22,09	23,71
NAVY AS % OF GDP	0,22%	0,22%	0,22%	0,22%	0,22%
NAVY AS % OF DEF. BUDGET	15,00%	15,00%	15,00%	15,00%	15,00%

Source: [http://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/HCSS\\_FI-130910IndianOceanpdf](http://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/HCSS_FI-130910IndianOceanpdf).

In summary, today, almost sixty percent of China's energy demands imported from countries, like Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc. To achieve its strategic goals, including sustaining the secured SLOC's and free flow energy, break US hegemony in the IO and establish a permanent "String of Pearls, China adopted the policy of 'peaceful development' during the mid-1990s. This strategy was designed to facilitate economic growth, prosperity and modernization. This 'peaceful development' strategy is focused on the use of soft power diplomacy in the world. According to China's White Paper, China has an established business and trade linkage with 163 countries.<sup>126</sup> It has signed many free-trade-zone agreements and bilateral investment treaties with 129 countries.<sup>127</sup> As China's strategic goal has advanced from being a regional power to being a superpower, this policy has turned into a more aggressive power policy. China's transition from a regional power to a global power depends on its economic growth. China's pursuit of interests in the IO in fact began as a response to the growing US presence in the IO, which is supposed to aim at containing

<sup>126</sup> "White Paper: China's Peaceful Development", <http://in.chineseembassy.org/eng/zt/peaceful/t855717.html>, Accessed on: 03.12.2016.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

China.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the US presence in the region is seen as one of the reasons for Chinese increase its defense spending.

However, its rising dependence on oil and raw materials are the main concerns that will play a larger role in the Chinese development. China's demand for energy resources is expected to grow in increasing amounts over the next 20 years. As long as the Chinese economy continues to grow, its demand for all energy sources, especially oil and natural gas is likely to increase. According to BP Energy Outlook 2035, China's demand for liquids grows by 7 Mb/d to 2035 and its demand for continues to lead the growth in consumption (390 Mton) even though its growth rate declines from eight point three percent p.a. during 2000-13 to zero point eight percent in 2013-35.<sup>129</sup> Despite the increase in the country's supply of oil and natural gas, it is clear that national resources cannot meet China's energy demand.

In this context, the delivery of energy to the country from the shortest path smoothly and timely has begun to be seen as the key to economic growth. Thus, China has established strategic partnerships with countries on energy trade routes to keep the pace of its economic growth not to lose its position on the world stage and increase the prosperity of its citizens. It has obtained a number of privileges by way means of military and economic aids, particularly in states located in the IO.

Indeed, the underlying fact is that China is skeptical about the US and Indian partnership and believes that this partnership will harm its national interest.<sup>130</sup> Consequently, China is choosing to secure energy trade routes with its own naval units. China's efforts to provide energy security in the region with its own marine elements are leading the country to confront the other countries having competing interests in the region. This chapter examined the China's interests and initiatives in the IOR. Next chapter will examine the India's strategic interests in the IOR.

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<sup>128</sup> Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "*Boosting Maritime Capabilities in the Indian Ocean*", New Delhi, India. August 23, 2007. <http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/2908.cfm>, Accessed on: 24.10.2016.

<sup>129</sup> "BP Energy Outlook 2035", (2015). <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/energy-outlook-2015/bp-energy-outlook-2035-booklet.pdf>, Accessed on: 02.01.2017.

<sup>130</sup> Surjit Mansingh, "India and China Today and Tomorrow", *The International Spectator*, 46.2, (2011): 41-55.



## CHAPTER 4

### INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Compared to China, India has geographical and strategic advantages in the IO such as geographical proximity to maritime trade route. The IOR is extremely important for India due to various reasons:

- Its dependence on imported oil and gas trade,
- Ensure energy security,
- Coping with contemporary and regional security challenges,
- Conducting more active policies to protect its strategic interests,

First is its dependence on imported oil and gas trade. India is located on the world's busiest trade route (Africa, Europe, West Asia, Central Asia, ASEAN and Australian trade route). Nearly seventy percent of India's oil is supplied from West Asia. For this reason, India is heavily dependent on this important trade route in the IO.

Second is the energy security. Energy security is India's prime concern in the IOR. It is vital for the Indian economy to keep the SLOCs open and safe in the IO that continues its upsurge. India concerned about the piracy disruption of the energy trade route through the sea-lanes, especially in the Strait of Malacca and in the Gulf of Aden because of increasing threats of terrorism like the '26/11' Mumbai attacks.<sup>131</sup>

Third is coping with contemporary and regional security challenges. India is geographically open to all kinds of threats because of its the long coastline, porous nature of its borders, including maritime piracy, terrorist attacks, income inequality, border disputes between India and its neighbors and organized crime that emerged from the lack of order, weaker governments and economic underdevelopment.

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<sup>131</sup> The 2008 Mumbai (Bombay) attacks that took place in November 2008, were a series of offences. These offences were carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which is a militant organization based in Pakistan. It was founded in 1990 by Hafiz Mohammed Saeed. The group has repeatedly claimed through its journals and websites that its main aim is to destroy the Indian republic and to annihilate Hinduism and Judaism.

Fourth is conducting more active policies to protect its strategic interests in the IO. Indian relations with South Asian and the Middle Eastern countries are largely based on the ocean economy. Moreover, the IO has rich marine and energy sources, such as manganese nodules, fisheries, algae and sea weeds. Since the IO is geographically very close to rich energy resources, India wants to take advantage of geographical location of the IO. Therefore, India has invested huge sums to develop ports for strategic purposes. The Mumbai attack and the ocean piracy have propelled India to take control of the IO through individual and multilateral naval exercises. Mumbai Attack and ocean piracy have made India be aware of the significance of controlling neighboring oceans through individual and multilateral naval exercises.

Since China is building ports in Gwadar, Hambantota, Chittagong and the littoral states namely Sri Lanka, Maldives, these initiatives are considered by India as an important strategic loss. India perceived these Chinese initiatives in its own area as a threat for its national security. For this reason, India strengthens its naval force assigned to control over the IO. Today, IN is a blue-water navy<sup>132</sup> with sizable force projection capabilities. It can be seen as a net security provider in the IOR. Apart from these, India has recently signed a strategic level partnership defense cooperation agreement with the USA, Japan, Israel and Australia. India has also developed close relations with the Southeast Asian states, so-called India's "Look East" policy. With such initiatives, India intends to protect its strategic interests in the IOR.

#### **4.1. Energy Dependence on Imported Oil and Gas**

After having a rapid rise in economic reforms in early 1990s, the Indian economy has made major investments in industrial production to sustain its recent economic growth.<sup>133</sup> A fast rising trend indicator of the Indian economy make India achieve national goal of becoming a world power.<sup>134</sup> This leads to more energy consumption in India than ever before and made India dependent on energy. India imports nearly seventy percent of its energy and most of these are provided by the

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<sup>132</sup> "A blue-water navy" is a maritime force capable of operating globally; essentially across the deep waters of open oceans.

<sup>133</sup> Weimar, *op.cit.*, "Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia:", p.16.

<sup>134</sup> Chunhao, *op.cit.*, "US-India-China relations", p.632.

Gulf States so that it must indispensably use maritime transportation for this energy import.

Rising energy demand has drawn attention to the importance of energy security. Increasing dependence on imported oil in India has been an issue of concern for India. India's annual energy requirement has increased by about seven percent. This is considered as a worrying situation. This is due to the fact that annual energy demand increases by about seven percent.<sup>135</sup> Annual energy production of India is only two point three percent of world energy production, whereas annual energy consumption is three point three percent of world energy supply.<sup>136</sup>

**Table 7: India's Top 10 Imports (subcategories of fossil fuel-related products)**

Crude oil	US\$72.3 billion
Coal, solid fuels made from coal	\$14.1 billion
Processed petroleum oils	\$4 billion
Petroleum oil residues	\$1.4 billion
Coke, semi-coke: \$521.4 million	\$521.4 million
Coal tar oils (high temperature distillation)	\$161.6 million
Petroleum jelly, mineral waxes	\$129.3 million
Electrical energy	\$42.3 million
Tar pitch, coke	\$16.5 million

Source: <http://www.worldstopexports.com/indias-top-10-imports/>

Reference to the IEA, based on growth rates, India is expected to invest \$ 800 billion by 2030 for this growing demand.<sup>137</sup> As a result, India is modernizing its navy and increasing its military strength to secure not only its trade routes but also those of other countries in the region. This topic will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. According to the Indian Army Doctrine;

<sup>135</sup> International Energy Agency, *op.cit.*, "World Outlook Energy 2015".

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

“By virtue of her size and strategic location in the IOR, India is expected to play her rightful role to ensure peace and stability in it.”<sup>138</sup>

#### 4.2. Ensuring Open and Safe Choke Points for Energy Security

The IO is surrounded by land rim on three sides and access to the region is provided with a few narrow passes vital for all countries in the region. Sustaining economic growth is crucial for all littoral states in the IO. The maritime trade route from the Middle East through the IO to the SCS is a substantial way for the prosperity of regional states, India needs secure and open maritime trade routes to sustain its economic growth and achieve regional dominance.

Nearly, two-thirds of the world’s oil shipments, one-third of bulk cargo traffic and half of the world’s container shipments are conveyed through trade route from Middle East to the SCS through the IO.<sup>139</sup> Within India’s Maritime Military Strategy, the choke points passing through the IO, principally the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Cape of Good Hope, occupy top priority for India.<sup>140</sup>

The most important choke point in the region is the Strait of Malacca. Malacca is preferred by countries of the region because of its short-distance and its many highly reliable navigational aids.<sup>141</sup> India is actively pursuing an active foreign policy to prevent economic and political losses that may occur in the face of any unforeseeable blockage. India has already an active military presence to control the crossing points in the region. Within this context, Andaman and Nicobar Islands are hosting India’s only Tri-service Theater Command of the Indian Armed Forces. It was established in 2001 to safeguard India’s strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca, and is strategically very important for India. Regarding the Strait of Malacca, India’s position on Nicobar and Andaman Islands offers rapid access to the northern parts of the Strait and gives immediate intervention in the

<sup>138</sup> Command, H. A. T. (2004). Indian Army Doctrine, p.6, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/157030/India %202004.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/157030/India%202004.pdf), Accessed on: 01.01.2017.

<sup>139</sup> Navy, I. (2004). Indian maritime doctrine. *New Delhi: Ministry of Defense*.

<sup>140</sup> Navy, I. (2007). Freedom to use the seas: India’s maritime military strategy. New Delhi: Integrated HQ Ministry of Defence (Navy).

<sup>141</sup> Mokhzani Zubir and Mohd Nizam Basiron, “The Strait of Malacca: the Rise of China, America’s Intentions and the Dilemma of the Littoral States”, *Maritime Studies* 2005.141 (2005): 24-26.

event of a potential blockage. According to news of Sputnik,<sup>142</sup> India is planning to build a sea bed-based surveillance sensor line to track submarines or sea ships patrolling the SCS and the IOR.<sup>143</sup>

Since the end of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the IN has been carried out escort duty during the passage of American vessels through the Strait of Malacca. India has performed collective exercises and friendly deployments with Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia over the Strait of Malacca. It has also been continuously deploying its warships in the SCS since 2000 and this enhances its influence in the region.

Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, India has developed close military cooperation and defense agreements with Oman since 2003, involving training, joint exercises, maritime security cooperation, as well as right of using the Thumrait air base for transit purposes and berthing facilities.<sup>144</sup> Another security agreement has developed with Qatar in 2008, that includes maritime security, intelligence sharing and defense cooperation.<sup>145</sup>

As for the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, it is also important to reach the Red Sea and beyond for the Indian Navy. India has been involved in several initiatives because of its strategic position. These are joint exercises with France in 2005 and 2007, Russia in 2009 in the Gulf of Aden and a continuing naval presence against piracy attacks off the Somali coast in 2008.<sup>146</sup> India enhanced its military links in 2001 with the South African states by signing defense cooperation agreements to ensure the security of Cape of Good Hope.

Considering the activities of these transit passage points in India, it is understood that India is determined to keep the Straits open and secure to take control of them unilaterally. At the same time, India's activities in the region will enable it not to allow China to have an easy access to the IO

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<sup>142</sup> Sputnik, a major new media brand with modern multimedia centers in dozens of countries, was launched on November 10, 2014.

<sup>143</sup> <http://sptnkne.ws/cnsA>, Accessed on: 19.10.2016.

<sup>144</sup> David Scott, "India's Aspirations and Strategy for the Indian Ocean—Securing the Waves?", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36.4, (2013): 484-511.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

### 4.3. Coping with Contemporary Regional Security Challenges

In recent years, rapid rise in human trafficking, smuggling of illicit goods and materials, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy and maritime terrorism make the situation in the IOR more complicated. Maritime piracy is at the forefront of these security problems, which have a negative spillover effect on maritime trade. Piracy has been a serious threat to international maritime trade since the early 21st century. The threat of piracy, which has been brought to the world agenda in recent years with pirates of Somalia, began to emerge in the IO. Piracy has become a primary security issue that adversely affects the intensive maritime trade in the IO. According to OBP data, in 2015, the total cost of Somalian piracy in the West India, amounted to \$ 1.5 million.<sup>147</sup> The attacks on shipping vessels passing through the Strait of Malacca reached record of 157 incidents in 2004 and the Strait of Malacca began to be accepted as the world's most dangerous pirate hotspot by the IMB.<sup>148</sup>

A wide range of initiatives have been launched over the years to compete with maritime piracy between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in the Strait of Malacca region. Moreover, a number of bilateral and trilateral agreements have been implemented over the years to draw attention of the seriousness of security in the Strait of Malacca and combat maritime crime with cooperative efforts. Some of the partnership initiatives undertaken by the countries of the region in this process are listed below.

- The Five Power Defense Agreement (1971) (Member parties are Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the U.K.),
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982),
- The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988),
- Japan-Proposed Regional Coast Guards (1999),
- The Shangri-La Dialogue (2002),

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<sup>147</sup> "Oceans Beyond Piracy", The State of Maritime Piracy 2015 (Denver, CO: One Earth Future Foundation, 2016), Tuesday, 3 May 2016 – London, <http://obp.ngo/reports/sop2015>, Accessed on: 28.11.2016.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

- MALSINDO & the Eye in the Sky Initiative (2004/2005),
- The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (2006).<sup>149</sup>

Another serious security challenge in the region is terrorism. For example, the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai that took place in 2004 and the attacks on USS Cole and French Tanker Limburg in the Gulf of Aden have been incidents of maritime terrorism that caused great repercussions in the world.<sup>150</sup> Although India has made an effort to overcome regional and global security concerns through military modernization, maritime security and nuclear policies, its domestic security concerns are still considered as serious issues for India.<sup>151</sup>

With the liberalization of Indian economy after 1991, Indian economy has experienced a rapid economic growth. While this situation leads to further expansion of the existing gap between social groups, poverty has remained a major problem for India. The unexpected economic growth stemming from a more market-oriented economic policy in the 1980s and economic liberalization in the 1990s resulted in income inequality among different social groups. This also resulted in uprisings of the indigenous people. Today, while millions of Indians are fighting for survival under starvation limit, a majority of people in the country are enjoying very prosperous life.

According to a report by Johannesburg-based wealth research firm New World Wealth; although India is among the 10 richest countries in the world with a total individual wealth of \$5,600 billion, it is the second most 'unequal' country in the world after Russia.<sup>152</sup> Almost one-fifth of the world's population has been living together with a common culture and religion for many years in South Asian countries. But those countries have also faced regional problems. Despite having common values, they are not able to act together. The countries in the South Asia are

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<sup>149</sup> "Threat Convergence Transnational Security Threats in the Straits of Malacca", <http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/ttcvr1213-threatconvergence-malaccastraits-08e.pdf>, Accessed on: 12.12.2016.

<sup>150</sup> Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, "Maritime security cooperation in the IOR", p.180.

<sup>151</sup> Aditi Chatterjee, "Non-traditional maritime security threats in the IOR", *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 10.2, (2014): 77-95.

<sup>152</sup> <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/indias-54-per-cent-wealth-controlled-by-millionaires-most-unequal-country-after-russia-report-3013286/>, Accessed on: 02.01.2017.

facing with major challenges such as political and economic instability. India's desire to become dominant power in the region and attempt to take its neighbors under control led the other states in the region to live in isolation.

Another regional security challenge that India has to tackle with is the territorial disputes with its neighbors, such as Kashmir and Siachen with Pakistan and Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin with China. Today, there is still a continuing tension between the states in the disputed territories with regard to the use of natural resources. Many illegal organizations that emerged from the lack of order, weaker governments and economic underdevelopment can be considered as any other important security problems in the region. These are Naxalite–Maoists called the PLGA, Tamil Tigers, Eelam People's Democratic Party, Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal Peoples' Aman Committee, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Muttahida Qaumi Movement and ISI involvement with drugs.

#### **4.4. Conducting More Active Policies to Protect its Strategic Interests**

India, carrying out a policy of neutrality from its independence to the end of the Cold War period, began to carry out more active policy to protect its strategic interests in parallel with the change in the global balance of power since the end of the Cold War. As a part of this active policy, India has improved its relations with its neighbors, reestablished its maritime strategy and take steps to become global power by taking initiatives in countries beyond its borders.

##### **4.4.1. Growing Bilateral Relations between India and its Immediate Neighbors (China, Pakistan, Others)**

India, seeking to be the dominant power in the Indian Ocean region, is looking for ways to improve bilateral relations with its neighbors. In this way, India aims to solve the existing problems with its neighbors, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal and to provide stability in the region. Of course, the most important thing is to correct relations with Pakistan.



#### 4.4.1.1. Sino-Indian Relations

India and China relations have been tough throughout their history. China's occupation of Tibet in 1950 created a potential security threat for India. Chinese economic and social policies in this region led to riots among the Tibetans. After the riot, Dalai Lama and many of his followers had to leave Tibet.<sup>153</sup> In 1959, India granted asylum to Dalai Lama and many of his followers.<sup>154</sup>

Relations that have strained in the mid-1950s turned into a complete war in 1962.<sup>155</sup> The 1962 Indo-Chinese War, which originated from the border dispute, ended with some concessions in both countries, but the effects of the war continued until today. Relations between India and China have been distant for a long time due to the negative atmosphere created by this war. In fact, these two countries have great similarities in many respects, like having the first and second largest populations in the world that causes serious socio-economic problems. In addition to that, especially after the Cold War, both countries have been trying to grow economically and have an ambition of dominant powers in their regions.

The primary national interests of India and China are the continuity of government, the well-being of their people, protecting sovereignty, territorial integrity, security and economic interests. Both of these countries give great importance to economic development and produce similar goods. They are dependent on the foreign energy sources to meet their energy needs, and this resulted in a serious competition between the two countries in Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and Africa.

The most obvious and important problems between India and China are border disputes. India wants to keep its border with British colonial rule (McMahon Line)<sup>156</sup>, while China defends its historical boundaries. For this reason, there is continuous debate over the long border zone between China and India. (Figure 9) The eastern part of India, Arunachal Pradesh, Kaurik, Shipki La, Jadh and Laphthal

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<sup>153</sup> Mansingh, *op.cit.*, "India and China", p.48.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> The McMahon Line is a demarcation line drawn on map referred to in the Simla Convention, a treaty between Britain and Tibet signed in 1914.

regions and Aksai Chin region are the main disputed border regions. Moreover, friendship and strategic relations between China and Pakistan threaten India's national security and the desire for dominance in South Asia. Former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Lal Nehru (1889-1964) clearly revealed the strategy of becoming a powerful country in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>157</sup> According to him, "India, constituted as she is, cannot play a secondary part in the world. She will either count for a great deal or not count at all. No middle position attracted me. Nor did I think any intermediate position feasible."<sup>158</sup>

Although India has put economic reforms in the practice shortly after China, it is still far behind China. India and China are also members of many international and regional economic organizations, including ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit, BCIM association, trilateral meetings (Russia, BRIC, and the G20), and the UN.<sup>159</sup> Another bone of contention between two regional powers is China's 'string of pearls' strategy to constrain India's freedom of movement in South Asia. China's numerous investments in building up port facilities in the IO have been serious attempts to neutralize Indian influence in the region.<sup>160</sup> China's increasing substantial trading relationships with India's neighbors and China's penetration in India's neighborhood, by using its booming exports and hunger for international markets have led India to recalibrate its foreign policy.<sup>161</sup> In this context, India is seeking ways to weaken China's influence over its immediate neighbors Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal

#### **4.4.1.2. Indo-Pak Relations**

Indo-Pak relations have been on bad terms since their independence. Continuous tension in between is one of the most important problems in South Asia. This tension led to four major wars (1948, 1965 and 1971 over Kashmir and 1999 in Kargil) and numerous small scale incidents. These two countries have even

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<sup>157</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, "*The Discovery of India*", New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, 1999.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Mansingh, op.cit., "India and China", p.48.

<sup>160</sup> David M. Malone and Rohan Mukherjee. "India and China: conflict and cooperation", *Survival*, 52.1 (2010): 137-158.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

threatened to use nuclear weapons against one another in this process. The Kashmir issue is the most important problem between the two countries. It is also one of the most important perennial territorial disputes in the world today.

In the course of the Cold War, India preferred to remain neutral and non-aligned for a long time while Pakistan was the ally of the USA and China, but it eventually became the ally of the Soviet Union.<sup>162</sup> At that time, China and the USA gave a great deal of foreign military and economic aid to Pakistan. Especially the alliance, which extends to the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, has led to a growing concern in India. The transfer of nuclear weapons technology and missile systems from China to Pakistan has evoked serious fear on Indians.

The mutual nuclear tests were carried out successively by two countries in 1998 and with the Kargil war in 1999, and therefore, the tension between the two countries reached the highest level. Thanks to China's and the US more balanced approach to both sides, the war was not progressed further. After the war, peace initiatives with Pakistan were undertaken by Indian prime ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004), Manmohan Singh (2004-2014) and Narendra Damodardas Modi (since 2014). But these initiatives failed due to domestic pressure in India and the deadly Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2008.<sup>163</sup> In every negative event, countries accused each other and tried to justify themselves by trying to take support of international community. Owing to hostile relationship between the two countries, they had to earmark the bulk of their budget for the war industry.<sup>164</sup>

Both states keep on investing a large amount of their money on weapons from the USA, China, Russia, Sweden and France.<sup>165</sup> India-Pakistan relations go to a very critical balance, which has a negative effect on stability in the region. One of the reasons for the so-called tensions of India-Pakistan relations is the military and economic support that China gives to Pakistan. Therefore, India chose to reorganize relations with China to weaken the alliance between China and Pakistan. China is on

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<sup>162</sup> Rohan Mukherjee and David M. Malone, "Indian foreign policy and contemporary security challenges", *International affairs*, 87.1, (2011): 87-104.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Stuti Bhatnagar, "Interstate Conflicts and Regionalism in South Asia: Prospects and Challenges", *idea 2* (2008).

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

the one hand seen as a very important trading partner for India, on the other hand, as a dangerous actor, which is an obstacle to being a dominant power.

#### **4.4.1.3. India's Relationships with Other Immediate Neighbors (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal)**

India's relationships with other nations in its region are far from settled. India's dominant status or at least its perceived aspiration creates threat perceptions among its smaller neighbors. Despite their small and weak status, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, which shares a common culture, religion and history with India, are very significant for India.

But, the policy that India applied in the region in order to become a dominant power are perceived by these small neighbors as a threat to their national security. Thus, there is a lack of confidence between these countries and India. For example, although India has undertaken a mediation role as an effective regional power in the Tamil issue, it was not welcomed by the Sri Lankan government, due to the fact that India provides a shelter to LTTE terrorist organization on its own territory. India has recognized the strategic importance of Sri Lanka for itself in recent years and begun to give economic and military assistance to this country to carry the relationship in between to the higher levels.

Bangladesh is one of the neighbors that India has been experiencing a tense relationship with. India supported Bangladesh in 1971 during Bangladesh War of Independence, to facilitate separation of Pakistan. Then, under the pretext of some of Hindu refugees, India directly intervened with Bangladesh. In addition, after the war, India built a dam on the Ganges River and transferred half of the river's water to another part of the region. Therefore, this issue caused a drought in North Bangladesh This situation caused reaction of Bangladeshi people and aroused hatred towards India. Bangladesh naturally perceived all of these incidents as a hostile attitude. The growing Chinese influence on Bangladesh obliges India to improve its existing relations with Bangladesh. In this context, India is seeking ways to solve all problems, especially the water problem, between Bangladesh.

And, the last issue to be addressed in this section is the relations between India and Nepal. Nepal is a country that cannot be shared between India and China due to its strategic location. Because of that, both countries are rivaling to establish influence on Nepal. Despite the pressures of the Indian government on Nepal, its decision to launch diplomatic relations with China, Pakistan and other countries in the region led India to impose an economic embargo on this country. The resistance of Nepal against the Indian pressure has resulted in a deterioration of relations between the two countries. Moreover, the fact that the Nepal-Indian border remains open is accompanied by problems such as human trafficking, illegal migration and drug trafficking. India provides Nepal with economic assistance to solve the problems in between. But at the same time, relations between India and Nepal supported by China are constantly tense.

Today, these three countries are continuing military and economic relations with China and that is observed by India with great concern. India is intensely striving to overcome these fears and solve current problems with immediate neighbors.

#### **4.4.2. Indian Maritime Strategy**

The theory of maritime hegemony of Alfred T. Mahan has a very important place in the Indian maritime strategy. Mahan stated that the most important, or even the only, condition of dominating the world can be achieved by controlling important trade routes in the seas.<sup>166</sup> According to Mahan, the island countries have a great advantage over the mainland countries, but coastal states having long coastlines and major ports were as advantageous as the island states.<sup>167</sup> Mahan also stated that a continental state has to defend the country against the threats both from its immediate neighbors by establishing a strong army and from the sea by establishing a large navy.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, “*The influence of sea power upon history, 1660-1783*”, Read Books Ltd, 2013.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Michael PM Finch, “Edward Mead Earle and the Unfinished Makers of Modern Strategy”, *Journal of Military History*, 80.3 (2016).

David Scott, in his article, stated that India is carrying out a six-fold maritime strategy and this strategy consists of increasing its naval spending, strengthening its infrastructure, increasing its naval capabilities, active maritime diplomacy, exercising in the IO and keeping open the choke points.<sup>169</sup> India is necessarily adopting the idea of increasing and strengthening an all-round balanced naval capability to balance against rising China, threatening Pakistan and coping with contemporary non-traditional threats.<sup>170</sup> However, India comes up against not only internal but also external challenges. Internally, India is anxious about the expenditure on the defense industry for strengthening its Naval Force that will later result in budget deficit.<sup>171</sup> Externally, Indian influence in the IOR, which seems favorable, is perceived as a growing challenge by China and Pakistan.<sup>172</sup>

When Indian Maritime Strategies are examined, it is seen that the 1998 Indian Naval Defense Strategy was defense-based and limited in capacity,<sup>173</sup> but the 2004 Indian Maritime Doctrine appeared to be a more aggressive and influential dimension to continue to impact on the entire the IO.<sup>174</sup> According to Scott, this Indian Maritime Doctrine was so assertive that it contained dynamics that could react instantly in the event of any threats that could occur in the region.

The 2007 Indian Maritime Military Strategy covers 2007-2022 periods. According to many writers, Indian maritime military power has restructured and made more powerful by the doctrine.<sup>175</sup> This strategy also mentions the close resemblance between Indian naval diplomacy and Alfred T. Mahan's maritime power framework. With this strategy, India has extended its defense strategy within the scope of its strategic interests throughout the entire ocean instead of coastal defense.

As a result, considering all Indian Maritime Strategies, it is clearly seen that India considers being the dominant force in its region as its basic objective. For this

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<sup>169</sup> Scott, *op.cit.*, "India's Aspirations", p.498.

<sup>170</sup> Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, "Maritime security cooperation in the IOR", p.181.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Scott, *op.cit.*, "India's Aspirations", p.499.

<sup>174</sup> Indian Maritime Doctrine, *op.cit.*, p.54.

<sup>175</sup> Indian Maritime Doctrine, *op.cit.*, p.71.

reason, it is clear that any Chinese initiative in the IO will be counterbalanced by India. Many Indians think that the Chinese dominance in the IO is unacceptable. India believes that the effective Indian national maritime security strategy that reinforced by domestic technology and maritime industry will bring synergy to all countries in the region.

#### **4.4.3. Indian Active Foreign Policy in its Near Abroad**

The change in Indian economic orientation and foreign policy with the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s is seen as a turning point in Indian history. The Indian socialist economy, which has been struggled for a long time with poor fiscal management, serious budget and payment deficits, has undergone major economic reforms initiated by Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh.<sup>176</sup>

Indeed, India has been perceived as a regional power or a dominating power by South Asian countries since its independence in 1947 in terms of economic, regional, demographic and military power. Nevertheless, despite this superiority in the region, India has not been able to use this power sufficiently in foreign policy. Moreover, it has been trying to establish a sphere of influence in its neighborhood for years to ensure national security and protect its national interests. After economic liberalization in 1991, India started to extend these efforts to all around the world.

In the post-Cold War era, India started to pursue a pro-active foreign policy and established many agreements and partnerships to have a say in both regional and global arena. Some of those are as follows:

- “Look East” policy,
- A major defense relationship with Israel,
- Energy diplomacy with Arab countries and Iran,
- Adoption of US nuclear missile defense program (2001),
- Support for the US invasion of Afghanistan (2002),
- And the Indian-US nuclear cooperation agreements of 2005 and 2008.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Mukherjee and Malone, *op.cit.*, “Indian foreign policy”, p.93.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

Sino-Indian relation that had been peaceful until the 1950s, deteriorated due to the debate on the borders. With the border conflict in 1962 their relations were seriously deteriorated and in this process, China chose to plunge its relations with India to the lowest level and began to support separatist militant groups in India's northeast.<sup>178</sup> China has provided economic assistance to neighboring countries of India, aiming to create its own sphere of influence in the region, as the so-called "string of pearls." For this reason, India could not pursue an effective policy even in its own region.

Indian active foreign policy, which started with the economic liberalization, has evolved to take an aggressive manner just after the Chinese military and economic aids to South Asian countries. Thus, India has developed a variety of security cooperation with most of its neighbors, including military cooperation and staff training.<sup>179</sup> Myanmar, which has a very important geopolitical position in the IO, causes a controversy between hegemony-seeking powers in region, India and China. India and Myanmar have shared not only a border of 1643 km, but also shared common historical, cultural and religious bonds.<sup>180</sup>

After the Chinese initiatives in the IOR to secure its own national strategic interests, India has changed its neighborhood policy. For example, India cooperated with Myanmar in 1991 to increase co-operation and prevent "illegal and insurgent activities" and expand border trade through two trading posts with an India-Myanmar Trade Treaty. Since then, Myanmar has become an indispensable partner for India. Because the geopolitical position of the Myanmar has been very significant for protecting Indian security interests in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Furthermore, Myanmar has a crucial place in India's "Look East" policy.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Christian Wagner, "Security cooperation in South Asia: overview, reasons, prospects", SWP Research Paper, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs, (2014).

<sup>180</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, 'India-Myanmar Relations', December 2014. [http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Myanmar\\_Relations.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Myanmar_Relations.pdf), Accessed on: 19.10.2016.



In addition to the 'China factor' being on the East Asia transit line, being an important partner for stabilizing the problems in the India's north-east and having rich underground natural resources make Myanmar indispensable in Indian foreign policy.<sup>181</sup> Myanmar has also become a strategic key element for India to achieve its goal of regional leadership.

India has conducted military operations against militant groups in its northeast, along with Bhutan and Myanmar. Myanmar has been seen by India not only as a trading partner, but also as an indispensable partner to neutralize Chinese influence in the region. Therefore, India has cooperated with Myanmar to eliminate the separatist militant groups in its northeast. BIMSTEC and ASEAN have also contributed to the development of relations between the two countries.<sup>182</sup>

Sri Lanka, with its geographical proximity and common economic, cultural and historical ties with India, is another important Indian neighbor. After gaining its independence from the UK in 1948, the civil war between the Tamil rebels and the government of Sri Lanka lasted about 60 years and ended in 2009 with the government's military operation. In this process, India intervened in this internal conflict as a regional power. After the civil war, thousands of Tamils were exiled to India and today they have to live in Tamil Nadu province, south of India.

Although Sri Lanka is an unstable country today, it is an important accommodation facility on the world's busiest sea trade route in terms of its geographical location. This makes Sri Lanka a center of interest for other forces, which have strategic interests in the region. For example, China grants special importance to Sri Lanka, because of its strategic location on its energy trade route. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has a vital importance for China in the policy of containing India. In addition, China aims to build a permanent presence in Sri Lanka by increasing the investments in the country, which takes advantage of Sri Lankan problems with India. In this context, bilateral agreements have been made between two countries and Sri Lanka has received economic and development assistance from

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Donald L. Berlin, "India in the Indian Ocean", Naval War Coll Newport RI, (2006).

China. With development of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, China aims to achieve a significant gain in the region.

Sri Lanka also occupies a significant place in Indian foreign policy. According to Indian analysts, Chinese initiatives in Sri Lanka are efforts for containing India strategically. These initiatives have prompted India to take urgent measures. Then so, India has established strong relationship with Sri Lanka. India supplied economic aid to Sri Lanka for the disaster relief in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami and the reconstruction of the country. This assistance has made a significant contribution to the development of relations between the two countries. Moreover, India signed a FTA and CEPA with Sri Lanka to consolidate Sri Lankan economy and to increase bilateral trade between India and Sri Lanka.<sup>183</sup> In addition to defense cooperation, intelligence sharing, modifying a warship and supplying defense equipment were constituted between the two countries. Both countries have also carried out joint military exercises every year such as India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise 'MITRA SHAKTI, a series of bilateral exercises, which started in 2013.<sup>184</sup>

**Table 8: India–Sri Lanka Merchandise Trade, 2000–2012**

Year	Sri Lanka				
	Exports to India (\$ million)	Imports from India (\$ million)	Share of total exports (%)	Exports to (\$ million)	Import:Export Ratio
2000	58	600	1.0	9.0	10.3:1
2001	72	601	1.5	10.5	8.4:1
2002	170	832	3.6	13.8	5.0:1
2003	245	1,076	4.6	16.1	4.4:1
2004	391	1,439	6.8	18.0	3.7:1
2005	566	1,835	8.9	20.7	3.2:1
2006	489	2,173	7.1	21.2	4.4:1
2007	515	2,610	6.7	23.1	5.1:1
2008	418	3,447	5.2	24.5	8.2:1
2009	322	1,820	4.5	17.8	5.7:1
2010	474	2,570	5.6	19.0	5.4:1
2011	519	4,431	4.9	21.9	8.5:1
2012	567	3,640	5.8	19.0	6.4:1

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> <http://currentaffairs.gktoday.in/india-sri-lanka-joint-military-exercise-mitra-shakti-2016-begins-1020163-6702.html>, Accessed on: 12.12.2016.

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Annual Report, Various Issues

Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world is also known as East Pakistan. It was gained its independence from Pakistan in 1971 after the bloody civil war. Bangladesh, which has experienced military coups, interim governments, extraordinary situations and tutelage of certain actors / families, is not able to get rid of the political tension. Bangladeshi politics is characterized with a serious polarization. Despite all this, Bangladesh, which is on the transit passage point with its important geographical location, is an unshareable country between China and India.

For China, Bangladesh is of great value in keeping India under pressure in the context of China's South Asia policy. Bangladesh meets a large proportion of its military equipment from China. According to the SIPRI, China has supplied military equipment to Bangladesh since 2010, including maritime patrol vessels, corvettes, tanks and fighter jets, surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles. China also provides substantial economic support to Bangladesh, for the construction of the port of Chittagong Port.<sup>185</sup> This increasing economic and military rapprochement between China and Bangladesh has greatly raised apprehensions in India and this situation led to Indian pursuit of an active foreign policy towards Bangladesh.

India and Bangladesh apart from land boundary disputes have other contentious issues, such as the Teesta water agreement, infiltration, smuggling and border crimes, insurgency and territorial waters dispute. The Teesta water agreement is now a major political problem between India and Bangladesh. Water related issues in Bangladesh are flood, river erosion, tidal surge, flash flood etc. In every year, owing to all these hazards, people rush to cities for their livelihood. Some parts of this population crosses over into India through porous borders.

Illegal migration is a long standing sensitive issue for India. Illegal migration from Bangladesh has been seen as a threat to India's internal security. The rise of insurgent groups in the north-east, because of the issue of illegal immigration from Bangladesh is another concern for India. Smuggling and border crimes are

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<sup>185</sup> <http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/china-bangladesh-pledge-deeper-military-cooperation/>, Accessed on:12.11.2016.

significant problems between two countries. Due to being used as a transit passage point by drug dealers and the drug mafia to different destinations, Bangladesh is seen increasingly as a threat to India's internal security. Insurgency has been playing the role in straining Indian- Bangladeshi relations. Northeast India has been facing insurgency groups, such as NLFT, ULFA and NDFM.<sup>186</sup>

The sovereignty over the island nation-South Talpatty in Bangladesh and Purbasha in India is an unsolved territorial dispute between two countries. These islands were spotted by a satellite picture in 1975 in the estuary of Haribhanga River on the border of the these two countries.<sup>187</sup> Thus, in order to settle the dispute, Bangladesh proposed sending of Indo- Bangladesh team to determine the flow of channels of the river on the basis of existing International Law of the Sea.<sup>188</sup> But the Indian counterpart sent forces to lay claims by stationing naval troops on the island in 1981.<sup>189</sup> India's North-eastern states cannot be easily accessed from the mainland without Bangladeshi cooperation, so having friendly relations with Bangladesh is in the interests of India in every respect.<sup>190</sup>

From an economic point of view, India and Bangladesh signed an agreement on the "East Corridor Pipeline" in 2004 to carry Myanmar's gas to India over Bangladesh. On the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, these two sides signed an agreement to let Indian cargo vessels use Chittagong port.<sup>191</sup> Another agreement was signed between BPC and the IOC in April 2016 to jointly build a LPG terminal plant in Chittagong port city.<sup>192</sup> The BBIN corridor is another

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<sup>186</sup> The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) is a militant organization that seeks to secede from India and establish an independent state. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) is a separatist group from Assam, India seeking to establish a sovereign territory via an armed struggle. National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFM) is a major insurgent group, which seeks to obtain a sovereign Bodoland for the Bodo people in Assam, Northeast India.

<sup>187</sup> Piyali Dutta, "India-Bangladesh Relations." *IPCS Special Report. New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)* (2010).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee, "India's Vision on Act East Policy", ICWA at the National Seminar on "India's Act East Policy: Problems and Prospects in North East India" at Imphal, Manipur, (2016). <http://www.icwa.in/pdfs/ssreports/2014/eventreportpapermanipur29jan2016.pdf>. Accessed on: 11. 10. 2016.

<sup>191</sup> <http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/china-bangladesh-pledge-deeper-military-cooperation/>, Accessed on: 19.10.2016.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

Indian and Bangladeshi common initiative to improve the connection between them and with other South Asian countries.<sup>193</sup>

Pakistan is of the countries at the top where India has the most problems. Since the independence and the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, these two South Asian countries have fought four times (1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999) and have experienced countless border conflicts. Nearly 1 million people lost their lives in the conflicts between these two countries. The main reason of wars and conflicts is the Kashmir Problem. Moreover, the nuclear race between the two countries is another reason behind strained relationship between them.

When the current situation is examined, it can be seen that the Kashmir Problem has not been solved yet and the relations have gone through war-oriented. Since their establishment, both countries have blamed each other for feeding and provoking radical elements on their territory. Increasing terrorist attacks, reciprocal accusations and rapprochement between Pakistan and China have been other reasons preventing the improvement of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Especially the Gwadar port, which is jointly built by China and Pakistan, has been perceived as an open threat by India.

According to Christian Wagner, China intends to open an alternative trade route by building land corridor through Pakistan.<sup>194</sup> This is called as OBOR.<sup>195</sup> OBOR strengthens Pakistan's position against India. It also offers China an opportunity to reach the western part of the IO directly rather than pass a large part of the IO. Despite all these unfavorable developments, India is attempting to improve relations with its eternal enemy, Pakistan. In this context, these two sides launched a peace process in January 2004. India's desire in this peace process is to prevent any likelihood of military conflict, to find out a solution to Kashmir issue and to lay the groundwork for the necessary stability on the way to pursue great-power status in South Asia region and the world.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Christian Wagner, "The Role of India and China in South Asia", *Strategic Analysis*, (2016): 1-14.

<sup>195</sup> "OBOR" is China's broadly sketched vision of how it plans to boost regional integration in its wider neighbourhood.

<sup>196</sup> Berlin. op.cit., "India in the Indian Ocean".

In South Asia, Chinese attempts to contain it and the problems with other neighbors forced India to develop a more close relationship with other regional countries, such as Iran. As opposed to Chinese economic and military assistance to Pakistan, India has established a similar relationship with Iran. In fact, these two countries have been in strong relations with each other in many respects such as culture, language and other fields, since the times of the Mughals ruled India.<sup>197</sup> After having a rapid rise in economic reforms in early 1990s, the relations between the two countries peaked. Furthermore, Iran, which does not want to pursue an external trade policy and is also dependent only on the west, tries to utilize its growing relations with India to diversify its external trade policy. Iran expects to sell its rich natural resources easily both to South Asia and Southeast Asia, thanks to its cordial relations with India.

For India, this strong relationship is a long-term effective policy to access to Central Asia for commercial trade. In fact, there were two reasons for India's entry into the development and restructuring of Iran's Chabadar port. One of them is to try to increase trade with Central Asia, the other is to repay the port project that China has started in Gwadar of Pakistan and if necessary to enclose it in this region. Since Chabadar port<sup>198</sup> is under the renovation, India makes use of the Iranian port; Chabadar to contain Pakistan in the construction of the Pakistan-China co-built Gwadar Port and at the same time India also wants to reduce Chinese influence in the region. Another partnership has established between Iran and India on the North-South Transportation Corridor, a project to link Mumbai via Bandar Abbas with Europe, building a pipeline, which is 2,700-kilometer from Iran through Pakistan to India.<sup>199</sup>

Indian connections with African states, including South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, especially Mauritius and Seychelles, remained limited for a long time. But today these links are increasing at the advanced level. Due to their strategic positions, these countries have a very important place for India. Since 2003, India has played

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> "Chabahar" is situated on the Makran Coast of the Sistan and Baluchestan province of Iran and is officially designated as a Free Trade and Industrial Zone by Iran's government. India has assisted in development and construction of the Chabahar port.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

an active role in securing Mauritius's special economic zone with its patrol missions. India launched defense cooperation with Seychelles for training military personnel and helping with donation of a Mauritius patrol vessel.

Indian-South African bilateral agreements and an India-Brazil-South African trilateral initiative have gained momentum in recent years. Thanks to a combined aviation exercise, carried out in late 2004 with the participation of Indian and African counterparts, this relationship has moved to the level of partnership in the field of security.<sup>200</sup> For instance, joint marine exercises were conducted by India and South Africa on the African coast in the mid-2005.

During the visit of former Indian president A. P. J. Abdul Kalam to Tanzania in 2004, an agreement was signed to train Tanzanian military personnel in India and to deploy Indian naval vessels in Tanzanian ports.<sup>201</sup> Mozambique and India have agreed to continue the patrols of the Mozambican coasts, which were recently launched during the 2003 African Union summit.<sup>202</sup> Thus, the Indian intelligence has taken an opportunity to monitor the activities of China and Pakistan closely in the region. India has also agreed with Mozambique to prevent piracy and has settled a listening post in Madagascar in 2007.<sup>203</sup>

#### **4.4.3.1. From “Look East” Policy to “Act East” Policy**

India has begun to pursue an active foreign policy in the region extending from the IO to the SCS to ensure its national security and protect and take measures against China.<sup>204</sup> Indian government launched the ‘Look East’ policy in the early 1990’s. This policy aims to shift India’s focus from the West to emerging markets in South East Asia. In addition, India is targeting the economic development of the northeast part of the country.

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> “India to Train Tanzanian forces”, *Indo-Asian News Service*, (2004), [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com)., Accessed on: 11.09.2016.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Crude Ranjit B. Rai, “China’s String of Pearls vs India’s Iron Curtain”, *Indian Defence Review*, 24.4, (2009).

<sup>204</sup> Weimar, op.cit., “Sino-Indian power preponderance in maritime Asia:”, p.16.

For India to boost its standing as a regional power, this policy envisaged improvement of financial relations with Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia.<sup>205</sup> However India has not searched for strategic partnerships neither in the East nor in the Southeast Asia. India established a free trade area with ASEAN in 2010, to consolidate the relations with regional multilateral organizations.<sup>206</sup> To sustain certain interests in the SCS region the IN regularly carries out operational cruises and exercises with Vietnam, Singapore and the Philippines. This policy can be seen as retaliation against Chinese footprints in the IOR. Recently, the SCS through the Strait of Malacca has been the most compelling zone for India to achieve its foreign policy goals.<sup>207</sup>

India's "Look East" policy was initiated during the period of Narasimha Rao in 1992 for better engagement with East Asian and south east Asian nations. Throughout the years, India has not only developed broad financial and exchange bonds, but also hold gradually strengthening security ties with various regional countries.<sup>208</sup> Thanks to India's 'Look East' policy, India has initiated maritime activities with Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. ASEAN member states and IN have started to cooperate in policing the IOR to fight piracy, trafficking and other threats.

During the post-Cold War, due to rising Chinese influence in the IO, East Asia became one of the priorities of Indian foreign policy. India has also established strategic alliances with many states, which consider China as a threat in the region, such as the USA, Russia, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and South Korea.<sup>209</sup> India's "Look East" policy has initially aimed at economic liberalization, but has now turned into an aggressive policy that extends to military partnerships. For example, in order to improve military capabilities, especially navy, Vietnam cooperates with India. India is planning to train Malaysia's Su-30 pilots and the Singaporean troops on

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<sup>205</sup> Malone and Mukherjee, *op.cit.*, "India and China: conflict" p.147.

<sup>206</sup> Hornat, *op.cit.*, "The power triangle in the Indian Ocean", p.13.

<sup>207</sup> James R. Holmes, "Inside, outside: India's 'exterior lines' in the SCS", *Strategic Analysis*, 36.3, (2012): 358-363.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*



Indian Territory by utilizing military stations and polygons.<sup>210</sup> IN ships now routinely visit Southeast Asian countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, Brunei and Timor Leste). To protect the SLOC from the SCS to Africa and the USA, India has also investigated ways to improve relations with regional countries. In the face of China's presence in South Asia and the IOR, India is attempting to become dominant power in East Asia.

India's increasing engagement with Vietnam is the most critical one. This engagement aims to ensure sea lane security and prevent sea piracy in the region. In this context, Vietnam has granted India the right to use the port of NH Tran.<sup>211</sup> Chinese access to the IO and the SCS is also common concern for both countries.<sup>212</sup> In terms of India's strategic interests, it is important that Vietnam is one of the strongest powers in the region. Thus, India will remain a supportive force in the region and will gain an important position to restrict China. Another common approach of Vietnam and India is to consolidate their ties with the USA to balance China. Both countries are aware of the fact that the USA is the only power that can compete with China.

Another noteworthy development is defense cooperation between India and South Korea in the Asia-Pacific against China. In order to strengthen the defense partnership between the two countries, a series of MOU signed in 2005 and 2006 in the fields of industry and logistics.<sup>213</sup> Protecting the sea lines of communication in the IOR is another common interest of the two countries. Hence, India has participated in anti-piracy operations in the IOR and the Gulf of Aden with South Korea.

Defense cooperation between India and Japan is growing. Securing the sea lanes for their energy security is main concern of both countries. In this context, both countries are jointly implementing a series of exercises, combating piracy, terrorism and cooperating on disaster relief operations with other regional powers to increase

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

bilateral ties in the maritime realm.<sup>214</sup> Being allied with Japan, which has the strongest Navy in Asia, is very important for India. At the same time, India is an indispensable actor for the security of Japan's energy trade route.

Another area of competition between India and China is Burma. Burma's Andaman sea coast is vital for both China's and India's energy trade security. Because of that, India has taken over the rebuilding of Burma's western Sittoung port and has been providing economic and military assistance to the ruling junta.<sup>215</sup> Due to Chinese efforts to infiltrate Burma, the Indian government has been reluctant to end economic and military aid despite internal and external criticisms.<sup>216</sup> Burma is a very important country for China, because it is the second largest trading partner and almost the largest foreign investor of China. India's economic relationship with Burma is dominant in the public sector under expectation due to delays in implementation and deficiencies in quality.<sup>217</sup> However, owing to delays in the implementation of projects and the lack of coordination of its various agencies/departments, the policy could not yield to desired output.

The government upgraded the "Look East" policy to the "Act East" policy in 2015. The main aim of this policy has been a more remarkable combination for India's economy for those developing economies of the East Asian Region. India's Act East Policy goes one step further and encourages a proactive role for India to play in its eastern neighborhood. In order to balance China, Modi has committed India not just to Look East but also to Act East policy while former prime ministers had tried to build coalitions in the 'Look East' policy of the 1990s. India keeps on extolling the ASEAN's 'anchor' role in east Asia, but still aims to enter into

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<sup>214</sup> Indrani Bagchi, "Japan, India Can Restore Peace, Stability in Asia-Pacific Region", *Times of India*, 28 (2012), <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Japan-India-can-restore-peace-stability-in-Asia-Pacific-region/articleshow/12902448.cms>, Accessed on: 03.01.2017.

<sup>215</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "India in the Asia-Pacific: Rising ambitions with an eye on China", *Asia-Pacific Review*, 14.1, (2007): 54-71.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

partnership with selected regional powers, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and the USA.<sup>218</sup>

In summary, Southeast Asia has an important strategic location that connects the IO to the Pacific Ocean. The US pivot strategy to Asia re-emphasizes the importance of the region in partnerships established by ASEAN members in a new balance of power concept in Asia.<sup>219</sup> According to Manjeet Padres, as long as China poses a threat to many countries increasingly, Southeast Asia will remain in a central position and major powers will continue to compete for power to have a right to say in the region.<sup>220</sup> For example, India's presence in Southeast Asia provides it an opportunity to shape the emerging regional order in Asia.

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<sup>218</sup> 'India is now the bright hope for sustaining Asian dynamism and prosperity: PM Modi in Singapore', Narendra Modi website, <http://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-37th-singapore-lecture-india-s-singapore-story-by-prime-minister-during-his-visit-to-singapore--377134>. Accessed on: 17.09.2016.

<sup>219</sup> Manjeet S. Pardesi, "Is India a Great Power? Understanding Great Power Status in Contemporary International Relations", *Asian Security*, 11.1, (2015): 1-30.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### COUNTERING CHINESE STRING OF PEARLS

The crucial maritime link between the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries is provided by the IO. This sea line of communication is vital to energy security of South and South-East Asian countries, as 2/3 of the world's oil is carried through this route. However, this trade route lacks necessary infrastructures to handle such traffic.

The proposed MSR or Strings of Pearls by China has demonstrated growing political, economic and strategic might of China in Indo-Pacific region. MSR, which was proposed by China primarily as an economic co-operation among ASEAN nations, aimed to connect the port towns of China to the other ports in the IO, East Africa and South East Asia. But later it was expanded to include several littoral nations in the IO, such as Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Mauritius. MSR has now focused on building ports, storage areas and ensuring a free trade agreement with the IO countries including Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. China's primary expectations from MSR are to provide security to SLOCs in the IOR, to access to the export markets, develop its western provinces and contain the USA and India in the region. This project caused great excitement among the countries of South Asia and South East Asia. However, China's aspirations in the SCS and the IO aroused suspicion among its neighboring countries on the grounds that it is beyond benign commercial intentions.

As for India, this is a very important situation. India is the predominant power among the littoral state in the IOR. However, China's "String of Pearls" strategy and its close partnership with Pakistan have increased the tension in the region. Many Indians think that China aims to contain India through the 'String of Pearls' and the ports on this pearl would be used not only for economic purposes but also for military purposes. For this reason, India is worried about the expansion of 'String of Pearls'. India decided to implement a balancing strategy to neutralize the Chinese influence in the IOR. India's balancing strategy is consisted of three stages. First stage is 'internal balancing', using its internal dynamics, second stage is 'external

balancing’, through the help of the USA and Japan, third stage is ‘economic balancing’, via maintaining better economic relations with its immediate neighbors.

Internal balancing strategy comprises of the modernization of the army, increase in defense budget and the development of its maritime strategy. At first glance, when compared to China, India’s maritime power may seem weak, but its strategic location and friendly relations with its neighbors make it superior in the region. India aims to upgrade its army capabilities and deploy them in the strategic places in the region to reduce its military vulnerability. India is eager to modernize its military strength and border infrastructure facilities through its own capabilities and foreign assistance. Within this context, India has signed significant agreements with US, Japanese, French and Israeli defense companies, such as Boeing, Mitsubishi, Kawasaki, France’s Dassault Aviation and Israeli Aerospace Industries, to upgrade its military capabilities. In addition, its defense spending has increased substantially by 165.8 % after 1990.<sup>221</sup>

As a part of external balancing, India establishes defense relations with the USA, Japan, Russia and Israel and carries out a maritime diplomacy towards littoral and island states in the IOR. Increasing Chinese presence in the IO is a concern not only for India but also for other powers such as the USA, Japan and some littoral countries in the SCS including Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. India signed various defense cooperation agreements with the USA, Japan, Russia and Israel to counter Chinese presence. India has also embarked frequent joint naval exercises and joint security operations with littoral states and its neighbors such as MILAN<sup>222</sup> whose participants are Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Australia , Indo Thai Coordinated Patrols with the participations of Thailand and Joint exercise codenamed ‘Naseem Al Bahr’ with joining of Iraq, Kuwait and Oman.

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<sup>221</sup> Pieter D. Wezeman, and Siemon Wezeman. “SIPRI Fact Sheet: Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2014.” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1503.pdf> (2015), Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>222</sup> “MILAN” is a biennial exercise of navies. India, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand participated in the six-day exercise, which began on February 2014.

Economic balancing is the last stage of Indian balancing strategy against the rising Chinese influence in the IO. India undoubtedly enjoys superiority in the region as it has very close and healthy strategic, economic and cultural relations with its neighbors. India enhances its economic ties with neighbors through investments to undermine Chinese economic clout. In this context, India has strengthened its cooperation with South Asian neighbors within the framework of multilateral regional initiatives like SAARC, BIMSTEC. In addition, India has carried out comprehensive economic and strategic engagements with Vietnam, Philippines, Mongolia and Japan, located at Chinese periphery to strengthen its regional influence.

### **5.1. India's Internal Balancing Strategy**

China is focused on enhancing its influence on South Asian states, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, to ensure the secure energy and trade flows from the Middle East and Africa. Furthermore, China seeks to contain Indian power by building close ties with Pakistan and by helping Islamabad to enhance its military capabilities.

China's initiatives in the IOR are:

- Financing the building of a port and a modern transport system in Kenya
- Building of a deep seaport near the Hormuz entry point in Gadarah, Pakistan
- Involvement in the Hambantota harbor project in Sri Lanka
- Port development in Chittagong, Bangladesh
- Infrastructure development and investments in Sittwe, Coco, Hianggyi, Khaukphyu, Mergui and Zadetkyi Kyun in Myanmar
- Investments in the Laem Chabang port, Thailand's largest deep-water port.<sup>223</sup>

China's assistance to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is in the form of defense technology collaborations and arms supplies. China is also engaging with the

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<sup>223</sup> Chris Devonshire-Ellis, "China's string of pearls strategy", *China Briefing* 18 (2009): 31. <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2009/03/18/china%E2%80%99s-string-of-pearls-strategy.html>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

African states such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and South Africa in several infrastructure and business investments projects. China's biggest trade partner in Africa is Sudan. China is importing almost seventy percent of oil produced in Sudan. China has funded many projects in Djibouti to explore mineral deposits and geothermal energy sources in the country. Chinese investments in Zambia aim to undertake mining of Zambian rich copper reserves.<sup>224</sup> Infrastructure projects in the islands of Madagascar, Comoros and Mauritius are the other involvements of China. Seychelles is another strategic country under China's influence in the IOR. Although Seychelles has close military ties with both India and the USA, it has strengthened its commercial, military and political relations with China.<sup>225</sup>

These minor states, including Sri Lanka, Maldives and Seychelles sometimes seek to play the 'China card' against India in order to get more economic assistance and privileges from India. China's nuclear and missile technology assistance to Pakistan is India's biggest concern. Against all these developments, India has undertaken a series of counterbalancing activities against China. One of them is the internal balancing strategy, which includes modernization of armed forces and developing the infrastructure programs, increasing defense spending and developing an active maritime strategy.

### **5.1.1. Modernization of Armed Forces and Developing Infrastructure Programs**

Being World's largest arms importer in 2011, India surpassed China and since then it has enjoyed its leading position. Although China limits its exports to purchase of military hardware from Russia, India (like many other coastal countries) has a lot of choices, like European, American, Japanese and Israel military defense companies. As a result of this, some important defense companies like Boeing, EADS, BAE, Thales, SAAB<sup>226</sup> and Raytheon have invested mostly in India.<sup>227</sup> Most of these defense companies have participated in strategic partnerships with Indian

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Panda, *op.cit.*, "China's Tryst with the IORA", p.671.

<sup>226</sup> "SAAB" is a manufacturer of automobiles that was founded in Sweden in 1945.

<sup>227</sup> Venkatshamy, *op.cit.*, "The IOR in India's strategic futures", p.32.

defense public sector units (PSUs) and large private sector players like L&T<sup>228</sup>, Tata and Mahindra.

India has been upgrading its air force since 2000. With the purchase of Il-78 aerial tanker aircraft, Indian air force gained a long range flight capability. Tanker aircraft has enabled nonstop flights to the Su-30s from its main operating base southeast of Mumbai, to Car Nicobar in the Bay of Bengal. Thanks to tanker aircraft, Indian air force has gained important air supremacy in the IO.

Another strategic development is the acquisition of three Phalcon AWACS aircrafts. AWACS aircrafts can detect aerial threats via its mesa radar, designed for 360-degree surveillance out to 350 nautical miles. It can send information about potential aerial threats to the fighter aircrafts. Thanks to these aircrafts, India has the ability to monitor Chinese air activities even in its airspace.

India also plans to get 126 new multirole combat aircrafts (F-16, F-18, MiG-35, Mirage 2000-5, or Gripen) from foreign suppliers, such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin Mikoyan, Dassault Aviation, SAAB and Honeywell.<sup>229</sup> In addition, India begins to upgrade its fleet of Jaguar aircraft, Tu-142M and Il-38 maritime surveillance/antisubmarine warfare aircrafts.<sup>230</sup> Finally, the Navy is increasing its capacity with the Israeli-built Heron II UAVs. These are the other plans of Indian Navy,

- The development and coproduction of a fifth-generation fighter aircraft. (India-Russia)
- Brahmos long-range cruise missiles with a 290-kilometer range and supersonic speed. (India-Russia)
- An aerospace command for missile targeting and battle space management. (India- Israel)

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<sup>228</sup> “Larsen & Toubro Limited”, commonly known as L&T, is an Indian multi-national conglomerate headquartered in Mumbai.

<sup>229</sup> “India to get Rafale fighters in 2016, will also buy 126 medium combat aircrafts”, *National Turk*, <http://www.nationalturk.com/en/india-to-get-rafale-fighters-in-2016-will-also-buy-126-medium-combat-aircrafts-33611>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.



Another Indian initiative is the development of naval infrastructure program. Since India is an oceanic country, it uses its geographical advantage and increases the sea power it deploys in strategic areas of the region to become a dominant power in its territory. The naval infrastructure programs of India in the IO are intensified on the mainland in the West, East and in the South, in the Lakshadweep islands, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Western Command, stationed in Mumbai, is responsible for the Arabian Sea. The Eastern Command in Andhra Pradesh is predominantly concentrated on the Bay of Bengal. The Southern Naval Command stationed in Kochi, consists of a training squadron, training establishments, bases, land forces, survey ships, a naval air station and a ship repair yard.<sup>231</sup> It is responsible for the training of all its personnel. As for the Lakshadweep islands, an important decision was taken in April 2012 to establish a full blown naval base INS Dweepprakshak, on Kavaratti Island.<sup>232</sup>

Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the archipelagos consisted of 572 islands and separated from the Indian mainland by 1,300 km and 160 km from Sumatra and the entrance of the Strait of Malacca are very crucial for Indian maritime strategy.<sup>233</sup> India has opened a key naval station, named INS BAAZ (HAWK) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India wants to counter China's moves in the IO via INS BAAZ. It can use this station to monitor the activities on critical maritime choke points, especially the Strait of Malacca. This naval station also includes an upgraded base. India aims to gain strategic supremacy in the area via this base. Baaz's strategic position (near to Indonesia) enables a strategic position to the Indian military, in case of a threat to Indian maritime activities in the region. Baaz will also be actively used against piracy in the region.

India has established its Far Eastern Command in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. A major amphibious warfare hub and integrated sea-and-land fighting unit are deployed on the islands, which can be used by India for

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<sup>231</sup> "Organisation of Southern Naval Command, Kochi", Indian Navy, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/organisation-southern-naval-command-kochi>, Accessed on: 23.12.2016.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

operations in the IO and its littoral.<sup>234</sup> The primary aim of this command is agitating the China's shipping vessels while crossing through the Strait of Malacca. India has strengthened its position in this archipelago chain, as these islands give India 'geopolitical advantage' and 'vantage position' in the Eastern IO.<sup>235</sup> India has also initiated Seabird Project, which is an operational naval base in Karwar on its western seaboard.<sup>236</sup> It is the largest naval infrastructure projects of India, that involves an air force station, a naval armament depot and missile silos. The main purpose of this project is to ensure the security of the Indian maritime routes in the Arabian Sea. Another Indian initiative is the Sethusamudram Project. (Figure 10) This project is planned to shorten the distance from the present 755 to 402 nautical miles between Indian west and east coasts, which will make India save 36 hours.<sup>237</sup> Thus, Indian warships of eastern and western fleets will reinforce one another quickly.<sup>238</sup>

The establishment of a monitoring station in Madagascar is another initiative of India in the region to keep an eye on China's activities in the region.<sup>239</sup> India also plans to build a monitoring facility in Mauritius. Moreover, India has been trying to find a chance to strengthen its naval contacts with Mozambique and Seychelles. India donated a patrol aircraft to Seychelles Navy to prevent of China's military assistance to Seychelles.<sup>240</sup>

### **5.1.2. Defense Spending and Active Maritime Strategy**

The IOR plays a major role in global geo-politics as a gateway between the energy-hungry East Asia and the energy-rich West Asia. With 7500 km long coastline, India is the major actor in the IOR. Thus, maintaining stability and security

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<sup>234</sup> Scott, *op.cit.*, "India's Aspirations", p.481.

<sup>235</sup> Shyam Saran, "India's Foreign Policy and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands", 5 Sept. 2009, [http://www.maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/Shyam\\_Saran\\_Address.pdf4](http://www.maritimeindia.org/sites/all/files/pdf/Shyam_Saran_Address.pdf4), Accessed on: 18.11.2016.

<sup>236</sup> Sudhi Ranjan Sen, "Now, India has the Largest Naval Base East of the Suez Canal", September 10, 2015, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/now-on-indias-west-coast-the-largest-naval-base-east-of-the-suez-canal-1215952>, Accessed on: 11.10.2016.

<sup>237</sup> Dulip Jayawardena, "Present status of the Sethusamudram Project", <http://www.Sundaytimes.lk/100711/BusinessTimes/bt09.html>, Accessed on: 11.10.2016.

<sup>238</sup> Berlin, *op.cit.*, "India in the Indian Ocean".

<sup>239</sup> Pant, *op.cit.*, "Rising China in India's vicinity", p.8.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

in the IOR is a matter of life and death for India. India has improving its maritime infrastructure and consolidating its maritime strategy. Indeed, India is targeting:

- To protect its boundaries from nations like China that have a history of aggression against India,
- To control the international trade and national commerce along with usage of Ocean resources,
- To use its navy and maritime economic powers as an instrument of diplomacy deterrence and political influence in energy security,
- To protect its trade from terrorism and piracy,
- And carry out humanitarian activities such as recent evacuation in Yemen.

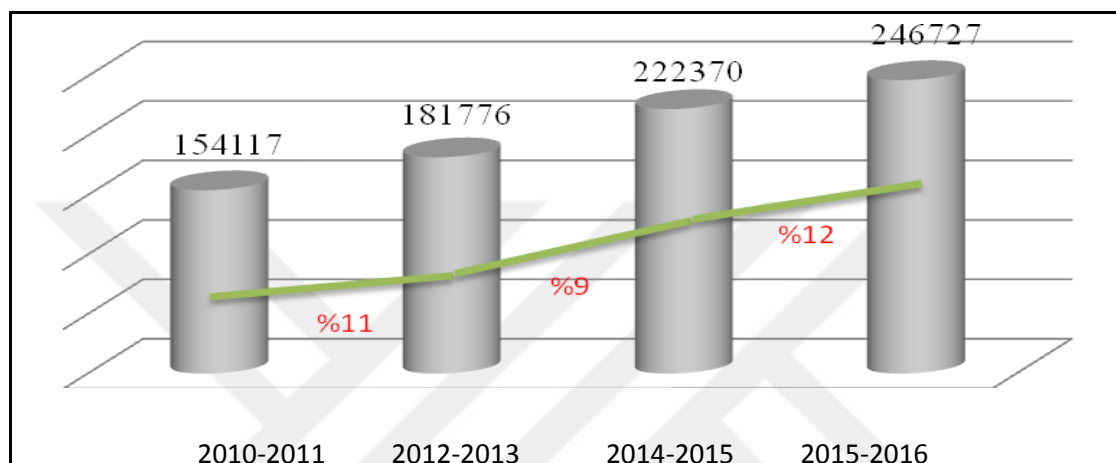
In regard to this, the government has taken various new initiatives. Some of which are as follows:

- Indian Maritime Security Strategy, which focuses on “ensuring secure seas.”
- Blue Chakra- Initiative, promoting the ocean economy.
- SAGARMALA project, to promote port led development, improve coastal economy and modernize ports.
- MAUSAM project, to revive its ancient maritime routes and cultural linkages with countries in the region.
- Improving strategic relations with island countries like- Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Maldives.
- Developing port infrastructure in Bangladesh and Iran. Collaboration with Myanmar on Kaladan multi-model transit transport project.
- Organizing joint naval exercises with the USA, Japan (Malabar), Russia (Indra-Navy), etc.

New Delhi is seriously concerned about China’s maritime trade port facilities and railway connections, controversial land boundaries and its increasing naval presence in the IO. Indian defense experts state that their main rivals China and

Pakistan are allocating around four percent of their GDP for military expenditures.<sup>241</sup> India increased its defense budget due to these concerns. India's defense budget has increased sixty percent in 2010-2015 periods. According to the SIPRI, India has been the world's top arms buyer for the last three years and is the first buyer of the world weapons industry with sharing fourteen percent.<sup>242</sup>

**Table 9: Growth in total Defense Budget of India**



Source: Based on data from UN comtrade.

**Table 10: Top 10 defence budgets in 2015 and 2016 (in millions of US dollars).**

2015 Defense Budget			2016 Defense Budget		
Rank	Country		Rank	Country	
1	USA	605,625	1	USA	617,107
2	China	181,977	2	China	192,840
3	UK	61,890	3	UK	62,362
4	Russia	51,495	4	India	50,678
5	S.Arabia	47,610	5	Russia	49,154
6	India	46,645	6	S.Arabia	45,872
7	France	44,922	7	France	45,382
8	Japan	42,192	8	Japan	41,686
9	Germany	34,842	9	Germany	35,835

<sup>241</sup> Sandra Krtalić and Aleksandar Major, "Military Expenditures in the Maelstrom of the Globalized World", *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 23.2 (2010): 142-161.

<sup>242</sup> <https://www.sipri.org/>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

10	S. Korea	32,275	10	S. Korea	33,477
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Source: IHS Jane's Defence Budgets

In all these developments, India realized that China could not only be balanced by internal balancing. Therefore, it adopted an external balancing strategy.

## **5.2. India's External Balancing Strategy**

Although India has taken many measures to sustain economic growth and balance the rising China in the IO in the past years, its capabilities are not enough to do these. Moreover, the region is too wide to control and has high security risks. This has led India to cooperate with regional countries strategically such as Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Singapore and extra-regional actors such as the USA, Japan, Israel and Russia. The role of India's navy has been expanded with progressive defense partnerships and joint exercises.

### **5.2.1. Indian Defense Partnerships**

The global economic and strategic center of gravity shifted from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific in recent years. China's rising power and energy strategies becomes a common concern for many major powers such as India, the USA and Japan. With the help of this common concern, India has established strategic partnerships with these great powers against the growing Chinese influence in the region.

#### **5.2.1.1. US-Indian Strategic Partnership**

The US-Indian defense cooperation is based on common principles and shared national interest and strategic objectives, such as fighting terrorism, preventing proliferation of weapons, and maintaining peace and security in the IOR. Moreover, the USA and India have some similar concerns regarding with the Chinese presence in the IOR. During the last two decades, comprehensive defense agreements have been signed between the two countries that will allow them to keep company with in many areas. One of them is the 'Defense Framework Agreement', signed in 1995, which covered a period of 10 years and was extended for 10 years

again in 2005.<sup>243</sup> All defense cooperation agreements between the two are within this framework. As stated in the Joint Principles for Defense Cooperation in Defense Framework Agreement;

*“The USA and India share common security interests and place each other at the same level as their closest partners – confirming that this would also apply with respect to defense technology transfer, trade research, licensing, co-development, and co-production involving defense services and advanced technology.”*<sup>244</sup>

This defense cooperation comprises bilateral exercises, joint training, institutional mechanisms, and defense equipment. The two countries now participate in more military exercise and training such as Malabar, which is an annual bilateral exercise between the Navies of the two countries. Indian and American military forces are regularly trained at defense training establishments of each other. Especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, this cooperation has been implemented very actively in the IOR. This cooperation includes:

- Naval protection of US shipping in the Strait of Malacca in 2002 by Indian navy,
- Close partnership after the 2004 tsunami,
- Combined military exercises,
- A dialogue on missile defense system,
- American acceptance of India’s acquisition of Phalcon AWACS and,
- An offer to sell India a variety of military hardware, such as fighter aircraft and P-3 maritime patrol planes.<sup>245</sup>

Moreover, many institutional mechanisms are formed to promote defense co-operation between the two states. Some of them are:

- The Defense Procurement and Production Group (DPPG)
- Senior Technology Security Group (STSG)

<sup>243</sup> Framework For the US – India Defense Relationship, <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2015-Defense-Framework.pdf>, Accessed on: 10.12.2016.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Berlin. op.cit., “India in the Indian Ocean”.

- Joint Technical Group (JTG)
- Military Cooperation Group (MCG)
- Executive Steering Groups (ESGs)<sup>246</sup>

Along with trade, India and the USA have established a ‘Defense Trade and Technology Initiative’ to promote co-development of defense technology. India’s import of defense equipment from the USA has exceeded \$9 Billion with this cooperation.<sup>247</sup> This cooperation aims to:

- Improve the bilateral defense relationship and decrease the bureaucratic obstacles or inefficient procedures,
- Increase capacity of India’s defense industrial base,
- Enhance the technological collaboration through co-development and co-production,
- Strengthen the US-Indian business ties.<sup>248</sup>

Furthermore, the plans of the USA to extend its naval hegemony are not only limited to the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans but also the IO as well. Within this context, the US administration has directly expressed that ‘the safety and economic security of the USA depends substantially upon the secure use of the world’s oceans.’<sup>249</sup> The USA has a vital national interest in maritime security’.<sup>250</sup> It already has a significant military presence in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, East and Northeast Africa, Singapore Pakistan and Diego Garcia. However, China’s rise as a military and an economic power forced the USA to form alliances with regional countries like India.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Framework For the USA *op.cit.*, “India Defense Relationship”.

<sup>247</sup> Sylvia Mishra, “India-US Defence Ties: Making Co-Development Mantra Work”, <http://www.India writes.org/india-us-defence-ties-making-co-development-mantra-work/>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>248</sup> US-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ic/DTTI.html>, Accessed on: 12.11.2016.

<sup>249</sup> US Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, The National Strategy for Maritime Security, September 2005, p.1, <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/small-vessel-security-strategy.pdf>, Accessed on: 25.09.2016.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> Berlin. *op.cit.*, “India in the Indian Ocean”.

According to the 2015 World Economic Outlook report of the IMF, China has overtaken the USA as the world's largest economy.<sup>252</sup> China's defense spending has also risen significantly over the past decade. With its allocated annual military budget of \$129.4 billion in 2014, China emerged as a serious contender to US military power in the region.<sup>253</sup> In addition, according to the Pentagon, through the DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile, the PLAN can target the entire SCS, the Strait of Malacca, most of the Bay of Bengal and some parts of the Arabian Sea.<sup>254</sup> China also develops new marine vessels, such as aircraft carriers to control East and Southeast Asian waters. It is expected that China will further enhance its military power in the coming years. Consequently, Washington wants to hold up the China's rise both in the SCS and in the IOR through using India's strategic position and its significant maritime power.

In the aforementioned framework agreement, perhaps the most important project is the nuclear partnership project. The IOR was a relative nuclear stagnant area most of the time during the Cold War. With the end of Cold War, the USA supplied a crucial assistance to India. However, close cooperation between Pakistan and the USA during the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, resulted in deterioration of relations between India and the USA. With the coming of George W. Bush in 2000, Indo-US relations have gathered pace again. India began to be seen as a strategic counter-weight against China. They enhanced their nuclear energy cooperation in the 1990s. This nuclear energy cooperation was interrupted due to the India's nuclear tests in 1998. India was subject to US sanctions. India's close relations with China and Russia and its observer status in Shanghai Cooperation Organization have led the USA to re-establish a close civilian nuclear relationship with India in 2008.

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<sup>252</sup> According to the World Economic Outlook report prepared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China's GDP in 2014 was US\$18.976 trillion (PPP terms) and US\$11.212 trillion (absolute dollar terms). US GDP, on the other hand, was US\$18.125 trillion (PPP terms) and US\$18.125 trillion (absolute dollar terms). See, World Economic Outlook 2015, International Monetary Fund, April 2015. [http://www .imf. org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/01/weodata/download.aspx](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/01/weodata/download.aspx), Accessed on: 25.08.2016.

<sup>253</sup> Joshi and Pant, op.cit., "Indo-Japanese Strategic". p.319.

<sup>254</sup> US Department of Defense, op.cit., "Military and Security Developments".



Furthermore, all these developments have been observed with deep concern by China. In response to these, China made a similar deal with Pakistan to transfer its civilian nuclear technology. And what is more, China supplied two new nuclear reactors to Pakistan in 2010 to counter the US–Indian nuclear alliance.<sup>255</sup> China is very uncomfortable with the rapprochement between India and the USA and its consequences. But today, nuclear relations between India and the USA are progressing rapidly India is actively trying to establish a strategic partnership with the USA to balance Chinese domination in Asia, but uncertain about entering into a formal alliance.<sup>256</sup> According to India, closer cooperation with the USA will increase India’s profile and bargaining power leverage in the eyes of Chinese elites, whereas a formal military alliance with the USA would provoke a Chinese backlash.<sup>257</sup>

#### **5.2.1.2. Indo-Japanese Rapprochement**

The post-Cold War Asian security order is based on three pillars.<sup>258</sup> The first one is the “hub and spoke” system based on security guarantees provided by the USA to its various Asian allies and partners including Japan, South Korea, Philippines, India, Pakistan and Singapore.<sup>259</sup> The second pillar is the “economy first” approach aiming to establish an economic interdependence among Asian countries.<sup>260</sup> The last one is the establishment of an American hegemony in the region that guarantees equal access to global public goods.<sup>261</sup> Indeed, the objective of all these pillars is to prevent the Chinese dominance in Asia. The security partnership between the USA, India and Japan aiming to prevent the China’s growing power actively in time has turned into a strong bilateral relationship between New Delhi and Tokyo in 2007. Today their bilateral relationship reaches to a strategic partnership level.

India and Japan share common concerns about China. Their economies are heavily dependent on the China’s growing economy. Thus, they concern that their

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<sup>255</sup> Pant, *op.cit.*, “Rising China in India’s vicinity”, p.12.

<sup>256</sup> Pu, *op.cit.*, “Ambivalent accommodation.”. p.153.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> G. John Ikenberry, “American hegemony and East Asian order”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 58.3, (2004): 353-367.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

vulnerable economies would be affected negatively in the event of any Chinese coercion. Another common concern is the regional dominance that China would like to establish in South East Asia and South Asia through North Korea and Pakistan. New Delhi and Tokyo believe that China has supplied these countries with missile and nuclear technologies and thereby is a serious threat to their national security. Moreover, they have complained about Chinese resistance against the entry of India and Japan in the UNSC. At last, they worried about China's intentions and increasing power in both East Asia and the IO.<sup>262</sup> As a result of these common concerns, India and Japan decided to strengthen their bilateral relationship.

Since almost ninety percent of Japan's oil need is supplied from the Middle East and carried through the IO maritime trade route to Tokyo, Japan feels obliged to establish relations with India to secure its overseas energy supply. The two countries with great potentials in economic and security fields also face similar challenges. The Senkaku Islands dispute<sup>263</sup>, China's revisionist forays in East and Southeast Asia, its growing naval capabilities and its assertive intentions in the Indo-Pacific waters are mutual concerns of India and Japan. They have established a strategic convergence to overcome these mutual concerns. These two states signed a series of agreements such as, Joint Statement "Japan-India Partnership in the New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership" in April 2005, "Agreement for Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy" and agreements on manufacturing skill development in India, cooperation in space, earth sciences, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, transport and urban development in November 2016.<sup>264</sup> In addition to these, India and Japan initiated direct bilateral maritime exercises, purchasing defense equipment and transferring of defense technology in 2011.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Shinzo Abe, "The Bounty of the Open Seas: Five New Principles for Japanese Diplomacy", Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013).

<sup>263</sup> "The Senkaku Islands dispute", or Diaoyu Islands dispute, concerns a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu Islands in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Tiaoyutai Islands in the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan).

<sup>264</sup> Elizabeth Roche, "India, Japan sign landmark civilian nuclear deal". <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/alJ9XsoWmUkcyPYO0HDDOK/India-Japan-sign-civil-nuclear-deal.html>, Accessed on: 11.12.2016.

<sup>265</sup> Joshi and Pant, *op.cit.*, "Indo-Japanese Strategic", p.321.

The first bilateral Indo- Japanese joint naval exercise was performed on the coast of Okinawa in June 2012 and the second bilateral maritime exercise was carried out in the IOR in December 2013.<sup>266</sup> The Strategic Rapprochement between the two countries has turned into India-USA-Japan trilateral military cooperation. In 2014, with the invitation of India, Japanese Navy started to participate in the annual Malabar exercises with the US Navy in the Pacific waters.<sup>267</sup> India also plans to purchase Japan's US-2 amphibious aircrafts for surveillance purposes in the IO. Both Japan and India have initiated the "transfer of defense technology" and "collaborative projects in defense equipment and technology" to strengthen the strategic partnership.<sup>268</sup> They are trying to establish a strong partnership to serve their strategic interests and provide much greater stability in the region.

#### **5.2.1.3. Indo-Israeli and Indo-Russian Defense Relationships**

During the Cold War, India developed close economic, military and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and displayed an anti-Israeli foreign policy due to the Muslim population in its territory. At that time, Indian armed forces were dominantly equipped with Russian weapons. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, India's largest provider of military technology has weakened. Thus, India began to search for a new supplier of military technology for upgrading its military capabilities. As a part of this quest, India, for the first time, established official diplomatic relations with Israel, one of the military technology powerhouses all over the world, in January 1992. The visit of former Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to India was a turning point for the Indo-Israeli relations in 1993. Two countries signed a range of agreements related to international security, intelligence and defense equipment. Their relations have expanded to various areas, including trade, agriculture, economic cooperation and cultural exchanges by the successive Indian governments. The main issues affecting the India's defense cooperation with Israel are:

- The Soviet–Afghan War,

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

- The Iraq war (the second Gulf War),
- The Kargil crises of 1999,
- The 9/11 events,
- The terror attack on the Indian parliament in New Delhi in December 2001,
- And the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008.

The arms trade between Israel and India is the most important part of the bilateral partnership and it has demonstrated a rapid rise in recent years. The approximate total value of the weapons trade over the past decade is estimated at around \$10 billion.<sup>269</sup> The delivery of the Phalcon AWACS equipped with Russian-built Ilyushin II-76s in May 2009 and March 2010 made Israel one of the largest arms exporters to India.<sup>270</sup>

With annual arms trades totaling approximately \$1.5 billion, Israel became the second largest arms supplier to India, after Russia by the end of 2006.<sup>271</sup> In March 2010, a contract was signed between the two countries for the development and procurement of Barak 8 medium-range surface-to-air missiles.<sup>272</sup> In the mid-2010, India announced that it was interested in the Israeli anti-missile defense system (David's Sling and Iron Dome).<sup>273</sup> On the one hand India has such a high defense relationship with Israel, on the other hand it increases its defense cooperation with Russia, its primary arms supplier during the Cold War.

The defense relationship between India and Russia is based on a historical perspective. As mentioned earlier, the Soviet Union was the only weapon supplier of India in the Cold War era. During the Cold War, nearly all of its military equipment was Soviet-made. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet

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<sup>269</sup> Efraim Inbar and Alvite Singh Ningthoujam. "Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century", *Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies*, Bar-Ilan University, 2012.

<sup>270</sup> "Israeli Phalcon reaching India on Monday (NDTV, May 24, 2009) and India to get Phalcon AWACS on Thursday", *Times of India*, March 24, 2010. <http://www.ndtv.com/topic/awacs>, Accessed on: 25.08. 2016.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> Yaakov Katz, "Israel eyeing big defence contracts in India", *Jerusalem Post*, March 10, 2010. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Israel-eyeing-big-defense-contracts-in-India>, Accessed on: 18.12.2016.

<sup>273</sup> Inbar and Ningthoujam, *op.cit.*, "Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation".

Union, the supply and modernization of this equipment was hampered. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, bilateral relations were tried to be kept alive by Russians, but these efforts did not yield results until the 2000s. During the 2000s, bilateral relations were restored and turned back to their heydays.

From 2004 to 2014, Russia became one of the India's largest arm suppliers and supplied almost seventy-five percent of New Delhi's weapon imports.<sup>274</sup> These imports include military weapons, equipments, systems, vehicles, helicopters, missiles and ships. From 2009 to 2013, they signed defense industry agreements worth an estimated \$30 billion.<sup>275</sup> However, when India decided to turn towards Europe and the USA for the purchase of military equipments, Russia has established military relations with Pakistan and China. Additionally, the IRIGC-TEC was established between two states on modernization and industrial cooperation, outstanding issues, energy and energy efficiency, tourism and culture, science and technology in 1994.<sup>276</sup> The sale of a multitude of defense equipment to India was provided through the efforts of this commission. Indian-Russian defense cooperation has improved with several military joint programmes:

- Brahmos Cruise Missile Programme,
- Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft,
- 5th Generation Fighter Jet Programme,
- Sukhoi Su-30MKI Programme,
- Military Hardware.<sup>277</sup>

Today, the co-operation is covering a broad range of sectors, including joint research and development, training, service to service contacts, joint exercises some like INDRA,<sup>278</sup> AVIA-INDRA.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Franz-Stefan Gady, "Russia Remains India's Largest Arms Supplier (For Now)", March 01, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/russia-remains-indias-largest-arms-supplier-for-now/>, Accessed on: 18.12.2016.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> "Overview of India-Russia Economic Cooperation", [http://indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=705&Itemid=705&lang=en](http://indianembassy.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=705&Itemid=705&lang=en), Accessed on: 12.01.2017.

<sup>277</sup> "India may sign Rs 33k crore deal with Russia for modern missile air defence systems, S-400", <http://www.abplive.in/india-news/brics-india-may-sign-rs-33k-crore-deal-with-russia-for-most-modem-missile-air-defence-systems-s-400-430949>, Accessed on: 03.11.2016.

### 5.2.2. India's Quest for Maritime Security Cooperation in the IOR and the SCS

China's increasing initiatives in the IO prompted India to advance maritime cooperation with the littoral states. (please see Table 12) India has deeply concerned about the security and strategic implications of the Chinese efforts to establish maritime infrastructure in the IOR. These Chinese initiatives were a common security concern for not only India but also some other Indian Ocean littoral states, including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Therefore, to fight with the common maritime security challenges in the IOR, several cooperative security mechanisms have formed. Some of those are as follows:<sup>280</sup>

- MILAN
- MALABAR (India, United States, Japan)
- IBSAMAR (India, Brazil, South Africa)
- JIMEX (India and Japan)
- SIMBEX (India and Republic of Singapore Navy)
- SLINEX-II (India and Sri Lanka)
- PASSEX<sup>281</sup>
- CORPAT
  - Ind-Indo
  - Indo-Thai
  - Indo-Burma (EEZ BL)

In response to China's Gwadar Port in Pakistan, India wants to build a port in Chabahar, one of the coastal provinces of Iran. Moreover, India opened Farkhor airbase jointly operated by Indian Air Force and Tajikistan Air Force. Farkhor

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<sup>278</sup> "INDRA" is a joint, bi-annual military exercise conducted by India and Russia starting in 2003. The exercise is tasked with boosting cooperation and interoperability between the Russian and Indian navies. The word INDRA is a portmanteau of the participants' respective countries.

<sup>279</sup> "AVIA-INDRA" is a joint exercise will further strengthen the relations between the two air forces taking forward the India - Russia strategic partnership.

<sup>280</sup> Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, "Maritime security cooperation in the IOR", p.181.

<sup>281</sup> A passing exercise (a PASSEX in US Navy terminology) is an exercise done between two navies to ensure that the navies are able to communicate and cooperate in times of war or humanitarian relief.

airbase is India's first military base outside of territory. Apart from these, India also developed its space-monitoring post in Mongolia in response towards China.

Furthermore, India has enhanced its naval cooperation with a number of Persian Gulf states as well as with the navies of other major powers in the region such as the USA, the UK, and France. In order to counter Chinese presence in the IO and to ensure the security of its trade routes, India has also been trying to find a way to access to the Vietnamese, Taiwanese and Japanese ports for the forward deployment of its naval force.<sup>282</sup>

### **5.3. India's Economic Balancing Strategy**

Through the String of Pearls in the IO, China has developed close relations with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan. It supplied economic and military aid to these countries. The main objective of China is to gain an advantageous position in the IO by taking the advantage of economic vulnerabilities of the regional countries.

India, which wants to prevent these Chinese initiatives, has also implemented its economic balancing policy in addition to its internal and external balancing policies. India has aimed to reduce economic impacts of China on its immediate neighborhood through this economic balancing policy. As a part of this policy, India has participated in and increased its weight on the regional economic organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, BIMSTEC and the IOR-ARC of which it has been a member for a long time.

India begins to launch regional economic integration initiatives to establish a strong relation with other countries in the region to balance China's fast rising strategic challenge in South Asia. The SAARC is one of these economic integration initiatives. The SAARC, established in 1985 focuses on social and economic matters and non-discussion on contentious bilateral issues.<sup>283</sup> According to the SAARC Charter, the objectives of the association are to:

- Improve the welfare of the peoples of South Asia,

<sup>282</sup> Pant, *op.cit.*, "Rising China in India's vicinity", p.15.

<sup>283</sup> <http://saarc-sec.org/SAARC-Charter/5/>, Accessed on: 25.08.2016.

- Accelerate economic growth, cultural relations and social development in the region,
- Advance and consolidate collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia,
- Contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems,
- Encourage collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, scientific, technical social and cultural fields,
- Strengthen cooperation with other developing countries,
- Consolidate cooperation among themselves in international forums and,
- Collaborate with international and regional organizations with common purposes.<sup>284</sup>

Since the signing of its Charter in 1985 by heads of states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in Dhaka, the SAARC has attempted to address several regional problems, including drug and human trafficking, social identity and terrorism.<sup>285</sup> SAARC membership was a part of India's strategy for securing its neighborhood from external influences. India is actively involved in SAARC's economic negotiations under its "Look East" policy. It has signed FTAs with Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives. It is trying to boost trade with Pakistan through the SAARC. Although, China is an observer country in SAARC and seeks to gain full membership, India blocks China's SAARC accession.

India was not one of the founding members of the ASEAN.<sup>286</sup> It was founded by Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in 1967.<sup>287</sup> Its objectives are to create cooperation in the field of economy, sociology, culture, technic, education and to provide regional peace and stability within the framework

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional organisation comprising ten Southeast Asian states, which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic integration amongst its members.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.



of the concept of Justice, law and respect for the principles of the UN.<sup>288</sup>The purposes of ASEAN are as follows:

- To increase the social progress, economic growth and cultural relations,
- To sustain regional peace and stability,
- To provide active collaboration and mutual assistance,
- To sustain assistance to each other,
- To cooperate more effectively,
- To pursue close cooperation via international and regional organizations.<sup>289</sup>

When the role of India in this organization is examined, it is clearly seen that the relations between India and the ASEAN generally remained uncertain in the 1980s. However, their relations began to change with the end of the Cold War.<sup>290</sup> This change was largely due to the India's "Look East" policy. India became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1996. It has focused particularly on establishing close ties with Burma, Singapore and recently Thailand, which share India's concerns about China's ascendancy in the Asia-Pacific. Many South-East Asian states have begun to see India as a significant power that could play a kind of balancing role in the region against Chinese dominance. Therefore, India has developed close relations with the South-East Asian states including bilateral defense pacts, such as the sale of technology, training personnel and joint military exercises.

India's bilateral and multilateral engagement with the ASEAN states essentially is a function of its wider strategic objectives in South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. Burma is the key state for Indian balancing policy against China. Great strategic importance given to Burma by India is for not only defensive purposes but also rich energy resources of Burma.<sup>291</sup> India aims to develop relations

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<sup>288</sup> <http://asean.org/asean/about-asean/overview/>, Accessed on: 25.08.2016.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> Sharkdam Wapmuk, "The Role of India in Regionalism: SAARC, ASEAN, EU, BIMSTEC, IOR-ARC and MGC: Lessons for Nigeria in the ECOWAS [dagger]", *IUP Journal of International Relations*, 9,1, (2015): p.21.

<sup>291</sup> Berlin. *op.cit.*, "India in the Indian Ocean".

with the neighboring countries of the SCS through ASEAN and to gain a permanent position in the region. In this context, India has gradually stepped up its economic relationship with ASEAN members since 2010.

**Table 11: India's Trade with East Asia, Australia and New Zealand**

Country	Export		Import		Total Trade	
	2010-11	2014-2015	2010-11	2014-2015	2010-11	2014-2015
Brunei	23.07	41.99	234.17	840.88	257.23	882.87
Cambodia	66.94	142.53	8.01	17.96	74.95	160.49
Indonesia	5,700.78	4,043.32	9,918.63	15,004.64	15,619.41	19,047.96
Malaysia	3,871.17	5,816.55	6,523.58	11,117.74	10,394.75	16,934.29
Myanmar	320.62	773.24	1017.67	1,231.54	1,338.29	2,004.78
Lao PDR	13.11	67.31	0.22	85.28	13.33	152.58
Singapore	9,825.44	9,809.36	7,139.31	7,124.47	16,964.75	16,933.83
Thailand	2,274.21	3,464.83	4,272.09	5,865.88	6,546.31	9,330.71
Vietnam	2,651.44	6,257.88	1,064.90	3,003.35	3,716.34	9,261.23
Philippines	881.10	1,395.58	429.39	423.04	1,310.49	1,818.62
ASEAN	25,627.89	31,812.58	30,607.96	44,714.77	56,235.85	76,527.35
China	14,168.86	11,934.25	43,479.76	60,413.17	57,648.62	72,347.42
Japan	5,091.24	5,385.57	8,632.03	10,131.36	13,723.27	15,516.93
South Korea	3,727.29	4,602.95	10,475.29	13,529.11	14,202.58	18,132.06
Australia	1,713.02	2,782.13	10,789.00	10,247.24	12,502.01	13,029.38
New Zealand	190.59	322.10	625.21	591.40	815.80	913.49

Source: Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, Government of India (All values in USD million)

BIMSTEC is another regional organization in South Asia. It comprises seven member states, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand. According to the declaration of BIMSTEC, its objectives are as follows:

- To create an enabling environment for rapid economic development
- To accelerate the economic growth and social progress in the sub-region
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance
- To provide assistance to each other
- To cooperate more effectively in joint efforts
- To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations,

- And to cooperate in projects.<sup>292</sup>

As noted before, in order to counter China, India has established permanent security relations with its neighbors and, increased economical engagement with them through regional economic organization. By doing this, India wanted to build strong relations with its immediate neighbors with the help of these economic organizations and aims to break the Chinese influence in the region. India has stepped up its economic support to prevent these countries from being completely under the sway of China. India has also initiated many projects such as Chabadar port in Iran, tripartite trade and transit passage agreement with Iran and Afghanistan, deliberations with Myanmar on access to Sittwe Port, connectivity projects with Bangladesh. India is targeting to enhance its economic relations with the neighboring countries through these economic organizations and undermine the Chinese influence.

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<sup>292</sup> <http://www.bimstec.org>, Accessed on: 22.12.2016.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The control of trade routes between the Middle East and East Asia is always significant for both China and India. So that these two countries are excessively dependent on this trade route, they are increasingly striving to secure it. To secure this trade route, China has increased military capabilities, naval units and built many ports and navigation facilities in the Indian neighborhood. It has also developed strategic naval bases across the IO. These attempts are part of “String of Pearls” strategy. However, all these initiatives have been perceived as serious threats to its national security by India. Therefore, India adopted a balancing policy against the China. In the face of China’s expansionism, India has pursued aggressive security policies to ensure its national strategic interests in the region. India has increased its strategic superiority in Lakerdep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, improved relationships with its neighbors, modernized its army, increased defense spending and renewed its maritime strategy in the IO. To become a dominant power and break the influence of China in its region, India has applied a balancing policy against China.

#### **Why is it important for India to Protect its Interests in the IOR?**

The IOR is important to India for the various reasons. Following are few important reasons:

- The IO contains the trade route to Africa, Europe, West Asia, Central Asia, South East Asia and Australia.
- Since almost seventy percent of India’s oil import comes from West Asia, ensuring security of this energy trade route is India’s prime concern.
- Securing its investments in Iran's Chabadar port, Maldives, Africa and Sri Lanka etc is very important for India. India also aims to neutralize Chinese String of Pearls with its own project Mausam.
- Due to its long coastline, porous border and growing terror threat, keeping the IO devoid of illegal and terrorist activities is in India’s’ own national interest.

### **How does India Overcome the Potential Threats of the Rise of China in the IO?**

India has rich cultural linkages with West and Central Asian countries. It can reach out to West and Central Asian countries by using its soft power and cultural linkages with the small island nations in the IOR like Seychelles, Maldives. It can use these linkages to establish economic, political and military relations. Its “Project Mausam” is a good example for strengthening these linkages. India has participated in all Joint action to prevent Chinese dominance. Moreover, India plays an important role in multilateral regional forums like ASEAN, SAARC, BIMSTEC and the IORA. It also intensifies its military cooperation with other regional and extra-regional states. Especially, its strategic level partnership agreement with Japan and Australia for military cooperation can help to keep China in check in the region. Farkhor Air Base, India’s first military base outside its territory in Tajikistan can help India to balance China. India can receive support from the USA and Japan for required technological advancement.

### **Is India Capable of Countering Chinese Influence in its Neighborhood?**

China and India have long-lasting border disputes and both countries have relationship based on mutual suspicion since the end of the Cold War. China’s “String of pearls” strategy and its close cooperation with Pakistan increased the tensions between the two countries. It can be argued that India, which is economically in weaker position than that of China, will be unable to counter Chinese influence in its neighborhood. However, India and its neighbors have very long historical, cultural and economic ties with each other. India has urgently needed neighbors to be able to counter China around its neighborhood. As a result, India has launched a number of initiatives to create a climate of confidence with its neighbors.

- Developing greater cooperation with South Asian neighbors under regional fora like SAARC, BIMSTEC, and ASEAN.
- Embarking on comprehensive economic and strategic engagements with nations at Chinese periphery like Vietnam, Philippines, Mongolia and Japan.

- Enhancing defense capabilities with special emphasis on navy and border infrastructural developments.
- Establishing defense cooperation and frequent joint exercises with neighbors and powers such as the USA, Japan, Russia and Israel.
- Maintaining continuous engagements with the IO littoral states like Maldives, Mauritius to strengthen Indian influence.
- Strengthening its economic ties with and investments in neighboring nations to undermine Chinese economic clout.
- Resolving disputes related to border, trade etc. with its neighbors.

With these initiatives, India may not be able to fully balance China in its own capability, but it may balance China effectively with the help of other major powers.

#### **Is the USA an Indispensable actor for India's Balancing Policy Against China?**

India and the USA share a geopolitical objective to prevent any Chinese dominance in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, the strategic alignment between China and Pakistan impel India to forge close ties with the USA. Moreover, the USA is eager to maintain its dominance in the IO and the SCS through aligning with balancers like India and Japan. For these reasons, India-US partnership is getting stronger and stronger in the region.

- A civilian nuclear cooperation agreement between India and the USA would help India meet its growing energy demands.
- The USA provides India with the advanced technology in the defense industry. It would ease India to upgrade its defense technology.
- The USA supported India openly for NSG membership, which can help India's cause of entry into leagues such as NSG etc.
- The USA actively shares intelligence and information to combat terrorism.

When all these developments are taken into consideration, even if the USA has an established strategic relation with Pakistan, it is clearly seen that the USA is an indispensable actor for India to balance China in the IO.

### **What are Convergent Interests of China and India in the IO?**

- They have specialized interests on issues like Afghanistan, Central Asia.
- They have suffered from terrorism. They have increased cooperation on counterterrorism.
- They have cooperated in the multilateral realm, like trade and climate change issues.
- Maritime security in the Pacific and the IO is vital for both countries due to energy security.
- To sustain peace and stability in West Asia and Gulf are essential for their energy security.

To sum up, the more energy resources of the world are depleted, the more the access to these declining energy sources becomes vital for the countries. This leads to a great power struggle among the energy-dependent countries, such as the two energy-hungry giants in the Asia Pacific region, India and China. Although the struggle for power between India and China seems to be mainly aimed at accessing energy resources, China's increasing maritime power in the region is causing great hesitations in not only Vietnam, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan and the Philippines but also India and China's neighboring countries. At this stage, the USA seems to be an indispensable partner for those countries that want to secure national security.

However, the stagnation of US economic growth over recent years, as well as the intention to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Agreement, which is identified as a potential disaster for US foreign trade by the US President Donald Trump is a clear indication that China will further increase its current presence in the region. Furthermore, the ongoing bullish momentum in the Chinese economy and large energy investments that Chinese firms are launching worldwide indicate that Chinese economy will catch up with that of the US over the next 20 years. This situation is watched with anxiety all over the world.

In this context, it is unlikely that the Indian balancing strategy aiming to balance the growing Chinese influence in the IOR will stop China's progress. The US-Indian partnership is a must-have option here. If China's economic upturn cannot be stopped, it will even create an alliance between the USA and Russia against the rising of China. Today, the US fight against ISIS in Syria, which was carried out together with Russians but seems to be separate, can be seen as an example of a possible future alliance between the USA and Russia. China's growing economic and military might and its close relationship with strategic countries of Asia Pacific region clearly indicates that tension in the region seems to increase.

Although there is a serious competition between India and China to become a dominant power in the IOR, they avoid using military force against each other. This Sino-Indian rivalry, which can be identified as a "Cold War," has been so far limited to some instances of show of force including naval exercises and nuclear missile tests. Even though it seems calm today, due to the growing significance of the region, their bilateral relations are vulnerable to potential escalation of tensions between them.



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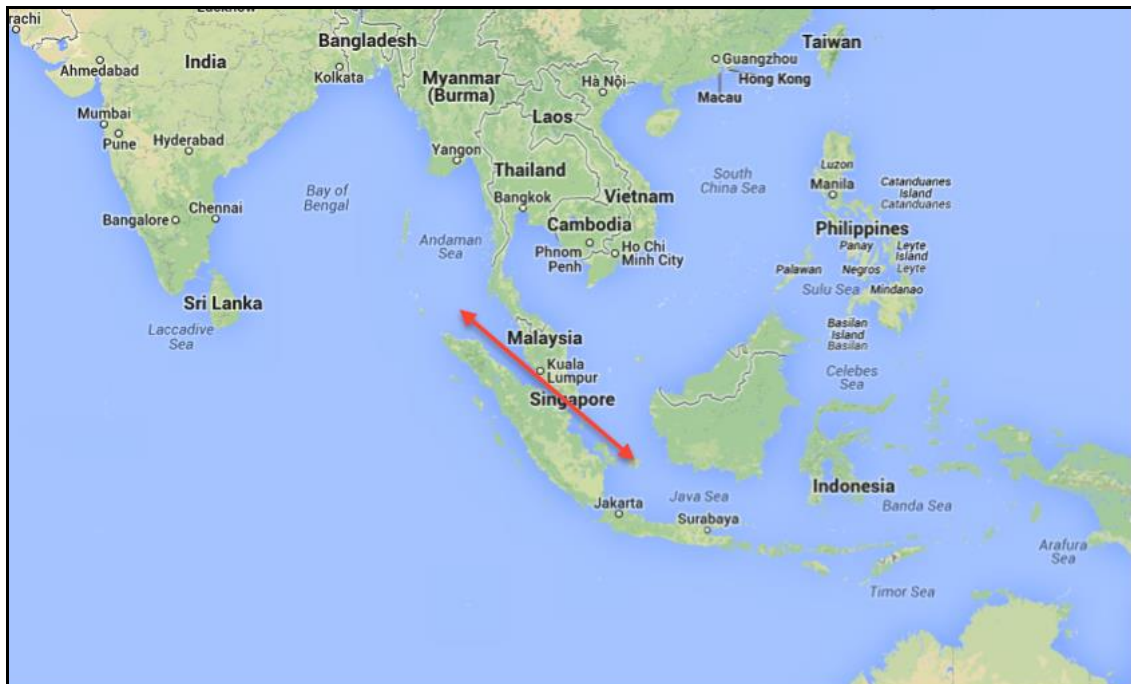
APPENDIX A  
MAPS

Figure 1: Maritime Trade Route and Strategic Choke points in Indian Ocean



Source: [http://www.tamilnation.co/intframe/indian\\_ocean/](http://www.tamilnation.co/intframe/indian_ocean/)

Figure 2: Strait of Malacca



Source: The Oil Exchange, <https://theoilexchange.wordpress.com/>

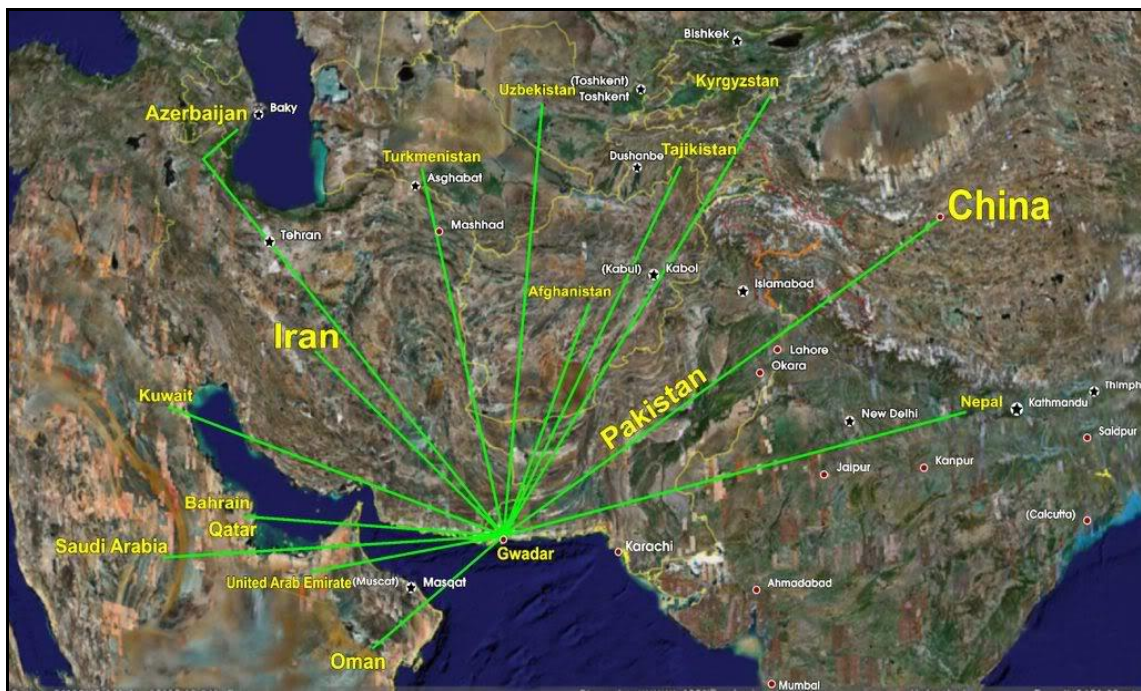


**Figure 3: Chinese ‘String of Pearls’**



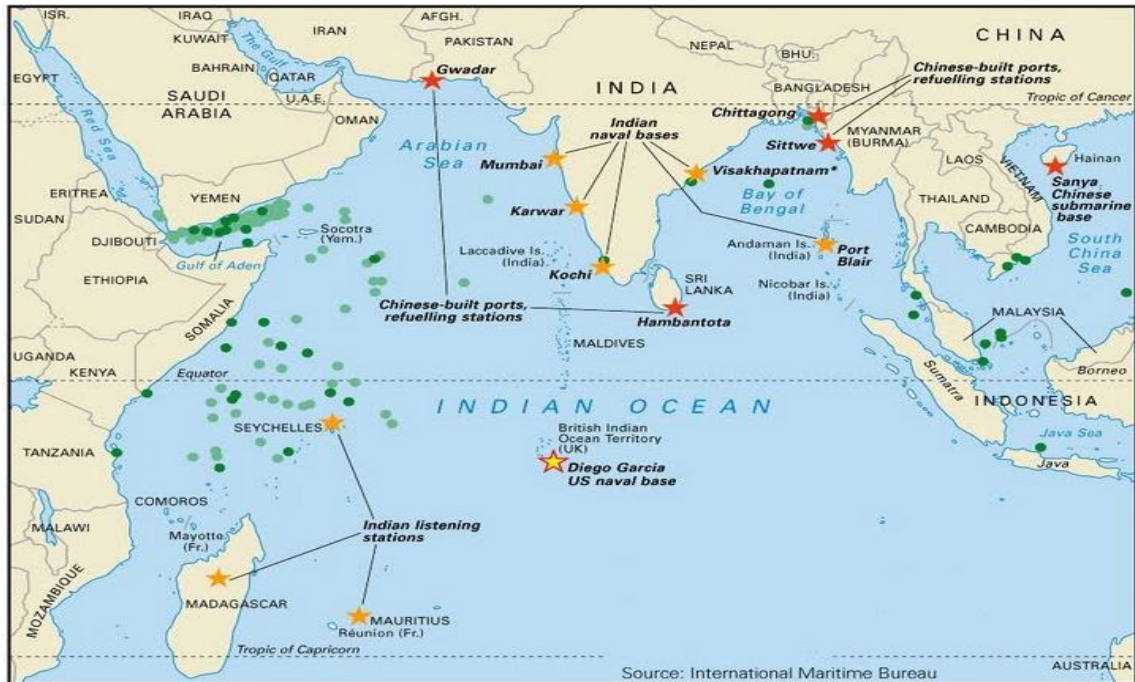
Source: Joint Operating Environment (JOE 2008) Available at <http://www.marinebuzz.com>

**Figure 4: Strategic Location of Gwadar in the Central Asia Energy Corridor**



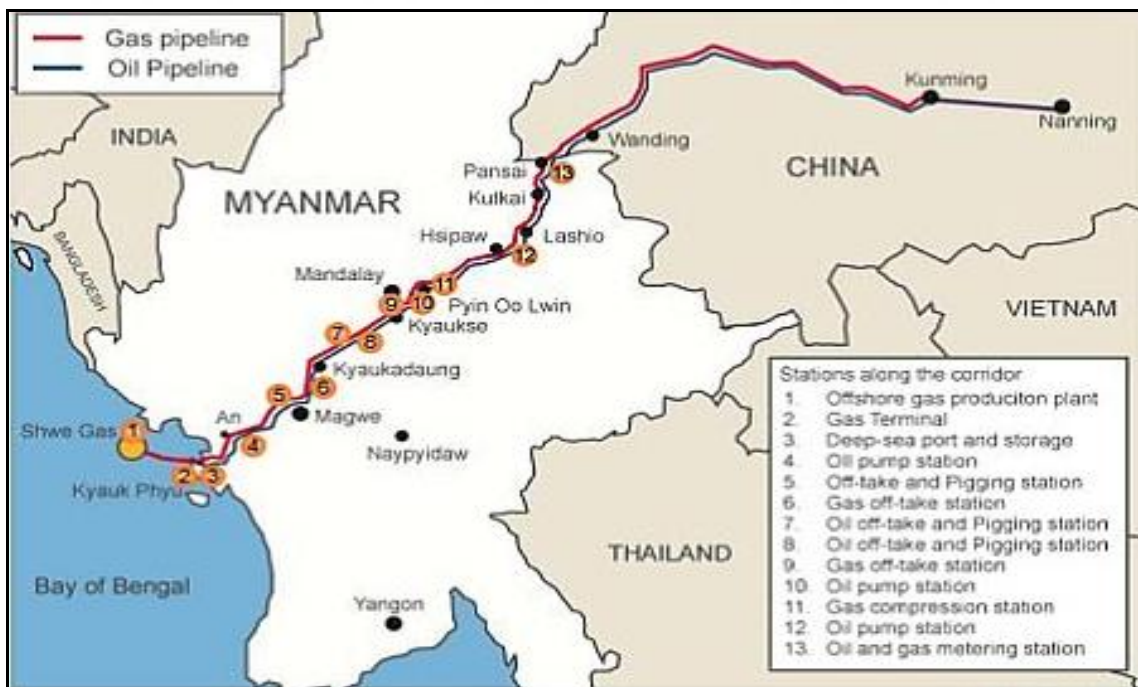
Source: China seeks a naval base west of India, world affairs watch, Pakistan defence forum. <https://balochilinguist.wordpress.com/2015/12/13/strategic-carnage-of-balochistan-2/>

Figure 5: Basing in the IOR



Source: Research. [http://www.sangam.org/2009/10/ Great\\_Power.php?uid=3728](http://www.sangam.org/2009/10/ Great_Power.php?uid=3728)

Figure 6: China's Trans-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipelines



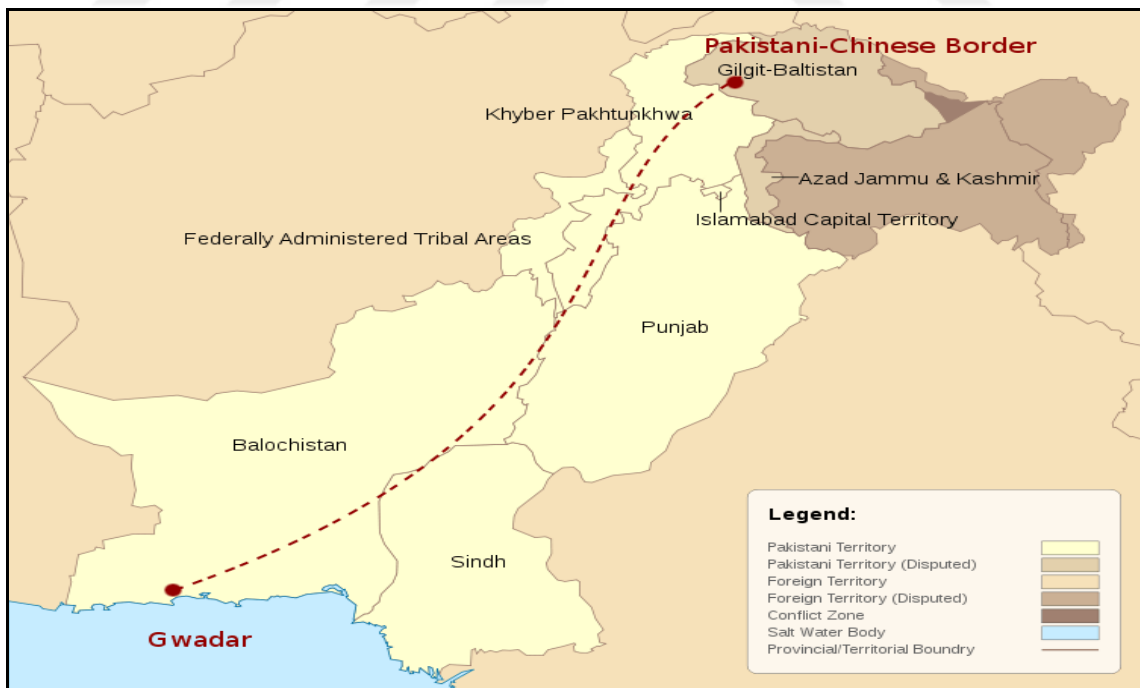
Source: Reuters

**Figure 7: China’s Proposed New Silk Road**



Source: Xinhua, The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/building-new-silk-road/p36573>

**Figure 8: China – Pakistan Economic Corridor**



Source: Great Power Confrontation in the Indian Ocean, Global Research. Available at [http:// www.sangam.org/2009/10/Great\\_Power.php?uid=3728](http://www.sangam.org/2009/10/Great_Power.php?uid=3728)

Figure 9: Disputed Border Area



Source: The Economist

Figure 10: Sethusamudram Project



Source: <http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/08/02/geography-in-the-news-a-new-international-canal/>

## TABLES

**Table 12: Ongoing Maritime Security Cooperation Initiatives of the Indian Navy**

Country	Foreign naval cooperation
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ships visits</li> <li>• Training assistance and exchanges</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• HADR assistance</li> </ul>
Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• Information sharing for MDA</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Hydrographic survey assistance</li> <li>• EEZ surveillance</li> <li>• Gifting of naval platforms and other military hardware</li> <li>• Ship refits</li> </ul>
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint survey in Sir Creek and adjoining areas conducted</li> </ul>
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint survey in Sir Creek and adjoining areas conducted</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Hydrographic survey</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Gifting of naval platforms and other military hardware</li> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• EEZ surveillance</li> </ul>
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational meetings</li> <li>• Gifting of naval platforms and other military hardware</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Information sharing for MDA</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• HADR assistance</li> <li>• Hydrographic assistance</li> </ul>
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>
Bahrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>
Iraq, Kuwait, Oman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Joint exercise codenamed 'Naseem Al Bahr'</li> </ul>
Qatar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>
Saudi Arabia, UAE Yemen, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Varuna series of Joint exercises</li> </ul>
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> </ul>

Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEZ surveillance</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Gifting of naval platforms</li> <li>• Hydrographic survey assistance</li> </ul>
Mozambique, Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• EEZ Patrols</li> <li>• Hydrographic assistance</li> </ul>
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Training exchanges</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• IBSAMAR series of exercises</li> </ul>
Sudan, Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> </ul>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Training exchanges</li> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> </ul>
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy Staff talks</li> <li>• Ind-Indo coordinated Patrols (CORPAT)</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• Training assistance and training exchanges</li> <li>• Visits by defence/civilian officers</li> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• HADR assistance</li> </ul>
Brunei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> </ul>
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Gifting of naval platforms</li> <li>• OTR</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Joint exercises and Coordinated Patrols EEZ BL</li> </ul>
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Joint Exercises codenamed SIMBEX</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Visits by defence/civilian officers</li> <li>• Information sharing for MDA</li> <li>• OTR</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Milan participant</li> <li>• Indo Thai Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT)</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> </ul>

USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Malabar Series and other Joint exercises</li> <li>• Mutual logistics arrangements</li> </ul>
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> <li>• Exercise Konkan</li> <li>• Training exchanges</li> <li>• Hydrographic cooperation</li> </ul>
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Officer training exchanges</li> <li>• JIMEX series of exercises</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> </ul>
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indra series of Joint exercises</li> </ul>
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• PASSEX</li> </ul>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> <li>• Training assistance</li> <li>• Navy-to-Navy staff talks</li> </ul>
Cambodia, Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ship visits</li> </ul>

Source: Compiled from various MoD Annual Reports.

## TURKISH SUMMARY

Günümüzde ülkeler, ekonomik büyümelerini devam ettirebilmek için giderek artan bir enerji ihtiyacı duymaktadırlar. Şüphesiz ki bu enerji ihtiyacının karşılanmasında kullanılan enerji nakil hatlarının güvenliği oldukça önemli hale gelmiştir. Ülkeler ekonomileri için hayati önem taşıyan enerji nakil hatları üzerinde kontrolün bir başka ülke elinde olmasını istememektedirler. Bu durum ülkeler arasında zorlu bir mücadeleye sebep olmaktadır. Dünyanın en kalabalık ülkelerinden olan Hindistan ve Çin arasında Hint Okyanusu bölgesinde yaşanan mücadele buna iyi bir örnek oluşturmaktadır. Bu iki ülke arasındaki mücadele özellikle Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde artış göstermiştir. Peş peşe gerçekleştirdikleri ekonomik reformlar sayesinde önemli bir ekonomik büyüme yaşayarak Asya'nın en büyük güçleri haline gelmişlerdir.

Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşüyle birlikte Asya'da büyük bir güç haline gelen Çin, bu yükselişini büyük oranda hızlı büyüyen ekonomisine borçludur. Çin, hızla endüstrileşmiş ve tüm dünyaya üretim yapan büyük bir üretim merkezi konumuna gelmiştir. Elbette artan üretim, beraberinde enerji tüketimini de artırmış ve Çin kendi öz kaynakları ile karşılayabileceğinden daha fazla enerjiye ihtiyaç duymaya başlamıştır. Bu durum onu enerji ithalatında dışa bağımlı bir ülke haline getirmiştir.

Bugün yüksek oranda petrol ve doğalgaza ihtiyacı olan Çin, bu ihtiyacının büyük bir kısmını Ortadoğu'dan deniz ticaret yoluyla karşılamaktadır. Böylesi bir durumda, Ortadoğu'dan başlayıp, Hürmüz Boğazı'nı geçerek, Hint Okyanusu yoluyla Malakka Boğazı'na, oradan da Güney Çin Denizi'ne uzanan Hint Okyanusu ticaret yolu, Çin için büyük önem kazanmıştır. Ayrıca, dünya petrol ticaretinin büyük bir kısmının ABD'nin kontrolünde olması, Çin ekonomisi için büyük bir tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Bütün bunlara ek olarak, Çin'in Hint Okyanusu'na olan coğrafi uzaklığı ve bu okyanustaki Amerikan donanmasının hâkim konumu, durumu karmaşık bir hale getirmektedir.

Enerji nakil yollarında oluşabilecek herhangi bir tıkanmanın, enerji arzında büyük aksamalara yol açacağını düşünen Çin, deniz ticaret yolunu güvenli hale getirmek için büyük çaba sarf etmektedir. Bu sebeple Çin, bölge ülkelerine askeri ve



ekonomik yardımlarda bulunmakta, alternatif ticaret yolları oluşturmakta, limanlar ve deniz üsleri inşa etmektedir. Pakistan’da Gwadar Limanı, Sri Lanka’da Hambontato Limanı, Bangladeş’te Chittagong Limanı ve Myanmar’da başlatılan Kyakpuhu demiryolu ve petrol boru hattı projeleri Çin’in Hint Okyanusu bölgesinde başlattığı en önemli girişimlerindendir. Kendi anakarasından Ortadoğu ve Afrika’ya uzanan deniz ticaret yolu üzerinde başlatılan bu girişimler Çin’in “İnci Dizisi” stratejisi olarak adlandırılmaktadır.

Hint Okyanusu’nun, Hindistan açısından önemi incelendiğinde ise önümüze Çin ile benzer sonuçlar çıkmaktadır. Güney Asya’nın en kalabalık ve en güçlü ülkesi olan Hindistan, Soğuk Savaş döneminde tarafsızlık politikası yürütmüş, uygulamaya geçirdiği ekonomik reformlar sayesinde büyük bir yükseliş ivmesi yakalamıştır. Bağımsızlık sonrası Hindistan ekonomisi sırasıyla;

1. 1950-1965 yıllarını kapsayan dönemde “sosyalist bir toplum modeli”ne ulaşmak için uygulamaya konulan “karma ekonomi”,
2. 1965-1973 yılları arasında yoksulluğu azaltmaya yönelik uygulanan “Yeşil Devrim”<sup>293</sup> politikası,
3. 1973-1980 petrol fiyatlarındaki artışa bağlı ortaya çıkan döviz darboğazına karşı uygulamaya konulan “Dış Şoklara Uyum Dönemi”,
4. 1980-1991 kuraklığa bağlı iç şok ve petrol fiyatlarında görülen ikinci büyük artışa tepki olarak uygulamaya konulan “Ekonomik Liberalleşme Dönemi” yaşamış,
5. Soğuk Savaş’ın sona ermesiyle birlikte “serbest piyasa ekonomisi” modeline geçiş yapılmıştır.<sup>294</sup>

1990’lı yıllarda uygulanan ekonomik reformlar sayesinde ülke hızla sanayileşmiş, tıpkı Çin gibi enerji ihtiyacı artmış ve artan enerji talebini karşılamak için Hint Okyanusu’na daha fazla bağımlı hale gelmiştir. Ayrıca bölgesinde komşularıyla özellikle Pakistan’la yaşadığı sorunlar neticesinde Hindistan, askeri

<sup>293</sup> Yeşil Devrim, üçüncü dünya ülkelerinde başarıyla uygulanan tarım politikalarına verilen genel bir addir.

<sup>294</sup> Sumru Öz, “Küresel Rekabette Yeni Bir Güç: Hindistan”, TUSİAD-Sabancı Üniversitesi Rekabet Forumu, 11/446, (2007), s.1-7.

gücünü devamlı artırmış ve bu durum, güçlü bir ekonomiyi zorunlu kılmıştır. Hindistan, Çin gibi enerji ihtiyacının büyük bir bölümünü Hint Okyanusu üzerinden karşılamaktadır. Bu sebeple Hint Okyanusu'ndaki enerji nakil hatlarının güvenliği, Hindistan açısından da büyük önem taşımaktadır. Çin'in enerji nakil hatlarında oluşacak herhangi bir tıkanıklık durumunda büyük bir ekonomik krizle karşı karşıya kalacağı gerekçesiyle Hint Okyanusu deniz ticaret yolu üzerinde uyguladığı "İnci Dizisi" stratejisi, Hindistan tarafından kendi ulusal çıkarlarına açık bir tehdit olarak algılanmaktadır. Her ne sebeple olursa olsun, kendi coğrafyasında böylesi oluşumlara kesinlikle müsaade etmeyeceğini dile getiren Hindistan, Çin'in Hint Okyanusunda başlattığı girişimlere karşı bir 'dengeleme politikası' uygulamaya başlamıştır. Bu dengeleme politikası, dâhili, harici ve ekonomik dengeleme stratejilerinden oluşmaktadır. Ülkelerin artan ticaret hacmi ve deniz ticaret yolu üzerinde yaşanan bu gerilimler, Hint Okyanusu bölgesinin önemini daha da artırmaktadır.

Dünya petrol rezervinin %66'sına ve doğalgaz rezervinin %35'ine sahip<sup>295</sup> olan Hint Okyanusu bölgesi, yıllık yaklaşık 100.000 yük gemisine, toplam konteyner yükünün %61'ine ve petrol ürünleri ticaretinin %70'ine ev sahipliği yapmaktadır.<sup>296</sup> Dolayısıyla hızlı gelişen dünya ülkeleri arasında ilk sıralarda yer alan iki Asya devi; Hindistan ve Çin için bu okyanusun önemi gün geçtikçe artmaktadır. Fakat Hint Okyanusu bölgesi, günümüzde sürekli artan güvenlik sorunlarıyla karşı karşıyadır. Yüksek nüfus artış oranının yanında, yoksulluk, politik istikrarsızlık, doğal felaketler, gıda ve su sıkıntısı, terörizm, sınır anlaşmazlıkları, deniz korsanlığı gibi sorunlar bölgenin en önde gelen çıkmazları arasındadır. Hindistan ve Çin hem bu güvenlik kaygılarını gidermek hem de enerji ithalatının güvenliğini sağlamak için bölgedeki askeri güçlerini artırma yoluna gitmişlerdir. Bölgede yaşanan bu hareketlilik, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin gerilmesine yol açmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Hint Okyanusu'nda bölgesel hakimiyet kurmak isteyen Çin ve Hindistan arasında yaşanan rekabeti incelemektir. Bu rekabette hem Çin hem de Hindistan, Hint Okyanusu'nda ekonomik, politik ve askeri açıdan hâkim güç olmayı amaçlamaktadırlar. Bu çalışma, bölgenin jeostratejik önemini örneklerle

<sup>295</sup> Dudley, op.cit., "BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2016".

<sup>296</sup> Hornat, op.cit., "The power triangle in the Indian Ocean", p.1-19.

açıklamayı, Hindistan ve Çin'in bölgedeki stratejik çıkarları hakkında bilgi vermeyi, Hint Okyanusu Bölgesi'nde Çin'in uyguladığı "İnci Dizisi" stratejisine karşı Hindistan'ın uyguladığı dengeleme politikasını analiz etmeyi ve iki ülke arasında ileride yaşanması muhtemel krizleri tahmin etmeyi amaçlamaktır.

### **HİNT OKYANUSU BÖLGESİNİN JEOSTRATEJİK ÖNEMİ**

Dünyanın en yoğun enerji ticaret yolunu bünyesinde bulundurması sebebiyle bütün bölge ülkeleri için hayati derecede önem taşıyan Hint Okyanusu, sayıca çok ve oldukça dar geçiş noktalarına sahiptir. Bunların en önemlileri; Malakka Boğazı, Hürmüz Boğazı ve Bab- el-Mandeb Boğazı'dır.

Malezya Yarımadası ve Endonezya'ya bağlı Sumatra Adası arasında 805 km uzunluğa sahip dar bir boğaz olan Malakka Boğazı, bölgenin en gelişmiş ticaret devletleri olan Çin, Japonya, Güney Kore ve Tayvan'ı uluslararası ticarete bağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, Okyanusya ve Pasifik Okyanusu arasında ana geçiş noktasını oluşturur. Çin, Afrika ve Ortadoğu'dan ithal ettiği petrolün %77'sini bu boğaz üzerinden sağlamaktadır. Konumu itibariyle boğaz, Çin için hayati derecede önem taşımaktadır. Çünkü boğazda oluşabilecek herhangi bir tıkanıklık, enerji ithalatının durması anlamına gelmektedir.

Hindistan açısından Malakka Boğazı'nın önemi oldukça fazladır. Hindistan için bölgedeki ulusal çıkarlarını korumak ve "Doğuya Bakış" politikası kapsamında Malakka Boğazı'nın güvenliğini sağlamak oldukça önemlidir. Boğazın yakınlarında bulunan Andaman ve Nikobar adalarında askeri üs ve birlik bulundurması, Hindistan'ın bu boğazın güvenliğine verdiği önemin açık bir göstergesidir. Bu kapsamda Hindistan, Endonezya, Malezya ve Singapur gibi bölge ülkeleriyle ortaklıklar kurarak bölgedeki terörizm, deniz korsanlığı ve silah kaçakçılığının önlenmesi için askeri operasyonlar yürütmektedir.

Hint Okyanusu üzerinde bir diğer önemli geçiş noktası ise Hürmüz Boğazı'dır. Umman Körfezi ile Basra Körfezi'ni birbirine bağlayan Hürmüz Boğazı, dünyanın petrol ticaretindeki en önemli geçiş noktalarından birisidir. Kızıldeniz'i Hint Okyanusu'na bağlamakta ve on binlerce geminin Asya'dan Afrika'ya geçişini sağlamaktadır. Dünya petrolünün yaklaşık %20'si ve Ortadoğu petrolünün %40'ı bu

boğaz üzerinden taşınmaktadır. Stratejik önemi nedeniyle, ABD donanma filolarından birini Basra Körfezi'ne yerleştirmiştir. Çünkü Hürmüz Boğazı'nda enerji nakli sırasında oluşabilecek herhangi bir aksaklık, ABD'nin çıkarlarını önemli ölçüde etkileyecektir. Hürmüz Boğazı, sadece ABD için değil; bölgenin iki büyük gücü olan Çin ve Hindistan için de oldukça önemlidir. Örneğin Çin, petrol ihtiyacının üçte birini, öte yandan Hindistan, ham petrol ihtiyacının yarısından fazlasını Hürmüz Boğazı üzerinden karşılamaktadır.

Kızıl Deniz'i Hint Okyanusu'na bağlayan ve dünya enerji ticaretinin büyük bir kısmının taşınmasını sağlayan Bab-el-Mendeb Boğazı, bölgenin bir diğer önemli geçiş noktasıdır. Basra Körfezi'nden Batılı devletlere taşınan petrol ve doğalgazın yaklaşık %30'u bu geçiş noktası üzerinden taşınmaktadır. Çin, olası enerji krizlerine karşı enerji temin yollarını çeşitlendirmek için Afrika ülkelerine büyük yatırımlar yapmakta ve bu ticaretin güvenliğine de büyük önem vermektedir. Bu yüzden Çin, Bab-el-Mandeb Boğazı'ndaki enerji güvenliğinin sağlanması için Cibuti'ye askeri üs kurmaktadır. Öte yandan Hindistan, ekonomik büyümesini sürdürmek için ihtiyaç duyduğu enerjinin büyük bir kısmını Körfez ülkelerinden Bab-el-Mandeb Boğazı kanalıyla sağlamaktadır. Boğazın açık ve güvenli tutulması için son yıllarda Hindistan donanması düzenli olarak Körfez ülkelerinin limanlarını ziyaret etmekte, askeri personellerine eğitimler vermekte ve ortaklaşa deniz tatbikatları gerçekleştirmektedir.

Hint Okyanusu Bölgesi, Hindistan ve Çin açısından sadece jeostratejik önem taşımamakta aynı zamanda bünyesinde her iki ülke için de stratejik çıkarlar barındırmaktadır.

### **ÇİN'İN HİNT OKYANUSUNDAKİ STRATEJİK ÇIKARLARI**

Geniş yüzölçümü, zengin yeraltı kaynakları ve kalabalık nüfusuyla Çin, tarih boyunca uluslararası sistemde önemli bir konuma sahip olmuştur. Uluslararası politikadaki asıl ağırlığını 1978 yılında devlet başkanı Deng Xiaoping tarafından gerçekleştirilen ekonomik reformlar sayesinde kazanan Çin, ekonomik olarak büyük gelişme göstererek dünyada önemli bir güç durumuna gelmiştir. Hızla büyüyen ekonomisi, Çin'i aynı zamanda dünyanın en fazla enerji tüketen ülkesi durumuna

getirmiştir. Enerji konusunda 1970’lerde kendi kendine yeten bir ülke iken 1990’larda dışa bağımlı bir ülke haline gelen Çin, bugün neredeyse enerji ihtiyacının %60’ını dış kaynaklardan karşılamaktadır. Çin, bu enerji ihtiyacının büyük bir kısmını Ortadoğu’dan başlayarak Hint Okyanusu’nu takip edip Güney Çin Denizi’ne ulaşan deniz ticaret yoluyla karşılamaktadır. Bu ticaret yolunda son yıllarda artan yoğunluğa bağlı olarak deniz korsanlığı ve uluslararası terörizm gibi güvenlik tehditlerinin oluşması, Çin’i oldukça tedirgin etmektedir. Bu bağlamda Hint Okyanusu bölgesi, Çin için temel güvenlik alanı haline gelmiştir. Özellikle Malakka Boğazı’nda yaşanabilecek olası bir tıkanıklığın ulusal ekonomik büyümesine zarar verebileceği endişesini duyan Pekin yönetimi, enerji ticaret yolunun güvenliğini güvence altına almaya, enerji naklinde oluşacak aksamalarda kullanılmak üzere alternatif ticaret yolları bulmaya çabalamaktadır.

Bu yüzden Çin son yıllarda özellikle Malakka Boğazı başta olmak üzere deniz ticaret yolunun güvenliğini sağlamak amacıyla bir takım girişimlerde bulunmaktadır. Bu girişimlerin bazıları, Pakistan’da Gwadar, Sri Lanka’da Hambontato, Bangladeş’te Chittagong liman inşaatları, Çin-Pakistan ekonomik koridoru ve Myanmar demiryolu projeleridir.

Asya-Pasifik coğrafyasının büyük bir bölümünün denizlerle ve okyanuslarla iç içe olması sebebiyle Çin ve Hindistan arasında deniz yolları konusunda ciddi bir rekabet yaşanmaktadır. Özellikle uzun yıllar boyunca batılı devletler arasında bir rekabet alanı olan Hint Okyanusu, 1990 sonrasında iki ülke arasında ciddi bir rekabet alanı haline gelmiştir. Ekonominin artan önemi, ülkeler arasındaki rekabeti iyice artırmış ve günümüzde askeri ve siyasi mücadelenin yerini almıştır. Çin, bu bağlamda, geliştirdiği ve üzerindeki her bir noktanın birer “inci” tanesi olarak tanımlandığı bir deniz ticaret rotasını ifade eden “İnci Dizisi Stratejisi” ile kendi anakarasından Port Sudan’a uzanan deniz ticaret yolu üzerinde stratejik limanlar inşa ederek ABD’nin bu enerji yolu üzerindeki hâkimiyetine karşı bir alternatif oluşturarak enerji güvenliğini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Tayvan’dan Hürmüz Boğazı ve Doğu Afrika’ya kadar uzanan bu rotanın en önemli noktaları: Malakka

Boğazı, Myanmar'da Sittwe, Bangladeş'te Chittagong, Sri Lanka'da Hambantota, Pakistan'da Gwadar, Hürmüz Boğazı ve Aden Körfezi'dir.<sup>297</sup>

İnci Dizisi üzerindeki en önemli nokta hiç şüphesiz ki Pakistan'da yapımı devam etmekte olan Gwadar Limanı'dır. Çin'in Ortadoğu enerji kaynaklarına kesintisiz ulaşabilmesi ve bu enerji kaynaklarının güvenliğinin sağlanmasında Gwadar limanı oldukça kritik bir konumdadır. Çin'in en büyük petrol ihracatçıları hiç şüphesiz Ortadoğu ülkeleridir. Güvenlik açısından riskli olan bu bölgede denetimi sağlayabilmek için Çin, limanın bölgeye olan yakınlığının avantajını kullanmak istemektedir. Bu kapsamda, limanı Çin topraklarına bağlamak amaçlı, Çin-Pakistan Ekonomik Koridoru (CPEC) adı verilen bir boru hattı projesi başlatılmıştır. Bu koridor ve liman inşaatlarında çalışan yaklaşık 2,5 milyon Çinli işçinin çalışması ve bunların güvenliğinin Çin ordusu tarafından sağlanıyor olması limanın yalnızca ekonomik amaçlı olmadığı, aynı zamanda askeri bir nitelik taşıdığını da göstermektedir. Gwadar limanı ve boru hattı projesi sayesinde Çin, Ortadoğu enerji kaynaklarına Pakistan üzerinden doğrudan ulaşmayı planlamaktadır.<sup>298</sup> Bunun yanı sıra Pakistan'ın kuzey bölgeleri ile Çin'i doğrudan bağlayan Karkorum Otoyolu yenileme çalışmaları, Çin'e bölgede hareket serbestisi kazandırmaktadır. Pakistan ile ortaklaşa yapılan bu girişimle Çin, Malakka Boğazı üzerinden sağlanan enerji nakil hattına alternatif bir hat oluşturma şansı yakalamıştır.<sup>299</sup>

Çin'in yaklaşık 1 milyar dolar harcadığı Sri Lanka' da bulunan Hambantota Liman Projesi, Çin'in İnci Dizisi üzerinde bulunan bir diğer noktadır. Çin'e pek çok açıdan katkı sağlayacak liman, özellikle Chagos Adaları'ndaki ABD'nin en önemli üslerinden birisi olan Diego Garcia'ya yakınlığı açısından oldukça önemli bir konumdadır. Önemli bir enerji terminali olarak görev yapacak olan liman, üzerinde bir yakıt dolum ve bir yakıt depolama tesisi barındırmaktadır. Çin gemileri

<sup>297</sup> Khurana, *op.cit.*, "China's Maritime-strategic", p. 4.

<sup>298</sup> Ziad Haider, "Baluchis, Beijing and Pakistan's Gwadar Port," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (Kış/Bahar 2005): 98.

<sup>299</sup> Iskander Rehman, "Keeping the Dragon at Bay: India's Counter-Containment of China in Asia", *Asian Security* (2009): 118-119.

Hambantota Limanı'nda mola vererek yakıt ikmali gerçekleştirmekteler ve böylelikle deniz aşırı coğrafyalarda etkinlik kurabilme imkânı yakalayabilmektedirler.<sup>300</sup>

Çin'in "İnci Dizisi" rotası üzerindeki diğer bir önemli nokta ise, Bengal Körfezi'nde bulunan Chittagong Limanı'dır. Limanın modernizasyonu ile Çin ile Bangladeş arasında ekonomik ilişkiler geliştirilmiş ve stratejik bir ortaklık kurulmuştur. Ayrıca Bangladeş'e sağlanan askeri ve ekonomik yardımlar, ülkenin kalkınmasına büyük katkı sağlamaktadır. Liman sayesinde Çin, Malakka Boğazı'ndan önce konaklama imkânı kazanmıştır.

Çin'in İnci Dizisi stratejisinde kilit önemde olan diğer bir nokta ise Myanmar'da bulunan Sittwe Limanıdır. Çin, limanın altyapı çalışmalarına ilave olarak Myanmar'da Hianggyi ve Khaukphyu demiryolu projeleri başlatmıştır. Coğrafi konumu nedeniyle kritik bir pozisyona sahip olan Sittwe Limanı, Çin açısından Malakka Boğazı'na, Gwadar Limanı gibi alternatif bir diğer ulaşım hattı olarak görülmektedir. Olası bir Malakka Boğazı tıkanıklığında Chittagong Limanı üzerinden gelen Çin ticaret gemileri, Sittwe Limanı'na yanaşacak, buradan yüklerini Khaukpyu demiryolu aracılığıyla Çin'e doğrudan aktarabilecektir. Ayrıca Çin, Myanmar yakınlarında bulunan ve Malakka Boğazı'na çok yakın bir konumda olan Coco Adaları üzerinde bir dinleme istasyonu kurmuştur. Bu istasyon vasıtasıyla Andaman ve Nikobar Adaları'nda konuşlu Hindistan güçlerini ve bölgedeki deniz ticaret yolunu takip etme şansı yakalamıştır. Çin, dünya pazarına doğrudan açılmak için Myanmar ile çok kritik bir işbirliği yapmış ve Hint Okyanusu'nun kuzeydoğusunu kontrol altında tutabilmenin yollarını aramaya başlamıştır. Son yıllarda Çin ile Hindistan arasında Myanmar üzerinde ciddi bir rekabet yaşanmaktadır. Hindistan'ın Andaman Adaları'nda, Çin'in de Coco Adaları'ndaki varlıkları, iki ülke arasında Myanmar üzerinde kontrol sağlama yarışına yol açmıştır.

Bunların yanı sıra Maldivler'de, Seyşeller'de ve Madagaskar'da da çeşitli limanlar inşa etmeye başlayan Çin, dünyadaki petrol ve doğalgaz pazarlarına ulaşabilmek için Hindistan açıklarında güvenli bir hat oluşturmayı

<sup>300</sup> David L.O. Hayward, "China in the Indian Ocean: A Case of Uncharted Waters", *Independent Strategic Analysis of Australia's Global Interests Strategic Analysis Paper* (2010): 4.

amaçlamaktadır.<sup>301</sup> Güney Çin Denizi ve Hint Okyanusu'nda daha güçlü olmayı amaçlayan Çin'in askeri harcamalarını artırması ve donanmasını modernize etme çabaları bölge ülkeleri tarafından kaygıyla izlenmektedir.

Çin, Pakistan, Bangladeş, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka gibi bölge ülkelerine yaptığı askeri yardımlar [silah, nükleer askeri teknoloji] ve ekonomik yatırımlar [liman inşaatı, demir yolu, boru hattı] karşılığında birtakım imtiyazlar [donanma bulundurma, liman işletmeciliği, gözetleme istasyonu] edinmiştir. Çin'in, Hint Okyanusu'nda yaptığı bu girişimler her ne kadar ekonomik amaçlı görünse de Hindistan tarafından kendisini çevrelemeye yönelik bir dizi girişim olarak algılanmaktadır. Birçok Hintli analiste göre, Çin'in bölgede oluşturduğu denetim mekanizması her ne kadar ekonomik amaçlı görünse de, bu mekanizma ileride askeri amaçlı olarak kullanılacak ve bu da Hindistan'ın Hint Okyanusundaki stratejik çıkarlarına zarar verecektir.

## **HİNDİSTAN'IN HİNT OKYANUSU'NDAKİ STRATEJİK ÇIKARLARI**

Afrika, Avrupa, Batı Asya, Orta Asya, Güney Asya ve Avustralya'yı birbirine bağlayan dünyanın en yoğun ticaret yolu üzerinde bulunan Hindistan, coğrafi ve stratejik açıdan Hint Okyanusu'nda birçok avantaja sahiptir. Bu avantajları kullanarak Hindistan, artan petrol ve doğalgaz ithalatının devamlılığını ve enerji güvenliğini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca mevcut bölgesel güvenlik sorunlarıyla baş ederek bölgedeki stratejik çıkarlarını korumak istemektedir.

1990'lı yıllarda uygulamaya konulan ekonomik reform paketleriyle hızlı bir yükselişe geçen Hindistan ekonomisi, savunma sanayisine hatırı sayılır bir pay ayırmaya başlamıştır. Fakat gelişen sanayisine bağlı olarak büyük oranlarda enerji tüketmeye başlamıştır. Doğal kaynakları kendi ihtiyaçlarını karşılama konusunda yetersiz kalan Hindistan, giderek artan bir şekilde enerjide dışa bağımlı bir ülke haline gelmiştir. Bugün Hindistan yıllık petrol ihtiyacının yaklaşık % 70'ini Batı Asya'dan karşılamakta ve ticaretinin büyük kısmını ise Hint Okyanusu üzerinden

<sup>301</sup> David L.O. Hayward, "China in the Indian Ocean: A Case of Uncharted Waters", *Independent Strategic Analysis of Australia's Global Interests Strategic Analysis Paper* (5 July 2010).



yapmaktadır. Bu durum, Hindistan için Hint Okyanusu'nun önemini ikiye katlamıştır.

Ekonomik yükselişini sürdürme ve Hint Okyanusu'nda egemen güç olma arzusunda olan Hindistan, Hint Okyanusu deniz ticaret yolunun güvenliğinin sağlanmasını güvenlik stratejisinin merkezine yerleştirmiştir. Fakat Hindistan, bölgede deniz korsanlığı, terörizm, sınır sorunları, illegal örgütlerin faaliyetleri ve Çin'in "İnci Dizisi Stratejisi" gibi birçok güvenlik tehdidiyle karşı karşıyadır. Bunlar içerisinde Hindistan için en önemli olanı Çin'in "İnci Dizisi Stratejisi"dir. İnci Dizisi stratejisi ile Çin, Hindistan'ın komşularıyla çok yakın ekonomik, stratejik ortaklıklar kurmuş ve bu ülkelerde birçok girişim başlatmıştır. Bunlardan Hindistan açısından en fazla tehlike arz edeni, Çin-Pakistan ortaklığıdır. Çin-Pakistan Ekonomik Koridoru (CPEC) projesi ile Pakistan, ekonomik olarak gelişmeye başlamış, bu proje kapsamında yapılan Gwadar Limanı'yla da ticarete önemli bir konum kazanmıştır. Çin-Pakistan askeri ilişkileri hızla ilerlemiş, Çin'den temin edilen nükleer teknoloji transferi sayesinde Pakistan, Hindistan karşısında önemli bir denge unsuru olmaya devam etmiştir. Öte yandan, Çin'in Myanmar, Bangladeş ve Sri Lanka ile olan ekonomik ilişkilerinin gelişmesi, Hindistan tarafından Çin'in bölgede egemen güç olma arzusunun göstergeleri olarak algılanmaktadır.

Hindistan'ın karşı karşıya kaldığı bir diğer güvenlik sorunu ise komşularıyla olan sınır sorunlarıdır. Bunlardan en önemlileri, Pakistan ile yaşanan Keşmir ve Siachen sorunları; Çin ile yaşanan Arunachal Pradesh ve Aksai Chin sınır sorunlarıdır. Bu bölgelerdeki doğal kaynakların kullanımı konusunda yaşanan rekabet ve tarafların bölgede egemenlik kurma çabaları halen devam etmektedir.

Hindistan'ın karşı karşıya kaldığı diğer bir güvenlik sorunu da terör saldırılarıdır. Bunlardan en önemlisi, 26 Kasım 2008 tarihinde gerçekleşen Mumbai terör saldırılarıdır. Bu terör saldırıları sonrasında Hindistan, deniz güvenlik stratejisini yeniden gözden geçirmek zorunda kalmış ve askeri kabiliyetlerin modernizasyonu, erken ihbar ve ikaz sistemlerinin temin edilmesi gibi birtakım tedbirler almıştır.

Öte yandan zayıf yönetimler ve yetersiz ekonomik koşullar yüzünden ortaya çıkan yasadışı örgütler<sup>302</sup> de Hindistan için Hint Okyanusu'nda ortaya çıkan kaygı verici sorunlardan bir diğeri olmuştur. Bu yasadışı örgütlerle mücadelesini sürdüren Hindistan, bölgede istikrarın sağlanması için büyük çaba sarf etmektedir. Fakat ülkede yaklaşık 360 milyon insanın yoksulluk sınırının altında yaşaması bu tür örgütlerin yok edilebilmesine engel olmaktadır.

Hindistan bölgedeki tüm bu sorunlarla baş edebilmek için komşularıyla olan ikili ilişkilerini geliştirme yoluna gitmiştir. Çünkü Çin, bölge ülkelerinin zayıf ekonomilerinden istifade etmekte ve onlara ekonomik ve askeri yardımlarda bulunmaktadır. Bu durum Hindistan tarafından kaygıyla izlenmektedir.

### **ÇİN'İN HİNT OKYANUSU'NDAKİ “İNCİ DİZİSİ” DENETİM MEKANİZMASININ DENGELENMESİ**

Bölgesinde egemen güç olmaya çalışan Hindistan, tarihsel bir takım sorunlar yaşadığı komşu ülkeleriyle böylesi sıkı ilişkiler kuran Çin'in Hint Okyanusu'nda artan etkisinden fazlasıyla rahatsızlık duymaktadır. Özellikle, “Pakistan–Çin” ittifakı, Hindistan tarafından büyük bir tehdit olarak algılanmaktadır. Çin'in “Deniz İpek Yolu” projesi kapsamında Hint Okyanusu'nda başlattığı girişimleri kendisine karşı oluşturulan bir çevreleme politikası olarak gören Hindistan, bölgedeki Çin etkisini kırmak için karşı bir dengeleme politikası başlatmıştır. Bu politika kapsamında; kendi iç dinamiklerini kullanarak “dâhili dengeleme”, bölgede çıkarları olan diğer büyük güçlerin yardımlarını alarak “harici dengeleme” ve ekonomik örgütler içerisinde aktif bir politika izleyerek komşuları üzerindeki Çin ekonomik etkisini kırmak amaçlı “ekonomik dengeleme” faaliyetleri yürütmektedir.

Dahili dengeleme stratejisi ile Hindistan, savunma harcamalarını artırmakta, ordusunu modernize etmekte ve deniz güvenlik stratejisini yeniden şekillendirmektedir. Bu bağlamda Hindistan, dünyada askeri teknoloji anlamında lider olan ABD, Fransa, Japonya, İsrail gibi ülkeler ile savunma anlaşmaları yaparak askeri gücünü artırma yoluna gitmiştir.

<sup>302</sup> PLGA -Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army: Halk Kurtuluş Gerilla Ordusu- , Tamil Tigers - Tamil Gerillaları- , Eelam People's Democratic Party, Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal Peoples' Aman Committee, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Muttahida Qaumi Movement ve ISI bölgede faaliyet gösteren illegal örgütlerdendir.

Harici dengeleme stratejisi, bölgedeki artan Çin etkisine karşı Hindistan'ın giriştiği bir diğer dengeleme stratejisidir. Hindistan bu stratejisi ile bölge ülkeleri ve savunma anlaşmaları yaptığı diğer ülkelerle birlikte Hint Okyanusu'nda (MALABAR [Hindistan, ABD, Japonya], INDRA-NAVY, MİLAN, IBSAMAR [Hindistan, Brezilya, Güney Afrika], JİMEX [Hindistan ve Japonya], SİMBEX [Hindistan ve Singapur], SLINEX-II [Hindistan ve Sri Lanka]) askeri tatbikatlarını gerçekleştirmiştir. Ayrıca Hindistan, “Doğuya Bakış” politikası kapsamında Güneydoğu Asya ülkeleri (Vietnam, Kamboçya) ile ilişkilerini geliştirmiş ve Güney Çin Denizi'ne savaş gemilerini göndererek bölgede Çin'e karşı güç gösterisinde bulunmuştur. Bütün bu girişimler, Çin tarafında ciddi bir endişe ile takip edilmektedir.

Öte yandan, kendisine komşu olan ülkeler üzerinde artan Çin ekonomik etkisini kırmaya çalışan Hindistan, “ekonomik dengeleme” stratejisini devreye sokmuştur. Hindistan, kendisine komşu olan ülkelerin üzerinde Çin'in oluşturduğu ekonomik baskıyı ortadan kaldırmak ve onların ekonomik olarak kalkınmalarını sağlamak için çaba sarf etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Hindistan komşularıyla ASEAN bölgesel forumu, Doğu Asya zirvesi, BCIM (Bangladeş, Çin, Hindistan, Myanmar) ortaklığı, üçlü toplantılar, BRIC (Brezilya, Rusya, Hindistan ve Çin)<sup>303</sup> gibi bölgesel örgütler yoluyla ekonomik ortaklıklar kurmuştur.

## SONUÇ

Dünyadaki enerji kaynakları gün geçtikçe tükenirken ülkeler için bu azalan enerji kaynaklarına ulaşım hayati derecede önem kazanmaktadır. Bu durum, enerji bağımlısı ülkeler arasında büyük bir güç mücadelesi yaşanmasına sebep olmaktadır. Özellikle Asya Pasifikte, dünyanın en fazla enerji ihtiyacı duyan iki büyük gücü, Hindistan ve Çin arasında yaşanan güç mücadelesi bunun en önemli örneklerinden biridir. Bu güç çekişmesi genelde enerji kaynaklarına erişim amaçlı gibi görünse de Çin'in bölgede giderek artan deniz gücü, sadece Hindistan'da değil aynı zamanda Çin'e komşu olan ülkelere de, Vietnam, Kamboçya, Güney Kore, Japonya ve Filipinler, büyük tereddütler uyandırmaktadır. Bu aşamada ulusal güvenliklerini

<sup>303</sup> Mansingh, op.cit., “India and China”, p.48.

güvence altına almak isteyen bu ülkeler için ABD vazgeçilmez bir ortak olarak görülmektedir.

Fakat ABD ekonomisinde son yıllarda yaşanan gerileme ve bunun yanında ABD başkanı Donald Trump'ın, ülkesi için potansiyel bir ticari felaket olarak değerlendirdiği Trans-Pasifik Anlaşması'ndan çekilme niyeti, Çin'in bölgedeki mevcut gücünü daha da artıracığının açık bir göstergesidir. Ayrıca Çin ekonomisinde devam eden yükseliş ivmesi ve Çinli firmaların dünya çapında başlattıkları büyük enerji yatırımları, Çin ekonomisinin önümüzdeki 20 yıl içerisinde ABD'yi yakalayıp geçeceğini göstermektedir.

Bu kapsamda, Hint Okyanusu bölgesinde artan Çin etkisini dengelemek amacıyla Hindistan'ın başlattığı dengeleme stratejisi'nin Çin'in ilerlemesini durdurma ihtimali zayıf görünmektedir. Burada, ABD-Hindistan ortaklığı bölgede olmazsa olmaz bir seçenek olarak görülmektedir. Diğer taraftan eğer Çin'in ekonomik yükselişi durdurulamazsa, ABD ile Rusya arasında yükselen Çin'e karşı bir ittifak kurulması olası görünmektedir. Bugün ABD'nin Rusya ile Suriye'de ayrı gibi görünen fakat birlikte yürüttükleri terör operasyonları, ileride gerçekleşebilecek olası bir ittifakın ilk nüvesi olarak gösterilebilir. Fakat Çin'in sadece ekonomik ve askeri alanda gücünü artırmakla kalmayıp, Asya Pasifikteki stratejik konumdaki ülkelerle yakın ilişkiler yürütmesi, bölgede gerilimin devam edeceğinin açık bir göstergesidir.

Çin ve Hindistan arasında aynı coğrafyada egemen güç olmak amacıyla ciddi bir çıkar çatışması yaşanmasına rağmen, her iki ülkeninde birbirlerine karşı askeri güç kullanmaktan kaçındıkları görülmektedir. Bu rekabet, donanma tatbikatları ve nükleer füze denemeleri gibi sınırlı bir güç gösterisi olmaktan öteye geçememiştir. "Soğuk Savaş" olarak adlandırabileceğimiz, Çin-Hindistan ilişkileri, günümüzde her ne kadar sakin gibi görünse de gerek buldukları coğrafyanın stratejik öneminin artması gerekse hızlı ekonomik büyümelerine bağlı olarak enerji açlıklarının artması dolayısıyla önümüzdeki dönemde muhtemel krizlere gebe görünmektedir.

## ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Adı Soyadı:	Fatih KILIÇ		İmza:	
Doğum Yeri:	KAMAN			
Doğum Tarihi:	01.01.1977			
Medeni Durumu:	EVLİ			
<b>Öğrenim Durumu</b>				
Derece	Okulun Adı	Program	Yer	Yıl
İlköğretim	Benzer Köyü İlkokulu	-	Kaman/KIRŞEHİR	1982-1987
Ortaöğretim	Hirfanlı Ortaokulu	-	Kaman/KIRŞEHİR	1987-1990
Lise	Kırıkkale Tek. Lisesi	Makina	KIRIKKALE	1990-1994
Lisans	Anadolu Üniversitesi	Uluslararası İlişkiler	Eskişehir	2012-2014
Yüksek Lisans	Necmettin ERBAKAN Üniversitesi	Güney Asya Çalışmaları ve Uluslararası İlişkiler	KONYA	2015-2017
İş Deneyimi:				
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