

India in the Indian Ocean

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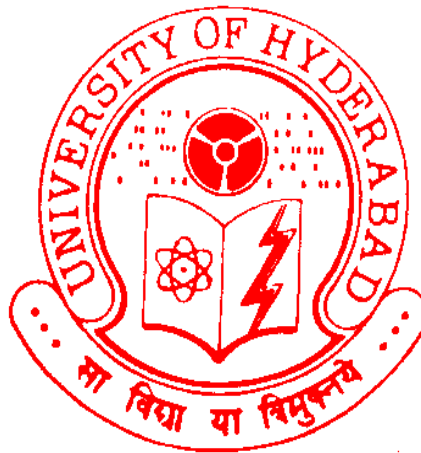
IN

POLITICAL SCIENCE

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DECLARATION

I, **Dickey Lama** submitted by bearing **Regd. No. 17SPHL07** , hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “**India in Indian Ocean**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Prithviram Mudiam** is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this university or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my dissertation can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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SI No	Abbreviation	Expansion
1	ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and the United States Alliance
2	ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
3	AU	African Union
4	BIOT	British Indian Overseas Territory
5	BoP	Balance of Power
6	BOT	Build, Operate and Transfer
7	BRI	Belt Road Initiative
8	CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation
9	CME	Constructive Maritime Engagement
10	COMCASA	Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement
11	ECM	European Common Market
12	EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
13	GDP	Gross Domestic Pay
14	HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response
15	ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
16	IFI	International Financial Institutions
17	IN	Indian Navy
18	IO	Indian Ocean
19	IOD	Indian Ocean Dialogue
20	IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
21	IOR	Indian Ocean Region
22	IORA	Indian-Ocean Rim Association
23	IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
24	IOZOP	Indian Ocean Zone of Peace
25	IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
26	ISLs	International Shipping Lanes
27	LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
28	LIMO	Low Intensity Maritime Operations
29	NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
30	PSM	Presence and Surveillance Missions
31	RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
32	ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
33	RSC	Regional Security Complex
34	RSC	Regional Security Complex
35	SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
36	SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
37	UN	United Nations
38	UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
39	USA	United States of America
41	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

Introduction

The Indian Ocean has bound together the destinies of the countries along its coast and even further beyond¹; the history of trade, security and the geopolitics of the region have resulted in massive conflicts and a variety of economic interactions among empires and modern states alike. The clamouring for resources, acquisition of maritime check points (choke points) and securing the trade routes are the central concerns of the various powers in the region. The Indian Ocean has witnessed the synthesis of various phenomenon in world history, such as colonialism, trade, spread of cultures, ideas, and religion.

The socio-economic foundations of the networks in the region were initiated with the monsoon winds and the ocean currents that facilitated trans-oceanic trade and interaction between the distant lands. The system of interactions that arose in the region before the advent of the European powers in the region has been termed as a system of global economy by economic historians² while Bose asserts the idea of an inter-regional system.³ The system in its interactive nature accelerated the growth of civilisation along the littorals of the region while the distant lands in the Western hemisphere developed much later. The global economic system dependent primarily on the ocean currents for trade continued to be the basis of navigation until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁴ after which the technology of the steam engines accelerated trade and in turn propagated European hegemony.

¹ Fernand Braudel. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Translated by Siân Reynolds. London: Collins, 1972.

² Angela Schottenhammer. *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Volume II*. 1st ed. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

³ Sugata Bose, . *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

⁴ Ibid.

The Indian Ocean and its significance has been understated⁵ and overlooked by historians who study the Oceans while they evaluated the Pacific, Atlantic, and the other smaller seas. This disregard may stem from the various discourses of disinterest towards the significance of the ‘third world ocean’ except for the Western Indian Ocean which acquired significance for its oil politics. The recent revision of the Eurocentric historiography of the region traces the economic system before the colonial age and establishes patterns of trade that shaped the politics of the region. The patterns did not emerge with colonial control but changed with its advent and modernisation, these geo-strategic equations continue to alter in the contemporary period.

This dissertation attempts to assess the geopolitical orientation of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) its changing significance, tracing it through historical frames and the events that altered the power politics of the region. These historical frames are supported by the symbiotic relationship between maritime security (through power projection) and development of naval capabilities.⁶ This historical analysis is essential to trace the complex security dynamics of the region while placing it in the global power structure. This assists in understanding the involvement of the superpowers in the region, contributing in the analysis of the different discourses used in various contexts and ‘the shift from one legitimising discourse to another.’⁷

⁵ Milo Kearney. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

⁶ Singh & Verma “India’s Needs and Naval Capabilities: A Symbiotic Relationship.” *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 2(1), (2015): 52–74.
doi:10.1177/2347797014565294

⁷ Achin Vanaik, “Post cold war Indian foreign policy.” *Seminar*, 581, 92008).
http://www.india-seminar.com/2008/581/581_achin_vanaik.htm
Vanaik argues shifts in discourses with regard to the US intrusion and its imperial project that have flouted under various banners like humanitarian crises, war on

The geopolitical requirements of establishing hegemony by dominance of Eurasia stem from theories put forward by geopolitical thinkers such as Mahan, Mackinder, Spkyman and Zbigniew Brzezinski. The importance of choke points is central to these geopolitical theories and have remained so from the strategies of Albuquerque to American and Chinese strategies in the region. The *Balance of Power and Threat*⁸ have been altered by various events, thereby leading to change in policy imperatives such as the Cold War and the spread of economic liberalisation. The Indian Ocean Region as a Regional Security Complex (RSC)⁹ has undergone massive geopolitical modifications with the Second World War and the Cold War

India in the Indian Ocean and its foreign policy have undergone a significant shift in accordance to the changing balance of power in the region. Indian foreign policy regards security of the nation as being placed in concentric circles¹⁰ and these circles are widening with growing interests. The thesis will analyse the shift of India's policies from the demand of a Zone of Peace and Non-Alignment movement upto the "*Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)*" and "*Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)*." The changes in policies towards the Indian Ocean entail

terrorism, democracy war on narcotics and prevention of weapons of mass destruction in the 'wrong hands,' Here, the shifts in discourses and legitimisation expounds understanding theories of power vacuum and reciprocal escalation under the overarching banner of 'defending the free world by containing communism.'

⁸ Stephen M Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*. 2nd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. According to balance of threat theory, states' alliance behavior is determined by the threat they perceive from other states. Walt contends that states will generally balance by allying against a perceived threat, although very weak states are more likely to bandwagon with the rising threat in order to protect their own security.

⁹ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. *Regions and Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

¹⁰ The idea centred around Kautilya's circle of states, Indian Foreign policy viewed as consisting of three concentric circles around a central axis.

Y. Sinha, "Future Directions of India's Foreign Policy", www.mea.gov.in 30 October 2002

domestic changes as well as the structural implication of the world system. The economic liberalisation and the disintegration of the Soviet Union are important factors in the changes towards the ocean policies and hence the Cold War is used as a temporal divide in the thesis. Furthermore, the consequent nexus between geopolitics and geoeconomics¹¹ entails new challenges in the region refuting the assumption of these being separate conceptually and in terms of power projection¹². The changing and flexible boundaries with the materialisation of a globalised world order takes this integration further. The idea of traditional security thus becomes extensively related to economic security along with the emergence of other non-traditional aspects of security. The thesis will look at the traditional security aspects of the region in relation to IOR while mapping out the geo-economic aspects. This convergence of economics and security has been presented by Mastanduno¹³ as a characteristic of the world system after the end of the Cold War.

“The post cold war structure the strategic urgency and uncertainty perceived by the U.S. officials in the early Cold War setting led them to integrate economic and security policies. U.S. officials sought to create an international order, and economic instruments and relationships were a vital part of that undertaking.”

With these concepts of power projection into the Indian Ocean Region this argument based research will locate India’s position in the Indian Ocean Region amidst the security architectures of other powers such as China and the USA.

¹¹Timothy Doyle. “The coming together of geoeconomics and geosecurities in the Indian Ocean Region.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 10:2, (2014): 129-132.

¹² Doyle & Alfonsi. “From farm to hole: Globalisation and security in Australia.” in *Australian foreign policy: Controversies and debates*, edited by D. Baldino, A. Carr, and A. Langlois, 75–94. South Melbourne Victoria: Oxford University Press, 2014.

¹³ Mastanduno. “Economics and security in statecraft and scholarship.” *International Organisation*, 52(4), (1998): 825–854. doi:10.1162/002081898550761

Chapter 1

The Indian Ocean: Concepts, Geopolitical orientations and Historical

Overview

“ The passage had begun, and the ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet. Round her abysses of sky and sea met in an unattainable frontier. A great circular solitude

moved with her ever-changing and ever the same always monotonous and always changing.”

Joseph Conrad, 1963

The construction of a region is determined by the knowledge-power equations of perspective and it is these perspectives of global politics that led to study of specific regions starting the 1940s. The study of the Persian Gulf, for example, was led on because of its energy resources. The idea of a region is constructed to propagate a set of ideas which are linked to economic collaboration and ideas of security, while the structure of the region is influenced by the global system and the individual states. The construction of regions accommodate analysis leading to policy making, perceptions and understandings of a particular nature.

The study of the Indian Ocean accommodates three different kinds of regional constructions, these are,

- “Indian Ocean-wide concept”,
- “East Indian ocean concept”,
- “Indo-Pacific concept”.¹⁴

¹ Rumley, Dennis, Timothy Doyle, and Sanjay Chaturvedi. “Securing’ the Indian Ocean? Competing Regional Security Constructions.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 8, no. 1 (June 2012): 1–20.

The thesis argues for the Indian Ocean wide concept while accepting the construction of the other concepts as an equal if not a supplemental a strategic necessity for India. The neighbourhood first policy of India invariably looks at South Asia- the Indian subcontinent and its adjacent regions- with utmost priority and this South Asian core is the centre of connectivity in the IOR. The Indian Ocean, named after the Indian subcontinent, is a part of the 'inner circle' or immediate neighbourhood as well as the 'middle circle' which is continental Asia and the Indian Ocean in India's grand strategy.¹⁵ The geographic boundaries, unity of the ocean and its geopolitical orientations are explored in the chapter to situate India in the context of the Indian Ocean Region.

IOR: Geographical boundaries and implications

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is a region that accommodates around one-third of the world's population from around 24 states situated along the littorals. The IO "is the third largest ocean in the world and covers an area of 73,556,000 km²," with the land included it covers around 102 million km², which is around 20 percent of the globe.¹⁶ The Indian Ocean extends from (West) the 20° East Meridian through Cape Agulas in South Africa to (East) 146°55' East upto the South East Cape, Tasmania in Australia.¹⁷ The Southern Boundary extends upto 60° South latitude according to the Antarctic treaty of 1959¹⁸ which remains a contested boundary.

¹⁵ Raja Mohan. "India and the Balance of Power." *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2006): 17.

¹⁶ Christian Bouchard,, and William Crumplin. "Neglected No Longer: The Indian Ocean at the Forefront of World Geopolitics and Global Geostrategy." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, no. 1 (June 2010): 26–51

¹⁷ International Hydrographic Organization. *Limits of Oceans and Seas*. Special Publication 23, 3rd ed. 1976.

¹⁸ Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, *The Antarctic Treaty*. Buenos Aires, 1959.

This vastness of the Indian Ocean with diverse actors impedes in the conceptualisation of the region as one subsystem, however, the significance of its sea lanes, the connectivity of the subsystem which is economically, environmentally, and geo-strategically argue otherwise. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) connects the Atlantic to the Pacific, thereby connecting the East and the West with seven main access points and maritime checkpoints. One-fourth of cargo and two-thirds of the oil of the world move through the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) in the IOR.¹⁹ Oil reserves, the export of raw materials, sea minerals, fisheries and tourism give the region its economic relevance, these are vital to international trade and environmental stability.

The IOR derives significance from its reserves of oil and commerce that is transported in its waters, “it is the centre stage of power play in the twenty-first century.”²⁰ With such geographical placement, the nations in and around the ocean have major roles to ensure that the free flow of trade is not interrupted. India is one of the biggest players in the IOR and must ideally ensure that the littoral states work together with and maintain regional cooperation.

The Indian Ocean as a Concept

The unity of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) can be demonstrated by its physical boundaries, its unique geopolitical positioning, strategic and economic significance. The Indian Ocean as a reality began augmenting attention in the study of global politics with superpower involvement. The studies conducted of its histories, strategic assessments and perceptions of

¹⁹ Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the 3rd Indian Ocean Conference, Vietnam (August 27, 2018)

²⁰ Robert D. Kaplan. “Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power plays in the Indian Ocean.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (March/April 2009): 16-29, 31-32.

vulnerabilities and risks since then have further established the significance of the region. Braudel in his study of the Mediterranean speaks of the unity in the seas created by “the movement of men, the relationships they imply, and the routes they follow.”²¹ Historians speak of the unity in the Indian Ocean through similar interactions, these interactions extend their influence to the inlands mainly due to trade, migration, colonisation, and culture. The spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, for example, shows a phenomenal level of interaction among the individuals and regions around the Indian Ocean.

The birth of area studies, in the 1940s and the 1950s, gained impetus with the independence of colonies and the idea of regional consciousness, or a newfound position in the international global system. This emergence of a regional focus of interaction amidst the nation states and the global system helped to analyse regional subsystems. Cantori and Spiegel²² and their comparative approach to regional politics have helped assess such regions in comparison to other regions and the international system.

Physical unity

Pannikar calls the IOR a ‘closed landlocked sea’ with Asia as its roof, Africa its western wall, and Burma its Eastern wall. The distribution of archipelagos around the peninsula makes it all the more suitable for the development of naval bases securing the SLOCs and resources.

The unity of the Indian Ocean (IO) can be asserted geographically through its closed character unlike any other ocean and geo-strategical connection by its ‘linkage of

²¹ Fernand Braudel. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Translated by Siân Reynolds. London: Collins, 1972.

²² Ferenc A Váli,. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976.

instabilities.’²³ The ‘globe influencing characteristics’ of a region²⁴ makes IOR a geo-strategic unit, while the peninsular of India extending unto the sea with ‘features of a land-locked sea’²⁵ and the emergence from the same plate of Gondwana mass land give it geographical unity. The position of India in the sea with its peninsular gives the state a natural geopolitical advantage and also a vulnerability due to its open coastline stretching 7516.6 kilometres. The Indian Ocean is a ‘gigantic bay north to the imaginary line between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Leeuwin, this bay is open towards the South and closed in the North’ by the Indian peninsula.²⁶ Africa lies towards the West, Australia towards the East and borders the Antarctic Ocean in the South. The geography thus provides the infrastructure for historical, political, cultural and economic developments. Pannikar calls the IO a closed sea, contrastive to the ‘highway like structure’ of the Pacific and the Atlantic. Pearson posits the unity in the Indian Ocean with the monsoon and its effect on trade, movement, and other historical forces. while Bose uses the refers to the Tsunami of 2004 and its devastation that found unity in the people in the Ocean, he argues that “the people shared an extra-territorial identity and universalist aspiration”.²⁷ The IO has unity and disunity in many different forms²⁸ the classic unity in its trade movements accompanied by its cultural interaction.²⁹

²³ Ibid, 235.

²⁴ Saul B Cohen. *Geography and Politics in a Divided World*. London: Methuen, 1964

²⁵ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945

²⁶ Ferenc A Váli,. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976.p.24

²⁷ Sugata Bose. *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

²⁸ Chaudhuri, K. N. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

²⁹ Jaishankar “preface.” in *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order?: Contributions to a Seminar on Narendra Modi's Sagar Speech*. Edited by Kumar, Yogendra. New Delhi: K W Publishers, 2017.

Thompson argued that classification as a region subsystem requires four absolutely necessary features. Firstly, there needs to be a 'pattern of interaction which exhibits regularity and intensity to the extent that one change affects the entire system,' these changes of close proximity and the instabilities of regimes and conflicts in the region are the unifying feature. Secondly, the states need to be proximate. Thirdly, a regional system needs to have 'two or more actors.' Lastly, the region needs external and internal observers and recognisance as 'a distinctive area of theatre' operations.³⁰

The increasing economic cooperation and interaction in the IOR with Sea lines of Communication (SLOCs) that form important routes especially to the energy corridor place the patterns of interaction in the IOR, these interactions will be traced and the emerging security complications assessed in the following chapters. The recognisance from external and internal actors can be assessed in the foreign policies of the superpowers and the regional organisations or movements that provide coherence to the region. The Zone of Peace declaration during the Cold War, the Nuclear Free Zone, and the UN Adhoc Committee on the IOR, are all initiatives that emerge from the perception of common risks and shared vulnerabilities of the states in the region. The perspectives and the change in policies make the IOR significant in terms of strategic balancing. The superpowers during the World Wars approached the region as a distinctive strategic arena. The IOR has been "sensitive to external intrusions, both as threats and as opportunities".³¹ The IOR is home to 51 littoral and hinterland states, with these many states to analyse the conception as a single region can only be formulated with the focus on certain core sectors. The core sectors are those states

³⁰ William R. Thompson. "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1. (March, 1973): 89-117.

³¹ Russell B Trood, William L Dowdy. *The Indian Ocean; perspectives on a strategic arena*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985. p.4

are the “central focus of international politics within a given region.”³² Dowdy and Trood recognise five core sectors in the IOR region³³. The regional classification of the IOR with core sectors will assist in analyses of international politics. This thesis will attempt to look at mainly the South Asian core because India’s location at the centre of the IOR in the South Asian core is a priority for the maritime security of India.

Historical unity

The history of the ocean has categorised it as a region of peaceful transactions supporting some of the earliest civilisations in trade and prosperity, “a well-integrated interregional arena of economic and cultural interaction and exchange.”³⁴ Bose speaks of the geographical unity of the Indian Ocean and places it as a ‘inter-regional space’, this space has a higher level of intensity in reference to human history, it influences with its contribution and is influenced by “structures, processes and events of global significance.” Thus, Bose draws its spatial boundaries which falls between the ‘generalities’ of the world system and the ‘peculiarities’ of region. Temporal thresholds are defined by periodisation which are to be meaningful. Therefore, until the 18th century, it was a well connected inter-regional arena of economic and cultural interaction and exchange. Bose explicates how these links were modified by the nature of colonial transition.³⁵

Moorthy and Jamal posit that, as early as the 20th century many European authorities called

³² Steven L. Spiegel, Louis J. Cantori. "International Regions: A comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems." *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 13, Issue 4, (December 1969): 361–380.

³³ The five core sectors are: The Persian Gulf core, the South Asian Core, a Red Sea core, a South African core, and an Australian core.

³⁴ Sugata Bose. *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006. p. 15

³⁵ Ibid

the Indian Ocean only a “half ocean” as it did not extend into the northern hemisphere and it still remained a British Lake under colonial rule.³⁶ European scholars ascertain the Indian Ocean Region to be “a passive region, of the unchanging east whose history is influenced only by exogenous forces like the Roman, Islamic, and the Western European”³⁷ while being categorised as a “British lake”³⁸ during and after the colonial phase. The description of the Indian Ocean as a ‘void’ is explained by Moorthi and Jamal as “an Enlightenment inspired anxious classification.” They anthropomorphise the Indian Ocean as “an ocean of notions”³⁹ and “yields a rich harvest for the imagination, both in poetics and politics.”⁴⁰

The colonial domination on the Indian Ocean has been said to bring about the integration under the British raj, while some opine that the European interference has steadily fragmented the region competing actors weighing in their influence.⁴¹ The colonial influence has also earned the Indian Ocean depiction as a British Lake.⁴² The understanding about the region as insignificant or void has changed as ‘they fade into history’.⁴³ The region has emerged as a ‘distinctive area of theatre operations’ with patterns of interaction that entail geopolitical and geoeconomics interests.

³⁶ Moorthy and Jamal. *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

³⁷ Michael N. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*. New York: Routledge, 2003. p. 23

³⁸ K.M. Pannikar, *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945

³⁹ Adapted from Salman Rushdie’s *Haroun And the Sea of Stories* where the protagonists father is a story teller. They anthropomorphise the Indian Ocean wherein it becomes its own story teller.

⁴⁰ Moorthy and Jamal. *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2010. p. 4

⁴¹ See Sugata Bose, S. Jaishankar, Milo Kearney and Angela Schottomer.

⁴² K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945

⁴³ Lee Corder. “Indian Ocean Maritime security: Risk based International policy development.” PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 2015, p.4.

Bouchard and Crumplin perceive the Indian Ocean to be disintegrative in nature, “nothing but a collection of different subregions who have various disparities”⁴⁴, this combined with the confluence of various cultures, traditions, colonisation and globalisation has changed the nature of IOR and affected the various states in the region differently. Buzan states that IOR as a region will ‘detract more than add understanding’, the IOR he claims has weak and tentative linkages that create ‘problems of omission and superficiality.’⁴⁵ However, Buzan in assessing the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZOP) mentions the geo-strategic character of the Indian Ocean as a problem. In this assessment, he may have accepted the coherence and unity of the ocean. As such there are many scholars who disregard the IOR as a region for assessment of security risks and vulnerabilities, but the unity like Ian Clark and Vali suggest lies in the ‘linkage of instabilities’ which ‘radiate’ and reach out, states facing such perceptions of threats then form policies which extend towards others in the region, thus giving the region unity. Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi argue for the Indian Ocean as a unified ocean and a reality based on the geopolitical orientation, the colonial heritage, the low human development index (despite the rise of Asia), and the common developmental problems and implications for national and regional security.⁴⁶

The idea of studying a regional system can be both integrative and disintegrative, and the boundaries of regions will always be contested, especially the oceanic boundaries in

⁴⁴ Christian Bouchard & William Crumplin. “Neglected no longer: the Indian Ocean at the forefront of world geopolitics and global geostrategy,” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6:1, (2010): 26-51, pp. 43-44

⁴⁵ Russell B Trood, William L Dowdy. *The Indian Ocean; perspectives on a strategic arena*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985.

⁴⁶ Rumley and Chaturvedi. *Geopolitical Orientations, Regionalism and Security in the Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge, 2015

accordance with the ‘indivisibility of the ocean’⁴⁷ and the non-existent physical boundaries of the waters. The threat perceptions that have emerged in the recent past have changed considerably and so has the nature of the IOR. Kaplan calls it the ‘centre stage for 21st century rivalry’ the IOR reality here being more than just a subsystem or a geographic element. The IOR is ‘an idea.. combines the centrality of Islam with global energy politics and the rise of India and China to reveal a multilayer, multipolar world.’⁴⁸

Geopolitical Orientations of the IOR

“It is easier to describe the positions of the lands of the Empire in relation to the oceans than to continents”

- C.B Fawcett, A Political Geography of the British Empire, 1933

Geopolitics has been “specified within larger discursive formations-(Imperialist discourse, Cold War discourse, and discourses in the new world order and global environmental change).”⁴⁹ With this classification, we see how the emergence of geopolitical thought is parallel with “imperialist strategy and racist white supremacist thinking”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Influence of sea power on history 1660- 1783*. Boston: Little,Brown &Co, 1890.

⁴⁸ Robert Kaplan. “Center Stage for the 21st Century: Rivalry in the Indian Ocean.” *Foreign Affairs*. March 16, 2009.
https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/03/rivalry_in_the_indian_ocean.html

⁴⁹ These discourses have been identified by Tuathail, Dalby, and Routledge (1998).
Tuathail, Dalby, and Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.

⁵⁰ Tuathail (1998) notes the importance of so called “experts” in claiming “truths” about international politics. As a critical tool for thinking about the politics of power/knowledge of geopolitics, he presents a triangle of intellectuals, institutions, and ideology which influence the actions of a state by claiming “truths”. Critical geopolitics treats geopolitics as a discourse, as a culturally and politically variedly of describing, representing and writing about geography and international politics. Tuathail mentions the dissident intellectual (as an alternative to the intellectual of the statecraft) who is critically minded and challenges the prevailing “truths” of geopolitics and the structure of power.
Tuathail, Dalby, and Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Mahan, Haushofer, Mackinder, Ratzel, and Spykman are imperialist geopolitical thinkers, the first to state in theory their ideas of controlling certain spaces to attain glory, and resources for their respective states. The entire discipline was shunned after the Second World War because of its guilt by association with the German “geopolitik”, and the justification of policies of national expansion, both of power and territorial control. Geography as a determinant in power politics was widely debated and scholars like Morgenthau were critical of the undue attention it received in practice and theory. Morgenthau argued that geography could be one aspect of national power but “amounted to a distortion on its own especially when infused with virulent nationalism.”⁵¹

Critical geopolitics questions traditional imperialist geopolitics and the Cold War geopolitics, which was also played out in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), reinforcing that the production of geopolitical knowledge is an essentially contested political activity. Ratzel’s concept of the state as an organism that needs its living space, Mahan’s theory of sea power, Mackinder’s imperialistic expansion of the heartland and the problematisation of these discourses within the discourses of resistance explain the geopolitical development of this region.

Murthi calls the Indian Ocean the “heart of the third world” and the “Ocean of the South”. “The geopolitical past of the Indian Ocean region since the sixteenth century and its contemporary strategic scene is characterised by a high degree of extra-regional influence, control, and domination”.⁵² Rais explains how colonialism, regional politics and conflicts

⁵¹ Morgenthau. Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948.

⁵² Rasul B Rais. *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987. p.1

within the region have led to facilitation of external control.⁵³ The Cold War militarised the oceans based on specific Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and choke points. These geographic attributes were transformed into geo-strategic spaces of superpower rivalry.⁵⁴

The assessment of three geopolitical theories which continue to provide significance to the IOR are Mackinder's Heartland theory, Spykman's Rimland theory, and Mahan's theory of Sea Power. Twentieth century geopolitics envisioned a confrontation between the Eurasian land power and the maritime powers of the Asian rimland.⁵⁵ Mackinder, in his "Geographical pivot to history"⁵⁶ presented a 'post-Columbian' era where the exploration and domination of new colonies were no longer possible, there was nothing else to 'discover' and the world politics would alter. Mackinder was a realist and propagated the efficacy of land power, specifically the 'Eurasian landmass' and at its core, the 'the heartland' or the 'pivot'. This heartland was fertile with many rivers and enabling such a land resource with military power would assist in acquisition of world hegemony. The alliance between the states of Germany and Russia or Japan could reinforce this vision and the control of the coasts in Eurasia would accommodate a commendable sea power.

⁵³ Ibid. p.1

⁵⁴ Sanjay Chaturvedi, "Common Security? Geopolitics, Development, South Asia and the Indian Ocean." *Third World Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1998): 701–724.

⁵⁵ Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976.

⁵⁶ H. J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History." *The Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (1904): 421-37.

Mackinder, "The Round World and the Winning of the Peace", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 21, No.4 (Jul., 1943), Council on Foreign Relations pp. 595-605 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/200297>

*“Whoever rules East-Europe commands the heartland,
who rules the heartland commands the world island;
who rules the world island commands the world.”*

The Indian Ocean region falls in Mackinder’s World Island and though the focus was on land power Mackinder in his later work, *The Round World and the Winning of the Peace*, identified the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the monsoon lands of India and China which would prosper and play an important role in the balance of power. Mackinder’s teachings were adopted by Germans who used it for their aggressive expansionist policies and was termed as the handmaiden of Nazism. Haushofer envisaged German and Russian cooperation and called for Lebensraum, a living space. Ratzel, in a similar expansionist policy, theorised the state as an organism with a never-ending struggle for space and existence.

Nicholas Spykman, also called the American Haushofer and the ‘godfather of containment’ led American geopolitical thought into the importance of the rimland, accepting the significance of the world island but rejecting the heartland theory. Gray⁵⁷ writes of Spykman as ‘America’s finest scholar’, and second in geopolitics only to Mackinder. The Rimland concept he states in his *Geography of Peace*, 1944 states:

*“Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia;
who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world.”*⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Colin S Gray,. *The Future of Strategy*. Stanford John Wiley & Sons, 2015 p. 873

⁵⁸ Nicholas John Spykman; Helen R. Nicholl et al. *The geography of peace*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944.

Spykman believed in power politics⁵⁹ but allowed human discretion and warned against any deterministic geographical detail. However, like Morgenthau he believed that a state's moral aspirations are different from an individual's moral aspirations, "values must be discarded the moment they bring weakness".⁶⁰ He stated that Europe was no longer the centre of the world, there was decentralisation and creation of 'spheres' like "the Americas from the United States, the far East from Japan, the heartland of Eurasia from Moscow, and the Eastern Atlantic and the Indian Ocean from Europe." Spykman's 'categorisation of circumferential sea power' is a strategically vital instrument of power, critical to the overall strength of Rimland politics.⁶¹ The United States of America followed the geographical theory of Spykman after Wars in Korea and South East Asia, finalising military treaties like the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), the Australia, New Zealand and the United States Alliance (ANZUS), and allies such as Taiwan, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Iran, Turkey, and Greece against the Communist spread.

Mahan's theory of sea power in his work the 'Influence of Sea Power on History: 1660-1783'⁶² is the most important of geopolitical theories applicable to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). He traces the development of the British Naval Power, envisions the rise of the United States as the next sea power and identifies choke points and the importance of sea power in dominating world politics. Mahan's vision and strategies of seapower are exercised by Indian, Chinese, and American naval forces. In his works, he claims the importance of the Indian Ocean and lists six fundamental elements of sea power: "geographical position,

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 17

⁶⁰ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948. p.18

⁶¹ Colin S Gray. *The Future of Strategy*. Stanford John Wiley & Sons, 2015. p.890

⁶² Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Influence of sea power on history 1660- 1783*. Boston: Little,Brown &Co, 1890.

physical conformation, extent of the territory, size of the population, character of the people, and character of the government.”⁶³

“Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas. In the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters.” (Mahan, 1890)

Mahan emphasises the role of sea power during times of peace as an assurance of security, trade and transportation. War, however, needed ‘naval supremacy’ and meant ‘attacking the enemies trade and threaten all interests’. “Control of sea power by maritime commerce and naval supremacy means predominant influence in the world... (sea power) is the chief among the merely material elements in power and prosperity of nations.”⁶⁴ The argument was that sea power controlled trade and the wealth that came from such trade led to maritime strength. Naval strength meant ‘battleships’ and an offensive spirit, a strategy that could be so strategically arranged that war would not be necessary, and because of such an idea, Mahan has often been compared to Clausewitz. These ideas led to the strategy of commercial blockades in international politics.

The Indian Ocean Region witnessed the spill of the superpower rivalry into the region as the focus in the ‘Rimland’ reemerged in geopolitics. The central issue for the United States and its Asian allies was whether China would dominate Asia or whether the United States working primarily with Japan could counter balance China’s emergence. Nevertheless, it becomes important to understand that there may be several, even competing, geopolitical visions within a state, upheld by various institutions of statecraft.

The connection of these geopolitical theories to the histories and the maritime culture of the region is necessary to trace the changing nature of the Indian Ocean Region. The region has

⁶³ Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Influence of sea power on history 1660- 1783*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1890. p. 24

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 197

always been central to the development of civilisations and also served as a convenient passage to India, wherein the European powers through their sea power managed to imperialise almost the entire subsystem, leaving only after almost two centuries. This withdrawal from the subcontinent, or the mainland, was not withdrawal where they still retained territories. The pre-modern histories find the IOR as ‘free seas’ before the involvement of the European powers in the region; the monopoly that the European powers wanted to establish in the region was in variance with the ‘natural law’⁶⁵ and the idea of free seas, the justification of such violation was that these were not European waters.

Historical overview of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

The idea of the Indian Ocean Region is central to the idea of the Indian subcontinent. It has consistently shaped the destiny of the states on its littorals and the hinterland. The histories of the world today are increasingly being studied through the seas⁶⁶ and with the histories of colonisation and anti-colonial repositioning the cultural and historical connections need to be assessed as they lead to the strategic linkages in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This ocean since millenniums has been the centre of interaction for people, especially along its

⁶⁵ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945. p. 8

⁶⁶ Bernard Klein and Gesa Mackenthune, eds., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York, 2004); Daniel Finamore, ed., *Maritime History as World History* (Gainesville, Fla., 2004).

littorals⁶⁷. These internal histories of the ocean are to be understood not as simple forms of interaction but a complex and contingent web⁶⁸ of memories, contacts, trade, and a quest for power even before the age of imperialism, while external powers looked upon the region as a way to the “supine and alluring east”.⁶⁹ McPherson presents the IOR as a ‘self-conscious’ world⁷⁰ before the Europeans while Jaishankar finds in the precolonial an “intrinsic unity in the Indian ocean”, the trading patterns concomitant with the cultural interaction forming the ‘heart of this identity.’⁷¹

The histories and the relations that develop in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) are contingent factors that decide the relationship between regions or spaces. The temporal and spatial positioning of the region here is to understand that the region was an interconnected global economic system of trade and exchange of ideas, technology, and religion till it was interrupted by colonisation of the states with non-regional powers clamouring for the control of the ocean.⁷² Bose claims against this and writes an alternative history of the Indian Ocean wherein the indigenous nexus of relationships in the ocean only disappeared in the 1920s after the Depression.⁷³ The idea of sovereignty changes with centralised control under the

⁶⁷ See Sugata Bose, Milo Kearney, Sugata Bose, M.N Pearson for the history of the Indian Ocean.

⁶⁸ R, Mukherjee. “Competing Spatial Networks: Kasimbazar and Chandernagore in Overland and Indian Ocean Worlds.” in *Trade, Circulation, and Flow in the Indian Ocean World*. edited by Pearson M. Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

⁶⁹ Moorthy and Jamal. *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

⁷⁰ McPherson, Kenneth. *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1997.p.5

⁷¹ Jaishankar “preface.” in *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order?: Contributions to a Seminar on Narendra Modi's Sagar Speech*. Edited by Kumar, Yogendra. New Delhi: K W Publishers, 2017. p 5

⁷² K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

⁷³ Sugata Bose. *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

British raj, especially after 1857, resulting in the loss autonomy of the port cities and the idea of permit or ‘cartazas’ to trade in the Indian Ocean is imposed. The resistance to this by indigenous merchants is short-lived and in this resistance the definition of pirates and piracy is expanded.

Bose claims to present broad patterns of interregional networks “unraveling of individual tales of proconsuls and pirates, capitalists and labourers, soldiers and sailors, patriots and expatriates, pilgrims and poets. An analysis of the large flows of goods and money is balanced with an interpretation of the perceptions and experiences of people who were the key actors in the Indian Ocean interregional arena in modern times”⁷⁴. Bose however on account of presenting the region writes mostly of the Indian subcontinent which has been reviewed by Campbell⁷⁵ as a nationalistic presentation of Indian history.

The development of the maritime activities and interaction between the ports and various places in the IOR, was not a linear development but changed in various ways depending upon the ‘polities, peoples and networks.’⁷⁶ The maritime history of the region before the age of imperialism was at one point stated as undocumented, which led to claims of the absence of maritime culture. It is argued here that the IOR has always had a maritime culture while presenting archeological and literary documentation of the presence of maritime culture in the region.

⁷⁴ Ibid p. 23

⁷⁵ Campbell. “Book Review on Sugata Bose. A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire.” The American Historical Review, Volume 112, Issue 4, (October 2007): 1140–1141.

⁷⁶ Angela Schottenhammer,., Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Volume II. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

K.M Pannikar differentiated three different eras or historical frames: the period before Vasco Da Gama ; the “Vasco da Gama epoch of Asian history”, that is, the period between the arrival of the Portuguese admiral at Calicut and the end of the Second World War; and finally the contemporary period.⁷⁷ The Vasco da Gama epoch (also called post Gaman period) is historically the most important one of all three, because non-regional powers enter the region for trade and later colonisation. The trade during the time before the Europeans entered the Indian Ocean is referred to as the ‘traditional trading pattern of the pre-colonialist era’. Menon states that the traditional trading pattern could not survive because of the absence of laws of the seas, as no sovereign or institution could ensure safety of the goods in the traditional patterns.⁷⁸

Milo Kearney in his study of the history of the ocean states that from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the contemporary period different actors utilised the trading in the Indian Ocean, some of which had expansionist intentions.⁷⁹ He refers to four different periods the last of them being the Cold War. The Eastern hemisphere has been at a more advantageous position with developed civilisations in the past due to its association to the oceanic routes and trading centres. Kearney places the argument that most changes in a gene pool occur when placed at geographic centres of interaction, thus “preponderance of new species appearing in the Old World...spreading gradually first to North America, then to South America, and finally to Australia.” Braudel in his study of the Mediterranean follows the water ways which bring different people together. The monsoon winds and ocean currents thus favoured the emergence of trade and civilisation in the Western Indian Ocean. The changing geopolitical

⁷⁷ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945.

⁷⁸ Shiv Shankar Menon, “Maritime Imperatives of Indian Foreign Policy,” Speech to the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, 11 September, 2009.

⁷⁹ Milo Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

orientations of the Indian Ocean can be assessed through the history placing the dynamic changes through the emergence of new players in the Ocean. Rumley and Chaturvedi present four phases of the Indian Ocean; the pre-colonial, the colonial, the Cold War, and the post Cold War or the globalised phase.⁸⁰

Most of the historical frames to study the IOR are similar in their temporal classifications with the major events in being recognised as the colonisation, the Cold War and the contemporary age of globalisation. The perceived security threats are different and the Balance of Power(BoP) has undergone changes in accordance to the different actors involved but the strategies of control, especially of the choke points have remained the same. This section will look into these histories while tracing the geopolitical developments and the strategies of seapower to establish control over the region.

The pre-colonial phase or pre-Gaman period

The maritime culture in the pre-Gaman period according to archeological and literary evidences here is as much of a cultural and religious interaction as it is of trade and development. The Indian Ocean is one of the oldest (5000 years) in terms of being transversed by humans unlike the Mediterranean, Pacific or the North Atlantic, after which the Europeans entered the region, initially for commercialisation but later imposed complete colonial domination.⁸¹

⁸⁰Rumley and Chaturvedi. *Geopolitical Orientations, Regionalism and Security in the Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge, 2015

⁸¹ Michael N. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*. New York: Routledge, 2003

Vali traces the Indian ocean trade with the Egyptian expeditions around 1500 B.C who traded with the Arabs in ‘gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.’⁸² Apart from Arabian ventures into the Indian Ocean the Indians, the Chinese and the Malay people form extensive patterns of commercial interaction which were supported by the monsoons.

The evidence of maritime culture during the Mauryan Empire can also be seen in the writings of Greek and Roman literary records of Alexander’s campaign. The Periplus Maris Erytherai describes the presence of various Greco-Roman merchants selling goods in Barbaricum (Karachi). The reign of king Asoka saw a systematic maritime connection with distant countries,⁸³ this connection was one of cultural diplomacy, a peaceful foreign policy, preaching Buddhism, ideas of conflict resolution and moral politik. The edicts of Asoka provide testimonies about foreign lands and have references to sea voyages and trade.

The Andhras (Satavahanas) in the second century B.C in the south and the Kushanas in the 1st century A.D towards the north, both experienced Roman influence. The trade between the Romans and the kingdoms was prominent and evidence of Roman coins suggest relations from the period of Augustus upto around 217 A.D.⁸⁴ The relations may have stopped due to the decline of the Andhras and the extinction of the Kushans or interruption by Persian powers, nevertheless the relations laid the foundations for emigration of Indians.⁸⁵

⁸² Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976. p.37

⁸³ Kumar, Yogendra. *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order?: Contributions to a Seminar on Narendra Modi's Sagar Speech*. 1st ed. New Delhi: K W Publishers, 2017.

⁸⁴ Sridharan, Rear Admiral K. *Maritime History of India*. New Delhi: Minister of Publications and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1982

⁸⁵ Ibid. pp: 27-28

The Guptas and their commercial trading in the ocean has been recorded by travellers from foreign lands and ‘trade guilds.’. The accounts of tremendous amounts of gold in the region with numerous war fleets, and the invention of the ‘matsya yantra’⁸⁶ and war fleets. In the 10th century the Cholas emerged who destroyed the Chera fleet and gained paramount control of South India. Raja Raja, the first of the Chola kings conquered offshore islands of Sri Lanka and Maldives. This was contrary to most empires who focused on commerce and peaceful relations. Vijaya Sakhujia calls it a “consistent and aggressive maritime mercantile policy.”⁸⁷ The maritime culture of South India also involved the Pandyas, the Sailendras who were mostly involved in maritime commerce. The Pandyas too conquered Ceylon and the Gulf of Mannar.

After the downfall of Sri Vijaya empire and the Cholas it was the Arabs who controlled the commerce of the ocean but never exercised naval power as such. The sea faring Arabs had no serious designs to conquer India, the descent by land however had far reaching consequences. The Mughals mention of an Imperial Mughal Navy, with Akbar the arrangements of naval power were similar to that of the Maurya dynasty.

The Zamorins of Calicut came to declare themselves as independent during the 14th Century with the downfall of the Cheras. They were Hindu monarchs who maintained prosperous trade relations with the Arabs until the advent of the Portuguese in 1498. The maritime history of India would be incomplete without the mention of the Kunjali Marthavar, the

⁸⁶ A crude compass. Sridharan, Rear Admiral K. *Maritime History of India*. New Delhi: Minister of Publications and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1982.

⁸⁷ Kulke, Hermann, K. Kesavapany, Vijay Sakhujia, and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, eds. *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*. Nalanda-Sriwijaya Series. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009. p. 39

admirals of the Zamorin who fought the Portuguese for eight long decades. K. Sridharan in his work on maritime history writes of the barbarianism of the Portuguese and the acts of piracy and appropriation. Pannikar writes of the Marrakars, “in initiative, courage, navigational skill, and persistence, they bear comparison with the great figures of warfare.”⁸⁸ The Portuguese entry into the IOR ends the Pre-Gaman period and unfurls rivalry between the European empires ending in the the British establishing their hegemony with India as the centre.

Despite all these developments in the maritime culture of various empires in India, the maritime power was given secondary preference. A factor to heed here is that, the upper caste Hindus were prohibited from crossing the seas which impacted a part of the subcontinent to be landlubbers. The Muslim domination also reached India through the mountain passes of Afghanistan, and most conquerors in this period came through the land and so most empires did not develop any substantial naval power.

The Colonial phase or post- Gaman

The colonial phase in the subcontinent began with the Portuguese discovering the route to the Indian subcontinent, used their naval domination to establish monopoly over the trade, and to “spread the faith”. Almeida and Albuquerque brought unprecedented wealth to Portugal, while converting the ‘heathens’ to Catholic faith,⁸⁹ this imperial domination lasted for about a century after which the entry of other European powers, (British, French and the Dutch) led to scramble and a series of wars to establish monopolies of trade around the

⁸⁸ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945.

⁸⁹ Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976. p.37

region.

Toussaint calls the time from 1600-1750 an “inter regnum” because there was no exclusive control of the region. Aurangzeb’s indisposed fleet and the Maratha sea power resisted the European control but with substandard ships as compared to the Europeans were defeated.⁹⁰ The Omani maritime empire was one which was a powerful force in the Indian Ocean, “whose legacy however moth eaten was inherited by the British maritime force,”⁹¹ and with this maritime legacy the British established control over the region with India as the “jewel in the crown.” The British conquests “were not planned for imperialism like that of the Portuguese, however, the EIC like its rivals gained allies in the region after which with the approval of the home government they resorted to annexation.”⁹² The interest of the different actors were completely commercial until the Portuguese intervention which used the political control to attain control. The notion of free seas existed in the region till the entry of European powers, and no maritime power established such supremacy or ventured into colonial control. The Hindus and the Arabs were not involved into the region for colonial supremacy, with the exception of the Chola empire who colonised parts of Sri Lanka and Maldives.

The monopolisation of trade for profit coincided with the communication revolution and the advancement in navigational technology which further ensured the dominance of the European powers especially the emergence of the British. The nineteenth century imperialism is justified by Marxists with economic factors and the search for markets leading

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Shiv Shankar Menon. “Maritime Imperatives of Indian Foreign Policy.” *Maritime Affairs. Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 5:2, (2010): 15-21.

⁹² Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976. p.37

to colonisation. The inherent contradiction of the capitalist mode of production brings about rivalry among the colonial powers to establish control over resources and the markets. Hobson with his 'under-consumption' thesis presents that the imperialism was not a product of capitalism but a reaction to the ill-adjusted of the capitalist system, the 'taproot of imperialism was the surplus indispensable surplus capital.' The non-economic factors underlying the European power structure and their regional politics is disregarded in such an understanding. Thus the colonial strife and especially the power politics in the IOR finds its reflection in the realpolitik and conflicts of Europe.

Vasco Da Gama in 1498 obtained the services of a Hindu from Malabar and reached the coasts of Calicut. Pannikar states that the discovery of sea routes to India was "a great event from the results that followed, but as a feat of exploration or nautical adventure, it was of no importance."⁹³ Francisco de Almeida was the first Portuguese viceroy to India but his refusal in necessitating territorial acquisitions, paved way for his successor Albuquerque, who became the architect of Portuguese empire in the Indian Ocean. Albuquerque's strategy was to "capturing approaches to the ocean", that is the straits, to prevent other foreign shipping to pass through these straits, establish naval bases along the coastline and islands and seize "key points". These key points were along the East African Coast, to control the entrance from the Red Sea to Socotra islands, Hormuz to control the Persian Gulf, and Malacca to dominate the spice islands. The control of these choke points is the principal source of threat perception in the IOR for all major powers as they control the SLOC (Sea Lines of Communication). The Spanish and Portuguese equation in the IOR was the first non-regional monopolisation of trade and with this the Iberian peninsula controlled the IOR with its sea

⁹³ K.M. Pannikar, *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945. p. 41

power and naval strategy.

The Dutch, the French, the English and the Portuguese fought each other and also the internal resistance to establish their colonies. The Dutch captured Malacca from the Portuguese in 1641, but could not challenge the Portuguese naval power. The French seized Madagascar as a colony and also seized Pondicherry in 1744. The French failed because they underestimated sea power and the Dupleix, the French Governor in Pondicherry could not work together with the naval commander Bertrand Francios la Bourdonnais⁹⁴, thus “was doomed to fail.”⁹⁵ The French and the British were the principal contenders for the control of the region and the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763 gave complete control to the British. Thus, the Pax Britanica was established in the Indian Ocean. Vali states that the British colonisation was not a preconceived plan, but in the waging of wars to maintain control, the East India Company established supremacy. Britain after the Iberian thus attained control of the IOR and all its resources.

The British Raj and the First World War

The scramble for colonies among the imperialist forces was at its zenith from 1871 to 1914.⁹⁶ The Britishers as Mackinder heartland theory advised attempted to control the land and also the World Islands. The European interference changes the Balance of Power (BoP) in the region carving out their zones of influence which otherwise was a “self sustaining space with natural, and therefore, flexible boundaries.”⁹⁷ The monopolisation of trade for profit

⁹⁴ The commander converted Mauritius into a strong naval base.

⁹⁵ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945. p.65)

⁹⁶ Milo Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

⁹⁷ Jaishankar “preface.” in *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order?: Contributions to a Seminar on Narendra Modi's Sagar Speech*. Edited by Kumar, Yogendra. New Delhi: K W Publishers, 2017. p 7

coincided with the communication revolution and the advancement in navigational technology which further ensured the dominance of the European powers especially the emergence of the British. The nineteenth century imperialism is justified by Marxists with economic factors and the search for markets leading to colonisation. The argument is of inherent contradiction of the capitalist mode of production brings about rivalry among the colonial powers to establish control over resources and the markets⁹⁸. Hobson with his 'under-consumption' thesis presents that the imperialism was not a product of capitalism but a reaction to the ill-adjusted aspects of the capitalist system, the 'taproot of imperialism was the surplus indispensable surplus capital.'⁹⁹ The non-economic factors underlying the European power structure and their regional politics is disregarded in such an understanding. Thus the colonial strife and especially the power politics in the IOR finds its reflection in the realpolitik and conflicts of Europe.

The new liberal and radical ideas of reform and change in Europe threatened the authority of the political elite in Europe and imperialism, which increased the security and power, helped in the stabilising the domestic politics. Europe was stemming with political conflicts and under the influence of the expansive nationalism, imperialism was the perfect 'escape valve' for power projection and accumulation, this valve as we see with the World Wars was a temporary one. The action and reaction of world politics resonated to the regions such as the IOR and the colonial acquisitions proliferated. The link of the colonies to Britain was certainly one with political economy and a links between strategic and economic transactions. This relationship between geopolitics and geoeconomics echoes throughout the

⁹⁸ For the Marxist interpretations of Imperialism see Rosa Luxembourg (1912), *The Accumulation of Capital*, LWNIN

⁹⁹ Rasul B. Rais, *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987

history of the region with other factors of extreme realpolitik issues.

In India, for the 200 years that the British ruled the Gross Domestic Pay (GDP) remained stagnant while the United Kingdom's GDP increased fivefold.¹⁰⁰ The British had three major conceptions about the Indian Ocean region, there should be no other great power in the Indian Ocean other than the British, they wanted control of both land and sea territories, and lastly the control over the narrow straits which formed gateways into the Indian Ocean.¹⁰¹ India was the centre of the maritime power of the British, "a British Lake", the dominance of which would acquiesce the control of the region, connect to London, and connect to the Far East.¹⁰²

London secured Aden and Socotra in 1839 and after suppressing the first war of Independence in 1857, India was ruled directly by the Queen who was proclaimed "Kaiser-i-Hind", the Empress of India.¹⁰³ The imitation of the Mughal customs by the British as a symbol of establishing control witnessed one change; "the ritual of incorporation" turning into a "ritual of subordination."¹⁰⁴ The British empire after 1857 did not want to confront any cultural disinclination and strengthened their control over princely states and a unitary and indivisible sovereignty was imposed as against the precolonial and layered concept of sovereignty. The precolonial sovereignty presented the ports and other sea based trading

¹⁰⁰ Maddison, A. *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*. Paris: OECD, 2003.

¹⁰¹ Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976. p.39

¹⁰² Sarabjeet Singh Parmar. "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean An Indian Perspective." Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (January–March 2014): 49–63

¹⁰³ Sugata Bose. *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.56

centres a certain amount of autonomy which the European centralisation and imposition abolished.

The study of the British strategy in the IO is significant as it has been the “primary interface to connect the region to an increasing globalised world.”¹⁰⁵ The supremacy of the British in the region for almost two centuries, only to be challenged briefly by Japan in 1940s presents the story of a series of decisions that have had strategic implication on India till today. The movement from a colonised India under the British rule to Indian aspiration of a blue economy today has similar strategies necessary to maintain influence in the region. Jackson in his study of the British empire in the Indian Ocean acknowledges the pre-existing connections that shaped the region and presents the British interference as the driving force of change, which led to a new balance of power in the region. The events that led to the change in balance of powers and the presence of non regional actors was not just an economic rationalisation but a combination domestic politics and the conflictual patterns in the Europe and the regional centers of power.

India under the British raj was a ‘sub-imperial force,’ it was partly autonomous and the interest of the Indian foreign policy were represented as India was considered an irrevocable part of the British empire. The East India Company’s Marine (1612) formed to protect British shipping would be named and renamed as the British strengthened control over the region. In 1934 it was the Royal Indian Navy which served the British interests in the Indian Ocean to be renamed as the Indian Navy in 1934.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Ashley Jackson. “Britain in the Indian Ocean Region.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 7:2, (2011): 145-160.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.35

The Arabian and the Swahili coastal areas were secured for trade interests and secure Indian dominance. Bose presents Curzon's arrival in Oman on November 21, 1903 and his explanation of British dominance in the region as "duty to defend the great British Empire of India" and create "order in chaos" in the region. The centre was Indian and Curzonian imperial strategy was to protect this valuable centre. The British Empire based its supremacy in the Indian Ocean on colonies and bases. The regional centres of power like India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Eastern Coasts of Africa all has strategic and economic value to the British empire. These centres ensured the protection of the SLOCs that connected the West to the East. The control over the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Bay of Bengal along with a galaxy of islands, the SLOCs, the regional centres of imperial power and the technological advancements changed the Balance of Power in the Indian Ocean with colonisation. In 1839, Ranjit Singh and the British joined forces to fight Russian influence over Afghanistan and retained this position till 1842. The British presence in Africa, the Persian Gulf and in the Eastern Indian Ocean "overlay centuries old connections.... the creeping imperialism transforming the initial contact of equals into British rule."¹⁰⁷

The technological advancements were also responsible in binding the ocean and augmenting strategic significance. Some of these were the wireless telegraphy, the submarine telegraphy (from the Cape to Australia), the emergence of steamships and oil fuelled engines¹⁰⁸ (travelling from Bombay to Suez with increased capability in transfer of resources and products) and the development of aircraft carriers supplementing the naval forces.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ashley Jackson. "Britain in the Indian Ocean Region." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 7:2, (2011): 145-160. p 37

¹⁰⁸ The oil fuelled engines also increased the importance of the oil refuelling and oil supplying nations.

¹⁰⁹ Ashley Jackson. "Britain in the Indian Ocean Region." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 7:2, (2011): 145-160. p 37

The ‘great maritime gateways’ of Malacca, Suez, Cape of Good Hope, and the intermediary islands for refuelling the ships were acquired. The strategy was the same as Albuquerque and the Naval warfare with the other European powers and the indigenous powers was momentary. Thus, a maritime trading empire was created and the Royal Navy was “neighbours to every country with a coast-line.” “The empire had unparalleled oceanic knowledge and the Indian Ocean was the most Europeanised of all the world seas.”¹¹⁰ Migration in the wake of imperialism was vigorous with the demands of labour of a connected economy and new colonies. Indians were transported as indentured labourers to Malaya, Mauritius, Uganda, and Hongkong.

"After Aden was taken in 1839 by the British(...)Indians were so numerous in East Africa that calls were heard from the Government of India and the Indian political class to make it an Indian territory after the First World War”¹¹¹

This influence of Britain strengthened as well as weakened with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869¹¹². This accomplishment was only second to the discovery of trade routed to the Indian subcontinent by the Europeans and served numerous British interests while opening up the area to other European powers (Germans, Italians, Dutch, and the French). Suez connects the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea and after the Anglo-Egyptian war of 1882 the British assumed control and it remains a strategic necessity to acquire influence in the region. The Suez went on to assume increased strategic significance with the oil politics and the Cold War.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.38

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 41

¹¹² This was a remarkable feat of 19th century engineering, the cutting of the Canal through the Isthmus of Suez which united the oceans of Europe with Asia.

Zanzibar and Australia fell under the British influence and the IOR was completely under the British. Meanwhile, the French acquired Madagascar, the Comoro Islands, Djibouti, and Diego Suarez and this acquisition was permissible by the British. The British acquisition of India accommodated its super power role via maritime control through strategic bases throughout the world. However, the British, as Ashin Das Gupta claims were incorporated partly into the structure of India¹¹³ and despite articulating the geopolitical concerns with clarity, the British too became victims of the ‘curse of continentalism’.¹¹⁴

The British influence began staggering after the two World Wars which made it impossible to retain and manage the huge empire, the peace in Europe had been one major component which facilitated the navy concentrate on the Eastern hemisphere for colonisation. However, with the German threat in European waters the British relinquished some control and entered into an Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1911. The German cruiser ships entered the IOR raided Malaya, bombarded oil tanks in Madras, and sank and captured around 16 ships of the allied powers. The Indian Ocean was not central to the first world war, but the few skirmishes in the region concomitant with various colonies demanding Independence created different bone of contention for the Britishers. The First World War mobilised many resources for the War from the region, especially India, and the sea power facilitating this mobility helped the British predicate the security architecture of the Indian Ocean. The one change to this

¹¹³ Ashin Das Gupta. *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. India: OUP, 2004.

¹¹⁴ Raja Mohan. “Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.” Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (October-December, 2013): 107–109.

architecture was the Anglo-American alliance and the Washington treaties of 1922 which forced Britain to surrender her absolute monopoly.¹¹⁵

The shift in alliance from the Anglo-Japanese to Anglo-American changed the balance of forces considerably. The Royal Navy was still the largest navy in the world but not the only one. The British rule was beginning to end in the IOR and the geopolitical orientations were altering with new non-regional players.

The Second World War

The Second World War was unique for Britain because it was simultaneously fought in Europe and Asia. India's status of a regional power centre became even more significant, providing resources for fighting the War for an economically drained Britain incapable of financially committing itself to protect its colonial acquisitions. The Indian Navy doubled its personnel during the course of the War. Singh writes of the committee formed to plan the requirements of the Indian Armed Forces reports assumptions without taking into possibility the idea of an independent India.¹¹⁶ The committee was apprehensive of Russian influence and the emergence of China as a long term threat. These assumptions also handled the Anglo-American mindset and the strategic anxiety.¹¹⁷ The sub imperial force that India was during the first war gained prominence and as the "periphery-to-metropole"¹¹⁸ and Indian troops along with personnel from South Africa, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Seychelles provided military manpower for the War.

¹¹⁵ Rasul B. Rais, *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987

¹¹⁶ Sarabjeet Singh Parmar. "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean An Indian Perspective." Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (January–March 2014): 49–63

¹¹⁷ Hiranandani, G.M. *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976–1990*. Michigan: The University of Michigan, 2009.

¹¹⁸ The term used by Thomas Metcalfe to emphasise focus on the Indian Ocean region. The term here is used with the focus of India as a regional centre of power especially in the Indian Ocean Region.

The Indian National movement under Gandhi gained momentum as it became a mass movement and the II World War started in 1939. This war reached the Indian Ocean, with the Germans desiring naval force to achieve their geopolitical goals of “lebensraum” and Hitler’s operation Sea Lion to absorb Britain’s colonies. Furthermore, the 1941 Operation Orient¹¹⁹ seeking control of the Western Indian Ocean by Germany and Italy while the Eastern Indian Ocean was to be controlled by Japan. The Japanese under General Tojo occupied Vietnam controlling the Malacca and Mussolini’s attempt to base in Abyssinia and Eritrea was the materialisation of Germany’s intentions for operation Orient. The Japanese conquered Burma in 1942, occupied Sri Lanka and invaded Assam in 1944.

The Indian coastline was completely unguarded and left Indians conscious of the vulnerability India to the IOR. The supremacy of the British in the IOR was unchallenged till the “entry of Japan demonstrating India’s dependence on the security of the seas.”¹²⁰ The Indian Ocean in the world views of Gandhi, Tagore, and Curzon was accepted as a region of paramount importance. The national movement under Bose saw collaboration with the Japanese during the Second World War but that failed with the defeat of Japan and the horrific atomic bombings. After the end of the war the subcontinent was partitioned creating a volatile South Asia that is a subject of concern till today. The emergence of bipolarity led to the Cold War and Indian Ocean as a subsystem became also a subset to this rivalry.

¹¹⁹ Operation Orient was the code name given to the operation that envisioned Nazi Germany linking up with the Empire of Japan mainly through the Middle East focused mainly on securing the Middle East and its oil fields and linking up with Japanese forces after the fall of the Soviet Union.

¹²⁰ K.M. Pannikar. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945. p. 41

The Indian Ocean was of tremendous importance to Britain and its allies in the Second World War for its vital strategic bases protecting the convoy routes. The closing down of the Mediterranean-Suez route the importance of the Cape route increase and the entire ocean was a theatre of German and Japanese activity. The Eastern fleet came into existence during the War which was all British naval forces east of the Suez which accomplished tasks with minimal resources. The Allied forces won the War with its sea power in the region and the advantageous mobility of sea power, however, Britain had absolutely no financial resources to maintain a large empire and the entire region witnessed decolonisation process in a few years after the War. The Second World War as an event thus led to a complete change in the Balance of Power (BoP) not only in the region at a subsystemic level but also a global geopolitical alteration. The regional security complex of the IOR thus now involved not just colonies of the British Empire but independent nation-states which in the coming years would accommodate a half of the world's conflicts. The geopolitical orientation of the IOR moved beyond European involvement after the devastating Wars and the idea of a changed global system structure with many new independent nations and a drastically different Bop emerged. The United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) were the two superpowers in a world which was now bipolar and divided into two camps.

The Cold War geopolitics of the Indian Ocean and India

The partition of the subcontinent erased the India Centre¹²¹ of security in the region which during the Second World War was an eminent and resourceful base or a regional centre of power for the British. The withdrawal of the British powers from the region led to the two superpower rivalry for control and a complete pandemonium in the regional subsystem as well as the global system. The regional level of security has become both more autonomous and more prominent in international politics with decolonisation and the ending of the Cold War escalated this process.¹²² The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) had more than a dozen of newly independent nations at the core of this rivalry and inflated anxieties were the central concern in the foreign policy of most of these states. The strategic use of sea power to control the SLOCs and the movement of resources, especially oil, was indispensable. Thus, the Anglo-American anxiety to control resources, the rising nationalism combined with detestation for foreign interference led to construction of different discourses to protect vital economic interests in the region. The convergence of the geopolitical and the geoeconomic concepts can be located in these discourses throughout the Cold War apart from the strategic animosity between the two superpowers.

¹²¹ India's centrality in the Asian security order before the Second World War. See Peter John Brobst, *Future of the Great Game: Sir Olaf Caroe, India's Independence and the Defence of Asia* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2005).

¹²² Peter Katzenstein. *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2005

The superpowers, especially USA justified presence in the region with the three doctrines¹²³, the theories of power vacuum and reciprocal escalation, leading to the intensification of sea power strategies. The policies that emerged as a result of this rivalry were the non-aligned movement, the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace and the idea of littoral solidarity.¹²⁴

The conflicts within the region (especially India and Pakistan) were accommodated in the rivalry, and the island nations despite their small territories gained strategic significance. The chapter assesses the strategies of the superpowers and the reaction of India as the leader of the non aligned movement. The failure of the Zone of Peace initiative, the 'nuclearisation' of the region, the attainment of bases and the ever increasing importance of the choke points.

India and Non-Alignment: the initial years

India became independent of British rule in 1947 with most of the South Asian territories and these newly decolonised states, which were mostly non-settler colonies, adopted the European idea of nation state with indivisible sovereignty, territory, population and government. India did not have enough resources to build itself into a strong power because the domestic problems like the integration of nation states required prioritisation. The idea of power, which is argued in this instance with three notions are "allocation of resources, ability to use such resources and finally understanding the conditions and consequences of the use"¹²⁵ (resources, strategies and outcomes), this is a traditional understanding of power.

¹²³ The Truman, Eisenhower, and Nixon doctrines which led to the formation of the Carter doctrine.

¹²⁴ Littoral solidarity in security and trade. Jayaramu. P.S. "Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: Problems and perspectives." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (April - June 1986): 237- 246.

¹²⁵ Raymond Boudon and Francois Bourricaud, *A Critical Dictionary of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 267.

Apart from this traditional generalisation, the contextual and relative power cannot be ignored especially in the years of defence and strategy formulation. As such the balance of power in the global system and the regional subsystem shaped the foreign policy of India and the IOR. Apart from the bipolar structure of the world system, the geographical position of India and the IOR- Regional Security Complex will facilitate understanding the relationships within and the external powers.

Geographically, India is a peninsula and has a coastline extending upto 7516.6 km. It has 1197 islands with an area of more than 8249 sq.kms and has got the central position in the Indian Ocean. The position of the peninsular between the chokepoints of Hormuz and Malacca increase the geoeconomic significance of the country considerably. The well endowed centrality in the region contribute to India's stance as a major power in the region¹²⁶ and consequently the Indian Ocean Region is an important geographical aspect for India second only to the great Himalayas¹²⁷. The growing convergence between geopolitics and geoeconomics in the ocean may soon make it the most important one.

India's image in the world changes from 1947 to 1990 in four different phases.¹²⁸ The independence of the subcontinent led to numerous conflicts and India with the idea of one

¹²⁶ Sekar, T. "India's Maritime Challenges in Indian Ocean" in *India and Southeast Asia in IOR: A Crystal Gazing*, edited by S. Manivasakan, 140. Chennai: Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 2013

¹²⁷ Sukhwai. *Modern Political Geography of India*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1985

¹²⁸ S.D Muni. *India's Foreign Policy: The Democracy Dimension*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd, 2016

Asian identity emerged as a leader. The self perception of India as the natural hegemon¹²⁹ in South Asian RSC came with the India as a regional centre of power during the British raj. The years immediately following the independence of the country saw no regard for the development of sea power or maritime capabilities. The norm building for the newly independent South propagated by India included the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, rejection of military alliances and disarmament stemming from the non-alignment and the Panchsheel principles of peaceful coexistence.¹³⁰ The idealism of the non-aligned movement (NAM) was the perfect approach to Cold War politics and a realist decision against bandwagoning with any of the two superpowers. India had certain objectives in the fifties such as, the assertion of its complete independence, consolidation of its position in the region to face colonial powers and maintenance of a “third area” that would be a buffer between the two blocs.¹³¹ The non-aligned movement made the South Asian RSC the buffer between the land-sea power asymmetries of the Soviet Union and the USA respectively. This was the first phase where the decolonised nations began their “tryst with destiny” and under NAM wanted to free the Indian Ocean from the superpower rivalry and nuclear threats.¹³² India’s policies had both “normative and instrumental underpinnings (...) at a systemic level, the policy made sense as it enabled a materially weak state to play a role

¹²⁹ D.Hagerty and H. Hagerty, “India’s Foreign Relations”, in D Hagerty (ed.), *South Asia in World Politics*, Oxford, Rowman and little field, 2005, p 41.

¹³⁰ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *Panchsheel*, http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/191_panchsheel.pdf Accessed on 20th August, 2018

¹³¹ Ravindra Varma. “The Indian Ocean in India's Strategy and Diplomacy.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 25, No. 2 (APRIL—JUNE, 1964):38-49

¹³² P.S Jayaramu,. “Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: Problems and perspectives.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (April - June 1986): 237- 246

that was considerably more significant than its capabilities would warrant.”¹³³ The instrumentality of its non-alignment and principal oriented foreign policy was a consequence of the strategic circumstances.¹³⁴

The Bandung Conference 1955¹³⁵ and the Belgrade in 1961¹³⁶ was one of the major roles played by Indian ocean states in the new world to prevent foreign interference and the regional formulations thus began taking shape in the region. In the initial years of independence, India played the role of peacemaker under the UN for Korea and the Indo-China states of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam conflicts. India extended its support to Burma (Myanmar), Nepal, and Indonesia while propagating unity against the colonial interests and racism. However, economically India was not equipped for a position of Asian leadership and faced numerous conflicts from its immediate neighbourhood that impacted India as well as its image. Mohammed Ayoob opines of Non-Aligned as “manifestations of the same motivational force.” The nationalism against colonialism, non alignment, and assertion of Islamic identity in the IOR are “variations of the same theme.” This search for autonomy was a part of wider concern in the IOR to restore political equality of the non-western.¹³⁷

India in the first few decades after its independence expended its defence finances on the

¹³³ Sumit Ganguly, “Introduction,” in *India’s Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Sumit Ganguly (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1.

¹³⁴ Iskander Luke Rehman, . "From an Ocean of Peace to a Sea of Friends." *Shaping the emerging world. India and the multilateral order* (2013): 131-153.

¹³⁵ Bandung Conference 1955, *Foreign Affairs Record* , Vol.1, No. 4, April 1955, pp. 67

¹³⁶ "Documents of the Gatherings of Nonaligned Countries 1961-78." (1979): 202-202.

¹³⁷ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Quest for Autonomy : Ideologies of the Indian Ocean region", in Dowdy and Trood, *The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a strategic arena*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985.

protection of its land borders. The partition that created Pakistan and animosity between the two nations led to three wars (1948-1949, 1965, 1971). The geopolitical implications of this animosity¹³⁸ were centred on the Kashmir border conflict, which was not just a geographical issue but identity dependant and central to the national building process of both states. The rivalry had “shaped and limited the strategic potential of India since independence”.¹³⁹ The countries had extremely high stakes in the conflict and it remains unresolved with Kashmir as flashpoint in South Asian RSC. Nehru’s forward policy and the refuge it gave to Tibetans after the Chinese occupation led to the 1962 war which India was ill-equipped to fight and hence faced a humiliating defeat.

The British had given India eight new frigates which were anti-submarine, a second cruiser and an aircraft carrier by 1962, the United States responded positively India during the 1962 war and the Pakistan sought alliance with China.¹⁴⁰ India’s defeat obliterated Nehru’s idealism with the idea of an Asian identity and amenable relations with China. Sri Lanka brokered the peace between India and China while Indonesia supported Pakistan in the 1965 War.¹⁴¹ The 1965 war also witnessed the bombardment of Dwarka and before the Indian fleet stationed in Bombay (now Mumbai) could retaliate the cease fire was declared. The Indian fleet moved from Bay of Bengal to Mumbai to Dwarka during the war and Indian

¹³⁸ Stewart-Ingersoll, Robert, and Derrick V. Frazier. “Geopolitics for India.” In *Handbook of India’s International Relations*, 35–46. Routledge, 2011.p.40

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.40

¹⁴⁰ Gulab Hiranandani, "The Indian End of the Telescope: India and Its Navy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 55 : No. 2 , Article 5. (2002) Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol55/iss2/5> p.3

¹⁴¹ Indonesia had despatched a Russian-built submarine and some missile boats to assist the Pakistani Navy.
Ibid p. 4

navy had no role to play as it was “directed to take no aggressive action at sea.”¹⁴² The countries first five year defence plan was directed at the army and the airforce and thus the land border conflicts engaged India into securing its land borders thereby leading to a delayed focus on the sea. Iskander Rehman accurately positions India’s approach to maritime strength in the initial years as ‘moral strength and material weakness’

“India’s approach toward its maritime environs was proprietary, exclusionary, and deeply rooted in the rhetoric of nonalignment...It was also profoundly reflective of a strong sense of maritime embattlement, arguably inherited from the young nation’s colonial past and considerably reinforced by various incidents, such as the dispatch of an Indonesian naval flotilla into the Bay of Bengal during the India-Pakistan War of 1965 or the well-known deployment of the USS Enterprise Carrier Task Force in the Bay of Bengal in December 1971.”

The process of integration, numerous internal militant movements, border disputes with immediate neighbours in the South Asian RSC were the priorities of a young India and all the defence expenditure went into stabilising these issues. The expectation that the various states in the South Asian Complex would support India in face aggression was disrupted. The 1962 War “pushed India’s strategic vision to the farthest distance possible from the oceans”¹⁴³ and despite appeals K.M Pannikar to engage in a formidable maritime security aspect India could not focus towards the sea, the allocations for the Navy were drastically reduced to enable the expansion of the army and air force¹⁴⁴. India had no military capability to confront the Chinese and the problems of integration and economic deficit pushed the

¹⁴² Ibid p.5

¹⁴³ Raja Mohan. “Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.” Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (October-December, 2013): 107–109.

¹⁴⁴ G.V.C. Naidu, ‘The Indian navy and Southeast Asia’, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 13, No. 1, June 1991, pp. 72-85

country to receive aid¹⁴⁵ from a Pakistan sympathising United States of America (USA) with uncomfortable conditions. The Nehruvian leadership thus presented a conjoined idealism and realism with Non-alignment¹⁴⁶ and India was pushed into the South Asian RSC only to interact with its immediate neighbours and disputes. This economic, security and developmental deficit affected the image of India and its leadership in the IOR and the Asian super complex.

Transfer of Power from Britain to United States: The Suez Canal

The control of the IOR was essential for its SLOCs and the oil from the Persian Gulf which had unprecedented use during the war and BIOT would be the base to oversee such control. The IOR was located at a considerable distance from both the superpowers and the acquisitions of bases and allies in the region was considered crucial. The American interests in the oil producing regions of the Persian Gulf and the direct projection into the region began in 1944 with the Anglo-American Petroleum Agreement.¹⁴⁷ The agreement never

¹⁴⁵ The food crisis led to import of shipments of wheat through PL480 (Public Law 480 created by the office of Food for Peace)

¹⁴⁶ Andrew Kennedy. "Nehru's Foreign Policy: Realism and Idealism Conjoined." in *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*, edited by David M. Malone, C. Raja Mohan, and Srinath Raghavan, 2015.
DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198743538.013.7

¹⁴⁷ Michael B Stoff., "The Anglo-American Oil Agreement and the Wartime Search for Foreign Oil Policy." *The Business History Review* Vol.55, No.1 (1981): 59-74.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3114442>.

Stoff argues that the unprecedented use of oil, a series of enemy victories made USA realise their dependence on others for oil. The agreement was signed to ascertain access to oil.

materialised due to a “battery of fears and suspicions”¹⁴⁸ and was withdrawn from the Senate. Suez crisis known as the Second Arab-Israeli saw UK, France and Israel invade the canal to seize control and remove Nasser from power.¹⁴⁹ The US under Eisenhower, USSR and the United Nations General Assembly demanded the withdrawal of British, French and Israeli troops from the Suez and an armistice was signed. The withdrawal recognised Egyptian sovereignty and authority over the Canal. The humiliation of Britain hastened the decolonisation of the IOR and led to Harold Wilson’s declaration of withdrawal from the Suez in 1968.

The Labour Party under Wilson declared that Britain would withdraw from Suez because Britain could not afford the colonies or its adjoining commitments anymore and “it was neither wise nor economical to use the military force” to protect such interests.¹⁵⁰ The withdrawal from Suez created a ‘vacuum’ for the Americans to engage in their oil interests. An internal memo of the US government of 1945 had described Saudi Arabia as the ‘most strategically important area of the world’ and its oil as a “stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history”.¹⁵¹ Hence when the Suez

¹⁴⁸ Herbert Feis, “The Anglo-American Oil Agreement.” *Yale Law Journal*. Volume 55 Issue 5 17, (1946): 1174-1190

This fear and suspicion grows is accelerated by the Arab-Israeli War wherein the Soviet Union changed stance from anti-Zionist to Stalin’s pro-Zionist policy too again supporting the Arabs and prosecuting Jews towards the end of the Cold War.

¹⁴⁹ Roger Owen. “Suez Crisis.” In *The Oxford Companion to the Politics of the World*. Second edition, edited by Joel Krieger. London: Oxford University Press, 2001.

¹⁵⁰ See Defence Statement on the Defence Estimates 1965. Cmd Paper No. 2592, presented to Parliament. March 4, 1965. <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1965/mar/04/defence>

¹⁵¹ Draft memorandum to President Truman prepared by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Merriam) and submitted to the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) early in August 1945.

Office of the Historian. “Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers,

withdrawal was announced the Americans enter the region starting the reciprocal escalation of Soviet Union naval forces. The withdrawal by the British was to be completed by 1971 while the two contending superpowers expanded their influence in the region through navy ships, submarines, and nuclear weaponry. The demand for bases and the intrusion in the local politics exasperated the delicate balance of power and a series of proxy wars and power projections broke out.

Power Vacuum and Reciprocal Escalation

The exacerbation of rivalries between states, like India and Pakistan, was also supplemented by conflict within states. The military and economic aid was used in the process to increase influence in the region.¹⁵² The super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, especially the American presence was justified with the ‘power vacuum’. The British withdrawal from the subcontinent and the alleged vacuum needed to be replenished with the Balance of Power operation. The vacuum was presented as a military¹⁵³ and a political vacuum¹⁵⁴. the withdrawal from the Suez was not essentially a naval operation but just handing over the reigns of control to USA when Britain was no longer capable of financially administering control over the region. The replacement was not a quasi-natural one as propagated but a

1945.” The Near East and Africa, Volume VIII. Washington, 9 October, 1945
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v08/d20>

¹⁵² Selig S Harrison,, and K Subrahmanyam. 1989. *Superpower Rivalry In The Indian Ocean*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵³ Military vacuum is when a projecting military force is withdrawn from an area.

¹⁵⁴ Political vacuum is when an area recognised belonging to the sphere of influence and interests of a state and the state is disinterested in the area. The idea seems very similar to the later emancipatory justifications by the United States to intervene in West Asia.

voluntary act to control the oil fields in the region.¹⁵⁵ Vali questions if the notion of freedom of the seas is in accordance with the justification of a sea territory declared as a vacuum during peace. The other argument of power vacuum was that the local powers would be unable to defend themselves causing instability. The newly independent colonies were perceived as maladministered and indisposed. The IOR with its fragmentation, resources and instability was an attractive front for the expansionist governments,¹⁵⁶ an 'inadequately defended region' which needed a custodian was an 'imperialist attitude' and induced if not escalated local conflicts. The two superpowers supported regimes were not necessarily representative or 'legitimate' but convenient and all these propaganda created 'artificial atmosphere' of competition and contention.¹⁵⁷ The Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean increased considerably after the British withdrawal from the Suez but the presence was exaggerated¹⁵⁸ to accomodate US interests in the region. The Soviets rejected the power vacuum theory, deemed it as inappropriate and a 'notorious thesis'¹⁵⁹ but were considerably involved in the region through different initiatives and developmental aid.

The idea of power vacuum and the reciprocal escalation have been written and strategised however they are insufficient to explain the superpower rivalries. The USA and Soviet Union did not possess equal capabilities in naval power and the primary interest was to acquire

¹⁵⁵ Rasul B Rais. *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987

¹⁵⁶ Ferenc A Váli. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976.

¹⁵⁷ Misra, K. P. "Indian Ocean Politics: an Asian-African Perspective." Maryland Series in *Contemporary Asian Studies* Vol, No.1, 1978.

¹⁵⁸ Anthony Harrigon, "Red star rising in the Indian Ocean." *National Review*, New York. 1971: 421

¹⁵⁹ V. Matveyer, "Stuffed 'Vacuum'" *Izvestia*(Moscow), 28 May 1971. Page 11.

resources rather than contain the SU. The US considered their sea power paramount in the strategies to contain SU, whose interference in the region for oil control was based on land power. The power vacuum theory has serious contradictions in theory and practice, to start with the British control of Suez itself had no credibility¹⁶⁰ and the Suez Crisis subverted the apparent British control of the region. The presence of foreign powers was frowned upon by the regional powers and the region after decolonisation was the responsibility of the littoral states, the threat of instability ironically was created by the presence of foreign power.

The strategic nuclear parity of the powers and intercontinental ballistic missiles induced competition between the powers in most areas considered strategically significant, and the presence of one power justified the presence of the other power. This reciprocal escalation was not limited to the interests in defying the other power but for influence on the resources of the Indian Ocean region. “The capabilities, intentions and force structures do not confirm to the framework of the two theories or its assumptions...the capabilities were asymmetrical .. and the mutual confrontation was unintended.”¹⁶¹ The two sides had “economic and strategic stakes” and the naval deployments in the region need to be assessed in that context instead of the threat of another war. The escalation has been looked upon as an action-reaction cycle of bi-polar world politics but the balance of threat with the atomic and nuclear weapons maintained deterrence.

The bipolar structure of the global system thus affected the regional security complex of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the capabilities were mismatched but the threat perceptions

¹⁶⁰ K. P. Misra. “Indian Ocean Politics: an Asian-African Perspective.” Maryland Series in *Contemporary Asian Studies* Vol, No.1, 1978.

¹⁶¹ Rasul B Rais, *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987

justification of involvement in the region using those perceptions escalated presence of submarines and warships all around the region especially the choke points or the maritime gateways. Cantori and Spiegel¹⁶² speak of the core regions in large regional security systems and the core regions and the oil made West Asia the core while India as the centre of British empire and leader of non-alignment became another. Cantori and Spiegel argue of the 'Intrusive system' which is a "politically significant participation of the external powers in the international relations of the sub-ordinate system". This intrusion by the external powers is in the form of aid, alliance or any other form of commitment and causes the external to behave as indigenous. The intrusion of the powers for the assertion of their strength in the region withdrew with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the justifications for oil interest changed.

India, Zone of Peace, and UNCLOS

The escalation of conflict in the IOR led to the presence of nuclear warheads and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) in the region but with nuclear deterrence the two superpowers and the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1965, the superpower presence fell in the Indian Ocean.¹⁶³ The anglo-americas anxiety¹⁶⁴ of the world wars had emerged more

¹⁶² Steven L. Spiegel, Louis J. Cantori. "International Regions: A comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems." *International Studies Quarterly*. Volume 13, Issue 4, (December 1969): 361–380.

¹⁶³ Rasul B Rais. *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987. p. 44

¹⁶⁴ Hiranandani in his study of Indian Navy states that the British in the 1940s formed a committee to look into Indian Armed forces and discovers assumptions of a Russian invasion after British withdrawal and probability of Russian influence on India
Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976–1990*, p. 6.

strongly against Communism and the IOR became the subset of this rivalry. India received many different ships from Britain to safeguard the SLOCs, and prevent the presence of the communist enemies along its coastline, however with the Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1971) India leaned toward the Soviet Union who provide India with its first 4 submarines from (1967-1969), this was the Second Phase in India's evolution. The focus was on Vietnam and the proxy war was fought until 1973. Meanwhile, the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT) was being discussed from 1965 to 1968 by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, led by the United Nations (UN). The treaty was opened to signature in 1968 and presents a three pillar system of non-proliferation, disarmament, and the right to peacefully use nuclear technology. Article II of the treaty however states;¹⁶⁵

Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transfer or whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Article IX

...For the purposes of this Treaty, a nuclear-weapon State is one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967.

India considered the treaty discriminatory in its nature and refused to sign it, conducting its own nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998. The balance in the region changed with the change in strategic circumstances in the 1970s. The reconciliation between the Nixon administration and Mao's regime post the Sino-Soviet split pushed US further away from India who was

¹⁶⁵ Non Proliferation Treaty, (1968) United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text>

vary about this friendship and Pakistan involvement with them made it more anxious. This encirclement of India was to be balanced disposing Indira Gandhi in 1971 to sign the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Soviet Union. After neutralising the threat of Chinese aggression, receiving “five submarine chasers, two landing ships, five patrol boats, four submarines, a submarine depot ship, a submarine rescue vessel, and eight missile boats”¹⁶⁶ from the SU and engineering a new dockyard in Vishakapatnam for specifically SU naval technology,¹⁶⁷ the Indian navy under the leadership of Indira Gandhi retaliated to the 1971 Pakistani attack on the Western border. The Indian Navy operated from the Bay of Bengal and sank the US supplied submarine of Pakistan¹⁶⁸, Gandhi supported the *Mukti Bahini* and the war for the liberation of East Pakistan involved India, Soviet Union and the United States. This war put in context the complexities of the Cold War alliances in the IOR the development of the Indian navy and strategies was set in motion by the presence of a US naval task force led by a 7th Fleet carrier ‘Enterprise’. The Indian understanding and pride in its naval wing increased after the 1971 war thereby beginning to strengthen its position in the Indian Ocean¹⁶⁹ and amidst these geo-strategic complexities Henry Kissinger

¹⁶⁶ G.M. Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976–1990*. Michigan: The University of Michigan, 2009. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol55/iss2/5>

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 65

The Eastern Indian Naval Headquarters in Vishakapatnam all Soviet-supplied vessels would be based, maintained, and refitted; all ships of Western origin were to be based at Mumbai. This arrangement was necessary to meet the Cold War concerns of the Soviet Union regarding the leakage of its technology to the West, and also that of Britain (which had licensed the construction of *Leander*-class frigates in Mumbai) regarding the same to the East. Ibid, p. 65

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p 66

¹⁶⁹ For more details about the war ;
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/indo-pak_1971.htm 9

acknowledges India as a considerable regional power. The treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union (1971) and the 1974 nuclear tests¹⁷⁰ were a complete diversion from the norms of disarmament and non-alignment. India tilted towards the Soviet Union facing aggression from China, Pakistan and USA. During this period, India also began to move towards the larger definition of maritime interests especially in terms of protection of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and declaration of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZOP). The capabilities of India to counter US hegemony and Pakistan (a SEATO member) in the region was not feasible and the friendship with the Soviet Union had helped it achieve some control. The United States disliked the presence of the Soviet Union in the region and as an extension of the reciprocal escalation and power vacuum established a base in the BIOT.

Diego Garcia became the main point of access into the region for the US since 1971, it was a part of the BIOT in the Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory), the product of lingering British presence. The resident population, the Zilios, was removed from the island without consent. This was a violation of human rights as well as the violation of the UN resolution 1514¹⁷¹ which prevented the dismemberment of colonies. Stuart B Barber, working with the Pentagon, stated that Diego Garcia was an ideal base because of its location in the IOR and its distance from potential threats.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ For a detail record of the Smiling Buddha (Pokhran I) see
<https://nuclearweaponarchive.org/India/IndiaSmiling.html>

¹⁷¹ Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples Adopted by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.
<https://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>

¹⁷² Gamini Bandara Keerawella, "The Growth of Super Power Naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean and Sri Lanka's response." Doctoral thesis, Columbia: University of Columbia, 1988.

Diego Garcia was to protect the Indian Ocean and waterways from Soviet Union threat and an important access point for Kenyan and Somali bases, here, the perceptions and justification of the superpower rivalry seem to be more about relative gain than security in the region. The formation of a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) too was to ensure access to the oil fields, the real threat to US presence were the local states most of which resented the Soviet Union making the Soviet Union presence a propaganda rationale. The US propaganda of assuring regional security was a facade of forcing trade relations, and creating military bases for the uninterrupted access to oil especially after the oil embargo of 1973.¹⁷³ The proliferation of naval forces in the region gained more importance after the failure of the Nixon doctrine and the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The presence of United States in Diego Garcia and the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan accelerated the Cold War and the presence of naval warships in the region. The land power of the Soviet Union through Mackinder's heartland into the World Island was countered with the Mahanian seapower projection of the United States. The littoral nations were anxious about the development of this rivalry and Sri Lanka proposed that the Indian Ocean be declared as a Zone of Peace.

The General Assembly declared the Indian Ocean a zone of peace by resolution 2832 (1971). It called upon the great Powers to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral States of the Indian Ocean with a view to halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean. The Declaration upheld the need to preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Indian Ocean region and sought to resolve political, economic

¹⁷³ David S Painter, "Oil and Geopolitics: The Oil Crises of the 1970s and the Cold War." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 39, no. 4 (150) (2014): 186-208. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24145533>.

and social issues affecting the region under conditions of peace and security.¹⁷⁴

The Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZOP) was a disarmament initiative which has wanted to prevent an conflict such as Vietnam and follow the various disarmament initiatives like the Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Non-Proliferation Treaty(1968), the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (LANWFZ) (TLATELOLCO) proposals (1967), the Outer space treaty (1967), and the Seabed Treaty (1971). Bandaranaike proclaimed in 1971 that the concept of peace zone in the Indian Ocean follows the other disarmament treaties and is nothing but an “extension of non alignment.”¹⁷⁵ The proposal of IOZOP was criticised and countered on the basis of the need of protection of the SLOCs and oil. The discussions on the IOZOP led to the demand of the denuclearisation of the littoral states, this extension of denuclearisation was again seen by India in a realistic sense and as a “second attempt at disarming the unarmed- the first being the NPT.”¹⁷⁶

Additionally, the UNCLOS III introduced the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) induced nations to patrol and exercise control thereby “reinforce naval capabilities.”¹⁷⁷ the need to patrol and exercise control over those zones has become imperative, which in many cases calls for reinforcing a nation's naval capabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Law

¹⁷⁴ "U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON INDIAN OCEAN AS ZONE OF PEACE." International Legal Materials 11, no. 1 (1972): 217-19.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20690864>.

¹⁷⁵ K. P. Misra, *Quest for International Order in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, Pvt. Ltd. 1977, p. 85.

¹⁷⁶ K. Subrahmanyam, “Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean: retrospect and Prospect,” in Selig Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam, eds., *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, (Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 229

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p 229

of the Sea (UNCLOS III) or the Law of the Seas was concluded in 1984 and came into force on 1994. The EEZ extends upto 200The most significant clause of the UNCLOS III is the introduction of the Exclusive Economic Zone 200 nautical miles (nm) or 370 kilometres. The Indian Coast Guard was organised for protection and surveillance of the EEZ in 1977.¹⁷⁸

India as engagement with the islands in the region strategised *Operation Cactus* (1988), *Operation Lal Dora* (1983) and *Operation Viraat* (1988) were carried out when the opportunities presented themselves and not a part of India's grand maritime strategy. Indian government required capabilities of Sea Power and the modernisation of its Armed Forces. The Operation Lal Dora which was to be carried out in Maldives was terminated because the Navy and the Armed forces disputed over the leadership and the constraints of the resources. The strategic will to project power into the Indian Ocean and build the image as a regional power¹⁷⁹ was carried out during this phase, however, there is a gap between India's rhetoric of a Great Power and its capabilities¹⁸⁰ and the termination of Operation Lal Dora was one such example .

K. Subrahmanyam documents India's changing perceptions of the IOZOP and the various prejudices in extending the proposal to the hinterland. He presents it as a "measure to halt the spatial proliferation of nuclear weapons."¹⁸¹ India "had a far more realistic view about

¹⁷⁸ Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, "Maritime Surveillance of the Indian EEZ," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 1, April 1998, pp. 49–59

¹⁷⁹ David Brewster. *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership*. Routledge, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315815244>.

¹⁸⁰ (Ibid.)

¹⁸¹ K. Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean: retrospect and Prospect," in Selig Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam, eds., *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, (Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 229

the game of 'non-proliferation' and therefore refused to accept a regime . . . which violates the basic international norm that all nations of the world are equally entitled to the same categories of weapons of offense and defense. Nor was India taken in by the concept of a nuclear- weapon-free zone, which legitimized nuclear weapons in the hands of a few powers." ¹⁸² The perceptions of India from a norm and principle centred notion and a policy of disarmament have evolved with the experience of various strategies, discourses, and events which altered the strategic structure of the entire region.

This idea of reciprocal escalation and Western assertion of norms especially over nuclearisation resonates with Rais's (1987) argument over the exertion influence by Western powers especially America in the name of peace building. India after its defeat and encirclement by China and Pakistan (with USA) goes on the shred the garb of disarmament and idealism to realistically defend its territories. The IOZOP with its initial presentation in the UN general assembly was obstructed by the USA which made the island nations and the other littorals anxious. The Americans would not leave Diego Garcia and the IOR until the Soviets vacated Afghanistan.

Raja Mohan refutes US presence in the region and claims that's the United States claim to "dangerous dependence" on regional resources and the threat by the Soviet Union was "overdramatization" of the increase of the price of oil in the oil embargo, he disparages the American obsession of the oil in the region. ¹⁸³

¹⁸² Harrison, Selig S, and K Subrahmanyam. 1989. *Superpower Rivalry In The Indian Ocean*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press. p.4

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 6

K. M Pannikar, writing on the eve of independence, in the middle of the 20th century, made the case for a strong maritime orientation in India.¹⁸⁴ He asserted that India has had a powerful naval tradition and had enjoyed the command of the seas around it until the beginning of the 16th century. He also insisted that the neglect of sea power was at the root of India's loss of independence, relative decline and global marginalisation since then.¹⁸⁵

The presence of US in the Indian Ocean was severely criticised by various defence strategists of India, including SP Seth, S. N Kohli, J. P Anand and K. N Sud. The “securitisation” of the India Ocean was to protect oil interests and the Sea lines of Communication, protecting its commercial interests while secondarily containing the spread of communism, especially after the containment of Afghanistan. Such confrontation would result in regional conflicts and proxy wars. Finally the appropriation of the base would violate the UN Resolution declaring the Indian Ocean as a “Zone of Peace”.

The major factors in the development of the geopolitical orientations in the IOR were the entry of American naval task force into the bay of Bengal during the last stage of the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971, turbulence in the Persian Gulf, Sino-US reapproachment, and Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.¹⁸⁶ In the mid 1950s India's economic policy in attempt to find a possible “third way” between the political and economic models of the East and the West had unveiled a disastrous outcome. The new and enduring interest in the seas was an inevitable consequence of globalisation of Indian economy in 1991. Globalisation came with the end of the Cold War which changed India's relations and policies with other countries.

¹⁸⁴ Raja Mohan. “Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.” Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (October-December, 2013): 107–109.

¹⁸⁵ Pannikar, KM. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945.

¹⁸⁶ G.V.C. Naidu, ‘The Indian navy and Southeast Asia’, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 13, No. 1, June 1991, pp. 72-85.

The importance of sea power had been acknowledged and the economy was liberalised in 1991 this coincided with the disintegration of the Soviet Union which had been India's ally against the Western domination led by the USA.

Chapter 3

Securing the Indian Ocean post Cold War : Capabilities and Constraints of India

“A land power thinks in terms of continuous surfaces surrounding a central point of control, while a sea power thinks in terms of points and connecting lines dominating an immense territory.”

–Nicholas J Spykman¹⁸⁷

The Indian policy in the global system changed in 1991. The change in policies was in regard to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the economic liberalisation of the economy. The naval capabilities of the India increased with time and its open economy post the balance of payments crisis. The shift from an “inward leading economy” to an “outward leading economy” looks to the seas¹⁸⁸ and the removal of the Cold War anxiety accelerated this shift. These changes affected the structure of the IOR in context to the powers in and outside the region, while the strategic culture of India and the notion of security was increasingly associated to globalisation and geo-economics. The Indian influence thus moved from the South Asian RSC to the Indian Ocean RSC and today with its maritime strategic doctrine of 2015¹⁸⁹ aspires to move into the ‘extended neighbourhood’¹⁹⁰ of the Indo-Pacific to balance

¹⁸⁷ Nicholas Spykman, “Geography and Foreign Policy,” *American Political Science Review*. 32, no. 1 (February 1938): 28–50.

¹⁸⁸ Raja Mohan, *Samudra Manthan- Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United Book Press, 2012.

¹⁸⁹ Indian Navy. “Indian Maritime Doctrine -2015.” Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), 2015. Sivakasi: Standard Press (India) Pvt. Ltd, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-maritime-doctrine-2015-version>.

¹⁹⁰ David Scott. *Handbook of India's International Relations*. London: Routledge, 2011.

China. The US policy perceived India as a potential balancer in the region while under Obama it was appreciated as a “linchpin” of the Asia pivot.¹⁹¹ The growth and Indian policy shift is correlated to growing economy and its maritime capabilities. The dissertation attempts to map these policy changes focusing on India’s capabilities and constraints in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) while assessing the external environment and its threat perceptions. The structure of the chapter will present the policy changes and the difference in perception rather than the quantitative analysis of the Indian Naval power. The convergence between the geopolitics and geoeconomics for India and its naval presence also emerged post Cold War. The Geoeconomics¹⁹² as articulated by Edward Luttwak comes from an understanding that

“everyone, it appears, now agrees that the methods of commerce are displacing military methods- with disposable capital in lieu of firepower, civil innovation in lieu of military-technical advancement, and market penetration in view of garrisons and bases.”

The argument was further articulated as economics being the continuation of war by alternate means¹⁹³ and Huntington claims that the major conflicts between the US and the major powers in the coming years will be economic rather than one of military confrontation.¹⁹⁴ The changing strategic nature of the global system thus obliged the globalisation process. These parallel developments affected the Indian economy and the SLOCs central to the RSC

¹⁹¹ US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, “Partners in the 21st Century”, IDSA Key Speeches, 6 June 2012, www.idsa.in/keyspeeches/LeonEPanettaonPartnersinthe21stcentury.

¹⁹² Geoeconomics here maybe defined as the relationship between economic policy and changes in national power and geopolitics or as the economic consequences of trends in geopolitics and national power. The notions of trade follows the flag and the flag follows the trade point to the subject matter of geoeconomics.

¹⁹³ Daniel Bell, “Germany: The Enduring Fear”, *Dissent*, vol. 37, no. 4, Fall 1990, p. 466.

¹⁹⁴ Samuel Huntington, “Why International Primacy Matters”, *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 4, Spring 1993, pp. 71–2.

of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The foreign policy initiatives and the strategic culture of the state have been focused on non-alignment, which lost its significance with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and hence needs revision for a rising India that was exposed to export led growth and expansion of international trade. The increasing demand for oil and other facets of energy security for a growing population brings more integration in the concepts of geopolitics and geoeconomics for India.

The Chinese with the grand strategy of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), the alliance between Russia and China before the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2019, Modi's visit to Maldives as his first trip at the beginning of his second term, and the rise of Indo-Pacific as a region of interest are all complex strands of events that are results of a transformation of the Balance of Power in the region. The multipolarity and the Indian Ocean Region as Kaplan calls it the "centre stage of rivalry in the 21st century"¹⁹⁵ witnesses India, China, USA, and Japan, their proliferation of bases and sea power attempting to control the SLOCs in the region. The increasing trade has created an inextricable nexus between the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the region while the persistent rise of China and its long term strategy of control and influence are centred around the RSCs of the Indian Ocean.

Emergence of the Indian Oceanic order and expansion of international trade.

India could not work on its sea power during the Cold War but since then it has become a major player in the IOR. The previous maritime policies of India (1970s and 1980s) were present but not substantial or a part of a grand strategic vision. The Cold War witnessed small scale interventions in the region, especially the islands but the Navy had a very

¹⁹⁵Kaplan, Robert. "Center Stage for the 21st Century: Rivalry in the Indian Ocean."
Foreign Affairs. March 16, 2009

minuscule role in India's strategy. The domestic factors of a failing inward looking economy and land border conflicts did not provide a suitable environment for maritime growth. The balance of payments crisis was cataclysmic for the economy and the domestic politics mirrored the dissatisfaction of the people.

“The main areas chosen in the initial phase for reforms were tariffs, exchange rates, non-tariff barriers and capital flows. Many of the reforms effected in the capital flows had major impact on domestic monetary system, which was significantly liberalized.”¹⁹⁶ The economic reforms of 1991 and the phenomenon of globalisation changed the trading interactions as well as widened it. “In 1990–1991, India's total external trade (import and export) accounted for a mere 6 per cent of the GDP [and] by 2010–2011, it had increased to 52 per cent”.¹⁹⁷ This unprecedented rise was accompanied by a extensive focus on policies and nation building including nuclear developments and space ventures, this willingness of engagement also transpired in the naval power.

The engagement and the ideational change in maritime policies saw a detachment from the Nehruvian stance.¹⁹⁸ The inward looking and regulated economy of India was made open to foreign investment under the leadership of Manmohan Singh.¹⁹⁹ Today nearly 90 percent of

¹⁹⁶ T.P. Bhat, “Structural Changes in India's Foreign Trade”. New Delhi: Institute for Studies in Industrial Development. November 2011

¹⁹⁷ Military Affairs Center. *Net Security Provider: India's Out of Area Contingency Operations*. New Delhi: Magnum Books, 2012. p.13.

¹⁹⁸ For ideational change of foreign policy see Raja Mohan, C. *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

¹⁹⁹ Nirupamo Rao. Speech on the Maritime Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy. New Delhi: *National Maritime Foundation*, India Habitat Center, July 28, 2011. (<http://meaindia.nic.in/myprint.php?id=190017885&d=29&sz=c&m=&y=&pg=>

India's trade in volume, and more than 77 percent of its trade in value, is maritime in nature.²⁰⁰ The economic growth of India increased steadily with the economic reforms and in 2011 the foreign trade policy strategies were to create a stable and trustworthy environment for investment, neutralise duties in export, create employment, reduce transaction costs, build infrastructure and promote the Indian brand.²⁰¹ The improvement of the economy correlated the advancement of the naval power and the increasing import of energy resources mostly through the SLOCs. India in 2011 imported 73 per cent of its oil from West Asia.²⁰² The energy security of the IOR was the underlying interest in the Cold War complexities and remains so for a rising India and China. Mahan posits that "commerce thrives in peace and suffers during war"²⁰³ and the naval force is a logical supplement to commercial prosperity. The 1991 reforms thus provided ideal space for the growth of the Indian navy.

The energy security became paramount such that the choke point of Hormuz which is essential for the transport of oil from West Asia into India becomes a perceived threat if any hostile actor assumes control. This anxiety of a securitisation threat is India's "Hormuz dilemma". Similarly the Malacca straits pose a threat to Chinese imports of oil causing the

&flg=& searchdata1=).

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ T.P. Bhat, "Structural Changes in India's Foreign Trade". New Delhi: Institute for Studies in Industrial Development. November 2011.

²⁰² Ernst and Young, "India's Energy Security: Key Issues Impacting the Oil and Gas Sector 3," report prepared for the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 2011 (www.ey.com/IN/en/Industries/Oil--Gas/Indias-energy-security).

²⁰³ Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Influence of sea power on history 1660- 1783*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1890.

“Malacca Dilemma”²⁰⁴.

India after 1991 expanded its influence beyond the South Asian RSC, its rising self assurance accompanied growth of its national security agendas and economic stand in the global system. India’s refusal to sign the NPT and gradually attain the position of nuclear state in 1998 followed its victory in the 1999 Kargil conflict. The developmental goals were achieved and the engagements with multilateral forums began in an environment which was stable and secure. India thus shed its “curse of continentalism”²⁰⁵ and aspired to achieve the role of a leader in the immediate neighbourhood and engaged with the extended neighbourhood with diplomacy. India declared that its strategic interests are located from the Hormuz to the Malacca regions reflecting Mahanian sea power and geopolitical aspirations.

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The region enters into a new geopolitical era post Cold War called the **Indian Oceanic order** with five main characteristics, these characteristics developed in a unipolar structure with the United states as the ‘hegemon’ in the global system as well as the IOR RSC. The five characteristics of the IOR RSC and the Indian Oceanic order ²⁰⁷ are:

1. The heterogeneity of the region causes fragmentation and the emergence of several

²⁰⁴ David Brewster. “An Indian Ocean dilemma: Sino-Indian rivalry and China's strategic vulnerability in the Indian Ocean.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 11:1, (2015): 48-59.

²⁰⁵ Raja Mohan, C, *Samudra Manthan- Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United Book Press, 2012.

²⁰⁶ Scott, David. 2006. "India's “Grand Strategy” For The Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions". *Asia-Pacific Review* 13 (2): 97-129. doi:10.1080/13439000601029048.

²⁰⁷ The Indian Ocean order as given by Bouchard can be used to formulate an Indian Ocean RSC.

regional subsystems but the conceptual unity is established with the history, approach to Cold War politics, the ‘linkage of instabilities,’²⁰⁸ and the physical geography.

2. The “regionalism in the Indian Ocean Region is original in its nature is formalised through the IORA and IONs initiatives.”²⁰⁹

3. The subordination to foreign powers in its colonial, post colonial history and the contemporary hegemony in the oceans by the United States, Japan and the rising influence of China is an essential characteristic of the IOR-RSC.

4. The important SLOCs and the choke points in the region where more than half of the world's conflicts are present form an important characteristic of the ocean.

5. The vast resources in the region: oil, spices, petroleum, and markets have always made the region a region to gain profitable influence.

These five characteristics including the non-traditional aspects of security like environmental and human security bind the region together with considerable threat perceptions and the question of sustainable development.

Rise of China and its Indian Ocean influence

The rise of China as a revisionist power in the world system has altered the unipolar structure, creating a multipolarity in accordance to the rise of other major powers such as India. India-China relations embrace multiple issues which are bilateral, regional as well as

²⁰⁸ David Brewster. “An Indian Ocean dilemma: Sino-Indian rivalry and China's strategic vulnerability in the Indian Ocean.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 11:1, (2015): 48-59.

²⁰⁹ Bouchard, Christian, and William Crumplin. “Neglected No Longer: The Indian Ocean at the Forefront of World Geopolitics and Global Geostrategy.” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 6, no. 1 (June 2010): 26–51.

global. The Chinese in the revival of their sea legacy under Zheng are steeped in Mahanian sea power notions. The strategic objectives of the two nations in the Indian Ocean region seem to be similar in stabilising the periphery, containing the nuclearisation of the region, preventing the intrusion of non-regional powers and cooperation for the “maritime silk route” as a part of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI).²¹⁰

Chinese policy makers identify four concerns related to its “periphery”, which has traditionally included India: nuclearization, terrorism, third party disputes and internal political instability in its border provinces. These translate in its India policy to the following priorities: a stable periphery; establishing parity between India and Pakistan on the nuclear issue; opposing extra-regional powers on its South Asian periphery; cooperation on its “maritime silk route” initiative which translates into India’s acceptance of its naval presence in the IOR; expanding economic interests in South Asia, including India; partnering in global regimes and resolving the border conflict. Despite these understandings of the periphery both countries share border disputes and a “trust deficits.”²¹¹ This trust deficit between the two nations can be traced to global and regional issues mainly the conflict of interests in the IOR. The border (sea and land) have multiple flash points and the trade relation in the IOR entail vexation regarding the access to energy security. The Chinese dependence on the IOR SLOCs for energy need such as oil leads to the acquisitions of bases and India’s adaptation of a Monroe doctrine in the region aims at resisting any presence in its immediate neighbourhood. The Chinese requirement for oil will double its 2000 demand by 2020 and this is bound to create further rising tensions in the region.²¹² Zhang Yenchung perceives

²¹⁰ Ibid. p 214

²¹¹ Ibid p. 215

²¹² Philip Andrews-Speed, *The Strategic Implications of China’s Energy Needs* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies July 2002), p. 25.

India's interest from Hormuz to Malacca to be an aggressive policy and "encroaching upon China's traditional sphere of influence,"²¹³ this perception is strengthened by the expected intrusion by the United States which has been a hegemony in the area through a base in Diego Garcia.

The dependence of China on energy through the Malacca straits presents what Yenchung calls a "Malacca predicament"²¹⁴ and an obstruction of this narrow strait is capable of causing a serious energy crises for China. Chinese scholars perceive the position of United States also as one to restrict China's influence in the region especially the policy of "pivot to Asia."²¹⁵ China has in perspective of such threats to its energy resources resorted to the long term strategy of the "Belt Road Initiative" and the revival of its "Maritime Silk Route." China and its rising economy have managed with its soft power diplomacy to create a "renaissance"²¹⁶ of its old historical and cultural appeal. This soft power diplomacy has been

²¹³ Zhu Fenggang, 'The Impact of the Maritime Strategies of Asia-Pacific Nations', Dangdai Yatai 5 (2006), p. 34.

²¹⁴ Zhang Yuncheng, 'The Malacca Strait and World Oil Security', Huanqiu Shibao, 5 Dec. 2003, FBIS-CPP20031217000202. p. 39

²¹⁵ See Wang Jisi, Ni Feng and Zhang Liping, 'Impact of US Global Strategic Adjustment on China', Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Yuanbao, 7 Jan. 2004, FBIS-CPP20040121000126.

Dan Jie and Ju Lang, 'Russian Strategic Bomber to Fly to China', Jiandai Wuqi, 1 March 2005, FBIS-CPP20050328000206.

Jiang Hong and Wei Yuejiang, '100,000 US Troops in the Asia-Pacific Look for "New Homes"', Guofang Bao, 10 June 2003, 1, FBIS-CPP20030611000068.

He Yijian, 'The United States Is Busy Deploying Troops in Asia', Liaowang, 13 May 2002, 54-55, FBIS-CPP20020521000054.

Li Xuanliang, 'US Military's 'New Guam Strategy'', Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan, 18 June 2006, 18-19, FBIS-CPP20060619718001.

²¹⁶ Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, 'Sources and Limits of Chinese "Soft Power"', *Survival* 48/2 (Summer 2006), 24-5; Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein, 'Hoping for the Best, Preparing for the Worst: China's Response to US Hegemony', *Journal*

accompanied by “debt diplomacy”²¹⁷ and the acquisition of ports on longterm of lease, including Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar²¹⁸ in Pakistan. Chinese naval with its Mahanian vision has been creating a “string of pearls”²¹⁹ in the Indian Ocean Region.

The Gwadar port in close proximity to the Hormuz strait could be an alternative route for the oil transport if Malacca is rendered dysfunctional and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) or the Gwadar-Kashgar pipeline would prevent the complete dependence on the Malacca straits. The increasing influence asserted by China in the Indian Ocean region which it explicates as not exclusive to the Indian Ocean may result in naval skirmishes across the Ocean. The Chinese naval presence has transformed the geopolitics of the region and their ambitions have always been clear, they have investments in Asia and Africa, covert

of Strategic Studies 29/6 (Dec. 2005), 965–6.

²¹⁷ According to a study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), from 2013 to 2016, China’s contribution to the public debt of heavily indebted poor countries nearly doubled from 6.2 percent to 11.6 percent. China’s lending is expanding even more through BRI. Noting a lack of economic feasibility of some BRI projects, many observers suspect that the initiative is partly motivated by China’s desire to stimulate its own economy, obtain strategic assets, and converting its economic access into political and strategic influence in recipient nations.

Mark Green. "China's Debt Diplomacy: How Belt and Road threatens countries ability to achieve self reliance". Foreign Policy. April 2019. url: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/25/chinas-debt-diplomacy/> Accessed on June 20, 2019.

²¹⁸ With 12 berths in place or in planning, and with the capacity to receive deep-draft merchant ships, the port facility could easily play host to Chinese warships.

Government of Pakistan, *Ministry of Ports and Shipping*, presentation on Gwadar Port Project, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PAKISTANEXTN/Resources/293051-1114424648263/Session-VII-Fazal-Ur-Rehman.pdf>

²¹⁹ The term first appeared in a Washington Times article after originating in a Booz- Allen study commissioned by the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment. See Bill Gertz, ‘China Builds Up Strategic Sea Lanes’, *Washington Times*, 18 Jan. 2005, 5 [http:// www.washtimes.com/national/20050117-115550-1929r.htm](http://www.washtimes.com/national/20050117-115550-1929r.htm)

and overt operations and caused considerable instability in the region. The Chinese challenge to the Indo-Pacific led to the Obama administration declaring the pivot to Asia. The Indian policies have shifted from the search of a consolidated Asian identity after the 1962 war and are wary of Chinese presence in the IOR. India has accessed Indonesia's Sabang port and Oman's Duqm port. The additional cooperation has been with France in the Reunion islands and United States through logistics agreements and access to Diego Garcia. India does not completely ally with either China or the United States, but through its Act East and Look East policy it engages with the Indo Pacific and collaborated with various navies to perform naval exercises. India is the largest importer of military hardware and this is a strategic core vulnerability.²²⁰

India and US: Strategic partnerships

India and United States began with amenable relation in the 1990s with the disintegration of the Soviet Union but India's nuclear tests in 1998 brought a halt to the relationship.²²¹ The relationship was strengthened with the nuclear deal of 2005 and India was not labelled as a nuclear pariah anymore.²²² The Indian-Pacific two ocean strategy was signed in 2007 and a maritime partnership was established between the two countries. The maritime

²²⁰ Commodore A.J Singh, talk on India's Maritime security. *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*. Published on Jun 16, 2014.

²²¹ Gurpreet S. Khurana (2017) Optimising India-US Maritime-Strategic Convergence, *Strategic Analysis*, 41:5, 433-446, DOI: 10.1080/09700161.2017.1343234 . Accessed on June 15, 2018.

²²² C. Uday Bhaskar, 'Nuclear Pariah No More', *The Times of India*, September 9, 2008, Url: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/LEADER-ARTICLE-Nuclear-Pariah-No-More/article-show/3460297.cms?> Accessed on September 15, 2018.

collaborations witnessed a thaw after this until the 2015 US-India joint strategic vision²²³ which led to the signing of the foundational agreements between India and the US. The Obama administration considered India the linchpin to the Asia pivot. The foundation to these collaborations was the joint perceived threat of an aggressive Chinese maritime policy and the acquisition of considerable national power by India. India being stated as the linchpin in Asian pivot presents the role of India in the IOR-RSC as a balancer, opposed to bandwagoning with either USA or China.²²⁴ The Malabar exercises of India with the United States has been marginal in its activity and the role of the two navies combined could create a more stable balance of power against China in the region. The desired collaboration could be in the disaster management, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) and Anti submarine Warfare (ASW) against China. The Indian and US agreements have moved beyond the purview of collaboration on non-traditional security threats and operations under the purview of the United Nations. The two nations share differences in their policies towards the two nations of Iran and Russia but collaborate on the defense cooperation signing the foundational agreements.

The four foundational agreements of the United States are the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), General Security of Military Information Agreement (GISMO), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2016 and agrees on sharing logistics and bases for refuelling and berthing, the COMCASA signed in 2017 provides the

²²³ Government of India, *Ministry of External Affairs*. "US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region", January 25, 2015, at http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/24728/USIndia_Joint_Strategic_Vision_for_the_AsiaPacific_and_Indian_Ocean_Region. Accessed on July 20, 2018.

²²⁴ Walt, Stephen. "The Origin of Alliances (Ithaca." *NY: Cornell University* (1997).

mechanism for the safe exchange of information. The communication between the two nations would be encrypted and facilitate the exchange of surveillance information, cyber communications, give access to communication equipment and communication channels. Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) facilitates geospatial exchange and has not been signed by the two countries. LEMOA was not signed between the two countries even after it was first proposed 14 years ago in 2002 because the US was wary of the Chinese apprehension to such a collaboration between India and the US. The LEMOA signed in 2016 exhibits outright attempt to balance Chinese acquisition of bases and influence in the region. The shift in India's policy from detesting the US presence in the Indian Ocean and calling for a Zone of Peace to collaborating on these foundational agreements presents an India which is capable of balancing and with enough national power to form an alliance with the United States. The key factor in the collaboration between the two nations is China and its antagonism in the Indian Ocean.²²⁵

Multilateralism in the IOR

The initial years after the economic liberalisation of 1991 witnessed the formation of many multilateral forums for economic cooperation amidst the trade policy dictation of the international organisations.

SAARC: India's capability and influence in the early 1990s was limited to its immediate neighbourhood and the formation of SAARC in 1985 presented a South Asian RSC organisation. The Gujral Doctrine announced around 1996 advocating for friendly relations

²²⁵ Gurpreet S. Khurana (2017) Optimising India-US Maritime-Strategic Convergence, *Strategic Analysis*, 41:5, 433-446, DOI: 10.1080/09700161.2017.1343234 p. 442

in the region in context of the SAARC led to the SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) in 1993 and a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) in 2004. Despite, such agreements India remained marginal in SAARC which focused on the South Asian RSC and from 1997 India underwent a rise in capability and economic standards thereby increasing its regional interests and parameters of security towards the Indian Ocean. Thus, the Indian Ocean forums of IOR-ARC and IONS began their functionality in the IOR- RSC.

IOR-ARC

“The IORA is the single ‘permanent’ inter-governmental organisation with 21-Members and 7 Dialogue partners. It was first established in March 1995 in Mauritius as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and formally launched two years later as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC); this was renamed IORA in November 2013.”²²⁶ The importance of the IORA deteriorated for India with its economic view and is not significant forum for India.

IONS set up in 2008 was based on the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) and is an organisation that serves as a forum under the leadership of India in the IOR. India has denied the Chinese membership of the IONS and is a part of its “Look South” policy. The IONS leadership has been passed on to different countries to promote the vision of Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) . The SAGAR vision aspires India to become a blue water economy, but the capabilities seem far fetched. The movement from a brown water economy to a blue water economy for India is an incremental phenomena. The process will be expensive and slow but the blue economy with the idea of sustainable development is the

²²⁶Christian Wagner (2013) The Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC): the futile quest for regionalism?, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 9:1, 6-16. DOI: [10.1080/19480881.2013.793909](https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2013.793909)

future of the Indian Ocean Region.

BIMSTEC was set up in 1998 by Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Nepal and Bhutan joined the forum in 2004. The organisation devoid of Pakistan, indulging the rest of the South Asian states and focusing around the Bay of Bengal became an organisation to articulate India's Look East or Act East policy. BIMSTEC symbolises growing continuity between the SAARC and ASEAN and promoted economic cooperation in the region. The Bay of Bengal in such close proximity to the Malacca straits and the exclusion of China was to combat its influence in Myanmar. BIMSTEC apart from facilitating economic cooperation also has a Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter terrorism as of 2004. The 2008 convention of the BIMSTEC included combating terrorism, organised crime, and drug trafficking in the region. The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) brought Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar together and excluded China in 2000²²⁷. The MGC is another Indian initiative to engage with the military regime in Myanmar and helps India balance Chinese policy in the region. All these multilateral forums work towards the engagement with the East following the Look East Policy focusing on the ASEAN and South East Asia. The new emergence of the regional construct of the Indo-Pacific will centre more engagement of India in the region at least with diplomacy if not military presence.

QUAD : The grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US, and Japan is known as the Quadrilateral security dialogue of QUAD, it was first proposed by Shinzo Abe in 2007. The QUAD does not function as a binding or a military collaborative, it was formed to counter China and its aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific. The formation of Quad followed

²²⁷ India-Bimstec, *BIMSTEC summit declaration*, Bangkok, 31st July 2004, [www. bimstec.org](http://www.bimstec.org)

the Asian pivot construct. The QUAD and India as a member of the QUAD has welcomed the initiative but with strategic caution, the context was the Doklam crisis which affected the relationship between the two countries which only stabilized with the Wuhan Summit. This strategic caution in against forming a completely aggressive stance against China is also important in context of the protectionist policies of the Trump administration.

The Maritime strategy of India

The maritime-military power was represented in the IOR RSC by the Indian Navy and its maritime doctrines. The driving force for the development of the Indian Navy has been to defend the territories from the hostile powers seeking influence.²²⁸ The “arc of from the Persian Gulf to the straits of Malacca” according to the Indian Navy is a “legitimate area of interest.”²²⁹ The entry of the Enterprise into the region during the 1971 war certainly affected the security architecture of the country, this hostile presence ‘seeped into India’s cultural memory’²³⁰ and a specific maritime doctrine and strategy was formulated to address such issues. Chinese have claimed that India cannot assert exclusive control over its Indian Ocean territories.²³¹

²²⁸ The argument here is that as a rising power India will face challenges from other major powers, the relative gain of one power will incite another to curb its rise. This is a threat to security

See Nicholas Sykman, *America’s strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*;

²²⁹ Indian Navy. “Maritime Doctrine- 2004.” Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), Sivakasi: Standard Press (India) Pvt. Ltd, 2004.

²³⁰ Holmes, Winner and Yoshihara. *Indian Naval strategy in the Twenty-First Century*. 2009. London: Routledge. p.31

²³¹ Geoffrey Barker (2011), “Jostling Giants”, Inside story.

India in the security architecture gives a central position to submarines because they are central to the act of sea-denial²³², the Ocean also sustains “a peculiar topography, salinity, and thermoclines and all hinder the ability of sonar to detect submarines.”²³³ The development of the Indian Navy has been incremental but not revolutionary, the implication here is the lethargic process of acquisition of the submarines and extremely slow development of indigenous ship building that was compiled first during the Cold War and is still straggling. India currently also does not have the capability to prevent any other power from venturing into the ocean²³⁴ despite having the 5th largest navy in the globe. The capabilities of India in the Indian ocean have largely been determined with these doctrines which are presented in accordance to the changing geopolitical architecture of the area. The navy in the doctrine segregates its primary and secondary area of interests. The primary areas are the littoral areas of the northern boundaries of the ocean including the choke points of and the International shipping lanes (ISLs). The secondary areas of interest is the Indo-Pacific region which is the emerging geo-strategic region with respect to conflict between China and the other stake holders in the region. The pivot to Asia which is a US construction entails a similar idea to influence the region.

²³² Cote, O. R. “The third battle: innovation in the U.S. Navy’s silent Cold War struggle with Soviet submarines.” Newport, R.I: Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. 2019.

²³³ Harsh V. Pant, *The Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*. 1st Edition (Hardback) - Routledge. 2012
<https://www.routledge.com/The-Rise-of-the-Indian-Navy-Internal-Vulnerabilities-External-Challenges/Pant/p/book/9781409430872>

²³⁴ Ibid

Figure 3.1: Areas of Interest 2015



National Security Imperatives of the Indian Navy

Strategic deterrence in naval power projection operates at multiple levels assessing the different elements of national power. This definition of national power includes diplomacy, economy and military aspects apart from the influence of the global structural system. The Presence and Surveillance Systems (PSM) ensure a “forward presence” which is enforced through Constructive Maritime Engagement (CME). The deterrence against a stronger force can be achieved by forming coalitions which are friendly, like the Malabar exercises of 2007. Nuclear deterrence can be achieved by submarines powered with nuclear heads, then first use policy is adopted and such submarines can give the capability of second strike. The INS Arihant and Chakra – on lease from Russia - are the two nuclear-powered submarines currently in service with the Navy. The second of the Arihant class was launched in 2017 and is in advanced stage of completion. The Arihant class is armed with nuclear capable missiles and is critical to India’s second strike capability. The navy also practices deterrence by sea denial and active deterrence with escalatory punishment. Gurpreet Khurana asserts that the Navy is ideal for compliance or punishment by inflicting force because it has controlled escalation.²³⁵

Multilateral structures have been ineffectual in addressing the overall issues in the IOR-RSC. The Maritime documents list Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) engaging with non-traditional threats such as poaching, trafficking, terrorism, smuggling while ensuring safety of the ISLs. “India’s maritime military strategy is underpinned on the freedom to use the seas for our national purposes, under all circumstances.”²³⁶

²³⁵ Gurpreet S. Khurana. “Optimising India–US Maritime-Strategic Convergence.” Strategic Analysis, vol.41 (5), (2017): 433-446.

²³⁶ Government of India.Ministry of Defence (Navy). “Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy,” Indian Navy, Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2,

Stability operations are another way in which the navy performs peacekeeping operations and provides assistance to other countries. The Operation Flowers are Blooming in 1986 assisted Seychelles to thwart coup attempts. Operation Cactus in 1988 was to defend the Maldivian President but failed to materialise. India also intervened in Sri Lanka and Mozambique while different security missions under the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) were provided in the region, the Indian navy lists all these actions in their maritime doctrine (2007) and strategy (2009).

The 2015 strategy ensuring freedom of the sea extends the areas of interests and confronts proxy wars in by Pakistan following the 2008 Mumbai attacks while presenting horizontal escalation in the sea to counter China on land. The 2015 strategy aims for India to be a “net security provider” in the region which is financially ambitious. The capabilities of India even with a navy and strategies are ambitions rather than capabilities which are no match to China, its string of pearls, the Belt Road initiative and military power.²³⁷ The need for collaboration is imminent, without which India cannot balance China.

John Mearsheimer once pointed at the realpolitik of China and its open acceptance of the idea of realism and hard power. China seems persistent in its horizontal expansion, and its entry into the Indian Ocean has been economic, while the islands, especially Sri Lanka is under Chinese influence with the ‘debt diplomacy.’ Sri Lanka remains an important regional centre of power in the middle of the IOR. Chinese foray into the Indian Ocean is an alarming shift in region and need immediate attention.

Integrated Headquarters,, October 2015, pp. 34–35; and Freedom to use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy, Integrated Head- quarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), May 2007, pp. 59–60.

²³⁷ Pant, Harsh V. India in the Indian Ocean region. Growing mismatch between ambitions and capabilities. *Pacific Affairs*, Volume 82, Number 2, Summer 2009, pp. 279-297(19)

The Belt Road Initiative expands through land over the disputed regions of Kashmir and through Sea controlling Sri Lanka, this is an unwelcome development for India. The BRI intends to access the energy corridor, connect with Europe and Africa with similar strategies of debt diplomacy and multiple SEZs throughout the region. The debt diplomacy provides another strand of nexus between the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the region. Apart from China, US presence in the Indian Ocean today is a welcome exercise for India. The containment of a persistently rising China has been attempted on multiple forums like BIMSTEC, SAARC, IORA, IONS, and finally QUAD. These multilateral forums extend into the Indo-Pacific which is the 2015 strategic influence extension in the maritime doctrine of India.

The geoeconomics of the region will be discussed in the next chapter with the multilateral forums and their role in the Indian Ocean RSC. The increase in capabilities has certainly led India to extend its primary areas of interests in the region but the capabilities are short in hand, especially to enter the Indo-Pacific.

The disputes in the South China sea and Indian presence in China's neighbourhood could be show of strength for India, however, while China possesses the capabilities to engage with the IOR, India does not possess enough to engage in the Indo-Pacific. The immediate neighbourhood policy for bilateral engagements and economic and military alliances for engagements into the Indo-Pacific region seem reasonable for the naval force of India.

The major contenders in the Indian Ocean Region today are China, Japan, India, and the USA. Though, USA has and will maintain its hegemony over the region and call for "securitisation." India with its nuclear presence, its competition with China has created a different equation of power. Each nation is dealing with their security dilemma and a clash

of interest, economic or security which makes this the pivot of Asia.

Kaplan argues today that a triangular maritime dynamic today appears inevitable. “India and china are emphasising their sea power, the job of managing a peaceful rise will fall on the U.S Navy to a significant extent. There will surely be tensions as the gaps in their relative strength begin to close”.²³⁸ The Chinese capital penetrating the African hinterland in a modern day “Scramble for Africa”²³⁹ the emergence of Asian giants, the Indian Ocean as the centre stage of rivalry in the 21st century²⁴⁰ and the new “Asia Pacific Century”²⁴¹ suggest the shift in the historiography of the world system towards the East and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is one of the most significant regions in the world. The region is looked upon with notions of ‘transnational imaginary geography’²⁴², and inter-regionalism.²⁴³

The rise of the Asian economies has the potential to alter the world’s maritime environment and these nations have become important players in geoeconomic and strategic equations. The rise of India and China in Asia has the potential to radically alter the world’s maritime environment. Moreover the rise of these countries in international politics has made them important players in all aspects, mitigation of global warming, managing the world’s

²³⁸ Ibid

²³⁹ Moorthy and Jamal. *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

²⁴⁰ Robert Kaplan. “Center Stage for the 21st Century: Rivalry in the Indian Ocean.” *Foreign Affairs*. March 16, 2009.
https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/03/rivalry_in_the_indian_ocean.html

²⁴¹ Kevin Rudd and Ronald Reagan who call the 21st century focused in the Asia Pacific

²⁴² Ghosh and Mueke. *Cultures of Trade: Indian Ocean Exchanges*. Cambridge Publishers: UK. 2007.

²⁴³ Sugata Bose. Sugata. *A Hundred Horizons*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

energy markets, refashioning the international economic order, sustaining food security, or the construction of a stable balance of power in Asia.

Conclusion

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in its ideational formulation encompasses the Indian Ocean and the twenty-four states in proximity to its littoral. The construct of the region is a highly contested one with historians questioning the unity of the Indian Ocean owing to its culturally diverse population. India is situated in the centre of the IOR-RSC and its policies affect the world system. The denouement of the Cold War has been used as a temporal divide to present a stark contrast in India's policies before and after.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) finds its socio-economic foundations from the monsoon winds that facilitate trans-oceanic trade and interaction. The system of interactions present before the European intervention in the region facilitated the exchange of ideas, religion, culture, and trade. The interaction was so extensive that it formed in its own way a global economic system.

The unity of the ocean is based on its historical interaction, its physical feature of “a landlocked sea”²⁴⁴ and a “linkage of instabilities”²⁴⁵ that bring unity in the Indian Ocean. Bose explains the “shared extra-territorial identity and universalist aspiration” of the IOR population in the trade movements and cultural interactions. The IOR is congruous with

²⁴⁴ Pannikar, KM. *India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945: 56

²⁴⁵ Váli, Ferenc A. *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region*. 1st ed. London: Collier Macmillan, 1976: 41

Thompson's classification of a subsystem²⁴⁶ and is a "distinctive theatre of operations"²⁴⁷ throughout history. The geopolitical orientations of the IOR resonate with the geopolitical theories "within their larger discursive formations- Imperialist discourse, Cold War discourse, and discourses in the new world order and the global environmental change."²⁴⁸ The Indian Ocean is at the "heart of the third world" and the "ocean of the south"²⁴⁹ and hence has been "characterised by extra regional influence, control and domination."²⁵⁰ The geopolitics of the Cold War witnessed Mackinder's heartland theory in the strategy of the Soviet Union, while the USA confronted them with Mahanian strategies of sea power. India finds itself in the Rimlands of Eurasia which according to Spykman²⁵¹ is a strategic strength giving access to land and sea. Mahan's theories of sea power are the most relevant in the study of the geopolitical orientations of the Indian Ocean Region as well as the different actors that have interests in the regions. The geopolitical theories connected to the history and the IOR-RSC explain the strategic complexities of the region.

²⁴⁶Thompson. R. William. "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1. (March, 1973): 89-

117.

²⁴⁷ Ibid p:92

²⁴⁸Tuathail, Dalby, and Routledge. *The Geopolitics Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.

²⁴⁹ Moorthy and Jamal. *Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

²⁵⁰ Rais, Rasul Bux. *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987:14

²⁵¹ Nicholas John Spykman; Helen R. Nicholl et al. *The geography of peace*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944: 124

The IOR in its pre-colonial history was a “self conscious”²⁵² world in an “inter-regional system”²⁵³ which benefitted from interaction among its littoral countries and civilisations prospered along its coasts. The region is the oldest ocean in terms of being transversed by humans. The Egyptians, the Arabs, the Chinese and the Malay people and their trade was supported by the monsoons. The evidence of maritime culture can be found in archaeological and literary sources. Apart from them the Andhras, Kushanas, Guptas, Cholas, and the Vijaynagara empire have a significant record of sailing in the oceans.

The colonial advent brought the monopolisation of trade and induced competition among the European powers for control in the region. The importance of the Hormuz and the Malacca straits emerged as maritime choke points. The *Pax Britannica* is established in the Indian Ocean and has been called a British Lake.²⁵⁴ The Portuguese strategies of controlling the choke points to control the trade continue throughout the history of the region. The British were strengthened with the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and it connected the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean. The First World War saw the shift from a Anglo-Japanese alliance to a Anglo-American alliance and the Americans entered the IOR-RSC during the Second World War. India became a regional centre of power as the “periphery-to-metropole” and India with other colonies in the region supplied the alliance with resources and armies during the War.

²⁵² Moorthy and Jamal. Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives. New York: Routledge, 2010.

²⁵³ Bose, Sugata. A hundred horizons: the Indian Ocean in the age of global empire. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006.

²⁵⁴ Pannikar, KM. India and the Indian Ocean: an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945: 59

The end of the Second World War brought significant changes in the world system with the independence of colonies to form independent nation-states and the world systems changed into a bi-polar structure which militarised the ocean for the next few decades. The British withdrawal from the East of Suez in 1968 and consequential American entry in a so called “power vacuum” was justified as providing stability to the region. The farce of the vacuum to gain access to the IOR was refuted by various arguments explaining how the financial profits and the energy security was the underlying motive of the United States.

The presence of the United States led to the Soviet entry into the region and a reciprocal escalation continued to expand the influence and control of extra regional powers in the region. Cantori and Spiegel described this phenomenon as “intrusive”²⁵⁵ The conflicts were accommodated and often induced and resulted in anxieties which brought the littoral nations together in proposal for an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZOP).²⁵⁶

Meanwhile, independence of the littoral states post Second World War had changed the geopolitical equation of the region and a multitude of newly formed nations struggled with the formation of a national identity. India as the regional power centre under the British assumed a self-perceived leadership role. The littoral countries with weak political systems wanted to retain their newly won independence and not indulge in the superpower rivalry unravelling in the ocean.

²⁵⁵ Steven L. Spiegel, Louis J. Cantori. "International Regions: A comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems." *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 13, Issue 4, (December 1969): 361–380.

²⁵⁶ Jayaramu. P.S. “Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: Problems and perspectives.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (April - June 1986): 237- 246.

The non-alignment movement thus was the response of the littoral nations which did not want to bandwagon nor had enough capability or national power to balance the rivalry. The policy of non-alignment, norms of disarmament and Panchsheel principles of peaceful coexistence were in a certain sense adopted by the region to steer away from a potential war.

The central position of India in the Ocean and its coastline of 7516 kms contribute to a geopolitical advantage as well as the vulnerability of the region. In its initial years of independence India was occupied with its land border conflicts- the Partition, the Kashmir conflict, and the 1962 war with China. India's preoccupation with its land borders, the financial constraints, internal insurgencies, and the integration of princely states hindered any and all attention to sea power or the Indian Navy, which performed a coastal constabulary role and was a reconfiguration of the Royal Indian Navy.

The demand for the Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean was overlooked by the superpowers who wanted assurance of access to the energy reserves, the vital choke points for the transportation of these energy reserves, and the protection of the SLOCs from the other major powers. India's normative stance of non-alignment, Asian identity and disarmament was weakened after being defeated in the 1962 war. India then under the leadership of Indira Gandhi adopted a *realpolitik* view of world politics.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty was being discussed to prevent a Nuclear war but the conditions of the treaty were discriminatory²⁵⁷ and India refused to sign it. The balance in the IOR changed in the 1970s where India was initially isolated by alliance formation

²⁵⁷ Non Proliferation Treaty, (1968) United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text>

between Pakistan and the United States while the Chinese and the United States were undergoing a phase of rapprochement under the Nixon administration. India was surrounded by these alliances and subsequently, in 1971 signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union. In the same year, the Bangladesh liberation war was fought wherein India extended its support to Bangladesh against Pakistan. A US Naval task force led by 7th fleet carrier 'Enterprise' entered the Bay of Bengal to assist Pakistan. This incident led Indian leadership to understand the vulnerability in the absence of a sea power.

Meanwhile, the United States developed Diego Garcia as a base and subsequent Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led to an escalation of conflict in the region. The reaction to the developments led to multiple treaties being signed to contain the escalation, which included the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (LANWFZ) (TLATELOLCO) proposals (1967), the Outer space treaty (1967), and the Seabed Treaty (1971).

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) or the Law of the Seas was concluded in 1984 and came into force on 1994. The most significant clause of the UNCLOS III is the introduction of the Exclusive Economic Zone. India engaged with the islands in the region strategised *Operation Cactus* (1988), *Operation Lal Dora* (1983) and *Operation Viraat* (1988). These were carried out when the opportunities presented themselves but were not a part of any grand strategy in the seas.

The major factors in the development of the geopolitical orientations in the IOR were the entry of American naval task force into the Bay of Bengal during the last stage of the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971, turbulence in the Persian Gulf, Sino-US rapprochement, and Soviet

military intervention in Afghanistan.

India after 1991 expanded its influence into beyond the South Asian RSC, its rising self assurance accompanied the growth of its national security agenda and economic strength in the global system. India's refusal to sign the NPT and gradually attain the position of nuclear state in 1998 was followed by its victory in the 1999 Kargil conflict. The developmental goals were achieved and the engagements with multilateral forums began in an environment which was stable and secure. India thus shed its "curse of continentalism"²⁵⁸ and aspired to achieve the role of a leader in the immediate neighbourhood and engaged with the extended neighbourhood with diplomacy.

The evolution of the Indian Navy and the capabilities of its sea power have been incremental but not revolutionary. The emergence of new security threats in region which are non-traditional has increased the role of the navy further. The Chinese 'encirclement of India' and its Belt Road initiative have led to a newfound cooperation with the United States. The relationship was strengthened with the nuclear deal of 2005 and India was not labelled as a nuclear pariah anymore.²⁵⁹

The Indo-Pacific two ocean strategy was signed in 2007 and a maritime partnership was established between the two countries. The maritime collaborations witnessed a thaw after

²⁵⁸ Raja Mohan. 'Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.' Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (October-December, 201): 107–109

²⁵⁹ C. Uday Bhaskar, 'Nuclear Pariah No More', The Times of India, September 9, 2008, at [http:// timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/LEADER-ARTICLE-Nuclear-Pariah-No-More/article show/3460297.cms?](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/LEADER-ARTICLE-Nuclear-Pariah-No-More/article show/3460297.cms?)

this until the 2015 US-India joint strategic vision²⁶⁰ which led to the signing of foundational agreements between India and the US. The Obama administration considered India the linchpin to the Asia pivot.

The four foundational agreements of the United States are the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), General Security of Military Information Agreement (GISMO), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and these are a drastic shift from the pro-Soviet policies or the non-alignment initiative of India.

India has issued three maritime doctrines in the last 20 years and has aspirations of a blue-water economy in the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific. India's naval doctrines (its collaborations with the US, Japan, Australia) and multilateral forums like IONS present a complete shift in its policies.

The Indian Ocean Region is a significant regional security system and with the entry of China into the region will demand much more advancement of capability and policy making from India. It is no exaggeration to say that it is India's presence and role in the Indo-Pacific that will determine India's position in the international power hierarchy in the 21st century.

²⁶⁰ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, 'US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region', January 25, 2015, at http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/24728/USIndia_Joint_Strategic_Vision_for_the_AsiaPacific_and_Indian_Ocean_Region.

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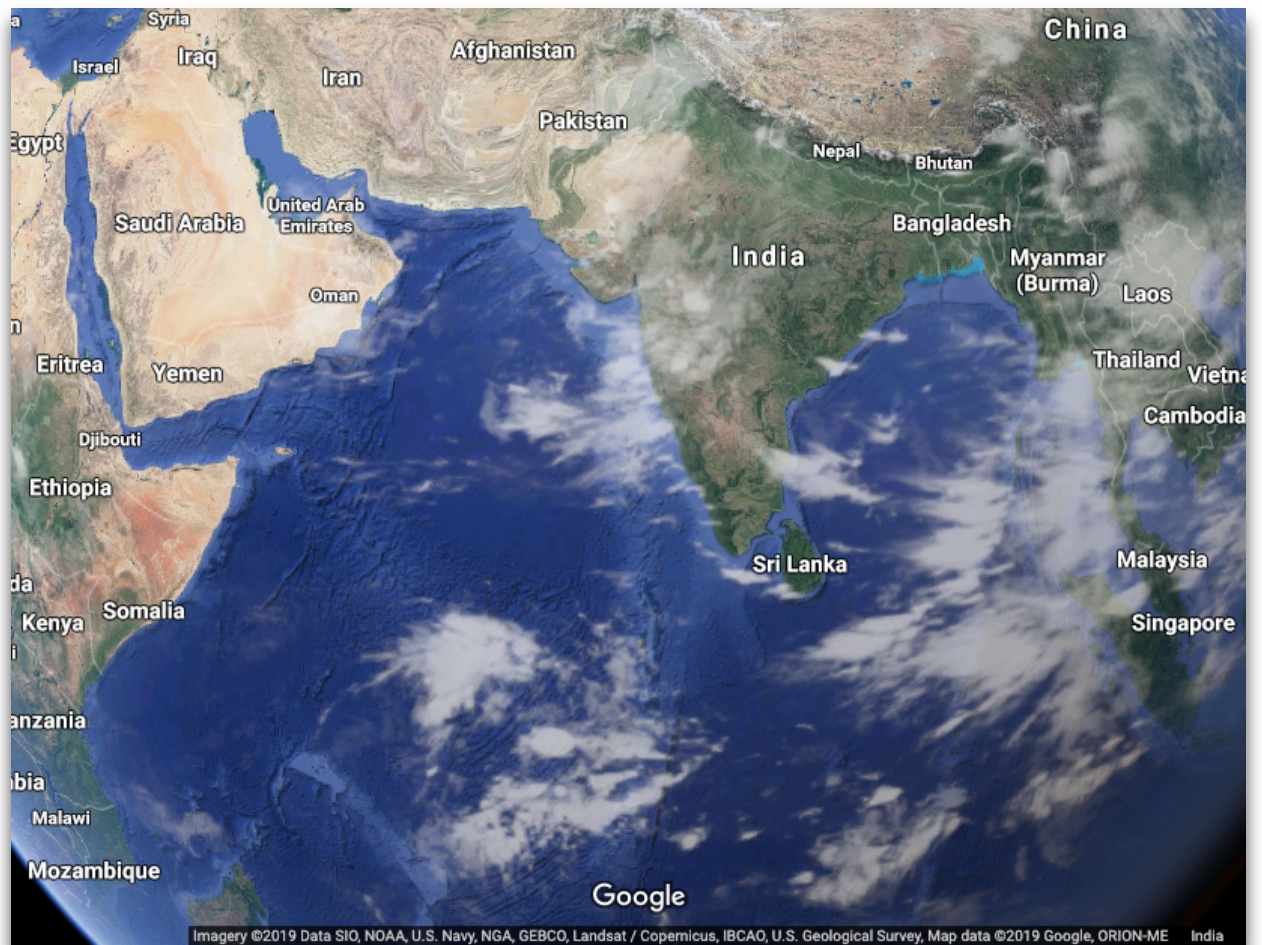
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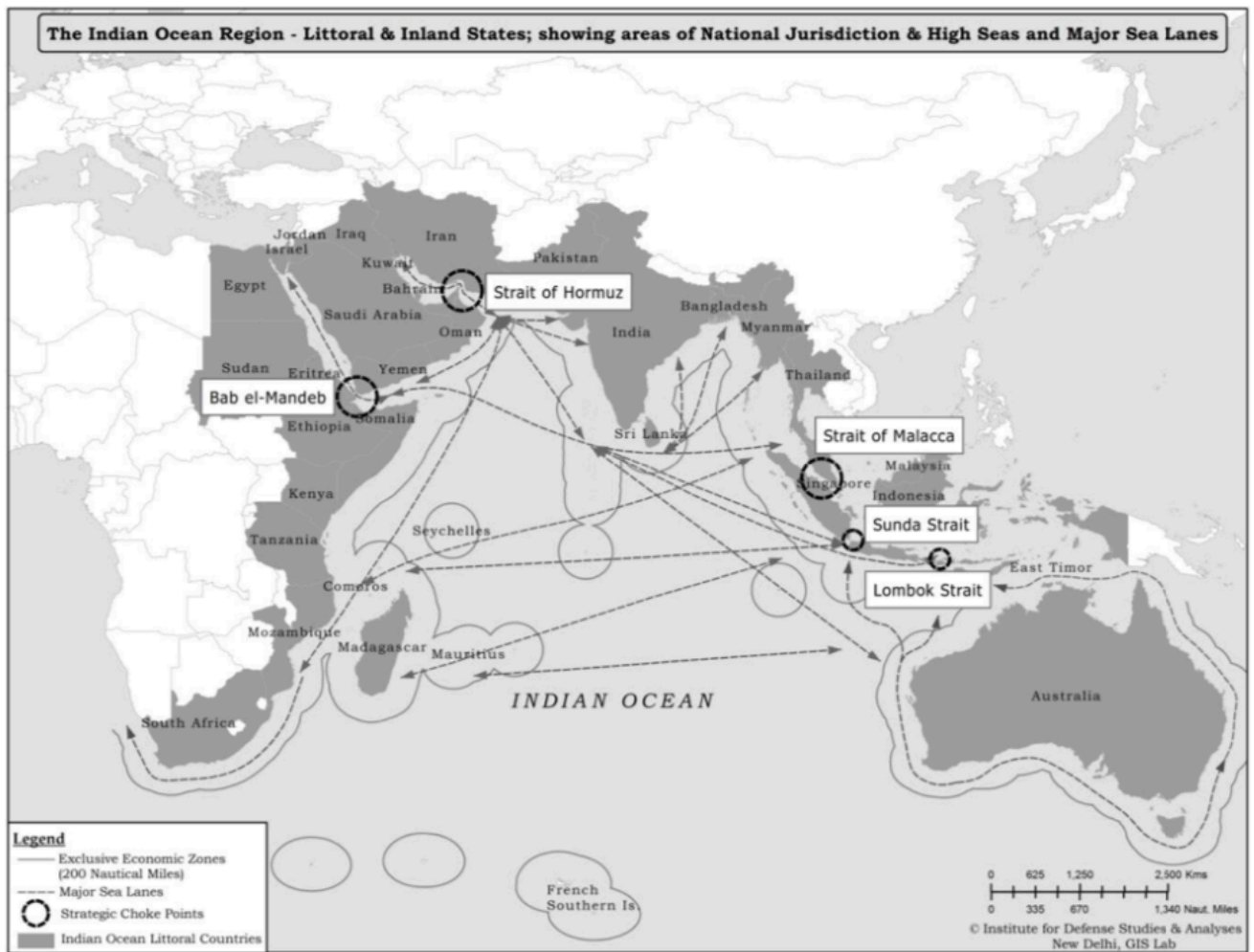
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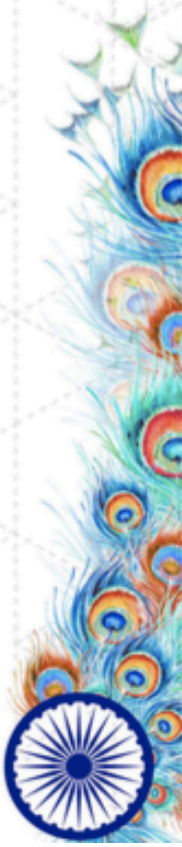
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