

An Investigative Study on the Recent Geopolitical Tension in the Indian Ocean Region; With Special Reference to String of Pearls & Necklace of Diamond Strategies

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Abstract— This paper examines whether India's necklace of diamond strategy has been successful to counter China's string of pearls strategy in the Indian Ocean region. China's string of pearls strategy ensures establishing maritime bases in Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Djibouti to enhance its influence and military network. India argues that China is trying to surround itself with a network of dual-use port facilities in the Indian Ocean, the main concern here is Defence and Energy security. China is even affiliated with Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, and Iraq, all currently splintered by conflict. However, in this geopolitical crisis between China and India, it is possible to identify how successful their strategies have been. Accordingly, the Indian Ocean region is more important than choosing any other region. This is qualitative research based on descriptive analysis. Here information is obtained through secondary data and information is obtained through research papers and articles conducted in this regard. And also maps are used to study the geographical distribution. According to the analysis, it can be concluded that India has managed to exert a significant influence on China through its Necklace of Diamonds. It can be concluded that India is making many efforts that are not second to China. Accordingly, it is clear that India has achieved some success in implementing its strategy through the Necklace of Diamond.

Keywords—Indian Ocean region, Necklace of Diamonds, String of Pearls

I. INTRODUCTION

'Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas' (Mahan, The Indian Ocean In World Politics: Reflections On Its Future By Prasanta Sen Gupta, 1987). China and India, which are Asia's two rising powers, aim to dominate this region of water to satisfy their regional and global ambitions. Both states have intentions to increase their strategic influence to secure and challenge their competitors. (Jahanzaib Mengal, 2022) Strategically, China is consolidating its power through the "String of Pearls policy" and India is consolidating its power through the "Necklace of Diamonds" concept. China is encircling India through the String of Pearls, the Debt Trap, CPEC, and the Belt and Road Initiative. China is attempting to invade the Andaman Sea and gain control of some portions of the Indian Ocean, which is causing tensions between the countries. China is

increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean over the past few years through its Debt Trap Diplomacy and Strings of Pearls strategy to contain Indian hold in the Indian Ocean. In a counter-action, India has started working on the 'Necklace of Diamonds' strategy. This strategy aims at garlanding China or in simple words, the counter encirclement strategy. India is expanding its naval bases and is also improving relations with strategically placed countries to counter China's strategies. India, Japan, and the United States have signed a deal to resist China's dominance in the Indo-Pacific area. India has also launched a new tri-service using the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where China is attempting to establish its concentration.

However, In contrast to China's string of pearls policy, India is already using the necklace of diamond strategy. But there is a problem with whether the strategies taken by India through the Necklace of Diamonds have been successful in establishing power in the Indian Ocean. It is a current need to study whether India's necklace of diamond strategy succeeds or fails to fight China's String of Pearls policy.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is an eternal link between the ocean and man. This relationship is seen in various forms, commercial, economic and political. Here, the political activity regarding the ocean became directly affected with the recognition of ocean power in the nineteenth century. China and India can be mentioned as two countries that have worked very well in establishing ocean power. Accordingly, at present, it is known to the whole world that China is working to establish its maritime power through "String of pearls policy" and India is working to establish its maritime power through "Necklace of Diamond". It is clear that India is very keen to suppress China's power through certain strategies. But the aim here is to study whether those strategies are able to suppress China's power. Accordingly, "Whether the India's necklace of diamond strategy has been successful to counter the China's string of pearls strategic in the Indian ocean region?" is the main research problem. It is clear that India is very keen to suppress China's power through certain

strategies. But the aim here is to study whether those strategies are able to suppress China's power. Accordingly, **"Whether the India's necklace of diamond strategy has been successful to counter the China's string of pearls strategic in the Indian ocean region?"** is the main research problem.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The main objective of the research is to examine whether India's necklace of diamond strategy has been successful to counter China's string of pearls strategic in the Indian Ocean region.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining geopolitical strategy is a complicated synthesis of a multidisciplinary approach, taking into account political science, economics, history, and geographical situation. Politics is more significant in geopolitics than geo (space), because politics precedes that mutual relationship. Geopolitical analyses and projections inform state policy in the form of strategy and real actions. Geopolitics aims to provide answers to two key questions: what will happen and what to do? Often, for the purposes of geopolitical goals, there are abusing terms such as: "natural boundaries", "historical right", "living space", "limited sovereignty", "export of democracy", "preventive war", "human rights protection" etc." (Kovacevic, 2005) The West's global political, military, economic, and cultural superiority stretches back to the age of maritime conquests around the end of the 15th century. For centuries, the West has imposed worldwide dominance through conquest of rich colonies and economic progress. The state must expand its area in order to live and survive. As the state expands, it tends to take up the essential living space ("lebensraum"). Lebensraum is a concept that defined Nazi Germany's primary goal for territorial aggression. Adolf Hitler detailed in his book "Mein Kampf" his belief that the German people required lebensraum land and raw materials for a Greater Germany - and that this could only be found in the East. The Nazi strategy of slaughter, expulsion, "Germanization," and enslavement of the Slavic people, and eventual colonization of the territory by genetically pure German people, carried out these intentions. Karl Haushofer defined geopolitics as the science of the spatial dependency of political events. He predicted future global organization, splitting the world into three pan-areas: Pan-America, where the United States would dominate, Pan-Europe, where Germany would dominate, and Pan-Asia, where Japan would dominate. The Anglo-American school of geopolitics refers to lessons on land dominance or the advantage of naval power (Haushofer, 2007).

As mentioned above, World War II, Cold War, and Post-Cold War had in the world. There were conflicts between powerful countries to consolidate power geopolitically. Also, the invasion of weak states by strong

states also happened as a result of consolidating this power. However, when we move to the Asian region, the two countries that are important in studying these geopolitical crises in Asian countries are India and China. It is confirmed in the literature investigation that China has used the string of pearls policy and India has used the Necklace of Diamond strategy to consolidate its power in the Indian Ocean region. India has been making a "Necklace of Diamonds" to counter the "String of Pearls" created by China. Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, Asian countries, and Somalia are a number of the countries wherever China is establishing maritime bases as a "String of Pearls" to boost its influence and military networks. (Sumanta Bhattacharya, 2021). India is also attempting something similar to offset China's string of pearls. India has built the Necklace of Diamonds and is suing other countries' ports to assist India battle China. Changi Naval Base in Singapore, Chabahar Port in Iran, Assumption Islands in Seychelles, Sabang Port in Indonesia, and Duqm Port in Oman make up the Necklace.. However, over the years, India has worked to upgrade its navy and maritime policy in order to counterbalance China's String of Pearls plan (A.J.Scott, 2006). Under the Modi administration, India has openly supported the Indian Ocean, Look East Policy, as its backyard, and has worked to strengthen its long-standing relationships with littoral states as well as strategic collaborations with major littoral countries Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Between 1995 and 2005, China's In 2011, India's previous foreign secretary coined the term "Necklace of Diamonds" for the first time. This approach intends to resist and counterbalance China's growing assertiveness, as well as its construction of ports and other infrastructure projects with IOR littoral states, which are viewed as a direct threat and 'encirclement' of India in its immediate neighborhood (Ramachandran, 2017) consumption for crude oil more than doubled (Kaplan, 2009), and this trend is expected to continue for the next twenty years. China imports 10 million barrels of crude oil per day on average, with a peak of 12 million barrels per day (Collins, 2016). In terms of security and regional goals, India is likewise trailing China. India is already expanding its trade connections and economic activity in the IOR in order to preserve its interests and expand its influence (Kaplan, 2009). Despite the fact that India and China do not acknowledge the existence of a strategic rivalry or competition in the Indian Ocean, their activities and attitudes do. Booz Allen initially used the phrase "String of Pearls" in his 2005 paper titled "Energy Futures in Asia." Booz anticipated Chinese naval expansion by constructing infrastructure projects and making various investments in Asian littoral states to bolster its naval dominance in IOR. However, Booz's analysis has been used as an analytical tool to analyze and explain China's evolving interests and assertiveness (China's desire to install military bases and intelligence stations) in South

Asian littoral regions over the years. China has built tighter and more diplomatic contacts with the Indian Ocean Region's coastal states over the years in order to increase its naval might. The 'String of Pearls' is primarily put forth by Shiv Shankar Menon in his book "Choices in the making intended to increase China's economic, political, and diplomatic weight in the world. India is doing all possible to safeguard its interests. India's Diamond Necklace was created to rival China's Pearl String. However, there have been several strategy obstacles in its successful implementation, since China has increased its economic relations with about 90% of the world's countries, providing financial aid to the majority of countries, including terrorist-run countries. China's One Belt, One Road Initiative is regarded as the world's most risky financial project. (Biswas, 2022). It shows that China is at risk. However, India is increasing its relation with many countries like Japan, US, Sri Lanka to counter the China influence in the Asia region and especially in the Indian Ocean region, it has also adopted the Act East policy to gather more support against China, after the South China Sea conflict, most of the Asian countries are supporting India. (Biswas, 2022). "Crisis in India-China relations has best been managed, but not resolved". of India's Foreign Policy" (Menon, 2016). A study of literary sources will confirm that much research has been done on this struggle between China and India. But it is clear that whether India's diamond chain strategy has been more successful than China's string of pearls policy in consolidating its power, especially in the Indian Ocean region, has not been widely studied.

V. METHODOLOGY

In this study "Indian Ocean Region" is selected as the study area. That is because both China and India are working to establish the power of the ocean, which includes the Indian Ocean region.



Figure 1.1: China's String of pearls policy Source: <https://www.google.com/>, (2023)



Figure 1.2 : Necklace of Diamond Source: <https://www.google.com/>, (2023)

This research based on qualitative data and the analysis that data according to the descriptive method. Secondary data obtained from published sources like various books, international journals newspapers, articles, magazines, and websites on the internet, have formed an important component of this study and provide a foundation to it.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The String of Pearls is a strategy deployed by China, by building a network of commercial and military bases and ports in many countries. This strategy has been deployed by China to protect its trade interests, as a major chunk of its trade passes through the Indian Ocean and various choke points like Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca and Lombok Strait (Jha, 2022). To resolve the 'Malacca Dilemma' Chinese President Hu Jintao, in 2004, stretched out the strategy of a "new historic mission" that necessitated Chinese marine forces to be placed in offshore waters for major military tasks. It signified China's determination of building a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Ever since, China has embarked to expand its naval presence in Indian Ocean Region by linking a 'patronage of network' together in the Indian Ocean littoral states (Kostecka, 2011). In its Maritime Silk Road Initiative, China has begun a project of port development and diplomatic support in littoral states such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, all of which has harmed India's strategic interests and raised concern about encirclement in the Indian Ocean.

According to Yash Jha (2022) there three main Impact of String of Pearls on India. First one is It endangers Indian maritime security. China is developing more firepower with more submarines, destroyers, vessels, and ships. Their presence will pose a threat to India's security through the water. Second one is impact on the Indian economy Indian resources will be diverted towards defense and security. Thus, the economy will not reach its potential, hampering economic growth. This may further lead to instability in India and the whole east and southeast region.

And third one is the strategic clout of India which it enjoys today in the Indian ocean will be reduced. China doesn't have any openings in the Indian ocean, the Strings of pearls will lead to China surrounding India and it will be able to dominate it. Countries that today consider India as a partner in response to China may end up in the lap of China. Booz Allen initially used the phrase "String of Pearls" in his 2005 paper titled "Energy Futures in Asia." Booz anticipated Chinese naval expansion by constructing infrastructure projects and making various investments in Asian littoral states to bolster its naval dominance in IOR. However, Booz's analysis has been used as an analytical tool to analyze and explain China's evolving interests and assertiveness (China's desire to install military bases and intelligence stations) in South Asian littoral regions over the years. China has built tighter and more diplomatic contacts with the Indian Ocean Region's coastal states over the years in order to increase its naval might. The 'String of Pearls' is primarily intended to increase China's economic, political, and diplomatic weight in the world. According to Lanteigne (2008), China has geo-strategic interests and concerns in the Indian Ocean to protect its trade and sea line of communication (SLOC). Its significant apprehension in the Indian Ocean is to protect the maritime trade routes from where the oil and gas supplies pass which the Chinese economy depends upon. Beijing is cognizant of potential dangers from different state-actors and non-state actors through the straits from where its maritime trade passes. Approximately forty percent of China's oil imports pass through the 'Hormuz chokepoint', at the gateway of the Persian Gulf, and around eighty-two percent of oil traverse the Malacca Strait. This 'Strait' indicates China's 'Malacca Dilemma'. Chinese strategists and policymakers are apprehensive that in case of a war any adversary might be inveigled to interdict the Chinese maritime trade from the Malacca chokepoint. Accordingly, it seems that there are several reasons why China is anxious to consolidate its power in the Indian Ocean region through the String of pearls policy. But this is a threat to India. It is disturbing the freedom of India. Indian thinkers regard the Indian Ocean Region as India's backyard and natural region of influence (Brewster, 2010). It is also believed that India, in this region, serves as the ultimate leader and has the greatest influence over the single most ocean or region in the globe named after the country (Brewster D. , 2018). According to Indian thinking, this area of the ocean (Indian Ocean) is 'India's Ocean' (A.J.Scott, 2006).

Since independence, Indian officials and thinkers have identified the development of complete sovereignty over the subsequently named ocean as the country's "manifest destiny." Over the years, Indian maritime strategists have failed to recognize India's oceanic dominance (Chaudhuri, 2015). However, in recent years, the emphasis of marine thinking has evolved to provide the

country with a mental map' with a larger emphasis on maritime precedence with primary concern on Indian oceanic trade, protection of Economic Exclusive Zones (EEZ), and extension of Indian strategic depth in the IOR. Apart from its geostrategic significance, the Indian Ocean is also important to India in terms of energy security. Oil demand has risen in the country, as it has in China, in tandem with its increasing economy and population. India began the Necklace of Diamonds balancing strategy. According to Ramachandran (2007), this approach intends to resist and counterbalance China's growing aggressiveness, as well as its construction of ports and other infrastructure projects with IOR littoral states, which are viewed as a direct threat and 'encirclement' of India in its immediate neighborhood. However, over the years, India has worked to upgrade its navy and maritime policy in order to counterbalance China's String of Pearls plan (A.J.Scott, 2006). According to Brewster (2018), India has actively supported the Indian Ocean, Look East Policy, as its backyard under the Modi administration, and has taken steps to strengthen its long-standing relationships with littoral states and critical partners. India benefits from its geographical location and pivotal location in the Indian Ocean.

Strategic consolidation has become a recurring subject in marine waters between India and China in recent years. The deployment of navy and maritime competition by India and China flecks the water from the northern section of the Indian Ocean to the western half of this ocean. (Brewster D. , 2018) India and China's Marine Dynamics Conflict and antagonism between India and China have stayed on land for decades. As India and China have opened their doors to global markets and commerce, their economies have grown enormously, compelling them to focus on marine trade and commerce. In this way they are trying to establish maritime power because all things like trade and control will be easier. It is important to establish the power of the Indian Ocean.

VII. CONCLUSION

India is using a multi-pronged strategy to counter the Chinese String of Pearls Strategy. India is doing all possible to safeguard its interests. However, there have been numerous strategy obstacles in its successful implementation. China's One Belt, One Road Initiative is regarded as the world's most risky financial project. However, India is expanding its relations with many countries such as Japan, the United States, and Sri Lanka in order to counter China's influence in the Asia region, particularly in the Indian Ocean region. Although the Necklace of Diamond strategy was implemented before China's String of Pearls policy, it is clear that Accordingly, it is clear that strategically both countries are competing

side by side. Both countries' strategies are becoming challenges for both countries from time to time. According to the data analysis, it is clear that India has achieved some success in implementing its strategy through the Necklace of Diamond.

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