



## Emerging Regional Order: Implications for Pakistan's Maritime Security

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### Abstract:

The present study attempts to assess the emerging regional order and its implications for Pakistan's maritime security in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). This study focuses on these aspects, first and foremost, the significance of maritime security and strategies in the Indian Ocean, as well as the implications for Pakistan. Second, the policy options available to Pakistan to respond to the strategic calculus of the maritime strategy domain as well as the security domain in the Indian Ocean Region. For the same purpose, Rational Choice Theory, a realist theoretical perspective, has been applied to investigate the methods and techniques used in the conceptualization of the terms maritime strategy and security. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis has been used for doctrines and data analysis. Finally, the study attempts to investigate the strategic and security interests that may become the real impediment to sustaining long-term peace and stability as a result of regional opposition forces. Furthermore, the competitive nature cannot be glossed over for the sake of oversimplification.

**Key Words:** Maritime Security, Implications, CPEC, BRI, Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Strategy,

### INTRODUCTION

The prevailing maritime security concern is primarily based on maritime security parameters. Aside from the shifting insecurity, the paradigm is simply due to the roles played by both internal and external actors (Stedman, 1999). The magnitude of its implications under influential actors may manifest as military repercussions. China intends to boost the economy through aggressive trade and commerce policies. On the other hand, energy imports are a critical component in bringing about economic stability in China (Congressional Research Service, June, 2019). China looks to energy-rich countries for this purpose. India has geostrategic and geographic significance that necessitates the use of its coastal zone to strengthen its naval base and develop security and economic ties with powerful countries in order to protect its interests.

Aside from economic activity, the militarization of the South China Sea raises the West's eyebrows, prompting it to seek strategic allies in the region, as seen in the form of the Quadrilateral Commission (McDonald, 2019). A shift in strategy from land to water is owing to the speedy

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competition of resource utilization and scarcity of resources that gives Hobson's choice to pledge for maritime security and strategy dimensions within the domain of warm water. In the earlier days, policy formulation had stemmed from the foreign policy directives based upon the land and the entire strategy. Pakistan is at the crossroads of South Asia and the Middle East Region (Anwar, 2011). The strategic significance of Pakistan is witnessed owing to the role of warm water that provides a sea path to the continents across the globe. Therefore, the demographic and geo-strategic importance of Pakistan (Kreft, 2008) is crystal clear from its location and warm water access. The recent developments under the CPEC project divulge the same truth that the importance of sea is not only indispensable in the historical paradigm but also in the foreseeable future, which gives weightage to the sea routes. With the era and technological revolutions, history has progressed at a rapid pace in the twenty-first century. Human beings have evolved and changed for the betterment and advancement of human society.

The Indian Ocean is a warm water zone that connects the world to the Central Asian Republics, which have abundant oil reserves, and 40 percent of global production passes through the Persian Gulf, which is connected to the Indian Ocean. (International Monetary Fund, 2011). Warm water's strategic location is also advantageous because it provides access to European and Asian markets, as well as the African continent's bulge (European Union, May 2019). On the one hand, the significance of the Indian Ocean facilitates great opportunities, while on the other hand, rivalry among traditional rivals, such as the low ebbs between Pakistan and India, intensifies, opening up opportunities for competition. Current developments, such as the construction of Gwadar Port as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) grand project and India's counter-development plans along Iran's coastal beltline of Chabahar Port, demonstrate the flexibility and strains that exist in the same terrain.

On the one hand, the developments show the convergence of interests of various stakeholders, which is reflected in the form of cooperation and mutual consent, and cooperative nature appears to be the outcome as a result of this frame of reference. On the other hand, the flexibilities and vulnerabilities represent the opposing forces' opposing stances. The richness of the water reserves, namely the blue economy, and the traditional form of maritime security are both at work at the same time. All of the world's major powers rely on the so-called Great Connector, which runs from the Cape of Good Hope to the Malacca Strait (Putten, Wetzling, & Kamerling, 2014).

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION (IOR)**

The Indian Ocean is located in a warm water zone that connects the world to the Central Asian Republics that have abundant oil reserves, and 40 percent of global production passes through the Persian Gulf, which is linked to the Indian Ocean. The strategic location of warm water is also considered advantageous because the same route provides access to European and Asian markets, as well as the African bulge. On the one hand, the significance of the Indian Ocean facilitates great opportunities, while on the other hand, rivalry intensifies among traditional rivals, such as the low ebbs between Pakistan and India, opening up avenues for competition. The current developments, such as the work on Gwadar Port under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) grand project and India's counter-development plans at the Iranian coastal beltline of Chabahar Port, demonstrate the flexibility and strains under the same terrain.

### **Contemporary Dynamics of International Realm**

With the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, traditional and conventional means of warfare transformed into modern technological tactics where the Hybrid and Cyberwarfare started to influence the international realm (Cullen & Reichborn-Kjennerud, 2017). One aspect of the strategy devised for maritime security and maritime strategy remained unchanged. Despite the fact that traditional and conservative methods have progressed toward rapid technological revolution, the concept of dominance and control remains at the heart of maritime debate.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, one of its key strategies was to move towards warm waters. For the aforementioned reasons above, the great powers, namely the US and the Soviet Union, fought viciously in Afghanistan during the cold war. According to the Afghan chapter, access to warm water is the driving force behind the Capitalist-Communist bloc's squabble in Afghanistan. Without going into detail about all aspects of the Cold War, the conflict and power struggle for access to warm water instils the significant notion that sea routes have always been a key element in the domain of foreign policy during the relationship with external actors. This ocean's choke points carry approximately 80% of the world's sea-borne oil trade (Parmar, 2013).

### **Geographical Proximity**

Another important factor is the Indian Ocean's geostrategic proximity to three continents and its access to warm water that leads in to a well-organized demography. All littoral states can exploit and extract resources from this geostrategic significance to further their motives and initiatives. The CPEC project, which is part of the Chinese Maritime Silk Route initiative, is an excellent example of resource utilization and the exploration of new vistas for the development and advancement of the state's machinery. This system includes the trade routes and sea lanes that cross the Indian Ocean and continue past the Malacca Strait and the Sunda and Lombok Straits into the South China Sea, the western Pacific Ocean to North Asia, and the Pacific to North America. This oceanic geography encompasses the world's most important trade routes today. The Indo-Pacific concept can be implemented at a high political level. It includes several of the world's most economically and militarily powerful nations, including the United States, China, and India, as well as a number of important and smaller nations.

Maritime Security and strategy studies have got sheer significance owing to the state of nature in the modern world. The variations of conflict and confrontation are inconceivable, and human beings as individuals are no longer safe. This shift has resulted in a new security paradigm that revolves around the focal point of an individual's or human's security. In this perspective, the long-standing traditional narrative centered on the state-centric approach and national security shifts to human-specific issues, with individual security taking center stage. This is a revolt against traditional security methods in favour of a non-traditional security paradigm. In terms of Pakistan's maritime security and strategy, Pakistan must consider the consequences of even the slightest move by India's naval forces. As a matter of fact, Pakistan must develop a counter-force to meet the challenge. A nuclear deterrence policy is required by the nuclear force. Because India's belligerency and student policies are crystal clear to all and sundry, any miscalculation could lead to a point of no return for the state. There is an urgent need to examine the insights of foreign policy formulations and materialize them in order to counter any threat posed by Indian naval forces.

## **Understanding the Term “Maritime”**

The term has been used in International Relations to refer to the maritime sector. The maritime domain is a field related to International Relations that enunciates water-related factors, particularly warm water. Maritime security, also known as maritime strategy, encompasses all aspects of water related to the maritime domain, such as blue economy, diplomacy, security and insecurity, threats and challenges, capabilities and vulnerabilities, problems and solutions. Maritime security, like other international buzzwords, is a term that draws attention to new challenges and mobilizes support to address them (Bueger, 2015). Discussions of maritime security frequently begin with a focus on the "threats" that exist in the maritime domain.

## **THREATS AND CHALLENGES**

The stakeholders in the Indian Ocean are responsible for maritime security in the region. This group comprises of both international and regional actors. States such as the United States, China, and Japan are important international actors, and many regional states such as India and Pakistan have a role to play within the Indian Ocean region. So far, stakeholders in the Indian Ocean have two poles: Pakistan and China, which have cordial relations and are working for economic development and long-term sustainability, and the United States and India, which are demonstrating their power and control through aggressive positioning. It should be noted that the Indian Ocean has not seen a full-scale war, but the presence of various stakeholders and their confrontation with a constant rise of issues (conflicts between Pakistan and India are examples) reveal that the region poses a threat, which reduces the level of stability within the IOR (Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones, and Ziad Haider, 2004).

Pakistan is a developing country that faces a variety of threats and challenges across the board. The threat and challenge that exist in the maritime domain are no exception. Needless to say, the threat and challenges in the maritime domain are not limited to these security factors; there are numerous other negative aspects of maritime security. To enumerate some of the elements, it can be said that the maritime domain as a whole is included. Maritime geopolitics, security, trade, and environmental activities are among the factors that are detrimental.

The majority of the debate in the past has centered on the nuclear doctrine's deterrence policies. Deterrence is defined as the policies adopted by nuclear-weapon states, such as their behavior when they are in conflict with another state. Nuclear deterrence is distinctive in its ability to counter the threat and challenge posed by other states. However, according to David Dewitt, "Reassurance" is more important than the traditional method of "Deterrence."

## **MARITIME SECURITY COOPERATION: THE FRAMEWORK**

### **A. Maritime Security Cooperation: The Framework Under United Nation Charter**

For its constant support for international peace and security, the UN approaches the issue differently. The United Nations has adopted a law of the sea policy known as UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). This convention advances the concept of peace and cooperation for economic development. Maritime security is the primary concern for the long-term sustainability of international peace and security. In this particular reference, the UN promotes the concept of international peace and security within the context of the maritime in general, and warm

waters in particular. Both traditional and non-traditional threats can be countered through this cooperation and coordination. In this way, the UN charter states that when it comes to international affairs, all of the states in the Indian Ocean Region must cooperate and coordinate for development and progress, while also ensuring international peace and security in the region.

### **B. Alternative Notion of Security**

The Indian Ocean's maritime security necessitates a new set of security paradigms ranging from national security to human security, and from environmental security to marine life security. All of these diverse dimensions shift traditional policymakers away from a state-centric to a non-military-centric approach. This is an unconventional idea that deviates from conventional methods and traditions. Furthermore, this adds an increasing amount of energy to look at other dimensions, including the military dominant perspective. For environmental and marine life security within the maritime domain, all coastal states must devise concrete measures through an integrated framework policy that excludes no stakeholder. That is, the concept of security in the maritime domain takes a holistic approach rather than a tunnel vision to serve the interests of any particular state.

### **C. Dwindling Spectrum Between Trust and Dis-Trust**

The Maritime doctrine oscillates between trust and suspicion. In fact, the strict stance of India is observed in this maritime domain as well as in all other fields. As a result, trust and mistrust are pursuits in one way or another, like the two sides of a coin. Either one state trusts the other state, or the other state mistrusts the other state's goals and ambitions. Not to mention the state's offensive posture, which is always looking for a security dilemma as a result of its neighboring state's constant and overwhelming response to threat perception. From this perspective, the maritime doctrine oscillates between trust and distrust. For example, Pakistan and India have always been arch-rivals, and their relations have always been at their lowest levels due to the pervasive impression of India's covert hegemonic ambitions.

## **MARITIME SECURITY IMPLICATIONS**

### **A. Dynamics of Maritime Security: A Buzzword**

It is essential to analyze the origins of the term maritime security in order to comprehend it. Following the 2001 incident, the term maritime security gained increased prominence and value. Following 9/11, the term "maritime security" became a buzzword. The buzzword encompassed a wide range of meanings, ranging from piracy to policy level. Because of the complexities of emerging situations, the term maritime security has also found its way into the formulation of agenda-setting. Cornwall expresses this perplexity in the letter's "purchase and power through their vague and euphemistic qualities, capacity to embrace a multitude of possible meanings, and normative resonance." (Bueger, 2015)". Divergent perspectives shaped the level of security threat into naive dimensions like terrorism, piracy, and strategic point-scoring.

Many territorial and extraterritorial powers are making the best use of available resources to expand their maritime domain of influence. Furthermore, with the creation of such a buzzword, the states that are working in different oceanic domains such as the South China Sea, where China is playing a larger role, and India at the same time are demonstrating their increased concentration in

the IO region. Both countries are attempting to create a security space in which they can pay more attention to their interests and pull the strings in their favour. In such a stimulating world, the complexity of buzzwords must be replaced by simplicity and clarity of ideas. Similarly, this clarity would change the dynamics of maritime security in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean region.

### **B. Role of Globalization and its Maritime Security Dimension**

In its full effect, the term "Globalization" appears to lack a clear conceptual understanding that could explicitly give its broadest meaning. According to Jan Aart Scholte, the definition must be based on the fundamental framework of the super-territorial and trans planetary framework. This concept has the potential to improve the overall sound connectivity of the masses. Furthermore, he has been a critic of the globalization perspective and has widely disseminated the concepts of internationalization, liberalization, universalization, and Westernization as a narrow-minded focus with no naïve idea about the development of new paradigms within the scope of globalization. (Scholte, 2002). Such rejection at four different levels sowed confusion about the concept of globalization in general. On the other hand, these adaptable dimensions benefit many disruptive forces on a global scale. The global connectivity of people can have a negative impact on the international environment in the form of international criminal cases and cross-border terrorism. The global level of security and insecurity must be used to calibrate this international spectrum.

To explicitly conceptualize the idea of security propagation, it is necessary to examine historical outmaneuvering. Throughout history, the concept of security has been associated primarily with British maritime, and later, power shifted towards the United States after World War II. The same stated situation prevailed in international affairs for over three centuries. These international dynamics have highlighted the importance of maritime strategy and security. Furthermore, an increase in the number of transnational crimes and international terrorism, as well as state security and insecurity, has emerged globally, furthering the concept of security and insecurity issues within the context of globalization among the community of nations. Security concerns have arisen in the long run as a result of the drastic changes taking place around the world. It is worth noting here that maritime security is just as important during peacetime as it is during wartime.

### **MARITIME STRATEGY OF PAKISTAN**

Pakistan is strategically located near the Arabian Sea. However, despite the passage of seven decades, Pakistan has remained unable to capitalize on the opportunities found in the maritime domain. On the one hand, the security and strategy dimensions bring forth maritime security dimensions, while on the other hand, economic potential and economic cooperation can further an increased level of security and stability. In the former case, Pakistan appears to be tripping along with a security-centric approach that has been overwhelmed by the belligerence of India's maritime strategist, while in the latter case, Pakistan is breathing a sigh of relief as a result of increased connectivity through Chinese Premier Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (Zongyi, 2017). The consequences and repercussions of the coastal state's dual dimension can also be assessed in this state of rivalry.

## Indian Naval Doctrine

Because the Indian Navy's role was peripheral during the initial phase, it received little or no significance in comparison to other armed forces. This is also why the budget allocation was rather low in comparison to other armed forces. However, the meagre defense budget could not put an end to the traditional view of the Pan-oceanic phenomenon. The concept of dominating the IO region and propagating one's own hegemonic design dates back to the early 1950s. Jawahar Lal Nehru maintained the British legacy of oceanic vision and did his best to follow in its footsteps. As a result, the Indian naval doctrine prepared itself for operational purposes, decision making, planning and training, as well as security-related issues. All of these components were either fully or partially supported for hegemonic designs. The Indian Naval doctrine evolved on three distinct levels: conceptual, physical, and human. In this way, the significance of Indian naval forces and naval doctrine can be traced back to a formative period in history. Indian strategists in general, and the Indian Navy in particular, planned for the two most important goals. The first plan is visible in the work that is ingrained in efforts to achieve strategic success. For many good reasons, the strategic level approach glosses over the tactical level approach. The tactical level plans may yield short-term benefits, but the strategic level ambitions can yield long-term results. As a result, the strategic level remained in the spotlight, while tactical considerations received no debate at all.

Second, there is an orchestrated plan to have a dominant military role and work on command and control of the entire Indian Ocean region. These monopolized policies have rationally resulted in an offensive stance of Indian strategists at large, as seen in the intermittent clashes between its neighbouring countries. In this regard, Pakistan's maritime domain has always been in a threat-like situation, leaving Pakistan with the Hobson's choice of working to develop a strong military and maritime force to counter any external threat. In terms of Indian Naval doctrine, the shift in strategic focus and dominance plans kept strategists preoccupied with looking for better roles. The Naval doctrines of 2004 and 2007 are very significant for this purpose, with the addition of aspects of military and diplomatic means being made a larger part of the doctrine. One of the most important aspects of Indian naval doctrine is the sharing of intelligence and the pursuit of innocuous motives. These policies are furthered for goodwill purposes, such as assisting civilians in the face of natural disasters and floods, among other things.

Whenever the relationship between Pakistan and India is analyzed, it becomes clear that Indian strategists' offensive positioning and security threat have always put their neighbor in jeopardy. The Indian Naval Doctrine's constant provocations and aggravations have posed a serious threat to Islamabad's strategists since its inception. The rational decision aspires Pakistani military strategists to improve their military and maritime capabilities in order to counter such an aggressive positioning of a belligerent state. Not only that, but the limited wars in 1965, 1971, and 1999 are all clear examples of Indian aggression. The monopolized orchestration that follows the acquisition of territorial and extraterritorial power speaks volumes about the Indian Strategists' implicit agendas. The limited wars in the Siachen sector (1984), the world's highest battleground, and the Kargil Chapter (1999) take shape incidentally one after the other. In addition to this major escalation, skirmishes at the international border and line of control have demonstrated Indian strategists' offensive stance.

Despite the fact that both countries developed nuclear weapons capabilities in the late 1990s, the conventional mode of conflict continues unabated. In this regard, the South Asian region is equivalent because, with nuclear weapon states, these warlike situations exist as in the aftermath of independence. These vehement rational decisions by Indian strategists pave the way for Pakistani counterparts to investigate the prospects of tactical weapon technologies and a continuous surge of weapon technology for staying alert at all times. This course of action in the military and strategic domains kept the country preoccupied with trying to work for security reasons, transforming the entire state into a security-centric state. It is the same policy orientation that has kept Naval doctrine and naval capabilities hidden for so long. As a result of the imbalance sequencing, the dire needs of the maritime security dimensions were glossed over.

### **GWADAR, 'THE MASTER PLAN'**

CPEC was launched in 2015 under the leadership Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Premier Xi Jinping of China. The Belt and Road Initiative's flagship project is well underway. From infrastructure development to the establishment of Gwadar Port, all development is linked to both countries' firm hard work and perseverance. The Gwadar development project is a master plan for expanding the region's infrastructure. Gwadar is strategically located to allow for the exploration of untapped resources. The establishment of the port will open up new avenues in the form of blue economic growth. In this context, Gwadar port will supply the energy sector, special economic zones, communication and technological advancements, as well as improved modes of transportation and infrastructure development. All of these progressive steps may transform the entire spectrum of blue growth in the Gwadar port zone until the final phase of this CPEC project under the auspices of BRI.

### **CHINA'S ENDEAVORS & ITS IMPLICATIONS**

China has military, maritime, and strategic intentions in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Because of growing tensions between rival coastal states in that region, the South China Sea has become a strategic necessity. Furthermore, the Indian Ocean Region has its own strategic implications, with many opposing forces demonstrating their presence in one way or another. China, with its string of pearls policy, has stepped forward to open up new horizons for the coastal states. China is working at multiple levels, such as ensuring its naval presence in the region, building ports, and implementing policies related to piracy, which have been the hallmarks of achievements in the oceanic belt. The facts of the matter reveal that the state is putting forth every effort to demonstrate its dominance in the Indian Ocean Region. It has been observed that sea control is an essential component of foreign policy directives because the famous figure Alfred Mahan stated that sea control can bring about control over the entire global economy. And, control of the sea has become a critical venture for gaining a dominant position in order to seize power and expand its wealth. This can be accomplished through increased trade and commerce during the peacetime and resource exploitation for military pre-requisites during the wartime. All of these efforts and contributions can be made to secure trade and, more broadly, SLOCs.

Similarly, since the start of the CPEC project, Pakistan-China relations have advanced to the next multifaceted threshold. China's role in maritime strategic and security matters has grown as a result of its presence in the Indian Ocean, owing to the establishment of the port of Gwadar in



Pakistan. On the one hand, the strategic implications of China's presence in the Indian Ocean are evident; the shortest and safest passage provided to China through CPEC has increased its geo-strategic significance in the IOR. This same development, on the other hand, has provided this strategic partnership with a prospective phase of economic interconnectivity. The Asian Giant is rising peacefully, flexing its muscles in international politics on a broader scale.

The Belt and Road Initiative is reviving the old Silk Road project by channelizing and streamlining it. One of the key components in the recent development (under CPEC) is that the Gwadar port, with its geo-strategic and geo-graphic significance, has the potential to change the course of pattern through increased blue growth over time. China has effectively used its old silk route vision to materialize in a new form through the Belt and Road Initiative. However, for the Gwadar port, all of these characteristics appear to be equally important and applicable. It is up to the strategist and policymakers to determine how comprehensively the maritime strategist can materialize all of these aspects in practice. Local and global economic interests may have divergent perspectives that necessitate a higher level of commitment to get everyone on the same page. Rational decisions can result in a progressive methodology that allows both actors to work toward common goals. To retain the commitment within the eclipse of time, an inclusive and integrative scheme must be followed for such blue economic strategy.

### **Implications of Maritime Domain**

Pakistan, as a developing country, appears reluctant to engage in investigating the long-term benefits that could be realized from the availability of warm water access and resources. The utilization of unexplored and untouched resources speaks volumes about the unattended proportion of resource management. It has been observed that nearly 95 percent of international trade takes place via seaways, which equates to 63.3 percent of GDP. The largest share can be improved by making full use of all resources. However, due to the security-centric paradigm, the utilization of sea resources has remained on the contrary. Under the auspices of a security-centric state and security-centric policies, the state has been reluctant to take revolutionary steps in the maritime domain. Because of India's offensive posture, Pakistan's security-centric approach remains its main priority. In light of its long-term neighbor's rigorous stance, Pakistan must make deliberate choices regarding policy formulation and policy implementation. As a result of the security-centric paradigm, the maritime security dimension gains a multitude of significance and prioritization.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF UNDAUNTING NAVAL FORCE**

The security issues and hostilities of neighbouring India only exacerbate the situation, resulting in an intermittent war. Pakistan, on the other hand, prefers a defensive positioning strategy. Nonetheless, the rational choices of Indian forces in general, and Indian Naval forces in particular, necessitate a strong and unafraid naval base from Pakistan. A strong Navy is not only necessary for furthering economic outmaneuvering, but it is also necessary to counter the Indian Naval forces. In the long run, Pakistan's naval forces have received relatively little attention and have remained neglected and unattended. This concern is critical when considering the security and strategy dimensions during both war and peacetime. Unfortunately, Pakistani think tanks were unable to assess the adverse consequences of the maritime domain, resulting in this neglected zone receiving

inadequate attention and timely assistance (Fayyaz, 2010). The naval force did not remain the top priority on the decision-makers' security agenda. The long-term ramifications are completely obvious: the naval forces will not be able to progress and develop in a reasonable time. As a result, military power at sea is weaker than military power on land. Furthermore, military power at sea, according to Raja Rab Nawaz, has been overlooked as an effective tool for the expansion of an overall military strategy.

### **National Security Dimensions**

Since the inception of both Pakistan and India, a security-centric approach has dominated the atmosphere, with relations between the two countries at an all-time low. The security-centric policies strengthened over time as a result of the three wars (1948, 1965, and 1971) between these neighbouring states, as well as the ongoing skirmishes along the Line of Control and internationally marked borders (Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol, Muhammad Muzaffar, 2016). Furthermore, limited type of military conflicts such as the Siachen conflict and the Kargil war have demonstrated that the deteriorating situation would remain fragile at all times. Aside from conventional warfare, non-conventional warfare and nuclear technological advancements have pushed both states well beyond the point of no return.

The rapid decline of the situation has an impact on the overall stability of South Asia and their relationship in particular. This persistent tug of war has resulted in three wars in the past, and forecasting the near future is a distant prospect in such circumstances. Because of the strategists' misguided policies and the tactical strategies on board, the probabilities and possibilities must not be underestimated. Misunderstanding, misperception, and miscalculation all contribute to the possibility of future conflicts. The most perceptible example of the power show of the late 1990s, when both countries chose nuclear explosions, which completely transformed the environment of South Asia. (Glen E. Howard, Matthew Czeka, 2009).

Furthermore, it appears that the competitive nature has grown significantly, bringing multi-dimensional clashes to the maritime domain as well. In the midst of strained relations, Pakistan relies on the trade and commerce of external elements and actors. At any time, an unexpected confrontation could put a halt to foreign elements, which would have a negative impact on the country's most dependable approach of import and export. In this case, the irrefutable fact is that a conflict situation would instantaneously halt the operation of such soft targets (as in the Gulf War and the US attack on Afghanistan) (Daniel Byman, Sara Bjerg Moller, 2016). This cessation would present two distinct challenges. One would be a decline in economic activity, as freights, cargoes, and merchant ships would be apprehensive to continue operating in war zones. And, second, a slew of challenges, such as the entire burden of responsibility, is placed on the strategist during wartime. One of the assumptions in this regard is that the time was not ideal for major investment in the maritime domain due to security concerns. However, in contrast to Pakistan's maritime domain's naval development, India's naval force and development continued uninterrupted. This continuity created a gap between the potential capabilities of both naval forces. As a result, at this point, the development of Pakistan's naval forces is critical for countering any future attack and maintaining the balance of power in the South Asian region.

To counter the Indian Navy's massive outmanoeuvring in a 5:1 ratio, Pakistan required significant and exponential growth to counter the naval forces of Indian maritime security strategists. One obvious reason for less investment and development in the maritime security domain is the Afghani people's perennial claim to greater Pashtunistan, as well as the security threat posed by Indian forces on the line of control and international borders. (Hanif, 2017).

These confounding factors kept the country mired in a security quandary, with few options for venturing out and seeking development in the maritime sector. Another possible reason is the navy's minor role in the overall defence mechanism of the country. This minor role may not inspire policymakers to invest heavily in the maritime sector in order to strengthen naval forces. Currently, both countries' military and maritime capabilities have been enhanced by nuclear weapon technology. This unconventional technology will tempt India to seek a competitive advantage through the use of conventional tactics. With their perceptions of a lower probability of nuclear confrontation, the ratio of 5:1 remains an important factor for the Indian Navy to begin a limited war confrontation. Because of the non-conventional equilibrium found by nuclear weapon technology, a limited confrontation is a plausible step for India using conventional warfare strategies.

As a result, Pakistan urgently requires technological advancement in conventional capabilities to counter a conventional offensive mechanism employed by Indian strategists. Second-strike capability and attainment are critical for Pakistan to counter Indian belligerence at any given time and space. These circumstances necessitate a proactive plan for the maritime domain's security as well as the nation's strategic interests and concerns. This security dimension reflects the alma mater's pursuit of maritime interests similar to continental interests. Furthermore, in the case of Pakistan's maritime security concerns, interest and development could not yield proportionate results while keeping security and strategic interests in mind. This disproportionate gap is the result of Pakistan's lower investment in naval force. As previously stated, lack of interest in maritime investment stems from the existential threat posed by India's belligerent stance (Iftikhar, 2016). If proper streamlining of naval forces at par with land power had been pursued over time, naval forces and maritime strategic dimensions would have advanced to new heights of progress and development.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study aimed at investigating maritime challenges and their implications for Pakistan. The concept's long-term consequences have been highlighted in a significant context. It is possible to argue that rational decision-making would lead to more competition rather than cooperation in this region. This nature of completion is evident in the core beliefs of the competing opposing forces flexing their muscles to maintain their sway in the Indian Ocean Region. Though strategic and security interests may continue to be a problem in sustaining long-term peace and stability due to regional oppositional forces, the emergence of multiple state actors in the region can bring much more coax to the region's deteriorating circumstances.

As a result, the competitive and confronting dynamics cannot be glossed over for the sake of oversimplification. The rational decision always prioritizes national interests over the collaborative decision-making process. It is to say that the security dynamics of maritime strategy and security

are still as important as they were in the past. The maritime security domain encircles strategic, economic, diplomatic, and security interests as a driving force for achieving monopolized hegemonic goals and assists the state in achieving regional and extra-regional power. Furthermore, the win-win situation initiated by President Xi Jinping in the form of CPEC can further progress, prosperity, and development of infrastructure, port construction, and energy woes. The development of these sectors may facilitate in the resolution of security-related issues such as cross-border and transnational terrorism. The strategic partnership between China and Pakistan in all sectors is being viewed with suspicion and speculation across the globe. In this regard, the maritime strategic and security domain reveals immense significance for strengthening security apparatus and fostering political maturity. Moreover, the launch of CPEC creates a framework for the region's enhancement of its footholds in the maritime security domain within the Indian Ocean region. Steps such as transportation development, port construction, and the spread of Fiber Optics for communication purposes are all linked to China's comprehensive approach to reaching out to the IO region.

The underlying reason for all of these developments can be seen in the form of securing its foothold as well as working for the security concerns of SLOCs in the Indian Ocean, as this route would be used for navigation of free passage and 90% carrying of trade and energy supplies to and from central Asian states and oil enriched states. These peaceful and environmentally friendly projects can come to fruition due to improved security measures on one hand. On the other hand, the collaborative approach can help both states (China and Pakistan) strengthen their strategic partnership. Furthermore, through these joint ventures, China's ambition to improve its territorial linkage in the Indian Ocean is plausible.

Eventually, it can be encapsulated as the competitive vibes in the strategic sphere remain as clear as a crystal. The maritime domain plays a significant role, and states must consider maritime strategies in order to meet the challenges that they face. The implications of the maritime strategic domain remain equally important and powerful in order to maintain its foothold in the future. Due to a leadership vacuum, Pakistan's maritime domain has been devoid of policies and strategies. Furthermore, the entire development of Pakistan's maritime appears to be a counter-strategic response to the threat posed by Indian forces. Last but not least, conceptual models can be used as a springboard to overcome obstacles and formidable challenges in the long run. Pakistan's maritime strategies will serve as a model for all states in the international community.

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Date of Publication	May 10, 2021
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