

India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications for Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Ocean is the region which would be the center of conflicts among world powers in near future. Major powers of the world have their strategic and economic interests in the Indian Ocean. U.S. sole super power of the world, in the current timeframe, has been changing its policies in the Indian Ocean keeping in view its vital interests. Under Trump administration, U.S. policies in the Indian Ocean has been diverted from Obama's administration. India considers the Indian Ocean as its backyard. U.S. sole hegemonic power wants to have supremacy over the ocean that is why U.S. has shared responsibilities with India to control politics of the Ocean. Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has been strengthened by signing deals such as Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement. They have also joined naval forces. They are actively patrolling and conducting deep-rooted Malabar exercise in the Indian Ocean. The study focuses on the geopolitical complexities which converge the interest of India and U.S. in the ocean. These developments have serious implications for regional security and regional actors like Pakistan. China is the most important factor in the changing geopolitics of Indian Ocean. Case study method has been applied to study implications for Pakistan in Indian Ocean. Primary and secondary data have been collected for the research. It has been concluded that China plays the role of regional balancer for Pakistan in Gwadar port regarding Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in Indian Ocean Region. In order to maintain asymmetrical balance in the region, Pakistan has to revisit its strategic and maritime policy keeping in view its crucial role in the ocean.

Key Words: **Indian Ocean Region, Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership, Implications for Pakistan, China's factor.**

Introduction

The third largest Ocean of the world is the Indian Ocean (IO), partially covering one fifth of the total area of world's ocean i.e. 7,056,000 km² (27,240,000 sq. mil), which is approximately 20% of the water on Earth. The Indian Ocean (IO) is bounded by the coastal land of India, which is the center of the Indian Ocean, Asian region on north, on west by Africa and the western Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian Peninsula, Bay of Bengal (BoB) near Myanmar and Indonesia, on east near Australia, and on South with Southern Ocean. The geopolitical and strategic location of the Indian Ocean is very crucial as it provides shortest oceanic routes

connecting Asian region, i.e. Middle East, South Asia, and Africa to the west and Europe (Karim, 2017).

Geopolitical and geo-strategic power has been shifted from Euro-Atlantic to Indo-Pacific region, which has incited the economies of European Union (EU), U.S., East Asia, China, Japan, India and Australia (Hafeez, 2017). Since post-cold war era, U.S. has shown great interest in Asian Region. After September 11, the United States shifted its policies towards Asia and developed strategic and economic ties with India, to make India its strategic hub in Asian Region (Fani, 2009). Prior to 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections, U.S. foreign policy under the former President Obama's Administration shifted regarding India compared to previous administrations. He realizes the importance of India in the Indian Ocean and developed stronger bilateral and strategic partnership, relating this deal as "defining partnership of 21st century, guided by convergent national interest". Some important factors which the former President Obama considered crucial to U.S. national interest were to form a strong collaboration between defense and security forces with India. That includes holding joint exercises of military, joint operational and research military exercises, co-development and coproduction of military weapons, machinery, equipment and nuclear deals, growth of economy and to intertwine India to form U.S. hub in Asian region. Because the former President Obama's vision was, that the future of trade and economy of U.S. is greatly dependent on Indo-Pacific. When Barack Obama became the President of America, he deliberately mentioned India as its trustworthy ally in his first speech. The former President Obama called India its strategic partner but he did not fully support the policies of former President Bush Administration towards India. Indo-U.S. strategic partnership took a turn in the former President Obama's Administration (Kumar, 2018).

In 2016 presidential elections of America, Donald Trump, a Republican, became the president of USA. President Trump set up some new policies towards Indo-Pacific region. Since his policies are based on America First strategy, even in Indo-Pacific region, which seems to be effecting U.S. relation with regional states. He uses the term Indo-Pacific Region, instead of Asia Pacific, to define that America's geopolitical and strategic policies are Indo-centric and its interest lies in Asian and the Indian Ocean region. The term Indo-Pacific manifests the interest of America on broader scale i.e. in Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean. Indo-Pacific has been raised to a high profile regional preference by Trump administration in National Security Strategy (NSS). The strategic policy towards Indo-Pacific is described as a geopolitical area of rivalry and contention of regional states for free and coercive perception of new great game and world order to take place soon enough, and for China as an emerging power in the region. However, India's interest has been neglected in the Indian Ocean due to America First policy. But both states are best options for each other since their rival (China and even Pakistan) and interests in the ocean are similar i.e. to contain China and rebalance power in the Asia (Ayres, 2018).

India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan being the third largest littoral state of the Indian Ocean is facing grave implications from Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean Region. Some of the crucial implications faced by Pakistan are for its foreign and defense policy, maritime affairs, nuclear weaponization and nuclear submarines, militarization of sea and about the strategic and power balance in the entire region. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the source of emergence of China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean faces most critical challenges. Because of One Belt, One Road (OBOR) policy and CPEC, Pakistan and China's military presence in Indian Ocean has increased. Although, Pakistan has weaker economy than India and U.S., Pakistan seems to be a hurdle for India in becoming regional hegemon. U.S. is helping India in becoming its Pivot of Asia and in gaining strategic and military power. Due to the expansion in Indo-U.S. strategic power in Asia Pacific, Pakistan unfortunately has no place to stand against these two powers. Their strategic partnership has remarkably created a power difference in the region, due to which regional power balance has been disrupted. Pakistan is also building its naval ties with China in the Indian Ocean to stand firm against India. But if India continued making strong naval forces with U.S. in the Indian Ocean, then the power dominance and security of the region will be in the hands of India. This would result in Pakistan facing major threats and challenges in the Indian Ocean from India and U.S. as well (Bukhari, 2011).

Statement of the problem

The growing importance of the Indian Ocean in the geopolitics of the world has diverted the interest of great powers specifically U.S. towards the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). For U.S. to deepen its control in the Indian Ocean Region, U.S. has to strengthen its strategic partnership with India. Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has increased its vulnerability and implications for Pakistan. The study has been conducted to identify the factors and actors which has lead U.S. to develop strong strategic and defense ties with India in the Indian Ocean Region. In case of Pakistan, little research has been conducted to identify the impact caused by U.S. strategic policies prior to and post 2016 U.S. president elections in the Indian Ocean Region. Therefore, this study has been conducted to analyze Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean Region and to identify its implications for Pakistan.

Research objectives

- To identify the factors and actors that shape U.S. strategic partnership towards India in Indian Ocean Region.
- To analyze the shift in U.S. strategic and defense policies towards Indian Ocean before to and after 2016 American Presidential election.

- To analyze Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its implications for Pakistan.
- To recommend strategic options available to Pakistan.

Methodology

The research conducted is qualitative in nature. The methodology used for the research are descriptive, historical, analytical and content analysis. Case study design has been applied and primary data has been collected for case study in which interviews were conducted. Data have been collected through primary and secondary sources, and content analysis has been used to conduct the research. For primary sources, interviews have been conducted from naval officers and experts on maritime affairs. Structured and open ended questions have been used for taking interviews. The interview included the following questions, what are the factors and actors that shape U.S. strategic policies towards India in Indian Ocean Region (IOR)? What are the strategic and security compulsion of India to have alliance with U.S. in the Indian Ocean? What are the implications of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership on Pakistan in Indian Ocean Region (IOR)? What will be the impact of the shift in U.S. policies towards Indian Ocean (IO) during President Trump's administration on Pakistan? Data for secondary source and content analysis have been collected from national and international journals, articles, newspaper articles, books, research papers and reports.

Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in Indian Ocean Region

Post-cold war era

After the cold war era, U.S. interest grew vigorous in South Asian region with deep-rooted strategies. The strategic partnership between India and U.S. began in post-cold war era under former President Bill Clinton's Administration. Former President Clinton viewed India as a capable partner in South Asia during his visit. He deliberately mentioned that U.S. has neglected India for a long time. U.S. formed strategic partnership with India in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) based on common goals (Fani, 2009).

Post 9/11

The September 11, 2001 attack on U.S. soil, gave India an opportunity to develop strategic partnership in Asian region. U.S. is also inclined towards India, because of China's emergence as a great power economically and militarily, becoming a great threat to U.S. hegemonic power. China may even surpass U.S. on global scale and even in Asia and Indian Ocean, China and Pakistan's collaboration will result in the downfall of India in becoming global power (Mohan & Khanna, 2006).

*India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications
for Pakistan*

Former President Bush recognized the importance of India and U.S., and in 2005 an agreement was signed regarding defense and strategic collaboration. Former President Bush policy in Asia referred India as capable partner in the region because India appeared to U.S. as a potential element of cooperation on strategic, economic and political grounds, and on other areas as well. Former President Bush administration also held India a potential state that can protect peace and prosperity in Indian Ocean Region. However, his administration reportedly mentioned Pakistan as a friendly state that should not be neglected in the region. China in new world order has become U.S. strategic competitor in Asia Pacific (current name, Indo-Pacific). Since Bush administration, U.S. is striving hard to make India a global economic power, in order to curtail CPEC and China's growing activities. China, far from being strategic partner became strategic rival and economic competitor to U.S. and even India in Asian region (Mohan, 2009).

Former president Obama also laid stress on economic and strategic relation with India. Although, in former President Bush's administration, the aims and objectives of strategic ties were not accomplished. However, his policies in Asian and Indian Ocean Region assisted former President Obama in formulating an integrated policy towards the Indian Ocean region, particularly in Indo-Pacific region. On the other hand, strategic partnership between U.S. and India under former President Obama administration faced serious challenges. The pivot of Asia policy of U.S. signifies India as its regional anchor, to keep check on China's expansion and to fight war on terror. But former President Obama's policy did not prove to be very effective. The consequences of former President Obama's foreign and strategic policy towards India showed mixed results. Despite all that, he embraced and strengthen Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in his second tenure. Former President Obama regenerated Asia-Pacific strategic partnership in Indian Ocean and during his second tenure, he revived Asia Pivot policy as well (Mukherjee, 2017). It is said that under Obama's administration, Indo-U.S. strategic ties in the Indian Ocean region was at its peak. Both states entitled their friendship as "Chalein saath saath; Forward together we go" (Mohan, 2009).

Under the current U.S. President Donald Trump, and his administration, the focus and policies towards the Indian Ocean region has been diverted a little or it can be said that his policies are different from Obama's administrative policies. Former President Obama administration sought a long term policy objective in the region, especially with India. However, President Trump has set new strategies for the region in which Indian Ocean has become the fundamental block of Indo-Pacific region (Thayer, 2018).

Shift in U.S. policies after 2016 presidential elections

From Asia-pacific to Indo-pacific strategy

President Donald Trump has given a definite strategy and approach towards Indian Ocean Region (IOR) unlike his predecessors. It is because; former President Obama has always hesitated to talk about Rebalancing or Pivot of Asia policy with its true objectives. Although, the latter policies involve Asia Pacific which do not cover the entire Indian Ocean Region. President Trump, on the other hand, has directly represented all his strategies and policies towards the region through Indo-Pacific strategy. President Trump has adopted a new terminology for Asia Pacific i.e. Indo-Pacific region, which signifies a broad perspective of U.S. geopolitical and geo-strategic policies in the region. Also, by adopting the name of Indo-Pacific, U.S. highlights the importance of India as a core state in the region and as the most trustworthy ally of U.S. in Indo-Pacific region. On a broader scale, Indo-Pacific includes two largest and important oceans of the world i.e. Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. According to President Trump administration, the term Asia Pacific was linked with U.S. strategies towards the whole of Asia or towards East Asia only. Adopting this term, U.S. has ultimately remodeled strategic and geopolitical map for China and Pakistan. In this way, Indo-U.S. strategic policy along with Japan and Australia has initiated their aim to curtail and isolate China in South China Sea and limit Pakistan's movement in the sea, and to achieve great influence and control over the Indian Ocean (Chen , 2018).



Indo-Pacific Region Source: <https://goo.gl/images/s3hH5L>

Trump's free and open Indo-Pacific Region

Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy is referred to as a revised strategy of former President Obama's Rebalancing and Pivot of Asia strategy, and that of former President Bush's strategy. The main difference is that the objectives for Indian Ocean Region and Asia Pacific region have been made clear under Trump's strategy. India, on the hand, also shares same interests as that of U.S., which is why India and U.S. both are best options for being each other as strategic partners (Chen, 2018).

With regard to Trump's administration, free and open Indo-Pacific strategy has been described in different manner. The word 'free' in the strategy have two meanings; on international arena i.e. every state of Indo-Pacific region should be free in all manners i.e. to roam freely, in the region and in the ocean as well, without any threat or constrain from any external force. And the second is on national arena i.e. for all states of Indo-Pacific to be freer on political, social and other national and domestic ground. On the other hand, the word 'open' has several different meaning as well. First of all, on international level is to have open airlines and open Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC). More than 50% (above half) of world's trade goes through Indian Ocean, South China Sea and Arabian Sea, by opening the sea, the trading oceanic routes will become more feasible to cross by large shipments, cargos and tanks. And on national level to have open Indian Ocean, means that the infrastructure and development projects should be built in the region in order to cover huge economic and development gap. Also, by developing the infrastructure of regional state, there will exist more regional corporation in terms of trade, political and security relations. Other than that, U.S. under Trump administration means a lot more from the part of open Indo-Pacific region, i.e. to have open (also fair and free) trade and investment (socially and economically) to boost up economic and security relation among other regional states along with U.S., likewise previous Presidential administrations, Trump administration also supports free, open and fair trade relations with each other (Wong, 2018).

Former President Obama's policy towards Indo-Pacific was Pivot of Asia, and India was referred to as a Regional Anchor in maintaining and rebalancing power in the region. However, President Trump foreign policy is two steps ahead of former President Obama's foreign policy. President Trump has introduced Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), a pact signed by U.S. and India to use each other military bases and logistics. And he has also enhanced the role of 7th naval fleet of U.S. INDO-PACOM, which signifies the geostrategic importance of India for U.S. in the region (Khan, 2019).

However, the policies and strategies of President Trump cannot be simplified by the fact that it would have grave implications for Pakistan. But President Trump can prove to be good for Pakistan too.

Since President Trump has cancelled a billion-dollar trade deals with India because Pakistan was giving more benefit. In simple words, it can be said that President Trump is neither pro-Indian nor pro-Pakistani, rather he is pro-American; which can be signified by his America's First policy. Other than that, President Trump is of the view that if India cannot fight Pakistan, how can it fight and contain China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean (Mir, 2019).

Factors and actors shaping United States policies towards India in Indian Ocean Region

Military and strategic partnership

Indo-U.S. strategic partnership includes defense cooperation, collaboration on maritime affairs and military exercises in the Indian Ocean. U.S. and India has been conducting exercise Malabar in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) since a long time. Initially, it was a bilateral maritime exercise but later on Japan and Australia also joined forces, known as the Quad. Consequently, regional and extra-regional states are made part of this exercise in the Indian Ocean Region, however, China and Pakistan were not invited. Due to constant navy exercises and patrolling in the Indian Ocean, India has gained influence near Strait of Malacca and around South China Sea. Since China already has military dominance in South China Sea; and now, China along with Pakistan are conducting joint military and naval exercises to counter Malabar exercise and are actively patrolling in the Indian Ocean. Other than that, India has also joined U.S. largest military exercises in the Indian Ocean region known as Rim of the Pacific exercise for naval forces. Other significance military exercise held by U.S. are; Red Flag (for air combatants) and Yudh Adhyas (armies of both state on land, ground) (Singh, 2015).

Under President Trump's administration, in case of military exercises in the Indian Ocean, a large scale military exercise of Indian and U.S. Air force was held in the Indian Ocean near Bay of Bengal. This exercise is known as 'Ex Cope India-18' and is being conducted in order to strengthen military and defense relations with each other (Anonymous, 2018).

India and U.S. military ties have taken a whole new level later in 2018 when both states agreed on conducting a major military exercises comprising of all three sectors of military i.e. Army, Navy and Air force, to conduct a joint exercise on India's eastern coast. This tri-military exercise of both Indian and U.S. navy has arranged to be conducted in 2019. Furthermore, India and U.S. have signed a new agreement called as Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement referred to as COMCASA enabling both states to utilize each other military and technological information during operations and in times of peace and conflict. It provides an easy and safest way for transfer of diplomatic and military information to each other's military. However, U.S. has some doubts on India settlement with Russia on buying a billion-dollar missile craft system, but this matter has not been of much concern between the two ally states (Anonymous, 2018).

*India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications
for Pakistan*

In addition to this, the oldest naval exercise in Indian Ocean Region, known as Malabar has recently been conducted near the shores of U.S. Even in President Trump administration, Malabar exercises are being held properly.

India's compulsion to join with U.S.

The strategic and security compulsions due to which India has joined hands with U.S. in the Indian Ocean is based on their common goals and interests in the Indian Ocean Region. India, a littoral state, located at the heart of the Indian Ocean has direct access to the ocean and high sea. India is the most suitable option for U.S. in the Indian Ocean Region and vice versa. Indo-U.S. strategic partnership would help U.S. in getting access of Indian naval bases and India is being benefited with military equipment, strategic and nuclear aid in information and technology. U.S. is utilizing naval bases of India to keep check on China expansion in the region. The presence of U.S. and Indian naval forces patrolling in the Indian Ocean, would keep China and Pakistan naval forces away from the high sea. India and China have now become strategic, economic and power competitors. U.S. and India fears that if China gets hold on Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) in the Indian Ocean, not only trade would be affected but U.S. hegemony would also be swayed. In order to maintain and rebalance power in Asia, India is collaborating with U.S. to become a powerful influencer. India already has some influence over SLOC, particularly on Strait of Malacca (trade route for China and Japan). India and U.S. are making strong allies with littoral states (near choke points) to curtail the movement of China and contain it in South China Sea (Rogin, 2018).

India has also signed accords with regional states to construct sea ports near chowk points for strategic purposes. India is building Chabahar port with Iran and Duqm sea port with Oman in Persian Gulf, in order to gain influence in North Arabian Sea and Arabian Gulf. This will pose threats to Pakistan's Makran coast, Gwadar Port and Arabian Sea. India will constraint the movement of Pakistan naval forces in its territorial sea. India's geo-strategic interest in the region is to protect these ports and gain regional hegemonic status. And India needs U.S. assistance in protecting its strategic interest in the region. Both India and U.S. works in collaboration with each other to remain dominant in the Indian Ocean. India is also a major partner of Quad (Quadrilateral ties between U.S., Japan, India and Australia on maritime affairs in IO). However, China still has an upper hand on India in gaining military influence in the region, because Hambantota sea port in Sri Lanka has been officially given to China (Khan, 2019).

India is trying to follow the objective of 'Akhand Bharat' (Greater India) and thus has created more enemies than friends around it. In west it has already fought four wars and three military stand-offs with its arch nuclear rival; Pakistan due nuclear flash point of Kashmir and very recently India has suffered an Aerial defeat from Pakistan over Palwama incidence in Kashmir. In North it had already fought

a full scale war with China in 1962 and is still involved in border skirmishes. Lately, in 2014 Indian troops suffered heavy losses and had to withdraw from Chinese border in Arunachal Pradesh. China is also building a dam which will diminish the much needed water flow for India from Brahmaputra River. In its North West, India is trying to Influence Nepal with a view to prove its hegemony over a small country however due to opening up a road link between China and Nepal and a rail link in near future India is losing its control over Nepal. In its North East, India has been influencing Bhutan not to resolve border disputes with China in Dangling Plateau, however has failed. In East it is still trying to influence Bangladesh however due to Chinese interests in Bangladesh Indian influence is diminishing. Apart from unfriendly relations with its neighbors, India is also not getting enough support from Afghanistan, Iran and Russian against its arch nuclear rival Pakistan. No involvement of India in 'One Belt One Road' initiative by China is an evidence of Indian diplomatic failure. On the other hand, projects like CPEC are frustrating India. India wants to build a Blue Water Navy and without U.S. support, it is very difficult to timely build the desired capability. At national front, India is under pressure from more than thirty independent movements including Kashmir, Tamils, Sikhs and Naxalites, who are killing and have already killed Indian ministers and politicians. Opening up of Kartarpur Corridor by Pakistan for Sikhs along its border has further worsened the situation for Indian as friendly relations developing between border sharing Sikhs and Pakistanis. Individuals of Indian armed forces are committing suicide and future generation is only choosing military as a profession and not as a mission or passion. Thus, mainly due above mentioned facets India is compelled to have alliance with U.S. in the Indian Ocean (Malik, 2019).

Diplomatic relations

Under Former President Obama's Administration, U.S. initiated Quadrilateral Maritime military exercise with India, Japan and Australia in Indo-Pacific Region. U.S. under the exercise of Malabar developed Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) in 2007, between India, Japan and Australia. Quadrilateral ties were based on diplomatic meetings for security, defense and maritime military exercises to militarize the ocean, it was later named as the Quad. Under President Trump's administration, quadrilateral ties are enhanced and strengthened due to the rise of China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Region. China's rise has not only threatened U.S. hegemonic power on regional and global scale, but has also caused fear among India's economy because Pakistan economic status is also stabilizing. Quad is not only limited to military exercises but also includes free, open and safe trade routes and navigation system in the ocean, free Sea Lines of Communications, maritime stability and security, and other protection of laws of United Nation Convention Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Gale, 2018).

Both Japan and Australia are actively supporting President Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy to show their interest. Though, by closely observing the Indo-

*India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications
for Pakistan*

Pacific strategy of President Trump and Rebalancing of Asia strategy of former President Obama; both the strategies are somehow the same, with the former being a bit advanced than the latter. The reason that both administrations have same objective is because their main goal is to contain and isolate China from becoming the global hegemonic power (Mir, 2019).

However, Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in Indian Ocean Region under Trump's administration is not fully supporting U.S. to regain its influence in the region. It is because of Trump's America first policy, withdrawing from Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), engaging Indo-Pacific strategy and without presenting any clear strategy to achieve its objective in the region. That is why most regional allies are having second thoughts about their alliance with U.S. On the other hand, China's BRI policy has put the entire Indo-Pacific on a single road or route (connecting with regional states through land and sea routes), and CPEC via Gwadar port, provides the shortest route to Europe and even to the west. Consequently, Trump's administration seems to be repeating the same mistakes as that of Obama's administration and other previous administrations. Because the policies being presented by previous presidential administration were ambiguous (Khan, 2019).

Technology terms

Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean Region also includes trade of high technology between both states. Trading of technology means that India and U.S. would share their technological devices; equipment for military and defense purposes to use it for better serving their interest and objectives (Sekhon & Purushothaman, 2014).

However, India is in favor of enhancing strategic and economic partnership and still needs U.S. assistance to gain military dominance in the Indian Ocean. India wants to be treated equally in sharing all sort of sensitive information and nuclear technology with Indian military forces as well (Singh, 2015).

Indo-U.S. strategic partnership, under Trump's administration, in Indian Ocean Region is assisting India in technological and military terms to upgrade India's military capability. Recently, India and U.S. have agreed on sharing logistics, and sensitive military technology and information. U.S. and India have signed a new agreement known as Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), which allows the military of both states to use each other's military domain and land i.e. air, land and naval bases for repair, resupplies, refueling and resting the military at each other's bases. Both have agreed on transferring military technology and logistics to each other. LEMOA also allows both militaries to keep check on China's expansion and to counter terrorism in the region. The agreement aims to strengthen both states military and strategic ties, maintaining peace and prosperity in the ocean, and conducting large scale naval exercises. LEMOA encourages Indian and U.S. naval forces to conduct naval exercise and naval

meetings ensuring safety of cargos, shipments and the ocean. Since U.S. has provided India with new technological anti-submarine, anti-surface warfare equipped with various weapons and detecting system that can detect submarines as well; known as Boeing P8-I Poseidon. Even China does not possess such a technology in its navy. Thus, India and U.S. are technologically stronger than that of China and Pakistan (Cholan, 2017).

LEMOA also includes Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange Cooperation Agreement of Geo-Spatial Agreement (BECA) and to intensify collaboration in Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) with India. Another purpose of LEMOA is to keep a close eye on Sino-Pak military naval patrolling and the formers presence in South China Sea and Indian Ocean. China's BRI policy and String of Pearls policy allows China to build overseas military bases, economic corridor and ports connected through oceanic routes in the Indian Ocean. Since String of Pearls refers to Chinese military bases and ports to scatter in the Indian Ocean, therefore U.S. and India are also militarizing the ocean by constructing more naval bases and ports. LEMOA is one such pact allowing U.S. to operate freely in the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia is one of the biggest military and naval base of U.S. located at the head of Indian Ocean in order to predominate its geopolitical and geo-strategic status in the ocean. Other than that U.S. has large military base in Bahrain and Qatar, and the 5th naval fleet of U.S. INDO-PACOM resides near Persian Gulf in order to protect maritime routes and trade. Another reason why U.S. has a great number of naval fleet in the Indian Ocean is to counter maritime terrorism and transnational crimes in the ocean and to fight terrorism (Hiranandani, 2018).

Economic ties

According to National Security Strategy (NSS) of U.S., India is the ultimate element of U.S. in Asia Pacific strategy (now Indo-Pacific) and security apparatus (Ayres, 2019). However, during President Bush administration India felt disregarded on economic grounds. But China's rising economy in South China Sea has disrupted U.S. supremacy (Green, 2016).

U.S. military presence in the Indian Ocean (IO) helped boost up the economic cooperation with India and other regional states. U.S. focus is to gain supremacy near Malacca Strait in the Indian Ocean. Since it is one of the important routes for transport of energy from the Indian Ocean to Pacific Ocean, therefore having military presence near Malacca Strait would eventually benefit U.S. in gaining influential control over trade routes of the Ocean in general and of Malacca Strait in particular. U.S. considers India as a security provider in the region, therefore U.S. enhanced its rebalancing strategy of Asia which consists of several agreements that will benefit trade and defense of both states collectively (Sekhon & Purushothaman, 2014).

India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications for Pakistan

President Trump in his National Security Strategy (NSS) considers India as its global economic and strategic partner. U.S. has formed strong bilateral economic and technology ties with India in Indo-Pacific to regain its influence in the region. Economic ties of U.S. and India has always remained strong but since Palwama attack, President Trump's administration has set to cut a billion-dollar trade deal with India (Trump, 2017).

U.S. and India are seeking their interest in Indo-Pacific region by collaborating with each other. In simple words, U.S. is assisting India in its Make in India's policy and India is cooperating with U.S. in serving its Indo-Pacific strategy, defense cooperation and military strategy, and America First policy as well. Indo-Pacific strategy describes a border strategic domain in which two big oceans connect and where U.S. interest resides. However, China is reluctant about U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. Economically, China is of the view that its BRI policy should not be compared to U.S. economic influence in Indo-Pacific and is not of great concern. Despite all this, U.S. and its allies does not see China's expansion (militarily and economically) as amiable and for trade purposes only. President Trump's NSS and National Defense Strategy (NDS) regards China as its strategic and economic competitor. Whereas U.S. says that if China follows the rules in the ocean than the growth of China would be appreciated (Malik, 2019).

China's factor

China's emerging power in Indo-Pacific is a great threat to U.S. and India's hegemonic status because of its BRI policy, CPEC and development of Gwadar Port. China enlargement, along with Pakistan's rise has become a major concern for U.S. and India. China is using economic strategies, diplomatic, military and other strategies to join forces with Pakistan. BRI is one such policy which not only connects the states but also provides shortest land and oceanic routes to landlocked and littoral states. China is not only expanding economically but it is also enlarging its military and naval bases. That is why U.S. and India are conducting large scale military exercises to have a close check on China's activities in the Ocean. Since Strait of Malacca is a strategic narrow pathway for China and other regional states for oil and energy transport. Therefore, India and U.S. are working on gaining military influence in the Indian Ocean and SLOC. India, being U.S. regional anchor is also securing its military influence in order to curtail China and Pakistan's joint patrolling and naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. Since China is continuously expanding and has initiated CPEC, therefore India has also established strategic and economic ties with regional states (Hanif & Khan, 2018).

Impact on Pakistan

The growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has resulted in increasing implications for Pakistan. Since the rivalry between India and Pakistan, the latter would likely

to face more threats from Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership. Even though, Pakistan has other challenges and threats from terrorism but India is the biggest threat Pakistan have, thus the focus of Pakistan is more centered towards India (Bukhari, 2015).

More importantly, India is also facing huge consequences in the Indian Ocean Region, ever since Pakistan has initiated developing Gwadar Port. Because it will soon become the trade hub in Indo-Pacific region, which will impose Pakistan and China's influence in the Indian Ocean Region and will be a big threat to India. Both Pakistan and China would militarize the Ocean by conducting joint military exercises (Malik, 2014).

The containment and engagement policy of U.S. in the Indian Ocean, especially towards Indo-Pacific, is somewhat similar to cold war. Since, both the rival states of U.S. are communist states, therefore this new kind of Cold war towards China in the Indian Ocean (IO) is known as cold War 2.0. It refers to containment strategy for China, to make India a global power and for U.S. to remain the sole global hegemon (Kuo, 2018).

Rebalancing Asia

US, under former President Obama, has neglected the rise of China in Indo-Pacific, when the future could be predicted that the Indian Ocean Region would be the center of concern of world's economy, U.S. has shifted its policy towards the Indian Ocean. Pakistan's Gwadar Port is not the only threat U.S. and India is concerned about. Balance of power in this region has already been disrupted, due to which U.S. is strengthening India as its regional anchor, so that China's rise could be curtailed in South China Sea, and also for Pakistan to not gain power. This strategy of U.S. is known as rebalancing of Asia and rebalancing the power shift in the Indian Ocean Region in order to protect and secure free and open trade in the Indian Ocean (Malik, 2014).

U.S. strategic interest in the Indian Ocean is centered towards China. U.S. Indo-Pacific falls under Rebalancing of Asia policy of former President Obama administration. Rebalancing policy also includes preventing China from gaining control over Malacca and Hormuz Strait. It also connects the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Controlling this strait would eventually lead the state to control maritime trade activities in IO. In view of this U.S., along with India, is monitoring China's growing expansion in the Ocean. U.S. has also strengthened military and diplomatic ties with Japan, Australia and Korea in the region. Other than that U.S. has built important military bases in littoral states of Middle East (Qatar and Iran), Japan and South Korea and have also formed strategic alliance with other democratic ally states to gain influential control in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea (Khan & Amin, 2014).

India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications for Pakistan



How America wants to Check China's expansion

Source: <https://goo.gl/images/mkhUdU>

Implications for Pakistan

In the Indian Ocean Region, Pakistan is likely to face many implications and challenges from regional and extra-regional states. With the rise of China and Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean Region, Pakistan has been entangled with consequences resulting from their rivalry. India and Pakistan, however, are old rivals therefore, the impact on Pakistan is much greater. The balance of power in the region has been disturbed since India has developed strategic ties with U.S. in the ocean. The disruption in balance of power is not only between India and China but also Pakistan is facing huge impact in the region because of the rivalry between India and China, and the latter being a strategic and economic partner of Pakistan. Any use of force or threat to use of force will destabilize the entire region wagging into conflicts and even war. Thus, Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in Indian Ocean Region has several implications for Pakistan, which are as followed.

Economic dimension

Pakistan faces great implications because 97% of trade of Pakistan is dependent on sea. Maritime trade of Pakistan is now largely being transited through Gwadar

port. Also, CPEC is an economic booster of Pakistan. If India, imposes blockade on sea routes than Pakistan maritime trade would face huge threat on economic and military ground. China is another big actor for Pakistan and Indo-U.S. in the Ocean. China and other landlocked regional states are also dependent on maritime trade and oceanic routes. However, China and Pakistan are increasing their military presence in the Indian Ocean through Gwadar Port to protect oceanic routes. But U.S. and India does not want China and even Pakistan to gain influence in the Indian Ocean, because the entire world depends upon the Indian Ocean for trade of oil and energy resources. U.S. have deployed about 60% its naval forces in the ocean and particularly near Malacca Strait. And if any blockade is imposed by any influential power, the situation between regional states and extra-regional state would be intrigued, leading to economic and military instability in the region. Other than that, if SLOC in Indian Ocean are blocked, then the international market will be affected.

Military dimension

Pakistan military would face huge consequences if things did not go well for Pakistan on economic grounds. In case of Pakistan, most regional and extra-regional states conduct naval exercises in the ocean. The main purpose of naval exercise and operation is to observe the enemy forces and their presence in the ocean. In Indian Ocean Region, India and U.S. have been conducting large scale naval exercise known as Malabar exercise. Japan and Australia are also significant partners of U.S. and India and their joint military exercise is known as the Quad. Consequently, U.S. has provided India with carriers, operational aircrafts and other military equipment, so that the technological gap could be minimized while conducting operations. Interoperability is far higher during operations and exercise. It has since been improved between India and U.S. because of their joint conduct in large scale naval exercise. Pakistan have been conducting exercise AMAN, a multinational exercise, as an alternate to exercise Malabar. Exercise AMAN is a large scale naval exercise in which U.S., Japan and Russia also participated. Similarly, India was not invited in this exercise as the former does not invite China and Pakistan in any exercises particularly Malabar exercise in the Indian Ocean. Another big loss that India would face, is losing Russia as its partner in the Indian Ocean. Since Russia has developed defense and strategic ties with Pakistan and has also shown interest in Gwadar Port and CPEC i.e. Russia's policies are leaning towards Pakistan and China in the Indian Ocean. Thus, the nexus in the Indian Ocean would be Triple Axis i.e. Pakistan, Russia and China and the Quad i.e. U.S., India, Japan and Australia.

Recently Pakistan's Navy has deducted two Indian submarines trying to enter Pakistani waters. There is a need to enhance naval capacity to at least secure its area of interest by adding at least four nuclear submarines with capability to launch Intercontinental Ballistic Nuclear Missile and two air craft carriers. In order to protect and develop CPEC and its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Pakistan must

try to add the stake holders such as regional and extra-regional in this project and establish an Air Defense Identification Zone over its EEZ (Malik, 2019).

Technological dimension

China has emerged as the second largest economy of the world. The economic gap between China and U.S. is very little. However, China lags behind U.S. on technological scale. With the development of P8I-Posedian (long range aircraft to hunt down submarine), U.S. naval forces has become stronger than before and now U.S. has lead P8I-Posedian to India in the Indian Ocean. U.S. has been providing carriers, vessels, stealth (large radius) submarines, aircrafts, anti-submarines, nuclear technology and nuclear aid, weapons, warships to India, so they can conduct large scale naval exercises and to exceed China and Pakistan's naval forces. Not only China but the regional states, particularly Pakistan also fear this technology. The reason for U.S. providing naval aid and nuclear technology to India in the Indian Ocean is, so that the gap between Pakistan and Indian naval forces could not be reduced. Besides that, India's potential and combat naval war forces keep increasing to that of Pakistan. Since U.S. is providing technological submarines and other technological assistance to India to increase its strength and power; due to which the Indian naval forces have become vulnerable to Pakistan as well as China in the Indian Ocean Region.

China's rise as a factor

China has initiated its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) policy with Pakistan and other regional states in order to develop and industrialize the remaining 6% of its area (the rest 94% of China is industrialized) as well. Pakistan with the help of CPEC, specifically Gwadar Port is going to be a trendsetter and economic hub of the future in the Indian Ocean. Successful completion of CPEC and Gwadar Port will result in China and Pakistan's economic boost up on regional and global scale. Since, the center of gravity of world economy has been shifted towards Indo-Pacific from Atlantic; U.S. has been facing economic and strategic challenges from China's emergence. Along with China, Pakistan's rise is also a big deal for India. Being the nuclear rival states, India would have to face greater consequences from Pakistan's rise. Since India has rivalry with Pakistan as well as China, it stimulates double threat for India in Asia and even in Indian Ocean Region. It can be simplified that China and Pakistan will become strategically and economically strong, leaving India behind. This will affect not only India's economy and strength, but India would also be in fear and pressure from China and Pakistan. Since Gwadar Port will influence the SLOC and straits passages in the Indian Ocean; trade and economy of India would also be affected. This is something that U.S. and India does not want to happen, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (Ahmed, 2019).

China in fear of losing the Strait of Malacca as its sole transport pathway, of oil and fuel, has instituted an alternate pathway via Gwadar Port i.e. CPEC and BRI in Pakistan and connecting with other regional states (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Myanmar). This would help China in developing its western side (underdeveloped) and would also provide the shortest trading route to Central Asia, Europe and African states. The alternate passage in BRI policy through Gwadar Port is a gateway to regional economy. Because trade with landlocked states (Central Asia, Africa and Afghanistan) would open through land route and would be connected to sea route, through Gwadar Port, which provides shortest route to trade in Arabian Sea, Africa, Central Asia and Europe, and connects the East to the West and vice versa. In this case, Pakistan's trade with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and other Central Asian states would also open, increasing the economic position of Pakistan. Afghanistan and Iran, no doubt, will also initiate trade with Pakistan in near future because both the states are neighboring states of Pakistan connected by shortest land routes in the region. This will increase intra-regional trade, strengthening the region in the Indian Ocean.

Strategic and security options available for Pakistan

Pakistan development and progress of Gwadar port has also threatened the maritime domain of Pakistan. Maritime security challenges on land and offshore domain of Pakistan has increased. The maritime threats on coastal and offshore area of Pakistan are transnational threats including conventional and non-conventional threats, such as maritime terrorism, piracy, smuggling of drugs and weapons, human trafficking, cyber space threats and other such threats. In order to counter these threats and challenges, Pakistan Navy (PN) plays a very important role in countering maritime terrorism and other maritime threats and challenges.

Pakistan Navy is playing an active role in maritime security of Western Indian Ocean and is involved in maritime exercises and operations to counter terrorism, piracy and is a part of Combined Task Force 150 for countering maritime terrorism. Other than that Pakistan Navy is fighting against terrorism in coastal areas and areas where sea ports are located such as in Balochistan, PN is playing a huge role in developing and building infrastructure in the province of Balochistan to avoid conflicts and violent activities in the region and on coastal area. Thus, maritime security has become extremely challenging for Pakistan in the recent timeframe.

With the success of Gwadar port, Pakistan would be economically stable and strong, also Gwadar port would become economic hub of the region. In this case, India would be left with no other option but to develop friendly relation with Pakistan in order to increase its economic status in the region. Regardless of this, India would need land access to start trade with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and to initiate trade with Central Asian region as well, otherwise India would face isolation in economic terms. And India cannot get access to all these landlocked states without passing through Pakistan. If India uses the sea route through

*India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications
for Pakistan*

Chabahar port for trading purposes, it would be costly and time consuming. Therefore, the only option India would have is to develop friendly relations with Pakistan to stabilize and maintain its economic status in the future (Ahmed, 2019).

The strategic imbalance in the Indian Ocean between regional and extra-regional states is that of conventional and nuclear forces and submarines in the ocean. India has nuclear submarines which can stay for a long time in water without coming out on surface, whereas Pakistan does not have any nuclear submarines yet. Pakistan navy have conventional submarines that can stay under water for a short time period and have to come out of water after a certain period of time which can prove to be vulnerable since the location of the submarine can easily be tracked (Malik, 2019).

Conclusion

Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has become a hot topic of debate since their partnership in Indo-Pacific Region. India dreams of becoming regional hegemon of Asia has become true with its strategic partnership with U.S. India's 'Ankhand Bharat' view in the Indian Ocean Region would also be fulfilled with its assistance to U.S., which would result in negative impact on regional scale, particularly for Pakistan in the Indian Ocean. U.S. is already providing high technological naval weapons and nuclear submarine to India to compete against China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Region. Another purpose of India developing weapons and transferring of technology and equipment for Indian naval forces from U.S., is that so the former can have greater naval power than Pakistan. This has eventually resulted in arms-race in the region, disrupting balance of power. Thus, the strategic partnership of India and U.S. in Indo-Pacific region has become much more influential which has put Pakistan in a less secure position than the rest of regional states. India and U.S. have been conducting extensive naval exercises and patrolling in the Indian Ocean to gain military dominance in suspicion of China and Pakistan pre-dominating their military presence in the ocean particularly near North Arabian Sea through Gwadar Port. India's intension of building Blue Water Navy with U.S. collaboration in the Indian Ocean also serves to predominate high sea and help U.S. in containing China and Pakistan's growing activities towards the ocean. Leaning of power balance towards India due to its strategic partnership with U.S., Pakistan would likely to face deadly implications not only in oceanic domain but also in political, economic, social, defense and on international ground, resulting in nuclear arms race and conflicts with rival India (involving U.S. and China) in order to maintain power balance in the region.

For Pakistan, to counter Indo-U.S. strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean Region, the former has to change its paradigm from land lord thinking to maritime nation thinking. The reason to start thinking and acting like a maritime state is that so Pakistan could focus on developing its maritime sector, and by developing blue economy which includes oceanic industries for extraction of hydrocarbons,

fisheries, marine tourism, aquaculture, securing and utilizing marine ecosystem for marine biology, seabed mining and developments of ports and coastal areas for national and international investment. Pakistan should develop and secure its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the oceanic domain of Pakistan should be considered as the fifth province of Pakistan. Consequently, U.S. can prove to be good for Pakistan against India under President Trump's administration because of the recent Palwama attack where U.S. has raised questions for India in failing to stand against Pakistan. And because U.S. needs Pakistan to escape from Afghanistan. U.S. would want to develop good economic ties with Pakistan. Thus, the real competition in the Indian Ocean is between China and Pakistan, and U.S. and India, which has taken the shape of Cold war in the 21st century.

Recommendations

- Pakistan has to reconceive its foreign policy and maritime doctrine.
- Pakistan should procure state of the art weapons and maritime domain to counter Indo-U.S. naval collaboration in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Pakistan should focus on improving its naval capability in the Indian Ocean to protect its coastal areas and maritime interests, and to emerge as a maritime power in the Indian Ocean.
- Pakistan Navy maritime strategy should include sea-based second strike nuclear capability.
- Pakistan Navy should procure more nuclear submarines, submarine launched ballistic missiles, and improve technological equipment and nuclear weapons in order to gain maritime power, along with quality and quantity.
- Pakistan Navy should actively conduct naval exercises in the Indian Ocean Region in order to keep check on U.S. and India's militarization of the sea and should participate in operations to counter maritime terrorism and transnational crimes.
- Pakistan should develop its blue economy by stabilizing the economic status of the country while building maritime infrastructure, technological devices for marine experts and maritime affairs and by focusing on other social and political aspects in the ocean.

***India-United States Strategic Partnership in Indian Ocean Region and its Implications
for Pakistan***

- Pakistan should enhance its economic status and prosperity in the region because Pakistan is the central state for providing shortest oceanic and land route for trade and other purposes to landlocked states.
- Government of Pakistan should increase the budget for navy to improve naval capability and security of sea ports and bases in the Indian Ocean.
- Pakistan should develop strategic ties with Russia in the Indian Ocean and should invite the latter in CPEC because of its strategic interest in Pakistan and Gwadar Port.

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Aima Tahir & Khushboo Ejaz

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