



## INDIA'S WORRIES REGARDING THE MILITARY DISPLAY BETWEEN CHINA AND THE US OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: A STUDY

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### **Abstract**

*The show of military strength between the United States and China in the South China Sea — doesn't reflect that all Asian nations have failed jointly to curb the increasing militaristic hegemony of China? They haven't been able to come up with a unified front that they can use to pressure Beijing to respect the sovereignty of other countries territories, have they? Forcing the dragon into submission is not a solution, and having one foreign superpower dominate the area is bad for Asia's stability. Because it has the potential to open the door to increased mutual fighting among regional allies, similar to what takes place in West Asia, which is continuing to be a bubbling pot owing to the ongoing superpower competition that takes place there. The history of the globe is filled with numerous examples of super & major powers being involved in various parts of the world, which subsequently suffered from a great deal of bloodshed and instability for extended amounts of time.*

**Keywords:** *Asia's stability, Hegemony, Regional allies, Sovereignty, Struggle for Power.*

### **Introduction**

China's ongoing imperialist aggressions over the South China Sea and recent statements over Taiwan have pushed the United States to show off its impressive military force in this contentious part of the world. The United States wishes to impose its uncontested global hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. Still, this objective faces a significant challenge due to China's growing expansionism over the Indo-Pacific.<sup>[1]</sup> The phrase "Asia-Pacific" is progressively losing its luster due to the expanding relevance of a wider range of international contacts. As a result, the area that comprises the whole of "Asia-Pacific" in addition to the "Indian Ocean" is now known as the "Indo-Pacific."<sup>[2]</sup> Although there is no consensus among academics regarding the precise geographic outlines of the Indo-Pacific region, the rise of the Indo-Pacific as a new region of unification among the majority of the world's powers — while incorporating both the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean into its fold — reveals a new facet of the predominate strategic reality of the 21st century. Despite India's major appearance in the Indian Ocean region, before the current regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, New Delhi widely overlooked the geopolitical interests and security issues of maritime security. This was the case even though many mighty regional countries, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, the United States, and the ASEAN states, recognize India's role as vital in the Indo-Pacific. But today, the Indo-Pacific region has occupied a new crucial sector in India's foreign policy engagements, representing a substantial change in New Delhi's geopolitical thinking.<sup>[3]</sup> This move has expanded India's dangers beyond its continental boundaries and into its maritime domain. As China is faced with rising internal dangers on various counts, according to political experts, such as the continuous Corona assault with new versions, the persisting economic crisis, and the government's incapacity to answer people's demands, notably oppressing the masses comprising the minority Uighur Muslims, all of these combined constitute severe risks to the authoritarian rule of the Chinese Leader Xi Jinping, who has been attempting to distract the public focus from his shortcomings lately. China has been energetically pursuing its imperial expansion in all directions for the last few decades, escalating unwanted border conflicts with almost all of the nations in this area. Interestingly, China has not exempted even great powers like Japan or Russia in its quest to fulfill its endless hunger for acquiring islands (of Japan) or (the city of Vladivostok in Russia)



territories of other countries. China's goal is to expand its territory at the expense of other nations. In the same manner, countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka have targeted India to destabilize it and divert public attention from their own wrongdoings within their own countries.<sup>[4]</sup> These countries cannot manage their own internal challenges due to the Corona disease outbreak, economic recession, rising unemployment, and other social and economic crises. As a result, these countries have targeted India. The presence of Taliban-2 in Kabul is another source of great worry for nations committed to maintaining peace, notably India. Recent unrest in Sri Lanka, which ultimately led to a change of government, is cause for concern since the new government has allowed a high-tech Chinese warship to remain in port at Hambantota.<sup>[5]</sup> In contrast, India has steadfastly maintained all of the declared aims of its foreign policy. It continues to work with the actual motive to safeguard its national interests in line with the true spirit of peace, progress, welfare, and security of not just its own but that of the whole of humanity to achieve the long-cherished vision of "Vasndhaiv Kutumbakam," which translates to "the whole world is a family." In other words, the Indian government views the entire world as one family. In this paper, we shall discuss how India's current foreign policy is undergoing some revisions to maintain consistency with its previously proclaimed principles, as well as to efficaciously neutralize the dangers posed by the burgeoning Beijing-Islamabad-Kabul axis, as well as the challenges presented by China's rising imperialist hostile actions in the Indo-Pacific and subsequent US military actions, all of which work against India's national interests. China's rising transgressions in the Indo-Pacific, notably around the South China Sea, as well as against "India, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea," and practically all other coastal nations surrounding the Indian Ocean, have created a very tense and insecure environment in the region. This is discussed in the introductory section. In the second section, we talk about the Beijing-Islamabad-Kabul axis. We examine India's attempts to safeguard its national security and territorial integrity using military choices and diplomatic methods. We do this by comparing and contrasting China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The next section will address the many choices that India has in front of it to improve its position concerning Chinese intrusions. In addition, it compares and contrasts the imperialist actions of China with those of the Quad initiative and the Aukus Accord to emphasize the significant worries surrounding peace & security in the Indo-Pacific domain. Last but not least, it concludes that China should have a cooperative stance towards India and the other nations in the Indo-Pacific, as well as other super & major powers throughout the globe since peace and security are in the shared interest of mankind.

### **Afghanistan-Pakistan-Beijing triangle**

Beijing, Islamabad, and Kabul have formed an axis to encircle India and coerce New Delhi into submitting to a global order centered on China's self-proclaimed primacy. Since long ago, China and Pakistan have been India's two most pressing security issues. This situation has only worsened with the likely participation of the Taliban in Afghanistan & Nepal. China and Pakistan continue to be India's two most pressing security concerns. Because Taliban-2 and the majority of other terrorist organizations in Pakistan share the goal of creating as much instability in India as they can, this has become an issue of serious concern to India. China has already successfully surrounded India through its previous String of Pearls plan. This was accomplished with the active help of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and other coastal states surrounding the Indian Ocean.<sup>[6]</sup> In addition to this, Beijing has taken control of a region in the Indian Ocean and has also created an airfield in a part of Kashmir that is controlled by Pakistan (POK). After the Pakistani Supreme Court ordered elections to be held in Gilgit-Baltistan, a part of Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (POK) India tried again to claim the territory as part of India. This time, however, the move alarmed both Pakistan & China since New Delhi had included POK in its meteorological reports for Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>[7]</sup> POK forms an important entity of the very expensive "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)" project, which is another reason why Beijing is very



nervous. It will have a lasting impact on its grand vision for the Belt and Road initiative (OBOR).<sup>[8]</sup> Both the “China’s Strings of Pearls” plan and the OBOR empire building may be compared to a well-designed icon for trade and business. When all of these facts are considered, it would seem that Beijing has thrown down the gauntlet not just to India but to virtually all of the governments in the Indo-Pacific area with the previously described limited and self-serving aims that are veiled in its neo-imperialist policies. India, along with other territories in the region like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Tibet, is now the nation in the area that is suffering the most as a result of continued Chinese expansionist and imperialistic intentions.

### **The Chinese imperialistic attitude towards the Quad and the AUKUS**

Indeed, the ASEAN member states and other coastal states in the Indo-Pacific have grounds to be apprehensive of Beijing’s escalating imperialist aggressions in maritime waters in the light of the country’s expanding political and military aspirations.<sup>[9]</sup> The littoral nations, especially the smaller ones like “the Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam,” etc., are worried about Beijing’s military force since it has surpassed their combined power. The smaller nations, which see themselves as easy prey for the foreign powers’ arbitrary demands, agree on this point, which relates to their security worries. This is why governments in the area that have the backing of the United States have unequivocally denied China’s brazen claim over the South China Sea as its preferential sphere of influence. This is evident in the robust rebuke by all members of the ASEAN, from the Philippines to Taiwan and India has also challenged this assertion. The ongoing conflict between China and Taiwan is another key source of friction between the two countries. Even if the previous Kumintong Government in Taipei was more amicable to Beijing than the current administration of Tsai Ing-wen, the island country of Taiwan remains a potential source of conflict between China and the United States.<sup>[10]</sup> As a result, previous ASEAN and East Asia Summits sought the involvement of the United States and other major nations to compete with China’s growing influence. The United States and Russia had entered the East Asia forum by the time this information became available. There is no question that China has recently surfaced as a major contestant for global influence. This can be attributed to China’s deep-seated desire to assert itself as a liable global player to ensure peace & security in the world, an endeavor in which China has been largely unsuccessful due to the imperialist & expansionist policies it has pursued. Also, Beijing never seems to understand that gaining a higher power position is fundamentally followed by sharing the international obligation to contribute to global peace and development. This must be reflected in Beijing’s behavior and intentions toward the rest of the world. On the other hand, the deployment of troops in the areas surrounding the South China Sea and frequent military drills in the sea waters and land boundaries are in complete contradiction to the existing customs & conventions of the harmonious global affairs, and instead, seek to advance the Chinese interests overseas.<sup>[11]</sup> These activities have been going on for quite some time. Beijing’s increasingly aggressive and irresponsible behavior has caused enormous unease and worry among peace-loving countries worldwide, including the United States and every other big and little power in every region of the globe. To combat the expansionist intentions of China, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, proposed the formation of a group known as the D-10, consisting of ten large democratic countries. This specific goal is also a focus of the QUAD effort and the AUKUS accord, designed to facilitate its achievement.<sup>[12]</sup> Christensen, T. J.<sup>[13]</sup>, a well-known security expert, observes that it is generally accepted throughout “ASEAN and East Asia that Australia,” being equally hesitant of China’s growing power status, has practical issues to go on the same course. This is something that is taken for granted in both of these regions.



Australia is the major military force engaging in joint naval drills with India, Japan, and the United States to enhance the other countries' interoperability. Some of Australia's most senior political figures think that Australia's bilateral relationship with Beijing should be built on a far more solid basis and that the country should not put all of its eggs in the basket provided by the United States.<sup>[15]</sup> This development is not something that can be ignored lightly. In addition, strategic analysts think that a strategy to limit China's military ascension may not be viable and that Canberra must strike a balance between its defense connections with Washington. Despite this, it would be a prudent move for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its powerful proponents to take comprehension of the pre-existing conditions that exist in the region. It is possible that there will not be any sudden and drastic change in the existing partnerships or agreements, whether they are overt or covert. This is the reason why India needs to have active interactions with the ASEAN and all of the other states in East Asia, except Japan, South Korea, and Russia, and needs to help build up a prospective defense network that may make sure free transport to commercial consignments over seafaring channels that pass through and around the South China Sea.

### **Prospects Ahead of India**

India must thus make urgent measures to engage its diplomacy further to establish strategic ties with all countries in the Indo-Pacific, especially the Southeast Asian member states. India must also work to expand the scope of its most recent security agreement with Australia to turn the QUAD initiative's vision into reality. It must also support the AUKUS accord, even if it is not a member. Fortunately for Australia, a similar security agreement with the United States has been in place since 2011 to achieve the same goal. In a manner parallel to this, Japan is working to improve both its technological and economic standing, as well as its military capabilities, to strengthen its position in the area and provide a balance to the aggressive expansionism of China. A robust regional security bulwark, i.e., regional security architecture cum alliance similar to NATO, is necessary in the light of recent developments, as it would be able to confront the growing Chinese imperialist claims in the area successfully. India, on its side, must further improve its Look East strategy by developing tighter economic and military alliances with other like-minded ASEAN and Far Eastern governments, as the recently agreed India-Vietnam holistic relations on August 25, 2020, and previous to it the India-Australia assurance accord.<sup>[16]</sup> In addition, India should avoid getting into unnecessary conflict with either China or Pakistan. Still, it should prioritize strengthening itself to safeguard its national interests, which should be understood in terms of power, which can be understood as the function of a state's material potential. The Indo-Pacific area will continue to increase New Delhi's profile and ensure its strategic interests in the so-evolving landscape; nevertheless, the government must stay open to new ideas and structures, such as a burden-sharing model focused on issue-based alliances.<sup>[17]</sup> In addition, the Indo-Pacific region will continue to provide New Delhi with an opportunity to raise its profile and safeguard its strategic interests. A strategy of this kind will make it possible for India to make the most of its limited resources and capabilities to prepare for a new security situation properly. The actions and results India achieves in the Indo-Pacific region may help build the groundwork for India's role in emerging global security architecture. India's growing engagement in the Asia-Pacific region's strategic discussions highlights its developing predisposition toward the aim of stable regional peace and security. Achieving this goal needs Indian and Southeast Asian governments to cooperate on all fronts and in a strategic capacity. While this is happening, India has been able to keep its relationships with Japan and Australia on a positive footing. This has allowed India to continue to make steady advancements in its technological and economic development in an era marked by expanding digitalization and developing artificial intelligence (AI), all against the backdrop of widespread globalization and liberalization. In addition, Indian diplomacy needs to continue focusing on the East to play a significant role in South East Asia. This is because India and





the region's countries have been linked through Buddhism for many centuries in commerce, religion, culture, and even the development of civilization. And this issue has to be dealt with appropriately and given new life.

China's behavior toward most nations in the Indo-Pacific region has been so absurd and antagonistic that it has led to the formation of a worldwide accord among almost all major & regional powers, notably smaller ones in the Indo-Pacific area.<sup>[18]</sup> In addition, China's suspected participation in the Coronavirus production in its Wuhan Lab of Virology has already brought the world community together under the leadership of the United States. Because of this, Beijing must get an appropriate reprimand to rein in its aggressive escapades. When this topic is discussed, the genuine issue that emerges is whether or not this type of engagement in Asian affairs on the part of a distant superpower is acceptable. Especially because neither the Security Council nor the General Assembly of the United Nations has authorized the United States to take any action against China. Despite this, the United States is determined to carry out a larger and more menacing military exercise in response to one currently being carried out by Beijing in the contested waters of the South China Sea, including the Indo-Pacific. This has the potential to create a dire situation throughout the entire region. Both sides are frantically engaged in gigantic show-offs for their respective scary weapons. This is one of the reasons why the current dispute between the United States and China over the South China Sea is becoming worse instead of better. Because the success or failure of a foreign policy is largely determined by the amount of power it possesses and how that power is exercised, the foreign policies of various countries are having a difficult time remaining consistent and logical in pursuing their defined national interests in a manner that is both desired and consistent. This is because the success or failure of a foreign policy is largely a function of its power and the way it is exercised. The pursuit of power and its central role in international affairs cannot be overstated. To protect the country's ability to handle all difficulties realistically and responsibly to project India's long-cherished goals of being a supreme power rather than a rising power, India's competent leadership of Prime Minister Modi has successfully managed to keep the essential principles of the country's foreign policy while facing huge domestic as well as external issues in an effective way, to project India's capacity to handle all challenges effectively. This has enabled India as the Prime Minister of India; Narendra Modi believes that superpower is a great power not only economically and militarily but also culturally, with the conceptual and philosophical potential to offer something new for the benefit of all humanity. This belief of PM Modi for the nation provides revolutionary prospects for it to gain great power capabilities and to make its acquisition an official goal of India's national policy. Perhaps, with this perspective in mind, India has successfully managed to renew and develop its strong links with all major and other regional powers like "Britain, France, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, etc." including the lone super/hyper-power the United States spanning over across all the continents viz Asia, Europe, Africa, America. This is particularly noteworthy given that Beijing and Islamabad sustain to keep extremely acrimonious and antagonistic relations with the government in New Delhi, both on their own and as part of a larger conspiracy that almost certainly includes the participation of Kathmandu and possibly even Colombo as well as other anti-Indian power centers. Therefore, it is clear that the increasing hostility between the two sides namely, USA and China with each passing day has grave warnings not only for the peace & security of the two adversaries but also for the peace & security of the whole globe. It should be no surprise that the United States of America and China, two of the world's most powerful militaries, possess nuclear weapons and various other cutting-edge, devastating armaments and have the capabilities to indulge in massive destruction. China has the biggest army in the world and a vast accumulation of various cutting-edge and lethal weaponry. However, the United States still has the



greatest pool of such lethal weapons and the well-trained military people, making it the most powerful military force in the world. The technically superior and more sophisticated capabilities of the United States military have the potential to alter the current territorial status quo in the South China Sea; nevertheless, doing so may trigger a third global war. However, this cannot occur since war is never the answer to any problem. This standoff between China and the United States over the South China Sea may be resolved by the pursuit of peaceful & diplomatic solutions instead. While the United States justifies its ongoing military exercises as a means of resisting China's unauthorized sovereign claim over the entirety of the South China Sea and as a means of ensuring unhindered navigation via maritime channels, China continues to conduct its military exercises to protect its territorial disputes over the island, even though it lost the case before "the International Court of Arbitration in 2016." In addition, Beijing continues to assert its erroneous claim based on historical precedent by impeding the free passage of naval goods belonging to other nations when they travel through this area. China has transformed the whole island into a fort, complete with military installations and arsenals, rather than complying with the ruling of the highest court in the world. Additionally, since it is the only superpower in the globe, the United States of America also has the burden of fostering international trade and business via this area. In a similar vein, it is anticipated that China would honour and participate in the distribution of the associated regional responsibility due to its increasing global power standing.

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