



Curtailing China's Expansionist Forays

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- The spectacular rise of China over the past two decades has changed the geopolitical scene across India's maritime frontiers.
- While countering Chinese foray into the Indian Ocean, India needs to embrace a multi-dimensional approach.

\n

\n\n

How has China deployed its expansionist attitudes?

\n\n

\n

- Beijing's readiness to deploy its navy coercively to enforce its erratic claims has shaken its entire maritime neighbourhood.
- **Neighbourhood Issues** - Its claims across the South China Sea are spelt out in its unilaterally drawn "Nine Dotted Line".
- This has resulted in tensions with virtually all its neighbours - South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.
- What is worse is that China is even building air bases on artificially constructed islands across the South China Sea to assert itself.
- Notably, the very basis of China's claims have been rejected by a UN tribunal in a judgment on a complaint filed by the Philippines.

\n

\n\n

\n

- **Indian Ocean Foray** - This Chinese “assertiveness” across the South China Sea is accompanied by its growing naval presence.
\n
- It has deployed its Nuclear submarines, across the sea-lanes of the Indian Ocean - from its naval base in Djibouti to across the Malacca Strait.
\n
- Noitably, the Indian Ocean Region accounts for 40% of the world’s oil production and 57% of the world’s oil trade.
\n

\n\n

What are the implications of China’s BRI?

\n\n

- ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ is being recognized as Beijing’s strategy to dominate the major sea lanes of the Indo-Pacific.
\n
- BRI projects are increasingly seen as unsustainable due to its massive demanding investments that will be funded by Chinese credit.
\n
- As most projects are said to be economically unviable, this might result in an eventual distress sale to China.
\n
- This would increasingly compromise the sovereignty of the hosts and hand over control of infrastructure to the Chinese.
\n
- Srilanka has already started to feel the heat in its Hambantota venture with China.
\n
- Pakistani & Myanmar economists have also started questioning the rationale of Chinese investments.
\n

\n\n

What are the direct challenges to India?

\n\n

- Beijing now claims the entire of Arunachal Pradesh and also large tracts of Ladakh.
\n
- Also, China has built a navel monitoring facility and port on Myanmar’s Cocos Islands which is near the Andaman Islands.

- China now has a full-fledged military base in Djibouti, and full access to port facilities at Gwadar, in Baluchistan.
- It is set to significantly strengthen Pakistan's navy, providing it 4 frigates and 8 submarines.

\n\n

How is India's Maritime policy contrasted with China's?

\n\n

- India has settled its maritime boundaries with most neighbours - Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- Moreover, India has no maritime boundary tensions with Pakistan, though demarcation is possible only after the land boundary is agreed upon.
- Notably, India also works closely with the littoral states through the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).
- It is for this reason that India's maritime behaviour, unlike that of China, has won international praise.

\n\n

How has India's Alliances took shape?

\n\n

- India is partnering Japan for economic cooperation and connectivity across its shores to Africa.
- During his visits to Seychelles and Mauritius in 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a number of maritime agreements.
- These included infrastructure and security partnerships and credit assistance for upgrading their naval capacities.
- India's coastal lines of communication across the Indian Ocean are hence being closely monitored now and anti-piracy operations have also intensified.
- A naval conclave was organised in Goa recently, which was attended by

senior naval officials of many countries in the region.

\n

- Notably, India had offered to provide them with better intelligence on maritime movements across the Indian Ocean.

\n

- Adding to these is the various maritime exercises like Malabar (US, Japan & India) and IndRa (India & Russia).

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Business Line

\n



IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative