

India's Domestic Debate over China's Growing Strategic Presence in the Indian Ocean

*Rajdeep Pakanati**

This article seeks to capture the domestic debate in India over China's activities in the Indian Ocean. It engages the critical geopolitical articulation around formal, practical and popular geopolitics, and provides a narrow perspective on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It begins with a look at how India and China perceive the IOR, which is crucial to understand how the Indian Ocean is framed in the public consciousness in India. This is followed by a look at debates over China in the Indian Parliament, specifically focusing on the debates and questions raised by various Members of Parliament (MPs) and the government's response. The article then analyses the largest circulated newspaper in English, The Times of India, during the last few years to discern any domestic discourse in the public sphere. It concludes by looking at domestic discourse created by think tanks and research organisations which pay close attention to China.

INTRODUCTION

The geopolitical context of competition and conflict in Asia has always occupied the attention of scholars and decision makers. More recently, the 'Pivot to Asia' by the United States (US), coupled with the expectations of the Asian Century, has brought greater focus on this region. While the propaganda-like coverage on South China Sea (SCS) has dominated the attention of people around the world and in India, a similar situation awaits in the context of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

* Dr Rajdeep Pakanati is Associate Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat. He can be contacted on rpakanati@jgu.edu.in.

ISSN 0976-1004 print

© 2018 Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

Journal of Defence Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, January–March 2019, pp. 5–31



Geopolitics is a reliable guide of the global landscape using geographical descriptions, metaphors and templates such as ‘Third World’, North/South, ‘continental power’ or the Asian Century. These terms inherently draw on the geographical location and are labelled or identified as such. The attention on geopolitics is also necessary as academics, political leaders, journalists and learned experts mobilise these references and put forward particular understandings of places, communities and the accompanying identities.¹ For example, David Brewster, while highlighting the growing significance of the Bay of Bengal in the context of Indo-Pacific region, argues that ‘a new mental map that recognises the greater strategic centrality and importance of the Bay of Bengal can be of considerable benefit in understanding the strategic dynamics and potential of the area.’²

In mainstream study on geopolitics, the dominant realist perspective is preoccupied with borders, resources, flows, territories and identities,³ but a more useful framework to engage with geopolitics can be found in the critical geopolitical articulation around *formal*, *practical* and *popular* geopolitics (see Figure 1). This article engages with formal geopolitics as

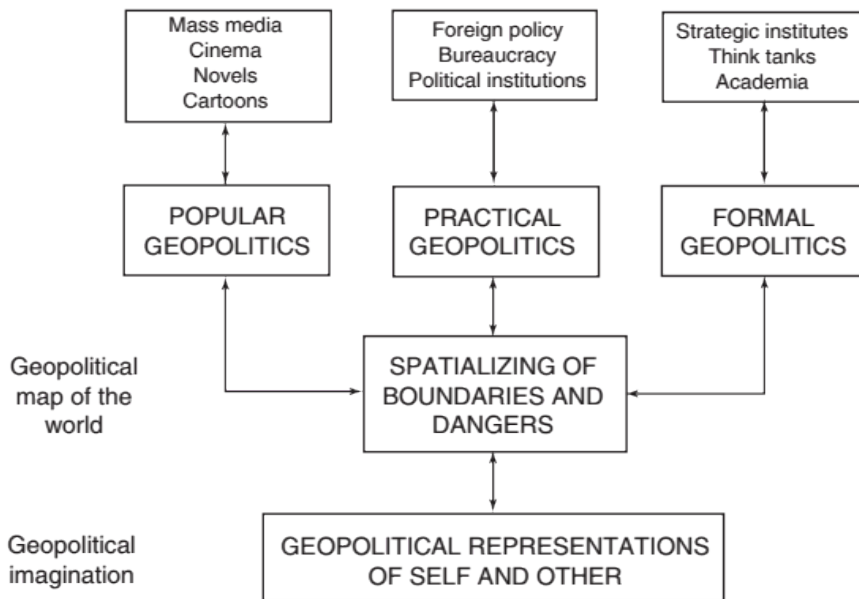


Figure 1 Formal, Practical and Popular Geopolitics

Source: Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics*, London: Sage, 2009, p. 46.

articulated by academics in India, along with that applied by strategic institutes and think tanks. Specifically, it seeks to capture the geopolitical dynamics of India–China relations in the maritime context, which is done by assessing the domestic debate in India over China's activities in the Indian Ocean. The article begins with looking at how both India and China perceive the IOR. This is crucial to understand how the Indian Ocean is framed in the public conscience in India. Next, the debates over China in the Indian Parliament are examined, with a focus on the debates and questions raised by various Members of Parliament (MPs) and the response of the Government of India (GoI). Then, the article carries out an analysis of the largest circulated newspaper in English, *The Times of India* (TOI), during 2011-2015, to discern any domestic discourse in the public sphere. Ultimately, it concludes by looking at domestic discourse created by think tanks and research organisations which pay close attention to China. The article aims to tease out 'practical geopolitics' from the focus on the maritime doctrines along with the debates in the Parliament. Popular geopolitics is assessed by looking at the news media.

INDIA–CHINA RELATIONSHIP

The India–China relationship is intricately tied to shared borders as well as the shared geopolitical space in Asia. Using both the *practical* and *formal* geopolitics lens to provide a geopolitical understanding of competition and conflict in Asia⁴ shows that the focus of this relationship has been predominantly on the conflict between the two countries over border matters. According to Ouyang Guoxing of the Hainan Institute for World Watch (HNIWW), there are:

three main divergences in the Sino-Indian relations: First, historical legacies which include: the border issue, the Tibet issue; and their derivatives such as the visa issue. Second, structural conflicts under the regional security structure which include: the Sino-Pakistan 'quasi-alliance', PLA-N's activities in IOR, India's role in the maritime disputes between China and its neighbours, and the strategic triangle of China, India and the USA. Third, the economic and non-traditional security issues which include issues like the trade imbalance between the two countries, and the cross-border water resources issue.⁵

While this assessment is true, it must be pointed out that the major issue between India and China is the unresolved land border issue, which

is at the core of the geopolitical understanding of bilateral relations. Until this issue is sorted out, the insecurity that India feels will not be addressed. Furthermore, it is also useful to point out here that India and China have not found much success in settling any major disputes/disagreements through bilateral means. The Special Representatives of India and China on the Boundary Question have, thus far, held 18 rounds of negotiations and are yet to reach a comprehensive solution. This, complemented with flag meetings on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between ground commanders, has helped in maintaining a cold peace even during tense moments like the Doklam crisis. While a 'cold peace' is preferable, the continuing tensions over the border issue capture the media's attention sporadically over 'incursions' across the LAC.⁶ The absence of a settlement over the border issue then informs India's response to Chinese presence in the maritime sphere.⁷

China is also very sensitive about the Tibet issue, but India has accommodated the former significantly by limiting the 'freedom movement' of Tibetans in India and providing them only a limited space. This demarcation of 'political' and 'religious' freedom means that Tibetans can only advocate for their political rights outside India. For example, India has always taken active steps to ensure that Tibetan activists do not disrupt the visit of Chinese dignitaries by providing a tight security cordon in all the places they visit. India did concede the Tibet issue by recognising Chinese claims in the 1950s.

The other major issue which is often thought to characterise India–China relationship is the close friendship between China and Pakistan. While India is certainly sensitive to this matter, it can live with such an engagement as has been done with the US, another close ally of Pakistan. It is high-time that we de-hyphenate Pakistan's relationship with China and seek greater bilateral engagement with China.

Current analysis, rightly so, focuses on the rise of these two countries and the inevitable tensions that are expected to mount as these two major civilisational countries seek to meet the core needs of their citizenry. This is manifested in the need for natural resources and energy resources from rapidly growing economies. While the last century hinged on meeting the material needs of the developed countries, today it has decidedly shifted with China needing the resources for itself and maintaining its vast production network for the world market.

Not so surprisingly then, the India–China relationship is now being looked at through their interactions on the maritime front, focusing

especially on the major International Shipping Lanes (ISLs) which criss-cross the Indian Ocean. The Indian thinking on this aspect is laid out in the *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2004*, which has been revised and updated in 2015. This doctrine refers to three major changes in the Indian approach:⁸

1. an enlargement of India's areas of maritime interest south-eastwards and westwards;
2. a reconfiguration of 'primary' and 'secondary' areas of interest with the South-West Indian Ocean and Red Sea now encompassed within the 'primary area'; and
3. the altered emphasis on maritime choke points of the Indian Ocean which seeks to construct a geostrategic 'exclusivity' for India.

On the other hand, China's 'One Belt, One Road' (*yidai yilu*, OBOR)—consisting of the Silk Road Economic Belt (*sichouzhilu jingjidai*) and the Maritime Silk Road (*haishang sichouzhilu*)—proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 captures the centrality of the maritime space in China's thinking.⁹ The conceptualisation of the OBOR draws on the symbolic concept of ancient Chinese interactions with the countries in the OBOR region and marries it with the realist approach to meet their national objectives.¹⁰ Coupled with the OBOR, the new Chinese leadership has also unveiled a new initiative in the form of a neighbourhood policy in October 2013, which suggests a greater emphasis by China on the conduct of relations with its immediate neighbours.¹¹ This was addressed in a conference held at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations in 2013¹², and it appears that there were disagreements about the origins of the policy and the geographical area that can be considered as China's surrounding area. The initial analysis suggests that the neighbourhood policy hinges primarily on deepening economic relations and affirming China's sphere of influence in economic and strategic arenas.¹³

'LOOKING' AT THE INDIAN OCEAN

Keeping in mind the *Indian Maritime Doctrine* and China's OBOR proposal, the following questions guide the analysis in this section:

1. How does India perceive the Indian Ocean strategically, politically and economically?

2. How does India perceive its own role in the IOR vis-à-vis China?
3. How do we analyse China's presence in the Indian Ocean?

India and the Indian Ocean

The importance of Indian Ocean can be gauged from the following basic facts. One, the IOR contains 36 littoral and 14 adjacent hinterland states, consisting of more than 2.6 billion people or 40 per cent of the world's population. Two, more than 80 per cent of the world's seaborne trade in oil transits through Indian Ocean choke points, with 40 per cent passing through the Strait of Hormuz, 35 per cent through the Strait of Malacca and 8 per cent through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Three, around 40 per cent of the world's offshore oil production is estimated to come from the Indian Ocean. And four, of the 119 Non-Aligned Movement states, 47 are IOR states.¹⁴

Let us see how India looks at the Indian Ocean by analysing any specific initiatives that New Delhi has taken so far. India's outlook vis-à-vis the IOR is articulated in the defence parameters and responsibilities outlined by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and concretised in the *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2004*, which has been followed-up with *Indian Maritime Security Strategy* documents issued in 2007 and 2015. These documents clearly show that India is keenly aware of the changing dynamic towards an *Indo-Pacific* focus from a *Euro-Atlantic* worldview. Accordingly, India has responded to these changes by expanding the navy's areas of interest (both primary and secondary) and by seeking greater engagement with countries bordering the IOR.

Apart from the strategic articulation of the IOR through the domestic lens, India is actively engaging with other littoral states through the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). In the arena of cooperation between navies of the IOR region, India put forward the idea of starting the IONS in 2008. The IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the IOR by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues. The core objective of this forum is to promote a shared understanding of issues and concerns relevant to the IOR.¹⁵ Today, it brings together 35 navies of the region and other global players.

China in the Indian Ocean

China's activities in the IOR arise from its stated, strong national interests

and also the recognition that India alone cannot assure the security of the Indian Ocean. This became evident ever since piracy increased off the coast of Somalia, on the western edge of the ocean, and threatened the world's most important ISLs. Even if one were to consider Chinese interests, sending submarines for anti-piracy missions has specifically raised India's concerns. China has undertaken over a dozen anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden and even carried out evacuation missions of Chinese citizens in Libya, Egypt and Syria.

In response to a question in the Parliament in 2014, the then Defence Minister stated:

China has been deploying naval ships as part of their Anti-Piracy Escort Force in the Gulf of Aden since January 2009. It is understood that 18 such deployments have been undertaken till date and that Chinese Navy ships deployed as part of Anti-Piracy Escort Force have visited Seychelles in April 2011 and in June 2013 during their Overseas Deployment. Several other Navies and multilateral groups are also deployed in the anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.¹⁶

China's economic growth has increased its blue-water capability, which is naturally extending into the IOR. Akin to the modernisation efforts of the Indian Navy (addressed later), China has boosted its naval modernisation; and the launch of its first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, in 2012 signals this clear intent.

China's naval modernisation efforts include a wide array of platform and weapon acquisition programmes, including programmes for anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBMs), anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), land attack cruise missiles (LACMs), surface-to-air missiles, mines, manned aircraft, unmanned aircraft, submarines, aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, patrol craft, amphibious ships, mine countermeasure (MCM) ships, underway replenishment ships, hospital ships, and supporting command and control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems.¹⁷

The fact that has captured the attention of observers in India in terms of Chinese presence in the IOR is the so-called 'string of pearls' (Figure 2), which involves the expansion of military capacity coupled with building strategic relationships along sea lanes from the Middle East to southern China.¹⁸ The most alarming action, as far as India is concerned, was Chinese investment in the port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka in 2008. This, coupled with the involvement in deepening the Gwadar Port in Pakistan, has rankled India which feels encircled by China. The lack of

progress on the disputes over the border areas between China and India has only enhanced the perception that China is seeking to challenge and assert itself from a new direction.

More recently, the OBOR proposal has been doubted by some observers as an effort to rebrand the ‘string of pearls’. Such a plan meshes well with China’s aspiration to maintain strategic ambiguity during its ‘peaceful’ rise as a great power.¹⁹

On the other hand, it has been analysed that India has been seeking greater ‘clarity’ about the OBOR, which has not been provided by the Chinese. A more realistic assessment is:

the OBOR is not exactly a grand Chinese strategy though it comes pretty close. What the Chinese have done—pushed by structural economic imbalances at home and the need to take charge of reshaping their external environment—is simply displaying both creativity and willingness to take risks by wrapping its national interest in the form of a grand economic plan for its wider neighbourhood. This is a plan that can and will change and adapt to the circumstances.²⁰

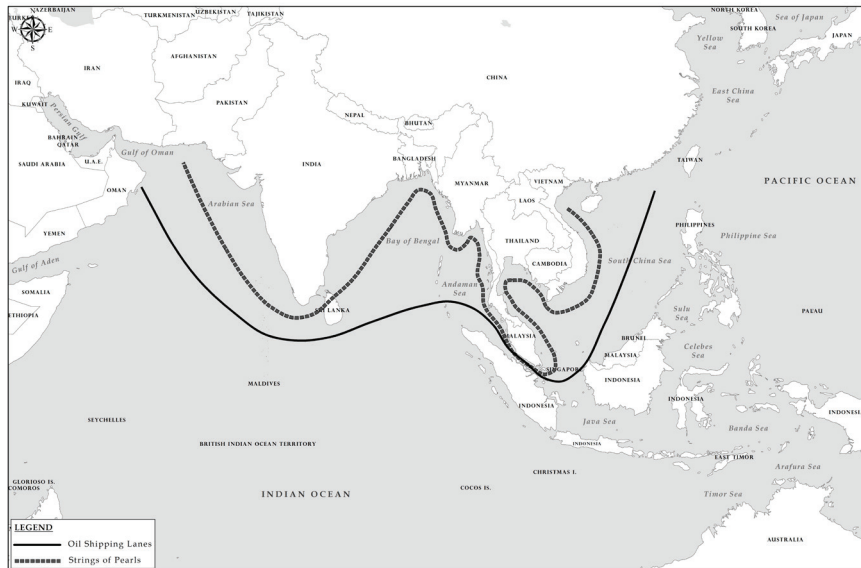


Figure 2 Chinese ‘String of Pearls’

Source: Adapted from Harsh V. Pant, ‘China’s Naval Expansion in the Indian Ocean and India–China Rivalry’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 3 May 2010.

The formal geopolitical analysis suggests that India should take a pragmatic approach by cooperating where possible in the OBOR, while at the same time deploying its limited resources to build a network of ports in the Indian Ocean, like the proposed plans in Chabahar Port in Iran and Trincomalee in Sri Lanka.²¹ I would like to point out here that the discourse in India does not just pander to the establishment. It is well known that the competent and highly-skilled diplomatic corps is sometimes handicapped, due to the limited capabilities of manpower and resources, unlike China, to meet the demanding requirements of articulating and undertaking the tasks of Indian foreign policy. The wait for 'clarity' about the OBOR by the Indian policymakers can be attributed to the 'laziness, at best or an inability to comprehend the scale of Chinese ambitions, at worst'.²²

'QUESTIONS' ABOUT CHINA

This section looks at the *questions* about China raised in both the Houses of the Parliament. This will shed light on the *practical* geopolitics in India. The first part looks at the debates that China's maritime initiatives have generated in India, along with questions about China's activities which are viewed with disquiet. The analysis suggests that there is a focus on: China's presence in the Indian Ocean; China's cooperation with Sri Lanka and other littoral countries in the IOR; the OBOR project; and China's cooperation and activities in the Bay of Bengal. The second part looks at the debate in the government over land border dispute. It also makes a comparison between the debate over land border and maritime issues; the questions raised in Parliament refer to the infrastructure development by China in both these realms (which is not feasible to detail in the article). A final important set of questions concerns the trade deficit between India and China.

Cooperation between India and China

While India–China relations are often posed to be antagonistic, it is necessary to point out that the core relationship between these countries is one of cooperation. There are three important agreements which lay the foundation and define the parameters of confidence- and security-building measures between India and China: the Panchsheel Agreement signed in Beijing on 29 April 1955; the Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control signed in Beijing on 7 September 1993; and the Agreement on Confidence Building

Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control signed in New Delhi on 29 November 1996.²³ Among these, it is the second agreement that provides a concrete basis for addressing the disputes between the two countries. Specifically, this agreement calls for the India–China boundary question to be resolved through peaceful and friendly consultations. The various agreements between India and China led to the appointment of Special Representatives in June 2003 to form a framework for boundary settlement.²⁴ The twentieth meeting of the Special Representatives was last held on 22 December 2017.

India and China have also initiated joint army exercises since 2007 and the sixth India–China joint military exercise, ‘Hand in Hand’ (2016), was held in Pune. This exercise laid emphasis on joint handling of counter-terrorism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Lieutenant General Zhou Xiaozhou, head of the Chinese Observer Delegation, stated that the joint exercise would play an important role in deepening mutual cooperation and forging a closer development partnership. He said that the exercise would expand the scope of military interaction, facilitate exchange of best practices in counter-terrorism operations, enhance mutual understanding and trust and further promote friendly relationship between both militaries.²⁵ These joint army exercises were suspended in 2017 due to the simmering tensions arising from the Doklam crisis.²⁶ The 7th round of Hand in Hand was held recently between 13–23 December 2018. The two countries also undertook one passage exercise between their navies, off Qingdao, China, in April 2007.

In the arena of energy exploration and production, China and India have received contracts to explore the Indian Ocean floor falling in the ‘Area’ under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS). The China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA) has concluded a 15-year contract with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for prospecting and exploration of polymetallic sulphides in the South-West Indian Ocean Ridge on 29 April 2014. India has also been granted the Pioneer Investor Status under the UNCLOS and presently holds the contract to explore about 75,000 square kilometres (sq km) for polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean Basin.²⁷ India, as a member of UNCLOS, has recognised fully the Chinese plan of work for exploration in the South-West Indian Ocean Ridge to be carried out under the regulatory framework of ISA as it is in an area beyond national jurisdiction of any state on the high seas.

On the expansion of India's economic interests, there have been some objections raised by China to the projects being undertaken by ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), India's state-run oil and gas company, in the SCS. This was raised in the Parliament and the government responded that China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) issued a notification offering nine blocks in the SCS for foreign collaboration, which is actually a part of a Block currently with OVL in collaboration with a Vietnamese company.²⁸

India has clearly conveyed that its hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation projects in the SCS, off the coast of Vietnam, are purely commercial in nature. Also,

India's position on South China Sea issue is consistent and has been reiterated bilaterally and in multilateral fora on several occasions. India supports freedom of navigation in international waters while maintaining that sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the UNCLOS.²⁹

Boundary Questions between India and China

The most important topic discussed by the MPs pertains to the territorial dispute between India and China. These questions arise when there are reports of Chinese incursions into the Indian territory as well as China's development of infrastructure along the border and India's development of infrastructure in the border states. A similar concern is seen from the discussions in the House when members point to Chinese claims over Arunachal Pradesh.

China disputes the international boundary between India and China. In the eastern sector, China claims approximately 90,000 sq km of Indian territory in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, while the Indian territory under the occupation of China in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is approximately 38,000 sq km. In addition, under the so-called China–Pakistan Boundary Agreement, signed between China and Pakistan on 2 March 1963, Pakistan has illegally ceded 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to China.

The MPs appear to be more concerned with traditional engagements with China over the land boundary matters in comparison to questions regarding China's presence in the Indian Ocean. For example, during the incursions of Chinese troops into India in March–April 2013, and again in September 2014, this matter was raised by several members in

the monsoon session and discussed with great concern. In a debate raised by former Foreign Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on 6 September 2013, the Parliament had a lengthy discussion on the matter of Chinese incursions into India. Starting the debate, Sinha was agitated at regular reports of Chinese incursions into Indian territory and observed that the 'Chinese are nibbling at the Line of Actual Control and they are re-drawing that Line.'³⁰ The major incident which triggered this debate was the temporary encampment of Chinese in the Depsang Plains, located on the LAC separating India and China.

The then Defence Minister, A.K. Antony, pointed out the unsettled nature of the LAC and the three-fold response of the Indian Government:

One is to find a longstanding solution to this border dispute between India and China through the mechanism of Special Representatives. Second one is to develop more mechanisms so that whenever dispute of incursions or occasional face-off takes place, immediately both the sides can intervene and sort it out. That is another part. While doing this, our Government is very clear on that. Since China has already gone ahead in infrastructure building, one thing we are very clear we will continue the process of strengthening our capabilities in the border areas. That is a clear policy. There is no question of compromising on our ability of strengthening our capabilities. We will not compromise on that.³¹

In a telling response, he further stated that independent India had a policy for many years that the best defence is not to develop the border.³² This position has changed now and India is seeking to develop the border areas to meet the requirements of Indians residing in these areas.

In an earlier detailed debate on Indo-China relations held in the Lok Sabha on 9 December 2009, the opposition leaders argued that India should take an aggressive stand in response to Chinese incursions. This was countered by the government which argued that India's response to China has to be measured and driven by peaceful intent, rather than engaging in aggressive posturing. In this debate, the then Minister of External Affairs, S.M. Krishna, pointed out that India was going to celebrate the 60th year of diplomatic relations in 2010, which have deepened despite setbacks in the 1960s. This could be seen in the deepened interactions at the highest leadership levels, meetings of Special Representatives and interaction between the defence forces of the two countries.³³

Another major concern expressed by the MPs involves China's claims that Arunachal Pradesh, which is as an integral part of India, is its territory. In fact, China did not endorse the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) 2009–12 for India in the board of Asian Development Bank (ADB) on the grounds that the proposed India CPS involved technical assistance funding for the Flood and River Erosion Management Project in Arunachal Pradesh. In response to this, GoI clearly conveyed to the Chinese side that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India. It also told the ADB and all member countries of the ADB which have executive directors on its board, including the US, Japan, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Germany and Italy, that: (i) the CPS is not a political document and it does not make any judgement as to the legal or other status of any territories; and (ii) China's objection on political grounds is a clear violation of the ADB's Charter which prohibits the bank from evaluating any proposal on grounds other than economic.³⁴

China has routinely protested the visits of Indian leaders, including Prime Minister (PM) Manmohan Singh and PM Modi, to Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese Embassy is also following the practice of issuing a stapled visa instead of proper visa to Indian citizens from Arunachal Pradesh in the last few years. Earlier, this practice was also followed with respect to Indian citizens from J&K—an irksome issue in the Sino-Indian relations.

Apart from border incursions and dispute over Arunachal Pradesh, China has also been assisting Myanmar in the installation of surveillance and communication systems on some of its islands in the Bay of Bengal. Chinese personnel and ships have been visiting Myanmar naval bases in this connection. When questioned in the Parliament, the government said that it was giving specific attention to the development of infrastructure for the development of border areas in order to meet India's strategic and security requirements, and also to facilitate economic development of these areas. This included the states of J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. It was also pointed out the government does not allow foreign governments and agencies to interfere with the government's right to undertake economic development within India's territory.³⁵

There has been no major debate on China in the four years since the current government came to power, apart from mentions in the Lok Sabha about Chinese territorial claims in Arunachal Pradesh and

reference of disputed territory in Kashmir as belonging to Pakistan. A recent report titled, 'Sino-India Relations including Doklam, Border Situation and Cooperation in International Organizations', prepared by the Committee on External Affairs presented to the speakers on 4 September 2018 hasn't been presented in either of the Houses so far.

Trade between India and China

The other topic that the MPs are regularly concerned about is the increasing trade deficit between India and China. When looking at trade between India and China, the major concern is the trade imbalance which is in favour of China. Chinese exports to India rely strongly on manufactured items meeting the demand of fast-expanding sectors like telecom and power, while India's exports to China are characterised by primary products, raw material and intermediate products. A look at the data shows that while the total trade between India and China from 2011–12 to 2014–15 was \$73.4 billion, \$65.8 billion, \$65.9 billion and \$55.2 billion respectively, the trade deficit was \$37.2, \$38.7, \$36.2 and \$36.7 billion in the corresponding years.³⁶ India has argued that exports to China face tariff and non-tariff barriers for agricultural products and limited market access in other products. On the import side, India has argued that China indulges in dumping, which has seen the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) initiating 171 investigations on imports from China and imposing anti-dumping measures on 75 products, as of February 2015. As of 18 December 2018, anti-dumping duty is in force on 105 products imported on China.³⁷

In response to a question on the trade deficit between India and China in 2015, the concerned minister, while expressing concern, pointed to the efforts being taken to overcome this imbalance.³⁸ Some changes have indeed taken place as this matter has been discussed regularly with China at the highest level. For example, in 2018, China removed all restrictions on import of medicines to cure cancer, which now makes it attractive for Indian pharma companies to export generic medicines, thereby contributing towards reduction in the trade deficit.

The analysis of the debates in the Parliament reveals that the primary concern is India's dispute with China over the border regions. Recently, there was only one question in the Lok Sabha addressing the threat posed by China encircling India.³⁹ That said, the Indian Government has always emphasised cooperative engagement with China, despite these border disputes. A similar disquietude is not expressed with regarding

to China's presence in the IOR, which could possibly be attributed to the fact that border issues are often directly addressed by MPs from that region, whereas a similar concern is not felt by MPs belonging to the coastal regions. This aspect can be explored further.

While India is cognisant of Chinese engagement with neighbouring countries, it is taking steps through the 'Neighbourhood First' policy to counter the extent of influence in these countries.⁴⁰ For example, the thawing of relations between India and Sri Lanka suggests that India is regaining its foothold in that country. This, coupled with increasing the capacity of naval capabilities (elaborated later), suggests that India is slowly restoring and increasing its blue-water capabilities to counter the obvious challenges posed by China.

'WRITING' ABOUT CHINA

This section is primarily based on the analyses of the largest circulated English newspaper, TOI between 2011 and 2015. Methodologically, this provides a glimpse into the *popular geopolitics* in India.⁴¹ The analysis mainly covers the end of term of the previous government and the formation of the new government in May 2014. The coverage complements the 'questions' about China in the Parliament, both during the terms of the previous and current government. The coverage in this newspaper dovetails with PM Modi's visits to various countries, and also focuses on the naval exercises and military modernisation being undertaken by India, especially under its Act East Policy.

PM Modi's Emphasis on the IOR

Today, the world speaks of 21st century driven by the dynamism and the energy of Asia and the Pacific. But, its course will be determined by the tides of the Indian Ocean. This is why Indian Ocean is at the centre of global attention more than ever before.⁴²

In his most important foreign foray, one which has been less covered than the other intensely covered trips to the US, China or Australia, the PM made a strategic visit to Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka during 11–14 March 2015. The plan to visit Maldives during the same trip was cancelled due to political unrest in that country.

Apart from these visits, the PM also visited Bangladesh in June 2015. During this visit, PM Modi and PM Sheikh Hasina appreciated each other for the amicable settlement of the India–Bangladesh maritime boundary issue, arbitrated by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

The tribunal was unanimous in identifying the location of the land boundary terminus between Bangladesh and India, and in determining the course of the maritime boundary in the territorial sea.

This PCA decision on the India–Bangladesh maritime boundary issue, coupled with the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) ratified by India in July 2015, has generated greater goodwill in Bangladesh. The LBA has addressed the problem of enclaves, that is, Indian areas surrounded on all sides by Bangladesh and vice versa. This suggests that India is interested in resolving outstanding boundary matters with its oceanic neighbours.

Naval Exercises

India's efforts at countering Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean, especially the submarine manoeuvres, apart from military modernisation, include the conduct of naval exercises with other navies. For example, India held a flurry of bilateral naval exercises in 2015 with countries in the critical Asia-Pacific region, ranging from Australia, Japan and Indonesia to Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar and Singapore. Interspersed between these exercises, there have been periodical exercises with the US (Malabar), the United Kingdom (Konkan), Russia (Indra) and France (Varuna). These engagements can be mapped on to the 'Diamond Concept' (*daiyamondo kousou*) envisioned by Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, in which the US, Japan, Australia and India would form a virtual security 'diamond' and work together to maintain the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.⁴³ This has generated a significant amount of debate under the rubric of the quadrilateral (Quad), but it is still too early to make a concrete assessment.⁴⁴

Another recent initiative—one that would not have escaped the attention of China—is the US–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region, announced on 25 January 2015 during the visit of former US President Obama to India. Such a partnership is considered a natural one between the world's two largest democracies that bridge the Asia-Pacific and IOR. This step might be construed as a threatening move as the US has already announced a 'pivot' to Asia, which involves 'reorienting significant elements of its foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific region and encouraging many of its partners outside the region to do the same.'⁴⁵

In a pointed question on India's cooperation with the US in 2007, 'whether various officials of US held a series of meetings with Indian

Navy including the Navy Chief on a whole range of issues including maritime security',⁴⁶ the then Defence Minister, A.K. Antony, sidestepped the matter and just pointed to India's plans to enter into a maritime cooperation framework with the US. I would like to highlight here that the cooperation between India and the US has deepened since the signing of the nuclear agreement between the two countries in 2005. The US–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region is the culmination of a decade-long engagement with the US.

The mainstay of naval exercises, envisaged under various bilateral and multilateral engagements, is the Malabar series of exercises which India and the US have been holding regularly every year since 1992, except for a brief interregnum after the 1998 Pokhran II nuclear tests. These exercises have started taking a trilateral nature with Japan joining the exercises frequently since 2007. The twenty-second edition of Malabar exercises was held in June 2018 and focused on anti-submarine warfare and maritime interdiction, among others.⁴⁷ During Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit in January 2014, it was also announced that Japan will be a partner in the Malabar naval exercises, taking it from a bilateral naval exercise between India and the US to a trilateral level on a permanent basis.

Malabar is a series of complex, high-end exercises designed to enhance maritime cooperation and interoperability among the participating navies, along with increasing capability to undertake non-combatant evacuation, disaster relief and improved maritime domain awareness. The last edition witnessed the continuing involvement of aircraft carriers, destroyers, helicopters and long-range maritime reconnaissance planes of the three navies. These exercises are viewed sensitively by China as these navies have held the exercises in the waters off the coast of Japan in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2014. The 2015 exercises were supposed to not include Japan, as was indicated during the visit of PM Modi to China in May 2015; however, Japan did end up participating in the same. These exercises also signal the implementation of the US–India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.

India and Australia too, for the first time, held a joint naval exercise, AusIndex, in September 2015, to strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries as envisaged in the Framework for Security Cooperation. In fact, India amped up its relations with Australia with PM Modi visiting Australia in the first six months of coming to office. This was the first visit of an Indian PM to Australia since 1986 when the

then PM, late Rajiv Gandhi, had visited Australia. Indeed, the lack of high-level engagement has been an eyesore in the relations between these two countries.⁴⁸

Defence relations between India and Indonesia have also been growing steadily with regular joint activities and exchange of personnel between the armed forces of the two countries. Under the broad ambit of this strategic partnership, the two navies have been carrying out Coordinated Patrolling (CORPAT) along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) twice a year since 2002, with the aim of keeping this vital part of the IOR safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade. The CORPAT has strengthened understanding and interoperability between the navies, instituting measures to prosecute vessels engaged in unlawful activities and conducting search and rescue as well as pollution control. This was expanded in 2018 to a Bilateral Maritime Exercise, which included one warship and one maritime patrol aircraft from each side. This signals a further growth in the interactions between these countries, especially since the participation of India in the search for the Malaysian airliner, MH370, which went missing on 8 March 2014.

India held an International Fleet Review from 4–8 February 2016, which was attended by over 100 ships and 60 aircraft from 52 countries. While the navies of countries with whom India holds periodic exercises—such as the US and Australia—participated, the presence of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N), with two ships, was not lost on the observers. This was viewed as a major confidence builder. Also, it was an indication that furthering a sound working relationship with the Indian Navy is necessary to safeguard the sea lanes both in the Indian Ocean and the SCS.⁴⁹ In line with India's Act East policy, this event, that was held in the Bay of Bengal, was aimed at developing familiarity, enhancing camaraderie and exchange of professionalism between the navies.⁵⁰

Military Modernisation

The emphasis on Indian Navy's modernisation can be seen from the decision to invest almost \$50 billion in 2011 for building or buying warships, submarines, maritime fighter jets and maritime aircraft.⁵¹ Among these acquisitions, the aircraft carrier, *INS Vikramaditya*, and Talwar-class stealth frigates have been inducted into the navy. This modernisation also includes two more aircraft carriers, six submarines,

seven guided-missile destroyers, four anti-submarine warfare corvettes, nine naval offshore patrol vessels and eight amphibious craft, with a combined price tag of over \$10 billion. The navy is also acquiring seven stealth frigates, in addition to the three 6,200 tonne Shivalik-class stealth frigates built at Mumbai-based Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL).⁵²

To bolster the underwater capability, which has been identified as a weakness, India is seeking to build, domestically, six nuclear-powered stealth submarines under project P75(I) as part of the 'Make in India' initiative. This is in addition to the six Scorpene submarines already being constructed at MDL. The first of these submarines, *INS Kalvari*, was inducted into the Indian Navy in December 2017. The navy is also in the process of acquiring carrier-borne fighter jets and maritime patrol aircraft, as well as multirole helicopters and surveillance drones. Of the 45 Russian MiG-29Ks ordered, India has already received 23 for use on board the aircraft carrier, *INS Vikramaditya*. So far, India has inducted eight P-8I long-range reconnaissance aircraft.⁵³

Another acquisition aimed at improving India's underwater capability is the plan to acquire mine countermeasure vessels (MCMVs). While the original plan was to acquire these from South Korea, the MoD cancelled a 2008 global tender in which Kangnam had emerged as the winner because of the South Korean company's alleged use of defence agents in pursuing the deal, which overseas defence companies are not allowed to do under the Indian law. India's Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) is now looking for international companies with the technology the state-owned company needs to build 12 MCMVs for the Indian Navy.⁵⁴ The Expressions of Interest (EOI) were sent to South Korea's Kangnam, Italy's Intermarine, Spain's Navantia, US-based Lockheed Martin, Germany's Thyssenkrupp and two Russian shipyards.⁵⁵

The Indian Navy is also looking to acquire ShinMaywa US-2i amphibian aircraft from Japan. India was exposed to these amphibious aircraft during the course of Malabar exercises conducted off the coast of Japan in 2007. Though basically designed for air-sea search and rescue operations, the US-2i can also rapidly transport 30 combat-ready soldiers to 'hot zones' in an emergency. These aircraft can give a huge boost to operational logistics in areas like the far-flung but strategically critical Andaman and Nicobar Islands.⁵⁶ If the deal goes through, it will add a new defence supplier to India as Japan is slowly breaking out into the international arms market.

The modernisation of the navy takes on additional importance in the light of the US–India Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) signed in 2012. This initiative seeks to expand the overall levels of defence procurement and technology cooperation with the US, which stands at around \$13 billion since the mid-1990s. It has been suggested that India will seek help from the US for the new indigenous aircraft carrier programme.⁵⁷

The navy's modernisation efforts were put to test in February 2014 during the Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX) aimed at bolstering the military force levels on the eastern coast and Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to counter China's strategic moves in the critical IOR. The exercise saw the Western and Eastern fleets amassing across the Bay of Bengal for the intensive combat manoeuvres in all the three dimensions of 'surface, air and underwater'.⁵⁸

In response to the call from Malaysia and China, India had also deployed five warships and five aircraft, including a newly acquired naval P-8I long-range reconnaissance plane and an Indian Air Force C-130J Super Hercules, during the multi-nation search for MH370.⁵⁹

Shift in Ideology?

While there has been continuity in the practical steps taken by the erstwhile United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government and the current National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, there appears to be a clear shift on the ideological front. While the Indian National Congress only took a normative leadership role in the IOR, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to provide a more assertive tone to the Indian foreign policy. In a series of stories focused on the India Foundation, set up five years ago as an 'independent research centre', the TOI has found that it plays a significant role in the decision making of the present government.⁶⁰ This body is dominated by the party members of BJP and ideologues from its parent Hindu nationalist organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

According to the India Foundation, Indian foreign policy stands on five new pillars: *samman* (respect), *samvaad* (talks), *samruddhi* (prosperity of neighbours), *suraksha* (security), and *sanskriti* or *sabhyata* (traditions). This assertive tone is akin to the opinion of an expert at the Center on China–American Defense Relations, of the Beijing-based Academy of Military Science. In an opinion piece published in the *China Daily*, Zhou Bo argues that the presence of Chinese subs in the Indian Ocean is no

reason for India to be worried. He goes on to argue that China has strong interests in the IOR and that India alone cannot assure the security of the Indian Ocean.⁶¹ In another instance, Senior Captain Zhao Yi, Associate Professor at the Institute of Strategy of the elite National Defence University in Beijing, said, 'If the Indian side views the Indian Ocean as its backyard, it cannot explain why navies from Russia, the United States, Australia have the right of free navigation in Indian Ocean.'⁶² Another researcher, Zhang Wei of the PLA Navy Academic Institute, pointed out that 'when most submarines navigate we inform our neighbouring countries to reduce concerns and enhance mutual trust', adding that '[t]he Chinese Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean is to protect maritime security and sealines of communication.'⁶³

Despite these assertive tones, the fact is that China participated in the International Fleet Review held in February 2016, while India has participated in Chinese fleet reviews and naval exercises since 2007.⁶⁴ Such cooperation is to be expected also as the Indian Army and the Chinese Army have been engaging in joint training exercises for several years now. The maritime engagement can only enhance the goodwill between India and China.

CONCLUSION

This article has applied a critical geopolitical articulation around *formal*, *practical* and *popular* geopolitics to understand the geopolitical dynamics of India–China relations in the maritime context. It reveals that despite concerns raised by China's presence in the IOR, the overall domestic response articulated in practical geopolitics is one of cooperation, while pointing to the pragmatic steps being undertaken by India to boost its multifarious capabilities. Despite the setback in relations between India and China because of the 1962 conflict, the Indian Government recognises the inherent strength of the country and seeks to pursue a peaceful means to settle the border disputes while reiterating the Panchsheel principles. India is also pursuing efforts to increase defence-to-defence contacts with China so that greater understanding can be developed to address global and local problems. India's modernisation of its navy is concomitant to the national strategic and economic stakes. If one is to evaluate the domestic debate over China's activities in the IOR, there is more continuity than change in the discourse.

To summarise, as an overall response to the question raised at the beginning of the article, namely, how does India perceive the Indian

Ocean strategically, politically and economically, India recognises the obvious strategic interest as articulated in the *Indian Maritime Doctrine*. There is added emphasis on the economic and political interests in the IOR and the dependence on the ISLs. India has deepened its engagement with its immediate neighbours, like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Seychelles, Mauritius and Myanmar, to secure these interests.

How does India perceive its own role in the IOR vis-à-vis China? India clearly recognises China's interests in the IOR and seeks cooperative engagement through naval exercises and coordinated patrolling to counter piracy. On a more realist plane, India is boosting its naval capabilities through modernisation to counter the supposed Chinese 'string of pearls' strategy and engaging in bilateral and multilateral naval exercises. A formal geopolitics analysis also suggests that India should cooperate with China where possible in the OBOR, while at the same time urging the institutions of practical geopolitics to act more decisively.

The popular geopolitical analysis shows that the news media's focus is intrinsically episodic, especially about LAC incursions. The other coverage does dovetail with the major visits of the PM and naval exercises, with the most recent International Fleet Review presenting an opportunity to highlight India's naval capabilities. That said, there is a small but subtle shift in the ideology of the new government, which is carried by the news media. The overall picture suggests the coexistence of cooperative, competitive and conflictual overtones in India–China relationship.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on a conversation with Li Lingqun, Researcher at Collaborative Research Center on South China Sea, Nanjing University. This work is funded by National Social Science Foundation, China (Sequence No. 15CGJ029). The title of the project is: 'A Study on Institutionalising Maritime Cooperation among Coastal States in the South China Sea', led by Li Lingqun. The initial work was translated into Chinese and published in the *Chinese Asia Pacific Security and Marine Research Newsletter*, which looked at the domestic debate over China's activities in the IOR. It has been significantly modified to incorporate and engage with the geopolitical competition and conflict framework and also make it available to an Indian audience. I sincerely thank the two anonymous reviewers for constructive feedback which has strengthened the focus of this article. Any remaining errors are my own.

NOTES

1. Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics*, London: Sage, 2009, pp. 4–9.
2. David Brewster, 'The Indo-Pacific and the Growing Strategic Importance of the Bay of Bengal', in Namrata Goswami (ed.), *India's Approach to Asia: Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility*, New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), 2016, pp. 290–305.
3. H.J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1904, pp. 421–37.
4. Practical geopolitics can be assessed by focusing on the Indian Parliament, Indian Navy and the Ministry of External Affairs. Formal geopolitics is assessed by looking at the work produced by think tanks such as the National Maritime Foundation, Institute for Chinese Studies and the IDSA, all located in New Delhi, as well as other academic works.
5. Ouyang, Guoxing, 'Sino-Indian Relations: The Chinese Perspective', in Gurpreet S. Khurana and Antara Ghosal Singh (eds), *India and China: Exploring Convergences in Asia*, New Delhi: National Maritime Foundation, 2015, pp. 31–43.
6. Shruti Pandalai, 'Who Sets the Agenda? Does "Prime Time" Really Pace Policy? The Indian Experience', IDSA Monograph Series No. 13, IDSA, New Delhi, 2013, pp. 54–59.
7. Bertil Lintner, *Great Game East: India, China, and the Struggle for Asia's Most Volatile Frontier*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.
8. Gurpreet S. Khurana, 'Indian Navy Updates Maritime Doctrine 2009', Commentary in National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, 2016, available at <http://www.maritimeindia.org/View%20Profile/635947104929670524.pdf>, accessed on 6 May 2016.
9. 'Xi in Call for Building of New "Maritime Silk Road"', *China Daily*, 4 October 2013, available at http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-10/04/content_17008940.htm, accessed on 10 December 2015.
10. Gurpreet S. Khurana, 'Geopolitics of China's "Maritime Silk Road" Concept: An Indian Perspective', Paper presented at 8th NMF–RSIS Bilateral Seminar, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, 9 April 2015.
11. François Godement, Martina Bassan, Antoine Bondaz and Marc Julienne, 'China's Neighborhood Policy', European Council on Foreign Relations and Asia Centre, February 2014.
12. 'Current Situation in China's Surrounding Areas and its Strategy', *Xiandai guoji guanxi – Contemporary International Relations*, No. 10, 2013. A roundtable held at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR).

13. François Godement et al., 'China's Neighborhood Policy', n. 11.
14. Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe, 'Fact Sheet: The Indian Ocean Region and Australia's National Interests', Strategic Analysis Paper, Future Directions, Australia, 29 May 2012.
15. P.K. Ghosh, 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium: Uniting the Maritime Indian Ocean Region', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2012, pp. 352–57.
16. Minister of Defence, Mr Manohar Parrikar, Answer to Starred Question, Rajya Sabha, 25 November 2014. Despite these concerns, it is to be noted that 'India, China [and] Japan have recently agreed for better coordination amongst their naval ships deployed for anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Minister of Defence, A.K. Antony, Answer to Unstarred Question, Rajya Sabha, 14 March 2012. Additional details about the coordinated anti-piracy patrolling are not available in the public realm, either from the Indian Navy or other public sources.
17. Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service Report, 21 September 2015, available at <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33153.pdf> and Gordon G. Chang, 'China's Military Modernisation and its Impact on India', in Namrata Goswami (ed.), *India's Approach to Asia: Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility*, New Delhi: IDSA, 2016, pp. 237–56.
18. The term 'string of pearls' was first used in a report titled 'Energy Futures in Asia', commissioned by the US Department of Defense's Office of Net Assessment from defence contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton.
19. Prem Mahadevan, 'China in the Indian Ocean: Part of a Larger PLAN', CSS Analyses in Security Policy No. 146, June 2014, available at <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CSSAnalyse156-EN.pdf>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
20. Jabin T. Jacob, 'India and China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative', *Nação e Defesa* No. 142, 2016, p. 58.
21. Shyam Saran, 'What Does China's Global Economic Strategy Mean for Asia, India and the World?', ICS Analysis No. 35, Institute for Chinese Studies, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 1–7.
22. Jacob, 'India and China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative', n. 21, p. 62.
23. Swaran Singh, 'Three Agreements and Five Principles between India and China', in Tan Chung (ed.), *Across the Himalayan Gap—An Indian Quest for Understanding China*, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1998.
24. Ministry of External Affairs, 'India–China Bilateral Relations', January 2012, available at <http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/China-January-2012.pdf>, accessed on 15 December 2016.

25. 'India–China Joint Military Exercise “Hand in Hand 2015” Commences in Kunming', *IBN Live*, 13 October 2015, available at <http://www.ibnlive.com/news/india/india-china-joint-military-exercise-hand-in-hand-2015-commences-in-kunming-1150669.html>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
26. This article does not undertake an analysis of the Doklam crisis, as I believe that in the long term, the crisis will look much different than the urgency it had during the summer of 2017.
27. Minister of Defence, Mr A.K. Antony, Answer to Starred Question, Rajya Sabha, 12 December 2011.
28. Minister of State, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Mrs Panabaka Lakshmi, Answer to Unstarred Question, Rajya Sabha, 4 December 2012.
29. Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj, Answer to Starred Question, Rajya Sabha, 12 December 2014.
30. Mr Yashwant Sinha, Debate under Rule 193, Parliament of India, 6 September 2013.
31. Minister of Defence, Mr A.K. Antony, Response to Debate, 6 September 2013.
32. *Ibid.*
33. 'Discussion on Indo-China Relations with Special Reference to Recent Occurrences', Debate under Rule 193, Parliament of India, 9 December 2009.
34. Minister of External Affairs, S.M. Krishna, Answer to Starred Question, Rajya Sabha, 9 July 2009.
35. Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, General V.K. Singh (Retd), Answer to Unstarred Question, Rajya Sabha, 2 February 2015.
36. Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman, Answer to Unstarred Question, Rajya Sabha, 13 May 2015.
37. S.R. Chaudhary, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Response to Unstarred Question in Lok Sabha, 24 December 2018.
38. Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman, Answer to Unstarred Question, Lok Sabha, 13 March 2015.
39. Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, General V.K. Singh (Retd.), Answer to Unstarred Question, Lok Sabha, 12 December 2017.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Pandalai, 'Who Sets the Agenda?', n. 6. and Debasish Roy Chowdhury, 'Between the Lines: Indian Media's China War', *China Report*, Vol. 51, No. 3, 2015, pp. 169–203.
42. 'Text of the PM's Remarks on the Commissioning of Coast Ship Barracuda in Mauritius', Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 12 March

- 2015, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=116881>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
43. Yuki Tatsumi, 'Abe's Visit Takes Japan–India Security Relations to the Next Level', *The Diplomat*, 14 December 2015, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/abes-visit-takes-japan-india-security-relations-to-the-next-level/>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
 44. Tanvi Madan, 'The Rise, Fall and the Rebirth of the "Quad"', *War on the Rocks*, 16 November 2017, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/rise-fall-rebirth-quad/>, accessed on 15 June 2018.
 45. Kurt Campbell and Brian Andrews, 'Explaining the US "Pivot" to Asia', Chatham House Paper, 1 August 2013.
 46. Minister of Defence, Mr A.K. Antony, Answer to Starred Question, Rajya Sabha, 9 September 2007.
 47. Rajat Pandit, 'India, US, Japan All Set for Malabar Exercise with China in the Crosshairs', *TOI*, 27 May 2018.
 48. 'Why the Indian Prime Minister Won't Visit Australia', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 2012, available at <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-opinion/why-the-indian-prime-minister-wont-visit-australia-20120828-24yn8.html>, accessed on 15 December 2016, and 'Australia Seeks to Draw India into Tighter Embrace with Nuclear Deal', *TOI*, 18 February 2014.
 49. Rudroneel Ghosh, 'Positive Sign: China's Participation in India's international Fleet Review Boosts Bilateral Confidence', *TOI*, 7 February 2016, available at <http://goo.gl/MQgDFA>, accessed on 15 December 2018.
 50. 'International Fleet Review 2016 Curtain Raiser: 6 Key Things to Know', *The Economic Times*, 15 October 2015, available at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/international-fleet-review-2016-curtain-raiser-6-key-things-to-know/articleshow/49375814.cms>, accessed on 15 June 2018.
 51. Rajat Pandit, 'Rs 3L Cr Plan to Boost India's Naval Might', *TOI*, 26 September 2011, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Rs-3L-cr-plan-to-boost-Indias-naval-might/articleshow/10121043.cms>, accessed on 15 December 2016, and 'Navy Plans Major Expansion in Manpower, Shore-based Infrastructure', *TOI*, 15 October 2011.
 52. *Ibid.*
 53. 'Indian Navy's Boeing P-8Is Dedicated to the Nation: 7 Facts about Surveillance Aircraft', *The Economic Times*, 14 July 2018, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indian-navys-boeing-p-8is-dedicated-to-the-nation-7-facts-about-surveillance-aircraft/articleshow/49767751.cms>, accessed on 15 December 2018.

54. Vivek Raghuvanshi, 'India Seeks Global Transfer of Technology to Build MCMV', *Defense News*, 26 September 2015, available at <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/naval/ships/2015/09/26/india-seeks-global-transfer-technology-build-mcmv/72730048/>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
55. 'Mine Counter Measure Vessels Project to Take 8 Months to Finalize', *TOI*, 22 March 2015, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/Mine-counter-measure-vessels-project-to-take-8-months-to-finalize/articleshow/46648795.cms>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
56. 'Wary of China, India and Japan Set to Forge Aircraft Deal', *TOI*, 26 February 2015.
57. 'Boost for Defense: India & US Explore Opportunities for Cooperation on Aircraft Carrier Technology', *The Economic Times*, 14 July 2018, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/boost-for-defence-india-us-explore-opportunities-for-cooperation-on-aircraft-carrier-technology/articleshow/48494684.cms>, accessed on 15 December 2018.
58. 'Navy Validates Massive Exercise under Country's First Military Satellite's Gaze', *TOI*, 2 March 2014.
59. 'Indian Warships, Aircraft Join Search for Malaysian Plane', *TOI*, 15 March 2014.
60. 'How National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's Son Shaurya Reinvented Himself into a Key Policy Player', *TOI*, 4 August 2015 and 'No More Romanticised Foreign Policy', *TOI*, 26 April 2015.
61. 'China's Subs in Indian Ocean No Worry for India', *China Daily*, 20 July 2015, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-07/20/content_21329579.htm, accessed on 15 December 2016.
62. Ananth Krishnan, 'PLA Plays Down Indian Ocean Visits, but Says Ocean Not India's Backyard', *India Today*, 1 July 2015, available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-china-indian-ocean-backyard-navies/1/448262.html>, accessed on 15 December 2016.
63. Ibid.
64. Ananth Krishnan, 'An Unusual Request from China's Navy Chief', *The Hindu*, 25 April 2014.

