

South China Sea: Sino-India Interest and Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific Region

Sanjay Kumar Agrawal

Abstract

The South China Sea region caters as a political and economic life preserver for the coastal region. It also has important strategic implications and base ground for coastal states to project their specific legitimate claims over oceanic resources. The narrative established by the post-cold war is of a unipolar world leaning highly towards hegemonic American interests, which turned out in rising of various geopolitical powers, those of India, China, and South-East Asian countries like, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. The rise of stakes of these countries in international relations is not just a by-product of American policies but also the product of their individual sovereign endeavours e.g. the rise of Asian tigers is a testimony to this fact. After the liberalisation policies of China and India in 1970s and 1990s respectively, the growth of South-East Asian Nations accelerated in world trade and geopolitics making the Malacca strait and South China Sea (SCS) as strategic rallying point for the powerful contenders of the region. This paper highlights how due to growing energy demands globally and its economic exploitation leads to the rise of the chances of strife among the surrounding coastal nations. The surrounding region is the main navigation route of heavily transported and largely populated area of South Asia and South East Asia. All these factors accumulated in the hegemonic interest of China were overtly protected by its cheque book diplomacy (financing Hambantota port-Sri Lanka, Gwadar port-Pakistan, One Belt, One Road strategy) to protect its economic and strategic national interests. Presence of America in Japan and South Korea is seen as a counter balancing force for China, however post 2008 subprime crises that gave economic shocks to

America created economic gap in aiding these countries to tackle China. Hence it became the pivot to America's Asia Strategy to tackle China by combining efforts of contending nations of Indo-Pacific region (Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand)-the Quad to offer a united front against China. Further various issues pertaining to South China Sea dispute and challenges in the Indian Ocean region is dealt with. It also pertains to Chinese assertion on Indian Ocean under the garb of protecting it from piracy and oil spill disaster is frequently creating its rivalry with India; its military base in Djibouti is another reason for Indo-Chinese rivalry, which has its roots in India's interest in South China Sea, which is the main topic of discussion here. The paper also covers South China Sea in India's 'Act East Policy' as how India's long-standing Look East Policy is transformed into more assertive Act East Policy in the region.

Keywords: *South China sea, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Indo-Pacific, The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), One Belt-One Road, String of Pearl Strategy, Spice Route and the project Mausam, The Nine-dash line, Act East Policy*

Introduction

Time is the ultimate cradle in which International relations are formulated. Within two decades of 21st century, the world has progressed with unprecedented pace in the politico-economic scenario. The narrative established by the post-cold war is of a unipolar world leaning highly towards hegemonic American interests, which turned out in rising of various geopolitical powers, those of India, China, and South-East Asian countries like, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. The rise of stakes of these countries in international relation is not just a by-product of American policies but also the product of their individual sovereign endeavour e.g. the rise of Asian tigers is a testimony to this fact. After the liberalisation policies of China and India in 1970s and 1990s respectively, the growth of South-East Asian Nations accelerated in world trade and geopolitics making the Malacca strait and South China Sea (SCS) as strategic rallying point for the powerful contenders of the region.

The South China Sea region caters as a political and economic life preserver for the coastal region. It also has important strategic implications and base ground

for coastal states to project their specific legitimate claims over oceanic resources. SCS consists of major catchment basin of heavy metal and petroleum products and is believed to be harbouring large reserves of oil and natural gas and is in demand for its rich fishing (Majumdar, 2013). Due to growing energy demands globally and its economic exploitation rises the chances of strife among the surrounding coastal nations. The surrounding region is the main navigation route of heavily transported and largely populated area of South Asia and South East Asia which is considered as the life blood of 21st century's trade. It is perceived as important shipping lane for ASEAN, India, Taiwan, China, Japan and South Korea which are all heavily dependent upon international and extra regional trade-most of which is shipped through the area (Cordner, 1994).

All these factors accumulated in the hegemonic interest of China were overtly protected by its cheque book diplomacy (financing Hambantota port-Sri Lanka, Gwadar port-Pakistan, One Belt, One Road strategy) to protect its economic and strategic national interests. Presence of America in Japan and South Korea is seen as a counter balancing force for China, however post 2008 subprime crises that gave economic shocks to America created economic gap in aiding these countries to tackle China. Hence it became the pivot to Asia Strategy of the US to tackle China by combining efforts of contending nations of Indo-Pacific region¹ (Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand)-the Quad to offer a united front against China.

South China Sea (SCS) Dispute

South China Sea is considered important because of its busy international waterway, cutting across the world trade, commerce and economy. More than \$4.5 trillion worth of global trade crosses through this region. The resource rich SCS with numerous offshore oil and gas blocks never fails to attract India's interest in the region¹, as it provided the technical assistance to these mineral rich littoral regions (Vietnam, Philippines) in exploring the oil and natural gas in the region. This infuriated China against India and manifested as its adventuring in region encircling India in Indian Ocean region through its massive String of Pearl strategy.

India's oils exploration in SCS is always vehemently opposed by China projecting it as 'disputed area' and asserting insurances of Chinese sovereign

jurisdictional claim over the oceanic region. China is continuously asserting its right over SCS taking this reservation in cognisance. India carefully crafted its agreement and signed a Joint Vision Statement for the period 2015-2020 on defence Cooperation with Vietnam as India-Vietnam Relations² with Vietnam for oil exploration also which is being undertaken at Vietnam's request so as to maintain its panchsheel principle of 'non-interference in internal issue'. These explorations zone is although within the living nautical space of Vietnam but China perceive it as a threat to its territorial sovereignty.

China continuous assertive denial on the various issues including sovereignty of India over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and also by being engaged intervention on a various infrastructural development plan and investment projects in Gilgit-Baltistan region which is popularly known under the umbrella project of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor).

South China Sea: The Issue

The historical claim of China is being ruled out by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Hague, Netherlands and ruled that, China has no statutory base to it. Philippines brought the matter to legal scanner of PCA in 2013 focusing on Scarborough Shoal however China stayed away from the proceedings. The PCA at the Hague discarded Chinese claim over “nine-dash line”³, with boundary of wide-spectrum of economic and financial interests and held it as a gross perversion of international norms under the framework of the 1982 United Nations Convention on law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and violates it. The Court slammed China for causing irreparable losses over the ecosystem of Spratly islands, a contentious conglomeration of island, due to over fishing and construction of artificial of artificial island. The PCA held that China transgress the sovereign rights and infringes upon economic interest of Philippines by causing severe harm to the coral reef by constructing synthetic isle. The International Arbitral Tribunal decided in favour of Philippines that China's maritime entitlements exceeds the geographic and substantive limits under the UN Convention (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016 & Jash, 2016).

China further went on to reject an international ruling of PCA (Permanent Court of Arbitration) on the SCS claiming it as “null and void” and without of any “binding force”. Moreover, China is venturing in military Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea (SCS) such ADIZ would

require overflying planes to first notify China. Chinese experts claim that the entire scheme of thing is the strategy of China to contain 'pivot to Asia' strategy of USA which is perceived to counter China. On the other hand, India is a firm believer in the tribunal which had been set up within the statutory and legal provision of the United Nation's Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and opines that it must be given the "utmost respect".

Challenges in the Indian Ocean Region

The Indian Ocean occupies one-fifth of the globe's oceanic region and is bordered by the most demographically rich and varied nations of the world which contributes highest among biodiversity, flora, fauna, minerals and culture along with its beautifully mystifying geography. Such characteristics of Indian ocean makes it a highly desirable trade route and also the peaceful relations among the surrounding states makes it perfect for free, frank and fair-trading hotspot. It connects Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and South East Asia. It is also a host to number of strategic trade points like Straits of Hurmuz, Strait of Malacca.

India and China are constantly making effort to widen their zone of influence in this critically acclaimed mineral and resource rich region. Given that the Indian Ocean harbours more than one-third of the bulk cargo, two-third of the world's oil shipments, and half of all container traffic, with its unquestionable strategic importance. It is also important in forging strategic relation with our extended neighbour in order to counter the increasing presence of China in the region.

Although Indian Ocean region remains the island of stability and growth in the recent global upheaval which is encountered by terrorism, conflicts of ethnicity and statelessness, however some instances of turbulence are evident in the region like increase in number of drug shipping in Asian coastal region in last few years, human migration due to both political and apolitical factors, the unprecedented level of humanitarian crises witnessed in Bangladesh and Myanmar's refugee movement.

Chinese assertion on Indian Ocean under the garb of protecting it from piracy and oil spill disaster is frequently creating its rivalry with India; its military base in Djibouti is another reason for Indo- Chinese rivalry, which has its roots in India's interest in South China Sea, which will be the main focus of discussion hereon.

India-Sri Lanka-China

India and Sri Lanka share the closest links since inception of civilization being similar in culture and ethnicity, which has a huge influence on the social, economic and political growth and stability of both the nations. In the last few years, there has been a surge in amicable relation between India and Sri Lanka in all the possible dimensions of international relations. The joint commission which was setup in 1992 for addressing the problem related to bilateral issues between India and Sri Lanka is still relevant and fruitful as evidently manifested by the frequent visits of external affairs ministers of both the sides to reach at a common solution through amicable and friendly manner, to discuss, debate and deliberate on issues and solve the problem locally. Further the economic ties are strengthened in collaboration by setting up of Special Economic Zone in Trincomalee and enhanced partnership, cooperation and expertise sharing in aerial navigation, India also extended its satellite system 'GAGAN' and IRNSS to south Asian countries including Sri Lanka. The second meeting of joint working group on tourism was held in mid-2016. To take things forward the collaborative partnership on development of Buddhist circuit in India along with Ramayana circuit in Sri Lanka was proposed.

Sri Lanka is of strategic importance for China, pertaining to which China added Sri Lanka's Hambantota port as one of its 'pearl' in its 'String of Pearl Strategy'. Sri Lanka is also a focal point to China's Maritime Silk Road where it is also modernising the Hambantota port. Recently, Sri Lanka has given its nod to the Chinese investment in Colombo Port City project to make it an ambitious international finance outpost center in the Indian Oceanic region.

India - Pakistan - China

Chinese interest in Pakistan goes hand in hand with Pakistan's rivalry with India. Chinese initiative of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a segment of its 'One Belt-One Road' initiative is to counter India and maintain its hegemony in South Asia. The project includes 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road building highways, railways, as well as pipelines. China through this ambitious project seeks to bypass the bottleneck of Malacca Strait to access Indian ocean and reach out trijunction of West Asia, Africa, South Asia which is under the influence of India; CPEC connects the Xinxiang province of China to the

Gwadar port in Pakistan which will considerably reduce the distance for China's energy import from Middle East by 11000 km.

The huge, comprehensive and complex mechanism of rails, trading zones, roads, energy project and pipelines of CPEC will link Pakistan's Gwadar deep sea port to China's underdeveloped far-western region getting access to the Arabian Sea via Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). China certainly through this corridor is also in a position for direct entry in the Indian Ocean at the apparent tri-junction of South Asia, West Asia, and Africa. India openly raised its unwillingness to join OBOR and staunchly against CPEC as this project compromises the territorial sovereignty of India and also it is perceived by India as a China's strategy to contain India from western borders.

The One Belt, One Road (OBOR)

In a constant pursuit to reshape the world order, and maintain its hegemony in Asia and strengthen its claim over dominant world power, China shaped this comprehensive policy framework to encourage domestic progress and foreign diplomatic politics. About OBOR, the initiative is premised on two components—first, the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) which is to be established along the Eurasian land corridor from the Pacific coast to the Baltic Sea and second, the 21st century Maritime Silk Road (MSR). Thus the name “belt and road” initiative which runs via the three major mainland of high economic potential that are Asia, Africa, Europe, linking the vibrant economies of East Asia at one side and full-blown economies of Europe at the other.

Scholars point out that the 'One Belt One Road' initiative, have enough potential to redefine the geo-economic power away from the United States of America and Anchor it towards the Eurasian nations, provided that it is backed by a firmed fiscal organisational mechanism and implemented without creating the issues of territorial sovereignty. More than half the population of world is expected to reap the fruits from this ambitious project of China. Analysts are of the view that “belt and road” initiative could shift the centre of geopolitics and geo-economics power towards Eurasia, and threaten the “Pivot to Asia” strategy of the United States and its 'quad' members. China is expecting that the general trading segment amongst the Silk Road nations would touch \$3 trillion over the next 8-10 years. India is not part of OBOR and reiterated its firm opposition on belt and road initiative of China, with Foreign Secretary communicating the fact

that India will join multilateral connectivity initiatives in Asia, only if they were ensured through a consultation and dialogue. India views China's OBOR as a “national Chinese initiative” which compromises the territorial sovereignty of India. The defence establishment which unequivocally opposed the project is of the view that the OBOR might not be altogether beneficial and that these corridors in forthcoming period could be used for strategic military mobilisation and services can be hindered by extremist elements from Pakistan and also it will require huge investment in protecting such critical infrastructure from being hijacked by non-state actors. There is apprehension in India about being part of a “hegemonic project” that would ensure China-model of development in the Indian Ocean region, which reminds India of previous failure of implementing doctored dictated approach from developed countries. The prime issue of dispute for India is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which has an inextricable link with OBOR. For India, OBOR may be a potentially viable economic juncture but it threatens India's territorial sovereignty and its overall interest.

India's Strategy to Counterbalance the OBOR

'Cotton Route' is the India's response to China's silk route, and is considered as counter balancing strategy to OBOR. Cotton Route is envisaged to severe and strengthen already amicable relation among the countries of Indian Ocean rim. On the other hand, India has also started Project Mausam and Spice Route in a direct response to belt and road initiative of China. The project 'Mausam' is related to the re-establishing of India's pristine marine trade routes with its traditional trading partners along the Indian Ocean. The 'Spice Route of India', envisages India as a linchpin in revival of ancient sea routes in Africa, Asia and Europe. Many scholars and analysts in India view the project Mausam and the Spice Route as rival contestation to the Maritime Silk Road.

China and India's Strategic and Economic Interest in South China Sea

Both the countries have shown economic growth and emerged as island of stability in environment of global turbulence, the global dynamics offer the opportunity for both India and China to forge a relationship on the principle of cooperation and coordination in order to promote the regional interest of Asia

which is considered as the light of 21st century. In the last two decades, bilateral trade has increased considerably and both countries have emerged as a major trading partner. In 2014, the bilateral trade between India and China surpassed \$60 billion mark. In 2013, 4% of India exports were destined for China and India's import from China was upto 11%, the major products that are exported by China are electric and electronic equipment, furniture, fertilisers and organic chemical. On the other hand, China's imports from India mainly comprises of slag, and ash, cotton, pearls, copper ores, precious stones. Given the strategic importance of the Malacca Strait and of the mineral-rich South China Sea, both nations constantly pursue the acquisition of maximum resources and hassle-free navigation. Hence, both are contesting fiercely in the region by applying various modes of soft diplomacy, cultural ties, cheque book diplomacy, etc. The overlapping of EEZ (exclusive economic zones)⁴ of various littoral nations of South China Sea provide the room for India in strategic role played there by providing soft assistance in term of technology, standards of procedure, training etc. to these nations, which help them to claim their rights over minerals hence countering China in fragmented manner.

The South China Sea, in particular, and the Indo-Pacific region, in general, is the golden trade route due to the growing presence of economies and trade blocs like ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), and RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership). This strategically important region is also witnessing armed rivalry where the two major powers China and the US are confronting each other. Chinese 'infrastructural might' has championed in the region and created the two artificial islands of Paracel and Spratly for military adventure in Indo-Pacific to which the US responded by placing THAAD (terminal high-altitude area defence) in South Korea. India is also echoing in the same chorus of free navigation in Indo-Pacific along with the US and other South-East Asian nations against Chinese assertion over South China Sea and its military adventure in the Indo-Pacific region.

Military Reforms of China

China announced a military reform to rejuvenate its strategic strength and to make it more substantial, connected and effectual combat-ready fighting beyond its borders and shores. China announced that the People's Liberation

Army (PLA) will be cut by 300,000 personnel from its 2.3 million strong military force. The reforms involve strengthening the Central Military Commission (CMC) command structure over the PLA. China in collaboration with Djibouti developing a robust overseas logistics facility to strengthen its ongoing anti-piracy patrolling in the Gulf of Aden, analyst of the view that China may try to manipulate and convert this into its first military base in Indian Ocean Region. Reasons behind the reforms is that China wants to proportion its teeth to tail ratio, focus more on intelligent armaments and agile movements of military units and equipment in order to make it more modern on terms with US forces capable of handling multidimensional challenges and expand power in all direction. It also contains the strategy to realign its existing seven military area commands of Beijing, Nanjing, Chengdu, Jinan, Shenyang, Lanzhou, and Guangzhou into four strategic zones. Such restructuring will revamp older fragmented and bulky nature of its armed forces and establish joint operational military command, as China put it, “an elite combat force” by 2020 (Pandit, 2015).

China is involved in various regional brawls with several other Asian countries including India. The threat of facing combat from different borders simultaneously urges China for military reform although their navy is not equipped to fight at two fronts simultaneously. Prior to the reforms in the military, the PLA's disciplinary mechanism was not upto the mark but now, the Commission reports directly to Xi Jinping which has made a difference. The Chinese forces have a better command along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and will continue to maintain its aggressive stance.

India necessarily requires to be vigilant about the Chinese military reform so as to realign its own military capabilities to handle any untoward situation as India is well versed with Chinese aggression in Doklam (tri-junction) and strategic locations in Arunachal and Kashmir region. Certainly, these reforms will lead in enhancing strength, capability and capacity of the PLA, primarily the Navy, which has now been entrusted with an extended role of carrying out the task of 'open seas protection'. India should take cognisance that conflict in East China Sea and South China Sea are certain to rise, due to its economic and strategic military necessity which may have negative implications of its Act East policy. China trying to make foundational base in Djibouti, which threatens India's role

as security and safety valve in Indian Oceanic region. Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) which is being formed by India to bring equilibrium and counter balance China's naval invasion in the region which has substantially failed to live up to its initial obligation and promise of a robust theatre command due to turf fights among the three Services. India has not gone in for major strategic military reformation so far to inject the much-awaited synergy requirement among the three services of Navy, Army, and Air Force, reduce their poor teeth-to-tail combating ratio and better utilisation of rare resources to systematically transforming military capacities in a cost-effective holistic manner.

Growing Security Dilemma and Balance of Power in the Region

Although India is neither directly involved in the SCS dispute nor has any direct stakes there, it is recognised as an extra-regional power through its maritime naval exercise in collaboration with the stake holding countries in SCS, and its growing strategic partnership with various littoral states of The South China Sea (SCS). SCS is directly linked to India through its two conceptual connotations that are; firstly, “extended neighbourhood” concept that emerged in 2000 and became the buzzword in issues of far neighbour, recent example is SCS. Extended neighbourhood recognises geographic regions outside South Asia in which India feels it has interests to loss, gain, defend and maintain. Secondly, “Indo-Pacific” dimension where South China Sea gets directly linked to India's strategic framework as South China Sea is sandwiched between Eastern Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. In this context, major interests of India in the Indo-Pacific region are to check the Chinese assertiveness in the Indian Ocean in order to secure the freedom of the navigation.

SCS linkage has also surfaced in India's military maritime qua naval doctrinal and strategy documents such as the 2007 doctrine on Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy and the 2015 maritime doctrine on Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy, which identified the South China Sea among the “secondary areas” of focused maritime interests.

South China Sea in India's 'Act East Policy'

India's long-standing Look East Policy is transformed into more assertive Act

East Policy under the able guidance of administrative machinery and leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the 10 member ASEAN (Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam and Singapore) in order to make strong connect of vibrant South Asian Countries and Asian. Regions strategic and economic outlook are re-shaped and revamped by various conflicting ideological and strategic framework like, US 'pivot to Asia', Japan's 'Democratic Security Diamond' and China's 'Maritime Silk Road'. In this backdrop, endeavours are made by India to stabilise the security framework of the region by participating and redrawing the mutual consensus-oriented relationship in Indian Ocean and South China Sea region, one of the primary strategies of India is reflected by Act East Policy (AEP) in the case of South China Sea. India has firmly articulated its principled position of maritime security, freedom of navigation and expeditious resolution of disputes according to provisions of international law viz-UNCLOS (the UN Convention on Law of the Seas, 1982), developing a code of conduct, and settlement through peaceful mechanism of discussion, debate, and dialogue.

Given the context of safeguarding maritime security, strategic interests and ensuring the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, stability of SCS is of substantial importance to India which also have direct impact on India's 'Act East policy', given India's increasing engagement with the countries in East and Southeast Asia. That is, India's strategic objectives in playing an extra-regional power in the Southeast Asia is based on the twin objectives: First, its ambitions to be the predominant power in the northeast Indian Ocean, which is mainly centred on the huge bay of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. Here, it acts as a key defensive against potential threats from and through the Southeast Asian archipelago. Secondly, it stands within the broader objective to assume a greater strategic role in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. This interest is mainly driven by an imperative to balance China's growing influence in Southeast Asia as well as its aspirations to expand its own strategic space (Brewster, 2013, p. 151).

Conclusion: Focusing Future Trajectory

It appears that an urge for closer cooperation motivates and enhance the economic affairs between India and China, competition is still what marks their bilateral diplomatic relations considerably. Where, India expressed a non-

participative stance over China's ambitious economic corridor with Pakistan pointing out its potential sovereign threat to Indian territory. India sees CPEC as China's policy to contain India from western border. In case of conflict, China can mobilise troops using CPEC, which is a move to have a strategic foothold by China and jeopardises India's security concerns. The diplomatic rivalry in question is not limited to strategic concerns, but is further fuelled by a chronic border dispute. On the other hand, neither China nor India can afford to turn a blind eye to the huge benefits that intense economic cooperation can potentially bring about. Therefore, both countries are trying to capitalise on mutual economic benefits while working hard to contain political frictions in South China Sea within manageable limits.

References

- ASEAN Secretariat: The declaration on the conduct of parties in the South China Sea, 2002. <http://www.aseansec.org/13165>
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ((2012, December 21). Vision Statement ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit.<http://www.asean.org/news/asean-statementcommuniques/item/vision-statement-aseanindia-commemorative-summit>
- Brewster,D. (2013). India's defencestrategy and the India-ASEAN relationship, *India Review*, 12(3),151-164
- Cordner, L. G. (1994). Regional resilience: The imperative for maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia. *Naval War College Review*, 47(2),42–45.
- David B.(2013). India's defence strategy and the India-ASEAN relationship. *India Review*, 12 (3),151.
- Indian Navy. (2007). Freedom to use the sea: India's maritime military strategy. Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy).
- Indian Navy. (2015). Ensuring secure seas: Indian maritime security strategy. *Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1(2)*, 32.
- Jash, A. (2016). South China sea in India's strategic gambit: Interest and policies. *SADF FOCUS*, 23,1-17.
- Lee G. C.(1994). Regional resilience: The imperative for maritime security cooperation in Southeast Asia. *Naval War College Review*, 42-45.
- Majumdar, M.(2013). India's stakes in the South China Sea. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3 (13),242-247.
- Ministry of Defence. (2015, May26). India and Vietnam sign a joint vision statement on defence cooperation. Press Information Bureau. Government of India. <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122033>.

Ministry of External Affairs. (2016, July 12). Statement on award of arbitral tribunal on South China Sea under annexure VII of UNCLOS. Government of India.
<http://www.mea.gov.in/pressreleases.htm?dtl/27019/Statement+on+Award+of+Arbitral+Tribunal+on+South+China+Sea+Under+Annexure+VII+of+UNCLOS>.

Pandit, R. (2015). China overhauls military as India drags feet. *The Times of India*.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/China-overhauls-military-as-India-drags-feet/articleshow/49942184.cms>

PCA Case No 2013-2019 in the matter of the South China Sea Arbitration. (2016, July 12).

Permanent Court of Arbitration. <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf>.

Endnotes

¹ The term Indo-Pacific was used by a strategic thinker Khurana in 2007 for the first time, in one of his articles, "Security of Sea Lines: Prospects for India-Japan Cooperation". According to him the meaning of this term, was a maritime space stretching from the littorals of East Africa and West Asia, across the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean, to the littorals of East Asia.

² "India-Vietnam Relations", A note prepared by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, March 2002, as quoted in SD Muni and Grojesh Pant, *India's Energy Security: Prospects of Cooperation with Extended Neighborhood*, Rupa and Co, New Delhi, 2005, Chapter 3, Section 4.

³ The 'nine-dash line' stretches hundreds of kilometres south and east of its southerly Hainan Island, covering the strategic Paracel and Spratly island chains. China buttresses its claims by citing 2,000 years of history when the two island chains were regarded as its integral parts.

⁴ The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea created a number of guidelines concerning the status of islands, the continental shelf, enclosed seas, and territorial limits. Three of the most relevant to the South China Sea are: Article 3, which establishes that "every state has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles"; Articles 55–75 define the concept of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is an area up to 200 nautical miles beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea. The EEZ gives coastal states "sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to" (above) "the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil..." Article 121, which states that rocks that cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.