



Geopolitical Maritime Dominance in the 21st Century: A Comparative Analysis of U.S., China, and Emerging Naval Powers

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Abstract

In an increasingly globalized world, the struggle for geopolitical maritime dominance has become a defining feature of 21st-century international relations. This study presents a comparative analysis of the United States, China, and emerging naval powers, focusing on how control over strategic maritime chokepoints shapes global influence. The research explores how traditional powers like the U.S., facing signs of fading power, navigate the enfeebling effects of prolonged proxy wars and internal political divisions, often relying on bipartisan alliances to maintain their global standing. In contrast, China's assertive naval expansion and proximity-based influence strategies in the South China Sea represent a shift toward more regionally grounded dominance. The study also examines the responses of emerging naval powers and regional alliances that counterbalance both superpowers, while highlighting the bullying

efforts that occasionally characterize major powers' maritime posturing. Through the lens of diplomatic thawing and realignment, the paper analyzes how shifting

alliances and maritime strategies are reshaping the global geopolitical structure, emphasizing that the oceans remain a central theatre for power projection and negotiation in the modern era.

Keywords: Globalized World, Geopolitical Structure, Maritime chokepoints, Enfeebling, Proxy Wars, Bullying Efforts, Bipartisan Alliances, Fading Power, Proximity, diplomatic thawing.

Historical Background

Almost 71 % of the entire World consists of Waters in the form of small Seas & huge Oceans with large amounts of water connected with both natural, artificial Straits & Bays surrounding the globe. These Seas & Oceans remained very important not only for exploring the unveiled regions of the globe but also for their strategic importance, mineral & trade potential. In the wake of exploring the un-inhabitant & disconnect World with the civilized & developing regions, these mammoth water Channels played the most important role. Although the importance was smelled by the great Alfred Mahan, a US naval officer & historian by floating his maritime experiences promoting his intellectual wisdom that economic interests bind states together as naval technology is expanded & advanced. But the real importance of these seas & Mighty Oceans came into being during & after the WW1, WW2 & the Cold War Era. After the end of the cold war & the splitting of USSR, the oceans remained quite calm maintaining the US hegemony all around for almost two decades. But with the emergence of China as becoming another global power following by the US in the start of 21st century to onwards up to the present era, overturned competition into confrontation for effective control & dominance over these oceans.

During the Cold War Era, although there occurred many important events describing the importance of these water mediums between the superpowers of that time, US & USSR. The naval battle between the two continued indirectly in the form of proxy wars which were fought on the soils of Korea (Both North & South) & Vietnam, but the two most important events were the Suez Canal Issue in 1967 which initially shocked later changed the whole scenario of the World Politics & especially the politics of the Middle-East resultantly rise to the fear in the global trade Markets. Secondly during the 1971's Indo-Pak War, how India made it difficult for Pakistan Navy by surrounding PNS Naval Base Karachi situated on the Arabian Sea, to stop to make any help for their military residing in the East-Pakistan, which later came into a huge catastrophe splitting the largest County of the Muslim world.

Now we discuss the five most important dimensions of Sea Power considering the present & quickly changing strategic landscape through bipartisan agreements, different Alliances, Coalitions & introduction of different economic models.

1. World's Oceans are rapidly becoming the most important zone of Confrontation between the great Military Powers

The World's Oceans are rapidly becoming most important zones of confrontation between world's great military actors-the United States & China above all, but also Russia, Japan, India & others. How these powers manage their naval rivalry will shape the world for the next half century (1). If we study the world history, we come to know that prior to the WW1 Britain & France were the two superpowers of that era, as they have a strong & dominant control over world oceans. They conquered the World with the help of their naval dominance around the globe. After WW1 & Especially WW2 both these countries lost their naval superiority, eventually lost their superpower status. While US & the USSR who gained naval superiority, snatched the status of superpower from the old once. The decline of USSR, the vacuum was almost filled by China by prophesying the importance of the oceans. As described by Chinese president XI Jinping "the countries that embrace the sea thrive, while states that spurn the sea decline" (2).

In the present prevailing scenario, the region which has become strategically most important is the Indo-Pacific region, this region stretching from pacific coastline to the Indian ocean is home to more than half of the world's people nearly two third of the world's economy & seven of the World's largest militaries ⁴. More than that the only existing superpower of the World US has not only situated in this region but also has deep interests in both strategic Economic & Trade. In this region of Indo-Pacific there are multiple bilateral or trilateral conflicts, but the real Confrontation is between the enfeebling US & rapidly Strengthening China. Although US made different bipartisan Alliances, setup Coalitions signed different treaties yet not succeeded much as China Skillfully, intelligently & strongly kept herself harmless from these intimidating efforts of the furious US & its deprived regional partners.

Following the footprints of great Alfred Mahan's navel strategy to achieve greatness, it was necessary to have strong navel presences in the seas' US strategy of Indo-pacific composed of five legitimate & progressive objectives but the way US wanted to implement this strategy is bullying the opponents and even its indecisive coalition partners. As we see these coalitions, treaties, partnerships of the region like AUKUS, QUAD & Five Eyes. For these associations, US not only being the driving force but also facilitating these diplomatic rather defense ties to suppress China only. On the other hand, China has been struggling to grasp its authority in the Indo-pacific region by implementation of different tactics to control, disturbed but very important trade chokepoints in the region.

The Strait of Malacca (Which connects Indian Ocean to the South China Sea) is very sensitive & this creates a security issue for China as the straits function as a strategic 'chokepoint' through which 80 % of chin's oil supply must pass. As this area has been made vulnerable for China by US due to its effective naval presence there in the form of deployment of US naval vessels & their aggressive activities. To cope this menace the development of

Chinese military has focused on the ability of their forces to engage in Anti-access or area denial capability (1).

The straits of Malacca empty its water into the South China Sea. After crossing the strait, most of the maritime traffic entered the strategically, geographically & economically very important South China Sea. Although this sea has multiple issues of authoritative control & sovereignty of different sea zones, yet Beijing maintains a commanding position even by overlooking 2016's decision of permanent court of arbitration against the justifying occupation of China in the important parts of this sea. These disputes draw China & US into a potential confrontation & both are very keen to vindicate their authority in the region. The location of this sea also makes it militarily strategic & valuable for regional security.

On the one hand China has not only occupied most of the conflicted Island's situated on the shores of this sea but on the other hand there have been massive installments with airstrips & deployment of anti-aircraft missile defense system by the Beijing which can be depicted through the US satellite images. The US is officially neutral in South China Sea dispute; however, it too has its national interests in the Asia-Pacific region. These interests include defense treaties with Japan, South-Korea, Philippines & Australia along with defense partnership with Indonesia & Vietnam (3). US also strengthening Taiwan, another key player of the region through its advance military hardware's & this assistance causing immense tension especially in the Taiwan Strait as China consider Taiwan as its integral part emphasizing its "one China policy". The chief US national interest is freedom of navigation as it is described in its Indo-Pacific strategy, the unrestricted passage for commercial ships as well as military ships & aircraft carriers through & over the South China Sea (4).

The tension has been mounting in the region which can be observed through the incident of China's dramatic areal confrontation with US over South China Sea in May 2023. Moreover, claimant's issues in the South China Sea are highly complicated & overlapping with each other. The ever-growing influence of Beijing globally & particularly to the strategically very important region of Indo-Pacific compelled the furious US to strengthen its ties with other regional powers through the transfer of its different unveiled cutting-edge technologies. AS always, these blessings of US are not for free, and the allies must pay back to self-interested US in the form of keep confrontation with the Beijing. To keep Beijing under pressure Washington established different agreements with different regional partners. AUKUS is one of those. AUKUS is the most important new defense partnership arrangement since the end of the cold war (5).

The timing of this new deal is particularly significant. It comes just month after the U. S's frustrated rather shameful exit from Afghanistan, when doubts have been rumored in multiple quarters about U. S's commitment in the region. Commentators depicted the U.S withdrawal as the dying act of a fading power, incompetent in execution, redolent of isolation & betrayal of allies (4). So for the U.S AUKUS is a win. AUKUS is a plan of manufacturing of

Nuclear Submarines for Australia with its technology transfer & to keep the Pacific free for trade & to maintain U.S hegemony over the Indo-Pacific region. It exemplifies the importance of Washington in attaches to deepening corporation with key allies & strengthening their military capabilities to assist indirectly the security challenges posed by China in the region (6).

Japan & Taiwan who are the other regional partners of U.S strongly welcomed this deal of AUKUS with “**A Duchenne Smile**” and was widely hailed as a strategic masterstroke particularly from the U.S, while the other strategic partner especially from the Europe, France who was the initial supplier of this deal, later kicked-off completely from this deal called it “**A Stab in her Back**” (4). The reason behind why U.K joined this agreement is that after the Approval of Brexit, UK was feeling the pressure of global isolation so to neutralize this perception & to provide a support for U.S, UK joined this alliance proving as ever bosom friend & second fiddle to the US. On the other hand, under the consortium of Washington, rapprochement between South Korea & Japan other key regional powers, creates new opportunities in this region despite historical & harsh difference between the two. This bipartisan proximity communicates that U.S remained very successful by advertising & promoting a false mantra as a nightmare for the regional partners stating China a “**revisionist power**” state with a slogan that is “Wo China a raha hay ... Wo China a Raha hay, as it did during the Cold war era by stating U.S.S.R as an “**Evil Empire**” with a slogan that was “Wo Russia a raha hay... Wo Russia a raha hay.

Following Alfred Mahan’s one of suggestion for US foreign policy, that in future US require a network of naval bases capable for providing fuel & supplies for its enlarged navy & maintaining open lines of communication between the US & its new markets. For this purpose, Quad is another effort of U.S being a trap to balance the growing Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. The main aim of this Quadrilateral security dialogue is to promote a free & open Indo-Pacific which is also one of the core points of U.S Indo-Pacific Strategy. The group has held regular meetings since 2017 & has taken steps to enhance cooperation on a range of issues including maritime security (7).

The strategic importance & the dynamics of power dispute in Indian Ocean region in the global scenario gave rise to a clash of powers, being the United States, India & China the main actors involved¹⁴. India being the regional power was very attractive for another regional power US to counter the 3rd regional power China, so that US will be able to develop its rebalancing strategy towards Asia-Pacific & to maintain its unipolar hegemony. Moreover, through quad U.S has been driving very cunning and diplomatically smart New-Delhi to counter Chinese rise in the region for which it has been made the India part of Quad. This Indian Induction has direct & indirect both very serious implications upon the economically disarray & diplomatically isolated Pakistan which has certainly led to strategic instability in South –Asian region.

New-Delhi has been enjoying the situation and bearing the mighty economic & technological advantages with both hands. India has waited very long for this golden

opportunity, because its sole challenging neighbor, Pakistan always remained the core ally of the West especially the U.S very needy but a far more than friend for a very long time too & also became an apple of U. S's eye after the tragic incident of 9/11. But what Pakistan got from this friendship & cooperation & Why US turned its eyes from Islamabad to towards New-Delhi are the million \$ questions?

However, critics describe this policy shift of U.S favored towards New-Delhi due to three main reasons:

- (i) India's growing as mighty economic power of the Globe.
- (ii) To counter mighty Chinese influence in the region.
- (iii) Double –play of Pakistani authorities during the U.S led war on Terror especially in Afghanistan.

Considering India as the most important regional competitor to China, US has become very approachable to India, but on the one hand I think that Washington has been playing sneakily with New-Delhi as it previously played with Islamabad to counter growing influence of the communism. But on the other hand, I am also sure that New-Delhi is not as deprived-off as Islamabad was. Moreover, considering the past long non-alignment stance of New-Delhi & very close & cordial relations with Russia, it will not go to that extent as Islamabad went with US all around. Likewise, Beijing is precisely strong economically & strategically as compared with 1990's Moscow. Considering these facts, now United States & India have a clear geopolitical foe in the form of China as both understand that one can facilitate the other in their competition with Beijing. So, for US, India is a massive pivotal power in Asia that sits astride critical maritime routes & shares long contested border with China. For India US is an attractive source of cutting-edge technology, education & investment.

Besides Indian support in the region, another facility US possessed in Indian Ocean is the naval base at Diego Garcia for its strong naval presence in the region. This is one of the largest military bases of US abroad & this base was used for military operations in Iraq & Afghanistan. Moreover to maintain effective control over Indian Ocean, US deployed its 5th naval fleet, the division responsible for naval forces in the north-west Indian Ocean quadrant was reactivated after 48 years of inactivity joining the large 7th fleet based in the western-pacific ocean quadrant (4).

Middle East is also part of the Indo-Pacific region & has always remained in limelight in the world geopolitics. As this region is very important not only for the massive reserves of Energy but also a key supply route for the shipment of this energy up to the Far East. The emerging Chinese influence in the middle east, especially after the China brokered Tehran-Riyadh rapprochement & their diplomatic thawing helped Iran & KSA, also placed Beijing in a commanding position in this long-troubled area. The Chinese support proved to be blessing for

both as they came out of US pressure. I think this is a serious warning for US & its regional allies & if they pose any threat to smooth oil & gas supply to China through Indian Ocean or Strait of Malacca, they will also have to face the music in the waters of gulf region. Recently Iranian forces demonstrated this by seizing two US oil tankers near Strait of Hormuz, the latest in series of such incidents in one of the world's most vital energy passageway (8).

Apart from Indo-pacific, Arctic Ocean region is going to be hub of activities & turning into another flashpoint, militarily, economically & geopolitically in the coming future. The Arctic, the region with the North Pole as its geographical center, includes the northern part of Europe, Asia & North America, as well as the Arctic Ocean. There are no generally recognized boundaries there. The arctic states with official arctic states as the Russian federation, the US, Canada, Norway & Denmark¹⁷. While sharing the Arctic, among five of its legitimate members, four of them are western NATO members & they all see Russia (The 5th member) as their sole opponent in the struggle for control over arctic. In the present scenario of expansion of the NATO & a long Russo-Ukrainian war, not only tension has been mounting in the arctic region but also on the north shores of war zone Russia. Moscow with the diplomatic & economic brace of China is in aggressive mood against US led NATO. As US with its choke holder western allies moving forward, Russia is hooping & threatening them to use its tactical nukes which have recently been deployed in Belarus (9).

So, to counter the commanding position of Russia in the region, US itself & by using wilted NATO has been mobilizing its naval fleets, with advance marine military hardware. Moreover, the US arctic doctrine stipulates that northern sea route must be blocked. In accordance with the directive, Norway & U.S are planning to restore the navy base at Olav Vern in the arctic region¹⁸. Meanwhile to balance this pursuit, Russia established a new joint strategic command with the assistance of already deployed extensively weaponized, the Northern Fleet (10).

After the WW-II & with the demise of Britain & French empires; US remained omnipresent & also was the sole hegemonic player in the Atlantic. But now the situation has been changing dramatically in this region, particularly in Europe dominant Mediterranean Sea (Which is connected to the Atlantic), neutral Black sea (Marginal Mediterranean sea of the Atlantic Ocean), economically important Baltic Sea (An arm of the Atlantic Ocean) & surprisingly in the South-Atlantic ocean. As far as the Mediterranean Sea is concerned, Moscow sees it as a large NATO dominant regional part so by forgetting the bitter past & capitalizing the political, economic & defense opportunities expanded its influence & established cordial relations with the countries situated on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Regarding to the Black Sea, it has a massive importance both for Russia & NATO, as West think it is the gateway for massive induction of NATO in the region (Now black Sea has become most important after the Russo-Ukrainian war, as it is the only supply route from West to Ukraine). Moscow remained very much aware about this fact so to barricade NATO, it has improved its position accomplishing complete control over seaport of Sevastopol through

annexation of Crimea in 2014. By adding to the fuel, the Russia-China nexus all around the globe especially by conducting joint naval exercises twice in the Baltic Sea (Which is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean) threatens to be anti-US hegemony in this region & to examine the worth of Chinese newly built Blue-water Navy in compared with US long established Blue-water navy (11).

On the other hand, Beijing's growing sway in the region has raised concerns in Washington & beyond. China through its Massive Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is not only providing military assistance but also It has established its 1st permanent military presence in the Atlantic Ocean, most likely in Equatorial Guinea at the port of Bata, a deep-water commercial port on the gulf of Guinea¹⁹. On the other Russia under Putin administration has also been strengthening its ties with authoritative regimes of Latin America like Venezuela, Cuba situated on the Atlantic Ocean & Nicaragua which is set between the strategically very important Pacific ocean & Caribbean Sea (12).

By securing its position in the Atlantic, Beijing don't stop here, to get influence on the other side of the Atlantic (In the South Pacific Ocean) Chinese People liberation Army (PLA)/ Navy have already established seven sea-ports, three in Panama, three in Bahamas & one in Argentina. For face savings, US president John Biden higgled visited Columbia (Country Situated on South Pacific Ocean) where he promised that US would soon designated Columbia as its Non-NATO ally. But all these US efforts have been in vain because the Red Dragon has been carrying the day globally & soon will be in a ruling position over most of gigantic water waves. At the end it seems to me, that there is no such hurdle despite some un vain resistance from rapidly debilitating US in the way for China the time to come when it solely or dominantly hold lions share to set the terms of the World to come (13).

2. Role in Global Commerce is a function of Sea Based Trade

Since 1845, at the height of British imperialism/ adventurism, when British Royal Navy find a route through the arctic & this voyage generated valuable scientific discovery. Ever since ocean science has been a leading indicator of global power, but the Britisher's did not went forwarded due to the blocked of Arctic year around by a thick layer of ice. With the increasing temperature of the region since 2000, now in 2018 a flotilla of Chinese container vessels sailed through the arctic route from Shanghai to Hamburg Germany, almost six thousand miles shorter than the traditional route from South China Sea via Indian Ocean through the Suez to Mediterranean to the western coast of the Atlantic (14).

As the great Alfred Mahan argued that a genuine maritime power as involving commercial reach, adequate ships & a network of ports (15). By 2015, that China had acquired 1st two measures of power were beyond doubt. In the following eight years China has almost achieved the third one. From South Pacific zone to the South Atlantic zone, Chinese have established several seaports which not only shocked the world at all but also demonized the livid US, who remained all dominant & impervious in Southern parts of both the Atlantic & the

Pacific. Now circumstantially China turned the table all around for diplomatically disintegrated & economically near to bankrupt the US.

As far as Indo-Pacific is concerned, it has occupied pride of place in World oceans trade with clear recognition that it will shape the 21st century world order (16). “Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade. Whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself”(17). Moreover, according to a report of the Asian development Bank (ADB), countries in the Indo-Pacific region produce more than 60 % of world GDP. This gives the significance of this region globally. So, among the great power rivalry, this region matters the most for every great power of the globe to either maintain its power or to grab the new power.

The emergent US-China rivalry has also taken on varied other forms ranging from contestations surrounding rules of trade to increasingly aggressive military posturing (18). Besides US, other regional powers of the Indo-Pacific like Japan, North Korea India, Australia & Russia have also been struggling for their economic survival or to maintain their economic superiority globally. According to Alfred Mahan’s believe that in future, US economy would enable to absorb its massive industrial production, therefore US should seek new markets abroad (19). For this purpose, it should have extensive control over oceans which are very much important in global trade. So, US after the WW-II to the 1st decade of the 21st century maintained its hegemonic status in the world economy. But from the Beginning of the 2nd decade of the 21st century, China emerged as a great competitive eminent threat US long maintained supremacy.

Stating the US Indo-Pacific strategy; “Our vital interests & those of our closest partners require a free & accessible Indo-Pacific & that the regions seas & skies are governed & used according to international law. In particular, we will build support for rules-based approaches to the maritime domain, including in the South China Sea & East-China Sea (2). On the other hand, China also wanted a comprehensive control in this region, so when US made a cardinal mistake by leveling Middle East unleashed (Due to its self-fulfilled energy needs), China by capitalizing & filled the vacuum by using its shrewd diplomacy & massive financial resources. Now Beijing holds a satisfactory position in Red Sea & its critical maritime choke points, the Bab-el-Mandab, Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman onwards to the Arabian Sea. On Arabian Sea, Chahbahar of Iran & Gwadar of Pakistan (Which is a commercial port becoming a strategic dual-use facility in the Arabian Sea) both ports have been developing rapidly by the Chinese herself to facilitate its trade vessels. So due to these rivalries the South-Asian region has become one of the mostly hotly contested areas of great power competition (20).

As far as trade concerned to the South China Sea, in the recent days this route has become the most important trading zone of the Indo-Pacific region. About a third of all the

world's maritime trade goes through South China Sea, half of all oil & gas tankers from the Middle-East sail into it on their way to China, Japan, the US & elsewhere (3). So South China Sea is especially important not only for China but also for other regional economic powers. As far as India is concerned, it is now the world's 5th largest economy which has been growing rapidly & 55% of its trade is done through South China Sea, which makes further complicating the maritime flows to & from India in the event of a South-China conflict (17). So, by sensing the geopolitical & geoeconomic importance of South China Sea, China even remained negative in the decision of Special Arbitration Court by calling it **"illegitimate"**. Japan & South-Korea the other strong economic countries of the region are also re-lining themselves by forgetting their resentful past.

In the North of the globe, here a new type of conflict of the 21st century is emerging & will develop in the future. The vast potential of resources & geopolitical position as a global transport artery have led to the transformation of the Arctic into a powerful magnet that attracts not only the Arctic countries but also many European states & even China, located far in the south (21).

Russia's **"forth wall"** "the arctic which spends part of the year under a thick blanket of sheet-ice is now slowly opening up & Russia has already taken advantage with rising investment in natural resources, exploration & scientific research. How Russia values the arctic, being the major player of the region can be judged from Putin's response after a press conference in 2017, said "Today the wealth of Russia will grow with the expansion into the arctic". Moreover, he said "I hope we will soon be able to achieve economically far more favorable transportation of goods between Asia & Europe on the northern sea route compared with alternative routes"³¹. By making the words of Putin into reality, both Russia & China are now in the way forward for rapidly increase in trade through the arctic. For this purpose, Russian crude oil now is flowing to China via Arctic Ocean (22).

As far as the economic importance of Black Sea & Mediterranean is concerned, Moscow sees the Black Sea region as vital to its geo-economic strategy; to project Russian power & influence in the Mediterranean, protect its economic & trade links with key European markets & made southern Europe more dependent on Russian oil & gas (23). As NATO already established major influence in Mediterranean through the alignment of most of the regional countries & further going ahead towards strategically & economically important Black Sea, especially during mysteriously long ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, this region has become a powder keg. All the arms supply from west to Ukraine & exports of Grains from Ukraine to the World also has been carried through the Black Sea. As this trade has been continued through this channel, recently Russia has withdrawn herself from the famous Black Sea grain deal initiative, which was signed during this war. This retaliation proved to be havoc to the enfeebling economy of the war affected Ukraine (24).

So, tension has been mounting from both sides to grab the control or influence over the waters of Black Sea, as it is connected to Mediterranean via phosphorous & onward to Red Sea

via strategically, geographically & economically very important Suez Canal. In this region Baltic Sea (Which is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean) important water channel for regional economy, as it is the main source of gas supply to the Western Europe especially to Germany. Two gigantic Moscow owned gas pipelines named Nord Stream-I & II have been installed on the seabed of this Sea. But these pipelines are also affected by the worse security situation in the region & the gas supply has been stopped due to a series of clandestine bombings & subsequent gas leaks. So, the Situation in the Baltic Sea is vexed & volatile & this situation continues as the war goes ahead. The combination of geopolitical & economic strategies with an enduring domestic commitment to a dynamic society powered the US in the maritime system in last almost 75 years & especially after the end of cold-war & collapse of USSR (25).

So in the end it is arguably very true that the World Oceans are very important for the world trade to be continued, as these Oceans are under serious threats due to global power competition so it is necessary to have a peace all around the planet so that these trade arteries could be kept free & easy accessible for global trade.

3. The Oceans are Vital to Modern Communication

The oceans are vital to modern communication & due to this modern communication the World has become global village. The 21st century is the century of advanced & cutting-edge technology in every field of life & all this has been possible to the accessibility of advanced communications. As our earth has been divided into seven different continents surrounded by vast oceans, so to connect all the continents, modern communication lines have been playing a very substantial role.

Thousands of miles of Fiber optic cable lying at the bottom of the world's oceans carry more than 95 % of the world data from phone calls to emails to encrypted military secrets (26). Now presently this area of activity has also been under the shadow of revelry between USA & China. The race is continued over who controls the flow of big data provided through undersea cables, has now become a weapon of war in this new emerging cold war between the two technology giants of the globe. Resultantly subsea cables, which control the world data, are now central to the US- China Tec war (27)(28).

Although US dominated in undersea cable lying business since its start yet with the passage of time countries like France , which is a strong member of EU & NATO has also been moving forward aggressively in this field & there has been seen huge involvement of the French companies in undersea cable beneath the Atlantic to connect the thirty African countries. Despite the growing global competition in undersea global network system, France is in a very commanding position providing swift internet facilities through its owned cable network to most of the African nations (29).

On the other hand, US by going further advance in this filed has started lying \$ 600 m worth undersea cable from Singapore to France named as South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe 6, or in short “**Sea MeWe-6**” which will transport data from Asia to Europe via Africa & Middle-East at super-fast speed over 12000 miles of fiber running along the

seafloor. As this cable slated to be finished in 2025, already put both US & China in a confrontation position & there is an ongoing tussle between the two competitors, as Beijing consider despite low bid from Chinese state owned company HMN Tech, the contract was awarded to a comparatively high bid US based Subcon (30).

Though the global internet is powered by vast undersea cables, these cables are vulnerable too, as it has been observed numerous occasions that these undersea cables were damaged partly through both conscious & unconscious efforts. This may be the bitter outcome of global rivalry for effective control over the world oceans. To control the Oceans & these vast communication cables, it is necessary for the global competitors to have well-built control over littoral countries. Moreover, to avoid any kind of disturbance a strong and continued surveillance system is also very necessary & to keep the safety of these communication lines in checked every great power to have a very strong and swift navel activities & regional Naval bases across the world oceans. At this point, certainly, US is very much dominant as it has 11 Aircraft carriers in the form of its blue water Navy & around 750 established Naval bases around the globe. These gigantic war ships and naval facilities not only safeguard the geopolitical, geoeconomic but also protect its very important communicational interests. Let's see what happened in the future & what impacts entire world have to face due to this revelry which unfortunately & understandingly turned into awful antagonism (31).

4. Oceans Play a Central Role in the Realities of Energy

Due to the massive industrialization globally, especially in the West made it evident to carry the out-comes of this economic boom to the other parts of this Planet, there emerged a great need of energy worldwide. To meet this challenge heavy investments were made to explore the hidden wealth beneath the mighty oceans, as most of these Oceans are very much abundant with the huge deposits of hydrocarbons. Since 2010, more than half of the volume of energy discovered globally has been found offshores. Moreover in 2018 there were fifty-five such discoveries representing 70 % of the volumes of liquids & gas discovered. And the International Energy Agency predicts a rise of 24,720 billion cubic feet of offshore gas production by 2040 (1).

AS Oceans play a leading role in the realities of energy & there are two dimensions of their leading role:

1. Energy resources.
2. Routes for the supply of energy.

As far as energy resources are concerned the Arctic Ocean region has become most generous in this facet. As this ocean spends part of the year under a thick blanket of sheet-ice impenetrable by all but the staunchest icebreakers. But now due to the swear effects of Climate Change, opening of the Arctic Sea to the Europe, there has been providing more & more

opportunities for the exploration of oil & Gas in the Norwegian & Barents Sea. The Arctic is one of the last frontiers still free from full-on exploration of its resources by humanity (32). But as the exploration started there emerged a discontentment's contention from all ravaging concerned regional players as well as global powers like China.

The Arctic region is increasingly attracting the attention of not only the territorial states but also of the world's great powers, due to its massive unexploited resources potential. According to the US geological Survey "the last pantry" of earth contains 30 % of World's natural gas resources, 13 % of oil & 9 % of coal as well as significant amount of metals (Uranium, Copper, titanium, gold, diamond & graphite) (21). But as the situation is becoming favorable to all kind of activities in the Arctic, there emerged a rivalry between the main countries of this region on the issue of its land territory especially between the US and the Russians. According to the UN convention of law of the Sea (UNCLOS), that anything beyond the continental shelf of a country is open & cannot be exploited and means in theory, that much of the Arctic ocean will remain out of bounds & unclaimed (32).

Although many regional disputes were settled through the 1996's established the Arctic Council (Comprising with 8 permanent members with some key world players like China, India & Japan) being its observers but still there have been many issues on the territorial boundaries of this Arctic region. Both Moscow (being the regional player) & China have been aligning themselves against the West, in this region & Mr. Putin recently declared that his country will be pleased to encourage China to use the massive advantage of the expansion of arctic ocean. Moreover, the undefined boundaries of the arctic region have also made the regional scenario raged.

As far as the important sea routes for the supply of this massive energy is concerned, most of the oceans are important but some of them are not only the most important but also are inevitable for the global supply chain of hydrocarbons. 45 % of World oil & 60 % of World's natural gas has been found in Russia & the Middle East situated on the shores of the Black Sea, Red Sea which are connected through Mediterranean Sea & the Suez Canal. Mediterranean holds an important position as it is connected with three-sided, one with via Bosphorus to Black sea, secondly via Suez with Red Sea & thirdly with Mighty Atlantic through Strait of Gibraltar, while Suez Canal which was once called the Swing-door of the British Empire has now become the front door of China, Russia & India.

As far as China is concerned, due to its massive industrialization, it needs more & more energy to satisfy its booming economy without any obstacle. So, Beijing by using its sharp diplomacy & massive financial investment already challenged the commanding position of US maintained through deep & longstanding ethnic conflicts between Iran & other Arab States. This region is significant as it has been blessed with many critical chokepoints, like Strait of Hormuz & Bab al-Mandab. As far as the importance of Hormuz is concerned, an old saying went, **"if the World were an egg, Hormuz was its yolk"** (17).

So every great power is very much interested in having effective control over the region. Moreover, an average, 18.5 million barrels of oil pass through the 48 km wide strait of Hormuz, while an estimated 4.8 million barrel traverse the 30 km wide Bab al Mandab. So these two chokepoints combines account for an estimated of 35 % the Worlds seaborne trade of oils & other liquids (33). From April to July 2023, strait of Hormuz remained presented a situation like a tug of war between US & Iran, as US Navy prevented its oil tankers seized by the Iranian forces near the Gulf of Oman. US recriminates that this Iranian action was against the international law of Seas, as it came-off in the international waters. This action of Iran may be over the benediction of the Beijing, as in the mid of 2023, China brokered Tehran Riyadh diplomatic rapprochement. I thought that through these incidents, Beijing anonymously threatening to the US that if US will pose any threat to smooth Chinese oil supply in the Indian Ocean, US must be in hot waters for its energy supply from the Middle East. So there has been a proxy war continued to control the Indian Ocean region (33).

So in the meanwhile XI **Jinping** by using first the forum of GCC-China Summit & later China-Arab Leagues strategically important shipping off route of the world (separating the nations of the UAE & Iran) has been remain successful to normalize the situation to a satisfactory level by keeping Beijing's core interests in checked. This route also separates Persian Gulf & the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea onwards to Indian Ocean, meaning scrupulously stifling to the Washington. After sailing through this highly vulnerable corridor, Chinese vessels carrying the massive deposits of hydrocarbon, cool but with the abundant of whirlpools encircling the Indian Ocean. More than 85% of the oil & petroleum products bound for China cross the Indian Ocean& pass through the strait of Malacca to the South China Sea (34). As the competition between India & China suggests that the Indian Ocean will be the epicenter of global disputes in the 21st century.

Here Chinese played a master stroke by signing the CPEC with Pakistan in 2015 (Unfortunately which is still under the shadows of uncertainty due to some mysterious reasons) for the safe passage of its mighty energy supply through Gwadar Sea Port & onward transmission via robust road & Rail network constructed under CPEC to the western Chinese Xinjiang region, bypassing the troubled area of Indian Ocean & very important but wonkiest Straits of Malacca (35).

On the Indian Ocean, Iran's Chahbahar Sea Port is another option for Beijing alternative to Gwadar for its massive oil & other supplies from the Middle East. For this purpose, the peace of Afghanistan in the form of a stable govt installed at Kabul is very much necessary for the Beijing, but there is a huge uncertainty there in Kabul, so Beijing is in a state of disarray either to stay focused on its massive 62 B \$ CPEC, by pressurizing Islamabad for early completion of the CPEC or to open the channel of Chahbahar despite high security risks via Afghanistan. Although Chinese have not been able to get favorable outcomes in above mentioned both the routes but Chinese efforts beard fruit in the form of melting of ice & rapidly opening of the Arctic Ocean for its energy supplies especially from the Moscow.

Let us see what happens in the coming future on the chessboard of the globe, but one thing is evident, this ongoing scenario has put this area of South-Asia into a flashpoint for great power competition.

5. Critical role of Oceans to our Weather or Global fight over Climate Change

The Ocean's tight linkage with the atmosphere makes understanding its behavior vital for forecasting weather and climate conditions⁴⁴. So Oceans plays a critical role in shaping of our climate & weather patterns, as climate change has become one of the most prominent rather threatening concern for the global world, so oceans which have not only directly affect the climate change but also vice-versa, Oceans too are very much adversely effected with severe climate change of the planet. Moreover Oceans are vital service producers as they absorb Carbon, produced Oxygen & stored massive amount of heat omitted by the Sun. Oceans absorb about 30 % of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, keeps the atmosphere in check by producing 50 to 80 % Oxygen (Which is mandatory for living organisms in this planet) & they are the largest solar heat absorber on earth, so oceans play a very critical role in stabilizing & regulating the climate System (36).

Further the oceans not only store solar radiation but also distribute this massive solar heat around the globe through the process of evaporation which is very much important for the regularity of our climate system. By regulating global weather, Oceans also play a key role in global rain distribution, occurrence of large and small both types of hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons & tsunamis, especially in the coastal areas. In 2004 “**boxing day**” tsunami which ripped through an undersea fault in Indian Ocean propelling a massive column of water towards the shores of regional countries especially on the northern tip of Sumatra by producing massive destruction (37).

In 2011 another undersea megathrust earthquake in the Pacific Ocean smashed the coastal cities of Japan very badly. This is because the dynamics of the different ocean rain Systems have been changing causing different effects in different continents. The prime example of this change can be observed in the two big rain patterns of Pacific i-e AI Nino & La Nino. These two oceans rain systems control the weather patterns both in Atlantic & the Pacific covering a large area, from United States to Northern Sahara. Moreover, in mid of June 2023 a tropical cyclone named “**BiparJoy**” which emerged in Arabian sea very loudly, stroked to the port of Karachi Pakistan & the Indian Gujrat but fortunately passed away only by pouring heavy rains in these coastal areas. So, Oceans are a big source of different rain cycles established throughout the world. Oceans also play a pivotal role in human ecology as a critical stabilizer of the global climate. In the most recent, a divesting tropical cyclone named as “**Helene**” massively hit the 10 Southeastern states of the U.S especially the in Florida in the last year's September, leaving colossal infrastructural destruction and billions of \$ financial loses with millions of victims.

Outside of Earth's equatorial areas weather patterns are driven largely by Ocean Currents, as these ocean currents, by acting like a conveyor belt transport warm water &

precipitation from the equator to the poles & icy water from the poles back to tropics. Ocean currents regulate global climate & without these oceans currents, the regional temperature would be more extreme-super hot at the equator & frigid towards the poles (38). So, Oceans play a decisive role in the maintaining of temperature on earth. Without these oceans, earth's temperature would have risen 36 c (96.8 F) means no life on this planet (39).

As mentioned earlier in this article, almost 90 % of World trade has been done via these mammoth water channels groaning on large ships & by doing so 2.9 % of the total greenhouse gases emission is represented by this shipping. While the global trade forecast triples by 2050 the amount of this share of greenhouse gases will also be increased simultaneously, causing more danger to the climate of the earth. As marine trade is evident, it is necessary to regulate this trade and to stop oceans contamination.

Oceans are very much abundant with natural resources with Fossil Fuels in the form of crude oil & natural gas. According to the U.S Metrological Survey department the World Oceans have estimated potential resources of 2272 Billon barrels of crude oil & 131 Billion cm^2 of Natural gas⁴⁸. To cope with the ever growing need of the World, massive exploration of oil & gas have been underway & due to this massive exploration, the climate of the earth have to face serious adverse consequences. Since 2010, more than half of the volume of the energy discovered globally has been found offshore, mostly in Arctic Ocean circle, North Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Mexico & the Caspian Sea. These are the statistics of discovered natural resources in the oceans but there is a huge amount of undiscovered but estimated deposit of Natural resources are present under the different seabed's (40).

The Single Arctic Ocean circle may contain 160 billion barrels of oil & 30 % of the planets undiscovered natural gas(37). As the ice of the Arctic has been melting rapidly due to global rise in temperature, it means easier drilling in this circle, which proved to be havoc for the ongoing global fight against climate change. Organizations like Greenpeace, which have been actively working for the protection of the global environment, showed their great concern of regional exploration. As one of the important causes of climate change is the reckless use of these fossil-fuels to produce electricity. So in the recent past the concept of renewable energy have been floated and immensely advertised throughout the globe. Wind energy, which is also important source of renewable energy has also been produced mostly in coastal areas due to swift and continuous Ocean winds. So, oceans winds contribute a lot in the production of wind energy which is one of the alternatives to the energy produced by the Fossil fuels. In short Oceans play a key role in regulating the world's climate system or fight against the very alarming climate change issue globally (41).

Conclusion

To conclude , we can say that this article sought to provide an overview of how dominance in Sea-Power played a substantial role in US being the hegemonic super power of this planet at the end of WW-II & especially after the demise of Mighty U.S.S.R with end of

prolonged Cold War. Due to this Oceans dominance, US came to have lion's share of all kinds of economic benefits & also remained all-powerful to maintain uni-polar World order. Still the United States has been the main and the largest great power of the Oceans & this situation May be continued for a decade or so, but its maritime dominance is being challenged by the intensification of the swiftly strengthening China & promptly fading US as economic World's totalitarian rule.

Icing on the cake for China, mysteriously prolonged Russo- Ukrainian & demonized Gaza War (recently forced but shameful cease fire accepts by the Hamas) provided the Red-dragon to capitalize the situation in its favor from all sides by indulging wobbly US's sole hegemony into a question mark. Moreover, these two unproductive but heavily invested warfare is have become the cult-throats of the US. What comes next in the context, who will rule the world will decide how Mr. Trump will react to the Chinese political ploys & how Beijing remained successful by keeping the higgled US away from the pragmatic contemporary world. In the end, to sum up the article, I am very much compelled to agree to the great Alfred Mahan's divine conviction that "Whoever rules the waves, rules the World".

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