China's Maritime Security Policy in the Indian Ocean: Assessment and Implication for Korea

Min-su Kim[*] and Hae-jin Park[**]

ABSTRACT

China became the second largest economic power. But the gigantic growth of China has triggered another concern that it will project its influence around the Oceans in order to have maritime hegemony. Actually, China recently provoked conflicts with the Japan, Philippines, Vietnam as well as the U.S in South and East China Sea. However, it would be premature to decide that Chinese maritime security policy is quite offensive for securing maritime hegemony. This is because maritime environment in the Indian Ocean is quite different from that of the Pacific Ocean. First, in the Indian Ocean, there is no dominant maritime power, unlike in the Pacific Ocean where bilateral military alliances led by the U.S are playing a key role in maritime status quo. Second, there is much room for cooperation among nations because non-traditional security issues such as piracy, armed robbery against ships and illegal transportation of WMD cannot be tackled by one or some nations. Third, Africa becomes an attractive region to China for its national resources. Against this backdrop, China is pursuing 'tailored strategy' by becoming 'multilateral' and 'cooperative' in the Indian Ocean, while staying 'unilateral' and 'conflicting' in the Pacific Ocean. For example, China is trying to make a positive contribution to peacekeeping, disaster relief and count-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean.

Considering this, Korea should prepare multi-leveled maritime policy. At a bilateral level, Korea should consolidate military alliances with the U.S and Japan. At a multilateral level, it needs cooperation among nations to fight against non-traditional security threats like piracy. Finally, at a unilateral level,

* Corresponding author, Senior Researcher, Korea Maritime Institute, Seoul, Korea. E-mail: guan72@kmi.re.kr, Tel: +82-2-2105-2951
** Second Secretary, Regional Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Seoul, Korea

it should strengthen capability of navy forces by equipping with modernized equipment with cutting-edge technologies.

Key words: maritime security, SLOC, piracy, Law of the Sea Convention, WMD

1. Introduction

China passed Japan to become the world's second-largest economy behind the United States in the second quarter of 2010.[1] This is not surprising because the international community has already predicted China would become one of the most powerful 'economic giant'. However, around the time of the news release, maritime environment surrounding China has become worse and raised concerns. First of all, China planted the national flag deep beneath the South China Sea, where Beijing has tussled with Southeast Asian nations over territorial disputes.[2] Also, on Aug 16, the United States Department of Defense issued its annual report on China's military power. It warned that China's military development will affect the balance, security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and this has evoked protests from Beijing. To make matters worse, China-Japan's deep-rooted conflict over territorial claims on the Senkakus or Diaoyu islands has recently hotly reignited. Tensions arose from collisions between a Chinese fishing boat and two Japanese coast guard ships near islands in the East China Sea on 7 Sep 2010.

This consecutive incidents show that global maritime powerhouses such as the U.S and Japan are worrying that China will flex its muscles more directly in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, they are also trying to get their bilateral military alliance more tightly tied. However, this movement can stimulate China and escalate military tensions in the region. This confrontation seems as a kind of vestige of Cold-War. However, this can put a stress on the negative evaluation of Chinese navy missions, apart from its positive contribution to peacekeeping, disaster relief and count-piracy operations around the world. So I think that it is better to analyze China's maritime strategy from the broader perspective. This is why I am focusing on the Chinese maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean.

Against this backdrop, China's maritime security strategy in Indian Ocean in its history will be looked into. Then I will shed light on strategic importance of maritime security in Indian Ocean for China. Also, comparing with that in the Asia-Pacific region, China's maritime security policy in Indian Ocean will be analyzed at three dimensions; diplomatic, political/military and economic ones. Finally, based on the analysis, I will issue some suggestions for Korean maritime security policy.

---

1. China Passes Japan as Second-Largest Economy. *The New York Times* (2010.8.15).
2. The South China Sea covers an area of more than 648,000sq miles (1.7 million sq km) with more than 200 mostly uninhabitable small islands, rocks and reefs. ABS-CBN News(2010.8.26), 'China plants flag in South China Sea amid Disputes'.

2. History of Chinese Maritime policy

China's interest in ocean has evolved with the changing times. During the past, some of China's rulers have realized maritime potential, while others have knowingly refused to do so. It has often been pointed out that the Chinese navy during the year 1000-1500 has been almost certainly the world's largest and technologically most advanced maritime force. Zheng He's voyage in Ming Dynasty from 1405 to 1433 was a notable example of China's pursuit of ocean interests.[3] Yet this great voyage was China's sole effort to construct a large, oceangoing fleet from the early fifteenth century through the early twenty-first century, underscoring dynastic China's preoccupation with its continental frontiers.[4]

During the era of 'Cold War', China has focused on consolidating sovereignty over disputed territory and strengthening military security in maritime area, since the 1950s when Mao stated that China should develop a strong fleet. However, despite the recognition of increasing importance of fostering naval force, the lack of resources and time has led China's navy fleet to remain oriented toward coastal defense against neighboring states including Taiwan. In 1979, however, Deng Xiaoping delivered an important speech encouraging to develop a powerful navy and in 1985 he reiterated this point by calling for navy with 'real fighting capacity'(Thomas, 2002). This perception has changed China's stance. China started to move toward Oceans beyond coastal region and began to prepare for competition with other maritime powers.

Since the end of the Cold War, China's interests in oceans have been intensified and diversified. For its maritime national security, China has pursued 'blue water' maritime strategy which can be quickly available and actively operational in the Pacific and Indian Ocean, in order to become a strong maritime power. To realize this goal, China has made substantial changes since 1980s in its maritime strategy, training methods and technical equipments.[5] China started to enhance its maritime security in the context of international strategy.

Meanwhile, with the advent of the 'Post-Cold War' era, China began to see ocean from the globalized perspective. There are mainly two reasons. One is internal driving force. For its economic growth, China needs to secure more marine resources. Recently, the land-based resources are running out, thus the global interest is shifting to development

3. The Voyage has proclaimed the virtue and majesty of his emperor wherever he went and numerous foreign kings offer submission to China (Thomas M. Kane (2002) *Chinese Grand Strategy and Maritime Power*, Frank Cass Publishers).
4. Robert, S. Ross (2009) China's Naval Nationalism: Source, prospects and the U.S Response. *International Security*, Vol 34 No. 2, pp.55-56.
5. Yihong Zhang (2002) The Chinese Navy Heading toward Twenty First Century. *Maritime Strategies in Asia*. White Lotus press.

of ocean-based resources for the sustainable supply. In addition, Law of the Sea Convention, concluded in 1982 and took effect in 1994, has guaranteed coastal states for their sovereign right over marine resources in EEZ[6] and Continental Shelf. Also, as marine technologies for oil drilling and gas exploitation advanced, marine resource has become a more attractive alternative for economic growth engine to China.

The other is external driving force. Recently, maritime security environment has changed for non-traditional security reasons. Piracy issue in Gulf of Aden as well as in Malacca Strait becomes a threat to international community. Others such as unlawful acts against the safety of navigation, armed robbery against ships, illegal transportation of WMD are also threatening maritime security. This background has brought China to come on the international stage as one of major maritime actors to deal with non-traditional maritime security issues. Of course, China's international effort seems to be strategic approach because China recognizes that it can't cope with piracy and terrorism alone for protection of sea lane of communication for its transportation of resources.

3. Maritime Security Environment in the Indian Ocean and China's Interests

In the era of the post-Cold War, the scope of issues of maritime security in the Indian Ocean persists with continued assortment of traditional inter-state (or bilateral) competitive security and the non-traditional international issues of cooperative security. In particular, asymmetric challenges such as maritime terrorism, piracy, shipping of WMD are on the rise. In the case of piracy, out of total 293 piracy accidents that happened in 2007, 277 cases(Africa-189, Indian Sub-Continent-23, South East Asia-65) took place in or around Indian Ocean, while Americas has 14, Far East Region has nothing and rest of the world has just 2. This amounts to 94.5% of total accidents (see Figure 1). These challenges are essentially part military, part economic and part human welfare and leave much room for maritime security cooperation.

---

6. According to UNCLOS, coastal states can declare EEZ(exclusive economic zone), which shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured(Art. 57). In EEZ, the coastal state has 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 the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds (Art. 56).
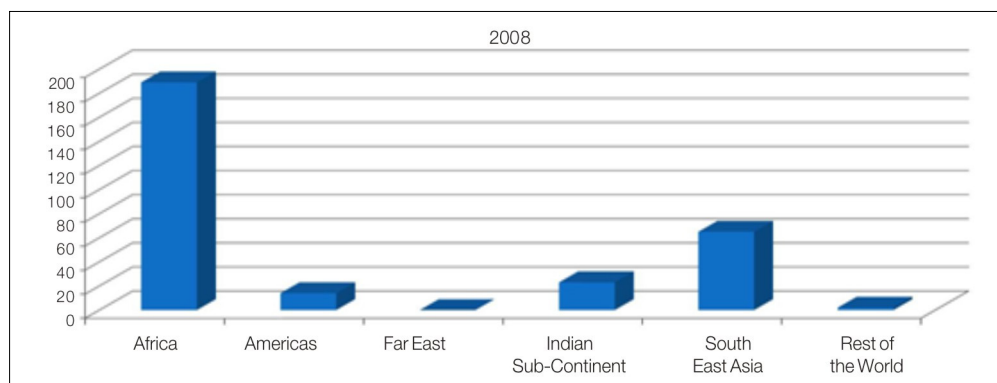
Figure 1. The Number of Piracy Accident in 2008

In addition, most of the states of the Indian Ocean as well as external actors such as China and the United States are characterized by a mix of maritime security concerns and motives.[7] However, there is no dominant maritime force in the Indian Ocean comparable to the U.S.-Japan alliance in the Pacific Ocean. In this sense, the Indian Ocean has more 'anarchic' feature than the Pacific Ocean. Therefore it is necessary to seek cooperation between states for the enhancement of maritime security, the effective law enforcement, and the maintenance of maritime order against challenges in the maritime sphere. Of course, there are several maritime security regimes in the Indian Ocean, although they are not enough to control the Indian Ocean effectively. For example, the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)[8] was formed in March 5, 1997, in Mauritius. The mandate of this international body of littoral states was to boost economic cooperation amongst its member states. Meanwhile, Australia's efforts to introduce a security agenda have not been successful; indeed, the organization has ignored issues of maritime cooperation. The charter of the association does not even mention the issue, and only one of the projects of the works program examines the subject of development, upgrading and management of ports.[9] Also, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Training and Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC)[10], which was launched in 1997 and

---

7. Donald L. Berlin (2008) *The Evolving Trends in Maritime Security, Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Regions; Critical Issues in Debate*, pp.29-30, Center for Security Analysis.

8. There are 19 full members, which are littoral states such as Australia, India, South Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Mauritius etc. and 5 dialogue partners, which consist of China, Egypt, France, Japan, United Kingdom. The U.S doesn't join in IOR-ARC (Wikipedia Dictionary, As of 5 June 2010).

9. Cdr. P K Ghosh (2004) Maritime Security Challenges in South Asia and the Indian Ocean: Response Strategies, A paper prepared for the Center for Strategic and International Studies – American-Pacific Sea lanes Security Institute conference on Maritime Security in Asia, Honolulu, Hawaii.

10. Aims and purposes of BIST-EC/BIMST-EC are to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development, accelerate social progress in the sub-region, promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest, etc. See details at http://www.bimstec.org

Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC)[11] devoted a limited amount of attention to marine and coastal issues and are ill-equipped to deal with newly-emerging maritime security threats.

The post-Cold War era has also heralded a strategic shift in thought for maritime policy from the economic perspectives. Globalization dominates strategic considerations. This has led to enhanced maritime security concerns, since most regional trade is sea-borne. However, the Indian Ocean is home to many choke points, such as the Straits of Hormuz, Gulf of Aden, Straits of Malacca, Lombok and the Sunda Straits. Any disruption in traffic flow through these points can have disastrous consequences. The disruption of energy flows in particular would be a grave security concern for littoral states, as the majority of their energy lifelines are sea-based. Since energy is critical in influencing the geo-political strategies of a nation, any turbulence in its supply has serious security consequences (Ghosh,
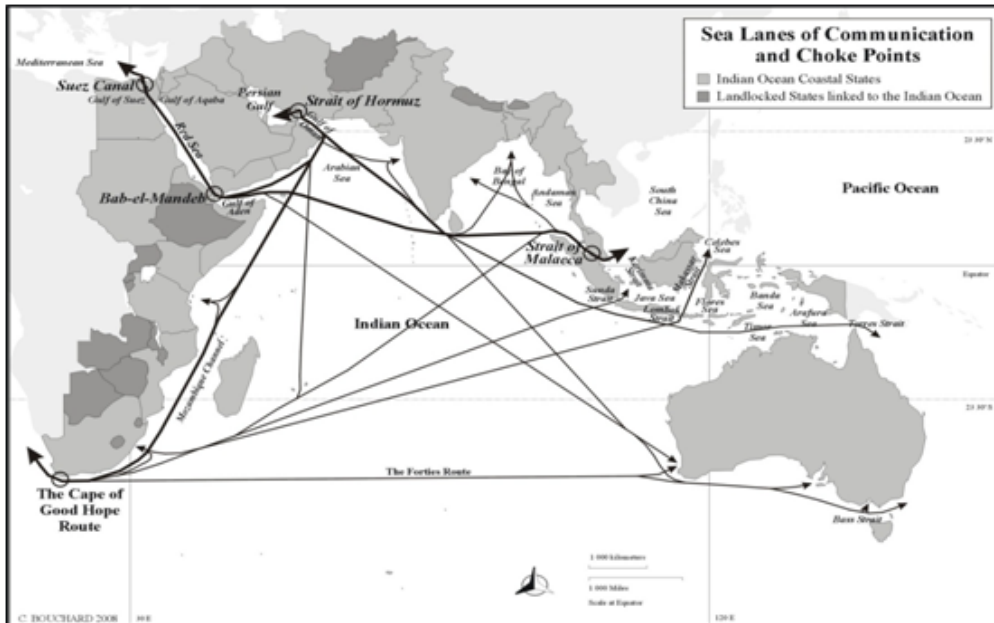
Source: Sanjay Chaturvedi (2009) A presentation on International Conference on Piracy and Crime at Sea, Kuala Lumpur, 18-19 May

Figure 2. SLOC and Choke Points in Indian Ocean

---

11. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been in existence since 1980, when it was formed as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled States in Southern Africa known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), with the main aim of coordinating development projects in order to lessen economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. The founding Member States are: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. See details at http://www.sadc.int/

2004). Given the spiraling demand for energy from India, China and Japan, it is inevitable that these countries are sensitive to the security of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and choke points of the region.[12]

Also, as climate change has increasingly affected marine environment, marine disasters such as tsunami can be a newly emerging threat on maritime security in the Indian Ocean. In order to response tsunami, navy coalitions led by the U.S have played a key role at a bilateral and multilateral level. For example, U.S navy and Japan's Self-Defense Force(SDF) have worked together on disaster relief operations following the December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean. Also, talk of a quadrilateral group — the United States, Japan, Australia, and India — has emerged. Advocates for expanding quadrilateral cooperation have pointed to the "Regional Core Group" that formed in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.[13] Also, The United States and the ASEAN launched the U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership Initiative in November 2005 to foster cooperation. One of the key components of the Enhanced Partnership is about political and security cooperation, and its initial projects have included post-tsunami assistance.[14]

Against this backdrop, China has growing interests in the Indian Ocean and seeks strategic influence due to the following reasons. First of all, there is increasing burden from the existence of Indian Navy (IN). Although the Indian Navy is medium-size blue-water force and the fourth largest in Asia (after Russia, China and Japan)[15], its presence in the Indian Ocean has seemed as a block to China's advance toward the Indian Ocean. As has been the case with virtually all great powers, India which has consolidated power in its own region would be tempted to exercise power farther (Berlin, 2008). Under these circumstances, China has interests in preventing India from enlarging the Indian security perimeter and achieving a position of influence in the Indian Ocean region overall.

Also, as China's economy is remarkably growing, Africa becomes more attractive region to China for its potential for natural resources. China's development activities for offshore oil and gas resources are facing increasing blockage from neighboring countries. For example, in South China Sea, it confronts history old territorial disputes with Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia. In the Yellow Sea (East China Sea), China, Japan and Korea have not reached a 'maritime boundary agreement' to draw EEZs and Continental Shelf lines. In addition, China's expansive strategy into overseas oil and gas field in the Pacific Ocean has been blocked by Japan's extension movement backed up by the

---

12. Security of transport of oil and gas has become a growing element of energy security. For sea lanes, various choke points around the world are seen as vulnerable-/some 40 percent of all seaborne oil goes through the Hormuz Strait and almost 40 percent goes through the Malacca Straits (Harris, Stuart (2004) Global and regional orders and the changing geopolitics of energy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, p.170).
13. Emma Chanlett-Avery and Bruce Vaughn (2008) Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. *CRS Report*.
14. Bruce Vaughn (2007) U.S. Strategic and Defense Relationships in the Asia-Pacific Region. *CRS Report*.
15. Rahul Roy-Chaudhury (2000) *India's Maritime Security*. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

U.S.-Japan alliance. Faced with eastern boundary conflicts and disputes, China inevitably changed its way toward Indian Ocean, and accordingly, toward Africa for securing natural resources.

Last but not least, one of China's important interests in the Indian Ocean is securing SLOC for energy security. China's oil import dependence has placed energy security issue high on China's foreign security policy agenda. In response, it pursues political relationships with oil and gas-exporting countries in the Middle East and Africa. China has become the largest new investor, trader, buyer and aid donor in African countries. Chinese trade with sub-Saharan Africa is growing at 50 percent a year. Already that trade has jumped in value from $10 billion in 2000 to about $50 billion in 2007. Out of China's roughly $1.5 billion investment in Africa in 2006, about half of it went to resource-rich nations for building infrastructure and for securing resources including oil and gas.[16] And at current levels of consumption, the oil import dependence of China is expected to reach 61 percent by 2010 and 76.9 percent by 2020. For securing transportation security of resources and trade goods, China views SLOCs as its very lifelines. For China, the strategic significance of the Indian Ocean region as a source of energy and as a transit route increases every year(Berlin, 2008). However, China has a strong fear of a blockage of the Hormuz, Gulf of Aden or Malacca Straits by pirates and terrorists. It wants to reduce its vulnerability to sea lane threats.[17]

4. China's Practices for Maritime Security in Indian Ocean: comparative approach with Pacific Ocean

China is facing the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean seaward. As seen above, although China used its maritime potential only for coastal security before the advent of post Cold-War era, it has pursued 'blue water' maritime strategy almost for two decades. However, its eminent navy presence in the Oceans has often been regarded as a threat to neighboring adversaries such as India, the U.S and its military alliances. This means there is a limit to pursue 'hard sea power' and it can bring 'maritime security dilemma', under which arms race in navy force among nations can be accelerated. This situation necessitates a consideration of the pursuit of 'soft sea power' for China. Soft power policy can be a more useful tool for the enhancement of China's maritime influence in maritime security, both in the Pacific Ocean where US-Japan alliance remains strong as a vestige of Cold-War era and in the Indian Ocean where non-traditional threats to maritime security

---

16. Robert I. Rotberg (2008) *China into Africa : Trade, Aid and Influence*. World Peace Foundation.
17. Harris, Stuart (2010) Global and regional orders and the changing geopolitics of energy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, pp.174-175.

has newly emerged.

Based on this assumption, I will assess China's practices in maritime security in the Indian Ocean from the diplomatic, political/military and economic perspectives, in comparison with those in the Pacific Ocean, with a consideration of maritime security environment and Chinese interests in Indian Ocean that I discussed above.

4.1 Diplomatic Perspective

In the Pacific Ocean, US-led sea interdictions have been ongoing in maritime security sector since the outbreak of the 9.11 terrorist attacks of 2001. One of the interdictions is PSI, which is a strategy calls for a comprehensive approach to prevent hostile states and terrorists from obtaining WMD. The U.S has also expanded PSI westward from Pacific Ocean. Possibly related to the PSI are the annual Southeast Asia Co-operation Against Terrorism (SEACAT) organized by the US Navy in the Philippine and the South China Seas. During the 2005 exercise the Indonesian, Philippine, Singaporean and Thai navies conducted visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) exercises on 'rogue ships'. Meanwhile, the US and Singaporean navies launched the first phase of the annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), conducted from June through August 2005 with six Asian nations including, Indonesia for the first time since 2002. For the first time, search and seizure were introduced into the CARAT exercise.[18]

Also, in maritime security sector, U.S has actively promoted a series of voluntary trade programs in order to enhance security of trade into U.S. seaports.[19] The two principal voluntary programs are the Container Security Initiative (CSI) and the Customs-Trade Partnership against Terrorism (C-TPAT). CSI is implemented by entering into bilateral agreements which allowed both nations to send inspectors to each other's ports. The

---

18. Valencia, Mark J. (2005) The proliferation security initiative. *Adelphi series*, pp.25-38.
19. After the 9.11 terrorist attacks in 2001, security assurance across international trading system is becoming a critical factor for international business managers and governments. While the initial concern of crisis management was on vulnerability to the air transportation system, the attention moved to security in the maritime sector and then regarding inland transport. Accordingly, the international organizations and United States have actively developed a number of initiatives focusing on global security issues. Certain international organizations such as International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Customs Organization (WCO), and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) have supported enhancing regulatory coverage of safety and security within the world trading system. In the maritime sector, IMO implemented the new security plans set out in International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which contained detailed security related requirements for governments, port authorities, and shipping companies together with a series of guidelines to meet these requirements. ISPS is one of a number of amendments to the 1974 Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS). WCO also developed a regime in order to enhance the security and facilitation of international trade, which was the WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. And ISO developed the Publicly Available Specification (PAS 28000) for a security management standard to improve the security of supply chains. (Korea Maritime Institute (2008), Study on Establishing Logistics Security System (in Korean)).

inspectors have the authority to inspect containers being shipped by sea. C-TPAT seeks to develop cooperative relationships between the companies in the global supply chain and the U.S. authorities.

In sum, in the Pacific Ocean, there are some security regimes led by the U.S for maritime security: PSI and CSI/C-TPAT. These regimes are the product of cooperation among nations. But the underlying aim is to protect U.S national security from sea-originated threats, rather than to protect international maritime interests.

Environment of marine security in the Indian Ocean is unlike that in the Pacific Ocean. There is the lack of a dominant actor like the U.S and non-traditional threats on maritime security are more prevalent. This environment can give more strategic chance for China to dispel the 'China threat'[20] concern from neighboring states including India. This can lead China's growing initiatives in the Indian Ocean for peaceful purposes and facilitate the regional perceptions that China's intent in the region is benign. Let me introduce a good case. In December 2008, the Chinese cargo ship 'Zhenhua 4' was seized by pirates. Taking this opportunity, China dispatched three warships to Gulf of Aden in Africa.[21] Although China's underlying purpose is to secure sea route for transportation of resources from Africa, it was clearly done as a compliance with Resolutions of United Nations Security Council[22] to cooperate with international community. This Chinese Navy's activity of entering the Indian Ocean for anti-piracy and escort missions can be evaluated as opening a new chapter in the naval history of the nation.[23]

At a bilateral level, China in cooperation with Russia tries to expand its presence in the Gulf of Aden and conducted Blue Peace Shield 2009, a joint exercise involving counter piracy operations (Vijay Sakhuja, 2009). However, at a multilateral level, China seems to be less influential in the Indian Ocean because established multilateral maritime security initiatives are mainly led by India, which is worrying about China's military expansion in Indian Ocean. Among them is the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)[24], which is a brain child of Indian navy and meets every two years. The Second meeting of IONS was held in Dubai from 10-12 May 2010 with 32 littoral nations in the Indian Ocean. Among other security issues concerning the Rim area, this year's meeting largely focused on piracy, smuggling and terrorism affecting the Indian Ocean region(IOR)[25]. This

---

20. Vijay Sakhuja (2009) Maritime Multilateralism: China's Strategy for the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Analysis and Information*, p.12.
21. China to Aid in Fighting Somali Pirates. *The Washington Post* (2008.12.18).
22. For more details, see UNSC S/RES/1816, S/RES/1838, S/RES/1846, S/RES/1851. http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions08.htm
23. Ye Hailin (2009) Safe Seas; As China relies more on the ocean, maritime security becomes a greater concern. *Beijing Review.*
24. IONS is an initiative by 33 Indian Ocean littorals wherein their navies or the principal maritime security agencies discuss issues of maritime security, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster-Relief. For more details, see at http://indiannavy.gov.in/.
25. Joshy M. Paul (2010) Cooperative Security in the Indian Ocean Region: The IONS Way. *RSIS*

clearly shows that IONS is well operated as one of the most effective devices to address non-traditional threats without China.

Nonetheless, in the Indian Ocean, China can choose 'cooperative' and 'multilateral' methods to combat non-traditional threats including piracy. This can be one of the best policies for maritime security on diplomatic perspective, based on the concept that non-military methods, instead of military methods, are fit to tackle non-traditional threats. Of course, there are some issues ahead to tackle, among which are to clear concerns of 'military presence' and to take advantage of established multilateral cooperative body such as IONS.

4.2 Political/Military Perspective

In the Pacific Ocean, the United States has played a pivotal role as a dominant power. It has begun to respond to the shifts and challenges in several ways[26]. It has sought to reinvigorate its bilateral alliances and security ties with regional states such as Australia, Japan, and Singapore; launched an ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership Agreement; reopened military-to-military ties with Indonesia; and raised the profile of the Trilateral Security Dialogue with Japan and Australia. It also has embarked on a major initiative to develop a strategic security relationship with India. Currently, the Pentagon seems to be in front of the rest of the U.S. government in fostering actual multi-national security cooperation among the major democratic states of Asia.[27]

Especially, to U.S. policymakers, the key challenge is to develop a strategic posture in the region that can accommodate China's peaceful economic rise while sending the signal that the United States is not leaving a geopolitical vacuum for China to fill. Developing joint capabilities through enhanced defense partnerships with likeminded states may discourage China from asserting itself in ways that harm U.S. interests (Chanlett-Avery and Vaughn, 2008). Actually, US-led alliance has succeeded in blocking China and China seems to be satisfied with the status quo.

COMMENTARIES.

26. The U.S. hopes that engagement and economic development will lead China to become increasingly democratic and a stakeholder in global economic and political affairs. While the United States is hedging against the possibility that China's rise will be less benign, it welcomes a peaceful and prosperous China. In this context, the U.S. has sought to strengthen existing alliances and develop new strategic and defense relationships in the region while better positioning its regional military capabilities by restructuring and redeploying its forces in the region (Bruce Vaughn, *CRS* (2007)).

27. Kerry Dumbaugh (2008) China-U.S. Relations: Current Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy. *CRS Report.*

Figure 3. U.S Treaty Allies in the Pacific Region

In the Indian Ocean region, China's position has been a little different from that in the Pacific Ocean. China has used 'bilateral relations' with Iran as a regional partner to offset the U.S's influence[28] and 'Sino-Pakistan relations' to counterbalance the influence of India.[29] This policy, however, is also close to 'continental-based' and 'antagonistic' one. Considering the changing maritime security environment in the Indian Ocean, China doesn't need to stick to the 'balancing strategy'. Also, China has no territorial claims and the paramount concern. Animating Chinese interests in the Indian Ocean is energy security, which requires cooperation with other nations. Therefore, for now, soft power can offer China an inexpensive way to project influence into new geographic domains without a need to back up its diplomacy with large military forces. For instance, China doesn't hope to repeat its erraneous blunder of 2004/05, when it remained conspicuously aloof from the tsunami relief effort — allowing India, Japan, and the United States, its chief rivals at sea, to harvest goodwill from their naval diplomacy. Cooperation in the areas such as disaster relief, piracy and counterterrorism could lay the groundwork for a more durable partnership in maritime affairs in Asia, alleviating the concerns about sea-commerce security that could prod China in a more ominous direction.[30]

---

28. International Crisis Group (2010), The Iran Nuclear Issues: The View from Beijing. *Update Briefing.*

29. Bruce Reidel and Pavneet Singh (2010) U.S.-China Relations: Seeking Strategic Convergence in Pakistan. *Foreign Policy At Brookings.*

30. Holmes, James R. and Yoshihara, Toshi (2008) China's Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, pp.390-391.

At a political/military level, there is a need for China to utilize 'soft power' based on cooperation with other nations including India and the U.S with a consideration of maritime environment in the Indian Ocean, even though it may stick to naval presence strategy against military alliances against China's advance toward the Pacific Ocean.

4.3 Economic Perspective

China's seeking and securing national resources are omnidirectional because it doesn't care whether they are in the Pacific Ocean or in the Indian Ocean. If there is a difference to China, developing natural resources in Africa is ongoing (for now), while that in Pacific region is a willing (for the future). Also, threats on SLOC are bigger in the Indian Ocean, mainly due to piracy in Malacca and Gulf of Aden. This shows China's maritime security policy for economic purpose should focus more on the Indian Ocean than on the Pacific Ocean.

However, despite China's high dependence on imported oil from the Indian Ocean region and the strong interest in SLOC security for its seaborne trade, there is a criticism that China has made to date only limited attempts to contribute to regional cooperative efforts in tackling piracy or maritime terrorism threats.[31] This should be changed because the geopolitics of energy security for Indian Ocean energy stakeholders must also involve different forms of regional cooperation with neighboring states as well as a variety of aspects of a resource diplomacy strategy both with near neighbors and especially with distant suppliers.[32]

In short, China can choose maritime security policy for regional and international cooperation, through which the safety of its SLOCs can be ensured. <Table 1> shows SWOT analysis on the opportunity and threat in maritime environment in the Pacific and Indian Ocean for China, and the strength and weakness of China's practices in the Indian Ocean.

Table 1. Maritime Security in Indian Ocean and China's Policy

		Diplomatic Level		Political/Military Level		Economic Level	
		O	T	O	T	O	T
Pacific Ocean	Environment	Anti-Terrorism cooperation Regime(PSI, C-TPAT, CSI)	Westward expansion of military alliances led by the U.S	Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS)	Military Alliances (U.S-Japan, trilateral..)	Natural resources in Pacific Islands	Competition with economic powers for securing resources

31. Rosenberg, David and Chung, Christopher (2008) Maritime Security in the South China Sea: Coordinating Coastal and User State Priorities. *Ocean Development & International Law*, pp.51-68.
32. Sanjay Chaturvedi (2008) Securing Energy Flows: Social Constructions of Indian Ocean-Space, Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Critical Issues in Debate, Center for Security Analysis.

		Diplomatic Level		Political/Military Level		Economic Level	
Indian Ocean	Environment	O	T	O	T	O	T
		Lack of dominant power, prevailing non-traditional threats(pirate, maritime terrorism)	India-led Cooperative Maritime security regime (IONS) Prevailing Distrust on China's military presence	Traditional allies(Iran, Pakistan) Cooperative climate (dispatch of navy for combating piracy)	Increasing U.S navy's activities (tsunami relief activities)	Core Supplier of Natural resource	Threats on SLOC Lots of Choke Points
	China's Practices	S	W	S	W	S	W
		Leading Cooperative bodies with African Countries (FOCAL, NEPAD)	Lack of participation in the cooperative multilateral bodies	Dispatch of PLA to fight piracy, Navy modernization according to Blue water strategy	Lack of cooperative activities with other joint navy activities	Donate enough aids and investment in Indian Ocean countries including Africa	Lack of cooperative policy for secure SLOCs

Note: S(Strength), W(weakness), O(opportunity), T(Threat), PLA(People's Liberation Army)

5. Prospect for Korea's Maritime security policy

At present, China's maritime security policy seems different according to its stage. In the Pacific Ocean, China pursues expanding its maritime prowess with standing against the bilateral U.S-Japan(or trilateral Korea-U.S-Japan). This is often revealed as a challenging and threatening behavior, which causes warlike response from neighboring states spearheaded by the U.S. On the other hand, in the`Indian Ocean, there remains much room for China to pursue strategic harmony with other states including the U.S. China prefers multilateral cooperation to unilateral military operation for its national core interest; securing resources and SLOC.

Considering its practices, China's maritime security policy has meaningful implications for Korea maritime security policy. First, Korea also should establish different maritime security policy according to where it is applied because it also has different national maritime interests in coastal, offshore area and the far oceans. Korea is surrounded by China, Japan, Russia and North Korea. Even in the Post-War period, Korea has been thought of as the last frontline between democracy and communism. In particular, as seen from the sinking of a South Korean Navy warship by strike from North Korean submarine off its western coast, the potential threat from North Korea has kept South Korea still on alert. So in coastal and offshore area, it is a matter of course that the prior national maritime interest is 'national security'. On the other hand, Korea remains flexible in pursuing its maritime interest in the Oceans. Korea has interrelated 'national interest' of securing raw

63

materials, natural resources and their SLOC from pirates rather that 'security' alone. However, although Korea prefers bilateral alliance with the U.S and Japan in Pacific Ocean, it can focus on multilateral cooperative mechanism in Indian Ocean.

Second, Korea should prepare for the possibility of China's pursuit for the global maritime hegemony by breaking balance of power with the U.S and Japan in the Pacific region. If China provokes the U.S and neighboring nations, it can come into conflict or limited warfare, even though the chance is very low. In this case, Korea can be 'chain-ganging'[33] into the conflict or military confrontation according to the 'paradox of alliance'. Also, Korea has issues of maritime delimitation and exploitation of marine resources in East China Sea to be solved with China. Furthermore, if the military conflict between the U.S and China is escalated in South China Sea, it can lead to blockade of SLOC and do detrimental harm to Korean economy. In reality, the U.S navy ship called 'Impeccable' conducted 'scientific surveillance' in the EEZ of China in March last year and it caused strong criticism from Beijing that the U.S. activity in the Chinese EEZ violated its jurisdiction seriously. The U.S also conducted joint navy exercise with Vietnam in South China Sea for the first time in 35 years after the end of Vietnam War. Most of navy experts evaluated that the joint exercise was intended to show the U.S willingness to deter Chinese military expansion in South China Sea. In this regard, I think Korea can play a coordinator's role of preventing conflicts between the U.S and China from escalating into disputes.

Third, Korea should beef up its navy's capability in a modern way. Recently, the average growth of military budget has been over 7% since 2000, which exceeds the global average. In particular, China spent total 85 billion dollar in 2008(17.1 % of annual growth rate), compared with Japan(46 billion dollar, 0.6%) and South Korea(24 billion dollar, 5%).[34] Also, the expenditure for navy forces has mainly been used to secure brand-new ships such as submarines or aircraft carriers and develop cutting-edge technology for surveillance. In order to maintain minimal navy deterrence in East Asia and to expand cooperative navy support in the Oceans including in Indian Ocean, Korea needs to increase its budget for modernized navy forces.

In short, like China, Korea needs to set up balanced maritime security policy considering its national interest in coastal, offshore region and the Oceans. From the point of foreign policy, Korea should prepare for the 'hegemonic dispute' between China and the U.S. Also, Korean navy needs to evolve into modernized forces equipped with high tech equipments.

---

33. 'Chain ganging' is a jargon term in the field of international relations describing the elevated probability for inter-state conflict or conflagration due to several countries having joined together in alliances or coalitions (Wikipedia, as of 17 Sep 2010).
34. Lee Suh-Hang (2009) *Implication for Strengthening of Navy Forces in East Asia*, Institute of Foreign Affairs National Security (in Korean).

6. Conclusion

China is dramatically changing. Economically, China became the second largest economic power and almost all the developing nations want to attract investment from China. Politically, it also became enormously powerful in the international stage. But the gigantic growth of China has triggered another concern that it will project its influence around the Oceans in order to have maritime hegemony. Actually, China recently provoked conflicts with Japan, Philippines, Vietnam as well as the U.S in South and East China Sea. However, it would be premature to conclude that Chinese maritime security policy is quite offensive for securing maritime hegemony because it has made its positive contribution to peacekeeping, disaster relief and count-piracy operations specially in the Indian Ocean.

In the Indian Ocean, there is no dominant maritime power, unlike in the Pacific Ocean where bilateral military alliances led by the U.S are playing a key role in maintaining the maritime status quo. Also, there is much room for cooperation among nations because non-traditional security issues such as piracy, armed robbery against ships and illegal transportation of WMD cannot be tackled by one or some nations. In particular, Africa and Middle East region are strategically important because they are major source of raw materials and natural resources for its economic growth. Thus China's maritime security policy will pursue better ways of multilateral cooperation to secure the resources abroad and their SLOC.

For Korea's sake, multi-leveled maritime policy will be needed. At a bilateral level, Korea should consolidate military alliances with the U.S and Japan. This is very crucial to 'national security' against North Korea's provocation. At a multilateral level, it needs cooperation among nations to fight against non-traditional security threats like piracy, armed robbery., etc. This will be also conducive to secure natural resources abroad and their SLOC. Finally, at a unilateral level, it should strengthen capability of navy forces and play a coordinator's role between the U.S and China in case of their hegemonic dispute.

References

Bruce Reidel and Pavneet Singh (2010) *U.S.-China Relations: Seeking Strategic Convergence in Pakistan*. Foreign Policy At Brookings.

Bruce Vaughn (2007) U.S. Strategic and Defense Relationships in the Asia-Pacific Region. *CRS Report*.

Cdr. P K Ghosh (2004) Maritime Security Challenges in South Asia and the Indian Ocean: Response Strategies, A paper prepared for the Center for Strategic and International Studies – American-Pacific Sea lanes Security Institute conference on Maritime Security in Asia, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Donald L. Berlin (2008) The Evolving Trends in Maritime Security, Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Regions; Critical Issues in Debate. Center for Security Analysis. pp.29-30.

Emma Chanlett-Avery and Bruce Vaughn (2008) Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. *CRS Report*.

Harris, Stuart (2010) Global and Regional Orders and the Changing Geopolitics of Energy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs.*

Holmes, James R. and Yoshihara, Toshi (2008) China's Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Strategic Studies.*

International Crisis Group (2010) The Iran Nuclear Issues: The View from Beijing. *Update Briefing.*

Joshy M. Paul (2010) Cooperative Security in the Indian Ocean Region: The IONS Way', RSIS COMMENTARIES.

Kerry Dumbaugh (2008) China-U.S. Relations: Current Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy. *CRS Report.*

Korea Maritime Institute (2008) *Study on Establishing Logistics Security System* (in Korean)

Lee Suh-Hang (2009) *Implication for Strengthening of Navy Forces in East Asia*. Institute of Foreign Affairs National Security (in Korean).

Rahul Roy-Chaudhury (2000) *India's Maritime Security*. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

Robert I. Rotberg (2008) *China into Africa : Trade, Aid and Influence*. World Peace Foundation.

Robert, S. Ross (2009) China's Naval Nationalism: Source, prospects and the U.S Response. *International Security*, Vol. 34 No. 2.

Rosenberg, David and Chung, Christopher (2008) Maritime Security in the South China Sea: Coordinating Coastal and User State Priorities. *Ocean Development & International Law.*

Sanjay Chaturvedi (2008) Securing Energy Flows: Social Constructions of Indian Ocean-Space, Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Critical Issues in

Debate. Center for Security Analysis.

Thomas M. Kane (2002) *Chinese Grand Strategy and Maritime Power*. Frank Cass Publishers

Valencia, Mark J. (2005) The Proliferation Security Initiative. *Adelphi series.*

Vijay Sakhuja (2009) Maritime Multilateralism: China's Strategy for the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Analysis and Information.*

Ye Hailin (2009) Safe Seas; As China Relies More on the Ocean, Maritime Security Becomes a Greater Concern. *Beijing Review.*

Yihong Zhang (2002) The Chinese Navy Heading toward Twenty First Century. *Maritime Strategies in Asia*. White Lotus press.