Involvement of the United States in the Bay of Bengal: Need for a Strategy of Winning the Battle Without Fighting

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"To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill"
-- Sun Tzu (*Art of War*)[1]

As one of the major wings of the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal possesses tremendous strategic importance in the world geo-economic and geo-political environment. Despite "maritime bonding," countries of this region have unfortunately not seen the emergence of a vibrant trans-oceanic community. This may be rooted in regional countries' wide dissimilarities and divergent interests, which have prompted each country to pursue economic linkages

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with extra regional powers including China. This has inevitably limited the region's collective effort in economic growth. However, in the global competition for dominance, China still focuses on the "near sea"[2]—the South China Sea and Western Pacific. China has rightly seized the opportunity to fill the vacuum and has now ensured the its strong presence in the region, both economically and militarily. China is guided by vigorous bilateral engagements with the smaller littorals of the Bay of Bengal.

Recently, the United States decided to rely on India to contain Chinese influence and dominance in its Asia-Pacific strategic environment, which ultimately impacted the geo-strategic and geo-political scenario in the Bay of Bengal. Such regional dependency in theory looks to be economical and less risky. However, the opposite may prove true, especially due to Chinese interest and strong presence among the Bay of Bengal littorals. Chances of confrontation further increased with the new defense guideline published in January 2012 by the Obama administration.[3] Therefore, the United States, in order to pursue its own interest in the Bay of Bengal, needs to re-assess her present posture. It needs to identify possible avenues to engage in the region not mainly to suppress and/or contend with the Chinese dominance but to develop meaningful, positive partnerships. In the most populous coastal region of the world the gradual increase of cooperative US involvement with the littorals of Bay of Bengal will diminish the increasing Chinese influence in the region. In this case the US needs to consider China a partner, not a competitor. Against this backdrop this paper will first analyze the geo-strategic importance of the Bay of Bengal. It will then scrutinize the Chinese influence in the region in respect to its relations with the littorals and its strategic interests. The Indian response will be discussed, followed by a discussion about the present and future US posture and aspirations with special reference to its recent Asia-Pacific focus. Also, recommendations regarding a US approach that would ensure a prosperous region that co-exists in the littorals with all regional stakeholders will be discussed.

Geo-Strategic Importance – Regional Perspective

The Bay of Bengal is centrally located between the Middle East and the Philippine Sea. It lies at the center of two huge economic blocks, the South Asian Regional Co-operation (SAARC)[45] and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)[67]. It also connects the South East Asian economy to Middle Eastern oil sources. The sub region falls within the calculus of the South Asian security scenario. China's southern landlocked region, major sea ports of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and Strait of Malacca littorals in Malaysia and Indonesia provide access to the Indian Ocean. Most of these countries are rising economically and have strong (although at times volatile) democracies, with the exception of Myanmar.

Within these areas, India plays the most dominant and crucial role in the region. The Bay of Bengal is strategically crucial for India since it naturally extends its sphere of influence to include potential sources of natural resources. The major concern is the outlying islands, namely Andaman and Nicobar and, most importantly, several major ports like Kolkata, Chennai, Vizag along its coast with the Bay of Bengal[8].

The Bay of Bengal is one of the world's sixty-three Large Marine Ecosystems. The littoral countries' populations represent 25 percent of the world's total[9]. Over 400 million of these people live on coastal catchment areas, and these numbers are expected to increase by 20 percent by the year

2015. The Bay of Bengal thus has some of the most densely populated coastlines on earth. Poverty is common and the people living along these coasts rely heavily on the natural resources of the Bay of Bengal and its coastal habitats, particularly fisheries[10]. In addition, the potentiality of oil and gas reserves[11] at various places recently caused tension in the Bay. The Myanmar, India, and Bangladesh coasts in the Bay of Bengal hold unexploited reserves of 100 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF) or approximately 1 percent of the world's total of[12] oil and gas[13] according to official sources, and approximately 200 TCF according to various unofficial sources[14]. In 2008 and 2009, the disputed maritime boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar resulted in military tensions. Although International Tribunal for Law of the Sea (ITOLS) recently gave its verdict for delimitation of the boundary[15], the issue is yet to be completely settled. Bangladesh is also pursuing a settlement with India regarding the boundary through the ITOLS[16] or through arbitration.

Besides geo-political issues, the sub-region's economic handicap has brought enormous challenges. Natural disasters like cyclones, illegal and unregulated fishing, and other living resources have adversely impacted the ecological condition of the region. Research from the "Climate Institute" shows that due to sea level rise, there will be an estimated 50 million environmental refugees by 2050 on the coast of the Bay of Bengal.[17] Illegal trafficking of arms and drugs also present problems for the littorals. Piracy, though presently under control, will likely increase if the littorals fail to pay enough attention due to lack of capacity.[18][19]

The geographical and strategic environment remain tremendous opportunities for global powers like the US to leverage. Each of the smaller littorals offers tremendous economic potential due to untapped natural resources. An open market policy and eagerness towards foreign direct investments will give these smaller littorals the essential support they need to gain economic momentum. Enhancing capacity in the maritime field is one of the courses of action that can be utilized to increase the US involvement in the region.

Chinese Factors in the Bay of Bengal Calculus

Why China is in the Bay of Bengal

With the emergence of China as a global power, the Bay of Bengal is slowly gaining a different momentum. China has yet to achieve the capacity to contest the international maritime order, given the overwhelming US maritime power in the area[20]. If China meets its military potential, the Indian Ocean will feel its presence, as will the Bay of Bengal. The maritime security of the narrow Malacca Strait between Malaysia and Sumatra of Indonesia canalizes China's maneuver towards the Indian Ocean. The Bay of Bengal provides the bridgehead of its westerly thrust[21]. China strives to avoid contention in the Strait of Malacca by directly entering into the Arakan coast of Myanmar by land from the Yunnan province. Access to the energy resources of the Bay of Bengal also interests the Chinese. During the recent standoff between Bangladesh and Myanmar, China played a significant role in defusing tension between the countries. It also played a vital role bringing both parties to the negotiating table. Notably, both countries depend heavily on China for security and economic development[22].

Chinese Alternative Access Strategy

China has already attempted to link Bangladesh (Chittagong) to China (Kunming) through Myanmar[23] after deciding to access the Bay of Bengal through a road link. For China, the "Irrawaddy Corridor"[24] that links Kunming in Yunnan to the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar and Bangladesh offers land-based maritime access that is critical for the development of its western and southern regions. The corridor also gains salience in terms of transporting gas from Myanmar's offshore platforms to Yunnan as well as in overcoming the vulnerability of its shipping in the strategic Southeast Asian choke points.

China - Myanmar Nexus

In return for access provided by Myanmar, China has helped Myanmar to establish some communication facilities on Coco Island in the Arakan coast of Myanmar. Although no major Chinese naval force has called on Coco Island or any large ship facility, Chinese communication facilities, radar station, and personnel in the area concern some in the west. Many observers consider these facilities as Chinese listening posts to observe the naval movements in the Bay of Bengal[25]. Despite recent attempts at political reform, both countries continue infrastructure projects including oil and gas pipelines, mining projects, a hydropower station and aid packages. Among these projects, the pipeline is of critical importance to China for overcoming the vulnerability of its energy supply chains that run across the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca. This 2,800 kilometer-long two-pipeline network (one each for gas and oil) is being built at a cost of US$2.54 billion, of which China has a 50.9 percent stake and the Myanmar government has 49.1 percent[26]. China has invested in 72 projects in Myanmar worth 15.8 billion dollars. The bilateral trade reached 5.3 billion dollars in fiscal year 2010-11 and is expected to exceed 6 billion dollars in fiscal year 2011-12[27]. China supplies a variety of military equipment and developed military infrastructure to build up the Myanmar armed forces, officially known as "Tatmadaw." The Policy Research Group (India Base Research Institution) estimates that China has provided 3 billion dollars to build "Tatmadaw" in recent years[28]. The most worrying link to consider is the suspected Myanmar and North Korea cooperation, particularly in the nuclear domain, that could potentially destabilize the security situation in the Bay of Bengal[29].

China and Other Smaller Countries

Through vigorous bi-lateral engagement with the smaller littorals, China shows firm resolve to guard its maritime dominance in the Bay of Bengal. Senior Chinese leaders have exchanged visits with the smaller littorals of the Bay of Bengal like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in recent years (2009 and 2010). These visits resulted in various economic and military deals[30]. After Sri Lanka defeated the Tamil-insurgency (led by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam--LTTE) in 2008, for which it received significant criticism from the US for human rights violations[3132], it looked to India and China for support. Hambantota in the south is currently being developed as a major city that will have an international airport and a modern deepwater port, which is being built with Chinese assistance. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has become heavily dependent on Chinese military hardwire. Besides helping in infrastructure development, China has pledged to assist Bangladesh in launching a communication satellite[33]. Bangladesh shares barely three hundred miles of coastline that opens to sea-lanes with the rest of the world. Similarly, Sri Lanka and the landlocked countries in the region (Nepal and Bhutan)[34] that also use

the Bay of Bengal, have handicapped Indian dominance by taking proactive strategy to ensure maritime access in the area. Often, countries lean towards China to balance Indian influence. Therefore, latent Sino-Indian contention already exists in the region.

How does India Fit into the Competition?

Sino-Indian factor – Competition and Mistrust

For thousands of years, Indian and Chinese civilizations have been separated not only by the Himalayas and Tibet, but also by the vast and virtually impassable lands that once existed between Bengal and the Yangtze valley. Myanmar and the adjacent highlands have traditionally been a barrier to interaction between South and East Asia. This basic geography that is now being overturned by a series of massive infrastructure projects, new railways, and highways will very soon bring China into greater and more direct contact with the Bay of Bengal than ever.

The Chinese approach of systematically nurturing and promoting diplomatic linkages with the Bay of Bengal littorals provides it with a number of strategic advantages against India. China believes that it will be in a position to link its electronic listening systems at Coco Island in Myanmar and the staging/listening systems in Bangladesh to monitor Indian naval and missile activity**.** Additionally, the prospect of Chinese ships and submarines operating in the North Andaman Sea would have serious repercussions for India's power projection capabilities. This may result in some aggressive counter-maneuvering by both countries' navies in case of a clash of interests. China bases its quest to establish a regional power profile on sustained and dedicated engagements with India's neighbors for access and basing. It has adeptly reinforced its alliances with these countries through politico-military support and challenging India in its backyard. The Chinese understand that they have a peer competitor and a rival who they must contend with to enhance their influence in the Bay in particular and Indian Ocean in General.

Indian Hegemony vs. Chinese Dominance - Dilemma for other countries

India considers the Bay of Bengal as its own lake and a strategic maritime space for its politico-economic initiatives toward the Southeast Asian region. India is well aware of China's growing strategic initiatives in the Bay of Bengal and has taken political and military measures by extensive military buildup and economic engagement in the littorals to counter Chinese influence. These initiatives have so far delivered the desired dividends of maintaining stability. China, though not a trusted friend, avoided directly challenging India's ability in the Bay of Bengal as they have done so in South China Sea. For example, China has never participated in Exercise MILAN, a recurring Indian Navy-organized exercise, which takes place at the strategic location of Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands[35]. Moreover, the greatest challenge for both India and China will be to address the ability of Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka to exercise strategic autonomy, even if it is limited, and thereby minimize the probability that the sub-regions become a source of instability. The smaller littorals fear that such competition will result in conflict rather than prosperity.

Regional Institutions – Failed to provide required impetus

The Bay of Bengal littorals, unlike ASEAN, is yet to achieve any progress towards a solid regional alliance for prosperity and security. Accounting for less than 3% of global trade, it has been overshadowed by a vigorous effort to vitalize the SAARC and is also ill-equipped to handle maritime challenges[36]. SAARC and South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) could also feel pressure from the Pakistan-India rivalry and heavy Indian hegemony. Although tremendous potential exists to generate regional maritime cooperation under the banner of the SAARC, not much had been done so far. M. K. Alam presents the following recommendations:[37]

- To foster maritime co-operation and dialogue among the states of the SAARC and to promote maritime confidence and security building measures;
- To promote adherence to the principles of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, to commence dialogue on the areas of UNCLOS which are either indefinite or not fully accepted by regional nations, and to promote joint hydrographic survey efforts to assist in the observance and implementation of UNCLOS;
- To help safeguard the peaceful merchant shipping of the region and to examine the means for developing procedures to assist in the protection of shipping within the region with increased joint activity in naval control of shipping;
- To create a secure atmosphere for the sustained exploitation of the resources of the sea and to identify regional hydrographic survey and oceanographic priorities and examine ways to conduct joint surveys in those waters with greatest priority;
- To contribute to the preservation of the marine environment and to provide a framework of co-operation for weather prediction; and
- To undertake policy-oriented studies on specific regional maritime security problems and to provide training in relevant aspects of maritime operations to those lacking in certain types of capability or expertise.

An economic community comprised of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar Sri Lanka, and Thailand (BIMST-EC) was launched in June 1997, notably omitting Pakistan. This organization might also fail, but the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BoBLME) is another initiative taken by the littorals to ensure effective utilization of fishery resources in the Bay[38]. No existing regional cooperation initiatives currently address security issues. The countries, however, lined up with regional initiatives like Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)[39] whenever those were formed. While China is more focused on bilateral issues, the U.S. can instigate regional efforts in the form of economic and security issues in the region. However, it has yet become party to any of the above mentioned organization in any capacity excepting limited participation in the SAARC.

U.S. On the Scene

U.S.-India Relations: healing the sore

At the beginning of the Cold War, the US goal attempted "to orient [South Asian] nations toward the United States and the other Western democracies and away from the Soviet Union."[40] However, India's geo-strategic interests and considerations differed from those of the US. The US recently started actively engaging India as a partner to balance China's interests in the region. The deal in July 2005, between then-US President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, lifted a three-decade moratorium on US nuclear trade with India. India's civilian nuclear energy program has been assisted by the billions of dollars it received from the U.S. through multiple agreements[41]. Nonetheless, it is clear that the U.S. has been trying for years to cement its relationship with India via these deals in order to counterbalance the influence of China. Although Pakistan and Afghanistan do not play a role in the dynamics of the Bay of Bengal, both countries' active membership in SAARC enter into the security calculus of the Bay of Bengal. The recent cooling of relations with Pakistan and perceived diplomatic fickleness damages the credibility of the US in the region.

India Card – Friendship of Interests or Trust?

Indian support to US regional interests still remains in question as India tries to become a global power and intends to control the Bay of Bengal through its own agenda. Countering the US and EU economic hegemony[42] and its heavy reliance on Iranian oil[43] makes India a questionable ally of the US in time of real crisis. Indian think tanks understand that India serves as the most available partner in the American strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific region. While the Indian foreign and defense policy accepts any co-operative approach with the US, it would not be comfortable in permitting US military presence on its soil. Comments in the Indian media such as "American dreams are sure to set off significant political resentment as it would offset India's long held tradition of non-alignment"[44] reflect this sentiment.

Where is the Misunderstanding?

Recently, The United States Navy, under PACOM, initiated naval exercises in the region. Exercise MALABAR with India[45] and CARAT in Bangladesh[46] are examples. Such exercises reflect definite military presence and strategic intentions of the US in the region. However, isolated military presence may validate the Chinese warning that fuel the fear of confrontation and strategic thinking in the littorals. The latest visit by Secretary Clinton to Myanmar may show the positive US interest in the region but does not yet prove progress towards an active relationship. In the days leading up to Clinton's visit, China sent its own envoy to Myanmar in the form of Vice President Xi Jinping, who is also vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. Xi emphasized the close relationship between China and Myanmar and the country's commitment to deepening their ties[47]. Discarding Myanmar, Secretary Clinton, in the first week of May 2012, also visited Bangladesh and India where bi-lateral security initiatives have been documented. Still nothing has been done to regenerate regional cooperation.

The politico-economic scenario in the Bay of Bengal region favors China due to its aggressive

efforts in past few decades. Previous discussion indicates smaller littorals depend heavily on China both for development and security. Further, the latest strategic shift by the US towards the Asia-Pacific, mainly to contain China, will likely make the region a place of contention and mistrust. China quickly responded by welcoming economic and trade-related engagements and warned against any military demonstrations[48]. Historically, the US has never had a trusted relationship with the Bay of Bengal littorals. The peoples' impression of the US intentions always remained indifferent. Opposing the Bangladeshi war of liberation in 1971[49] and blaming Sri Lankan efforts in demolishing LTTE infrastructures under the cover of human rights violations[50] have kept countries of the region suspicious about the US intentions. The worst is the Myanmar case, where sanctions have only helped to strengthen US-Myanmar isolation. China has subsequently occupied the vacuums created by US sanctions. For any impoverished country, as association with the world's greatest industrial revolution might prove beneficial. However, unless that association also comes with investment and other economic interaction, the relationship will result in an extreme imbalance.

Confrontation vs. Peace – Double-Edged Sword

China habitually moves cautiously and patiently. It invested generations of hard labor to build and improve the Great Wall to stop invasion from the north. It waited for Hong Kong to return and designed two economies in one country. If history offers any lesson, China will likely take guarded steps in the world arena while it tries to expand its zone of influence. It will soon overtake Japan as number two economy of the world[51]. It may add some prestige but China will still not be yet challenge the US militarily. Maritime order for another quarter of a century will safely remain in the hands of the US and the West. However, India as the strategic partner of America makes the region more volatile. While contending Indian dominance, China will likely entangle US in an unhealthy relation, which may destabilize its littorals and the region.

Both India and China need to have cooperative relations with the US for their own national interest of prosperity. Similarly, the U.S. cannot do without the two major players of the Bay of Bengal. However, the naval arms race in the Bay of Bengal has always puzzled influential circles in the U.S. A paper released on December 11, 2000 by the conservative Heritage Foundation of Washington, DC, which has some influence on the Republican Party ideology, says, "The United States should make clear (to India) that a naval arms race to gain regional control of sea lanes--which could interrupt the free flow of goods through the area--would be in no one's best interests."[52]

What should be our heading?

As the Defense Guideline dictates, "The United States has played a leading role in transforming the international system over the past sixty-five years. Working with like-minded nations, the United States has created a safer, more stable, and more prosperous world for the American people, our allies, and our partners around the globe, than existed prior to World War II"[53]. The same positive attitude needs to continue. It would be naïve to say that either China or India can suppress the other. The United States needs to carefully consider the huge potential of the other littorals of the Bay of Bengal. Access to the potential resources in the Bay of Bengal is a concern that needs cooperation for equitable sharing. Therefore, the United States could be a positive influence to promote regional stability in the Bay of

Bengal. In this regard, the military should play a subdued role, and economy, trade, and diplomacy should play active roles. The U.S. should leverage what Joseph Nye calls "Soft Power"[54] and what Secretary Clinton considers "Smart Power"[55]—the ability to combine the hard power of coercion or payment with the soft power of attraction into a successful strategy. The U.S. - Asia-Pacific strategy in general, and Bay of Bengal, in particular has to reject the over-reliance on hard power and the belief that "democracy, human rights, and civil society are not best promoted with the barrel of a gun"[56].

Towards a Win-Win Situation

Fostering regional cooperation with China and India will be the right choice, especially in the field of maritime security and capacity building. In this regard the objectives of CS 21 (the US 21st century maritime published in 2007) can be taken as a guideline for such an approach: "US maritime forces will be characterized by regionally concentrated, forward deployed task forces with the combat power to limit regional conflict, deter major power war."[57] As long as China feels comfortable operating alongside other major powers towards gaining access to the Indian Ocean through the Bay of Bengal and has a share in exploiting the resources in the Bay, it is less likely it will have urge to be aggressive in ushering conflict into the region. As a starter, Anti-Piracy and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) are the two issues that can be utilized as a start point to effectively muster all stake holders under one regional forum. In the process, the Bay of Bengal's smaller littorals will support major players to facilitate their economic emancipation. The U.S. with its present "liberal internationalist" posture can easily adapt the same to be present in the dynamics of the Bay of Bengal. Through economic cooperation and regional stability, the US, China and India should and would be able to reach a a win-win situation.

Conclusion

The Bay of Bengal region is affected by the strategic calculus of South Asia, South East Asia, and the overall Indian Ocean geo-strategic environment due to its location. The Bay not only has significant economic importance with its vast untapped resources, its shoreline contains the habitat of some of the most populous areas of the world. In addition, the rise of China's economic and military might, Sino-Indian enduring competition for regional dominance, and the difficulty of China to get direct access to the Indian Ocean have increased the potential for instability and contentions in the region. India considers the Bay of Bengal as its own lake and a strategic maritime space for its politico-economic initiatives toward the Southeast Asian region. Absence of extra-regional powers and historical ties with the littorals allured China to fill the vacuum by extensive engagement with other littorals in economic and military field. India is conscious of China's growing strategic initiatives in the Bay of Bengal and has taken politico-military and economic measures to reduce Chinese influence there. China and India are both trying to align the other littorals of the region in their favor by economic support, military buildup, and/or extensive diplomatic efforts. Myanmar is the choice of China in finding access to Bay of Bengal as an alternative route to the Indian Ocean via the Bay of Bengal to avoid the Strait of Malacca.

The United States has always maintained a strong presence in the Asia-Pacific region. It is growing further with the recent affirmation of Asia-Pacific strategic shift. However, access to Bay of Bengal waters was not much in practice by the US strategy. Recently, the U.S. has chosen India as a

partner to contend with China. India's South Asian neighbors look to India and China with one eye on relations with the US with the other. Most of these countries, being placed in a double edged sword, are seeking either to balance a hostile relationship or to hedge against excessive dependency on the US or India. For the U.S., China and India heavily influence security affairs in the Asia-Pacific in general and the Bay of Bengal in particular. China and India are also populous, as are the other Bay of Bengal littorals. China and India also regard their relations with the US as their most important external relationship. Therefore, analysis shows for the U.S., the case of a nuclear India with a hegemonic posture, how much trust can be put solely onto them remains a sore question.

In order to maintain stability and continuous prosperity in the region, including efforts to accrue a satisfying order, the stake holders must work together. To start with, SAARC can be a good forum for maritime cooperation in confidence and capacity-building. The establishment of a center for anti-piracy and HADR under the SAARC umbrella may be considered as a starting point. Otherwise, the same old game is likely to continue, where the US might act as the villain in the region by playing the "India card" vs. the "China card." The other littorals, in such a scenario, will unnecessarily be confused in choosing a side, and the ensuing chaos will raise chances of conflict between them, as happened in many places during cold war (proxy wars). Regional cooperation in all fields of prosperity needs to be exploited to bring all stake holders together to ensure peace in the region. Having great capacity, the U.S. can play the pivotal role in this regard. Otherwise tension, competition, and mistrust will take us back to another Cold War era where this region may become an area of peripheral conflict to lure attention away from the main focus.. Therefore, the US can make an effort to attack the hegemonic strategies in the Bay of Bengal region by creating regional framework where individual dominance will be nullified. This will break any nation's capability to create specific allies by creating cooperation. Still, if competition is not neutralized, the use of force remains as a last resort. Thereby, it will be possible, as Sun Tzu advocates, to win the battle without fighting.

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BIMST-EC	Bangladesh, India, Myanmar Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Co-operation
BoBLME	Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem
BRICS	Brazil Russia India china and South Africa
CS 21	A Co-operative Strategy for 21st Century Navy
HADR	humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
ITOLS	International Tribunal for Law of the Sea
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MILAN	"Hindi Word" meaning to "Meet"
PACOM	Pacific Command
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Agreement
TCF	Trillion Cubic Feet

UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USA	United States of America

[1] Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Translation of Samuel B. Griffith, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 77
[2] Naval War College China Maritime Studies Institute (CSMI) conference, May 10-11, 2011
[3] Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, January 2012, Released by the Department of Defense on January 05, 2012
[4] SAARC was established in 1985 for mainly economic co-operation among the six south Asian countries Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. Afghanistan is later included making the association of eight countries. Although many hoped the forum would be spring board for hugely potential region towards economic emancipation but till date nothing much had happened. Many blame India-Pakistan rivalry for such reason. The forum has tremendous opportunity to co-operate in all fields of prosperity including security. Maritime co-operation within Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea is a great option always remained unexplored. Details can be found in *http://www.saarc-sec.org/*
[5] http://www.saarc-sec.org/
[6] One of the most economically successful forums for regional co-operation in world. Details can be found http://www.aseansec.org/,
[7] http://www.aseansec.org/
[8] Bay of Bengal from Wikipedia (internet) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Bengal
[9] State of World population 2011, report of UNFPA available online at http://foweb.unfpa.org/SWP2011/reports/EN-SWOP2011-FINAL.pdf
[10] Lecture by He Changchui, delivered at workshop organized by FAO at Bangkok on 18 June 2007, accessed through internet on 12 Jan 2012, http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/rap/home/speech
[11] Recent reports suggest that "British Petroleum" (BP) has signed US$7.2 billion contract with Indian company to drill for Oil and Gas in Bay of Bengal. In addition, "ConocoPhillips" of the US is already has signed contract with Bangladesh for exploring deep sea Oil and gas reserve in the Bay of Bengal. Details can be found in The New York times Feb 21, 2011 online at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/business/global/22bp.htmland. Also can be found in U.S. energy firm ConocoPhillips is seeking to expand operations in the Bay of Bengal following a U.N. tribunal border ruling which cleared the way for more offshore oil and gas exploration in the region. http://www.energy-pedia.com/news/bangladesh/new-149849. Details of ConocoPhillips also can be found in various newspaper reports i.e. The Financial Express, April 07, 2012 at www.financialexpress-bd.com/
[12] British company BP and US company ConocoPhillips has invested huge amount of money in these explorations in conjunction with Indian and Bangladeshi companies.
[13] BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2011, accessed online at http://www.bp.com/assets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2011/STAGING/local_assets/pdf/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2011.pdf
[14] Dr Anand Kumar, Bangladesh disputes Myanmar explorations in Bay of Bengal, paper 2931, Nov 21, 2008, Published by South Asian Analysis Group, accessed through online http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers30%5Cpaper2931.html
[15] www.itlos.org accessed on 20 March 2012
[16] Jared Bissinger, The Maritime Boundary Dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar: Motivations, Potential Solutions, and Implications, Asia Policy 10, (July 2010). http://www.nbr.org/publications (accessed on 20 Jan 2012)

[17] The information can be accessed through Climate Institute (a Washington based research institute) website at http://www.climate.org/topics/environmental-security/index.html
[18] http://www.icc-ccs.org/component/flexicontent/85-news/367-global-piracy-decreasing-but-hotspots-remain-deadly accessed on Apr 07, 2012
[19] Details are available in International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting center (IMB PRC) website. The incidents are not as per the definition of piracy outlined by UNCLOS but can be termed as robbery of petty nature. However, such incidents often happen due to lack of surveillance and quick reaction capacity of the littorals including India (though having moderate size Coast Guard).
[20] Chinese General Chen Bingde admitted that China is yet to achieve close capability to the USA, during his visit to the USA in June 2011. Further Details can be found in the Book, "The PLA at Home and Abroad" published by Strategic Studies institute, June 2010. Also the comment of Chinese General can be found in 'Military.com news' at http://www.military.com/news/article/chinese-general-says-his-military-is-no-match-for-us.html
[21] The New Nation, (News Paper of Bangladesh), Dec 19, 2009
[22] Ibid.
[23] Indo-Myanmar news, June 17 2010, http://www.indoMyanmarnews.net/archives-1/2010/june/china-endorses-bangladesh-myanmar-road-project/
[24] In fact, the "Irrawaddy Corridor" in Myanmar is similar to the "Karakoram Corridor" in Pakistan, which links Xinjiang-Pakistan onward to the Persian Gulf with access to energy sources in the Persian Gulf. The corridor can also be compared to the Ho chi Minh trail built to bring link with Vietnam in early 60s.
[25] Andrew Selth "Chinese Military Bases in Myanmar: The Explosion of a Myth", Regional Outlook Paper No. 10, 2007, Griffith Asia Institute
[26] The Defenseindustry. Com 30 June 2010 accessed through http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/Chinas-K-8-Jets-A-Killer-for-Myanmar-06457/
[27] Network Myanmar accessed through http://www.networkmyanmar.org/component/content/article/67/China-Myanmar-Relations
[28] http://policyresearchgroup.com/myanmar-china/index.1.html
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