

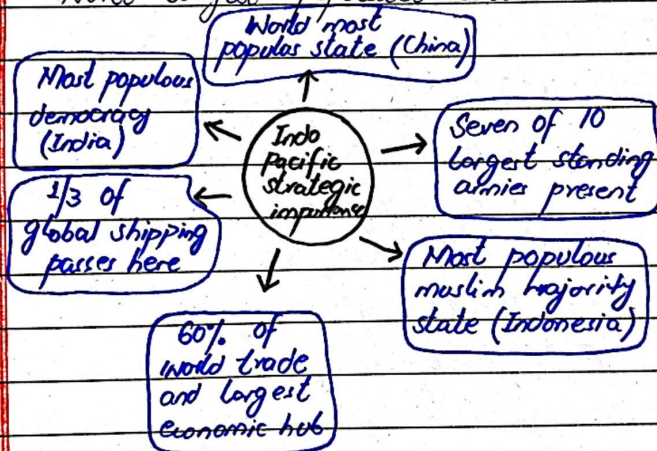
Indo-Pacific has become a new center for naval militarization and mobilization. By keeping in mind, recent developments, discuss the ongoing race for naval supremacy in Indo-Pacific region. Also highlight its implications for Pakistan and possible policy options?

1/ Introduction

The Indo Pacific region has become a focal point for global naval militarization and geopolitical competition. The primary players in this race for naval supremacy include United States, China, India, Japan, Australia, and other regional powers, driven by overlapping security interests, trade routes and territorial disputes. This armrace poses implications on Pakistan as well.

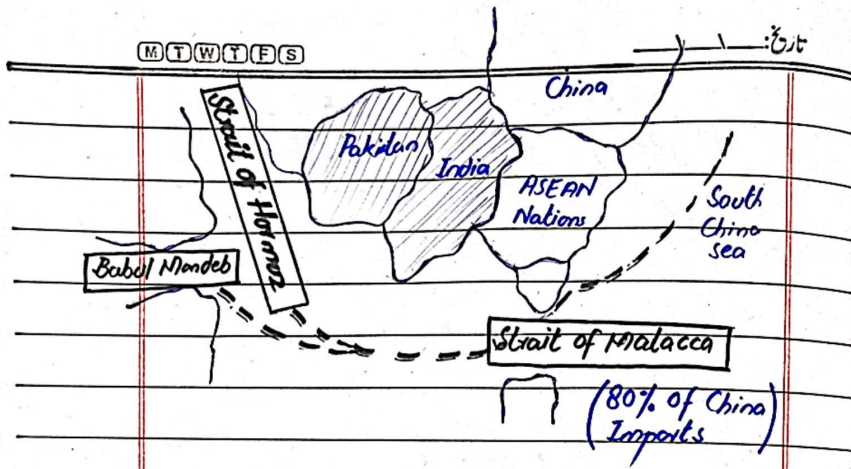
(B) Strategic importance of Indo Pacific region

Indo Pacific region is of great strategic importance, with being largest economic hub, encircled by world largest populated areas.



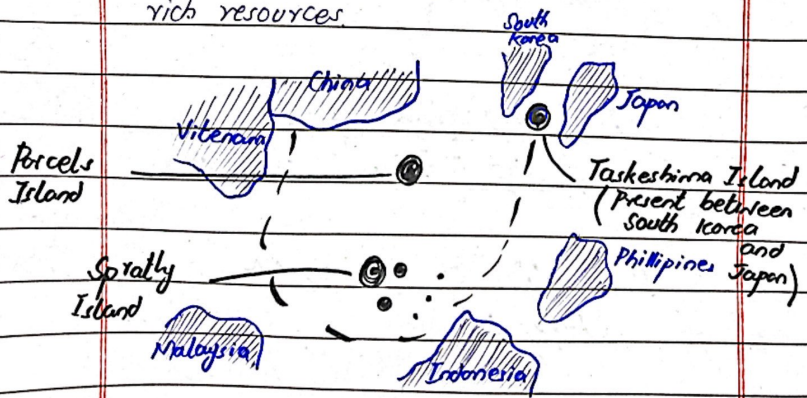
(c) Indo Pacific - full of flashpoints and resources

(i) location of Prime Maritime Chokepoints



(iii) Artificial Islands - source of untapped resources in Indo Pacific region

Indo Pacific region has number of Artificial Islands which have rich resources.



3) Ongoing race in Indo Pacific region for Naval Supremacy

(A) China's Naval Expansion in Indopacific region

(i) China's Navy Size

China has rapidly expanded and modernized its Navy in Indo Pacific region. The country's naval aim is closely tied to its territorial claims in South China sea and the protection of its maritime interests along critical sea lanes.

"The PLA has already overtaken US Navy as largest Navy in the world by size, with plans to grow 460 warships by 2030."

(US Defence Department, 2022)

- Annual China military report

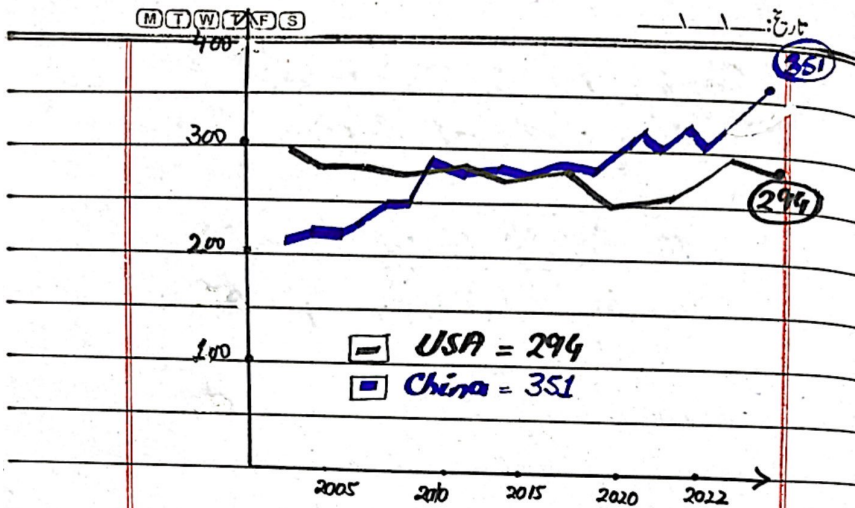


Fig: China has overtaken US in number of principal combat ship --- 351 to 294

(iii) China's string of pearls policy in Indo pacific region

China's string of pearls strategy refer to the establishment of network of ports and infrastructure along key maritime routes in Indian ocean, from Chinese mainland to Middle East. These ports include Gwadar (Pakistan), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Kyaukpyu (Myanmar) and Chittagong

(Bangladesh), aim to secure China's energy supplies and enhance its naval reach.

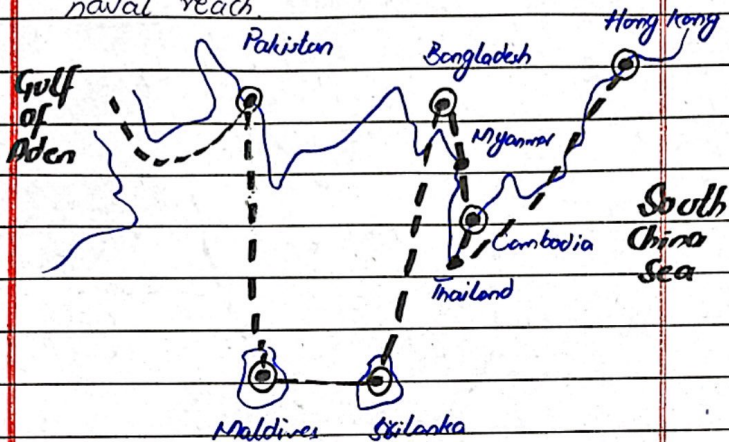


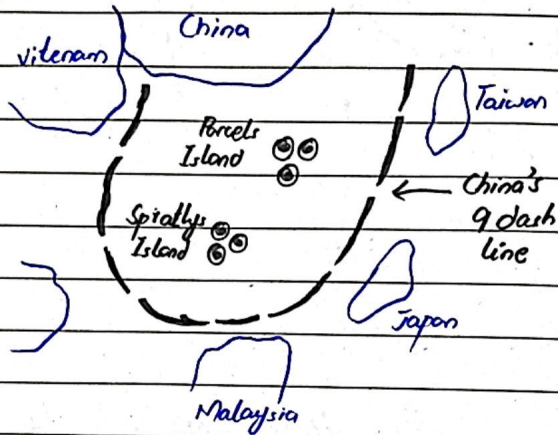
Fig: China's string of Pearls

(iii) China's 9 dash line policy - claiming Islands in South and East China sea

China is adopting A2AD (Anti-Access Area Denial) military strategy aimed at South China sea, where China has been militarizing Artificial Islands and enhancing its air and naval presence to assert control over disputed

territories.

The Nine Dash line approximately 90% of south china sea is claimed by China, based on historical map.



(B) USA's Naval Expansion in Indo pacific region

The US remains dominant force in region with Indo pacific strategy focusing on countering china's growing influence and ensuring free and open Indo pacific.

i) Necklace of Diamond Policy of USA to contain China

Chinese rise has threatened US hegemony and in order to 'Contain China', USA is strengthening its Naval and military presence in Indo Pacific region

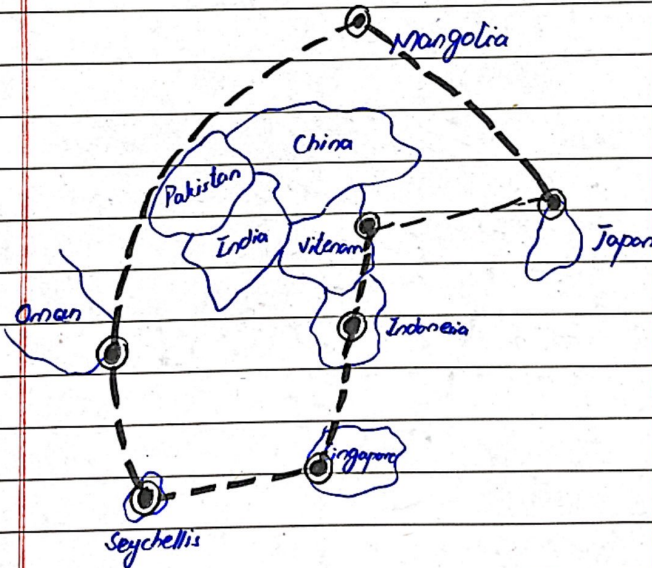
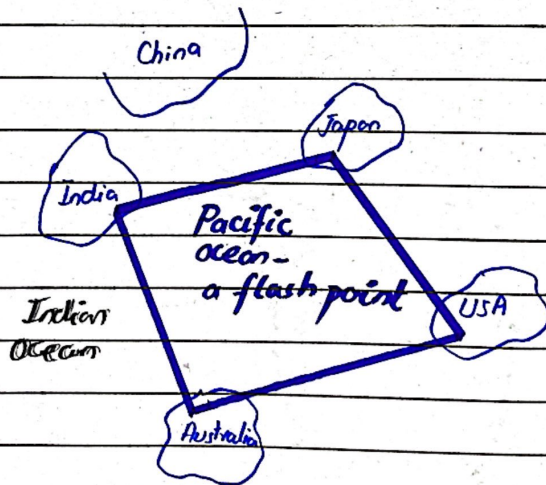


Fig: Necklace of Diamond
policy of USA to contain
China in Indo Pacific

(ii) USA is making regional alliances for Naval Supermacy

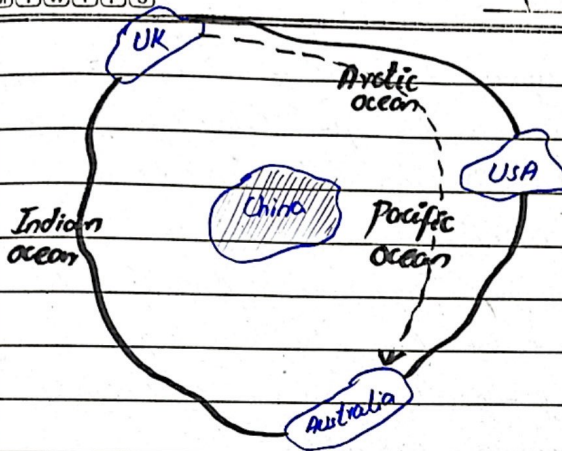
(a) Quad

Quad is quadrilateral security dialogue, aims to deepen USA's strategic alliances to help USA contain China, through increased influence in Indo pacific region.



(b) AUKUS Agreement

It is an important step by USA for its naval supermacy in region



"Our presence in Indo Pacific ensures that no single nation can dominate this critical region."

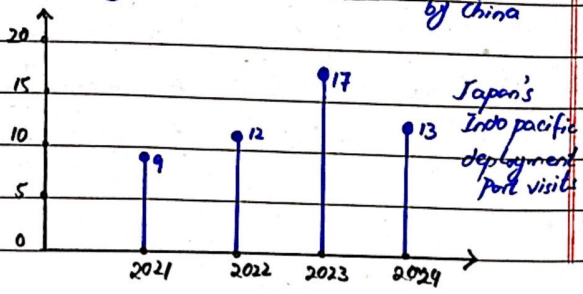
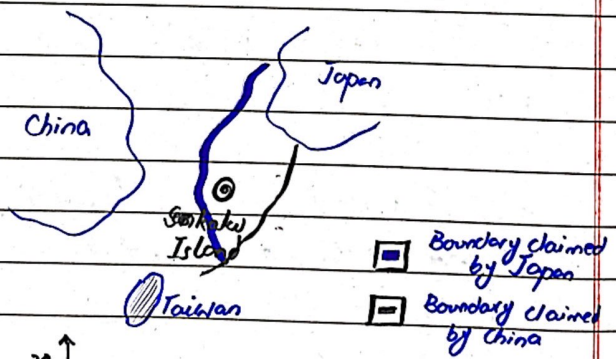
(Commander of U.S. Indo Pacific region Command)

(C) Increased Armsrace between Japan, South Korea and Taiwan in Indo Pacific region

(a) Japan Naval presence in Indo Pacific region

Japan's approach is shaped by its own strategic challenges. The Japan Maritime self defence force (JMSDF) focuses heavily on denying influence of China in East and South China sea - two areas vital for not only Japan's economic security but territorial integrity.

The South China Sea is a home of disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, where tension between Japan and China have simmered for years.



1046 km of coastline, provides its strategic access to Arabian sea and border Indian ocean region.

Pakistan defence budget was \$10.4 billion in 2023, significantly lower than its rivals. Its naval forces are smaller, with 50 ships, including 8 submarines. Pakistan has been upgrading its Naval capabilities with China's assistance. It is acquiring 8 Honger class submarines from China, which will enhance its underwater capabilities in 2028.

5/ Policy Options for Pakistan

Pakistan should start manoeuvring to become partner in Indo pacific strategy. Pakistan should establish policy embedded primarily with economic elements. It should adopt policies to strengthen and develop military capabilities to tackle emerging challenge.

6/ Conclusion

Indo pacific region has become a hotspot for Naval militarization and mobilization in 21st century, resulting in arm race among states.

It poses various implications on Pakistan which Pakistan should overcome by effective policy making.