



India Looks at China's Expansion in the Indian Ocean

OE Watch Commentary: India continues to carefully monitor the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) growing role in the Indian Ocean. The accompanying excerpted article from the *Hindustan Times* discuss some of India's concerns. According to Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba, India's senior most military commander, China has "deeper pockets" than India and is systematically increasing its presence and investments in the region. Lanba drives home the concept of smaller countries becoming "debt-dependent," in which they end up giving "control of territories, which are of strategic significance, to China." These countries include Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Djibouti, where China has built its first military base allowing it to sustain its naval units in the Indian Ocean. In order to try to counter the growing military might of the PLA Navy, according to Sudarshan Shrikhande, a retired rear admiral, "India would have to do a lot more to sharpen its naval edge. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“At any given time, they (China) have six to seven warships deployed in the region. Also, they send two conventional submarines to the area every year.”

Source: Rahul Singh, "China here to Stay in Indian Ocean, Keeping Eye: Navy Chief," *Hindustan Times*, 7 May 2018. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/china-here-to-stay-in-indian-ocean-its-military-movement-cause-for-concern-navy-chief-sunil-lanba/story-9IXNkSBEhTOetMPEX3qZ8I.html>

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said the Navy is keeping a sharp eye on "the pattern and periodicity of extra-regional deployments" in the Indian Ocean Region. A fleet of 50 combat-ready Indian warships is carrying out round-the-clock surveillance, he said. "Their (PLAN) headquarters is now used to handling forward deployments.

The navy chief said China had "deeper pockets" than India and it was "going about systematically" increasing its presence and investments in the region. "There is a degree of debt-dependence of countries such as Djibouti on China," Lanba said.

Mounting debts have led countries such as Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan to give control of territories, which are of strategic significance, to China.

The base in Djibouti has shored up China's capabilities to sustain naval units in the Indian Ocean.

Lanba said the pattern of deployment of Chinese warships in the IOR was being mapped. "At any given time, they (China) have six to seven warships deployed in the region. Also, they send two conventional submarines to the area every year.



Gwadar Port: In late 2015, the port was officially leased to China for 43 years, until 2059.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gwadar_Port.jpg, CC BY-SA 3.0.