



STUDY MATERIAL

VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE THAKURPUKUR

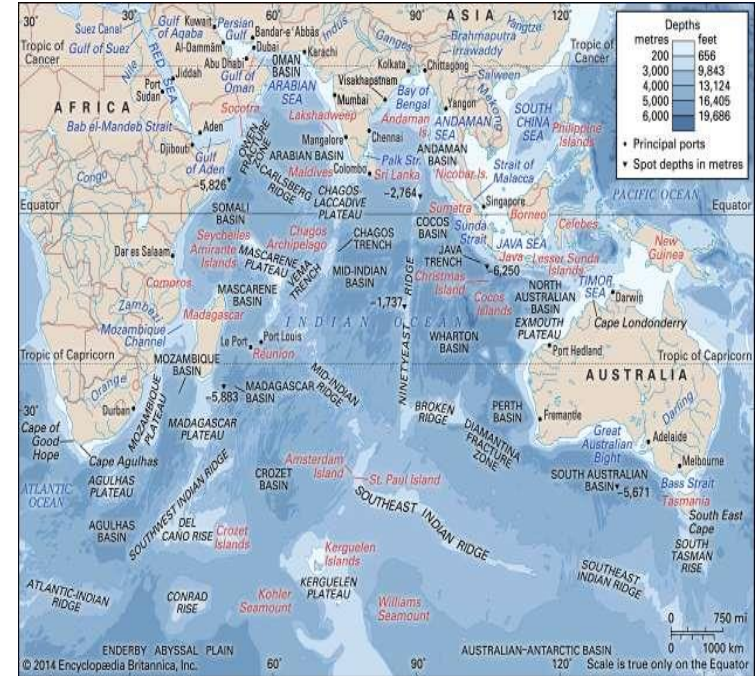
NAAC ACCREDITED GRADE—'A'

Subject: Political Science
**Topic: Indian Ocean – Its Strategic
Importance**

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Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

The Post Cold War World witnesses the importance of Water bodies in International Politics. As the 3rd largest body of water in the World and containing vital Sea Lanes the importance of Indian Ocean has become clear.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

The relative decline of US power in the South Asian region has left a Vacuum which is to be filled by China and India, as both of them hold their position in the competition of International Power Politics.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- The Sea Lanes in the Indian Ocean are considered to be strategically important in the World.
- For Example - 80 % of the World's maritime trade in Oil passes through Indian Ocean pivotal points like 35% through the Straits of Malacca, 40% through the straits of Harmuz and 8% through Bab-el-Mandab strait.



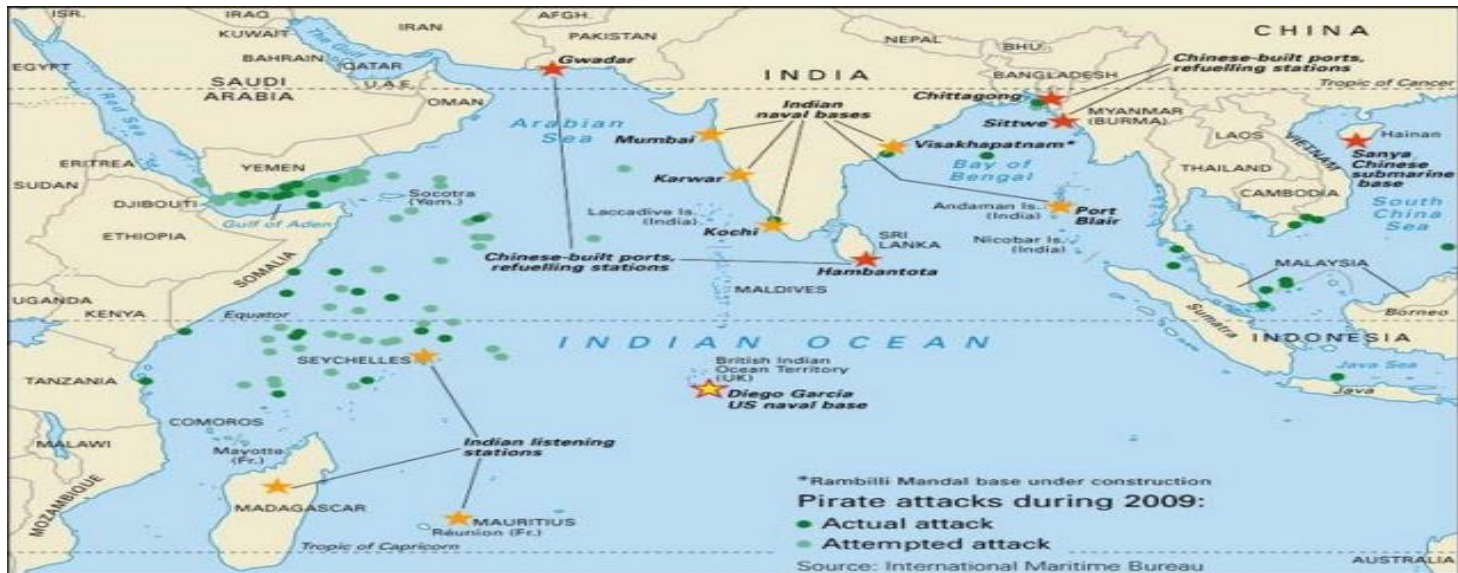
Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- Moreover, half of the World's armed Conflicts are presently located in the Indian Ocean region. As India having a triangular long Coastline bordering three water bodies, namely Bay of Bengal in the east, Arabian Sea in the West and Indian Ocean in the South hence geopolitically it gains a strategic importance in maritime trade and Warfare. This gives rise to competition between India and China as the latter is not naturally facilitated by long Coastline.



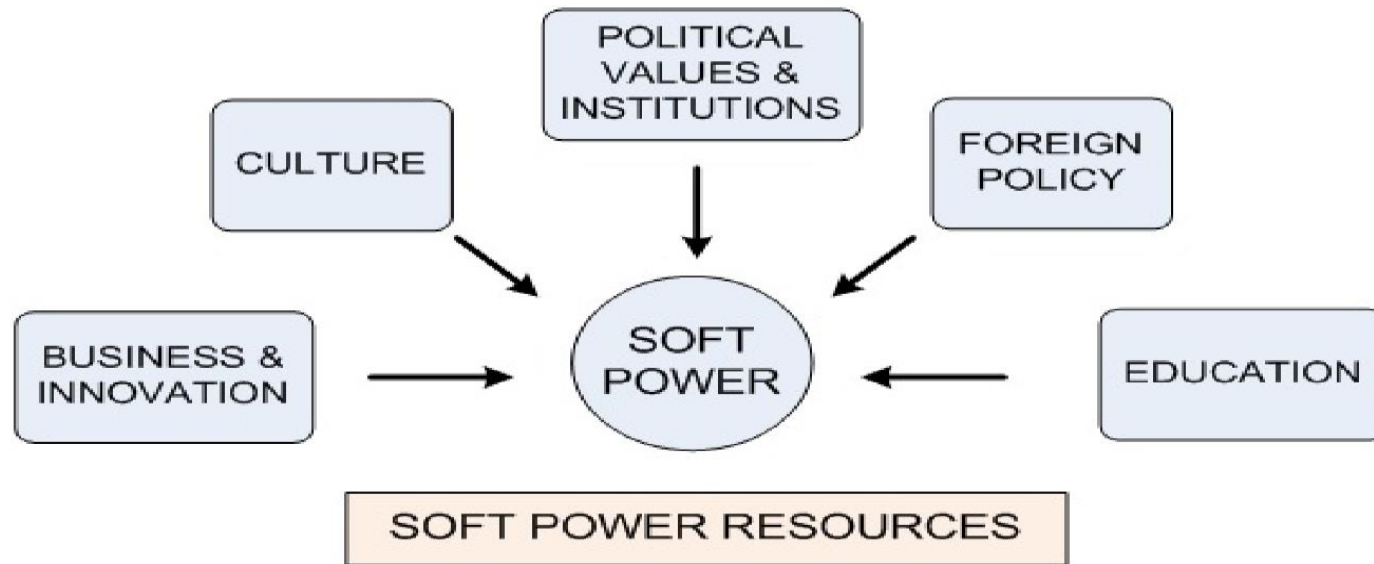
Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- Hence Indian Ocean region is becoming a home of continually evolving strategic developments between India and China. Moreover the rising nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan, The US interventions in Iraq, growing Islamic terrorism, events of Piracy around African Coastline etc. have increased the importance of Indian Ocean.
- Hence almost all the world's major powers have deployed military posts in Indian Ocean.
- For example- Combined Task force 150 to counter piracy from Gulf of Oman to Kenya.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- China's soft power diplomacy has been an important parameter in shaping the Indian Ocean Strategic environment.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- For Example, by giving large loans on generous repayment terms, building of roads, dams, ports, power-plants and railways and providing military assistance and political support in the UN Security Council through its Veto powers, China has secured a goodwill among Countries in the Indian Ocean region. Countries like Pakistan, Sri-Lanka are within the Chinese orbit. For Example, Sri-Lanka was granted dialogue partner status in the Shanghai Co-operation organization. It is to be noted here that both of these countries are India's neighbours and maintains a frozen relationship with the latter due to Islamic fundamentalism and Identity Crisis.
- Moreover, Energy Security and resources are very critical. The Indian Ocean region is very rich in that, and hence it has been the peaceful abode of the major global powers.

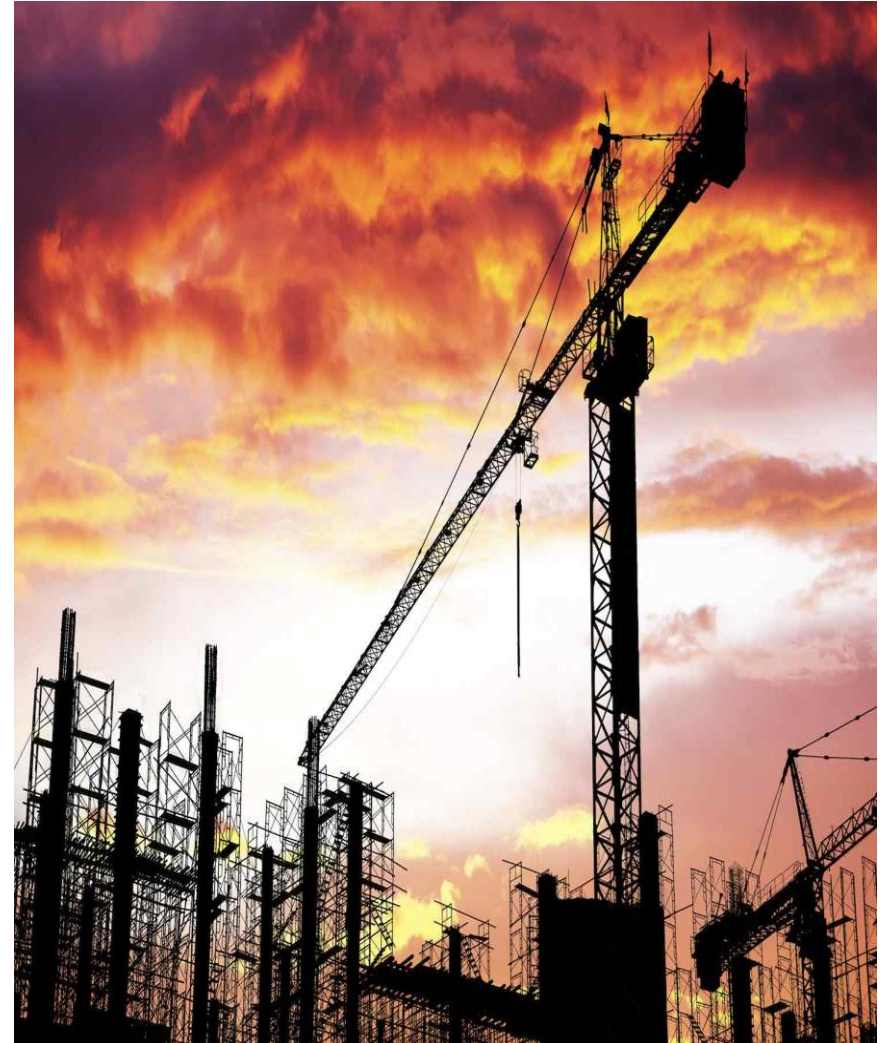
Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- It was in 1971, that an UN resolution was passed declaring the Ocean as a “Zone of Peace” in order to avoid arising conflict between US and China. However not much has been done to furtherance this declaration and so the conflicts in the zone still persists.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

- India has started various infrastructure development projects in Mauritius in order to develop strong allies in Indian Ocean. India is also creating a Security grid with the littoral Countries so that militarization of the Indian Ocean can be prevented.



Indian Ocean – Its Strategic Importance

But more initiatives are to be taken for increasing India's military base on the Indian Ocean which is the heated issue of the Country.

