



## Mahanian Thinking: Rising Navalism of China in the Indo-Pacific Region

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### ABSTRACT

As China has grown economically, so has its military power developed and by design. China has invested heavily in the Navy and shipping industries along with related infrastructure around its neighbourhood and beyond. China's immediate concerns were the sea routes in the Indo-Pacific region, which they started dominating by buying shares in seaports and investing in shipping infrastructure in coastal cities, which is projecting a soft image but according to speculation, it can be quickly upgraded to carry out any military mission. The study is taking qualitative and quantitative data. The study also highlights the Chinese naval expansion and its comparison with leading navies of the world. The research in this paper is carried out by keeping in view the impact of Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories on Chinese strategists in the context of China's increasing Navalism in the Indo-Pacific region.

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## 1. Introduction

"For whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself."

Sir Walter Raleigh

China's Naval strategists have avidly followed Mahan since the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their economic rise made them realize that without a strong military and protection of their sea routes, it is impossible to defend the economic gains. Economic rise fuelled the military rise which in turn translated into the protection of their economic interests around the globe, where the Navy has a major role to play which is the protection of sea lines of communications (SLOCs) and all related infrastructure. It is a turn to the sea, where the influence of Naval strategists like Sir Alfred Thayer Mahan can be seen. It is being argued whether China is being influenced by Mahan, Corbett, or both but in this study, mostly Mahanian schools of thought are being discussed. China's economic rise brought out the sentiments in Chinese to reclaim their past glory, avert a "century of humiliation" like situation, and subsequently pursue the design to become a superpower. In 2013, President Xi Jinping shared a vision of the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) in Kazakhstan and later in the same year proposed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) in Indonesia, collectively known as One Belt One Road or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (M.Li., 2020). These projects show China's ambitions to rewrite regional and global world order. As Mahan's writings depict the time when the US was a rising superpower, therefore it can be said that Mahan's theories are more attractive to Chinese strategists.

Protection of vital sea routes is the prime importance for China. Hence, the Indo-Pacific and especially the Indian Ocean are under China's focus. The presence of their military, PLAN and Para Naval forces along with Coast Guards shows the desire to have complete hegemony over the sea routes, which shows the Mahanian influence. Today, China has the largest Navy in terms of combatants, Surface Ships, and Submarines and is second largest in tonnage just behind the USA (Powder, 2019). Foregoing in view, the discussion in this research paper will revolve around the increasing presence of the Chinese Navy in the Indo-Pacific regions and its implication

on the geopolitics of the region and world with an endeavour to establish Mahan's influence upon their Strategist and in particular Naval strategists.

## **2. Literature Review**

Alfred Taylor Mahan explains in his literature about the new sides of the emerging world and especially the literature gives an insightful understanding of the strategic work through the implacable importance of sea power. The future of the world would be in the hands of that power that has control over the sea lanes. Eventually, it is necessary to utilize economic activities aside from military power (Mahan). The literature gave the importance of sea power in the coming era and those who kept sea power in their hands would have ultimately the power of the globe in their hands. The gap has been taken especially in the context of China as China is emerging as a global port, there must be an implication of the Mahanian conceptualization of the study. Attiq Ur Rehman explains the importance of naval power under the preview of the master of the strategic port of the navy by the rising importance of the sea. The literature further explains the importance of naval power in the dynamic changes on the global stage and more important the significance of it if there is a need for the state to remain on the international stage as a global player and major stakeholder (T.Mahan). The literature identifies these aspects while there is a gap identified in the study which explains that literature didn't hold the importance of naval power for emerging powers, especially in the context of its economic interests.

Furthermore, J.R Holmes, explains in his literature about the rise of China and its strategic influence in the South China Sea which is also valid for the Chinese strategic interests in the region and beyond. Especially the Chinese leadership is considering the South China Sea as important as America considers the Caribbean historically (T.Yoshihara, (2006)). The writer explains that it would be one of the key obligations for China to maintain these interests for its interest but the literature dissent highlighted the further expansion of China under the preview of Mahan theory. The gap has been taken from the literature review which ultimately is the major focus of the study. There is a significant gap in the literature on how China is experiencing this change at the ultimate ground that is important in this study, especially in the context of finding how much China is influencing the Mahan conception of Seapower which is also given one of the key objectives of the study to explore further.

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

In this research, Alfred Thayer Mahan's Sea Power theory is used as a theoretical framework to examine the manifestation of China's increasing naval power in the Indo-Pacific region. Mahan's theory highlights the importance of a strong navy, and control of sea routes and links maritime domination with the nation's security and global influence. In Mahan's words, "Control of the sea can pave the way for the country's emergence as the world's dominant military, political, and economic power"(J.Sumida, (2014)). In his Sea Power Theory, Mahan argues that a powerful navy is important for a nation as it protects maritime interests, projects power, and deters rivals. It will examine how China is manifesting its rising navalism, keeping in view the arguments of Mahan. Controlling sea routes for commerce security was also highlighted by Mahan. This will be analyzed as to how China is showing its presence in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean. Mahan knew the importance of the link between the powerful navy and the nation's economic prosperity. This link will be established by a detailed description of China's investment in shipping industries and the expansion/ modernization of its navy. China's aggressiveness in the South China Sea in the shape of control, naval presence, and construction of artificial islands will be highlighted in Mahan's command of the sea. Mahan debates that a nation's geopolitical influence is directly proportional to its naval power, which will be explained by showing China's effort in the shape of BRI/MSR to expand its presence around the globe (T.Mahan., (1918)). Foregoing in view, by application of Mahan's theory as a theoretical framework, this study aims to provide an understanding of Mahan's theories' influence on China and China's rising navalism and its implication in the Indo-Pacific region.

## **4. Research Methodology**

Below there is details of the research methodology that is being taken for this research study.

#### **4.1. Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to analyze Mahan's influence on Chinese strategists and its practical manifestation in the shape of China's increasing Naval and military presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, it will also add regional and global implications of China's increasing navalism.

#### **4.2. Hypothesis**

By focussing on fleet size, strategic port acquisitions, and control of maritime chokepoints, China's naval expansion, guided by Mahanian principles of sea power, will challenge U.S. naval dominance in the Indo-Pacific region and significantly increase its influence over the South China Sea. It will also have an impact on regional military alliances and freedom of navigation operations.

#### **4.3. Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Which key Principles of Mahan's theories are influencing Chinese strategists?
- How is China manifesting its increasing Naval presence in the Indo-Pacific region?
- What are the implications of China's rising navalism on regional and world geopolitics?

#### **4.4. Research Method**

This study is analytical research that seeks to find how China increasing its Naval presence in the Indo-Pacific region and its implications. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed. As mentioned right away the qualitative data has been taken from different resources like articles. While at the same time, some important reports have been like first-hand reports of government officials.

### **5. Main Arguments**

#### **5.1. Mahan's Theory and China**

It is necessary to understand Mahan's work's influence over China before discussing its impact, as this study will look at China's increasing presence in the Indo-Pacific through the lens of Mahan's theories. Captain (Rear Admiral post-retirement) Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) was a Naval Officer and a strategist, who wrote "The Influence of Sea Power upon History". He wrote, "Whoever rules the waves rules the world". He was a strong proponent of Sea Power and according to him nations' prosperity and power are determined by their exercise of control over the sea lanes or sea lines of communications (SLOCS). He insisted that for peaceful and steady economic growth and commerce, a strong Navy is essential for their protection (A.T.Mahan). Mahan enumerated his six famous principles or principle conditions that affect the nation's sea power are geographical position, physical conformation including natural production and climate, the extent of territory, number population, the character of the people, and the character of the government including national institutions. These six principle conditions are briefly explained in the context of their influence on Chinese strategists.

#### **5.2. Geographical Position**

The geographical position of a country is explained by Mahan while giving an example of England. The location of England was such that they didn't have to defend themselves against any enemy from land as it was surrounded by water and due to their central position they were able to concentrate their forces before their adversaries. He argues that England has an advantageous geostrategic location due to which, they have an edge over their enemies. This element applies to China, as China possesses a very large coastal area and centrally located geographical position due to its proximity to the Indian, Pacific, and Arctic oceans.(R.Holmes, (2014)).

#### **5.3. Physical Conformation**

Mahan tells us about the importance of physical conformation by quoting examples of European sea powers of their time. He argues that easy access to the sea from the country's interior to its coast and further to the seas from its ports and harbours is vital for economy and commerce. In physical conformation, he also discusses that a nation should be self-sufficient in terms of resources and not dependent on outside resources (J. R.Holmes, (2012)). China is fulfilling this condition as they are investing heavily in building communication infrastructure and making further advancements for getting access to seaports in immediate neighbourhoods also, to gain full benefits out of their physical conformation.

#### **5.4. Extent of Territory**

Here Mahan tells us that for developing sea power, the length of the coastline and the character of their harboring facilities are more important than the land mass. He added that the extent of the coast and proportional population can determine the strength and weakness of nations. In this regard, China has one of the lengthiest coastlines in the world with more than 170 seaports, and its population is fully invested in shipping and related industries.

#### **5.5. Number of Population**

Mahan discusses that while keeping in view the extent of territory, it is not just the number of population rather it's the population going to the sea or available for services related to the sea. This factor is also applicable to China as a large number of the Chinese population is associated with shipping industries and sea ports as it will be discussed further during this study.

#### **5.6. The character of Population**

Mahan writes that a nation's character and aptitude are important elements for the development of sea power. He explains the behaviour of British colonists that they used to easily settle down outside their home country and would readily start with progress, which was lacking in other contemporary nations. Chinese character is manifested in the shape of their employment around the world in seaports, with shipping industries and other BRI-related infrastructure.

#### **5.7. Character of Government**

It is explained that vision, wisdom, willpower, intelligence, and deliberation on the part of the government, their institutions, and rulers by their populations are most important for making a nation a great sea power. This factor is evident as China's MSR is a practical manifestation of their government commitment.

As for *Sea Power Theory* Mahan believed that a strong and advanced Navy is a prerequisite for a country to develop and preserve its dominance over the world. He was of the view that a strong navy could protect the country's SLOCs, help in overseas power projection, and protect the colonies and overseas territories (T.Yoshihara, (2012)). A powerful navy is vital for economic interests, as it secures access to overseas resources and markets. Mahan added that naval power is significant to achieve a nation's strategic objectives, and the navy must be equipped with strong, modern warships, a network of ports and bases around the world, and a well-organized and skilled crew. Hence, the classic *sea power theory* says that a powerful navy is essential, which has two main purposes, first is the security of seaborne commerce during peace and defence of sea routes or denial of those to the enemy during wartimes and second is for offensive purposes. Mahan also advocates "*Command of the Sea*", as a nation cannot be a true sea power if it does not possess a command of the sea, which is the ability to control the sea lanes and deny its use to the adversaries. As already explained in the preceding para, command of the sea is integral to becoming a sea power nation. Mahan's theories have influenced the policymakers of great powers of the last two centuries and it is still relevant for the rising great powers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Mahan, 1999). China as a rising power is well on its way to achieving its grand strategic goals, they are exercising full command of the sea in the South China Sea and quantitatively possesses the largest navy in the world, which makes it a significant naval power. It will be further discussed during the study.

#### **5.8. China's Rising Navalism in the Indo-Pacific Region**

The last three decades have seen a steady growth in China's naval power, Chinese are heavily investing in ships, submarines, aircraft carriers, modern technology, military bases, ports, and other shipping infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region. They are also conducting naval exercises and in pursuit of increasing their naval strength they have reclaimed islands and built artificial islands in the South China Sea. China is also improving its ties with other countries in the region, which gives them access to important geostrategic locations and ports. This study will discuss how China manifests its increasing naval presence in the Indo-Pacific region but before that, it is important to understand the historical context and MSR/BRI, which can be a driving force behind China's rising Navalism. (Y.Ji, 2016).

### 5.9. Historical Context

Historically China has never remained a notable sea power in known history, however, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, China was repeatedly defeated by Great Britain in opium wars, followed by France, Japan, Germany, and the USA. According to an estimate from 1840 to 1949 until the creation of the PRC, several foreign powers invaded and defeated China from Sea for more than 470 times. China has to sign several unequal treaties with those invaders to give them access to their markets and ports.(Peter, 2006). This era is known as the “Century of Humiliation” and its impact is imprinted on the minds of Chinese nationals. This is one of the main driving forces behind China’s turn to the sea and quest to increase its naval power.

### 5.10. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), previously known as One Belt One Road is a vision of Chinese leader Xi Jinping. In 2013, he proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt in Kazakhstan and later the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) in Indonesia, which collectively became BRI. The BRI aimed to increase cooperation among nations, but the focus of the BRI was infrastructure development for China in host countries. Scholars argue that it’s a geo-economic strategy of China to change the economic governance system of the world.(Li, 2020).

Chinese policymakers are really concerned and continuously working to formulate strategies and policies to safeguard BRI projects and investments. Infrastructure and projects related to MSR are linked mostly through sea routes, which is a domain of the Navy. Therefore, commensurate capacity building and advancement of Naval assets is on priority for Chinese strategists. Here, it can be said that BRI is another driving force behind China’s increasing Navalism.

In the *Indo-Pacific region*, there are three main actors besides the USA, who are competing to become a naval power. China, India, and Russia, but it is only China, that is taking practical steps. At present Chinese shipping companies own 96 ports in 53 countries, and more than 30 of those countries are in the Indo-Pacific region. In the following paragraphs of the study, the discussion will specifically focus on the manifestation of China’s increasing naval presence and shipping infrastructure in the region. This study will start with Djibouti in Northeast Africa and move to the Indian Ocean, East Asia, and Australia, and end up in the South China Sea covering all aspects relating to shipping and navalism.(H.Ohashi, 2018).

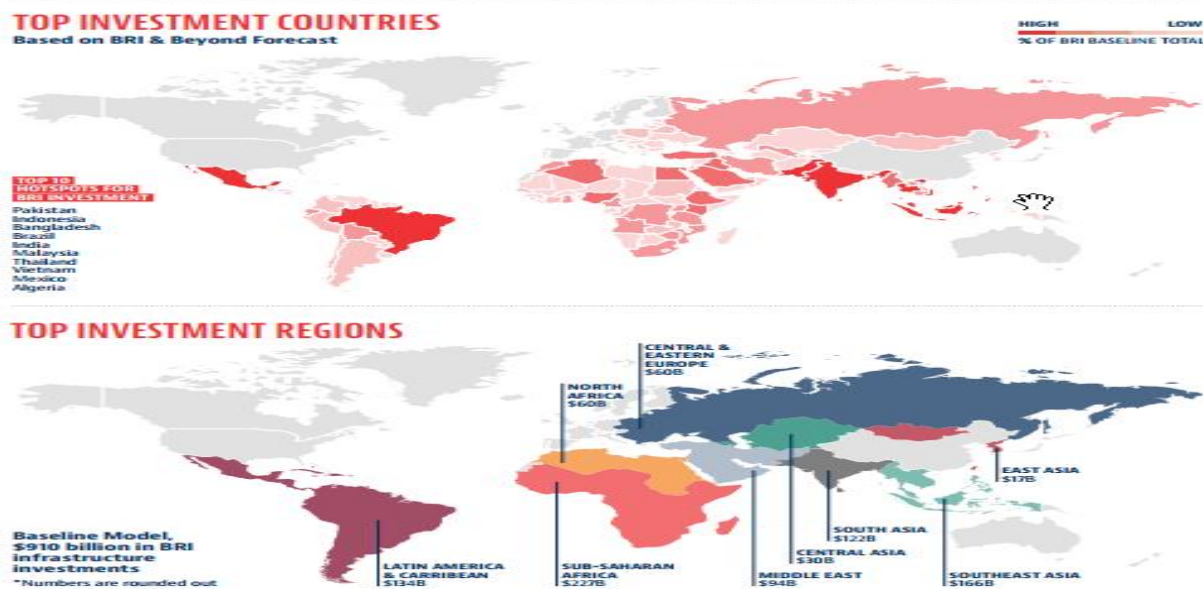
*Djibouti* which is located on Bab al Mandab, the world’s busiest and most dangerous shipping route, is a gateway to the Red Sea and Africa’s largely untapped markets. The Chinese are investing heavily to make it an important node along MSR/BRI. China is investing in railways, roads, telecommunication, and shipping ports. Chinese Merchants have 23.5% shares in Doraleh Multipurpose Port (DMP), and almost 800 Chinese are manning the operation of the port. In addition, jointly with the Government of Djibouti, China is building Dalian Port Cooperation Limited with 40% shares, started in 2017 on a 48 square kilometres area, it is predicted to be the largest free trade zone in Africa. Djibouti is the first country, where China has established a People Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) military base accommodating around 2000 personnel to protect their investments and SLOCs(K. P.Lai, 2020).

**Figure 1: Chinese Investment Worldwide Source:American Enterprise Institute**



*Gwadar a future jewel* positioned near the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz is an essential node, which will support China in building up MSR, it will also help in China's 'Far Seas' strategy. China is financially assisting in the construction of the deep sea port at Gwadar, phase 1 was already completed in 2007. Due to security concerns and destabilization phase 2 is yet to start. In 2017, China took over port operations from local shipping authorities and it is agreed upon that for the next 40 years, China will receive 91% of the revenue. It is being speculated that due to the security situation in Baluchistan, a province of Pakistan, where Gwadar is located, China is planning to enhance its naval and military presence. Gwadar and nearby Jiwani coastal city can be transformed into future military bases, as China's strategic partnership with Pakistan dictates that these ports can be used to support greater military and naval partnership.

**Figure 2: Global BRI Investment Source: The Global Compliance**



*Hambantota* is a port located on the Southern coast of Sri Lanka, which is developed and financed by China. The Port became controversial due to its financial feasibility and military implications, especially after a deal in the backdrop of concession on loans, where Sri Lanka handed over the port to China Merchant Port Holdings (CMPH) on a 99-year lease, including a 42-hectare' artificial island near the harbour with 70% share in the port. Hambantota being at the heart of the Indian Ocean is very important militarily and from a naval (SLOC) point of view. Other than Hambantota, China has also invested in *Maldives* located in the Indian Ocean. In Maldives China has taken 17 islands on long-term lease. Presently, most of these islands are used for tourism purposes, projecting a soft image of China. China is seeking to increase its reach and protect its geostrategic interests. China is investing in the development and construction of ports, other maritime infrastructures, and naval access agreements by enhancing bilateral ties with countries such as *Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Myanmar, and Bangladesh*.

In the East Asia region, Chinese shipping companies bid to purchase 51% stakes in the largest seaport, Maura Port of *Brunei*. The Maura Port Company which operated the port has to relinquish the port operation to China against a 60-year agreement in 2017(Schulhof, 2022). Despite all the tensions, China is *Taiwan's* biggest trading partner as 60-70% trade-off with Taiwan comes from China. In 2018, Chinese shipping companies took over the control of Kaohsiung Port, located at the Southwestern tip of the island. Kaohsiung Port is the largest container port in Taiwan.

In *Australia*, Chinese shipping companies have bought stakes in three ports. In 2015, they purchased 80% shares in Darwin Port, which is located in the North of Australia. The location of Darwin Port is geo-strategically important, due to its proximity to the US marine base and the Indonesian capital Jakarta. Chinese are planning to improve and expand the shipping facilities at this port. Moreover, in 2016 Chinese shipping companies bought 20% stakes with a 50-year lease in Mel borne, Australia's largest container port, and in 2018 purchased 50% shares in Port



of New Castle, located on the east coast of Australia, which is the largest coal exporting port of the world. *Cambodia* is geo-strategically valuable for China's regional sea commerce. China is Cambodia's largest foreign investor and trading partner. In Cambodia, China is developing Koh Kong Port, and according to some reports presently it is owned by a Chinese company with a secret lease of 99 years. This port can be used for docking of PLAN ships also. There are speculations that China had an agreement in 2018 to develop another port at Kampot and in 2019 a secret deal was signed granting China access to the Ream Naval base of Cambodia located near the Gulf of Thailand.

*Malaysia* is located along the South China Sea and overlooks a strategic Chokepoint, the Strait of Malacca is a natural focal point for China due to its geo-strategic and geo-economic importance. China has invested there in Kuala Linggi International Port, Samalju Industrial Port, and Kuantan Port and endeavouring to revive the historic Malaysian port of Melaka. Melaka Gateway is seen by the Chinese as a Harbour, which will support the visit of their aircraft carrier (J. M. F, 2021 ). *Singapore* is a linchpin link between the Indian Ocean and the Asia Pacific, due to which most of the regional powers have interests in the country. Despite all that, Chinese companies manage to collaborate with the Port of Singapore Authority cooperation and carry out development and oversight of port operations. *China* with a coastline of 32,000 kilometers of which 18,400 kilometers are along China's mainland. It is one of the longest coastlines in the world. China has 172 seaports, of which 7 ports are among the top ten largest container ports in the world. Shanghai seaport China is considered to be the largest port in the world. An estimate says that Chinese shipping companies own around 5500 commercial vessels and carry out businesses with 600 ports in 150 countries around the globe.

### **5.11. Artificial Islands**

It is one of the key factors that shows China's growing navalism. Several artificial islands have been constructed in the South China Sea in the disputed Spratly and Paracel Islands. This construction has been controversial but China claims historical association. Some major artificial islands include Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef, Subi Reef, and Johnson Reef. Military installations like airfields, missile systems, and radar facilities are constructed over these islands which are raising concerns among neighbouring countries.

### **5.12. PLAN**

All this investment in maritime-related infrastructure brought the notion of security and protection of assets along with maintenance and control of SLOCs for carrying out trade and other maritime activities across the region, which brings this study to elaborate, quantify, and compare Chinese naval assets with world-leading navies. The Chinese Navy PLAN is viewed as the protector of China's economy and as per estimates it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most capable blue water navy after the USA, with five branches which are the Submarine Force, Surface Force, Coastal Defence Force, Marine Corps and Naval Air Force, and strength of around 250,000 personnel. China's Military Strategy 2015 focuses on the modernization of maritime military force and they reinforced that focus in 2019 to become a dependable maritime power. According to some reports, PLAN already had 330 surface ships and 66 submarines in 2018, which made China the largest navy in quantitative terms. As for aircraft carriers are concerned, Liaoning was the first that they got from Russia in 2012. In December 2019, Shandong, the first indigenous aircraft carrier was inducted into PLAN. Construction of the third Type 003 aircraft carrier is in progress. A futuristic comparison of the US and Chinese navies is shown in Table 1.

According to some reports and as shown in Table 1, it is stated that "The United States has lost its military edge to a dangerous degree and could potentially lose a war against China or Russia." Other than modernizing and expanding the naval fleet, China carried out some major exercises and joint exercises in the last ten years. Some notable exercises are (1) Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercises in 2014, 2016 and 2018, which are the world's largest multinational naval exercises, (2) Joint Sea Exercises with Russia in 2012, (3) Blue Sea Exercises in 2017 involving aircraft carrier Liaoning, (4) South China Sea Naval Exercises in 2016 and 2018, (5) East China Sea Naval Exercises in 2013, jointly with Russia in 2018 and Strategic Cooperation-2018 exercises with Japan, (6) Indian Ocean Naval Exercises includes MSR exercises in 2014 and Exercise Sea Dragon exercises with Pakistan in 2017. These exercises enhanced China's naval capabilities, and bilateral relations with countries and projected its naval power in the region.

**Table 1: Numbers of Chinese and U.S. Navy Battle Force Ships, 2010-2030**

Equipment	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Present estimate
Ballistic missile submarines	3	4	4	6	8	As per Wisevoter.com
Nuclear-powered attack submarines	5	6	7	10	13	Ranking (Warships) <sup>1</sup> China - 730
Diesel attack submarines	48	53	55	55	55	Russia - 598
Aircraft carriers, Cruisers, Destroyers	25	26	43	55	65	N.Korea -519 USA -484
Frigates and Corvettes	50	74	102	120	135	
Total - PLAN (including type not shown)	220	255	360	400	425	
Total - US Navy (including type not shown)	288	271	297	287	291	

## 6. Implications of China's Rising Navalism on Regional and World Geopolitics

The increasing navalism of China in the Indo-Pacific has some significant regional and global implications. In a regional context, China's claims of territorial sovereignty over a large portion of the South China Sea and the construction of artificial islands have given rise to territorial disputes and escalated tensions with neighbouring countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Moreover, China's naval expansion and military presence in the shape of aircraft carriers, missile systems, and submarines have raised concerns about their intentions and potential impact on regional security. On a global level, China's increasing naval presence in the region can affect the free flow of trade and commerce, potentially leading to economic disruption as the Indo-Pacific region has the busiest shipping lanes, with more than 50% of global shipping passing through the region. Subsequently, the increasing naval power of China was not received well by other powers, it has led to military competition in the region with countries such as the US, Japan, and India. These countries especially India and Japan are now in competition to strengthen their naval capabilities to counterbalance China. Quadrilateral Security Dialogues commonly known as QUAD are also reactivated by the USA, Japan, India, and Australia to guard their interest in the region. Hence it can be said that China's naval expansion is part of its grand strategy to assert regional and subsequently global influence, and in the process, they are challenging the status quo.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that China has transformed its economic power and manifested it in the shape of investment in shipping industries, its presence and investments in seaports of the region, naval expansion, and control of the South China Sea. All above mention developments point toward the influence of Mahan upon Chinese strategic thinkers. During the study, Alfred Thayer Mahan and Geoffrey F. Gresh's writings were consulted along with some reliable articles and reports. The study started with analyzing the linkages of Mahan theories with China and goes on to discuss Chinese presence and investments in seaports in several countries in the region. It also briefly discusses the construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea and gives an account of Chinese naval expansion. Moreover, the study also briefly touches on the implication of China's rising navalism in regional and global contexts. Keeping in view the research questions, the findings of the study are;

China is fulfilling the requirements of all key elements and conditions of Mahan's sea power theory and it is evident in the thinking of Chinese strategists through practical manifestation.

Construction of artificial islands and military infrastructure over them in the South China Sea, the numerical superiority of PLAN, Stakes, and investments in several seaports in the region which can be readily transformed to undertake military missions and the quest for further modernization of their navy is ascertaining the increasing naval presence of Chinese in Indo-Pacific region. China's rising navalism has raised concerns among regional nations as well as the world. Regionally Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, and India have shown security concerns, which led to the quest for the acquisition of naval power. India and Japan are



especially concerned and trying to contest China in the region. Whereas globally, the USA is concerned that it will diminish its hegemony, therefore to contest and counterbalance China, QUAD is re-energized by the USA, Japan, India, and Australia. Overall the study was focused on finding out Mahan's influence over Chinese strategies, especially their maritime and naval expansion strategies. Therefore, it can be said that within the grand strategic design of China, Mahanian thinking is evident in the field of Navalism.

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