

Examining Us Maritime Strategy in the Indo-Pacific (2017–2024)

Utkarsh Sanjay Nikoshe

Ph. D Research Scholar, Amity Institute of International Studies, Amity University Noida, India

Dr. Sukhwant Singh Bindra

Professor, Director Research, Amity Institute of International Studies, Amity University Noida, India

Abstract:

One of the most important and highly recurring term in the lexicon of American naval strategists is the Indo-Pacific. Highly coveted by all powers in the current international order, it has emerged as a flashpoint for maritime supremacy and intense geopolitical rivalry in the 21st century. The United States, its allies, partners and its principal adversary, the People's Republic of China are the major players in this theater. China has rapidly expanded its dominance in this region and the US has sharply responded by a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) intended to contain Beijing's footprint. While existing literature encompasses Washington's substantial efforts and energy to neutralise its nemesis in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the South China Sea, IOR and Oceania, it has inadequately addressed America's answer to increasing Chinese overtures in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), a critical region for the US. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this paper to explore what strategies can the US employ to counter China in the Western Indian Ocean Region through a qualitative case study methodology and thematic data analysis. The study found out that the US can cooperate with other Indo-Pacific Powers such as France, UK, India, increase its interactions with WIO littoral island states, strategically use its Diego Garcia base to effectively tackle China from consolidating this region and preserve the rules-based order.

Keywords:

Western Indian Ocean, US, China, Indo-Pacific, FOIP.