

## Book Review

# China in the Indian Ocean

Gunjan Singh

*The Costliest Pearl: China's Struggle for India's Ocean*  
by Bertil Lintner  
Context, 2019.

China's growing regional ambitions have been the focus of many recent studies. With the strengthening of the Chinese economy and its financial clout, there has been an increase in Chinese influence globally. China is investing heavily in infrastructure and other projects across the world. With increasing investments extending beyond its boundaries, Beijing strongly feels the need to strengthen its military to defend its expanding external assets and interests. As a result, an all-round modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is underway. A rapid naval build up and acquisition of strategic ports and military bases along the principal sea routes—especially in the Indian Ocean-- is a particular goal of the PLA.

### Chinese Aims

China traditionally has been a country with a security focus based on threats emerging from the land. However, over the last decade there has been a renewed focus on strengthening the naval power base. Such ambitions also emerge from Beijing's aspirations to counter the United States as well as find a solution to its Malacca Dilemma. Today, almost two-thirds of Chinese oil and resource imports pass through the Malacca Straits. China is aware that in case of a conflict, countries like the United States and India can blockade the flow of vital resources. Such fears have been gaining attention

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