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traffic.

Jiaolong can possibly monitor maritime and naval activity in the Indian Ocean. This fits well into China's Indian Ocean strategy where its shipping remains vulnerable to a number of asymmetric threats and challenges as also the regional navies that can disrupt the free flow of Chinese shipping from Africa and the Gulf region. Jiaolong can also monitor the US, UK, France and Indian nuclear submarine activity by trailing their radioactive signature. It is fair to argue that the deployment of the Jiaolong goes well beyond its scientific utility and supports the Chinese navy's maritime strategy.

## India, Sri Lanka and Maldives: Tripartite Maritime Security Agreement and Growing Chinese Influence

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China and India continue to vie for maritime influence, as influence over the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) remains both commercially and strategically advantageous. However, India's recent strategy includes developing regional cooperative maritime frameworks that focus on security as a preventative hedge on Chinese incursions. While China consolidates commercial maritime interests in South Asia, India is hoping to underscore the greater importance of maintaining security, with the subcontinent giant as the cornerstone.

In an attempt to further consolidate its littoral neighbors, India signed a tripartite maritime security pact with Sri Lanka and the Maldives in early July. The deal includes joint cooperation on Exclusive Economic Zone surveillance; search and rescue operations; working on anti-piracy efforts and; sharing and tracking of merchant vessels using new technologies.

The trilateral agreement was signed just days after the announcement giving the control of Gwadar Port to China. In August 2013, a new USD \$500 million container port will open in Colombo harbor in Sri Lanka, completed largely by the Chinese state run firm China Harbor Engineering. Ultimately, this group controls an 85% stake in the terminal and will continue to hold one for the next 35 years. A Chinese state owned firm will also own 125 acres of reclaimed land from the sea being built off the coast of Colombo. These strategic partnerships follow recent US-Indian drills such as the Malabar Exercise while India officials claim both sides' naval cooperation has "hit the big time."

While Chinese commercial influence in the region increases, it has yet to make a significant security related move. Despite China's continued investment in ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, India hopes to remind its neighbors that addressing physical security must include India. Without attempting to be provocative, the tripartite agreement consolidates the regional maritime cooperation; India may also try to expand the agreement to other IOR nations such as Kenya, Oman, Tanzania or Mauritius.

As a part of this, India also called for a common maritime security regime in the IOR in the latest Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) conference in early July. China remains only a periphery dialogue partner to the IOR-ARC and not a full member, while

other strategically important nations such as Seychelles, Mauritius and Thailand are members. This quiet but calculated regional cooperative approach to maritime security plays into the long-term strategy of India. If India can assert itself as the regional head for maritime security, it can pressure China who will become increasingly dependent on energy resources either based in or traversing the IOR bound for China.

The agreement incorporates Sri Lanka and the Maldives into Indian identification and tracking systems as well as provides regular messaging regarding the lines of communication. Shared cooperation on Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) expands the radius of monitoring 200 nautical miles past the coast of Sri Lanka and the Maldives for India. While the agreement may not specifically give access or preferential treatment of other country's EEZs to India, maintaining a stake in them will afford them critical information and monitoring advantages. As previously mentioned, any potential expansion to East African or Gulf nations could have similar benefits.

Last week, China operationalized the China Coast Guard for the purpose of marine surveillance and law enforcement, including the arming of ships. While this move is more clearly aimed towards South China Sea disputes with Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam, it nonetheless underscores the unilateral and assertive nature of Chinese maritime security. Japan and Pakistan will continue to play a role in the continued Indo-Chinese competition.

The agreement does remain subject to broader political pressures and may at times be difficult to implement if India-Sri Lanka tensions rise for example. The agreement is an attempt to cater to mutually accepted norms for cooperation in the IOR namely, piracy, but will likely need to be bolstered in writing to ensure proper implementation and expansion. The language remains broad enough however to accommodate other IOR countries.

Regardless, India is likely betting that regional cooperation and mitigated tension are likely to trumpet the greater uncertainties of Chinese economic investments in the region. And India would do so rightly. Despite China's belief that they can single handedly reinvigorate these ports, it remains an unsustainable plan. China's economy alone has slowed down significantly amidst fear over its own housing bubble and rising credit risks. Previously growing at double-digit rates, it now hovers around 7%. Subsequent potential political and social unrest emanating both domestically and among its foreign partners will pose additional challenges to maritime assertions, including in the IOR.

So while the tripartite agreement is only an introduction to the potential for shared maritime security in the IOR, it emphasizes India's assertion into its own backyard. Furthermore, it does so in a manner that specifically addresses long standing and agreed upon grievances as a means to ease into a security framework. As China concurrently takes a commercially driven approach in the region, the competition becomes a matter of development versus security. IOR nations in the immediate seem to be attracted to China's development aid; but by playing to the long-term necessity for stable lanes of communication, India indeed has embarked upon the proper blueprint.