

Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region: Examining the Impact on Sri Lanka

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The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is fast becoming a major area of global political and security interest due to various reasons. Therefore, there are many threats for maritime security of the Indian Ocean region, which could have disastrous consequences on regional countries. The region's political and security context is rapidly shifting mainly due to expanding and competing Chinese and Indian spheres of influence in the region. Traditional security concerns like the maintenance of the freedom of maritime navigation and free access to and transport of vital energy supplies are increasing in importance in the Indian Ocean. This paper describes the interests of these superpowers and the emerging power rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region. The aim of the research is to identify the reasons behind these power struggles in the Indian Ocean Region and the impact of those threats on Sri Lanka. Data collected from secondary sources and existing literature confirmed the findings of the article on this wider topic. The findings reveal that the main sources of traditional threats to the region is Indo China Power rivalry and how it has impacted Sri Lanka being right in the centre of the India Ocean. The conclusion of the article demonstrates different methods in shaping the foreign policy and defence strategy in order to build better relationships with these emerging rivalries. Some broader implications were also extracted for the Sri Lanka Military from a realistic point of view.

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