China’s Expansionism

What is the issue?

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India’s political and security establishment needs a strategy in light of China’s naval expansion.

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What is the China’s grand strategy to be regional hegemon?

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China’s grand strategy includes the following:

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- **South China Sea:** China has built runways and fortified seven artificial islands in the **Spratly islands** in the South China Sea.
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- **North of India**: Garrisons, airfields and missile sites linked by modern road-rail networks underpin China’s dominant posture on the Tibetan plateau.
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- The Xining-Lhasa rail link is progressing towards Nepal.
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- **East of India**: China’s Yunan province will gain access to the Bay of Bengal via rail, highway and pipeline, linking it to the deep-water port being built by China at Kyaukpyu in Myanmar.
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- China decided to develop **Sonadia Islands** as a deep sea port for Bangladesh and development of Chittagong port.
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- **West of India**: China constructed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which will create access to the Arabian Sea from Xinjiang to the Pakistani port of Gwadar via Gilgit-Baltistan.
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- China has set up its **first overseas military base at Djibouti** on the Bab el-Mandeb.
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- **South of India:** China has built a new harbour in Hambantota and modernised Colombo port for Sri Lanka.
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- All three ports (Gwadar, Hambontota and Kyakpyu) could provide bases or sanctuaries to PLAN ships and submarines deployed in the Indian Ocean.
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What is India's perception about China's encirclement?

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- The Chinese string of pearls strategy around Indian Ocean has encircled India strategically and endangering its strategic interest in the region.
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- The recent Chinese sale of eight diesel submarines to Pakistan and two to Bangladesh provides conclusive evidence of India's **"strategic encirclement".**
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What is China's view about encirclement theory of India?

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- China mocked at the India's "encirclement" thesis and maintain that **China neither wants war, nor seeks further territorial gains.**
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- China looks for economic engagement and friendship, which India has consistently failed to provide by playing the Dalai Lama card, cosying up to the US and withholding cooperation on the "**Belt and Road" initiative.**
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- While China looms large in India's security perspectives, the former **does not regard India as a threat or even a competitor.**
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- China is irritated with India's attitude towards the Indian Ocean and its growing maritime relations with the US, Japan and Australia.
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What do China assume about themselves in the international world?

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- China’s self-perception has always been that of a **benign and benevolent great power.**
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- The Chinese nurtured a deep-seated “victim mentality” as a relic of China’s subjugation and humiliation by foreign powers during the 19th century.
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- The post-Civil War leadership in China retained a clear vision of their aims: **Hegemony in Asia, acquisition of nuclear weapons and the incorporation of Tibet into the People’s Republic.**
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Does India need to be aware of anything?

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- As Indian diplomats and security experts took note of two strategic reasons because of the increasing growth of PLAN and the creation of the SCS island-fortresses.
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- **First**, These bases can be used to forward-deploy ships, aircraft and missiles to threaten US, India or other naval forces,
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- **Second,** such deployments could extend the operational range of PLAN surface and air forces by as much as 600-900 miles.
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- The Chinese are now closer to India’s Andaman & Nicobar Islands and can closely monitor the activites of tri service command in the island.
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- In the near future, when PLAN is the world’s second most powerful navy, it can contemplate a re-enactment of 1962 in the Bay of Bengal to cut India down to size again.
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- The political leadership and the armed forces have to react against a PLAN **amphibious assault,** on the Andamans, supported by one or more aircraft carriers.
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- India have a modern navy at sea, but without a national security doctrine or strategy, its difficult to deter the enemy or protect the India’s strategic interests.
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Source: Indian Express

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