

Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean: The Region-Centric Multilateral Approach

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Introduction

Indian Ocean is one of the most talked about oceans in the world today. Its significance is multidimensional: it has the most conflicts in its region and is the busiest conduit of world trade. It has also been the focus of super power rivalry during the Cold War and is gaining renewed attention in recent times as the geostrategic interests of the major world powers re-converge in its waters. With the rising politico-strategic foci on its shores, there is increasing evidence of maritime crime in the Indian Ocean, of late. Though substantially abated, yet piracy in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden coupled with maritime terrorism, drug trafficking and human smuggling are the signs of some serious disturbances to peace and stability in the Ocean, demanding a credible maritime response. The vastness of the Ocean makes it virtually impossible for a single littoral nation to remain successful against these challenges.

The changing threat mosaic necessitates a relook at the models of fighting, the threats and the prevailing situation in a diminished maritime security milieu. A paradigm shift from 'confrontational' to 'cooperative' approach is essential; whereby regional littorals may come together to operate their maritime forces for better preservation of their maritime interests whilst not allowing the extra-regional actors to interfere with the regional settings. This new method may be termed as 'region-centric multilateral approach'. This would principally mean solving specific difficulties through: using own resources and own operational ways. This approach predicates on the prime

cardinal that the extra regional forces pursue an 'interests-centric' course, which might not answer the 'region-specific' threats and challenges; therefore, region-centric approach becomes the key problem solver in such situations.

This study focuses on the major issues in contemporary maritime security, especially in the Indian Ocean, and figures out a way to deal with those. It begins with the description of the Indian Ocean with respect to its significance in global trade and geopolitics thereafter evaluating the oceanic order in terms of various threats of maritime security. After explaining the regional security situation, the study argues for a 'region-centric' maritime security model. The study posits that despite several inter-state rifts among the Indian Ocean littoral, the possibility of realizing a region-centric maritime security architecture can be envisaged, as this would be the only framework making region-specific security interests secure. The study suggests that region-specific problems can best be solved by the regional countries themselves as extra-regional nations serve their strategic interests only, and at times, relegating the regional problems to a degree of least significance; and that there always exists a space for cooperation even among the countries with enduring hostility.

The Indian Ocean

Indian Ocean has always been in the spotlight of global attention, and in the words of Sugata Bose, is an "interregional arena"¹ – the one with multiple regional identities and enormous diversity, which is one of the profound characteristics of this ocean. One can gauge the significance of this ocean from the notion of Milo Kearney, who argues that "world wealth, power, and creativity"² has more often been determined,

directly or indirectly, by the Indian Ocean. Spread over an area of around 73,556,000 square kilometres, Indian Ocean holds the most diverse nations on its littorals. Nearly 1/3 of the world's population lives on its shores – with dissimilar socio-economic, cultural and linguistic settings. The Indian Ocean Region, in its share of conflicts and violence, has perhaps seen a lot – from one phase of history to another. The collapse of Soviet Union and Post-9/11 dynamics have brought Indian Ocean into another limelight of its recent history. Toshi Yoshihara declares that density of interest of nations around the globe would increase so much as to transform the waters washing the shores of Asian countries “to be a new geostrategic locus of international politics”³ – and such settings are giving rise to a complex mix of traditional and non-traditional challenges and threats.

David Michel and Russell Sticklor, of the Stimson Centre, argue that “multiple security, maritime policy, and governance challenges are driving regional and extra-regional players to focus increasing attention on Indian Ocean issues within a complex geopolitical framework where foreign powers and local actors' interests and objectives inextricably intermingle.”⁴ Senator Sehar Kamran rightly puts the situation in the India Ocean thus, “... we are witnessing a reprioritization of maritime borders and trade routes, and a resurgence of competition for influence and control in international waters.”⁵ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research shows that with over 100 conflicts, Indian Ocean Region accounts for the highest number of prevalent conflicts in the world⁶. Many of these conflicts have their roots on land, but the perilous impact at sea is a reasoned corollary. The conflicts in the Indian Ocean Region could have a devastating effect on socio-economic situation in and around the region. One thing in this Ocean is surely going to happen: simultaneous enhancement of both security and economic activities, which has led Robert D. Kaplan to claim that

it is “a nervous world crowded with warships and oil tankers”, and believes that “a more anxious, complicated world awaits us.”⁷

Littorals of Indian Ocean are generally poor⁸, some ungovernable, failed or failing states, overpopulated urban centres with fragile governance including two nuclear powers. Most of the Ocean’s nations have weak maritime forces, save a few. Economic conditions and centuries old maritime oblivion is reflected from the maritime force structures and doctrines – which obviously are far behind the other advanced nations of Europe and America. Political, ethnic and enduring inter-state disputes abound the Ocean’s littorals, which have prevented the Indian Ocean nations to develop a regional unity as is seen in the North Atlantic. Walter Anderson refers to the fact that historic super power rivalry⁹ during the Cold War resulted into ‘blocks’ and impacted the evolution of strategic cultures of Indian Ocean states. Cumulatively, these factors created an ambiance of hostility, mistrust and rifts – compelling states to pursue a security-centric approach by aligning with major powers. The alignment was a direct result of security-expediency, which inhibited states’ efforts for self-reliance, indigenization and independent capacity building. This transcended into diverging doctrines, incoherent operating methods and dissenting procedures to deal with prevalent and emerging maritime threats. Given the regional lack of unity in formulating a cooperative construct to fight maritime security challenges, and not-so-well equipped maritime forces of the littorals, we surely are faced with a grim situation, which needs serious attention!

Maritime Security

The phrase ‘maritime security’ has a ‘universal acceptance’ problem. Its accepted, agreed and clear definition is an issue that can set or upset any framework on it. Like Julian Corbett

says, “[t]he vaguer the problem to be solved, the more resolute must we be in seeking points of departure from which we can begin to lay a course.”¹⁰ It is important to understand the conceptual perspective of maritime security vis-à-vis conventional warfighting. In this respect, Geoffrey Till discerns between the two by saying:

[There are] two concepts of battle—the conventional battle for mastery at sea and strategic dominion and the newer concept of a battle for maritime security. As an element in inter-state relations, the first is quintessentially competitive, the second quintessentially cooperative¹¹.

Till’s postulate about the ‘two battles’ is highly relevant to current debate on maritime security, right from the proposition of its definition to finding ways for its implementation. Christian Bueger, in his essay written for *Marine Policy*¹², gives some insights into the definition paradox of maritime security and its related aspects. He proposes that maritime security should be viewed through a matrix of four core concepts: maritime environment, economic development, national security and human security. Elaborating further on his conceptual arguments about maritime security, Bueger proposed, in an article published in *International Affairs*¹³, that maritime security has four distinguishing characteristics, which are¹⁴: interconnectedness, liminality, transnationality and cross-jurisdictionality. Similarly, Michele Ameri and Michael Shewchuk, at United Nations, contend that the term ‘maritime security’ is broad with many policy sectors and it does not have a legal definition. However, they opine that it includes: security from crimes at sea, resource security, environmental security, security of seafarers and fishermen¹⁵. Prior to its widespread use, maritime security has often been thought of as a ‘good or stable order at sea’, however, the notions of ‘good order’ and

'stable order' are subject to question as to what such expressions really mean. One may tend to suggest that there might not be a *definition*, per se, of maritime security but it would mean to be a *condition* where human activities would be free from the threat of: accidents at sea, climate change, pollution, maritime terrorism, arms proliferation, inter-state disputes, piracy, human smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal fishing. A look at the Indian Ocean's contemporary milieu, through the Bueger's and Ameri-Shewchuk assertions, reflects presence of almost the entire range of maritime security problems, some of which are discussed in the ensuing passages.

Piracy, though reduced in intensity and extent, yet figures prominently as one of the most important maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean. Thean Potgieter, of the South African Institute of Security Studies, opines the scourge of piracy and non-traditional maritime threats have led to enhanced naval presence and maritime interactions in the Indian Ocean.¹⁶ Piracy became a global problem beginning with the new millennium. Main piracy hotspots were: Gulf of Guinea, Strait of Malacca and Horn of Africa. Piracy peaked from 2009 to 2011 but was brought under control by 2012 owing to international efforts. International Maritime Bureau (IMB)'s sub-organ International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) statistics show the trend of piracy as 'slowing down' world-wide. Statistical data on piracy incidents¹⁷ reflects that, for instance, in 2014, piracy in the Indian Ocean, accounted for US \$ 2.3 billion, including 245 piracy and armed robbery incidents. In 2015 and 2016, majority of piracy occurred near Strait of Malacca and West Africa. Between March-May 2017, there were 3 vessels hijacked near Gulf of Aden; and over 80 incidents of piracy have taken place, by end of September 2017, around the globe. Between March and April this year, three dhows were hijacked by pirates near Horn of Africa, which can be viewed on ICC's 'Live Piracy Map'

of 2017¹⁸. Intensity in ‘piracy hotspots’ has also been varying since 2012 with more pirate attacks occurring in Strait of Malacca and Western African region. For instance, on 15 September, 2017, in the Gulf of Guinea, around seven robbers armed with guns, knives and iron bars boarded an anchored container ship, assaulted three crew members, stole ship’s properties and escaped¹⁹. Nevertheless, pirates’ activities, in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden, may have reduced but remain noticeable and threatening. A potential for piracy exists to spring up again, and that continues to be a challenge for maritime forces of Indian Ocean region to remain prepared for the anti-piracy operations.

Maritime terrorism caught global attention with USS Cole attack (2000) and MV Limburg inferno (2001) and it continues to pose maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean. Yemeni rebels attacked UAE double-catamaran ferry vessel, with missiles, on 1 October 2016; US navy destroyer, with missiles, on 5 October 2016; and Saudi navy frigate, with suicide boats, on 23 January 2017, which killed 2 Saudi sailors.²⁰ Yemen crisis at land is producing security problems at sea and this is a validation of the ‘interconnectedness’ characteristic of maritime security. Maritime terrorism has the potential to remain a tool for a terrorist organization aiming to fulfil their strategic objectives. Rise of ‘Al Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent, Islamic State and their inclination for using sea to leverage advantage of ungoverned spaces for terrorism, are concerns that must continue to figure in the challenges facing maritime forces of the region.

Drug trafficking is a grave concern that has been plaguing the Indian Ocean states. A United Nations report suggests that there has been “an alarming spike in illicit drug trafficking throughout the Indian Ocean”²¹ commencing from 2014. Afghanistan

remains the epicentre of drugs production, especially heroin, in the world. Outward flow of drugs take both land and sea routes²². Drug traffickers use Pakistani and Iranian coasts to move the illicit products to various regions of the world. According to UN Office on Drugs & Crimes (UNODC) World Drug Report, Afghan opiates trafficked on the southern route to go to Pakistan (and partly to Iran) for subsequent shipment to the Gulf countries and East Africa, for further shipment to Europe, either directly by air or via Southern or West Africa by air or by sea²³. Pakistan seized over 16,000 Kg of heroin in 2015, where major portions of this drug were captured by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA). Checking the drugs flow from the sea is a tough challenge, which the Indian Ocean maritime forces cannot afford to leave unaddressed.

Human smuggling in the Indian Ocean has been steadily increasing. UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2016, presents a dismal picture of this maritime security peril. According to the report, there are nearly 500 routes, by which this horrendous crime takes place. Majority of people smuggled are from Sub Saharan Africa; however, 35 different countries have reported presence of smuggled persons from South Asia²⁴. Interestingly, the statistics and analysis of human smuggling trends by the UNODC reveals that the smugglers and the smuggled persons have the same background. Human smugglers often prefer the sea routes as these give them plenty of ease to do their business. This, nonetheless, becomes a hard challenge for a maritime force to keep the smugglers' probable routes under monitoring, especially the ones which are ungoverned and unsupervised.

Focus on climate change in the Indian Ocean is nominal. Pradyumna Karan's conclusive diagnosis of the Tsunami's devastations suggests that, "[a]n individual or society with a low

perception of risk is likely to adjust poorly to the threat”²⁵. Considering the fact that nearly 4 billion people live within 100 Km of the coast, the impact of climate change on their lives would be beyond measure. Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 wreaked havoc on the coastal towns and cities of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, while many places were wiped off the coasts. Pakistan’s Super Flood of 2010 devastated huge areas and affected 20 million people. Tropical cyclones Phet of 2010 and Nilofar of 2014 severely impacted Oman and Pakistan’s coastal areas. One of the most serious contributory factor of these devastations has been the massive urbanization of major metropolis on shores of the Indian Ocean and a deficient organizational as well as response infrastructure for such calamities. Kolkata, Mumbai, Karachi etc., are sources of colossal pollution and chief threat to marine biodiversity. Despite what happened in 2004’s Tsunami, a central tsunami warning system has not emerged so far. Indian Ocean’s maritime forces need to keep the climate change as a challenge in their operational calculus and must be ready to play their role wherever required in the Ocean.

Besides these major challenges, there are several other problems that keep appearing now and then necessitating a maritime security response, which include: illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, gun running and resource exploitation. Cumulatively, these threats in the maritime domain are enormous for a single nation to fight alone because of the vastness of the oceans and substantial ungoverned or unmonitored spaces at sea. This necessitates a multilateral effort to embattle these and alike challenges, which could further compound the security situation in the Indian Ocean. The Clingendael Institute points towards this reality by positing that there is “absence of a comprehensive multilateral agreement on maritime security in the Indian Ocean”, and that

unarguably results into a “classical security dilemma.”²⁶ This security dilemma could complicate if the Indian Ocean littorals continue to diverge from each other and seek out cooperative regimes with extra-regional countries, thereby risking an opportunity to unify themselves at sea, which makes it convenient and a great deal easier to cooperate.

Regional Security Situation

There are some other strings of security situation in the Indian Ocean, besides those discussed as a part of maritime security above. The discussion of these factors is necessary as these could affect the realization or otherwise of region-centric security mechanism for the Indian Ocean. Among the first such factors is the current and future role of the United States in the Indian Ocean. The US oil dependence on the Middle Eastern oil would certainly lessen, due to shale, and the “[s]hale revolution may cause major changes in the world economy and international relations”²⁷, claimed the Japanese East Asian Strategic Review, 2014. The Review argued that lessening of the US dependence on the Middle Eastern oil could gravely affect the ‘oil politics’ of this region. According to US Energy Information Administration (EIA), the US gross oil imports from Persian Gulf reduced from nearly 100 million barrels per month (2001) to about 50 million barrels per month (2017)²⁸. A Reuters report suggests that the US has become the world’s top oil exporter in 2016²⁹. Nonetheless, the US’ renewed focus on ‘Indo-Pacific’ in view of ‘Pivot to Asia’ or the ‘Rebalance Strategy’ would continue to figure prominently in regional estimates of security. North Korea’s nuclear brinkmanship and China’s defiant position in the South China Sea would keep the US’ gaze glued to Indian Ocean as it would try finding more ‘like-minded’

allies to counter the nations rejecting US' supremacy in the affairs of the region.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will have a pronounced positive impact on maritime security, peace and stability³⁰ in the region. CPEC, in its long term, is not limited to Gwadar Port or land route to China but it aims for a greater regional convergence, union and collective prosperity. Nevertheless, Trump administration's 'South Asian Policy' (which is significantly anti-Pakistan) coupled with US Defence Secretary's controversial claim on 'CPEC passing through a disputed territory' could embolden India to solidify its hostility against Pakistan. Signing of 'Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)' has greatly perturbed both China and Pakistan as the Indo-US military bond has risen to a new elevation. LEMOA is designed to keep the US naval presence, in the Northern Indian Ocean, sustained with the logistics supplied by India. These agreements, though concluded bilaterally, yet could have a profound impact on the region-centric framework, because other regional countries would suspect an enduring ingress of extra-regional players, which in turn could compromise the regional security.

There are varying views on Iran nuclear deal, which had been reached after a long and protracted series of negotiations between the parties. Though Trump has announced to disavow the deal, yet several countries, which helped shaped the accord might not voice the Trump-like concerns. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) believes, "the deal enhances Iran's security and consolidates its regional clout"³¹. While Karim Sadjadpour of Carnegie Endowment posits that outcome of Iran nuclear deal could be uncertain, especially if viewed in the new low in US-Iran relations under Trump. The deal could have positive and negative results as far as regional peace and security is

concerned³². Iran-Saudia hostility has been intensifying for some time now, and was one of the core points of discussion of King Salman's visit to Russia³³. This, apparently unsolvable rivalry has the potential to bring the region into another type of volatility and crisis. Region-centric framework for maritime security, when looked through this terrifying inter-state confrontation, would need a careful configuration, which could lead towards a do-able course of action.

Nuclearisation of the Indian Ocean is an element of 'enduring instability' and risk, and this will enhance the probability of arms race in the region³⁴. Iskander Rehman, in his work 'Murky Waters' opines that Indian induction of SSBN will "noticeably dent" the strategic balance of Indian Ocean region³⁵. On the same note, Syed Muhammad Ali questions the Indian theme of 'minimum' credible deterrence and says, "... such a large sea-based nuclear arsenal, which seems destined to eventually eclipse the British or French nuclear arsenals, be considered minimum?³⁶" Recently, India has unveiled Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces, which deliberately removes the phrase 'minimum' from the deterrence and argues for surgical strikes. Such an aggressive doctrine would definitely create suspicions among the regional countries thereby reducing the probability of cooperation and operating together. Despite the issues that seek to create hurdles in formulating a region-centric cooperative mechanism, yet some analysts believe that there's a strong likelihood that Indian Ocean is going to see several maritime partnerships and initiatives both for trade and security³⁷. Nonetheless, these conflicting developments will have far reaching effects on security environment in the Indian Ocean and highly influence the thought processes to form region-centric architecture to address the shared maritime security issues.

Region-Centric Multilateral Approach to Maritime Security

Admiral Mike Mullen, former US Chief of Naval Operations, admitted that challenges in the maritime domain were so great that even the US navy was not able to negotiate those alone³⁸. He proposed the idea of 'global maritime partnership' for protecting the maritime commons by leveraging the advantages of sea that only maritime forces enjoy. Though the 'maritime commons'³⁹ have 'ownership paradox' but the idea of Mullen leads to creating partnerships at sea for responding to threats multilaterally rather than doing it alone. 'Doing it alone', obviously, is a ludicrous proposition, if not impossible. Pattern and uncertainty of threats challenge the unilateral ability of a state to deal with maritime security threats. The menace of piracy cannot be dealt with a single nation's maritime forces; human smuggling and drug trafficking through ungoverned sea spaces is a tough ask for someone alone to tackle; natural disasters swiftly drench the response capacity of even the strongest of the economies.

The troubling reality, however, is that the Indian Ocean states share almost the same maritime security issues, yet multilateral cooperation has failed to ascend to the significance that it should have been accorded.⁴⁰ Liu Cigui of China Institute of International Studies expounds that "[t]he world is now in an era that values maritime cooperation and development"⁴¹ emphasizing maritime cooperation and highlighting the need for building partnerships instead of dealing with the challenges of maritime arena alone. US Navy's Rear Admiral Gerard P. Hueber points towards several aspects of maritime partnerships, in his essay written for Naval Forces Magazine, underlining that partnerships can result into response efficiency through ready, tailored and flexible forces⁴² – a fact

that a single state might not have the requisite resources in order to realize such a capability.

In a recent report of 'Global Trends 2030', the US National Intelligence Council states that future will see more of "a consolidated regional order"⁴³ (regional arrangements) than what is now. The prototypical thinking in international relations suggests that multilateralism is the answer of the problems we face in the world of our time, which also stresses the need to form such cooperative alliances, principally within a region where states are facing the similar set of threats and troubles. While remaining aware of the 'wave of change', which was noticed soon after World War II, it would be an historic fallacy not to choose the cumulative good over rivalry – i.e., not to form or become part of collective efforts to solve shared problems. Disputes among nations of the Indian Ocean, and some recent developments as discussed under Regional Security Situation, have a serious influence over charting a course for a cooperative regime at sea. Speaking of enduring differences at inter-state level, T. V. Paul, in his book 'The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry' critically examines the root causes of this prolonged enmity between the two nuclear armed neighbours. Calling it "the most enduring and unresolved conflict of our time"⁴⁴, Paul queries as why such a rivalry can't be solved whereas some of the most dreaded and long standing issues in rest of the world have been resolved? The history of the region suggests that Paul's hypothesis "[t]he conflict has affected all key dimensions of inter-state and societal relations of the two antagonists", holds its ground.

One has to admit that if challenges in the maritime realm are to be met, then traditional inter-state rifts have to be 'ignored' or 'made irrelevant' to the contemporary maritime issues. Geoffrey Till, in his book 'Asia's Naval Expansion', while referring to the

US' Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower, says that "trust and cooperation cannot be 'surged' but have to be built and sustained over time, through development of increased understanding amongst maritime forces and forging of international partnerships."⁴⁵ Till's argument is pragmatic and asks for 'choosing reconciliation over rivalry' as an antidote for the current calls in the maritime milieu. Chinese professors Shicun Wu and Keyuan Zou profess a similar idea of multilateral maritime security framework where the nations have to "set aside dispute for joint maintenance of maritime security"⁴⁶. Overcoming or 'short-circuiting' bilateral rivalries will signal external powers not to interfere with the regional settings too much, and be cognizant of independence and sovereignty of other states. Even if resolution of larger issues, e.g., Kashmir, is not presently possible, smaller initiatives, focusing on promoting peace and engagement, could be do-able. Meeting of former chiefs of ISI and RAW at London School of Economics⁴⁷ is one of those acts, which could help defuse tensions between the two nuclear arch-rivals paving the way for working on 'region-centric' initiatives to fight common threats. Andrew T. H. Tan delves into the facet of establishing own cooperative initiatives without the 'dictations' of extra-regional players as this would ensure the Indian Ocean states to remain in the "driver's seat"⁴⁸ for protection and preservation of national or regional interests, liberty of action and freedom of undertaking any political or military decision in own maritime domains.

Lee Cordner holds the view that out of all spheres of possible multilateral interactions, it is the maritime arena that offers visible prospects for circumventing rivalries and 'getting along' to work in a cooperative environment⁴⁹. This view emerges from the fact that maritime security concerns are shared among the Indian Ocean nations, and therefore, they must work together to form mechanisms for collective maritime security of

the Indian Ocean Region. In the same context, Robert D. Kaplan, in his essay, written for Foreign Affairs in 2009, acknowledged the need for a multilateral mechanism of operating together in the Indian Ocean, by saying:

One might envision a “NATO of the seas” for the Indian Ocean, composed of South Africa, Oman, Pakistan, India, Singapore, and Australia, with Pakistan and India bickering inside the alliance much as Greece and Turkey have inside NATO.⁵⁰

Looking at Till’s views on “battle for maritime security” as “quintessentially cooperative” and Kaplan’s phrase of “NATO of the seas”, one is compelled to believe that region-centric cooperative arrangement is inescapable for the Indian Ocean nations. The key question now is to find a ‘way’ to work together whilst making the inter-state differences ‘muted’ or ‘irrelevant’ to the overall common good. This aspect needs a debate and an open discussion. On forums like Galle Dialogue, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) etc., ideas on ‘working together at sea’ can be exchanged while underscoring the reality that ‘our ocean needs our way’ and not the extra-regional forces, which look for divergences among regional countries, exploit those and extract their strategic benefits.

The Future and Way Ahead

The future, as many would believe, is uncertain, unpredictable and challenging much more than the present. The impact of globalization and interdependence will steadily grow in the future, i.e., convincing nations to prefer the idea of *collectiveness* over *unilateralism*. Friedman suggests that the crisis in 21st century will be more than in the 20th century⁵¹, this could be an envisioned messy future replete with conflicts! Hamish McRae,

in his work the 'World in 2020'⁵², mentions that the future will have some of the greatest natural disasters, which might tear the hopes of survival apart for some nations. This demands we should be ready – mentally and materially to face uncertain times collectively. Conflicts or crises could spring up at any corner of the Indian Ocean – because of it being the most spectacular conduit of natural resources – as a consequence of inappropriately managed geopolitics among major players. Peter Chalk predicts⁵³ an increased level of maritime traffic, which would mean enhanced probability of piracy and armed robbery attacks making it a gruesome challenge to security at sea. In this respect, the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies listed seven key parameters⁵⁴ that would define the maritime future of Indian Ocean: 1) Civilian use of SLOCs, 2) strategic importance of SLOCs, 3) vulnerability of SLOCs, 4) activity of violent non-state actors, 5) maritime power distribution, 6) nature of the maritime build-up and 7) maritime relations. The Hague report goes on to suggest that the “activity of violent non-state actors” will considerably increase in the Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

Considering these and alike challenges and future predictions of the Indian Ocean, one reality is indisputable, i.e. the Indian Ocean nations need to adopt cooperative rather than confrontational approach. Future calls for a change in our way of thinking that we can no longer outsource the security of our ocean to external powers whose concerns for the Indian Ocean are shackled to their pre-determined set of national interests. The future of a secured Indian Ocean necessitates greater adoption of region-centric multilateral approach. There are some initiatives already in place, for instance, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Association of South East Asian

Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to name a few. These platforms can be used to form a maritime security alliance among Indian Ocean littorals, on the lines of NATO. Initial framework may appear difficult to conceive as lack of regional coherence, bilateral hostility and mistrust would substantially inhibit meaningful progression. However, the key argument of 'protecting our ocean ourselves' should drive the Indian Ocean littorals' strategic priorities when it comes to realization of cooperative constructs in the maritime domain.

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End Notes

¹ Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 6.

² Milo Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

³ Toshi Yoshihara, "Introduction" in *Asia Looks Seaward: Power and Maritime Strategy*, ed. Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger International, 2008), p. 1.

⁴ David Michell & Russell Sticklor, *Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security & Policy Challenges*, (Washington DC: Stimson Centre, 2012), 11.

⁵ Sehar Kamran, "Introductory Remarks" in Conference Report, One-Day National Conference on Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean: Prospects & Challenges for Pakistan, Islamabad, 27 March 2017, p. 37.

⁶ Conflicts are shown under the heading of "Asia and Oceania" in Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, *Conflict Barometer*, (Heidelberg, Germany: HIIK, 2015), p. 109.

⁷ Reference is made cumulatively to “Asia-Pacific” in Robert D. Kaplan, *Asia’s Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, (New York: Random House, 2014), pp. 182-183.

⁸ Gross domestic product in purchasing power parity (GDP-PPP) of \$10,131 (US) billion, the Indian Ocean Region represented only 10.3 percent of world GDP-PPP in 2010, as noted in David Michel and Russell Sticklor, “Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime and Security Policy Challenges” in *Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security and Policy Challenges*, ed. David Michel and Russell Sticklor, (Washington DC: Stimson Centre, 2012), p. 10.

⁹ Walter K. Anderson, “Emerging Security Issues in the Indian Ocean: An American Perspective” in *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, ed. Selig S. Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 12-13.

¹⁰ Noted by Christian Bueger, “What is Maritime Security?”, *Marine Policy*, Vol. 53, pp. 159-164. Actual reference of the quote is Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, (London: Longman Green & Co., 1911), p. 6.

¹¹ Geoffrey Till, “The Changing Dynamics of Seapower and Concepts of Battle” in *International Order at Sea: How is it Challenged, How is it Maintained*, ed., Jo Inge Bekkevold and Geoffrey Till, (Basingstoke: Palgrav Macmillan, 2016), p. 177.

¹² Christian Bueger, “What is Maritime Security?”, *Marine Policy*, Vol. 53, pp. 159-164. Actual reference of the quote is Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, (London: Longman Green & Co., 1911), p. 6.

¹³ Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds, “Beyond Seablindness: a New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies”, *International Affairs*, iix174, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix174>.

¹⁴ These phrases have been explained by Bueger and Edmunds, these are briefly described here. ‘Interconnectedness’ means security challenges in the maritime domain are not distinct but one depends on the other, e.g., dumping of toxic waste in the Somali Basin (environmental pollution) resulted into depletion of fish, and that led to emergence of piracy. ‘Liminality’ means challenges of security at sea are not just the issues of marine environment but are linked to land; problems occurring at land eventually appear as maritime security challenges. ‘Transnationality’ implies that maritime security issues are not the responsibility of one agency or a state; but they transcend such limiting boundaries of jurisdiction. ‘Cross-jurisdictionality’ signifies overlaps or tensions between the law enforcement agencies, where questions like: Which law may be used to capture the pirates? Where the pirates should be kept? How the pirates may be trialed and what punishment could be given?

- ¹⁵ Michele Ameri and Michael Shewchuk, “Maritime Security and Safety”, briefing at United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS), October 17, 2007, at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_25years/07unitar_doalos_2007.pdf, accessed November 4, 2015.
- ¹⁶ Thean Potgieter, *Maritime security in the Indian Ocean: strategic setting and features*, (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2012), p. 3.
- ¹⁷ Statista, “Transportation & Logistics – Water Transport: Maritime Pirates’ Attacks Worldwide, 2009-2016”, at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266292/number-of-pirate-attacks-worldwide-since-2006/>, accessed 20 September 2017.
- ¹⁸ ICC ‘Live Piracy & Armed Robbery Report 2017, available at <https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-map/details/169/1388>, accessed 7 October 2017.
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