The Threat to Maritime Security to India and the Structure to Cope with Them

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Abstract

India, has very long relations with the oceans and is dependent on oceans/seas as much as any other island country. The geo-strategic location of India makes her an important player in the Indian Ocean region. Being the home of huge population in the region and providing a gateway and path for energy transportation the Indian Ocean has now became one of the most active regions in the world strategically. Especially, in the Post cold war era the major powers contention in the region have enhanced the security threats to India's maritime zone.

Key words- sovereignty, Non-Traditional Security, Fragility, Geo-politics, Development.

Introduction

The attack of 26/11 in 2008 in Mumbai, further gives the view of non-traditional threats to India's security. Therefore the theme of the paper would be to discuss the traditional and non-traditional security threats to India's maritime security and structure of maritime defence of the country at present along with the recommended step which are yet to be taken.

The concept of maritime security in itself is a comprehensive concept which necessarily addresses the non-traditional as well as traditions security threats. The maritime security in itself requires an interrelated and cooperative security by the state actors as well as the non-state actors.The maritime security involves the mitigation of risk and reduction of vulnerability in collective and cooperative order so as to protect, prevent as well as promote the national, local and global vital interests, goals and core values. These vital interests include the sovereignty of the state, the economic development, human and social development environment and ocean resources and the freedom of navigation in high seas.[1] One is aware of the fact that rises effectively to more than three-fourth of Earth's surface. On one hand, the three-fourth portion of Earth's surface is covered with water and the three fourth of portion of this water is effectively 'no man's land'. With ever growing trade in post cold war era of globalisation which is mainly sea-borne since the seas are cheapest made of transportation, making humans reliant on seas for most of their needs . which is mainly sea-borne since the seas are cheapest made of transportation, making humans reliant on seas for most of their needs.

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https://idsa.in/system/files/JDS_8_2_2014_LeeCordner.pdf

The term maritime security basically means freedom from fear or threat from the sea. The concept basically defers from

International Journal of Research

Available at https://edupediapublications.org/journals

e-ISSN: 2348-6848
p-ISSN: 2348-795X
Volume 05 Issue 04
February 2018

person to person and state to state. It is based on its geographical, geo-political, economic and demographic situation. UNCLOS defines maritime security as "peaceful use of sea for peaceful purpose" so that all people get benefited from it." Peaceful here is not only absence of war but also the absence of injustice at seas/oceans.

India has lends it name to the third largest and probably the most significant oceans in the 21st century both strategically as well as economically. Indian PM Shri Narendra Modi asserted on UN platform that the 21st century belongs to Asia and especially to India, the Indian Ocean has a huge rate to play in it. India is not only geographically and geopolitically but historically dependant on sea. In Indian mythology the Indian Ocean is termed as 'Ratnakar' which means 'the maker or creator of jewels.' With 11 maritime states and islands, India is as dependent on sea as any other island nation. With 7576 km. long coastline and approximately around 2.2 million sq. km. of EEZ, the threats and challenges posed to India's maritime security is also huge.

Challenges/Threats to India's Maritime Security

As mentioned above, India is blessed with huge coastline and vast EEZ, making her one of the most enriched nation in sea/ocean resources. The seafaring population of India is very large. It accounts for more than entire population of many European and African nations. The security challenges faced by India are basically characterized two major heads- major power strategic contests and Low intensity conflicts and piracy.[2]

The shift of global maritime focus from Atlantic-pacific region towards the Indo-pacific continuum leads to a possible contests among the major powers in the region for their vital interests. The energy thrust of USA and China and their depends for hydrocarbons and petroleum products on west-Asia makes the SLOC's and Choke points in vicinity of Indian subcontinents vulnerable. Hence directly effects the maritime security of India.

2 http://theconversation.com/cooperation-is-key-to-securing-maritime-security-in-the-indian-ocean-67989

India for her economic growth and energy requirement has to depend upon the seaborne trade. The infrastructure for effective seaborne trade needs to be developed which furthermore enhances the paradigm of maritime security of India.

The traditional state-based concerns of maritime security includes sea-lanes security, the internal political instability, geopolitical fragility, territorial disputes, insurgency and inter-state tensions, which now a days are coupled with growing threats from non-state sources and asymmetric links. These non-state threat sources includes- piracy, terrorism, trafficking (human and drugs), the impacts of environmental degradation, the depletion of resources, natural disasters, climate change, weak states and failing institutions and energy security and vulnerability to the SLOC's. These diverse challenges furthermore couples with the diverse and politically instable nations bordering the region which leads to political tensions bringing with the danger of instability and tensions.

The traditional state based concerns and major power strategic contests among some prominent influential powers like USA, China, Japan and Australia along

with India being and inevitable part of this nexus. The vulnerability to India's maritime security enhances the comprehensive diplomatic policies and bilateral and multilateral ties with one another. It also mitigats one another's influences in order to protect their vital interests and core values and also promoting the furthermore.[3]

But along with this tussle for influence and power is going on, some non traditional threats to maritime security in IOR, are need to be discussed.

- ➢ Piracy
- ➢ Terrorism
- ➢ Trafficking
- ➢ Environmental Security Challenges
- ➢ Energy Security and SLOC's Vulnerability

- ➢ **Piracy-** When it is talked about non-traditional threat to maritime security the scrouge of piracy at high sea is most prominent in modern day

[3] https://nationalinterest.in/india-and-the-indo-pacific-balance-of-power-1814c5a5f6a1

shipping. Pirates now a day are well equipped with modern gadgets and arms such as modems, satellite phones, radars, speedboats. Very high frequency radios, grenades, mortars etc. easily take control of the merchant ships and vessels. The Indian Ocean region became victim to the act of piracy due to geography and weak legal regimes in the regions. There are many shallow areas and choke points particularly near the African Coast and Malacca strait in Indian Ocean which as well as with operational point of view for pirates to perpetrate attacks and also to allow them quick gateway. The acts of

piracy has seen a great low in recent years due to some effective port security measure and harbour because these are still some unsuccessful attempts have been recorded in the high sea. This problem would continue as long as some effective maritime zone law enforcement agencies are not raised up.

- ➢ **Terrorism-** When we talk of word 'terrorism' there is no doubt that India is one of the major problems of marine terrorism. The attack of 26/11 on the economic capital of the country Mumbai has shattered the whole structure of Naval/Marine defence throughout and raised some serious questions upon it. The Mumbai attacks ask for the security of coastal water very effectively. Apart from 26/11 attacks on Mumbai in 2008, there are several other incidents of terrorist acts in Indian Ocean Region such as terrorist attack on USS core in 200 and on French tanker MV Limburg in 2002 in the region. Sinking of 'Superferry 14' near Manila on 26 Feb 2004 in which 116 people were killed is also claimed by a terrorist organisation'theAbuSayyafGroup'. [4]These incidents says loudly about the menace of terrorism in marine environment is also very critical and as said by Joshua H. His article on "Security of sea lanes in South east Asia" in Asian survey (2006) that have grave "Knock-on effects" on developed economy the effective steps must be taken to curb down terrorism in marine environment.[5]

➢ **Trafficking (Narcotics and Human)-** Being a cheap route of transportation and with a large area remaining out of any legal boundaries high seas provide easy route for illegal trafficking of drugs and human in the region.

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www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg485dhs.11

5   Emerging Maritime Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region: Challenges and Responses, praghya pandey,
http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_34577.pdf

These trans-national security concerns effects ranging from fuelling terrorism to illegal immigration causing socio-political instability. India's geopolitical setting is near the two of the world's most illegal opium producing areas- The Golden Cresent comprising of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran in west flank and the Golden Triangle comprising of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos of East flank makes her victim to illegal drug trade due to its long and porous coastline.

➢ **Energy Security and SLOC's Concern-** The all above mentioned challenges both traditional as well as non-traditional challenges to maritime security is primarily centred on SLOC's and its security. The strategic and economic importance have already being discussed. These issuers are very critical and every nations and especially India as these SLOC's account for India's 90% of trade. Even more than 80% of world trade is transported through SLOC's of Indian Ocean. Energy security is also a matter of great concern became 90% of energy requirement of country is met through these lanes of communication and even a temporary blockage to a major choke point like Strait of Hurmuz, Strait of Malacca, connecting Persian Gulf and Pacific Ocean respectively to the Indian Ocean would lead to a substantial impact on the energy security.

There have been significant improvements in the security near sea when viewed from the Indian perspective yet some major loopholes are yet to be filled. The attack of 26/11 in 2008 in Mumbai exposes some of the major loopholes of Indian maritime security structure. Firstly, it exposed the porus nature of India's coastline; it also indicates the lack of effectiveness in surveillance system and lack of inter-agency coordination. The Government after 26/11 attack took several measures for the defence of huge 2.2 million sq. km. of EEZ like creation of coastal police stations; development of surveillance infrastructure, the commissioning of radars stations along the coastlines and installation of automatic identification system. These activities were done under the purview of Coastal Security Scheme (CSS) allowing the passage to transmission of large consignment of narcotics to the Far East and the western countries through ocean. Particularly

Myanmar's ports are major base for narcotic traffic around the world.[6]

[6](Sakhuja,2010)

Apart from drugs, illegal human and small arms are also smuggled through seas as it is cheapest and easiest for of transportation for illegal migrant. Along with illegal migrants, illicit weapon trade and gun running is also a major concern which posed a serious threat to national security in the region and specially India due to its huge coastline. These routes also provide a gateway for money laundering in the region. These above mentioned menaces such as illegal trafficking of narcotics, humans and arms need a concerted action at regional, sub-regional, national, local as well as global levels to be addresses effectively.

➢ **Environmental Security Challenges-** Another major challenge faced by the maritime structure of the country like India is the natural disasters in IOR. IOR is the focus of about 70% of natural disasters in the world and the most prominent and destructive was the tsunami that hits out coast in 2004 along with the cyclones that hits our east coast regularly throughout the year. Apart from natural disaster the heavy traffic of the sea routes in the region makes in accident prone. More than 150 collisions at seas happens at yearly basis due to poor visibility, non-serviceability of radars, hulls failures, boiler explosions and human errors.* (Khurana, 2004) Due to these natural and manmade

disasters and pollution by cargos in regions led to contamination of water disturbing the ecological balance of the region. Each of these undertaking is aided by intelligence networks facilitating the effective monitoring of maritime activities in legal zone of country.

The whole structure of Indian maritime security is basically triple layered structured with coastal police guarding the area of coastal waters. Further, at second layer Indian Coastal Guard is responsible for the defence and security of the area within the EEZ and coastal water (effectively from 12NM to 200NM) and at last it is the Indian Navy responsible for defending the high seas beyond 200NM. Although these agency are very much efficient in their own but the coordination among them is also necessary for even more effective defence of the maritime zones and coastline of the country.

A bi-annual exercise 'Sagar-Kavach' is organised with Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guards and the Coastal police as the participants in order to learn the spirit of teamwork and to maritime security jointly. The latest edition of the exercise commenced in October 2017 in Gujrat involves the ships and aircrafts of Indian Navy and ICG, UAVs of the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, personnel from police commandos, patrol boats of BSF and the marine police and India customs making the exercise even more effective in order to enhance the inter-agency coordination.[7]

Apart from security the maritime zones and coastline from any external threats/infiltrator, these agencies are also responsible for backing with the ecological imbalance arising due to regular natural and manmade disaster. One of the major causes of marine pollution is oil spill which cause huge damage to the ocean ecology nearby. These oil spills and other man made disasters and pollution could be controlled with proper inter-agency coordination and regular patrolling of the troops and creation of awareness among the locals on the coastline about the menaces of marine pollution.

Conclusion-

Although the agencies are very effective in their job to defence and ensure security in India's maritime zone especially after the terrorist attack of 26/11 in 2008 but still some major security breaches occurs like in early quarter of 2011 a Russian Couple unintentionally entered into India's maritime zone noticed only by fisherman near the Mumbai coast as the incident of shooting of fisherman by and Italian tanker in suspicion of pirates in 2013 in EEZ of India or the entry of a vessel unnoticed near Mumbai in 2014. Also in January 2017 two vessels the M.T. B.W. Mapple and M.T. Dawn Kanchipuram collided near Kamarajar harbour of Ennore leading to oil spill due to the negligence of authority.

India have done some good work in improving its maritime

security structures with active involvement International or regional forum like Indian Ocean Rim Association, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, the East Asia summit etc. along with strengthening its intelligence service in the maritime zone. India, also have taken some prominent steps in order to improve its infrastructure by enhance surveillance system in Mumbai, Kochi, Vishakhapatnam and port Blair,

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7   https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/coastal-security-exercise-sagar-kavach

installing a network of 51 radar stations (20 Indian Navy and 3 Coast

Guards) on its coastlines and islands, focusing on building the national maritime domain awareness grid to strength its maritime security Structure operationally and technologically.

Even though these are very substantial steps, yet Indian maritime security lacks an apex authority. The coastal security bill drafted in 2013 is yet to be tabbed and the need of National Maritime Authority (NMA) is very critical. The recent projects by Government of India-projects Sagarmala and project Mausam would further strengthen the coastal infrastructure facilitating the security. The maritime space is very important dimension in India's being power status and a key component of

India's energy security and the economic growth.

The secure maritime space would ensure balance between economic, growth, environment sustainment and strategic interests and would further enhance the holistic development of country leading to peace and prosperity.

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