

Naval Power In The Indian Ocean: Rivalry Or Cooperation

**Author: Sushil Kumar Singh
Research Scholar
Department of Defence & Strategic Studies (University
Of Allahabad)**

Univercity Of Allahabad Allahabad ,
Email - singh.sushil143@gmail.com sushilsinghdefence@gmail.com

An essay published lately, regarding external affairs, titled "center stage for the 21st century. Power plays in the Indian Ocean", delineates the eminent scribe and author Robert Kaplan, the present picture of a marine Great Game played between India and China. An except of his point of views says, "Already the world's pre-eminent energy and trade interstate seaway, the Indian Ocean will matter even more as India and China enter into a dynamic great - power rivalry in these waters."

According to his views, the in the neck to neck fight of South East Asian Countries China and India. The turrle of ASEAN will suffer the between two powerful most. they may be entrepped countries who are already

borne with nuclear weapons writ forgs huge destruction. Robert Kalpan's essay echoes the maritime treatment of the Samuel huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations.' Except these two nations, all the naval forces of the Asia Pacific will have to co-operate or will be forced to avoid clear conflict. the some condition will apply even if they emulate to be dominant in the region. The naval occurrences in the Indian Ocean and the Western pacific which are very significant for ASEAN navies raise a little questions. There arises also a question mark whether Indian and Chinese navies or of ASEAN

member nations or of Japan are adopting the latest technologies to like their potentials. China which is already a huge power of this region is an aspirant for naval renovation programme. China's navy is targeting to expand its mobile maritime troops, information warfare and and combined exercises power to procure a genuine ocean power. In the views of Western natal veterans, China wo is bent upon to gain sea control over the island chain that spreads about 200 nautical miles from the mainland, seeking a sea-denial strategy. To radar nearby accessing naval forces

and check the using her hand based aircraft and submarines, China is establishing her ocean intelligence. According to some eminent American military experts, China's is aiming to bereave the American reach to this belt so that she may become independent to sort out her maritime conflicts according to her own strategy. From the point of views of defense experts China has full potential to prevent American help to South, Korea or Japan and she also has the capacity to dampen American assistance to Taiwan under attack. India who assumes

herself an important geographical hub of the Indian ocean, will procure her second air-craft carrier in 2012 from Russia and is hopeful to get next one indigenous air-craft carried by 2015. China's indigenous nuclear submarine was introduced in the month of July, 2009, that will be inducted formally in 2012.

Japan is focusing to ameliorate its sea monitoring efficiency in the sea of Japan, Philipine Sea & East China Sea. It has raised its maritime planning covering sea control, missile protection, calamity relief, counter - proliferation and

may - be exigencies including Taiwan Strait and North Korea. Japan doesn't hide its worries for China's defence strengthening particularly Beijing's "string of pearls" planning or its occupancy of reaching to parts and military convenience with the sea routes of communication in the Indian Ocean covering Pakistan and Burma. Actually a big aim of the Indo Japan naval cooperation i.e. their combined security declaration in October, 2008, is inclined to react China's 'String of Pearls' strategy.

On the one hand Australia lacks large number of ships or naval platforms

except frigates and has no nuclear submarines. On the other hand it has extraordinary networking, over-horizon radar competence and surveillance. It will be heading to expand interoperability with the US navy accompanied by Japan and India and towards the growing potential of China. The US naval power is such worried about Chinese naval strengthening. The US wants to ascertain the powerful China may not compel the regional states to bow before its unlawful demands or to sort out Taiwan matter forcefully. The U.S. is also much concerned about that

China may use its maritime territorial disputes with East & South East Asian countries. it has always been the view of strategists that Asian security is provided excellent service by China which is a continental power where as the US is dominant over the seas but this is altering now because China's naval power is growing day by day. If we talk about Indo - China naval rivalry then we can argue that Indian and China can not prevail over East Asian and Indian ocean waters. Keeping all these concerns said, the US will keep dominating maritime power in the region as it

seems determined to keep up its power. We can not ignore Japan's terrific naval power. Australia will also try to acquire a significant power with its new defence built-up. Thus the circumstances regarding Asian naval dominance would depend on the reciprocity among many key players including India and China.

In the big naval competition among the key players of the Asia - Pacific, other navies are to only on-lookers i.e. Indonesia is going to purchase four Dutch-made missile corvettes and two submarines. Malasiya is dealing to purchase two

diesel - electric scorpene
attack submarines
manufactured by a Franco -
Spanish Company. Singapore
is going to purchase Sweden
- built two archer class
submarines that lonely
posses stealth frigates for its
small powerful fleet.

the apprehension
that comes in mind first is
whether this formation of
Asian navals may be a
menage to the peace of this
region. For this we to
understand the root cause
behind this naval build-up. It
is obvious that, this built-up
took place by two thriving
giants for regional dominance

including some other political
reasons also.

Chronologically the
Asian Naval build-up came in
existence much before the
advent of China and India.
The main point regarding this
build-up is that China is
terrestrial power and the
heart of Asia lying near
maritime region. Trades
through waters are chiefly
hubs for the good economic
conditions for the countries
like India, Australia, Japan,
China, South Korea and the
ASEANS nations when the
law of Sea was embraced, the
problem that come forward is
the exploitation of Maritimes
resources.

The Asian states armed forces played the crucial role of basically counter - insurgency orientation during cold war. After the pulverization of various communist revolutions and crumbling of some separatist movements now the attention has diverted to traditional warfare, so the neighbouring nations of this region are now focussing on navy and air forces.

Behind the Asian naval renewal, piracy occurrence and the 9/11 World Trade attack have also been the main reasons. At present Asian navies are

coping with lots of menaces like illegal migration, drug trafficking energy insecurity and many others. Energy safety and soil price rise are also boost - ups for the naval back-up. These problems can not be ignored and the regional naval connections must be strengthened.

After World Trade Centre attack, the US took up many maritime security initiatives along with multi-lateral action i.e. Internal Ship And Port Security. A regional action to support these measures is needed in Southeast Asia. The cooperation among ASEAN navies is more important

than cooperation with outside powers. Many inspiring instances of cooperation are there, like Malasiya, Singapore and Indonesia coordinating patrols in the Straits of Malace for many years. This cooperation has been supported by "Eye-in-the Sky" a joint aerial vigilance system when Indian Ocean suffered Tsunami in 2004, the world saw an international naval cooperation for a common aim where the Asian navies as well as there from US, Europe and Australia come together. By such humanitarian action, the US

was successful to a large extent to remove anti-Americanism aura in Indonesia. This indicates a good sign for future understand among navies across the globe.

China's progress in naval transparency is a positive trait in this regard. It has produced white papers containing information regarding military competence, its participation in combined naval exercises, bilateral and multilateral defence consultantism and regional disaster relief operations. Its maritime cooperation is fine feasible cooperation having two

conditions, the first one is 'no US dominance' and other one is no compromise of sovereignty.

We have already seen several examples of Bilateral and Multilateral coordination among Asian navies. The Indian navy, to check smuggling and drug trafficking, organized patrols called Milan, with Indonesian and Thailand navies. Indian navy sponsored the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium in 2008 and was successful to bring the navy chiefs of 29 countries at the same platform except China.

Another example of these co-ordinations is the

western Pacific Naval Symposium held by the US Pacific fleet having a proposal to link WPN with IONS. The US navy is deliberating the Thousand Ship Navy Global Maritime Partnership that presumes a universal maritime alliance prompted to security and humanitarian goals that may be led by any nation.

The countries lying in South East Asia, are also increasing maritime cooperation. On purposes to encourage user countries to coordinate one another, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore began the cooperative mechanism for

the straits of Malacca and Singapore. This step is prompted to ameliorate maritime safety and environmental protection but it doesn't guarantee aforesaid security.

Efforts are continue to make a sea agreement between the US and China. It is political responsibility of ASEAN and ASEAN Regional Forum that they should conclude the some agreement to prevent incidents at sea in Southeast Asian waters. The aforesaid agreement would be enough to cover all the navy forces operating in regional waters. In this regard Canada's role has been very

limited in the Indian ocean and Asia Pacific. In the past decade Canada has been active to counter terrorism and piracy actions around the Arabian sea and Northern Indian ocean. it has also been involved in many multinational exercises in the pacific but it has focused less on the pacific and Indian oceans the to concentration on budget on Canadian operations in Afghanistan. Its policy on strengthening Canada's naval resources in the Arctic has added further problems. Its general apathy shews that it is not going to play any big role to develop naval cooperation in the

Western Pacific and Indian oceans.

Nobody can predict whether the Pacific or the Indian ocean will prevail in this century or not. In this regard the Canadian navy and the navies of ASEAN countries would do something true and significant engaging the US, Australian and Japanese navies in different cooperative activities and fight uncustomary menaces.

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