INTRODUCTION
In the nineteenth century Alfred Mahan\textsuperscript{1} introduced the idea of sea power to describe a country's ability to use the sea to national advantage but many contemporary texts prefer the concept of maritime power.\textsuperscript{2} This has been defined by the former chief of the Singapore Navy as "the aggregate of a country's ability to make use of the sea in order to fulfil its national economic, security and other goals."\textsuperscript{3} Maritime power is the means by which a nation or a group of nations acting together, attempt to secure and maintain command of the sea so that it can transport its own mercantile and military resources necessary for the prosecution of a war effort. In doing so it naturally attempts to deny such facilities to the enemy. The strategic elements involved in maintaining this power range from developing ship-building and ordnance facilities, bases at home and abroad, fishing mercantile and hydrographic fleets, to the final arbiter of maritime power, the fighting ship. Maritime power is not merely that of a warship. It is the sum total of those weapons whose installation and the geographical circumstances, which enable a nation to control transportation over the seas during wartime.\textsuperscript{4} The priority of maritime power has primarily been defensive. The over-riding aim was the defence of the integrity of the homeland against invasion and raids against which military forces would otherwise have to be deployed. For example, Britain is an island Kingdom off the coast of Europe surrounded by states that possessed larger armies than Britain. This was the \textit{raison d'etre} for the British Royal Navy, other countries being continental needed navies for the same reason but were not so absolutely dependent on maritime power for national survival as the British.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, US Navy 1840-1914.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Harold J. Kearsley, \textit{Maritime Power and the Twenty-first Century} (Aldershot, 1992), p.86.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Bernard Brodie, \textit{A Guide to Naval Strategy} (New York, 1965), p.34.
\end{itemize}
Maritime Perception and Strategic Thinking: Historical Perspective

In contemporary world maritime power can be understood as "that strength in naval ships, associated aircraft, weapons and support services which enables a country to promote the political and economic interests of itself and its allies in peacetime and over the enemy in war." Therefore, there are many conditions for a country to achieve maritime power. Firstly, the aim and determination of the country and its alliance's involvement; the geographical advantages or disadvantages which it possesses. Secondly, the importance of its past history and the influence it had on its sea-going capability and lastly, the stability of the economic base of that country. Arleigh Burke had stated that sea power has four essentials ingredients, first, an instrument to carry on essential trade - the Merchant Marine, secondly to protect that commerce - a navy, thirdly the ability to protect the national political will through mobile military forces conveyable across the world's oceans and fourthly, the nation will to exercise its enterprise on the sea. Without these preconditions of commerce and defence cannot be built or if built cannot be used or sustained.

Maritime strategic thinking has its origins in the use of military force in a naval sense in support of land force during the Persian invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. In the ninth century there was conscious use of maritime power by an English ruler Alfred the Great, King of the West Saxons against the Danish invasions. Even in the ancient and medieval periods maritime power thus played a key role. The Mediterranean, a land-locked sea, witnessed the rise and fall of several civilizations - the Phoenician, the Roman, the Byzantine, the Arab and the Turkish, in whose history the navy had played

8 Moore, n.5, p.3.
an important role. Then came the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean which could be traced to the Punic Wars. It was only when the Romans crushed the Phoenician navy that they could extend their hold over north Africa. The Indian Ocean also witnessed great sea borne activities both in the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Historians, such as Thucydides provide illustrations of some concepts of maritime strategy from the ancient times which drew inspiration from them. With the advances in science and technology, the development of the cannon and increased manoeuvrability of the sailing ship, Alonsa de Charve, Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Bacon\(^9\) considered maritime tactics and strategy in a practical sense. All argued that maritime or sea power conferred so many advantages that those nations that possessed it to a significant degree would have a dominant influence on world events, from the importance of the oceans to trade and imperial expansion. They agreed that sea power was the means to national prosperity. All advocated the building of not only naval power but also the civilian maritime component and merchants fleets, ports, overseas bases and colonies.

The concept of maritime strategy states that in a period of conflict some degree of command or control of the sea is essential either because of the direct strategic importance of such control or because of the potential access or protection provided for national interests by the control. This includes both denying the use of the sea to the enemy (to prevent an attack from the sea) and asserting the ability to make use of the sea for one’s own purpose (to conduct littoral operation in support of land or to maintain sea lines of communication). Sea denial and sea assertion (or sea use) are the two components of sea control.\(^{10}\)


\(^{10}\) Sam Bateman, "Naval Roles and Maritime Power", *Maritime Studies*, September-October 1995, p.15.
Sir Julian Corbett defined maritime strategy as:

The principles which govern war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval strategy is but that part of it which determine the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of land forces.\textsuperscript{11}

The maritime strategic thinking and the development of the strategic justification for naval forces is that the primary purpose of maritime operations is to protect country’s own economic vulnerabilities or to attack the enemy. However, in a more contemporary sense, the concept of maritime power extends this strategic link with economic interests beyond trade and merchant shipping to embrace the whole range of a nation’s offshore commercial interests, fishing and offshore mining, and their vulnerability to attack.

Recently, various scholars have sought to develop the strategic principle of sea power, which was initially laid down in the concepts by Mahan and others. Ken Booth has proposed a trinity of naval functions; a diplomatic role where navies are used in support of foreign policy either through a passive presence or in a manipulative or coercive sense a policing role associated with sovereignty protection and coastguard type activities and a military role of projecting and maintaining a balance of power.\textsuperscript{12} Geoffrey Till also emphasises the similarity characterised in maritime strategy which is comprised of two essential parts, the winning, keeping, contesting or ignoring command of the sea by means of the decisive battle, fleet in being or blockade, and purposive or preventive uses of the sea by means of coastal protection, protection of trade, projection of power ashore, naval diplomacy and strategic deterrence.\textsuperscript{13}

Rear Admiral of Australian Navy, Richard Hill who has been working in the Australian context, has attempted to deliver a general theory of maritime power for


medium powers. His belief that a medium power should create and keep under national control enough means of power to sustain coercive actions, which will preserve national interests, is based on the concept of credible missions. He sees this in the concept of sea control; consisting of sea use and sea denial. Hill in his thesis, 'Concept of Reach', which is significant to Australia, given the extent of their area of direct military interest. Sea assertion makes it possible for a nation to control a part of it, for its own purposes and make it possible to project ashore against an adversary. Typical sea assertion operations comprise amphibious operations, which include such tasks as the evacuation of nationals and the restoration of law and order, naval presence missions - including response to regional requests for support and peacekeeping tasks, intelligence and surveillance, protection of shipping, offshore territories and resources and mine counter-measures.

At the highest operational level, power projection includes strike against land targets or lines of communication from the sea. Typical operations involve naval gunfire support, seaborne air strikes and interdiction of an adversary's sea lines of communication. To this extent, many sea assertion operations are offensive in character, although they may be conducted for defensive objectives. But the concept of maritime power would not be complete without air power in the maritime environment. Since the advent of aircraft in the early years of this century, their influence on maritime operations has been fully recognised by maritime power and its strategists. The utility of aircraft for naval reconnaissance and surveillance was essential and recognised immediately, because of its significant impact demonstrated in World War II and Gulf War. Aircraft are now an essential element of maritime power and operations.

Significance of Indian Ocean

Strategically the Indian Ocean occupies a unique position. Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, commented that "The Indian Ocean is the key to the seven seas. In the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters."\(^{16}\) The Indian Ocean is the world's third largest ocean which is about half of the size of the Pacific Ocean and only slightly smaller than the Atlantic Ocean. It is separated from the Atlantic Ocean at the Cape of Good Hope and the boundary between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific follows the line from the Malay Peninsula through Sumatra and Australia. It is situated between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn. It covers approximately one-fifth of the ocean area of the world and extends between Africa in the west, Australia in the east, Asia in the north and Antarctica in the south. Along with the long coastline of East Africa, the entire reaches of the east Indian Ocean and the lands bordering this part is a region of great political and strategic significance. It lies between two political worlds, at one end are the People's Republic of China and Russia and at the other end lie the interests of United States and United Kingdom. Significantly, the Indian Ocean communicates with the South China sea through the Straits of Malacca.

The geographic definition of the Indian Ocean as has been accepted by the United Nations on the 1 July 1974 is as follows:\(^{17}\)

1. The dividing line between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean is the meridian of Cape Aguthas (20° O'E).

2. The dividing line between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean is the meridian of the South-East Cape of Tasmania (197° O'E), the western exit of which is the Bass Strait and the median line between the north-west of Australia and the Malay Peninsula (Cape Talbot through Timor, Sumba, Flores and the Sunda Islands up to Sumatra).

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17 UN Document A/AC, 159/1 July 1974, Ad Hoc Committee in the Indian Ocean, p.16.
3. The dividing line between the Australian Ocean and the Indian Oceans is the 60° O's.

4. The northern limits of the Indian Ocean are clearly defined by the continent of Asia.

The Indian Ocean has an area 28,400,000 sq. miles (73,600,000 sq. km.) making up 20.6 percent of the total oceanic area of the world. The maximum length is over 10,960 km. (north and south) and its maximum breadth is nearly 9,655 km (east and west). The average depth of the Indian Ocean is about 12,760 feet (3,890 meter) and the deepest known points is in Java Trench, which descend to 24,442 feet (7,437 meters).18

The chief marginal seas include the Red Sea and Persian Gulf in the north, the Arabian Sea to the northwest, Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal in the northeast and the Great Australian Bight which is off the southern coast of Australia. The major islands and groups include Madagascar, Sri Lanka and the Mascarenes (Mauritius, Reunion and related islands). The ocean receives great rivers that flow from the Asian continent: the Salween, Irrawaddy, Ganges and Brahmaputra flow through to the Bay of Bengal, the Narbada and Indus through the Indian subcontinent which is the Gulf, the Tigris and Euphrates flow through into the Arabian Sea. The chief African rivers emptying into the Indian Ocean are the Giuba, Zambezi and Limpopo.

The region comprises 44 states consisting nearly one-fourth of the world population. It consists of India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kuwait, Oman, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Egypt, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Maldives, Jordan, etc.

For many centuries the Indian Ocean has been the keystone water corridor linking the west and east, even though in more recent times, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean rimlands have been the focus of strategic attention with regard to internationally vital

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waterways. Its straits, various points of entry and exit have become the key to the entire region and to almost every industrial power outside of it. There is no doubt that the Indian Ocean has been the most ancient trading waterway of the world. The Indian Ocean instead of dividing the peoples of the rim countries unites them. Monsoon winds have helped the trading seafarers in the region a great deal. The people of the Indian Ocean region have conducted free and flourishing trade for centuries. In fact, for many centuries, even before the Greek sailor's guide, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, was written, the vast Indian Ocean was a great highway of economic intercourse and the main area of trade and navigation. 19 There is also evidence to show that much before Vasco da Gama discovered the route to India via the Cape of Good Hope, Indians and East Africans were in continuous contact within the whole Indian Ocean complex. Alan Villiers, the well known Victorian explorer and maritime traveller who circumvented the globe during 1934-36 is of the opinion that the Indian Ocean is the birthplace of the art of sailing and Indian ships were among the earliest to have sailed over its blue bosom. The Indians were also most prominently active in maritime trading and strategies prior to the nations of Europe and Asia which sailed through the waters of the Indian Ocean in very early times. 20 The dynasties of ancient India, such as Nanda, Maurya, Chola and Satavahana had very strong fleets which were used for the purpose of navigation and carrying on maritime trade with Greece, Rome, Egypt and Arab countries through the Indian Ocean. Till the thirteenth century India played a dominant role in all the naval activities with Indonesian, Arab and Chinese ships also being active in the Indian Ocean.

In the fifteenth century the European powers with gun-powder and larger and stronger ships sailed into the Indian Ocean notably Portugal, Denmark, France, and

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England and expanded their colonial dominance in the region. William E. Griffith remarks, "The Portuguese and the British saw this sea as the gateway to the riches of India and beyond." However, later the British became supreme and controlled the Indian Ocean region for about 200 years. By the mid-twentieth century the Indian Ocean drastically changed by the emergence of superpowers' interests, the United States and the Soviet Union who tried to establish their superior control over the major water expanses of the oceans, especially the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean for their political objective, security and economic interests. Both the superpowers either winner or loser in their naval capabilities competition in the Indian Ocean. In 1991 came the end of their Cold War and the Indian Ocean was left to the regional powers.

The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean stems from the fact that the Indian Ocean possesses vast amounts of raw materials which are important for the growth and development of the major manufacturing industries. The vast floor of the Indian Ocean has not yet been fully explored and the possibility that it may contain deposits of strategic minerals cannot be ruled out.

Recently a study off the coast of the Indian Ocean have confirmed that there are rich deposits of natural gas, oil, and heavy minerals which are of great economic and strategic importance. The ocean abounds in fish, which has been proved beyond doubt.

It is a fact that the entire Indian Ocean region is a powerful economic entity. The region is rich in minerals - containing two-thirds of the world's oil resources, 40 percent of its gold, 90 percent of diamonds and 60 percent of uranium. It has vast deposits of

23 ibid, pp.273-4.
coal, copper, iron ore, bauxite, lead and manganese. The region is also rich in agricultural products like tea, coffee, coconut, cotton and rubber. The food production potential, particularly of wheat and rice, is immense.

Australia and Indian Ocean

Australia is an Indian Ocean nation lying between three great oceans of the world - Pacific on the east, the Indian Ocean in the south and the southern. The continent is bounded by latitudes 10° and 44°S (about 2,450 miles from Cape York Peninsula in the north to Tasmania in the south) and by longitudes 112° and 154°E (about 2,700 miles from east to west) Australia. The Commonwealth of Australia covers an area of 7,682,303 sq. km. (2,966,157 sq. mile). According to the mid 1993 statistics, Australia's population was 17,657,400 giving a density of only 2.3 inhabitants per sq. km. one of the lowest national figures in the world.24

Australia is separated from Indonesia in the north-west by the Timor and the Arafura Seas, from Papua New Guinea in the northeast by the Torres Strait, from the Carol Sea Islands Territory (in the Carol Sea also in the northeast) by the Great Barrier Reef, from New Zealand in the southwest by the Tasmania sea and from Antarctica to the south by the Indian Ocean.25 Australia also possesses some external territories which consists of a group of non-self-governing dependencies. They are located variously in the Antarctic continent and in the surrounding areas of the Southern Pacific and Indian Ocean. They comprise the Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Islands, Cocos Islands, Norfolk Islands, the Heard and McDonald Islands and the Coral Sea Islands. Only Christmas and Cocos Islands have permanent inhabitants.26

26 ibid, p.716.
In the early nineteenth century Australia did not have the same perspective about the importance and potential of the Indian Ocean and its resources unlike the South Asians - with the exception of Western Australians. Most writers have observed a so-called 'Eastern Tilt' in Australia's foreign policies, it was only the Western Australians, who were fully aware of the history and significance of the Indian Ocean. Historically the Indian Ocean has seen a higher level of traditional maritime commerce between littoral and islands peoples than have the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The Indians, Indonesian, Chinese and Arabs/Persian peoples all had a long history of transoceanic trade well before the entry of Europeans into the Indian Ocean region. In terms of strategic history through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and up to the mid-twentieth century, the naval power of Britain and its leadership in global industry enabled Britain to achieve hegemony in the Indian Ocean. Australia and India were both integral parts of the system which supported the Indian Ocean often being referred to as a British lake.27

Despite the importance of the Indian Ocean, both strategically and economically, it is a fact that Australia has tended to neglect the Indian Ocean. In fact, her attention was directed toward the Pacific Ocean and the waters and lands to their immediate northwest rather than to the Indian Ocean itself. There are various reasons for the apparent Australian neglect of the Indian Ocean. Australia is a two ocean country (or even a three-ocean country if one includes Southern Ocean) and there are some historical factors such as that most of the population and industrial infrastructure is concentrated in the south-eastern part of the continent. This region is an extremely busy oceanic highway, where massive trade and travel flows between East and Southeast Asia and the Middle East and Europe. It offers valuable alternative to the trans-Atlantic route, which

is dependent for the most part on European acquiescence and unrestricted passage through the Suez Canal. The region has traditionally faced threats from east coast Russia and Germany and during the World War II of Japanese invasion through Papua New Guinea.

The Indian Ocean is of vital importance to Australia because nearly 30 percent of its exports and more than 20 percent of its import (by value) move across the ocean and more than 20 percent exports and nearly 15 percent of imports move through Indonesia's Sunda Strait, Tombok Strait and Ombai Strait. Further more, civil aviation links with western Europe, Southern Africa and Middle East rely upon access to airspace or airports in fifteen countries of the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean is not only important for seaborne passage but also is very crucial for geostrategic reasons to Australia. Therefore, since the 1970s Australia has increased its naval presence in the Indian Ocean to protect national interests and territories. Subsequently, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) expanded their operations and military support facilities in Western Australia. The RAN units are deployed regularly to the northeast Indian Ocean with routine port visits to the islands states and along the East African littoral states. The RAAF also undertook maritime surveillance with P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft and expanded its operations with routine surveillance flights from Learmonth in western Australia to Cocos Islands and Butterworth in Malaysia.

However, Australian economic interests in the region are closely related to its military strategic interests. Response to potential threats to these interest have in the past been formulated within the framework of the ANZUS alliance. Recently, considerable attention has been paid to the Indian Ocean region in Australian Defence Planning.

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28 The Indian Ocean Challenges and Opportunities, Seminar hosted by the Navy Foundation, New Delhi, 29-30 September 1992, p.12.
Strategic priority is now given to developing defence infrastructure in Eastern Australia, which will eventually host half of Royal Australian Navy fleet. The proposed western basin provides greater deployment and surveillance potential in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the face of the development of naval power by other Indian Oceans' littoral nations, such as India. Australia also perceived that threats to Australian interests in the Indian Ocean and to other areas of direct Australian military interest, arise not only from Indian Ocean nations but also from other developing powers in Australia's broader strategic environment. The future challenge to Australian security planners in the Indian Ocean arises from the ongoing transformation from a world where there has been regional superpowers domination to a more complex, multi-polar world, with several major centres of power likely to emerge in the twenty-first century. The three emerging East Asian powers, China, Japan and Indonesia all have the military capability to pose a direct threat to Australian interests.

Australia with its relatively strong capacity in the past to ignore the Indian Ocean in view of its transpacific orientation, currently appears to be gradually accepting a more active regional maritime role. This situation is best reflected by the recent upgradation of a normal base near Perth on the south-west coast of West Australia to facilitate Indian Ocean deployment of a frigate force and acquisition of long-range strike capabilities by its naval-air arm. The RAAF has been upgraded by acquisition of aircraft, such as F-III bombers, F/A/-18 fighters and 2P-3C Orions. RAN has also acquired new classes of warships, both surface combat ships, and submarines to defend Australian territory and society from the threat of military attack and to protect of Australian interests in the surrounding maritime areas, island territories, proximate ocean areas and focal points.

Chapter I goes into the history of maritime activities in the Indian Ocean. This region gradually became the highway for transmission of ideas, culture, religion and also
a gateway to numerous commercial activities. Later, European powers emerged and tried to use it for their colonial pursuits.

Chapter II focusses on the post-World War II where a number of regional and non-regional nations have projected maritime power and influence within the Indian Ocean region. The superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union had conducted sustained deployment of fleets in the Indian Ocean. The other major powers, i.e., England, China, Japan and France have also been taken cognizance of in this chapter.

Chapter III deals with the Australian strategic maritime and commercial interests in the eastern Indian Ocean. Australian main security concern is to protect maritime approaches, ocean resources, islands and the economic potential of northwest Australia.

Chapter IV analyses Australia's direct military interest in the Asia-Pacific region. It also focusses on the emerging status of Australia as a regional power.

Chapter V looks into Australia's anxiety due to the growing maritime capabilities of the Asia Pacific region. In this chapter an attempt has been made to underline the Australian planners' concern on this issue and rethinking for the better equipment for both the air and naval capabilities in the twenty-first century.