CHAPTER - 1

GEOPOLITICS, SEAPower AND SEALANES
OF COMMUNICATION: AN ANALYSIS
Political geography is a relatively new branch of human geography dealing with the political interpretations of geographical phenomena. It studies human activities which are political in nature. Political geographers are concerned with geographical consequences on decisions and actions which are politically oriented. It was first recognized as an independent branch of geography only after the publication of Ratzel's Politische Geographie in 1897. In this chapter, the subject matter of political geography is dealt at length taking into account the concepts of geopolitics and geostrategy. The definition of sealanes of communications (SLOCs), concepts of strategic geography, sea power and maritime strategy are also described. According to Grofman, 'modern human geography is a behavioural science concerned with both describing and explaining patterns of social behaviour and interaction within a spatial context' (Grofman, 1982: 883).

1.1. Geopolitics

Tuomi stated that 'political geography describes the rise and actions of political forces in a spatial context' and 'geopolitics represents the spatial situation in the forms of texts, articles and governing principles' and 'geostrategy is the military and political strategy or course of action adopted to achieve the geopolitical ends'. (Tuomi, 1998: 7). He stressed on the fact that geostrategy lies within the realm of geopolitics. According to Oxford English Dictionary 'geopolitics is the study of the influence of geography on the political characters of states, their history, institutions and especially relations with other states'. Loo, is of the opinion that 'the study of political geography (or geopolitics) highlights the importance of geography to international relations' whereas 'the study of military geography (or geostrategy) highlights the importance of geography to strategy and military operations at all levels' (Loo, 2003:156). Loo further analyzed that 'geopolitics is the spatial study and practice of international relations' and focuses 'on the relationship between politics and physical environment' and states that 'how geography can provide an understanding of politics and inter-state relations' (ibid: 157). According to Sloan and Gray, 'one of the aims of geopolitics is to emphasize that political predominance is a question not just of having power in the sense of human or material resources but also of the geographical context within which that power is exercised' (Sloan and Gray,
Harvey (1992) gives different arguments about geopolitical factors, according to him it covers all the essential dimension of the environment that encompasses the world politics from one individual states to other. Again according to Ostend (1988) the geopolitical environment includes the effects of space, topography, position and climate. He further described that geopolitics deals with the configuration and lay out of lands, soils, climate and the distribution of natural resources as well as those dealing with the distribution of people, social institutional or behavioral patterns.

According to the above arguments it is seen that all spatial arrangements of geopolitical factors - population, resource, people's behavior are governed by geography alone. Thus it can be defined as the subject which deals with the influence of geography, economics, and demography on the politics and international relations of a state especially the foreign policy. Coined by the Swedish author, Rudolf Kjellén, the term 'geopolitics' highlights the role of a territory, resources and boundaries which can play an important role in shaping global political relations. According to Dodds, geopolitics deals with international relations, political science, history, geography and law into a definitive collection that covers two dimensions of the geopolitical division, the first one he describes as 'Classic geopolitics' according to him it 'examines the impact of physical geography on political actions' and the second one is the 'Critical geopolitics' which 'challenges the notion of geography as a passive backdrop to international affairs and examines the socially constructed nature of geographical claims' (Dodds, 2009: 45).

According to Brill, 'it has always been stressed that it is extremely difficult to draw a line of demarcation between political geography and geopolitics' (Brill, 1984: 88). Brill further argued that 'the definition of geopolitics as an applied political geography originated by Otto Maull became a process of political event under the influence of Karl Haushofer, Hermann Lautensach and Erich Obst'. He is of the opinion that 'according to Maull geopolitics is an applied science and it is nothing but an applied political geography'(ibid: 89). Brill further added that 'according to the Encyclopedia of Britannica one of the branches of Geopolitics is geostrategy, which forms the elastic nucleus of the political, military and economic strategy' (ibid: 97).
According to Dodds, 'Even today geopolitics is commonly understood as a discipline which deals with the influence of geographical space on the politics of a state' (Dodds, 2009: 7.) He further described geopolitics and geopolitical behavior in a modern sense developed amongst the great powers at the beginning of the 19th century and most especially in Germany, the United States, and Russia. During that time these countries were experiencing a period of rapid growth. Germany's national unity was being established as a means of attaining prosperity and greater influence in Europe. According to Dodds, 'these considerations were developed in the course of 19th century into doctrines of internal growth' and 'the extension of influence beyond the country's own national borders, and finally into global geopolitical theories' (ibid: 9). Geopolitical thinking grew up in a period characterized by great changes in power relations and especially in those countries that were actively engaged in improving their status.

1.2. Sea Power

According to Modelski and Thompson, the classical definition of 'sea power means use and control of the sea' but for contemporary usage according to them, 'sea power may refer first to a state disposing of major naval strength that is forces capable of using and exercising control over the sea' (Modelski and Thompson, 1998: 4). They further added 'sea power refers to the exercise of function in the global system by the use of naval strength' (ibid: 5). They described sea power means ocean power to understand the modern world system and for this one should understand the oceanic system as well as the maritime circulation. The advent of the modern world system equals to the use and control of the seas on a global scale and this has given rise to today's what we call the new age of sea power. According to them world seas constitute one interconnected system and compared it with world ocean and the new age is compared to as the present day ocean power. In the classical definition sea power means use and control of the sea.

The two classical western exponents of sea power were Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett. According to Mahan, command of the seas had been a dominant theme in European history since the beginning of the Age of Exploration. He saw a world ocean as
the single vast highway connecting a global economy. He saw a world whose economy was increasingly global. Countries were increasingly dependent on trade and that meant on access to the sea. To him the seas were the highways. A. T. Mahan’s “Influence of sea Power upon History 1660-1783”, published in 1890 provides the first general theory of sea power in modern times. Just two decades later Julian Corbett’s “Some Principles of Maritime Strategy” (1911), another thesis produced, based on similar methodology but provides different conclusions. Their two different theories stand as the modern maritime strategist thought. Both of them focused on naval strategy related to political causes. They do agree with the fact that sea power represents a higher order medium of interaction in world politics. According to them it gives greater mobility than land power access to wider variety of resources and has higher horizons. It operates world wide at all global level. Mahan was a naval historian who developed the concept of sea power. His immense contribution to naval history has helped many naval strategists to perceive prewar situations. He was the first person to bring some kind of nexus between naval power, maritime trade and political influence. He perceived the key to global leadership in control over the lines of communication at sea and over world trade. A favourable geographical location with good harbours was a necessary condition. He combined the idea of commercial expansion with the necessity to reinforce the naval power of the US and regarded the area from China to the Mediterranean, the middle strip, as commercially important. He strongly recommended the construction of the construction of the Panama Canal and the acquisition of various Pacific islands situated on the route from the USA to China and Southeast Asia. There is clear evidence that Mahan’s ideas influenced the American Policy of expansion and special attention has been drawn to their influence on the thinking of presidents Me Kinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

According to Stubbs and Truver, ‘the early 20th century definition of the sea power of the state was based on A.T. Mahan’s notion that sea power rested upon the means needed to defeat organized military threats originating in nation states’ (Stubbs and Truver, 2007: 4). According to them the control of sea was the prime requisite of the world. Any state cannot simultaneously become a great land and sea power. In the struggle for supremacy, a sea power would always have the upper hand because in a trade dominated world, a
suitable maritime location offered a distinct politico-economic advantage in comparison to a land-locked state or geographically states. Only sea power can control the world oceans. According to Mahan during the World War I, American navies destroyed the Japanese navy. It makes possible to use historical examples to gain an understanding of how sea power can work. Sea power provides greater mobility, hence access to a wider variety of resources and experiences, it employs higher technology, which is more expensive and generates innovation, it operates worldwide and at the global level. Mahan argued that naval power was the key element in sea power and was the crucial element for success in international politics. Mahan’s ideas stimulated the thinking of strategist and helped to justify naval expansion programmes throughout the world, at least for the next half century if not longer.

Sumida has argued that ‘According to Mahan transport over water had been and would continue to be cheaper than carriage over land, constituted a set of physical and human geographical propositions whose use in connection to explanations of major international political outcomes made it easy for many readers to believe that geography determined the course of history’ (Sumida, 1999: 47). He further argued that ‘Mahan’s ideas about sea power, which among other things dealt with the interconnectedness of force, economics and geography’ have promoted considerable discussion of the relationship of his work to geopolitics. He stated that ‘these enquiries however have been based on the assumption that Mahan’s views were simple and thus easy to understand’ (ibid: 39).

According to Klein, ‘the achievement of Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) has been to put the concept of sea power on the active agenda of world politics’. He further stated that ‘Mahan’s arguments had major consequences for naval policy all over the world but specially all over Germany, Britain and the United States’ (Klein, 2006: 9). He described that ‘the concept of sea power depends on naval forces and of changes in their relationships is essential to understand long term trends in global politics’ (ibid: 10). He is of the opinion that to know how the concept of sea power and command of the sea may be operationalised one should know the Mahanian concept of command of the sea. According to him Mahan has identified the structure of world politics and argued that sea power is essential to understand it. According to Friedman ‘writing in the 1880s, Mahan
concluded that command of the seas had been a dominant theme in European history since the beginning of the Age of Exploration’. He further explained ‘Mahan saw the world ocean as the single vast highway connecting a global economy’ (Friedman, 1992: 34). Friedman further argued that ‘Mahan’s personal experience focused him on the oceans and the trade crossing them’ and he explained the fact that ‘Mahan thinks because the ocean is trackless, commerce cannot be protected by the equivalents of road sentries’. (ibid: 35). The essence of Mahan’s theory was that a nation could be strong only if it had the means to control the seas against any threat and sea power and this is the only way to attain that strategic gain.

Yaydan argued that ‘navies have always been and will doubtless remain political instruments’ he further argued that ‘from the earliest days of organized military forces at sea, warships have been used diversely for self-defence projecting power and as the means of conveying emissaries in the conduct of relationships with other states’. He argued that ‘naval forces are used in home waters for law enforcement and self defence and in distant waters to support foreign policy, which in the past has incorporated empire building and more recently as contributions to collective security’. (Yaydan, 2003:62)

Webster’s Dictionary states the definition of navy ‘as the entire military sea force of a nation, including vessels, officers, men, stars, yards etc. with naval as the adjectival form’. Yaydan stated that ‘it is the use of warships rather than the use of merchant ships or other vessels engaged in commercial activity, for furthering the foreign policies of a state’ (ibid: 63). He feels that the advent of technology and communications in particular, has greatly increased the diplomatic potential of warships in that they now have considerable flexibility, mobility and endurance. He added ‘regardless we now live in a very much more complex world in which things happen more quickly and frequently without warning’ (ibid: 64). According to him every States need to have a range of options through which they can respond rapidly to the threats affecting their internal security or to the security related to their geographic and economic dimensions.

According to Yaydan, ‘states maintain navies because about 75 percent of the surface of the earth is covered by water and the ocean play an important role in most of our lives’. He added ‘not only all they are a source of food, energy and the means of sustaining life,
they are the great highways upon which we depend for much of our commerce and communication' (ibid: 64). The oceans are essential to way of life not only for highly developed industrial economy, an emerging industrial state, or even a largely underdeveloped state. Misuse of the oceans, particularly environmental abuse and unlawful constraints on their use are now seen as threats to our security. The oceans have become political and therefore subject to political control. Navies have evolved as one of the means by which states exercises control all over the oceans, or to a selected parts of it.

Yaden described, 'Diplomacy is an instrument of a state’s foreign policy' and should not be used as a synonym for foreign policy and is defined as 'the process of influencing the decisions and behaviours of foreign government and peoples through dialogue, negotiations and other measures short of war or violence' (ibid: 65). He feels that 'maintaining national security and thus territorial, political and economic integrity is viewed as a state’s foremost obligation’ according to him this requires a blend of domestic, foreign and national security policies (ibid: 66). One clear trend in international relations and in the complex and controversial process of trying to keep order in the world is the preference for comprehensive crisis management strategies. Yadan says 'more over 80 percent of the states are not landlocked and have littorals borders. Also, some 50 percent of the world’s population is located within 80 km (50 miles) of the shore, today and by 2030 this is likely to rise to 75 percent’. He predicts that 'the increasing density of population in the coastal areas not only adds new meaning to long term environmental issues such as sea level rise, but also brings out the fact that major conflict almost anywhere in the world is likely to have maritime dimensions'. (ibid: 68).

According to Gray and Barnett, 'A.T. Mahan’s theory has provided sailors and seamen the first general theory of sea power in modern times. According to John Gooch, A. T. Mahan and Corbett still stand as the founding partners as well as rivals of modern maritime strategic thought' (Gray and Barnett, 2000: 34). The subject of maritime strategy could gain popularity only after the emergence of A. T. Mahan’s theory on sea power in 19th century. Before this there was total absence of any theories of war at sea. No analytical techniques had been devised to highlight every day maritime facts and
shape them into broad principles that could be useful for any seagoing power. Two decades later Julian Corbett’s ‘Some Principles of Maritime Strategy’ (1911) gained worldwide reputation. It is also based on a similar methodology but have different conclusions.

Gray and Barnett are of the opinion that ‘Both men related naval activity to political purpose, which is the fundamental requirement of all strategic theories. They provided the terminology, the definitions and concepts that are the foundation of all subsequent discussion of sea power and maritime strategy’ (ibid: 35). Corbett’s theory was based on the nature of maritime strategy and the purpose of naval warfare. He drew a clear distinction between maritime strategy and naval strategy. By maritime strategy, he meant the principles governing a war in which the sea is a substantial movement of the fleet after maritime strategy had determined what part the fleet should pay in relation to land forces. Both the theories revolve on one idea that is the sea is a matter of mastering a medium that had only a surface dimension. By the time of Corbett’s death, airplane sprung up.

1.3. Concept of Strategy

According to Ward, ‘over the years geography has played an important role in strategy which is an essential component of politics’. (Ward, 1992: 18). Faringdon stated that, ‘the basic creative thinking in the field of strategic studies has been done in the universities and research institutions’ (Faringdon, 1989: 13). According to Akhtar, ‘strategy analyses the way in which governments use military power in the pursuit of their interests’ (Akhtar, 1989: 86). He added that ‘an overall strategy should incorporate the political, economic and military instruments of policy and ‘the study of strategic and defence affairs is socially useful in the context of its relevance to contemporary policy, geared to the development of national security community’ (ibid: 87). According to Klein, ‘a conclusion can be drawn that maritime theory in fact provides a suitable framework for thinking about broad national security issues and military strategies in and through space’. He further described ‘it provides a useful framework for contemplating military operation in space’ (Klein, 2006:12).
Klein is of the opinion that there are a variety of competing views regarding space theory and strategy and 'the inability to reach a consensus on the issue is not due to lack of vigorous debate' (ibid: 13). Some strategists have argued for developing a space power theory based on an air power model while others argue for a space control framework based on the century's old precedent of naval strategy. He argues that 'naval strategy which includes the sea power concept, addresses some diplomacy prestige and commerce issue, it mostly deals with the actions of fleets and consequently tends to have a sea and navy centered focuses' (ibid 14). Klein argues 'maritime' pertains to the overarching activities interests regarding the seas and oceans of the world. These activities and interests include the interrelationships of science, technology, cartography, industry, economics, trade, politics and international affairs, imperial growth, communications, migrations, international laws, social affairs and leadership. Additionally, maritime strategy is inclusive of the interaction between seas and land. Since many national and local economies have historically depended upon coastal ports for trade and economic well-being, nation states developed the need to protect their maritime trade with fleets. Naval strategy is the subset of maritime strategy.

Klein feels that maritime strategy appears to more closely match the broad and diverse interests in space, especially when compared to either air power or sea power theories, 'a maritime strategy will be used to develop a strategic framework for space' (ibid: 15). He explained that 'many historians have recognized Sir Julian Stafford Corbett (1854-1922) for his coherent and convincing exposition of maritime principles'. He feels 'Corbett was a British theorist and strategist', who was renowned for his 1911 work titled 'Some Principles of Maritime Strategy' and 'is acclaimed as Great Britain’s greatest maritime strategist' (ibid:16). Klein further stated that Corbett wrote on many of the same issues as Mahan, Corbett’s theory and strategy are said by many to be ‘more accurate and complete than Mahan’s work’, and ‘more logically developed' (ibid:17).

Maritime communications pertain to those lines of communication by which the flow of national life is maintained ashore. And therefore they have a greater meaning and are not analogous to lines of communications traditionally used by land armies. Although
maritime communications include lines of supply and trade, they also include lines of communication that are of a strategic nature and are thus critical for a state's survival. Corbett describes maritime communication - the communication to support the fleet, those required by an overseas army and trade routes. Emphasizing the importance of SLOCs, Corbett believed in the vital need to protect one's access to these lines of communication and if the enemy's fleet is in a position to render them unsafe, the enemy must be put out of action.

1.4. Strategic Geography

Sakhuja thinks that 'there is an important link between the SLOCs and Geography in the construction of any strategy' (Sakhuja 2001: 690). Geography is highlighted in strategic discussions because it helps the participants to visualize strategic relationships and requirements. Use of geopolitics or strategic geography benefits the nation-state in both war and peace.

According to Boulding, 'different geographers leave different views such as, O'Loughlin or Kirby who all have attempted to link geography to international relations, how geography can be placed in political context'. He further described 'O'Loughlin sees one political contribution of political geography as the accurate identification and mapping of meaningful contexts for the actors engaged in inter state relations'. He thinks 'entities physically closer to each other interact more than those further away because it is simply easier to do so' and 'in political geography a state's strength military and political power diminishes as we move unit distance away from its home base' (Boulding, 1962:13). Technological evolution or globalization has able to change the meaning of the geographical geopolitical context or environment. New technology permits humans to overcome physical barriers to the more of ideas or things or overcome the spatial distribution of resources through the creation of alternations. There are many arguments put forward by different scholars that technological innovation has withered away the deterministic approach thus providing opportunities is decision making within the existing probabilities of behavioral choices.
Stubbs and Truver thinks ‘naval power is simply the ability to use military means at sea’ and ‘it is an element or a subset of sea power’, he further stressed that ‘it is not the same much as homeland security or homeland defence’ as these are subsets of a state’s overall national security posture (Stubbs and Truver, 2007: 5). Any number of arguments could be made to demonstrate the linkages between geography, geopolitics and international relations. The study of political geography highlights the importance of geography to international relations whereas the study of military geography or geostrategy highlights the importance of geography to strategy and military operations at all levels.

Loo, in his article “Geography and Strategic Stability” argued that how geography plays an important role in shaping the strategic calculations of policy makers and strategic planners. As he writes ‘the geopolitical influence on strategic stability is seen in the way in which policy makers and strategic planners perceive the physical environment in which the state is located’. He further added ‘it is the influence of geography on tactical and operational elements of the strategic calculus that underpins strategic calculation about the feasibility of the use of military force’ because he thinks that ‘the geographical conditions will influence policy makers and strategic planner’s perceptions of strategic vulnerabilities or opportunities’. Loo also added that ‘geography influences the particular inter-state relationship, the way in which strategic planners and policy makers visualize the strategic environment’ and ‘they operate in and how particular geographical configurations create conditions of geostrategic vulnerability’ (Loo, 2003: 23). Sakhuja feels ‘economist, the military and politicians highlights geography in their discussions as it helps them to understand and appreciate strategic relationships and requirements’ (Sakhuja 2001: 690). Each country tries to influence its surroundings zones by using its political, economic and military powers. Therefore they occupy certain demarcated periphery or zones that have severe implications upon other regional states.

Srivastava argued that ‘strategic studies focus on the role of military force’ and it can be use to study ‘the organized and legally sanctioned instrument of violence which is officially used by states to pursue their interest in competition with other states’ (Srivastava, 1998: 22). He further argued that ‘the use of military force is the ultimate instrument of state policy for the survival of the state, its people and its institutions’ (ibid:
24). He thinks ‘the state with the greatest military strength tend to be those which have the greatest influence on international relations in terms of unchallenged status, successful diplomacy and respected actions’ (Srivastava, 1998: 27). He argues nation’s power in international politics is not directly proportional to its military strength. Reasons he put forward was that the nature of the international society and the nature of the states which comprise the military power is important and may be an indispensable conditions for survival. Liddell Hart argued that ‘strategy is the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the end of policy’ (Liddell Hart, 1967: 333). The strategic study has conceptual and social relevance and practical applications as well at national and international levels. The study of strategic studies is directly linked to the economic, social and political progress of the individual and society and affects its environment of peace and security.

Osterud says, ‘the contribution of geography and the role of geopolitics have an immense impact in the study of international relations, because of which some geopolitical approaches are being curved out and employed in studying determinism’ (Osterud, 1988: 198). Harvey stated that geography is brought back into the study of international relations. The geographical and geopolitical components of the environment of any international actor are thus essential to understanding choice in foreign policy and international relations.

1.5. Concept of Security

Srivastava argued that ‘international security refers to the security of the collectivity of state in contrast to national security relating to the security of the individual state’. He feels ‘an individual state may feel insecure when international security enjoys a feeling of security’ or it ‘may feels fairly secure in a highly in secure international environment’. He elaborated this fact by concluding that ‘the security of individual state may be incompatible either with the security of international society as a whole or with part of it’ (Srivastava 1998: 20). Russ Swinnerton in his paper ‘Confidence-building measures at sea: the Challenges ahead in Southeast Asia’ argue about military education regarding protection of sealanes which should be imparted to every body so that they should be able
to recognize patterns and opportunities in complex situations. Facilities like communications and modern information technology, improved situational awareness and decision-making assistance should be given priority. Security must be recognized as multi-dimensional and defence forces must be a part of it. Navies must recognize the challenges that exist in support of certain peace-time activities which offer opportunities for cooperation.

1.6. Transport Geography

Transport is a key necessity for specialization—allowing production and consumption of products to occur at different locations. Transport has throughout history been a spur to expansion and better transport allows more trade and greater spread of people. Economic growth has always been dependent on increasing the capacity and rationality of transport. The infrastructure and operation of transport has a great impact on the land and is the largest drainer of energy, making transport sustainability a major issue. Density of development depends on mode of transport, with public transport allowing for better special utilization. Good land use keeps common activities close to peoples homes and places higher-density development closer to transport lines and hubs, minimizes the need for transport.

Transport geography is a sub-discipline of geography concerned about movements of freight, people and information. It seeks to link spatial constraints and attributes with the origin, the destination, the extent, the nature and the purpose of movements. Geography and transportation intersect in terms of the movement of peoples, goods, and information. Today, societies rely on transport systems to support a wide variety of activities. These activities include commuting, supplying energy needs, distributing goods, and acquiring personal wants. Transportation geography measures the result of human activity between and within locations. It focuses on items such as travel time, routes undertaken, and modes of transport, resource use and sustainability of transport types on the natural environment. Transportation modes are an essential component of transport systems since they are the means by which mobility is supported. Geographers consider a wide range of modes that may be grouped into three broad categories based on the medium they exploit:
land, water and air. Each mode has its own requirements and features, and is adapted to serve the specific demands of freight and passenger traffic. Transportation systems are composed of a complex set of relationships between the demand, the locations they service and the networks that support movements. Such conditions are closely related to the development of transportation networks, both in capacity and in spatial extent. International transportation takes place at the highest scales of mobility that involve intercontinental and inter-regional movements. It is consequently subject to many geopolitical considerations such as control, competition and cooperation. Globalization has extended considerably the need for international transportation, notably because of economic integration, which grew because of the expansion of international trade. The basic features of international transportation are constrained by its geography, which involves geopolitical considerations.

In the past many wars have been started to gain control over trade routes, to gain control over mineral or energy deposits, to gain colonial control over untapped regions, or to set trade routes via existing ocean ports. This has been particularly important for maritime nations seeking to support the existing trade, expand it and secure its circulation. Through history, passages were subject to many conflicts that generally aimed to assure a control of a strategic location. International transport infrastructures, such as ports, airports and canals were also subject to geopolitical considerations as they can provide access to strategic resources or key markets. Transport efficiency has increased significantly because of innovations and improvements in the modes and infrastructures. Ports are particularly important in such a context since they are gateways to international trade through maritime shipping networks. As a result, the transferability of commodities has improved. Decreasing transport costs does more than increasing trade, it also help change the location of economic activities. The control of strategic places is also an important part of international transportation mainly to reduce vulnerability to disruptions. As the global economy becomes more interdependent, economies are becoming vulnerable to supplies of raw materials, energy and food.

The means of transporting people and equipment are a necessary element of national power. Norman argued that 'two aspects of transportation deserve consideration'. He explained 'one is external which concerns over access to foreign sources of materials. It
involves the use of ships, ports and canals’ and the other one is ‘the movement of goods across the land access of other states’ (Norman, 1987: 166.) Water transport is slow, relatively cheap and use for the movement of bulk cargoes. It is feasible only where there are navigable rivers and canals and this distribution are very closely controlled by geography of a place. Throughout history, the sea has been an important medium for economic prosperity. The waterways have been used as a medium of trade and have provided the impetus for growth of maritime enterprise. Sakhuja feels that ‘over the years, dependence on the sea as an economical and efficient means of transport has grown and resulted in greater concern for the safety of the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs)’ (Sakhuja, 2001: 689). This is considered as a highly effective method of transporting large quantities of non-perishable goods. Transport is a necessity for specialization. It allows production and consumption of products to occur at different locations. Better transport allows more trade and greater movement of people. Economic growth has always been dependent on increasing the capacity and rationality of transport. The largest consumption of energy for transportation of goods whether it is an air, land or waterways making transport sustainability a major issue.

1.7. World Seaborne Trade

According to World Bank estimates, in 1999, the world sea borne trade was pegged at 21,480 billion ton miles. According to Sakhuja, ‘United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Report, ‘Review of Maritime Transport 2000’ has noted that world sea-based trade recorded its 14th consecutive annual increase and Asia’s share of imports and exports was 26.1 and 18.8 percent respectively’ (Sakhuja 2001: 689). Vijay Sakhuja argues about the threats to help develop strategies to combat disorder at sea and also set out measures for maritime cooperation that may be considered at the bilateral, multilateral and regional tends to enhance the security of the SLOCS. In one important sense the sea does have geographical features that affect movement. Friedman stated that, ‘modern merchant ships generally follow the shortest paths between parts to save fuel and time so in this sense there are defined sea lanes. The paths moreover converge in certain places, which are called focal points’ (Friedman, 2000: 57). He
further explained ‘Geography is closely linked to sea control’ and ‘the important factor in naval or maritime strategy is that the sea contains important resources’ (ibid: 58).

International trade both in terms of value and tonnage has been a growing trend in the global economy. During 1960s and 1970s, the factors of production were much less mobile. There was a limited to the level of mobility of raw materials and finished products in a setting which is fairly regulated with tariffs and quotas regulated by world market forces. Trade was mainly concerned with a range of specific products due to high transport cost and delayed in inefficient freight distribution. During 1980s onwards, the mobility of factors of production, particularly capital became possible. Regional trade agreements emerged and the global trade framework was strengthened from a legal standpoint. Containerization provided the capabilities to support more complex and long distance trade flows. Due to high production costs in old industrial regions, activities that were labour intensive were gradually relocated to lower costs locations. Foreign Direct Investment began to flow, particularly towards new manufacturing regions and the multinational corporations became increasingly flexible.

During the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, there was a growth in international trade, which includes a wide variety of services that were previously fixed to regional markets and hence there is increase in the mobility of factors of productions. There is a shift in the development of infrastructure towards the geographical and functional integration of production, distribution and consumption with the emergence of global production networks. Complex networks, involving flows of information, commodities and finished goods have been set up, which in turn demands a high level of command of logistics and freight distribution. In such an environment, powerful actors have emerged which are not directly involved in the function of production and retailing, but mainly taking the responsibility of managing the flow of trade.

1.8. **SLOCS, Geography and Geo Strategy**

According to Roy, ‘sea lanes of communication are the route taken by a ship to transit from point A to B’. He further added ‘in maritime and economic terms, it should be the shortest distance, economic and timely delivery of cargo’ and ‘the arteries of a region and
serves as an umbilical cord to the country’s economy’ (Roy, 2001:2). East argued that ‘it is axiomatic that all states, though in different degrees related to the stages of their economic development have the need of access to the seaways of transport along which world trade is carried’ (East, 1975: 4). During times of peace, the SLOC serve as commercial trade routes, but during war, these routes are considered strategic paths. The SLOCs vary in length which depends on the geography, the type of landmass, choke points, reefs, continental shelves and location of ports and harbours. As Roy said there is beyond doubt that it is the appreciation of geography which effects on the SLOCs that further determines the military strategy of any country.

A strategic region can be defined as a region within which a state’s interest’s lie and it considers using political, economic, and military instruments of power to safeguard its interests. The number, location and size of the strategic region vary from state to state, based on national interests. Japan’s natural interests demand that the SLOCs be safeguarded and it has accordingly defined its strategic region out to 1000 nautical miles from shore. It is evident that states intend to exercise influence far beyond their shores thereby establishing several strategic regions through which their respective shipping would transit during both hostilities and provides of tension peace. The Malacca and Singapore straits continue to be popular among pirates. This is due to geographical and operational reasons. The area around these straits attracts the heaviest maritime traffic zone. A large portion of these sea lanes are located within or beyond straits, some of them being the most explosive and volatile areas in the world.

According to Friedman, ‘World trade is seen as the main engine of world economic development. Countries reach the take off stage toward modern development by selling products to more developed countries, because their internal markets cannot support their growth as countries develop, trade between countries grows dramatically’ (Friedman, 2000: 64). Friedman further describe that ‘in the year 2000, 99 per cent of the world trade by volume (84 percent by value) traveled by sea’ and ‘the volume of world seaborne trade has risen 1/5 since 1990 and chat growth is accelerating’. He says ‘moreover, 95% of that trade by volume (70 percent by value) traveled through nine key choke points the

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2 A strait is a singular, narrowed body of water joining two larger entities.
Bab-el-Mandeb (at the southern end of the Red Sea), the Cape of Good Hope, the Danish Straits, the Malacca straits, the Panama canal, the English Channel, the straits of Gibraltar, the straits of Hormuz and the Suez canal' (ibid: 65).

According to the Lloyd’s Maritime Information Services (1999), the major super ports in descending order of numbers of ship calls were Singapore, Hong Kong, Rotterdam, Yokohama, Pusan, Hamburg, Nagoya, Kobe Jakarta, Osaka, New Organs, Barcelona, London Shanghai Tokyo and Los Angeles. Modern diesel electric submarines particularly need specialized base facilities. The mouths of harbours containing those bases become choke points that other countries’ submarines can patrol. If patrolling submarines arrive early enough, they an effectively neutralize the adversary’s submarine force simply by waiting outside the base and trailing any submarine that chooses to come out.

Asia as a larger entity has immense potential for regional cooperation. Shakir has pointed out that two fundamental forces characterize post colonial Asia, the first one is ‘a rediscovery of pre-colonial trade and economic relations as well as historical and cultural ties’ and second one is the ‘inter nationalization of economic ties as a result of the development of the productive forces under the impact of the scientific and technological revolutions’ (Shakir, 2000: 16). The Maritime power is a visible manifestation of the power of the state, with every great power today aspiring to maintain a great navy as a symbol of its status. The caveat that needs to be introduced here is that maritime power is not just for great powers; even small underdeveloped countries maintain maritime capabilities for a number of reasons.

The politics of maritime power is thus an exploration of the contemporary facets of maritime power, particularly as a political instrument of the state in the post World War II Era. It surveys the modern day’s use of maritime power for achieving a range of political objectives after the end of Cold War, and a number of developments that provide evidences to the importance of maritime power. Globalization has resulted in the growth of international trade as well as just in time manufacturing techniques. The emergence of this global interlinked economy that is highly dependent on sea-borne trade, SLOCS and strategic waterways has placed greater burdens on maritime forces in policing both
coastal and high seas. Stubbs and Truver say 'The seas link the nation with world commerce and trade and allow us to project military power far from our shores to protect our interests' and 'serve as highways'. They further argued 'while the reliance on naval power to achieve national military objectives is still fundamental to most seafaring nations, today it is but one manifestation of a broader concept of sea power -as is the unique aspect provided by guard' (Stubbs and Truver, 2001: 4).

They argued that 'the 21st century maritime power speaks to a nation's needs beyond the purely military capabilities needed for war fighting' and 'it includes for each of us as the use of the seas to preserve marine resources, to ensure the safe transit and of cargoes and people on its waters, to protect its maritime borders from intrusion, to uphold its maritime sovereignty to rescue the distressed who ply the oceans in ships and to prevent misuse of the oceans' (Stubbs and Truver, 2001: 5). Today's maritime threat environment is more challenging than what it was during the Cold War. According to Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thomas H: Collins-'Sea power in the 21st century is the ability of a nation to use the seas safely, securely, fully and wisely to achieve national objectives and he further explained 'we need new thinking, new partnerships and a new construct to provide the sea power since we all want to ensure the safety and freedom of the seas for all, and the security for each of our nations. I suggest that today we need to think about a bread complement to 21st century naval power -maritime power' (ibid; 6)

The sea power of the state in the early 21st century comprises the full spectrum ability of a nation to use the seas safely, securely full and wisely to achieve national objectives and sustain good order throughout the maritime commons. This new maritime security environment demands new thinking, new partnerships and a new construct to provide the power at sea to ensure the security, safety and freedom of the seas for all. It includes the uses of the seas to preserve marine resources, to ensure the safe transit and passage of cargoes and people on its waters. Stubbs and Truver further says, 'these are timeless interests, but which are more relevant than ever and collectively can be described as a state's maritime security and safety interests intermingled with homeland defence and homeland security needs' (Stubbs and Truver, 2001: 8).
The maritime security programmes and initiatives of these agencies must be integrated and aligned into a comprehensive, cohesive national effort to scalable, layered security this includes full alignment and co-ordination with the private sector and other countries' public and private institutions. Thus success in securing the maritime domain will not come by naval acting alone, but through a layered security system that integrates the full maritime capabilities and interests of goals and commercial interests throughout the world. The need for a strong integrated effort to reinforced by the fact that most of the maritime domain is under 20 nation's sovereignty. According to Stubbs and Truver, ‘the 2005 National Strategy for Maritime security emphasizes the importance of the inter agency approach: 'Security of the maritime domain can be accomplished only by seamlessly employing all instruments of national power in a fully coordinated manner in concern to other nation -states consistent with international law’ (Stubbs and Truver, 2001: 10).

Stubbs and Truver feels ‘A chartered collaborative framework where the nations working to address their maritime security interests contribute to collective engagement on the shared maritime security interests of regional neighbours and international partners through information sharing, exchange of a common operational picture, conduct of co-operative operations and the development and exercise of international and regional agreements’ (Stubbs and Truver, 2001: 11). To them development of co-operation and information sharing among partnering nations to work together to defect and monitor, deter or intercept transnational maritime threats to prevent harm to a nation’s safety, security, economy or environment is the most essential criteria. According to Friedman, 'the basis of all naval strategy in a simple physical fact, it is far easier to move anything by sea than over land. That is why the great bulk of the world’s trade goes by sea, why an air base or a missile field can travel by sea and why no much of the world’s population lives either near the sea or near a major river'. He explained 'this also explains why ships can lie off a coast for a protracted period, where as ground troops have to be there and aircraft offer only intermittent presence' and he stressed on 'the sheer vastness of the sea' because of which 'it is still difficult to maintain any sort of wide ocean surveillance' (Friedman, 1992: 4). He further explained 'that the sea remains dominant and is less obvious in an age of fast mass air trend, but anything heavy still goes primarily by sea.

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For example in both Iraq wars something like 90-95 percent of the materials used, by the coalition forces arrived by sea’ (ibid: 4).

1.9. Globalization

According to Friedman, ‘the sea makes globalization possible ultimately the economy of water transportation causes countries to specialize in whatever they can produce most economically, importing almost everything’ (Friedman, 1992: 4). He further explained, ‘the potential for maritime trade magnifies the effect of naval power, since at least in theory a dominant naval power can prevent the free movement of goods’ (ibid: 4). According to Tangredi, “the future of maritime power or sea power, to use its more traditional title does not lie exclusively upon the sea’ and it ‘lies to a great extent, beyond the sea’. He further explained ‘because maritime power or sea power, properly understand is as much an abstract concept with tremendous effects as it is a concrete reality (Tangredi, 2000: 131). The container ship and other merchant shipping provide the transport by which the trade of the world trends. The warship provides the access security that allows the trade to occur. According to Tangredi, ‘as Sir Raleigh observed in his day (1616), whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade, whom so ever commands the trade of the world command the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself, to ‘command’ trade requires more than the ability to trade’ (ibid: 133).

The need for access to materials is widely recognized since few nations possess all of the resources needed for maintenance of their domestic economy. Raw materials needed for manufacturing such as chromium or bauxite is plentiful only in a few locations. They do not travel by air. The oil market has become even more volatile now that mainland China is becoming the Persian Gulf region’s top importer. The degree that nations possess access determines their level of eco dependence on others. Tangredi is of the opinion that ‘although globalization was heralded as an era of interdependence, the truth is that Rome participants are more economically dependent than other participants. Economic dependence inevitably affects international power and political freedom’ (Tangredi, 2000: 133).
Sean thinks, ‘globalization provides an opportunity for the advancement of common human standards and equality as norms and rules are channeled throughout the world. This global proximity is thought to foster cooperation and to increase security’ (Sean, 2004: 10). Globalization is simply a process by which distant parts of the world are linked more closely together through advances in communications, transportation and eco inter change, and according to Tangredi, the effects of globalization on the maritime realm can be captured in seven categories. There should be increase in non state and translational threats, increase in maritime traffic and trade, increase in concerns about economic security, increase in military presence and intervention in locations not previously considered of vital interests and increase in proliferation of information technology with high technology sensor system. Tangredi argued that ‘what type of and how big a navy should nations buy and maintain, there are at least five factors that would go – the perception of access vulnerability, the perception of direct military/ security threat, usefulness of naval forces for homeland security, and availability of a global naval ally’ (Tangredi, 2000: 137). All nations are vulnerable, but some are vulnerable in the extreme.

Tangredi thinks ‘the overall impact of globalization on the maritime world is to make it even more important to national and global economics and even more critical to economic well being’. He further added, ‘for humans, the environment of the sea is an inherently hostile one. Without artificial means (ship) and knowledge (sea manship) no human can survive, yet the sea is the primary artery of access and the most critical physical element in globalization. So, humans built the means of achieving access through this medium’ (ibid: 140). According to him, ‘What about the expansion of the concept of sea power into space and cyberspace these are both environments much like the ocean, humans can use them and become dependent on them, but cannot inhabit than surely than are approaches and understandings to be applied here?’ (ibid: 144). He explained ‘maritime/ sea power is a tool of access to the global economy. Maritime commerce will continue to expand whether it takes the form of large ships to hub ports or smaller ships to distributive networks. Information technology has also revolutionized the shipping industry as it has other sectors. But again threats to this maritime infrastructure
become less apparent the more efficient it is' (ibid: 145). Globalization of the world economy and the corresponding dependence of a greater number of nations on foreign trade, the security of global maritime trade will remains as critical as ever.

1.10. Information Technology

According to Lonsdale, 'the other forms of strategic power: sea, land, air and space, all have their own physical environments which have unique characteristics. The nature of each environment determines to a degree how the corresponding power can be utilized (Lonsdale, 1999: 139.) He further explained ‘information power operates within an environment which is but defined as the infosphere’ (ibid: 140). According to him infosphere act as a highway through which information and weapons can flow. Sea help to exploit its bed resources like this deposits of information one found within the infosphere. In this article he describes information power's flexibility and accessibility. It can be used in gathering information about terrorism, small wars, and economic warfare.

Lonsdale argued, ‘information power may encourage states to become involved more readily in issues and crises regardless of their relation to geographic position. Information power may also present an actor with a greater capacity to become involved in external matters’ (ibid: 145). Physical geography continues to matter both in military and geopolitical terms, since geography matters, distance and proximity will also continue to play an important role.

1.11. Sea Transport

Long distance trade played a major role in the cultural, religious and artistic exchanges that took place between the major centers of civilization in Europe and Asia during ancient period. Some of these trade routes had been in use for centuries, but by the beginning of the first century A.D., merchants, diplomats, and travelers could cross the ancient world from Britain and Spain in the west to China and Japan in the east. The trade routes served principally to transfer raw materials, foodstuffs and luxury goods from areas with surpluses to others where they were in short supply. Some areas had a monopoly on certain materials or goods. China for example supplied West Asia and the
Mediterranean world with silk while species were obtained principally from South Asia. These goods were transported over vast distances either by pack animals overland or by seagoing ship along the Silk and Species Routes, which were the main arteries of contact between the various ancient empires of the Old World. Other important trade route, known as the Incense Route, was controlled by the Arabs, who brought species and stones by camel caravan from South Arabia.

The trade routes were the communications highways of the ancient world. New inventions, religious beliefs, artistic styles, language and social customs as well as goods and raw materials were transmitted by people moving from one place to another to conduct business. Dominance of sea become less obvious in age of fast mass air travel, but anything heavy still goes primarily by sea. For example in both Iraq wars something like 90 percent to 95 percent of the material used by the coalition forces arrived by sea (Friedman, 2007: 29). In terms of weight about 96 percent of the world’s trade is carried by maritime transportation. Seaborne commerce exceeds 3.5 billion tons annually and accounts for over 80 percent of trade among nations. According to the United Nations Department of Defence every aspects of the daily lives of people is touched by goods and services that are ultimately connected to free trade by sea.

The political, economic and military importance of SLOCs still remains as an essential geopolitical consideration for economic and military strategy as it was in the days of Mahan. Even at this 21st century, most of the world’s goods are traded by ships. Though there are technological advances in transportation systems, the geographical parameters like winds, ocean currents and local weathers of a particular area still determines the safest and most efficient trade routes. Pressure on existing SLOCs are increasing as more nations now belong to the global capitalistic trading system and most world’s international trade moves by container ships. Rapid economic growth in the world’s coastal areas places an increased demand on existing SLOCs and chokepoints.

1.12. Silk Route

The historical Silk Road comprised a series of land and sea trade routes that crisscrossed Eurasia from the first millennium B.C. through the middle of the second millennium B.E.
The intersections among people from diverse cultures along the way promoted sharing of commodities, ideas, arts, sciences and innovations. As the domestication of pack animals and the development of shipping technology both increased the capacity for prehistoric peoples to carry heavier loads over greater distances, cultural exchanges and trade developed rapidly. In addition, grassland provides fertile grazing, water and easy passage for caravans.

The term maritime refers to shipping and things related to water bodies like seas and oceans. Maritime activities therefore are those activities which use the seas or oceans. Maritime activities therefore are those activities which use the seas or oceans as conduits or facilitators. In this context the significance of seas and oceans to the survival of human kind cannot be negated. The seas have been a major focus of human concern from earliest times. Humankind depended on the seas for several reasons which are linked to the four attributes of the seas viz. sea as a resource as a means of transportation, information and into dominion. The sea has played a vital role in the growth of world economy. It has been a provider of unlimited supply of living resources. According to Multani, 'the hidden power of the oceans started emerging, as man gradually began traversing the vast oceans' and 'today the relevance of sea power is much greater than the earlier times' (Multani, 2007: 4).

The sea has been and still remains a medium of transport and exchange for the vast bulk of world’s trade. The sea is considered as faster, cheaper and safer means to travel and to send goods as compared to the land. According to Hadley, 'it is easier to provide ships with substantial stocks of ammunition, fuel and stores so that they can remain at sea for longer periods'. He argued that 'water transport or transport through sea lead to the expansion of trade' (Hadley, 1970: 2). The sea holds a central place in nearly all economies because it carries the vast bulk of trade and communications, it provides food supplies, it supplies substantial energy resources and it promises even greater mineral wealth. Moreover the sea is an important focus for the both security and insecurity. These realities are nowhere more apparent than in the Asia-Pacific region. There geography and rapid rates of economic growth have underlined the interconnecting role of the sea. Volumes of international trade and shipping have risen steeply and with them levels of
economic interdependence. Movements of people, freight and information have continuously been fundamental components of human societies. Contemporary economic processes have been accompanied by a significant growth in mobility and higher levels of accessibility. Starting from the early days of industrialization maritime transport served as the arteries for transport of goods. Developing transport systems has been a continuous challenge to satisfy mobility needs. Transportation can be perceived as a service to people, freight or information.

Globalization underlines a decreasing importance of boundaries in the geography of international transportation. Economic integration processes, notably free-trade agreements have established common tariff policies among groups of nation becoming interdependent. Multilateral agreements have also helped establishing an increasingly deregulated global trading environment. The notion of network is at the core of globalization process. Maritime circulation takes place on specific parts of the maritime space. The construction of channels, dredging is attempts to facilitate maritime circulation in reducing discontinuity. More than any other mode, maritime transportation is linked to heavy industries such as steel and petrochemical facilities adjacent to port sites. The current environment shows a decrease of relative costs for many commodities, parts and finished goods, a process supported by transport systems. Many factors explain this, such as the exploitation of comparative advantages, a reduction in tariffs and larger consumption markets, expanding economies of scale. Prior to the 1970s, global trade flows were dominated by three major zones, North America, Western Europe and Pacific Asia. A discontinuity was observed between developed and developing countries as raw materials were flowing north and finished goods were flowing from south. This situation can mainly been explained by differences in levels of development as well as by the domination of the majority of developing countries by colonial powers. From the 1970s, this situation changed as industrial development took place in many developing countries for example in Latin America (Mexico), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia) and East Asia (China, South Korea, Taiwan). Many industrial processes which initially took place in developed countries, were relocated in new locations offering lower production costs, namely because of cheaper labour.
Consequently, global trade is now characterized by significant flows of merchandises from developing to developed countries. The nature of shipping has changed rapidly from the old, slow, small vessels of pre-World War II times to the large and powerful fleets of today. The maritime world is going to be continually more economically important as more and more national economies their dependence on overseas trade. The concept of maritime power is inseparable from its spatial meaning. It is associated with nation's ability to exploit the sea.