CHAPTER VI:
European piracy and maritime supremacy in Mughal perception
Mughal Perception of European Maritime Supremacy and Piracy

Piracy was not unknown either in the Islamic West (the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman II’s (1520-66) pirate-ships operated in the Mediterranean sea) or in the Indian Ocean. Even long before the Portuguese arrived on the scene, the Indian Ocean had been infested with Malabar and other pirates (against whom the merchants had to make their own arrangements) who operated in the gulf of Persia and Red Sea even after the European piracy became a major concern in the sixteenth, seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century. A few indigenous pirates were Malabars, Sanganians of Beyt and Dwarka, the Koli rovers of Gujarat, the Warrals of Diu and Gogha, the Muscat Arabs. The Maharattas, wrote Khafi Khan, also indulged in piracy.¹ They had in their possession the newly built forts of Khanderi, Kalaba, Kasa and Katora off the coast opposite Janjira, the island-fortress in occupation of the habshis (Abyssinians). From these they attacked and captured vessels going to and coming from the ports of west and south-east Asia. Similarly, the Sakana also called Bawaril, as well as those based on the Sorath (Saurashtra) coast, were

¹Khafi Khan, Muntakhab-al-Lubab, Calcutta, 1870, p.428.
notorious for piracies, and from time to time attacked the small ships that came from Bandar-Abbas and Muscat.²

By 1556, the Portuguese were firmly established on west coast with a large number of factories there. By the first half of sixteenth century, city of Diu and Bassein with lands attached to them in the kingdom of Gujarat were also in possession of Portugal. Similarly, Chaul, Bhatkal and all those areas where Portuguese had fortresses were under the Portuguese king.³ Bombay was under Portugal since 1550.⁴ They were able to regulate and restrict the traffic of Indian merchants in the Indian Ocean to a large extent by the introduction of a system of cartaz which was introduced by the Portuguese in 1502 after a war with the Zamorin of Calicut.⁵ Cartaz was used to implement monopoly and supremacy over maritime trade in Indian Ocean regions.⁶ Portuguese officials were soon detailed to guard coastal regions to

² *ibid.* According to Khafi Khan however, one difference between the Indian and the Europeans, particularly the English pirates, was that while the former never attacked the hajj pilgrim traffic, the latter thrived on it. (Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Calcutta, 1870, vol.ii, p.428).
⁵ K.S.Matthew, Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany, Delhi,1997, p.69; An amount of 5 pardaos for each cartaz was charged.(Historical Archives of Goa, MSS, Codex no. 3027, fol.21; cf. M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Hyderabad,1987, p.71).
⁶ M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.78.
prevent other ships from conducting trade with any part of India and were asked to capture all ships not equipped with *cartazes.*

They compelled Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, to accept the system of *cartaz* under the terms and conditions of the treaty signed on 23rd December, 1534. Under its terms, vessels going to straits of Mocha via Bassein had to buy *cartaz.* (this treaty was repeated between these two parties on 25 October, 1535). Their claim to maritime supremacy had piracy as an essential element needed to reinforce it. They prevented journeys to Mocha and deterred Malabar ships by burning them and guarded the ships to Cambay coming from Goa and other places and gave *cartaz* for southwards trade as well as for Red Sea trade. Akbar broadly maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese by accepting to take *cartaz* from them to send off his pilgrim ships, a practice which continued under Jahangir.

In the *cartaz* issued to Bhimji Parekh under the orders of Jahangir for the ship called *Mubarakshahi* on 18th May 1620, special reference is made to the tradition of issuing a free *cartaz* every

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8 M.N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India,* p.79.
10 *Letter Received,* vol.1, p.258.
11 M.N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India,* p.27.
12 ibid., p.81.
This implies that the arrangement in vogue from 1573 when Akbar agreed to take *cartazes*, was not discontinued during his lifetime and afterwards, however odious it might have been thought to be. Akbar signed a *farman* on 18 March 1573, perhaps at Broach, instructing the Captains, Governors, administrators and other officials working especially in Surat, Broach, Naussari, and Velodra (Vadodra) in the province of Gujarat not to disturb the Portuguese in their possession like Diu. It further enjoined to them not to favour Malabar pirates but extend help to Portuguese.  

Akbar himself consented to take *cartaz* from the Portuguese for the imperial ships leaving Gujarat coast every year for Persian Gulf and Red Sea (a practice which continued even under Jahangir). The control of Portuguese of the Red Sea trade was detested by Mughals since the Portuguese posed a potential danger to not only the native traders, but also to the hajj pilgrims. Akbar, in a letter in 1586 to Abdullah Khan Uzbeg, expressed displeasure regarding the unrest that the Portuguese created by harassing traders and pilgrims

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15 *ibid.*, p.27.
to holy places.\textsuperscript{16} Badauni also testifies to the fact that Akbar detested their control of the High Seas.\textsuperscript{17} Monserrate reports that ‘the king and indeed all the Mongols take it exceedingly ill that they are compelled, if they wish for safety on their sea-voyages, to come to Diu and ask for a safe-conduct, which they can only obtain on certain conditions.’\textsuperscript{18} Akbar was of the opinion that the Feringis, who turned out to be a great threat to the pilgrimage to Mecca as well as to the trade, should be driven away from the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{19} It was considered quite humiliating for so powerful an Emperor as Akbar to ask for passes from the Portuguese, it being held by the people that the obligation of taking passes for the ships of the Emperor was an infringement of his dignity.\textsuperscript{20} Though Akbar had instructed his officials in Malwa and Gujarat to take necessary steps to drive away the Portuguese with the assistance of Deccan rulers, there is no record of any effective expedition against the Portuguese.

Private traders like Abdur Rahim Khan paid tax to obtain passes and ensure the safety and security of the passengers aboard

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{16} Akbarnama, III, P.275; see also Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha’-i-
Abul Fazl), DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, p.44.
\bibitem{17} Badauni, Abdul Qadir Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, p.150.
\bibitem{18} Monserrate, Fr. A. Commentary on his Journey to the Court of
Akbar, p.166.
\bibitem{19} Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, vol.iii, p.757.
\bibitem{20} David Lopes, (ed.) Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar por
\end{thebibliography}
their ships. Malik Ayaz, chief Governor of Sultanate of Gujarat in 1573, was able to keep Gujarat ports secure from *firangis* (Portuguese), but later, their influence increased and no ship could dare depart without their pass (*cartaz*), except from Surat 'owing solely to the gallantry and bravery of those entrusted with the government of the city of Surat.'\(^\text{21}\) Several attempts were made by Akbar to control piracy, but these measures were unsuccessful. Despite Abul Fazl's assertion that 'India was an abode of peace and the vagabonds of Gujarat been subdued by Akbar and the masters of the peninsulas or countries of European islands (*amiran-i-jazair-i-firang*), who were a stumbling block in the way of *hijaz* had become submissive and obedient,'\(^\text{22}\) Portuguese piracy continued. Five ships loaded with goods from Jeddah in the Red Sea reached Goga in August 1577, were captured by Portuguese and later another vessel belonging to the Emperor too was sighted at Goga and was captured by them although it was later returned to the Emperor's agents. He found them to be a 'menace' on the route to Mecca.\(^\text{23}\) In a letter to Abdullah Khan Uzbeg, 1586, Akbar wrote that he intended 'to undertake extermination of the numerous *Farangi* infidels (Portuguese) who had established themselves on


\(^{22}\) Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.275.

the shores of the ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and had created unrest and were oppressing traders and pilgrims to holy places. He intended to go personally to that region so as to clear the place of trouble-makers in view of the news. The Governors of Surat, Khwaja Safar in 1546, organized a naval battle against them and in 1572, Malik Ayaz, tried to control piracy.

For as long as Portuguese naval power was held in esteem, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, did not allow the English to establish a Factory at Surat. He also rebuked them for the robbing of ships coming from Red Sea by Henry Middleton and refused to give them any explanation of why he did not let them establish a Factory at Surat. The English started issuing passes to unprotected Indian vessels as early as 1613. As early as 1612, the English started holding Gujarat ships for ransom and claimed that ships could not dare go out the river of Surat without their passes although they also admitted that the transportation of their own goods to Surat was dangerous due to Portuguese frigates.

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24 Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha’-i-Abul Fazl) DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, P.44.
25 Badauni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, tr. and ed. George and A. Ranking, N.Delhi, p.150).
26 Letters Received, vol.i, p.279.
27 ibid., p.30.
28 ibid., p.185-86.
29 ibid., p.307.
They suffered crushing defeat at the hands of English in 1612 and 1614 and plundered four ships engaged in trade in 1613, and seized his mother's ships in 1614 despite the fact that it was carrying a Portuguese pass. Jahangir had to send Muqarrab Khan again to tackle with them.\(^\text{30}\) In 1613, the Portuguese organized a raid on the port of Surat and sacked four ships.\(^\text{31}\) In retaliation for the Portuguese action Muqarrab Khan got St. Xavier and other Jesuits arrested at Surat in 1614, and closed their churches.\(^\text{32}\) Meanwhile, Portuguese were defeated in a naval fight by the English, wherefore they had to approach Muqarrab Khan suing for peace.\(^\text{33}\) This victory of English gave them a temporary edge over the Portuguese and next year when they seized a ship of his subjects at Surat, Jahangir debarred Portuguese trade and laid a siege at Daman. English were asked to help against Portuguese. The refusal of English General displeased them but their trade was not stopped.\(^\text{34}\) Finally in 1615, Portuguese had to yield to the Mughals and in a truce they had to pay three lakh rupees for the ships taken and license to go to Red Sea.\(^\text{35}\) The attempt made by Muqarrab


\(^{31}\) *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.125.

\(^{32}\) *Letters Received*, vol.ii, pp. 96, 107.

\(^{33}\) *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.49.

\(^{34}\) *Letters Received* iii, p.4.

Khan to enlist the support of one European power against another, although unsuccessful initially, became a policy in the coming years.

For safeguarding and furthering English trading interests, Sir Thomas Roe, an ambassador of England who reached Mughal court in 1615, devised a policy of ‘force’ to enter into the Red Sea trade for which he decided on a three-pronged policy-1) to ask the Mughal for a three-year truce, 2) to blockade and chastise the Portuguese, and, 3) to force Indian merchants to pay to the English as much as they were paying to the Portuguese and start English trade towards Red Sea (which formed a substantial part of Indian merchants’ trade) by escorting the Mughal ships and Gujarat ships to Mocha but this was initially refused by the Prince Khurram. He had not failed to understand that Portuguese exercised considerable influence on the western coast and that the Mughal officials had commercial links with them. Roe in 1618 at Ahmedabad wrote to Capt. Pring that Muqarrab Khan and some Mughals freighted from Diu. Roe’s proposal to Prince Khurram to let them ‘settle’ (at Surat) against which he proposed to take the responsibility of naval

36 Letters Received, vol. vi, pp.227, 229-30.
37 Roe in a letter in 1618 at Ahmedabad to Company, EFI, vol.i, p.15.
38 Letters Received, vol.i, p.153.
39 EFI, 1618-21, p.12.
40 ibid., p.19.
defense of Surat against the Portuguese, was scornfully rejected by Khurram. Apparently any such ‘help’ which would put the Emperor under any sort of obligation of a foreign European trading Company was unacceptable to him. Roe then decided to ‘make them feare to freight in the Portingalls’ and this policy does seem to have included piracy despite Roe’s alleged attempts to convince his Company men that in the initial stages, they must ‘only attempt quiet trade and live only as merchants.’ Besides ‘stopping the native ships for redressal of their grievances’ the English also followed the policy of threatening Portuguese. In 1623, their two ships, Mauritius and Rotterdam which were returning from Holland attacked Portuguese ships returning from Goa.

The English asserted their maritime supremacy on the conventional methods used earlier by the Portuguese, namely, 1) the system of

[44] EFI, vol.i, p.54,139.
[45] President Fursland and Council at Batavia to Surat Factory, EFI,1622-23, p.225.
[46] Khafi Khan, however, made a distinction between the nature of piracy of these two European nations. He gave the Portuguese the credit of not attacking those ships which ‘have not received their pass,’ according to rule, or the ships of Arabia or Muscat, with which two countries they have a long-standing enmity, and they attack each other whenever opportunity offers.’ And in this trait, they are not attacking other ships, who attack even those ships which have their pass, Khafi Khan, Muntakhab-ul-Lubah. tr Elliot
licences, as inherited from the Portuguese practice of issuing *cartaz*, according to which any ship sailing western Indian waters without the *cartaz* would be sacked, looted or sunk, and 2) organizing convoys for Indian ships. Just as the Mughals accepted the Portuguese passes, they were willing to tolerate the English passes, as well. In January 1618, Ikhlas Khan, the Captain of the ship *Jahangir* approached Roe and requested him for the safe conduct of his ship to the Red Sea. In November 1619, Bickley’s squadron captured a cargo vessel on its way from Lahri Bandar (Sindh) to Persia on the pretext that it carried a Portuguese pass. Asaf Khan at Agra ordered imprisonment of Hughes and Parker—two servants of East India Company at Agra. Sometimes an embargo was placed on their trade. Early in 1617, Alexander Childe, master of ‘James’, surprised a Surat vessel laden with timber in the Red Sea. It was kept detained for three months. They had to pay compensation for it. The same year, at the request of the Indian merchants the English at Surat, gave passes to the ships of ‘Danda Raspore’ for the Red Sea. Soon after the Company’s fleet seized yet another ship belonging to a Surat merchant. In 1620, the

and Dowson, Calcutta, 1877, p.344. In 1635, for example, Cobb, the Captain of a ship licensed Charles I of England, plundered two Mughal vessels at the mouth of Red Sea, though one of them had a pass from the Surat factory. (Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.4. cf.J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p. 340).

English captured a Portuguese vessel at Jask.\footnote{EFI, vol.i, p.226.} Next year, in 1621, the Surat authorities took out money of Prince’s junks to satisfy claims against Malik Ambar, for which they were severely punished. They were turned out of the Factory and had to seek refuge with the Dutch. At Ahmedabad and Cambay, Safi Khan laid embargo on goods which the Factors were preparing to send to Surat.\footnote{ibid., 1622-3, p.xv.} The same year, despite a warning by the Prince to President and Council at Surat that they ‘should live quietly or else leave,’ Prince Khurram’s ship arriving from Red Sea was taken.\footnote{ibid. vol. i, p.318-19.}

In October 1621, some English pirates sunk an Indian ship which possessed valuable treasures. In March 1622, English Factors appeared before Mohammad Taqi, Diwan of the subah, to make compensation for the alleged loss. Although they tried to lay the blame on Dutch, they were imprisoned and had to make compensation. Despite these occasional parts of friction and conflict, Anglo-Mughal relations were, in the long term, those of considerable cooperation. Once the dispute subsided, they were permitted to rent any house for the establishment of the factory. They were also allowed to buy or construct four frigates each year, were freed from land tolls, and an arrangement was made by which a sum of 40,000 mahmudis was to be paid yearly in lieu of all
custom-dues in Surat, both inwards and outwards. The agreement was sent to the Emperor for confirmation and accordingly a farman was received on 7th September, 1624. By this agreement, the English were allowed to have access to the Red Sea. They also secured the right to convoy the Mughal junks from Surat to Mocha and back. By 1630, the English fleet at Surat was providing convoys to Indian vessels trading with the Red Sea, such as the Shahi. In the Bay of Bengal, the English were providing escort to Indian merchant vessels against the pirates of Aracan and Chatgaon. Despite these attempts to control piracy, the English were always suspected to be involved in piratical activities themselves. The capture of Taufiqi, Mirza Mahmud’s ship at Surat in 1635 by an English pirate called Roebuck, and Mahmudi, a Diu junk by the English pirates led to the imprisonment of some Factors of the East India Company as he was a prominent merchant of Surat and was a broker of Governor of Broach, Yaqub Khan.

As the Company’s trade expanded, so did their control over maritime trade. In March 1623, Safi Khan and Mohammad Taqi told the English at Ahmedabad that they had received the news that the English were planning to seize King’s ship to Mocha and as a preventive measure they wanted a pass. In 1630, three Indian ships

52 ibid., 1622-23, p.xxxiii.
53 ibid., p.27-30.
54 ibid., 1624-29, p.49.
were seized, probably on the grounds of non-possession of English licenses. Passes were given to Ali Verdi Beg (skipper) for Samb Cranee (?) for Surat to Mocha and back; for Masihi to Trussen Beage(?) bound to Mocha and back, for Hasani (Mohammad Abbas) and to Muniri (to Sheikh Daud), for Ahmadi to Sheikh Ali, two passes to Hafiz Khan for Salamati and to Abdel Samad for Gharib Hafiz for Gogha and back.55

The Mughal response to European piracy was also shaped by the belief that piracy was practiced by all European Companies, more often than not, in consonance with one another.56 In 1616, Asaf Khan (who was virtually protecting the English Factors at Agra) told Roe that he should endeavour to prevent Dutch from robbing Prince's ship for that would be hazardous not only for the Dutch, but the English, as well.57 Later in 1622, when native merchants claimed that their ships had been taken off Chaul and demanded compensation, the English tried to blame Dutch but the Mughal officials held them also responsible arguing that they 'shared the booty.'58

55 ibid., 1630-33, p.284.
56 ibid., 1622-23, p.xvi.
58 EFI, 1622-23, p.xvi.
While English and Dutch had been earlier proposed separately to convoy the Mughal ships, they were asked in September 1630 by the Mutassadi of Surat, Mir Musa, to collectively convoy Shahi, after Musahi, which was more richly laden, was captured by Portuguese while returning from Red Sea. Anglo-Dutch efforts to locate it proved fruitless.\(^5\) In November, Mir Musa negotiated peace with the Portuguese who agreed to surrender the ship Musahi in return for the release of the goods and men seized by the Indian authorities. The Portuguese secured a promise that as earlier, Indian ships will take Portuguese passes. Aurangzeb also took passes from the Portuguese to be allowed to send off his ships for pilgrimage.\(^6\) Safi Khan in 1623 expressed his wish to make the English ships convoy the junks coming from Red Sea to Gogha for which he had pressurized them by issuing an order by which no Englishman could leave Broach and perhaps they were not allowed to dispatch any goods from there either (because a ship which was detained at Mocha by them-Safi Khan was its overseer and warned them that if Mughal ships were not carried to Gogha, he will 'cut and slice English and Dutch trade into many pieces.'\(^5\) The same year, the English factors alleged that depredations of the Dutch had led to seizure of English warehouse

\(^{5}\) EFI, 1624-29, p.49.  
\(^{6}\) M.N.Pearson, The Portuguese in India, p.27.  
\(^{61}\) EFI, 1622-3, p.272.
and their President and factors were jailed for seven months.\textsuperscript{62} In 1630, Charles I had sent Captain Quail's Seahorse which committed piracy for which English were held responsible and had to pay compensation.\textsuperscript{63} Again, in 1641, the English alleged that their ship Diamond laden with goods for Bantam was stopped by Mughal officials because Danes had seized Sir-i-Khail's junk (for injuries received an year before), which led the English to conclude that Mughals had decided upon a policy of collective responsibility whereby if one Christian nation molested a ship, other European nations will also bear the brunt.\textsuperscript{64} However, neither the allegation, nor the compensation was slapped on any one or more than one European country without investigation. And it was only for safety of their ships and prevention against piracy that the policy of collective responsibility was considered by the Mughals.

In the seventeenth century, the overseas trade and commercial activity of the members of royal family and nobles such as Nurjahan, Khurram, Muqarrab Khan, Zulfiqar Khan, Saif Khan, Muiz-ul-Mulk etc. had increased, which grew at a faster pace in the latter half seventeenth century in which they mainly took the help of European merchants. Nevertheless, the growth of

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{ibid.}, p.3.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{EFI}, 1642-5, p.48.
trade in the Indian Ocean in the latter half of seventeenth century also saw a corresponding increase in the incidents of piracy-most of the pirates being chiefly the English-most notorious among them being Teach, Henry Evory, Kidd, Roberts, England and Tew-who had extended their operations to Indian Ocean, (helped by friends on shore with supplies and information of rich prizes to look for, or armed ships to be avoided,\textsuperscript{65} which put a strain on this arrangement. The commercial interests of Prince Khurram had already started to clash with that of European trading companies, specially the East India Company.

Piracy was a sensitive issue for the Mughal state, for it undermined trade and commerce, and indirectly, of course, affected the revenues accruing from trading activities. When an imperial ship was attacked, however, it amounted to an open infringement of sovereign authority. When Mughal Emperor’s ship \textit{Ganj-i-Sawai}\textsuperscript{66} which was returning from Mocha was (considered the largest vessel of the port of Surat), attacked by a pirate ship called \textit{Fancy} and looted at leisure for many days by Evory, was carried by its crew to Surat on 12\textsuperscript{th} September, 1695, it aroused great indignation. Captain Kidd, a notorious pirate based at Madagascar dominated the Indian Ocean at one point of time. His fleet had

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{ibid.}, p.viii-x.

\textsuperscript{66} Sahnawaz Khan, \textit{Maathir-ul-Umara}, tr. H. Beveridge, revised, annotated and completed by Baini Prasad, vol.i, p.446.
around 300 men, of whom majority were English men.\textsuperscript{67} The victims ascribed the attack to English men closely connected with Bombay. Some of them said that at the time of plunder, they recognized some English men (who were previously known to them).\textsuperscript{68} Tremendous pressure prevailed upon the Governor Itimad Khan to punish the English. He therefore sent a party of regular troops under his Lieutenant Ashur Beg to occupy the factory (14 September) and confine the merchants there. Forty-nine English men, including President Annesley and other members of Surat Council, even interlopers like John Vaux and Uphill, who had been expelled from East India Company’s service were imprisoned. At Swally, sailors of Benjamin were jailed too. At Broach also, their arms were confiscated and factors imprisoned. Their trade was totally stopped. President Annesley and his colleagues were arrested, and all European trade in the port suspended. Annesley, and Sir John Gayer at Bombay, protested to the Governor and the Emperor, on which the Emperor demanded that the English, Dutch and French should scour the seas in pursuit of the pirates and provide a regular escort for the pilgrim ships making the trip to Mokha, till this demand was satisfied. "European trade would be


stopped and the prisoners detained. Annesley offered to provide an escort for the convoying of pilgrim ships between Surat and Jedda; the port was reopened and prisoners released, and for a time all went well. But the Company's servants soon found the task beyond their powers.\textsuperscript{69} Following this incident, in 1695, Itimad Khan introduced the system of convoy to Red Sea. Dutch, English were to detach one of more ships every season to escort the Indian vessels to and from Mocha. These European warships would for the time be in Mughal service and they would be paid according to a fixed rate. For a ‘large ship’ one thousand khandies; the payment for round trip would be Rs. 20,000; for a smaller ship, it would be Rs. 5000. Half the payment was to be borne by the imperial treasury and half the payment was to be borne by the merchant whose ship was to make a trip.\textsuperscript{70}

Earlier, in 1691, when a ship belonging to Abdul Ghaffur, prince of Surat merchants was taken by interlopers near Surat (with nine lakhs cash on board), the Mughal government placed a guard on the English Factory at Surat and forbade their trade in the

\textsuperscript{69} Das, Harihar \textit{The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702}, p.31.
\textsuperscript{70} ibid., p.113.
country. But one of the pirate crew having been captured and proved to be a Dane, the embargo was removed.\(^{71}\)

That the English settlements were vulnerable on the shore was proved by the war between the English and the Mughals at Bengal in 1686. To the counter-effect, the negotiations that followed also proved that the Mughals wanted them to behave well and follow the law of the land and not to stop their trade. (Charnock and his colleagues stirred up a war after being issued a notice to appear before court at Dacca for non-payment of dues amounting to Rs.43,000 to Indian merchants and brokers). During this war, the English asserted their naval supremacy by burning Indian shipping in the docks and seized two vessels belonging to Prince Azam and Shaista Khan as prizes. In the peace that was made in June 1687, the English were allowed to renew trade at Hughli, but after they made fresh war on Mughal shipping on the Bombay coast, Shaista Khan forbade any building at Sutanuti. English under Heath (who had replaced Charnock in Bengal) committed atrocities at Balasore which led the Mughal faujdar to seize their Factories and their Bengal establishments suffered a terrible setback. When Aurangzeb (who was then in Golcunda) came to know of all this he ordered arrest of all Englishmen,

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occupation of their factories all over his dominions, prohibition of all their trade. But to work out a compromise, Shaista Khan was removed from Bengal in 1688 and (after Khan-i-Khanan was placed temporarily) Ibrahim Khan, who was friendly towards the English, was sent to Bengal as a permanent Viceroy. He re-established the Bengal Factory.

In April 1687, following the policy of Josiah Child, Chairman of Company in London of settling in Bombay and withdrawing from Surat, Sir John Child left Surat. This was taken as an act of offence by Mughal Governor of Surat. He put troops around the Factory and soon after, the war began and a force was sent to Swally to seize Child. Child retaliated by blockading the mouth if the river below Surat and then sailing down the coast, captured all sorts of Indian shipping indiscriminately including forty big ships. Meanwhile, the Siddi of Janjira, as Mughal Admiral, attacked Bombay in May 1689 and occupied to outlying parts. This war had again proved that while English could assert at Sea, they could be routed at land. Siddi made Child desert the fort and marching further, he took possession of fort of Mazagun (and

72 Siddi Yaqut Khan of Janjira was called Mughal Admiral by the Europeans. Yaqut Khan was not a person, but a title and the holder had to hold the fleet which his Habshi clan had built up at Janjira, some way below Bombay, at the service of imperial Government, Ashin Das Gupta, p.27. For details on Sidis, see D.R.Danaji, Bombay and the Sidis, Bombay, 1932).
73 ibid.p.339.
made it headquarters and Mahim fort. He also made himself master of Dongri hill, an eminent castle of Bombay, plundered East India House and set it afire. These wars confirmed their respective positions. While English mainly attacked Mughal shipping, Mughals retaliated by stopping their trade on land. English had to confess fault and seek pardon. Aurangzeb pardoned them and sent a farman on 4th April 1690 restoring their trade on payment of five of Rs.150,000 and restoring goods of Indian ships. However, Aurangzeb’s callous attitude can be judged from his statement that the Christians were the ‘Lions of the Sea,’ saying that God has allotted unstable element for their rule.

Around this time, a number of pirates of European nations had also joined piracy. From the English sources, it is evident that the pirates of other nationalities (specially the interlopers, i.e. merchants of the new English Company) had also joined in. In 1691, the Bombay Council, while writing to London that trade was being greatly hampered by the large number of pirates along the coast, also stated that the European pirates came from all nations.

75 Burnell, John *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, pp.19,32.
and nationalities: English, Dutch, French, Danes etc. and sailed under English colours for which they were held responsible and made to pay compensation. While its possibility cannot be wholly ruled out, the allegation of it being a frequent case is most certainly an exaggeration as while the different European nations traded differently they often worked in consonance. At times, various pirates on a single ship were of different nationalities. In 1684, six Europeans, four of them being English and other Dutch, begged passage in a Persian merchants' richly laden ship bound for India and in Gulf of Persia, killed the owners and looted the ship. In 1689 rovers from West Indies arrived. English President at Bombay, Gayer is also said to have handed over six French pirates to Itimad Khan, in Gulf of Cambay. French squadron was working four pirate ships from New York imposed a loss of four lakh rupees for native ships; interlopers also captured ships while East India Company servants also joined them e.g. Mocha and Josiah crew mutinied and joined the notorious pirate Kidd. The English and the Dutch were more vulnerable and contradictorily,

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80 Orme Mss.117, p.291.
81 ibid., p.11.
82 ibid., p.29.
83 ibid., p.34.
more successful than the Portuguese because they traded deep into the interior. In case the ship of a prominent merchant was looted at sea, they prevailed upon the Governor to demand restitution and protection of their ships naturally because more than anything else, it was a monetary loss and safety to them. In 1691, Abdul Ghaffur's ship was taken at the mouth of Surat which had nine lakh rupees cash on board, supposedly by the Danish pirates. Initially, embargo was placed on English trade but finding them innocent, it was lifted. Two plundered vessels of Abdul Ghaffur, Karimi and Ahmadi turned up ashore two days after they had disappeared. The nakhuda (captain) of the ship Karimi reported that pirates had put both the ships on fire, in which six men were injured, and Rs.500,000 worth in bullion all in Spanish rial were ferried across to the pirate ship, and of this sum, 4 lakhs belonged to Ghaffur. Itimad Khan summoned Dutch Council and interrogated Van Ommen. He replied that the testimony against them was dubious since the Indians called all the Europeans 'hat-wearers' which confused the issue. Itimad Khan proposed that each of the three European Companies would send one ship to search for the pirates. But on 20 September 1692, Van Omen declined help by saying that

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they had no extra ship for the purpose. The next year, two of Ghaflur’s ships, Fez Rasan and Fatehi, were attacked off Bab al Mandeb, by an English pirate, Thomas Tew and his total loss was of two and a half lakh rupees. Another merchant, Sheikh Hamidi’s ship Ahmadi also fell to pirates and his total loss was of eight and a half lakh rupees. In 1694, pirate Henry Evory’s ship Fancy with forty-six guns and 150 men captured Fath Muhammadi of Abdul Ghaflur. In 1698, Chivers captured a fine ship with a cargo worth 14 lakhs belonging to Hassan Hamidan, a merchant of Jeddah and Surat. On 12 Jan. 1699, order from Emperor to ‘squeeze English, Dutch and French’ so that they pay compensation to Hasan Hamidan and others robbed by European pirates. They were asked to either undertake to pay compensation in future or leave Mughal Empire. European Factors had to sign the undertaking. The Indian Ocean was divided into zones among the three companies- the French were given the Persian Gulf, the Dutch ‘the Arab coast from Muscat to Jedda; and the English ‘the South’ which took in the West coast of Indian and Indonesia area. The idea was that they would be responsible for the piracies committed in their areas and if piracy is committed in their area, either they would capture the

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86 ibid., p.111.
87 ibid.
89 ibid., p.352.
pirates or pay money. On 2nd Feb.1698, Kidd captured *Quedah Merchant*, 400 tons, bound from Bengal to Surat with a rich cargo worth 4 lakhs of rupees belonging to Mukhlis Khan, one of the great nobles of the Mughal Empire. Its Captain was an Englishman, gunner was French, 2 Dutchman and therefore all three nations were held responsible for this piracy. In August, Emperor ordered that all three nations should pay total damages amounting to 14 lakhs. A guard was placed on the English factory and they had to pay 2 lakh rupees as compensation. Gayer refused payment offered to furnish convoys for Mocha as he had already done before (Gayer offered Mughal Emperor to give them 4 lakh per year—the same amount was being given to Sidi of Janjira for convoying Red Sea fleet but he had been clearly unable to save Indian ships from European desperadoes. Dutch had similarly asked for a monopoly of trade in Mughal Empire in lieu of convoying Red Sea fleet. But both these offers had been rejected by the Emperor as he realized that neither any one European nation was involved in piracy, nor any one nation could guard against all other equally powerful pirates. The Dutch threatened to abandon trade than pay damages. But they signed bonds to suppress piracy

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91 *ibid.*, p.29.
and jointly engage to make good all future losses. According to the terms of agreement, “the Dutch convoyed the Mecca pilgrims and patrolled entrance to Red Sea, besides paying 70,000 to the Governor of Surat, the English paid Rs.30,000 and patrolled South Indian Seas, while the French made a similar payment and policed the Persian Gulf. In 1699, February, Amanat Khan forced the English, Dutch and French to sign *muchalkas* (agreements), giving a guarantee to protect and convoy the Mughal ships, and to make good all losses from piracy. A few months later, one of the best ships belonging to Husain Hamidan— armed with fifty guns and manned by three hundred men "was taken off St. Johns by three pirates on her voyage from Jidda. (The pirate crews were said to have received £ 800 per man). Unfortunately for the English, the Governor, Itimad Khan, a man of indisputable probity, and a firm friend to the English died and had been succeeded by Amanat Khan in May 1697. The new Governor issued orders that no one should be permitted to leave the town, that no provisions should be taken to the English ships, and that all sea-borne traffic should be stopped. The Emperor commanded Nawab Asad Khan to issue a *parwana* to the Governor of Surat. In this document Aurangzeb

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92 ibid., p.53.
93 ibid., p.53.
94 Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.iii, p.464.
95 Das, Harihar *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702*, p.34.
emphasized the losses inflicted on Indian merchants by the pirates pointed to the ineffectiveness of the English to convoy ships in affording protection; and ordered the Governor to bring pressure upon the English, Dutch and French to make them pay compensation to the Emperor's subjects. He declared that unless written guarantees were given that the piracies should stop, no more Englishmen, Dutchmen and Frenchmen would be allowed to dwell and trade in his dominions.\textsuperscript{96}

The Governor of Surat, acting on the Emperor's order, presented the three European nations with an ultimatum demanding compensation for the losses sustained from the pirates, and an undertaking to clear the seas and provide convoys for pilgrim ships. The Mughal subjects were forbidden to have any dealing with Europeans by proclamation accompanied by beat of drum throughout the city, and a guard was set over the factories. The Dutch and French were quick to come to terms with the Mughal authorities. Both paid sums of money to the Governor and signed guarantees for the safe navigation of the Gulf of Mokha, and the Gulf of Persia respectively. Amanat Khan now demanded that the English should give similar security for the Southern Indian Seas, from the Coast of Coromandel and Bengal as far as Sumatra and Java. President Annesley and his Council asked for time to obtain

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{ibid.}, p.34.
instructions from Sir John Gayer at Bombay. Gayer, on being apprised of the seriousness of the situation, sailed for Suali Bar with a small fleet and arrived there on January 11, 1699. He advised Annesley not to make the payment demanded by the Governor, and not to give the guarantee for the safety of the Southern Seas. He pointed out that the English had furnished convoys for two years and would willingly do so for a third year, and that England alone among the European nations concerned was sending men-of-war to extirpate the pirates. He declared himself quite ready to discuss the subject with the Mughal's representative. Nevertheless, he avoided a personal meeting with the governor. The delay and hesitation on the part of the English in giving the required security made the Governor furious, and he immediately, sent several hundred soldiers to blockade the factory, threatening the inmates with death. These strong measures caused Annesley to bring the whole question up for discussion at a general council, and it was decided that a guarantee should be given similar to those offered the English and the French. Thus "the dull unthinking English" (as Sir Nicholas Waite called them in a letter to the Directors) undertook heavier responsibilities than their European rivals. The Portuguese, whose sea-borne trade had almost ceased to exist, were not included in the arrangement. Next, the Emperor demanded that the Europeans should recompense Husain Hamidan
and other merchants for the losses they had suffered. The Mughal Governor however explained to him that the European Companies at Surat could not be held liable for this, as the pirates were "hatmen of all nations", acknowledging the authority of no sovereign. Gayer and his colleagues trusted that the guarantee given by the English would satisfy Aurangzeb. But their fortunes at Surat had reached their lowest ebb; their trade had been almost extinguished, and at this critical moment Annesley was replaced on May 13, 1698 by Stephen Colt, his junior in Council. President Colt found himself at once confronted with the greatest obstacle to the success of the embassy of Sir William Norris. Mukhlis Khan had already been compensated, which had enabled President Colt if to stave off any additional claims and to soften the rigorous measures, of the Governor by secretly bribing the subordinate Mughal officials. The discovery of these transactions made the London Company seem to the principal merchants of Surat to be themselves pirates, and also strengthened the demands of Husain Hamidan. When Diyanat Khan became Governor of Surat, the question of the claim was renewed. Sir John Gayer refuted the charge of piracy and appealed to the Emperor, as well as Diyanat Khan, hot to believe the allegations without making full enquiry. He asked Diyanat Khan to use his authority to prevent any disturbance to the Company's trade at the port. The Emperor's orders, however, were imperative
regarding the satisfaction of Husain Hamidan's claims. President Colt emphatically denied any responsibility for these, as it was not possible for him to meet the demand without consulting the authorities in London. The result was the arrest and imprisonment of Sir John Gayer and others of the London Company.

The prospect of a settlement seemed remote on account of a strong representation made to the Emperor that in spite of repeated orders the Company had not yet discharged its debts. It was further complicated, at this juncture, by the fact that an English ship; supposed to belong to the London Company, had captured one of Abdul Ghafur's ships, sailing from Mokha, and three other ships carrying considerable sums of money. In December, 1701, acting upon instructions, Diyanat Khan seized some of the Company's factors at Surat, forbade the entry of all provisions, and confiscated goods amounting to over Rs. 140,000. These were given to Abdul Ghaffur as part of the compensation for losses incurred through the pirates. The claims of Husain Hamidan had yet to be satisfied. On 23 September, 1701, Abdul Ghaffur's ship was plundered and two other ships went missing. The Dutch pleaded that they had broken the convoy and hence the Dutch were not liable to give compensation. A long tussle ensued over the issue, but the Dutch

\[97\] *ibid.*, p.36.
refused compensation. In February, 1702, Prince Sultan Muhammad Azim-us-Shan, Viceroy of Bengal, attacked the Company's settlements at Patna, Rajmahal and Kasimbazar, property was seized, but the embargo on all European trade, in Bengal was afterwards withdrawn. Acting on the same order, the Nawab Da'ud Khan appeared with a large force in the vicinity of Fort St. George. Governor Thomas Pitt had already served information of his approach through spies, and took apt measures to defend the weak settlement. He protested against the charge of piracy, pointing out to Da'ud that the security-bond extorted from the three European nations at Surat did not apply to his own settlement. Nevertheless, Da'ud besieged fort for three months, inflicting great loss on the Company's trade and revenue. At first he demanded an exorbitant sum, but Governor Pitt agreed to pay him Rs.20,000 and another 5,000 to Muhammad Said, his diwan, or revenue collector, the siege was then raised, and full liberty to trade was granted as before. Daud on his part made reparation to the English for damage done. It is clear that the incidents of piracy were growing steadily in the last quarter of the 17th century and in the same measure, frictions and wars between the Europeans, specially the English, were also growing. The importance of the issue can be judged from the fact that when the New East India

98 ibid., p.115.
Company sent an ambassador to acquaint Mughal Emperor of formation of a new “English Company trading to the East Indies; to request granting of such settlement for its factories; and such immunities and privileges as might be necessary for security and protection of Company’s agents and redress of their grievances; seek privileges equal to those enjoyed by other Europeans, it had to impress upon the Mughal king their seriousness in dealing with the issue of piracy, which was admitted even by the English King.

One of the instructions given to Norris on his appointment by king William the Third, (King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland) on 31 Dec. 1698, was to inform the Mughal king of efforts of King of England to suppress piracy. In a letter addressed to the Mughal King, he wrote that he was ‘sending squadron of war ships (to end piracy) along with the embassy.’ And it was precisely on the issue of piracy that the Norris embassy sent by New English Company (established at Surat on 8th April, 1699), from 27th January 1701-18 April 1702) could not succeed. There had been regular reports of piracy in the Indian Ocean and while Emperor Aurangzeb continued to insist firmly on a guarantee for security for sea, and demanded an undertaking by the English to clear pirates from the seas as a price for a farman, the ambassador Norris was

99 ibid., p. 77.
100 ibid., p. 82-84.
equally emphatic in refusal as he knew it to be an impossible task.\textsuperscript{101}

The collective guarantee or joint convoys made the Indian shipping even more dependent on the European Companies, even while not making them free from piracy. In 1701, Hussain Hamidan’s ship which was reportedly not following the convoy to Mocha provided by Dutch and English was taken by the pirates and although English pleaded innocence, Governor set guards on the Factory and debarred all their correspondence with Europeans or natives from all conveniences because he demanded 300,000 from them to pay to Hussain Hamidan.\textsuperscript{102} In reply to which the English sent a \textit{Roca} to Governor on 13 Jan. 1701/2 saying that there was no proof of their involvement and accusing him of having fraudulently taken Rs.235,000 for Abdul Ghaffur of his loss of Rs.182,000 which he says was robbed by pirates in straits of Malacca and now Rs.300,000 were being demanded for Hussain Hamidan.\textsuperscript{103} The Governor rejected this \textit{Roca}. The English Company men then took the matter to principal merchants of Surat, who advised them to ask Dutch to pay half the money as they were involved too.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, p.311.
\textsuperscript{102} k(i), \textit{Surat Factory Diaries}, India Office Records, London, No.3(org.) 7 Jan.1701/2. I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}, 16 Jan.,1701/02.
However, the strict attitude of Mughal Government led them to heavily compensate for the losses made. This strict attitude was evident in the first decade of eighteenth century. On 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1703, two ships of Surat, one belonging to Abdul Ghaffur and another to Qasim Khan, when returning from Mokha were captured by pirates off Surta. Following this, the Governor Itibar Khan, seized all Indian brokers of European Companies cut their food supply and all communication from outside. Two lakh rupees were recovered from the brokers (Vithhal and Keshav Parekh) of old East India Company and three lakhs more from brokers of the Dutch.<sup>105</sup> From October 1703 to February 1704, Dutch blockaded the port of Surat until guards were withdrawn from their factory on 15<sup>th</sup> March. They also captured a rich vessel bringing Indian pilgrims back from Mecca, some of which even Aurangzeb venerated, and in return of their ship, they asked Governor of Surat to repay the money that he had forcibly taken from them<sup>106</sup> as an indemnity-bond. While the Governors of Surat were encouraging piracy by these coercive methods, Aurangzeb disapproved of their policy. He removed Itibar Khan and installed Nejbat Khan in his place. By an imperial order received on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1704, he also rejected the agreement made by Amanat Khan in Feb. 1699 which

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bound them to convoy all Indian ships and make good all losses arising out of any act of piracy and instead asked the Surat merchants to give a written discharge of all their claims on Europeans.\textsuperscript{107} He also forbade Nejabat Khan to take indemnity bonds from the Europeans in future.\textsuperscript{108} In December 1704, Dutch Council made claims to cancel \textit{muchalka} and a new \textit{farman} was issued to free them from all claims.\textsuperscript{109} This was perhaps the first time when peace was concluded on terms dictated by a European power precisely because there was no other option.

European maritime dominance was a source of considerable irritation for the Mughal rulers and officials, but they had come to accept the necessity of obtaining passes for their ships. This did indeed amount to an infringement of sovereignty-a recognition of the weakness of an imperial authority-but the system of passes was never quite considered as an acceptance by the Mughals of the power and strength of the Europeans. In Mughal perception, European maritime dominance was often equated with piracy, and this allowed them to de-legitimate European assertions of political authority. European maritime dominance co-existed in Mughal imperial consciousness with their political marginalization. They

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{ibid.} vol.iii, p.487-91.
\textsuperscript{109} Manucci, Niccolao \textit{Storia Do Moseor. 1656-1712} vol.iv, p.143.
were still considered as inferior and subordinate to the land-based empires in Asia, and their dominance over the seas was, in Mughal perception, no more than an instance of piracy—a willingness to engage in plunder and violence for quick profits. That the European maritime dominance reflected their technological superiority, as also a better-developed political system, was an insight that was lost on the consciousness and perception of the Mughals in India.