CHAPTER 6
MARITIME DIMENSION OF INDIA

While addressing a seminar in New Delhi, George Fernandez, the Defence Minister of India, expressed shock that in more than 50 years of India’s independence, not one government had paid heed to the protection of 7,500 kilometers long maritime borders. He stated that the country was callously indifferent on the issue in the past. "This shocking revelation was made by the task force on border management." The minister said. The maritime security had not figured in the national agenda so far. The Andaman and Nicobar islands remained an "open house for forces inimical to India." India’s strategic space in the seas and oceans around it where "rich in minerals and hydrocarbons." the minister continued. "Even land locked nations will demand sea space for exploration purposes and such moves may start conflicts for control of sea routes." The minister wanted the Navy and the Coast Guard to play their roles in a determined manner since "our shores so far have been a landing ground for powers to plunder and colonise the country." This statement summarises in a nutshell the current state of maritime India.

Ancient Indian Maritime Heritage

India had a progressive maritime history. Ancient Indian scripture, "Rig Veda," refers to ships, and Indus River (Sindhu) as the natural outlet to sea. Later, the Samhitas, described a ship as "storm proof," with a pleasing appearance and with
wings, probably sails, on its side. They also mentioned about eastern and western oceans. In the South, people were engaged in ocean trade since time immemorial, both with West Asia and South East Asia. Similarly, the Indus people traded by sea for centuries. Seafaring had its origin either somewhere in the southern coast or the Sindhu delta before the historical period, and the area around the mouth of the Ganga. There were also reports that sailors of Sindhu delta turned to piracy for survival that extended to the mouth of the Tigris through the Shat-el-Arab. Chandragupta tasked his navy for coastal and inland water defence. Emperor Ashoka's navy regulated traffic and suppressed piracy, under a Navadyaksha. His vessels visited Egypt, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Syria, Cyrene, Macedonia, and Epirus. The "Arthasashtra" written in the fifth century BC, the "Jatakas" of the fourth century BC, and many other ancient texts refer to India's maritime tradition and overseas trade since prehistoric times. They are supported by archaeological discoveries. Notable among them was the ancient dock at Lothal dating back to 2500-1700 BC. Recently there was a find of a Roman shipwreck off Bet Dwarka. The evolution of maritime trade and the cultural exchanges with the Levant, the Middle East, and the South East Asia from ancient times are recorded in history. Starting from the second century BC, and uninterrupted for almost a millennium and a half years, empires such as the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Kalingas, the Sri-Vijayan Kings, the Shailendras, the Cheras, the Cholas, the Pandyas, down to the Vijaya Nagar Empire in the fourteenth century AD, exercised considerable maritime influence in the region. These empires supported the science of advancement in navigation, instrumentation, mathematics, and shipbuilding.
Migrations and Invasions

In spite of power struggles within, India was a unique peninsula culturally and humanly integrated. It was more or less the “last stop” in the human migratory route. People came to stay. It was rich and developed. That attracted invaders through its open borders, over the land and by the sea. They plundered India until the British invasion in the seventeenth century. There is no record of India invading another country in spite of its capability. There were no serious ocean expeditions for conquest, religious missions, or trade. It is somewhat confusing to understand. Does this mean India never felt insecure like other nations as a continent, or appreciated its own uniqueness as a peninsular state? It could be that either the national security concept in India was not prevalent, or the people were not seriously insecure to explore further for territories, ethnic spreading, or resources. Its uniqueness as a country was anyway subjugated by colonial rules, especially by the British. India was colonised only by those who came by the sea.

Historical Perspective: Maritime India

*Manusmriti*, equated the sea going people to incendiaries, prisoners, those who are fed by the son of an adulteress, sellers of illicit liquour, bards, oilmen, or suborners to perjury. They were all offenders. The prevailing Brahminic order placed restrictions on sea travel and traffic. The *Bhaudhayana Dharma Sutra* forbade orthodox Brahmins to engage in sea travel and traffic, and prescribed penances and penalties for transgressions. Still some Brahmins transgressed the scriptures. It was
not forbidden for other groups in the varna order. The Cholas in South India had elaborate maritime orientation in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Traders and merchants from medieval Bengal frequented Simhala and beyond. Gujarati merchants were known to be traded in the Indian Ocean in fifteenth century. These records testify Peninsular India's legacy of seafaring tradition.\(^{16}\)

The first to take to sea in India were the coastal people. For them the sea was their natural element for subsistence. They were fishers, boatmen, pearl divers, and others. Their status was low in the social hierarchy.\(^{17}\) Early mariners were drawn from such communities for long distance trading. Many converted into Islam with the advent of Arab shipping and Islamic commercial contacts. They involved in multi-economic activity. Retaining their basic occupation—fishing and seafaring. They also engaged in more complex economic activities deriving from trade and commerce. Seasonal piracy also belonged to the realm of seafaring. Coupled with the Portuguese offence, it displaced the maritime activities. Merchants and rulers dreaded them.\(^{18}\)

Indian peninsula strategically bridged West Asia with South East Asia. Indian coastline accommodated large number of ports and commercial outlets. Maritime Gujarat, Konkan, and Malabar on the west, and deltaic Bengal, Orissa, Andhra, and the Coromandel on the east hosted hectic maritime commercial activity. It also meant natural interlocking of riverine operations with maritime traffic. In spite of these, the coastal society was not a unitary whole and cohesive. The coastal area was porous, pliable, and unspecified.\(^{19}\) It continues today.
The seafaring scenario of Peninsular India changed totally with the arrival of the Portuguese. On May 20, 1498, after 207 days of voyage from Lisbon, Vasco Da Gama, the Captain-Major of a Portuguese fleet, specially assigned by King Manuel of Portugal discovered the all-sea route to India, when he anchored off the medieval Calicut. Since then it was only a matter of time for the Portuguese to gain control of the seas and introduce their system. Those who did not adhere to their system where classified as pirates. Piracy was an old profession that predated the arrival of Portuguese in Indian littoral. Portuguese onslaught coupled with State apathy subjugated the Indian seafarer. The State was not concerned about wars at sea. According to Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (1528-37) “Wars by sea are merchants affair and of no concern for the prestige of Kings.” “And if the King’s fleet (Aurangzeb) be but ordinary, considering so great a monarch and these advantages, it is because he minds it not, he contenting himself in the enjoyment of the continent and styles the Christian lions of the sea, saying that God has allotted that unstable element for their rule.” The medieval Indian state was benignly indifferent to maritime matters. The political conceptions and predilections of the pre-Mughal authorities, the Lodis of Delhi and the regional sultans of Gujarat, Jaunpur, Bengal, and the Deccan, and the Mughal State remained consistent to land. The inconsistency was in commercial affairs—especially maritime affairs. They were ambivalent and often downright contradictory.

Akbar consolidated the administrative and economic system. That acted as catalyst for commercial activity both on land and at sea during the period of Akbar.
An admiralty was set up in Surat to oversee Hajj pilgrimage and combat piracy and thereby support trade and shipping. It was viewed an important auxiliary department for gaining territorial power on land including riverine waters by complimenting the manoeuvres of the army. The considerations were not geared for the accretion of maritime power or even control of maritime trade. The perception was clearly different. The Muhgals seemingly had the capability, but did not feel it necessary to stake claim for maritime hegemony in the Indian Ocean. Instead they preferred to apply for European trading permits for their quasi-commercial ventures and pilgrimage tours. Malabar was an exception. The sovereign and the ruling elite, while adhering to sea travel themselves, were motivated by considerations of revenue and power to keep sea channels open and trade and shipping free. For the Muhgals the trade was important but was conducted on land, not by the sea.

The Portuguese jeopardised the maritime interests of the local traders. They coerced merchants and rulers into submission. They exercised control from their strongholds at Cochin, Goa, Diu, and Malacca. The second stage was taxation of local trade. Portuguese nurtured the rivalries between states to their advantage. The sultans did not consider the restrictions as substantive issues that impinged upon their sovereign authority. It depended on their larger political interests. Portuguese continued attack on trade and shipping right through the 1520s. They could implement the Cartaz-Cafila-Armada system without much difficulty. The rulers of India were impervious to maritime matters since it did not materially affect them.
The state refused to deal with the problem of seaborne aggression, even when it seemed to encroach on sovereign and territorial rights.28 Glory for the Sultans and Mughals, as M. N. Pearson points out was not won at sea; it was firmly and visibly linked to land.29 "The wholly military ethic of the Muslim rulers was bound up with the land and the horses racing over the plains." The notables, even those whose interests were linked to the coast and control of its resources, failed to articulate a policy of sustained resistance. The trading activities of the Portuguese threatened to dismantle the carrying trade of spices in the Indian Ocean by building up a naval and maritime empire that would control and regulate all trading channels in the ocean. The merchants were left with two options. Either to defy the Cartaz-Cafila-Armada system or work within its limits. It was judicious for the merchants to opt for the latter. In Malabar the State assisted the seafarers. But they could not sustain for long. They earned the enmity of the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, the conflict marked their first definitive expression for maritime claims and their hegemony over the seas. Barros, the official chronicler of the Portuguese observed, "it is true that there does exist a common right to all to navigate the seas and in Europe we acknowledge the rights which others hold against us, but this right does not extend beyond Europe and therefore the Portuguese as lords of the sea are justified in confiscating the goods of all those who navigate the seas without their permission."30 The thinking of a medieval maritime superpower was evident in this chronicle.

All over Peninsular India, the attitude of the ruling elites to the larger issue of maritime jurisdiction and power was ambivalent and inconsistent. The South Indian
sovereigns especially Vijayanagar, could not remain indifferent to the issue of the Portuguese monopoly. Although the Portuguese did not enjoy success in Vijaynagar, the State did not attempt to regulate the course of external trade in the same manner as they did the flow of revenues from land. An integral part of organic maritime policy was missing. The empire disintegrated slowly into smaller states.

According to available records, Bengal seems to have maintained extensive links with the Indian Ocean. Local traders also attest Bengal’s vibrant maritime tradition.

The sea was not the preferred site of action for the Mughals, and yet they could not choose to ignore it altogether. Besides the advantages from the overseas trade, there was the pressing business of organising the Hajj to Mecca. The Mughals, therefore, integrated the commercial activities and foreign trade. The seventeenth century constituted a golden period for Indian trade and shipping. The benefits of political security, the integrations of the subcontinent into the larger Central Asian-Iranian-Turanian circuit, the expansion of West Asian markets under the patronage of the Ottoman and Safavid rulers were exploited by Indian merchants and mariners whose operations substantially expanded in scale and scope. Improved communications gave the merchants easy access to a large productive hinterland whose goods entered the cargoes of sailing merchants. At the same time the influx of bullion that came into India was central to the working of the Mughal economy and helped sustain the revenue and monetary edifice of the Empire. The Mughal Navy
sought the assistance of the European powers to police the seas and curb the activities of pirates, privateers, and the Portuguese. The Mughals did not contest the European presence at sea. A seafaring merchant could not expect official support as a matter of course on an issue that involved his interests. Further the imperial flotilla did not assume their responsibility of policing the sea, but functioned essentially as an auxiliary force to assist the principal fighting forces on land. Maritime affairs were centred on land security. The Mughals depended on European convoy services for protection at sea. In lieu, they promised concessions to them. Indian traders in the seventeenth century, therefore, had to deal directly with the Europeans from a State induced position of relative weakness. At the same time European superiority in the seas was matched by the Mughals on the land. The permit system in the sea destroyed freedom of navigation enjoyed by the Asian tradesmen prior to the entry of the Portuguese. The interest of the parties brought a broad consensus: the Mughals did not press for their advantage at sea knowing that their naval strength was inadequate; the Europeans realised that their growing investments in India lay at the mercy of the Mughals while the Indian seafaring merchant cut short his losses and worked within the confines of the European system of permits to expand his overseas ventures.

Maratha power was centred on its founder, Shivaji. He was aware of the significance of sea power. He was the main opponent of Mughal power. His attitude to coastal politics and maritime power was different. The specific configuration of the Konkan coast articulated a definite maritime strategy in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Konkan as a region guaranteed essential conditions of sea power—ports,
harbours, a hard seafaring population, and above all access to ship building materials. Shivaji was aware of it and made resolute attempt to sweep the sea as he did on land. However, historical information about Shivaji’s activities at sea is neither accurate nor substantial.\(^3\)

The rise and fall of the political regimes in medieval India did not fundamentally alter the entrenched political attitudes of maritime control. The political authority in India at the all India level or at the local level preferred to take its strength on the basis of territorial control rather than on mercantile control involving taxation on trade and protection of client merchants on the high seas against political competitors.\(^4\) The notion of power and sovereignty continued to remain land based. The warrior ethic was not oriented towards the sea. Maritime jurisdiction did not figure in the evolving political agenda of the Indian sovereigns. Rather than take on the Europeans in the high seas in pursuit of principles of free navigation, the Mughals like their predecessors preferred to work out a compromise formula whereby the Europeans were permitted, indeed, even authorised to police the sea and decide on the terms of navigation for Indian merchants. This in turn emboldened the peripheral powers, the European companies, to fish successfully in the troubled politics of the hinterland.\(^5\) The Dutch East India Company found its way in India in 1602, two years after the English East India Company.

In the eighteenth century, the rulers of Travancore and Mysore attempted to control overseas trade by taxation and locked horns with the European East Indian
companies. But the overall developments irreparably dislocated the trading structure of maritime India. Indian shippers and seafaring merchants were subjugated. The casualties of the eighteenth century crisis were Indian shippers and merchants who found their way blocked by the European fleet in their own waters.

The collapse of Ottoman and Safavid empires threw the markets in West Asia into disarray. Conditions of trade in the high seas deteriorated as piratical attacks increased in scale and incidence. The Bombay Marine, the naval arm of the East India Company in western India imposed a set of controls that ended the claims of existing coastal powers. Under the circumstances, the relationship between the local coastal society, seafarers and the rulers, and the English East India Company became tense and violent. By the 1760s English shipping turned towards China. Muslim shipping staged a quiet retreat as the ships of the English established sole control over the region's freight traffic. The English ships had a reputation for being seaworthy and capable of withstanding piratical attacks on the high seas, a factor that prompted Gujarati residents in Bengal to use English ships for transport and trade.

Political insecurity ruled the roost in the eighteenth century with the decline of the Mughal authority and the English East India Company acquiring political power. The steady intrusion of European interests eroded the autonomy of the Indian merchant and impinged upon the local coastal societies. The focus was on Imperial Admiralty to enable them to impose absolute authority over the seas through the medium of the pass. Coastal and maritime hegemony thus figured significantly in the
political agenda of the English East India Company, though they were not the only contender for maritime control. The decline of the Mughals invited the coastal potentates to assert their claims along the coast and the high seas, especially on the Konkan coast. Every one: the Khanojis, English, Portuguese, and the Dutch, claimed exclusive right to police the sea and establish authority of their trading permit as the only legitimate one. The result was loosening of the political system along the coast rendering the operations of the seafarer extremely hazardous. There were too many players, with claims in the same terrain, whom the seafarers were eager to avoid at all costs. After thirty-eight years of prolonged conflict on rights and jurisdiction over the sea, English East India Company eliminated the rest. Right through 1740 and 1750s, the Company's naval establishment "the Bombay Marine" fought intermittently to establish control of the seas against a number of contenders. There was no jointness among the various Indian maritime forces. The British dubbed them as pirates. A substantial section of the seafarers followed the English system.

Technological revolution transformed the British trade into a higher position in India and the Indian Ocean in the nineteenth century. The introduction of steamships, development of telegraphy, and the opening of the Suez played a major role in the upliftment. New technology harnessed the British commercial interests and overwhelmed maritime Asia. The new order was not accessible to non-Europeans. Under the new system, India's foreign trade passed on to the hands of European merchants. At the core of the new European monopoly was the Conference System that consisted a series of monopoly reigns to exclude all competition by techniques
such as rate wars and deferred rebates. The Peninsular and Oriental Company, and the British India Steam Navigation Company came to dominate India's overseas trade and coastal shipping. Native shipping already in the doldrums was swept clean from the runs on which the liners came to operate. European global hegemony displaced other traders and seafarers. Indian sailors were reduced to the status of poorly paid labourers and maritime merchants to that of small time traders handling subsidiary business. There was systematic discrimination in everything.

There is an interesting find of survival under competition here. Coastal trade in India flourished because of indigenously designed and built native craft: dhows, pattamars, baggalas, and dhonies. Seventy nine percent of coastal trade was in them in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The geographical configuration of Indian coast prevented steamers from calling at certain ports, and there were many of them. Fishing boats switched over to carrying cargo when they found fishing was not possible or lucrative, seasonally in Gulf of Cambay and Kathiawad coast. This switch was made possible thanks to the inherent flexibility of Indian boat designs. A fact that quite clearly underlines the importance of indigenous technology, and development of facility ports, in sustaining local commercial and seafaring activity in an era of ruthless imperial domination. The shipbuilding art in India can be traced back to 3000 B.C. 25 different class of ships are mentioned in Yuktikalpataru, compiled by Raja Bhoja of Dhara who ruled around tenth century A.D. Indian shipbuilding industry flourished throughout the history of maritime India till the
industrial revolution in the second quarter of nineteenth century, when it lost to advanced designs and construction techniques of the industrialised world.42

To sum up, the historical perspective of maritime India through the medieval ages to independence was of subjugation, coercion, state apathy, disorientation, and later day technological incompetence of the natives who depended on the seas laced with their quest for survival against odds.

Maritime Perspective: Independent India

On March 28, 1958, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India stated on the quarterdeck of the Navy's cruiser, I N S Mysore:

"From this ship I look to India and think of our country and its geographic situation—on three sides there is the sea and on the fourth high mountains—in a sense our country can be said on the very lap of an ocean. In these circumstances I ponder our close links with the sea and how the sea has brought us together. From time immemorial the people of India have had very intimate connections with the sea. They had trade with other countries and they had also built ships. Later on the country became weak. Now that we are free, we have once again reiterated the importance of the sea. We cannot afford to be weak at sea. History has shown that whatever power controls the India ocean, has in the first instance, India's sea borne trade at her mercy, and in the second India's very independence itself." It was a vision statement of sorts.
It took 24 years hence for India to come up with an Ocean Policy Statement (Appendix E). It came out in 1982. Though an enthusiastic statement, it was based primarily on science and technology development. India does not have a comprehensive ocean policy that will address the issues of maritime security of India.

**Indian Ocean Perspective**

The Indian Ocean is the third largest of Earth's four oceans, bounded on the west by Africa, on the north by Asia, on the East by Australia and the Australasian islands, and on the south by Antarctica. It is connected to the Pacific by passages through the Malay Archipelago and between Australia and Antarctica, and with the Atlantic by the expanse between Africa and Antarctica and the Suez Canal. The total area is 73,427,000 sq km. It is about 20% of the world's total ocean area. The width is 6,400 km at the equator. It narrows towards the north and is divided by Indian peninsula into the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea on the east and the Arabian Sea and the Lakshadweep Sea on the west. The Arabian Sea sends two arms northward, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The average depth of is 3,900 m or slightly greater than that of the Atlantic, and the deepest known point is 7,725 m off the southern coast of Indonesian island of Java. In general the greatest depths are in the northeastern sector of the ocean, where 1,30,000 sq km of the Ocean floor lie at a depth of more than 5,500m. A map of the Indian Ocean is given at Appendix F.

Madagascar and Sri Lanka are large islands in the Indian Ocean. Smaller islands include Socotra, Maldives, Andaman and Nicobar (India), Lakshadweep
(India), and Mauritius. From Africa, the ocean receives the waters of the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, and from Asia those of the Euphrates and Tigris, Irrawaddy, Brahmaputra, Ganges, Indus and Shatt-el-Arab rivers. As a rule, the winds over the Indian Ocean are gentle, with frequent extended periods of calm. Tropical storms occur occasionally, however, particularly near Mauritius, and the ocean is notable for seasonal winds called monsoons. The islands are low coral and high volcanic types. The Indian Ocean has two water circulation systems: a regular counter clockwise southern system (South Equatorial Current, Mozambique Current, West Wind Drift, West Australian Current) and a northern system, the Monsoon Drift, whose currents are directly related to the monsoon winds. The SW monsoon draws moisture and drops heavy rainfall on the Indian subcontinent and SE Asia. Indian Ocean is tropical particularly north of 10 degree South, where there are no seasonal changes except those induced by monsoons.43

The Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Persians, the early Egyptians, the Dravidians, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the British, besides other coastal countries in the Indian Peninsula in the early days navigated the Indian Ocean. In the 19th century the British dominated it.44 For them the priority was to keep the sea lines of communication open to India, “the heart” of British Empire.45 They were particular about preventing European encroachment to India. Other factors were minimal, like checking the smuggling of slaves, and trade in the Persian Gulf and the East African coast. Russia was considered to be a threat. But Britain laboured to confine the Russian naval forces in the Black Sea. British policy centred around the assumption that “all the eastern sea lines led to the subcontinent, that had become in
two centuries the strategic centre of a commercial network that covered the whole Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The British therefore gave a great deal of emphasis both to the security of the Indian Ocean and in getting to know it well. The policy of the British in the Indian Ocean was “India centred” till India became independent in 1947. By 1967, British withdrew from the Indian Ocean. Political and security priorities of the Cold War brought the Soviet Union and the Untied States into the region. New States, like Mauritius, Seychelles, and Australia emerged in the region with evolving nationalisms. Others like Sri Lanka and Maldives started looking towards the Indian Ocean for a new awareness. Irrespective of the size and development, the nations felt they were influenced by the Indian Ocean. Presence of large number of navies in the Indian Ocean, and some of them nuclear, can lead to competition. There are changes in the naval doctrines since 1997 all over the world. The navies advocate regional presence. The United States had recast its operational framework after the Cold War. People’s Republic of China has intentions to reach out to the northern Indian Ocean and seas surrounding. It is a matter of active consideration among the navies of the world. Other concerns are the problems of narcotics and arms traffic in the Asian region, and piracies and crimes in the high seas. To counter this, Indian strategists advocate the presence of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard with full capability in the Indian Ocean.

Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) in Indian Ocean

Ocean routes of the world were the chords of maritime communication for traders, merchantmen, missionaries, immigrants, criminals, and colonists. In the time
of war these routes are blockaded to choke the supplies to the enemies. These routes acquired the name sea lines of communication (SLOC) in course of time in maritime vocabulary. They became vital not only for a littoral state but also to those whose economic health depended upon sea trade in spite of being geographically disadvantaged. SLOCs virtually connect the world, whether coastal or interior. Strategically, threats to SLOCs are ocean based transnational crimes and aggression during armed conflicts.

According to World Bank, sea-borne trade was 21,480 billion ton-miles (btm). It is expected to reach 35,000 btm in 201, and 41,800 btm in 2014. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Report, “Review of Marine Transport 2000” the world sea-borne trade is increasing and Asia’s share of import and export was 26.1 and 18.8 percent respectively. SLOCs are maritime economic models for cost effective communication by trade and other means. In criminal or warfare parlance they may not be the same. Deviated SLOCs may be necessary depending upon their intentions and objectives. For a nation state, its SLOC becomes a geostrategic ocean region, and most part of it will be outside its waters. A geostrategic region, this research defines, is a region outside the State that is not colonised by it, but within which it has interests related to its national security and it considers using political, economic, diplomatic, and military instruments of power to safeguard it. Geostrategic region is time and situation related. The definition of geostrategic region therefore is of interest for every State in its maritime strategy. SLOCs are to be seen from the type and density of traffic, threats, and choke points.
The Indian Ocean is a busy route with oil as the main traffic commodity. It directly impacts on energy and economic security of countries of destination. The traffic is from Africa, Persian Gulf and Europe on one side and Asia and Australasia from the other side. The choke points are the Strait of Hormuz, and Red Sea block on the west and Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits on the east.

India is midway between two choke points: Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca, in the Indian Ocean (Appendix F). Both these points are flashing with activities related to conflicts and transnational ocean crimes like piracy. But the important point is that whether India can regulate them, and thereby the SLOCs in the central and North West Indian Ocean.

India and its Maritime Neighbours

India shares maritime boundaries with Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Oman becomes a neighbour when India's claim on legal continental shelf (LCS) is accepted. India’s maritime security interests are shaped by their attitudes, and external and internal policies. All of them have ratified the UNCLOS. It is necessary to know them.

Pakistan

Pakistan is the main adversary to India since independence. It has sworn to break up India. India’s alleged hegemonic ambitions have been a point of
discussions in the Pakistan media and other forums. It has been carrying on a proxy war with India for the last two decades. Its Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) supports acts of terrorism all over India. Pakistan aims to disrupt the social and political fabric of India and wreck it economically.\(^{50}\) At the same time an editorial in the Pakistani media\(^{51}\) alleges India having a grandiose maritime plan at $12 billion to expand its hegemony in the Indian Ocean as part of its larger strategy to dominate trade and naval routes in the Indian Ocean and much beyond.

India has maritime boundary dispute with Pakistan in Sir Creek. The dispute dates back to 1907-08 between the erstwhile provinces of Sind and Kutch. It was then resolved by a resolution in 1914 suggested by the Government of Bombay. It was implemented by placing pillars along the demarcated boundary line on land in 1924. The boundary inside the Sir Creek was taken as the centre of the navigable channel. Pakistan did not accept it. There were six rounds of talks so far in nine years, the last in November 1998. During the 1998 talks, Indian side proposed a seaward approach for solving the maritime boundary as per Article 6.2.5.3 of Technical Aspect of the Law of The Sea (TALOS). Pakistan is not ready till Kashmir issue is resolved.\(^{52}\) It is not likely to be so in the near future. Often, Indian and Pakistani fishers trespass into each other's waters and get arrested by the security agencies. Indian Coast Guard has been directed to warn and direct Pakistani fishers, who inadvertently drift into Indian waters, back to their waters without arrest as a goodwill measure.\(^{53}\) The problem is political as well as technical, and rests mainly in the resolution of land boundary on the Sir Creek.\(^{54}\) The difference is about 250 square miles of ocean that is expected to
be rich in hydrocarbons. Pakistan rejected India's proposal for equidistant and equitable principles. Pakistan wants only equitable principles rather than an equidistant median line. Complications arose in 1996 when Pakistan declared a series of nine straight baselines, which were immediately challenged by India—one of these baselines lie on the eastern bank of Sir Creek and is not acceptable to India. India's resolve is to see the issues are sorted out bilaterally under the Shimla agreement of 1972. The issue is geo-political and historical.

Maldives

Politics of Maldives, subject to periodic instability, had begun to revolve around the question of the British base since World War II, at Gan in the Addu Atoll of Southern Maldives, particularly after the British left. The islands declared independence in 1965 but the British had an agreement to use the base till 1986. This led to further disintegration with the locales and even to a short period of balkanisation of the islands when the people of the Addu Atoll with the neighbouring Suvadiva Atoll declared themselves a sovereign republic as the United Suvadivan Republic. The separatist movement that began in 1958 was over by 1963 after a series of police actions by Male Government. The lesson to be learnt from this was economical disparity when outsiders bring rewards, and if denied by the local government can cause unrest. It reflects in internal politics also because the rulers often have conflicting business interests. This speaks for Maldives as a South Asian country with the highest coup average. India and Sri Lanka have special
neighbourliness protocol with the Maldives. India has a stable maritime regime with the Maldives and a firm and demarcated maritime border.

**Sri Lanka**

India borders Sri Lanka in the Gulf of Mannar and the historical waters of the Palk Bay. The ongoing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka has its direct impact on India. India's policy towards Sri Lanka has been put to test on many occasions in the past. India's maritime boundaries with Sri Lanka are well marked. But there are issues: often fatal firing by Sri Lankan security forces on traditional Indian fishers crossing the historical waters in Palk Bay, nonrecognition of Katchativu agreement by Sri Lanka, smuggling between the countries through the sea route, and Sri Lankan-Tamil refugee influx into India.

**Indonesia**

The motto of Indonesia is "Bhinneka Nutgall Ika" or "Unity in Diversity." But the country is going through cataclysmic economic and political crisis today. It is the world's largest Muslim country and at the same time the most fragmented major state. Indonesia is a large archipelagic state with islands spread over 3,000 miles. 6,000 islands are inhabited. These islands are strategically located, and command over straits that are vital for sea-lines of communication. They are virtually the stepping-stones from the Indian Ocean to Pacific. While Indonesia is the world's fourth largest populated country, it has half of its population below the poverty line. 56
Many constraints are on maritime and air defence. According to strategists, Indonesia is a typical case of how ethnic differences when accompanied by economic turmoil and unfulfilled political aspirations can bring even strong pluralistic states down on their knees. Ethnic trouble is brewing all over Indonesia. According to Indonesia watchers, insurgency in “Aceh” in Indonesia can push refugees to the nearby Andaman and Nicobar Islands. While India has well demarcated maritime boundary line, the concerns are on maritime piracy since Indonesia is a hot bed for it considering the economic turmoil and past history. For India, Indonesia will form a case study and simulator for national security perception and turn around in a pluralistic society that comes under security turmoil.

Thailand

Thailand had concluded a continental shelf boundary with India in the Andaman Sea and fixed a trijuncture point with India and Indonesia on Jun 22, 1978. India has no disputes with Thailand but the Andaman Sea across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been a scene of frequent skirmishes between Myanmarese and Thai fishers and security agencies. Thai fishers also frequent Indian waters close to Orissa and West Bengal.

Myanmar

Myanmar’s Coco Islands border India close to the Andamans in the Bay of Bengal. It has leased a base to China. It has the potential to become an exclusive area
of influence geopolitically. Myanmar is also affected by internal insurgency and drug trafficking and associated crimes. Myanmar is generally supportive of India on foreign policy issues. It has maritime boundary problems with Bangladesh and fisheries disputes with Thailand. India has delimited the maritime boundary in the Andaman Sea, in the Coco Channel with Myanmar on December 23, 1986 and the trijunction point between Myanmar and Thailand on October 27, 1993.

**Bangladesh**

The two countries are intertwined by history, geography and ethnicity. There are border issues over the land as well as in the sea. These are simmering issues. The Bangla Deshi military in the past has shown an inclination to get involved in politics, mostly of the anti-Indian variety. India's maritime boundary with Bangladesh is under dispute. Several rounds of talks have taken place since 1974. The problem is not so much political as technical. Bangladesh favours an equitable solution whereas India favours equidistant line. The main dispute is over the sovereignty of South Talpatty or New Moore (Purbasha) Island that emerged in 1971, in the wake of volcanic activity in the area. It is approximately five square kilometres in size (and appears to be still growing) at the mouth of Haribhanga River that marks the land boundary between the two countries. The island was first shown in the Admiralty Chart 859 by India. India claims the river flows to the east of the Island where as Bangladesh claims it to be on the west. The dispute has more to do with the resources in the hydrocarbon rich Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in the Bay of Bengal. Until this dispute is settled, the maritime boundary line cannot be demarcated.
Oman

Oman is India’s potential maritime neighbour. It is divided into two parts, the main territory occupying a position to the east of Saudi Arabia bordering Arabian Sea, and an exclave on the Musandam Peninsula, separated by the United Arab Emirates. It is the pecularity of the country. It shares a common EEZ with Pakistan in the Gulf of Oman, though it has not concluded any agreement. However, there are no known disputes. The United States protested in 1991 against Oman’s requirement for prior permission for the passage of warships through territorial waters, and against conditions on the right of transit passage through international straits. Oman is at the choke point of the Strait of Hormuz.

Maritime Dimension of India

The geostrategic asymmetry between India and its neighbours is evident. Despite the asymmetry there is certain interdependence in bilateral relations whether practised to mutual advantage or not. Each of these nations is strategically placed and therefore important to India. India has ratified the UNCLOS on June 29, 1995. It is surrounded by the maritime zones in the Arabian Sea, the Lakshadweep Sea, the Gulf of Mannar, the Palk Bay, the Bay of Bengal, and the Andaman Sea within the Indian Ocean. It has disputes with Bangladesh and Pakistan on maritime boundaries. It has signed 12 maritime boundary agreements with its maritime neighbours. India has the fifteenth largest coastline in the world including island territories and large maritime
zones in the Indian Ocean with an equivalent ocean property to govern, and strategic interests to manage.

The maritime zones of India are vast expanses of ocean terrain. Details given in the Table 6.1 explains its expanse and magnitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coastline</th>
<th>7,516.6 kilometres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Territorial waters</td>
<td>12 nautical miles from the baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,55,889 square kilometres area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,682 kilometres perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Contiguous zone</td>
<td>24 nautical miles from the baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9,315 kilometres perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exclusive Economic Zone</td>
<td>200 nautical miles from the baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20,13,410 square kilometres area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9,104 kilometre perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Legal Continental Shelf</td>
<td>Expected to increase the area by another million square kilometres with a perimeter of about 8612 kilometres once delineated and approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Continental shelf</td>
<td>5,04,000 square kilometres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mangroves</td>
<td>3,565 square kilometres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Coral reefs</td>
<td>18000 sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Major ports</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Minor ports</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Private ports</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fish potential</td>
<td>4.72 million tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seaweeds</td>
<td>624 species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Islands in Lakshadweep</td>
<td>11 inhabited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 uninhabited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Islands in the Andaman and Nicobar</td>
<td>36 inhabited (24 Andaman, 12 Nicobar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>536 uninhabited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Near shore islands-mainland</td>
<td>447 west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>151 east</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1. India’s Maritime Zones Data
Indian baseline system is yet to be approved and promulgated by the government without which the calculations are only judicious estimates. The outer limits of continental shelf are currently in the process of being delineated. The Naval hydrographic department has completed the task of delineating the foot of slope (FOS) and the 2500 m isobath. The remaining task is of collection of geophysical data to substantiate India's claim. It is being done by other agencies.\textsuperscript{61}

Ocean Property Assessment: Maritime Zone of India

(a) **Resources.** Identified ocean resources are given below.

(i) **Living Resources.** Living resources comprise general fisheries, planktons (phytoplankton and zooplankton), nektons (whales, other marine mammals, adult fishes, sharks, crustaceans, squid etc.), benthos (deep sea fauna, coral fauna, littoral fauna, marine algae (sea weeds) and mangroves), including littoral benthos (clams, oysters, shrimps, crabs, lobsters, and seaweeds), pearl, and various other marine organisms and benthic animals.\textsuperscript{62} Most of them form renewable sources of protein rich food. About 15 % of Indian population living near the coast are engaged in fishing. The catch is estimated about 2.7 million tonnes annually. It is far less than the sustainable yield of 3.9 million tonnes estimated. About 90 to 95 % of the living resources are found in the EEZ. Indian fishing is confined to territorial waters because the style is traditional.
(ii) **Nonliving Resources.** Nonliving resources comprise water, oil, gas, lime mud deposit, and minerals (magnesium, bromine, sand, gravel aggregates and placer deposits, phosphate, calcareous deposits, nodules containing manganese, copper, cobalt and nickel, and hydrothermal mineral deposits containing zinc, copper, iron, silver, and gold).

(b) **Ocean Advantage.** Ocean advantage comprises trade, shipbuilding, renewable energy, and geostrategic positioning. Indian maritime zones are linked and integrated with the world for commercial traffic besides coastal shipping. The infrastructure facilities are ports, both major and minor, and linking inland transportation. Shipbuilding industry also includes ship braking with the world's biggest yard in India at Alang. An answer to shortage in oil and gas energy is renewable energy from the wind, tide, current, thermal gradient, salinity gradient etc.. Geostrategic positioning could be best understood if the history and the future of India is visualised as a land locked nation without the maritime component.

(c) **Ocean Environment.** Ocean environment comprises three elements: coastal zones, marine environment, and climatology.

(i) **Coastal Zones.** The atmosphere, the sea, and the land meet and interact, in several respects in the coastal zone. Human activity in the form of urbanisation, harbours, navigation,
transportation, industry, domestic and industrial waste disposal, fishing, mariculture, and recreation is maximum in the zone. It is vital for economic security. Coastal zones are also important for biodiversity. The thrust areas are wetlands, mangroves, and coral reef ecosystems. 21 wetlands, and mangrove areas and four coral reef areas in India have been identified for intensive conservation and management purpose. Six significant wetlands in India are declared as “Ramsar Sites” under the Ramsar Convention. Under the World Heritage Convention, five natural sites are declared as “World Heritage Sites.”

(ii) **Marine Environment.** Keeping marine environment free from pollution is vital from the point of view of environment security. Marine pollution in the Indian Ocean including Indian waters is a neglected area of study. There are periodic reports of metal and oil pollution near major cities along the Indian Ocean Rim, more particularly in the coastal areas of Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and along the oil tanker routes in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Reporting on the chlorinated hydrocarbons and DDT and its metabolites in the Indian Ocean. Sarkar and Sen Gupta (1992) observed that these toxic compounds are found throughout the Indian Ocean, with highest concentrations in the sediments of the Bay of Bengal, owing to large human inputs from the east coast of India. Very high concentrations of DDT are also reported for various tissues
of Australian fur seals and South African fishes. A concerted region wide study of marine pollution in the Indian Ocean is necessary. Continuous monitoring of the marine environment for pollution is essential to evaluate the state of health of this Ocean and to provide a basis for sound remedial measures against further pollution of the seawater and its organisms, particularly in coastal waters.63

(iii) Climatology. Scientists of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa has found hitherto unknown reservoir of potent climate changing gas, the nitrous oxide, within the coastal waters of India in the Arabian Sea. It is attributed to fertilizer run offs to the sea that stimulates production of nitrous oxide and hydrogen sulphide. Hydrogen sulphide can affect the local fisheries industry. Nitrous oxide is a potent greenhouse gas. According to some estimates, it is 200-300 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Experiments by NIO suggest that post-monsoon 1,80,000 square kilometres of the Arabian Sea becomes low in oxygen, leading to the death of bottom living marine life. For the past three years there has been less oxygen in the region probably because of increased input of nutrients from human activities. The accumulation of nitrous oxide and hydrogen sulphide is the highest so far observed in coastal waters. India has argued that per capita emission of carbon dioxide is negligible when compared to advanced countries in comparison with the norms of Kyoto protocol. But this new find from Goa suggests that this mere
0.05 % of world’s ocean--totally off India--may be contributing a disproportionately huge amount of up to 21 % of the global output of potent gas. India’s find ah has been published in the British journal *Nature.* The monsoon is the bloodline of India. Its force is tremendous. Some times rises to the fury that can be very destructive. It is the nature’s engine. The South West monsoon arrives over Kerala on the first day of June and glides through India right up to Assam. The manifestations of the monsoon are still unpredictable ranging from cool to roaring cyclonic winds accompanied by disastrous downpours to heart breaking drizzles which takes the country to a dry parched and sizzling summer after it makes its exist. India has two monsoons: South West and North East. They are scientific phenomenon and therefore their anatomy needs to be studied for better appreciation. The origin of the powerful winds and the accompanying winds of the South West monsoon in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea just above the equator perhaps still remains very much unknown.

(d) **Islands.** Islands are ocean properties for a maritime nation under the geoproperty concept. The researcher finds that such a perception will advocate the principles of national security in a more effective way while considering island security. Islands can provide recluse for transnational crime syndicates besides being strategic chokers. The island property comprises island and rock territories. India has a large number of islands that can be grouped under three categories:
(i) **Lakshadweep.** Lakshadweep covers an area of 323 square kilometres in the Arabian Sea away from the mainland. It is in the proximity of Maldives and located 115-275 nautical miles from the mainland. Out of the 27 islands 11 are inhabited.

(ii) **Andaman and Nicobar.** Andaman and Nicobar is in the Bay of Bengal, about 565-940 nautical miles from the mainland, and covers 9,141 square kilometres. These islands are in close proximity to Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia. The Table and Coco Island chain now with Myanmar were originally part of the Andaman chain. There are 572 islands in the group. Out of this 36 are inhabited.

(iii) **Near Shore Islands.** According to the latest survey, India has 447 islands in the west and 151 islands on the east close to the mainland. These islands are critical with respect to national security and are to be seen in an entirely different perspective. Their importance in national security is yet to be studied seriously.

**Maritime Border Area Assessment**

It is explained in this research that maritime boundary is to be seen as an area within a perimeter. India is a fully bloomed maritime nation with all the boundaries that can be prescribed within the concept of maritime security. They are vectored in Figure 6.1, below.
Inland navigable waters inward of baseline (Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Cambay, Hoogli River, etc.) and the coastal zones (Varying)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Archipelagic waters (applicable to archipelagic states)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Territorial waters (12 nautical miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Historic waters (Palk Bay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contiguous zone (24 nautical miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exclusive economic zone (200 nautical miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continental shelf (to 350 nautical miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal continental shelf (2500 m isobath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maritime search and rescue region (varying)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1. Maritime Border Areas

For a better appreciation, the Exclusive Economic Zone, the Legal Continental Zone, the Maritime Search and Rescue Zone, and superimposition of the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Legal Continental Shelf are appended at G, H, I, and J respectively.

External Maritime Dimensions: Mining Blocks and Antarctica

Unlike many other maritime nations, India has "external" maritime dimensions (outside its maritime zones): seabed-mining blocks (Appendix K) allocated under the seabed mining treaty, and interests in Antarctica. India has been allotted blocks of about 1,50,000 square kilometres of area in the Central Indian Ocean for deep-sea
mining. The area extends between latitudes 13.36 and 13.78 degrees South and longitudes 75.6 and 75.85 degrees East.65 India is in an exclusive club with its explorations in Antarctica. Between 1981 and 1999 India launched 19 scientific expeditions. It commissioned the first research station Dakshin Gangotri in 1983. Five years later Maitri replaced it and Dakshin Gangotri became a supply base. In 1983 India acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and achieved consultative status. India participates regularly with the bodies of the treaty system in negotiations and consultations. The Antarctic Treaty aims to ensure that Antarctica is used for peaceful purposes. It promotes international cooperation in scientific research. In 1986 India became a member of the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CAMLR). The main fisheries interest in Antarctic is the protein rich krill. In 1991 India ratified the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. Setting aside the Antarctic Minerals Convention adopted in 1988, the Treaty parties agreed to prohibit all Antarctic mineral resource activities for a period of fifty years, and accorded priority to scientific research, including that essential to understanding the impact of Antarctica on the global environment.66

Maritime Capabilities: Views of Disapproval

There are many views of disapproval on the maritime capabilities of post independent India besides what is officially expressed. An article in the newspaper Pioneer states that the Indian Navy lacks maritime vision.67 The article was critical of Indian Navy's objectives and absence of a national doctrine. While quoting certain examples, the article points out what it calls the tragedy of Indian Navy and attributes
it to failed leadership. It alleges the leaders lack vision, leadership qualities, and direction. While it is not appropriate to conclude such comments in their totality without a focused research, this study recommends the term “navy” in this respect to cover all the maritime forces and agencies, and to accept comments, however adverse they are, even from anonymous authors for analysis and coverage. It supplements knowledge management in decision-making, therefore quoted.

Maritime Policy and National Objectives: Strategic Assessment

The national objectives of India are generally articulated in the annual report of the Lok Sabha titled “National Policy Study.”

(a) Preservation of India’s sovereign independence
(b) Pursuance of an independent foreign policy with no power block alliances.
(c) Cooperation of all friendly nations and with the United Nations.
(d) Reduction of world tension.
(e) Equitable international order, and cooperation based on justice and fair play.
(f) Non-alignment and peaceful co-existence.

These objectives related to national policy have been practised since independence. A closer look will reveal that a wholesome national security objective is conspicuously absent. Without such an objective the goal towards national security
and therefore, maritime security, cannot be articulated. The objective “to put continuous and relentless efforts to maximise national security with full support to the world bodies for upliftment of global security” is absent. It will include maritime security by design. No maritime nation can have a maritime policy in the absence of a national objective that leads to it. The maritime security policy therefore will be “to integrate maritime interests within and as the national interests to foster national security and other national objectives, and adopting a strategy appropriate to achieve it.”

Maritime Security: Strategic Interests and Constituent Elements

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan of the Untied States (1840-1914) believed that sea borne commerce produced national wealth and thereby contributed to the greatness of a country. His mentor was the then Swiss Chief of Staff Baron De Jomini. His prognosis on the sea power as ultimate to a nation’s power was contemporary and situated to the period. His vision on overbearing sea power was a judicious combination of naval superiority combined with mercantile enterprise. According to him, the ingredients of sea power were, 69

(a) geostrategic location,
(b) physical confirmation of the country with secure harbours,
(c) possession of adequate territory to act as economic bases,
(d) human power to man the sea in hostile conditions, and
(e) ability of the government to exploit sea power for national objectives.
His observations were obviously based on the British success in becoming a maritime super power of the period. However it is evident that the objective of an appropriate maritime strategy is to achieve the national interests integral to the grand strategy towards national security. The national maritime interests, therefore, can be articulated as to,

(a) deter conflicts at sea,
(b) win conflicts including war at sea,
(c) provide second-strike capabilities in case of a nuclear attack,
(d) enforce maritime laws in the sea,
(e) protect economic interests in the sea,
(f) ensure marine environment security,
(g) assist mariners at sea in distress,
(h) support humanitarian activities,
(i) support disaster mitigation activities,
(j) carry out scientific and technological studies at sea,
(k) assure trade opportunities by sea,
(l) support regional cooperation at sea,
(m) curtail and interdict transnational crimes at sea,
(n) influence regional cooperation and engagement,
(o) provide oceanic support by creating wealth for the people,
(p) protect sea-lines of communication,
(q) protect life and property at sea, and
(r) command the ocean ways for the benefit of humankind.
The community element for attaining such objectives comprises the following in maritime India (the list is not complete since it is an evolving concept): -

(a) Navy
(b) Coast Guard
(c) Fisheries
(d) Marine Customs
(e) Marine Police
(f) Offshore operators
(g) Shipping community
(h) Ship surveyors
(i) Ship builders
(j) Ship breakers
(k) Ports
(l) Hydrographers
(m) Marine underwater operators
(n) Research organisations
(o) Environment and Forests
(p) Space applications
(q) Air applications.
(r) Ocean miners and technologists
(s) Ocean communication
(t) Cable layers.
(u) Coastal community.
Coastal states.

Maritime NGOs

Maritime neighbours.

Others...

Maritime Threats

Threat is considered to be danger forewarned and appreciated. The "threat matrix cube" explained in Chapter 3 includes all kinds of threats except the wild cards. Identifying a threat is the initial step for perception, and subsequent analysis and appreciation. Without such perception and appreciation, preparedness level can be costly and chancy. A threat not identified and appreciated cannot be considered for policy decisions on strategic planning. The threat matrix "cube" identified in this research is an aid for such an appreciation.

There are cases when unidentified threats are used in decision-making. Proceedings of National Defence College, New Delhi, Seminar on "A Maritime Strategy for India" states that, "one significant way in which maritime threat differs from land based threat is that in the case of the former, it is not always possible to identify the adversary, since the adversary does not have to be an immediate neighbour. Maritime power must cater for a large number of contingencies and be aimed at protecting and furthering national interests." It means that adversaries to the maritime terrain could be from beyond the neighbours. The adversary can be visible or invisible. It could be human or nonhuman from the national security point of view.
The trend in maritime security is for overcoming regional nonresilience, which makes it imperative for security cooperation especially in South East Asia, according to Captain Lee G. Cordner of the Royal Australian Navy.\textsuperscript{70} This statement came close to the end of the Cold War and reflects the immediate perceptions. South East Asian sea lines of communication are at the confluence of the pacific and Indian Ocean trade routes. Conflicts, and transnational crime syndicates involved in piracy and other serious crimes in the region can threaten them. The author in this case calls for alliances for collective security through coalition warfare. He talks about India's overt roles in Sri Lanka, Maldives and construction of naval and air facilities in the Andamans and states that it aspires to be perceived as a dominant power in the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{71}

**Maritime Strategy**

Maritime strategy should be integral to the overall national security strategy. The problem in strategy is not strictly in the terminology, but perception, identification, and appreciation: the three elements of strategic planning. The seminar held at the National Defence College, New Delhi came up with following\textsuperscript{72} appreciation:

(a) Maritime strategy is vital for national security.
(b) Power stems from economic, technological, scientific, and educational development, and military preparedness in a supportive role. This observation may be valid, but it could be said that a secure nation can exercise power.

(c) Implied threat can be negated by regional partnerships.

(d) India does not have a maritime strategy; it is traditionally land based.

(e) India's threat is from economic competitors that will cause fractions in cooperative engagement. Such fractions may use military force against which credible deterrence is necessary. Military security is still high in the concept of national security. Therefore the navy is only for credible deterrence and its role needs to be defined and articulated.

(f) Around the world there is consistency in governance with respect to national interests irrespective of the type of government in power.

(g) Strategy is a definition of long-term goals. Policy, derived from strategy, is the method of achieving discernible results in real time.

(h) The decision regarding the size of the navy whether for deterrence or all out war is to be taken after considering the economic, political, and military aspects. Therefore it need to be seen what India is expected of its Navy by taking into account its role in national security. Deterrence is not achieved only by military means. It is used as means of policy when other methods are not conducive.
(i) Influence stems out of power, and power is derived from economic, political, and military strength.

(j) There are too many ministries involved in decision-making process with respect to the Indian Ocean.

(k) Alliances are gudgeon pins of many victories.

(l) India should start partnerships with the India Ocean Rim countries.

(m) The perception that India is a regional bully needs to be corrected.

(n) The first step in securing political involvement is articulation of strategy.

(o) The aspects of strategy are economics, politics, and military.

The strategy for adoption, therefore, is a combination of all these, and changes in the evolving scenario that calls for on the spot analysis.

Maritime Forces and Agencies: India

(a) Indian Navy.

Indian Navy was a colonial concept. It was created by redesignating the Bombay Marine in May 1830, during the reign of William IV, under Captain Sir Charles Malcolm (later Rear Admiral). The purpose was to give
legitimacy to the Bombay Marine to operate outside its jurisdiction. It was British. It fought against the real but regional Indian navies. The British also had another navy, the Bengal Navy. It was not merged with Indian Navy. There were many differences between the two with respect to duties and functions, personnel selection, rank, armament etc. Even then they carried out joint operations and fought jointly in Burma and China wars. The British found keeping the two navies separate strategically important and administratively convenient. (Today this concept still finds a new anachronism of advantage in the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, two vital maritime forces with defined roles for all conceivable situations at sea, if managed well as separate entities capable of jointness when required. It is a welcome sign in Indian maritime thinking).

As a fall out of the Great Rising of Indian naval sailors in 1857, in the milieu of the nationalist awakening, the British abolished the Indian Navy on April 30, 1863, and retained the Bombay and Bengal Marines. In 1877 the navy was reorganized as Her Majesty's Indian Marine with a modest role of non-combatant duties. In 1892 the name was changed to Royal Indian Marine. It was formally inaugurated as the Royal Indian Navy at Bombay on October 2, 1934, with the adoption of the Indian Navy ( Discipline) Bill by the legislative Assembly on September 8, 1934. Sardar K. M Panikar observed, "Indians were sailing the seas for the first time in warships--small and insignificant units, no doubt, but symbolic of the resuscitation of the old
forces, which had for at least two millennia held the mastery of Indian seas."

This continued till independence. At the time of partition the Royal Indian Navy was divided in common sense lines in a rough proportion of 2:1. The Navy has to immediately plan for immediate requirements: defining its role and functions in the independent India, equipping for the role, and staffing it by the Indians. The current Navy Act came into force on December 25, 1957, (62 of 1957). It gave power to the government to raise and maintain naval forces and auxiliary naval forces. The role and function of the Navy are not given in the Navy Act. The ten-year plan (1948-1958) attempted to combine the protection of merchant ships as the primary task. The British Indian Government envisaged the Indian Navy as a local defense force. The expansion plan identified other roles that included protection of sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean.

Lord Mountbatten in 1951 envisaged Indian Navy as a force to support the allied forces in the advent of a global war. According to him there was no question of India fighting on the “wrong” side during a war. Mountbatten also felt that the infrastructure facilities in India would be available to the British in case a global war broke out. Jaswant Singh, who authored *Defending India*, expressed his astonishment of not the way Mountbatten put it, but on the confidence of the British that India’s security interests and thus responses were dovetailed with that of the allies. Mountbatten continued to influence India’s defence policies especially on the Indian Navy and Kashmir, four
years after independence. During that period the Indians felt there was no need for submarines since Pakistan will concentrate on surface and air threats to India. They questioned Mountbatten on the logic of procuring anti-submarine ships for the Navy. There were contradictions in planning about goals within a global and limited war. Anti-submarine warfare was with global perceptive. Today Indian Navy faces a crisis. Its role is ambiguous, its force is rapidly declining, funds are not sufficient, war ship construction programme is limited, and operational readiness is affected. Jaswant Singh attributes these to the absence of timely decisions and concludes that such an absence is decision itself that doesn’t make the problem go away.

(b) Indian Coast Guard.

Indian Coast Guard was formed in 1978 subsequent to the Coast Guard Act 1978, as a post UNCLOS III development to protect the maritime interests of India in its maritime zones. Its duties and functions are defined in the Act. These duties are to be carried out as “deemed fit” and “without duplication of efforts.” They are.

(a) safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore terminals, and other structures and devices.
(b) protection of Indian fishers.
(c) assistance to fishers at sea.
(d) preservation of marine environment
(e) protection of marine environment
(f) prevention of marine pollution
(g) control of marine pollution
(h) assisting Customs and other authorities at sea.
(i) enforcement of maritime laws in force.
(j) safety of life and property at sea.
(k) collection of scientific data, and
(l) other duties as assigned by the Government

From these duties and functions, it can be seen that the Coast Guard is a perfect recipe for nonmilitary maritime security. However, it has not developed the way it has been envisaged in the original plan.84

(c) Other Maritime Forces and Agencies. They include shipping, state and central fisheries, scientific vessels, light house and light ships, marine science organisations in India, Customs Marine, port facilities, and state police marine wing, all functioning independently within their own occupational constraint. The Group of Ministers has recommended formation of marine police for coastal zone surveillance to work in tandem with the Coast Guard.85

NOTES

1 A Meeting of Minds: Editorial in the Times of India, Mumbai, on the Millennium World Peace Summit where in religious leaders and spiritual teachers from India demonstrated about India with rare eloquence that it stands for world peace in spite of occasional setbacks, September 1, 2000, p.12.


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23 Ibid., p 39.

24 Ibid.

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7 Ibid., p. 1521.


9 n. 51, p. 65.

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11 Ibid.

12 n. 43, p. 154-66.

13 Ibid., pp. 173-4.


15 Source: National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai, India.

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22 n. 6b, pp. 34 - 9.

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., p. 188.
76 Ibid., p. 211.
77 Ibid., p. 274.
79 Ibid.
80 Section 5, Navy Act, 1957.
81 n. 79, p. 116.
82 Ibid., p. 117.
83 Ibid., p. 128.
84 Coast Guard Sources (Unclassified), Indian Coast Guard, Directorate of Plans, Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi.

n.49, p. 72.