

# **CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR ENHANCING MARITIME VISIBILITIES: MEASURES AMONG NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES - BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT**

Rear Admiral M Lokmanur Rahman, NGP, ndu, psc  
Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Logistics)  
Bangladesh Navy

# INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Indian Ocean – one of the most populated areas in the world
- ❖ Single largest wealth exploitable area - contains two third of world's oil reserve, one third natural gas, 90% of world' diamond, 60% of uranium and 40% of gold
- ❖ IO littorals interests include continuous flow of maritime trade
- ❖ Diverse maritime threats and challenges exist in the IO region – many of which are transnational

# INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Interests of IOR states converge in the maritime domain
- ❖ Cooperative security is most pressing at sea
- ❖ Maritime visibility to ensure security is difficult to coordinate among nations, governing bodies, security organizations, and armed forces
- ❖ Responsibilities, jurisdiction, co-ordination, information and intelligence exchange are hugely complex and challenging
- ❖ No nation and organization alone have all the necessary capabilities
- ❖ There is a genuine need for partnership and cooperation among the maritime nations



# UNIFYING FACTORS

- ❖ Majority of IOR countries are developing
- ❖ Being home of one -third of the world's population, this region exhibits widely differing political and economic systems
- ❖ Without economic progress, fate of the billions of poverty stricken people of the IOR cannot be changed
- ❖ IO has evolved from an international route for trade and energy, into a major global intersection for economy, resources and environment
- ❖ Ocean's shores are today the nexus between terrorism, anarchy, energy flows and environmental change

# UNIFYING FACTORS

- ❖ Common interests in non-military security concerns may offer the greatest scope for states to cooperate and work collectively
- ❖ Longer term common interests, like environmental concerns and sea level rise also need collective regional and extra-regional cooperation
- ❖ Maritime security, Economic stability and Environmental factors are the unifying factors in the IOR

## THREATS IN THE REGION

- ❖ There are traditional and non-traditional challenges in the IO
- ❖ Traditional challenges include piracy, security of SLOC, military presence and competition
- ❖ Non-traditional challenges like natural disasters, humanitarian crises and climate change are also on the rise
- ❖ We have to be prepared for mass displacement of Non Traditional Threat in this region
- ❖ But we are yet to organize ourselves to deal with such threats in future

## IMPLICATIONS ON LITTORALS

- ❖ Transnational maritime crime involves economically motivated activity like piracy, smuggling, illegal migration etc.
- ❖ Non Traditional Maritime Threats have substantial security ramifications for the related nations in particular and the littorals as a whole
- ❖ These have effects which are costly in human terms and cause a major drain on national resources
- ❖ It has synergetic effect that aggravates interstate conflict and non-state political violence

## IMPLICATIONS ON LITTORALS

- ❖ It is important to identify common threats of the littorals to initiate any maritime cooperation arrangement
- ❖ Non Traditional Threats that are common require regional or at least sub-regional response
- ❖ To ensure regional maritime security, peace and stability, these need to be addressed in a cooperative and collaborative manner
- ❖ There are good reasons for mutual cooperation for enhancement of maritime visibility in facing the Non Traditional Threats

## MARITIME VISIBILITY FRAMEWORK - EXTERNAL

- ❖ Regional information and intelligence centers may act as information hub for all maritime safety and security
- ❖ It may be coordinated by IMO/IHO, NAVAREA coordinator and national coordinator
- ❖ Joint patrol and Surveillance may be carried out in critical areas through joint agreement
- ❖ Organizations may consist of government, non-government and UN representatives
- ❖ Organization like IONS and IORA should take the lead role in coordination with others
- ❖ Bilateral and Trilateral agreements and talks should supplement the regional initiatives

# MARITIME VISIBILITY FRAMEWORK - INTERNAL

## ❖ Establishment of Apex Maritime Organization

- Bangladesh is trying to establish an apex organization for maritime affairs
- This will unify all the efforts in maritime visibility taken by different maritime organizations and reduce duplication of effort
- It will also work as database center for all maritime organizations

## ❖ Establishing Marine Crime Reporting Center (MCRC)

- Bangladesh is planning to establish MCRC in Chittagong and Mongla which will reduce the reaction time to respond for any call of countering piracy

# MARITIME VISIBILITY FRAMEWORK - INTERNAL

## ❖ Enhancement of Port Security

- All the ports of Bangladesh are maintaining the security level as per ISPS code
- With the assistance of Automatic Identification System (AIS) of the ISPS code the port authorities are able to monitor movement of vessels

## ❖ Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

- Intensive surveillance network, SLOC monitoring and patrolling are direct measures to reduce poaching, smuggling, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking and gun running
- Recent inclusion of MPA and Helicopter in BN fleet has enhanced surveillance capability of Bangladesh

# CHALLENGES

## ❖ National Priority

- Each country's primary objectives may range from protection of SLOC, exploration of resources to safe tourism
- They may operate with different aim and interest in the maritime area
- These different ideologies and interests may act as a barrier in information sharing

## ❖ Security Issue

- ❖ Each country promulgates its own policies on the security of information
- ❖ Over classification of security reasons may become a common phenomenon and this may hinder flow of information

# CHALLENGES

## ❖ Cultural Perception

- Information sharing faces issues like cultural perception and understanding while working in multinational environment
- Political and financial obligations are also major barriers for information sharing

## ❖ Interoperability

- Biggest challenge for cooperation at the operational level is interoperability
- Absence of common operating procedures and doctrine - another major problem
- Smaller partners may not always share similar operational procedures and have same doctrine

# STRATEGIES REQUIRED

- ❖ Indian Ocean requires close attention by decision makers at the highest strategic level
- ❖ In a promising pluralistic world order, it is essential to establish governance frameworks that will integrate the super powers
- ❖ Policymakers should attach higher priority to safeguard SLOCs and vulnerable choke points
- ❖ Global production chains are vulnerable to supply disruption in the Indian Ocean
- ❖ Business executives should re-assess their policies regarding supply-chain risk management

## SUGGESTIVE MEASURES

- ❖ Littoral countries in IOR should have an agreement on common Interest while they should seek for solution of conflicting Interest
- ❖ Trust and Confidence building measures like MOU, Maritime Economic and Partnership dialogue should go on
- ❖ Collective security measures like formation of task force may be needed
- ❖ Coordinated Maritime Surveillance, Patrol and Information Sharing is the key to enhance maritime visibility

# SUGGESTIVE MEASURES

- ❖ Combined training can be arranged for common understanding and knowledge sharing
- ❖ Regular meeting, seminar and symposium should continue regarding maritime awareness
- ❖ Sea Exercises help to check interoperability and harmonize relation between the navies as well as the countries
- ❖ Best Practices on cooperation and implementation of Maritime rules and regulation should be followed
- ❖ Joint Search and Rescue Exercise like IMMSAREX could be an example of enhancement of maritime visibility

# BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT

- ❖ Bangladesh is the Chair of IONS and active member of ReCAAP and WPNS
- ❖ Two navy ships since last 5 years plying in Lebanon under UN Maritime Task Force to maintain Global Peace
- ❖ BN ships and personnel conducted disaster relief ops in Sri Lanka and Maldives during Tsunami 2005
- ❖ Recently, they Carried relief goods for Typhoon affected people of Philippines

# BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT

- ❖ Bangladesh Navy provided fresh water and water treatment plant during National Water Crisis in Maldives in December 2014
- ❖ Bangladesh Navy was actively involved in SAR operation for missing Malaysian aircraft MH 370
- ❖ Bangladesh Navy ships regularly participate in joint exercises like LIMA, MILAN, AMAAN, WPNS EXERCISE, CORPAT, SEACAT and conducts CARAT and TIGERSHARK
- ❖ It also participates and arranges maritime workshop, seminar and symposium on a regular basis

# BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT

- ❖ Bangladesh pursues friendly relations with both her neighbors and other sub regional/regional countries
- ❖ Security cooperation with the neighbors are also being focused
- ❖ Bangladesh Navy plays important diplomatic role to enhance maritime security in BoB

# BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT

- ❖ BN has an increasing part in maintaining and improving working relations with her neighbors
- ❖ With India, significant progress is made - both navies enjoy a long endured working relations built overtime through exchange of visits, exercises, common training etc.
- ❖ MoU has been signed last year between both nations coast guard with respect to cooperating in the fields of maritime security
- ❖ Last month both the navies and coast guards exchanged rescued fishermen of each other at sea

# BANGLADESH VIEWPOINT

- ❖ Security and Partnership dialogue in process with India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Malaysia
- ❖ Bangladesh has made significant diplomatic moves to improve relations with Myanmar
- ❖ BN ships do visit Myanmar regularly
- ❖ More importantly first ever staff talk between the navies has taken place recently which shall pave the way for increased security cooperation
- ❖ Similar effort with neighboring states would make the neighborhood working sphere more engaging and meaningful

# CONCLUSION

- ❖ Historically sea has been an influencing factor in establishing global order, peace and security
- ❖ Sea remains as a primary means of exports and imports globally
- ❖ Economy and maritime power of countries varied over the decade - shifted from continent to continent and ocean to ocean
- ❖ IOR is comprised of many largely populated developing countries
- ❖ Trade and commerce of the globe is shifting towards this region

# CONCLUSION

- ❖ Super powers of the globe are also interested about this region due to power projection and economic benefits
- ❖ IOR though seems to be calm but remains volatile
- ❖ Traditional and nontraditional threats also persists here
- ❖ Various Non-state actors are involved with illegal activities which needs to be addressed

# CONCLUSION

- ❖ Law enforcing agencies and maritime stakeholders should remain vigilant to counter all those issues
- ❖ It is very difficult to ensure full visibilities in the maritime areas
- ❖ Coordination among maritime agencies is vital for enhancement of surveillance, communication, intelligence gathering and information sharing
- ❖ Doing the same thing by different countries with divergent culture, religion and economic condition must be a mammoth task
- ❖ Following a pragmatic strategy focusing common interest may increase such multinational effort for enhancing maritime visibilities in the region

Thank You