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Abstract

## *India's Maritime Interests, Challenges and Concerns in the Indian Ocean*<sup>#</sup>

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India is a core state in the Indian Ocean and a great power in the Asia-Pacific. Measured by economic performance and critical indices of national power that goes with the comprehensive elucidation of its profile, domain and power, India's role and performance is destined for an esteemed position in global governance.

India as a Rising Power has all the credentials of governed by democratic governance a resilient civilian leadership that has been inclusive agenda of social and economic development. A foreign policy focused on peaceful coexistence and the exercise of power with benign and humanitarian agenda.

As a Core state in the Indian Ocean, India's maritime grand strategy articulated on its realist strategic paradigm is encompassed with concentric circles of the *immediate*, *intermediate* and the *extended* strategic theatres known as the Mandalas. The core state is conditioned by the following premises: (a) It articulates on the strategic conduct and sources of strategic conduct of states in the immediate, intermediate and outer concentric rings in proactive and reactive actions to changing regional and international security dynamics; (b) It is a realist construct that envisages how states define and dynamically move in the spatial contexts of International relations, driven by the imperatives of strategic autonomy and (c) It envisages the dynamism of alliances by which states conduct themselves' in relation to the changing regional and international setting.

The evolution of India's grand strategic power and profile has been in parallel to the development of its maritime and naval power since the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>#</sup> The views expressed in this paper/presentation are the personal views and opinion of the author and does not reflect any of his official affiliations.

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India's strategic vision and maritime doctrines articulated on the four planks of naval operations envisage: Benign, Humanitarian missions with the primary accents to positive approaches of the use of naval power to aid and assist other states. However, in times of clear and present dangers the constituting factors of Coercion and Compellance missions with the aim to reinforce deterrence and dissuasion are ready in place.

India's interests aim at the prevalence of peace, development and tranquility of the global commons and have always reiterated the peaceful use and development of the oceans. India's foremost issue and challenge is its geo-strategic and geo-economic prism in the quest to secure and safeguard its Exclusive Economic Zone and India's SLOCs and its (Sea Lanes of Communications) sea-borne trade that ships in its hydrocarbon energy resources, raw materials and its exports. The EEZ confers on India its allotted zone of 2,013,410 Sq km with huge repositories of mineral wealth, oil and natural gas, living and non-living resources and with its expansive potential by way of extending the continental shelf to almost 2.9 million sq km equaling the landmass of India. India is conferred with further sovereign rights and entitlements of its seabed resources of 150,000sq km of seabed in the high seas. India's interests in seabed mining and its interests in Antarctica are huge resources that are to be secured.

India contends multi-layered challenges-threat matrices that are the traditional military to the non-traditional and transnational. How these challenges-threats are addressed? What are the instruments and operations of India's maritime power? To what ends does India's strategic vision, doctrines and capabilities augment India's role and responsibilities are some pertinent issues that needs deliberation.

This presentation would examine a) The challenges-threat matrices of India's maritime environment; b) The Doctrinal, Operational and transformational issues of India's maritime power; c) The strategic engagement of the Indian Navy; d) The benign and humanitarian epochs of Indian naval power; e) India's Naval Power and the future pathways of Indian Ocean Security.

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