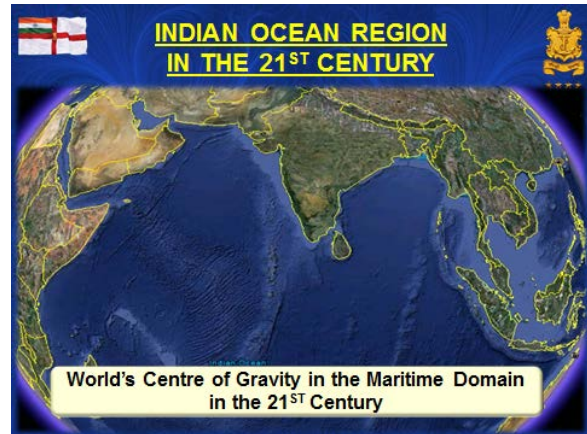


## COLLABORATIVE ARCHITECTURES FOR MARITIME SECURITY - INDIAN NAVY'S PERSPECTIVE

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India is essentially a maritime nation and the Indian Ocean has been at the vortex of intense maritime activity over centuries. The last decade has witnessed substantial expansion in India's dependence on her maritime environment. The Indian Ocean Region, which is an area of primary interest for the Indian Navy, has also emerged as the world's centre of gravity in the maritime domain. The title of the talk, in a sense, sums up the Indian perspective towards the evolving dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region and encapsulates India's maritime approach.



A unique factor which differentiates the Indian Ocean from the other two major oceans – the Pacific and the Atlantic – is that 80% of the oil and trade that emanates in the Indian Ocean Region is extra-regional in nature. It implies that any impediment to the free movement of oil or trade through the Indian Ocean Region, will have an impact not just on the economies of the region, but the rest of the global economy as well. It is in the Indian Ocean Region where interests of the rim countries, as well as major geo-political entities intersect. The Indian Ocean has therefore become a cross-road of geo-political dynamics. These characteristics of the IOR underscore its maritime nature, and point to the need for maintaining stable, secure and safe seas.

Despite the fact that the lands surrounding the Indian Ocean have historically been the scene of frequent conflicts, peace and stability prevailed in the maritime domain. However in recent times, security issues emerging from instabilities on the surrounding land are transgressing into the maritime domain and assuming the shape of non-traditional and semi-conventional maritime threats. The homogeneous character of the seas is only facilitating their proliferation.



The Indian Ocean Region is, therefore, encountering a broad spectrum of traditional and non-traditional threats and challenges, which range from asymmetric warfare to maritime terrorism and piracy, illicit trafficking, poaching, and natural disasters. Of these, Piracy continues to pose a potent threat to international shipping and legitimate use of the seas. While cooperative actions have largely succeeded in curbing piracy off Somalia, it has waxed and waned in different parts of the Indian Ocean Region. Further, the nexus of trans-national criminals and terrorists is exploiting the vast and ungoverned nature of the oceans. The flow of illicit weapons and narcotics by sea has fuelled armed insurgencies, ethnic conflicts and terrorist activities. Similarly, poaching and human trafficking amount to illegal activities, and violate basic human rights and security. Also, the current trend of extreme events leading to natural disasters is relatively much higher in the Indian Ocean Region. As the locus of over 70% natural disasters, IOR is one of the most disaster prone regions in the world, thereby posing immense challenge to littorals in the IOR. Globalisation has led to vulnerability of the oceans with wide and varied maritime threats and challenges and no single Navy is robust enough to monitor global commons and handle these challenges on its own.



In order to effectively overcome the wide array of maritime challenges in our neighbourhood, the new Indian Maritime Security Strategy is centred on 'shaping a favourable and positive maritime environment', with Presence, Maritime Engagement and Regional MDA amongst its key pillars. Towards this, naval presence in India's areas of interest enables rapid response and readiness for the range of traditional and non-traditional contingencies. Consequently, the operational footprint of the Indian Navy has been steadily increasing, in keeping with the nation's growing maritime interests and maritime engagements.

The Indian Navy is cognisant of the fact that maintaining stability in the maritime domain is a shared responsibility of all coastal states, which can best be achieved through a cooperative and collaborative approach, through open, inclusive regional mechanisms. Therefore, it is only natural that as far as maritime diplomacy is concerned, global maritime partnerships and networking among the navies, are emerging as the new order for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To establish an environment of peace and stability, the Indian Navy has initiated a series of capacity building and capability enhancement initiatives. Such initiatives strengthen the capacity of the partner navy to provide maritime security in its own area of operation, and thus help in improving net security in the regional maritime environment, whilst concurrently strengthening bilateral relations and maritime interoperability. The capability enhancement initiatives of the Indian Navy include measures for cooperative development through training, technical support and maintenance and hydrographic cooperation.

The Indian Navy's efforts in shaping a favourable and positive regional maritime environment in the Indian Ocean are adjunct to similar, like-minded endeavours of other regional partners. The Navy has therefore been harnessing various potential areas of cooperation and collaboration, under bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

Introducing the potential for shared maritime security in the IOR, India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives signed a tripartite maritime security agreement in 2013 for joint cooperation on EEZ surveillance, Maritime SAR, working on anti-piracy efforts, and sharing of white shipping information for developing the sub-region's MDA.



The Indian Navy has also promoted multilateral initiative such as Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the operational interaction, *MILAN*, amongst regional navies. These have established themselves as valuable mechanisms for strengthening maritime cooperation, to address common maritime security challenges. As a founding member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), India has been keen to enhance regional cooperation. IORA's priority goal of maritime security cooperation is supported by the Indian Navy's strategy for shaping a favourable and positive maritime environment, and the various efforts therein, as also the growth and development of IONS. Taking these initiatives forward, the Indian Navy will be hosting an International Fleet Review in February 2016, to bring the navies of the world together to strengthen bridges of friendship, with the underlying theme, "United Through Oceans".



It is reiterated that strengthening global maritime partnerships and networking amongst the navies is the new order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to address common maritime threats and challenges. It is a fact that stability in a well-networked and interdependent maritime domain, is the shared responsibility of coastal states. The same could be achieved through synergised, inclusive and cooperative efforts facilitated by maritime engagements. Towards this, the Indian Navy will continue to operate in cooperation with friendly maritime forces to address shared security concerns, and look towards promoting peace, security and stability in the maritime neighbourhood, through open, transparent, inclusive, balanced and cooperative measures. This forms the basis and the core of India's strategy and approach to the Indian Ocean Region.