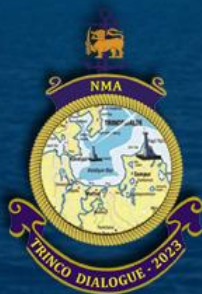


TRINCO DIALOGUE

MARITIME SYMPOSIUM - 2023

“IMPORTANCE OF MARITIME SECURITY IN REALIZING SRI LANKA’S MARITIME STRATEGY”



27TH OCTOBER 2023

ORGANIZED BY
JUNIOR NAVAL STAFF COLLEGE
NAVAL & MARITIME ACADEMY



TRINCO DIALOGUE 2023

MARITIME SYMPOSIUM NINTH EDITION

IMPORTANCE OF MARITIME SECURITY IN REALIZING SRI LANKA'S
MARITIME STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

1. The Trinco Dialogue is an annual maritime symposium conducted by Naval and Maritime Academy, Trincomalee. The inaugural session of Trinco Dialogue was conducted by the Junior Naval Staff College (JNSC) on 28th November 2011 under the astute guidance of Commandant Naval and Maritime Academy. The objective of this annual maritime symposium is to provide a platform for officers of Junior Naval Staff College to discuss, deliberate and expand the horizons and other young officers to enhance their knowledge on various subject matters related to contemporary maritime and military issues. The theme of first symposium was 'Identifying maritime challenges through dialogue'. The second Trinco Dialogue was conducted on 27th October 2012 with the theme of 'Collaborative Maritime Security through Modern Technology' and third was conducted on 07th January 2014 with the theme of 'Combating Maritime Disorder in IOR through Collaborative and Collective Response of Regional Navies. The fourth edition of Trinco Dialogue was held on 08th November 2014 under the theme of 'Maritime heritage of Sri Lanka and quest to become a maritime nation'. The fifth Trinco Dialogue was successfully conducted under the theme of 'Managing maritime domain of Sri Lanka' on 16th January 2016. The Seventh Trinco Dialog was held under the theme of 'strategic importance of Trincomalee Harbour on driving Navy's Maritime Strategy 2025' in 2018.

2. The Trinco Dialogue 2022 (Eight edition) commenced with lighting the traditional oil lamp by the chief guest and other distinct invitees. The Commandant, Naval and Maritime Academy Commodore KDCC Fernando, RSP, USP, rcds MSc (DS) Mgt, MA in IS & S (UK), AFNI delivered the opening remarks. The keynote address was given by the Chief Guest, The Deputy Chief of Staff and the Commander Eastern Naval Area Rear Admiral KJ Kularathne, RSP*, USP, PSC, MMaritimePol, (Aus)MSc(D&SS) (India), DIP in CR, MNI. The Chief Guest inaugurated the forum for an effective discussion whilst emphasizing the fact that the Sri Lanka Navy: Roadmap to Future. He also commended the dedication of the JNSC and the Naval and Maritime Academy towards the successful culmination of Trinco Dialogue 2022.

3. The ninth edition of Trinco Dialogue maritime symposium is organized by the Junior Naval Staff College of NMA under the profound leadership of Commandant Naval and Maritime Academy Commodore Buddhika Liyanagamage, RWP, RSP, USP,ndc, psc which is scheduled to be held on 27th October 2023 at Wasantha Karannagoda Auditorium, Trincomalee. The Commander Eastern Naval Area will be the Chief Guest. He will also deliver the keynote speech followed by the opening remarks by the Commandant Naval and Maritime Academy. The Trinco Dialogue 2023 will be conducted under the theme of 'IMPORTANCE OF MARITIME SECURITY IN REALIZING SRI LANKA'S MARITIME STRATEGY' in three sessions and a total of six papers are presented including papers by three guest speakers.

STUDENT OFFICERS - 33RD JNSC



LCDR (N) DGKS
GAMAGE



LCDR (N) HGA
SOMASIRI



LCDR (SBS) GA
GUNATHILAKA



LCDR (G) DLLD
LIYANAGE



LCDR (N) DKNS
WICKRAMASINGHE



LCDR (E) JADGD
DINUKA



LCDR (ASW) KS
DISANAYAKE



LCDR (CDO) DJKS
SIRIWARDANA



LCDR (S) KKGBC
ABEYWARDENA



LCDR (ASW) NN
WICKRAMASOORIYA



LCDR (INF) KI
THENNAKON



LCDR (PRO) LAKB
LAKSHAN



LT (IT) KPHS
KARUNANAYAKE



LT (LS) TSC
PEIRIS



LT (L) PHS
PEIRIS



FLT LT
HMTM HERATH



CAPT MKS
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LCDR (G) SPIKE SENANAYAKE, RSP, psc
DIRECTING STAFF II



CDR GORA RATHORE
DIRECTING STAFF (INDIAN NAVY)

CONCEPT OF TRINCO DIALOGUE 2023

1. Throughout history, many countries have been able to generate a significant portion of their income and overcome economic challenges by utilizing the ocean. They have developed profound maritime strategies to become maritime nations. Developing a maritime strategy encompasses more than just naval forces or strategy. It involves managing various organizations within the marine sector, including shipping, maritime finance and law, maritime technology, ports and logistics, shipbuilding and repairs, maritime services, and private sector industries. Sri Lanka, being an island nation with ideal conditions for benefiting from the sea, has the potential to become a maritime nation. Yet, Sri Lanka has been unable to establish itself as a maritime competitor due to inadequate conceptualization and the lack of a well-defined maritime strategy. A well-formulated maritime strategy has the potential to elevate Sri Lanka as a maritime nation and provide opportunities for growth in the sea.

2. Maritime security is a crucial aspect of a maritime strategy as it impacts all other sectors. There are several natural and human-induced safety and security concerns that affect Sri Lanka's maritime interests including maritime accidents, natural disasters and the potential rise of sea levels. Additionally, there are security threats such as drug trafficking, piracy, illicit trafficking, pollution, and even terrorism that could impact Sri Lanka's maritime activities. Further, the growing influence of China, and the USA in the region as external powers in addition to the status quo power India, has made Sri Lanka a focal point of geostrategic competition, which poses a significant threat to Sri Lanka's interests. One possible solution to these threats is the effective utilization of Sri Lanka's maritime arm; the Navy and the maritime law enforcement component; the Coast Guard. These two entities should be an essential component of the maritime strategy of Sri Lanka.

3. Therefore, Sri Lanka's maritime arms should be equipped and prepared for future challenges. Sri Lanka Navy will have to enhance its Maritime Domain Awareness and Net-Centric Warfare capabilities. In addition, SLN must have the capacity to work with other navies and have the capability to engage with joint exercises for ensuring interoperability. To this end, SLN's Air Arm, Research and Development, and Leadership will also have important roles to play in the future. Furthermore, both SLN and Coastguard have the potential to contribute significantly to nation-building through certain roles that help revive the country's struggling economy.

PROGRAMME

“IMPORTANCE OF MARITIME SECURITY IN REALIZING SRI LANKA’S MARITIME STRATEGY”

| <u>TIME</u> | <u>ACTIVITY</u> |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 0815 | Arrival of the Participants. |
| 0825 | Arrival of the Chief Guest. |
| <u>INAUGURAL SESSION</u> | |
| 0830 | NMA Anthem. |
| 0833 | Lightning traditional oil lamp synchronize with ‘Trinco Dialogue’ introductory video and traditional ‘Pooja Dance’ by SLN cultural group. |
| 0843 | ‘E’ launching of ‘Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium- 2023’ by the Chief Guest with the playing of theme video. |
| 0848 | Log on to the ‘Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium- 2023’ compendium online using the QR code. |
| 0850 | Opening Remarks by the Commandant Naval and Maritime Academy Commodore B Liyanagamage, RWP, RSP, USP, ndc, psc, MA SS (CT: P&S) USA, MSc (DS). |
| 0900 | Keynote Address by the Chief Guest; Commander Eastern Naval Area, Rear Admiral PS De Silva, USP, ndc, psc, MSc (DS) Mgt, MSc (D&SS), Dip in D & WA. |

SESSION ONE: Maritime Security Concerns in the Development of a Maritime Strategy for Sri Lanka

| | |
|------|---|
| 0910 | Introduction of the first moderator by Master of the ceremony. |
| 0915 | Introduction of first speaker by the moderator. Moderator: Commander DDK Dayananada, RSP, psc, MAIR, MEng (NWST) |
| 0920 | Paper by Rear Admiral (Retd) WDEM Sudarshana, RSP, USP, ndu, psc, MSc (D&SS), MSc (MS & NSSS), MA (SSS). ‘Formulating a Maritime Strategy for Sri Lanka’. |

- 0945 Introduction of second speaker by the moderator.
- 0950 Paper by Lieutenant Commander (G) DLLD Liyanage and Lieutenant Commander (CDO) DJKS Siriwardana.
'Importance of Navy in Realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategic Objectives'.
- 1010 Discussion.
- 1025 Final comments and summary of two papers by first moderator.
- 1030 Presenting mementoes for the Chief Guest and the Guest Speaker by CN & MA.
- 1035 Photo session for nominated group and refreshments.

SESSION TWO: Current and Future Challenges in IOR: Maritime Security and Maritime Safety Concerns

- 1100 Introduction to second moderator by master of the ceremony.
- 1105 Introduction of third speaker by the moderator.
Moderator: Lieutenant Commander (PRO) LAKB Lakshan.
- 1110 Paper by Captain WNSB Dharmarathne, RSP, USP, psc, MS (DA) USA, BSc Mgt Deputy Training Captain & Senior Course Co-ordinator JNSC.
'Future Maritime Security Concerns: Sri Lanka's Perspective'.
- 1130 Introduction of fourth speaker by the moderator.
- 1135 Paper by Lieutenant Commander (SB) GA Gunathilake, Lieutenant (LS) TSC Peiris.
'Future Maritime Safety Concerns in the Indian Ocean Region'.
- 1155 Discussion.
- 1210 Final comments and summary of two papers by the moderator.
- 1220 Short break.

SESSION THREE: Shaping Sri Lanka Navy for Future Challenges

- 1230 Introduction of third moderator by master of the ceremony.
- 1235 Introduction of fifth speaker by the moderator.
Moderator: Commander (N) KE Buddhika, RSP*, psc
- 1240 Paper by Lieutenant Commander (ASW) NN Wickramasooriya and Lieutenant Commander (INF) KI Thennakoon.
'Prerequisites for SLN to Play Its Role Effectively through Cooperative and Collaborative Approach'
- 1300 Introduction of sixth speaker by the moderator.
- 1305 Paper by Commander (ND) JHCH Ranaweera, RSP, USP, psc, MSc (D & SS), PGD in Def. Mgt, BNavalSt (MW) (Hons), JP (Whole Island) - Officer Training Officer.
'SLN Role in Nation Building: Doctrinal Aspects'
- 1325 Discussion.
- 1340 Final comments and summary of two papers by the moderator.
- 1345 Vote of thanks by Lt (IT) KPHS Karunanayake.
- 1350 National Anthem.
- 1355 'Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium 2023' concludes and the departure of the Chief Guest and playing of final video (Bon Voyage).
- 1400 Lunch at Golden Lounge, ENA Wardroom (On Invitation).



INAUGURAL SESSION

OPENING REMARKS

Commodore Buddhika Liyanagamage, RWP, RSP, USP,
ndc, psc, MA SS (CT: P&S) USA, MSc (DS)
The Commandant, Naval & Maritime Academy



1. A Very Good Morning. First of all, I would like to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you all to the Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium 2023, organized by the Junior Naval Staff College of the Naval and Maritime Academy. I am indeed truly honored to deliver the opening remarks as the Commandant of the Naval and Maritime Academy.
2. This symposium is a testament to our collective commitment to addressing a matter of profound importance - the significance of maritime security in realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy.
3. Ladies and Gentlemen, for seven continuous years, the 'Trinco Dialogue' was an annual event at the Naval and Maritime Academy. After a 'little pause' due to the pandemic years, we resumed this forum again last year. My sincere appreciation goes to the Directing Staff and Student Officers of the 33rd Junior Naval Staff Course for their hard work in making this edition of the 'Trinco Dialogue' a reality.
4. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Naval and Maritime Academy, as the premier Naval Training Institution, proudly presents the 9th edition of the 'Trinco Dialogue' this year, providing a valuable platform for officers involved in operational and tactical roles within the Sri Lanka Navy, as well as officers from friendly Navies and sister services.

5. I am sure the outstanding panel of speakers and presenters will enlighten you all with their intellect and wisdom, giving a positive and exciting insight into the future.

6. With that brief overview, I would like to welcome and extend my sincere gratitude to our esteemed Chief Guest, Rear Admiral Suresh De Silva, the Commander Eastern Naval Area. Sir, your presence here today reflects the significance of the discussions that will unfold today, and we eagerly await to hear your words of wisdom and insights on Maritime Security and Strategy.

7. Furthermore, I would also like to welcome our guest speaker, Rear Admiral (retired) WEDM Sudarshana. Sir, your extensive understanding of maritime knowledge and experience makes your presence crucial to the success of this symposium. We fervently await to hear and comprehend your views on today's theme.

8. Ladies and Gentlemen, throughout history, nations have harnessed the potential of the ocean to strengthen their economies. Sri Lanka, as an island nation, possesses the ideal conditions to become a maritime nation, but it lacks a well-defined maritime strategy. A well-structured maritime strategy is crucial to elevate Sri Lanka as a maritime nation and also address the multifaceted aspects of maritime security.

9. Sri Lanka faces safety and security concerns like maritime accidents, natural disasters, and security threats such as drug trafficking, piracy, illicit trade, pollution, human trafficking, IUU fishing, and terrorism. Additionally, Sri Lanka's strategic location has made it a focal point in geostrategic competition among India, China, and the United States, posing a significant threat to its interests.

10. Utilizing Sri Lanka's maritime assets, in particular the Navy and Coast Guard, effectively is crucial to addressing these challenges. Sri Lanka's maritime forces, particularly the Navy, must improve and expand its capabilities in Maritime Domain Awareness by collaborating with other navies and engaging in joint exercises to maintain interoperability to be prepared to effectively confront future challenges. While doing so

it is imperative to be cognizant of the crucial role of the Sri Lanka Army and the Sri Lanka Air Force in this endeavor.

11. Furthermore, both the Sri Lanka Navy and Sri Lanka Coast Guard have the potential to significantly contribute to the nation-building process, particularly in reviving the country's struggling economy.

12. Moreover, the young officers among us today are the future leaders and this symposium endeavors to groom these young officers to develop critical thinking, leadership qualities, and decision-making skills.

13. Here, I must mention the significance of the recently concluded Navy-organized Galle Dialogue maritime symposium, which featured presentations from local and international academics as well as our own naval personnel, in honing the capabilities of our naval officers by providing valuable exposure and knowledge. Therefore, I encourage all of you to seize these opportunities to develop yourselves and to represent Sri Lanka in international forums in the future.

14. In conclusion, this symposium presents an invaluable opportunity to collectively address the challenges and seize opportunities presented by our maritime realm. Let us engage in thoughtful discussions, share knowledge, and work collaboratively to secure our maritime future, realize Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy, and contribute to regional and global peace and prosperity.

15. Thank you and I look forward to a productive and enlightening symposium.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF GUEST

Rear Admiral PS De Silva, USP, ndc, psc, MSc (DS) Mgt,
MSc (D&SS), Dip in D & WA
The Commander Eastern Naval Area



1. History is a testimony to the fact that nations have harnessed the potential of their Navies to strengthen maritime power in order to emerge as superpowers. Towards establishing a robust maritime power, a well-structured maritime strategy is crucial, especially for an Island nation like Sri Lanka. In order to bring out the relevance of Maritime Strategy and Maritime Security, the theme of the 9th edition of the *“Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium 2023”* has been formulated which states *“Importance of Maritime Security in Realising Sri Lanka’s Maritime Strategy”*.
2. The *Trinco Dialogue 2023* would address the issues of present and future Maritime Safety & Security, the objectives of Maritime Strategy and the relevance of a cooperative & collaborative approach in order to address and formulate a thought process toward the development of Sri Lanka’s Maritime Strategy.
3. One of the primary factors in the development of a Maritime Strategy is to formulate a road map towards the development of a strong Navy (which was the theme for *Trinco Dialogue 2022*). A strong and professional Navy would enable the safety and security of our Maritime interests in our areas of interest. I strongly agree with the fact that *“a strong Navy is not a provocation to war, but, an assurance of peace and prosperity”*.
4. Having said that, we must understand that the formulation of strategy is not a mundane military affair. It would need a **whole national approach**. This approach would need a collaborative effort by military, civil, diplomatic and administrative collusion as a nation guided by national leadership. We are passing through a tough phase as a nation, but, I am sure and confident that we will emerge back as a strong nation in the near future.
5. I believe that the *Trinco Dialogue Maritime Symposium 2023* would open the pathways towards building a strong Navy and nation.



SESSION ONE

Rear Admiral (Retd) Meril Sudarshana, RSP, USP, ndu, psc, MSc (D&SS), MSc (MS & NSSS), MA (SSS)



ABSTRACT

1. Sri Lanka is a nation with a strong maritime heritage and also she is blessed with a huge sea area as per the UNCLOS III, which defines, the rights and responsibilities of the coastal states, in the use of the oceans, conduct of maritime commerce, the protection of the maritime environment and management of the maritime resources. Being a signatory to UNCLOS III Sri Lanka has its sovereign rights in its ocean's and also responsible for fulfilling obligations towards the global maritime community.
2. Owing to the location and the huge sea area she owned, Sri Lanka has a great opportunity to achieve prosperity, wellbeing and human security through the enormous resources connected to its maritime domain and one of the major National Interests of Sri Lanka is to become a 'Capable Maritime State'.
3. However, the realities of current world order, competition between the major powers, environmental issues such as climate change, and the nontraditional maritime threats are the challenges that Sri Lanka has to face.
4. In order to achieve this major national interest of becoming a capable maritime state and to combat the maritime challenges in an efficient, effective and a sustainable manner Sri Lanka needs to develop a 'National Maritime Strategy.' All the stakeholders connected to maritime sphere such as Security and Safety, Trade and Commerce, Ports and Shipping, Fisheries, Tourism, Education, International Relations, Environment, Sports both government and private sector are to be party to this effort and needs a 'Whole of Government' or a 'Whole of Nation' approach.
5. This paper discusses on a model that can be followed to formulate a 'Maritime Strategy to Sri Lanka'. Further, it is not restricted to Maritime Security but covers all the important sectors of the Maritime Sphere.

IMPORTANCE OF NAVY IN REALIZING SRI LANKA'S MARITIME STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



DJKS Siriwardana
Lieutenant Commander (CDO)



DLLD Liyanage
Lieutenant Commander (G)

INTRODUCTION

1. The maritime domain holds profound strategic significance for Sri Lanka, an island nation strategically located at the crossroads of major shipping routes in the Indian Ocean. The maritime domain holds immense strategic significance for Sri Lanka, given its strategic location at the crossroads of major shipping routes in the Indian Ocean. The absence of a national maritime strategy may lead to challenges in effectively harnessing the benefits of this domain and ensuring the protection of maritime resources. Developing a cohesive national maritime strategy would not only support maritime security but also contribute to bolstering maritime trade, fostering regional stability, and upholding international maritime laws. It is crucial for Sri Lanka, especially in the 21st century's 'Asian Century,' to align its maritime strategic objectives with broader geopolitical and economic trends, emphasizing the need for robust naval capabilities to safeguard the country's maritime interests (globalsecurity, 2020)

2. Even though there have been few attempts to formulate a National Security policy, defence policy or Maritime Strategy; it is noteworthy to understand that nothing has been worked out towards an authorized document from the government so far. Reasons for such failure may vary political will being of the main. Thus, Sri Lanka Navy being a major responsible stakeholder for maritime affairs in Sri Lanka, has taken initiative to formulate and publish Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL) and Sri Lanka Navy's Maritime Strategy 2025 (2016). These attempts were subjected to criticism from

the various scholars in Sri Lanka mainly due to authority of such documents in the absence of considerations from other maritime stakeholders (Kulathunga, 2017). While the Sri Lanka Navy has outlined its Maritime Strategy 2025 to address maritime security and protect the nation's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), it's important to note that Sri Lanka currently lacks a comprehensive national maritime strategy (globalsecurity, 2020). The absence of a comprehensive strategy leaves a gap in Sri Lanka's ability to fully utilize its maritime resources, protect its maritime interests, and align with evolving geopolitical and economic trends, particularly in the context of the 21st century being considered as 'Asian Century. Naval forces worldwide, including the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN), are vital for achieving maritime objectives (GalleDialogue, 2013). They form the core of maritime security, protecting territorial waters, trade routes, and countering various threats. Modern navies go beyond military roles, engaging in humanitarian efforts, disaster relief, and law enforcement at sea (MDSL, 2020). Sea power encompasses not just naval strength but a nation's ability to exploit the sea for economic and strategic benefits while deterring potential adversaries. The SLN's evolving capabilities, shifting from coastal defense to blue water operations, highlight its crucial role in advancing Sri Lanka's maritime strategic goals (globalsecurity, 2020).

3. Further, this study aims to delve deeply into the multi-dimensional role of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) in realizing the country's maritime strategic objectives. In the absence nationally authorized document for the Maritime Strategy of Sri Lanka, the authors considered National Maritime Strategic Objectives derived in the Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL) and Sri Lanka's National Maritime Strategy 2025, to assess the SLN role. Through systematic analysis, the study will examine the SLN's military, diplomatic, constabulary, and benign roles, evaluating how each contributes to the broader goals outlined in Sri Lanka's National Maritime Security Strategy. The study will also explore the SLN's adaptability in addressing evolving maritime challenges, considering its significance in the geopolitically crucial Indian Ocean region. Furthermore, the study will scrutinize the SLN's contributions to national development, particularly in sectors like tourism and fisheries, which are inherently linked to maritime security. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the SLN's functions, capabilities, and limitations, this

study offers viable recommendations to policymakers and stakeholders for enhancing the Navy's effectiveness in achieving Sri Lanka's maritime aspirations."

AIM

4. The aim of this study is to examine the role and task of Sri Lanka Navy in realizing national maritime strategic objectives and make viable recommendations.

MARITIME STRATEGIC CONCERNS FOR SRI LANKA

5. **Strategic significance of Sri Lanka's Geographical Location.** Sri Lanka's geographical location lies at the heart of its maritime strategy. The island nation is strategically positioned at the crossroads of major shipping routes in the Indian Ocean, making it a pivotal player in global maritime trade. This positioning, combined with the emergence of the 21st century as the "Asian Century" underscores the profound strategic significance of Sri Lanka's location. The nation's maritime boundaries extend far beyond its land area, encompassing an ocean space twenty times its landmass. This expansive maritime domain offers opportunities and challenges that the SLNMS 2025 aims to address comprehensively (Joseph, 2015).

6. **Importance of Maritime Strategy.** A comprehensive strategy has always been necessary. It is addressing to many maritime challenges such as terrorism, piracy, smuggling, illegal immigration/ emigration, illegal fishing etc... The Maritime Strategy is a component of the National Military Strategy that supports making plans for the global employment of naval forces from pre-conflict preparations to unconditional surrender. It considers the present military, technical developments, and threats. It's a flexible concept as well. The writers tested the strategy through regular operations, exercises, and war games, then used the feedback to make adjustments and improve the

overall concept. This should be a common goal which having the involvement of all the stakeholders of national level.

7. **An overview of Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy.** Sri Lanka's National Maritime Strategy (SLNMS) has to be a forward-looking roadmap acknowledging the maritime domain's immense potential and strategic importance in shaping the nation's future. It is meticulously formulated to achieve both short and long-term national development goals. The strategy, designed for 2025, demonstrates a profound understanding of the dynamic nature of events unfolding in the maritime domain, both regionally and internationally, requiring a flexible and adaptive approach (Joseph, 2015).

MARITIME STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF SRI LANKA

8. During the key note address of Galle dialogue 2023 his excellency the president stated that the importance of maritime strategy as well as maritime security as an island nation. This study has conducted base on the two key documents available in Sri Lanka Navy which are published as Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL) and Sri Lanka Navy's Maritime Strategy 2025 (SLNMS) and also referred many researches and available written documents from subject expertise in Maritime Strategy. Those identified maritime strategic objectives will be discussed in subsequent paragraph.

9. **Maritime Security.** Maritime security is central to the strategy, with the Navy and Coast Guard playing vital roles in addressing various traditional and non-traditional security threats. These threats encompass issues like drug trafficking, human smuggling, illegal fishing, and poaching. A well-structured and strategic maritime security plan is essential to protect Sri Lanka's interests and uphold national objectives (Meegoda, 2020).

10. **Sea Control.** Establishing sea control over Sri Lanka's maritime domain is paramount in the strategy. Drawing from historical lessons, it underscores the importance of sea control and highlights the pivotal role played by the Sri Lanka Navy in achieving this objective. By asserting local maritime superiority, Sri Lanka can deter adversaries from using its waters for military or illicit activities such as poaching and smuggling (Meegoda, 2020).

11. **Maritime Reach and Depth.** Given the substantial expansion of Sri Lanka's maritime area, the presence of the Sri Lanka Navy in this vast ocean space becomes crucial. To safeguard the nation's maritime wealth effectively, the Navy must enhance its fleet and surveillance capabilities, ensuring robust maritime coverage and protection (Joseph, 2015).

12. **360 Degree Approach to Maritime Domain.** The strategy adopts a comprehensive perspective on maritime security, extending beyond surface activities. It emphasizes securing areas beneath the sea, in the air, along immediate coastal regions, and even cyberspace. This holistic approach ensures that Sri Lanka is well-prepared to respond effectively to any crisis or threat (Meegoda, 2020).

13. **Maritime Diplomacy.** Sri Lanka recognizes its Navy's significant role in supporting the nation's foreign policy through maritime diplomacy. Regional stability and development are essential to cooperation and alliances in the maritime domain. Active participation in diplomatic initiatives allows Sri Lanka to build strategic relationships and foster regional collaboration (Joseph, 2015).

14. **Economic Development.** Sri Lanka aims to leverage its strategic location in the Indian Ocean to promote economic development. This includes attracting foreign investments in maritime industries such as shipping, logistics, fisheries, and tourism. The country also seeks to develop its ports and infrastructure to facilitate increased maritime trade.

15. **Blue Economy.** Sri Lanka recognizes the potential of its marine resources and endeavors to harness them sustainably. The country aims to promote responsible fishing practices, aquaculture, and the development of the marine biotechnology sector. Sri Lanka also emphasizes protection and conservation of its marine environment and biodiversity.

16. **Regional Cooperation.** Sri Lanka seeks to promote regional cooperation and collaboration in the Indian Ocean. This includes participating in regional frameworks such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and engaging in joint maritime exercises, patrols, and information-sharing initiatives. Sri Lanka also aims to strengthen bilateral relationships with neighboring countries for mutual benefit in the maritime domain.

17. **Capacity Building.** Sri Lanka places emphasis on developing the necessary maritime capabilities and human resources. This involves investing in maritime infrastructure, including port facilities, maritime surveillance systems, and search and rescue capabilities. Sri Lanka also focuses on training and capacity building of its naval and maritime forces to effectively manage its maritime domain.

IDENTIFICATION OF MARITIME STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES RELEVANT TO SRI LANKA NAVY

18. Since marine zones are rich in natural resources, the Sri Lanka Navy must identify relevant objectives. Many nations depend on fishing and offshore oil and gas development for their economies. Thus, maritime interests must be protected to preserve these resources and maintain economic balance. Due to the rising threat of piracy and smuggling, maritime security regulations are needed to combat illegal activity and maintain legality and stability in the global waterways. Marine tactics have military, geopolitical, economic, and security implications beyond commercial enterprises. Marine strategic objectives are crucial to national security. The Historical Context of Maritime

Strategic Objectives: Naval Forces' Contribution. Maritime Strategic Objective Classification Maritime security protects territorial waterways, international trade routes, and freedom of navigation. To discourage threats and wars, maritime security entails power projection. Aid for humanitarian and disaster relief missions.

19. **Safeguarding National Security.** The Sri Lanka Navy aims to protect the country's maritime interests and maintain the security of Sri Lanka's coastal areas, territorial waters, and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This involves countering threats such as piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal fishing.

20. **Ensuring Maritime Domain Awareness.** The Sri Lanka Navy seeks to develop comprehensive maritime domain awareness by enhancing its surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. This includes the use of radar systems, maritime patrol aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and maritime surveillance vessels to effectively monitor and detect any suspicious activities in Sri Lanka's maritime zones.

21. **Supporting National Defense.** The Sri Lanka Navy plays a vital role in supporting the broader national defense and military operations. This includes providing naval presence and support for amphibious operations, coastal defense, and maritime strike capabilities. The Navy also collaborates with other branches of the armed forces to ensure the overall security of Sri Lanka.

22. **Protecting Maritime Resources.** The Sri Lanka Navy aims to protect the country's maritime resources and fishing grounds. This involves patrolling Sri Lanka's territorial waters and EEZ to prevent illegal fishing practices, such as poaching by foreign vessels. The Navy also cooperates with other agencies to promote sustainable fishing practices and protect endangered marine species.

23. **Ensuring Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response.** The Sri Lanka Navy plays a crucial role in providing maritime-based humanitarian assistance and disaster response. This includes search and rescue operations, providing relief supplies, and evacuating people in times of natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods, and

tsunamis. The Navy also collaborates with international partners in disaster response efforts.

24. **Promoting Regional Cooperation.** The Sri Lanka Navy actively engages in regional cooperation initiatives to enhance maritime security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. This involves participating in joint naval exercises, information-sharing programs, and cooperative maritime patrols. The Navy also engages in bilateral and multilateral maritime security dialogues to strengthen regional partnerships.

ASSESSMENT OF SLN ROLE IN REALIZING MARITIME STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

25. **Military Role of SLN.** The essence of all navies is their military character. In fact, the main role is to ensure that no hostile maritime power degrades their national security and interests. The Navy's military role is characterized by the threat or use of force at and from the sea. This includes application of maritime power in both, offensive operations against enemy forces, territory and trade, and defensive operations to protect our own forces, territory and trade. The military role is performed through the accomplishment of specific military objectives, missions and tasks. (MDSL, 2020).

26. The Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) is responsible for maritime patrols, surveillance, and protection of Sri Lanka's maritime interests. They combat threats like piracy, drug trafficking, and human smuggling, provide assistance to fishing vessels, and conduct search and rescue operations. The SLN also collaborates with international partners to combat transnational maritime crimes and promote regional stability. Their efforts contribute to Sri Lanka's economic development and national security. The SLN also provides disaster relief and humanitarian assistance during natural disasters, and actively participates in international peacekeeping missions.

27. **Constabulary Role of SLN.** The Sri Lanka Navy's constabulary role involves enforcing maritime law and order at sea, including counter-piracy operations, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue operations, and maritime border control. It participates in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia, and enforces maritime laws within Sri Lanka's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone. The navy also responds to distress calls, rescues stranded fishermen, and assists in maritime incidents. It also controls and secures Sri Lanka's maritime borders. Challenges faced by the navy include limited resources, a vast maritime area, sophisticated and evolving threats, and international cooperation. Despite these challenges, the Sri Lanka Navy continues to play a vital role in maintaining maritime security and upholding constabulary functions.

28. **Diplomatic Role of SLN.** The Sri Lanka Navy plays a crucial diplomatic role in fostering international cooperation, promoting regional stability, and protecting its maritime interests. It participates in naval exercises, exchanges, and port visits to foster understanding and interoperability. The Navy conducts search and rescue operations, counter-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance, and maritime security cooperation. However, it faces challenges such as limited resources, complex regional power dynamics, non-traditional maritime security threats, and compliance with international legal frameworks. These include balancing relationships with major powers and neighboring countries, addressing non-traditional maritime security threats, and ensuring compliance with international law. To overcome these challenges, the Navy focuses on building strong relationships with other navies, enhancing operational capabilities, participating in international forums, and fostering cooperation through training and exchange programs.

29. **Benign Role of SLN.** The Sri Lanka Navy plays a benign role in ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of Sri Lanka's maritime domain and its people. It undertakes tasks such as maritime surveillance, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance, and marine resource protection. The navy also represents Sri Lanka's interests in regional and international maritime forums, and collaborates with other law enforcement agencies to enforce maritime laws. Despite facing challenges such as dealing with illegal activities, limited resources, a technology gap, regional maritime disputes, natural disasters, geopolitical dynamics, and environmental challenges, the Sri Lanka Navy maintains peace and stability in the maritime domain. These challenges include dealing with illegal activities, managing limited resources, navigating regional maritime disputes, addressing natural disasters, and navigating geopolitical dynamics

30. The Sri Lanka Navy faces several challenges in its maritime operations, including limited capacity for maritime surveillance, insufficient resources for anti-piracy operations, limited capabilities for maritime interdiction and enforcement, inadequate maritime infrastructure, lack of coordination with other maritime agencies, limited focus on capacity building and training, and insufficient international cooperation and collaboration. These issues hinder the Navy's ability to effectively monitor and patrol the vast maritime domain, protect its interests from piracy, combat illicit activities, maintain maritime law and order, and maintain a persistent presence at sea. The Navy also faces challenges in ensuring safe sea lines of communication and adapting to evolving maritime threats. The Navy's role in national development, particularly in tourism and fisheries, is crucial for attracting foreign investment and fostering economic activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

31. The following recommendations have been formulated after identifying the gaps in the present SLN modes operandi, in realizing Sri Lanka's maritime strategic objectives.

32. **Enhanced Regional Cooperation.** To bolster its diplomatic role and contribute to stability in the Indian Ocean, the SLN should seek to strengthen multilateral partnerships with other regional navies. Joint naval exercises and information sharing can be avenues for such cooperation.

33. **Invest in Advanced Maritime Surveillance Systems.** Given the evolving nature of maritime threats, investing in cutting-edge surveillance technology can significantly boost the SLN's capabilities in both military and constabulary roles.

34. **Specialized Training Programs.** For the SLN to effectively undertake its diverse roles, specialized training programs should be developed. This is particularly important for constabulary duties like combating piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing.

35. **Acquire Versatile Naval Assets.** To extend its maritime reach and depth, the SLN should consider acquiring more versatile naval assets, such as multi-role vessels, allowing for effective power projection far from Sri Lanka's shores.

36. **Establish a Legal Framework.** Given the SLN's vulnerability to international constraints, establishing a robust legal framework can help navigate complex international maritime laws, allowing Sri Lanka to uphold its national interests while meeting international obligations.

37. **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Preparedness.** The SLN should further develop specialized units and acquire equipment for HADR missions, enhancing its benign role and showcasing its commitment to regional and international stability.

38. **Maritime Tourism and Fisheries Protection.** The SLN should collaborate with other governmental departments to develop maritime tourism while ensuring fisheries protection, both crucial sectors for Sri Lanka's economy.

39. **Long-term Strategic Planning.** The SLN should actively participate in formulating Sri Lanka's long-term maritime strategy, ensuring that its capabilities and objectives align with the nation's broader maritime aspirations.

40. **Operational Efficiency** Smaller navies must keep their operational efficiency and national security while they undergo modernization. Strong economies may be able to afford new weapons and ships for their armed forces. However, strategic planning and optimizing resources are especially important for countries with a low GDP.

41. **SLN Transformation** The SLN will soon transform and apply these features to compete with a large naval force whose soldiers are better suited for land combat, a tiny navy, a vast maritime domain, active TOC, illicit fishing, and a low GDP. Marine cooperation initiatives, capacity-building measures, defense enhancements, optimal resource utilization, innovations, integrations, and an appropriately sized workforce are just some recommendations in the four case studies that could help the SLN become a more formidable navy (Liyanagamage, 2018).

42. **Strong Foreign Policy** Singapore is another notable example since its foreign policy has helped ease tensions with its neighbors. By sticking to the good-neighbor policy, relevance and utility, feeling of community, multilateralism, and defense, Singapore has kept the peace with its neighbors and 102 superpowers. Following a similar action would allow Sri Lanka to maintain neutrality in a conflict between China and India. Sri Lanka may take a page from the Seychelles' and Mauritius' books, not just because of their non-aligned stance. Both nations have adopted new policies such as combating corruption, strengthening law enforcement and the judicial system, fostering good governance, expanding access to clean water and sanitation, encouraging the development of a sustainable blue economy, forging international partnerships, and

increasing participation in International Small Island Developing States' working groups to forge better ties with nations in the IOR (Liyanagamage, 2018)

43. **Strengthen Maritime Security.** The Singapore Navy's work to strengthen maritime security sets a great example for other small, expanding fleets in the IOR. The Royal Singapore Navy does more with less by using submarines for power projection, technology as a force multiplier, regional and international security partnerships, membership in maritime organizations, indigenous developments, cost cutting by optimizing available resources, and reducing the workforce. These steps are a condensed version of the SLN's initial recommendations (Liyanagamage, 2018).

CONCLUSION

44. In summary, Sri Lanka's National Maritime Strategy for 2025 which has to be implemented immediately should be a comprehensive and forward-looking framework that recognizes the nation's maritime potential and the strategic importance of its geographical location. The strategy's pillars and points should be encompassed a holistic approach to maritime security, governance, research, and cooperation. Its implementation is critical for harnessing the full potential of Sri Lanka's maritime space and contributing to broader national development objectives. The establishment of a National Maritime Strategy Implementation Authority (NMSIA) will play a pivotal role in coordinating and executing the strategy's objectives in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Navy, shipping industry, scientists, researchers, and maritime experts (Joseph, 2015; Meegoda, 2020).

45. Further, the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) has to play an indispensable role in realizing the country's maritime strategic objectives. Its multifaceted responsibilities from military and constabulary positions to diplomatic and benign functions underline its significance as a primary stakeholder in Sri Lanka's maritime domain. The SLN's evolving capabilities demonstrate its adaptability and resilience, particularly its transition from a force focused on coastal defense to one capable of blue-water operations. Through its varied

roles, the SLN safeguards Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and maritime resources and contributes to broader regional stability and global maritime security.

46. As Sri Lanka continues to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape of the Indian Ocean, the importance of a competent and versatile naval force cannot be overstated. This study has explored the depth and breadth of the SLN's involvement in maritime affairs, shedding light on its capabilities and limitations. The recommendations aim to guide policymakers and stakeholders in enhancing the SLN's effectiveness, thereby contributing to realizing Sri Lanka's maritime aspirations. The continuous evolution, training, and adaptation of the SLN are vital for its sustained relevance and for Sri Lanka's broader maritime and national objectives.

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SESSION TWO

FUTURE MARITIME SECURITY CONCERNS: SRI LANKA'S PERSPECTIVES

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“Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters”.

—Alfred Thayer Mahan¹

1. The economy and balance of power of the world are significantly influenced by the Indian Ocean. Today, responsibility for maintaining the security of the area's maritime domain rests primarily with the islands and coastal nations in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). However, coastal and island nations face enormous challenges from emerging traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges in this region. Sri Lanka, the second-largest island nation in the IOR, has 1,340 kilometers of coastline, 65,610 square kilometers of land area, and 510,000 square kilometers of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).² Being an island nation, Sri Lanka faces the traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges prevalent in the IOR.

2. In particular, drug trafficking menaces, smuggling, and maritime pollution in Sri Lanka's EEZ pose a significant threat to Sri Lanka and other coastal and island nations in the region. It is the mission of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) to prevent maritime security

¹ P. K. Ghosh, “Maritime Security Challenges in South Asia and the Indian Ocean: Response Strategies,” in *American-Pacific Sealanes Security Institute Conference on Maritime Security in Asia* (Honolulu, HI: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 1, <https://www.navedu.navy.mi.th/stg/databasestory/data/lawabout/law-aboutsea/Maritime%20Security%20Laws%20&%20Frameworks/Maritime%20Security%20in%20SEA.pdf>.

² Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, *Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL)*, SLN BR 1 (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Navy Headquarters, 2020), 166, https://www.navy.lk/assets/images/english/Doctrine/br_01/mobile/index.html#p=1.

incidents in the nation's EEZ and to support such efforts throughout the IOR.³ India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar are major coastal nations, and Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros, Reunion, Andaman Nicobar, and the Maldives are the main island nations in the region.

3. This paper is to examine existing maritime security threats to Sri Lanka and how the country could address future maritime security concerns.

MARITIME SECURITY THREATS PREVAILING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Drug Trafficking

Maritime terrorism and drug trafficking are interrelated due to the high profits generated from drug trafficking, which often leads to arms smuggling.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of humans for the purpose of forced labor or sexual exploitation, while human smuggling refers to the illegal transportation of people across borders for financial gain.

Maritime Terrorism

In 2009, the Sri Lankan Navy decimated the LTTE's Sea Tiger wing, resulting in a significant drop in successful maritime terrorist attacks. However, previous attacks on the USS Cole in Yemen and the French tanker Limburg had devastating consequences.

Sea Piracy

Modern-day piracy has shifted from stealing goods from ships to violent attacks, including ransom, hostage-taking, and crew member killings. Piracy off the coast of Somalia occurs in the Gulf of Aden, Guardafui Channel, and Somali Sea, in Somali territorial waters and other surrounding places, and has a long and troubled history with different perspectives from different communities

Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing has severely damaged the marine environment of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Bottom trawling, a banned fishing

³ Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, 60–61.

method, is the main cause of the damage maritime biodiversity. Furthermore, some fishermen use explosives and illegal fishing nets, which poses a serious threat to the sustainability of fishery resources.

Arms Smuggling

Enforcing laws to prevent arms smuggling through sea routes is a challenging task, given the vastness of the sea. Accurate intelligence and coordination are essential to tackle this problem. Moreover, small arms are easily smuggled as they are easily available in the market. The profits from the drug trade can be used to purchase arms, making it more difficult to detect such activities. These activities are usually carried out through dark networks.

Sea Lines of Communication Protection.

The security of maritime shipping lanes and choke points is paramount to regional countries, which is why SLOC patrols are crucial to ensuring their free flow of maritime trade. The Indian Ocean is home to important SLOCs and maritime choke points. A large volume of international long-haul maritime cargo from the Persian Gulf, Africa, and Europe transits through this ocean. This sea-borne trade, primarily oil, virtually affects every aspect of the daily lives of most people of the world. Similarly, the Southeast Asian choke points of the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Straits affect the economic vitality of the Asia-Pacific region.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

The IOR comprises 38 states, is the third largest of the world's oceans, and is home to some 2.5 billion people, or one-third of the global population. The IOR also possesses the least well-developed coordination arrangements for disaster response in the world. The region is one of the most vulnerable to threats ranging from geophysical, meteorological, hydrological, climate, biological, or man-made disasters. Insufficient governance, population growth, and underdeveloped economies in the Indian Ocean region are causing geographical and climatic changes.

Climate Change.

Island states in the IOR face unique climate change vulnerabilities due to small size, economic constraints, and heavy reliance on maritime resources. Further, climate

change, whether it is caused by humans or not, poses a significant risk to the region's future. This is because island states may cease to exist completely, and coastal flooding and salinization pose a major threat to the land of littoral states in the IOR.

IMPORTANCE OF MARITIME SECURITY IN THE IOR AND IMPACT ON SRI LANKA:

The Indian Ocean covers 20 percent of the Earth's surface, and its position connecting the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, along with their associated Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), has transformed the Indian Ocean into a significant region for global trade and energy transfer, as well as maritime security concerns.⁴ Indian maritime security studies specialist Priyanjoli Ghosh emphasizes the geostrategic importance of the IOR for global maritime commerce and the power balance of the region in his 2020 journal article "India's Indian Ocean Region Strategy."⁵ Geopolitics and foreign affairs author Robert D. Kaplan asserts that the Indian Ocean and Asian regional dynamics are of great concern for strategic competition in the 21st century.⁶ Kaplan further emphasizes that this dynamic area (which includes India, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Burma, Oman, Pakistan, China, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka) has become crucial to U.S. power. This region is now a vital aspect of the world's economic future and the Global Power Competition (GPC).⁷

Maritime security in the IOR must tackle the emergence of non-traditional and traditional threats. Maritime security studies specialist Priyanjoli Ghosh further addresses existing maritime security challenges that include rising narcoterrorism in the region.⁸ Sri Lanka and other coastal and island nations in the IOR are also, directly and indirectly, vulnerable to narco-terrorism. Drugs are increasingly a threat to Sri Lanka,

⁴ Sandy Gordon, *Security and Security Building in the Indian Ocean Region* (Canberra : Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1996), 18–28, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/216566>.

⁵ Priyanjoli Ghosh, "India's Indian Ocean Region Strategy," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 146–50, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/31/2002488089/-1/-1/1/GHOSH.PDF>.

⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), 5–17.

⁷ Kaplan, 10–20.

⁸ Ghosh, "Maritime Security Challenges."

Seychelles, Maldives, and Mauritius. Therefore, the disruption of drug trafficking and narcoterrorism is important to secure ocean commerce and prevent terrorism.

Maritime security researchers of the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), Sam Bateman and Anthony Bergin assert that many of the coastal and island nations in the IOR face enormous challenges from a variety of emerging maritime security threats such as Illegal Unreported Unregulated Fishing (IUUF), encroachment on sovereign economic exclusion zones (EEZ), terrorism, migration, narcotics trafficking, maritime piracy, and natural disasters.⁹

According to the Maritime Strategy of Sri Lanka, to protect its own EEZ, Sri Lanka must largely contribute to ensuring several aspects of regional maritime security. “The Sri Lanka Navy’s Maritime Strategy 2025, its roadmap for achieving this aim, was released in November 2016 in Colombo. The SLN’s lack of resources, especially bigger ships, has resulted in weak security in the maritime domain of Sri Lanka.”¹⁰ While a variety of maritime security challenges prevail in the IOR, drug trafficking is among the most significant and particularly affecting to the Ocean’s global commerce and the security of regional nations.

At the same time, it is important to consider the geopolitical implications associated with regional maritime security concerns. For instance, Ghosh asserts that being a regional power, “In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the world order is expected to witness a geostrategic shift, India will aim at further strengthening its presence in the IOR. In this dynamic, India will look forward to building up the gambit with Indian Ocean littorals such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles to scrutinize the rise of China.”¹¹ It is important to understand how India’s posture will affect IOR maritime security concerns and partnerships.

Professor Aparajita Biswas’s article, “Small Arms and Drug Trafficking in the Indian Ocean Region,” states that Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, known as the Golden

⁹ Sam Bateman and Anthony Bergin, “New Challenges for Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean – an Australian Perspective,” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 7, no. 1 (July 2011): 117–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2011.587335>.

¹⁰ “Sri Lanka Navy Maritime Strategy 2025,” Global Security, accessed February 15, 2022, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/sri-lanka/navy-strategy.htm>.

¹¹ Ghosh, “India’s Indian Ocean Region Strategy,” 150.

Crescent, comprise the most significant for opium poppy cultivating region in the world and the Golden Triangle of Southeast Asia, which includes Burma, Thailand, and Laos, is located close to the IOR.¹²

From another perspective, Biswas discusses the link between narcoterrorism and arms trafficking in the IOR by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) during the three decades (1983–2009) of separatist conflict. The LTTE engaged in drugs and arms trafficking to generate funds for purchasing sophisticated weapons, equipment (GPS, communication sets), and training facilities in Sri Lanka and abroad.¹³

In 2009 the LTTE was defeated militarily by the Sri Lankan armed forces, ending three decades of internal conflict. However, drug trafficking and narcoterrorism remain a national and regional threat to security.¹⁴ Therefore, military and law enforcement measures by individual states without partner support would not be an effective way to counter transnational narco-networks.¹⁵

According to the Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL), the SLN has continued its efforts to address all types of maritime security challenges in Sri Lanka's EEZ and the adjacent areas of the IOR. That includes counter-narcotics trafficking in the EEZ and the region to help secure maritime commerce and to ensure better regional maritime security with the resources available in the SLN.¹⁶

Further, the MDSL discusses the IOR's vulnerability to arms and drug trafficking in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, which are extensively used by traffickers.¹⁷ It has been noted that while annual consumption of heroin within Sri Lanka is minimal, the

¹² Aparajita Biswas, "Small Arms and Drug Trafficking in the Indian Ocean Region" (working paper, Centre for African Studies, 2008), https://archive.mu.ac.in/arts/social_science/african_studies/biswaswp.pdf.

¹³ Biswas, "Small Arms and Drug Trafficking."

¹⁴ Mitchell Sutton and Serge DeSilva Ranasinghe, *Transnational Crime in Sri Lanka: Future Considerations for International Cooperation* (Barton ACT, Australia: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2016), 7–11, <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/transnational-crime-sri-lanka-future-considerations-international-cooperation>.

¹⁵ Biswas.

¹⁶ Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, *Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL)*, 48–65.

¹⁷ Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, 60.

number of apprehensions involving the drug made each year at seaports, airports, and on fishing vessels is significant and alarming.¹⁸

The SLN reportedly apprehended approximately 16,000kgs of different types of drug substances from 2016 to 2023 in the EEZ of Sri Lanka.¹⁹ Iranian, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan drug traffickers were also apprehended during those operations, along with the fishing trawlers they used to conceal their illicit trade within the general fishing community at sea. This statistical data highlights the existing drug trafficking threat to the country.

According to the study *Transnational Crime in Sri Lanka*, by Australia-based maritime security experts, Mitchell Sutton and Serge De Silva-Ranasinghe, “at the regional and global levels, Sri Lanka has engaged in a number of initiatives to counter drug trafficking, people smuggling, money laundering, and maritime crime. Most of its law enforcement cooperation efforts at the coordination level have been with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).”²⁰

As Sutton and De Silva-Ranasinghe note, Sri Lanka and regional countries in the IOR have used the SAARC to cooperate on law enforcement efforts. Further, the authors mention that the SAARC selected Sri Lanka as the center to establish the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1990), the Colombo-based SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (1992), the SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters (first held in Colombo in 1996), and the SAARC Coordination Group of Drug Law Enforcement Agencies.²¹

According to Article 108 of the 1982 “United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea” (UNCLOS), “All States shall cooperate in the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances engaged in by ships on the high seas contrary to international convention.”²² Sri Lanka ratified UNCLOS on July 19, 1994. Therefore, Sri Lanka and other coastal nations should find ways to ensure safer SLOCs by disrupting

¹⁸ Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, 60–61.

¹⁹ Sri Lanka Navy, *Compendium of Drug Seizures at Sea*.

²⁰ Sutton and Ranasinghe, *Transnational Crime in Sri Lanka*, 15.

²¹ Sutton and Ranasinghe, 15–16.

²² United Nations, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2008), 56, ProQuest.

non-traditional threats, including drug trafficking, and bolstering maritime security in the IOR.²³

Annual maritime security symposia, such as the “Galle Dialogue” maritime conference, and professional international training programs offered by UNODC to counter maritime security threats have enabled the SLN to become a key partner in the IOR maritime domain.²⁴

Commodore (retired) Kazi Emdadul, founding member of the Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development, asserts that maritime security has remained a low priority in the region. He opines that “non-traditional threat (NTS) is real and moving fast towards a cataclysmic situation, yet the regional forums’ initiative seems like a pantomime and inadequate.”²⁵

Sri Lanka faces significant challenges due to scarcity of resources and financial constraints to tackle maritime security concerns. The current economic turmoil in the country will further limit access to essential resources, such as new platforms and technologies, to address existing maritime security concerns. Further, little research has been done to explain how small nations might benefit from maritime security and trade engagement with great power nations. The United States, China, and India may provide an opportunity for smaller nations to pursue more effective maritime security cooperation. The geographical position of Sri Lanka and its available naval assets have helped contribute to maritime security in the IOR, but expanded cooperation with these great power nations may be needed to enhance the capacities and capabilities of smaller nations like Sri Lanka in meeting this security objective.²⁶

²³ Buddhika Liyanagamage, “Future Maritime Security Concerns of the Sri Lanka Navy: Challenges versus Solutions” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), 1–3, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/61216>.

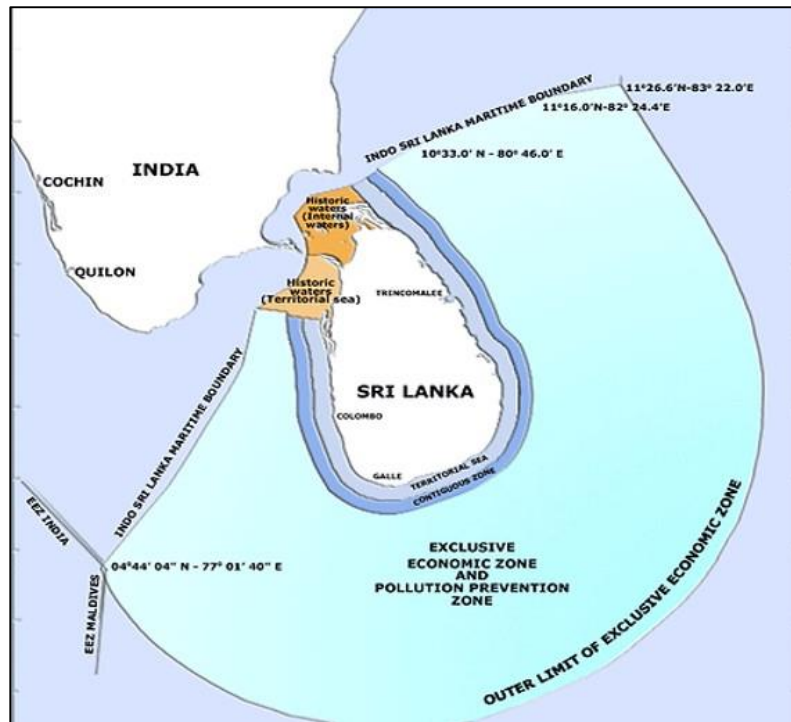
²⁴ “Galle Dialogue 2021: International Maritime Conference - Sri Lanka,” Galle Dialogue 2021, accessed November 4, 2021, <http://galledialogue.lk/>; “UNODC Conducts Exercise to Counter Maritime Crime in Sri Lanka.”

²⁵ Kazi Emdadul, “Maritime Security Challenges – Indian Ocean Region (IOR): Shared Concerns and Opportunities Way Ahead,” *South Asia Journal*, March 18, 2021, <http://southasiajournal.net/maritime-security-challenges-indian-ocean-region-ior-shared-concerns-and-opportunities-way-ahead/>.

²⁶ Cody T. Smith, “Century of the Seas: Unlocking Indian Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century,” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2017), 75–78, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/56178>.

SLN CAPABILITIES IN MARITIME OPERATIONS

At present, the SLN and Coast Guard are conducting maritime operations by deploying existing resources to disrupt non-traditional threats in Sri Lanka's EEZ and adjacent areas in the IOR. Sri Lanka claims an EEZ up to eight times larger than the nation's land area, as shown in the map in Figure 1.



Map of Sri Lanka's EEZ²⁷

The SLN's fleet units, which include Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessels (AOPV) and Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV), are being deployed for counter-drug operations and other maritime security operation on the high seas while Fast Gun Boats (FGB), Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV), Fast Attack Craft (FAC), and other classes of ships and craft are conducting other forms of maritime operations in the Sri Lankan littorals to ensure maritime security in coastal areas and the EEZ.²⁸ Deployment of coastal observation points and radar stations would enhance surveillance capabilities along the country's coast.

²⁷ Source: Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, *Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL)*, 125.

²⁸ Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters.

SLN has apprehended more than 16000 Kilograms of illegal drug substances such as Heroin, Methamphetamine, Hashish, Ketamine, and cannabis from 2016 to 2023. This effort is intended to suppress the influx of drugs and psychotropic substances into the country and counter other maritime security threats such as piracy and smuggling. From 2009 to 2023, SLN has intercepted a total of 6,148 illegal migrants through successful maritime operations.

Another initiative is Colombo-based, the Maritime Information Fusion Centre (IFC) which collects, analyzes, and shares maritime information to enhance decision-making processes regarding maritime security and environmental issues. Sri Lanka's maritime region is 27 times larger than its landmass and sees over 60,000 ships passing through annually. Given the non-traditional safety and security challenges, it is imperative for Sri Lanka to safeguard its maritime domain and protect the safety of seafarers.

In order to monitor maritime activities in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the IFC Colombo was established at the Navy Headquarters premises. The IFC Colombo promotes cooperation, collaboration, and sharing of maritime information among local and international stakeholders to improve Maritime Domain Awareness.

CONCLUSION

Maritime security threats in the Indian Ocean have a significant impact on Sri Lanka and other littoral states in the IOR. Among the above-mentioned threats, drug trafficking, human smuggling, maritime pollution, and climate change are particularly significant to Sri Lanka and its EEZ.

Most of the countries have been supported by partner nations, regional countries, and international actors to enhance the effectiveness of their maritime security operations through Memorandums of Understanding, agreements, legal mechanisms, capabilities, and resource enhancements including financial assistance. Those are the identified key factors that resulted in effective outcomes of maritime security operations in the states studied.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING SRI LANKA'S FUTURE MARITIME STRATEGY.

Enhancing maritime security to tackle nontraditional threats in Sri Lanka's EEZ and IOR requires additional resources such as advanced platforms, intelligence sharing, technology, and agreements with regional and extra-regional actors. Sustainable recommendations are necessary to achieve this objective.

It has been observed different countries have initiated successful maritime security cooperation programs and strengthened their legal entities through regional and international cooperation with other nations and international actors.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) covers a vast maritime zone of nearly 68.56 million square kilometers, including coastal states from South Africa in the west to Australia in the east. IORA acts as the 'first line of defense' by building upon existing national, regional, and international measures to enhance coordination and support harmonized international collaboration for maritime safety and security.

Sri Lanka is now the chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), having assumed the position during the 23rd IORA Council of Ministers meeting in Colombo on October 11, 2023. Sri Lanka was a founding member of IORA in 1997 and had previously served as its chair from 2003 to 2004. This could help Sri Lanka to reap benefits in order to ensure better maritime security with the collaboration of IORA.

Further, Sri Lanka can improve its maritime security through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The SAARC can facilitate regional dialogue and intelligence sharing to address non-traditional threats and drug trafficking. This can enable regional navies to jointly tackle maritime security threats in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) and assist Sri Lanka in countering maritime threats by increasing maritime patrols for better security in the region.

The Sri Lanka Navy can enhance its maritime surveillance capabilities by acquiring maritime patrol helicopters. This can be done by initiating financial support and asset acquisition through navy-to-navy staff talks and defense dialogues with regional navies and major powers like the United States. The Sri Lankan navy has already received patrol vessels from the United States, China, India, and Australia, many of which can carry helicopters onboard. The country should shape its foreign policy and maritime

strategy to meet its interests while fostering international partnerships. Further, acquiring ship-borne UAVs and drone technology could widely help to increase the surveillance range of the platform

As the paper explained, UNODC is a key counter-drug and maritime security operations entity of the United Nations offering training and asset sharing in different countries, including Seychelles, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. Therefore, increasing engagement with this organization could help the SLN and other counter-drug and maritime security operations enforcement agencies to build capacity through enhanced training and acquisition of additional resources through the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP).

Maintaining a foreign policy that is not aligned with any particular country could be the best option for Sri Lanka to receive support from its partners, such as India, the United States, and China, and to enhance its maritime security capabilities. This objective can be achieved through various means like conducting maritime exercises, training and exchanging assets, goodwill port calls, and navy-to-navy staff talks. Sri Lanka's maritime strategy should be designed accordingly to reap the benefits for the nation and the region.

Foreign Military Funding (FMF) is vital to supporting U.S. coalition partners in the war on terrorism. FMF provides grants for the acquisition of U.S. defense equipment, services, and training, which promotes U.S. national security by contributing to regional and global stability, strengthening military support for democratically-elected governments, and containing transnational threats including terrorism and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, and persons. These grants enable key allies and friends to improve their defense capabilities and foster closer military relationships between the U.S. and recipient nations. This type of opportunity could help a country like Sri Lanka to mitigate financial constraints in future maritime security concerns.

Maritime cooperation dialogues, such as the Galle Dialogue maritime conference in Sri Lanka, the Goa Maritime Symposium in India, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, and the International Sea Power Symposium in the United States, are valuable platforms for enhancing maritime domain awareness. These dialogues also provide opportunities for smaller nations to identify and address capability gaps and requirements to counter maritime security threats.

Maritime security operations heavily rely on the use of new technology and intelligence sharing. In the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), regional countries should prioritize intelligence sharing and cooperate with international intelligence agencies to improve maritime surveillance. Effective local and international intelligence sharing can significantly enhance counter-maritime security operations. Therefore, Sri Lanka's national policies and maritime strategy should align with these aspects through ministerial-level collaboration with great powers, regional powers, and international agencies for a better future.

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GA Gunathiklaka
Lieutenant Commander (SBS)



TSC Peiris
Lieutenant (LS)

REGION



"In an age of global trade and interconnectivity, maritime security isn't just one nation's concern but a shared responsibility. The safety of the seas ensures the prosperity of nations."

- Admiral Sunil Lanba -
Chief of Naval Staff Indian Navy

PREAMBLE

1. The IOR's significance in global trade, energy transportation, and geopolitics is undeniable. Ensuring its maritime safety directly impacts global economic stability, energy security, and geopolitical peace. For Sri Lanka, enhancing maritime safety can bolster its economic prospects, strengthen its geopolitical stance, and protect its marine environment. This research, by providing actionable insights, can guide policymakers, maritime agencies, and regional bodies in formulating effective strategies, ensuring the IOR remains a beacon of prosperity and stability.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2. The research objectives are enumerated below.
 - a. To identify and analyze the evolving maritime safety challenges in the IOR.
 - b. Asses the naval assets available presently for addressing the maritime safety threats and challenges.
 - c. To assess the effectiveness of existing regional cooperation initiatives and recommend enhanced collaborative strategies for ensuring maritime safety in the IOR.

AIM

3. Aim of this study is to evaluate future maritime safety concern in the Indian Ocean Region and bring out area to be addressed.

BACKGROUND

4. Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has a rich and intricate history of maritime incidents that have shaped its current dynamics. Historically, piracy has been a significant concern, particularly off the coast of Somalia. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), Somali waters witnessed a peak of piracy incidents in 2011, with 237 attacks, disrupting global shipping and leading to international naval responses (IMB, 2012).

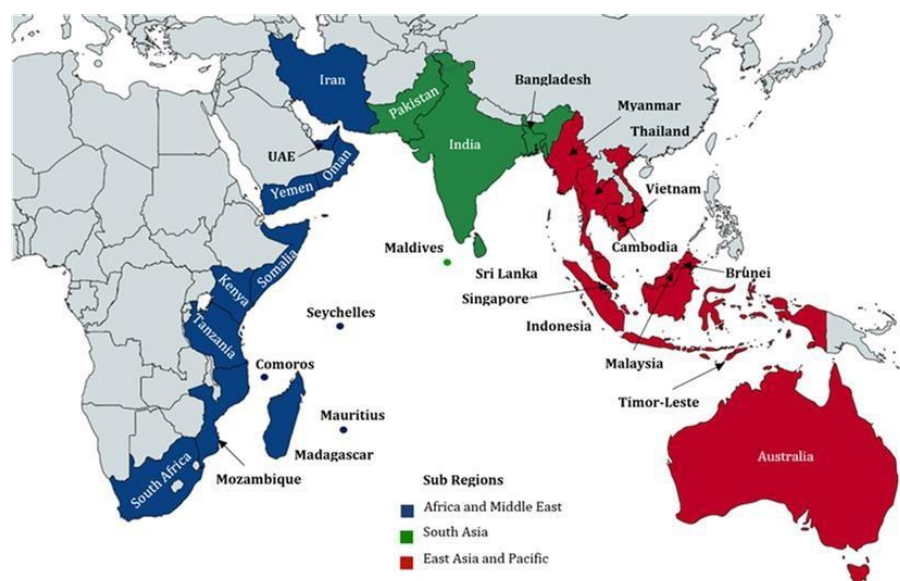
5. Territorial disputes have also been a feature of the IOR. The South China Sea, although not directly part of the IOR, influences its dynamics significantly. The disputes here involve multiple countries, with claims over islands and maritime boundaries. These territorial claims have occasionally led to standoffs and skirmishes, as noted by Fravel (2011).

6. Further, maritime accidents, due to reasons like navigational errors, equipment failures, and adverse weather, have also been a concern in the congested shipping lanes of the IOR. For instance, the collision of the oil tanker "MT Dawn Kanchipuram" with

another vessel off the coast of Chennai, India in 2017, resulted in an oil spill impacting the marine environment and local livelihoods.

7. The Indian Ocean region consists of 28 states, spanning across three continents and covers 17.5% of global land area. These 28 countries include 21 members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Figure 1: The Indian Ocean Economy



8. The Indian Ocean, with 16.8% of the world's oil and gas reserves, is responsible for 35.5% of global iron and gold production. It also captures 28% of global fish, leading to successful export industries like Indonesia and India, contributing to global frozen fish exports.

9. The Indian Ocean is home to major sea routes connecting the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the Americas, facilitating maritime trade, carrying over half of the world's sea-borne oil, and hosting 23 of the world's top 100 container ports. Container traffic has increased fourfold since 2000.

10. Smaller ports in the Indian Ocean region have seen growth, with China becoming the most important trading partner, accounting for 16.1% of total goods trade in 2017. However, trade with major partners like the EU, US, and Japan has declined between 2000 and 2017. Intra-regional trade is stronger.

11. To counter these challenges, several safety protocols and infrastructural developments have been put in place. The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was established in 2009, in response to the escalating piracy incidents. With the collaborative efforts of multiple countries, piracy attacks have significantly decreased in recent years (UN, 2020).

12. Regionally, initiatives like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) have emphasized maritime safety and security, promoting cooperation and information exchange among member states. Infrastructure-wise, many countries in the IOR have invested in modernizing their ports, enhancing navigational aids, and boosting their maritime patrol capabilities to ensure safer seas.

13. Moreover, international conventions like the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) have been ratified by many IOR countries, ensuring a standardized approach to maritime safety and environmental protection.

14. This study seeks to delve deeper into the impending maritime safety challenges in the IOR. By drawing from historical precedents, evaluating current dynamics, elaborating International laws and treaties and forecasting potential future risks, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the safety concerns. Through this lens, the study will offer insights and recommendations to fortify maritime operations, ensuring a secure and prosperous Indian Ocean Region in the years to come.

RELEVANCE OF SRI LANKA NAVY

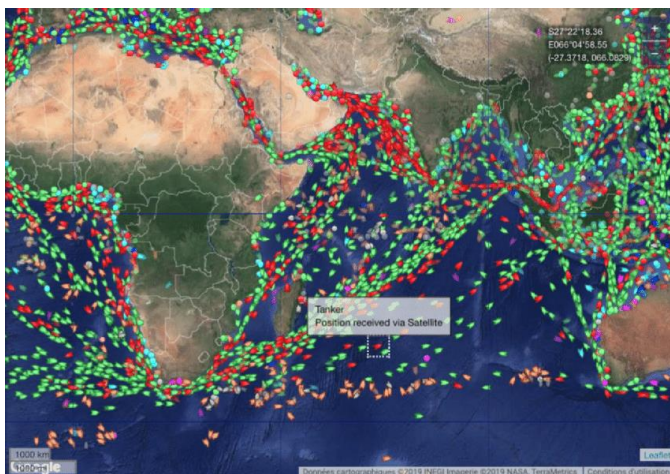
15. **Protection of Maritime Trade.** Navies in the IOR play a crucial role in safeguarding the region's vast maritime trade routes. They help ensure the security of shipping lanes, which are essential for the global movement of goods, particularly oil and container traffic.

16. **Security and Stability.** Navies contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the IOR. Their presence helps deter piracy, terrorism, and other maritime security threats, which can disrupt trade and endanger coastal states.
17. **Resource Exploration and Protection.** The IOR is rich in natural resources, including fish and minerals. Navies protect the interests of their respective countries in resource exploration and safeguard against illegal fishing and resource exploitation.
18. **Disaster Response.** Given the region's vulnerability to natural disasters, navies are instrumental in providing rapid response and relief efforts during events like tsunamis and cyclones, thereby saving lives and mitigating damage.
19. **Sovereignty and Territorial Claims.** Several countries in the IOR have disputes over maritime boundaries and territorial claims. Navies play a role in protecting their country's sovereignty and interests, helping manage and resolve these disputes peacefully.
20. **Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation.** Navies often engage in diplomatic activities and joint exercises with other countries in the IOR. These interactions promote cooperation, build trust, and enhance regional security.
21. **Balancing Geopolitical Influence.** Major powers like the United States, China, India, and others have a strategic interest in the IOR. Navies serve as instruments for these countries to project influence and maintain a balance of power in the region.
22. **Humanitarian Assistance.** Navies are involved in humanitarian missions, such as providing aid, medical assistance, and disaster relief in the event of natural or man-made disasters.
23. **Environmental Protection.** Navies also contribute to environmental protection in the IOR by monitoring and responding to environmental threats, including oil spills and pollution

SAFETY THREATS

MANMADE THREATS

24. **Increase in Maritime Traffic.** The surge in global trade has intensified maritime traffic within the IOR. With the IOR acting as a conduit for major global trade routes, its waters have witnessed a substantial increase in shipping activities over the past few decades. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO, 2018), the volume of cargo transported by ships has nearly quadrupled since the 1970s. This upswing in maritime traffic has led to increasingly congested sea lanes, especially in chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. Such congestion elevates the risk of collisions and other maritime accidents.



25. **Piracy.** The waters off the Somali coast have historically been plagued by piracy, posing significant threats to commercial shipping. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB, 2021) reported that while piracy incidents have decreased due to international naval interventions, the threat remains persistent.



26. **Smuggling and Illegal Fishing.** The IOR has also been a hub for smuggling operations and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. A study by Stimson Center (2016) indicated that IUU fishing in the IOR not only affects the marine ecosystem but also has socio-economic implications for coastal communities.

27. **Potential for Maritime Territorial Disputes.** The IOR, with its strategic importance, has been the epicenter of various territorial disputes. The South China Sea, for example, has multiple overlapping territorial claims by countries like China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia. These disputes have occasionally led to standoffs, as noted by Council on Foreign Relations (CFR, 2020). Additionally, India and Pakistan have had longstanding disagreements over the maritime boundary in the Sir Creek region. Such disputes can escalate tensions and have ramifications for maritime safety and security in the region.

28. **Drug trafficking.** Drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean region is a significant concern, as it serves as a major transit route for illegal narcotics. The region's vast sea routes provide numerous opportunities for smuggling, but the maritime nature presents unique challenges for law enforcement and security agencies. Collaboration between countries and international organizations is crucial to combat drug trafficking, sharing intelligence and conducting joint patrols. The revenue generated from drug sales can fuel violence and instability in affected regions. Drug traffickers often use the cover of legitimate maritime activities, causing negative environmental consequences. Enforcement efforts involve counter-drug trafficking operations, and countries have

established legal frameworks and laws to combat the trade. Regional initiatives, like the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime, coordinate efforts to address maritime security challenges.

NATURAL THREATS

29. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR), with its vast expanse and geographical diversity, is susceptible to a range of natural threats. The region's unique position and climatic conditions amplify certain risks, making maritime safety a pressing concern.

30. **Climate Change Effects.** The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident in the IOR. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2019), sea levels are rising at an accelerating rate due to the melting of polar ice caps and the expansion of seawater as it warms. For countries in the IOR, this poses a direct threat to coastal communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Additionally, changing weather patterns have resulted in altered monsoon cycles. These changes can lead to unpredictable and intense rainfall, causing flooding in coastal regions. The IOR is also witnessing an increase in the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones. A study by Nature (2018) suggests that the warming oceans are contributing to the intensification of cyclones, posing significant challenges to maritime operations and coastal infrastructure.

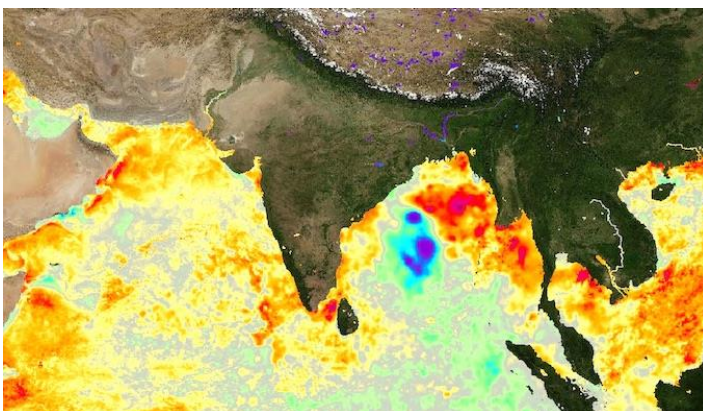


31. **Tsunamis and Their Potential Impact.** The IOR is no stranger to tsunamis, with its tectonic settings making certain areas particularly vulnerable. The devastating 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami stands as a grim reminder of the region's susceptibility. Originating off the west coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, it resulted in the deaths of over 230,000 people across 14 countries, making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history (National Geographic, 2005). Tsunamis pose a dual threat to the IOR. Not only do they cause immediate destruction, but they also have long-term implications for coastal infrastructure, including ports, shipping facilities, and naval bases. The aftermath of a tsunami can disrupt maritime trade, impact coastal economies, and necessitate significant rebuilding efforts.

32. **Cyclones and Typhoons.** The IOR is prone to tropical cyclones, which can cause widespread destruction, including high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, and flooding, affecting coastal regions and islands. The Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea are particularly susceptible to cyclones.

33. **Volcanic Activity.** Some islands and coastal areas in the IOR are volcanic in nature. Volcanic eruptions can have immediate and long-term impacts on communities and ecosystems.

34. **Heatwaves.** The IOR experiences intense heatwaves, which can have health impacts and strain energy resources as cooling demand increases.



35. **Coral Bleaching.** Rising sea temperatures and other environmental stressors have led to coral bleaching in the region's coral reefs, threatening marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

36. **Sea Level Rise.** Climate change-related sea-level rise can result in coastal erosion, inundation, and salinization of freshwater resources, affecting communities and infrastructure.

37. **Ocean Acidification.** Increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are causing ocean acidification, which can harm marine life and impact fisheries.

CHALLENGES

Technical and Operational Concerns

38. **Aging Infrastructure and Vessels.** The maritime infrastructure in parts of the IOR has not kept pace with the rapid increase in maritime traffic, leading to challenges in handling the volume and ensuring safety. Aging ports, outdated navigational aids, and ill-equipped vessel traffic management systems can contribute to bottlenecks and increase the risk of maritime accidents. Furthermore, many vessels operating in the region are old, making them more susceptible to mechanical failures. A report by the International Transport Forum (ITF, 2019) highlighted the correlation between the age of vessels and the likelihood of accidents.

39. **Lack of Standardized Safety Protocols.** While international conventions provide guidelines for maritime safety, there's a disparity in their implementation across the IOR. The diverse nature of the region, with countries at different stages of economic development, has resulted in varied adherence to safety standards. According to the World Maritime University (WMU, 2017), inconsistent enforcement and application of maritime safety protocols can lead to operational challenges and increase the risk of incidents.

40. **Challenges in Search and Rescue Operations.** The IOR's vast size and diverse features pose challenges for search and rescue operations, with delays and limited interoperability hindering coordinated efforts. The 2014 Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 incident highlights the complexities of SAR missions in the region.

ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS

41. **Disruption in Trade.** The IOR is a crucial nexus for global trade, with major shipping routes crisscrossing its waters. Any disruption due to maritime incidents can have ripple effects on global trade. For instance, a blockage or a significant accident in a strategic chokepoint like the Strait of Hormuz can disrupt oil shipments, causing global energy prices to spike (Kaplan, 2009).

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42. **Increase in Insurance Costs.** As the risk level in the region rises due to safety concerns, insurance premiums for vessels operating in the IOR can escalate. The Lloyd's Market Association (LMA, 2017) highlighted that piracy and maritime disputes can significantly elevate insurance costs, affecting shipping companies' profitability.

43. **Potential Sanctions.** Countries that do not adhere to international maritime safety and security standards may face sanctions or restrictions. Such measures can affect a country's trade relations and its reputation in the global community (WTO, 2018).

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SRI LANKA NAVY

44. Sri Lanka's unique position in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) grants it an unmatched significance in maritime safety. The Port of Colombo serves as a testament to its relevance, acting as one of the busiest transshipment hubs in South Asia. Given this, the island nation witnesses a massive volume of maritime traffic, making its role in

regional maritime safety indispensable. Moreover, its proximity to key chokepoints amplifies its geopolitical relevance (Perera, 2018).

45. **Patrolling and Surveillance.** With the increasing complexities of maritime challenges, the Sri Lanka Navy plays a vital role in patrolling its territorial waters, ensuring safe passage for commercial vessels and deterring illegal activities. Their surveillance capabilities have been pivotal in countering threats like piracy and smuggling.

46. **Search and Rescue Operations.** The Navy is equipped to conduct search and rescue operations in its waters. Given the traffic in the region, ensuring rapid response to maritime distress calls is crucial.

47. **Collaboration with Regional Navies.** The Sri Lanka Navy has been actively engaging in joint naval exercises and information sharing with regional navies. Such collaborations amplify the collective capabilities of IOR countries in ensuring maritime safety.

48. **Modernization and Training.** Recognizing the evolving maritime challenges, the Sri Lanka Navy has been modernizing its fleet and enhancing the training of its personnel. This ensures that they are equipped to handle contemporary threats and challenges.

CONCLUSION

49. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) serves as a fulcrum for global maritime activities, with its vast waters bearing witness to significant proportions of the world's trade, energy shipments, and geopolitical maneuvers. Its economic vitality, combined with its strategic centrality, accentuates the need for a steadfast maritime safety framework. Historically, the IOR has been a theater of diverse challenges, from piracy that once held commercial shipping at ransom, to intricate territorial disputes that tested the diplomatic mettle of nations. Today, the challenges have evolved, with climate change-induced

hazards, burgeoning maritime traffic, and shifting geopolitical contours adding layers of complexity. The role of Sri Lanka in this maritime tapestry cannot be overstated. As an island nation nestled strategically amidst key shipping routes, Sri Lanka's maritime decisions, capabilities, and collaborations have ripple effects across the IOR.

50. Sri Lanka's ports, particularly the Port of Colombo, are crucial for global trade and maritime health. To address challenges, the region must integrate maritime safety solutions, adopt technological advancements like satellite surveillance and autonomous vessels, and foster regional synergies. Collaborative efforts, informed decisions, shared vision, and legal enforcement are essential for ensuring the security and prosperity of the International Ocean Region (IOR), as the tranquility of its waters mirrors global order stability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

51. The potential consequences of neglecting maritime safety in the IOR underscore the urgency of formulating and implementing robust solutions. Addressing these concerns requires a multifaceted approach, combining regional cooperation, technological advancements, capacity building and legal development.

Regional Cooperation

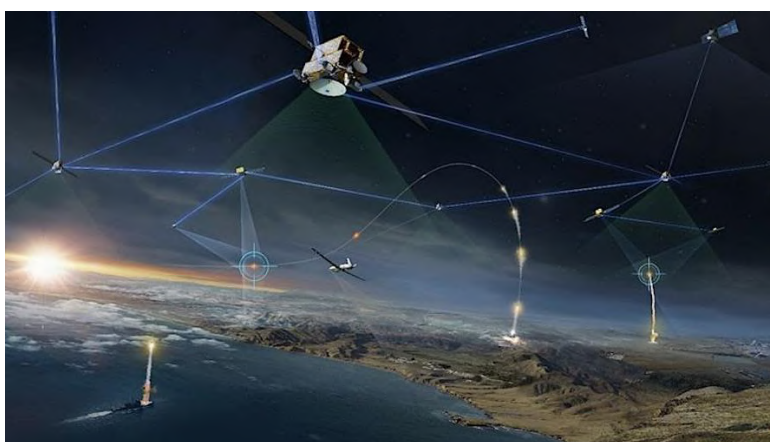
52. **Unified Regional Approach.** Given the interconnected nature of maritime challenges in the IOR, a unified approach is pivotal. Countries should collaborate on standardized safety protocols, share intelligence, and engage in joint naval exercises to foster trust and coordination. As Chaturvedi and Doyle (2015) highlight, regional integration can enhance collective response mechanisms and facilitate the pooling of resources.

53. **Strengthening Regional Organizations.** The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a key platform that can be further leveraged to address maritime safety concerns. Enhancing its maritime safety and security pillar, establishing a dedicated

maritime coordination center, and increasing funding for joint initiatives can bolster regional safety efforts (IORA, 2018).

Technological Solutions

54. **Satellite Surveillance and Communication.** Satellite-based monitoring can provide real-time data on vessel movements, aiding in early threat detection. Enhanced communication systems can ensure seamless information exchange between ships and maritime control centers (Satyanarayana, 2016).



55. **Autonomous and Remotely Operated Vessels.** Investing in autonomous vessels equipped with advanced sensors can enhance search and rescue operations. They can operate in challenging conditions, reducing human risk and increasing the effectiveness of rescue missions (Navel Robotics, 2019).

Capacity Building

56. **Training and Workshops.** Continuous training for maritime personnel on modern navigation tools, anti-piracy measures, and emergency response is crucial. Workshops that foster regional collaboration and knowledge exchange can further amplify safety measures (WMU, 2020).

57. **Investment in Modern Maritime Infrastructure.** Modernizing ports, enhancing vessel traffic management systems, and upgrading navigational aids can facilitate safer vessel movements and reduce accidents (ADB, 2018).

58. **Enhancing Regional Maritime Research and Data Sharing.** Establishing regional research centers focused on maritime safety can provide valuable insights. Data sharing platforms can ensure that countries benefit from collective intelligence, enhancing preemptive actions against threats (IORA, 2019).

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SESSION THREE

PREREQUISITES FOR SRI LANKA NAVY TO PLAY ITS ROLE EFFECTIVELY THROUGH COOPERATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE



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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the prerequisites for Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) to perform its role cooperatively and collaboratively in future. There are many traditional and non-traditional threats that Sri Lanka as well as the other countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) are facing at present and will have to face in future. At present, SLN is executing its roles with available resources in a collaborative manner with other regional and extra-regional countries. This study mainly estimates the threats that Sri Lanka will have to face in future and the possibility of SLN to achieve its objectives with the available resources in an effective way. Further, the paper describes why collaboration and cooperation are very important at this juncture, the prerequisites and the challenges that SLN will have to face in achieving the prerequisites. Finally, it forwards six recommendations to overcome those challenges.

Keywords: SLN Role, Cooperative and Collaborative Approach, Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

1. Sri Lanka is centrally located in the most important maritime route between Persian Gulf and Indonesia paving the way for the quick response for the SLOC which is located 5nm from the Dondra point of the southern coast. (Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka, 2020). Further, Sri Lanka despite its size, has a battle-tested navy well-versed in asymmetric maritime warfare. Its diverse surface vessels have been used in a range of operations, from counter-insurgency to intercepting floating armouries. The recent addition of five Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessels (AOPVs) has significantly boosted Sri Lanka's blue-water capabilities. At present, these vessels are vital in combating nontraditional threats such as Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, and Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (Meegoda, 2020).

2. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is a theatre where the great naval powers such as India, the US and China seek to extend their power projection in pursuit of their respective national interests. It comprises all the littoral and island states of that ocean. There are forty-eight independent countries in the region including hinterland and landlocked states of East Africa and South Asia. The island states of Madagascar, Mauritius, Maldives and Seychelles have maritime zones of approximately one million square kilometres or more. Moreover, there are nations only with navies such as Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Myanmar, South Africa, Thailand, and Timor-Leste while the nations only with coast guards such as Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles (Bateman.S, 2016). In addition to the nontraditional threats which were discussed earlier, maritime piracy, maritime terrorism, and illegal movement of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are other threats that IOR is facing mostly in the present context.

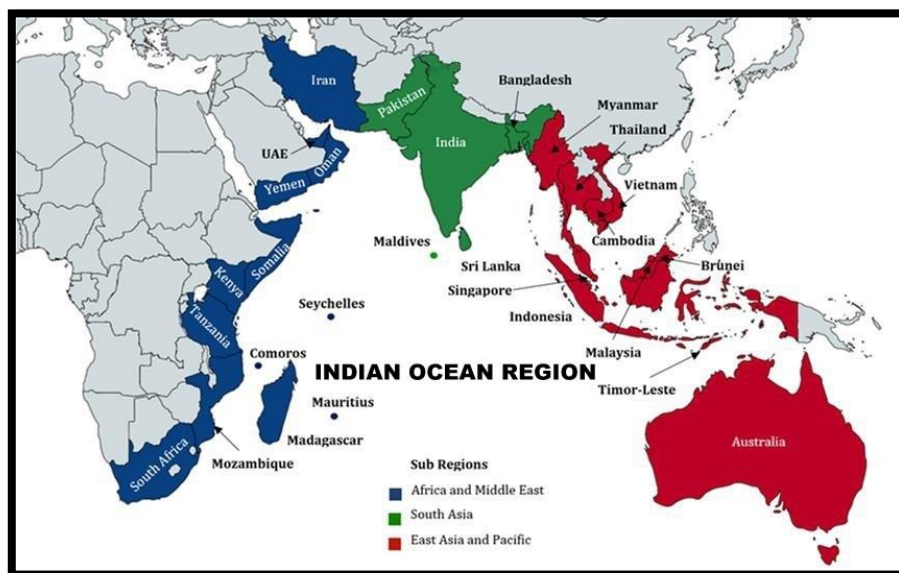


Figure I: Counties in the Indian Ocean Region

Source: (Ramchander, 2020)

3. Enhancing the implementation of maritime monitoring policies is crucial, requiring comprehensive surveillance to cover all aspects. Collaborative efforts are required to address the shared security needs of our oceans, exceeding geographical boundaries. Rather than competing, countries must cooperate seamlessly through a strong global network to respond effectively to maritime security challenges. To tackle these challenges, a global perspective and cooperative mechanisms are essential, particularly in the vast sea area of the IOR that the SLN is also part of. This paper emphasises the importance of cooperation and collaboration among navies and inter-

agencies concerning the SLN roles to face assumed future maritime threats in Sri Lanka and forwards recommendations to overcome the challenges for fulfilling the prerequisites of effective cooperation and collaboration.

FUTURE MARITIME THREAT ANALYSIS IN IOR

4. The use of our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is growing rapidly in various sectors such as trade, tourism, fishing, and energy development. In the same fashion, technological advancements and changing environmental conditions are expanding activities on the outer continental shelf and other maritime areas to meet increasing demands. This growth in activity poses risks to mariners, communities, and ecosystems, challenging traditional legal frameworks and capabilities for maritime governance in future. While we may not face current threats of terrorism, piracy, or armed robbery, there is a growing sophistication among actors involved in aforesaid operations. Illegal exploitation of the maritime environment and its resources also endangers ocean health and sustainability. The increasing size of cruise liners, tankers, and cargo carriers presents broader challenges. Some vessels are massive, carrying thousands of personnel and posing the risk of major disasters within our maritime jurisdiction. Sri Lanka may exercise sovereign rights over a substantial ocean area in the future, but maritime borders are less obstructive, lacking effective surveillance and investigative mechanisms due to the vastness of our EEZ. This results in many vessels passing through unnoticed and unmonitored.

5. According to the Information Fusion Centre (IFC), there were 1,474 occurrences in the IOR in the first half of 2023 and it is considered a 7 % rise compared to 1,381 cases in the same time in 2022. The reasons behind the decrease in maritime terrorism and Irregular Human Migration (IHM) indicated below are as follows (Editorial Team, 2023);

- a. Within the Sulu-Celebes Sea, the regular conduct of joint patrols of the Malaysian, Indonesian and Philippines authorities has kept the incident numbers low. Accordingly, all countries and the maritime community should remain vigilant and share information whenever relevant.
- b. There has been a decrease in the number of incidents as compared to last year due to the improved situation in Sri Lanka.

| | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|
| Theft, Robbery and Piracy | 59 | 68 |
| Maritime Incidents (MI) | 492 | 522 |
| Contraband Smuggling | 353 | 413 |
| Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing | 279 | 308 |
| Irregular Human Migration (IHM) | 174 | 123 |
| Environmental Security (ENVSEC) | 23 | 31 |
| Cyber Security (CYBSEC) | 3 | 9 |
| Maritime Terrorism (MT) | 0 | 0 |

Table 1: Comparison of Maritime Incidents in IOR (2022-2023)

Source: (Editorial Team, 2023)

6. In addition, the Global economic balance of power is once again shifting towards Asia. It is estimated that by 2030, Asia will surpass North America and Europe combined in global power based on GDP, population size, military spending and technological investments. Out of the four largest economies of the world namely the US, China, Japan and India, three are located in Asia (Silva, 2017). The US and its allies have imposed their presence in the IOR due to the uncertain political relations among the countries of the Indian subcontinent. This has led to the deployment of significant military troops in the IOR by nearly all of the world's major nations (Ramchander, 2020).

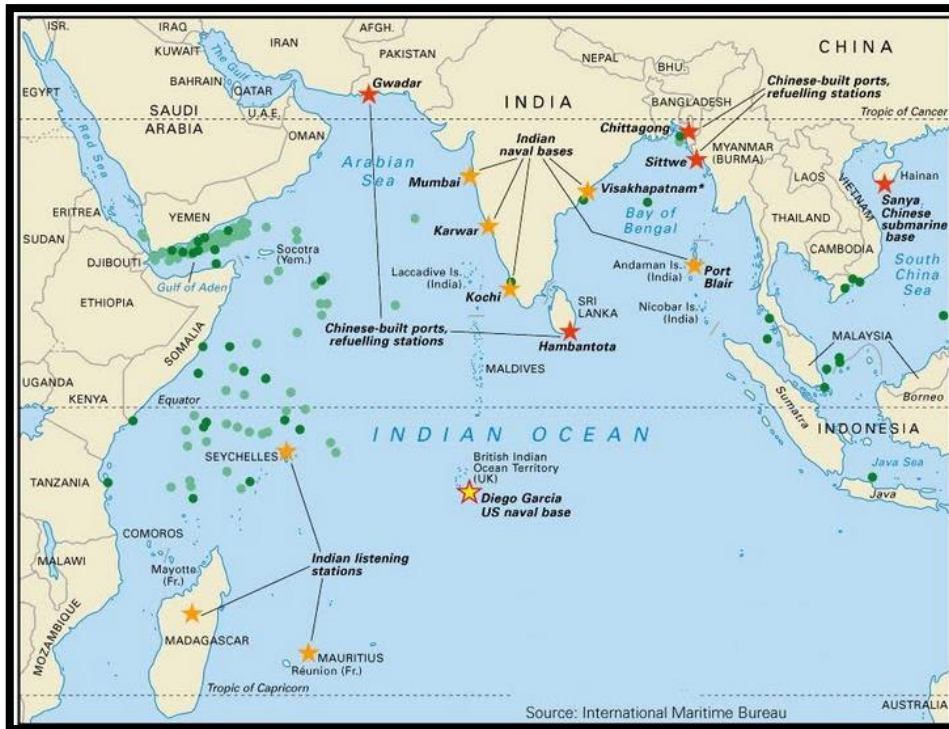


Figure II: Great Power Competition in IOR
 Source: Colonel Awadhesh Kumar (2020)

NECESSITY OF COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SLN ROLES

7. Before considering the necessity, it is required to distinguish the words Collaboration and Cooperation and to define the word effectiveness. As per Salvato, Reuer and Battigalli (2017), collaboration is an act of working together by two or more persons to accomplish something and Cooperation is joint work that is performed orderly, efficiently, and effectively.

8. A country’s naval forces can be involved in a wide range of missions, from high-stakes combat at one extreme to relief efforts for natural disasters and humanitarian causes at the other. This wide range of activities may be divided into several roles, each requiring a unique method of carrying out tasks. As a result, the SLN is intended to serve in three primary capacities Military, Diplomatic and Constabulary.

| Role | Time | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| | At Present | In Future |
| Military | From The Sea | |
| | Conflict Prevention | Amphibious Operation Evacuation Operation |
| | At Sea | |
| | Intelligence Collection and Surveillance | Protection of Maritime Trade |
| Diplomatic | Track 2 Diplomacy Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations | Peace Keeping Operation |
| Constabulary | Search and Rescue Operation Protection of the Marine Environment Anti-Smuggling and Human Trafficking Operation Drug and Contraband Operations | Counter Piracy Operations Counter Insurgency Operations Counter Terrorism |

Table II: Common SLN Roles that Require Collaboration Mostly

Source: MDSL

9. In today's interconnected world, cooperation and collaboration among navies are vital for enhancing collective security. This approach involves resource sharing and joint deterrence of threats that go beyond national borders. It not only bolsters the security of participating nations but also instils shared responsibility for maintaining peace in the maritime domain. While countries like India, Pakistan, and some Arabian Gulf states have robust maritime security forces, a maritime security gap exists in the western Indian Ocean region with countries such as Yemen, Kenya, and Djibouti lacking effective naval capabilities. At the same time, many Indian Ocean region states face resource deficiencies, including intelligence, early warning systems, and coordinated patrol capabilities to effectively manage their maritime areas (Cordner.L, 2011). The absence of cooperative bodies at regional and sub regional levels complicates resource coordination. Collaborating with other nations can have both positive and negative impacts, and the Sri Lanka Navy must carefully consider the best and most timely options, taking into account the country's future status and the Navy's requirements.

a. **Positive Impact**

(1) **Resource Optimization.** Sharing resources and responsibilities with other agencies and navies can lead to cost savings and efficient resource utilization. This is especially important for a smaller navy like Sri Lanka.

| | India | Pakistan | Bangladesh | Myanmar | Indonesia | Australia | Total |
|--|-------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Air Craft Carrier/ Helicopter Carrier | 01 | - | - | 01 | - | - | 02 |
| Destroyers | 10 | 02 | - | 04 | - | 03 | 19 |
| Frigates | 13 | 07 | 07 | 07 | 07 | 08 | 49 |
| Corvettes | 23 | 03 | 06 | 06 | 25 | - | 63 |
| Offshore Patrol Vessels | 29 | 11 | 30 | 51 | 168 | 12 | 301 |
| Amphibious Assault | 09 | - | - | 12 | 30 | 03 | 54 |
| Mine Warfare | - | - | 05 | 05 | 09 | 04 | 23 |
| Submarines | 17 | 08 | 02 | - | 04 | 06 | 37 |

*Table III: Availability of Naval Assets in Selected Navies of IOR
Source: Aviation Intelligent Insight*

(2) **Capacity Building.** Collaborating with more advanced navies allows the Sri Lanka Navy to learn from their experience, receive training, and access advanced technology. This can help in improving the capabilities and readiness of the Sri Lankan Navy.

(3) **Enhanced Maritime Security.** Collaboration with other navies and agencies can significantly enhance Sri Lanka's maritime security. Sharing intelligence, conducting joint patrols and coordinating operations can help in the detection and prevention of illegal activities such as piracy, drug trafficking, and human smuggling.

(4) **Search and Rescue Operations.** Working with other agencies and navies can improve the effectiveness of search and rescue operations during maritime emergencies such as natural disasters or accidents at sea.

(5) **Counterterrorism.** Cooperation with other agencies and navies can help in countering transnational threats, including terrorism as it enables the sharing of intelligence and the tracking of suspicious activities.

(6) **Maritime Disaster.** Collaborative efforts can improve the Sri Lanka Navy's ability to respond to maritime disasters, conduct search and rescue operations, and provide assistance to those in need, both domestically and in the region.

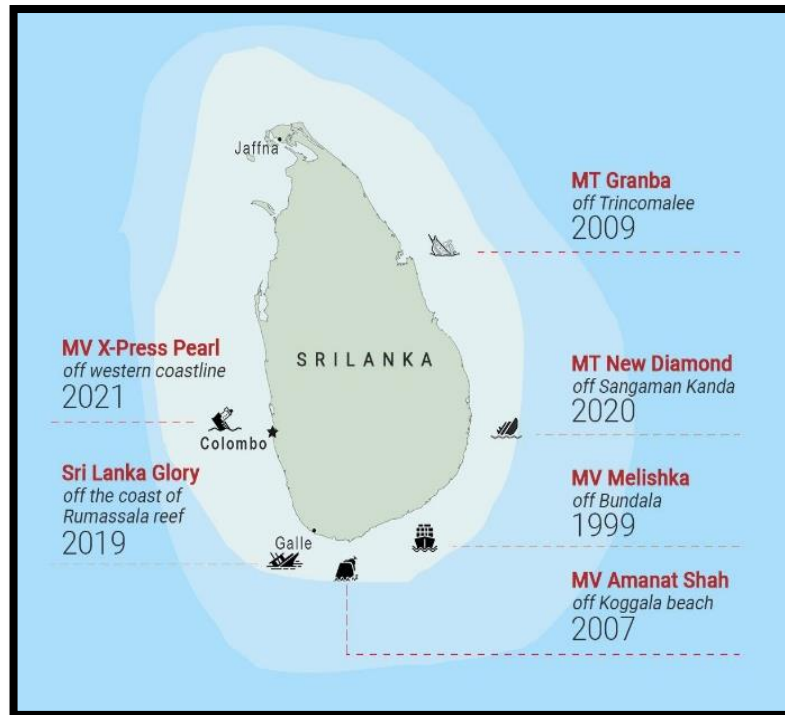


Figure III: Location of Maritime Disasters during Past Years
Source: Website

b. **Negative Impact**

(1) **Sovereignty Concerns.** Collaborating with foreign entities, especially in sensitive areas like maritime security, can raise concerns about national sovereignty. Some may worry about foreign influence or interference in domestic affairs.

(2) **Information Security.** Sharing sensitive information and intelligence with other agencies and navies could potentially pose risks to national security if not handled securely.

(3) **Political and Diplomatic Challenges.** Collaborating with some countries or agencies may have political implications or diplomatic

challenges particularly if it involves nations with complex international relations or historical conflicts.

(4) **Costs and Resource Allocation.** Collaborative efforts can be expensive and require resource allocation. The Sri Lanka Navy may need to divert resources and manpower from other essential functions to support joint operations.

10. As per the opinion of the researcher, the best solution that SLN can play its roles to face present and future challenges is through collaboration and cooperation after giving weightage to the following considerations;

- a. Limitation of resources to conduct SLN roles effectively in future.
- b. Less technological advancement due to the economic status of the country.
- c. Large area to cover due to the submission of claiming on continent margin extension beyond 200 nm on 08th May 2009.
- d. Requirement of international intelligence to pre-counter possible terrorism.
- e. Unavailability of resources to respond to maritime disasters.
- f. Unavailability of Underwater Capabilities to protect sea bed, subsoil and sedentary species in the continental Shelf of Sri Lanka

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PREREQUISITES FOR COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

11. By addressing the following prerequisites, the Sri Lanka Navy can enhance its role in collaboration and cooperation in maritime security both within the region and extra region. This contributes to the safety, security and stability of the maritime domain benefiting not only Sri Lanka but also its neighboring countries and the global community.

a. **Leadership.** One of the key components of maritime fighting power under the Moral Component subcategory is leadership. In military-related operations, leadership plays a critical role in fostering teamwork and achieving goals. Therefore, it is imperative that members of the SLN have appropriate communication and collaboration with one another. Every level of organization has to practice decisive leadership since it is essential to its success. Effective leadership involves understanding both individual and group dynamics as well as the environment in which given common objectives and tasks must be completed collaboratively.

b. **Diplomacy.** Effective cooperation for marine security is conducted by the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) in large part through diplomacy. Maintaining and enhancing diplomatic ties with international organizations, regional partners, and neighbouring nations is crucial. To facilitate cooperation in the face of marine dangers, agreements, treaties, and protocols must be established. Fighting disputes that might jeopardize marine security requires diplomacy. Reducing tensions and possible security hazards in the region can be accomplished through confidence-building initiatives and maritime dialogues such as the Galle Dialogue. Various foreign policy measures and bilateral agreements between the two nations have enabled the establishment of the Indo-Sri Lankan maritime cooperation framework. Furthermore, one tripartite agreement pertaining to marine security that encourages collaboration on exclusive economic zones was signed by India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

c. **Information Sharing and Intelligence.** To effectively participate in cooperative and collaborative approaches, the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) must develop an enhancement of intelligence-sharing mechanisms among naval partners. This involves the establishment of secure communication channels and information-sharing protocols that facilitate the exchange of critical maritime intelligence and threat assessments. By actively engaging in intelligence-sharing, the SLN can contribute to a comprehensive maritime domain awareness (MDA) picture, which is essential for countering a range of security challenges, including piracy, illegal fishing, and trafficking. Such collaboration builds trust and strengthens collective efforts, enabling rapid responses to emerging threats and ensuring the overall

security and stability of the Indian Ocean Region. New Delhi has also developed an Integrated Coastal Surveillance Network, connecting coastal radar and surveillance systems of partner states such as Sri Lanka, Maldives and Seychelles and with talks ongoing of including Bangladesh, Maldives, and Myanmar in a similar arrangement. These radar systems enable the detection, location, and monitoring of activities across the Indian Ocean and further connect to the Information Fusion Centre in India, providing real-time strategic awareness of the region (Suri.M, 2023).

d. **Capacity Building.** To excel in a cooperative and collaborative approach within the Indian Ocean Region, the SLN must more focus on achieving ample training, education, and technology transfer with the navies of the regional countries. Through that, SLN personnel can gain valuable experience in working alongside other naval forces effectively contributing to cooperative efforts in the region through combined and joint exercises such as SLINEX, Aman, CARAT/MAREX, DOSTI, Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), Cormorant Strike, JA-LAN EX with JMSDF (Japan Maritime Self Defence Force) and educational exchanges such as long specialization courses conducted by India and other regional navies respectively.

e. **Interoperability.** To ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) can effectively play its role in a cooperative and collaborative approach, it is imperative to prioritize the seamless integration of naval forces with partner nations. Firstly, the SLN should invest in standardized communication protocols and equipment to facilitate efficient information sharing and real-time coordination during joint operations. Secondly, interoperability through joint training exercises and drills with partner navies is vital to ensure that forces from different countries can work together seamlessly. Thirdly, the development of common operating procedures and a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities among participating navies is essential to prevent miscommunication and misunderstandings. Fourthly, fostering a culture of cooperation, trust, and mutual respect through diplomatic engagements and naval exchanges is fundamental in building strong partnerships that can effectively address maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean Region, ultimately enhancing regional security and stability. Lastly, it is required to give the priority on Doctrines Publications and Naval Planning Processes such as the Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka, Joint Doctrines, NATO Publications and Estimates which deal with laying down common processes, procedures and methodology of forces for various operations.

CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING PREREQUISITES

12. Achieving the prerequisites for effective collaboration and cooperation, especially in the context of the Sri Lanka Navy can be challenging due to various obstacles. Some of the key obstacles include as follows,

a. **Political Instability.** Political instability or changes in government priorities can disrupt long-term plans and international agreements, affecting the consistency of collaborative efforts. Frequently changing the government in Sri Lanka which led to shifting different types of foreign policy has made some difficult to go ahead with a collaborative approach. At the same time, when considering IOR countries, the Middle East is perceived as being plagued by political instability actual or potential conflict and uncertain security due to factors such as conflicts in the region, political unrest and conflict in Yemen, Sudan, and Eritrea, political polarization in Bangladesh, social unrest in parts of India, the pro-democracy movement in Burma (Cordner.L, 2011).

b. **Economy Development.** Economic challenges within participating nations can affect their ability to invest in collaborative projects and initiatives. Many nations in the Indian Ocean region have limited resources for maritime security and defence. Resource constraints can make it difficult for some navies to contribute effectively to collaborative efforts. Ensuring adequate funding for cooperative naval efforts is a vital prerequisite for the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) to effectively play its role in collaborative approaches. Cooperative initiatives often involve joint exercises, information-sharing mechanisms and the maintenance of modern naval assets. All of these require substantial financial resources. To sustain and enhance its collaborative capabilities, the SLN must work closely with government authorities to secure consistent and adequate funding. This may involve budget allocations for joint exercises, technology upgrades, and training programs aimed at interoperability with partner navies.

c. **Technology Gap.** There are significant technology and capability gaps among the naval forces in the region. In that event, the collaborative efforts may be hampered by differences in equipment, training, and operational capabilities. Unmanned systems, environmental monitoring technology, and advanced analytics tools play pivotal roles in enhancing situational awareness, response capabilities, and environmental protection. Together these, technologies enable navies to work efficiently in safeguarding maritime security responding to crises and maintaining international peace while respecting the critical importance of security, interoperability, and cooperation among allied navies.

d. **Security Concerns.** Navies are often reluctant to collaborate in a manner that might be perceived as compromising their sovereignty or national security. Concerns about sharing sensitive information or resources can be a barrier. Navies often hesitate to engage in collaborative efforts that might compromise their sovereignty or national security due to concerns about sharing sensitive information, resource allocation, interoperability challenges, political considerations, and information security.

e. **Cultural and Linguistic Differences.** Effective communication is crucial to ensuring the success of these collaborative endeavors and the need for overcoming language barriers and understanding cultural nuances is particularly pronounced in this region. Establishing common communication protocols, conducting cross-cultural training, and fostering mutual understanding among the navies of Indian Ocean countries is essential for building trust and promoting efficient cooperation in this geopolitically significant and diverse maritime environment.

f. **Competition Between Regional and Global Powers.** The competition between major global powers like the United States, China, Japan, and the United Kingdom in the Indian Ocean region can create both opportunities and challenges for the Sri Lanka Navy's regional collaboration efforts. While these powers bring resources and expertise that could enhance maritime security, their divergent interests and geopolitical rivalries may complicate Sri Lanka's regional partnerships. Careful diplomacy is essential to balance relationships with these key players, ensuring that regional cooperation remains a priority without unduly provoking major powers. Sri Lanka's navy can leverage its strategic location in the Indian Ocean to facilitate collaboration among these influential nations, promoting regional stability and security in the face of global power dynamics.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES

13. With special emphasis on the above factors discussed in this study, the following six strategies are recommended by researchers,

- a. SLN should engage in diplomatic negotiations to navigate political sensitivities and establish trust among partners.
- b. Establishment of Common Maritime Domain Awareness Centre and Joint-Combine Operational Planning Centre in Sri Lanka

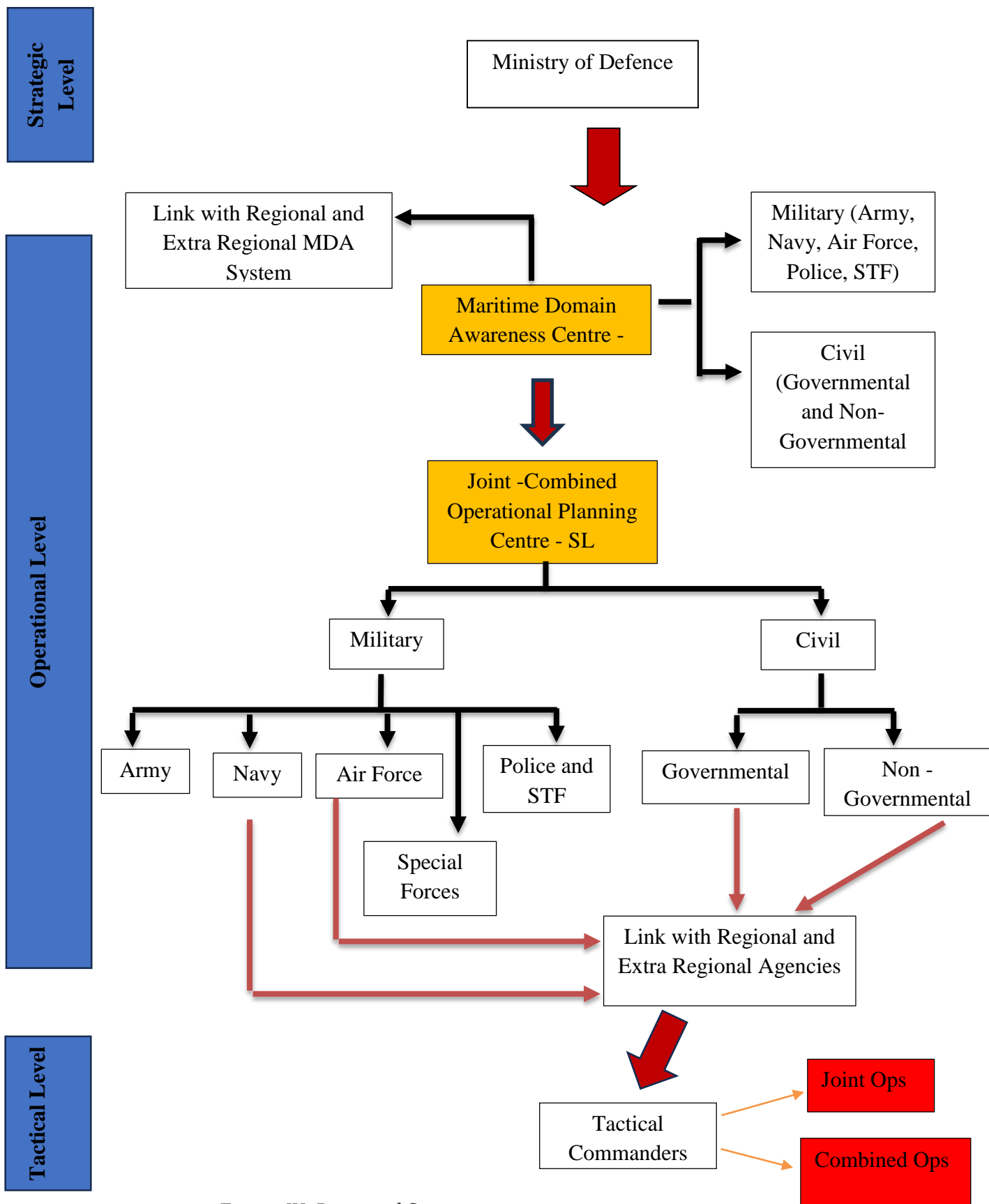


Figure IV: Proposed Structure

Source: Developed by the Researcher

- c. Establishment of a Joint and Combine Training Centre to conduct joint and combined training exercises and sharing best practices fosters familiarity and teamwork among naval personnel.
- d. Developing standardized operating procedures and protocols that align with international norms can streamline collaborative efforts by making joint doctrines and manuals.
- e. Exploring regional and international funding opportunities as well as forging financial partnerships with allied nations
- f. Researching in interoperable technology and equipment ensures seamless coordination by re-establishing the following sections under one directorate as follows,

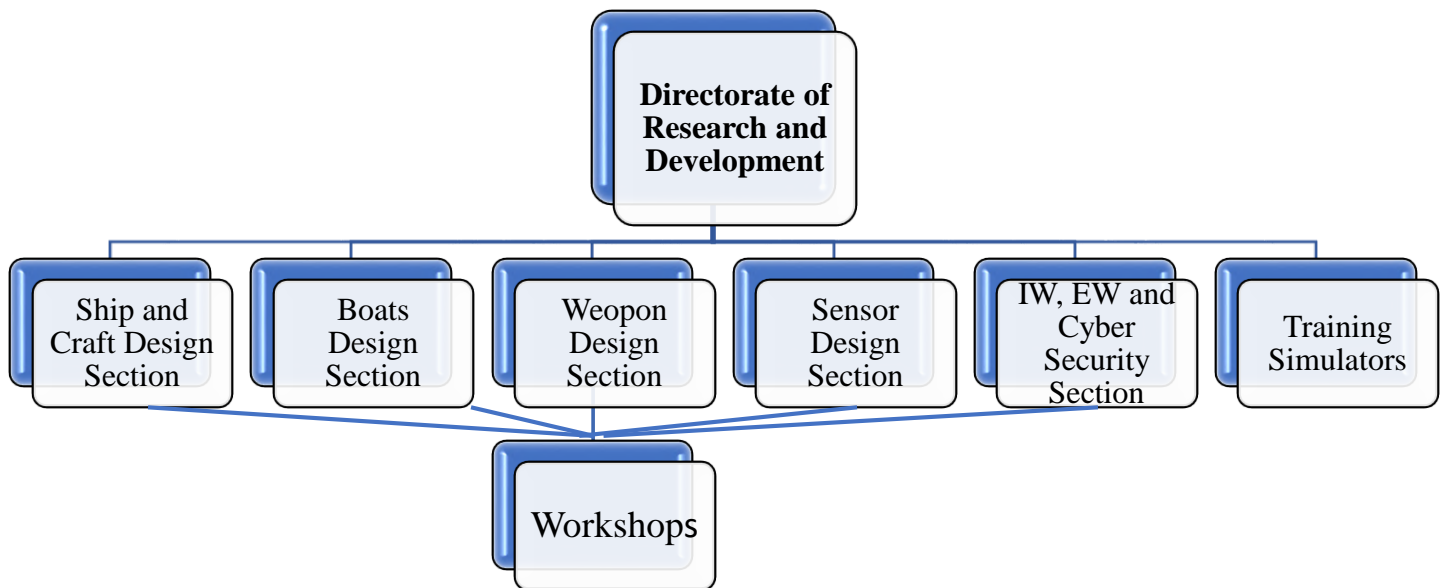


Figure V: Proposed Structure

Source: by Researcher

CONCLUSION

14. The Sri Lanka Navy has two far more important tasks in this context. They are safeguarding marine security concerns and attaining sustainable development. The maritime situation around our country is significantly different now though the maritime terrorism of the LTTE has been defeated. However, the threats that received less

attention before 2009 are the main focus of the current situation. Further, the proper positioning of the Sri Lanka Navy within the much wider framework of maritime governance will be crucial to the organization's ability to perform its tasks with the close collaboration and coordination of relevant authorities in the Indian Ocean.

15. Finally, the researcher closes up the studies by forwarding four takeaways for SLN to carry out its roles effectively in a collaborative and cooperative manner in future. First to discuss with collaborated agencies, to turn the talk into actions, third to seek the limitations and finally research to overcome those limitations.

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“The Sri Lanka Navy will have to play a role in protecting the sea routes across the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the sea off Banda Aceh and the Strait of Malacca”

Hon Ranil Wickremesinghe

President of Socialistic Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

1. The history of the Sri Lanka Navy is rich and diverse, reflecting the country's maritime traditions, its strategic location in the Indian Ocean, and the evolving challenges it has faced. It's rich maritime tradition spanning over 2550 years. Historical evidences reveal that, there had been active maritime trade between the Arabs and Ceylon in the 3rd century BC (ResearchGate, 2022).
2. Roman ships began to sail into Ceylon harbours and engage in trade with the Sinhalese in 125 AD. Apart from the Arabs and Romans, Sinhalese started to engage in maritime trade with the Chinese as well making Ceylon to become a significant place for trade in the Indian Ocean eventually (ResearchGate, 2022).
3. Stone inscription made by King Gajabahu I (114-136) at the Godawaya temple provides strong oldest evidences on customs duties imposed in Sri Lanka during that ancient time. In 1164 or 1165, King Parakramabahu I carried out an invasion of Burma. The building of the invasion fleet in the ports of Ceylon took five months and it was abundantly provisioned with all required facilities including medical care and essential logistics (ResearchGate, 2022).

4. The greatest of the Ceylon ports was Mahatittha (Mantai) while Gokanna (Trincomalee), Sukaratittha or Huratota (Kayts), Tambapanni (near the mouth of the Aruvi Aru) and Uavela (at the mouth of Kala Oya) were the other important ports during that time. Ceylon was considered as a significant trading hub for items such as spices, gems, pearl and ivory among maritime traders along the silk route of the Asian continent as well as in the Indian Ocean.

5. Large diplomatic naval expeditions to then Sri Lanka led by the legendary Admiral Zheng proves that the China had had close ties with Sri Lanka. The first Europeans to visit Sri Lanka were the Portuguese, who found a port in the area of Colombo and expanded their control throughout the country in 1517. Ruling of Sri Lanka went on to hands of the Dutch after the Dutch victory in the Dutch–Portuguese War. Accordingly, the Dutch East India Company, a trading company established in 1602 ruled the country until the British took over the country in 1796, naming the country as ‘Ceylon’.

6. As a result of the World War fear, the British created the Ceylon Naval Volunteer Force (CNVF) in 1937. After World War II, CNVF was absorbed into the Royal Navy as, Ceylon Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (CRNVR). After gaining independence from British rule, a nucleus of 100 officers and men were ready to form the Regular Navy. On 09th December 1950 the Navy Act was enacted (Act No. 34 of 1950) and the Royal Ceylon Navy (RCN) was formed. A Canadian built Minesweeper HMCyS Vijaya was the first ship commissioned in RCN. It received its first offshore patrol vessel, HMCyS Gajabahu in 1960. In 1972, as the country became a republic the RCN was renamed as the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) (Diamond of the Silent Blue, 2010).

7. With the commencement of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorist activities in the early 1980’s, SLN began to procure more ships/craft and it played a significant role during the conflict with the brutal LTTE, which lasted for three decades. It was actively involved in countering terrorism and securing the nation's coastal waters. The conflict ended with the defeat of the LTTE in 2009. Over the years, the Sri Lanka Navy has undergone significant changes in structure and capabilities. It has expanded its fleet, acquired modern vessels, and improved its training and professionalism.

8. Following the end of the LTTE terrorism, SLN shifted its focus from conflict to ensuring maritime security, countering non-traditional threats in Sri Lanka and its waters, coastal defence, and humanitarian missions. It also engaged in various international naval exercises and operations.

9. The SLN has evolved significantly since its formation in 1950, adapting to the changing security environment and the nation's needs. Today, it continues to be the predominant component of Sri Lanka's national defence and maritime security. With this evolution and complex security environment, geopolitics and increase of manmade/natural disasters in the country and its waters as well as IOR, the need for formulating a doctrine corresponding to the instruments of national power (Economic, Diplomatic, Informational and Military – DIME) arose. Accordingly the existing Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka came in to force in 2020.

AIM

10. The aim of this paper is to discuss the doctrinal aspects on the role of SLN in nation building.

MARITIME POWER IN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

11. Sri Lanka is positioned in the centre of the Indian Ocean at the crossroads of East to West and West to East international trade, making it ideally located to become a major logistics hub in the region. The geographic location of Sri Lanka in the IOR has given a significance to the country itself and vital advantage for its maritime trade. The shipping sector in Sri Lanka is developing rapidly and the Port of Colombo has been recognised as one of the fastest growing ports in the world at present.

12. In connectivity ranking in the year 2018, Sri Lanka has become the 13th best in the world whilst securing the 22nd position in overall container handling. Currently, 20 Main Line Operators in the world are using the Port of Colombo for their shipping operations. (SLPA, 2022). This increased shipping in an around Sri Lanka demands higher level of security of SLOC and port facilities.

13. Maritime security is considered as a vital component in the national security strategy with the trended Blue-Green Economic concept which undoubtedly signifies the

importance of maritime affairs. Alongside to the Sri Lankan government's intention to revisit its maritime policies and merge them with the country's economic policies, more attention has been placed on the role played by the SLN. Therefore, SLN being the predominant component, requires to take all possible efforts to project maritime power and ensure security in her jurisdiction on, SLOC and port facilities.

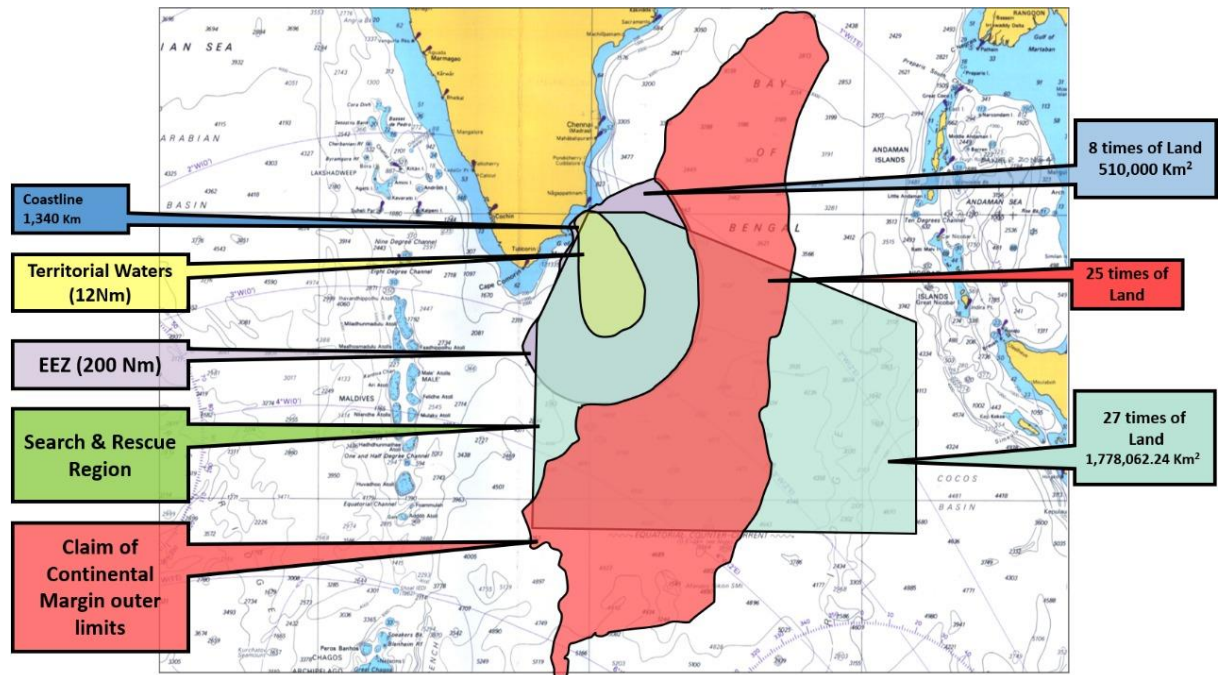


Figure 1: Maritime Zones Around Sri Lanka

Source : Directorate of operation,SLN

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total Coastal Belt | - 1340 km |
| Total Land Area | - 65,525 Sq km |
| Internal Waters | - 1,570 Sq km |
| Historical Waters | - 12,060 Sq km |
| Territorial Waters | - 18,060 Sq km |
| Contiguous Zone | - 19,620 Sq km |
| EEZ | - 437,400 Sq km |
| Continental Margin | - 1,400,000 Sq km (Claimed) |

WHAT IS A DOCTRINE?

14. Doctrine is defined in the dictionary as "a principle or body of principles presented by a specific field, system or organization for acceptance or belief." From an organizational perspective, doctrine is those shared beliefs and principles that define the work of a profession (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Principles are as follows:

- a. Basic truths, laws, or assumptions;
- b. Rules or standards of behaviour
- c. Fixed or predetermined policies or modes of action.

15. Doctrine is the codification of what a profession thinks (believes) and does (practices) whenever the profession's membership perform in the usual and normal (normative) way. U.S. Department of Defence defines doctrine as "fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application" (US Department of Defence, 2023). A doctrine applies at every level of warfare: strategic, operational, or tactical.

16. Concepts to apply to military doctrine derive from: current policy, available resources, current strategy and campaigns, current doctrine, threats, history and lessons learned, strategic culture, fielded and/or emerging technology, geography and demographics, and types of government.

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPTS AND MILITARY DOCTRINE

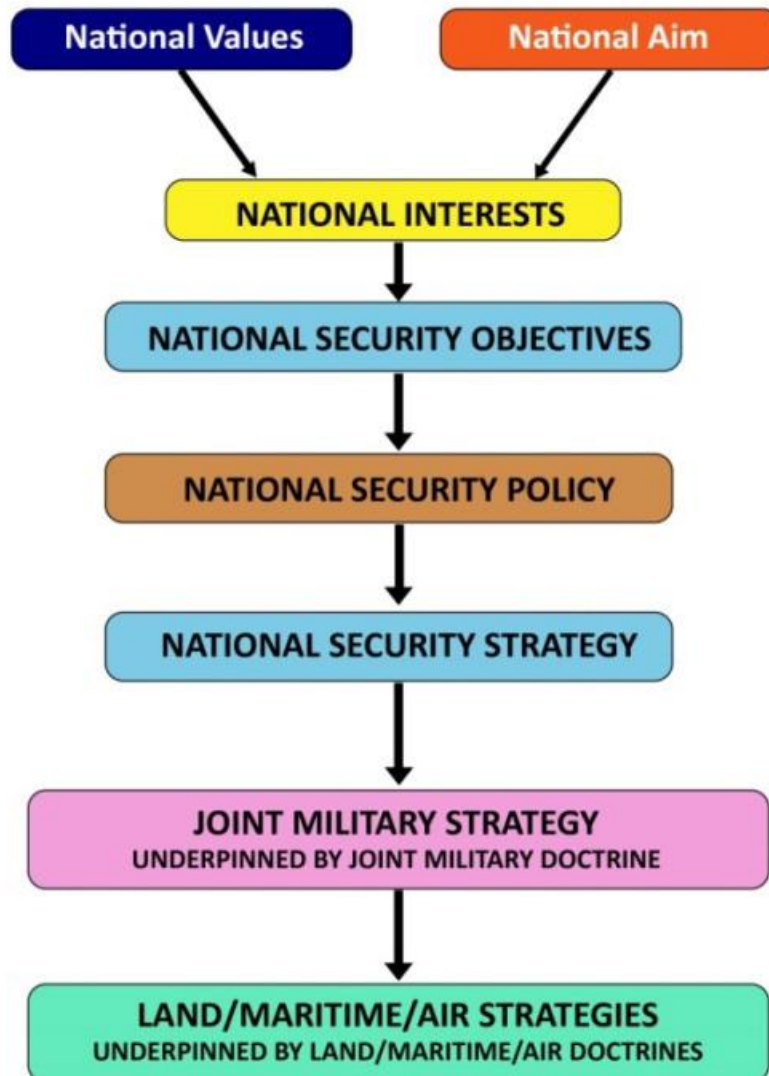


Figure 2: National Security Concepts and National Doctrine

Source : MDSL, (2020)

THE NEED OF MARITIME DOCTRINE

17. Following requirements were identified to formulate a Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka (MDSL);

- a. To make all naval personnel conversant and have a sound understanding of basic principles on which the use of maritime forces depend and shared way of thinking.

- b. To make the sister services understand and to better estimate the maritime component of the broader military strategy.
- c. To have better cooperation and coordination with the friendly Navies and alliances/coalition partners.
- d. To aware people of Sri Lanka so that the greater maritime potential of our nation with rich maritime history can be fully exploited and harnessed.
- e. To obtain an insight into the details of the maritime environment in which maritime forces function.

MARITIME DOCTRINE OF SRI LANKA

18. MDSL recognises the different levels at which decisions are made and at which operations are conducted. These levels include the Grand Strategic, Military Strategic, Operational and Tactical. It addresses the Military Strategic level but in so doing also focuses relevant facets of the operational level. Much focus has been paid to emphasize the ways in which naval forces conduct operations at sea and from the sea whilst enabling operations ashore.

19. The Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka takes its cue from vision statement of SLN i.e. 'to develop into a naval force capable of countering Brown, Green and Blue water challenges with a formidable force structure to achieve National Security Objectives and safeguard Sri Lanka's Maritime Interests.' and restructured the mission statement as 'To maintain, train and equip a combat ready naval force capable of achieving National Security Objectives and safeguard Sri Lanka's Maritime Interests whilst nurturing a stable environment at sea.'

20. Main Features of the MDSL; could be recognized as follows;

- a. Based upon historical experiences of successes and failures in conflicts and wars.
- b. Governs the coordinated action towards common objectives.
- c. It is primarily oriented towards the operational level of warfare.
- d. War fighting aspects are primarily considered, but will eventually include military operations other than war.

- e. Guides to understanding the unique nature of SLN's contribution to national security and how the SLN goes about its business.
- f. MDSL is a significant component of the training and education of all SLN personnel as it provides an authoritative guide to current naval thinking.
- g. Improves knowledge of own service and thus, it is the key element to make all Sri Lankans to understand the importance of their notion of the sea and maritime power.
- h. prominence given to the absolute dependence of SLN capability upon the people who serve and support SLN.

ROLE OF SLN AS DEFINED IN MDS

21. Similar to most of the other navies in the world, MDSL defines three following basic roles vested with SLN;

- a. Military role
- b. Diplomatic role
- c. Constabulary role

22. Above mentioned roles are defined comprehensively in following paragraphs along with examples extracted from the recent history as well as contemporarily context.

THE MILITARY ROLE

23. This is the essence of any navy in the world. The main role is to ensure that no hostile maritime power degrades the national security and interests of the relevant country. The Navy's military role is characterised by the threat or use of force at and from the sea. This includes application of maritime power in both, offensive operations against enemy forces, territory and trade, and defensive operations to protect our own forces, territory and trade. Military role could be categorized as follows;

- a. Military Role from the Sea
- b. Military Role at Sea

Military Role from the Sea

24. Following roles have been defined in the MDSL accordingly;

a. **Maritime Mobility (Sealift).** Sealift is the simplest way of moving forces in the maritime environment which involves embarking land forces from a port or harbour and landing them in another port or harbour. Though this could be undertaken by chartered or contracted civilian sealift ship in a benign environment, in threat environment landing ships/craft will be the preferred option.

SLN undertook this role amply during the conflict with the LTTE terrorists by sealifting land troops from Trincomalee to KKS and vice versa

b. **Combat Operations against the Land.** This is the ability of Navies to strike directly at land targets with large and medium calibre guns which is known as Naval Gun Fire Support (NGFS) which supports the advancing troops in operations. During many significant occasions, SLN was called upon to provide NGFS in support of the embarkation/disembarkation troops, when troops advance along the coast or as a cover to fleet units which are engaged in such operations close to land. Eg: Liberation of Jaffna Peninsula, Operation Balawegaya, capturing Sampoor during the 4th Eelam war.

c. **Support Operations on Land and in the Air.** Maritime forces offer considerable potential to contribute to combat operations on land and in the air. Medium calibre guns in surface combatants can be used for fire support or bombardment operation, while air warfare sensors and weapons contribute to counter air operations against own forces.

d. **Amphibious Operations.** In amphibious operations, naval units embark land forces at ports, transport them by sea to the designated area of operations, launch them against a hostile or potentially hostile shore and sustain them ashore for the duration of the operation. Amphibious operations are conducted by surface ships with support and insertion of Land/Special Forces.

Operation Balawegaya was a significant amphibious op undertaken by SLN to recapture EPS.

- e. **Evacuation Operations.** Warship can be a key element in Evacuations. They are mostly conducted jointly and seek to use a seaport or airport, but an amphibious operation may prove necessary in undeveloped areas. Mullativu evacuation operation is a significant Evacuation operation conducted by SLN in 1997.
- f. **Peace Enforcement Operations.** These are coercive in nature and normally undertaken under Chapter VII (threat to international peace and security) of the UN Charter, when the consent of any of the major parties to the conflict is uncertain.

Military Role at Sea

25. Following roles have been defined in the MDSL accordingly;

- a. **Intelligence Collection and Surveillance.** Intelligence collection, surveillance and environment assessment gathering activities are conducted during all operations and are vital enablers in maritime combat. Comprehensive intelligence and surveillance lead to the determination of the degree of conflict space awareness which is very vital to achieve conflict space dominance. All maritime units can contribute to this endeavor and also, shore based processing, production and dissemination systems also play a vital role, particularly in the provision of prompting information. Surveillance is necessary for development of MDA, as required for various missions. Surveillance by warships and maritime reconnaissance/patrol aircraft is primarily undertaken through their integral sensors like radars (including early warning radars) and Electronic Support Measures (ESM).

SLN carried out this role in a significant manner by which several floating warehouses of the LTTE could be destroyed. Though SLN was not in the possession of MPAs, it was coordinated very well during the conflict to gather intelligence and for surveillance.

b. **Cover.** These are the operations conducted to provide support to less powerful units. For that, the covering forces may require positioning within reach of the units needing protection.

This was amply exercised throughout the conflict with the LTTE. Escorting A 545, A 543, SLNS Shakthi and other LCM/LCUs and MV Lankamuditha are some examples.

c. **Maritime Strike and Interdiction.** Combat operations are conducted against an adversary's combat and logistics shipping to meet operational or tactical aims. Interdiction of adversary's maritime forces, to prevent their sea control, sea denial or power projection can be conducted from the sea or from the land and can be directed against targets at sea or in harbour.

Attacks and destruction of LTTE floating warehouses beyond several hundreds of nautical miles from the coast is a fine example to show how SLN performed this role.

d. **Containment.** These are the operations to restrict the freedom of action of enemy forces to prevent their use of the offensive operations.

SLN conducted patrols in the last phase of the Humanitarian operation to contain the LTTE sea tigers to the land and they were not able to launch their asserts due to that.

e. **Blockade.** Traditionally, a blockade could be established by a maritime force against the coast and ports of its enemy to prevent vessels entering and leaving the enemy coastal states.

Patrols conducted in layers off Mullaitivu could also be considered as a form of a blockade by which the above could be achieved.

d. **Barrier Operations and Defended Areas.** It is an operation or mission that involves establishing a defensive or offensive naval barrier in a specific area of the ocean that can be closed to an adversary. The main purposes of a Barrier operation is to intercept the enemy, deter him, prevent him using the sea area, surveillance and reconnaissance and to provide security to the own forces.

By conducting barrier patrols such as Waruna Kirana, off MLT, VTK, Chalei etc, the enemy was disrupted and there were several interdictions and destructions of their logistic movements as well.

e. **Layered Defence.** The layered defence is another operation conducted by maritime forces, similar to the method adapted for the defence of a convoy.

SLN performed this role specially when escorting convoys during the conflict and at the last phase of the Humanitarian operation by deploying various ships/craft in different layers considering their limitations/capabilities.



Figure 3: SLN deployment in seas off Nanthikadal Lagoon during final phase of Humanitarian Operation in 2009

Source: MDSL, (2020)

f. **Protection of Maritime Trade.** Maritime trade increases the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country and it is very much vulnerable to the national economy. If a port facility or a merchant shipping is destroyed in a war, its unbearable to the maritime trade thus to the economy which ultimately undoubtedly decreases the war fighting ability.

Protection of SL harbours and merchant shipping during the conflict with the LTTE was a vulnerable role performed by the SLN. This role is very much vital not only in the war time, but also during the peace time as well. SLN is vested with the responsibility of the protection of SL harbours in the 'International Ship and Port Facility Security Code' (ISPS) context as well.

THE DIPLOMATIC ROLE

26. Naval diplomacy envisages the use of naval forces in support of foreign policy objectives of a country and strengthen international cooperation on one hand and to showcase capability and intent to deter potential adversaries on the other. Following types of diplomatic roles have been defined in the MDSL accordingly;

a. **Track 2 Diplomacy.** Own officers interact among people from advisory groups or nations with intention to explore issues and solutions in an informal and unofficial basis. This could take place in the form of academic conferences in which military officers, government officials and academics participate as private individual rather than as official representatives.

There are many occasions where SLN representatives are also participating in international conferences and symposiums where LTTE Diaspora members and their sympathizers also attending. In these events, these representatives have amply emphasized and justified actions of SL Forces and presented recommendations to prevent such uprisings taking place in the future.

b. **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations.** Maritime forces are ideal to provide a full scale logistic support for humanitarian assistance operation as a means of transport and offshore base. Flexibility of maritime forces will enhance the effectiveness in disaster relief. Assurances could be rendered by providing fresh water, food, medical facilities, shelter and energy requirements.

Though SLN vessels have not participated in a real disaster scenario outside the country, it is well prepared and trained to provide Humanitarian Assistance in Disaster Relief (HADR) to any littoral country in the IOR. SLN conducts regular exercises with US Navy (USN) and regional navies to get prepared for any event. Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training

(CARAT)/Marine Exercise (MAREX) with USN, KOMODO Ex in Indonesia are examples.

c. **Hydrographical Surveys.** Hydrographical surveys are very much essential to ensure safety at sea and increases the protection of the marine environment. It improves international and coastal maritime commerce.

SLN Hydrography unit is regularly conducting surveys in coordination with the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) to measure the depths in harbours, navigational channels, coastal waters etc to ensure safe navigation in SL waters and well as to ensure a healthy marine environment which significantly helps both local and international seafarers.

d. **Salvage Operations.** The maritime forces should possess ability to conduct salvage operations in locally and overseas territories where there are frequent natural or manmade disasters.

SLN is particularly competent for salvage tasks and possess a talented manpower specialized in that. The recently conducted salvage operation to recover dead bodies of overturned Chinese fishing vessel in the Australian SAR region, removal of wrecks such as MV Cordiality off Pulmodai, removal of oil onboard sinking ship MV Thermopylae Sierra off Moratuwa, salvage of MV New Diamond off Batticaloa seas and MV Express Pearl incident off CBO port emphasizes the salvage role played by SLN.

e. **Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO).** There is a significant number of Sri Lankans work and reside in various parts of the world. They contribute immensely to the countries of residence as well as to Sri Lanka. Requirement of evacuating such SL citizens may arise specially due to insecurity and instability in some parts of the world or pandemic situations etc.

There were some discussions during the recent pandemic situation to dispatch SLN vessels to embark Sri Lankans from Middle East countries as flight movements were severely restricted with closures of airports.

f. **Assistance to Foreign Nations.** Naval diplomatic role also includes maritime assistance and support to friendly states. This may be in the form of evacuation operations, delivering of material aid, maritime patrols for augmenting stability and security etc. Further to the above, goodwill visits of war ships and

exercises, assistance with training of other international maritime forces also fall in to this role.

SLN vessels proceed on goodwill visits, organize international maritime exercises such as SLINEX, hold maritime symposium such as 'Galle Dialogue', participate in various international maritime exercises such as CARET, MAREX, KOMODO, MILAN, RIMPAC, AMAN etc, and training foreign naval officers on Asymmetric warfare and VBSS operations are examples to showcase how SLN perform the above role.

g. **Peace Keeping Operations.** These are operations undertaken under the consent of all the major parties in a conflict under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, to monitor and facilitate the implementation of peace agreement.

Deployment of SLN forces in United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) are examples wrt the above role. In addition to that, SLN is in the process of attaching a National Liaison Officer (NLO) at the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) in Bahrain which is an organization established to counter non-traditional threats in that region.

THE CONSTABULARY ROLE

27. The significant increase of maritime crimes have led all Navies in the world to focus more on the constabulary role that they have to perform. It involves a range of non-military maritime activities primarily focused on law enforcement, security, and maintaining order within a country's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

28. The protection and promotion of Sri Lanka's maritime security is one of the prime responsibilities of the SLN. The range of tasks that the SLN has to undertake in the constabulary role varies from Limited Maritime Operations to maintain good order at sea. Following types of constabulary roles are defined in the MDSL;

a. **Search and Rescue Operations.** Under international law, all vessels on the high seas are required to assist to conduct maritime search and rescue operations.

The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) located at NHQ operates under the SLN. This is the National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordinating Authority for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Sri Lankan Search and Rescue region (SL is vested with the responsibility over 1,778,062 km²). The SLN works in close coordination with the SLCG and augments efforts as required.

b. **Conservation and Protection of Living, Non-living Resources and Marine Environment.**

These are critical aspects of marine management and sustainable development. This is particularly important in the context of the world's oceans, which face various environmental challenges and the need to balance economic activities with environmental preservation.

SLN is performing a vital role with the above regard in coordination with relevant government agencies such as Ministry of Environment, Coastal Conservation Department, Wildlife Department, NARA etc. Followings are some of the projects undertaken by SLN;

- (1) Mangrove plantation.
- (2) Forestry tree plantation.
- (3) Conservation of underwater marine sites.
- (4) Coral plantation and conservation.
- (5) Beach cleaning programmes.
- (6) Dumping control.
- (7) Legitimate fishing activities.
- (8) Conservation of Turtles.

c. **Aid to Civil Power.** Naval operations to provide military assistance to the civil power are usually aimed at supporting domestic law enforcement at sea and land within national jurisdictions. This further includes provision of support to the public directly or to government agencies to ensure improve wellbeing of the citizens of the country.

The Sri Lankan Navy plays a significant role in aid to civil power, particularly in times of natural disasters, emergencies, and other situations where civilian assistance is required.

- (1) Riots controlling.
- (2) HADR operations such as flood relief.
- (3) Conducting diving operations (to recover drowned bodies etc).
- (4) Medical assistance to civil population.
- (5) Transportation of civilians and required essential items especially to islands in north. SLN vessels such as A 545 were transporting civilians and essential goods from TCO to KKS and vice versa during the conflict time.
- (6) Logistic and transport movements to northern waters islands.

d. **Quarantine Enforcement.** SLN conducts operations to enforce quarantine regulations in Sri Lanka to prevent landing on Sri Lankan shores by unauthorized foreign vessels. These regulations are imposed on various plants, animal and human disease.

SLN ships/craft on patrol apprehended several boats carrying Indians who were fleeing from India to Sri Lanka during the COVID 19 pandemic and actions were initiated to prevent COVID 19 diseased such kind of refugees coming in to the country.

e. **Protection of Offshore Assets.** Protection of Sri Lanka's offshore assets from seaborne attack is a task vested on the SLN. This requires deployment of naval ships. Attaining local sea control is essential.

SLN asserts deployment off Colombo harbour to protect vulnerable buoys fitted with oil and gas transferring arrangements, is a typical example.

f. **Counter Immigration and Emigration Operations and Anti-smuggling and Human Trafficking Operations.** SLN is performing a significant role to prevent illegal emigration and immigration occurring from/ to Sri Lankan shores and operations to suppress trafficking/smuggling of human and illicit trade/transnational smuggling. SLN has apprehended 126 no's of boats transporting over 6000 illegal immigrants which mainly started after the end of the conflict (from 2009 up to now). Nevertheless, these illegal human trafficking has been reduced vastly and only one incident reported in year 2023.

g. **Drug and Contraband Operations.** SLN is responsible to suppress trafficking of drug and contraband under the national jurisdiction. SLN has

apprehended several tones of drugs types such as Heroine, Ice, synthetic drugs, and Cannabis worth of several Billions of Rupees over last 10 years.

h. **Operations against Armed Robbery at Sea.** The SLN is responsible for suppressing armed robbery occurred within the territorial waters. With the escalation of measures taken for harbour defence including outer harbour patrols, reporting of such robberies were put in to near zero.

j. **Counter-Piracy Operations.** SLN is bound under the LOSC to suppress piracy whenever it may occur in the high seas. SLN vessels patrolling in High seas regularly monitor if any piracy act is taken place where they are deployed.

k. **Support to Counter Insurgency Operation.** SLN is called to assist the law enforcement agencies whenever there is any act of Counter Insurgency Operations. Role played by SLN during the JVP insurgency in 1987/88 is an example.

l. **Maritime Counter Terrorism.** Maritime terrorism committed by non-state actors is becoming very serious in IOR. Countering maritime terrorism has been bread and butter for SLN because it is a Navy which fought a brutal terrorism over 3 decades.

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY SLN TOWARDS NATION BUILDING

29. Other than the above main roles, followings are also highlighted in the Maritime Doctrine;

a. CBRN hazards/emergencies which can occur in major ports and in territorial waters are protected by the Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Organisation as the First Respondants.

b. The country earns a significant amount of foreign exchange (FOREX) by the operations conducted by SLN Hydrographic Service (SLNHS) such as by surveying and publishing marine charts.

c. Canal boat service from Wellawatta to Nawala.

d. Operation of hotels and restaurants by Malima Hospitality Service, naval museum and boat services increases the GDP of the country.

- e. SLN brings FOREX to the country by engaging in 'Onboard Security Team Operations (OBST)'.
- f. By constructing vessels for other countries such as Nigeria, Seychelles by which a considerable amount of FOREX has earned.

FUTURE NAVY: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

- 30. Following prospects could be identified in sustaining and achieving SLN's vision;
 - a. Develop motivated officers and sailors who are professionally competent and capable and to conduct naval operations.
 - b. Advance her naval capabilities to maintain the surveillance to increase Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) as well as to conduct SAR missions in our area of responsibility.
 - c. Continue to engage in R & D projects to enhance capability of the force.
 - d. Continue developing innovative technologies to ensure marine environment preservation and protection.
 - e. Increase capabilities in C4ISR along with other maritime partners in the region to improve MDA.
 - f. Develop mutual understanding and support with regional and extra regional partners through training and exercises to counter maritime security challenges.
 - g. Enhance asymmetric warfare capabilities with the use of innovative technologies to counter emerging non-traditional threats.
 - h. Enhance cyber security measures and incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) in to the service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 31. Considering the roles of SLN, prospects and challenges and existing threats following recommendations on doctrinal aspects are derived;

- a. It is significantly important to prioritize the navy roles as per the contemporary threats (mainly non-traditional in nature) and redefine the doctrine. A comprehensive analysis of our SWOT is critical in this.
- b. There is no 'Joint Military Doctrine' and thus formulation of a 'Joint Doctrine' is recommended.
- c. Revisit the doctrine when the instruments of national power (DIME) are changed.
- d. Output derived from the international/local maritime exercises, conclaves, conferences and symposiums etc participated by SLN personnel, should be incorporated in to the doctrine.
- e. Revisit the doctrine and incorporate strategies to counter manmade/natural disasters.
- f. With the increased partnership with USA under its Indo-Pacific partnership and EU Indo-Pacific partnership, doctrine has to be redefined.
- g. Rightsizing the SL Military is in progress and SLN needs to revisit the doctrine coincide with rightsizing.

CONCLUSION

32. The Sri Lankan Navy plays a multifaceted role in the nation's building process, contributing significantly to various aspects of national development and security. Beyond its traditional maritime responsibilities, the navy actively engages in a range of civil initiatives and partnerships aimed at fostering economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community development. This dual role as both a guardian of the country's maritime borders and a catalyst for broader national progress underscores the Navy's pivotal role in shaping a resilient and prosperous Sri Lanka.

33. With the passage of time, SLN felt the need of a doctrine comprising concise but comprehensive statements of principles and practices for the conduct of warfare for current situations in the country. Accordingly, the MDSL came in to force corresponding to the policies, resources, strategy, campaign concepts, doctrine, threats, and fielded and

emerging technology. In this context, this paper was delved into the diverse ways in which the Sri Lankan Navy contributes to nation building corresponding to the doctrinal aspects, highlighting its pivotal role in military, diplomatic and constabulary roles and finally deriving recommendations on doctrinal aspects which are felt as valid points.

“Navy is a Silent Service. What it does at sea is Unseen and unheard, they protect all the time, braving the myriad challenges of the great oceans, to bring peace and prosperity to our nation”.

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NAVAL & MARITIME ACADEMY
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JOINT OPS
DOCTRINE



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