India's Security Imperatives and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region: Need for Multilateral Approach

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Abstract

Keeping the ocean safe and secure requires a coordinated and cooperative set of actions that take into account a wide range of dangers and difficulties, as well as major determinants and changes. To put this into action, the Indian navy and its diverse units will work together, each with a role and responsibility for different aspects of maritime security. With its marine assets, difficulties, and opportunities, India needs maritime security architecture in the Indian Ocean to develop a vision, formulate plans, and oversee maritime activity. To foster cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, India, and the littoral states have to move for multilateral approach that can synergize and ensure maximum advantage from the maritime sector, to benefit the economy, and to reinforce maritime security.

Keywords

Maritime Security, Cooperation, Security Architecture, Indian Ocean Region, Multilateralism.

Introduction

The Maritime History of the world reveals that nations have depended on sea power for a complete recognition of their power capabilities. IOR has the presence of a number of extra-regional forces. The presence of these forces could make a dilemma in the region. The factors like oil, trade, and challenges like terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigrants, etc make the extra-regional forces to keep functioning in the IO (Indian Ocean). The hegemonic mindset and the dominating approach of the states make the dilemma strong. This will intensify the depth of maritime threats and challenges (Bashir, 2010). Maritime power and military have been the primary constituent for any rising power. The concentration of maritime power provides for the state's economic power in the world domain. Maritime power in its comprehensive scope is built around the political, economic, military, and technological dimensions. Increased strategic arms rivalry in the IO would heighten the sense of insecurity among the littoral countries. In order to step forward to demilitarization and disarmament, a multilateral approach is essential. The process of maritime administration by any superpower will not be sufficient to counter the challenges that are intensifying. Also, it would bring superpower competition in the IOR. There is an absence of collective and cooperative maritime governance. A collective approach would be required for the unity and cooperation among littoral countries and maritime supervision and administration will be achieved beneficially.

Maritime Security Dimensions

The geographical position and peninsular character of India are some of the factors that determine the country's future. Its move away from its continental orientation and towards a seaward path is the natural direction of its development. If India aspires to become a great power, it must first spread its strategic influence across the oceans. This can only happen through the maritime domain. The Indian Coast Guard's rapid development may play a supportive role in the Indian Navy's operations. To counter China's expanding power, the Navy has been striving to establish security ties with other nations. Because the Indian Ocean is contained in a variety of ways, the Indian Navy has devised unique defenses for chokepoint approaches to the region's seas. The Bab-el Mandab and the Mozambique Channel are two examples. The Navy has set out to become the leading power in the Indian Ocean through a variety of means. These include financing the multilateral IONS and participating in a variety of naval initiatives aimed at strengthening the Indian Ocean's naval capability (Brewster, 2010). The Indian Navy's rise to prominence in the Indian Ocean has frequently exceeded the expectations of the country's other armed forces and government (Denis, 2020).

I) Maritime Dimension of National Security

National security is the application of naval power to protect the homeland and maritime routes. The concept of maritime security involves the use of naval power to protect vessels and routes within the maritime domain. This includes the projection of naval power and the use of warships to safeguard the interests of both parties (Christian, 2017)The key to protecting a country's maritime interests is ensuring that its geographical features are protected. Various agencies and the armed forces conduct strategic assessments of India's potential threats. The Naval Authority is also monitoring the developments in the maritime domain, which could affect its various responsibilities. Conventional sources provide a greater security risk to the IOR. The IOR's counter-terrorism efforts are carried out through the use of modern and improved naval equipment and procedures. Non-traditional threats have become more prevalent and challenging to maritime security. Non-traditional threats have become the norm in maritime security. This pattern has been observed over the years. Non-traditional threats and the complexity of their solutions require the evolution of strategies and procedures in order to meet their goals (Devakumar, 2017).

II) Maritime Dimension of Environmental Security

Marine pollution, vessel safety and regulation, maritime search and rescue, ocean health, pollution, and climate change impacts are all included under the environmental security element of maritime security. The marine environment is a long-standing concern in the maritime realm, with its roots in international efforts to control shipping and other maritime operations through intergovernmental organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Maritime security is inextricably tied to the marine environment. They're a result of greater environmental security concerns at sea and on land. They also include the role of commercial shipping as a prospective target for criminals, terrorists, or pirates, as well as a means of human, illegal, or weapon trafficking. Furthermore, environmental degradation caused by fishing or other environmental crimes has the potential to increase complaints among coastal residents and lead to maritime instability.

III)   Maritime Dimension of Economic Security

Much of the marine security agenda is based on economic security, or so-called blue economy concerns. Around 90 percent of worldwide trade is carried out by sea, and marine resources like fisheries and offshore oil are important economic assets. Piracy, criminality, and other forms of maritime disruption can jeopardize global commerce, whereas coastal states frequently prioritize marine resource protection and development.

IV) Maritime Dimension of Human Security

The human security dimension refers to insecurity experienced by people and local communities, as well as those affecting states. Much of the marine security agenda is dominated by human security concerns. Millions of people living along the coast, for example, rely on fisheries for a living, but they are also the ones who are most vulnerable to climate change and maritime pollution. Such issues pertain not only to the safety of individuals and coastal communities, but also to the role of human insecurity in promoting the establishment of activities like piracy or criminality as alternative sources of employment in areas where economic distress or collapse has occurred (Timothy, 2017).

Strengthening of Cooperation in IOR

One of the ways to improve cooperation in IOR is recognizing the common maritime challenges that the region faces. Establishing effective cooperative engagements among the nations is a challenging task. It is crucial that the regional maritime security mechanism not be aimed at creating another military alliance. Instead, it should be made to promote transparency and confidence-building measures. Many of the nations in the IORs are developing states that are not equipped to manage the ocean. Most of the problems that ocean management faces are not solved by a single regional cooperative model. Instead, the various issues related to the ocean are still neglected in the IOR. The IOR-ARC was created with the goal of promoting economic cooperation among littoral governments (Sridhar, 2018).

The Indian Ocean Region has changed significantly in the way it cooperates with other nations. As a result, its cooperation has become open and liberal. Many of the nation-states of the IO have insufficient capacity to manage and protect their maritime zones. This issue can be addressed through the collective interests of the various littoral states. Some external powers have interests in the region that are not limited by borders or geographical regions. For instance, some of these include freedom of navigation and trade flow. Most members of the inter-oceanic grouping may be opposed to having an outside power to protect their interests. This is because many of them have suffered colonization.

The need for cooperation is being identified as one of the most critical factors in addressing the various challenges and threats facing the world. Sea lanes protection is an important aspect of maritime security. Due to the size of the region and the number of choke points in the area, the need to address both balanced and littoral threats is paramount. As the risks to sea lanes become more complex, the safety of the littorals should be the primary focus of efforts to improve their security. The concept of multilateralism is not feasible unless it is politically flexible and can accommodate the

littoral States. Coastal states have a fundamental obligation for good governance. It is essential that the maritime zones have the proper governance and security to ensure their sustained economic development. For instance, many states have different maritime capabilities and are not able to share certain maritime threats (Sridhar, 2018).

Restraining Factors to Maritime Security Cooperation

- Restrictions of regional powers above the part of other power players in the IOR.
- Coordination in the state of affairs of maritime operations that consists of coordination in exchange of informations, political coordination, cultural coordination, and operational coordination.
- Varying state impressions about similar needs, threats, and goals.
- The capacity constraints in many IOR states can lead to a lack of security, as this can affect the stability and growth of the maritime zones.
- Sovereign rights disputes and bilateral relations were some of the factors that affected cooperation in the region.
- There are also legal restrictions on sharing information.
- Vulnerability and compulsion of states over sovereignty and sovereign rights.
- Non-cooperating states.
- There is a deficit of understanding of the seas' many facets and the issues they provide.
- Existence of weak or failed states.
- Evolution of suspicion between states because of the colonial history among the IO littorals.

International security, national security, collective security, comprehensive security, cooperative security, and human security are all terms used to describe security. Other non-military conditions, such as social growth and environmental conservation, are linked to the concept of security. Regional security approaches, which are founded on the principle of cooperative security, support this concept. Both concepts stress the importance of working together, but these policies also require re-organization and national policies.

A multi-pronged approach is needed to address the various objectives of improving maritime governance and cooperation.

i) Operationalized Security Cooperation

Cooperation is a process where states modify their policies in order to meet the interests of other states. This type of cooperation usually involves the establishment of joint initiatives and programs. Officials carry out policies and address common

threats without requiring direct supervision from strategic authorities. This concept of operationalized cooperation is often referred to as the concept of coordinating actions and procedures without requiring the involvement of a certain level of authority. An example of operationalized cooperation can be considered as a search and rescue mission. Also, a formal joint patrolling between the littoral states can also be an ideal example of such cooperation.

ii) Maritime Domain Awareness

The goal here is to achieve interoperability in various areas such as Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and Information sharing for mitigating common maritime threats. However, this goal can be hard to attain because of the lack of trust between participants. The ability to quick and actionable information is needed in order to build trust. Consensus decisions would be made using a system that is based on common law.

iii) Role of Navies

The duties of the Navies are being redefined as the maritime environment changes and their combat capabilities are refined. The complexities of marine threats have necessitated a new response regime. The line between high seas and constabulary functions is blurring as well. Navies have two purposes: to maintain order and to safeguard nations. Today, this dual position is more obvious than it was a decade ago. They are engaging in both military and political activities, and they are often looking for ways to improve their effectiveness. Naval cooperation is an important aspect of maritime security, which strives to reduce the danger of conflict and foster a stable maritime environment that allows for good navigation at sea. In the Indian Ocean, naval cooperation is the most visible and frequently used tool for maritime security. It is also becoming more useful for non-military purposes to ensure environmental, sea lane, and energy security. The increasing threats of non-state actors have prompted the naval cooperation between the IOR and other external powers. In comparison to prior periods, there is a new situation of enhanced inter-naval contact today (Rao, 2010).

There is too much at stake for everyone to have a comprehensive security environment. This is why it is necessary to build a secure environment that is based on common trust and faith. The absence of a single common threat perception has kept the IOR diversified. Its goals and objectives are also linked to the various socio-economic imperatives. Establishing a common understanding of security concepts and procedures can help improve the overall security posture in the region.

Multilateralism in the IOR

Various threats to the region's stability have been identified. These include terrorist activities in Pakistan, Iran, and Sri Lanka, as well as piracy and armed

robbery at sea. These challenges can be seen in various countries along the corridor. Various security challenges confront the nations in the Indian Ocean Rim , including drug trafficking, terrorism, piracy, and civil war. The global trading and strategic spaces are under immense pressure due to the increasing number of security concerns. These issues can only be effectively addressed through a sustained and coordinated response. The growing threats posed by terrorist activities, piracy, and illicit trafficking have significantly affected the global trading and strategic spaces. These issues have become more challenging to address as the international community responds to them. These have significantly affected the operations of international organizations. These have become so critical that the international community is now unable to effectively address them. The increasing complexity and volatility of these issues threaten the stability and profitability of the global trading system. Security challenges of this magnitude require policy coherence and considerable resources. Successful management of these issues requires a coordinated effort and a commitment to address them. The threats posed by terrorism, human trafficking, and arms smuggling are now more significant and urgent than ever before. This could result in a spike in their level of attention and resources. As the East Coast's oil and gas production grows, so must the security measures in place to prevent exploitation and exploitation. As Africa's east coast becomes more attractive for oil and gas exploration, private and public maritime security authorities have to be strengthened. As Africa's offshore oil and gas production grows, the need for improved maritime security has become more prevalent. Various security measures have to be implemented in order to protect both private and government vessels. This region's coastal waters are also vulnerable to piracy and armed conflict. Greater maritime security is required in order to protect the region's cargo vessels and private individuals. As the global supply of marine transportation grows, so do the risks associated with it. This increases the likelihood that criminals will target ports and facilities for their activities. As the shipping industry grows, it will become the target of various criminal groups and terrorist organizations. These groups operate by carrying out robberies, kidnapping, and piracy. One of the most prolonged areas of geopolitical strife has been territorial disputes. They usually do not have much effect, and they can become turning points in the future. A number of security challenges and problems face the Indian Ocean region. There are limited resources available now and in the future to solve these concerns. The Indian Ocean is thought to be the world's largest marine space plot. With its numerous security challenges, the area will most likely remain a target of pirates and terrorists in the future. Despite the fact that a substantial number of states have committed significant resources to solve these issues, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been

impressive. The US and the European Union should lead the way in developing a comprehensive strategy to address various maritime issues, such as piracy and human trafficking. Other nations, such as Australia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates, should also participate. Piracy, human trafficking, and illicit fishing may all be addressed through regional solutions. While not all of these powers will be able to meet all of the challenges, there are still chances for regional security coordination and confidence-building (Preben, 2020).

As China's naval presence in the Indian Ocean continues to grow, India needs to step up its naval diplomacy and participate in trilateral and quadrilateral exercises with its maritime partners. India needs to step up its naval activities in order to maintain its geopolitical position. While India has not limited itself to bilateral exercises with other countries, due to the sensitive nature of the Indian Ocean, it has a strong aversion to holding multilateral maneuvers with China. Given China's lack of concern about India's increasing vulnerability in the Indian Ocean, India should engage in regular military drills and constructive engagements with its regional partners (Pushan 2015). India's military activities with other nations have a negative effect on the country and its residents. This is because the country wants to avoid getting dragged into military alliances. India's military exercises with other countries are often carried out in an act of intimidation and coercion.

As part of its naval operations, India has started setting up Coastal Surveillance Radars (CSR) in the Indian Ocean. These capabilities assist India in keeping track of its ships' movements in the Indian Ocean. They operate by monitoring the movements of vessels passing through these areas. Although the government has acknowledged the need for a cost-effective surveillance network, it will not help India's naval forces detect underwater threats. The lack of antisubmarine assets in India is a major flaw in the country's surveillance system. Creating partnerships is key to filling the gaps in India's military capabilities. This is why the country's military exercises are being held regularly to create a stronger military connection that can be used for joint surveillance. In the Indian Ocean region, both the United States and France have bases. China's expanding involvement in the region is causing alarm in both countries. To avoid this, the US and India have agreed to establish several agreements that would benefit both countries. There are various agreements that would allow the US and India to cooperate more closely. Agreements would enable the exchange of information and related equipment. Establishing interoperability between Indian and US systems would also help in reducing costs and improving the efficiency of operations. Agreements such as the interoperability agreement for Geospatial Cooperation and the communications interoperability agreement are needed to enhance the connectivity of the Indian Ocean.

These are crucial for improving the region's connectivity. It is past time for India to increase its engagement with its IOR partners. This will help India to develop a more robust and strategic IOR. This is in response to the growing threats posed by China and other regional powers (Pushan, 2015).

Conclusion

The maritime environment in the IOR is undoubtedly fraught with difficulties. India must take the lead in maritime domain management through a combination of cooperative agreements, technology, processes, legal support, force levels, and, most importantly, innovative leadership. Preventing malicious pirate activity at sea or terrorist infiltration from the water is a difficult task. The area that needs to be monitored is huge, and security services' assets are never enough for surveillance. The situation is exacerbated by the vast number of fishing and other boats that go out to sea every day without being fully bound by legal systems that allow for effective monitoring and control. Terrorism, piracy, guns, drug, and human trafficking, as well as smuggling by sea, have all increased in movement and spread. Security concerns and difficulties extend over India's maritime neighborhood and nearby territories have an impact on the country's marine environment. As a result, it's critical to create favorable and favorable conditions throughout the broader marine environment in order to improve our own maritime security and promote our national objectives. Conditions of maritime security and stability are required for a favorable maritime environment, with diverse risks kept to a minimum. To promote a favorable and positive maritime environment, conditions must be created where dangers and challenges can be monitored and countered on a regular basis. This would necessitate all parties adhering to international conventions and rules, as well as effective maritime coordination among all stakeholders, backed up by the necessary marine force capacity. The promotion of a good maritime environment will also aid in the provision of net maritime security. Multilateralism is the only possible answer to the challenges that have arisen in today's geostrategic landscape as a result of unilateralism and trade conflicts. India's robust and frequent friendly engagements with the military forces of IOR countries will improve the confidence of all parties, including littoral countries, and provide stability to the IOR's maritime security.

Suggestions

i)   Maritime security should concern about maritime governance through maritime law, governance mechanisms, and maritime order building.

ii)   The studies and research in maritime security should include with the causes and interactions on land and their link at sea.

iii)   Maritime security should observe the changing characteristics of sea power and should detect the transformations regarding the maritime environment.

iv) Traditional concepts of state action and cooperation are challenged by many unconventional activities in the maritime domain which leads to new mechanisms and networks through which maritime security has to be practiced.

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