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Ladies and gentlemen, let me first of all start with commending Sri Lankan Navy for providing this excellent platform of Galle Dialogue, where we can candidly discuss and deliberate upon maritime oriented challenges and their possible solutions. I congratulate Commander of the Sri Lankan Navy Vice Admiral Travis Sinniah, you Sir and your team for organizing this conference immaculately and in the most proficient manner. Successful conduct of this mega conference by Sri Lankan Navy since 2010, speaks volume of their commitment and resolve towards achieving regional maritime cooperation and devising a global strategy to face common challenges in the maritime realm. I feel extremely gratified to be present amongst such an august gathering, where Military commanders, Think tanks and Scholars from all over the world are gathered under one roof for common good. It is my profound privilege to share my thoughts on this ever important subject of global importance. To begin with let me say that Maritime Security has been under the shadows in past due to continental character of threats and challenges, but is now continuously gaining prominence with new dimensions, amid changing nature and character of threats and conflicts at sea. Maritime security is therefore a matter of vital importance for the national interests of states, as access to resources and their secure transportation are the drivers behind national growth and continued prosperity. It is well established that

in order to ensure Maritime Security, maritime visibility is a pre-condition. Maritime visibility and the process of its realization will be the core theme of my talk today. In the context of today's discussion the term 'visibility' would mean knowledge of all the activities that might be going on in our seas of interest. I will be using the term maritime visibility to denote a more general form of knowledge that the littoral nations must endeavour to possess. Maritime visibility would therefore mean co-existence of presence of maritime forces and knowledge of maritime domain. However, despite modern technological advances in fields of surveillance and information gathering, absolute maritime visibility continues to remain a predominant challenge to the global seafaring community. Even the most modern and technologically superior Navies and maritime law enforcement agencies of the world, find it extremely demanding to completely alleviate 'sea blindness' on their own, thus in 2004 the '1000 Ship Navy' term was coined. I therefore believe that the concept of attaining greater maritime visibility remains fluid and is still evolving for every nation. This lack of an accepted, agreed and clear definition could be an issue that might set or upset any framework based on it. As the term 'maritime visibility' has yet to mature, it remains open to various interpretations even at times to justify own objectives.

In order to develop the concept and contours of enhanced visibility to overcome challenges being posed by maritime security threats, first of all it is very important to understand the dynamic nature of the challenges that maritime community and think tanks are confronted with in various parts of the world, both collectively as a community and individually as a nation. In my discourse I have initially contextualized the issue in the global perspective and later have narrowed it down to Indian Ocean, which has been and will likely be a major arena of global power contestation posing greater challenges. I will also dwell upon Pakistan Navy's approach to address these complex challenges due peculiar threats to our maritime interests. I shall also touch upon our share in global initiatives of making the seas secured and usable by all.

Ladies and gentlemen, we shall have a look at the maritime imperatives of global, regional and local stakeholders with the aim to identify corresponding challenges along with threats to littoral states. We need to find grounds for common objectives vis-à-vis ensuring safety and security of all at sea against both traditional and non-traditional threats. Today's maritime domain, apart from the traditional naval rivalry, is embroiled with a variety of unconventional threats. These include piracy, maritime terrorism both at sea and from the sea, IUUF, smuggling of illicit cargo, arms and humans, marine pollution and impacts of climate change. The maritime challenges with which we are faced with, in Indian Ocean Region further compound due resource constraints, technological imbalance amongst the nations, general lack of awareness on maritime issues and proper legislation against illegal exploitation of seas.

While the advent of modern technological advancements such as commercially available open source ship tracking applications on one hand have enhanced MDA, however more advanced and sophisticated systems such hi-fi maritime monitoring systems and satellite imagery etc essentially remains a rich man's choice. The greater maritime visibility achieved through the latter systems remains available with selective nations, while other regional littorals do not reap benefits even in their own backyard.

This results in creating blind spots in the regional maritime picture, which is invariably exploited by the illegal actors. It is thus imperative that multilateral partners share available resources and information timely for achieving synergy in actions against a common foe.

Ladies and gentlemen, maritime crimes are on a rising trajectory, which necessitates paying more attention to the maritime arena for realization of greater maritime visibility. Maritime forces have a greater role to play in securing wide ranging national and collective maritime interests at sea than merely appearing as the only military instrument of a nation's power. A single nation and its maritime force is not likely to fight and defeat these complex maritime security threats. This requires a region-centric collaborative maritime security construct, but that's missing in real sense and is exactly what the Clingendael Institute points towards, as "absence of a comprehensive multilateral agreement on maritime security in the Indian Ocean" and that truly results into a "classical security dilemma".

Former US Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Mullen, also had admitted that challenges in the maritime domain were so great that even the US Navy was not able to negotiate itself alone. He proposed a global maritime partnership for protecting the maritime commons by leveraging the advantages of sea that only maritime forces enjoy. Though the 'maritime commons have 'ownership paradox' but the idea of Mullen was to create lasting partnerships at sea for responding to threats multilaterally. We need to admit here that the pattern and uncertainty of these threats saturate the unilateral ability of a state to deal with them. It would not be unfair to acknowledge that maritime threats such as the menace of piracy cannot be dealt with a single nation's maritime force; likewise human smuggling and drug trafficking through ungoverned sea spaces is a tough ask for a single state to tackle; while natural disasters swiftly drench the response capacity of even the strongest of the economies. The troubling reality, however, is that despite most of the Indian Ocean states share almost same maritime security issues, yet multilateral cooperation has failed to attain the rightful significance. In the words of Prof Liu

Cigui of China Institute of International Studies “The world is now in an era that values maritime cooperation and development”, which clearly substantiate the need for building partnerships instead of dealing with the maritime challenges of 21st century alone.

In a recent report of ‘Global Trends 2030’, the US National Intelligence Council states that future will see more “a consolidated regional order” than what is now. The traditional thinking in international relations suggests that multilateralism is the answer of the problems we face in today’s world, the same also stresses the need to form cooperative alliances, principally within a region where states are facing the similar set of threats and troubles. While remaining aware of the ‘wave of change’, it would be an historic fallacy not to choose the cumulative good over rivalry – i.e., not to form or become part of collective efforts to solve shared problems. Geoffrey Till, in his book ‘Asia’s Naval Expansion’, while referring to the US Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century, says that “trust and cooperation cannot be ‘surged’ but have to be built and sustained over time, through development of increased understanding amongst maritime forces and forging of international partnerships.” Till’s argument is pragmatic and rightly calls for ‘choosing reconciliation over rivalry’ as an antidote for the current ails in the maritime arena.

Here on, I will narrow my gaze to Indian Ocean and in particular the western part of it. Spread over an area of around 69 million square kilometres, Indian Ocean holds the most diverse nations on its littorals. Nearly 1/3 of the world’s population lives on its shores – with dissimilar socio-economic, cultural and linguistic settings. Indian Ocean Region, in its share of conflicts and violence, perhaps seen a lot – from one phase of history to another. End of Cold War and Post-9/11 have yet again brought Indian Ocean into limelight. A glaring contrast, which further makes the Indian Ocean different from other oceans and relevant to the rest of the world is that only 20 percent of the total trade is conducted among the countries of the Indian Ocean Region themselves, while 80 percent of trade is extra regional. It is noteworthy that in the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, the trade proportions are exactly

opposite. Thus, stability and maritime security in the IOR is not only of vital concern to the regional countries but to the whole world. However, as the global economy continues to increase the value of Indian Ocean, its vulnerability also increases proportionally, which creates a versatile net of challenges having the potential to cause serious damage to global, political, and economic security in the maritime realm.

Ladies and Gentlemen, although regional alliances in shape of multinational platforms such as IONS, HACGAM, SHADE etc exist in the region, however all these forums are still far from attaining the desired objective for which they were formed at the first place. An undisputed common objective of these mechanisms was to attain greater maritime visibility in order to maintain good order at sea. Only partial effectiveness of these initiatives can be attributed to the unsolved disputes among many nations of the Indian Ocean, which have a serious influence over charting the course for a cooperative regime at sea. One has to admit that if challenges in the maritime realm are to be met, then traditional inter-state rifts have to be ‘ignored’ or ‘made irrelevant’ to the contemporary maritime issues. Overcoming or ‘short-circuiting’ bilateral rivalries will signal external powers not to interfere with the regional settings too much, and be cognizant of independence and sovereignty of involved states in region centric maritime security architectures. This ultimately would ensure that Indian Ocean states remain in the “driver’s seat” for protection and preservation of national or regional interests, liberty of action and freedom of undertaking any political or military decision in own maritime domains. In the same context, Robert D. Kaplan, in his essay, written for Foreign Affairs in 2009, acknowledged the need for a multilateral mechanism of operating together in the Indian Ocean, by saying: “One might envision a ‘NATO of the Seas’ for the Indian Ocean”.

Ladies and gentlemen, as it is commonly said that ‘Land divides while the Sea unites’, thus shared challenges in maritime domain have resultantly given rise to the novel and broader approach of coordination beyond regional caveats towards achieving maritime visibility. This approach pillars upon information and resource sharing concept and is flexible in nature, purely

voluntary and the most logical way ahead for tackling the diverse and interconnected maritime security concerns. Region centric cooperative platforms also promote harmony amongst the actors and tend to unite nations against common threats and challenges, who may otherwise be antagonistic in nature. Thus considering alike challenges and future predictions about the Indian Ocean, one reality is indisputable: the Indian Ocean nations need to adopt cooperative rather than confrontational approach. Future calls for a change in our way of thinking that we can no longer outsource the visibility and security of our ocean.

Here ladies and gentlemen let me present Pakistan's perspective and share how do we look at these changing dynamics of security challenges and maritime visibility. Pakistan's significance stems from its vital geostrategic location at the heart of the Arabian Sea. It sits astride the busiest energy corridor of the Strait of Hormuz and holds an important position amongst the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Pakistan Navy is approaching these maritime challenges using its military capability involving active maritime surveillance operations by its units to enhance maritime domain awareness to proactively respond to any maritime security related incident from ever occurring in its backyard. In this regard, Pakistan Navy pursues the concept of 'Ready and Arrayed' maritime forces, which rest on the principal operational cardinals of: adaptability, responsiveness and effectivity. Pakistan Navy is building its capacity to maximize on maritime security. A CPEC Maritime Security Task Force has been raised at Gwadar to ensure conducive and secure environment for the international trade to kick start from Gwadar port. The said Task Force namely TF-88, comprises of ships, aircraft, UAVs and Pak Marines elements to ensure better visibility for ensuring economic growth of the region as CPEC project is beneficial for other neighboring countries as well. Concurrently, a network of radars and IR Sensors all along the coast and harbours, as part of Coastal Security & Harbour Defence Force, is in place with built in quick response elements to undertake the maritime interceptions against all elements who benefit illegally from sea. In this regard, the outermost layer of the maritime security is

provided by the Pakistan Navy ships and aircraft, which patrol upto the fringes of the Continental Shelf and even beyond to proactively detect and deter threats. On the inward; Pakistan Maritime Security Agency remains active to maintain good order at sea.

Pakistan Navy actively collaborates with international navies and is an active part of two Combined Task Forces i.e. Task Force 150 since 2004 and Task Force 151 since 2009. Pakistan Navy was the first regional navy to form part of these arrangements and has contributed significantly despite resource constraints to ensure peace and stability in the North Indian Ocean. Pakistan Navy's contribution so far includes participation of ships and aircraft, which cumulatively have investigated over 12,000 ships and small craft, carried out over 400 boarding operations and confiscated tonnes of contraband cargo. With 17 command tenures of both the Task Forces by Pakistan Navy, its contributions in both the initiatives have remained second only to the United States Navy. These deployments have no doubt significantly improved good order at sea by creating deterrence, curtailing liberty of action of terrorist, pirates and other criminal syndicates in the maritime domain.

Furthermore, to continuously nurture regional as well as international partnerships, Pakistan Navy participates in symposiums and conferences such as Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and Western Pacific Naval Symposium etc. And my presence here signifies the same national commitment. PN also sends its ships on Overseas Deployments to regional as well as far flung friendly countries for exercises to promote understanding of maritime operational cultures, enhanced interoperability and solidify coordination mechanics for synergistic response, whenever and wherever required.

As part of national resolve, PN ships frequently undertake Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Missions as well as Non Combatant Evacuation operations in far flung areas. We were amongst the first to respond during Tsunami in 2005 by carrying out humanitarian relief missions in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Rescue of stranded crew of pirated vessel MV SUEZ

in 2011, which apart from Pakistani seafarers, included 18 foreign nationals and evacuation of 35 foreign nationals from Yemen in April 2015 are few pertinent examples in this regard. Additionally, conduct of most recent HADR operation in Sri Lanka during the unfortunate events of floods in June 2017, is yet another testament of our resolute commitment towards supporting the maritime community in general and our regional friends in particular.

Holding of AMAN, which means 'Peace', series of exercise in our waters is also part of the same agenda to send a clear message across that we believe in collaborative maritime security. Pakistan Navy has been organizing AMAN series of multinational exercise biennially since 2007, while the latest exercise of the series was held in Feb this year, which witnessed largest ever participation of 35 countries. AMAN exercise is a reflective of Pakistan's commitment towards peace and stability embodied in the exercise's motto 'Together for Peace' bringing the navies of East and West under a common platform for the good of global commons.

Pakistan Navy has been, exclusively emphasizing maintenance of MDA and founded Joint Maritime Information Coordination Center, JMICC in 2013 at Karachi, which utilizes conventional surveillance tools for data gathering, analysis and subsequent transmission to all relevant stakeholders in the maritime domain. JMICC makes use of HUMINT for achieving enhanced MDA. Envisaged as a low-tech solution for achieving MDA, the approach taken by JMICC, provides valuable lessons and possible way forward for many regional countries. In contrast to other tech-savvy maritime operations centers, JMICC engages with 48 national stakeholders, which include government departments, law enforcement and Intelligence agencies, port authorities, academia, local fishermen forums and associations concerned with maritime sector. Through this direct engagement, JMICC receives first-hand information and has established itself as the first point of contact amongst local populous for reporting maritime incidents as well as suspicious activities.

The purpose of JMICC is not only to achieve enhanced MDA in our area of interest but also to avoid duplication of efforts amongst its array of stakeholders, which so far it has amicably achieved despite being in nascent stage, when viewed in the perspective of its genesis in 2013.

Apart from national stakeholders, JMICC also connects with a wide range of international and regional stakeholders such as IFC, Singapore, MSCHOA, ReCAAP, UKMTO and HQNAVCENT that share valuable and timely information with JMICC, which have significantly contributed in maintaining safe navigation and good order at high seas. Although it's a pure national effort, however, arrangements are in pipeline to extend the scope of this office to further involve the region and beyond.

Pakistan Navy of today is not only more relevant in line with contemporary and developing trends but is significantly contributing to maintaining safety of shipping at sea.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the future, as many would believe, is uncertain, unpredictable and challenging than present. The impact of globalization and interdependence will steadily grow in the future, and so will the clear and present danger of entities who utilize sea for their nefarious designs. Consequently nations are likely to adopt the idea of collectiveness over doing things unilaterally per force rather than as a matter of choice. A dire need therefore exists to practically augment the various 'collective' and 'collaborative' maritime security mechanisms by actions rather than just words. Accordingly, following must be considered as a way forward to enhance maritime visibility:

- First, regional actors need to put aside traditional inter-state rifts by playing more assertive role in existing collective mechanisms, which eventually will result in achieving enhanced maritime visibility by identifying common maritime challenges and formalizing the response methodology.

- Second, establish handshake between all maritime operation centers of the region as well as their capacity building to have better maritime visibility through sharing of information even on voluntary basis to start with.

- Third, collaboration in benign avenues such as SAR and disaster relief operations must be used as a stepping stone to enhance existing level of interoperability and surge trust between the regional nations. It may not be out of context to mention the conduct of IMSAREX under the patronage of IONS, which is the right step in this direction; however similar activities must be undertaken more frequently.

- Fourth, collectively undertake review of changing pattern through regular experience sharing and character of maritime challenges and its implications on marine environment, blue economy, human security, maritime crime and law enforcement.

In short, I believe that it is time for action if we are to attain maritime visibility. We need to recognize and tackle the ever evolving maritime arena and the complex web of challenges surrounding it. While doing so we should be ever ready to set aside our differences at regional level to have a more interconnected and broadly relevant understanding of the maritime security complex with which we are faced with. It is now time to move ahead together; as we say in Pakistan – ‘Together We Can – Together We Will’.

I thank you all for patience listening.