

**SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT FOR MARITIME SECURITY**  
**IN THE INDIAN OCEAN-SRILANKAN EXPERIENCE**  
**AND WAY AHEAD**

**MARITIME CONFERENCE-GALLE DIALOGUE**

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## **SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT FOR MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN-SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE AND WAY AHEAD**

**‘No single country is able to tackle today’s complex problems on its own’**

**European Security Strategy-2003**

### **THE SEA AS THE NEW THREAT OF GLOBAL TERRORISM**

The world depends heavily on sea-borne trade for its survival. Globalization will not survive if it is interrupted, for world energy supply heavily depends on sea transportation from oil producing countries. Such trade might be the victim of terrorist attacks, as it is the lifeline of the international economy and a symbol of globalization. At least 80% of world cargo volume is carried by sea. Containers now transport about 90% of this. It is not possible to screen all the containers and inspect all the ships carrying them across the ocean. Nevertheless, the general vulnerability of the ocean environment has become more apparent. This became clear with the suspected Al-Qaeda attacks on the USS Cole in October 2000, in the Yemeni port of Aden, killing 17 US servicemen, and on the very large French super tanker MT Limburg in October 2002, in the Gulf of Eden. This was done with small suicide boats, a technique pioneered by the now defunct Sri Lankan terrorist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was fighting for a separate state in Sri Lanka. Terrorist groups in West Asia and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had indulged in acts of maritime terrorism even before October 2000, and the LTTE, through its fleet of ships, ostensibly used for legitimate commercial purposes, had been using the sea for the clandestine transport of arms and ammunition and other material required for its acts of terrorism on the land.

### **SRI LANKA AND INDIAN OCEAN AND SLOC**

The Indian Ocean, with an area of 68.56million sq km, is the third largest water in the world and covers about twenty percent of the earth’s surface. It is bounded on three sides by land. Africa from the western wall, while Malaysia, Myanmar, and the insular continuations of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia from the Eastern wall. The Asian continent forms a

roof over the Indian Ocean northern extent, and distinguishes it from the Pacific and the Atlantic. The Indian Ocean is nearly 10,000 km wide at the southern tips of Africa and Australia, and extends nearly 13,500 km from the Persian Gulf to Antarctica.

There are several important straits, bays and seas within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), most of them in the northern part. Major shipping lanes criss-cross its vast expanse, with important strategic waterways and choke points linking the Indian Ocean to other important water bodies on the globe. The choke points in IOR are The Suez Canal, The Strait of Hormus, Bab-el Mandeb, The Cape of Good Hope, The Straits of Malacca and Singapore, The Sunda Strait, The Lombok Strait

This ocean figures prominently not only in the lives of people in the littorals, but also of the people of distant lands. The geographical prominence of the ocean was intimately connected with the fabulous riches and spices of the Indies. The importance of spices in the distant past is probably surpassed only by the present day prominence of oil. The ocean came to see incessant maritime activity from antiquity on, and in due course became the primary focus of European strategic and geopolitical considerations, both during and after the crusaders. The Indian Ocean is geographically important because it has been the corridor for East-West trade for centuries.

A region of utmost importance to the East and West, the Indian Ocean has become a focus of the new globalized world as well. This recognition has been accompanied by growing militarization throughout the area, which has included naval build up both by littoral states and the great powers.

The Indian Ocean accounts for the transportation of highest tonnage of goods in the world, with almost 1000,000 ships transporting its expanse annually. On its waters are carried two-thirds of world's oil shipments, and one-third of bulk cargo traffic and half of the world's container shipments International Sea lanes (ISL) is a term describing the primary maritime routes between ports, used for trade, logistics and naval forces around the world. Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC), on the other hand refers to the military supply routes in the maritime environment.

**Vulnerability of the Region.** Maritime counter-terrorism experts have been projecting that Indian Ocean region vulnerable, to such catastrophic acts of maritime terrorism. Following factors have been influencing their perceptions.

-The presence in this region of terrorist or insurgent organizations with proved or suspected capabilities for maritime operations.

-The wide networking of Al Qaeda across this region -- either through its own members or through surrogate Jihadi terrorist organizations.

-The reputation of this area as the world's leading producer and supplier of heroin from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent.

-The presence in this region of terrorist organizations such as the destroyed LTTE with a commercial shipping capability, which can be diverted for clandestine transportation of narcotics and arms / ammunition.

-The presence in this region of trans-national mafia groups with vast financial resources, a capability for clandestine shipping and a willingness to place their resources at the disposal of Al Qaeda and other Jihadi terrorist organizations operating across the region.

-The presence in this region of tempting choke-points such as the Malacca Straits through which pass a half of the world's oil and a third of its trade.

-The annual shipping traffic across the region has been rising sharply. There is a large volume of container traffic originating in this rapidly developing region. It has been estimated that 48 per cent of the global container traffic passes through this region.

-The reputation of this area as one of the most piracy-prone in the world. There has been an increase in the tactical sophistication of pirates.

## **MARITIME TERRORISM**

Since the terrorist attacks in the United States in 11 September 2001, the world is very aware of transport security requirements. Terrorists clearly demonstrated the potential destructive capability of commercial passenger air craft with the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on New

York and Washington, yet the vast unregulated maritime space could be even more easily exploited. Although the sea has long been used for various illegal activities, such as smuggling, piracy, armed robbery, gun running, human trafficking, it provides even greater scope for acts of economic terrorism than the air because of the greater volume of energy and commercial merchandise moved. On September 11 attacks, the Al-Qaeda used conventional air craft with a load of civilian passengers, to carry out suicidal missions against US targets. The potential destruction, if terrorist used ships would have been much greater. The maritime industry is no longer considered a safe, non-political, global transportation system moving goods by sea easily, from one country to another. Rather, shipping is seen as a venue that exposes all maritime nations to the threat of terrorist attack. Covering more than 130 million square miles of the earth's surface, most of the planets maritime environment takes the form of high seas that lie beyond the strict jurisdiction of any one state, meaning that, they are, by definition, anarchic.

The attack on USS Cole, when alongside in Yemen in 2000, saw a new form of terrorist attack from the waterside with a small boat, believed to be a water supply boat by those on board USS Cole, loaded with explosives, coming alongside the vessel and exploding. In the Sri Lankan theatre, we have seen many similar incidents prior to the USS Cole incident, but the West clearly failed to see the potential danger, until it hit them badly. Only after the attacks on US targets in 2001, special attention was given to the maritime field, as a ship arriving at a port carrying a Weapon of Mass Destruction capable of destroying the port and any adjacent population centers, was a possibility. The attack on VLCC Limburg off Yemen in 2002, while the discussions were going on to enhance maritime security, by a rubber flatted fast boat loaded with explosives led to the extension of developing security measures to the territorial sea as well.

There are hundreds of terrorist organizations in the world. They all have their own political agendas and operating characteristics. For the first time in the history of the world, however, any such organization now has the capability to undertake great attacks resulting in great destruction. Consequently, no maritime nation, whatever its political affiliation, religious affiliation, or ethnic make-up, is immune from such attacks.

**Possible maritime terrorist activities include:**

- Use of a commercial container ship to smuggle Chemical, Biological and Radioactive (CBR) materials for an unconventional attack carried out at a major commercial port city.
- Use of ships to transport weapons and other battle-related materials.
- Hijacking of vessels.
- Scuttling of a ship in a narrow Sea-Lane of Communication (SLOC) to block or disrupt maritime traffic.
- Hijacking of a Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) carrier that is then detonated as a floating bomb or used as a collision weapon.
- Use of a small, high speed boat to attack an oil tanker or off-shore energy platform to affect international petroleum prices or cause major pollution.
- Directly targeting a cruise liner or passenger ferry to cause mass casualties.

Clearly, then, potential terrorists could have a devastating effect on the freedom of the oceans and maritime commerce. Such acts by any state-sponsored or non state terrorist actors could lead to large-scale human casualties and major environmental disaster as well as to increased insurance rates, which would result in greater costs for maritime trade, or even the closing of a major port/strait or waterway.

Maritime terrorism, however, is not a new phenomenon, dating at least as far back as seizure of the Portuguese passenger ship 'Santa Maria' in 1961, and except for the fact that it occurs, by definition, in the maritime environment, differs little from terrorism ashore. Following the 'Achille Lauro' incident in 1985, the IMO formulated and adopted the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988 (SUA convention 1988). The conventions preamble states that the States Party agree to the conditions of the convention, being 'deeply concerned about the world-wide escalation of terrorism in all forms' However, no

concrete steps were taken to address safeguards against maritime terrorism until the ISPS Code came into force in 2004, following the attacks on US IN 2001.

### **Maritime Terrorist**

A maritime terrorist is one who, for political purpose or in order to affect the exercise of another state's or political entity's rights, attempts to do any one or a combination of the following:

- Seize or exercise unlawful control over a ship or other maritime structure by threat or force
- Perform or threaten an act of violence against a person on board which is likely to endanger safe navigation
- Destroy or damage, or place a device likely to destroy or damage, a ship, maritime platform, cargo or navigational facility
- Knowingly communicate false information which endangers safe navigation

### **Instruments of Control**

- International Treaties. (UNCLOS 1982, ISM Code, ISPS Code)
- Multilateral export control agreements. (PSI, MPI, CSI)
- Individual national export controls
- Security assistance

**International Ship and Port facility Security code (ISPS Code).** A diplomatic conference held in the London headquarters of the IMO in December 2002 ,as a result of new threats envisaged in the maritime sector after the 9/11 attacks, saw the birth of the ISPS Code which is dealing with security related requirements for governments, port facilities and shipping companies. The purpose of the Code is to provide a standardized, consistent framework for evaluating risk, enabling governments to offset changes in threat with changes in vulnerability for ships and port facilities

**Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Maritime Navigation 1988 (SUA Convention and Additional Protocols).** The main purpose of this convention is to ensure that appropriate action is taken against persons committing unlawful acts against ships. These includes the seizure of ships by force, acts of violence against persons on board ships, and placing of devices on board a ship, which are likely to endanger or damage it. The convention obligates contracting governments either to extradite or prosecute alleged offenders.

**Container Security Initiative (CSI).** CSI was launched in 2002 by the US Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, to increase security for container cargo shipped to the US. This includes use of scanning machines and position of US personnel in the ports loading containers heading into the US. Sri Lanka became the first country in South Asia to adopt CSI in all its ports dealing with international shipping. The arrangement is to randomly check containers and to closely monitor the point of loading and transit of containers

**Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).** Launched by US in 2003. PSI is cluster of bi-lateral agreements allowing signatory states to search each other's ships and aircraft on suspicion that they might be carrying cargo related to WMD

## **MARITIME SECURITY- DEFINITION**

Measures taken by owners, operators, and administrators of vessels, port facilities, offshore installations, and other marine organizations or establishments to protect against terrorism, sabotage, stowaways/illegal migrants/asylum seekers, piracy/armed robbery against ships and port facilities, smuggling of contraband, and theft of vessels.

It is a concept that includes military science, police science, security arrangement, psychology, sociology, domestic and International law, history, geography, geo-politics, religion and world trade. Proper maritime security creates a condition that establishes and maintains certain protective measures.

These protective measures consist of responses to recognized military security threats, and include, Intelligence gathering and analysis, Security planning, Physical security measures and procedures, Operational security measures, Crisis management and Training

These security measures must be able to address two important tasks. They must provide prompt warning of any immediate threat, and they must be able to remove that threat with as effective response.

## **Security Threats**

There are six maritime threats that affect every port and every vessel in varying degrees. and they are;

Pilferage and Theft

Illicit drug smuggling

Illegal migrants and stowaways

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

Sabotage

Terrorism

## **PIRACY**

Indian Ocean is the hot bed of international crime, with the most number of incidents of piracy, gun-running, and human and drug trafficking taking place in its waters. Piracy is particularly prevailing in South East Asia and Gulf of Aden/Horn of Africa. Despite some counter measures, piracy is a threat to shipping and the area in which ships are vulnerable is increasing. Piracy off the Somali coast has been a threat to international shipping since the turn of the century, with the risk of attacks in the region rated 'high' since the first quarter of 2010.

Piracy is a crime of opportunity. It is an economically motivated activity conducted either by gangs of petty thieves who steal ships' property or by organized criminals, who steal whole ships for their cargo and in many cases, kill the crew. Somali pirates who operate off the horn of Africa and long distances from the Somali mainland into the Indian Ocean are different: in their model it is the crew who are valuable nor the ship or its cargo. Their aim is to exploit the difference between the marginal value placed on human life in Somalia and its value in the outside world. Piracy is a land-based crime which is manifested at sea. Hence piracy has to be defeated on land as a political and economic change.

As per UNCLOS, only certain ships are entitled to intervene. i.e. warships or military aircraft, or other ships and aircraft clearly marked and identified as being on government service and authorized to that effect. Countering piracy is a matter of concern not only to the affected

ships but also to the entire region and even the world trade. Measures for countering piracy can be divided into three categories.

-Preventive measures. These are measures intended to make both actual and prospective Pirates abandon this 'career'

-Offensive measures. These are measures intended to defeat Pirates, their by preventing launch of Pirate attack in future.

-Defensive Measures. These are defensive measures to prevent pirates from boarding a ship

If the LTTE sea tigers were not defeated, they would have used their maritime capabilities to pirate ships passing Sri Lanka and that would have been a major threat to maritime commerce in the region

### **Maintaining a Balance between Security and Trade**

It was necessary to convince, that effective security is what the industry should have in place anyway in its own commercial interest, and those of its customers. Provision of effective means to counter any of the maritime threats provides a foundation for security measures and procedures to address terrorism. Conversely, effective measures and procedures to detect and deter terrorism will also counter other maritime security threats. It required a significant change of attitude to security by the industry and what might have been acceptable in the past was no longer acceptable now. It was no longer just money, lives but, national security of states was also at risk. However, balance must be struck-trade must continue-we should not do the terrorists job for them.

### **LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE) AND OCEAN**

Arguably, the LTTE was the most powerful and ruthless maritime terrorist organization in the world, with a well-developed and well-tested capability for acts of maritime terrorism. The Sea Tigers, which was the naval arm of the LTTE, had a well-structured command organization which had its own attack, logistic and suicide craft squadrons, which were capable of operations even in high seas. The Sea Tigers also had a merchant fleet which was engaged in various legal

as well as illegal activities through various front companies based in many capitals of the world. The LTTE had been involved in large-scale trafficking of drugs to western markets with its fleet of about 12 commercial ships registered in states providing flags of convenience. The cash generated from the sale was used to buy small arms in black markets, where they are available in plenty at low prices, left over from the conflicts in the past. The Sea Tigers had also carried out a number of terrorist attacks against naval as well as civilian targets, hijacked ships, attacked ships in harbour and engaged in large-scale gun-running and other crime at sea. They dominated certain coastal areas, rivers and lagoons in the northern part of Sri Lanka, where government forces were trying to retake control. In many ways, then, the LTTE could be considered as the leader, or trend setter, in maritime terrorism. Certainly, the possibility exists for technology and tactics transfer between various terrorist groups which are aspiring to acquire maritime capabilities, even though they may not have the same psychology or motives, and for further copycat acts of terrorism as occurred in the case of the USS Cole and MT Limburg. Therefore, a detailed study of the development, strengths and weaknesses of the LTTE Sea Tigers and the multitude of counter actions taken by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Sri Lanka Navy is essential for anyone interested in studying the trends and danger posed by maritime terrorism.

### **LTTE AND SEA TIGERS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.**

As the Tamil insurgency grew, they came to realize the importance of the ocean for their growth and sustenance. The LTTE leader, Prabhakaran is reported to have said “The security of Tamil Eelam is interlinked with that of its seas. It is only when we are strong on the seas, and break the dominance the enemy now has, that we will be able to retain the land areas we liberated and drive our enemies from our homeland”. Due to the geographical closeness and common ethnicity, the LTTE has been operating between the southern coast of India (Tamil Nadu) and the northern coast of Sri Lanka (Jaffna). Coastal Sri Lankan Tamils, especially its fishing community locally known as Kariyar (to which the LTTE leader belongs), are traditionally boat builders and seafarers. The Sea Tigers were established in 1984 with these militant fishermen in order to transfer men and materials across the Palk Strait to support the war against GOSL, quickly becoming the most capable and tactically astute of all seaborne

insurgency groups responsible for sinking 29 naval ships and craft and few freighters. The major tasks entrusted to Sea Tigers include:

- Weakening the dominance of the SLN at sea.
- Reducing freedom of operations of the SLN in support of ground operations carried out by the Sri Lanka Army.
- Providing much needed logistic support to the LTTE.
- Hampering GOSL efforts in providing relief supplies to the people of Northern province of Sri Lanka.
- Carrying out reconnaissance of harbours and other maritime or coastal installations.
- Using Sea Tiger divers to infiltrate harbours and anchorages to carry out underwater sabotage and lay mines and recover materials from sunken naval craft.
- Ferrying injured/sick cadres and reinforcement cadres between coastal locations.
- Adding international legitimacy to the LTTE's claim for a separate state on the basis that they have a *de-facto* navy.

### **Sea Tiger Attack Craft.**

In the beginning, the Sea Tigers used fiberglass dinghies (FGD) with multiple out board motors (OBM) and carried small arms for protection and attack purposes. These boats were no match for the high-speed and better-equipped SLN craft. Soon the LTTE realized the need to have much bigger, faster craft with mounted guns. The attack craft used by the Sea Tigers were fitted with multiple high power OBMs sometimes even high as 250 horse power and 04 such engines coupled together, could achieve speed in excess of 45 knots. These attack craft were fitted with radars, global positioning systems (GPS), radio communication equipment, night vision equipment, medium caliber guns (12.7 mm up to 30 mm ) , and carried an assortment of small arms, rocket propelled grenade (RPG), and other improvised weapons such as multiple

barrel rocket launchers (MBRL). The hull is usually made of fiberglass materials in order to make it lighter and faster and has good sea keeping qualities. These craft were used primarily for escorting their logistic movements, casualty evacuations, or simply to attack SLN craft patrolling at sea. Usually, they operate in a cluster of about 10 and accompanied by a few suicide craft. As the sea Tigers did not have any protected harbours along the coastal area under their domination, these boats together with other boats in their inventory were kept on land, hidden from naval and air observations until they were required for a mission. The LTTE used a specially designed cradle for launching and recovery of these craft for operations and training purposes. A Sea Tiger boat would be taken into a trailer, and either a tractor or a dozer would pull them 2-3 Km inland from the beach to avoid detection by SLAF.

### **Sea Tiger Logistic Craft**

The logistic craft of the Sea Tigers were mainly used for ship to shore transfer of war like materials and coast to coast logistic transfers or for transferring of LTTE cadres. These craft were also made out of fiberglass materials and have good sea keeping qualities and can achieve high speeds. These craft were lightly armed and have sufficient space for cargo and were fitted with equipment similar to that of an attack craft for independent or group operations.

### **Sea Tiger Suicide Craft (Black Sea Tiger Craft)**

The suicide squad, or the Black Sea Tigers of the LTTE, was formed in 1990. The LTTE having suffered initial setbacks at the hand of the SLN was looking for ways to challenge its supremacy at sea. They experimented with small fiberglass fishing boats packed with large quantities of high explosives and ramming their intended target. The Black Sea Tigers, initially used to take cover of the ordinary fishing boats and launch surprise attacks against SLN craft giving minimal reaction time, while the SLN craft was approaching to check the fishing boats or berthed inside a harbour. It was an extremely difficult task to differentiate a Black Sea Tiger suicide craft, and the government was compelled to declare high security zones off the port limits and to impose certain fishing restrictions in order to prevent them exploiting the situation.

The suicide craft of the Black Sea Tigers were the most potent weapon in their arsenal against the SLN, and other, economic targets. They can be compared to a human guided anti-ship missile. The LTTE had towards the end, had progressed to having high speed, low

silhouettes, stealthy design, and purpose-built suicide craft. These vary in length and are usually fitted with 2 high speed OBMs, as high as 200 HP. The bow section which is usually armour plated, is filled with 150-200 kgs of high explosives and can be detonated on impact with the target or by an operator-triggered mechanism. These suicide craft were able to race in towards the intended target even under fire as the bow is protected with armour. They were normally operated by a single Black Sea Tiger with the protection of Sea Tiger attack craft in a cluster waiting for the right moment to home onto the intended target. A video of a Black Sea Tiger attack in Trincomalee harbour in 2000, reveals the use of stealth technologies in boat design.

**Sea Tiger Swarm Tactics** Towards latter part of the conflict, the Sea tigers used to launch about 15 sea tiger craft and another 8-10 suicide craft, often mingling with the fishermen, to attack the SLN formations. It was very difficult to identify the difference between the fishing craft and LTTE boats and SLN had to watch for subtle difference in the behavior of the craft. The Black Sea Tiger suicide boats had to be identified and destroyed swiftly, as given time, they would attack in a pack of 5-6 in an attempt to overwhelm the SLN crews. The suicide boats were having a very low profile, moving at 35-40 knots, with armour protected bow, and were extremely difficult to engage. During the CFA of 2002, the LTTE built even much larger suicide boats with a view, mainly to attack SLN troop transporting ships, which used to carry more than 3000 troops at any one time, plying between the eastern port and north, which was the main sea line of communication

### **Modus operandi of Sea Tiger Logistics Transfers**

Lacking suitable harbours, the LTTE relied on mid-sea transfer of its lethal cargoes from LTTE ships to smaller LTTE logistic craft or commandeered fishing trawlers as close to the shore as possible to avoid naval surveillance. The Sea Tiger attack craft provided close quarter support and escorted these logistic boats. In the event of detection by the SLN, a ship would attempt to move towards high seas and other craft would try to steer in different directions whilst the attack craft and possibly the suicide craft tried to engage with the naval craft. In the event the SLN craft are able to intercept the loaded LTTE craft, they will try to self-detonate in order to destroy the cargo and the craft and to prevent it being apprehended by the SLN.

## **LTTE Merchant Fleet and Flags of Convenience**

The LTTE had not only owned and operated a fleet of twelve ocean-going freighters, most of which were said to be well equipped and capable of trans-oceanic long distance sailing, and plying between Europe and Asia, flying Panamanian, Honduran, and Liberian flags, they have also hijacked valuable commercial vessels as with the 1997 hijacking of the freighter *Stillus Limassul*, loaded with more than 30,000, 81mm mortar rockets, worth over a million dollars. Through various front organizations, these ships were used for carrying legitimate cargo when they were not engaged in illegal trade for the organization. They benefited from large amounts of money collected from the Tamil Diasporas living abroad to purchase these ships, which were also engaged in gun running, narcotic trade, human smuggling and other maritime crimes. A fleet of about 12-15 ships were under the LTTE at various times at various ports. Apprehending these ships was difficult due to a dearth of intelligence and corrupt practices prevailing at some international ports. The SLN, with limited resources, were maintaining surveillance around the country with limited success. As Sri Lanka is situated amidst busy shipping lanes, it was difficult to identify the bogus LTTE ships unless they come fairly close to the land and carry out ship to boat transfers. The SLN changed tactics in 2006-2007 and started developing its own intelligence network with the assistance of friendly foreign countries and started tracking down the bogus LTTE ships more than thousands of miles away. The SLN with limited blue water capability began intercepting the LTTE ships or 'floating arms warehouses' and their efforts paid dividends as they were able to destroy seven such ships during the year 2007 alone. These ships were reportedly carrying a large stock of weapons, mortars, artillery ammunition, and parts of light aircraft, diving equipment, torpedoes, and speed boats, Electro Optic devices, under water vehicles, night vision devices and explosives. These ships were not flying any flag and did not carry the proper International Maritime Organization (IMO) identification number, and did not have a port of registry. They either attempted to evade boarding or fired towards SLN ships when they were challenged at sea following the internationally accepted rules of engagement. SLN had no choice but to destroy them on self defence. If these items had landed in LTTE territory, one can only imagine the consequences. Without exaggeration, the efforts undertaken by the SLN could be seen as one of the most important components in the global battle against terrorism.

## **LTTE SEA TIGERS AND TRANS-NATIONAL TERRORISM: THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND ORDER**

With globalization, the world was not immune from the LTTE's development of brown (coastal), and blue (deep sea) water maritime capability. Given the rapid growth in information technology, any potential terrorist organization could obtain details of maritime operations carried out by the LTTE. How had it been possible for LTTE to acquire huge quantities of arms and ammunitions and explosives? Would they not sell these weapons or transport them on behalf of another terrorist group? How did they operate merchant vessels despite various international conventions aiming to regulate the international shipping activity? These are some of the questions to which the international community should find answers in order to understand the threat posed by maritime terrorism more generally. With its fleet of merchant vessels, it was ahead of the competition in acting as couriers, as well as providers of military training to several other groups in the region. Long before the Al-Qaeda attack on USS Cole and MT Limburg, the Sea Tigers displayed considerable ingenuity and daring in seaborne insurgency, providing inspiration to any terrorist group which aspired to maritime capability. In a 19 March 2001 interview with the BBC, Sea Tiger chief Soosai stated 'I think in Yemen they used our strategy of targeting the hull in their suicide attacks to blow up an American ship USS Cole, this is exactly what we used to do' This statement should not be considered lightly. It was the LTTE who pioneered the suicide attack craft and it is quite possible that Al- Qaeda either obtained the technology from LTTE or simply copied the method having seen their success. The LTTE and its Sea Tigers had shown a remarkable capability to use dual use technology for their terror operations. They have used commercial underwater equipment and vehicles to attack shipping in harbour as well as on fixed route passages.

It is also possible that other terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda use of the established LTTE shipping network to transport destructive materials to their bases across the globe. Although fought a national war of liberation, maritime arm of the LTTE presented, AL Qaeda with a source for maritime terrorism knowledge. From day one, the LTTE had been involved in human cargo smuggling, illicit drug and narcotics operations, smuggling of arms to raise funds

for their outfit. This had not been limited to Sri Lanka or its closest neighbors, but had operated through their front organizations right around the world.

India must have been very concerned about the growing threat posed by the LTTE Sea Tigers in the vicinity of its southern coast. The LTTE was able to operate despite increased surveillance by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard in the narrow strip separating the two countries mainly due to shared ethnicity and various other factors. The LTTE had shown a remarkable capacity for indiscriminate targeting of civilians during the decades of war. Given their record of civilian deaths, it would not be unreasonable to fear that they could have even used a crude nuclear device if it meant avoiding defeat at the hand of GOSL military forces.

## **LESSONS LEARNT FROM SRI LANKAN CONFLICT**

### **LTTE Grand strategy.**

Sri Lanka had experienced a brutal terror regime for almost three decades. Yet despite the indiscriminate, brutal attacks on the political leadership, military leadership, innocent civilians, and military as well as other economic targets, the country has been able to maintain a healthy growth rate and continue with social development. Indeed, more than 50% of the Tamil population lives outside the conflict area, and they live peacefully with other ethnic communities including the majority Sinhalese community. This chapter will identify and analyze the positive responses by the GOSL as a way forward in the international effort to deal with the growing threat of maritime terrorism.

SLN over the protracted war with the LTTE, was able to transform itself from a constabulary service into a potent counter-insurgency force and came the winner at the end. SLN action as a war fighting force capable of confronting a well-armed opponent possessing expert asymmetric-warfare skills in the maritime domain are worthy of careful scrutiny for all the navies in the world. SLN had to maintain freedom and safety of SLOCs, Escort MVs, Secure the harbours, Transport troops from East to North and vice versa, maintain surveillance of the EEZ and territorial waters.

SLN had to maintain 24/7 surveillance and high degree of readiness and remain prepared to intercept any LTTE sea movement whilst preventing LTTE attacks as well. It is pertinent to mention that despite being in the priority hit list of the LTTE, SLN was able to maintain the

freedom of the SLOCs, protection of Harbours, and maintained the sea control which was essential for international trade, humanitarian operations and sustenance of the military mechanism, especially, in the troubled North of the country. Despite many attempts by the LTTE sea tigers and black sea tigers, maritime trade continued, essential goods were transported and ports were never closed. SLN was able to evaluate the risk factor accurately by identifying the threat posed by the LTTE, studying the vulnerability of each port, SLOCs correctly and understanding the criticality of such facilities to maintain the freedom of the sea. SLN was able to implement necessary measure to mitigate the identified vulnerabilities and to prevent LTTE terrorists from launching their boats, under water saboteurs and other improvised submersibles. These tasks were achieved by reducing the vulnerabilities by various experiments, enhancing physical security measures, R and D, combining technology and improvisation, using dual use commercially available equipment, and, even at times using very rudimentary methods. The criticality was reduced by having alternative arrangements, maintaining redundancy with safety of human element as a prime consideration. General training, user training, maintenance training and continuous full scale, table top exercises and drills, keeping in line with the accepted international standards were some other important aspects of the success story. Intelligence gathering by own troops and disrupting of LTTE intelligence gathering was a major milestone achieved in maintaining the functions of the ports around the country.

The results were successfully achieved. Although the LTTE was able to carry out reconnaissance and had made detailed maps, sand models and possibly infiltrated some of their cadres into various organizations, the SLN never allowed them to be successful in any major attack. Disruption of the economy of the adversary has always been an important strategic objective of terrorist organizations,

### **Liaison with Stake Holders**

Another critical area was the Liaison between the SLN and other stake holders in shipping and ports. It was very important that all stake holders understood the need to keep the ports open and the ships sailing, as that was the life line of the country and country's economy and many jobs depended on those. SLN had to tread that line very carefully and was able to obtain the necessary assistance. Also, it was considered essential as it provided local intelligence, contacts, guidance and assistance in understanding international best practices, which was very

important in getting the major shipping lines to continue call on our major ports. As a result of these security related measures, general maritime security threats such as cargo theft, stowaways, piracy and armed robbery against ships, illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons, sabotage, came down to zero.

### **Technological Advances of Military forces**

Sri Lankan armed forces have evolved through experiences against the most hardened terrorist organization in the world and have taken huge strides in acquiring sufficient fire power, night-fighting capabilities and accurate targeting systems. The armed forces were also able to achieve successes through improvisations like the LTTE. Despite having limited blue water capabilities, the SLN has been able to conduct offensive maritime operations thousands of miles away from the country and destroy almost all of the LTTE ships which were used for various nefarious activities including gun running. The SLN is in the process of enhancing surveillance of the entire territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the island by acquiring more blue water capability and with technologically advanced radar systems.

SLN have developed elite commando style organization which was able to operate deep behind LTTE lines and carried out surprise attacks or obtain target data for accurate aerial bombings. The intelligence agencies also had come a long way and were able to monitor LTTE conversations and take either preventive or pre-emptive action to deny them success. Various research and development projects had been undertaken by the armed forces and the industry and their innovations were used to good effect. As the Commander of the Sri Lankan Navy, Vice Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda stated 'the secret in combating asymmetric warfare is to deliver an unconventional response' Despite the difficulties, however, the technological advances embraced by the GOSL had been a key part of their success at fighting this threat.

### **Technology against Maritime Terrorism and Dual Use Technology**

SLN in the period of 2005 to 2010 deployed Network Centric Sensors such as surveillance radars, Electro Optic Surveillance Systems, AIS, HF Surface Wave Radar and Marine Small target trackers around the Island to carry out effective maritime surveillance. All these sensors were acquired as stand alone units without Networking and remote access features which were very costly. SLN carried out Research and Development in order to network these

existing sensors at coastal locations for viewing by various theatre commanders and headquarters. This gave an unprecedented operational tempo and command decisions were made right at Naval Ops centres with the easy access to higher echelons. SLN utilized commercially off the shelf (COTS) equipment and accessories to achieve networking which cost much less than sophisticated systems proposed as projects by manufacturers at a considerable cost and longer time frames.

### **Small Boat Concept.**

Toward 2006, the LTTE had improved their suicidal craft, using multiple engines with greater horse power, specially, during the cease fire agreement from 2002 to 2006. They had increased the quantity of explosives carried and minimized RADAR signature, and became a great threat to SLN main Fast Attack Craft squadron. The SLN had to look for an appropriate counter strategy, and that was the small boat concept. The SLN developed. A low profile small boat, with superior speed, and lethal fire power, similar to that of a fast attack craft. SLN engineers carried out R and D, and came out with three designs, copying some of the Sa Tiger craft designs and made the moulds with better sea keeping qualities and built more than 150 such craft in their own boat yard. These were 14 m and 17m long Inshore Patrol Craft, 23 feet Arrow boat and 16 m long Command cum fighting Craft. These boats were fast, highly maneuverable and could carry lethal weapons and had better sea keeping qualities. SLN was able to build and fully equip an Inshore Patrol Craft (IPC) in 45 days and arrow boat in 8 days, amazing speed of construction. Also by building these boats indigenously, were able to save millions of money to the tax payer and the country. The 14m and 17 ml boats were fitted with a double barrel 23 mm guns, 40 mm AGLs, 12.7 machine guns and 23 feet boats were fitted with a single barrel 23 m gun and 12.7 mm machine gun These boats were mission oriented and Squadrons of these craft were stationed in strategic locations and their deployment really confused the Sea Tigers, now that they had to confront with multiple targets, but with superior fire power. Further, these boats could be launched from most places as they could be based strategically, and capable of rapid action/reaction interceptor operations. SLN s ability to concentrate a force at short notice that was able to confront the Sea Tigers was an important factor in gaining the upper hand in sea battles. In a very short period, SLN could shift one whole squadron to another place, so at some locations we had combined and had up to 60 boats available in some battle situations.

These squadrons could maximize fire power like infantry tactics with arrowed formation to expand each boat's arc of fire in an attack, the crews for these small craft were all volunteers and received special training and were a highly motivated lot. Towards latter part of the humanitarian operations, the boat crews spent a considerable amount of time at sea and often changed while at sea to obtain little rest before they start the next shift again. There were occasions that they refused to take rest and were on patrol for much longer time as they were committed not to allow LTTE leadership to escape from the advancing army troops.

The FACs has also been upgraded with 30mm cannon and SLN engineers used its own engineers to integrate the Bush master M242 30mm cannon on deck. SLN saved money and time as they only had to pay for the gun and not for the integration. FACs are capable of staying at sea for longer periods and maintain sea control. They have speed in excess of 40 knots and act as interceptors. The FACs were a deterrent to enemy movements. The FACs bore the brunt of LTTE attacks and suffered 20 losses.

### **Destruction of 'LTTE Floating Warehouses'.**

Towards year 2006, SLN knew that LTTE were bringing lot of war materials, using mostly fishing trawlers, owned or commandeered by them, which were being escorted by LTTE sea tiger attack and suicide craft. In 2006 SLN destroyed nine such trawlers and arrested two, mostly, in Gulf of Mannar area. SLN realized that it would be a never ending exercise as there were large number of fishing trawlers and it was not possible to check them all. SLN concentrated on the 'source' that is the 'floating warehouses' that brings in the arms for transferring into the fishing trawlers. This was also a difficult task as there are major shipping lanes very close to the Island and boarding and searching all of them was not possible. SLN developed its intelligence net work and soon, were able to identify the point of origin and details about these bogus LTTE ships and their locations at sea. By this time, the LTTE used to position their ships within the EEZ of Sri Lanka and once the navy attacked and destroyed them, the floating ware houses were shifted to much greater distances and beyond the reach of SLN.

By this time, combining technical and human sources, the SLN was able to have a pretty good idea about the details of the ships, the crews, cargo carried, methods of replenishing and transferring war like materials from shore to warehouse ships, the history of the ships, the LTTE

front companies which operated them and their whereabouts. In 2007, SLN was able to locate four such LTTE warehouse ships more than 3200 Km from the shores of the country and took the bogus ships by complete surprise. On 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September, we managed to destroy three such ships whilst the fourth managed to escape. Then on 17<sup>th</sup> October, the fourth ship was also destroyed, thus ending the LTTE warehouse ships and the lethal cargo they carried. LTTE depended heavily on the logistics by the sea for their sustenance and destruction of these ships badly affected their over all strategy. The ships destroyed by SLN were carrying more than 80,000 artillery rounds, 100,000 mortar rounds, three air craft in dismantled form, torpedoes and surface to air missiles, swimmer-delivery vehicles, diving equipment, RADAR equipment, high power OBMs, High speed boat and even a bullet proof jeep probably for their leader. No war effort can be sustained with out continuous supply of logistics and this was one of the crucial turning points in the grand victory against the LTTE.

### **Special Boat Squadron (SBS)**

The SLN's elite SBS was formed in 2005 only with 36 personnel. Now the strength has been increased up to 600. SBS personnel are possessing very high degree of physical fitness and receive advance training in both sea and land warfare tactics. They also receive training in paratrooper, diving skills, small boat handling, VBSS, Combat medicine, They operate in 4-8 men teams and use Arrow boats for rapid insertion and black RFD for covert approach from sea. They are capable of long range communications and long range surveillance operations. SBS was able to operate behind enemy lines and provide much needed accurate target information and LTTE activities. The SBS was heavily involved in Eastern province in land strike operations.

### **Research and Development.**

Improvisation, Ingenuity and innovation were the key to success in the war against the LTTE sea tigers. SLN was always trying to use what ever was available to the best effect. We had to improvise our fleet. We had to use innovation and ingenuity to get the job done. We did not have Frigates and had to depend on our OPVs, old tankers, Merchant Vessels and even large fishing trawler. We had to pre-position MVs and Tankers mid sea to refuel our OPVs to enhance endurance and this had to be done on both ways. We had to be 100% sure with our intelligence as attacking an innocent merchant ship would have been suicidal for us. We had to develop

Rules of Engagement as per international standards. As a result of these operations, the LTTE lost their supplies and that, in fact turned the tide against them. Since 2006, not a single LTTE ship was able to bring in materials and that was a serious blow for their strategy.

**Layered Defence.** Especially towards the end of the Humanitarian Operations SLN had to establish “defence barriers” of vessels four layers deep, consisting of fast attack craft (FAC), offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), gun boats, and the SLN’s Rapid Action Boat Squadron (RABS) and Special Boat Squadron (SBS), eliminating the LTTE’s seaward escape route and preventing supplies from reaching the rebels. This was indeed a very successful concept as it prevented all possible escape routes for LTTE leadership by sea and they had to keep all their small boats, mini submersibles and other assets on land. The LTTE was cornered on land

### **Fishing Marshalling**

It is a well known fact that LTTE started the insurgency by using ordinary fishing craft for movement between northern coast of Sri Lanka and southern coast of India. SLN introduced the concept of Fishing Marshalling points along the vulnerable coast in order to monitor fishing and other related activities, without disturbing the livelihood of fisher folks, but maintaining a watchful eye. The fishing boats going into the sea and returning were checked and a pass system was introduced to identify the genuine fishermen. Also these marshalling points provided necessary guidance, safe storage facility for fishing boats, OBMs and nets and assisted Fishermen in danger there by becoming a friend and not merely a law enforcing authority.

### **Port Security and Coastal Domination**

The ports in Sri Lanka were on the top priority hit list of the LTTE. The LTTE had carried out reconnaissance and even infiltrated some of the port facilities in order to gather intelligence. They had made sand models of ports and special teams with large sums of money were tasked to attack ports. They were able to achieve some success but were repulsed by naval action without allowing them to damage the function of the ports. SLN was given the task of maintain security of all the ports in the country as well as implementation of even International Security regimes. SLN had to carry out security assessments, make elaborate security plans, involve other agencies, carry out joint –full scale rehearsals on a regular basis and train all employees, users and security personnel. With such a huge commitment the security of all the harbours in the country was maintained even at the height of LTTE campaign. It is believed that

some best practices introduced by SLN were taken for serious consideration by IMO when they were preparing the ISPS Code.

SLN also had to dominate large stretches of coastal domination either side of major ports in order to prevent and LTTE Sea Tiger boat or improvised terrorist boat, or under water saboteurs from launching to carry out attacks against harbours. SLN had to combine human element with various detection equipment, day/night cameras and inshore patrols in order to maintain surveillance of the coast. These efforts paid dividends as no LTTE boat was able to launch attacks against ports during the latter part of the conflict.

### **INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION.**

The problem of terrorism is a global one. The menace of terrorism could be thousands of miles away from the conflict, but the effects could still be felt. In today's globalised and technologically advanced world, no country can remain totally immune from terrorist events elsewhere. And no solution can be restricted to the actions of any one government by itself. Although the LTTE was fighting for a local cause, they had not remained local in their guerilla tactics. They had developed a nexus with other terrorist organizations and engaged in various activities which broke international conventions and the rule of law in other countries.

The need to counter the threat of maritime terrorism, therefore, should lead to fundamental changes in the international maritime security environment, and the major sea borne trading nations International, regional and bi lateral cooperation and coordination is necessary in combating global menace of terrorism. However, as Admiral Sir Jonathan Band, the First Sea lord of the Royal Navy has stated, 'Until recently, the naval community was largely unfamiliar with the threat of terrorism .As a result, there is very little specialist anti-terrorist capability at sea. This is unfortunate because more and more we are seeing an increased utilization of the maritime space by terrorists' It is likely that more and more non state actors and organizations would have influence on the ocean activities which has hitherto been enjoyed only by legitimate navies.

The LTTE was able to collect large sums of money from Tamil Diasporas living abroad. The outfit's annual income was anywhere between \$175 million and \$ 385 million, of which \$

175 to \$ 250 million comes from drug trafficking. Funds collected by the LTTE from Tamil Diaspora, continue to have a destabilizing effect in Sri Lanka. These funds have led to a vicious cycle of intimidation, arms smuggling, and terrorism. Most of the governments, where large communities of Tamils are living have taken many a measure to curtail these unlawful collections. However, the LTTE was still able to collect this money through various fronts or charitable organizations.

**International Shipping and security Regimes** Commercial shipping is at the centre of world trade, and disrupting it would have serious consequences on the global system and economies of many a country. Shipping is a very complex situation as well. Commercial shipping is multi-national. A ship can be owned by a company, crewed by nationals of another country, flagged by a third country, carrying goods of yet another country to further countries. It can traverse any number of national or international waters before it reaches a final destination. The goods thus arrived can be shipped onward in an equally complex way. This complex network can be exploited easily by terrorist groups with the intent to do so. The IMO is the regulating body of international shipping activities and is responsible for providing necessary guidelines to contracting governments and companies that operate ships and for laying down various standards that have to be maintained, such as safety, standards of training, prevention of accidents, prevention of maritime pollution and after 9/11, enhancing security on board the vessels and port facilities. Sri Lanka is a member of the IMO and has ratified all the international conventions and implements those effectively so as to ensure that required conditions are maintained. Unfortunately, the IMO is only a regulatory authority and the implementation of these conventions is left mainly to the governments and shipping companies.

### **SLN SUCCESS**

Since The beginning of the conflict, SLN has been fighting a well-armed, experienced and determined, enemy using a wide range of vessels, from small boat to floating warehouses. SLN had to adapt to the developing situation and remain on top at all times. The LTTE was able to destroy at least 30% of our fleet. More than 1100 men of SLN have paid the supreme sacrifice in defence of the country. Despite all these, SLN was able to maintain sea control by using FACs and Fast Gun Boats, small boats, and destroying LTTE wear-houses by OPVs. Number of encounters at sea was reduced from 21 in 2006, to 11 in 2007 and just 4 in 2008. Since 2006, not

a single LTTE ship was able to supply war like materials to the LTTE, dealing serious blow to the overall strategy of them. LTTE resorted to the use of mines and underwater frogmen in order to swing the balance in their favour. IN 2008, SLN lost one FAC and an Auxiliary ship due to under water attacks. SLN had to do all these tasks under severe restraints. Although budgetary allocations were made, either it was taking long time to get required weapons and other equipment or due to various arms embargos, it was not getting what was needed. SLN had no choice but to manage with what ever available maximizing the effect and couple it with sheer determination and resolve to end the LTTE use of ocean and thereby, reducing their capability to wage war on ground.

## **CONCLUSION**

The war against terrorism is different from any other type of war and the GOSL has clearly understood the need to eradicate terrorism from the country in order to secure a lasting peace and to address the problems and grievances faced by the Tamil minority in a peaceful and democratic manner. The priority was to deny bases to the LTTE as the land areas under their total control have given them the opportunity to raise armies, develop naval capabilities and even air capability.

It can be concluded too, that the LTTE Sea Tigers was the most dominant maritime terrorist organization in the world. They certainly had maritime capabilities with international reach and evidence suggests them having links with other terrorist organizations such as ASG and Al- Qaeda and could transfer their hard earned knowledge and other equipment in their arsenal including suicide boats, underwater mines, under water suicide kits and many other improvised lethal items which could be used to attack maritime targets. The LTTE Sea Tigers have developed attack capabilities on the surface and underwater and may well have developed air capability to attack shipping and any other maritime asset as well. Although there is no ideological link between the LTTE and other trans-national terrorist groups, the LTTE could have made available their expertise and equipment for money. In today's world of advanced information technology, ideas and methods can be transferred from one actor to another quickly and easily.

SLN has given a strong message to the maritime terrorists and insurgents, world-wide, that they can be decisively defeated. Sri Lanka was compelled to aggressively respond to brutal acts of maritime terrorism committed by a fearless Sea Tiger wing which in most cases were ready to die in order to defeat and destroy the SLN. However, a committed and dedicated SLN was always able to maintain effective sea control and deny the same to the 'Sea Tigers'. Much talk about Sea Tigers finally became confined to the shore, and not been able to launch any of their boats. Sri Lanka army during the humanitarian operation and in the final offensive were able to recover large number of Sea Tiger attack craft, still on cradles, suicide boats in their jungle hide outs, number of semi-submersibles, and large number of high power OBM's. This is ample proof that the LTTE Sea Tigers were not able to come out to their favourite battle ground, the sea. The LTTE leadership must have had plans to escape by sea, when he could not hold any more the military offensive. The LTTE Sea Tiger leader Soosai had to send his families in a small fishing boat with the fleeing IDPs clearly demonstrate their predicament. SLN suffered some losses at sea due to Sea Tiger action. However, the SLN became victorious at the end and broke the center of gravity, the logistics, of the LTTE. The LTTE could not sustain their battle formations either on land or at sea due SLN action and the Sri Lanka Army was able to capture the whole of the previously LTTE dominated by the LTTE, thereby liberating the entire country. The SLN was able to identify and counter the asymmetric, irregular war launched by LTTE, at times using the same tactics used by the Sea tigers.

The emergence of the Sea Tigers as a credible maritime terrorist group was only a direct threat only to Sri Lanka. But ultimately they could have been a threat for the freedom of seaborne trade. The LTTE had been breaking many international conventions through illegal acts committed by them. Some of the conventions which were violated by LTTE are worth mentioning here;

- Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Maritime Navigation 1988
- International Convention against taking of hostages
- International convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings
- International Convention for Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism

The question should be asked, 'How is it possible for LTTE to acquire large quantities of weapons and other war fighting materials from various parts of the world despite strict international control regimes in place?' And, 'How is it possible for LTTE to transfer these items on board their ships and sail in the ocean without being detected by law enforcement authorities?' Obviously, there are huge gaps in the present international system. If a local terrorist group like LTTE can exploit the systems in place, surely a more organized, international terrorist group like AL-Qaeda can easily exploit these gaps for their advantage. The National Security Strategy of UK identifies Trans-national organized crime as a major threat to UK security, 'Organized crime involving fraud, the trade in illegal drugs, and illegal weapons, illegal immigration and human trafficking is increasing across the world'. The LTTE is falling into all these categories and broke the international laws and conventions with such impunity. They carried out their international activities through various front organizations based in many western countries although they are banned in most of these countries. They exploited the weaknesses in the international system and corrupt government officials in some countries to carry out their nefarious activities. There is no doubt that the LTTE and the Sea Tigers were a threat not only to Sri Lanka but to the international peace and order, directly or indirectly and hence the world has a responsibility to take appropriate action to prevent such organizations from carrying out their illegal activities whether on land or in maritime domain.

### **Seven- Step Strategy to counter maritime terrorism**

The paper presented by Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, Vice Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe, attending the 19<sup>th</sup> Sea Power Symposium in USA, indicated seven-step strategy to defend the oceans from the clutches of terrorism.

-Firstly, Deter the desire and the potential- Addressing the root causes in economic, social and political conditions of the state, which may create the insurgency.

-Second step is to disrupt the organization and network.

-Thirdly, to deny terrorist acquisition and point of origin –by close regional and international cooperation.

-Fourth step involves enhanced surveillance, intelligence and monitoring.

-The Fifth step involves search and detect.

-Sixth step is the arrest, prosecute and destroy.

-The seventh and the final point is securing the enemy's landing point- deny enemy landing by effective coastal and ground domination operations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paper has endeavored to prove that there is a real threat looming in the maritime domain, and the international community has a responsibility to prevent any terrorist organization or any other not-state organization to operate freely in the international system. Preventive action will be the best way of dealing with maritime terrorism as it will be difficult to prevent an attack from taking place once it is launched.

### **Strengthen International Conventions Dealing with Maritime Domain**

Many states tend to relax implementation of international conventions with regards to the maritime domain, the vastness and complexity of which provides many opportunities to exploit legal weakness. Historically, it has not been subjected to proper and continuous policing, and crime at sea has not drawn the attention of the international community sufficiently. These international conventions should have more enforcement authority, and governments or any party contravening them should be dealt with tough punitive action. The countries where corrupt officials and practices thrive should be made to clean up their acts or to face consequences internationally.

**Regulation of Conventional small arms and Explosives** Despite various internationally ratified conventions on control of sales of small arms, ammunitions and explosives, terrorist groups like LTTE have shown a remarkable capability at acquiring war fighting materials in international markets. There should be stricter laws and stringent punishments for companies violating the laws and regulations. These companies should be black-listed if any violations of controls are proved. An international effort must be made to arrest illegal arms dealers wherever they are and their organized rackets should be busted.

### **Cooperation to Curb Trans-national crimes**

There is no doubt that trans-national crime gangs are often linked with terrorist groups as they can be one of their best customers. Groups like the LTTE were engaged in many forms of transnational crimes in order to collect finances to run their war effort. There should be a concentrated effort by the international community to identify such trans-national crime groups and not to allow territories of any countries to be used by them to launch their activities. There should be a comprehensive and integrated effort in curbing these groups.

### **International Partnerships in Intelligence Sharing**

There is no doubt that timely intelligence is essential in order to prevent any crime. This is far more important in the maritime domain due to the much wider scope of the maritime trade and other activities at sea. Intelligence could be considered as the ultimate deterrent weapon that individual states and the international community must possess. There should be intelligence gathering, sharing, and analyzing mechanisms, internationally, regionally or bi-laterally. Efforts must be made to identify possible terrorist capabilities and share such knowledge with other governments so as to make evaluation and identifying vulnerabilities and risks more effective.

### **Prevention of Terrorist Financing**

Any terrorist organization needs funds in order to survive and to carry out their terror campaigns. Groups such as the LTTE depend heavily on forcible and voluntary contributions from the Tamil Diaspora. They are able to collect funds and transfer them or use them to purchase war fighting materials to sustain the war effort. When these organizations are banned in a particular country, they use various charitable organizations and other front organizations to collect the money. This money is helping the continuation and prolongation of conflict rather than solving it. No country should permit her soil to be used to collect terrorist financing and international conventions in this regard should be strictly imposed.

### **Dealing by Governments to curb Terrorist organizations**

Terrorists are masters in propaganda campaigns and they seldom own up to their terror activities and try to expose or even fabricate governments' efforts as human rights violations to which most western governments are sensitive. The fight against terrorism is different from any other form of warfare. Civilian casualties will be inevitable and terrorists always launch a propaganda war in parallel to their terror campaign against the governments and ordinary people. The immediate response of western governments might be to threaten the governments fighting with such wars with

economic or other form of sanctions. These sanctions in fact have a negative effect and provide a boost to the terrorist group. Instead the governments should be encouraged to fight the menace of terrorism whilst upholding internationally accepted norms of human and humanitarian rights and the message should be clear to any terrorist organization that they will not be able to achieve anything by using terrorist tactics. Forcing governments to have negotiations with the terrorist groups while they are still carrying out terrorist activities will also have a negative effect on the fight against terrorism.

**Regional Maritime Initiatives** No single government can protect the SLOCs, ports and maritime trade passing through its waters alone. International and regional cooperation and initiatives in the maritime domain are a must for the freedom of seaborne trade. Regional initiatives, maritime assets, expertise, manpower and maritime intelligence could be utilized to the optimum and hence should be encouraged.

**Regional & International Cooperation** Certain aspects of this co-operation such as those relating to intelligence collection and sharing, physical security and crisis management have already been touched upon in the previous paragraphs. Another aspect relates to mutual operational and legal assistance. Mutual operational assistance relates to action taken by the Navy or the Coast Guard of one country to apprehend terrorists involved in acts of maritime terrorism against another country and mutual legal assistance is about their prosecution, extradition or handing over by the police of the apprehending country to that of the victim country.

**Diplomatic Pressure to Dismantle Maritime Capabilities of Non state actors** The west's tolerant attitude towards the LTTE's maritime terrorist capability was seen as another indicator of its double standards in the fight against terrorism. Terrorist groups like LTTE who had International Maritime Capabilities should be forced to give up maritime capabilities as it could be a threat to the freedom of the seas. The maritime domain should be limited only to agencies operating under a state's authority as clearly mentioned in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

