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**“PAKISTAN NAVY CONTRIBUTING TO MEET MARITIME SECURITY**

**CHALLENGES IN INDIAN OCEAN**

**Rear Adm Khan Hasham Bin Saddique**

**DURING GUALLE DIALOGUE – 2011**

1. Pakistan being an important player and stake holder will continue to contribute effectively and play its due role in promoting peace and stability in Indian Ocean, states R Adm Khan Hasham Bin Saddique of Pakistan Navy during the Gualle Dialogue. While appreciating the conduct of forum he thanked the commander of Sri Lankan Navy for inviting Pakistan Navy to attend this important gathering of maritime experts.

2. He opined that Global security landscape having undergone radical transformation following tragic events of 9/11 has spawned highly complex and multifaceted challenges. The un-abetting struggle against extremism that ensued engulfs many nation states causing huge socio-economic impact. He stated that the region has been in the midst of this radical transformation in global security paradigm. The region remains afflicted with 6 of the 23 active high intensity conflicts on going in the world. Many regional nations also continue to spend heavily on military resulting in massive arm build up on land at sea. In the **Regional Maritime Context**, Indian Ocean lapping the shores of three continents is the smallest but most strategic waterway in the world not to mention 2.6 Bn people residing in 51 states including a few land locked ones in Indian Ocean Rim. The Indian Ocean spanning some 69 Million sq km is the home to some of the world's most important choke points and Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

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Within Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea becomes exponentially significant due to the energy security considerations. A total of 17 million barrels of crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz every day. More than 17,500 tankers and 7,300 Cargo ships pass through the Gulf each year. All this traffic passes close to Pakistan's coast, which puts us in a very important strategic perspective. The region with some 66% of world's proven oil reserves supplies only about 30% of World's oil requirement. Therefore, in future the energy supply from the Gulf and consequently its importance is bound to increase. However, owing to the presence of perennial regional conflicts and struggle for power in the Gulf, safety and security of the Sea Lines of Communication and choke points in the region is as challenging as it is strategically imperative. Any **disruption in energy flow** through the Arabian Sea can have disastrous consequences for both regional and extra regional countries because of heavy dependence. Thus, maritime security of North Arabian Sea (NAS) has attained greater significance with respect to freedom of navigation and uninterrupted flow of energy. With geo economic consideration assuming primacy in strategic thoughts no wonder this region evinces interest of all major players.

4. While discussing the **Maritime security challenges** in Indian Ocean he said that these challenges are both multidimensional and multifaceted and involve a host of non-traditional or non-military threats and challenges. Threats like maritime terrorism, drug trafficking and piracy have acquired trans-regional dimension. Besides, narco-arms and human smuggling remain rampant in the region and are further complicating the security matrix. With respect to terrorism at sea he said maritime domain presents not only the medium by which this threat can move, but offers a broad array

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of potential targets that fit the terrorists' operational objectives. Hence, **maritime terrorism** has emerged as a formidable threat to ships and maritime infrastructure and is now taking on a singular importance in terms of national and international counter terrorism planning. As maritime realm is by design conducive to such threat contingencies there is a real danger of terrorists attacking high profile and relatively unguarded and vulnerable targets using busy sea routes, commercial ports and naval bases. Terrorists can develop effective attack capabilities using a variety of platforms such as suicide boats, commercial vessels as launch platforms or take advantage of a vessel's legitimate cargo such as chemicals, petroleum, or liquefied natural gas, as the explosive component of an attack. In addition to maritime terrorism, the increase in incidents of **piracy** especially in Gulf of Aden has contributed to the spectre of escalating maritime crime. The piracy has expanded both in geographical scope and degree of violence. However, acts of piracy cannot be tackled at sea alone as borne out by the evidence over the last few years. It is a problem that essentially emanates from political chaos that prevails on land. There is thus a concurrent need to address the problems of governance in Somalia. He also described the phenomenon of illegal and unregulated fishing off the Somali sometimes referred as pirates of other kind which must also be ceased. He further went to say that an important adjunct to maritime terrorism is **drugs and arms trafficking**. Drug trafficking is by far the most lucrative means of making quick money, which is perhaps used to finance terror networks and arms trafficking. Afghanistan, supplies about 90% of the global market of illegal opiates. Hence, it is imperative to curb drugs and arms trafficking through the sea and to deny its trafficking to outside world. Gunrunning by sea is also the safest means for transferring arms and ammunition worldwide.

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5. Another dimension to maritime crime is **smuggling of commodities** such as oil, consumer goods and human trafficking which has grown phenomenally in recent years. There has been a progression over time from contraband in low value goods to high value items. The human trafficking has led to ingress of illegal immigrants in some of the regional countries, which has been a cause of increased social turmoil and crimes.

6. Finally a non-military but significant challenge to maritime security forces is **Maritime Pollution and Environmental Disasters**. Oil-related disasters at sea are a major source of concern not only for environmentalists but mariners as well. The oil spillage incidents, which occurred in Pakistan in 2003 and on the South East Coast of Mauritius in Feb 2005 are cases in point, which caused considerable damage to the maritime environment. Regional governments are deeply concerned with major oil spills or wrecks of oil tankers at narrow approaches to harbours and choke points, since such spills or wrecks can seriously affect the free flow of merchant shipping traffic.

5. He said that, the world today has become simply too interconnected and interdependent. This makes it difficult for any nation to single-handedly provide for its own security and economic wellbeing. We, therefore, need to develop strategies to respond and build cooperation and trust at both regional and international levels to deal with the growing maritime challenges. Accordingly, recent years have seen an increasing realization of the utility of maritime security cooperation among regional nations and shared commitments to safety and security have become a high priority.

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However, these are tempered by a strong desire to carefully guarantee national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Thus, such cooperation can only be developed through the process of mutual respect and confidence building.

6. The Indian Ocean Region has extreme economic diversities, where some of the fastest growing economies live in close proximity with some of the poorest countries of the world. The maritime security related problems that confront the region are not 'small' by any standards. However, if the problems of holistic security are enormous but so are the opportunities. In addressing the question of how these opportunities may best be maximized, the most appropriate mechanism is '**Constructive- Engagement**' to counter the individual and collective challenges that we face today. 'Constructive-Engagement' by regional and extra-regional navies enables sharing of operational and doctrinal expertise, generation of interoperability and the enhancement of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). Coupled with this, progressive capacity building of the littoral states can transform their security-related fragility into self-sufficiency. No one should aspire nor be allowed to dominate the sea and any competition between may not transgress into confrontation.

8. He went on to highlight the significance of sea for Pakistan and interests and compulsions. As is the case with most countries more than 95% of Pakistan's trade is sea borne and major requirement of POL imports comes from the Gulf. Continuous flow of energy resources through the Strait of Hormuz is essential for sustenance of economy and wellbeing. Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is 240, 000 Sq Km, with continental shelf

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extending a further 50, 000 sq km. The area is rich in fishery, possibly hydrocarbons and seabed resources and Pakistan aspires to exploit the EEZ for socio economic development of populace. It is therefore, in Pakistan's interest to see that the environment at sea is secure and stable to pursue legitimate interests unimpeded. Additionally, Pakistan is also pursuing development of maritime infrastructure especially along the arid Makran coast. Gwadar is a major commercial undertaking to become trans-shipment port of some reckoning in not too distant a future. The emerging maritime scenario in Indian Ocean thus necessitates a more dynamic role for Pakistan.

11. At international level, enhancing maritime security of the region through participation in the efforts against terrorism and contributing towards stability and peace in the area, especially of SLOCs in the North Arabian Sea, are the focus of our continuous attention. He reiterated, stability in this region is also essential for securing the vital energy supplies of the world which is a common interest of Pakistan and the international community. In this regard, Sustained and concerted efforts of coalition forces and regional players are required to maintain security.

13. Cognisant of its international obligations Pakistan Navy joined the US led multi-national coalition **Task Force-150**, under the ambit of Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan (CMCP). The mission of this TF is to work with regional navies through theatre security cooperation for countering extremism, terrorism and illegal activities at sea, in order to maintain maritime security and stability in AOR. So far, 39 PN ships with embarked helicopters, in rotation, have participated in CMCP. In addition, PN has also

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commanded TF-150 four times. It may be mentioned here that Pakistan Navy's proactive engagement with the international coalition has made it possible to effectively monitor and control drugs and arms smuggling in the North Arabian Sea. PN ships in conjunction with the coalition forces have been successful in deterring and denying the use of sea to potential terrorists. Due to aggressive deployment of Pakistan Navy units in collaboration with other coalition partners in TF-150, there has been no act of maritime terrorism in our region, in the recent past.

14. In addition to TF-150, upon adoption of a Resolution by UNSC to combat piracy in area off HOA and Somali coast, PN also joined **US led multi-national Task Force-151**. So far 11 PN ships with embarked helos have participated in anti-piracy operations under the ambit of TF-151. PN has also commanded this Task Force from Nov last year to March this year and is presently commanding this Task Force for the second time.

15. To curb the growing **threat of piracy around our EEZ**, PN has initiated a number of measures to pre-empt any act of piracy. A counter Piracy Patrol has been instituted in this regard. Pakistan and the Navy played a key role in release and rescue of MV SUEZ and its crew from Somali pirates. It may be mentioned the crew not only included Pakistanis but also Indians and Egyptians as well. In addition PN is also playing a lead role in strengthening the maritime and coastal security around our shores to check illegal activities by nefarious elements. Besides, efforts are in hand to coordinate and synergise actions against such activities through improving information sharing and coordination mechanism by host of agencies involved in the maritime domain.

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16. Besides participation in international coalitions, PN has also taken other initiatives for collaborative maritime security. In this regard **multilateral exercises AMAN** is being held biennially since 2007. AMAN Exercise is a clear manifestation of Pakistan's commitment towards peace and stability through harmony and collaborative maritime security between navies of East and West. These exercises have been well received and deeply appreciated by the participating countries. The third Exercise of the series AMAN 11 was held in March this year in which 28 regional and extra regional navies participated.

17. In the context of environmental protection measures, Pakistan Navy is the lead agency in combating all types of marine disasters at sea. A National Marine Disaster Contingency Plan (NMDCP), prepared by Pakistan Navy, was promulgated by the Government in 2008, wherein the organisation and actions required in case of marine disasters encompassing all national stake holders have been articulated. Exercises have also been conducted in this regard to practice actions by various agencies and to improve our efficiency against such disasters in future.

18. In addition, whenever required, Pakistan Navy has also actively contributed in disaster relief operations both inland and abroad. To mention a few, PN ships and helicopters contributed significantly in rescue and relief efforts at Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia during and after the Tsunami in 2005 and during worst floods in the history of Pakistan last 2010. Even during the current year PN has been active in relief efforts in coastal Areas of Sind Province.



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19. He concluded that the way ahead to address various challenges to regional maritime security is formulation of Collaborative Maritime Security Apparatus. However, a pre-requisite to make any pragmatic headway in this regard will be to resolve contentious issues and disagreements between the regional states through dialogue and political process. Such an approach could facilitate confidence building and trust between the regional countries, leading to furtherance of cooperation in combating maritime crime and enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). He stated that Pakistan is a peace loving country that believes in promotion of peace and stability in the region. The contemporary era is characterized by interdependence and the need to work collectively for peace and stability. In line with our national policies, I feel that Pakistan Navy has an important role to play in ensuring regional maritime security and stability. Due to its historic ties with most regional navies as well as socio-cultural affinity, Pakistan enjoys a unique position in the region. Pakistan provided crucial and meaningful support to the leading Gulf Navies in their formative years, thereby laying a solid foundation for mutual naval collaboration. Consequently there is excellent working relationship between PN and almost all other navies. Pakistan Navy's active participation in Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan, antipiracy operations off Somalia and holding of multilateral exercise AMAN biennially is a clear manifestation of our resolve towards peace and stability through collaborative maritime security arrangements. Pakistan and Pakistan Navy will remain committed, in accordance with our national policies, to play due role in the maritime domain and will continue to contribute significantly to regional maritime security. I feel Pakistan Navy despite resource constraints has proved equal to the task.