

**MARITIME SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:
SRI LANKA'S PERCEPTION OF OVERCOMING CHALLENGES**

INTRODUCTION

“To be secure on Land, we must be Supreme at Sea”

- Jawaharlal Nehru

1. The world depends heavily on sea-borne trade for its continued existence and allowing all countries to participate in the global marketplace in the high seas. Undoubtedly, the economic and political affairs of South Asia have been dominated by the sea. Indian Ocean covers 20% of earth and ranked in third largest water coverage of the world. Indian Ocean Region comprises 38 littoral states, 24 Ocean territories and 17 landlocked countries. Two adjoining seas are connected with the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Red sea, covering an area of 169,000 Sq. miles through the strait of Babel Mandeb, and Persian Gulf, through the straits of Hormuz.

2. Indian Ocean is possessed with vast natural resources, mineral, fish, marine products, oil resource and natural gas. It also provide home to many choke points, such as the Straits of Hormuz, Straits of Malacca, Lombok and the Sunda Straits. Any disruption in traffic flowthrough these points can have disastrous consequences. The disruption of energy flows in particular is a considerable security concern for littoral states, as majority of their energy lifelines is sea based. Since energy is critical in influencing the geopolitical strategies of a nation, any turbulence in its supply has serious security consequences.

3. Sri Lanka's geographical location has, traditionally, represented a significant point in the Indian Ocean region. Since the ancient history, maintaining of a maritime domain became an important factor to Sri Lanka as it is an island nation and lies near to a regional super power and also lies near the main sea route connecting West to East of world. Further it is observed that two regional powers - China and India has made their presence in Sri Lanka in various methods such as ports, aviation and power plants constructions therefore it is paramount important to be aware on maritime domain. It has enabled Sri Lanka to serve as a hub port to most of the countries around.

4. The powerful phenomenon of globalization has highlighted the criticality of Indian Ocean sea lanes for trade and energy security. Oil and gas- laden ships travel from the Persian Gulf transit via the Strait of Hormuz, around Sri Lanka through the Malacca Straits or Indonesia's archipelagic sea lanes into the waters of South China Sea. Reciprocal traffic, carrying finished goods comes from China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan the travels the other way. During the voyage they run the gauntlet of piracy, maritime terrorism and inter-state conflict. This is what worries many nations whose economies are dependent on trade and energy.

5. The strategic location of Sri Lanka as well as the Indian Ocean was amply highlighted in a letter that was written by Admiral *Raeder*, the German C-in-C in a report to *Hitler* dated 13 February 1942, state;
6. "Japan plans to protect this front in the Indian Ocean by capturing the key position of Ceylon, and she also plans to gain control of the sea in that area by means of superior naval forces. Fifteen Japanese submarines are at the moment operating in the Bay of Bengal, in the waters off Ceylon and in the straits on both sides of Sumatra and Java..."
7. "Once Japanese battleships, aircraft-carriers and submarines and the Japanese Air Force are based on Ceylon, Britain will be forced to resort to heavily escorted convoys if she desires to maintain communications with India and the Near East. Plans to strike westwards into the Indian Ocean and seize Ceylon had been prepared by the staff of the Japanese Combined Fleet".

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN OCEAN REGION

8. In general terms, maritime economic activities cover the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services involving the sea. Economic importance of the Indian Ocean is immense. Following are few facts which can be brought up in this regards:-
 - a. About 30% of world trade is handled in the ports of the Indian Ocean.
 - b. Half of the world's container traffic passes through Indian Ocean.
 - c. Continental shelves cover about 4.2% of the total area of the Indian Ocean and are reported to be very Rich in minerals including Tin, Gold, Uranium, Cobalt, Nickel, Aluminum and Cadmium although these resources have been largely not exploited, so far.
 - d. 40 out of 54 types of raw materials used by U.S. industry are supplied by the Indian Ocean.
 - e. Several of the world's top container ports, including Port Kelang and Singapore, are located in Indian Ocean as well as some of the world's fastest growing and busiest ports.
 - f. Indian Ocean possesses some of the world's largest fishing grounds, providing approximately 15% of the total world's fish catch (approximately 9 million tons per annum).
 - g. 55% of known world oil reserves are present in Indian Ocean.

- h. 40% of the world's natural gas reserves are in Indian Ocean littoral states.

Sri Lanka's Ocean Wealth

9. Indian Ocean makes a remarkable contribution to Sri Lanka's economy. The coastal zone of Sri Lanka consists of around 25% of total land area, hosts around one third of the country's population, accommodates over two thirds of all industrial facilities, and over 80% of tourism infrastructure.

10. Marine fisheries play a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's fish supply. According to the National Aquaculture Development Authority (NARA), in 2011, around 86% of total fish supply has come from marine fisheries. The marine fish catch comprises of 58% from coastal area and 42% from off shore.

11. Additionally, Sri Lanka has been blessed to discover oil reserves in the Indian Ocean, which could open a host of new economic opportunities for the country. As of now, there have been no focused investigations of gas hydrate potential in the Sri Lankan off-shores. However, existing data shows that oil and/or gas potential exists in the Mannar Basin to the west, Cauvery Basin to the north, Bengal fan deposits to the east, and newly identified sedimentary basins to the south of the island.

12. In the case of Sri Lanka, the prevailing peaceful environment has opened new avenues for a number of economic activities – for instance in tourism products like whale and dolphin watching. According to experts, Sri Lanka is one of the easiest places to see blue whales, and the warm continental shelf around the country makes it attractive for feeding for these animals.

SECURITY CONCERNS/CHALLENGES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

13. The international security environment is dynamic and uncertain, with recurring disputes, crises, and conflicts in many regions, and endemic conflicts in regions of particular importance to the security of the Sri Lanka. Concern over Sea lane and choke point security is one that any maritime nation cannot ignore in the present day scenario. Inter dependence between nations for the smooth movement of global maritime trade cannot be denied, disruption of which will affect all nations and could be critical to some. For this reason it is paramount that the maritime community is prepared to meet any contingency that may arise from these vital sea lanes, chokepoints and narrow seas coming under threat or siege.

14. Unlike past, the present day enemies are dynamic, irregular, networked and unorthodox. Security of this ocean can be threatened by means of terrorist threats, nation/state threats, transnational criminal and piracy threats, pilferage etc. Illegal and unregulated fishing activities in these waters have become prominent challenge not only to the security of Sri Lanka but also to the other regional countries.

Maritime Terrorism

15. Maritime terrorism was active in the region and Indian waters in particular since mid 1980's due to absence of effective maritime safety mechanism. South Asia and its surroundings constitute the hub of terrorist activities, and there is greater connectivity among terrorist groups. Cross-border terrorist networks are operating across the middle-East, Central Asia, South Asia, and South East Asia. Among the few terrorist organizations which have acquired maritime capabilities, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) stood as the most effective group. The LTTE played a pioneering role in the development and the wide use of suicide bombing as a terrorist weapon.

16. The military defeat of the LTTE and the dismantling of its military infrastructure have considerably reduced security threats in South Asia. The LTTE became a threat not only to Sri Lanka but also to other countries in the sense that its techniques were widely used and copied by other terrorist organizations. It had maintained close connection with other terrorist groups which used its shipping network. Pakistan and the Maldives experienced another type of maritime terrorist attacks the use of the sea coast by terrorists to gain access to the land for asymmetric warfare against state actors.

17. On November 26, 2008, a group of terrorists launched a series of shooting and bomb attacks across Mumbai, India's financial capital, killing 164 people (including 26 foreigners). Group of militants from Lashkar-e-Toiba, traveled by sea from Karachi across the Arabian Sea and reached a fishing village called Machchimaar Nagar in Mumbai. Later, Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram stated in the Lok Sabha, "the Mumbai terrorist attacks have brought into sharp focus the vulnerability of our coastline that extends to 7,500 kms and the imperative need to enhance maritime and coastal security".

Drug Trafficking and Arms Smuggling

18. Drug trafficking and arms smuggling is important aspect whilst considering the maritime security. Due to huge profits, drug trafficking is become one of the most money-spinning means, which is used to finance terror networks and arms trafficking. Due to Sri Lanka's proximity to 'Golden Triangle' and 'Golden Crescent', Sri Lanka had become a major transit point for heroin to Europe and other Western countries on an organized scale. Heroin is routed via Sri Lanka from Pakistan or India on a big scale by sea by containers and mechanized fishing craft. This sea route takes two forms. One is from Pakistan to Mumbai (facilitated by underworld dons in the city), then to Tuticorin or Rameshwaram and then to Sri Lanka by sea, or from Pakistan to southern India.

19. Gunrunning by sea is also the safest means for transferring arms and ammunition worldwide. Arm smuggling can be lead to an interstate conflicts or disputes. The link between drug traffickers and arms smugglers is prominent and

avowal fact in world wide. In national level drug trafficking and arm smuggling can influence the government. Moreover small arm smuggling can challenge the local government such as military takeover of the civilian government as we have well experienced during recent past in regional countries. Nullifying drug trafficking and arm smuggling is one of surpassing security challenge which is in front of Sri Lanka.

Maritime piracy

20. Sea piracy since 2007 has become a significant impediment to global maritime commerce. The estimated annual cost of piracy to global economy is around USD 7 to 12 billion. The projected cost of piracy by 2014 is USD 13-15 billion. In 2010, 86% of piracy activities worldwide were committed by Somali pirates. The numbers slightly decreased in 2011, but remained alarming at 62%. According to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), there were 439 pirate attacks worldwide in 2011 and up to middle of September this year it was 225. The instability prevailing in inland Somalia has transcended to the high seas including West coast of India and South as Mozambique Channel.

21. Maritime piracy is an expected security challenge to Sri Lanka. Even though there is no any reported piracy actions in Sri Lankan waters there were number of incidents in Indian Ocean. Right now there is no direct impact on Sri Lanka but it affects the entire global maritime trade and thereby Sri Lanka also can be affected. Dondra traffic separation scheme can have a little risk of piracy.. A Somalian seaman who apprehended off Dondra head sea accelerated the imagination and fear of piracy in Sri Lankan waters.

Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

22. There have been a problems relating the illegal unreported unregulated fishing activities all over the country's EEZ. To name few, bottom trawling, use of illegal fishing nets and use of explosives and poisons etc. It's the responsibility of the Navy to safe guard fishery wealth of the country. Sharing of fishery resources with neighboring countries, for instant, the intrusion of Indian trawler fishermen in Sri Lankan waters is a huge challenge ahead of the navy.

23. Eradication of the terrorism from the country provided a greater leeway for the fishing in territorial waters. Sri Lanka should be capitalized in this regard and should dominate the northern waters which enriched with the fishing wealth. Sri Lanka Navy should assist the security of fishing to a greater extend will be an opportunity to solve the cross boundary fishing problem over the years.

Human Trafficking

24. From a Sri Lankan perspective illegal migration is committed mainly for economic reasons. With the annihilation of the LTTE on ground in Sri

Lanka, terrorists may also be illegally migrating encouraged by their foreign networks and may also be engaged in trafficking of their cadres across borders.

25. Also Geographical location of the Sri Lanka is one of the closest reasons for rising human trafficking. In the past, many illegal asylum seekers used Thailand and Indonesia as transit points. But presently it has changed. Sri Lanka has been identified as a transit point by human smugglers. The increasing incidents of foreigners using Sri Lanka to get on boats number of locals taking the same risky route. During the past, 10 to 12 months the Sri Lanka Navy arrested over 2,000 illegal immigrants to Australia and arrested a large number of fishing boats which were used.

DEVELOPMENT OF PORTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

26. Ports and shipping plays a significant role in the economic development in Sri Lanka. The strategic geographical location of Sri Lanka for trade, transport and transshipment activities creates a great potential to consolidate its position as a naval and aviation hub of Asia. Towards accelerating activities in the port infrastructure development, several mega port development projects have already been launched during the 2006-2010 period including the Colombo South Harbour Project and Hambantota Port.

Vallarpadam Port in Kochi

27. Vallarpadam Terminal is the largest single operator container terminal in India and the first in the country to operate in a special economic zone. The terminal makes Kochi a key centre in the shipping world reducing India's dependence on foreign ports to handle transshipment.

28. The decision to speed up the process for giving exemption to the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) from cabotage law is part of this. Cabotage rules stipulate that only Indian feeder vessels can move cargo from one Indian port to another. Mother vessels were finding these rules as disincentive to come to Vallarpadam and they opted for ports like Colombo as they can re-ship the cargo from there in foreign flagged vessels even to Indian ports.

29. Currently, the cabotage law does not allow a foreign flag ship to carry export-import cargo between Indian ports which has been transported on the same shipping line. The law does not even allow for empty containers to be transshipped between Indian ports on a foreign flagged shipping line. This affects the 'Just in Time Logistics concept' to an extent as it increases the cost of the end product and burdens the associated infrastructure. Allowing transshipping export-import cargo at Indian ports would also put a lot less pressure on the road and rail transportation in India, thus allowing for lower emissions and more efficient transportation.

30. Relaxing the cabotage law and making the port tariff competitive with nearby foreign ports would assist in getting more mainline vessels calling India, as it will provide better parcel sizes and economies of scale.

Colombo South Harbour Expansion Project

31. The ports sector in Sri Lanka is dominated by Colombo Port. It is the only port equipped to handle container traffic and handles 95% of Sri Lanka's total international trade. It also serves as a transshipment hub port for South Asia; 70% of Colombo's container volume consists of transshipment traffic to and from the Indian subcontinent (ISC). The volume of containers handled increased from 200,000 twenty foot equivalent units (TEU) in 1985 to 1 million TEU in 1995, but the growth rate then tapered off and stagnated between 1997 and 2000 with an annual average of 1.7 million TEU. Growth then increased, and in 2006 Colombo Port handled 3.08 million TEU. One of the main reasons for the stagnation and slow increase in growth is Colombo Port's lack of competitiveness with other major transshipment ports established to cater for Indian subcontinent traffic.

32. The use of larger containerships means that Colombo Port now has to compete with established ports such as Singapore and new ports such as, Dubai, Port Klang, Salalah and TanjungPelepas in the Indian Subcontinent transshipment market. These ports are owned in whole or in part by established port operators and shipping lines, and is able to provide higher productivity and faster ship turnaround times. Thus they have a built-in advantage when competing for the Indian Subcontinent market. Colombo Port's efficiency and locational edge in the Indian Subcontinent transshipment market has therefore eroded as new players in South-East Asia and the Gulf region have used more modern institutional structures and equipment to reduce ship waiting and turnaround times.

33. Colombo Port is not able to offer the additional operating capacity required to compete for the Indian Subcontinent transshipment market Colombo Port has a depth of 15 meters (m). This means that it cannot berth the latest generation containerships, i.e., 9,000 TEU vessels; its competitors in Dubai, Singapore, Salalah, and TanjungPelepas can all berth 9,000 TEU vessels. Shipping economics mean that the trend is toward larger container vessels. Major shipping lines have already launched 11,000 TEU vessels for the Asia–Europe route, and in the next 10 years major container lines could possibly deploy vessels with 13,000 TEU carrying capacity. All hub ports therefore need to upgrade their infrastructure to handle these larger vessels or see their competitive position eroded.

34. The expansion of Colombo port capacity is aimed at helping exporters, importers and value added service providers with possible greater contribution for the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The expansion project of the south harbour will more than double the capacity of the Port of Colombo in container handling services and will have a positive impact on the export/import and value adding service

industry and also to the south Asian shippers at large with more efficient transshipment services and connectivity .

35. The proposed Colombo South Harbour will be located west of the present south west Breakwater in an area of approximately 600 hectares. The proposed harbour will have 4 terminals of over 1,200m in length each to accommodate 3 berths alongside depths of 18m and provision to deepen to 23m to accommodate deeper draft vessels of the future. The channel width of the harbour is to be 560 m and depth of 20m, with harbour basin depth of 18m and a 600m turning circle.

36. The Project will benefit Sri Lankan exporters by enhancing their competitiveness in international markets through lower freight costs and faster delivery times for time-sensitive exports e.g., textiles, which account for 52% of Sri Lanka's exports. Lower freight costs are expected to result in annual savings of \$82 million by 2015, and faster delivery times will create annual savings of \$49 million by 2015. In addition transshipment traffic will generate direct net annual income to terminal operators amounting to \$77 million by 2015.

37. The Project will help consolidate the position of Colombo Port as a transshipment hub port for the South Asian region by providing sufficient container-handling capacity and sufficient depth for the latest generation of mainline vessels to call at Colombo Port. The container handling capacity of each terminal to be developed is 2.4 million TEU/year. When three terminals are fully developed they will provide an additional capacity of 7.2 million TEU/year. Maintaining its status as a transshipment hub port will help enhance national competitiveness in international trade via lower costs and faster delivery, in addition to generating additional income from transshipment. Taking into account SLPA's strategy to provide infrastructure (breakwaters, channels, etc.) that can accommodate three terminals, the economic and financial analyses are based on the scenario that three terminals will be sequentially developed as necessary to meet forecasted demand.

Hambantota Harbour

38. Hambantota is located within 10 nautical miles of the world's busiest shipping lane, and it is ideally located directly at the inter section of major international sea trading routes. Over 100 ships bypass Sri Lanka daily during the voyage between Europe and far east, necessitating the carrying of a large quantity of fuel and supplies for the journey, which could be replaced by cargo if servicing is provided midway at Hambantota. Hambantota is destined to become the prime port of Sri Lanka, surpassing Colombo. It is the world's first in-built harbour carved out of land. Exhibited above major reasons government is going to develop Hambantota rather than developing Trincomalee or any other ports.

39. **Features of Hambantota port.**

- a. The natural depth along the coastline is ideally suited for the development of a deep water port. The approach to the port does not necessitate a long dredged channel.
- b. As a strategically situated maritime gateway to India (for transshipment container cargo) it is very well positioned. It is better located than any Indian port to act as a transshipment center.
- c. Hambantota enjoys a very good geographic location to serve domestic trade with direct road way connections to the southern central and eastern areas of the island than Galle.
- d. In view of the deeper berths and location advantages at Hambantota, it may be possible to attract most of the port related industries such as cement, fertilizer etc. port basin could be used for the services vesselsof bunkering facility and for larger fishing vessels.
- e. Since the major shipping route is very close by off shore services such as ship channeling, supply of water, fuel, crew changes etc could be under taken from this proposed port. Supplies for coal power generation, transshipment of vehicle could also be undertaken.

SRI LANKA'S PERCEPTION OF OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

40. Greatest challenge exists in the region at the moment is the diplomacy. Sri Lanka Navy's role in active engagement in the maritime operations in collaboration with other interested nations without antagonizing their national interests is a huge challenge ahead of the Navy. Sri Lanka Navy should determine to maintain progressive, positive relations with all the concern stakeholders in maritime operations linear with our national interests.

41. The emerging strategic environment in Indian Ocean region and the role of Sri Lanka Navy is a huge challenge for the Navy. As we discussed earlier Sri Lanka has greater obligation of preventing Piracy, Arms Smuggling, Criminal activities and terrorism in the exclusive economic zone and beyond it. Navy should be able to assist the international mechanisms prevailing at sea in this regard. Safe guard Sea Lanes of Communications and the ports from these emerging threats is the greatest challenge ahead of the Navy. Enhance the surveillance covering the area of responsibility and even beyond is what we look for.

42. The safe guarding the huge water body towards south of island is a huge challenge for the Navy. The obligation lies with the expanded Search and Rescue Region and the effective functioning of the Maritime rescue Co-ordinate Center (MRCC) is a huge global responsibility lies on our shoulders. Enhance capabilities of

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) is also a great challenge and obligation rest on us.

43. Sri Lanka is a country with a great maritime heritage. Safe guard the maritime heritage from the treasure hunters also a huge responsibility lies within our scope. It is a challenge to preserve these interests of the global community. Safe guarding the bio-economic environment in the coast directly affects by the ocean activities also an issue to take care of.

44. Sri Lanka has been blessed with discovering oil resources in the Indian Ocean region especially in the Mannar Basin which could host for new economic opportunities in future. As of now, there have been no focused investigations of gas hydrate potentials of Sri Lankan off-shores is also a challenge ahead of the Navy to assist these developments.

45. The complexity of the Strategic environment is merely provide a great opportunity for the Navy to have co-ordinate maritime operations with the other maritime nations regionally and beyond specially with Indian, Unites States, United Kingdom and China whose having great concern to the area. Sri Lanka should assist these nations in maritime operating in close quarters will provide greater opportunities in developing.

46. The security challenges demands greater responsibility in safeguard the trade and energy in the area provides wide opportunities for Sri Lanka Navy to provide its expert skills in counter terrorism. Onboard security teams is a one aspect that Sri Lanka Navy is practicing at the moment is an example for this. This demand of security encourages us to have collaborative efforts, joint exercises, joint operations, sharing of resources, expose to new technology and most importantly this gives opportunity to expose our Navy to the world so that our Officers and sailors can gain professional competency.

47. Security of their own economy in terms of energy and trade via the sea lanes and shipping is the greatest concern of all the nations provides greater opportunities for Sri Lanka Navy to gain many a benefits ensuring security of all the shipping in our area of responsibility.

48. Emerging unorthodox, unprecedented threats from the sea demands the need of sharing intelligent among the nations. It's very important for the Navy to be neutral and impartial in order to collaborate with other nations to serve as a nerve center of disseminating intelligence to all the stake holders will enhance the Navy's credibility been amidst.

49. With the eradicating of the Terrorism from the country, provides a greater leeway for the fishing in our waters. Sri Lanka should be capitalized in this regard and should dominate the northern waters which enriched with the fishing wealth. Sri

Lanka Navy should assist the security of fishing to a greater extent will be an opportunity to solve the cross boundary fishing problem over the years.

50. Large amount of merchant shipping transiting across provides opportunities to take charge the violations of international laws and breeches of local laws widely with respect to the customs and sanitary law's in the country. Sri Lanka Navy should play an active role in this regard. We should ensure that the shipping is adhering the lawful conduct that we impose on them by our local legislature. This would ensure the safe and secure national waters and will enhance the countries reputation as a maritime nation.

Looking through the Sri Lankan Experience

51. The Sri Lankan experience of facing a three decade odd conflict can be cited as one and only available model to prove the fact that terrorism can be defeated immaterial of the ruthlessness of the terror outfit. As there are similarities in many ways to the security concerns in our region and that of the three decade odd conflict, there is a strong call for all of us to pay our serious attention to the emerging maritime security challenges at this very juncture.

52 It is indeed natural to find solutions by respective countries to issues that I have highlighted above. The tendency to treat own policies and strategies as the best even for issues that require regional approach has proved disastrous in the history. The rapid changing nature of the maritime security imperatives in the region requires different approach in visualizing, policy making and finally mapping out the road map ahead. I strongly believe that another nation does not need to go through what Sri Lanka underwent in order to learn it by experience. There is so much to learn from the Sri Lankan experience in finding solutions to non-traditional challenges.

53 I'm sure you all will agree with me that the win over the LTTE is not merely a military victory, but a strong example to highlight the resilient political leadership, coordination and cooperation, ability to withstand external as well as internal pressures of various magnitudes, ability to foresee the future with precision and convincing the regional as well as international forums. Some important aspects Sri Lanka can offer to the region in facing most of the maritime security challenges which require tactical as well as operational considerations can be seen through following aspects.

Sharing Sri Lanka Navy's Maritime Experience

54. Sri Lanka Navy's three decade odd maritime experience remains as the only such experience available since WWII. Even though such experiences of the Sri Lanka Navy have been discussed at various forums in various levels and even shared with some friends in the region, there are enormous amount of experience still to be shared with others in the region. Sri Lanka Navy's experience in the

maritime field varies from indigenous small boat operations, underwater counter measures, research and development, deep sea operations etc. In general Sri Lanka Navy has seen the worst that a Navy could expect to see out at sea and I'm sure in this note it will be true to say that we have the most valued expertise.

Real Time Intelligence Sharing

55. Even though we agree to sharing information and intelligence on various subject matters, there is an inherent reluctance to share much important and valued real time intelligence among the regional states. On the other hand we see an advanced information/intelligence sharing network among the pirates as well as terrorist networks. One important corner stone in our success in winning against LTTE was the timely receipt of real time intelligence. When we all are challenged with maritime security concerns that affect the whole Indian Ocean Region, importance of sharing valued information remain crucial.

56. In order to have a better view of the Indian Ocean Region, regional cooperation in maritime domain awareness is another key area. This will immensely assist the countries to share and be aware of the activities not only in one's interested area, but of the whole region. Having the knowledge and awareness of the broader maritime picture will be of immense help in arriving at critical decisions. Such a regional integration in the applications of Maritime Domain Awareness will enable the Indian Ocean Region to form a strong Maritime Domain Awareness backbone in order to patch with the global Maritime Domain Awareness initiatives.

Effective Maritime Governance

57. Good order at sea is crucial in making the Indian Ocean Region safe. Regional cooperation in enforcing effective maritime governance is a responsibility of all Indian Ocean Region states. Enhanced cooperation between various organizations at national level will be of immense value. Even though the borders of land and sea areas are well defined and monitored, maritime borders are generally provides less restrictions allowing free access without an effective mechanism for surveillance and proper investigation/inquiry. Due to the vastness of our ocean region, higher possibility exist many vessels taking passage unnoticed or unmonitored. Even though there are advanced technologies that support detections of larger vessels at considerable distances, many smaller vessels including fishing vessels largely remain anonymous. Limitations in visibility in the maritime domain create a challenging situation. Strong regulations and effective monitoring is a key aspect in this regard

Reaching the Operational Level of Piracy and Maritime Terrorism

58. This is yet another important area the regional navies need to understand in arresting piracy and maritime terrorism. As the Sea Lanes of Communications running through our region is crucial to the whole world, pirates and maritime

terrorism can present a grave threat to the very existence of these Sea Lanes of Communications. Identifying the importance of protecting Sea Lanes of Communications, Sri Lanka Navy at the very crucial stage of the conflict took a decision to reach the operational level of the enemy in all fronts. Especially when we think of arresting the maritime piracy in our region, our aim should be to eradicate piracy from our region. Regional coordination and cooperation has led to the decrease in the number of more serious piracy incidents in South-east Asia. The issue in our hand is now the opportunistic petty theft from ships at anchor or in port. These sea robbers also conduct 'hit and run' raids on ships to steal cash, the crew's valuables and ship's equipment.

59. The situation demands change in approach by the regional navies and Coast Guards. Unless we geared up to change our counter piracy operations from a much more "large fleet based" one to a 'non-traditional approach' which enable us to reach the crucial operational level of pirates/maritime terrorism, we will find difficulties in eradicating this menace from our region. We proved this concept highly effective against LTTE by introducing the Rapid Action Boat Squadron (RABS) concept.

Focus on Sea Lines of Communications

60. Ranking the third-largest in the world, Indian Ocean is home to one of the most important sea lanes in the world. These sea lanes are crucial in sustaining many global as well as regional economic giants. This no doubt has added much value to the strategic importance of our region. All these plus points have attracted the attention of many states as well as non state actors. If we had no crucial Sea Lanes of Communications in our region, many of our issues would have been not even emerged. The maritime security concerns in the Indian Ocean Region make our life lines vulnerable; we need special attention and focus towards safeguarding them. The region can be starved to death merely by disturbing our Sea Lanes of Communications. Transiting more than 80% of world's seaborne trade through Indian Ocean choke points is a clear fact to prove this very fact. The military starvation Sri Lanka Navy adopted by destroying LTTE's shipping network as well as taking total control of our Sea Lanes of Communications is another example to prove the importance of focusing on our Sea Lanes of Communications.

Soft Power Geopolitics

61. Since the introduction of 'Soft Power' concept by Joseph S. Nye to the international relations lexicon in 1991, it has gradually developed into a tool which is being used by many countries in the present geopolitical context. In making the future way ahead 'Soft Power' will remain as one key area where we need to look at emerging issues not only in the Indian Ocean Region but in a global perspective too. Lord Buddah's preaching of 'නහිවේදේනවේරාණී' which means 'Hatred cease not by hatred, but hatred cease but by love'. Is the very basic of Sri Lanka's policy in Indian Ocean – *Enemies of None , Friends of all*.

Regional Integration; The Key to Success

62. There are various viewpoints that have been presented on the theme. Out of the above areas that I have mentioned here in terms of using as tools to address challenges in our region, effective **'Regional Integration'** can be sighted as the most important pillar in finding solutions.

63. One country can be more powerful in terms of military, wealth or in size. But unless that country is a strong link in the regional integration process, the mere survival of that country is questionable. As a region which is fast becoming the attention of the whole world by gradually taking the center stage of the geopolitics, we can surely improve the regional security cooperation and coordination of regional institutes. The regional integration need to focus on building up a cooperative security dialogue and effective apparatus. In developing such a mechanism we could always consider the involvement of extra regional assistance as our aim should be to establish a global reach. Some sources have sighted lack of homogeneity and lack of common identity in the region.

64. This regional integration is important to be expanded through strong defence cooperation measures aimed at being proactive to events such as natural disasters, Search and Rescue Operations and marine pollution incidents with close coordination with the regional navies and Coast Guards. Such formation of defence cooperation measures necessarily require going beyond the traditional models and concentrating on improved collective Indian Ocean Region cooperation and action.

65. There is also an important role that various organizations in the region can play in this regard. As many tend to view the Indian Ocean Region as a collection of Sub-regions, there is a need for Region-wide institutions too. Various Organizations/institutions such as Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), Asia Pacific Economic Community (APEC), South Asia Regional Port Security Cooperative (SARPSCO), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and even the Galle Dialogue among many other initiatives can be of immense value in bridging this much wanted bridge in the Indian Ocean Region.

66. Hence the 'Cooperative Approach' by way of 'Regional Integration' can be seen as the most ideal tool that can help our way forward when viewed through the Sri Lankan perspective to find solutions to maritime security concerns in the region.

We can never leave behind the famous prophesy of Alfred Mahan and his saying when we discuss issues related to Indian Ocean and security;

"Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is key to seven seas. In the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters".