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***Naval Power : Dynamics and Transformation in
the Indian Ocean***

Dr.W.Lawrence S.Prabhakar

<lawrence.Prabhakar@gmail.com>

***TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE ALL
HONOUR, GLORY AND PRAISE !***

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Abstract of Presentation

This presentation examines:

- a) The geographical, social, cultural linkages between the Indian Ocean, the adjoining regions and the Pacific;
- b) Historical contexts of the growth of Naval power and the patterns of its rise and fall in the Indian Ocean;
- c) The spectrum of traditional and non-traditional threats that affect and impact the Indian Ocean region;
- d) The state of power play between the naval powers in the Indian Ocean region;
- e) The impact of the growth of naval powers in the Indian Ocean region;
- f) The recommended approaches to address strategic competition;
- g) Assessment of future maritime and naval imperatives for India.

Propositions

- Naval Power has been the “*single prominent transformative paradigm of history, technology, strategy, diplomacy and maritime trade*” that has impacted throughout Human history;
- The Euro-Atlantic, the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean maritime theatres have been predominant maritime theatres that determined the historical-civilizational, the naval-maritime trade dynamics shaping and impacting the respective littorals;
- The emergence of Maritime Asia and the growth of the littoral civilizations saw the paradigms of ancient civilizational historical, cultural and maritime economic transactions in the Indian Ocean;
- The dominant ancient civilizational powers of China and India had their economic and strategic power premised on Maritime/ Naval Power and trade;
- Colonialism and the European mercantile expansion elevated Indian Ocean to its maritime importance even as trade and naval fleets followed into the region. It was typically the beginnings of the *Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS)* that saw the continental wars in the region ably supported and influenced by Sea power.

Propositions

- Western Naval Power and Maritime trade determined the destinies of East and Southern Africa that hemmed the Indian Ocean, West Asia and Persian Gulf, South Asia and Southeast Asia for nearly three centuries;
- The Second World War saw the Indian Ocean region as the theatre of major allied and Japanese naval expeditions and a decisive theatre for the post-war maritime balance of power for colonial powers like Britain, France and also for the rising superpowers the United States and Soviet Union;
- Given the energy geopolitics and globalized trade, the Indian and Pacific Oceans have emerged as vital trans-oceanic maritime zone between the Euro-Atlantic and the Pacific-Asia regions in the present century;

Geographical, economic cultural linkages of the Indo-Pacific

- The Indian Ocean Region features a total area of 73,556,000 square miles that has its linkages with the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean in the world occupying approximately 20 percent of the Earth's sea surface;
- Indian Ocean encompasses several regional seas and sea areas: the Andaman Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Great Australian Bight, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Mannar, the Gulf of Oman, the Laccadive Sea, the Mozambique Channel, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea.
- In its geographical contexts, the Indian Ocean is linked with the Pacific Ocean through the South China Sea and East China Sea. This brings into context the Indo-Pacific geographical prism that ties the Asian landmass on both oceanic rimlands;
- Ancient trade and contemporary Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCS) have brought in the Pacific powers of China, Japan and subsequently the United States, South Korea and Australia into the Indian Ocean—converging on energy, trade, access and basing
- With the Cold-War and the Post-Cold War dynamics in play, the Indo-Pacific has witnessed the deployments of nuclear-propelled platforms-- submerged and surface;
- The Indo-Pacific economic interdependence of economies, emerging regional and transregional economic partnerships and agreements like Trans Pacific Partnership (US-led), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (China led) have propelled Indian Ocean and Pacific rim countries into newer economic and strategic partnerships—reinforcing the maritime driven economic globalization

Historical contexts of Naval power and patterns of its rise and fall in the Indian Ocean

- Paul Kennedy (1987) *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*;
- Sam Tangredi (2002) *Globalization and Maritime Power*;
- Two classic works that annotate and analyse the long cycles of historical, economic and military patterns of Great Powers with hegemonic ambitions—charting the ambitions and trajectories of their rise and fall.
- The imperative to analyse the rise and fall of Asia's civilizational powers in the early modern period is an interesting study: Some highlights of power play and transition:
 - The Chola Kingdoms had been competing for historical, economic and strategic stakes in Southeast Asia with the Buddhist Sri Vijaya kingdom of Sumatra. They had well established empire outposts in Southeast Asia.
 - The Chola Empire was the rising power that had extensive trade contacts with China and East Asia transiting through the Straits of Malacca into the South China Sea

Historical contexts of Naval power and patterns of its rise and fall in the Indian Ocean

- China's Ming Dynasty's Admiral Zheng He conducted the famous seven voyages in the region spreading to East Africa called as the "West Oceans." The convoy in the voyages typically featured over 300 vessels, including a number of "treasure ships" of over 400 feet long, accompanied by a legion of supply ships, water tankers, warships with canons, and multi-oared patrol boats; the total personnel on the fleet numbered over 28,000;
- Ancient Asian civilizational maritime power of China and India reigned until the 16th Century and began fading even as internal turbulence and declining maritime trade resulted in the two countries retreat from preeminence;
- Power transition was evident even as the two Asian powers were forced to concentrate on the hinterland while the maritime interests declined. It also saw the period of political transitions in the two countries that resulted in series of wars and it coincided with the rise of the European Colonial powers with a very strong maritime/naval accents of power and capabilities;

Historical contexts of Naval power and patterns of its rise and fall in the Indian Ocean

- ***Portuguese mercantile interests and naval power*** was elucidated on the premises of 'Mare clausum' (closed seas) of the Indian Ocean to Portuguese naval/mercantile interests. Asserting their navigation dominance and naval outposts in the Southern Asian littoral, East Africa and Southeast Asia
- ***Dutch mercantile interests and naval power*** emerged with the United Dutch East Indian Company with their naval mastery of the high seas and domination of the littorals of Southern Asia and Southeast Asia of Dutch East Indies, Indonesia with their long-endurance warships;
- ***French mercantile interests and naval power*** sustained interest in the Indian Ocean long after the colonial period.
- ***British mercantile interests and naval power.*** Command of the Seas, naval hegemonic dominance of the Indo-Pacific, symbolic forward presence in the post colonial to present period

Historical contexts of Naval power and patterns of its rise and fall in the Indian Ocean

- US Naval Power: hegemonic, overstretch, rebalancing, options for offshore balancing;
- Russian Naval Power: Symbolic naval forward presence, interests in West Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia—tokenism;
- China's naval power; Emergent and assertive—out of area deployments of South China Sea Fleet, naval access and basing—MSR
- Indian Naval Power: Enduring since 1971, regarded as “Net Security Provider” but are we in that role??? Or serving our own interests;
- Implications:
 - a) Interplay of History, Strategy, Trade, Technology juxtaposed on the long cycles of power transition;
 - b) Globalization and maritime power are interwoven for the littoral powers and extra-regional powers;
 - c) Continued interest of France and UK in the Indian Ocean even as access is being developed and engagement through multinational naval forces and operations EUNAVFORCE, CTF;
 - d) Great Power naval engagements with India

Spectrum of traditional and non-traditional threats: Impact on the Indian Ocean region

- The Traditional /Non-traditional threats spectrum could be envisaged from:
 - a) Globalized networks and State vulnerabilities;
 - b) Revolution in Military Affairs/ Naval Affairs, hybrid warfare—necessitates state interdependence and regional and global cooperation;
 - c) globalized information networks has revolutionised Governance and has complicated the salience and scope of threats—blurring the dichotomy of traditional and non-traditional threats;

Traditional Threats

- i) Inter-state conflicts and naval competition
- ii) Failing/Failed States
- iii) Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation

Spectrum of traditional and non-traditional threats: Impact on the Indian Ocean region

Non-Traditional Threats-- Human induced:

- iv) Piracy (This straddles in the Traditional and nontraditional threat spectrum)
- v) Maritime terrorism (This straddles in the Traditional and nontraditional threat spectrum)
- vi) Human trafficking;
- v) Narcotics trafficking;
- vi) Small Arms and Light Weapons trafficking

Nature induced

- vii) Climate Change and Oceans;
- viii) Ocean organic resources depletion;

Maritime cooperation-Threats mitigation initiatives:

- a) Milan, IONS, Komodo
- b) Employment of naval forces and maritime cooperation for addressing the challenges and threats—Benign, Constabulary and Humanitarian Disaster Relief;
- c) Importance of Coast Guards vis-à-vis Navies

Naval Powers in the Indian Ocean Region: Current state of play and plans for future

- a) The Indian Ocean region in the post-cold war period and in the age of maritime globalization has emerged with the new security construct of the ***Indo-Pacific***;
- b) SLOC Security, energy flows, littoral wars and intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq renewed the OMFTS (*Operational Maneuver from the Sea*);
- c) Naval and air forces modernization in the Indian Ocean region have been in momentum since 2000 that covers West Asia, Southern Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia;
- d) Naval and Air defence transformation efforts are focused on rapid logistics, stealth platforms, precision strikes, Aerial Early Warning and joint warfare with the naval forces providing the platforms for mobility and strike and the air forces for reconnaissance and strike missions;
- e) Extra-regional naval and air presence induced regional military modernization;
- f) Chinese military and strategic modernization induced regional military modernization;
- g) US Non-NATO ally status and transfer of military hardware to regional military modernization;
- h) Regional alliances bilateral and multilateral has catalyzed the regional military modernization, FPDA, US “Hub and Spokes” bilateral agreements with Japan, South Korea, Australia, partnerships with Singapore, India etc

Naval Powers in the Indian Ocean Region: Current state of play and plans for future

Regional Powers:

- a) India (with extended regional interests and ambient maritime vision);
- b) Pakistan (Challenger ?? to India's ambient maritime vision);
- c) China (Extended naval power in the Indian Ocean region with substantial presence in the East Pacific; Island Chains Strategy)

Extra-regional Powers:

United States; Dominant Hegemon, with full spectrum dominance capabilities, Conventional Global Prompt Strike capabilities—leveraged from Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean; Malabar with India

Japan: Limited engagement in Indian Ocean; Djibouti base-- Japanese MSDF brings into the fore the state of art guided missile destroyers, frigates, conventional submarines and its helicopter carrier that have full interoperability with the US Navy and Air Force; extended Malabar with India

Australia: Limited naval engagement; interests with maritime engagement with India AUSINDEX

Russia: renewed naval deployments; INDRA with India;

France: substantial overseas territory presence in Indian Ocean; Varuna with India-Defence sales to India;

UK Konkan with India; Substantial trade and defence sales with India; Indian Ocean and FPDA presence;

EU Naval Task Force: Constabulary missions, SHADE;

Israel, sea-based nuclear deterrence platforms, Iranian navy accents on asymmetric naval warfare;

Southeast Asian Navies:

Growing capabilities, Indian Ocean interest, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia

Impact of Growth of Naval Powers in the Indian Ocean Region

- Five significant trends:
 - 1) Energy flows out of West Asia-Gulf Region has galvanized regional and extra-regional stakeholder in the region;
 - 2) Asymmetric and counter asymmetric warfare, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan sustains multinational naval deployments;
 - 3) Regional powers militarization and nuclearization at sea; India, Israel, Pakistan, besides the extra-regional nuclear powers of US, China, Russia, UK France.
 - 4) Naval and air modernization of Southeast Asian countries responding to China's assertive rise and modernization;
 - 5) China's Maritime Silk Road (2013) outreach combined with naval power deployments in the Indian Ocean;

Impact of Growth of Naval Powers in the Indian Ocean Region

Trends:

- 1) Access and Basing—Military infrastructure buildup;
- 2) Interoperability
- 3) Naval network-centric operations
- 4) Nuclear Deterrence at Sea
- 5) Regional alliances and Maritime Partnerships;
- 6) Evolving Maritime missions:
 - a) Benign, Cooperative & Humanitarian missions;
 - b) Constabulary missions—Counter asymmetric;
 - c) Compellence Missions
 - d) Coercive and Deterrence Missions

Recommended Approaches to address the Strategic Competition

- *Maritime Multilateralism*: envisages and advocates sectoral approaches to develop cooperative security, economic, trade and commercial partnerships in the region IOR-ARC, IORA, MALSINDO, IONS, Milan etc
- *Maritime / Naval Risk Reduction Measures, INCSEA Agreement*--a time tested confidence building mechanism that could possibly contribute and enhance regional stability in the Indian Ocean region. Maritime/Naval Risk Reduction Measures, Confidence Building Measures envisage the prospect of increasing transparency and predictability of the navies in the region with regard to their operations and deployments. ;
- *Region-wide maritime economic and infrastructure development initiatives* China's MSR, "Infrastructure Diplomacy", India's Project Mausam;

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- India stands at a very critical strategic maritime threshold in the Indo-Pacific. --growing economy, growing maritime infrastructure, the evolving maritime and naval power architecture and its expanding diplomatic influence in the entire region offers India prospects for its power rise that would be the most important regional stabilizing influence in the region:
- a) *Elucidate India's Grand Strategic thinking and its Maritime Strategic Vision* is a vital factor of India's rise.
- India still lacks the institutional process of a grand strategic thinking process and its documentation that would envisage the essence of India's Grand Strategy in terms of its Comprehensive National Power, India's human development vision and strategy

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- b) *Secure India's vital interests in the Indian Ocean region and island territories* is a vital priority mission for the Indian Navy as that constitutes the assurance of India's position in economic and strategic terms.
- Given the host of maritime asymmetric threats and challenges and possible perils to India's economic and strategic interests, the Indian Navy should be able to garner its capabilities and resources in securing these vital offshore economic, energy and sea-bed resources within India's Exclusive Economic Zone as well as its island archipelagoes on its western sea board (the Lakshadweep & Minicoy Islands) and on the eastern seaboard (the Andaman & Nicobar Islands).
- Developing and deployment of naval amphibious and expeditionary naval capabilities and its complement land based offensive airpower along with naval airpower would be paramount

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- c) *Stabilize economic growth and foster regional economic cooperation* through regional economic multilateral aegis would be important. India's economic growth and development would be intertwined with the region in its Indian Ocean neighbourhood of East Africa, South Africa and Southeast Asia.
- Given the vast EEZ of India of 2.2 million sq km entails India to develop its Blue Economy of ocean resources that would also secure its ecological balance would be important tasks for India. India should strengthen the IOR-ARC as well as other sub-regional economic cooperation arrangements as they would enhance economic growth and development promoting regional trade economic integration.
- Developing India's Blue economy and would immensely value add to its resources and economic strengths

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- d) *Build, Equip, Expand India's Maritime / Naval Infrastructure* would be a critical mission for India as it expands its maritime trade and commerce as well as its naval expansion. Civilian and military access is vital and India being blessed by the two island archipelagoes on the two seaboard. Building and expanding India's maritime / naval infrastructure would be an important priority as the Navy and merchant marine of the country expands;
- India's maritime/naval infrastructure would greatly enhance India's varied naval operational missions that would project power and also provide the most feasible logistical solutions to its fleet and naval air deployments. India's growing maritime / naval infrastructure aids to multiply basing points for the fleet and also host maritime surveillance and reconnaissance assets that are vital in the region in contending with the various asymmetric threats at sea as well as traditional security threats.

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- e) *Enhance naval strategic deterrence and stabilize India's maritime domain* is a critical requirement even as the nuclearization of the Indo-Pacific Oceans increase in momentum both by contending regional littoral powers as well as extra-regional powers who have been adding platforms and newer capabilities. India's Nuclear Doctrine envisages for an assured retaliatory capability based on credible and survivable nuclear assets;
- f) *Expanded Engagement in Naval Diplomacy and operational engagements* would be the future anvil of the Indian Navy as it expands great power naval engagement as well as with medium and small power navies. India's currently expanding naval engagement and its capacity building initiatives to smaller navies in the Indian Ocean region is proving to be most invaluable for its naval diplomacy profile.
- Naval diplomacy would also be vital even as Indian Navy has expanded engagement with regional and extra-regional navies based on its amphibious and expeditionary platforms and its surface and submarine assets thus providing the full scope display of its operational capabilities

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- g) *Evolve Maritime Multilateralism with extra-regional powers* would be a very important dimension of India's naval strategy and diplomacy in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- The rationale of such an initiative is based on the fact that India being the dominant power should be able to shape and influence the future discourse on Indo-Pacific maritime order.
- Maritime Multilateralism on one hand builds the institutions for economic cooperation, development and growth and on the other it enhances India's soft power diplomacy to be exercised through a variety of initiatives like capacity-building, investment, technical assistance and development initiatives within the region.

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- h) *Emphasis on India's Indigenous R& D naval technology and production* would be a critical requirement even the country develops its penchant for strong science and technology education as well as Research and Development. India's indigenous shipyards are building warships and also the nuclear submarine of the Arihant class.
- India's destroyer, frigate and next generation aircraft carrier building technologies are being currently developed. Indigenous technology development and collaborative technology partnerships in R&D would continue to build the indigenous warship building programme of India.
- In pursuit of its Grand Strategy, the emphasis on indigenous Science & Technology R&D is imperative as well to nurture and build the scientific and technological capital of India that is crucial to the various ship-building programmes that India has launched.

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- i) *Equip and Expand India's Benign, Constabulary and Humanitarian Disaster Response capacities* would constitute an important dimension of exercise of its capacity-building for its naval capabilities for India's Benign, Constabulary and Humanitarian Disaster Responses.
- As India's expeditionary platforms increase in number equipped with varied capabilities for coercive missions, their employment for the humanitarian disaster response capacities is also evident.
- Indian capacities for the benign, constabulary and humanitarian disaster relief missions would increase even as the Indian Ocean is likely to face the increasing perilous prospect of natural disasters and climate change induced calamities and at the same time the peaking of various regional conflicts would trigger movement of Indian expatriates as well as other migrations within the region that would require larger capacities of rescue.

Assessment of the Future: Maritime and Naval Imperatives for India

- j) *Emphasis on building Multilateral Institutions in the Indian Ocean Region* would be India's goal in the Indian Ocean region as multilateral institutions would bring about a economic cooperation and interdependence in the region.
- Multilateral institutions may not be in India's strategic preferences as India would like to exercise its autonomy of its interest and power. But viewing it from the perspective of the growing integration of India with Southeast Asia as well as with several littoral and island states of the Indian Ocean region,
- Multilateralism would be the planks by which India could exercise its effective regional role and leadership. India would also have the benefit of being a benign power whose diplomatic leadership and its economic and strategic capabilities would aid multilateral institutions; strengthening the regional order and work to prevent dominant hegemonic extra-regional influences in the long run

THANK YOU GOD BLESS