

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING TO SHAPE FUTURE MARITIME
COOPERATION – INDIA’S ROLE
GALLE DIALOGUE 2012

1. Good morning Gentlemen! It is indeed a privilege and a distinct honour to be present in the beautiful city of Galle to address this august audience which represents the collective wisdom of the Navies of the world under one roof. I am sure the deliberations will result in consolidation and convergence of thoughts and ideas.

2. The seas around us are gaining new found importance as each day goes by and there is no doubt that the current century is the century of the seas. This subject therefore enthuses all of us in white uniform, but I am more than certain that the subject would also be a great interest to all others as well, as we are all connected with the seas in some way.

3. Let me explain this further, I would like this distinguished audience, to reflect on a very interesting biological fact - that all of us have, in our veins, the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the oceans, and this is not only true of the salt in our blood, but also of the salt in our sweat and in our tears. We are all therefore tied and connected to the oceans. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or just to watch it, we get the feeling of going back to where we came from.

4. This truly defines the relationship of man with the oceans and also the likely reason why talking about the seas brings out such passion in us.

5. It will be my endeavour during the talk this morning to throw light on the efforts of the Indian Navy at building partnerships and forging alliances to collectively address the challenges that face us. Navies are an important tool of diplomacy and are utilised by nations for maritime cooperation

initiatives that promote safety, security and stability across the global commons.

6. Today, more than ever before, threat perceptions that face all nations are as wide and varied as they come. Who could have imagined a decade or two ago, that in the 21st century, we would once again be grappling with pirates or that one of the major threats could be from asymmetric warfare or terrorism? In this context, I am sure you will all agree that we not only need to be prepared to meet unforeseen challenges, but also must be able to recognise and rapidly adapt to changing threats.

7. The maritime domain is the prime facilitator of growth and globalisation as; it is the medium by which 90 percent of world trade, when measured by weight and volume, is transported. While technology has changed many of the attributes of trade, the permanency of seaborne vessels, as a medium for transfer of goods from place to place, remains unchallenged.

8. The sheer physical dominance of the maritime environment over our planet is such that water bodies cover 70% of the Earth's surface; 85% of nation states have a coast line. 75% of the world's population lives less than 200 nautical miles from the sea. 80% of capital cities of the world and nearly all major centres of international trade and economic power are located on the coast. The maritime domain therefore demands and deserves continuous study, discussion and debate. Safety, stability and security are the building blocks of physical, economic well-being and prosperity. The Indian Ocean Region is no different, and the attendance at this seminar bears testimony to unanimity of thought in this regard.

9. Without Oceanic trade, the barriers of international commerce would be insurmountable, and the history of the world would have been vastly

different. Today, the Indian Ocean region is the economic highway of the world. 66% of the world's oil shipments, 33% of its bulk cargo, and 50% the world's container traffic passes through its waters. Of all the cargo that moves in these waters, perhaps the most critical is petroleum and its by-products. The oil arteries of the world flow through the Indian Ocean and any impediment to the free flow of energy resources could have a profound effect on regional as well as global economies. Ensuring energy security is therefore, a major maritime challenge of common concern.

10. The Indian Ocean has actually been one of the strongest unifying factors in history. For centuries, the waters of this ocean have been the vortex of intense maritime activity and carried religions, languages, traditions, and indeed people, across thousands of nautical miles and bound them together in a cultural brotherhood. In the recent past, the Indian Ocean Region has been witness to both commercial and maritime activity; In addition, we are also witnessing an ever increasing presence of maritime forces in support of their maritime interests.

11. The region is also subject to a variety of security threats to peace and stability. Indeed, today's most pervasive threat comprises non-state actors and included amongst these are traffickers of drugs, arms and human beings. To add to these we have to deal with poachers, mercenaries, terrorists and modern-day pirates. These non-state actors - all have a relative anonymity of individuality and intent, both of which impact on our policy options. Efforts by nation-states in combating these threats have at times shown some satisfying results on a sub-regional basis. However, as on date, piracy continues to pose one of the most worrisome maritime security challenges and Maritime terrorism has emerged as an omnipresent threat.

12. The region is also witness to 70 percent of the world's natural disasters. Not very long ago, our shores were ravaged by the Indian Ocean Tsunami, as a result of which, well over a hundred thousand lives were lost. The swift response to the tragedy, effectively demonstrated to the global community the unique brotherhood of the seas and the ability of navies to not just work alongside each other, but also to catalyse and facilitate cooperation amongst nations.

13. Natural disasters adversely impact on development and cause economic and social stresses which may sow the seeds of security threats. The vulnerability of our region to natural disasters, only adds to the complexity of the security milieu. Countries in Asia and the Pacific are four times more likely to be affected by a natural catastrophe than those in Africa, and 25 times more vulnerable than Europe or North America. In fact, almost 80% of the human fatalities in natural disasters of the last decade have been in Asia. The maritime medium often provides the most suitable access to disaster hit areas as large scale relief can be deployed from the sea. Whilst India has accorded national priority to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) on various occasions, we need to focus our efforts regionally to accord the subject due priority.

14. The Indian Ocean is perhaps a cradle to some of the most important, global sea routes. The Ocean's shores wash the world's largest oil producing region and also some of the fastest growing economies. Major East Asian economies look upon the Indian Ocean Region as a lifeline to sustain and expand their economies. On the other hand, western powers endeavour to maintain and deepen their presence in the region to secure their economic interests. It is evident that the Indian Ocean is becoming the global 'Centre of Gravity', when measured by the international energy resources and commerce that traverses its waters.

15. Almost 1,000 million tonnes of oil from West Asia passes close to the Indian shores annually. Some part of this is destined for our own ports, to feed the increasing demand for energy to fuel our current economic growth. A much greater proportion, however, is destined for the oil-intensive economies of the USA, Europe, China and Japan. India, due to its location, occupies centre stage in this ever evolving theatre of maritime influences. We see the role of the Indian Navy as a major stabilising force in this great movement of energy across the Indian Ocean, as India is cognisant of the need for security in the 'global commons'.

16. Moving onto the scourge of Piracy, you are all aware of the current deployment of our ships in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy missions. The statistics of the audacious acts of piracy are telling, however, much has been achieved in recent times through our pro-active approach and coordination with other navies operating in the region.

17. Piracy began in the year 2000 when foreign fishing vessels in Somali waters were seized for seeking ransom. The success bolstered the confidence of the pirates and they chose to venture further out to sea resulting in serious implications for the maritime community.

18. Over the years, piracy which started from the Coast of Somalia slowly, extended from 165 nm to about 445 nm by 2008. In a major change, the Somali pirates shifted from the Somali Coast to Gulf of Aden in 2008.

19. In 2010 piracy attacks spread further away from the Somali coast. Many of these attacks took place at a range of approximately 1000 nm from the Somali Coast as the Pirates started using bigger and better ships as mother vessels.

20. In 2011, due to the enhanced surveillance and focussed operations by the Indian Navy in the central Indian Ocean, the range of operation of the pirates reduced to 700 Nm from the Somali Coast.

21. Indian Navy has maintained a continuous presence in the Gulf of Aden since Oct 08. As of date since 2008, a total of 2200 ships from 50 different countries including 260 Indian flagged ships have been escorted by Indian Naval ships in the Gulf of Aden. A total of 40 piracy attempts have been prevented by Indian Naval ships and no ship under Indian escort has thus far been hijacked. The ships are escorted in a coordinated convoy schedule, based on the demands from the shipping agencies. This provides greater opportunity to the merchant vessels in transiting the internationally recommended transit corridor (IRTC) under protection of a warship. The convoy schedules are exchanged during the quarterly SHADE (Shared Awareness and De-confliction) meetings.

22. We acknowledge that the maintenance of sovereignty is a national responsibility. However, the stability of maritime regimes on the high seas is a common responsibility of adjacent coastal states and user states. As no state can exercise autonomous command of the sea in such a vast region, the case for naval cooperation in maritime surveillance and enforcement is compelling and that brings us to the need for “Capacity Building and Capability Enhancement through Maritime Cooperation”. Confidence building through capability enhancement is the construct which will aid maritime stability in the IOR.

23. Capacity building includes ‘provisioning of hardware/ platforms’ and ‘assistance in infrastructure building’, whereas capability enhancement comprises, training assistance, Joint exercises/ patrols, EEZ surveillance,

hydrographic cooperation, technical assistance, product support and, information sharing through, institutionalised dialogues.

24. It is my view that maritime cooperation should be collective in character and there is a need to take shared responsibility. Sensitivities of one and all need to be respected and each nation's interests need to be carefully balanced. Towards this, there is a need for synergizing regional forces to combat common non-state threats. With regard to building bridges of regional friendship, the Indian Navy has been regularly undertaking coordinated patrols or CORPATs with a few of our maritime neighbours. These patrols have been aimed at addressing constabulary issues such as poaching, smuggling, drug trafficking and other illegal activities in the region.

25. For South Asia to pursue the path of development, it is essential that our maritime neighbourhood remains stable and tranquil. Towards this end, concurrently in response to request from our littoral partners, we have regularly provided assets for assistance in EEZ patrols by deploying our ships and aircraft.

26. Consequent to the Mumbai terror attacks of 26 Nov 2008, the Indian Navy has put in place an institutional mechanism for sharing of knowledge, information and intelligence available with the various stakeholders. Relevant information is collated on a 24x7 basis from various sources and agencies with the common goal of strengthening our national maritime security.

27. Closely associated with coastal security is the issue of Maritime Domain Awareness or MDA. Ensuring the transparency of our maritime environment is crucial to our national security. It is planned to create a

national MDA infrastructure which will integrate multi-agency surveillance and enable sharing of information with all stakeholders of coastal security.

28. The maritime domain itself is very large and 95 % of the world's trade transits over the seas. The traffic on the seas has increased by 470% since 1970 and is likely to triple in the next 20 years. Therefore, no single agency or Navy can achieve Maritime Domain Awareness by itself. The success of MDA is therefore, dependent on collaborative efforts of various maritime stake holders, and the integration of technical means of tracking their respective vessels.

29. The principal purpose of building regional maritime domain awareness is to generate actionable intelligence. Monitoring the vast expanse of the IOR and waters connected therewith will require the collective effort of the nations of the IOR. Hence there is an undeniable need for cooperative engagement. The Indian Navy has arrangements with friendly navies to mutually enable us with a greater awareness of our combined maritime environments. This will be an ongoing effort, given the increasingly complex operating domains of the future.

30. At the same time, we need to look need to have a common picture which can be shared equally with all participating states. But, the paramount question would be, - "How do we solicit support for building a single transnational MDA network thereby improving maritime security for the IOR?" The start point could be the sharing of white shipping information, perhaps we should look at a working level group under the aegis of a suitable forum, with all nations irrespective of their size, being equal stake holders in this initiative. The essence to success would be the 'equal' sharing of information. Presently, much of the information being exchanged is streaming of AIS data. This is the first logical step in enhancing maritime domain awareness of the seafaring community.

31. In order to ensure good order at sea, the Indian Navy, like any other navy of significance, is mindful of the very substantial advantages of 'Constructive Engagement' of regional and extra-regional navies, since this enables the gaining and sharing of operational and doctrinal expertise, as also transformational experiences. It also allows for the examination and imbibing of 'best-practices', generates inter-operability and enhances Maritime Domain Awareness through a variety of information-sharing mechanisms.

32. It is in this context that the growing scope and complexity of 'Combined Exercises' such as those of 'MALABAR', 'VARUNA', 'SLINEX', 'KONKAN' and 'INDRA' series assume great relevance. The Indian Navy also utilises every available opportunity to exercise and train with other navies in the region.

33. At micro-regional level, the Indian Navy is also conducting MILAN, which is held at Port Blair as a biennial event since its inception in 1995. It aims to enhance regional cooperation and mutual understanding through formal and informal dialogue between navies of the region. The initiative has been an unqualified success and could form the basis for a cooperative maritime engagement structure in the region.

34. 14 Navies participated in MILAN 2012, conducted from 3rd to 7th February this year. The following activities were undertaken :-

- (a) HADR seminar
- (b) Table top exercise
- (c) Passex
- (d) Water sport activities
- (e) Cultural activities

35. In order to actively promote regional maritime cooperation, the Indian Navy initiated the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium or IONS in Feb 2008. IONS, is an inclusive and consultative regional forum that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among the Navies, of the littoral states of the IOR, to develop a common understanding of regional maritime issues. IONS was created with the aim to establish and promote consultation and cooperation, and give due importance to every view.

36. No discussion of such a nature would be complete without a candid assessment on the progress we have made over the last four years towards achieving the objectives of IONS.

37. The first of these is 'to promote a shared understanding of the maritime issues facing the littoral nation-states of the Indian Ocean and the formulation of a common set of strategies designed to enhance regional maritime security'. The IONS construct with the associated 'conclave of chiefs' is the ideal platform for the senior leadership of the member navies to meet. It is a forum for building personal relationships, and more importantly, for building trust. It is this trust that prepares the ground for the candid discussions that in time, leads to the development of a 'shared awareness' of the maritime challenges that we are all confronted with. The IONS has been tremendously successful in this respect. It, however, needs to be reiterated that given the dynamic world we live in, where change is the only constant, this is an ongoing process and needs to be constantly revisited.

38. The second objective of the IONS is 'to strengthen the capability of all littoral nation-states of the Indian Ocean to address present and anticipated challenges to maritime security and stability.' The IONS has done this through the conduct of a series of workshops. These include The Technical Seminar held at Colombo, Sri Lanka, in May 09. The HADR

workshop held at Dhaka, Bangladesh in Oct 2010. The Anti-piracy Workshop held at Jakarta, Indonesia in Oct 2011 and the Operational Workshop held at Colombo, Sri Lanka once again in Feb 12.

39. The third objective of the IONS is 'to establish and promote a variety of trans-national, maritime, cooperative-mechanisms designed to mitigate maritime-security concerns within the Indian Ocean'. This essentially amounts to the setting up of a more formalised set of mechanisms, which could be enunciated as a 'Charter of Business'. This is presently under formulation.

40. The fourth and final principal objective is 'to develop interoperability in terms of doctrines, procedures, organisational and logistic systems and operational processes, so as to promote the development of regional naval capacities for speedy, responsive, and effective Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) throughout the Indian Ocean region'.

41. IONS 2012 was held at Cape Town in Apr this year wherein the Chairmanship was handed over to the South African Navy. The theme chosen for the IONS 12 was "Regional Maritime Security Initiatives Aimed at Reducing Modern Maritime Security Threats".

42. Some of the major decisions taken during IONS 2012 include publication of the IONS newsletter by the Indian Navy, the inaugural edition of which would be released next month. It was also decided that the Indian Navy would conduct the IONS Preparatory Workshop and Operational Seminar in 2013 and concept Papers and SOPs on the three major issues of common concern that is HADR, Anti Piracy and MDA would be prepared by designated Navies. These SOPs would need to be well documented, gamed through the conduct of table top exercises and,

opportunity permitting, exercised at sea. Like all such procedures, these would need to be constantly assessed for effectiveness and amended when necessary.

43. With IONS platform, IOR littoral nations have got together to build a construct to manage their maritime affairs. The stake holders in this initiative are the nations and navies who legitimately deserve to have a say in their areas of interest. In the future, the IONS initiative will undoubtedly grow into a functional, vibrant regional construct whose influence and effects will pave the way ahead for future maritime cooperation.

44. With globalisation and consequent dependence on reliable oceanic commerce come its vulnerabilities. Paradoxically, one of the consequences of globalisation is the globalisation of security threats involving various forms of menace, from non-state terrorism to international crime mafias. No single navy - of any nation – is robust enough to monitor the global commons or respond adequately to major natural disasters. Global maritime partnerships are the new order of the 21st century, as nations work together to police the seas for security, stability and the economic well being of the world. It is beyond debate that the Indian Navy will continue to partner with navies worldwide to fulfil its commitment towards securing seas.

45. There are approximately a million professional seafarers, and wherever there are professional mariners at sea, there is a bubble of information and awareness around them. Every mariner at sea is a potential sensor, and every bubble of information around a mariner could be networked in order to contribute towards the overall maritime domain awareness. The effectiveness of this combined global force will rise or fall on its ability to network and share information at sea. Therefore let us

work towards a networked global common, structured to combat the emerging maritime challenges.

46. The Indian Ocean Region is demonstrably maritime with interests of nation states of the world over linked to unfettered flow of maritime trade. It is in the maritime domain that the interest of the world converges. The nations of the IOR have vast maritime interests and the responsibility of protecting these assets fall squarely on the men in white uniform. It is therefore the task of the Navies to ensure that our maritime interests which have a vital relationship with the Region's economic growth, are allowed to develop unhindered both in peace and war.

47. Given the collective wisdom, experience and diversity amongst the delegates of this seminar, I am sure that many initiatives and new proposals will emerge and it is my belief that gatherings such as these provide valuable insights which go a long way in shaping a common strategy to tackle the maritime challenges of the 21st century.