

**“IMPORTANT AREAS TO CONSIDER ENHANCE  
MARITIME SECURITY FOR A SECURE INDIAN OCEAN”  
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. **Ladies and Gentlemen!** It is indeed a matter of honour and privilege to be amongst this eminent gathering in this scenic and picturesque city of Galle. I would take this opportunity to profoundly thank the Govt of Sri Lanka and particularly Admiral JSK Colombage, Commander of Sri Lanka Navy, for extending invitation to Pakistan Navy for participation in this excellent forum. Let me also acknowledge the first rate arrangements for the event and kind hospitality extended to us by the organizers.

2. Of late Maritime Security has emerged a popular subject, which necessitates constructive engagement by all stakeholders in this globalised world of interdependence. Today I would like to share with you my thoughts on “Important Areas to Consider for Enhancing Maritime Security in Indian Ocean Region”. I shall cover the subject in the sequence as flashed.

- Geo-strategic Maritime Environment
- Regional Maritime Context
- Security Challenges in Indian Ocean
- Way Forward

- o Conclusion

## **Geo-strategic Maritime Environment**

3. **Ladies and Gentlemen!** The august house is aware that with the end of the Cold War and post 9/11, the world has witnessed flux in the global strategic landscape. **Uncertainty and complexity characterize today's environment which shows little signs of letting up in the near future. Additionally, the ambit of security has also broadened manifold to include multifaceted aspects. Another defining feature of contemporary environment is the fact that Geo economics has emerged as the preeminent strategic thought, thus access to resources (energy, food or water) sits on top of states' agenda. As a natural sequel to it security of global seaborne trade and energy lifelines which underpin global economic system has gained unprecedented prominence. Needless to emphasize that security of global maritime remit affects all nations and most people around the world.** The assurance of free and uninterrupted use of the world's oceans underlines our future course. Sea transport **accounts** for 90 per cent of world trade and the highest tonnages of goods pass through the Indian Ocean, with almost 100,000 ships transiting annually. This includes two-thirds of world oil shipments, one-third of bulk cargo and half the world's container shipments. The value of international trade that transits IOR sea lanes is almost one trillion US Dollars.

4. **Allow me to add here while physical and economic dimensions of maritime environment are obvious and perhaps overbearing yet one cannot ignore the diplomatic, political, legal and military aspects as well.**

These multiple features of maritime environment are intrinsically intertwined thus challenges thrown up at sea or from the sea often require multi pronged approaches.

### **Regional Maritime Context**

5. **Ladies & Gentlemen!** The Indian Ocean Region, which houses 56 littoral and hinterland nation-states and home to five strategic choke points; presents many contrasts and daunting challenges. Today the greater Indian Ocean Region besides being home to maritime great game of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a microcosm of various conflicts, disputes and threats, which cut across the entire conventional to and non-conventional spectrums. These include traditional maritime security concerns, including the risks of interstate or intrastate conflict; threats to good order at sea, such as maritime terrorism, piracy, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and non-traditional security concerns, including climate change, marine natural hazards, energy, food, environment and human security.

### **Security Challenges in Indian Ocean**

6. **Ladies & Gentlemen,** It remains a well established fact that no one single nation has the resources to address the challenges of maritime domain as a whole. As our interests in the maritime domain are increasingly interlinked and interdependent, so is the requirement to understand the collective responsibility to deal with these challenges. It is extremely important to protect vital common interests like preserving

maritime trade flows, protection of marine resources in respective EEZs and responding to natural disasters. Arguably devising mechanisms to deal with such non-traditional maritime security threats offers significant potential for states to cooperate and work collectively than more contentious security matters. Here I shall discuss some of the non-traditional maritime security threats and key areas of mutual cooperation that affect not only the regional states surrounding IOR but the global community as a whole. Firstly

### **Preserving Seaborne Trade**

7. Ladies & Gentlemen, the foremost is the preservation of seaborne trade, which is the backbone of international economy and a key engine driving globalization. Around 80 per cent of global trade by volume and over 70 per cent by value is carried by sea, which has witnessed a steady growth over the years. International seaborne trade grew by 4 percent in 2011, taking the total volume of goods loaded worldwide to 8.7 billion tons. According to another estimate, the world seaborne trade is expected to reach 41,800 billion ton-miles in 2014.

8. Thus the prospects for seaborne trade are set to rise dramatically. Unfortunately, along with this rise in traffic, the variety and intensity of threats, including piracy, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, gun-running, human smuggling, pollution, accidents and inter-state conflicts, are also expected to show a proportional rise. While the best approach to trade security obviously lies in extensive

cooperation, however, due variance of interests, it generates diverse response. The notion of perceived intrusion into aspects of national sovereignty from multilateral cooperation hinders advancement. Thus comprehensive security strategies encompassing differing perceptions and national interests need to be devised for ensuring the security of sea lanes.

9. The Indian Ocean is home to important SLOCs and maritime choke points. A large volume of international long haul maritime cargo from the Persian Gulf, Africa and Europe transits through this ocean. Some of the primary items transported are energy products - mainly oil and gas. Disruption in energy lifelines can also arise from patterns of trade flows. Imports to South Asia from West Asia utilize the Strait of Hormuz. Closure of the Strait of Hormuz would practically cut off Gulf supplies to the East altogether and has considerable global implications. Similarly, the closure of the Straits of Malacca, through which nearly 9.4 million barrels of oil per day flow, can seriously threaten the economies of Southeast Asia and the energy intensive economies of China and Japan.

10. The economic development of a state is closely linked to its trade and energy supply. Since most of the trade of the Indian Ocean littorals and the South Asian states is seaborne, SLOCs form the lifeline of these countries. At current levels of consumption, the oil import dependence of South Asian states is set to reach 96.1% by 2020.

Uninterrupted flow of seaborne trade is therefore vital for sustained economic growth. Of the challenges confronting this smooth flow of trade, the scourge of piracy in the Indian Ocean Region emanating from Somalia has evolved as a major threat since 2005, which brings me to the second challenge.

## **Piracy**

11. Ladies & Gentlemen, Maritime security concerns in our region continue to be dominated by the piracy and armed robbery, specifically hijacking of merchant vessels by Somalia based pirates. The enabling conditions like favourable maritime geography, political instability resulting in absence of rule of law and presence of safe havens ashore have all contributed in mushrooming the menace of piracy. Similarly the grievances of Somali people vis-a-vis IUU fishing off Somali coast and illegal dumping of toxic waste by other countries cannot be conveniently ignored. The pirates have become increasingly sophisticated both in terms of their tactics and the equipment they use. **As a consequence the cost of ships transiting through Gulf of Aden has risen by US \$ 20,000 per ship per voyage.** Likewise the insurance premiums have increased by 350% since 2008. The area affected by Somali piracy remains vast, encompassing all parts of the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and the southern Red Sea. The operational inability of a vast naval presence in form of CTF-151, EU NAVFOR, SNMG 1 & 2 and independent deployers, to secure this oceanic-sized space has raised security concerns coupled with rise in cost of goods.

12. Here, it is worth mentioning that the success story against piracy, in case of straits of Malacca gives at least a glimmer of hope that the piracy problem off Somalia can also be tackled. But analysts warn that the lessons of Malacca cannot be applied on Somalian region. Mainly because of lack of capacity, resources, regulating mechanism and organized governments in the region, the situation is "completely different" from Malacca. Moreover, geographic expanse of Indian Ocean susceptible to Somali piracy is significantly greater than the confined waters of Straits of Malacca. Notwithstanding the same, better coordination among CTF-151, EUNAVFOR, NATO, CTF-150 and other navies has reduced piracy in GoA though some incidents have also taken place in the greater Indian Ocean and towards the North Arabian Sea. While cooperation by all regional and extra-regional countries is considered important to combat the menace of Somali piracy it remains a fact that sustainable solution to Somali piracy lies in tackling the problem ashore with institution of a stable political setup capable of enforcing the rule of law.

13. Another significant factor contributing towards failing to arrest piracy is complex prosecution procedures. It is estimated that so far only 17 countries around the world have prosecuted around 800 pirates in their courts. Gradually number of prosecuting countries has dropped significantly. The regional countries in proximity of Somalia also lack in capacity to detain and prosecute large number of suspects. Hence most of naval forces operating in the area have adopted so-called "catch and release" policy. It is estimated that 90% of pirates captured

by patrols are released and thereon, pirates again get armed and resume their business. To deal with this issue, Pakistan is in the process of amending domestic laws to declare piracy as a crime.

### **Maritime Terrorism**

14. **Ladies & Gentlemen** Maritime domain with its vast expanse and lucrative targets, undoubtedly offers a conducive medium for potential terrorist activities. Fortunately, terrorism incidents at sea have been far and few yet the peril is ever present. This challenge can have devastating effects on global economies should any disruption is caused to SLOCs especially the energy supplies. Additionally, Narco-arms and human smuggling being indirect contributor to maritime terrorism further complicate the overall security matrix. Early realization of this challenge and the consequent maritime security collaboration by regional and extra regional navies in the IOR can be credited with effective deterrence and a workable mechanism to check this menace. The existing security collaboration is considered helpful in disrupting illegal drug trafficking, however, it must be realized that eradication of this menace needs concerted efforts ashore to target the source and origin of these drugs in golden crescent and golden triangle.

### **Ocean Resource Exploitation**

15. Depleting ocean resources are becoming increasingly important driven by rapid economic and population growth. The competition for



resources is increasing, which while unearthing newer opportunities for resource extraction mainly due to technological advancements is also identified as a potential source of conflict over access to natural resources. In this context the availability of oceanic fish stocks presents significant food security concerns, both regionally and globally. The importance of fisheries is set to increase in the IOR due increase in population of littoral states and the ongoing economic growth. Global fish stocks are under major stress, 87% of which are reportedly under crisis or fully exploited. Illegal fishing and poaching, which is already a cause of concern in the IOR, is set to increase. In the absence of effective capability to police their oceanic areas of responsibility, many IOR countries can do very little to check IUU fishing.

16. In the regional context, countries are facing the growing problem of unabated transgression into their EEZ and the consequent illegal foreign fishing. Pakistan's EEZ is rich in both living and non-living resources. Most significantly, the Indus Delta region is abundant with the prime quality fish which is quite lucrative for fishermen. Such incursions are not restricted to a few but quite often run in hundreds. Moreover, the methods like bottom trawling, unauthorized nets, use of chemical or explosive devices can practically eradicate all forms of marine life. The consequences of such practices and violation of international norms are most disastrous on the ecosystem. Such poaching activities, besides depleting the highly priced marine species in our region, cause enormous revenue loss to the Government Exchequer to the tune of Rs 8.1 billion per annum (official website of

PMSA) and also deprive the poor fishing community of Pakistan of their livelihood and means of sustenance.

## **Climate Change and Natural Disasters**

17. **Ladies & Gentlemen**, Climate change and frequency of natural disasters has registered an upward trend and is yet another challenge that affects all. While there may exist a debate on the causes of climate change, its manifestation cannot be denied anymore with firm evidence of rising ocean temperatures and global average sea levels. The sea temperatures around the equatorial areas of the Indian Ocean are reported to be rising more quickly than elsewhere. The changing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, together with sea level rise, are expected to have mostly adverse effects on natural and human systems, making many IOR countries particularly vulnerable. Furthering the argument it may be pertinent to mention that the frequency of natural disasters as a consequence of this climate change or otherwise has seen a significant increase in IOR affecting millions of people. Tsunami in 2004, Pakistan's earthquake in 2005 and cyclones in Bangladesh are some of the vivid examples of the same. Similarly the variations in the monsoon season have created drought conditions at certain occasions while also causing phenomenal flooding in the recent past. For three consecutive years since 2010, Pakistan has faced large scale flooding, which has uprooted millions of people and inundated vast tracts of fertile agricultural land.

18. Many IOR developing countries have very little capacity to mitigate the immense risks to human and environmental coastal systems caused by the ongoing climate change. Cooperative regional response is considered imperative for speedy assistance to affected population in case of a natural disasters **and marine pollution accidents**.

## **Way Forward**

19. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, analysis of the preceding discussion reveals that the Way Ahead to address various challenges to 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, enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and furtherance of cooperation in combating maritime crime. In this context following is proposed for consideration vis-a-vis the challenges.

a. Preservation of seaborne trade is crucial for economic well being of regional and extra-regional states alike. Existing level of cooperation by regional states needs to be further strengthened for smooth flow of Seaborne trade plying on the SLOCs crisscrossing IOR. A regional architecture for rapid information

sharing may be evolved to ensure freedom of navigation on the high seas.

b. Regulation of maritime traffic including small boats/fishing vessels in respective areas of responsibility is considered vital to check all types of illegal activities. In this regard **cooperation between all stake holders and capacity building of coastal states in IOR remain key enablers.**

c. Piracy in IOR is an enduring problem which requires a long term solution targeting political stability ashore in Somalia. Existing cooperation between Regional and Extra-Regional Forces combating maritime terrorism and the menace of piracy is considered vital. Sharing of experience, expertise and relevant information in this regard amongst regional states can help in capacity building and effective tackling of the problem. Such **fora** are considered useful to evolve workable solutions for effective suppression of piracy.

d. Living and non-living oceanic resources of sovereign nations need to be respected and protected against predation. Likewise use of fishing nets and fishing methods, which upset the ecological balance and deplete fish stocks, must be checked. To discourage illegal foreign fishermen policy measures by states

and regional organizations is the need of the hour. Additionally the existing mechanism amongst regional states may also be improved through dialogue/agreements to check illegal exploitation of oceanic resources.

e. Climate change is an emerging challenge confronting the humankind. We must support all initiatives aimed at reducing harmful emissions and preservation of delicate environment. Likewise a mechanism may be evolved for timely dissemination of any impending natural disaster to all regional states for contingency planning. Humanitarian assistance to affected nation may be expeditiously provided on bilateral basis.

## **Conclusion**

20. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, Pakistan remains committed for promotion of peace and stability in the region. Cognizant of its international obligations, PN was the first Navy of the region to join Combined Task force 150 in 2004, which is the maritime component of Operation Enduring Freedom. Similarly PN has also joined Multi-national Task Force-151 to combat piracy in area off HOA and Somali coast. PN ships with embarked helos are regularly participating in anti-piracy operations under aegis of TF-151. Moving a step further, Pakistan also organises a multi – national maritime exercise AMAN

series biennially since 2007 in which around 30 to 35 countries participated in each exercise. Next AMAN is scheduled in March 2013. These exercises are clear manifestation of Pakistan's commitment towards peace and stability through harmony and collaborative maritime security between regional and extra-regional navies. Pakistan in line with its Government policies will continue to contribute towards regional maritime security. **Let me end by saying that seas hold the key to future well being of humankind I do hope together we can make Indian Ocean a zone of peace and economic prosperity.**

**I thank you all.**