

**INDIA AND AFRICA: MARITIME SECURITY AND INDIA'S
STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN**

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In the 2010s, in conjunction with an expansion of India's naval capabilities, there has been a significant extension of India's maritime security relationships throughout the Indian Ocean region. Much of the emphasis has been on developing relationships with small states (Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Oman) at, or near, the key points of entry into the Western Indian Ocean. Arguably, the extreme asymmetries in size have made the development of such relationships relatively easy, as there is no question of competition or rivalry. Some of these states have long seen India as a benign security provider and have maritime policing needs that India can usefully fulfil. In some cases, India may effectively act as a security guarantor, as is arguably the case with Mauritius and the Maldives. But gaps inevitably remain in India's strategic posture and New Delhi needs to further strengthen its hand in coastal Africa and on the Arabian Peninsula. Also, littoral states on the African seaboard look towards regional power centres for assistance in maintaining maritime order and addressing security challenges. Countries with enhanced maritime capabilities like India, South Africa, Australia, and the US could assist by not only co-operating amongst themselves, but also by taking other littoral states on board as part of multilateral efforts towards the maintenance of maritime order. A challenge for New Delhi is to maintain perceptions of India as a benign and non-hegemonic power in the Indian Ocean region as it moves towards achieving great power status.

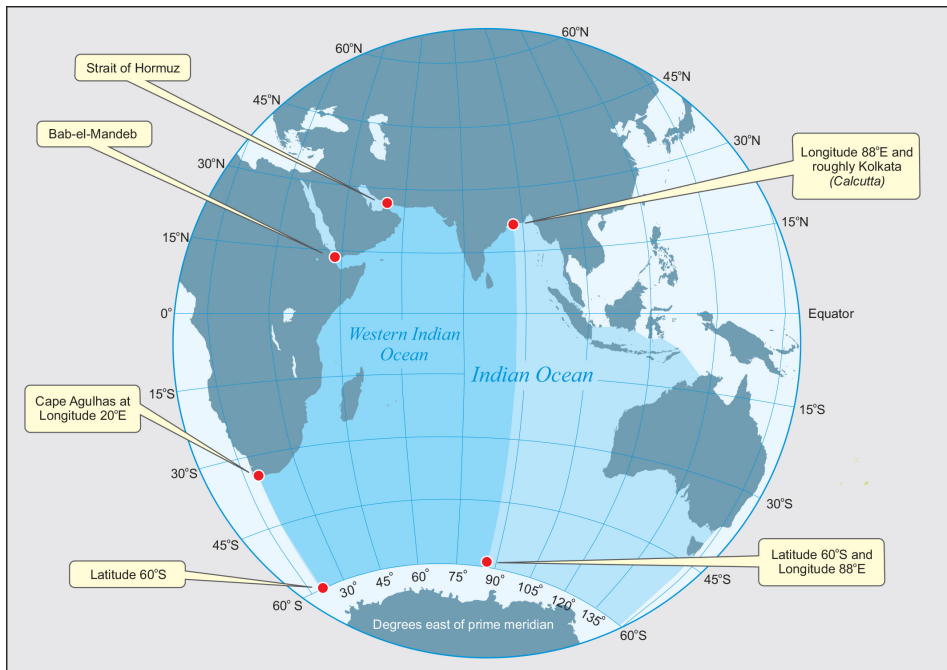
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There are a number of the critical issues that are likely to play a major role in the western Indian Ocean region over the next 10 to 15 years. But first the region has to be defined.

Defining the Western Indian Ocean

Covering an area of some 68.5 million km² and bounded by land masses on three sides (Africa, Asia, and Australia), the Indian Ocean is the world’s third-largest ocean. The greater oceanic region, though complex, forms a distinct geographical area. In comparison to the world’s other oceans, defining the exact boundaries of the Indian Ocean has been something of an imprecise science and has been a long-standing source of disagreement (Luke & O’Loughlin, 2010, p. 9). Sithara Fernando (2011, p. 23) adds a fourth land mass, Antarctica, in which case the total ocean area increases by several million square kilometres.

Figure 1: Parameters of the Western Indian Ocean



For the purposes of this chapter, the ‘Western Indian Ocean’ can be delimited by the following maritime points and boundaries:

- latitude 60°S (the northern-most limit of the Southern Ocean)
- Cape Agulhas (the southern-most point on the African continent) at longitude 20°E

- the east coast of the African continent from South Africa in the south to Somalia and Djibouti in the north
 - the Bab-el-Mandeb, which separates Djibouti and Yemen, on the southern-most reaches of the Red Sea
 - the east coasts of Yemen, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
 - the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman on the Arabian Peninsula, on the eastern-most reaches of the Persian Gulf
 - the southern coasts of Iran and Pakistan
 - the west and east coasts of India and
 - longitude 88°E, running roughly through Kolkata (Calcutta) on India's east coast, down to latitude 60°S.

According to this delimitation, the Western Indian Ocean region comprises the following countries (littoral and island states): the Comoros, Djibouti, India, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, the Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

On the basis of this conceptual framework, the Western Indian Ocean region (hereinafter referred to as the Indian Ocean, or the region) is comprised of 18 littoral and island states, as well as three territories in an entirely different category, controlled by extra-regional states: Réunion and Mayotte (both France) and the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), including the Chagos archipelago and the atoll of Diego Garcia (United Kingdom). Moreover, the region also includes numerous other island territories, such as Lakshadweep (India), Socotra (on the entrance to the Gulf of Aden, Yemen), and Tromelin Island, the islands of Juan de Nova, Bassas da India, and Isle de l'Europa (in the Mozambique Channel, France), which constitute valuable exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and strategic outposts (Schofield, 2007, p. 3).¹

Maritime Security and the Threat of Somali Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean is, once again, becoming an arena for geostrategic rivalry of some sort (see Brewster, 2014, pp. 5-11; Shambaugh, 2009, pp. 137-157). In fact, the region is emerging as one of the 21st century's leading strategic theatres,

¹ The broader Indian Ocean 'Rim' consists of 29 littoral countries and 6 island states. The Indian Ocean 'Region' can either be limited to the Rim countries, or it can be expanded to include landlocked countries dependent on the Indian Ocean. Thus, the number of states that comprise the Indian Ocean 'Region' can vary from a minimum of 35 Rim countries to a maximum of 52 states; see Fernando (2011, p. 23); Roy-Chaudhury (1998, note 4).

as a stage for the pursuit of global strategic and regional military and security interests.

Relations between the three major powers of the region, India, China (the People's Republic of China, PRC), and the United States, continue to evolve in complexity, heightened by the rise of India and China and a possible decline in US power in the region. However, the perception of US strategic decline warrants caution and should not be taken too literally. Of the three powers, indeed of all the world's leading powers, the US alone has the ability to project significant and sustained force into the region. It is a capability which, to 2020 at least, other powers can only aspire to. Furthermore, the US presence is viewed positively by India, which recognises it as a bulwark against Chinese expansion and assertiveness. In the broadest possible sense, while a rising China seeks to counter the dominance of the US and assert itself as the regional hegemon, an emerging India seeks, in turn, to act as a counter-balance against China. This is a situation which can serve US interests well, as the two regional rivals are left to compete and take all or most of the risks involved. India's naval expansion is a case in point, as it adds additional weight to the US naval presence (Luke & O'Loughlin, 2010, pp. 12-13).

At the same time, there is a burgeoning concern over an array of non-traditional security threats, especially energy security. Without any doubt, the Indian Ocean is critical to global trade and economic growth, as well as food and energy security (Chaturvedi & Okunev, 2012, p. 1; Hartley, 2012, p. 5).² However, now the world's most important route for international maritime long-haul cargo, the Indian Ocean remains vulnerable to piracy and highly unpredictable potential acts of maritime terrorism. Maritime security can no longer be conceptualised only in terms of a composite of sea power and naval arms build-ups, island and maritime boundary disputes, navigational regimes, activities in EEZs, competition over resources, and the maintenance of law and order at sea, including the protection of sea lanes of communication (SLOCs). The concept of human security also needs to be revisited with reference to some of the most pressing environmental issues: land degradation, access to fresh-water resources, the exploitation of fishing stocks, climate change, the illegal disposal of nuclear waste, environmental refugees and urban expansion and deterioration (Chaturvedi & Okunev, 2012, p. 1; see Hughes, 2011, pp. 41-45; UN Secretariat, 2008; UNEP, 2005).

² For overall GDP figures and GDP figures per capita, see World Bank (2015), and IMF (2015).

Figure 2: Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC)



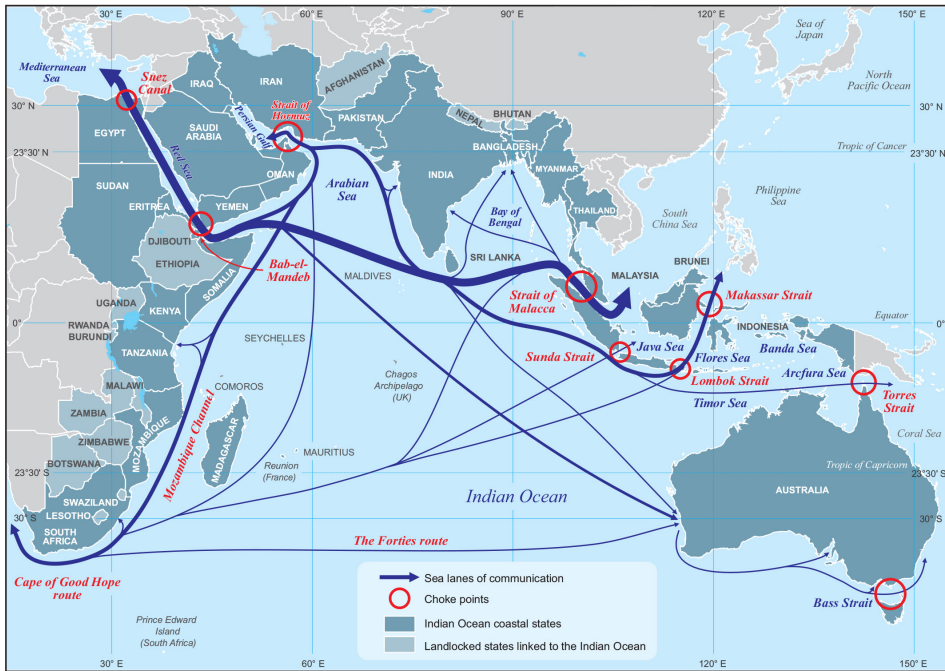
Of the three temperate oceans of the world, the Indian Ocean is probably the most problematic for security management. Despite this reality, however, the ocean seems bereft of any collective maritime security arrangements. The lack of maritime security around the Horn of Africa, in particular, causes a great deal of concern as it not only threatens commerce, but also peace and regional stability, international trade and global energy flows. From whichever direction, entry into the Indian Ocean is constrained by geographical imperatives. The routes through the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz have been used since antiquity for purposes of trade and communication and, naturally, a huge proportion of this trade is carried by sea. It raises the important question of what the strategic responses of regional navies are, ensuring the safe and efficient passage of these cargoes. Indeed, there are also countries outside the immediate region depending on secure shipping and they, too, have a legitimate interest in fostering a regime of co-operation. Some do not see a threat to shipping because of the interdependence of all in the region on maritime trade, but reliance on such a notion has obvious shortcomings. Rather than leave security management to chance it is axiomatic that it is in the interests of all to build a maritime security mechanism to promote an ocean-wide sphere of peace and tranquillity (Cozens, 1998, p. 1).

In determining particular strategies, regional navies have a vital role to play, but it should also be appreciated that “maritime strategy has a [clear] peacetime dimension” (McCaffrie, 1996, p. 7; see also Groenewald, 1997, p.1). Maritime strategy is idiosyncratic; in fact, it is fundamentally and significantly different from any other purpose -- it is unique. To quote Jack McCaffrie (1996, p. 4) again:

Navies have always been noted for their versatility and, in particular, their utility in situations short of conflict. This versatility comes from the characteristics of reach (including sustainability), adaptability (including the capacity to threaten and apply force in a finely graduated way), and acceptability (in that warships are diplomatic instruments unlike any other kind of armed force).

Maritime security, on the other hand, can be a rather broad, unfocussed and somewhat amorphous concept (Potgieter, 2012, p. 1) as it is both multi-dimensional and multi-faceted and involves both military and non-military issues. In the world of today, however, the luxury hardly exists of making clear-cut distinctions between traditional ‘military’ security issues (naval threats and challenges), hard, ‘non-military’ security issues (arms, narcotics and human trafficking, piracy and terrorism at sea and the protection of shipping, SLOCs, fishing stocks, seabed minerals and offshore oil and natural gas resources) and soft, ‘non-military’ security issues, such as providing energy security, safeguarding port and ship-building facilities, delimiting extended maritime spaces (EEZs), enforcing legal and regulatory mechanisms in maritime zones (maritime management), protecting the maritime environment, preventing pollution and dumping of toxic waste and securing dual-purpose oceanographic data (Roy, n.d., pp. 1 & 2). Thus, maritime security basically deals with the prevention of illicit activity in the maritime domain, covering national, regional and international efforts to enforce such security. Current global realities have introduced a range of maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean region as the roles of non-state actors have direct and fundamental effects on the evolving situation. This is a serious development as the rich Indian Ocean maritime trade, which includes much of the world’s energy shipments and almost half of global container traffic, traverses the ocean and is crucial to the world economy (Potgieter, 2012, p. 1).

Figure 3: West-East-West SLOCs Traversing the Indian Ocean



Recent economic turbulence worldwide suggests that a prudent and cautious approach to the matter of maritime security is required everywhere. Indeed, when economic growth is charging along and prosperity seems assured for all, voices of protest and disquiet usually tend to fade, especially in authoritarian regimes (Lingle, 1997, p. 55). But the present political discord in some countries is symptomatic of the converse of that contention. It is difficult, of course, to predict what the next stage in the world economy will have in store, but it is fairly obvious that economic growth will, of necessity, rely to a very large extent on the use of SLOCs (Cozens, 1998, pp. 1-2). What, then, are the latent and potential areas of friction which could surface to threaten freedom of navigation or otherwise impede the free flow of trade in the SLOCs of the Indian Ocean area? The following represent some areas of insecurity (see Valencia, 1998):

- Transnational disputes may arise from perceived irregularities by a littoral state in the practice of the right of 'innocent passage' through territorial waters by foreign ships. A littoral state may merely suspect 'activities inimical to its interests'.
- Marine pollution is a major source of concern. An estimated 25,000 tonnes of washed-out crude oil per day are being jettisoned into the sea anywhere between the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb, the Mozambique Channel, and

longitude 88°E. The effect on local communities and traditional fishing villages could be catastrophic and thus has political and security consequences.

- Undersea exploration for oil and gas (and minerals, although presently unlikely) pose not altogether unforeseen problems and security challenges.³
- Piracy has been evident in and around the waters of Somalia, in the Arabian Sea, and down the coast of East Africa.
- Maritime territorial disputes and inter-regional tensions could be exacerbated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) which now permits littoral states to impose national development interests in the ocean arena (EEZs), an extension of jurisdiction that has opened up a Pandora's Box of volatile issues.

There are also some tasks not readily appreciated or understood, grouped under the collective title of 'maritime confidence-building measures' (see Grove, 1996, Chapter 5): (1) transparency measures, such as visits by naval vessels, sharing general information on doctrine, policies and force structures, joint publishing of tactical and operating doctrines (that is, replenishment at sea, RAS), exchanging of personnel, and joint observation of naval exercises; (2) co-operation measures, more generally search and rescue (SAR) and humanitarian operations; and (3) incidents-at-sea agreements, addressing particular regional concerns, such as surveillance, fisheries, anti-piracy, anti-narcotic and illegal migration traffic, and dealing with activities usually tending to be bilateral in nature, but could also be extended to a multilateral forum such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

The fact that these measures are suggested as necessary illustrates a degree of 'uncertainty-based planning' in the Indian Ocean. This is not to suggest the beginnings of an arms race, but rather the convergence of at least two important motivators. First, since the ratification of UNCLOS III, governments are acutely aware of the importance of their rights and sovereignty over their respective ocean territories and EEZs. Second, in order to exercise these responsibilities countries need 'sea-securing resources'; in other words, ships capable of exercising sea power. It is into this arena that Indian Ocean navies and others need to insert sea-control platforms as a contribution to reducing insecurity at sea, thus demonstrating a

³ Underwater oil exploration and production in the north-western Indian Ocean takes place in an offshore oilfield, Bombay High (65km long, 23km wide, 75 metres deep), 176km off the coast of Mumbai in the Gulf of Khambhat off the Indian west coast, opposite the shores of the Indian states of Gujarat and Maharashtra (Rao & Talukdar, 1980, p. 487). British Petroleum (BP) joined India's Reliance Industries in a partnership on 23 oil and gas production-sharing contracts. This includes the KG-D6 block, spread across more than 50,000km² in the Krishna and Godavari river basins, off the east coast of India's Andhra Pradesh state in the Bay of Bengal (*Reuters India*, 22 February 2011; *Reuters*, 13 August 2012). Naturally, in order to safeguard these vital national assets, India has to maintain a very strong naval presence in both these maritime theatres.

firm resolve to maintain and preserve good order at sea. The costs of disrupted trade flows are probably incalculable, but nevertheless enormous, and the effects are unpredictable, but nonetheless deleterious to all in the Indian Ocean region and beyond. As the impact of the provisions of UNCLOS III takes effect, and as the changing strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean comes into sharper focus, the need for a stable and secure environment increases. Undoubtedly, there is a pressing need for a system of collective maritime security in the Indian Ocean (Cozens, 1998, p. 3).

India's Strategic Interests in the Western Indian Ocean

In recent times, India has adopted an expansive maritime strategy. Driven by great power aspirations and by strategic rivalry with China, India is expanding its naval capabilities and security relationships throughout the Indian Ocean region. It is paying specific attention to developing relationships at the key points of entry into the Western Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2010a, p. 1), i.e. the Strait of Hormuz (from the Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea), the Bab-el-Mandeb (from the Red Sea into the Gulf of Aden), and through the Mozambique Channel northwards into the south-western Indian Ocean along the shores of the Southern and East African littorals.

The Maritime Dimension in Indian Strategic Thinking

Among the changes in Indian strategic thinking in recent years has been a partial reorientation in India's strategic outlook in the maritime domain. Clearly, Indian strategic thinking has traditionally had a continental outlook. For thousands of years, military threats to India have been perceived as coming primarily from the northwest,⁴ reinforced by the country's experience in the 20th century when any direct military threats (from Japan, Pakistan, and China) were land-based. The continuing threats on India's western and northern borders and from domestic insurgencies has led to the Indian Army holding an undisputedly dominant position within the Indian military establishment. However, there is a developing view among some Indian strategists of India as a maritime power: that India's peninsular character and geographic position gives the Indian Ocean a preponderant influence over the country's destiny (see Brewster, 2014, pp. 11-15 & 23-35; Brewster, 2010a, p. 1; Menon, 2009). As Subhash Kapila (2012, p. 1) points out:

⁴ However, this is not to suggest that the Ottoman (Turkish), Portuguese, Dutch, French and British military presence in India, from around the 1490s and during the course of the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, did not also include a major maritime component.

The Indian Ocean stands aptly named because India's peninsular geographical configuration... places [it in a] unique commanding position on the Bay of Bengal on the eastern flank of the Deccan Peninsula and the Arabian Sea on the western flank. In strategic maritime terms, India is in a position to dominate the vast expanse of maritime waters from ... the Gulf of Aden ... all the way down south to the outermost extremities of the ... [Southern Oceans].

Some Indian leaders have also drawn a close connection between India's maritime ambitions and its destiny as a great power. As former Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee (2007) noted:

... after nearly a millenni[um] of inward and landward focus, we are once again turning our gaze outwards and seawards, which is the natural direction of view for a nation seeking to re-establish itself, not simply as a continental power, but even more so as a maritime power, and consequently as one that is of significance on the world stage.

Thus, one could argue that any significant geographical expansion of Indian influence can only take place in the maritime domain. As Rajiv Sikri (2009, p. 250), a former Secretary in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, commented: "If India aspires to be a great power, then the only direction in which ... [its] strategic influence can spread is across the seas. In every other direction there are formidable constraints."

India's standing as the most populous state in the Indian Ocean region and its central position in the northern Indian Ocean have long contributed to beliefs about the country's destiny to control its eponymous ocean (the ocean to which its name was given). According to some, there is now a well-established tradition among the Indian strategic community that the Indian Ocean is, or should be, 'India's Ocean'. Many in the Indian Navy see it as destined to become the predominant maritime security provider in a region stretching from the Bab-el-Mandeb to the Malacca Strait, and also having a significant security role in areas beyond (Scott, 2006, p. 99). This view was amplified by former US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates affirming that the US was "... look[ing] to India to be a partner and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond" (Murphy, 2009). And, according to Donald Berlin (2006, p. 60):

New Delhi regards the Indian Ocean as its backyard and deems it both natural and desirable that India function as, eventually, the leader and the predominant influence in this region – the world's only region and ocean named after a single

state. This is what the United States set out to do in North America and the Western Hemisphere at an early stage in America's 'rise to power'.

Many Indian maritime strategists see predominance in the Indian Ocean as potentially also delivering significant influence in East Asia. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the 19th century American naval strategist, is frequently cited by Indian strategic thinkers, including a statement (incorrectly) attributed to him: "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. In the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its [the Indian Ocean's] waters".⁵

During the Cold War, India's ability to pursue its maritime ambitions was severely constrained and for decades following independence the Indian Navy was known as the 'Cinderella' of the Indian armed forces. However, increased enthusiasm for maritime power has been accompanied by an expansion in India's naval capabilities;⁶ since the mid-1990s the country has embarked on a major programme to develop a 'blue-water' navy with significant increases in naval expenditure. India's armed forces budget grew at an annual rate of 5% from 2001-2005, at around 10% from 2005-2008, and to a massive 17.63% in 2012/13, but fell back to a rather modest 5.31% in 2013/14, primarily due to economic constraints. Yet, under the new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the defence budget has again been boosted by 12% for 2014/15. At the same time, the Navy's share of the increasing defence budget has risen from 11% in 1992/93 to 18% in 2008/09, and now seems to have stabilised at 17.8% for 2013/14. Still, in relation to the overall defence budget it faced a resource cut of 2.6% in real terms. Nevertheless, initial increased capital expenditure had encouraged plans for significant changes in the Indian Navy's force structure, with an emphasis on sea-control capabilities (see Miglani, 2014; Brewster, 2014, p. 13; Behera, 2013a; Behera, 2013b; Brewster, 2010a, pp. 2 & 3). Already, the Navy is undergoing substantial expansion with 40 ships and submarines, including two nuclear submarines and two aircraft carriers, either on order or already commissioned. The target is to have a 165-ship fleet by 2022, consisting of 60 surface combat craft, submarines and three aircraft carrier groups with a total of 400 MiG-29K aircraft and attack helicopters (Potgieter, 2012, p. 3). As some India observers are keen to point out, with two aircraft carriers in operation by as early as 2012/13,

⁵ A slightly different version of this quotation is: "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean controls Asia. The ocean is the key to the Seven Seas." This quotation is often attributed to Admiral Mahan but, in reality, is of doubtful provenance. The earliest reference to this quote in English appeared in an article, "Will the Indian Ocean Become a Soviet Pond?", in the *Atlas World Press Review* magazine of November 1979 – an article originally written by Italian journalist, Guido Gerosa, entitled *La flotta sovietica presidia nuovi mari*, and translated from the Italian publication *l'Europeo* (Milan) of 6 August 1970.

⁶ For a general discussion of India's maritime strategy and capabilities, see Buzszynski (2009, pp. 73-93); Holmes, Winner & Yoshihara (2009); and Naidu (2000).

“the balance of power in the Indian Ocean ... [would have] tilt[ed] decisively in India’s favour” (Rai, 2009, p. 7). And, according to Admiral Arun Prakash, the former Indian Chief of Navy Staff, India aims to exercise selective sea control of the Indian Ocean through task forces built around the projected three aircraft carriers that will form the core of separate fleets in the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea. The rapidly expanding Indian Coast Guard may also play an important complementary role to the Indian Navy, particularly in circumstances where there are reasons to emphasise policing functions over those of the military (Brewster, 2010a, p. 3).

In conjunction with an expansion in naval capabilities over the last decade or so, India has been quietly expanding its influence throughout the Indian Ocean. The Navy has been active in developing security relationships that are intended to enhance India’s ability to project power and restrict China’s ability to develop similar security relationships in the region. Given that the Indian Ocean is in many ways an enclosed sea, the Indian Navy has placed particular emphasis on the ‘choke points’ at entrances to the ocean around southern Africa (including the Mozambique Channel), the Arabian Peninsula (including the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb) and the straits connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans through the Indonesian archipelago (the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits). According to the Indian Navy’s 2004 Maritime Doctrine, “... [control] of the choke points could be useful as a bargaining chip in the international power game, where the currency of military power remains a stark reality” (IMOD-N, 2004, p. 64). The Navy has also sought to institutionalise itself as the leading power in the Indian Ocean through such initiatives as sponsoring the multilateral IONS, to which the navies of all Indian Ocean littoral states are invited (Brewster, 2010a, p. 3).⁷

But India’s naval ambitions have not been without its critics. Given the long-standing lack of co-ordination in strategic planning in New Delhi, the Indian Navy’s activist role in the Indian Ocean has often been way ahead of the views within the other armed services and the government. There is long-running tension between the Indian Navy and the Ministry of External Affairs over the Navy’s assertive regional policy, including over the 2008 decision to participate in anti-piracy operations off Somalia (Unnithan, 2008; *Thaindian News*, 20 November 2008). According to some, the Ministry of External Affairs repeatedly turned down requests from the Indian Navy to conduct naval interceptions.

⁷ Invitees to the naval symposium include France (which India recognises as a littoral state by virtue of its colonial territories), but not Britain or the US (notwithstanding their presence in the British Indian Ocean Territory, BIOT), or China.

It is not clear to what extent these tensions merely reflect bureaucratic caution or a more fundamental disagreement over the Indian Navy's regional strategy (Brewster, 2010a, p. 4; Maitra, 2005). Others are sceptical about the ability of India to transform itself from a continental to a maritime power. Varun Sahni (2005), for example, warns that the Soviet Union's failed attempts to become a naval power in the 1970s and 1980s should act as "a cautionary ... [note] for India's Mahanian navalists ... [and] a grim warning of what happens to a continental state that harbours overly grandiose maritime ambitions".

However, over the last decade or more the US has actively encouraged India's strategic ambitions in the Indian Ocean region. In March 2005, the Bush Administration announced that it would "help India become a major world power in the 21st century", adding that "... [we] understand fully the implications, including the military implications, of that statement" (US Department of State, 2005). In fact, the US has focused on assisting in the expansion of India's power projection capabilities and its role as a security provider in the Indian Ocean, with the former US Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter stressing that Washington welcomes India "taking up ... responsibility to ensure security in this part of the world" (Dikshit, 2008). US encouragement for the development of India as a regional naval power in the Indian Ocean has been compared to Britain's strategy in the late 19th and early 20th century when it found itself challenged by the growth of German naval power. Britain then forged partnerships with emerging naval powers, the US in the Western Hemisphere and Japan in the Pacific, allowing them a measure of regional hegemony, while the UK concentrated its resources in the North Atlantic against Germany (see Holmes, Winner & Yoshihara, 2009, Chapter 3). This analogy, while far from perfect, does capture some of the facets present in current US thinking, particularly its perceptions of the growing Chinese maritime threat and its desire to see India grow as a regional balancing power against China (Brewster, 2010a, pp. 4-5; see Chellaney, 2008, pp. 23-36).⁸

India's 'Emeralds' in the Indian Ocean

Over the last decade or so, India has developed good security relationships with many states throughout the Indian Ocean, with particular emphasis on the maritime choke points of the Mozambique Channel in the south-western

⁸ In 2007, the US Navy released a maritime security strategy that still stressed the Atlantic and Pacific oceans as the principal centres for regular US military presence – but now, the Indian Ocean was added as a key strategic focus. This reflects in part the importance the US attaches to the Gulf, but it also illustrates how central the integrity of sea lanes and their multifaceted connections have become to US strategic planning. In the past ten years, India-US security co-operation has expanded markedly, and naval co-operation centres on the Indian Ocean is its most active component. In the same period, India's attitude towards a permanent US presence in those waters has shifted from deeply sceptical to supportive (Schaffer, 2011).

Indian Ocean and the entrance to the Persian Gulf in the northwest, as well as the Malacca Strait in the northeast. India is also developing a security presence in the central Indian Ocean, astride the east-west SLOCs across the Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2010a, p. 7).

To be sure, the south-western Indian Ocean is the gateway between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. India's security relationships in the region are anchored by its close relationship with Mauritius (see Brewster, 2014, pp. 69-76), the island state that lies around 900km to the east of Madagascar. India has long-standing and close political, economic and security associations with Mauritius. Some 70 per cent of the Mauritian population is of Indian ethnic origin and for several decades Mauritius has acted as the primary gateway for international investment into India originating from the US, Europe and elsewhere, largely due to favourable tax arrangements.⁹ Former Mauritian Prime Minister Paul Bérenger described the bilateral relationship as "umbilical and sacred" and security relations as "intense" (*The Hindu*, 2 April 2005; Baruah, 2003), while former President Sir Anerood Jugnauth referred to the connection in terms of "blood relations" (*The Hindu*, 3 December 2009). Consequently, the Mauritian élite regards India in largely benign terms and appears to have accepted India as having a special role in Mauritian security.

Indian-Mauritian co-operation was formalised in a 1974 defence agreement under which India has transferred patrol boats and helicopters to Mauritius (including the supply of a patrol vessel in 2010) and provides training to Mauritian personnel and officers for the Mauritian National Coast Guard and Police Helicopter Squadron (effectively, the Mauritian navy and air force). Since 2003, the Indian Navy has provided maritime security through periodic patrols of Mauritian waters, including anti-piracy patrols in 2010 (*Deccan Chronicle*, 24 November 2009; Ramachandran, 2007b). India also backs Mauritius' territorial claims to Diego Garcia which was separated from Mauritian administration in the 1960s (Vyas, 2001). Mauritian political leaders have publicly indicated on several occasions that India would be permitted to establish naval facilities on Mauritius if it so wished (Harrison & Subrahmanyam, 1989, p. 263) and there are claims that India already operates a signals intelligence station (*India Defence*, 7 July 2007). In 2006 and 2007 there were reports of discussions between the Mauritian and Indian governments over the long-term lease to the Indian government of the Agalega islands (which lie between the island of Mauritius and the Seychelles),

⁹ Between April 2000 and January 2010, Mauritius was the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, comprising 43% of total investment, with the second largest investment source being Singapore; see IMCI (2010).

ostensibly for tourism (Sidhartha, 2006a; Sidhartha 2006b). It has been speculated that India's intention was to upgrade the Agalega airstrip to service Indian manned and unmanned surveillance aircraft (Forsberg, 2007). Discussions over the proposal reportedly ended due to political sensitivities concerning the local Creole population - contemplating, perhaps, the complaints of Diego Garcians who were dispossessed of their islands following a deal between the British and Mauritian governments (Brewster, 2010a, p. 8).

India also has growing security relationships with Madagascar, Mozambique and the Seychelles, littoral states in and around the crucial Mozambique Channel, the SLOC used by shipping transiting the Cape of Good Hope (Brewster, 2010a, p. 9). The security of the Seychelles was highly contested during the latter half of the Cold War as the US and the Soviet Union competed to maintain or establish a security presence in the islands. At the same time, India was seen by the Seychelles as a benign regional protector. In the early 1980s, Seychelles' leftist former President Albert René sought commitments from then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to intervene in case of an attempted coup. Although Gandhi declined to provide any public assurances, India did contribute two helicopters and training for the Seychelles security forces (Harrison & Subrahmanyam, 1989, p. 263). The Indian Navy has also assisted with maritime security in the Seychelles EEZ under a 2003 defence co-operation agreement in terms of which it provided anti-piracy patrols in early 2010 (see Brewster, 2014, pp. 76-79).¹⁰ Moreover, in 2005 India donated a patrol boat to the Seychelles, reportedly in a hurried effort to pre-empt offers of Chinese assistance (Ramachandran, 2007a). Also, in July 2007 the Indian Navy opened an electronic monitoring facility in northern Madagascar at the head of the Mozambique Channel (Ramachandran, 2007b; *India Defence*, 7 July 2007) and apparently had been granted 'limited' berthing rights in the island for Indian naval vessels (Pubby, 2007).

The Indian Navy has also acted as a maritime security provider for Mozambique, including taking responsibility for maritime security during the 2003 African Union (AU) and 2004 World Economic Forum (WEF) summits held in Maputo (Ramachandran, 2007b). And, in 2006, India and Mozambique entered into a defence co-operation agreement that envisages joint maritime patrols, supply of military equipment, training and technology transfer in repairing and assembling military vehicles, aircraft and ships (Brewster, 2010a, p. 9; *People's Daily*, 7 March 2006).¹¹

¹⁰ The US also provides anti-piracy maritime surveillance through unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) stationed in the Seychelles.

¹¹ For a wider discussion of India's strategic ambitions and role in south-eastern Africa, particularly in Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya, see Brewster (2014, pp. 85-89 & 92-93).

What is more, India's maritime security relationships in the south-western Indian Ocean are buttressed by growing maritime security relations with France (Brewster, 2014, pp. 79-80) and South Africa. Since 2001, the Indian Navy has conducted annual exercises with the French Navy, which operates out of Réunion and Djibouti. India has sponsored the 'IBSA Trilateral Security Dialogue' between India, Brazil and South Africa, pursuant to which trilateral naval exercises (IBSAMAR) have been held in 2008, 2010, 2012, and in 2014 off the Cape of Good Hope in South African waters (*Cape Times*, 21 October 2014; Brewster, 2014, pp. 96-98; Brewster, 2010a, p. 9). Further south, India also has a growing presence in Antarctica, with one active research station and a second that was scheduled for commissioning in 2012.

While some might see India as having a strong security role in the south-western Indian Ocean, there are fears in New Delhi that China might try to undermine or pre-empt India's relationships. Again, according to the former Indian Chief of Navy Staff Admiral Arun Prakash (2007b, p. 7), India "cannot afford to have any hostile or inimical power threatening the island states in this region". Political and economic relations between China and Mauritius and Seychelles are closely watched by New Delhi (Lamont, 2010),¹² and it has been claimed that a so-called Chinese 'thrust' towards these island states presages Sino-Indian naval rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean (Mohan, 2009). While China may seek to develop its economic and political interests in the area, it seems unlikely that it would be able to dislodge India as the dominant security provider to Mauritius, and there are no indications at present that it would be able to seriously challenge India's maritime security role elsewhere in the south-western Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2010a, p. 10).

India historically exercised a special political and economic role in the north-western Indian Ocean. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, British India was the dominant economic, political and military force in the region. The Trucial States (now the United Arab Emirates) and Aden (now Yemen) were administered from British India and British Indian Army garrisons were stationed throughout the Persian Gulf until 1947. However, India's influence in the region diminished significantly following independence and, although New Delhi generally adopted a pro-Arab foreign policy, its ties in the region were regularly strained as a result of the India-Pakistan conflict. Pakistan's close political, economic and military ties with many states in this region continue to this day. Some argue that the ability of India to extend its security presence in the north-western

¹² This includes an announced US\$700 million investment by China in a special economic zone in Mauritius.

Indian Ocean has also been constrained by the US predominance in the Gulf, leaving little room for New Delhi to develop its own relationships, and that the US has not encouraged an increased Indian security presence there (Brewster, 2010a, p. 10).¹³

Despite these constraints, India is developing security relationships in the region, particularly with Oman (which sits on the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf). Oman may see India as partially balancing its security relationship with the US and, since 2003, India has entered into several defence agreements with the Sultanate dealing with training, maritime security co-operation, and joint exercises (*India Defence*, 6 April 2010; Jha, 2009). The Indian Air Force uses the Thumrait air base for transit purposes and Oman has offered the Indian Navy berthing facilities in support of anti-piracy patrols (Dikshit, 2009). The Indian Navy has also sought to play an active role in the containment of Somali-based piracy and since October 2008 has one or two vessels in anti-piracy patrols off Somalia. However, India's contribution has been made separately from the US-sponsored Combined Task Force-150, in which Pakistan has played an active role (Brewster, 2010a, p. 11).¹⁴

The two island chains that dominate the central Indian Ocean are the British-administered Indian Ocean Territory (which hosts the US air and naval base at Diego Garcia), and the Maldives, both sitting north-south astride the major east-west SLOCs between the Middle East and East Asia. India has long regarded the Maldives as falling within its South Asian sphere of influence. In 1988, with the apparent blessing of the US and Britain, India sent troops and naval forces to the Maldives to support former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom against an attempted coup by Sri Lankan mercenaries. Since that time, India has supplied the Maldivian armed forces with equipment and training and the Indian Navy has provided maritime security. In August 2009, a security agreement was formalised that will significantly enhance India's capabilities in the central Indian Ocean. India has been granted use of the former British naval and air base at Gan Island, part of the southern-most group of islands in the Maldives lying around 1,000 km south of India and around 700 km north of Diego Garcia (Brewster, 2010a, p. 11). India is reportedly planning to base Dornier aircraft and helicopters at Gan, although it is unclear to what extent the Indian Navy will establish a

¹³ This perception is reinforced by the fact that the US military relationship with India is the responsibility of US Pacific Command, based in Hawaii, while the US security presence in the north-western Indian Ocean is administered by US Central Command, based in Qatar (which also has responsibility for the US military relationship with Pakistan). For a discussion on India's role in the north-western Indian Ocean and its attempts to develop a strategic relationship with Iran, see Brewster (2014, pp. 112-118).

¹⁴ As at April 2010, Pakistan had led CTF-150 on four occasions.

permanent presence at the associated Gan naval facilities. India also reportedly plans to station aircraft and naval vessels at Malé in the central Maldives and at Haa Dhalu atoll in the north (Dutta, 2009). As part of the agreement, India is building a system of 26 electronic monitoring stations across the Maldives archipelago, apparently to protect the Maldives' large EEZ from illegal fishing activities (Chandramohan, 2009).

An Indian Sphere of Influence in the Indian Ocean?

To what extent should India's maritime security relationships in the Indian Ocean be seen as the beginnings of an Indian sphere of influence in the region?¹⁵

The discourse on an Indian sphere of influence beyond South Asia is sometimes identified with Lord Curzon, the former British Viceroy of India who, at the beginning of the 20th century, advocated the adoption of a 'forward policy' to secure India's strategic position. Curzon's so-called 'forward school' argued that India's security demanded, amongst others, control of maritime routes and key ports en route to India, including Aden and Singapore.¹⁶ In many ways, the policies of the British Raj represented a significant departure from Indian traditions which had little history of territorial expansion or military and political adventure beyond the limits of the sub-continent. George Tanham's (1996, p. 73) study of India's strategic culture in the early 1990s characterised Indian strategic thinking as being "defensive" and "lack[ing] ... an expansionist military tradition". Indeed, any affirmation of an Indian security sphere beyond South Asia largely ceased following independence. After 1947, India effectively withdrew to the Indian sub-continent and asserted what has been called 'India's Monroe Doctrine' according to which New Delhi would not permit any intervention by any 'external' power in India's immediate neighbours in South Asia and related islands (Brewster, 2010a, p. 15). While India's attempts to exclude other powers from South Asia had only limited success, New Delhi's 'Monroe Doctrine' was used to justify military interventions in Sri Lanka and the Maldives in the 1980s (see Holmes & Yoshihara, 2008, pp. 997-1011).

Several decades earlier, Kavalam M. Panikkar (1943, pp. 100-101), India's most famous maritime strategist, argued that the Indian Ocean should remain "truly Indian", advocating the creation of a "steel ring" around India through the establishment of forward naval bases in Singapore, Mauritius, Yemen (Socotra),

¹⁵ On an Indian sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean, see Brewster (2014, pp. 35-37).

¹⁶ This included the creation of territorial buffer areas to insulate direct contact with other empires, including Afghanistan in the west, Tibet in the north, and Thailand (Siam) in the east, and for British India to take an active role in managing the affairs of these buffer zones.

and Sri Lanka. Towards the end of World War II, he wrote that "... to India ... [the Indian Ocean] is the vital sea", asserting that "Indian interests have extended to the different sides ... of the Indian Ocean [and], based as they are on the inescapable facts of geography, have become more important than ever before" (Panikkar, 1945, pp. 84 & 94). In a similar vein, Keshav Vaidya (1949, pp. 91, 101 & 130) talked of India's oceanic destiny needing around half a century to come to fruition. And nearly seven decades later, his hopes that India "... must, at least, rule the waves of the Indian Ocean" and "... must be the supreme and undisputed power over the waters of the Indian Ocean well on the path to becoming a mighty sea power ... which alone can ensure national greatness" are, perhaps, about to be realised.

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a revival in discussion in India about a 'natural' sphere of influence extending well beyond South Asia. This is related to a desire to move beyond India's traditional strategic preoccupations in South Asia and re-engage with its extended neighbourhood; in other words, to rectify what former Indian Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh called India's unnecessary acceptance of "the post-Partition limits geography imposed on policy" (Mohan, 2003, p. 205). Eric Margolis (2005, p. 70) perceptively remarks that what is "driving India's naval strategy is the concept that the vast Indian Ocean is its *mare nostrum* that the entire triangle of the Indian Ocean is ... [its] rightful and exclusive sphere of interest". As David Scott (2006, p. 120) emphasises, "... [to] shape the Indian Ocean as India's ocean is India's 'Grand Strategy'" for the 21st century. Thus, from the turn of this century, the Indian Ministry of Defence began describing India's 'security environment' as extending from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Strait of Malacca in the east (IMOD, 2001), an area which Jaswant Singh called India's "sphere of influence" (Rajghatta, 2001) and what former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2004) has somewhat more diplomatically referred to as India's "strategic footprint" (Brewster, 2010a, p. 16).

While there is obviously an aspiration in New Delhi to develop an expanded Indian strategic space, it is not at all clear what this might mean in practice. There is little doubt that India's approach to spreading its influence in the region differs significantly from Lord Curzon's, and it seems unlikely even in the long term that India will regain the regional hegemony exerted by British India. However, short of hegemony, India could express regional dominance through the development of a more hierarchical regional order or seeking to exclude other powers from the region. To date, the Indian Navy has taken a co-operative approach in developing security relationships, an approach that has been relatively successful. The failure of India to project military power beyond the limits of South Asia

during the Cold War has placed New Delhi in good stead in much of the Indian Ocean region.

New Delhi has a noticeable lack of historical baggage in many of its dealings in the region, with the exception of the Islamic factor arising from the Pakistan conflict. India is often perceived as essentially a benign power and not a would-be hegemon, in contrast with other external powers such as the US. While India is not in a position to exert significant power through military predominance or ideological means, it may be able to do so as a provider of public goods. This is certainly the current approach of the Indian Navy, which emphasises its ability to provide maritime policing, anti-piracy, and anti-terrorism functions. However, there are sometimes also noticeable overtones of hierarchy in India's dealings with the region, particularly in New Delhi's overt opposition to regional relationships with China (see Brewster, 2014, pp. 194-196; Brewster, 2010a, pp. 16-17).

In the longer term, India's role in the Indian Ocean will likely be determined (and limited) by the extent to which its naval expansion plans come to fruition. Drawing on the experience of the US in the Western Hemisphere in the 19th and 20th centuries, James Holmes (Holmes, Winner & Yoshihara, pp. 50-52) identifies three basic roles which the Indian Navy could play: first, a 'free-rider' navy, in which the Indian Navy can play a growing role in maritime policing and humanitarian functions, while the US continues to play a dominant role; second, a 'constabulary' navy, in which the Indian Navy would, sparingly and with tact, intervene in littoral countries to advance the common interest of South Asian states; and third, a 'strong-man' navy where it seeks to establish hegemony in the Indian Ocean and has the capability to mount a forward defensive posture beyond the Indian Ocean. Holmes concludes that the ambitions represented by the Indian Navy's expansion programme in the coming decades would give it the capability to act somewhere between a 'free-rider' navy and a 'constabulary' navy (Brewster, 2010a, p. 17). Undoubtedly, challenges in the maritime domain call for more effective law enforcement and the maintenance of maritime order. These challenges are, essentially, part constabulary, part economic, and part human welfare. And as crime on the high seas has increased, various avenues have opened up for maritime security co-operation (Ghosh, 2004, p. 1).

It should be noted that the potential for an Indian sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean is also subject to some important caveats: although India has ambitions to expand its strategic space in the Indian Ocean, there are real questions as to whether these aspirations will be achieved. India has a long history of its strategic ambitions surpassing its capabilities, of strategic goals and military expansion plans going unfulfilled. The planned expansion of India's naval capabilities

is probably years away from being achieved and is highly contingent upon the sustainability of India's high economic growth rate. India's security partners in the Indian Ocean (with the possible exception of the Maldives) will likely maintain other important security relationships as well and will not easily grant an exclusive security role to India. And, most importantly, the US has every reason to maintain a major regional security presence, particularly in the north-western Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2010a, p. 17).

Nevertheless, India's aspirations to expand its strategic space in the Indian Ocean region are clearly related to its broader ambitions to be recognised as a great power, ambitions that may, if anything, grow in coming years. Certainly, many would see a sphere of influence as a natural appendage of great power status. One study on India's regional plans (Pardesi, 2005, p. 55) concluded that:

... a rising India will try to establish regional hegemony in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region ... just like all the other rising powers have since Napoleonic times, with the long-term goal of achieving great power status on an Asian and, perhaps, even global scale.

From a geopolitical perspective, spheres of influence are seen as a normal part of ordering the international system. According to Saul Cohen (1973, p. viii) "... spheres of influence are essential to the preservation of national and regional expression ... the alternative is either a monolithic world system or utter chaos". The key feature of a sphere of influence is not just the ability to project power, but an acknowledgement of a hierarchical relationship in which the great power provides security to lesser powers in return for an acknowledgement of its leadership role (Brewster, 2010a, pp. 17 & 18).¹⁷ Many Indian strategists see China's political and security relationships in South Asia and its putative 'String of Pearls' strategy as part of a cohesive policy of 'encirclement' or 'containment' of India that justifies the development of a 'defensive' sphere of influence by India. As Arun Prakash (2006, p. 11) argued: "The appropriate counter to China's encirclement of India is to build our own relations, particularly in our neighbourhood, on the basis of our national interests and magnanimity towards smaller neighbours."

As it expands its influence in the Indian Ocean region, India also has had to accept the continuing role of the US in the region. The US, particularly with its base at Diego Garcia and its naval facilities in Singapore and the Gulf, seems likely to remain the predominant naval power in the Indian Ocean region for many years to come. However, there are indications that the US is willing to cede

¹⁷ For an incisive analysis of India as the natural centre of gravity and its leadership role in a regional security order in the Indian Ocean, see Brewster (2014, pp. 199-200 & 202-206).

to and, indeed, encourage a major regional naval role for India, particularly in the north-eastern Indian Ocean. For its part, India's willingness to co-operate with the US in achieving its ambitions is not as paradoxical as it may seem. As former US Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1955, p. 64) once conceded, the US (in developing its sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere in the 19th century) relied on Britain, the then superpower, to enforce the Monroe Doctrine until the US was sufficiently strong to do so itself. Similarly, India may have good reason to co-operate with the US while it builds its own naval power (Brewster, 2010a, p. 18).¹⁸

Yet, with the exception of the US, India will likely wish to co-operate with extra-regional navies in the Indian Ocean only as long as they recognise India's leading role in the region (Pardesi, 2005, p. 53). The apparent willingness of Japan to recognise India's role as the 'leading' maritime security provider west of the Malacca Strait forms a not insignificant element in the developing India-Japan security relationship (see Brewster, 2010c, pp. 95-120). How Australia fits in this picture is also not entirely clear. Australia's naval power ranks second only to India's among the littoral states. There is no suggestion that India is seeking to expand its strategic space into the south-eastern Indian Ocean and there is little reason for it to do so as the junction of the Southern and Indian Oceans is not a maritime choke point (Brewster, 2010a, p. 19). Nevertheless, there is a 'strong mutual interest' for Australia and India to enhance maritime security co-operation (Australian Government, 2009, p. 96), particularly in areas such as maritime policing (piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, human trafficking) and disaster management (see Brewster, 2010b, pp. 1-9).¹⁹

A Brief Outline of Security Threats in the Western Indian Ocean Region

Multiple sources of insecurity afflict many of the countries that rim the Indian Ocean. These challenges include terrorism in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India; state failure, civil war and insurgency in Yemen and Somalia; high-volume drug-trafficking via Pakistan and Iran; and piracy and armed robbery at sea around the Horn of Africa and in the Arabian Sea. Not all of these security concerns have occurred at peak intensity at the same time, and thus it is arguable that they have been addressed 'insufficiently' and on an 'if-and-when' basis. Even so, these risks

¹⁸ For an insightful discussion on US-Indian co-operation in the Indian Ocean region, see Brewster (2014, pp. 171-179).

¹⁹ For a perceptive analysis of a new security partnership between India and Australia in the Indian Ocean region, see Brewster (2014, pp. 154-159).

threaten one of the most critical strategic and trading spaces in the world. The Persian Gulf remains the global market's most important source of crude oil, while the northern Indian Ocean constitutes a key sector of the globe's 'West-East-West' trading belt. For this reason, it is all the more remarkable that these issues have not previously caused a greater holistic security breakdown in the Indian Ocean region.

As trends that have particularly worrisome security implications continue to evolve, it is conceivable that the conflated pressures of political insecurity, insurgent conflict, terrorism, illicit trafficking of all kinds, and piracy and vessel hijacking outstrip the international and regional community's ability to effectively respond to such issues in a sustained manner. Decision-makers should now confront the logic of adopting a 'management' approach to these challenges. Yet, successful management of security challenges of this magnitude, complexity, and inter-connectedness requires policy coherence, imagination, sustained participation, and considerable resources. Amidst the existential pressures of geopolitical fragility, internal political upheaval, insurgency, famine, and inter-state tensions, there is now a growing danger that the specific threats from terrorism, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and piracy will not get the resources and policy attention they require, and could therefore increase further in the near-term and beyond.

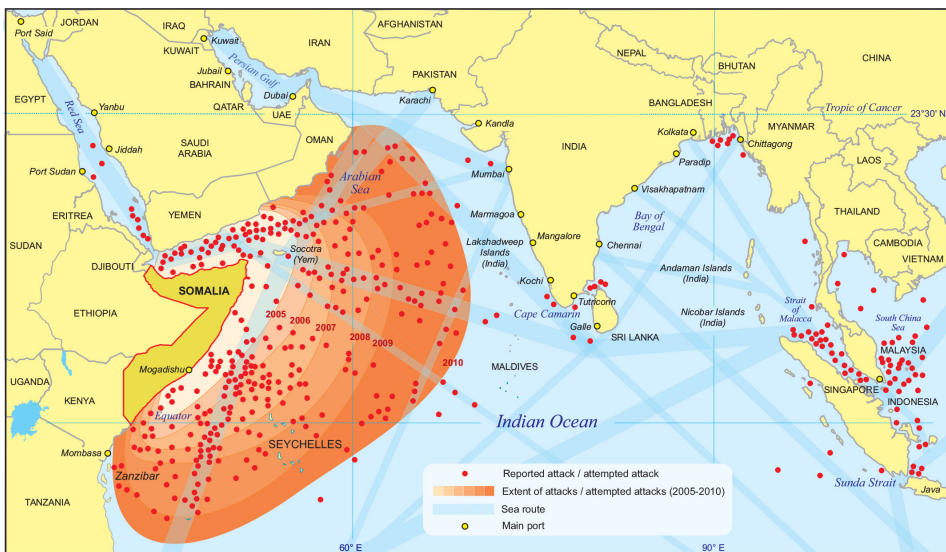
As offshore oil and gas exploration and production evolves along Africa's east coast from Mozambique northwards to Somalia, improved private and government maritime security have to be put in place, especially in the coastal waters of northern Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya. And as offshore industries expand, infrastructure, port facilities, and support shipping will likely be tempting targets for armed robbery, piracy, kidnappings, and sabotage for a range of actors, including organised criminal gangs, terrorists, and insurgent groups (some of which have yet to emerge or be identified). Also, historically, the settlement of territorial disputes has been one of the most protracted areas of geopolitical conflict. In most instances, disputes are benign, rendering them virtually dormant but, even so, they have the potential to become flashpoints in the coming years.

There appear to be a daunting number of maritime security threats and challenges in the Indian Ocean region, both extant and potential,²⁰ and insufficient resources to address them. Indeed, the mere fact that the Indian Ocean region

²⁰ These parts of the Indian Ocean region are categorised by Lloyd's Market Association of London, which provides professional and technical support to Lloyd's underwriting (insurance and, specifically, shipping) community, as 'Piracy, Terrorism, and Related Perils Listed Areas', enclosed by the following boundaries: on the north-west by the Red Sea, south of latitude 15°N; on the west of the Gulf of Oman by longitude 58°E; on the east by longitude 78°E; and on the south by latitude 12°S; see IMO (2013), and IMO (2009).

constitutes the world's largest swath of maritime space that is prone to piracy and terrorism of some sort, signifies that the region will arguably remain the maritime area with the greatest array of security challenges for the foreseeable future.²¹ However, while the resources that a very large and diverse group of states have devoted to addressing these challenges have never been adequate to the task, the largely successful coalition-building measures (CBMs) and joint task-force deployments have been impressive. With appropriate leadership from the US and the European Union, these multilateral efforts can be built upon in future. Other key states such as Australia, India, the UAE, Oman, Pakistan, Iran, and South Africa should come forward to forge regional multilateral solutions to address piracy, hijacking, human trafficking, terrorism, illegal fishing, and the integrity of EEZs. While not all these states and powers will be (or can be) grouped to address every challenge, opportunities for security co-operation and confidence-building in the region do exist (Herbert-Burns, 2012b, pp. 23 & 38-39).

Figure 4: The Somali Piracy Threat in the North-Western Indian Ocean



The oceanic area now threatened by Somali pirates is vast (more than 2.5 million square miles) and security of this space can never be assured, even with hundreds of warships. The 35 to 45 warships collectively provided by many states that are routinely deployed in the international recognised transit corridor

²¹ For various perspectives on the piracy conundrum, see Herbert-Burns (2012b, pp. 23-39); Luke (2012a, pp. 31-33); Luke (2012b, pp. 35-39); *Oman Tribune*, 4 November 2012; Potgieter & Schofield (2010, pp. 86-112); Middleton & Quartapelle (2010, p. 5, note 11); Tsvetkova (2009, pp. 44-63); Harper (2009); Middleton (2008); *Associated Press*, 12 October 2008; Murphy (2007, Chapter 3).

(IRTC) and in parts of the Somali Basin are woefully inadequate. However, most of the Gulf Co-operation Council states, including the UAE, have decent-sized naval forces and patrol craft. The Gulf States rely heavily on shipping for their economic prosperity, especially to secure the flow of crude oil exports. This reality should be matched with far more robust and sustained naval patrolling by Oman and the UAE, while Western powers that have replenishment capabilities could provide the necessary logistical support. On the north-eastern and eastern side of the high-risk area (HRA), India²² and Pakistan could likely provide more sea and air surveillance resources. Additional maritime patrol aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles based in Oman, the Seychelles, Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar could further enhance current levels of maritime domain awareness. Those states with sufficient warships, such as the US, the UK, China, France, Germany, Japan, and Turkey, could provide additional frigates and destroyers to extend the patrolling footprint deeper into the high-risk area, guided by improved maritime domain awareness and intelligence.

Ever since the piracy threat began to grow in 2008, maritime domain awareness has improved considerably due to the efforts of the UK Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO), the Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa (MSC-HOA), and various combined task forces. Even so, more could be done to harness the surveillance and threat-reporting capability of all the merchant vessels in the high-risk area, which could potentially expand the intelligence-gathering capacity for military forces by an order of magnitude. In the longer-term, an internationally supported financial programme to boost the naval and coastguard capacity of countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles would enable these states to provide far better maritime security and counter-piracy operations in their own waters (Herbert-Burns, 2012b, pp. 35 & 36).

Conclusion

Without any doubt, for India the Indian Ocean has huge and growing strategic significance, as it is most concerned with the ocean as a geostrategic space as opposed to a regionally significant one. India's traditionally land-oriented strategic vision has expanded in the past two decades to place greater weight on its maritime environment, and the Indian Ocean is now looked on as part

²² India's National Ship Owners' Association, figuring that piracy costs the global shipping trade some US\$10 bn annually, has formally urged the Indian government to back the creation of a maritime anti-piracy force under UN command (*Washington Post*, 3 October 2011).

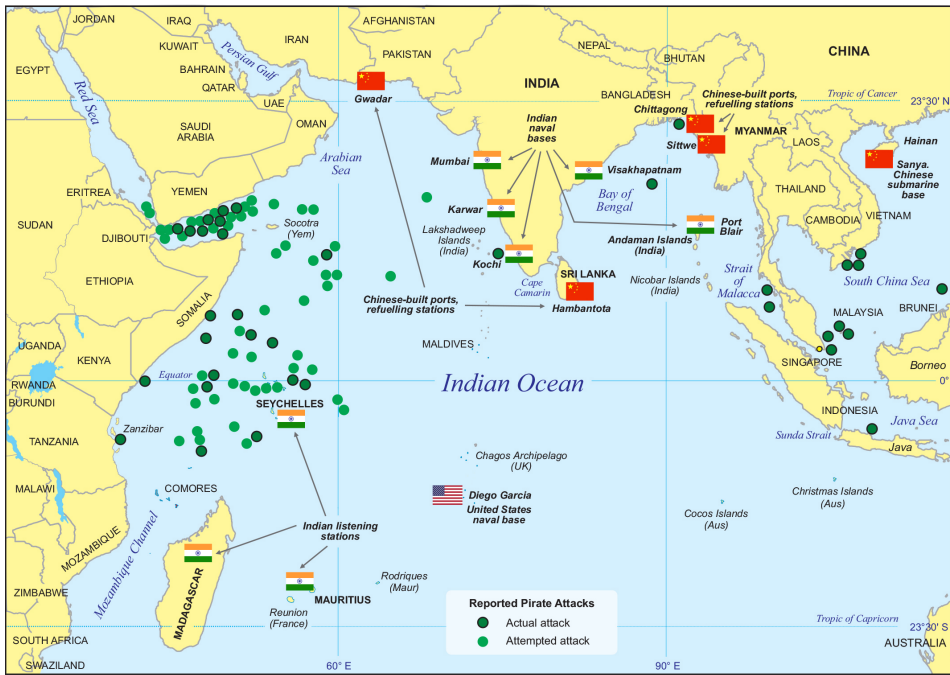
of the inner ring of India's security environment. Being the pathway to international trade, the Indian Ocean is strategically and economically more important than ever before (Schaffer, 2011, pp. 1 & 2).²³ Quite evidently, India is dependent on substantial seaborne trade and, consequently, its security interests have an important maritime dimension. Security and trade (commerce) have long been linked, and navies have long ago ceased to be military platforms only and have become tools for the protection of trading vessels and the policing of SLOCs (Pandya, Herbert-Burns & Kobayashi, 2011, pp. 2 & 4).

But, the Indian Ocean is also a potential arena for competition with a rising China and a setting for security co-operation with the US. In the past, India regarded with suspicion any country or development that challenged its ability to dominate its maritime space. As India's economy has grown, and as it has become more integrated with the world economy, this perspective has shifted. For the past decade, New Delhi has recognised that it cannot dominate on its own, and has come to regard the US presence as neutral or even beneficial to its interests. However, India's big strategic concern in the Indian Ocean is China, and New Delhi has been watching China's growing presence with great suspicion.²⁴ This includes not just the 'String of Pearls', places along the littoral where China is arranging for preferential access (including the new ports of Gwadar in Pakistan and Hambantota in Sri Lanka), but also the political links that China is building with these two countries and with Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh. In internal government deliberations in New Delhi, these factors enhance the strategic importance and bureaucratic clout of the Indian Navy, which has been consistently built up since 1990. Although the Navy accounts for a relatively modest share of Indian military spending (18% for 2012/13), it gets a significantly larger share of new procurement, some 72%. However, Indian officials speak of its mission in language reminiscent of their American counterparts: 'naval diplomacy', also with a focus on humanitarian operations like tsunami relief (Schaffer, 2011, pp. 1 & 2). Clearly, the rendering of assistance during natural disasters (tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding) have spawned a multitude of additional 'out of area' operational roles for regional navies, and these have dramatically increased transnational maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean region (Ghosh, 2004, p. 10).

²³ In 2010, the growing share of trade in India's economy stood at around 43%. Rapid economic growth, exceeding 8% per year since 2003/04, depends on a steady and secure supply of energy. Imports of oil and gas represent some 70%, and about two-thirds of this cargo has to come in by sea. Crude oil is India's largest import, about US\$100 bn per year and one-third of all imports, while refined oil is its largest export at about US\$29 bn per year.

²⁴ For a penetrating analysis of the expansion of Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, see Brewster (2014, pp. 182-196).

Figure 5: Great Power Competition in the Indian Ocean Region



Other security threats in the Indian Ocean have also achieved a higher profile in the past decade. Piracy in the Arabian Sea and around the coast of Somalia in the Horn of Africa, to India's west, has become the major menace.²⁵ However, almost paradoxically, India's approach to the Indian Ocean is primarily as a solo player, and so far it has been wary of direct involvement in multinational enterprises such as international anti-piracy operations. It has sought other ways to co-ordinate with the other nations concerned: co-operation rather than joint operations. Anti-piracy ought to be the major arena for international organisations to shape regional policy-making, but it has thus far been a relatively ineffective one as far as India is concerned. Nevertheless, India has been the driving force behind the Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Co-operation, IOR-ARC (dedicated to strengthening economic co-operation among the Indian Ocean littoral states) and a consultative group for the navies of the countries bordering the Indian Ocean, the IONS.²⁶ Because of the naval focus of the IONS, it is likely to

²⁵ Somali piracy has dropped off dramatically in recent times and there has been no attack on a commercial vessel in over two years. Piracy seems to have been suppressed, but not stopped – it may well return at some stage in the future. Therefore, the international maritime presence remains vital to maintaining this welcome reduction in pirate attacks; see *Agence France Press* (Paris), 8 April 2016.

²⁶ For a detailed discussion on the IOR-ARC and the IONS, see *Oman Tribune*, 4 November 2012; *The New Delhi Post*, 4 November 2012; *The Hindu*, 2 November 2012; Rumley & Chaturvedi (2012); Fernando (2011, pp. 23-27); Luke (2010c, pp. 19-22); McPherson (2002, pp. 251-261); Roy-Chaudhury (1998, pp. 258-282); Jayawardene (1994).

attract a greater degree of attention, but it is noteworthy that the Indian government has emphasised its responsibility not just for security but also for disaster management, ocean resources, and environmental issues, signalling New Delhi's desire to build a broad-based set of relationships around this vital waterway. Neither of these organisations, however, alters the basic judgement that multilateral organisations have had a relatively modest impact on how New Delhi addresses Indian Ocean issues, and that India's absence from the multinational anti-piracy task force limits the impact of that multilateral effort (Schaffer, 2011, pp. 1 & 2).

To sustain its current economic growth and achieve its great power ambitions, India sees the Indian Ocean region as critical to securing its strategic interests. India's interests in the Indian Ocean region are heavily focused towards improving trade, investment and economic growth, while it also attempts to secure access to hydrocarbon reserves and arable land in order to strengthen its energy and food security. Due to its heavy dependence on inbound seaborne trade, India has placed a premium on developing its naval capabilities to safeguard and project its influence across the Indian Ocean. Given that India sees itself as a major power with strategic interests across the Indian Ocean, and that its requirements for access to natural resources are set to grow, it is likely that New Delhi will aim to significantly expand its influence across the Indian Ocean in the coming years (DeSilva-Ranasinghe, 2011, pp. 1 & 10). Undoubtedly, maritime strategy is playing an ever-increasing role in Indian strategic thinking (see Prakash, 2007a, pp. 157-176). As India reaches for great power status, it is turning more and more to the Indian Ocean as a means of expanding its strategic space. Although it currently co-operates with the US, India has long-term aspirations towards attaining naval predominance throughout much of the Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2010a, p. 19). Also, the rise of India will play a key role in the gradual co-operative integration of the various countries and peoples of the Indian Ocean basin. The long-term result will be a more prosperous and globally more influential region (Berlin, 2006, p. 84).

In the 2010s, in conjunction with an expansion of India's naval capabilities, there has been a significant extension of India's maritime security relationships throughout the Indian Ocean region. Much of the emphasis has been in developing relationships with small states at or near the key points of entry into the Western Indian Ocean (including Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Oman). Arguably, the extreme asymmetries in size have made the development of such relationships relatively easy: there is no question of competition or rivalry, for example. Some of these states have long seen India as a benign security

provider and have maritime policing needs that India can usefully fulfil. In some cases, India may not only be a co-operative security provider, but may also effectively act as a security guarantor, as is arguably the case with Mauritius and the Maldives (Brewster, 2010a, p. 20). But gaps inevitably remain in India's strategic posture and New Delhi needs to further strengthen its hand in coastal Africa and on the Arabian Peninsula (Berlin, 2006, p. 84). Also, littoral states on the African seaboard look towards regional power centres for assistance in maintaining maritime order and addressing security challenges. Countries with enhanced maritime capabilities like India, South Africa, Australia and the US should assist by not only co-operating amongst themselves, but also by taking other littoral states on board as part of multilateral efforts towards the maintenance of maritime order (Ghosh, 2004, p. 10).

But, in reality, things look slightly different. India is by far the dominant littoral naval power in the Indian Ocean. Australia has the next most powerful Navy, but it can only feasibly aspire to be a middle power (Gordon, 2012, p. 2). In such company, South Africa is the naval midget amongst maritime giants. Despite being the best in the southern African region, if not in Sub-Saharan Africa, the South African Navy is grossly under-resourced (Van Rooyen, 2012, p. 13). The urgent need to re-equip the Navy was seemingly addressed by acquiring four corvettes and three submarines for delivery by 2007, as part of an arms deal package of some R70 bn concluded in 1998/99 (*Engineering News*, 23 November 2005). As late as 2010, however, Vice Admiral Refiloe Mudimu, Chief of the South African Navy, expressed apprehensions about the ability of the Navy to effectively "patrol and protect" even South Africa's territorial waters (Heitman, 2010, p. 10).²⁷ Although a senior naval officer tried to put a positive spin on the situation by noting that maritime security around the African continent "... is being addressed by means of the AU 2050-African Integrated Maritime Security Strategy" (Teuteberg, 2012), this is in all likelihood yet another paper tiger – given the AU's poor track record and the strategy's extensive projected timeline. Given continued limited maritime resources and the fact that a dramatic positive change in terms of maritime resource allocations in the near to medium-term is rather remote, the situation 'in the water' is not likely to change soon (see Van Rooyen, 2012, pp. 13-14; Van Rooyen, 2011, pp. 22-23).²⁸

²⁷ It was reported at the time that the South African Navy's capabilities remained rather limited; that it would have difficulty in contributing to anti-piracy operations off Somalia; that budgetary constraints would allow for only one frigate and support ship to be put to sea at any given time; and that such a deployment would deplete the entire 2011 annual operational budget (*allAfrica.com*, December 2010 & January 2011).

²⁸ Although the South African Navy has since commenced limited anti-piracy operations, it is restricted to the Mozambique Channel, in pursuance of South Africa's commitment to the Southern African Development Community (*Mail&Guardian*, 15 November 2011).

In the coming years, therefore, India needs to develop much stronger co-operative security relationships with the larger littoral states, particularly South Africa and Australia. There is much scope for security co-operation, especially in the maritime domain. However, the implications of India's strategic ambitions in the Indian Ocean still need to be worked through. To what extent, for example, might India expect implicit acknowledgement of a leadership role in Indian Ocean security and/or support in any attempts to exclude China from the region? In future, a challenge for New Delhi is to maintain perceptions of India as a benign and non-hegemonic power in the Indian Ocean region as it moves towards achieving great power status. A strong and influential India means a more multipolar world, and this is consistent with Chinese interests. However, as China increasingly regards India as its main Asian rival, Beijing sees India's power projection in the Indian Ocean as a disconcerting development.

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