Evolving Geopolitics and Security Dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region: An Analytical Overview

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Abstract

The political and security landscape of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is changing, giving it greater strategic significance. China's regional policy and Belt and Road Initiative pose a threat to existing powers. India's changing approach in the Indo-Pacific region (IOR) reflects worries about China's economic impact and ascent. With programs like the Act East plan, outreach into the western Indian Ocean, and the Security and Growth in the Area (SAGAR) framework, India is demonstrating its leadership. This emphasizes the viewpoints that are often ignored in international geopolitics. The third-largest ocean in the world, the Indian Ocean, is a vital center for international trade and geopolitics. It is home to important chokepoints for trade and the movement of energy, such as the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca. Important factors include cultural variety, environmental concerns, and marine security, with the US, China, and India vying for influence. It continues to be strategically important due to its rich cultural legacy, continuous regional organizations, a combination of economic prospects, and geopolitical concerns. Global politics and trade are changing as a result of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) in the Indian Ocean area (IOR). It improves value chains, trade, and connectivity but also presents obstacles, most notably the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). India attempts to impose regional leadership and balance off China's influence, and this has a significant geopolitical impact on its approach to maritime administration. However, because it limits the focus on governance operations, creates bureaucratic obstacles, and opposes Chinese collaboration, this policy makes it more difficult for India to handle important maritime governance challenges. The study will look into the strategies and security concerns of the countries around the western Indian Ocean, including India's security partnerships and its strategic objectives. Along with examining US efforts to retain influence in the

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developing IOR which is shifting from US dominance in conventional security to a multilateral balance, it will also examine China's ambitions and India's quest for a new order. It is anticipated that conventional security patterns will not change despite these changes. Natural disasters, terrorism, piracy, and climate change are examples of non-traditional security threats that still exist in the Indian Ocean Region, even in places where these threats are on the decline.

Introduction

The third-largest sea in the world, the Indian Ocean Region is home to important maritime routes that carry one-third of global trade. Its significance is explained by its connection to the major historical expeditions and invasions, as has long been evident. Two enduring phrases that have been used throughout international politics are IOR and geopolitics. Since the Atlantic and Pacific are currently experiencing a period of geopolitical power transfer to the Indian Ocean, policymakers in all major nations should closely monitor the maritime region that lies between the two oceans, known as the Indian Ocean Region. The so-called Great Connector, which runs from the Cape of Good Hope in the extreme south to the Gulf of Suez in the west and the Strait of Malacca in the east, is therefore a crucial and opportune place to investigate why and to what extent they depend on it (Khizar, 2023).

The above-mentioned strategic chokepoints are getting more and more congested with oil tankers, cargo ships, and naval patrol boats. Global players including the United States, Japan, Australia, China, India, and the European Union are progressively bolstering their military might and naval presence in the Indian Ocean and other key locations along its periphery. Apart from that, minor naval powers are also increasing their presence in the region, including South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Pakistan. The importance and strategic significance of the IOR are reflected in the developing economy of East Asia, rivalry among regional powers, and the collision and area of influence of super and larger powers over the region (Anwar & Hussain, 2023).

Geopolitics, as defined by Devetak et al. (2017), is the study of how the physical and anthropological characteristics of a state influence regional politics and

international affairs. In the realm of International Relations (IR), geopolitics serves as a method to assess a state's foreign policy in light of various geographical factors, encompassing topography, demography, area studies, climate, and natural resources, among others. At its core, geopolitics revolves around the interconnection of political power with geographical location. Geographic elements, including land area, population, and climate, along with the fundamental interests of global actors, shape the world's geopolitical system.
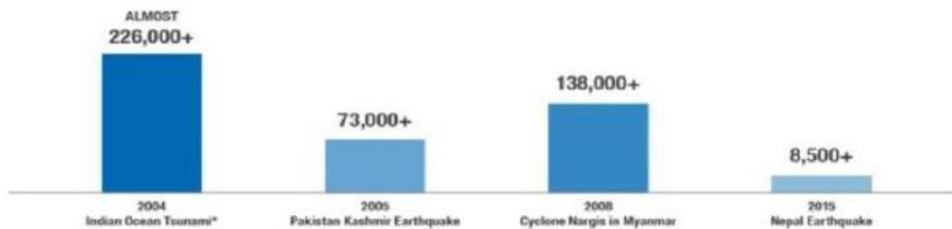
INDIAN OCEAN BY THE NUMBERS

SHIPS THAT TRANSIT THE INDIAN OCEAN ANNUALLY:

CHINA VS. INDIA MILITARY BUDGET EXPENDITURES, 2015

NEARLY 100,000

$144.2 BILLION

CHINA

UP 10.1% FROM 2014

$40 BILLION

UP 11% FROM 2014

INDIA

Source: Stimson Center

Sources: Xinhua, Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

DEATH TOLLS FROM MAJOR REGIONAL NATURAL DISASTERS

ALMOST
226,000+

73,000+

138,000+

8,500+

2004
Indian Ocean Tsunami*

2005
Pakistan Kashmir Earthquake

2008
Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar

2015
Nepal Earthquake

figure 1. Importance of The Indian Ocean

The term "geopolitics" is used broadly today, often as a synonym for international political relations, but more precisely to describe a global framework of such relations. Mahan notably asserted that national supremacy is intricately tied to sea power and its utilization in both war and peace. He emphasized the strategic importance of locations such as canals, rivers, chokepoints, and coaling stations, as well as the assessable fighting power in a navy, for gaining control over the seas (Khan, 2018). This historical perspective underscores the enduring significance of geopolitics in shaping the strategies and interactions of states on the global stage.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is seeing a significant shift in geopolitics, as evidenced by the rise of an "emerging multi-polarity." This phenomenon denotes the active involvement of several powerful players that have shaped the architecture of

regional security into a complicated web of military alliances and regional organizations. China is a key factor in this changing scene, having greatly shaped the political and security lines of the IOR with its powerful influence. Although the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is sometimes seen as a tool for Chinese expansion.

India has positioned itself as a major participant in the IOR, aware of its increasing economic might and concerns about China's regional growth. India's aggressive efforts to exert regional leadership are exemplified by initiatives like the "Act East" strategy, the Security and Growth in the Region (SAGAR) framework, and considerable outreach to the western Indian Ocean. Examining China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in detail, examines the BRI's land and marine routes, emphasizing the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) (Anwar & Hussain, 2023). We emphasize the MSR's significance for the geopolitics of the IOR, acknowledging it as a cornerstone of international trade. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other vital land lanes depend on the MSR's security, as this piece deftly analyses, highlighting the geopolitical ramifications and new difficulties that arise when the MSR passes through the IOR.

Statement of problem

A significant change is taking place in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which is being marked by the emergence of multipolarity and dynamic security dynamics. The evolving geopolitical scene brings with it new opportunities and challenges, but there are also urgent concerns that demand in-depth investigation when one examines it critically. The Indian Ocean is seen to be the marine basin with the greatest unanswered questions and contentious maritime security challenges. The nations bordering the Indian Ocean have direct access to it for the transportation of energy as well as other business and economic requirements.

The paper goes on to discuss the ramifications of the Belt and Road Initiative on international commerce and IOR geopolitics, looking at the difficulties presented by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Maritime Silk Road. India's approach to marine governance, which emphasizes geopolitical considerations, raises questions about possible constraints, particularly confronting China and tackling more general challenges related to maritime governance in the area. This article explores India's security policies in the western Indian Ocean, assessing their efficacy and the changing security landscape while highlighting the need of having a thorough grasp of the opportunities and problems associated with these arrangements.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative and analytical technique. It uses secondary data as the foundation for a qualitative data analysis. The main objective of the study was to analyse the strategic geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean and how it affects regional security. The relevant data was gathered via journal articles, reports, publications, and other scholarly works.

Significance

For the purpose of elucidating and contextualizing the intricate geopolitical and security shifts taking place in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), this article is crucial. In addition to ensuring a full examination of the complex interactions between various stakeholders in the IOR, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the shifting geopolitical dynamics. This in-depth analysis helps readers to comprehend the complexity of regional dynamics. The paper provides clarification on the power dynamics inside the IOR through its description of "emerging multi-polarity." Understanding the many roles played by powerful parties and the consequences that follow is essential to anticipating future conflicts, collaborative endeavors, and the overall stability of the region.

Concentrated examination of China's hegemonic power, particularly in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), offers significant fresh insights into the nation's objectives and the consequent impacts on regional dynamics. This knowledge will be essential for policymakers, scholars, and other stakeholders trying to grasp China's role in the IOR. The article critically analyses India's shifting regional posture while looking at initiatives like the "Act East" policy and the Security and Growth in the Region (SAGAR) framework. India's strategic direction is clarified by this study, which is essential to the stability and balance of power in the area.

Economic behemoths from Asia, the US, and Europe are acutely aware of the need for hegemonic power over the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has significant influence on regional dynamics related to economic growth, stability, security, and prosperity because of its strategic location and the developing Gwadar port. Pakistan still must deal with marine issues despite these benefits, especially in relation to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The objective of this paper is to recognize these obstacles and suggest corrective actions within the changing geopolitical context of the area. It highlights the need for Pakistan to take appropriate action to successfully manage current and upcoming difficulties in the maritime

domain.

Research Objectives

1. To find out the causes/factors of conflicts and stability of the Indian ocean region.

2. To find that geopolitics of Indian ocean and overview of maritime security.

3. To provide recommendations to overcome and need for maritime security in the Indian ocean & the model for marine security.

Geopolitics of Indian Ocean

Throughout history, oceans and seas have played a pivotal role in driving change and influencing interstate relations. Serving as cost-effective and efficient transportation routes, humans have utilized marine resources for centuries. The expansive Indian Ocean, covering 68 million square kilometers and surrounded by three continents and numerous islands, holds vital geostrategic significance in today's globalized economy. While it was historically neglected in geopolitics, the region's importance has surged due to its rich hydrocarbon resources, crucial Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), and geopolitical attention drawn by the turbulent socio-political situations in some littoral states (Challengesthe & Ocean, 2018). The rise of Chinese, Indian, and Russian military and economic capacities further underscores its regional importance. In 2011, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) experienced 142 political conflicts, representing over a third of global conflicts, highlighting its geopolitical complexity. Recognized globally as a geopolitical focal zone, the IOR is viewed as a nonviolent maritime thoroughfare and a cohesive interregional arena for commercial and social interaction. The region's diversity, with 51 littoral and hinterland states, ranging from wealthy Persian Gulf states to poorer nations like Bangladesh and Myanmar, adds complexity to its geopolitical landscape. With a population exceeding 2.65 billion and the busiest shipping lines, the IOR plays a critical role in global trade and security.

An examination of India's security plans and concerns in the western Indian Ocean area serves as a foundation for assessing the efficacy of security cooperation with neighboring nations.
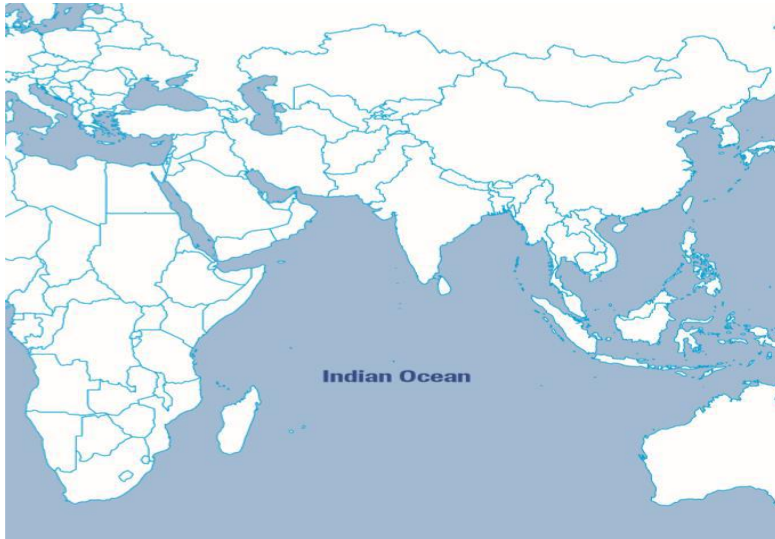
Figure 2. Indian Ocean on global map

Policymakers and analysts trying to evaluate the geopolitical ramifications of India's security engagements need to know these kinds of insights. The geopolitical and physical relevance of a state is emphasized by the modern international political arena. Over the past few decades, there have been substantial changes to the global geopolitical environment, with power dynamics shifting from Europe to Asia and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Seas and oceans, which are essential to the topography of the Earth, have always been important forces behind dynamic change and have long held secrets to wealth (India-eu et al., 2022).

An Overview of Maritime Threats to Security in The Indian Ocean

The political relevance and frequency of geographical disputes in the Indian Ocean are growing. This is due to the fact that this region is where the nations' marine trade begins. Large-scale natural resource regions and communication networks are also present. In addition, this area has been coping with several issues due to a deficiency of laws, authorities, security, and other elements. To maintain robust security and keep threats out of the region, these issues must be disregarded. The most obvious security risks are both conventional and unconventional.

These following six elements have potential to increase sea power and geographical importance of a state:

1. Valuable topographical position.

2. Functional coastlines, auspicious climate and natural resources.
3. Longitude and Latitude of territory.
4. Inhabitants, sufficient to defend its geographical boundaries.
5. The social order with a capacity for the sea and commercial enterprise.
6. Administration with the inspiration and proclivity to control the sea.

The analysis then shifts focus to India's maritime governance strategy, highlighting the influence of geopolitical considerations, such as countering China's expanding influence and asserting leadership in the IOR (Challengesthe & Ocean, 2018). However, we caution that this emphasis, while reasonable from India's perspective, may inadvertently limit the country's capacity to address broader maritime governance issues in the region.

The political relevance and frequency of geographical disputes in the Indian Ocean are growing. This is due to the fact that this region is where the nations' marine trade begins. Large-scale natural resource regions and communication networks are also present. In addition, this area has been coping with several issues due to a deficiency of laws, authorities, security, and other elements. To maintain robust security and keep threats out of the region, these issues must be disregarded. The most obvious security risks are both conventional and unconventional ensure security.

The idea of marine security encompasses the defense of the maritime environment and its resources, as well as national security and the borders of the oceans and seas that divide states. This is to safeguard human growth, the economy, and the environment. This includes all regions of land as well as rivers, harbors, and other bodies of water, all of which need to be properly administered. The Indian Ocean carries several threats that should be avoided. International legal frameworks lack a concept for marine security (Rahman et al., 2021). As such, it has to be addressed in order to establish suitable and stringent legislation to govern the marine zone.

Conflicts and Stability of the Indian Ocean Region

IOR is currently on the verge of instability and experiencing a subterranean battle. Despite its historical area of influence, China and India are now competing regional powers on this territory. The recent expansion of deep-water ports in the area and the increase in naval patrols are upending these ambitions. Although there is still little chance of a military clash in the area, increased rhetoric and activity might jeopardize regional security and ultimately spark several crises there. In addition to serving as a trade route, the IOR is home to billions of people and is usually at risk

from natural disasters (Rodrigo, 2021).

The 2004 tsunami and the 2008 cyclone Nargis were two of the most devastating natural catastrophes to ever affect the IOR, with thousands of lives lost. In order to prevent conflicts and maintain regional stability, it is crucial to conduct research into potential solutions for problems like freedom of navigation, protecting natural resources, preventing and providing relief from natural disasters, fending off both traditional and non-traditional threats, and overseeing international naval competitions.

Six words sum up the strategic environment of the Indian Ocean region: strategic alliances, strategic competition, and strategic dilemmas. These elements operate as catalysts for both stability and conflict in the area (Fernando, 2021). The struggle for dominance and influence between significant powers inside and outside of the area is the essence of strategic rivalry. For a variety of reasons, this arrangement leads to minor nations in the region forming alliances with larger powers.

Certain great nations are strategically convergent against others in this context because they are frequently compelled to choose between large nations, smaller, less powerful countries find themselves in a strategic dilemma. Consequently, the study's focus is on the various IOR actors and their regional interest. A new dynamic scenario has been created in the region as a result of these parties adopting various methods depending on their interests to attain strategic goals.

Main Causes Concerned for Conflict and Stability in IOR

Within the topic of international relations, there are two primary connected approaches: geopolitics and maritime security. The most strategically important resource base, the Indian Ocean, is also home to a number of risks to marine security. This study's primary goal is to investigate the maritime security risks associated with the Indian Ocean because of its geopolitical importance. The study's pertinent data was acquired through the use of journal articles, papers, publications, and other scholarly works. The study's findings and conclusions demonstrate the following: nuclear proliferation, energy security and competition, illegal trafficking, maritime terrorism, piracy, and marine resource management (Shah, Rafique & Rasool, 2020). The main strategies to reduce the risks to marine security may be summed up as follows: soft power geopolitics, information and intelligence sharing, maritime governance, and regional collaboration.

Sphere of Influence of the USA

Despite having no residence rights in the IOR, the USA has had a big impact on the dynamics of regional security. As a result, the USA keeps enjoying its sphere of influence over the area to keep it in their favor and aligned with their goals. The USA's interest in IOR stems only from their desire to prevent China from becoming a dominant force, which is, in other words, the most significant development now occurring in the Indian Ocean region. Become a Pacific pivot? In its "Rebalancing" Towards Asia reports, the Obama Administration unequivocally states that it is interested in "deepening our working relationships with emerging economies; strengthening bilateral security alliances."

- **Superpower Status and Expedition Capability:**

A major part of the IOR's enjoyment of its superpower position and expedition capacity has also been played by it. Yet, the majority of the nations in the area recognize the United States as a security guarantee. The USA's decision to retain high levels of military and diplomatic relations in the region was appreciated in this scenario. In India's littoral nations, US CENTCOM and PACOM are both more engaged than they were previously (Van Der Putten et al., 2014). Consequently, the United States of America maintains its perspective on matters pertaining to international peace and security and maintaining a sizable naval presence in Bahrain, Djibouti, and Diego Garcia.

- **Clash of Interest between India and China**

China and India's economy are powered by energy resources that are transported over the Indian Ocean via the Sea Line of Communication (SLOC). China consequently sees the IOR as strategically important, primarily because it is becoming more and more dependent on the SLOC in this regard. Over 60% of its exports and 85% of its oil imports go through the Gulf of Aden. Beijing has often voiced its worries that the economy and its interests in energy security may be harmed by a possible blockade and disruption of the SLOC (Khan, 2022). With the inauguration of the "One Belt, One Road" program, China has once again made great strides towards establishing commercial linkages with the littoral states of the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and Central Asia.
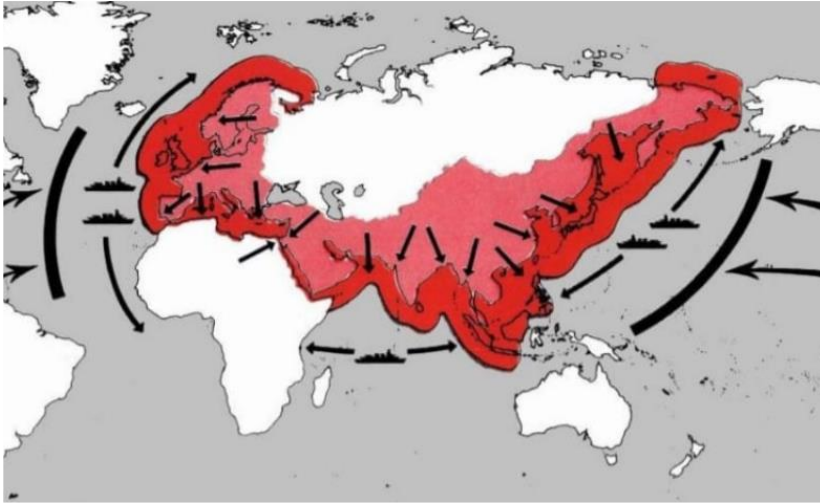
Figure 3. China and Indian Interest in IOR

- **India as a Major Player:**

While India is a prominent player in the region, it has also initiated the ambitious multimillion-dollar Sagar Mala development project, which aims to extend India's ports along the eastern and western coastlines in accordance with the project's motto, Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), an economic cooperation agreement aiming at connecting Asia and Africa via the utilization of Japanese technology and Indian influence in the region, was also launched by the governments of India and Japan in concert. China and India have both created programs to advance the growth of the region's infrastructure and to fortify diplomatic relations (Khan & Altaf, 2022). According to the World Bank, it is the least economically connected area. While there isn't often overt competition between Beijing and New Delhi, both are trying to further their economic and security objectives by fortifying their relations with lesser regional powers.
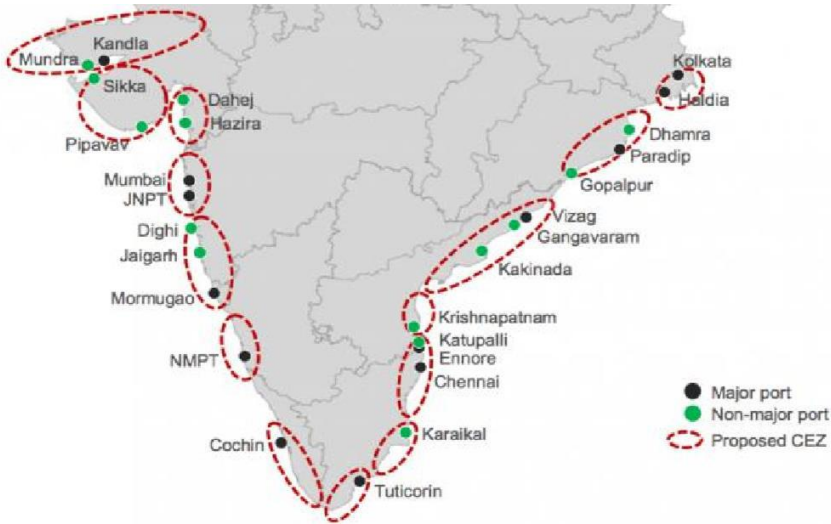
Figure 4. India as Major Power in IOR

- **Inter-Regional Rivalries:**

It is evident that the main cause of the SAARC's (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) unfulfilled potential is the rivalry between India and Pakistan. The "no negotiation phenomenon" between these two countries is a result of their competition for dominance in naval power, territorial conflicts, nuclear weapons race, and cautious attitudes. The situation resulted in numerous, arbitrary, and last-minute cancellations of the summit in the near future. Even the planned 19th SAARC Summit in Islamabad was unable to proceed. This situation is likewise represented by the BIMSTEC in addition to the SARRC. Thus, in the opinion of a number of experts and academics, "South Asia is the least integrated region due to rivalries among its nations."

- **An Arc of Instability of Indian Ocean Region:**

The region has descended into an "arc of instability" as a result of historical mistrust, territorial disputes, ideological disagreements, and disparities in military strength among IOR member states, among other things like the rise of international criminal organizations, internal armed conflicts within countries, competition for influence, and the spread of terrorism. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by the governments in the region, together with drug trafficking and piracy, has complicated the matter (Malone, 2015).

The strategic threat symmetry and perceptions in the IOR may be broadly divided into two categories: traditional and non-traditional. Traditional threats fall under one main category: nation-state conflicts. Conventional and non-conventional military conflicts have occasionally occurred in the region. The oceans will unavoidably be impacted by these wars, which are also sometimes referred to as "trade warfare," "amphibious warfare," "littoral warfare," etc. The proliferation of WMDs is the second issue. IOR is home to the two most recent nuclear powers. Additionally, countries use the seas to transfer, smuggle, and transport WMD. Given the presence of non-state entities in the region, it is perilous.

- **The competition between India and Pakistan and China**

The competition between India, Pakistan and China may lead to an increase in this type of activities in the ocean. The third is the security of SLOCs. Not just for the nations in the IOR, but for all of the nations as well, they act as "Life Lines". Using such strategies, it is easy to increase the intensity of any sort of closure, interdiction, blockade, or threat. The last topic is Maritime Boundary Issues and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The South China Sea, located in the Pacific, is the "anti-chamber" of the Indian Ocean (Pandey, 2023). Currently, six countries are embroiled in territorial/EEZ disputes at this "flashpoint." If it flares up, it will have an impact on the IOR. For India, the South China Sea is vital, and freedom of navigation is key.

- **Consequences of Climate Change**

Another version is asymmetrical and non-traditional. First, climate change puts security in jeopardy. Of the 16 nations considered to be at severe danger, ten are Asian countries, with Bangladesh being the most vulnerable. These countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and global warming, which might act as a trigger for conflict, destabilization, and other security issues. Furthermore, the UN predicts that by 2020, environmental migration would result in 50 million people, making climate change a "Threat Multiplier." Terrorist attacks on vessels rank third (Pandey, 2023). The center of maritime terrorism, which includes narcoterrorism, is located in IOR. This significant and widespread destabilizing concern in the IOR involves several non-state and quasi-state players. Fourth place goes to international criminality.

The epicenter of international crimes such as money laundering, smuggling, human trafficking, and gun running is IOR. Piracy has emerged as a significant security concern in the IOR throughout the past ten or so years. Finally, there is

Humanitarian Aid & Relief in Disaster Situations. 70% of natural catastrophes worldwide occur in IOR. Bangladesh is the most flood-prone country in the world. A number of other events, such as cyclones and tsunamis, also harm the states in the area.

- **Maritime Security in The Indian Ocean**

Maritime security is a dynamic, multifaceted concept in the IOR today. In addition to state actors, non-state actors (NSA) may also be dangerous in the International Organization (IO). While a large-scale confrontation is unlikely, the rule-based maritime order may be impacted by the serious danger posed by NSAs. The militarization of this ocean by both regional and extra-regional forces has increased as a result of several criminal activities that have been brought on by weak government institutions and a limited capacity to monitor maritime domain (Malone, 2015). Concerns over classic and unconventional security threats are present in the IO. Other challenges are trade and energy security.

- **Piracy**

Piracy remains the primary issue with naval security in the IOR. It clearly endangers the global shipping industry. Several security analyses show that pirate activity is undoubtedly growing at the moment and will do so in the future. Due to the numerous accidents that take place there, the waterways surrounding Somalia are considered a hotspot in the region. Pirates are especially interested in capturing oil tankers passing through the Malacca Strait, taking control of the ships, and selling the stolen cargo on the black market. These are profitable enterprises that they take advantage of.
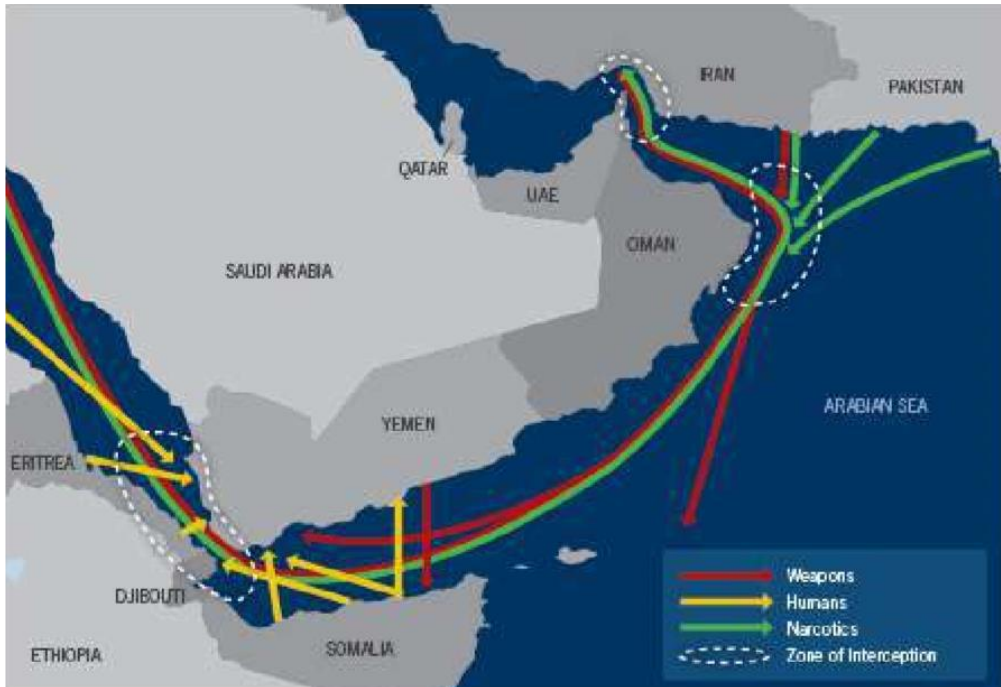
Figure 5. Smuggling & Piracy in IOR

- **Maritime Terrorism**

IOR is the hub of both drug- and maritime-related terrorism. A number of non-state and quasi-state actors are involved in this important and pervasive destabilizing issue in the IOR. Terrorism is a global phenomenon that threatens international peace in the twenty-first century. However, there is still a susceptibility to the terrorist threat, which calls for collaboration from all of the littoral countries of the IOR (Michael, 2007). The attack on the USS Cole, a US Navy vessel; the attack on the SS Limburg, a massive crude carrier; the attack on the Super Ferry; and the Mumbai attack's use of maritime routes are among the most recent occurrences in the region.
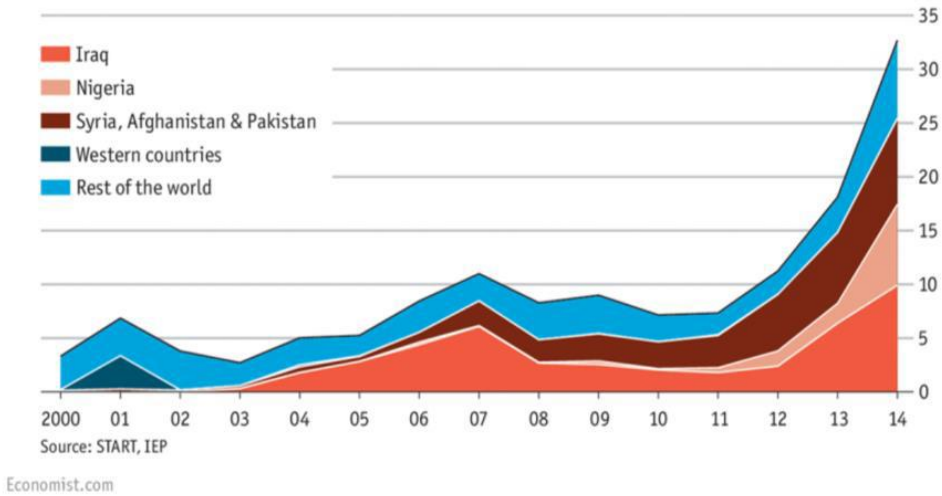
Figure 6. Global deaths from Terrorism

- **Human Smuggling**

Human smuggling is a major issue in the IOR, with 65.3 million individuals forced to flee their homes worldwide. Sri Lanka was believed to be a "source country" for this activity. It was mostly the LTTE that was at fault. Even though the LTTE is no longer in operation, more individuals than ever are smuggling people right now. One of the primary places for these activities is Australia. Furthermore, illegal trade is a serious issue that has greatly benefited the LTTE financially (Faisal, 2019). However, these procedures are still being carried out. The member countries of the IOR may learn a lot from this scenario about working together to develop a cooperative structure to deal with these issues.

Need for Maritime Security in The Indian Ocean:

The phrase "maritime security" refers to a number of real-world issues, including "piracy, robberies, trafficking and illegal trading, illegal fishing, and ocean pollution." At sea, rivalry between "states and violent extremism" is frequently connected. As a result, the sea becomes an essential area for "maritime security," which includes governmental authority and a variety of maritime conflicts that must be settled to stop crimes and other hazards. Nation-states have traditionally been concerned about maritime security. The "International Ship and Port Facility Security Code" was created in the early 2000s as a result of the numerous terrorist assaults on port facilities, which nonetheless caused a shift in the field of maritime security.

Since then, other international organizations and nations have developed programs for maritime safety. People are now more aware of the negative effects that marine insecurity has on human safety, economic progress, and the environment in general because of piracy, particularly in Southeast Asia, off the coast of Somalia, and in West Africa. As a result, adequate marine security is essential for the growth of the economy, people, and environment.

Sea safety frequently affects people all throughout the world, not only mariners. Because of its intricacy, it is referred to as "cross-jurisdictional" or "highly jurisdictional." At home and abroad, marine security is a significant concept. "Economic development, human security" in the marine zone will be the outcome of resolving security challenges at the national and international levels. Criminal activities such as piracy, illicit persons trafficking, illicit fishing, goods smuggling, and marine pollution are among the most serious issues under the umbrella of maritime security.

Therefore, under the current situation, maritime security in the Indian Ocean is essential for governing and protecting this region. It is also a crucial component of both domestic and international terrorism. The most fundamental infractions under marine security include things like robbery, illicit dealing with people, illicit fishing, pirating of goods, and ocean pollution. Therefore, in order to manage and provide assurance for this region, marine security in the Indian marine is crucial under the current circumstances. It is also a fundamental component of unknown and global psychological warfare (Khan, 2022).

The sea, maritime law, power, and conflicts have all been used to debate maritime security throughout history. People have been exploiting the waters for a variety of purposes since the 17th century. A "free sea" is defined in the "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea" (abbreviated "UNCLOS"). The primary goal of the Convention was to establish marine parameters about the area and distance so that appropriate laws and regulations could be put in place to prevent maritime conflicts in the area. Thus, maritime resources, designated territorial areas, and unobstructed sea routes between the nations will all be present.

Some nations declared at the start of the 20th century that they want more freedom for their citizens. It covered protecting fish supplies, reducing pollution, and making use of marine resources. President Truman of the United States utilized international law's regulations in 1945 to safeguard natural resources. He turned over all the continental sea's natural riches to the United States. Numerous more states

followed suit. Chile, Peru, and Ecuador travelled 200 nautical miles to reach their fishing limits between 1946 and 1950. Conversely, the remaining states have set a restriction of 12 nautical miles.

The United Nations' first meeting on the law of the sea took place in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1956. An agreement on the inclusion of soldiers in territorial seas and those adjacent to them was signed in 1964 as a result of the 1958 summit. In 1966, a deal was made to safeguard seas and fisheries. Despite being included in the UNCLOS, these were difficult to enforce because of the wide beaches. The United Nations convened its second session on the law of the sea in 1960, but no third-world nation attended to present their views (Fernando, 2021). Only developed nations participated. New York City hosted the third United Nations conference on the "law of the sea."

It is discussed how variety along the shore was raised by Maltese Arvid Pardo in 1967. The treaty enumerates important strategies and issues where these disputes arise between the nations' seas and oceans, including delimitation, navigation, archipelago, the "exclusion of economic zones," the marine environment, food, and so forth. The UN has created a qualitative and quantitative concept of maritime law and security in contemporary environments. This was a globally recognized and applicable concept. It was created during the 1958 Sea Conference. The most current one, which encompassed various territorial and legal rights as well as inland and territorial waters, was passed into law in 1994.
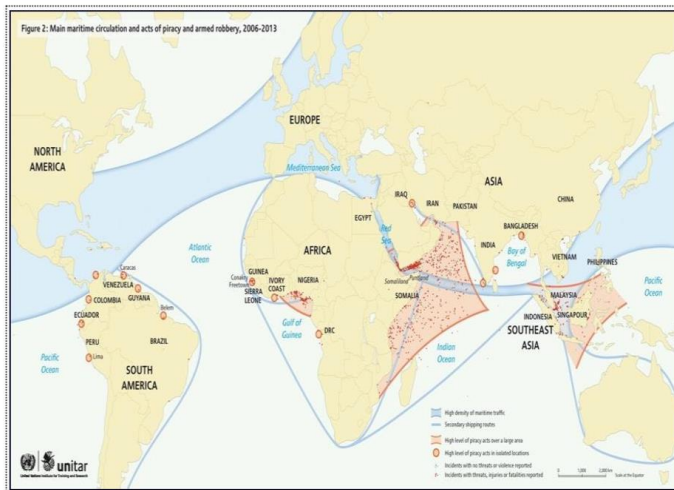
Figure 7. Traditional & Non-Traditional Threats In IOR

The United Nations has promoted a subjective and quantitative approach to maritime security and governance in contemporary settings. This was an idea that people all throughout the world recognized and applied. It was set up at the 1958 Ocean Show. The most recent one, which was approved in 1994, encompassed a few regional and legal authorities in addition to inland and regional waters. The concepts and theories around maritime security have evolved throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The "bombing of the U.S.S. Cole and the September 11 attacks" in 2000 provided guidance on how to increase maritime safety.

Off the coasts of Southeast Asia, Somalia, and West Africa, there was also an increase in maritime piracy in the 2000s. Additionally, it forces legislators to consider issues like global trade, financial expenses, the risks to the safety of sailors or the shipping sector, marine security, and so on. In recent years, researchers studying international relations have looked into and investigated the concepts of piracy and maritime security (Zhou et al., 2020). In 2004, a "regional cooperation agreement" was established to combat piracy targeting Asian ships, and the "International Maritime Organization Djibouti" was established in 2009. Was an agreement made for Southeast Asian and East African nations to cooperate in the fight against piracy? The "Jeddah amendment in 2017" added by the D.C.O.C. and the addition of illicit, unreported, and unregulated offshore fishing.

The Model for Marine Security:

The globe depends heavily on maritime trade, and all nations can take part in this global marketplace on the high seas. Without a doubt, the sea has influenced South Asia's politics and economics greatly. The third-largest body of water in the planet is the Indian Ocean. It occupies 20% of the planet. There are 17 nations encircled by land, 24 ocean areas, and 38 coastal states in the region. The Strait of Babel Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz, which separate the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea from one another, connects them to this ocean. Their combined area is 169,000 square miles.

- Marine environment (including Maritime security)

- Economic expansion, encompassing the "Blue Economy" Defense of the nation (including "Seapower")

- Human security (including trafficking in people)

Among the various natural resources found in the Indian Ocean are minerals, fish, marine products, oil reserves, and natural gas. Numerous choke points, such the

Straits of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, and the Sunda Straits, are also located there. Horrible things can occur if traffic doesn't flow smoothly through certain areas (Arrfat, 2018). Security-wise, coastal states have a lot on their minds, particularly in light of energy availability. Their energy lifelines are mostly found in the water, which explains this.

Energy plays such a crucial role in a nation's geopolitical tactics that disruptions in supply may have a big impact on security. Due to the numerous conflicts and crises that require security and protection in the area, the international security environment is unstable and ever-changing. Given the current circumstances, no nation should disregard the safety of marine routes or these rules.

If something goes wrong, it will affect all countries and for some, it can be quite important. As a result, marine regions need to be prepared with essential sea routes, checkpoints, assault-resistant structures, and other elements. The enemies of today are different from those of the past; they are unruly, unpredictable, and networked. For this reason, the preservation of this area requires robust security. The security of this ocean may be threatened by terrorists, other nations or governments, international criminals, thievery, etc. The safety of neighboring nations, including Sri Lanka, is increasingly threatened by illegal and unregulated fishing in these waters. Because energy is so vital to a nation's foreign policy, any shift in its supply may have a significant impact on security.

Due to many wars or situations that require local security and certainty, the global security environment is becoming more uncertain and shifting. No nation will overlook the safety of ocean routes or these maritime regulations in an ebb and flow situation. If something goes wrong, it will affect every country and could even be essential to some. Oceanic districts should thus be prepared with basic ocean routes, specified areas, defenses against attacks, etc. The enemies of today are not like those of the past; they are organized, unpredictable, and disregard rules. In order to ensure the security of this area, it is necessary to identify areas of strength (Khan, 2018). Risks from mental abusers, other countries or governments, international criminals, theft, and so on can all jeopardize the safety of this sea. Illegal and unregulated fishing in these waters has become a serious threat to the security of Sri Lanka and neighboring countries.

Findings and Conclusion

The Indian Ocean is getting more and more important due to the involvement of major nations and their interests. Major nations have taken an interest in the Indian Ocean due to its geopolitical relevance, which has produced a variety of hazards for maritime security. The superpowers' strategic competition is gradually broadening the range of security threats. One of the main causes of the threats to maritime security is the unpredictable and unstable nature of the Indian Ocean. Those issues may become even more serious in the future due to population and economic growth as well as governmental goals to improve regional power projection through marine capabilities. Strong regulations must so be implemented to safeguard the marine security of the Indian Ocean. The primary policy option that can be put into practice is maritime governance.

Governments and other regional bodies can better organize land and marine areas by keeping an eye on things and carrying out the necessary investigations. Within the framework of maritime governance, strict regulations must be put in place. The employment of advanced intelligence networks and information sharing might potentially reduce incidents of piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean. To do this, there should be less mistrust amongst the regional powers. Understanding the maritime domain may aid in enhancing regional cooperation by facilitating the sharing and support of regional initiatives. The use of soft power geopolitics may help to solve the expanding issues facing the Indian Ocean more often. Therefore, developing novel maritime strategies is crucial to promoting novel relationships.

As the number of crimes in the Indian Ocean region rises daily, it negatively affects international ties. Drug trafficking remains a danger in the area, tied to both human trafficking and terrorism. So, if the government does not act swiftly to resolve the issue, the harm to national security will be severe. It was said that in order to ensure marine security in the area, the government should collaborate to find solutions to these issues. The two nations' political and diplomatic relations will greatly strengthen if they can cooperate. Additionally, this region has to adopt stronger and more organized tactics for handling both regional and global challenges, taking into account security threats from enemy civilians, pirates at sea, and other sources, such armed pirates operating for non-governmental organizations. To strengthen, update, and modernize the Navy and address policy issues, long-term strategies are required.

Because of the necessity of defense in this area, the United States should collaborate closely with powerful nations like Japan and Australia to develop a long-

term strategy for marine security. Therefore, marine security must be established in order to stop the risks in this area. The IOR has four dimensions of importance. The first is historical. With a 1,500-year history of vigorous high seas trading, the Indian Ocean has been a hub for human connection for several millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans in 1498. There is sufficient evidence to show that human migration, the spread of religion, scholarly visits, and many other events dating back to the prehistoric age have all been added to the tales of seafaring and maritime trade over these waterways.

Second, geographical relevance: It is claimed that geography has a significant impact on regional security and peace in geopolitics. With a total size of 68.56 million square kilometres, or almost 20% of the planet's surface, the Indian Ocean ranks as the third biggest ocean. Stretching over 13,500 km from the Persian Gulf to Antarctica, it is roughly 10,000 km wide at the southernmost points of Africa and Australia. Physically, it is the most intricate ocean, walled and surrounded by land on three sides. Unlike the Pacific or Atlantic, the Indian Ocean is not "open-ended." Choke points limit the entry and departure of the Indo-Pacific Rim (IOR), which extends from the Suez Canal to the Strait of Malacca.

Thirdly, the IOR is economically significant since it possesses 40% of global energy reserves, 65% of key raw material deposits, and is the world's leading producer of jute, tea, rubber, and spices. Its natural riches and great economic variety also contribute to the region's strategic importance. The ocean floor contains more than 65 percent of the world's oil and uranium deposits. The strategic relevance comes last. From a strategic perspective, the Indian Ocean is the world's most significant body of water, and it will be here that 21st-century global conflicts will unfold. The hub of the world's principal maritime lanes is the Indian Ocean. Important maritime routes that connect the Americas, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East passes through IOR.

Dialogues can be used to bridge these gaps. Prospective military alliances, military training assistance, military-industry and technological transfer, and military diplomatic exchanges are among the acceptable and practical defense integrations that may be attained to ensure coordination of efforts towards a combined security framework. The contemporary approaches that might assist the cooperative security plans in the area are Integrated Intelligence Sharing and Integrated Space and Cyber Security Organizations. This opens the door for common cause missions to be carried out in order to keep the IOR peaceful and orderly.

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