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INDIA @75: REFLECTIONS ON THE HOMELAND DIMENSIONS OF MARITIME SECURITY IN INDIA

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Abstract: *As India celebrates and commemorates 75 years of independence, it is also a moment to trace the events which shaped the development of the homeland dimensions of maritime security and to reflect on its evolution. Evolving maritime threats, crises, and other developments have been catalysts for change, and '26/11' in particular was a watershed. The article explores some of the major features and characteristics of the evolutionary process, such as in the nature of transition, the conceptual development, reforms in governance, etc. and also related imperatives for the future.*

To celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence [India@75], the Government of India launched the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* (AKAM) initiative, a 75-week countdown to the 75th anniversary of independence, on 12 March 2021.[1] The initiative, divided into five themes, not only celebrates the *freedom struggl*e and the country's *achievements*, but also, looking ahead till 2047 [India@100 (*Amrit Kaal*)] focuses on *actions* to help India take its rightful position in the new world order, *ideas* (and ideals) to guide the country, and the *resolve* to shape India's destiny.[2]

As India celebrated AKAM — and in the spirit of AKAM— over the last year there have been two landmark developments with potentially far-reaching implications for the future of maritime security. On 09 August 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the UN Security Council High-Level Open Debate on "Enhancing Maritime Security: A Case For International Cooperation," under the Indian presidency of the Security Council. The relevance of the event can be gauged from the twin facts that this was the first time that maritime security was discussed in a holistic manner and as an exclusive agenda item at the UN Security Council, and that it was also the first time that an Indian Prime Minister was chairing an open debate in the UN Security Council.[3] Subsequently, in February 2022, Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar

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[1] "About" Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Ministry of Culture, https://amritmahotsav.nic.in/about.htm, accessed 04 August 2022.
[2] "About." Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
[3] Prime Minister's Office, "PM to Chair UNSC High-Level Open Debate on 'Enhancing Maritime Security: A Case for International Cooperation,'" Press Information Bureau, 08 August 2021. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1743814

(Retired), was appointed India's first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC).[4] The appointment of the NMSC realised a long-pending reform, which had been recommended in the *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security* (2001).[5] Both developments are reflective of the distance that the country has traversed since Independence, the growing confidence of India as a maritime nation, as well as the vision and resolve for strengthening maritime security, not just in India, but internationally as well. Notably, while Prime Minster Modi highlighted India's five principles for international cooperation, including jointly facing natural disasters and maritime threats created by non-State actors and preserving the maritime environment and resources, these principles also have implications for the homeland dimensions of maritime security.

In the backdrop of India completing 75 years of its Independence, this commemorative article reflects on the events that shaped India's approach to the homeland dimensions of maritime security and its evolution.

AN OVERVIEW OF EVENTS THAT SHAPED INDIA'S APPROACH

The Indian Navy was the only dedicated maritime force at the time of Independence, and it largely continued to be so till the raising of the Coast Guard 30 years later in 1977. However, in the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) island chain, a Police Marine Force (PMF) was raised way back in 1957 as a 'police coast guard,' and the Border Security Force (BSF) in 1966, soon after its raising in 1965, established its marine wing to facilitate presence in riverine areas along India's borders.[6] Interestingly, more than four decades later, the 'A&N model' of a state police formed the template on which the Group of Ministers (GoM), in their 2001 report on reforming national security, recommended the setting-up of coastal police, or State Marine Police (SMP), in all coastal states of the Union. Another interesting facet is that, despite a role limited to within the Indian baseline, the BSF, with its dedicated 'water wing', is perhaps the force with the largest inventory of vessels (some 450 of them), albeit mostly boats and small craft.[7] This is reflective of the successful 'marinisation' of a force, which was essentially not a maritime force. It is, therefore, a model worthy of emulation by other similar forces.

Smuggling emerged as the dominant non-traditional maritime security threat in independent India, and by the 1960s, smuggling by sea was 'rampant' and threatened the economy of the country.[8] In this backdrop, based on directives of the Prime Minister, the "Dr BD Nag Chaudhari Committee" was constituted, in 1970, to examine the issue. This committee

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[4] Krishn Kaushik, "First Coordinator for National Maritime Security Appointed, to Report to NSA," The Indian Express, 17 February 2022. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/ashok-kumar-first-coordinator-for-national maritime-security-appointed-7777016/

[5] Group of Ministers, *Report of the Group of Ministers to Review the National Security* (2001)," 74. https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/GoM%20Report%20on%20National%20Security.pdf

[6] "Police Marine Force," Andaman and Nicobar Police, https://police.andaman.gov.in/index.php/en/2013-10-13-13-05-45/police-marine-force.html, accessed 07 January 2021; Anirudh Deshpande, (*ed.*), *The First Line of Defence: Glorious 50 years of the Border Security Force* (Border Security Force: New Delhi, 2015), 262, https://bsf.gov.in/EventsDocs/01.pdf, accessed 05 January 2021.

[7] ET Spotlight Special, "Centre to Use Advanced Technology to Make Coast Line Impenetrable, Says Amit Shah," 29 May 2022. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/new-updates/centre-to-use-advanced-technology-to-make-coast-line-impenetrable-says-amit-shah/articleshow/91867468.cms?from=mdr

[8] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India* (New Delhi: United Services Institute, 2007), 35.

submitted its report in 1971.[9] The 1971 armed conflict between India and Pakistan also resulted in a rise in smuggling, with a further detrimental impact on the Indian economy.[10] In 1974, the Government approved the setting up of a Customs Marine Organisation (CMO), under a naval officer on deputation to the Customs, with 20 patrol craft and 50 confiscated dhows.[11] After the raising of the Coast Guard in 1977, the CMO was, in 1982, merged into the Coast Guard.[12] However, after the Kargil conflict with Pakistan (1999), the GoM Report (2001) recommended the strengthening of the Customs organisation, which essentially meant the revival of the marine dimensions of the Customs department.[13] Accordingly, between 2008 and 2012, Customs procured 109 boats for discharging the 'preventive' functions of the Customs organisation.[14]

The 3rd UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), which commenced its negotiations in 1973, witnessed arguments for creating a *sui generis* zone, namely, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), over which a coastal State could exercise sovereign rights over natural resources. Insofar as India was concerned, a major outcome was the creation of a large EEZ over which India would need to exercise its rights — essentially a constabulary function. In 1974, the Indian Navy suggested the creation of a Coast Guard organisation.[15] At that time, the Chief of the Naval Staff, had presciently stressed the need for greater coordination, an integrated approach, and an avoidance of duplication — issues that still remain relevant 50 years later.[16] Subsequently, in September 1974, the Government constituted a committee under Shri KF Rustamji, Special Secretary, to examine *inter alia* the formation of a coast guard.[17] In 1975, the committee submitted its report and strongly recommended the *"setting up of a 'Coast Guard' type of organization for general superintendence and policing in our sea areas."*[18] Against the backdrop of UNCLOS III, the increasing emphasis on law enforcement, especially to counter smuggling, discovery of oil in the offshore areas, and the need for an agency for benign 'safety and protection' tasks, the Coast Guard came into being on 01 February 1977 with two frigates and five patrol boats, and was formally 'inaugurated' on 19 August 1978.[19] The Parliament enacted the Coast Guard Act on 18 August 1978.[20] In the four decades-plus of its existence, the Coast Guard has grown from just seven surface platforms at the time of its inception to a force

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[9] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 36.
[10] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 41
[11] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 41.
[12] "Anti-Smuggling and Narcotics Control (AS&NC)," Indian Coast Guard, https://indiancoastguard.gov.in/content/1720_3_ASNC.aspx, accessed 04 August 2022.
[13] Group of Ministers, *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, 71.
[14] Comptroller and Auditor General of India, *Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Union Government, Department of Revenue - Customs (Compliance Audit), No. 1 of 2017*, 36. https://cag.gov.in/uploads/download_audit_report/2017/Union_Government_Report_1_of_2017_Revenue_Customs.pdf
[15] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976-1990* (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Navy), 2005), 367.
[16] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 37.
[17] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 38.
[18] "History," Indian Coast Guard, https://indiancoastguard.gov.in/content/442_1_HistoryICG.aspx, accessed 04 August 2022.
[19] "History," Indian Coast Guard.
[20] Prabhakaran Paleri, *Role of the Coast Guard in the Maritime Security of India*, 50.

of 158 ships and craft and 70 aircraft (as of January 2022), reportedly making it the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world.[21]

By the 1990s, with the repealing of Gold Control Act, 1968, and the liberalisation of the Indian economy, infiltration/ terrorism replaced smuggling as the principal non-traditional maritime security threat that the country faced. In the 1990s, three operations were instituted *inter alia* to prevent the smuggling of weapons and explosives into the country: Op TASHA (Tamil Nadu/ 1990), Op SWAN (Maharashtra-Gujarat/ 1993), and Op LEECH (Andaman and Nicobar/ 1998), with Ops TASHA and SWAN being longstanding ones.[22]

In 1990, with the withdrawal of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) from Sri Lanka, the protection of the Tamil Nadu coast was entrusted to the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard.[23] Op TASHA, a Low Intensity Maritime Operation (LIMO), commenced in June 1990 in the Palk Bay, to curb the smuggling of arms and ammunition, poaching, illegal immigration and activities of Sri Lankan Tamil militants.[24] In retrospect, Op TASHA, which was the first standing operation to involve the Indian Navy, the Indian Coast Guard, and the State Police, facilitated the institutionalisation of multi-layered patrolling, intelligence sharing, and the development of institutional structures for inter-agency coordination in Tamil Nadu. This operation, perhaps, laid the foundation of the coastal security construct in India. Notably, a dedicated Coastal Security Group (CSG) of the Tamil Nadu Police was raised in 1994.[25]

Subsequent to the terror attack in Mumbai in March 1993, which involved the use of the sea route for landing of ammunition at a location south of Mumbai, intelligence revealed the likelihood of the landing of arms and explosives along the west coast of India, from Gujarat to the Konkan coast.[26] In April 1993, a month after the blast, Op SWAN was launched at the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).[27] The operation, largely similar to Op TASHA, involved the States of Gujarat and Maharashtra, the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, supported by the Customs and the State Police.[28] In July 1999, the Indian Navy, along with the Maharashtra Police, implemented a community initiative, the *Sagar Rakshak Dal*, in coastal villages in Maharashtra. This was driven by the need for improving surveillance at a time when technology was limited, and was, perhaps, the first major initiative towards integrating the

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[21] Ministry of Defence, "Indian Coast Guard to Celebrate Its 46th Raising Day Tomorrow," Press Information Bureau, 31 January 2022. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1793845
[22] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: The Indian Navy 1991–2000* (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Navy), 2009), xxix.
[23] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976-1990*, (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Navy), 2005 (online edition). n.p.
https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Transition-to-Eminence-07Apr16.pdf
[24] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976-1990*, n.p.
[25] Bidananda Chengappa, "Coastal Security is the Weak Link in the Nation's Security Matrix," *Hindustan Times*, 22 November 2016. https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/coastal-security-is-the-weak-link-in-the-nation-s-security-matrix/story-a9lKuro0tcTDkLO4GHiBWN.html
[26] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: The Indian Navy 1991–2000,* 56.
[27] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: The Indian Navy 1991–2000*, 56.
[28] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: The Indian Navy 1991–2000*, 56.

community for maritime and coastal security.[29] Op SWAN took forward the lessons that had been imbibed from Op TASHA, which was limited to a single state on the east coast. Both these operations certainly contributed positively and significantly to the evolution of the coastal security construct in India. In effect, by the late 1990s, three of the 13 coastal states/ Union Territories (UTs), viz., Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu, had functional coastal security organisations, and at least two more, viz., A&N and Karnataka, had established marine wings of their respective police force.

After the Kargil Conflict of 1999, the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) was set-up under the chairpersonship of Dr K Subrahmanyam. The Committee, *inter alia*, urged that a thorough and expeditious review of the national security system in its entirety be expeditiously undertaken.[30] In April 2000, based on the recommendations of the KRC, a Group of Ministers (GoM) was tasked to review the national security system in its entirety, consider the recommendations of the KRC, and formulate specific proposals for implementation.[31] In turn, the GoM set up four Task Forces, including one on Border Management.[32] The report, submitted a year later in May 2001, included a section on "Maritime Borders and Island Territories" and made several recommendations to strengthen maritime 'border' management. The most notable of these recommendations related to the strengthening of the Coast Guard and the raising of specialised Marine Police units in all coastal States and island territories. The report constitutes a seminal step in the evolution of the construct for coastal security on a pan-India basis and, for the first time, comprehensively and holistically examined issues related to the security of the coast and island territories. The recommendations, once approved by the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS), were transformed into a veritable action plan for reforming national security, including those related to maritime 'borders' and island territories. Subsequently, in January 2005, the CCS also approved the first phase of the Coastal Security Scheme (CSS) for raising a Coastal Police in all coastal states, for implementation in 2005–06. This ushered in a new paradigm of marine policing in India.

On 26 November 2008, while GoM recommendations were still under implementation, foreign terrorists using the sea route attacked Mumbai ('26/11'). This led to the revamp of the construct for maritime security in India, especially coastal and offshore security, and reflected a paradigm shift in the approach to the homeland dimensions of maritime security. Broadly, it led to the allocation of specific responsibilities for maritime security agencies, such as the Indian Navy, the Indian Coast Guard, and SMP; capacity building of security agencies; an enhanced focus on electronic surveillance in general and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in particular; the progressive institutionalisation of coordination mechanisms; the strengthening of interagency operational coordination; and an increased focus on community engagement. Collectively, these measures have transformed India's approach to maritime and coastal security — regrettably however, this has been done reactively.

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[29] Himadri Das, "Community Outreach for Maritime Security in India: Need for a Contemporary Approach," National Maritime Foundation, 03 February 2021. https://maritimeindia.org/community-outreach-for-maritime-security-in-india-need-for-a-contemporary-approach/

[30] GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: The Indian Navy 1991–2000*, 56.

[31] Group of Ministers, *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, 1.

[32] Group of Ministers 2001, *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, 2–3.

SOME REFLECTIONS

There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen.[33]

Atypical Evolution

In the context of maritime security, according to the 'pragmatic ordering process' (2021) — a multi-stage model of transformation based on the developments in the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR) — there are five stages between exiting from an older established order and entering a new one: the emergence of a new problem (*problematisation*), an informal process (*informality*), 'experiments' (*experimentation*) to deal with the uncertainties of a new problem, *codification* of successful experimentation, and, thereafter, *consolidation*.[34] The model, based on the WIOR experience, is not designed to be a universal model, but one that illuminates and provides a heuristic for exploration.

From the available literature it appears that in India there has been little time for informality and experimentation, but there has, indeed, been a focus on high-level examinations by committees and groups towards addressing challenges ('problems'), as well as improvisations to deal with these challenges. The '26/11' case is paradigmatic in this regard — in about two months after the incident, a significantly reformed order was instituted. This notwithstanding, the 'new' model was built on localised 'experiments' of the past, such as Ops TASHA and SWAN; the Indian experience of dealing with terrorism in non-coastal states, and land-border management; successful innovations, such as the Indian Navy developed MDA system; etc. While in the past, 'crisis-driven ordering' perhaps necessitated a heuristic but imperfect approach to deal with future and emerging challenges, pragmatic ordering may perhaps facilitate a more ideal approach to address emerging and future maritime security challenges. In contrast to the past, the institutional mechanisms developed after '26/11' engender planned and experimented transitions to newer models, and consequently, these need to be leveraged for future and emerging challenges.

In a 'ideal' transition model, which lies in a S-shaped pattern, there are four stages: pre-development, take-off, acceleration, and then stabilisation (Figure 1).[35] In the first stage (pre-development), the initial steps at transitioning are not readily apparent. In the second stage (take-off), thresholds are breached for transitioning into a new model. In the third stage (acceleration), structural changes become more apparent. Finally, in the fourth stage (stabilisation), the rate of change reduces and a new equilibrium is reached. As evinced in the earlier section which provided an overview of the events that shaped India's approach, there has been a series of transitions in the past 50 years, some overlapping, but all driven primarily by new

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[33] The quote is widely attribute to Vladmir Lenin. However, as per some sources the origin of the quote is uncertain: https://quoteinvestigator.com/2020/07/13/decades-weeks/

[34] Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds, "Pragmatic ordering: Informality, experimentation, and the maritime security agenda," *Review of International Studies* 47, 171–191. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210520000479

[35] Geert Verbong and Derk Loorbach, *Governing the Energy Transition: Reality, Illusion or Necessity?* (New York: Routledge, 2012) in Christina Kelly *et al,* "Conceptualising change in marine governance: Learning from Transition Management," *Marine Policy*, Volume 95, 2018, 24-35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.06.023

challenges (and crises). As one transition stabilised, there arose newer challenges that needed to be addressed and new transitions to be me made — change has, in fact, been the only constant. In the context of reforms after '26/11,' the CCS directives of February 2009 reflect a 'take off' or inflexion point, which 'accelerated' in successive years by way of the implementation of various initiatives and processes, and has now reached a phase of relative 'stabilisation.' Looking ahead, the next generation of reforms need to be taken in a *preventive* context, driven by processes that review the present and peer into the future through periodic assessments, evaluations, audits, and strategic reviews, and articulate the way forward through vision, strategy, and plan documents, and not by a *responsive* or *reactive* context as has often been the case in the past.[36]

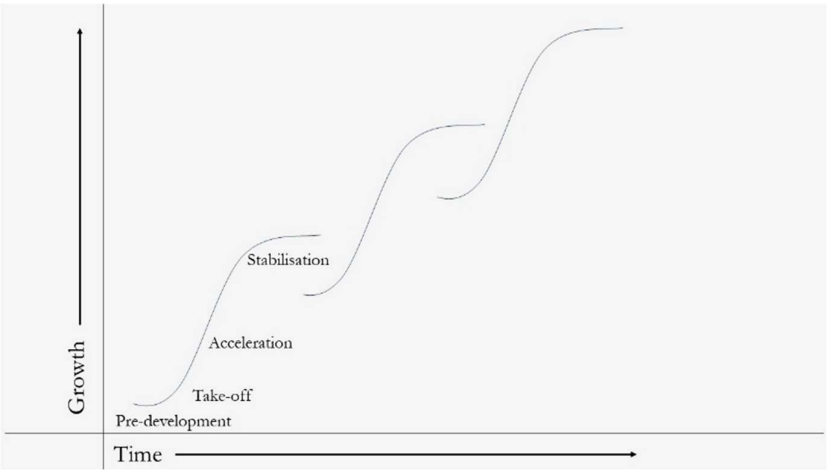

Figure 1: S-Shaped Transition

Conceptual Evolution

The concept of 'maritime security' has no universally accepted definition, but is acknowledged to have multiple dimensions, and its usage is largely contextual. In other words, maritime security could mean different things to different referents. Christian Bueger (2015) in a widely cited and popular article has described maritime security as a web of relations between concepts such as sea power, marine safety, blue economy and human resilience, and opines that each of these concepts points to different dimensions of maritime security, such as national security, marine environment, economic development and human security.[37] Subsequently, in 2021, he, along with his co-authors, conceptualised three dimensions of maritime security to be inter-State disputes, extremist violence *at* sea, and transnational organised crime.[38] In a classical sense, as KR Singh in *Coastal Security: Maritime Dimensions of India's Homeland* (2012) brings out, these dimensions relate to defence, 'security,' and law enforcement respectively. In other words, the contemporary dimensions of maritime security reflect a conflation of traditional approaches to

[36] John Sandoz, "Maritime Security Sector Reform," United States Institute of Peace, 10 May 2012. https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/05/maritime-security-sector-reform.
[37] Christian Bueger, "What is Maritime Security?," *Marine Policy,* Volume 53, 159-64, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X14003327
[38] "Indo-Pacific Archives," Christian Bueger, 27 October 2021, https://bueger.info/tag/indo-pacific/, accessed 04 August 2022.

security and law enforcement. The 2021 UN Security Council Presidential Statement on the August 2021 open debate on maritime security, however, retained its focus on maritime crime, transnational organised crime, and non-traditional threats, despite discussions on inter-State disputes.[39]

The available evidence points to MHA introducing the term 'coastal security' into officialese primarily in the context of border management and marine policing in the early years of the 2000s.[40] An etymological study may well reveal that this distinctive maritime concept, which is now being used in other countries as well, originated in India. Progressively, the term was also imbibed into naval doctrine in 2009, and doctrinally developed in the 2015 naval strategy, where it described coastal security as a subset of maritime security focused on coastal waters.[41] While coastal defence has been an enduring naval concept, coastal security as a distinct concept is only a recent addition. However, as highlighted earlier, the concepts of security and defence are no longer mutually exclusive, and particularly in the context of coastal and offshore security and defence, there are significant overlaps.[42] In fact, robust structures for coastal security engender coastal defence. In contrast to the naval strategy, which views coastal security as a subset of maritime security, KR Singh (2012), viewed coastal security from a different perspective as the maritime dimension of homeland security, perhaps driven by the fact that coastal border management is the responsibility of the MHA. It is the liminality of the concept, involving the seas and the lands, which perhaps gives rise to differing approaches to the issue.

The evolution of the theory and practice of 'coastal security' in India is indicative of similar linkages to other concepts and dimensions of security as has been described by Christian Bueger regarding maritime security, albeit in the limited spatial context of the coast and nearshore waters. Neither the concept of maritime security nor that of coastal security has reached a point of finalisation, but rather, they continue to evolve. However, the concept of coastal security — as an integral component of maritime security, as espoused in the Indian Navy's strategy — needs to evolve further and gain traction in reflecting its wider maritime remit beyond the confines of border management to which it has largely been tethered. Likewise, literature on maritime security too needs to give conceptual space to coastal security. Redefining concepts and their relationship to other concepts could lead to a fresh pathways encompassing a holistic approach while approaching the future.

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[39] UN Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2021/15 (09 August 2021). https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/220/62/PDF/N2122062.pdf?OpenElement

[40] Himadri Das, "Marine Policing and Maritime Security in India: Evolving Dimensions," National Maritime Foundation, 25 November 2021. https://maritimeindia.org/marine-policing-and-maritime-security-in-india-evolving-dimensions/

[41] Indian Navy, *Ensuring Secure Seas: India Maritime Security Strategy* (New Delhi: Integrated Headquarters of (Navy), 2015), 162.

[42] Himadri Das, "An Integrated Approach to Coastal and Offshore Defence: Leveraging the Coastal Security Construct," National Maritime Foundation, 23 March 2021. https://maritimeindia.org/an-integrated-approach-to-coastal-and-offshore-defence-leveraging-the-coastal-security-construct/

Changing Contours of Maritime Security Governance

(W)holistic Approach. Maritime security governance in India today is characterised by an inclusive *'whole-of'* paradigm, a global trend highlighting the movement from isolated silos in public administration and governance to formal and informal networks driven, *inter alia*, by factors such as the need for collaborative responses to complex problems.[43] The *'whole-of'* paradigm pertains not only to government(s) [*whole-of-government*], but also to the nation [*whole-of nation*], or across society [*whole-of-society*]. From essentially a single agency activity till the early 1970s, the governance of maritime and coastal security has established itself as a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, multi-level activity involving a host of ministries, departments, agencies, as well as civil society at large, through a mix of largely formal, but also informal processes, especially after the '26/11' incident. Operationally, Exercise SEA VIGIL (2019), a biennial national exercise, is an exemplar of the 'whole-of' paradigm, as it brings together the entire nation and all available resources, including those of maritime sectors and the community to facilitate collaborative responses, albeit in simulated scenarios. Likewise, Exercise SAGAR KAVACH is reflective of the 'whole-of' paradigm at the level of states. The establishment of coordinating committees at multiple levels of governance — the National Committee for Coastal and Maritime Security (NCSMCS) in 2009, the Steering Committee for Review of Coastal Security (SCRCS) in 2013, and the State and District level Coastal Security Committees in 2016 — has institutionalised mechanisms for policy coordination and implementation across the Centre and states, as well as within states and districts. With the appointment of the NMSC in 2022, the 'whole-of' paradigm is only likely to get further streamlined and consolidated. The 'whole-of' paradigm, which focuses on the whole, rather than parts, would be an important facilitator to meet the ends of 'holistic maritime security.' As such, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Fragmentation. Paradoxically, the 'whole-of' paradigm notwithstanding, the management of maritime security, spread over functions, sectors, agencies, as also between the Centre and states, is inherently fragmented, and 'siloed.' However, despite the negative connotations associated with fragmentation, a recent study (2022) argues that fragmentation in a regional maritime security cooperation context — described as a non-hierarchical proliferation of arrangements — facilitates increased 'socialisation' amongst stakeholders, which by itself can lead to the *"development of trust and collective identification between actors."*[44] This is likely to be true not just in the context of regional cooperation, but also for domestic maritime security coordination. Therefore, while fragmentation is perhaps inevitable, the plethora of sectoral and functional forums for coordination, as well as for intelligence and information sharing, need to be effectively and positively leveraged to further and promote national interests.

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[43] United Nations, *United Nations E-Government Survey 2012,* 55. https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2012-Survey/Chapter-3-Taking-a-whole-of-government-approach.pdf

[44] Scott Edwards, "Fragmentation, Complexity and Cooperation: Understanding Southeast Asia's Maritime Security Governance," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 44, no. 1 (2022), 87-121. muse.jhu.edu/article/855244.

Coordinated, but not Unified. At the operational level, several important initiatives have been taken to streamline coordination and have facilitated greater 'unity of effort.' These include, amongst others: the institution of the 'hub-and-spoke model' between the Indian Coast Guard and the SMP; the establishment and the NC3I network between the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard; the establishment of Coastal Security Operation Centres (CSOCs) across different echelons of the Indian Coast Guard in a hierarchical structure and their interface with the Joint Operations Centres (JOCs) at the apex-level of the hierarchy; the formulation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), etc. While a multi-layered approach to coastal security has been adopted, the GoM Report of 2001, acknowledging issues related to 'command and control' associated with the deployment of multiple forces, had enunciated the 'one-border-one-force' principle to obviate *"problems of conflict in command and control."*[45] Towards enhancing coordination and improve jointness among the armed forces in the maritime domain, a Maritime Theatre Command (MTC) is under consideration as a *"one-point command structure for all sea-going warships, submarines,* [aero]*planes, and surveillance assets like drones."*[46] Further, as per media reports, the MTC is expected to unify and integrate assets of the three defence forces, as also the Coast Guard, which is an armed force, under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

A recent study of some Asian States (2022) revealed three models of maritime law enforcement: *unified command* [maritime assets from different agencies temporarily assigned under a joint operational command], *unified force* [all maritime assets are centralised under a single agency], and '*division of labour'* [multiple agencies with their own assets, authorities, and operational tasks].[47] The author concludes that *"unified force and unified command models are better modes of maritime security governance in managing limited maritime resources than the ineffective and inefficient division of labour model."*[48] Another study, in 2018, dilated on the pervasive 'hybrid model,' which is based on the degree of formalisation of the division of responsibilities between military (navies) and non-military agencies.[49] Hybrid models, as per the analysis of the authors, reflect a pragmatic approach, as opposed to an idealised approach.[50]

In short, there is no unanimity as to the ideal operational model, as each one has its advantages, as well as disadvantages. However, it is a fact that coordinated models have shortcomings, which could at a critical time affect effectiveness of operational actions. The fact that 'unity of

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[45] "'Group Of Ministers' Report On "Reforming the National Security System," Press Information Bureau, 23 May 2001. https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive/releases98/lyr2001/rmay2001/23052001/r2305200110.html

[46] Ajay Banerjee, "Indian Navy to Set up Maritime Theatre Command by next Year: Navy Chief." *The Tribune,* 03 December 2021. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/confident-of-dealing-with-any-threat-in-indias-maritime-domain-navy-chief-345863

[47] Evan A. Laksmana, "Remodelling Indonesia's Maritime Law Enforcement Architecture: Theoretical and Policy Considerations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, Volume 44, Number 1, 122-149.

[48] Evan A. Laksmana, "Remodelling Indonesia's Maritime Law Enforcement Architecture: Theoretical and Policy Considerations."

[49] Safe Seas *et al*, *Mastering Maritime Security: Reflexive Capacity Building and the Western Indian Ocean Experience* (2018), 16. https://www.safeseas.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mastering-Maritime-Security-final.pdf

[50] The authors of Safe Seas *et al*, *Mastering Maritime Security: Reflexive Capacity Building and the Western Indian Ocean Experience* (2018) have attributed the analysis to: Sam Bateman, "Managing Maritime Affairs: The Contribution of Maritime Security Forces," in Jo Inge Bekkevold and Geoffrey Till (eds). *International Order at Sea: How it is Challenged, how it is Maintained* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), 261-282.

command,' as opposed to 'unity of effort,' is considered as a principle of war by some militaries is not without reason.

Securitisation. Another trend — a consequence of incidents like '26/11' and the institutionalisation of coordination measures amongst the government, security agencies, and other stakeholders — has been progressive 'securitisation,' albeit not in a classical sense of according high urgency and top prioritisation, but a more nuanced long-term cultural transformation amongst maritime stakeholders in the manner in which they think about security.[51] The inclusion of offences in the Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021, including intentionally or negligently obstructing, or destroying, Aids-to-Navigation (AtoN) or Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), and non-compliance with directions of a VTS provider is one such example at the level of the Centre.[52] Likewise, at the level of states, in 2020, the Gujarat Fisheries Act of 2003, was amended to enable the strengthening of fisheries monitoring, enforcement, and to enhance security.[53] Similarly, the draft policy framework for India's blue economy, which is aimed at enhancing the contribution of the blue economy to India's GDP, improving the lives of coastal communities, and the preservation of marine biodiversity, also focuses on maintenance of security of marine areas and resources.[54] Accordingly, one of the themes of the draft policy is focused on *"security, strategic dimensions, and international engagement."* Overall, securitisation, if managed through a long-term approach, tends to be largely positive as it increases the possibility of resource allocation.[55] The fact is that considering the threat perception, there is no option, but to securitise.

Top-Down and Bottom-Up. While the recommendations of the GoM Report (2001) and the CCS Directives (2009) are reflective of a top-down approach, developments have also been bottom-up. Four examples of a bottom-up approach include: (1) the PMF model of A&N (1957) which subsequently became a template for other coastal states to follow, albeit close to five decades later (2001); (2) the extrapolation of the multi-tiered model and state-level coordination mechanisms first instituted in Tamil Nadu (1990) and then further consolidated in Gujarat and Maharashtra (1993) as part of OP TASHA and Op SWAN, respectively, across all coastal states (2009); (3) the ReALCraft [Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft] portal developed in Kerala (2008) for fishing-vessel registration and fishing licensing, which was extended to the rest of the country (2014); and (4) the experience of the Indian Navy in Net-Centric Operations (NCO) and MDA, commencing in the late-1990s, which was then leveraged to develop the National Command, Control, Communication, and Intelligence (NC3I) network (2014) and put in place the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in 2018. Put differently, innovations at the level of states and individual departments/ agencies have

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[51] Christian Bueger, "What is maritime security?," *Marine Policy, Volume 53,* 159-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2014.12.005.

[52] The Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021, Sections 38–43.

[53] "Gujarat Ordinance No. 4 of 2020," Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Department (Government of Gujarat), https://lpd.gujarat.gov.in/assets/downloads/ordinance_22062020.pdf; "Gujarat Fisheries (Amendment) Act, 2020," Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Department (Government of Gujarat), https://lpd.gujarat.gov.in/assets/downloads/GujActN102020.pdf.

[54] Ministry of Earth Science, "Ministry of Earth Sciences Invites Stakeholders' Suggestions on the Draft Blue Economy Policy for India," Press Information Bureau, 17 February 2021. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1698608

[55] Christian Bueger, What is maritime security?.

significantly impacted the development of structures at the national level, and are reflective of a bottom-up approach. The future may be no different, and therefore, while having a global maritime security perspective, the next model and solutions for emulation may yet again come from local innovations and improvisations. This notwithstanding, with increasing focus on maritime security cooperation with foreign countries, best practices from elsewhere must also shape the future.

EMERGING AND FUTURE CHALLENGES: IMPERATIVE FOR CHANGE

The present construct for coastal security has evolved over the years primarily to respond to challenges such as smuggling, infiltration, maritime terrorism, etc. Yet, the fact is that risks from these non-traditional threats have not abated. The threat of maritime terrorism is widely considered to be a latent one. However, increasing incidents of drug seizures at sea and in Indian ports, are indicative of new and dangerous trends. The nexus between drug traffickers and terror organisations, and terror-financing through drug deals further compounds the issue. The magnitude of the menace can be gauged from the fact that, as per media reports, the total value of total drugs seized in India in 2021 was more than the budget of some states.[56] In addition, there have also been seizures of banned dual-use items under the SCOMET list [Special Chemicals, Organisms, Material, Equipment, and Technology] published by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) from Indian ports.[57] In essence, in addition to safeguarding the maritime boundaries and coastal zones, the protection of the country's 'economic frontiers' also need focused attention.

The IFC-IOR *Annual Report 2021* highlights four categories of emerging maritime security threats: 'hybrid threats,'[58] cyber threats, marine environmental pollution, and climate change.[59] The first category is of particular and immediate concern as it is indicative of a proliferation of advanced and dangerous military hardware to non-State actors. While the report is based on incidents elsewhere, it holds important lessons about which India must be mindful. In an article of 2021 related to the UK's *National Strategy for Maritime Security*, the authors highlight the following important trends of maritime insecurity: grey zone warfare at sea, the spill over of violent extremism on land to the sea, the growing nexus between maritime crime and terrorism, and the continued evolution of maritime (blue) crime.[60] Environmental security at sea and data-

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[56] Ankur Sharma, "Over 5,600Kgs, Costing Rs 40,000 Crore: India's 2021 Heroin Seizure Surpasses Annual Budgets of States," *News18*, 21 July2022. https://www.news18.com/news/india/over-5600kgs-costing-rs-40000-crore-indias-2021-heroin-seizure-surpasses-annual-budgets-of-states-5594581.html.

[57] Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, *Smuggling in India Report 2019-20,* 24. https://dri.nic.in/writereaddata/dri_report_dat_1_12_20.pdf

[58] IFC-IOR uses the term 'maritime security threat' in lieu of 'hybrid threats' as "action conducted by State or non-State actors, whose goal is to undermine or harm a target by combining overt and covert military and non-miliary means, conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formation, indiscriminate violence and coercion, as well as criminal disorder.' These involve the use of conventional military weapons, improvised devices, unmanned vehicles, etc."

[59] International Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region, *Annual Report 2021*, 92-113. https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/ifc-ior/IFC_IOR_ANNUAL_REPORT_2021.pdf

[60] Christian Bueger, Timothy Edmunds and Scott Edwards, "Innovation and New Strategic Choices," *The RUSI Journal*, 166:4, 66-75. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03071847.2021.1981777

cable security are other areas that the authors recommend that the UK's strategy should focus upon. Collectively, both, the report and the article, are reflective of the future concerns — *neo* non-traditional threats — that would need to be handled differently than in the past. Established models for handling threats 'at,' 'in' and 'from' the sea could well become outmoded. The S-shaped curve for transition, is also applicable for innovation, and unless new innovations are instituted, readiness for the next generation of challenges may well remain behind the curve.

CONCLUSION

A number of events and developments have shaped the evolution of the domestic or homeland dimensions of maritime security in India. While smuggling became a major threat in the 1960s, infiltration and terrorism replaced smuggling as the predominant threat in the 1990s, which led to the development of localised solutions in coastal states, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The Kargil conflict (1999) and the subsequent GoM Report (2001), which looked at reforming national security, also included several recommendations for strengthening maritime border management and coastal security, and the wider participation of maritime stakeholders. '26/11', however, was a watershed that brought about transformational changes in India's approach to maritime and coastal security.

The transition to newer models of governance has been atypical and largely in a responsive or reactive context. With the strengthening the institutional mechanisms across several levels of governance the next generation of reforms need to be taken in a preventive context, driven by processes that review the present and peer into the future through periodic assessments, evaluations, audits, and strategic reviews, and articulate the way forward through vision, strategy, and plan documents. As concepts, maritime security and coastal security continue to evolve. While approaching the future, redefining concepts and its relationship to other concepts could also lead to fresh pathways, engendering a holistic approach to maritime security. The concept of coastal security as an integral component of maritime security, as espoused in the Indian Navy's strategy, need to evolve further and gain traction to reflect its maritime remit beyond the confines of border management to which it has largely been tethered. Likewise, literature on maritime security too needs to give conceptual space to coastal security.

Unlike, in the past maritime security governance in India today is characterised by an inclusive *'whole-of'* paradigm, which is reflective of the collaborative approach to maritime security. This notwithstanding, fragmentation is inevitable. However, fragmentation, too, can contribute to greater socialisation, trust-building, and a collective identification of issues. Another feature of the evolving architecture has been a focus on coordinated structures towards achieving 'unity of effort'. While some scholars argue in favour of unified structures, others favour 'hybrid' models that reflect pragmatism as opposed to idealism. However robustly argued the debate, it must be conceded that 'unity of command,' is an enduring military principle, and not without reason. The MTC is an important step in this context. Two other features of the evolutionary process have been increasing securitisation and the interplay of both top-down and bottom-up approaches in the evolution of the construct. In an environment of high risks, securitisation is

inevitable, and lessons from the past are indicative of the fact that local solutions and innovations can offer great promise in a national context.

Trends, reports, and studies are indicative of the waxing and waning of existing threats and concerns about emerging *neo* non-traditional threats, such as hybrid threats, cyber threats, climate change, etc. Each one of these emerging and future threats has implications for maritime India. In the face of these challenges, established models may well become outmoded. Therefore, there are important imperatives for future-proofing. Finally, looking ahead to India@2047, the strengthening of maritime security is an unending work-in-process, rather than a journey with a defined end. In the past there may have been decades where nothing happened and there may equally have been weeks where decades happen, but that is now history.

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