



## Book Review

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Dave Sloggett, *The Anarchic Sea: Maritime Security in the 21st Century*, New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2014, 402 pp., 995 Rupees, ISBN 978-81-8274-755-5

How can mankind govern the seas and oceans? What are the various challenges that need to be considered in this aspect? What could well be the harbinger of future conflict in the high seas? Could it be that control for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) emerges as the maritime battleground of the future? How are nations coping with their respective maritime security problems? And what should be the blueprint for the development of an integrated maritime security solution based around creating acute and timely Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)? The book *The Anarchic Sea* tries to provide a comprehensive overview of approaching these questions from different dimensions of politics, diplomacy, economics (resources) and security (military and non-military).

In this era of renewed political, military and economic importance of the seas and the oceans, Dr Dave Sloggett attempts to look at the subject of maritime security holistically. By using a narrative, descriptive and explanatory style in a core case study format, Sloggett urges the readers to consider that maritime security is very much in vogue at the beginning of the 21st century. The book is not a critical analysis of the

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maritime domain but the purpose is to consider the various challenges in establishing a secure maritime environment, which resonates well with the title of the book, *The Anarchic Sea*. Drawing from the historical works of Clausewitz, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Julian Corbett and contemporary perspectives since 11 September 2001, the book adeptly delves into the interconnected relationship that exists among the different agents or players in the international maritime domain. Whether the ideas of 19th-century military thinkers are relevant to the present maritime dynamics is open to further debate for the effective crystallisation of a reformed and updated maritime outlook. Sloggett, while discussing concerned maritime and land issues, applies some of Sun Tzu's teachings and cites elements of Darwinian Theory's practical applicability to international realpolitik and the maritime dynamics.

The world has been looking for at least some piecemeal solutions to the complex problems dogging the maritime as well as the land-centric issues. Sloggett, through the title "Anarchic", brings out the prevalence of "chaos" and the subsequent possibility of achieving a better new world order. It almost seems that the presence of anarchy on the seas and oceans is the right platform for setting up a worldwide maritime governing structure. But what exactly constitutes a new world order in the author's mind remains a critical question to be answered. What this new world order would unravel in the future is to a large extent speculative but it is this pressing issue that concerns policy makers, strategists and the common man, who have varying degrees of perceptions in regard to the advancing globalised world. The global policing role to be assumed by the world's military forces is an interesting insight into the maritime future about which Sloggett writes. Possible growth of maritime terrorism, potential threat scenarios in mega ports, their implications on world economy and the vulnerable maritime environment have been addressed in an engaging manner. The book effectively targets both the military and commercial users of the sea. By examining the Mumbai terrorists' sea routes before launching the vicious assault on the heart of India's financial hub, Sloggett points out that a UK equivalent would be an attack on the royal yacht Britannia at Leith before an assault on Edinburgh. It is apparent that the current security discourses presents a form of an existing malaise when it comes to discussing maritime security in the international context. In this regard, Sloggett encapsulates the critical linkage between the land environment and sea to address the issues of the post-Cold War international security landscape.

The book's focal point has been on the maritime perspectives of international terrorism, piracy, transnational crimes and maritime strategy, but it also does justice to the comprehensive approach by duly bringing out the other aspect of maritime security such as state-on-state interactions, resource management, trade protection, disasters and oceanography. This is exemplified in the seven dimensions of maritime security listed out in the book for the potential readers to broaden their understanding on matters maritime. The expert view of treading a fine balance between hard and soft maritime power is another classic example that the author elucidates. The recurring theme of securing the sea lines of communication (SLOC) has gained considerable mention in this book; however, the solution to secure the world's SLOCs, whether through nations' cooperative efforts or by other mechanisms, remains the most important question to be answered in the maritime domain. This brings into focus the issue of right governance in the maritime domain, which should be a just and fair representation by all maritime nations.

Setting the tone for a global network of maritime cooperation, the author calls for cooperation among world navies by extolling the concept of the 1000 ship navy promulgated by the former US Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Michael Mullen. For instance, on regional cooperation among maritime nations and as a diplomatic model to be followed, Sloggett argues that the cooperation model between Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia is a practical framework to act against piracy in the Straits of Malacca, but the issue of robbery remains an enduring problem.

The "Rising China" rhetoric and its implications to the changing world order is conspicuous in the book, with the author favouring greater engagement in the maritime domain by the West, notably the USA. Meaningful insights have been provided in the book but often resemble the perceptions and analysis arising from Western thinkers. Even better justice to the comprehensive book could have been done by considering more Asian, African, Russian or Middle Eastern perspectives. The book is targeted more towards the navies rather than private security firms but academics and policy makers would find it useful due to its easy readability and the compact presentation of information. General readers may skip the maritime strategy chapter, which is closely connected to the final chapter – not that it is not important – but it is more concerned with navalists and policy makers. The sixth chapter titled "Delivering Maritime Security in the 21st Century" suggests certain roles the maritime forces can play in delivering security to the land environment. Sloggett highlights the role of intelligent surveillance by using surface-based platforms and

assets at sea, which can provide insights into the prevailing “atmospherics” of the communities stricken by internal strife, illegal activities and other problems. The importance of enhancing sea awareness and response assets is understood through Sloggett’s compelling study of maritime security. Regarding the issue of information or intelligence collation and its subsequent synthesis, the use of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) sources is advocated, which could play an important role in finding where the fault line exists. In an interesting method for tackling local criminal groups and changing their behaviour, the author writes how ship-based broadcast platforms, using local dialects, can be an effective tool in what is called “psychological operations” (PSYOPS) in military circles.

Sloggett’s meaningful and overarching study on the maritime domain serves as a revelation that asymmetric warfare will likely emerge as a ubiquitous phenomenon in the near future. However, the security subject on the metamorphosis of warfare is again open to further debate by taking into account historical conflicts and the reasons that led to conventional warfare thereafter. Conventional warfare cannot be ruled out and is still a potent threat to international security. During peace times, nations develop their military’s capabilities, which results in capacity building. To add some food-for-thought, one should be wary of pseudo peace deception that could be imposed upon the world and this could well serve the steady military build-up by nations. With just the right dose of catalyst, there could be an explosion of inter-state warfare on an unimaginable scale.

The final part of the book encompasses a gamut of case studies on a select group of nations’ maritime security. These have been adapted to regional specificities with each case discussing the concerned country’s unique maritime challenges. The wealth of knowledge, expertise and insights that Sloggett brings into these case studies offers lucid Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) regarding the particular countries analysed. For instance in an interesting case, Mexico is studied as that case “Where maritime security and criminality clash”. Sloggett writes that it is indeed difficult to see the issues of Mexico’s maritime security without using “the lens of criminality and its manifestations in the organisation of drugs and people smuggling activities in the region”. One of the challenges Mexico is facing in recent times involves transnational criminal cartels adopting novel approaches by using submarines alongside traditional fast craft for the purpose of drug smuggling. This section offers readers a quick analysis on a particular country’s maritime issues. In fact, the case study section could

be quite useful to the civilian echelons of the bureaucracy, diplomats and the militaries that spend a lot of time as practitioners of international realpolitik.

In conclusion, the book is successfully timed to address the challenges in the 21st-century maritime environment. It effectively imparts maritime consciousness to the readers, policy makers, naval strategists, diplomats and political leaders to manoeuvre and direct their concerted action in the right course. It is not a “tell-all tale” about the secrets of the maritime realm but an authoritative work on eternal verities that form part and parcel of the maritime domain. Sloggett has done a remarkable work on the subject by providing a series of theses, antitheses and intellectual propositions to help establish a secure and economically sustainable maritime environment.