



FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

Let me begin where we left, since the publication of 'Winter 2017' edition. Much water has flowed in the Indian Ocean-Pacific Ocean continuum, in the year by-gone. 'Excitement' and 'anxiety' has always been truly the two sides of the same coin for a mariner and the year by-gone is not an exception. For those immersed in the semantics of the maritime domain, there has been much to write home about.

The inaugural edition of the Indo-Pacific Region Dialogue, held in February 2018, was truly the much needed ice-breaker that brought together the maritime stake-holders of various nations on to a common platform to discuss the strategic domain. If I were to be forced to cherry-pick a single success (of the bouquet of successes), I would indeed state that the scale of the conference, which saw formidable representation, in size and stature, from major littorals of both the Indian and Pacific Ocean, was indeed the game-changer. The effervescent discussions that ensued, the new ideas and perspectives that flowed, and most importantly, the relative ease with which the participants took to discuss opposing, and at times, stymied views, brought immense value addition to the Dialogue on the anticipated lines. The immaculate success of the Dialogue, the urge to build up on the successive editions of the Dialogue (starting with the 2nd edition in March 2019), and our onus of retaining the continuity resulted in the Foundation releasing the Summer 2018 Edition of our flagship journal 'Maritime Affairs' as a 'Special Issue'.

In the interim period, the NMF, as the sole maritime think-tank of India, has had the distinction of engaging relevant think-tanks on both sides of the current maritime divide, China (*Academy for World Watch, Beijing and Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu*) and the USA (*RAND Corporation, Washington and Centre for Naval Analyses, Washington*). It is now with a sense of entitlement and from a position of strength that the NMF can now claim to have the ears of the policy makers in China, USA and more importantly, within India which is characterised by the multiple taskings the Foundation is receiving from the NITI Aayog. Interactions with think-tanks in India such as Kalinga Foundation, India Foundation and Delhi Policy Group, etc have been robust and useful for the Foundation to remain contemporary.

Concurrently, the Foundation is involved in shaping the maritime perceptions of India's maritime neighbours such as Sri Lanka (*Pathfinder Foundation*), Bangladesh (*Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development, Dhaka*), Israel (*Haifa Research Centre for Maritime Policy and Strategy*), ASEAN and even African countries such as Tanzania. It is with immense pride that the Foundation can now claim to be effortlessly working with its counterparts in Japan and Australia.

In a nutshell, these efforts have resulted in the NMF presenting a cumulative perspective and world-view to its audience and in the bargain, draw immense respect. Whilst I am of the view that the hard-earned progress of such seminal events should not be safe guarded as family-treasure, but rather be disseminated at all levels and over the entire spectrum; school students to aficionados of geo-politics. Whilst this publication is one such effort in

pursuit of the higher goal, the NMF has concurrently joined hands with reputed global institutions such as the OP Jindal Global University, AMITY Institute and India School of Business, to spread the significance of the maritime domain in nation building.

Last but not the least, I profusely thank each of the contributors, for generously sharing the distillate of individual decadal experiences through their concise, well-researched and articulate articles. I urge all the readers to continue the chain and pass the '*maritime-mantra*' within their own sphere of influence, so that the oceans emerge as the '*Unifiers*' as India sails ahead as a resurgent maritime nation in the 21st century.

I take this opportunity to wish the readers, patrons and stakeholders all the very best in the New Year ahead.

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