

India-Europe Maritime Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges

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नचिरंवरंनचिरंस्नेहः। योऽद्यमित्रंशत्रुः।
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“Neither friendship nor enmity lasts forever. Today’s friend may become an enemy tomorrow, and vice versa. Therefore, knowing what is in one’s best interests, one should act accordingly.”

Chanakya (*Arthashastra*)¹

India’s national policy is based on the long-standing tenets of strategic autonomy, plurilateralism and multi-vectored partnerships. Its national geo-strategy is premised on its strategic location and disposition astride the world’s most crucial shipping routes of the Indian Ocean, whose security became the premise for the birth of the new regional construct called the “Indo-Pacific”.² The maritime spaces of the Indo-Pacific region are likely to be the arena of heightened economic activity, and also a scene of dynamic insecurities and contestation in coming years. To preserve its maritime and overseas interests encompassed within its geo-strategic frontiers of the Indo-Pacific, India must foster maritime security collaboration in its engagements with the regional countries and stakeholders, including those in Europe. Such collaboration is particularly essential for India to strengthen its comprehensive engagement with the European countries, which is an important constituent of its national maritime policy.

Since long, India has engaged in naval cooperation with the European countries—notably France and the United Kingdom (U.K.)—primarily in the Indian Ocean. Since 2008, the Indian Navy has also been coordinating its counter-piracy and other law-enforcement missions in the western Indian Ocean with the *European Union Naval Force* (EUNAVFOR), instituted under the EU’s *Common Security and Defence Policy* (CSDP). Lately, an institutionalized and more comprehensive India-EU maritime security mechanism is being conceived at the broader Indo-Pacific level. The process effectively began with the EU-India Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2020-25 adopted in July 2020³, which led to their first-ever Maritime Security Dialogue in January 2021, followed by their first-ever naval exercise in the Gulf of Aden in June 2021. At the end of the second and third India-EU maritime security dialogues held in February 2022 and October 2023, the two sides identified a few broad focus areas for cooperation, such as Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), capability enhancement and maritime law enforcement. India-EU maritime security cooperation is thus at a nascent stage, necessitating—and amenable to—the necessary course corrections, as may be required by the two sides to secure their respective geopolitical interests.

Undeniably, there exist substantive convergences between India and the EU, which translate into opportunities for cooperation. However, the assumption that a common ground on security is merely rooted in their common democratic institutions and pluralistic societies may be misleading and provide a misplaced context to navigating the way ahead. To progress such cooperation, therefore, New Delhi would also need to factor the challenges in the form of the differences and divergences involving the interests, policy approaches and perceptions of India and Europe. Such challenges are exemplified by the recent case when amidst the Ukraine War, Europe admonished India for being ‘soft’ on Russia, thereby discreetly implying that in the event that China does a Ukraine on India, New Delhi should not be able to bank upon European support. This led to the Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar’s retort, “*Europe has to grow out of the mindset that its problems are the world’s problems but the world’s problems are not Europe’s problems*”.⁴ If such differences and divergences are glossed over by New Delhi, it may place India’s national interests at grave risk.

In this context, this policy-brief aims to identify the opportunities and challenges for India to forge a collective maritime security arrangement with European countries—and specifically, with the EU—based on the convergences and divergences, both at the national-strategic and functional levels.

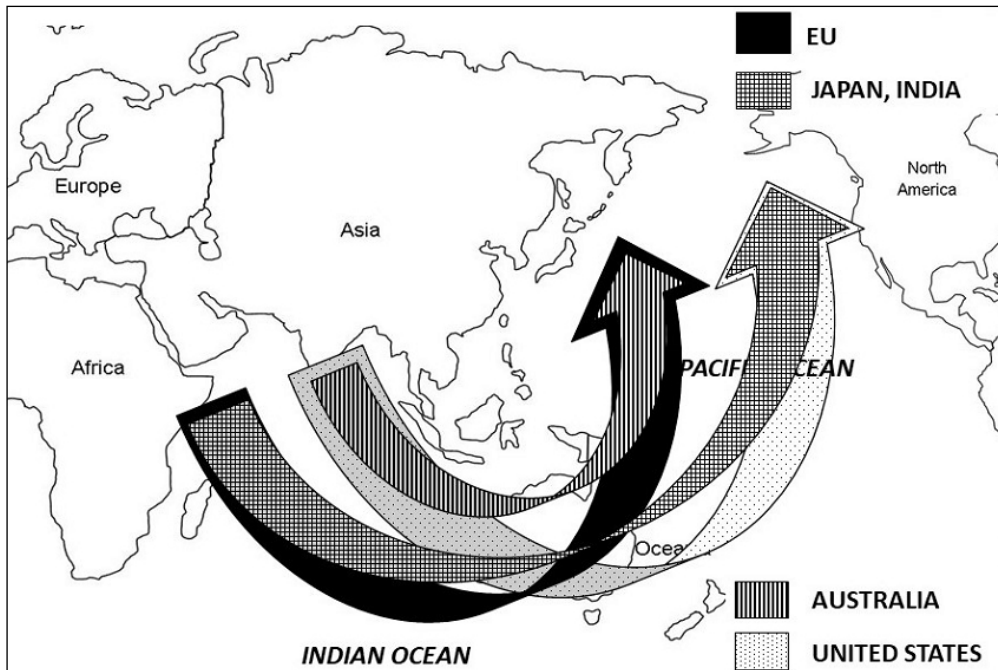
Geostrategic Frontiers in the Indo-Pacific

The geo-strategic frontiers⁵ of the key State actors in the Indo-Pacific region are represented by the differing spatial scope of their respective Indo-Pacific conceptualisations. (See Fig below). For instance, the geo-strategic frontiers of India and Japan are coincident. Australia’s frontier stretches from the Bay of Bengal to the China Seas. Whereas America’s geo-strategic frontier spans the entire globe, its Indo-Pacific conceptualisation extends from India to America (‘Bollywood to Hollywood’), which is the area of responsibility (AOR) of the U.S. Indo-Pacific (combatant) Command (INDO-PACOM).

As per its Indo-Pacific Strategy, 2021, EU’s Indo-Pacific encompasses the “*geographic area from the east coast of Africa to the Pacific Island States (including the western Pacific)*”.⁶ Hence, the geo-strategic frontiers of India and the EU overlap in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific. This area is nearly coincident with India’s areas of maritime interest, as stated in the *Indian Maritime Security Strategy 2015*.⁷ In India’s political articulation, the spatial scope of Indo-Pacific stretches from Africa to Americas, which may be primarily dictated by its geopolitical compulsion to incorporate the United States (U.S.) as a stakeholder in Indo-Pacific affairs, rather than by India’s tangible interests, as stated in its 2015 Strategy document. Some European sources indicate that the same holds good for the EU⁸.

Specific Areas of Strategic Confluence

Since the AOR of the U.S. INDO-PACOM does not extend to the western Indian Ocean (as mentioned above), India has been compelled to engage with the U.S. Central

Figure 1 - Differing Geographic Scope of Indo-Pacific

Command (CENTCOM) to preserve and protect its critical interests in the western Indian Ocean, notably energy security and the Indian Diaspora. Accordingly, in 2022, the Indian Navy began conducting maritime security operations with the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).⁹ However, joint operations under CMF are not devoid of major challenges, particularly with the Pakistan Navy also being a constituent of the CMF. In turn, this translates into India's imperative to forge a maritime security partnership with the EU for preserving its interests in the western Indian Ocean, and thus represents a major opportunity. The realisation of such opportunities leads to valuable actionable proposals, such as the one by European analysts to jointly establish a regional maritime capacity building programme for island and coastal states in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰

This imperative is strengthened by the potential insecurities that are likely to be caused in the northern Arabian Sea to the proposed *India-Middle East (West Asia)-Europe Economic Corridor* (IMEC), added to those caused by sub-State militant groups like the Houthis in the Red Sea. The E.U.'s security commitment to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea is evidenced by the EUNAVFOR Operation *ASPIDES*.¹¹ It may be assumed that the U.S. would be most willing to cede such security role in the Indian Ocean to the India-EU partnership.

The EU Indo-Pacific Strategy 2021 indicates that besides the western Indian Ocean, the China Seas is another area of heightened concern for the EU owing to China's increasing politico-military assertiveness, which is a major aspect of consonance with India. Notably, however, the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy 2021 classifies India as a Level-2 partner,

with the more preferred Level-1 partners in the Indo-Pacific region being Australia, New Zealand, the Southeast Asian countries (particularly Singapore), Japan and the Republic of Korea.¹²

Complementary Currencies of Power

Ostensibly, the key driver for EU's naval engagement with India is that the EU's CSDP for the Indo-Pacific region is constrained in terms of the maritime-military assets that it can bring to bear in the region. The EU States must commit much of their naval and maritime-air assets in Euro-Atlantic theatre, including to meet its alliance commitments to the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO). This imperative has become critical in wake of the Russian military offensive against Ukraine. Europe's capacity constraint could be addressed by the potent Indian Navy, and its operational philosophy of extended mission-based deployments (MBD) in the Indo-Pacific region, including through its extensive network of logistic and information-sharing agreements that it has forged with several regional countries. The EU may also see India's influence among the regional countries of the Global South as major opportunity. In some countries ranging from Iran to Myanmar, India possesses much more leverage than do the European countries.

For India, the EU collectively possesses considerable geo-economic, financial and technological prowess that New Delhi could benefit from to preserve, protect and promote its national interests at sea and overseas. India could also adopt the highly evolved European model of inter-state maritime security cooperation by redesigning it to suit regional conditions. The respective currencies of power and influence that India and the EU possess are thus complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Upholding Rules-based Maritime Order

At the broader geopolitical level, as *status quo* powers, both India and Europe seek to uphold the ruled-based maritime order premised on international law. More specifically, it relates to the laws codified in the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982 (UNCLOS) and other international treaties that apply to peacetime activities in the maritime domain; and the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) in case of hostilities in the maritime-configured Indo-Pacific region.

In the foreseeable future, armed conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region are more likely to be initiated over Taiwan or the South China Sea disputes. Invariably involving China, these wars would undeniably involve naval operations in the Indian Ocean, and therefore, India cannot expect to remain insulated. The *Newport Manual on the Law of Naval Warfare* 2023 brings doctrinal congruence between India and Europe on international law in case of a maritime war in the Indo-Pacific. Notably, such legal congruence between Indian and Europeans has not emerged from any quest on part of either, but has been facilitated by the Americans.¹³

Such India-EU ‘facilitated’ congruence does not extend to international laws applicable to peacetime, for instance, to address the issue of irregular migration *via* the sea. Whereas the European states have been ardent champions of human rights, the refugee-influx problem that India has encountered since its independence has prevented its accession to the 1951 *Refugee Convention* owing to the rather onerous asylum obligations that it places upon States.¹⁴ Currently, the flood of sea-based migration into Europe from various unstable areas of Africa and West Asia is leading a few European policymakers to re-think Europe’s liberal refugee policies of yore, and reform its human rights laws.¹⁵ However, the current policy divergence between India and the EU in this regard will need to be factored, at least in the short-to-medium term time frame.

Furthermore, even as India and the EU both view China as a revisionist power that seeks to disrupt the rules-based international maritime order, India and the European countries differ on two key elements of UNCLOS. The first relates to the dispute-settlement mechanism of the Convention.

UNCLOS Maritime Dispute Settlement Mechanism

In 2016, China rejected the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) constituted under UNCLOS provisions in its maritime dispute against the Philippines in the South China Sea.¹⁶ In stark contrast, two years earlier in 2014, India had gracefully accepted the PCA’s adverse verdict in India-Bangladesh maritime dispute in the Bay of Bengal.¹⁷ However, the record of the West in general—and the European countries in particular—on upholding international law is not unblemished. In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ)¹⁸ endorsed the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 73/295 of 2017, which had called upon the U.K. to end its colonial hold over Diego Garcia (Chagos) within six months, and hand it over to Mauritius.¹⁹ Many other maritime disputes relating to the erstwhile colonial possessions of the West exist in the Indo-Pacific region, such as the Comoros’ claim over the French-administered Mayotte Island, which was endorsed by the UNGA resolution of 1994.²⁰ India—as an ardent advocate of the interests of the Global South—has not yet taken a position on these disputes, but the time to do so will eventually come. If India sides with the Europeans on these maritime disputes, it would erode New Delhi’s influence and trust among the Global South that it has painstakingly developed to preserve and promote its geopolitical interests. It would, therefore, be more prudent for India to uphold international law by supporting Comoros and Mauritius, alike its support for the Philippines the 2016 PCA verdict. This could be perceived by the concerned European States as India’s principled stand against the erstwhile colonial powers, which India will need to grapple with through deft diplomacy to further India-EU maritime-security collaboration.

UNCLOS Interpretation on Freedom of Navigation

To preserve the rules-based maritime order, the second element of UNCLOS relates to navigational freedoms, which both India and Europe profess to uphold. Alike the EU,

India advocates such freedoms for commercial trade and military mobility. However, New Delhi's 'softer' interpretation of the UNCLOS differs from the 'rigid' interpretation of Brussels. Unlike the Europeans, India seeks "prior notice" before foreign warships undertake of innocent passage through Indian Territorial Sea²¹, and prior "consent" for foreign military operations in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).²² Since India and China were weak developing states during the UNCLOS negotiations in the 1970s, India's position on navigational freedoms is more aligned to China, rather than to the European countries. As the naval forces of India and the EU conduct coordinated operations in the maritime zones of regional states, this divergence could potentially be a major impediment. Notably, some regional States do not trust the Europeans even to undertake benign naval operations in their proximate waters, as exemplified by the case of Myanmar, which refused the humanitarian help from the French Navy in the wake of cyclone *Nargis* in 2008.²³ This divergence would also constrain India-EU cooperation against China's lawfare.

EU Indo-Pacific Strategy Vs India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative

In November 2019, India launched the *Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative* (IPOI) to implement its policy of SAGAR (*Security and Growth for all in the Region*)²⁴ enunciated in 2015. EU has been supportive of the IPOI, since its engagement with India under the Initiative would further the objectives of its own *EU Indo-Pacific Strategy* 2021. The "seven priority areas" of EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy—Sustainable and inclusive prosperity, Green transition, Ocean governance, Digital governance and partnerships, Connectivity, Security and Defence, and Human Security²⁵—are broadly consonant with the seven "pillars" of the IPOI, viz. Maritime Security; Maritime Ecology; Maritime Resources; Capacity Building and Resource Sharing; Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport; Science and Technology, and Academic Collaboration.²⁶ These so-called "pillars" are effectively spokes of an interconnected web of priority areas, alike those in the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

However, there exist nuanced—but substantive—differences between the two sets of priority areas. The EU considers "freedom of navigation" as distinct from "maritime security".²⁷ Also, "ocean governance", "security and defence", and "human security" are distinct priority areas of EU Indo-Pacific Strategy,²⁸ whereas all these are combined within the IPOI's single pillar of (holistic) "maritime security". These differences seem to be inconsequential, but a deeper understanding of their nuances indicate that these could pose a major challenge for cooperation. For instance, while the EU may cooperate with India on its narrower concept of Maritime Security, it may pressurize New Delhi to revise its domestic law and position on navigational freedoms to conform to EU's own interpretation of UNCLOS (as mentioned above).

Furthermore, India considers *Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported* (IUU) fishing as a subject of maritime security due to various reasons, *inter alia* the intelligence-gathering activities of China's fishing fleet in the Indian maritime zones. On the other hand, the EU considers IUU fishing as an aspect of "ocean governance". This may be a major challenge

for India considering that the EU is a major destination of India's fish exports. So far, the EU has placed 14 fish exporting countries in the Indo-Pacific region on its warning ('yellow card') or trade restriction ('red card') lists under its IUU Regulation (1005/2008) that seeks to prevent and deter IUU fishing.²⁹ India may also figure in such listing in future, given its domestic compulsions related to the livelihood of its artisanal fisherfolk. Whereas India is taking necessary legislative measures through the *Indian Marine Fisheries Bill 2021* to curb IUU fishing,³⁰ it would take time for the Bill to be enacted as law. Also, India has not acceded to the international convention against IUU fishing called the *Port State Measures Agreement* (PSMA) 2009.³¹ Hence, with the EU treating IUU fishing as an aspect of ocean governance rather than maritime-security, India would be the EU's defaulter, rather than a partner for a collective response to China's maritime militia operating in the guise of its high-sea fishing fleet.

Pan Indo-Pacific Policy Coordination

European policy approach for the Indo-Pacific is compartmentalized between the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific. This leads to the objectives of EU's mission in India being insulated from those of its mission in the *Association of South East Asian Nations* (ASEAN), with one mission being even ignorant of the developments in the other part of the Indo-Pacific region. This argument emerges from the author's personal experience while interacting with the EU mission representatives in India and in the ASEAN countries during track-two interactions. This leads to the lack of a synergized EU approach to meet the overarching objectives of its 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Such policy fracture is not restricted to the EU since India's government ministries also function in a similarly disjointed manner, impeding the fulfilment of India's objectives of its Indo-Pacific Vision and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). To synergize a pan-region foreign policy, in 2019, India established an "Indo-Pacific Division" within its *Ministry of External Affairs* (MEA) by expanding the Indian Ocean division to incorporate the ASEAN and Oceania.³² However, this has not yet been effective for synergizing affairs across the entire Indo-Pacific, primarily owing to the lack of cross-cutting expertise of the staff, not only in terms of area specialisations, but more importantly, due to the lack of domain expertise in maritime affairs. The appointment of a former Indian Navy Vice Chief as the National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC) in 2022³³ is an appropriate policy decision, but this can only be effective if the MEA can synergize its functional charter with the NMSC. For doing so, Indian diplomatic corps may need to rise above the problematic issues of guarding its turf in Indian foreign affairs, which is closely related to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)

The EU's MDA partnership has been valuable for India and the other regional countries to combat maritime crime and terrorism. Considering that the declining instances of piracy

in the western Indian is accompanied by the increasing activities related to trafficking in drugs, arms and humans, India-EUMDA cooperation needs to be bolstered by real-time linking the EU information-sharing centres (ISC) in the western Indian Ocean (Sana'a, Mombasa, Mahé and Zanzibar) with India's Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). Since the EU's CRIMARIO (*Critical Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean*) MDA programme is progressively expanding to the western Pacific—as CRIMARIO II³⁴—the India-EU MDA exchange network needs to be dilated by linking information-sharing centres east of the Malacca Strait—including in the South-West Pacific Island states—beginning with Singapore's *Information Fusion Centre* (IFC) at Changi. Notably, however, all these IFCs operates different internet-based information-sharing portals. Whereas the EU operates the IORIS (*Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing*) portal, Singapore shares information on IRIS (*IFC Real-time Information-sharing System*), and IFC-IOR is presently based on the MSIS (*Merchant Ship Information System*), with new ones being developed. Ideally, a singular portal needs to be used for the entire Indo-Pacific region. The EU, India and Singapore are zealous to have their own portal being used on a pan-regional scale. The EU has even been imparting training to regional coast-guards on IORIS. If not effectively managed, such competition could lead to a major challenge for India-EU cooperation.

The EU is keen to participate in the Quad's Indo-Pacific partnership for MDA (IP-MDA), a space-based initiative presently focussed on IUU fishing and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).³⁵ The Quad's IP-MDA is being extended to the ASEAN countries, will eventually be expanded to the Indian Ocean, just as CRIMARIO-I expands to the Western Pacific as CRIMARIO-II. This leads to an opportunity to have a hand-shake between the IP-MDA initiative and CRIMARIO. Furthermore, India-EU cooperation in IP-MDA could be easily extended to collaboration in satellite mapping, considering that India-EU space cooperation programme to share satellite Earth Observation data is already active.³⁶ Importantly, India-EU MDA cooperation could potentially help either side to play an important role in the possible event of a maritime conflict involving China in the Indo-Pacific region, of course, if they would choose to do so to preserve their interests.

Regional (Hardware) Capacity Building

The strategic compulsion for the EU to bolster its naval capacity in the Indo-Pacific through its partnership with India (as mentioned earlier) represents a 'one-way street'. The EU Indo-Pacific Strategy 2021 indicates that in its regional engagements, the EU intends to “*build maritime security capacity against drug trafficking, human trafficking and wildlife crime, and also illicit financial flows*”.³⁷ However, this merely refers to 'capability enhancement' in terms of 'softer' legal and procedural capacities, information-sharing and training, rather than 'hardware' capacity building of the smaller regional maritime forces. The nature of EU's current maritime security engagements with the IOR countries reinforces this argument. During India-EU maritime-security dialogues, the

EU indicated its acquiescence to establish a maritime-safety training centre for the Indian Ocean. However, it has not yet demonstrated its commitment for (hardware) capacity building of regional maritime forces. This could have been done by incorporating India into the *European Patrol Corvette* (EPC) programme.³⁸ To begin with, the EU could avail of facilities in Indian shipyards for maintenance and repair of its warships and naval auxiliaries, on the lines of *Master Ship Repair Agreements* (MSRAs) that the U.S. has signed with India.³⁹ This would enable the Indian shipyards to showcase their capabilities to the EU to enable joint naval shipbuilding ventures in future. Another critical area of possible cooperation is joint development of naval capabilities for mine countermeasures (MCM), which could be deployed in the insecure waters of West Asia.

Containing China's Regional Influence

The outbreak of the Ukraine War in February 2022 has got the EU worried about the potential insecurity to the Euro-Atlantic region caused by the emerging Russia-China strategic nexus. To address such insecurity, the EU seeks not only to counter a 'revisionist' Russia in Eastern Europe, but also to stymie China's geoeconomic influence in the Indo-Pacific, which is the source of Beijing's comprehensive power. Whereas India does not wield the sort of economic leverage over Indo-Pacific countries that China does, New Delhi's geopolitical influence in Global South is clearly a currency of power that is valuable for Europe. This is also a major opportunity for India—which has lately shunned China's *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI) to preserve its national interests⁴⁰—and thus, would welcome the partnership with the EU on its alternative connectivity initiatives such as the *Global Gateway* strategy.⁴¹

To displace China's regional influence, the EU also seeks a role in the Indian Ocean and ASEAN-centric Indo-Pacific multilateral institutions ranging from the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). The EU is already invested in the *Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation* (BIMSTEC) through its *Global Gateway* projects in Bangladesh and Nepal. Such plurilateralism involving the EU could be helpful for Indo-Pacific maritime security, and therefore, India could facilitate this. However, such role at the political level would need to involve the EU's functional cooperation through the *Western Pacific Naval Symposium* (WPNS) and the *Indian Ocean Naval Symposium* (IONS). However, the EU's entry into these functional level forums may not be easy. EUNAVFOR's entry into the WPNS is likely to be objected by China. Likewise, the Iranians may stall EU's participation in the IONS.

Countering China's Regional Aggressiveness

Unlike for India, China does not pose "an existential threat to Europe", as European have been saying.⁴² Nonetheless, the lessons of Ukraine War—wherein the Black Sea naval attacks have led to severe global food supply bottlenecks—is instructive. A maritime conflict initiated by China in the Indo-Pacific will seriously impact EU's commerce—

especially energy imports across the Indian Ocean—and even its data communications through the 77 submarine cable systems in the Indian Ocean, that constitute 20 percent of the world’s cables. Whereas the EU may realise the gravity of the potential threat, it is ill-prepared for military-to-military cooperation with India to deter China and respond to a regional maritime conflict initiated by Beijing. The likely reason is that its limited naval capacity is too overstretched for Indo-Pacific deployment, as examined earlier. Three days after Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stood in the *Reichstag* (German Parliament) to announce the biggest rearmament program for his country since the end of the Cold War.⁴³ This indicates how the ‘sleeping sentinels of Europe’ were caught off-guard. However, EU’s naval capacity constraint comes at the cost of developing operational compatibility with India for undertaking coordinated (or even joint) military missions such as for interdicting China’s Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) and Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) against Chinese nuclear attack submarines. It is inconceivable that Europe will be able to develop functional interoperability and capabilities as soon a threat from China manifests. In such a scenario, will the EU look to India to do the ‘heavy lifting’?

Conclusion

The universal idea of geopolitics conceived by ancient India’s well-known strategist Chankya many millennia ago (as mentioned in the beginning of this paper) was reiterated by the British statesman and Prime Minister Lord Palmerston in 1848, who said,

“We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.”⁴⁴

The same holds true in present-day geopolitics. The congruence of interests between India and Europe in the Indo-Pacific region is undeniably robust in the domain of geo-economics including sea-borne trade and maritime connectivity that seek to achieve common objectives not only of global and regional prosperity in broader terms, but also more specifically to offer better alternatives to the regional counties vis-à-vis those being offered by China. There also exist broader geostrategic convergences between India and the Europe, such as the overlap between the spatial scope of their geo-strategic frontiers, which encompasses their geopolitical interests in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific. Both India and Europe also need ensure a good and benign rules-based order in the regional seas to enable a free and open economic enterprise.

However, many specific divergences of interests, policies and perceptions co-exist, which represent challenges to India-EU maritime security cooperation. The variations of specific geopolitical interests and the means to preserve, protect and promote these interests constitute the detail, wherein lies many a devil. It may be easy to gloss over many of the functional divergences, but to ensure that India-EU maritime security collaboration is sustainable, these challenges need to be factored and addressed, if feasible, to say the least.

Besides the fundamental divergences on the aspect of rules-based maritime order, the most notable among these divergences is how to deal with China's rise. After having taken many years to realize the intent behind its China's BRI and its more recent charm offensives, the Europeans seem to be seeking comfort in a 'course correction' in the domains of geo-economics and non-traditional maritime security. However, alike the Chinese and the Americans, they are unable to look beyond the 'visible horizon of time' to fathom the adverse implications of the manifestation of a revisionist China's politico-military power in the Indo-Pacific; and eventually, into the Euro-Atlantic theatre. Hence, whilst India and EU may seek maritime security partnership for both to attain their respective short-term objectives, they must also look beyond the 'visible horizon', and coordinate their preparations.

Notes

- 1 Sanskrit *Shloka* (verse) composed by Chanakya (Kautilya) in Ancient Indian treatise on statecraft called *Arthashastra* during the reign of the first Maurya king, Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 BCE)
- 2 Gurpreet S Khurana, "Where from... Whither to: Trends and Tribulations of the Indo-Pacific Concept", *The Indo-Pacific Geopolitical OBSERVATORY*, IRIS (Paris, France), No. 5, October 2023. https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ObsIndoPac_note_5.pdf
- 3 "EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025", *European Union External Action* (Official website of the European Union), July 15, 2020. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-india_strategic_partnership_a_roadmap_to_2025_0.pdf
- 4 "Europe Has to Grow Out of Mindset That Its Problems Are World's Problems": Jaishankar", *The Wire*, 3 June, 2022. <https://thewire.in/government/europe-has-to-grow-out-of-mindset-that-its-problems-are-worlds-problems-jaishankar>
- 5 A 'geostrategic frontier' refers to a state's (or political entity's) areas of interest that lie beyond its sovereign territory, wherein it must be able to preserve its vital interests by employing the various forms of national power.
- 6 EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific - Council conclusions, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 16 April 2021. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7914-2021-INIT/en/pdf>
- 7 "*Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*", Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2, Indian Navy, October 2015, p.22. https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Maritime_Security_Strategy_Document_25Jan16.pdf
- 8 Indo-Pacific Observatory website, Sciences Po/ Centre de Recherches Internationales (CERI), <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cei/observatory-indo-pacific/eu/>
- 9 "Indian Navy carries out maiden operation as CMF member, seizes 940 kg drugs in Arabian Sea", *The Print*, 16 April 2024. <https://theprint.in/defence/indian-navy-carries-out-maiden-operation-as-cmf-member-seizes-940-kg-drugs-in-arabian-sea/2043900/>
- 10 Frédéric Grare and Manisha Reuter, "The Battle for the Indian Ocean: How the EU and India can strengthen maritime security", European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), 03 August 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-battle-for-the-indian-ocean-how-the-eu-and-india-can-strengthen-maritime-security/>

- 11 “EUNAVFOR Operation ASPIDES”, Official website of the European Union. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eunavfor-aspides_en?s=410381
- 12 I Indo-Pacific Observatory website, Sciences Po/ Centre de Recherches Internationale (CERI), <https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/observatory-indo-pacific/eu/>
- 13 The Newport Manual is an updated restatement of law, authored by legal experts from the Quad countries comprising Australia, India Japan and the U.S., besides the U.K. and Germany, with experts from many other European and Asian navies being the peer reviewers. James Kraska et al. *Newport Manual on the Law of Naval Warfare* (International Law Studies, Vol 101, 2023), Stockton Center for International Law, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3047&context=ils>
- 14 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>
- 15 “UK interior minister Braverman questions role of UN refugee convention”, *Le Monde*, September 27, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/09/27/uk-interior-minister-braverman-questions-role-of-un-refugee-convention_6140344_4.html
- 16 PCA Press Release: The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of the Philippines v. The People’s Republic of China)”, Permanent Court of Arbitration, 12 July 2016. <https://pca-cpa.org/en/news/pca-press-release-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-the-republic-of-the-philippines-v-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>
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