



India's Maritime Strategy: Context and Subtext

Gurpreet S. Khurana

ABSTRACT

In the coming years, India's maritime-military power is likely to play an increasingly crucial role in shaping the geo-political, economic and security environment in the maritime-configured Indo-Pacific region. This paper aims to analyse India's maritime security strategy promulgated by the Indian Navy in October 2015. The analysis goes beyond the text of the document, to provide a more profound understanding of four key underpinnings of India's strategy: historical and societal factors, maritime geography, political geography/jurisdiction and the China factor. The analysis begins with examining the salient changes in India's maritime-strategic outlook since its first strategy document was published in 2007.

Introduction

It is well acknowledged that in the coming years, India – albeit as a medium power – would play a crucial role in shaping the geo-political, economic and security environment in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Furthermore, owing to the predominantly maritime configuration of the Indo-Pacific, India's maritime-military power would be the key enabler for such a role. As expected, therefore, the new strategy document promulgated by the Indian Navy in October 2015 – titled *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy* – received much attention among policymakers, analysts and academicians worldwide. This strategy superseded the Indian Navy strategy document of 2007 titled *Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy*.

The text of the Indian Maritime Security Strategy 2015 (Strategy-2015) is comprehensive, lucid and revealing. Nonetheless, for a more holistic understanding of what the Indian Navy aspires to do and how, the reader needs to comprehend the context and subtext of the document. The provisions of the 2007 Maritime Strategy Document (Strategy-2007) are the fundamental context examined in this paper. They enable the reader to understand the salient changes in the new document, and what developments over the past decade have led to these changes. Furthermore, the paper is an attempt to extrapolate Strategy-2015 beyond its text to understand the following key underpinnings of India's maritime-military strategy, as follows:

- Historical and societal factors;
- Maritime geography;
- Political geography/jurisdiction;
- The China factor.

The paper was written primarily for the policymakers in the United States, for better understanding of the Indian maritime-strategic thought. Nonetheless, such comprehension is equally relevant for other major powers/countries that seek to cooperate with India to satiate common strategic objectives.

2007 Maritime Strategy Document

Title of Document

Strategy-2007 was titled *Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy*. However, Strategy-2015 is named *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*. This represents a transformational change in strategy. It was brought about by the new threat to India from the sea, posed by Pakistan-based proxy war through terrorism. Following the Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008, the Indian Navy was entrusted with the additional responsibility for overall maritime security, including coastal and offshore security. The new phrase "Secure Seas" is more closely associated with security of the littoral. Furthermore, the objective of "Freedom to Use the Seas" is not compromised in the new document.

Areas of Maritime Interest

As compared to Strategy-2007, Strategy-2015 indicates a significant dilation of India's Areas of Maritime Interest, both westwards and eastwards (see [Figure 1](#) below). While the darker shade represents the new Primary Area, the lighter shade shows the new Secondary Area. In Strategy-2007, the areas marked "X" were not included in areas of interest at all, whereas the areas marked "S" were Secondary Areas, which are now Primary Areas.

The expansion of areas is in tandem with its maritime and overseas interests, and strategic factors. Effectively, these are "geo-strategic frontiers", though none of the strategy



Fig. 1. Areas of Maritime Interest: 2015 Strategy¹

documents has ever articulated this concept. The strategic rationale will become clearer in the ensuing parts of this paper.

Concept of “Net Security Provider”

This phrase “Net Security Provider” was first used for India in 2009 by the United States’ administration. It began to be used increasingly among policymakers and analysts, particularly in India, thereby indicating New Delhi’s acceptance of such a role. The elaborate explanation of the concept of “Net Security Provider” in Strategy-2015 serves as a rather formal endorsement that India seeks to play an active role in regional security and stability.

However, balancing this role with the new responsibility of coastal and offshore security would be a major challenge. Furthermore, the new maritime strategy has explained the concept in the manner best suited to India’s national interest. It implicitly assigns India the regional role of a “provider of net security” rather than a “net provider of security”. The rationale is related to the context of “historical and societal factors”, which are examined in the following part of this paper.

Traditional Military Threats

Strategy-2015 says that “There has been no reduction in the potential threat from traditional sources...”.² In the past decade (since the promulgation of Strategy-2007), China has established a firm strategic presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This is evidenced by it obtaining deep seabed exploration rights in the south-west Indian Ocean (July 2011)³ and various People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy deployments ranging from its anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden (since December 2008) to its submarine visits at Colombo and Karachi.

Unlike Strategy-2007, however, Strategy-2015 refrains from naming China or any other country as a military threat; but it does say that “The likely sources of traditional threat would be from states with a history of aggression against India, and those with continuing disputes or maintaining adversarial postures to India’s national interests”.⁴ The reference to Pakistan and China is clear; furthermore, the two countries meet each of the three criteria.

International/ Maritime Law and Norms

As compared to Strategy-2007, Strategy-2015 lays specific emphasis on upholding and reinforcing international law, norms and regimes, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).⁵ Evidently, China’s increased politico-military assertiveness in the South China Sea since 2009⁶ with regard to its maritime claims was in the minds of the drafters of the new strategy.

Notably, since around 2011, the Indian Navy (IN) had begun devoting much attention to the knowledge of maritime law among its officers. This led to the promulgation in 2013 of the Indian Navy’s first-ever comprehensive *Handbook on the Law of Maritime Operations*, in three volumes.

Capability Development

Strategy-2015 carries much elaboration on the rationale of the submarine-based nuclear deterrence and its centrality in a comprehensive implementation of India's nuclear doctrine, particularly in terms of "survivability" and the ability to counter "nuclear posturing" by the adversary. This flows from a notable development in the past decade in terms of the induction of the INS *Arihant* ballistic-missile nuclear submarine (SSBN). Barely a month after Strategy-2015 was released, the SSBN successfully test-launched a K-15/B-5 missile,⁷ and 3 months later in February 2016, it assumed operational status.⁸

At the level of conventional naval capabilities, Strategy-2015 indicates a renewed emphasis on maritime domain awareness (MDA) and network-centric operations (NCO), besides anti-submarine warfare (ASW). There is also a palpable thrust on indigenisation as a follow-up of the national priority of "Make in India" enunciated by the new government led by Prime Minister Modi.

Historical and Societal Factors

In his seminal work "The Clash of Civilizations"⁹, Samuel Huntington aptly says that in the post-Cold War world of today, international relations will be driven not by ideological, political or economic distinctions among nations, but by differences in cultural identity. Hence, an understanding of the "historical and societal factors" embedded in India's civilisational ethos are germane to the quest of any major power to strengthen its strategic relations with India.

Mantra of "Ahimsa"

The thinking of Indians is greatly influenced by the mantra of "Ahimsa" (peace). The word is of Sanskrit origin, meaning "not to injure" or "compassion", which forms the cornerstone of India's civilisational ethos. The psyche among Indians flows much from the Hindu mythological tales like the "Mahabharata" wherein Lord Krishna prods the Pandavas to resort to arms against their cousins Kauravas as a karma (sacred duty) only when it becomes an inescapable option. India also takes immense pride in being the birthplace of Buddha.

This popular thought forms the basis for any government policy articulation at the national level, and drives it to preserve the status quo in the global and regional order. India's conscious adherence to established global norms is an offshoot of this approach. This is exemplified by the contrast in India's and China's approaches to accepting the judgement of the International Arbitration Tribunal on their maritime disputes with Bangladesh and the Philippines, respectively. Referring to India's acceptance of the Tribunal's verdict, Strategy-2015 says, "Resolution of jurisdiction promotes peace, by reduction of the scope for disputes, and facilitates maritime governance, investments in maritime economic activities, legitimate use of the seas, and cooperation for maritime security".¹⁰

The mantra of "Ahimsa" also drives India's reluctance to seek hegemony in its neighbourhood. By defining the concept of "net security", Strategy-2015 implicitly – but effectively – says that India would rather be a "provider of net security" than a "net provider of security" in the region. The rationale is to avoid the perception of India being perceived as

seeking the role of a regional “policeman” or a regional “hegemon”. For Indians, it is important to shape such a perception that mirrors their societal ethos.

Influence of Recent History

Due to events related to their more recent history when India was under colonial rule, Indians have developed a sense of sensitivity to subjugation in any form. Notwithstanding the fact that the British gave much to India, including its state institutions, and even facilitated its political unification, the scars of a subjugated society are still alive, not only in the elders today who were born before 1947, but also among the next generation who are familiar with the tales narrated by their parents. (This is not the same as the top-down “century of humiliation”¹¹ that has been coined by the Chinese political elite to mobilise opinion.)

After 1947, India supported the then-Third World countries in their freedom struggle, many of whom were then colonies under western powers, all of whom were major naval powers as well. Naturally, this led to a sort of apathy towards the West during the Cold War, and more specifically the divide witnessed during UNCLOS negotiations, and India’s support to the 1971 United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution on the Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace. India also chose not to align itself militarily with either the Western or Eastern blocs.

Today, New Delhi’s erstwhile stance has undergone a major transformation. Due to the vastly altered geo-strategic environment and India’s own national-strategic imperatives, its strategic interests now converge with those of most major powers. Nonetheless, the bedrock of India’s foreign policy and national strategy formulation remains the sensitivity of history and its continued adherence to the underlying spirit of “non-alignment”.

This manifests in India’s continued sensitivity to “joint” operations, which involves combined command and control (C²), under a foreign flag. The only exception is the conduct of such operations under the flag of the UN.¹² The sensitivity to “joint” operations was also reflected on the recent occasion when India’s Defence Minister Parrikar negated the recent proposal made by Admiral Harry Harris (Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Command) during the Raisina Dialogue held in Delhi in March 2016,¹³ saying “India has never taken part in any joint patrol; we only do joint exercises. The question of joint patrol does not arise”.¹⁴

Military and Maritime Culture

India’s characteristic military culture is closely related to its reverence for the concept of “Ahimsa” (mentioned earlier). In the process of its evolution as a modern state, India’s defence forces became well developed – much from British military traditions and professionalism – and also assimilated battle indoctrination over the decades since independence. However, for certain reasons (which are the subject of study in themselves), military culture did not develop at a national level in tandem with state institutions. As a result, the average political leadership is unfamiliar with military concepts and doctrines, or at least not as familiar as their western counterparts are, many of whom have actually served in the military and even fought wars.

With certain exceptions, an average Indian citizen, bureaucrat or media person is also unfamiliar with “matters maritime” and the related nuances of international law.

(The reason why this has occurred despite India's rich maritime heritage in various periods in history is, again, the subject of dedicated study). This void is aptly exemplified by an event of 2002, when the Indian Navy escorted US high-value ships through the Malacca Straits while the US naval forces were tied down in Afghanistan. The mission, called Operation "Sagittarius", was incorrectly reported in India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) website as "combined naval patrols",¹⁵ which led to concerns in Malaysia. The term "patrol" is not legally tenable since the Straits enclose the Territorial Seas of the adjoining countries. Later, the media clarified that it was merely an escort mission,¹⁶ which is in conformity with international law.

At the Raisina Dialogue of March 2016 (mentioned above), the proposal of US Admiral Harry Harris – initially negated by the Indian Defence Minister – does not seem to be misplaced. He possibly meant that the IN and the US Navy should go beyond bilateral "Malabar" exercises, and conduct "coordinated operations",¹⁷ with each side retaining its respective C². But he was not clear to the Indians, who understood it as "joint operations" under the US flag. A few months later, in July 2016, the Indian Defence Minister clarified, saying that India has always been willing to undertake "coordinated patrols".¹⁸

Unlike other countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom that are major maritime powers, India's maritime strategy documents have never been signed by the government functionaries. That is not to say that such documents are not in consonance with government policy or are not approved by the government. Strategy-2015 in particular flows from the new government's national-strategic priorities of "Act East" and "Make in India", furthers Prime Minister Modi's vision of "Sagar" (Security and Growth for All in the Region), and was released by the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar himself.¹⁹ But an endorsement through signature necessitates a more thorough comprehension of the document in hand.

Maritime Geography

Strategy-2015 talks about India's favourable maritime geography. It says,

*India's central position in the IOR, astride the main International Shipping Lanes (ISLs), accords distinct advantages. It places the outer fringes of the IOR and most choke points almost equidistant from India, thereby facilitating reach, sustenance and mobility of its maritime forces across the region. India is, therefore, well positioned to influence the maritime space, and promote and safeguard its national maritime interests, across the IOR ...*²⁰

Added to it are other attributes like a vast coastline and maritime zones, and the vast spread and scatter of its island territories. Few other countries have such a favourable maritime geography in a combination of various factors such as geo-strategic location, disposition and spatial scatter, length of coastline and coast-to-land ratio; and among those countries, nearly all have traditionally been major maritime powers. However, for India, this natural dividend comes along with two major challenges.

Challenge #1: Enhanced Insecurities

Given the regional security environment, India's maritime geography comes with an enhanced vulnerability to both traditional and non-traditional security threats. Although

Strategy-2015 does not explicitly state this aspect, it does mention the plethora of relevant threats.

Among the more conspicuous ones is that posed by private maritime security companies (PMSC).²¹ The piracy off Somalia threatened all regional and extra-regional stakeholders including India, but when it subsided, it left behind for India the new threat in the form of PMSCs and “floating armouries” that ply in the key ISLs criss-crossing south of peninsular India, causing India even more insecurity than piracy.

One of the more conspicuous traditional military threats is posed by the forays of Chinese submarines into the northern Indian Ocean. While the conventional submarines began visiting IOR ports in September 2014, the nuclear attack submarines (SSNs) were first deployed even earlier, in December 2013.²² The SSNs with land-attack capability cause immense insecurity for India’s critical littoral infrastructure and assets.

The enhanced vulnerability due to maritime geography requires commensurate resources and investment in terms of maritime-military capacity. However, the investment to generate capacities of such scale is very difficult for developing country like India, particularly when it is bound by its societal ethos and principles not to enter into military alliances.

Challenge #2: Diminutive Role in Western Pacific

India has vital interests in the Western Pacific and its contiguous seas. About 30% of India’s sea trade moves east of the Malacca Straits. However, there are major constraints for India to shape security in the area. The extended logistic lines and choke-points together pose a substantial hindrance for the IN to undertake missions across the spectrum of conflict.

Of course, the Indian Navy is not totally powerless to influence events in the area, and is already playing a useful role as an instrument of India’s foreign policy in tandem with various other tools of state power. Besides, the navy can play an important indirect role as well. It is important to note that what happens in the Indian Ocean may have a major bearing on the strategy of the Western Pacific (WP) littorals, many of whom are critically dependent on the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) of the Indian Ocean. Given this, the Indian Navy could effectively deter adversaries and help friends.

Be that as it may, maritime geography dictates that it is only in the Indian Ocean that the Indian Navy would be able to assert itself directly in all circumstances across the entire spectrum of conflict.

Political Geography/Jurisdiction

Political geography and jurisdiction impact significantly on India’s maritime strategy in its western maritime theatre, viz. the western Indian Ocean. India has critical interests in the area in terms of the large Indian Diaspora in the sub-region and its energy security. However, the IN is constrained in influencing events in the area, which largely flows from two factors related to “political geography”. The first is India’s differences with Pakistan, and its vain efforts to isolate India in West Asia/the Middle East. India has successfully mitigated its effect through proactive engagement with the sub-regional countries, and even successfully persuaded Pakistan to actively participate in its Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) initiative.

However, it would be harder for India alone to overcome the second factor – the jurisdiction barrier that coincides with the longitude passing the Iran-Pakistan border, and represents the westward extent of the area of responsibility (AOR) of the US Pacific Command (PACOM), under which India falls. As a result, any operational coordination between the IN and the Bahrain-based US Central Command (CENTCOM) needs to be routed through PACOM headquarters at Hawaii. Further, the East African littoral falls under the US AFRICOM, which has no pre-assigned naval assets but draws its forces from the US Mediterranean Fleet as and when required.

Strategy-2015 says that for shaping a secure and stable maritime environment, it is necessary in peacetime for the Indian Navy to “enhance cooperation, mutual understanding and interoperability with maritime forces of friendly countries ... across all doctrinal roles (viz. military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign)”.²³ Direct coordination between IN’s Western Naval Command (WNC) and US CENTCOM in the western IOR could have enabled quicker response to adverse contingencies relating to maritime safety and security, which range from piracy and terrorism to natural disasters and evacuation of civilians due to local instabilities. Furthermore, the present circumstances lead to operational complexities for both Indian and US naval forces, which could even lead to “blue-on-blue” engagements during war.

The North-South barrier in India’s western maritime theatre due to the jurisdiction constraint of the US, therefore, becomes a “virtual chokepoint” for the IN. Combined with the IN’s restricted direct role beyond the Southeast Asian choke-points (a constraint of “maritime geography” mentioned earlier in this paper), this leads to a triangle (see Figure 2). This triangle represents merely one-third of the entire Indo-Pacific region wherein India can seek a standing partnership with the US Navy.

It is also noteworthy, however, that the relations between India and the countries of West Asia and East Africa have traditional roots, at much variance with their relations with the US. Hence, it may be in the larger interest of both India and the US if India forges its own strategic and security equations with the littoral countries, rather than

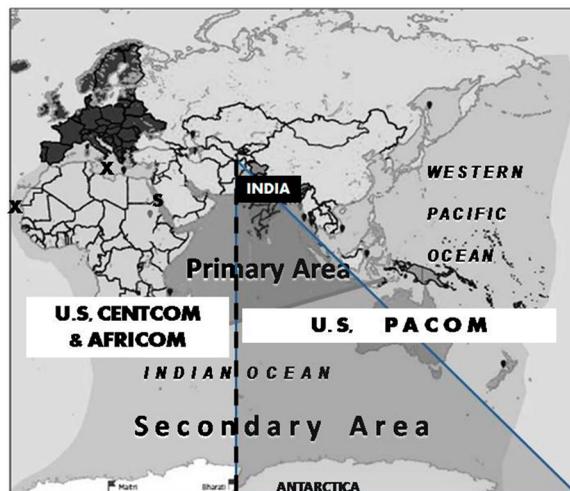


Fig. 2. Constraint of Political Geography/Jurisdiction.

being involved in US-led maritime security operations. India would also prefer to avoid an interface with Pakistan, whose navy is involved in these operations.

A prudent conciliatory balance would need to be struck between the two aforesaid contradictory facets, perhaps by instituting a mechanism of coordination between India's Mumbai-based WNC and the US CENTCOM. The mechanism may be useful for sharing strategic assessments, and conduct of coordinated operations on a case-to-case basis; and yet may afford adequate freedom of action to India to shape events in a manner that preserves the interests of both.

China Factor

Twin-track National Strategy

It is amply clear that India-China relations bear an adversarial character, beyond merely being a competitive one. However, as mentioned earlier, Strategy-2015 reflects a conspicuous self-restraint to allude to the "China threat". The likely rationale flows from India's broader national-strategy vis-à-vis China as its immediate neighbour, with which it shares a longer – albeit disputed – land border than any other neighbour. The national strategy is based on a two-pronged approach involving "engagement" concurrently with "deterrence" and "military preparedness" for the worst-case contingencies. "Engagement" with China in the "military" and "maritime" spheres is exemplified by combined defence exercises, IN-PLA Navy coordination during anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden²⁴ and the inaugural India-China Maritime Affairs Dialogue held in February 2016.²⁵ In the light of such a policy approach, any negative reference to China in a "public" document like Strategy-2015 would not be constructive.

Option of "Horizontal" Escalation

Given China's national objective of territorial consolidation and the attendant politico-military assertiveness against its neighbours, the Indian security establishment is well aware that the unresolved India-China land border – and related territorial dispute – bears the potential to flare up into an armed conflict. China enjoys decisive military superiority across the land frontier. Therefore, in the case of war, China would have a decisive advantage in terms of escalation-dominance. However, through its ability for sea control in the Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy could resort to "horizontal escalation" to the sea. China's strategic vulnerability in the Indian Ocean on account of its high dependence for its energy on SLOCs could be exploited by India – at least through symbolism by China "losing face" rather than by denial of a strategic commodity for sustaining the war effort – to blunt any Chinese land offensive.

In fact, when the Indian government was contemplating measures to reinforce deterrence across the India-China border, an eminent Indian strategist went to the extent of advising that rather than investing in raising a new Mountain Strike Corps in India's north-east, it would be more prudent and cost effective to invest in the Indian Navy's capabilities to interdict China's SLOCs, which, "tomorrow ... will be the Chinese Jugular".²⁶

Reflecting the essence of this strategy, Strategy-2015 dwells much upon SLOC interdiction.²⁷ While one cannot expect the document to specify the likely adversary, the

expansion of India's area of maritime interest is instructive in this regard. The secondary area now includes the West African littoral, which is the source of a major proportion of China's crude oil imports.

Challenges for the Navy

However, recent developments seem to have complicated India's strategic calculus. The first is the PLA Navy's submarine deployments in the Indian Ocean. This development was anticipated nearly a decade ago. It was assessed that China would not be able to establish sea control in the Indian Ocean for a few decades, and thus would deploy submarines instead for sea-denial and deterrence.²⁸ At that time, a Chinese analyst referred to it as China's "punishment strategy".²⁹ Notably, the deployment of Chinese SSNs in the Indian Ocean also threatens India's submarine-based nuclear-weapon bastion. This impinges upon the survivability of its nuclear deterrence, and thus seriously impacts the effectiveness of India's nuclear doctrine.

The second development is the PLA Navy's enhanced capability for logistic sustenance. China is developing a naval access facility at Djibouti.³⁰ It is also likely to develop a full-fledged naval base at Gwadar. According to a Chinese analyst,

*Pakistan has made Gwadar available (to China) as a naval logistical base, but Beijing so far has not accepted the offer for diplomatic reasons. Now with (China's President) Xi's One Belt, One Road policy in full swing, it is just a matter of time before the PLAN (PLA Navy) opts to turn the port into a foothold in the Indian Ocean.*³¹

Overcoming the Challenges

These developments dilute the effectiveness of the IN's SLOC-interdiction plans articulated in Strategy-2015. India could, however, maintain the relevance of this strategy through strategic situational awareness and MDA.³² It would include presence through forward deployment of naval forces, particularly for undertaking surveillance missions, and attainment of sub-surface MDA in select areas, particularly in the choke-points that provide the PLA Navy access into the Indian Ocean. Notably, in the new strategy, the eastward extension of India's primary area of maritime interest stretches to the far-eastern choke-points of the Ombai-Wetar Straits, which may be the most likely routes to be used by the Chinese nuclear submarines to enter into the Indian Ocean.

Future Options

Even if the Indian Navy succeeds in retaining the relevance of the existing SLOC-interdiction strategy, it may be prudent for it to explore future options. One among these is submarine-based "force projection" in the Western Pacific. Notably, unlike its predecessor, Strategy-2015 dwells much upon "maritime strike" as a component of "force projection". It states that

*the Indian Navy will employ maritime strike to project accurate combat force onto a maritime or strategic target, at sea or ashore ... (covering) ... the range of combat strikes at sea ... with weapons launched from aerial, seaborne, underwater and shore platforms.*³³

It seems that the construction of six indigenous SSNs for the Indian Navy approved by the Indian government in February 2015³⁴ is meant to develop the capacity to

undertake maritime strikes in the distant Chinese littoral using these stealthy underwater platforms.

Conclusion

India's maritime-strategic environment and conditions differ substantially from those of the major maritime powers in the West. Unlike for the West, India's concept of "maritime security" includes traditional military threats. To ensure maritime security, India does not enjoy the luxury of entering into military alliances. While this is advantageous to the extent that it enables New Delhi to make strategic choices that best serve its interests, it involves onerous costs that India will need to continue to shoulder.

While India enjoys a geo-strategic location and disposition in the Indian Ocean, geography also makes India more vulnerable and imposes constraints upon the Indian Navy's ability to influence events in the entire spatial swath where India's maritime interests lie. Even in the primary areas of its interest in Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy would encounter a major challenge to perform the role of a regional "net security" provider, and concurrently seal its coastline against terrorism; and thus find the right balance between its "blue-water" and "brown-water" responsibilities.

The answer to the aforesaid dilemmas lie not only in prudent development of appropriate capacities and partnership with major powers, but also in addressing the void in terms of maritime consciousness and the awareness of the nuances of international law.

Notes

1. *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, Indian Navy, Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2, Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), October 2015, pp. 34–35; and *Freedom to use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy*, Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), May 2007, pp. 59–60.
2. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 6.
3. Pradip R. Sagar, "China Mines Troubles for India," *DNA*, September 10, 2011, http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_china-mines-troubles-for-india_1585438 (accessed July 30 2016); and Ananth Krishnan, "China Signs Contract for Indian Ocean Mining Rights," *The Hindu*, November 19, 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2640040.ece> (accessed July 30 2016.)
4. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 37.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 6 and 24.
6. The USNS *Impeccable* incident of March 2009 and the May 2009 joint submission by Malaysia and Vietnam to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) are believed to be the triggers of China's assertiveness in recent years. See Sam Bateman, "The South China Sea: When the Elephants Dance," RSIS Commentary 91/2010, August 16, 2010, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CO10091.pdf> (accessed July 30 2016.)
7. Gulshan Luthra, "Nuclear Capable Arihant Submarine Successfully Test Fires Unarmed Missile," *The Economic Times*, November 26, 2015, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/nuclear-capable-arihant-submarine-successfully-test-fires-unarmed-missile/articleshow/49935508.cms> (accessed July 30 2016.)
8. Manu Pubby, "India's First Nuclear Submarine INS Arihant Ready for Operations, Passes Deep Sea Tests," *The Economic Times*, February 23, 2016, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indias-first-nuclear-submarine-ins-arihant-ready-for-operations-passes-deep-sea-tests/articleshow/51098650.cms> (accessed March 14 2016.)

9. Samuel Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Penguin Books, New Delhi: 1997), pp.19–39.
10. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 22.
11. Alison Adcock Kaufman, “The ‘Century of Humiliation’, Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order,” *Pacific Focus*, 25, no. 1 (April 2010): 1–33.
12. Joint operations are unlike Coordinated Ops, which the Indian Navy does engage in with many other navies, wherein the participating navies retain their respective chain of command. See “India Not Even Discussing Joint Patrol in South China sea with US,” *Sputnik News*, July 26, 2016, <http://sputniknews.com/asia/20160726/1043638482/india-south-china-sea-patrol-us.html> (accessed February 23 2016.)
13. Dinkar Pheri, “US Push for Joint Patrols in Indo-Pacific Region,” *The Hindu*, March 3, 2016, <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/us-push-for-joint-patrols-in-indopacific-region/article8306481.ece> (accessed February 23 2016.)
14. Sushant Singh and Pranav Kulkarni, “Question of Joint Patrolling with the US Does Not Arise: Parrikar,” *Indian Express*, March 5, 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/question-of-joint-patrolling-with-the-us-does-not-arise-need-to-cut-the-flab-from-the-military-parrikar/> (accessed July 30 2016.). Also see Gurpreet S. Khurana, “America’s Expectation versus India’s Expediency: India as a Regional Net Security Provider,” *NMF Issue Brief*, April 4, 2016, <http://maritimeindia.org/View%20Profile/635953258220603147.pdf> (accessed July 30 2016.)
15. Joint Statement of India–US Defence Policy Group, Ministry of Defence (Government of India) Press Release, May 24, 2002, <http://pib.nic.in/archieve/lreleng/lyr2002/rmay2002/24052002/r240520025.html> (accessed September 23 2002.)
16. Amit Baruah, “Only ‘Escort Duties’ in Malacca Straits,” *The Hindu*, April 23, 2002, <http://www.thehindu.com/2002/04/23/stories/2002042302911100.htm>. (accessed April 9 2017.) The Ministry of External Affairs press release was later removed from its website.
17. Pheri, “US Push for Joint Patrols in Indo-Pacific Region.”
18. “No Joint Patrols with Foreign Navies for India: Manohar Parrikar,” *Business Standard*, July 26, 2016, http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/no-joint-patrols-with-foreign-navies-for-india-manohar-parrikar-116072601087_1.html (accessed July 30 2016.)
19. “RM Releases Indian Maritime Security Strategy-2015,” Indian Navy press release, October 26, 2015, <http://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/rm-releases-indian-maritime-security-strategy-2015> (accessed July 30 2016.)
20. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 17.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
22. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2015*, Annual Report to Congress, Office of the US Secretary of Defense, April 2015, p. 19, http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015_China_Military_Power_Report.pdf (accessed July 30 2016.)
23. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 11.
24. “Indian and Chinese Navies Coordinating in the Maritime Domain: Navy Chief Dhowan,” *First Post*, April 18, 2016, <http://www.firstpost.com/india/indian-and-chinese-navies-coordinating-in-the-maritime-domain-navy-chief-dhowan-2735182.html> (accessed July 30 2016.)
25. “Inaugural India–China Maritime Affairs Dialogue,” Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India) Press release, February 4, 2016, <http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26317/Inaugural+IndiaChina+Maritime+Affairs+Dialogue> (accessed July 30 2016.)
26. Raja Menon, “A Mountain Strike Corps Is Not the Only Option,” *The Hindu*, July 29, 2013, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-mountain-strike-corps-is-not-the-only-option/article4963979.ece> (accessed April 9 2017.)
27. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, p. 70.
28. Gurpreet S. Khurana, “China’s ‘String of Pearls’ in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications,” *Strategic Analysis*, 32, no. 1 (2008), p. 3, https://www.academia.edu/7727023/Chinas_String_of_Pearls_in_the_Indian_Ocean_and_Its_Security_Implications (accessed July 30 2016.)

29. Ibid., p. 18.
30. Ministry of National Defense (MND), People's Republic of China (PRC) Press Briefing, February 25, 2016, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2016-02/25/content_4644801.htm (accessed July 30 2016.)
31. You Ji, "China's Emerging Indo-Pacific Naval Strategy," *Asia Policy*, 22 (July 2016), The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), Washington, p. 19, http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/free/AP22/AsiaPolicy22_IndiaChinaAtSeaRT_July2016.pdf (accessed July 30 2016.)
32. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, pp. 54–55.
33. Ibid., p. 69.
34. Rajat Pandit, "Govt Approves Construction of 7 Stealth Frigates, 6 Nuclear-Powered Submarines," *Times of India*, February 18, 2015, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-approves-construction-of-7-stealth-frigates-6-nuclear-powered-submarines/articleshow/46281364.cms> (accessed February 21 2015.)

Notes on Contributor

Captain (Dr) Gurpreet S. Khurana, Indian Navy, is Executive Director at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi. The views expressed are his own and do not reflect the official policy or position of the NMF, the Indian Navy, or the Government of India. He can be reached at gurpreet.bulbul@gmail.com