American Maritime Strategy in the Indian Ocean in the Post-Cold War Era, 1990-2012

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "**American Maritime Strategy in the Indian Ocean in Post-Cold War Era, 1990-2012**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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FOR WORLD PEACE....

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Abbreviations

AFP	Afloat Prepositioning Force
AMC	Air Mobility Command
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASW	Anti-submarine Warfare
BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
CCI	Counter Terrorism Initiative
CDI	Cooperative Defense Initiative
CGPCS	Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia
CMF	Combined Maritime Forces
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CTF	Carrier Task Force/Combined Task Force
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CJTF	Contingency Joint Task Force
CMCP	Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan
COMUSNAVCENT	US Naval Forces, Central Command
CSI	Container Security Initiative
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Destruction
ESG	Expeditionary Strike Group/ Executive Steering Groups
ETG-150	Escort Task Group 150
EU NAVFOR	European Union Naval Force Somalia

GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GMCC	Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center
GWoT	Global War on Terrorism
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
IDS	Integrated Defence Staff
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IRTC	Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor
ISPS	International Ship and Port Facility Security
JEI	JOINT EXERCISE INDIA
LEDET	Law Enforcement Detachments
MARCOS	Indian Maritime Commandos
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
US PACOM	US Pacific Command
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PD	Presidential Directive
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MIDEASTFOR	US Middle East Force
MOTR	Maritime Operational Threat Response
MPA	Maritime Patrol Aircraft
MPS	Maritime Prepositioning Ships
MSC	Military Sealift Command
MSCO	Military Sealift Command Office
MSF	Military Support Facility
MSO	Maritime Security Operations
MSPA	Maritime Security Patrol Area

MTMA	Military Training Mission Agreement
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSF	Naval Support Facility
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMCB	Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
NSC	National Security Council
NSMS	National Strategy for Maritime Security
NSSM	National Security Study Memoranda
NTPF	Near-Term Pre-Positioned Force
OEC	OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
OEF	OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM
OIF	OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
PRM	Presidential Review Memorandum
PCASP	Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
PD	Presidential Directives
QDS	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
R2P2	Rapid Response Planning Process
RAPPICC	Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution and Intelligence Coordination Centre
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
RDJTF	Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia
REDCOM	Readiness Command
RMSI	Regional Maritime Security Initiative

SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SHADE	Shared Awareness and De-confliction
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea
SSBN	Ballistic Missile Nuclear Submarine
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
TSC	Theatre Security Cooperation
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USMIDEASTFOR	United States Middle East Force
USREDCOM	US Readiness Command
USSOCOM	US Special Operations Command
USTRANSCOM	US Transportation Command
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Introduction

This study divides the United States' (US) post Cold War maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean into three phases: the first; from immediately after the end of the Cold war until 2001, the second; from September 2001 until 2007 and the third; from 2007 until 2012. Each of these three phases witnessed changing priorities and strategies of the US Navy's evolving involvement in the Indian Ocean. The US Navy's outlook changed in each of these significant junctures of history.

Unlike the popoular notion, the US evinced interests in the Indian Ocean very early during the Cold War. Both Presidencies, the Nixon and the Carter Administrations, mulled on increasing US footprints in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). During much of the Cold War, the Indian Ocean found itself on the US Navy's radar as its ships frequented the Indian Ocean for both power projection and sea control; mostly in an effort to deter the Soviet Union. By 1990, due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drawdown of the US naval resources worldwide, the Indian Ocean stood briefly relegated in the US Navy's scheme of things. Soon in 1991, it found itself reengaged in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91.

Three regional military operations by the US in the post Cold War era; OPERATION DESERT STORM (1991), OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2001) and OPERATIONIRAQIFREEDOM (2003) brought its limitations as well as new strategies to the fore. Especially OPERATION DESERT STORM was crucial in the reassessment of its strategy in the IOR. The limitations of 1991 proved lessons for its later military engagements in the Persian Gulf and the larger Indian Ocean. Sea-lifting emerged as a major naval strategy of the US. The later part of the post Cold War period, especially since the turn of the Century, saw the US Navy cooperate with other navies in the region in forming a collective security architecture for securingtrade and fighting against maritime piracy and terrorism.

The US Navy's engagement in the Indian Ocean continued in the post Cold War with a singular focus on the Persian Gulf area, and occasionally off the east

coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. This geographic pattern in its naval activities largely dominated the US Navy's engagements in the Indian Ocean until September 2001, when the terrorist attacks rattled the US and enforced a reassessment of its military response worldwide including in the Indian Ocean. Like the other military legs, the Navy too retooled its response in line with the Global War on Terror (GwoT). The period that ensued after the policy change in 2001, continued until about 2007, when finally the US maritime policy globally, and more so in the Indian Ocean, made another crucial turn. In the final phase, especially since 2007, the US Navy's policies in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean saw another reassessment in which its strategy was geared to face another great power rivalry; this time from China. China's continued assertive maritime strategy, especially since 2007 in the Indian Ocean, raised concerns among the US strategic circles about the latter's future role in the region. The assertiveness in China's maritime behaviour since 2010 further necessitated newer strategies by the US in Asian waters, including in the Indian Ocean.

Albeit the Indian Ocean is only the third largest ocean, its post Cold War relevance for the US has risen dramatically on the back of unprcedented trade transit, crucial maritime choke points, transnational challenges and emerging strategic competition. The sea routes passing through the Indian Ocean connects the South Asian Region with Africa, West Asia, East Asia and Europe.The IOR is home to more than 50 percent of the world's maritime oil trade with close to 32 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum passing every day through the Strait of Malacca and Strait of Hormuz alone.

The energy needs of the US and its rivalry with the Soviet Union kept it tethered to the Persian Gulf region since the Cold war. However, in the post Cold War era, its needs and concerns in the IOR diversified. Regional instability, sea piracy and terrorism, safety of sea lanes and maritime chokepoints and maintaining regional balance of power have formed the post Cold War rationale for the US' involvement in the Indian Ocean. Safety and security of high seas is a pressing concern for the US. For instance, the safety of more than 75 percent of hydrocarbon import by East Asia passing through the Indian Ocean is of

primary concern to the US, as among the recepient countries are some of the US' own allies.

The US has come a long way in the Indian Ocean;from an arena of strategic deterrence against the Soviet Union in the Cold War to cooperating with regional and extra-regional countries in the region.In the post Cold War era, the Indian Ocean has emerged as one of the most important maritime domainsinvolving its geostrategic interests. In this regard, the sense of realisation by the US has been particularly strong since 2010, when Pentagon's 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) made a specific mention about the Indian Ocean targetting the region's military as well as civillian infrastructure through an integrated approach. Since then, the US led by its National Security Council has also done a reassessment of its goals and interests in the Indian Ocean, elevating the region's importance. The post Cold War engagements of the US in the IOR have witnessed stark differences from its Cold War involvement.

Alhtough the US' interests in the Indian Ocean were identified very early by classical geostrategists such as Alfred Thayer Mahan and Harold Mackinder, there is an increasing realisation that in the post Cold War period that the US stands connected to the Indian Ocean in a much more integrated way, than it ever was duirng the Cold War. Much has been said and written about the US' Cold War engagements in the Indian Ocean. However, its post Cold War engagements with regional navies remains relatively less explored and studied.

This study tries to fill that gap by looking at the post Cold War naval engagements of the US with regional navies of the Indian Ocean and the strategies adopted by its Navy in the IOR.

Review of the Literature

The American naval presence in the Indian Ocean began after the ‘power vacuum’ created by the British withdrawal and the fear of an increasing Soviet presence in the area. Britain announced its intent to withdraw from the Indian Ocean or the “east of Suez” in 1968. This marked the point when the United States for the first time seriously started mulling an entry in the Indian Ocean. Michael A. Palmer (1992) in his book *On Course to Desert Storm: United States Navy and the Persian Gulf*, deals with the dilemma of the United States in assuming a direct military involvement in the Indian Ocean starting from the Eisenhower Administration to the Nixon Administration. He also analyses possible factors that were involved in delaying the military involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean.K. C. Beazley (1981) in his chapter titled *The October War and U.S. Policy* in the edited volume by Bowman L. & Ian Clark (1981) (eds), *The Indian Ocean in Global Politics*, brings out the “shift” of priority in defence expenditure after the Nixon Doctrine, leading to stress on the importance of sea lanes by the US Navy. Providing a succinct historical analysis of the Congressional debates, Gregory F. Gause (1985) in his journal articlefor the Review of International Studies titled, *British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973*, goes into history to analyse some of the Congressional testimonies during the Cold War that were crucial in changing the US' role in the Indian Ocean.

M. Joyce (2012) in his book*Bahrain from the Twentieth Century to the Arab Spring* discusses the regional politics that accompanied the US’ effort to formally establish the MIDEASTFOR in Bahrain. His presentation of the underlying tension over the MIDEASTFOR between the US and some of the Gulf countries creates scope for a critical analysis of the evolution of US military presence in the Persian Gulf. Gary Sick’s (2016) class lectures have proved crucial in outlining the Gulf policy of the US; particularly in conceptualising how the oil embargo of 1973 proved decisive for the US in preparing for contingencies.Buiding on the increasing US naval presence in the region, Frenec A. Váli's (1976) *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region: The Balances of Power* lists the gradual increase in deployments by the US in the Indian Ocean by listing various warships that entered the region.

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C. published a study, *Arms in the Indian Ocean: Interests and Challenges* by Dale. R. Tahtinen (1977). It draws the contours of American naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the Cold War era. The study cum report explains clearly how and why did the US enter the Indian Ocean after the British withdrawal. Tahtien (1977) presents his study in a way that categorises the American naval presence in the Indian Ocean within the scope of three main contexts. The first part deals with the military positions of the regional powers and the outside powers (particularly the US). It tries to explain the presence of the US during the Cold War in the Indian Ocean vis-à-vis the littoral states of the Ocean. The second part evaluates the presence of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War. It compares the naval activities and presence of the US and that of the Soviet Union. The last part outlines the conflict scenarios in the Indian Ocean involving the US and other regional powers. According to Tahtien (1977), the United States maintained an impressive naval presence in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War years especially with its task forces.

In *Asian Security: Old Paradigms and New Challenges* edited by Jasjit Singh (1991), Walter K. Anderson's essay highlights two debatable but contending ideas about the Indian Ocean being a zone of peace or an area of tension. His essay charts the evolution of US presence in the Indian Ocean after the British withdrawal in the 1960s until the end of the Cold War. He shows that the US presence in the Indian Ocean began as a concern for regional stability of the region but by the beginning of the 1990s, the US had the largest concentration of warships in the IOR. The beginning of the 1990s saw the largest deployment by the United States in the Indian Ocean since the World War II. He argues that the period following the 1990s saw gradual reduction in the naval deployments of the US across the Indian Ocean.Healso highlights the dilemma of the regional littoral countries towards the US' presence in the IOR.

In an edited volume titled *The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a strategic arena* by W.L. Dowdy and R.B. Trood (1985) presents a collection of thirty essays covering myriad dimensions of the Indian Ocean ranging from area specific perspectives to the interests of great powers in the region. In the book, the essay *Structure and Strategy in Indian Ocean Naval Deployments: Taking Stock*,the authours bring out various

dimensions of the naval deployments in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War which forms a good comparative background for the post Cold War deployments. The essay covers military modernisation, types of ships deployed, operational developments by the US, sea-based disputes and the navies in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the two decades that preceded the end of the Cold War. In the essay *The Indian Ocean: US Military and Strategic Perspectives* L.W. Bowman and J.A. Lefebvre (1985) trace how the Indian Ocean transformed from an area of caution to an area of strong naval presence for the US by the decade of the 1980s and 1990s. According to them the 1979-80 developments in the Gulf region posed serious concerns for the United States. The prevailing American strategy of using the regional states to protect its interests in the Indian Ocean had failed. Therefore by the mid 1980s, the US spent more than $1billion on making Diego Garcia an upgraded permanent base for the US in the Indian Ocean. Some of the most interesting details about the history of the US' presence in the Indian Ocean has been outlined in Peter H. Sand's (2009) *The United States and Britain in Diego Garcia: The Future of a Controversial Base*, where he elucidates the process of acquisitionof Diego Garcia by the US, and the subsequent ascendance in importance of the Indian Ocean for the US. These developments sequentially tie up with the US' military presence in the Persian Gulf.

The writers point out how the Carter and Reagan administrations were successful in gaining access facilities for the US in countries like Kenya, Somalia and Oman. They also point out that this transformation was, in more ways than one, a response to the political developments in Iran and Afghanistan.

Three key naval documents have been analysed to assess the shifting maritime priorities of the US Navy in the Indian Ocean during various phases: *From the Sea* (1992), *Forward...From the Sea* (1997) and *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (2007). These documents coming out at various points in the post Cold War naval history of the US outlined various strategies, many of which had relevance to the Indian Ocean. For instance, while *From the Sea* (1992) highlighted self sufficiency of ships as a post Cold War strategy of the US Navy that helped its ships to stay on high seas for long periods of time, *Forward...From the Sea* (1997) stressed on forward deployment as a key strategy for the US Navy.

Authours like Michael J. Green and Andrew Shearer's (2012) in their journal article *Defining the U.S. Indian Ocean Strategy* explain how the control of littorals emerged as a strategy for the US in the post Cold War. Besides, important websites like the Department of Navy of the United States, CENTCOM, Fifth Fleet, Seventh Fleet, *GlobalSecurity.org* etc. have been used to collect fact, substantiate arguments, and analyse strategies of the US Navy.The website *Naval History and Heritage Command* (http://www.history.navy.mil/) proved particularly useful in bringing out details of US Naval operations carried out in the Indian Ocean such as OPERATION DESERT SHIELD and OPERATION DESERT STORM. Other websites like the US Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC), USTRANSCOM and US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) have also been consulted to gather data.Particularly, the CENTCOM's website (http://www.centcom.mil/en) has been looked into with great detail to analyse the stated objectives of the US in the context of US' post Cold War strategy in the Indian Ocean.

A workshop report brought out in 2011 by *Future Directions International*, an independent strategic think tank based in Australia, titled, "Strategic Objectives of the United States in the Indian Ocean Region", has argued that in the coming decade the Indian Ocean is going to command the attention of the US' policymakers and strategists in a way that will be matched by few regions of the world. The points laid out by the paper form an important background in outlining the post Cold War relevance of the Indian Ocean for the US.Mohan (2006) points out that beginning with the 1990s, the US was under great pressure to cope with its relative decline as a great power. He argues that since the early 1990s, the US role in the Indian Ocean has been moderate, particularly in contrast to its massive military build up during late 1970s and 1980s.He further argues that at the end of the Cold War, America encountered a major change in its global profile. It ceased to be the leader of an alliance which was fighting the Soviet Union. This change came with a concomitant challenge of sustaining that leadership in Asia over a group of nations that needed the military might of the US to preserve peace and order in a still fragile world. In this context, the American naval presence was more successful in the Pacific than it ever was in the Indian Ocean. In that sense, the American presence since the 1990 in the Indian Ocean represented the contrary picture, to its presence in the Pacific during the

Cold War. He further argues that the collapse of communism and Cold War forced a 'fundamental reassessment' of America's goals and objectives in the world. It was within the scope of this grand strategy that American reengagement in the Indian Ocean was defined. This reassessment led to the difference in its approach in the Indian Ocean before and after 1990. Besides other sources, Presidential statements coming out under various administrations at various intervals have been factored in to analyse these reassessments.

K.R. Singh (2006) in his book *Indian Ocean: Great Power Intervention* has argued that in the post Cold War period Indian Ocean has seen an even more overwhelming presence of non-regional powers. According to Singh, the Indian Ocean has been subjected to 'three major and several minor attacks' by the great powers, particularly the US. The post Cold War strategy of the US in the Indian Ocean had two very important shifts compared to its presence during the Cold War. First, the disintegration of USSR had diminished its security concerns in the IOR and secondly the war on terror agenda had completely changed the nature of US involvement in the Indian Ocean. According to the author, the presence of the US in the post Cold War period turned more nuanced as it moved to 'access facilities' apart from maintaining its erstwhile bases. The US shared 'access facilities' with Philippines, Singapore, Morocco, Algeria, apart from having bases in Khanbad (Uzbekistan) and Manas (Kyrgyzstan).

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks the US established National Security Strategy (NSS), which it used to legitimise its presence in the Indian Ocean and world over. Pentagon's classified 2003 Operational *Availability Study* provided a new strategic orientation. Singh (2006) explains that the Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) represents a combination of amphibious warfare vessels, surface warfare ships and submarines and the Marines as part of the VIIth Fleet's forward deployed force for the US, thus listing the lethality of the US presence in IOR in the post September 11 period. In the post September period, the US faced the twin challenge of piracy and terrorism in the IOR. This led to various measures led by the US against piracy and terrorism.

Singh (2006) further adds that a Joint Task Force of the US operated from Djibouti to tackle piracy and other anti-terrorist operations in the Indian Ocean. Since the Indian

Ocean is far from the primary bases of the great powers, their presence in this region has always depended on their ability to provide logistic support. This capability of the US, according to Singh (2006), has undergone a major transformation in the post-Cold War period due to three main reasons. These are revolution in military affairs (RMA), network-centric warfare (NCW) and the use of UAVs. These three advances made in the US capabilities along with the rise of the unipolar world have significantly changed the nature its presence in the IOR in the post 1990 period. This is reflected by the significant change in American force projection across the IOR before and after the Cold War. Starting with the implementation of the Carter Doctrine, Operation Desert Storm, Operating Enduring Freedom of 2001-02, have all depicted structural, technological and logistical difference and evolution in the way US has approached the IOR. In essence, the US presence in the post Cold War period has been a combination of both military and logistics. R. Berke's 1991*New York Times* article *U.S. Sends Troops to Aid Bangladesh in Cyclone Relief*, and Paul A. McCarthy's RAND case study*Operation Sea Angel: A Case Study* have proved useful in explaining the purpose and intent behind the US Navy's Humanitarian Assistance (HA) and Disaster Relief (DR) activities. HA/DR activities by the US formed a significant strategy in the post Cold War period.

In an edited volume titled "Indo-US Relations in a changing world" by Air Commodore Jasjit Singh (1997), the essay *The Future US Security Role in the Asia-Pacific/Indian Ocean Region* by Rear Admiral William Pendley highlights that in the multipolar world since the 1990, United States National Security interests are more closely tied to world markets and economies than ever before. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the economic and security concerns of the US which were initially primarily centred in the Asia-Pacific region expanded to cover the Indian Ocean in a significant way. Rise of Asian giants like India, China and the US' increasing trade relations with these countries necessitated this change. Pendley in this essay argues that the US viewed the Indian Ocean as central to its economic future and political wellbeing. In the early 1990s, the main approach of the US towards regional powers was building strong bilateral relationships with them. He also argues that the US has worked with the countries of South Asia for security and regional stability. In the post Cold War period, the strategy of the US might have changed in

the Indian Ocean but its objectives largely remained the same; markets, capital, regional stability, collective security and balance of power which will facilitate US access to resources. The involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean since 1990 has been with a long term view. According to Pendley, the US involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War has futuristic and centred around a policy of prioritising its strategic imperatives in the face of dynamic changes that kept sweeping across Asia. Geopolitics and geo-economics are two major concerns of the US in the Indian Ocean with the latter eclipsing the former gradually since 1990.

A New Strategic Direction

In the paper *Assessing the New Maritime Strategy* by Andrew S. Erickson (2008) of the Naval War College's strategic Research Department, it is pointed out that the US has embarked upon a new maritime strategy in which mutual interests and harmony are central. According to him the official declaration of this new maritime policy took place on October the 17th, 2007 in the Naval War College. In the light of this new maritime policy, the US has been focusing on building new maritime partnerships. For the US, the period following the post Cold War in the 20th Century and much of the 21st, has been dominated by one thought. How the United States can maintain its existing status and role while China continues to rise? (Erickson 2008). It's precisely to answer this question that the US looked towards a new strategic direction in its maritime policy, one that talked of mutual cooperation instead of the traditional hostility and distrust with the countries of IOR. According to Erickson (2008), the US is looking at a 'competitive coexistence' with rising powers of Asia in the IOR.

Central to the understanding of this idea of competitive coexistence is the way in which the US has come to handle, engage and cooperate with major naval powers of the IOR since 1990. In his book *The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers,* Rasul Bux Rais (1987) examines the presence of the navies of the US and the Soviet Union. He argues that the presence of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean should be seen in the light of its economic and security needs rather than as military rivalry. The essence of US' economic interests in the IOR holds true even in the post

Cold War period, particularly in relation to US presence vis-à-vis China. In *Indian Defence Review* edited by Verma (2002), it is outlined that the relations between India and the US started improving in the post Cold War period and that of Pakistan and the US started plummeting. Still the two navies of India and Pakistan remained vital to the presence of the US Navy in the Indian Ocean. He points out that the Indo-US Naval Steering Committee was established in 1992 at New Delhi to chart out naval cooperation involving naval personnel exchanges, joint exercises and information sharing. This formed the basis of Indo-US naval cooperation in the post Cold War period. The Indo-US naval relations started with the series of MALABAR exercises in 1992, 1995 and 1996. According to Verma (2002), these exercises paved the way for greater understanding among the naval forces of India and the US and helped to develop broad frameworks for operating together in support of non-military operations such as anti-piracy and terrorism. The Presidency of Bill Clinton proved to be good for Indo-US naval relations as he lifted the ban on naval education and training by 2000 that was imposed on India in the aftermath of the 1998 nuclear tests. The review also points to the fact that the graph of US-Pakistan relations in the post Cold War period continuously went down due to terrorist activities and proliferation issues. According to the review, in the post September 11 attacks, particularly the ones aimed at countering terrorism and piracy, require a full spectrum of cooperation including diplomatic, economic, military, law enforcement and intelligence working together. These requirements have necessitated a cooperative engagement of the regional navies by the US in the IOR.

Upadhyay (2011) in his book *Combating Piracy in the Indian Ocean* and Alessi (2012) in his article *Combating Maritime Piracy*describe the nature of modern piracy threat in the Indian Ocean. Alessi argues that the international efforts to deal with the menace of piracy in the Indian Ocean have largely been led by the US. He says further that in 2008, the UN Security Council passed a series of measures targeting Somali piracy, culminating in the unanimous approval of U.S.-led Resolution 1851. F.C. Onuoha (2009) in *Sea piracy and maritime security in the Horn of Africa: The Somali coast and Gulf of Aden in perspective* traces the gradual concentration of piracy in the Indian Ocean since the 1990.A report brought out by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) in September 2010 titled, *Maritime*

Security, Updating US Counter piracy Action Plan Gains Urgency as Piracy Escalates off the Horn of Africa illustrates the progress made by the US government in implementing its plan to counter piracy. GAO's report (2010) puts forth that US agencies have collaborated with international partners to counter piracy in the greater IOR. Linking piracy to maritime terrorism, Korin and Luft (2004) analyse the trade and traffic patterns in the Indian Oceanand simultaneously analyse it in the context of its geography, trade routes and their proximity to the littorals. In doing so, they bring out the vulnerabilities of trade prone areas to sea-borne threats such as piracy and terrorism. They also list various attack capabilities that various terrorist outfits in the littorals of the IOR had acquired to threaten maritime trade.

The involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War has been multi dimensional. In the 2004-2005 tsunami relief operations, the US Navy demonstrated that American pre-eminence rests in part on their ability to provide public goods in times of crisis. Government reports like Congressional Research Report (RS22027) and Congressional Research Report (RL32715), brought out in the year 2005 and Quadrennial Defence Review (2006) bring out America's involvement in the Indian Ocean in disaster management and humanitarian relief measures (HA/DR). The 2007 MALABAR exercise series in the Bay of Bengal (involving naval forces from India, the United States, Japan, Australia, and Singapore) sent a signal that the major maritime democracies had the capacity to work together to maintain open sea-lanes of communication and welcomed others willing and able to do the same. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard October 2007 strategy document, "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea power" captures the entire sense of American perspective on Asian security, from managing the global commons to deterring the use of force by potential adversaries. Importantly, the document highlights Asia as one of two key theatres for U.S. maritime power with the Indian Ocean featuring prominently in it. Congressional Research Service ((RL33529) report brought out in 2010 titled "India-U.S Relations" mentions that South Asia emerged as of vital interest to the foreign policy of the US in the 21st century.

According to Erickson (2008), the post Cold war period has been full of strategic uncertainties. The scheme of US' policy in the Indian Ocean has changed, as has the

nature of countries that constitute the IOR. From a policy of hostility towards India in the Indian Ocean (American threat to India in the Indo-Pak war by the Seventh Fleet), the US has come a long way to a spirit of 'competitive coexistence' with rising powers of Asia in the Indian Ocean. Erickson (2008) sees this as a major shift in the maritime policy of the US from its erstwhile maritime policy. The US has come a long way from a deterrence based approach in the Indian Ocean to the use of soft-power and cooperation.

A fundamentally new policy has characterised the US policy in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War era because of a number of reasons. The more conspicuous reasons for which are growing terrorism, piracy and the rapid economic and military rise of the countries in the IOR region. The subtler reasons are concerned with securing its maritime and strategic interests vis-à-vis other countries in the region, out-doing chances of security threats and the best use of its naval power in the region by the US. Some other reasons given by the US for its presence in the Indian Ocean are conflict prevention and the maintenance of the stability of the IOR region. This includes non-combative use of its navy, disaster management, weather-forecasting and rescue operations. While the thinking and the core interests of the US remains the same in Indian Ocean the modes of projecting them have changed (Erickson 2008).

US new policy in the Indian Ocean has been characterised by a need for cooperation in an environment of rising regional powers in the IOR. The Indian Ocean along with the Arabian Sea is considered the strategic energy lifeline. The Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea are the two areas where the US and China have similar interests in securing their SLOCs (sea lines of communication). According to Rude (2008), a Chinese strategic thinker, in his article *The New US Maritime Strategy Surfaces*, Oceans have become the new domain of rivalry in the post Cold War period. In this new domain of rivalry security on high seas is more a way of power projection than anything else. Indian Ocean being an important trade route has involved the interests of both emerging and emerged powers in the post 1990 period. The involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period has been a combination of both soft and hard power with the former eclipsing the latter to a large extent gradually since 1990. The post Cold War policy of the US in the Indian Ocean has

been a dilemma between trade and economic relations on one side and alliance building and balance of power on the other. A revised US maritime policy was issued towards the last leg of the second Bush administration. Since then the policy has remained at the centre of US' policy under various governments. Most analysts believe that there is no specific policy of the US in the Indian Ocean and the future of American policy in the IOR region will keep on changing as per the needs. According to Rude (2008), the US policy in the Indian Ocean will keep shifting between "multinational trade cooperation and transnational military exercises."

Michael J. Green (2009) writing in the winter issue of the Naval War College review talks about how Asia is placed in the American strategy in his article titled *Asia in the Debate on American Grand Strategy*. According to Green (2009), for Clinton, economic priorities made Japan an adversary, then an ally to balance China, and then a secondary player in the pursuit of a new "strategic partnership" with Beijing. For Bush, Asia policy centred on Japan and relations with both Tokyo and Beijing improved. Green (2009) believes China does not occupy the entire focus of the United States in Asia, as Japan did in the War years. The reason that he points out for this is the fact that there have been other issues of importance like the crises in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of India, the global financial crisis and more importantly the fact that China is not a direct military threat to the US as Japan was. These are a few reasons for the positioning of geo-economic cooperation over geopolitical rivalry in the Indian Ocean by the US.

Green (2009) also maintains that the Indian Ocean Region will most likely remain a zone of peace in the foreseeable future. Given the ever-increasing level of economic interdependence that the US has with China since the end of the Cold War, it is as much in the interest of the US as China to keep the sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean safe. According to Green (2009), the United States continues to remain distrustful of China while simultaneously expanding trade relations with it. Green concludes by saying that 'Asia is a maritime theatre and the U.S. Navy is poised at the cutting edge of each of most of that region's challenges and opportunities.' Harsh V. Pant (2010) in his journal article *China's Naval Expansion in the Indian Ocean and India-China Rivalry*, and I. Storey (2006) in his brieftitled *China's MalaccaDilemma*

discuss the impact of increasing Chinese footprints in the Indian Ocean on the US' strategy in the post Cold War.

Even if the American strategy in the Indian Ocean limits itself to more economics and less politics, Green (2009) cautions that the long time challenges remain in the post Cold War period. Goldman Sachs predicts that China's gross domestic product (GDP) will surpass that of the US by 2027. He quotes the statistics from *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs* in a June 2008 survey that 64 percent of Americans favour a policy of engagement and cooperation with Beijing and that 67 percent oppose US efforts to contain Chinese power. To some extent, this has been reflected in the presence of America in the Indian Ocean after 1990. In The *Post-American World* Fareed Zakaria (2008) writes about the shift of power to Asia, and he notes that there is a "the rise of the rest", which includes India and China. Zakaria argues that the United States must learn to share power while still being the leader. He also says that the United States is gradually learning to share power and responsibility with the rising powers of Asia. Kaplan (2010) concludes that the Indian Ocean Region has become the most dynamic region to the US. Giving the argument a twist, Ladwig III (2014) presents a Neo-Nixonian understanding to assess what has been the post Cold War US strategy in the Indian Ocean; recent changes in US strategy in the IOR promote the IOR countries to defend and stand for themselves in times of crises.

Anthony H. Cordesman (1998) in a Center for Strategic and International Studies compilation, *CENTCOM and its Area of Operations*, highlights the US' naval relations with key Gulf countries while assessing the importance of key ports in the IOR for the US in the post Cold War.As US' naval relations expanded in the IOR the importance of chokepoints and SLOCs increased for the US. J. Rodrigue and T. Notteboom (2013) in *Strategic Maritime Passages: The Geography of Transport Systems*explain the importance of crucial choke points in the Indian Ocean such as the Straits of Malacca and Hormuz. For the US Navy, its expansion also led to newer ties with other regional navies of the IOR in the post Cold War era. The navies of India, Pakistan and Australia proved to be crucial in expanding the US Navy's agenda in the IOR.

The US' naval relations with key Gulf allies like Bahrain, Saudi Arabia etc and bigger regional navies such as Australia, India and Pakistan proved very crucial in shaping its post Cold War maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean. Various other sources of literature surrounding US' naval relations with key regional navies in the IOR have been used to make a comprehensive analysis of US' post Cold War maritime strategy.

Definition, Rationale and Scope of Study

Ever since the Cold War and particularly throughout the decade of 1990s, we have witnessed a persistent debate on the nature of the future role and power of the US in Asia. Indian Ocean figures prominently in that debate. Questions about, whether an America which was energy sapped due to the rigours of the Cold War could sustain its presence in Asia with same vitality, began to be asked. The theory of "imperial stretch" was anticipated to be somewhat relevant to America's presence in Asia. Amidst all these, the question of the future of US presence in the Indian Ocean was asked with similar tenor.

Although the Indian Ocean region comprisesimmense economic diversity, various aspects of its economic life support the notion of emerging geostrategic regionalism. Here, three things become very important: the similar economic profiles of many of the states of the area; the movements toward sub regional economic co-operation; and the trend toward expansion of intra-regional trade. These factors have come together to build a common spirit of the IOR.

Over half the states of the Third World are located in the immediate vicinity of the Indian Ocean. Recent World Bank statistics describe 30 of the 36 Indian Ocean littoral and island states as developing countries (lDCS) with per-capita gross national products of less than US$4830. Only one of the remaining nations, Australia, is regarded as industrialized by the World Bank. The others - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates are categorized as capital-surplus oil exporters. This economic profile has had a profound effect on the economic life of the region. In that sense, the Indian Ocean area has begun to measure up to the definition of a geostrategic region.

The US presence in the Indian Ocean is decisive as the IOR is a very important strategic field. Three important factors which determine the importance of the region can be listed as follows; the first is the high level of linkages in maritime and trade strategy that the economies of the IOR-ARC have achieved. Secondly, the foreign policies of superpowers like the US and China in the Indian Ocean are critical to the

region and its dynamics. And lastly, unlike in the Pacific, the members of the IOR have not given in to the foreign powers in the region to form regional alliances and pit one set of countries against the other. The dynamics of the region are still to unfold.

The U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's stated aim is that it will advance the interests of the United States and the security and prosperity of the region by building and effectively employing forward, capable and Coalition-focused forces across the full spectrum of maritime operations. Also, that they will endeavour to prevent conflict but remain prepared to win decisively when directed. This aim of the US Navy gets mitigated to a large extent when one talks about its presence in the Indian Ocean. There are two factors involved here. First, that it got involved in the Indian Ocean later than it did in other parts of Asia. Second, that the closest the US navy could get to the midst of action in the Indian Ocean was Diego Garcia (which is still considered distant from the heart of the Indian Ocean). Even before the US could thrust its military power in the Indian Ocean, a major development restructured the world order with the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was followed by a gradual rise of Asia and the US could never fully gain footprints in the IOR, in the way that it would have liked to. This restructuring done by the end of the Cold War necessitated a different approach by the US towards the Indian Ocean. The economic rise of Asia further added to the reasons for the change in US approach towards dealing with Indian Ocean. A lot of other factors like the rise of China and India are also responsible for the change of US role in the Indian Ocean in the post-Cold War era. But even if all these factors are combined to explain the change of US role in the Indian Ocean, we have many missing links in the explanations.

This study tries to fill these missing links in the US role in the Indian Ocean from the end of the Cold War till 2012.

Research Methods andDesign

While historical and analytical methods have largely been adopted to examine the US approach towards the Indian Ocean, international relations theories like Realism has been employed to deconstruct the complex involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period. Especially, the transition from the Mahanian Realism of the US Navy in the Cold War to its multilateral character in post Cold War has been highlighted through the US' adoption of a cooperative framework. America's conundrum in its involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War era between being a watchdog and being interventionist has been realistically assessed. The strong sense and trend of liberal internationalism in America's involvement since 1990 in the Indian Ocean has also been examined closely vis-à-vis the US' altered maritime rationales in the post Cold War.

Research methods used in this study comprise consultations of both primary and secondary sources. Data published in government documents, official declarations/statements and speeches, in particular, have been used as primary sources to discern similarities and differences in the perception and policies of various US Administrations. The focus in this regard has been since the Nixon Administration. In this regard, the National Archive in Washington D.C. and the Reagan Library in California proved immensely useful. The important National Security Study Memorandums (NSSMs) proved very useful in helping this research trace the evolution of US maritime presence in the Indian Ocean. Secondary sources like books, journals, periodicals and newspaper articles have been used as literature to assist research. Official reports such as Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports and Issue Briefs of relevance have also been consulted in significant measure. Excerpts from Congressional hearings and important websites such as the U.S. Department of State (http://www.state.gov/, http://www.state.gov/p/sca/index.htm) and others, have been used as sources to assist the research work. Besides these, Quadrennial Defense Reviews (QDR) and other publications from the Department of Defense (http://www.defense.gov/) have also been used to understand how the threats and challenges faced by the US necessitated a reassessment of its involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period. The materials available from the website

of US Naval War College (http://www.usnwc.edu/) have also been consulted. In this regard, three special papers brought out by the U.S. Naval War College; *The US Naval Strategy in the 1970s*, *The US Naval Strategy in the 1980s* and, *The US Naval Strategy in the 1990s* gave a detailed background to this research. Four major libraries in India, Jawaharlal Nehru University library, IDSA (Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis), American Centre library and Teen Murti library have contributed major sources of literature and study materials collected on the topic.

The library of Columbia University in New York City stood out both in richness of sources and their relevance to this study. The Columbia University library provided some Congressional hearings that improved the historical analysis of this study. Besides, some recent publications on the Indian Ocean from US think-tanks present in this library provided this study an improved assessment on the post Cold War US presence in the Indian Ocean.

A field trip to the US proved extremely useful in enriching the primary sources of my research.Vetting at early stages of this study by Professor Austin Long and Professor John Hattendorf of the U.S. Naval War College significantly improved this research study. However, continued and timely guidance of Professor Chintamani Mahapatra at Jawaharlal Nehru University has not only been critical in forming the views of the authour on this subject but also the analysis therein.

Research Questions

- What are the main political and economic objectives of the US in the Indian Ocean? And how have they changed since 1990?
- What has been the US policy in handling piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean region?
- What are the major broad changes in US involvement in the Indian Ocean since 1990 vis-à-vis its involvement in the pre 1990 period?
- How has increasing trade and economic inter-dependence transformed its concerns in the Indian Ocean for the US?
- What has been the nature of US engagement in the Indian Ocean Region in tackling piracy and terrorism?
- How has the US been cooperating with other regional powers of the Indian Ocean Region?

Hypotheses

- The American strategy in the Indian Ocean has been a combination of geo-political and geo-economic pursuits with the latter eclipsing the former gradually since 1990 in the wake of the rise of an economically resurgent Asia

- American presence in the Indian Ocean since 1990 has seen the gradual shift from its unilateral dominance in operational capabilities (both military and logistics) to combined concerns of collective security and balance of power.

Chapter 1

Evolution of US Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean

This chapter provides a background to the US involvement in the Indian Ocean. The chapter tries to present a historical account of US involvement in the Indian Ocean,particularly through assessment of various Presidential terms, and subsequentlypave the way for better understanding of the evolution of US naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

(*Courtesy: Google Maps*)

During the peak of British colonial rule in the Indian Ocean, US naval interventions were ‘out of bounds’. However, between 1832 and 1853 a few US ships visited the Indian Ocean largely for trade purposes. The history of pepper trade carried by US carriers dates back at least to the 1790s in so far as US ships’ visit for trade in the Indian Ocean is concerned. The first recorded history of the US Naval intervention in the Indian Ocean was near the "pepper coast" in extreme nortwestern Sumatra. It was also the first American armed intervention in Asia officially (Long, 1988). Although US trade visits to the Indian Ocean continued through the 20th century, the maritime region remianed dominated by Britain’s presence.

Britain’s predominant and almost unchallenged presence in the Indian Ocean spanned more than a century and a half, which included much of the period that preceded the World War II and a couple of decades that followed it. Throughout this period, Britain continued to play a significant role in the Indian Ocean until the late 1960s as it was the only major colonial and military power that was predominantly present in the region vis-à-vis its reach and might . As the late 1960s approached, Britain began to reformulate its Indian Ocean strategy and gradually reduced its commitments in the Indian Ocean. This meant that heretofore, not only was the Indian Ocean going to be without dominant British military presence but that there was going to be a scaling down of its political compulsions in the Indian Ocean region as well. The moment of a post-colonial frisson for Britain came with a decision of immense geopolitical significance: its withdrawal from the ‘east of Suez’ in 1968. This decision traces itself to the dramatic announcement of the Labour government of Harold Wilson in Britain that confirmed Britain’s withdrawal of all its troops from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971 through a proclamation made on January 16, 1968 to the House of Commons (Sato, 2009). The conservative government led by Edward Heath that followed the Harold Wilson’s Labour government in Britain failed to keep its promise of reversing the Wilson government’s decision to pull out of Britain’s all east-of-Suez bases (British Troops to Leave Persian Gulf Area, 1971).

Beginning early 1960s, it became increasingly clear to the Harold Wilson government that his was a country faced not just with declining finances but increasingly divided public opinion on Britain’s role in the world. By the mid-1960s, Britain was no longer

able to sustain its dominance and heretofore role of conducting traditional maritime patrol in the Indian Ocean.

The year 1963 saw the beginning of joint investigations by Britain and the US in the Indian Ocean to find islands that could be used for strategic purposes (Braun, 1983). This marked the beginning of US' interest in its presence in the Indian Ocean. The Cold War witnessed a restrained approach from the US vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean. One of the reasons why the US could not factor the Indian Ocean as one of the major areas for any geostrategic contestation with the USSR through much of the Cold War was because the period for the US remained fraught with repercussions of the Vietnam War and its involvement elsewhere. This also explains the low troop presence of the US in the Indian Ocean compared to other areas during the Cold War. In 1971, the US had as low as 600-man military unit in Iran out of 12000 men in the region and it carefully considered increasing its naval presence in the Gulf even as Britain contemplated its withdrawal. However, the small troop presence of the US in Iran was enough to reassure the former of its token presence in the Persian Gulf. After all Iran, which was US' main regional ally in the Persian Gulf, had a significant role in precipitating Britain's ouster from the Persian Gulf. Apart from other pressure tactics on Britain, Iran had laid its claims on three small islands in the Persian Gulf; Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunb, even before Britain withdrew. These islands still remain entangled (Henderson, 2008)in dispute between Iran and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The period beginning with the late 1960s during the Cold War symbolised a flux in the great power influence in the Indian Ocean. According to Dieter Braun (Braun, 1983), it was only after the beginning of the 1970s that the Indian Ocean began to figure prominently as a geopolitical region. The Indian Ocean emerged as the new arena for contestation between the regional presence of the United States in the Persian Gulf and its forward presence out of the Diego Garcia base on one hand, and the Soviet Union's 'regular naval presence' on the other. The Indian Ocean region, when viewed within the balance of power dynamics, reflects the presence of the US and the Soviet Union placed within an asymmetric power contestation between the two. This stands out especially in contrast to the near parity that both Superpowers achieved in rest of the world during the Cold War. In the Indian Ocean the Soviet

Union wielded more clout on the back of easy access, littoral basing facilities and greater presence. However, beginning with the late 1970s the US gradually emerged as the ascendant power throughout the latter part of the Cold War period.

During the late 1960s, the US and the USSR began to identify the Indian Ocean as an area where their own military forces would be needed to promote and defend national interests. Both the US and the USSR positioned themselves in the Indian Ocean for their own interests and opportunities. Both sides had a common interest in keeping the sea lanes safe. This was reflected in their mutual decision in 1987 to escort vessels through the Persian Gulf. However, besides this shared concern their mutual interests kept both the countries on tenterhooks about each other's presence in the Indian Ocean.

Gregory F. Gause (Gause, 1985) points out that since President Eisenhower, use of force in the Persian Gulf was a policy of last resort for the US. The pervasive thinking that characterised policy makers' decisions vis-à-vis the role of the US in the Persian Gulf was that Britain was best equipped to defend Western strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. Resultantly, the US did not find itself in a position that demanded special responsibilities from her in the region. A rather engaged US involvement in the Indian Ocean has its root in the British government's decision in January 1968 to pull back from its east of Suez presence, particularly from the Persian Gulf region. The British announcement came as shock as well as disappointment for the US given its strong efforts during 1965 and 1966 to convince Britain otherwise. The American government's opposition to British withdrawal was evident in the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk's case against it on January 11, 1968 (Fain, 2008).The British announcement of withdrawal caught the Lyndon B. Johnson government off guard in its lack of preparation to replace Britain in taking up the mantle of security in the Persian Gulf. The US' flatfooted stance on Persian Gulf was officially declared in the Under Secretary of State Eugene Rostow's expectation that 'the United States relied on the security grouping involving Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to fill the vacuum left by Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf' (Gause, 1985). However, due to persisting differences between some of these regional countries the

Johnson government had to leave the job of policy formation over the Persian Gulf to the Nixon Administration that followed it.

President Richard Nixon was faced with a dilemma between assuming the role of Britain in the Indian Ocean and leaving the region to the regional states. The US went for the latter option, given the disillusionment in the US over its involvement in Southeast Asia and lack of domestic support from the American people to any security commitments abroad particularly due to the Vietnam War. President Nixon's choice, commonly referred to as the Nixon Doctrine, held that the US can no longer take up direct responsibilities for preserving security in all corners of the world. Instead, it would strengthen regional powers to play the primary role in maintaining the stability of their own region. The pre-Cold War presence of the United States in the Indian Ocean, to a large extent, was guided by this vision. This underscores the reason why low priority was accorded to the Persian Gulf in US security thinking until 1978-79. Until 1979, both France and Russia had larger naval presence than the US. However, there were clearly other factors that weighed on the US indecisiveness for taking a direct military role in the Indian Ocean after the British east-of-Suez withdrawal. A direct assuming of the British role in the Indian Ocean would have meant a far greater responsibility for the US. The regional opposition of the littoral states to the US' presence in the Indian Ocean also peripherally affected the US' decision to avoid a direct military role in the Indian Ocean in the same measure that Britain had thus far indulged itself with. What started as a dilemma vis-à-vis its role in the Indian Ocean post British withdrawal in the US policy circle, transformed gradually into reluctance. This is evident in the words of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, "It is not the purpose of the United States to impose a *Pax Americana* around the world. We don't consider ourselves the gendarmes of the universe" (Anwar, 1991). Others like Michael A. Palmer (Palmer, 1992) believe that the Nixon Administration was unwilling to replace the British in the Middle East and had tacitly agreed to Iran being a regional power led by the Shah.

However, there were at least two factors during the Nixon Administration that were later understood to have obliquely affected the US' Persian Gulf policy. First, was the increasing belief within some of the Nixon Administration officials that the British withdrawal could mean a net gain for Gulf stability. James Noyce, who served as

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern, African and South Asian Affairs between 1970-1976 and was part of Congressional hearings on Persian Gulf, was among leading analysts who assessed Persian Gulf's security with US' role in mind. Noyce was mindful that the replacement of British role by the US in the Persian Gulf would have been detrimental to the latter's interests. However, the nuanced assessment from Noyce provided grounds to arguments which supported a gradual increase in the US' role in the Persian Gulf, relying primarily on arms sales, training, advisory and similar support in the Persian Gulf region. The second factor was probably more instrumental in drawing the US' attention to Persian Gulf's security and it pertained to a direct request from the US Navy to increase its Indian Ocean force. The US Navy made a request for a boost in its Indian Ocean capabilities as the region witnessed a sustained increase in Soviet naval presence in the region. By 1971, the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean boasted of 15 ships which included destroyers and a nuclear powered submarine. Although the Soviet naval threats to the US' interests in the Indian Ocean was written off as being 'moderate' by Noyes in a Congressional testimony in 1971 (Gause, 1985), it triggered the urgent need to further strengthen its small naval presence in the Indian Ocean since the 1960s. This need was felt despite a three-ship task force that the US had maintained in the Indian Ocean since the World War II, called the US Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR).

The establishment of the MIDEASTFOR in the Persian Gulf had initiated some US military activities in the Indian Ocean. A major entry of the US navy was in the form of Seventh Fleet which entered the Indian Ocean in December 1963 to participate in the annual Mid Link exercise led by the countries of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). This major naval activity of the US in the Indian Ocean was marked by the entry of the 'Concord Squadron' in April 1964. Gary Sick (Sick, 1983) lists that USS *BonHomme Richard* was the first US Carrier Task Force (CTF) to enter the Indian Ocean on April 4, 1964 along with the Concord Squadron, comprising USS *Bon Homme Richard*, USS *Shelton* (DD 790), USS *Blue* (DD 744), USS *Frank Knox* (DD 742) and the oil ship USS *Hassayampa* (AO 145). The 'goodwill visit' lasted six weeks and covered Iran, the Arabian Peninsula and touching other littoral countries of the Indian Ocean like Madagascar and Kenya among others. These activities, Sick (1983) argues, marked the beginning of a sense of intermittent regularity to the US

naval activities in the Indian Ocean. However, these visits by the US Navy carried more purpose to test the waters in the Persian Gulf to locate a future presence, than 'goodwill'.

The US' view regarding the Indian Ocean characterized by one having only a marginal interest began to change by the early 1970s. One of the more prominent voices of the time, Joseph Sisco the Undersecretary at that time, highlighted the importance of the Indian Ocean in his speech as part of the Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Addressing the US Congress in March 1973 he said;

> Measured in terms of power alone South Asia may not bulk large in relation to some parts of the globe. Nevertheless it is important to the US. The subcontinent bridges the area between the Persian Gulf, source of much of the world's energy, and South East Asia, a region which is only just beginning to emerge….Thus the direction taken by the primary actors in the South Asian stage……has important implications for our interests in the two neighbouring areas and for the sea lanes which link them and Europe and East Asia across the Indian Ocean basin.
>
> (Sisco, March, 1973)

U.S. Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR)

The Nixon Doctrine still had many undertones that were in support of increasing and diversifying the maritime positioning of the US in Asia. K. C. Beazley (Beazley, 1981) points out that the Nixon Doctrine was followed by a "shift" of priority in defence expenditure from ground forces to other legs of its military such as sea and air. He goes on to argue that in the aftermath of the Nixon Doctrine, sea-lanes acquired special attention from its military, particularly the navy. The year 1972 witnessed an important development that saw the incorporation of the Persian Gulf as a more important part of US naval policy. In 1972 the responsibility for most parts of the Indian Ocean was transferred to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC). In other words, the US Pacific Command (PACOM) was given the operational jurisdiction over the Indian Ocean marking the Indian Ocean as a direct policy concern for the first time. By 1972 the US Navy increased the frequency of operations

in the Indian Ocean. This was followed by refurbishing of the US naval facility already present in Bahrain in the form of MIDEASTFOR which was established in 1948. After the British withdrawal by the end of 1971 there was a resource crunch felt the Commander MIDEASTFOR as the British presence was responsible for most of the area monitoring and reconnaissance in the Persian Gulf. The MIDEASTFOR started exchange of information with the French to fill the gap left by the British withdrawal. On February 15, 1973 the US reached an understanding with France, established through an agreement between Commander MIDEASTFOR and the French Indian Ocean commander (ALINDIEN) on the island of Reunion (Palmer, 1992). Almost half a decade after the Nixon Doctrine, by the mid-1970s, the Persian Gulf had become crucial for the US' naval policy. The background for this shift in US naval policy towards the Persian Gulf can be traced to the Bahrain Government's ultimatum until June 30, 1977 to the MIDEASTFOR of the US. In 1971 after Bahrain gained independence from Britain, it signed a military agreement with the US agreeing to host the US naval forces in the region. But in the aftermath of the October War of 1973 Bahrain began to pressurise the US to remove the MIDEASTFOR from Bahrain. For the US, the decision to remove the MIDEASTFOR out of Bahrain would have been detrimental to its larger military interests in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean for at least two reasons: by the late 1970s the US was in the middle of a geopolitical rivalry in the Indian Ocean with the Soviet Union, and secondly, the MIDEASTFOR (together with the Military Airlift Command Recovery base at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia which became operative in 1951) had evolved to be an important military node for furthering US interests in the region through training of US soldiers, troop stationing and conducting joint exercises in the Indian Ocean. However, a reprieve to the US in this regard came in 1976 when the Bahraini Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman revisited the earlier ultimatum, allowing the MIDEASTFOR to continue in Bahrain (Joyce, 2012).

Beazly (1981) points out that between the years 1974 and 1976 the US indulged in vigorous naval (mostly military sales) diplomacy with some of the countries of the littoral Indian Ocean, particularly Iran. In the aftermath of a series of regional crises like the October War and the oil embargo the US practiced its Indian Ocean policy within the ambit of enhanced military sales to regional countries with a focus on

diversifying its military repositioning alternatives in the region. The US sold to Iran four Spruance-class destroyers and three diesel submarines besides some other land and air weapon systems in the mid-1970s. It also focused on improving intelligence gathering and logistics in the littoral Indian Ocean through technological advancement. These efforts were justified in the light of maintaining "balance" in the region which was increasingly tilting in the favour of Soviet Union due to its geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean and its littoral presence. Particularly following military build up by the Soviet Union in its facilities at Berbera in Somalia, US Defense Secretary Schlesinger used the following justification for increasing US military presence in the Indian Ocean:

> Although we would strongly prefer to see no Soviet build up of military presence in this region it appears the USSR intends to take up such a build up. Since an effective military balance is essential to the preservation of regional security and stability in this area of great importance to the economic well-being of the industrialized world, we feel we should have logistical facilities which will permit us to maintain a credible presence. In a period of transition to a new set of power relations only the United States among the Western nations has the stature to ensure that the balance is maintained.
>
> (Schlesinger, 1975)

The lack of US' interest in the Indian Ocean suddenly changed in 1979. The Iranian revolution posed two problems for the United States: the fear that the revolution would spread to other Arab states in the Gulf and the threat of an Iranian attack across the Gulf. This regional political upheaval became more seismic in that it upended the basis of US' policies in the Middle East. Iran had travelled a long way for the US from being an important regional ally to a regional threat starting with the Iranian Revolution. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 came as the first eye-opener for the US, forcing it to think about relocating its military facilities to the Indian Ocean on a much larger scale. The Soviet Union's proximity to the Indian Ocean with its military presence in north-west littoral Indian Ocean states and its relatively easy access to the Horn of Africa, Persian Gulf and the crucial Bab-el-Mandeb strait convinced the US about the certainty for the former gaining strategic

presence in the Indian Ocean, especially in the absence of US military deterrence. Braun (1983) argues that the asymmetry of power in the Indian Ocean due to increasing Soviet presence led the United States to think about an operational policy about the Indian Ocean. An already potent Soviet presence in some of theperipheral countries in the Indian Ocean heightened the need for such a move by the US.

However, the US was faced with some serious obstructions in the region. First, the US faced the danger of an asymmetric competition in the IORdue to more established Soviet presence. Secondly, it faced the geographical disadvantage of being the more distant competitor in this region. Thirdly, and most importantly, by naming and projecting Diego Garcia as a Military Support Facility (MSF) and not a military base the US' rhetoric undercut its own abilities to relocate a full-fledged military paraphernalia to the heart of the Indian Ocean to counter the Soviet presence and dominance. Besides these, the US also stared at the likely problems in logistics having relinquished control of the strategically crucial Dhahran Airfield in 1962. The construction of the Dhahran Air Base in the year 1945 had marked a change in approach and the concomitant seriousness at the policy level in the US about establishing a more concrete presence in the Indian Ocean (Braun, 1983). As Dhahran lies at the south-western end of a tip of land stretching out into the Persian Gulf, it gave US the much needed strategic access to the Indian Ocean. But in the post-1962 period, after the US wrested the administrative control of the Dhahran Air Base to Saudi Arabia, increasing Russian presence in the Indian Ocean region convinced the US of its folly in its erstwhile decision. As Russia slowly crept towards the countries of the Middle East having rich oil resources, the US evoked the sub-textual justification through what President Harry S. Truman had professed in the Truman Doctrine; namely, "the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Some of the ramifications of the aforementioned thought in the American political and strategic circles can also be linked to the US' decision to establish its MSF in Diego Garcia in the late 1960s.

Super-power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean

The rivalry between the US and the USSR resembled a crest and trough pattern since the 1950s until the end of the Cold War, the last phase of which witnessed intense contestation between the two sides ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Two consecutive treaties; Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the CENTO in 1954 and 1955 respectively, created enough grounds for further polarisation between the two Superpowers. In the 1950s, the US through pressure and the promise of its military aid effected the pro-Western defence alliance between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom, also known as CENTO or the Baghdad Pact,[1] and through its membership in SEATO[2] created scope for the USSR to initiate bilateral relations with Egypt, Burma, Indonesia, India and importantly Afghanistan in the successive years. These steps, primarily induced by the US or its extended support, generated a gradual need for the USSR to extend southwards towards Asia. The Indian Ocean emerged significantly in such desires of the USSR. In the mid-1960s the Indian Ocean emerged as a maritime exploration space for the Soviet Union, even as it strengthened its navy in its bid to race ahead of the US Navy. Although the United States had possessed a powerful navy for a long time, growing maritime activities by the USSR drew a more specific US attention to the Indian Ocean (Braun, 1983).

From the mid-1950s up to the late 1960s, the Indian Ocean witnessed the steady emergence of two separate strategies; one by the Soviet Union that sought to increase its presence in the Indian Ocean and hence undo the gains US made by the combined alliances of SEATO and CENTO treaties, and the other by the US that factored significant expansion of its naval reach in the Indian Ocean. After both the Superpowers had built substantial capabilities in the Indian Ocean, it gave way to

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[1] Baghdad Pact, Encyclopædia Iranica, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/baghdad-pact, (Accessed June 22, 2015).

[2]Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Encyclopedia Britannica, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Southeast-Asia-Treaty-Organization [Online] (Accessed June 22, 2015).

competitive posturing between them which at a later stage during the Cold War turned into strategic posturing involving nuclear weapons. A. Kapur (Kapur, 1981) lists the naval posturing of both the Superpowers against each other since 1968 and attributes the emergence of such intense competition between the two Superpowers in the Indian Ocean as an extension of their competition in other maritime areas such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. However, initially the US appeared to be lagging behind the Soviet Union when it came to acting and building up on the foresight that both the Superpowers seemed to have attained apropos the Indian Ocean as a strategic arena for future geostrategic upper hand. Braun (1983) argues that the Soviet Union was placed more favourably than the US in this regard. The sense of a growing proximity between the Soviet Union and some littoral Indian Ocean states triggered a policy consideration among US policy framers but disenchantment persisted due to US' major military commitments in the Vietnam War.

Although the basic tenet for both the Superpowers to constantly update their naval forces and capabilities in the Indian Ocean was gaining one-upmanship, they still competed with a few mutually overlapping interests. Both the US and the Soviet Union saw parallel interests in strengthening their respective positions in the Indian Ocean region, while still keeping military and strategic competition short of flagrant levels. The Indian Ocean naval talks initiated by the Carter Administration in 1977 was an important hallmark as it scooped out parallel interests between the US and Soviet Union amidst instigative rhetoric that only attributed the presence of the two Superpowers in the Indian Ocean to rivalry and animosity. These overlapping interests were in many ways responsible why the Superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean stoppedshort of any cataclysmic eventuality despite the Indian Ocean being the most nuclearised ocean during the Cold War. In the absence of some, or all overlapping interests in the Indian Ocean between the US and the Soviet Union there

lay significant scope for half a dozen[3] jostling nuclear powers in the region to not only compete militarily but indulge in proliferation during the Cold War.

The decade of 1970s leading up to the early 1980s was very crucial in so far as the Indian Ocean strategy of the US is concerned. The early 1970s turned out to be decisive for the US because of two developments; the energy crisis in the Middle East and the Ogaden War. There was a change in the approach of the US towards the Indian Ocean within a matter of one year; (1972-73), particularly in a relative sense if the pre and post energy situations were to be compared. The US failed to assess the severity of the October War in 1973 in terms of its consequences on the West Asian region. However, the consequence that followed the October War led the US to focus its attention on the Persian Gulf prompting some to think that the Ogaden War was a crucial push for the US' Indian Ocean strategy. Some authors, including Brawn (1983), believe that the decision of the United States to place itself militarily within the Indian Ocean was a result of the polarisation that followed the situation emerging from the October War.

Energy Crisis of 1973

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War threatened Israel which in turn called for US assistance. The US responded by setting up an air-bridge and providing massive support to Israel. According to Sick (2016), the US' fictional belief that business with Saudi Arabia and its political relations with Israel were two distinct things in its gamut of relations with the Middle East was wiped out when Saudi Arabia used oil as a weapon, causing the embargo. To that extent, the US' support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War led to the oil embargo that crippled world's energy economy. The immediate reaction from the US over the oil embargo was one of shock and the US was shown to be vulnerable for

[3] Including the US and the Soviet Union there were at least five nuclear powers in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War; the two Superpowers, India, Israel and South Africa.

the first time in that it agreed to cooperate with other countries to curb not just the energy crisis but remove sailing embargo which prevented US ships from entering certain parts of the Indian Ocean. This was also the time when the US Navy needed expansion in the Indian Ocean more than ever in the past. The embargo altered oil prices which skyrocketed to a new and unprecedented value that was six fold of the pre-embargo price. Even as the US faced a severe oil crunch, lacking excess production capacity, the devaluation of dollar highlighted the overall impact on the US economy. The energy crisis of 1973 was crucial in catapulting the Indian Ocean, particularly the Persian Gulf, from a region of peripheral concern in US policy circles to one that concerned the US' core energy interests. To add to US' increasing concerns in the Indian Ocean, by the end of 1973 the Soviet naval presence was four times as great as that of the US (Palmer, 1992:75). In the following year, 1974, the US sounded an emergency to upgrade Diego Garcia, which until then did not support many activities besides communications. A sustained upgrading of Diego Garcia which followed for many years saw it transform into a Military Support Facility (MSF) with air base, prepositioning capabilities, ship and oil tanker dockings and occasional stationing of carrier task force.

As per Arthur Burns, who served as the chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for two consecutive terms, between January 31, 1970, and March 8, 1978;

> …manipulation of oil prices and supplies by the oil-exporting countries came at a most inopportune time for the United States. In the middle of 1973, wholesale prices of industrial commodities were already rising at an annual rate of more than 10 per cent; our industrial plant was operating at virtually full capacity; and many major industrial materials were in extremely short supply.
>
> (Corbett, 1973)

Twin Crises: 1977-78

The late 1970s saw the US enter negotiations to limit military forces in the Indian Ocean when both the Soviet Union and Cuba employed forces in Ethiopia. Opposite positions were taken by the two superpowers in the Ogaden War, when the US pledged support to Somalia and the Soviet Union along with Cuba supported Ethiopia. The deployment of forces in Ethiopia by Soviet Union and Cuba, probably for the first time, placed the Indian Ocean in the midst of an arms race between the two Superpowers with the involvement of other extra-regional countries. Such a flagrant move not only witnessed a rallying by the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean against any military escalation but brought the US at the centre of a new and different geopolitics in Asia; one that concerned the Indian Ocean intrinsically.

The second half the decade of the 1970s saw some political dithering vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean by the US under the Carter Administration. When the discourse surrounding arms limitation and the "Zone of Peace" concerning the Indian Ocean reached the geopolitical high-table at the United Nations, the US too lent its ears to this regional opposition and depicted an intention towards considering demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean. In an address to the Press, President Carter on March 9, 1977 made public his decision for being in favour of demilitarisation and denuclearisation of the Indian Ocean. President Carter said the following:

> .....We've also proposed that the Indian Ocean be completely demilitarized, that a comprehensive test ban be put into effect, that prior notification of test missile launchings be exchanged. And I would like to see any of these items on which the Soviets will agree quickly, be concluded, and then get down to the much more difficult negotiations on much more drastic, overall commitments to atomic weapons, leading ultimately to the complete elimination of atomic weapons from the face of the Earth....
>
> (Carter, 1977)

With the above Presidential assertion on "complete" demilitarisation there was an anticipation that the US would go on to reduce strategic assets, both mobile and static, in the Indian Ocean. However, President Carter was quick to reformulate his views on the Indian Ocean in about little more than a week after his March 09, 1977 Media brief. With regards to putting an end to nuclear tests mutually along with the Soviet

Union the President mentioned a similar need for it in the Indian Ocean. On March 17, 1977 in his address before the United Nations General Assembly President Carter said;

> .....We will also seek to establish Soviet willingness to reach agreement with us on mutual military restraint in the Indian Ocean, as well as on such matters as arms exports to the troubled areas of the world....
>
> (Carter, United Nations - Address Before the General Assembly, 1977)

The military escalation witnessed by the Indian Ocean as a result of the competition between the two Superpowers throughout the 1960s and for most of the 1970s, for the first time was faced with the possibility of being halted. The talks concerning demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean between the US and the Soviet Union went on for more than three rounds. An important development as a consequence of these talks was the Soviet proposal for demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean in Washington in September 1977 (Harrison and Subrahmanyam, 1989:231). These seemingly peaceful initiatives in the Indian Ocean were still in the formative stage when the US too decided to voice its decision mandating arms limitation in the Indian Ocean. The restrained approach of the US in its military build up in the Indian Ocean was clear in Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's assertion in 1978 that the US is "sticking to its hands-off policy" (*The Washington Post*, February 11, 1978). However, by early 1978 due to the Soviets Union's support to the Ethiopian offensive and the Cuban involvement in the Ogaden War the US decided to slow down its demilitarisation in the Indian Ocean. The gradual demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean, however, paved the way for an eventuality where the Indian Ocean would have witnessed a military build up.

The Ogaden War was another turning point after which the United States decided to harden its stance vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The way in which the Soviet Union retaliated in the Ogaden War proved to be an alibi for the United States in believing that the action of the Soviet Union in supporting Ethiopia along with Cuba was an infringement or a violation of the unstated rules of competition between the two Superpowers. As the Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa grew, the US began

sending overtures that it might be coerced to call off the arms limitation talks. On March 1, 1978 the US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski linked the ongoing Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) rounds to the growing Soviet support for Ethiopia in the Ogaden War, and threatened to call the talks off (Harrison and Subrahmanyam, 1989: p231). As strategic posturing in the Horn of Africa did not show any signs of attenuation, the situation culminated in the calling off of arms limitation talks in the Indian Ocean by the US on December 15, 1978. This also brought an end to the prospect that the US would negotiate the sale of arms to the countries of the Indian Ocean region. The failure of arms limitation talks paved the way for the possibility of further unhindered militarisation in the Indian Ocean. Some analysts including Harrison and Subrahmanyam (1989) relate the linking of the SALT talks to the Ogaden War as part of the latent desire to continue having military presence in the Indian Ocean by the US. The counter argument, due to the lack of adequate measures by the US in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War, has often also been defended on the grounds that the US did not have "vital" (Bowman and Clark, 1981: 137) interests in most parts of the Indian Ocean with the exception of oil from the Persian Gulf.

The decision of the United States to bolster its position in the Indian Ocean partly also emanated from the slipping grounds beneath its foot, even as it lost its major allies in the region like Iran, the Soviet Union and to some extent Saudi Arabia. As the US' diplomacy waned in the region and it slipped in alliance making, the Soviet Union gained substantial positions in the Indian Ocean and improved its relations with littoral countries of the Indian Ocean.

The year 1978, also witnessed the Cambodian crisis in East Asia which changed US policies towards the Pacific, particularly with respect to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. The US declared its support for ASEAN in order to counter Vietnam which was supported by the Soviet Union. This US response to the Soviet backing of the Vietnam during the Cambodian crisis proved to be a quasi justification, in some ways, for more US naval presence in Asia. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that followed in 1979 was the last straw that broke the laden camel's back, in so far as the US response was concerned. The year 1979 marked a unique turn in the approach of the US towards the Indian Ocean, particularly the Persian

Gulf. The US stated occupied Afghanistan a "threat to the Persian Gulf" (Braun 1983). After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the US decided to step up its presence in parts of the Indian Ocean and this effort started by reaching out to the countries of the region through economic and military aids. The US used the circumstances arising out of the invasion of Afghanistan to garner support from Indian Ocean littoral countries against the Soviet Union. Australia was one of the countries that actively engaged itself alongside the US in the aftermath of the invasion. The rhetoric that was peddled by the US to garner collective opposition by the stakeholders in the Indian Ocean against Soviet invasion in Afghanistan referred to the latter's intention to secure access to warm-water ports in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet documents released after the end of the Cold War, however, suggested the intentions to be otherwise (Maley, 1997).

After the Soviet invasion the US decided to overhaul its Asian strategy. Braun (1983) argues that a report submitted in March 1981 went a long way in shaping a planned strategy to deal with countries of the Third World, majority of which were placed in South Asia and surrounded the Indian Ocean or bordered those countries that were littoral countries to the Indian Ocean. The report was submitted by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Library of Congress in March 1981 to the House of Representatives, the committee on foreign affairs. The Report listed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a reminder cum deterrent to the US. Following this report, the US decided to chart a four pronged scheme comprising four broad strategies that would form the fulcrum of future US policies in Asia, mostly concerning its strategy towards the third world countries. These four strategies were; a confrontation policy, a new containment policy, a flexible response policy and an economic security policy.

The 'Official' Entry of the US in Indian Ocean

In December 1979, the Carter Administration was jolted by the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and the Iranian hostage crisis led the Jimmy Carter Administration (1977-81) to seriously think about permanently deploying its navy in and around the Indian Ocean. The American reaction to this was the Carter Doctrine and the subsequent creation of the Rapid

Deployment Force (RDF). By the beginning of 1980, the US government had decided to maintain a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean assumed significance in the US' scheme of things as a consequence of its growing interests towards the Persian Gulf and its energy resources. Chomsky (2003) finds the Persian Gulf as a central point driving US interests in the region. In fact he argues that the system of bases that the US has constructed from the "Pacific to the Azores" was designed with operations in the Persian Gulf in mind. Beginning with the Carter Presidency the Persian Gulf gained a special focus as the US directed its major intervention forces to the Gulf region.

The need for US naval presence in the Indian Ocean was felt much before the Carter Doctrine was even thought of. Evidence of discussions among policy formulators of the time on the need for increasing US naval presence in the Indian Ocean can be listed back to about a decade before the Carter Doctrine was proclaimed. In a State Department Bulletin brought out in 1971 the United States laid out three primary concerns in the Indian Ocean (particularly the Persian Gulf): oil from the Persian Gulf, political stability in the region and free access to and from the region. It was in the context of these three important concerns that the US planned to develop Diego Garcia as a 'modest communications centre' (Braun, 1983). The focus of the US towards the Indian Ocean also received adequate attention within US policy during the 1970s as the grounds for this had been laid successfully by the Nixon Doctrine in 1969 which pronounced America's desire to exit the Vietnam War so that it could focus elsewhere. American interests in the Persian Gulf came as its replacement. The Nixon Doctrine, in some ways, provided the theoretical background to justify the presence of the US in the Indian Ocean through the 1970s. After the Vietnam War the US' involvement in the Indian Ocean would not be seen domestically as being derisive, as the Indian Ocean did not require a full-fledged military commitment from the US. The US involvement in the Indian Ocean would also be more acceptable as US energy interests were involved, as opposed to a regional involvement that was only for ideology and grandstanding.

In 1971 the US tacitly acknowledged that the American presence in the Indian Ocean would remain inferior to that of the Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean will continue to be an area that would not enjoy traditional US dominance in the near future. Nonetheless a State Department Bulletin on the issue same year highlighted the future significance of the Indian Ocean in American strategic calculations. Conclusively, the State Department downplayed any immediacy in gaining control of the Indian Ocean, so long as freedom of access to this region was preserved.

However, things changed rapidly as the subsequent years experienced a Soviet naval build up all over the world, including in parts of the Indian Ocean. In this regard Chipman (1982) observes that the Soviet Union undertook an 'aggressive' ship construction programme throughout the 1960s culminating through 1970s. The pace of Soviet naval build up was such, that by the early 1980s the belief that the US' thin line of naval superiority over the Soviet naval forces was lost, had already set in American policy circles. In such circumstances, the US strategy involving lack of immediate concerns vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean was forced to be re-thought in the 1970s itself.

Amidst such a policy flux, the US got a timely alibi to enter the Indian Ocean in the early 1970s in a manner that was reflective of a desired regional naval superiority. In 1971 when the US opposed the Indian involvement in the creation of Bangladesh and moved its warship USS *Enterprise*up to the Bay of Bengal, it marked a first casus belli by the US in this region. It also marked the first US naval show of strength in the Indian Ocean as it deployed a task force which included the amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli,* a battalion of 800 US Marines and a few other units. This show of strength by the US, until then an untested probability, was as much meant to be a strategic deterrence against India, as an emphasis on its capability to penetrate the Indian Ocean militarily (something that was expected to work as deterrence against the Soviet without the move being directed towards them). Another depiction of US naval strength in the Indian Ocean in the 1970s was in October of 1973 during the Arab-Israeli War or the October War. The US sent its aircraft carrier USS *Hancock* together with four destroyers to the northern Indian Ocean. The withdrawal of *Hancock* was followed by the deployment of another carrier, USS *Oriskany*. In 1974, the Indian Ocean again witnessed the entry of a US aircraft carrier, *Kitty Hawk* (Váli

1976: p175). Between 1972 and mid 1979, an average of three task forces entered the Indian Ocean every year. The mid and late 1970s also saw growing speculations on US deployment of Polaris and Poseidon submarines in the Indian Ocean (Bhatt 1992: p16-17). Even as the US depicted its abilities in force projection as a result of these frequent naval activities in the Indian Ocean, it also dramatically improved its capabilities for combat intervention and intelligence surveillance in South Asia (Harrison 1986).

The Carter Doctrine marked a unique change of approach in the US Strategy in at least two ways; first, it marked a serious departure from the US' earlier non readiness for military intervention and war, obliquely enunciated by the Nixon Doctrine; and second, it showed serious intent from the US in the direction of concretising its presence in the Persian Gulf. The Carter Doctrine gave a thrust to the strategic ideals of the US towards the Indian Ocean for the first time, thereby bringing the region within its policy ambit. It was also the first time that both the US and USSR began to see the Indian Ocean region as a single geopolitical expanse as opposed to their erstwhile conception of viewing this region as being composed of small sub-regions which were isolated and insignificant to their policy considerations.

The entry of the United States in the Indian Ocean along with the Soviet Union introduced the maritime region to a new kind of geopolitics; one that sought to put the two Superpowers in the midst of a balance of power game in this region. This increased the importance of the US Navy significantly, which became the most potent and capable means to buttress its commitments in the Indian Ocean, enunciated primarily through the Carter Doctrine. This geopolitical situation was not just new for the Superpowers themselves but the countries that comprised the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and its littorals.

Even before the Carter Doctrine was in place, the US was gradually building plans for entering the Persian Gulf. To that extent, the Carter Doctrine proved to be the metaphorical final nail in the coffin in the US' plan to enter the Indian Ocean. The Pentagon had first put forward its plan for theRDF in the Persian Gulf in 1977-78. The plan to put in place a RDF was to significantly reduce the impediments encountered by the US navy to move equipment and troops efficiently and readily to the Persian Gulf and other parts of the Indian Ocean. The distinctive quality of the

RDF would be its ability to as swiftly deploy, as withdraw from the region. This characteristic was planned in the aftermath of the lessons from the Vietnam War where the US got drawn into the war despite its willingness to get out of Vietnam (Bhatt, 1992).

This argument stands as a true assessment in the light of historical fact-finding during the Carter Administration. In fact, the idea of putting in place a RDF was underway in the Carter Administration since late 1970s. The Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) 10 titled, "Comprehensive Net Assessment and Military Force Posture Review," sought to re-evaluate the US strategy. The ordering of PRM 10 on February 18, 1977 was a definite sign of the need to rejig the US military postures in some parts of the world, including the Indian Ocean. During the Carter Administration PRMs and Presidential Directives (PD) were created by the National Security Council (NSC) to review and assess foreign policy requirements from time to time. As per the suggestions made by the PRM 10 assessments, President Carter signed PD 18 on August 24, 1977. One of the key directives coming out of the PD 18 led to the formation of the RDF later. In the following year, 1978, three divisions from the Army (9th, 82nd and 101st) and one Marine division were allocated services which comprised the early task of the RDF (Antill, 2001). The RDF was created as a mobile contingency force to respond to global crises without having to involve other US military resources, particularly the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces.

As a result of various PRMs and PDs that followed throughout the year 1977, the Indian Ocean became a focus area for President Carter. Among a series of declassified files from the Carter Presidency, at least two point towards serious efforts that were being made by the Carter Administration to gauge the US' military prospects and influence in the Indian Ocean region. The PRM/NSC 21 dated March 17, 1977 with its subject titled, "The Horn Of Africa," pondered on whether to "continue, reduce or suspend US military and economic aid programs in Ethiopia" while also wondering about the possibilities for "loosening Somalia-Soviet Union ties." Another PRM/NSC 25 titled, "Arms Control in the Indian Ocean," dated April 7, 1977 issued by President Carter mandated a study that was to be completed in about twenty days that would review past policies of the US in the Indian Ocean, simultaneously pointing out the

US' security interests and objectives in the Indian Ocean. Importantly, the study was to be completed under the scope of "crisis management in the Indian Ocean" and "US-Soviet rivalry" in the Indian Ocean region. Both these PRMs not only brought to fore the latent attention that was being paid to the Indian Ocean by the Carter Administration but also the urgency that was accorded to defend US' interests and increasing its military presence in the region. These efforts, however, were running parallel to negotiations with Russia over arms control in the Indian Ocean. In June 1977, a team of naval experts began negotiations with Russia for arms control in the Indian Ocean (Sick, 2016). These contrastingly different efforts in opposite directions by the Carter Administration, one finding ways to increase the US' presence in the Indian Ocean and the other trying to decrease, probably led to the failure of the arms limitations talks between the two nations. A few years later the Carter Doctrine officially marked the Indian Ocean as a place of developing US interests on the global strategic map. In an exception, the Carter Doctrine mentioned the Gulf region as an 'inviolable sphere of US interests' (Braun, 1983).

The year 1980 was a crucial year in so far as American strategy towards the Indian Ocean is concerned. On January 23, 1980, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed his doctrine in his State of the Union Address, which later became known as the Carter Doctrine. The Carter Doctrine marked a unique change of approach in the US strategy towards Asia in at least two ways; one, it marked a serious departure from the erstwhile approach of the US proclaimed by the Nixon Doctrine of 1969 (broadly understood as reluctance to get involved in military conflicts in Asia), secondly; probably for the first time the US had enunciated, through a Presidential Doctrine, the intent which vowed consolidating the US presence in the Persian Gulf, a crucial part of the Indian Ocean. The Carter Doctrine, therefore, saw the emergence of the US' strategic ideals towards the Indian Ocean as an upshot, thereby bringing the region under its policy considerations. From the Nixon Doctrine in 1969 until the Carter Doctrine in 1980, the US policy marked a radically distinctive turn in declaring the Gulf region as an important sphere of the US' interest.

In the State of the Union address delivered before a Joint Session of the Congress on January 23, 1980, President Carter, among other things, proclaimed,

> An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.....We've increased and strengthened our naval presence in the Indian Ocean, and we are now making arrangements for key naval and air facilities to be used by our forces in the region of northeast Africa and the Persian Gulf.
>
> (Excerpt from the Carter Doctrine, 1980)

Sick (2016) points out that the Carter Administration was interested in forward arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union until it realised in 1978 that there was no progress in the talks with the Soviet Union. The Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 incinerated any restraint on the part of the US. The post-Carter Doctrine phase witnessed an unprecedented naval build up in the Persian Gulf which, in many ways, proved to be a counter-step to an already established Soviet naval presence and intent in the Indian Ocean. The Carter Doctrine not just ended the Détente but prepared for a US resistance to the Soviet advance depicted mainly through the latter's naval build up in the Indian Ocean and the littoral states, finally culminating in the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report of the Library of Congress submitted to the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, drafted after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was decisive in framing the US' future policy towards the Third World. Increase in naval deployments in the Indian Ocean was an immediate US response to the crisis (Afghanistan: Soviet Invasion and U.S. Response, 1980).

The Carter Doctrine and the subsequent Persian Gulf naval deployments by the US were important as these developments made a very important distinction; marking a definitive change in the strategy of the US towards the Indian Ocean. These developments benchmarked the early 1980s in the US naval history as years that

witnessed the important distinction between an Indian Ocean sans the US involvement and the one that saw a part of the Indian Ocean being declared as integral to US interests. The desire of the US in the late 1970s translated into concrete naval presence in the Persian Gulf by the early 1980s. By the 1980s the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean connected a host of naval port-bases present in Gwadar and Karachi (Pakistan), Port Sudan (Sudan), Hodeida (Yemen), Trincomalee (Sri Lanka), Bahrain and Australia. However, the mainstay of US naval power rested on the string of conventional naval bases present throughout the larger Indian Ocean: Ras Banas (Egypt), Mariah (Oman), MIDEASTFOR (Bahrain), Mombassa (Kenya), Saudi Arabia, Berbera (Somalia) and Diego Garcia.

US Interests in the Indian Ocean

The Congressional Research Service (1978) was one of the early research documents coming out of Washington which explored US interests in the Indian Ocean and the broader Indian subcontinent. The document outlined that the US shared some of its interests in the Indian Ocean with some of the littoral countries, particularly India. Some of the US' interests in the Indian Ocean that were outlined in this document were; security, free transit of ships and one-upmanship in competitive naval deployments vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Even though the trade that passed through the Indian Ocean in the late 1970s was much less than the numbers today, security of shipping lines was still a preeminent concern for the US. As the Cold War peaked and the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean increased slowly, the US concerns began to tether around the free transit of warships in the Indian Ocean region. Any step from the regional countries causing obstruction to the movement of warships would further accelerate the already existing asymmetrical advantage that the Soviet Union enjoyed in the Indian Ocean. However, the most important concern for the US presence in the Indian Ocean was to relatively eclipse the Soviet naval presence by a steady acceleration of its own naval presence in the region.

The other major interest of the US in the Indian Ocean was to curb the growing Russian presence in the Indian Ocean. One way in which the US thought it would be best done, was to gain control of the choke points in the Indian Ocean through robust

naval presence in those areas. For instance, entrances to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf were very closely monitored by the US naval forces. Throughout the decade of 1970s both the Superpowers rallied to increase their presence in the Indian Ocean. Starting from the 1970s towards the 1980s the nature of presence of both the Superpowers moved towards becoming more military-oriented. In this regard, Braun (1983) highlights that military security in the Indian Ocean was hardly a concern before the US began to run a full-fledged MSF in the Indian Ocean Island of Diego Garcia. This may point to some truth as the US only began military build-up in the Indian Ocean on a noticeable scale in the 1970s. The possible expansion of supporting roles to the US military from Diego Garcia led to the beginning of concerns among the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean of a looming regional threat; one that could engulf other regional countries in the Superpower rivalry.

Genesis of US Indian Ocean Presence

The military interests of the US in the Indian Ocean grew with the combined effect of the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and the continuing hostage crisis in Iran until the early 1980s[4]. Especially, increasing Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean led to more pressing concerns for the US vis-à-vis its geographic basing in the heart of the Indian Ocean. Although the military facility at Diego Garcia conceptually traces its inception back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, the militaristic projections out of it began through some of the strands inherited from the Carter Doctrine. For instance, the Carter Doctrine categorically points out the Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean using the following words vis-à-vis the Southwest Asian region;

[4] 50 Americans were still held hostage in Iran even during January 1980, when President Carter was delivering his State of the Union address in 1980.

> The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: It contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway through which most of the world's oil must flow. The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position, therefore, that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil.
>
> (Carter Doctrine)

In the above excerpt from the Carter Doctrine, the Indian Ocean finds an unprecedented reference in a US Presidential Doctrine. Extending the above argument the Carter Doctrine builds up on the growing militaristic needs of the US in Indian Ocean. Laying out the plans of his Presidency, President Carter talked about deploying US military forces to "distant areas," besides strengthening NATO and deploying "modernized, intermediate-range nuclear forces to meet an unwarranted and increased threat from the nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union." (Carter Doctrine).

Referring to the US' growing military approach in the Indian Ocean, President Carter also mentioned the following;

> We've increased and strengthened our naval presence in the Indian Ocean, and we are now making arrangements for key naval and air facilities to be used by our forces in the region of northeast Africa and the Persian Gulf.
>
> (Carter Doctrine)

The above reference without doubt refers to the efforts that were being made by the US in equipping Diego Garcia as a functional MSF apart from efforts in eastern Africa by the US to gain upper hand vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The post-Carter Doctrine approach of the US towards the Indian Ocean was a stand-alone military vision for this regional rather than one based on cooperation with regional partners or allies.

The US naval presence in the Indian Ocean also shifted course due to changes in Soviet naval policy, as it did vice versa. Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean concretised after the year 1968 (Jukes, 1981). Although the basic presumption for a military build up by both the Superpowers remained underscored with their mutual competition and the need to gain strategic upper hand over the other, any direct military confrontation in the Indian Ocean between them eschewed the regional geopolitics during the Cold War. However there is immense scope to look at the naval presences of both the Superpowers beyond the rationale of one's retaliatory position against the other. Both the US and the Soviet Union used their influence to carve out their military space against each other. However, while the US military build up in the Indian Ocean could largely be attributed to countering the Soviet threat, at least on one occasion the US felt the need for strengthening military wherewithal in the Indian Ocean, for reasons beside the Soviet threat. The October War of 1973 and the oil embargo that followed was a decision that sought to threaten American economic interests in the region and challenge its premier position in the world as a military power. This threat emanated primarily from the decisions by the regional Middle East states. The US naval build up which followed in the years to come was to safeguard its energy interests in the Indian Ocean primarily. That this move would serve against Soviet presence in the littoral states, was an intended, added advantage for the US. In the aftermath of the October War, oil embargo by the states of the region and the resultant price rise that oil witnessed led the US to decide about sending a carrier task force to the Indian Ocean. On December 1, 1973 the then Defense Secretary James Schlesinger led the official announcement that a carrier task force had been dispatched to the Indian Ocean and that such endeavours would be undertaken on a routine basis. The deployment of the task force continued upto 1974, until the oil embargo in the Persian Gulf was lifted. The task force was as much a deterrent move against regional countries involved in the embargo, as it was an attempt to frame regional stability. Although the military presence of the US in the Gulf coerced an end to the oil embargo it could not prevent regional hostility against itself. The military presence of the US was opposed by the countries in the Gulf region, particularly Saudi Arabia which was pressurising Bahrain to oust the Middle East Force or the MIDEASTFOR of the US from the latter's soil. Feeling the heat of growing regional opposition in the Persian Gulf, the US decided to strengthen contingencies in Diego

Garcia. Most reasons that led to the strategic elevation of the status of Diego Garcia from a communications base to an MSF find their roots in the 1971 ultimatum handed to the US for the ouster of its MIDEASTFOR from Bahrain. The Gulf crisis and the ensuing regional resistance to US military presence in the Persian Gulf prompted counter strengthening of its unilateral capabilities in the Indian Ocean by bolstering the capabilities of its navy in the region by the US.

Geographic Basing of US Interests in the Indian Ocean

The American interests in the Indian Ocean apropos Diego Garcia go back to the 1960s when the US signed a deal leasing the island from the British. The US interests in the Indian Ocean emerged from the British government's inability to continue to hold its control over Aden. When the British government decided to pull back from the east of Suez and the Persian Gulf region, the US saw an opportunity to increase capabilities in an area where the Soviet Union was rapidly gaining upper hand. A faltering economy and its loosening grip on military control to the east-of-Suez led Britain to announce in the year 1968 that it would withdraw from the east of Suez by the year 1971. This development came in as an opportunity for the US which signed a treaty with Britain obtaining the right to use the island for military uses. Although the Treaty allowed for the presence of a small number of British forces on the Island, gradually it came to be filled by the US military personnel and facilities overwhelmingly. As the weight of the US troop and military paraphernalia on Diego Garcia grew, not only did it eclipse the British presence and hold on this island but many speculations surrounding the island started transforming into perceptions. Among a few common perceptions about Diego Garcia the one that emerged most prominently saw the island developing as one of the most important bases of the US overseas. Diego Garcia's emergence as the first concrete South Asian military presence of the US in the heart of the Indian Ocean changed the politico-security and strategic dynamics of the Indian Ocean region;which stared in the face of a possibility of being drawn into the Cold War rivalry. Part of the reason why apprehensions grew surrounding Diego Garcia was because indeed very little was known to the outside world about the island. Sand (2009) rightly points out that the Diego Garcia has

remained one of the most unknown American bases to the people in the US, as indeed to the rest of the world.

Although one could argue whether the lack of a military rhetoric and the absence of a real time show of strength based out of Diego Garcia by the US (when that was quite a possibility) was deliberate or not, but there has been a deliberate playing down of the military potential of Diego Garcia for the US, given its strategic location straddling the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. When the US signed the agreement in 1966 acquiring permission to use Diego Garcia, for defence purposes for an initial period of 50 years (The use of Diego Garcia for rendition), it was done in a clandestine manner. This was also reflected in the deliberate choice of its nomenclature, "Military Support Facility" (MSF) instead of 'base'. The strategic position of Diego Garcia, between the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and the Seventh Fleet in Japan also contributed in keeping its military projections and capabilities shrouded. However, the larger umbrella reason why the US insisted on limiting the potential of Diego Garcia only to a military support facility as opposed to making it a base was that in the latter possibility the US risked getting into an arms-race with the Soviet Union in a region where the Soviet Union already had an asymmetric edge. An MSF, in principle, took away the hostile intent that would normally be associated with a military base.

The manner in which the US took over and started its operations in Diego Garcia portrayed that the US chanced upon an opportunity presented to it by the British inability to hold on to the Island. However, in reality, the US undertook a smooth process of transition that involved initially allowing a small number of British forces to stay on the Island. While the whole process seemed very rapid and a bolt from the blue to many regional countries that form the Indian Ocean littorals, there was significant cooperation between Britain and the US to eventuate the treaty that saw the US overtake Diego Garcia from Britain. In this regard Braun (1983) argues that as early as the 1950s both the US and Britain started showing combined interest in parts of the Indian Ocean as part of their larger strategy to form a concrete basing out of the Indian Ocean. For Britain's Royal Navy and its Royal Air Force, the Indian Ocean was already an important position since the 1940s from where they concretised their deterrence against an imperial Japan. However, parts of the Indian Ocean grew in

strategic importance for the US gradually. First, the US found common interests with Britain in the Indian Ocean as an area that largely remained out of Western strategic calculus. Second, gradually the US' interests with regards to the Indian Ocean transcended into being one of its own and distinct from that of Britain. During the Cold War the US used the Indian Ocean as a trade route for transportation of minerals that were largely used for military purposes. Third and most importantly, as the Soviet naval operations spread to the Indian Ocean it gave rise to a threat perception. The Chinese antagonism added to this feeling and the US felt a strong need for basing itself in the Indian Ocean led by the effort from its Navy. Since the 1960s both the US and the Soviet Union started following an approach centred on bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

In the beginning, the Soviet Union followed this strategy more vigorously and later the US followed suit. However, the US always seemed to be playing the catching-up game in this regard with the Soviet Union resulting in gradual growing asymmetry between the two powers in the India Ocean. A major reason for the edge that the Soviet Union had vis-à-vis the US was the disadvantage that the US faced in the Indian Ocean due its peripheral location from the North American continent, as also from its other nodes of military presence. The geographical proximity of the Soviet Union was of great importance in gaining the strategic edge apropos the presence of the US in this region.

The credit for giving shape to the US thought on finding a strategic island in the Indian Ocean goes to Stuart B. Barber, director of Navy's Long Range Objectives Group (CNO/OP-93) established in 1955. His foresight saw the need for acquiring a future base right in a strategically located island in the southern Hemisphere which could be used in future for communication, refueling and "prepositioning" stations (Sand 2009). Acting on this proposition the US rushed a team of American admirals to take a stock of Diego Garcia as a potential strategic military station in the Indian Ocean. The first inspection took place in the year 1957 led by Admiral Jerauld Wright who was the commander of the US Atlantic Fleet. The second inspection took place under the leadership of Rear Admiral Jack Grantham in 1961. After successive inspections and assessments by the US Navy, the US along with Britain decided to carry out a joint military survey in the year 1964 led by US Commander Harry S. Hart

towards further concretising the possibility of a strategic US military location in the Indian Ocean. There were some other islands that caught the eyes of the US Navy but had to be turned down due to domestic protests both in Washington and London. The Tortoise Island of Seychelles was one such possibility that had emerged. Finally, the assertion voiced in this regard by Admiral Horacio Rivero, jr., vice chief of US naval operations seemed to be the final nail in the coffin in the effort to find a US military base in the Indian Ocean. He said at a briefing in 1964 with respect to Diego Garcia, "I want this Island." (Sand 2003: 2). In the same year after the quasi finalisation of the US decision to take over the island from the UK a legal hurdle stalled the desired discerptibility of Diego Garcia from its parent island of Mauritius. Both the US and UK faced a new problem as taking away of Diego Garcia would amount to violation of sovereignty of Mauritius, which was already an independent country as per the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries (Resolution 1514/XV).

Despite the seemingly smooth transition of Diego Garcia from the UK to the US, there remained the larger shadow of extra-judicial mandates adopted by both the countries to establish Diego Garcia as a military facility. The UK government issued an Order-in-Council on November 08, 1965 proclaiming the formation of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), without a debate (Sand, 2003: p4). Furthermore, both the US and the UK exceeded sovereignty accorded to Mauritius by choosing to ignore the UNGA Resolution (2066 [XX]). The two countries went ahead with the conclusion of a bilateral agreement on the "Availability for Defense Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory," in London on December 30, 1966 (U.K.-U.S. base leasing agreement for Diego Garcia, 30 December, 1966). The text of a secret letter signed between the UK and the US governments in the year 1966 confirms a deliberate cover up. The administrative cost incurred in the process of detachment of Diego Garcia from its mainland country Mauritius (illegally) was compensated against an earlier debt (1963 POLARIS missile sale by the US to the UK) of the UK government, thereby complementing an apparent smooth process of land-money swap.

The letters were present in the US National Archives, Washington DC under file no, RG 59/150/64-65 (1964-1966, Box No. 1552) as part of declassification on November

16, 2005 but now have been removed by the US Government "for national security reasons." However, they are present in the UK National Archive, FO 93/8/401. (Sand 2003 p149). The US Government's decision to take the secret letter confirming the Diego Garcia swap off the shelf while the UK government's decision to continue with the letter in its archives is reflective of the measure of respective current stakes of these countries inside Diego Garcia.

Diego Garcia in the US Navy's Scheme

One of the foremost advocates of the use of Diego Garcia to its full military potential, through his proposal of the island as both a naval as well as air base as early as 1959 was Admiral McCain. Commander of the US Pacific Fleet Admiral John S. McCain has famously talked about the strategic importance of Diego Garcia for the US in his following words, "As Malta is to the Mediterranean, Diego Garcia is to the Indian Ocean- equidistant from all points." (Kumar, 2000:119). Years later Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt wrote about US intentions in developing Diego Garcia in a similar tenor:

> In the judgement of many observers the Indian Ocean has become an area with the potential to produce major shifts in the global power balance over the next decade. It follows that we must have the ability to influence events in that area; and the capability to deploy our military power in the region is an essential element of such influence. That is the crux of the rationale for what we are planning to do at Diego Garcia."
>
> (Anwar, 1991: 43)

Despite the heavy rhetoric and lobbying from the Navy the US government remained doubtful about its entry in the Indian Ocean.

During the year 1967-68 the US Navy carried out studies for basing itself in the 'southern hemisphere' and Diego Garcia emerged as a strategic option. In the following year, the Navy along with the Joint Chief of Staff decided to take up the proposal to build a military base on Diego Garcia more seriously. Three strong reasons that emerged favouring acquisition of base rights by the US in the Indian

Ocean were; a) the need to increase naval patrols in the Indian Ocean in the wake of rising Soviet presence, b) to provide support assistance as well as present an alternative to the US military presence (particularly destroyers and flagship) already present in Bahrain, and c) support in logistics and refuelling for its fleet in the Pacific and the Gulf (Todd, 1994). In the year 1966, both the UK and the US agreed on a 50-year joint use and development of Diego Garcia (Urish, 1973). However, subsequent studies by the Department of Defense formed an opinion against any base in the Indian Ocean as it was assessed that the geopolitical status of the Indian Ocean did not deem a military base necessary at that point. Moreover, in times of military need, contingencies could be drawn from the Pacific Fleet (Rais, 1987).

Although some form of US presence in the Indian Ocean was still thought to be necessary, as a complete absence of the US from the region would have given undue asymmetric edge to the Soviet Union. With regards to the decision to develop Diego Garcia as a facility for logistics or communications, a consensus emerged between the US Navy and the Defense Department. However, after several repudiations the Congress finally approved the construction of a joint British-US Communications centre on Diego Garcia through the Military Construction Appropriations Act of 1971 (Urish, 1973). Hence, a purely militaristic approach towards developing Diego Garcia was avoided due to Congressional opposition. The planned operational requirements to be developed on Diego Garcia included surveillance, communications and docking in line with a $26 million Joint Chief of Staff plan (Rais, 1987: p80). The island also became a coveted place for military purposes because of its ideal clandestine strategic positioning and its geophysical location that is not prone to oceanic and weather turbulences.

The US Navy's involvement in the constructions at Diego Garcia was very crucial. The US Navy was at the forefront of the project during the entire phase that spanned from its inception in the 1960 until the completion of the project in 1986. The first phase has roughly been categorised by most, including Sand (2009), as the years spanning between early 1970s and late 1980s. During this period, Congressional allocation for mandated military appurtenance on Diego Garcia was sanctioned to the tune of $668.4 million. The project of initial military constructions was taken up by the US Navy's Mobile Construction Battalions. In January 1971, a nine member team

of Seabees from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) carried out the first survey for the areas conducive for making naval facilities on the island. The USS *Vernon County* was among the first US ships to be used on Diego Garcia for assistance in reconnaissance and building the 'Reindeer Station' at Diego Garcia. By July 1971 the first runway of the island measuring 3500 feet was constructed. Construction that followed were mostly contractual in nature involving companies from Taiwan, Japan and most prominently a collaboration between Texas rooted Raymond International, Brown & Root and Mowlem &Co. (Sand, 2009:36). On March 20, 1973 US Naval Communications station at Diego Garcia was commissioned. In November 1974, the US task force in the Persian Gulf that had sought to elevate its role in the aftermath of the oil embargo, participated in one of the largest naval exercises named Mid Link 74. Since this Exercise involved countries of the CENTO besides the US, the latter's participation also sought to create repositioning contingencies in the event that Bahrain would have remained firm on its decision to oust the MIDEASTFOR from the country (Beazley, 1981:123). The US' efforts to reformulate and gradually increase its naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the first half of the 1970s had been summed up briefly by the then Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger in a hearing before Senate committee. He explains the US Indian Ocean presence in the following words:

> The level of U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean has been prudent. We have had a small permanent presence in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea since 1949, consisting of the command ship and two destroyers of the Middle East Force centered in Bahrain. In addition, since October 1973, we have conducted more frequent and more regular deployments to the area from our Pacific Fleet. Over the past 18 months, there have been seven such deployments, including five visits by carrier task groups and two visits by major surface combatants. Over the past year, we have had an augmented presence in the area approximately one-third of the time.
>
> (Schlesinger, 1975)

About three years after the Mid Link 74 was conducted, in 1977 the naval support facility at Diego Garcia was also commissioned.[5] A couple of years after its commissioning Diego Garcia began to see more frequent US naval activities including docking and reconnaissance. During April 12-16, 1979 USS *Elliot* (DD 967) made a port call at Diego Garcia and later played important role in Gulf operations along with other ships of the US. The first test for the naval support facility at Diego Garcia came in the year 1980. On April 16, 1980 when the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved OPERATION EAGLE CLAW, the US military operation that sought to rescue the hostages in Iran, Diego Garcia became an "unannounced" (Clark, 2009) part of the operation as a station providing stationing of tankers. The clandestine nature of the operation necessitated that there was no formal notification about prospective arrival of tankers, fleet or air support to the island. Diego Garcia's proximity to the Persian Gulf and its isolated geographic location made it a strategic choice for prepositioning of US' military support in the Indian Ocean. Any odd maritime behaviour near Diego Garcia had very remote chance of being discovered by Iran or its friends, but certainly needed more cautious efforts to avoid any Soviet attention. In this operation, the Navy besides fielding two warships (USS *Nimitz* and USS *Coral Sea*) also provided eight RH-53D helicopters which were supported by the tanker force stationed at Diego Garcia. Diego Garcia also played an important role in providing refuelling to aircraft involved in OPERATION EAGLE CLAW, especially those that flew from Hawai through the KC-135s Stratotankers that were stationed on the island. Thigpen (2001) hints that the operation included Diego Garcia as a lynchpin of US' hostage rescue plan in Iran. He further mentions that the operation in Iran included Diego Garcia as a prepositioning base for aircraft before they flew to Masirah Island, Oman for deploying the aircraft as part of a forward base, closer to the centre of action in Iran. After the development of Diego Garcia, the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean was growing gradually. From the mid 1960s the US

[5] A chronological history of the events at Diego Garcia is available at: http://www.zianet.com/tedmorris/dg/realhistory.html

maintained its naval presence in the Indian Ocean on a regular basis, albeit substantially lesser than the Pacific or the Atlantic Oceans. The table in the next page provides a broad comparison of US ships operating in four maritime areas.

Table 1: United States Naval Operations (Ship days out of area)

Year	Indian Ocean	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Mediterranian Sea
1965	1,100	54,200	36,200	18.000
1969	1,100	62,400	35,000	19,000
1972	1,100	47,300	7,200	15,000
1974	2,600	34,800	8,500	15,400
1976	1,400	19,700	9,800	15,200

Source: Ashok Kapur, *The Indian Ocean: Regional and International Power Politics (New York, 1982).*

The number of ships being operated out the Indian Ocean show that albeit the number fluctuated, it reminded above a thousand ships since the mid-1960s. The number of US ships operating in the Indian Ocean went upwards after the year 1976 as the following two years saw the Ogaden War being played out near the east African coast. As pointed out earlier, the high tension that followed in the Persian Gulf due to the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan saw an unprecedented US naval build up in the Indian Ocean.

Carrying out a secret operation in Iran to rescue the hostages appeared to be a bridge too far in the end for the Carter Presidency. The combined concerns of long geographical distance between the US and Iran along with the need to keep the mission a secret proved to be difficult. These factors nonetheless helped the US in forming a strategy for a region that had until then remained on peripheries of US strategic concerns. As such, including Diego Garcia as an essential prepositioning

post for operations in Asia by the US, particularly the Persian Gulf, was a strategy that emerged as a consequence of the emerging tensions in the region in the late 1970s. While the Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union remained as the preeminent US concern in Asia, as elsewhere, drastic geopolitical developments such as the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan proved to be immediate triggers for the adoption of a more bellicose Indian Ocean strategy by the US.The year 1979 proved to be one of the most turbulent years for the Carter Presidency with a double jolt; first, the Iranian crisis that started with the November 4, 1979 overrunning of the US Embassy in Tehran by young Islamic revolutionaries, and second, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the following month. In the Carter Presidency's plan to handle this double challenge, extending strategic footprints in Asia came up as the most favoured option. It appears to be a consequence of this thought that Diego Garcia witnessed unexpected and frequent involvement in the failed operation against Iran hostage crisis.

In April 1980 even as the Carter Presidency decided in favour of a secret offensive against Iran, there were efforts being made to make Diego Garcia operationally ready for any immediate contingencies that might have arisen. In the effort to support OPERATION EAGLE CLAW Diego Garcia witnessed a gradual build up in its military support capabilities. As this build up happened almost simultaneously with President Carter's authorisation to carry out a secret mission against Iran in April 1980, the US Navy's establishing the Near-Term Pre-Positioned Force (NTPF) seemed to be the part of a combined effort comprising aerial cum naval saber rattling in the Persian Gulf. Although OPERATION EAGLE CLAWwas supposed to be largely an aerial exercise, it needed backing by a hands-on navy.

The years that followed saw the gradual expansion of the construction of military facilities on Diego Garcia and increase in naval activity. In the year 1981 Naval Air Facility was commissioned in Diego Garcia. Johnson (2004) lists the USS *Saratoga* (CV-60) as the first aircraft carrier to dock at Diego Garcia in 1985. By the year 1986 most of the major construction programmes on the island had been over and it continued to witness frequent naval activities by the US. In the year 1987 the USS *Constellation* undertook flight operations while stationed at Diego Garcia. In the same year USS *Long Beach*, the first nuclear powered guided missile cruiser, also visited

Diego Garcia marking a series of naval activity that would continue at a more frequent rate throughout the 1980s.

But for an efficient and enduring military readiness and support, OPERATION RICE BOWL could have met with an opposite finality favouring the US. The failure of the US' rescue mission during Iran hostage crisis along with rising Soviet asymmetric edge in the Indian Ocean region allowed for an assessment whether the US needed a significant military readiness overhaul in the Persian Gulf and the larger Indian Ocean. As a result, a lot of stress was laid on enhancing the US Navy's capability through strengthening prepositioning as an important element of US naval strategy in the 1980s. In the year 1986, not only was the NTPF rechristened as the Afloat Prepositioning Force (AFP), its responsibilities were expanded too. The AFP was employed as a new US naval strategy that promised express maritime delivery of equipment and supplies to ships positioned in tactical areas. This new naval strategy was supposed to prove beneficial in expediting maritime delivery mechanism during impending crisis, war, deterrence, threat or disaster management. Prepositioning also comprised one of the most essential five legs of the US navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC).

As part of the effort to build a coherent US naval strategy, in the year 1986 MSC Preposition Group One was created as a single strategic command. This naval command was mostly responsible for Diego Garcia and comprised twelve NTPF ships and thirteen Marine Corps maritime positioning ships. A significant development towards employing an integrated approach and instilling more functional discipline to naval activities in Diego Garcia was the decommissioning of the Naval Air Facility and incorporating its erstwhile responsibilities under one large banner of Naval Support Facility (NSF). These gradual changes helped in the evolution of Diego Garcia as one of the most important US military facilities around the world.[6] By the year 1987, as its strength and additional military strategies progressed further, Diego

[6] Details regarding these changes are available at: naval-technology.com

Garcia became a substantive and almost indispensable element of the US' naval strategy in the larger IOR; extending from the Persian Gulf, Western Indian Ocean, through the Pacific Ocean. Diego Garcia proved crucial in providing support to ships and aircraft from as far as the Fifth Fleet to its west, and Guam and Japan to its east. By 1987, Diego Garcia attained the requisite infrastructure to accommodate at least 30 ships and nuclear submarines at a given time. The island boasted of one of the longest "slipform-paved" runaways and its ability to store supplies and ammunition to support a 12000 strong troop for a month without support from outside. By the late 1980s Diego Garcia had a host of lethal war machinery including B-52 bombers, more than a dozen war ships and about the same number of cargo vessels.

Since the 1980s, the island of Diego Garcia has been central to the US naval strategy in the Indian Ocean. The military support infrastructure installed on the island is used to support operations, refuelling and maintenance not just the ships of the US but its allies like the UK and Australia. However, these services are specific to particular commands that are stationed at Diego Garcia. Some of them are; Military Sealift Command Office (MSCO), Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two (COMPSRON TWO), Afloat Prepositioning Ships Squadron Four (APSRON FOUR), Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Detachment, Mission Support Facility, FISC Yokosuka and 36 MXG Pacific Air Force (http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/diego-garcia/). The NSF at Diego Garcia provides maintenance, repair and pre-checks for prepositioning ships. Besides these the facilities at Diego Garcia include Air Mobility Command (AMC) controls for aircraft flying in the region.

Probably the most formidable aspect of the naval strategy of the US emanating from Diego Garcia were the strategic bombers that were placed on the island. The strategic bombers, particularly the B-52s, added immensely to the strength of the prepositioning ships with its ability to respond swiftly to crises. Besides these, the ability of the B-52s to carry about twenty nuclear warheads on a single aircraft made the US naval capabilities unparalleled in the Indian Ocean region. Despite erstwhile assurances to the US Congress against the stationing and use of B-52 strategic from Diego Garcia, by the late 1980s B-52s became an integral part of the combined naval-air strategy projected from Diego Garcia. However, as the US undertook more aerial

operations from Diego Garcia it realised that it would be more economical if more aircraft were placed at US bases in the Middle East as an alternative to sorties from Diego Garcia. This realisation especially came after the US conducted air operations from Diego Garcia using aircraft such as B-52H, B-1B (Lancers) and B-2 (Spirits) in both Afghanistan (2001-2006) and Iraq (2003), in OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and OPERATION IRAQIFREEDOM (OIF). It was also assessed that in relocating most of the air capability to the Middle East from Diego Garcia the US would save more than $360, 000 on a daily basis during active operations and sorties (Sand, 2009:40). With this detachment of aerial capabilities from Diego Garcia the island became a more naval-strategy centric support facility, although some air support continued to be stationed at Diego Garcia.

Throughout the 1980s the United States continued to develop facilities at Diego Garcia in order to strengthen its combined capability towards the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. The Reagan Administration's budgetary allocation to shore up facilities at Diego Garcia helped further in the development of military and logistic support at Diego Garcia. With the establishment of Diego Garcia as a functional MSF of the US in the Indian Ocean, it also filled the gap in the maritime communications chain that the US had established by using its naval reach in countries of east Africa, the Middle East and Australia. After the start of naval support operations from Diego Garcia, the US relied less on its Pacific and South Atlantic fleets to visit the Indian Ocean. The move is also seen by some, including Kapur (1981: p135), as an attempt by the US to make its naval strategy in the Indian Ocean more isolationist.

Establishment of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF)

On August 24, 1977 President Carter signed the Presidential Directive (PD) 18 which called for the establishment of a 'deployment force of light divisions with strategic mobility for global contingencies, particularly in the Persian Gulf region and Korea' (Palmer, 1992:92). Later in December that year the Secretary of Defense Harold Brown emphasised the need for naval and tactical air forces to gain strategic edge in the Indian Ocean. This was followed by the US Joint Chief of Staff's approval of the "Review of US Strategy Related to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf" on

September 07, 1978. This review was important as it reassessed US interests in the region. There were three broad US interests outlined in this 1978 review:

> 1. To assure continuous access to petroleum resources.
>
> 2. To prevent an inimical power or combination of powers from establishing hegemony.
>
> 3. To assure the survival of Israel as an independent state in a stable relationship with contiguous Arab states.
>
> (Palmer, 1992: p 92)

These decisions had direct bearing on the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). The RDJTF was officially established on March 01, 1980 at the MacDill Air Force Base Florida as part of US Readiness Command (USREDCOM). The task force was assigned with the duty to counter the Soviet threat besides being given the responsibility to 'help maintain regional stability and the Gulf oil-flow westward'. Given its highly mobile nature and a task force that drew military contingencies from all the forces, the RDJTF first started with global responsibilities which slowly narrowed down essentially to cover US interests in the Persian Gulf. As a result the RDJTF, as soon as it was institutionalised in 1980, saw its Area of Responsibility (AOR) expanded to cover most of the littoral countries of the Persian Gulf and East Africa, besides also accounting for security in countries like Afghanistan and Egypt.

Since the RDJTF was a combined task force, the Army, Navy, Marine and the Air Force all were equally crucial in its formation, both at the organisational and operational levels. However, as RDJTF was primarily responsible for littoral countries the naval component contributed significantly in force projection, maritime security, prepositioning and military readiness across the Persian Gulf, a region that defined core US interests during the Carter Administration. The RDJTF was a formidable combination of three carrier battle groups one of which was positioned in the Indian Ocean. The RDJTF also had a surface action, antisubmarine warfare patrol aircraft, amphibious ships and prepositioning ships at Diego Garcia (Antill, 2001). The Navy's operations were supported by its MSC. The combination of these military paraphernalia made the RDJTF a very potent military option for the US in the Indian Ocean, especially the Persian Gulf. However, there were still some concerns in the US

for better organisation of responsibilities under the RDJTF. As the RDJTF continued to take military support from the Navy, Army, Air Force and the Marine Corps, the Department of Defense took a decision to better organise the RDJTF and minimise any inter-services friction that would arise. Other similar changes at multiple levels in the RDJTF paved way for its evolution into a separate military command; the United States Central Command (CENTCOM). On April 24, 1981 Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger announced that the RDJTF would be changed to a separate military command with more focused geographic responsibilities.

The Reagan Administration: Establishment of US CENTCOM

Following the Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration (1981-89) reinforced the Carter Doctrine with greater emphasis. Bhatt (1992) recounts that the Reagan Administration brought very significant changes in the US naval policy. The US Navy took the largest share of the defense budget amounting to $42,000 million in 1979 which increased to $72,000 by 1983. Apart from continuing the further build up of the RDJTF, the Central Command or the CENTCOM was established on January 1, 1983 as a separate US military command. By the late 1980s the US had deployed seven ships to the Indian Ocean in Diego Garcia. It was during this period that the facilities at Diego Garcia were significantly enlarged.

The presence of the US in the Indian Ocean began with its footholds in the Persian Gulf as a “trip wire” (Singh, 1991) strategy against the presence of USSR. The primary objective of the pre-Cold War presence of the US in the Indian Ocean was to build an anti-Soviet consensus in the region. The repercussions of the Iran-Iraq war and increasing Soviet presence in the Gulf region led the US to increase its naval presence substantially by the late 1980s. By the year 1985, the US naval task force stationed at Diego Garcia alone included two aircraft carriers, 17 escort ships, 8 nuclear submarines and about 100 combat aircraft. By the early 1990s, the US imported about 15% of its oil imports from the Gulf, which increased its stake and security concerns in the region mandating robust naval deployments.

The table below sums up the steady increase in the Indian Ocean between 1976 and 1988, almost spanning the two presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

Table 2: *Increases in U.S. Navy Strength in the Indian Ocean, 1976-1988*

	Surface Ship Days	Carrier Ship Days	Percent of Deployed Carriers	Average Yearly Carrier Strength
1976	1,279	19	3	0.1
1977	1,439	100	**7**	0.3
1978	1,207	35	3	0.1
1979	2,612	153	9	0.4
1980	6,993	836	51	2.3
1981	5,651	646	39	1.7
1982	5,361	443	27	1.2
1983	4704	406	24	1.0
1984	5,335	410	28	1.1
1985	5,136	475	36	1.3
1986	3,580	185	13	0.5
1987	6,760	412	30	1.1
1988	7,991	412	30	1.1

(Palmer, 1992: p 97)

Re-constitution of U.S. Fifth Fleet

Fifth Fleet was re-constituted in June 1995 under the Clinton Administration, reinforcing US military presence in the Indian Ocean. The US engagement in the Middle East necessitated positioning of military personnel and equipment closer to the theatre of action. From the past the US had learnt important lessons from the failure of OPERATION EAGLE CLAW which had suffered a great deal due to lack of prepositioning military base or facility near to the place of operation. The reconstitution of the Fifth Fleet served to fill that gap for the US military in both OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). The Fifth Fleet was stationed at Bahrain and it served as the primary naval base for the US for conducting military operations in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, east coast of Africa and the larger Indian Ocean region. With more than a dozen warships and an aircraft carrier battle group, the US Fifth Fleet remained the most important naval extension of the CENTCOM in the Indian Ocean.

Indian Ocean in US Security Policy

The US effort to increase its naval presence in the Indian Ocean could be analyzed with a few rationales that range from economic to military in their scope. The US focused on increasing its naval presence in the Indian Ocean to ensure a safe passage of oil which would in turn maintain oil price stability and avoid circumstances like the one that emerged from the energy crisis of 1973. A strong naval presence in the Indian Ocean was also deemed necessary by the US policy makers to maintain the regional stability by offering support to its allies and friends in the region. The emergence of Pakistan as one such country that found support in the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean during the South Asian crisis of 1971 is a case in point here. The US, in the aftermath of the South Asian crisis, used the ensuing post-crisis stability in the South Asian subcontinent as a rationale for justifying its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Following which, the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean not only became more active but strengthened too. While seemingly ensuring regional stability and creating room for deterrence in the Indian Ocean against bigger littoral countries bullying the smaller ones, the US naval forces ensured their own rare

capability to deploy submarine-launched ballistic missile in the Indian Ocean (Kapur, 1981: 136); substantially cutting on the asymmetric edge of the Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean. This naval accomplishment by the US has specially been accounted for by historians and writers alike as the Indian Ocean opened up the unprecedented possibility of dual-target launch of these missiles towards both the Soviet Union and China, through its submarine launch ballistic missiles placed in the Indian Ocean.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century the US did not show obvious interest to enter the Indian Ocean. There are a few clear explanations for such a policy by the US towards the Indian Ocean in the first half of the 20th century. The first, was an already strong naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the form of the British Navy, second was the lack of an arch-enemy in the Indian Ocean in the first half of the twentieth century and the third being the lack of any direct interest in the Indian Ocean. To that extent, the desire of the US to have a presence in the Indian Ocean is often understood to have begun as a peripheral interest. While that might largely have been a correct assessment of the US presence in the Indian Ocean, it certainly does not account for the strategic planning by the US to make the transition from the British withdrawal to the American takeover appear like a smooth geopolitical progression. The understanding of the US' interests in the Indian Ocean as peripheral also emanates from the fact that both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans attracted the US' political and strategic focus after the World War II in significant ways. However, Anwar (1991:36) argues that the major focus of the US to the other two oceans did not actually mean that the Indian Ocean was totally ignored in the US' strategic calculus. He relates the efforts made by the US in its "Containment" diplomacy and the formation of SEATO to its efforts in the Indian Ocean at least in some ways. However, these efforts were eclipsed by the overwhelming presence and interests of the US in the Atlantic and the Pacific. Certainly, there was a lot of thought behind extending the US naval presence to the Indian Ocean since the 1950s, much before the US entered the Indian Ocean officially in the late 1960s. In fact Anwar (1991) traces the US' economic interests in the Indian Ocean as early as 1920s when the Gulf region witnessed setting up of US' oil companies in Saudi Arabia.

The decade of the 1970s saw the interests of the US in the Indian Ocean graduate from mere energy interests located in the northwestern corner of the Indian Ocean, to one having larger geopolitical interests spread through other parts of the Ocean. This approach operated on the basis of a twin policy concern: to support the regional states of the Indian Ocean that found themselves on the same page as Western countries (for instance the CENTO countries) and strengthen its own position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in the region.

The American naval evolution has variedly been understood to have begun in different years, the earliest reference going back to the 1920s when US oil companies were being set up in the Persian Gulf. However, the US Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean, in the sense that it actually involved military presence and depicted larger regional involvement, began with its involvement in the Persian Gulf, followed by the building of the US MSF at Diego Garcia. Even though the Indian Ocean did not play the role of a theatre where much of the Superpower politics played out during the Cold War, it did witness some contestations. In that sense, the Indian Ocean remained as the 'support ocean' for the US' military endeavours in Asia. In many ways, the Indian Ocean has continued to serve as the support-ocean for the US in the post Cold War; consistent with its lack of a full scale military involvement in the Indian Ocean. There was ample scope for the US' military to have carried out a full scale naval build up in the Indian Ocean and turn some new regional countries into allies or partners, in the manner that the US military diplomacy was carried out in the Pacific after World War II. The sustained opposition from regional countries of the littoral Indian Ocean countries to the US' presence, especially its nuclear presence, somehow continued to have an impact on the US' decision to have a full fledged military base in the Indian Ocean. Although there were other significant reasons for the US' decision to stop short of developing a full-fledged military base in the Indian Ocean; the lack of any direct US interest in the Indian Ocean surfaced as the most obvious one.

The evolution of the US Navy in the southern Indian Ocean was largely stunted on purpose. In the northwestern part of the Indian Ocean the US maintained a formidable naval presence in the form of the CENTCOM since 1983. In the western part of the Indian Ocean the US carried out studies to establish presence since the Carter

Presidency. The US naval deployments off the east coast of Africa went up during the Ogaden War. The US naval presence in the eastern Indian Ocean, up to Australia, often found justification on the grounds of strong US-Australia ties backed by the ANZUS treaty. A strong US naval presence in the Pacific too made the eastern parts of the larger Indian Ocean more frequented by US ships. However, the part of the Indian Ocean that remained the proverbial 'missing link' in US naval strategy in the region since the Cold War was the southern Indian Ocean. While most parts of the Indian Ocean have witnessed US naval presence and build up at some point in the post World War II period, the southern part of the Indian Ocean, with the exception of 1971 USS *Enterprise* entering this area, has been largely oblivious to similar naval build up as the Persian Gulf or the East African coast.

The US Indian Ocean policy has been the result of a gradual process that began, evolved and grew in its militaristic intent from the 1960s until the end of the Cold War inone form, and followed a different pattern ever since the Cold War ended. While the post Cold War policy of the US continued to be shaped by its engagements in the Middle East, the picture changed with the changing regional dynamics because of Chinese rise both as an economic and military power. China's desire to enter the Indian Ocean has added dilemma to the US naval post Cold War policies in the region. A lot changed in the post Cold War vis-à-vis the US' interests in the Indian Ocean. The absence of the Soviet Union and the emergence of serious Chinese interests in the Indian Ocean present two completely different but equally challenging situations for the US in the post Cold War in the Indian Ocean region.

Chapter 2

Indian Ocean in Post Cold War Strategy of the US

This chapter lays emphasis on the nature of the US' presence in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period and the way in which it has come to differ from Cold War period. This chapter also focuses on issues that have necessitated a reassessment of the US involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post 1990 phase. Through a closer look, it is analysed whether the geo-economic and geopolitical concerns of the US in the post Cold War balanced or is it a case of one being prioritised over the other in the IOR?

(*Courtesy: Google Maps*)

Before analysing the maritime strategy adopted by the US in the Indian Ocean, it is important to have a sense of the broad objectives that the US maritime presence in the Indian Ocean sought to achieve: what comprised the maritime strategy of the US in this region? Although the pragmatic implementation of these goals by the US Navy in the Indian Ocean, together with the efforts to achieve these goals through strategic play out since the Cold War in this region, can broadly be understood to comprise the US' regional naval strategy; it is equally important to explore the immanent political thinking and decision making that shaped them. As such, outlining the objectives of the US in the Indian Ocean becomes indispensable to understanding the naval strategy of the US in the IOR?

USObjectives in the Indian Ocean

In a workshop report brought out in 2011 by Future Directions International, an independent strategic think tank based in Australia, titled, "Strategic Objectives of the United States in the Indian Ocean Region", it has been argued that in the coming decade the Indian Ocean is going to command the attention of the US' policymakers and strategists in a way that will be matched by few regions of the world. The Report outlines some of the objectives of the US in the Indian Ocean as follows:

- Ensuring that US objectives are not jeopardized by states such as China and Iran.
- Preventing new or established extremist groups from harming the interests of the US or allied Indian Ocean littoral states.
- Ensuring that US policy is supported by a network of diplomatic relations with which to secure trade relations, military co-operation and influence.
- Ensuring continued access to markets, energy supplies and raw materials.
- Ensuring the security of maritime chokepoints and sea lines of communication (SLOCs).

The aforementioned objectives are, to some extent, in tune with the stated objectives of the CENTCOM, the Fifth Fleet and the Combined Maritime Forces of the US. Their stated aims include:

- Support and defend US, coalition and partner interests in the maritime environment
- Defeat terrorist actions in the maritime environment
- Diminish the influence of military posturing by disruptive countries
- Maintain and enhance war fighting proficiency for major combat operations of US Navy, joint and coalition forces
- Forge and improve partnerships with regional naval forces and other maritime entities
- Deter and disrupt proliferation, transport and delivery of weapons of mass destruction/effects
- Securing Sea Lanes of Communication

(Source: http://www.centcom.mil/en)

I

US Post Cold War Naval Strategy: 1990 Until September 11 Attacks

The developments during 1979-80 in the Gulf region posed serious concerns for the United States. The old US strategy of using the regional states to protect its interests in the Indian Ocean was rapidly proving to be less and less fruitful. Therefore, by the mid 1980s the US ended up spending more than $1 billion on making Diego Garcia an upgraded military base for the US in the Indian Ocean. The Carter and Reagan administrations were quite successful in gaining access facilities for the US in

countries that opened up to the Indian Ocean, like Kenya, Somalia and Oman. The gradual increase in the US' naval presence eventually transformed the Indian Ocean from an area of caution to an area of strategic concern for the US by the decade of the 1980s and 1990s (Bowman and Lefebvre, 1985).

As the US gradually stepped up its naval presence in the Indian Ocean, two contending ideas vis-à-vis its presence in the region came face to face; whether the Indian Ocean would remain a "zone of peace" or was it transitioning towards becoming an area that would breed regional tension? Walter K. Anderson's essay in Singh (1991) highlights this dilemma for the regional littoral countries of the Indian Ocean Region. Charting the evolution of the US' presence in the Indian Ocean after the British withdrawal in the 1960s until the end of the Cold War he shows that the US presence in the Indian Ocean began as a concern for regional stability of the region, however, by the beginning of the 1990s the US had the largest concentration of warships in the Indian Ocean and its regional maritime extensions. The beginning of the 1990s saw the largest deployment by the United States in the Indian Ocean since the World War II. Anderson's argument that the period following the 1990s saw gradual reduction in the naval deployments of the US across the Indian Ocean compared to its Cold War presence obliquely implies that the Indian Ocean's concern of dangling between being either a conflict or a peace zone might have been mitigated in the post-1990 phase.

1990: First change in US Threat Perception in the Indian Ocean

Rude (2008) observes that with the end of the Cold War "U.S. strategic goals were confused for a while." The absence of the Soviet Union as a compelling monolithic enemy figure left the US aimless for some time. The leadership of its Cold War alliance which was fighting the Soviet Union ceased to exist. This change came with a concomitant challenge of sustaining that leadership in Asia over a group of nations that needed the military might of the US to preserve peace and order in a still fragile regional as well as global order. In this context, the American naval presence was more in the Pacific than it ever was in the Indian Ocean. With the beginning of the

1990s, although the US was at the height of its unipolarity it felt the pressure to maintain its leverage in the Indian Ocean in the face of a drawdown of its resources from the region after the Soviet Union ceased to exist. This change was more starkly evident as the US' early 1990s presence in the Indian Ocean through the extension of its navy started as a moderate re-entry, particularly in contrast to its massive military build-up during late 1970s and 1980s. The American naval presence since the 1990 in the Indian Ocean represents the contrary picture to its presence in the Pacific during the Cold War. The collapse of communism and Cold War forced a 'fundamental reassessment' of America's goals and objectives in the world. It was within the scope of this grand strategy that American re-engagement in the Indian Ocean was defined (Mohan, 2006). This reassessment led to the difference in its approach in the Indian Ocean before and after 1990 as the threat perceptions, before and after the Cold War differed significantly.

With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the US naval doctrine underwent substantial change. The 1991 Gulf War changed the US' perception of global threat to one of regional challenge and opportunities. It was after this that the US involved power projection as a means of establishing dominance and countering security threats. The missile projection after the bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 is a case in point here. In September 1992, the US Navy and the Marine Corps came out with a joint White Paper titled, "From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century," which sought an overhaul of the naval strategy of the US, both near and abroad.

This new naval doctrine justified its timing in the light of its following assessment:

> The world has changed dramatically in the last two years, and America's national security policy has also changed. As a result, the priorities of the Navy and Marine Corps have shifted, leading to this broad assessment of the future direction of our maritime forces.
>
> (From the Sea, 1992)

From the outset the document stressed on the change of priorities of the US security forces, primarily its Navy and the Marine Corps. The US led by its Defense Secretary Dick Cheney also promoted the concept of "Base force" as part of the revised

American security policy in the early 1990s. When the US led by its Defense Secretary Dick Cheney promoted the concept of "Base force" as part of the revised American security policy in the early 1990s, it had some implications for US Navy's role in the Indian Ocean too. The concept was yet another post Cold War intra-military readjustment by the US, which marked a shift in the US' national security strategy from a global focus to one that prioritised regional challenges and opportunities. In this context, both the US Navy and Marine Corps were to play larger roles in the post Cold War period through improved coordination in expanded expeditionary missions to perpetuate the US maritime security architecture globally. This approach also marked a shift in the US national security strategy from a global focus to one that prioritised regional challenges and opportunities. In this context, both the US Navy and Marine Corps were to play larger roles in the post Cold War period through expanded expeditionary missions in the new US maritime security architecture. In the same breath, the national security framework outlined in the document pointed above also stated;

> The new direction of the Navy and Marine Corps team, both active and reserve, is to provide the nation:
> Naval Expeditionary Forces - Shaped for Joint Operations Operating Forward From the Sea - Tailored for National Needs.
>
> (From the Sea, 1992)

Such an endeavour was supposed to further streamline US maritime deployments all over the world, including the Indian Ocean in a new way. Of special interest to the US in this regard were its specified deployments in the Persian Gulf. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the US maritime deployments in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and the larger Indian Ocean depended on pull-out deployments from both the US Sixth Fleet and the US Seventh Fleet. However, the failure of the US Navy in 1973 to effectively provide logistics support to the two Seventh Fleet destroyers stationed in the Indian Ocean was a crucial point which changed the maritime strategy of the US, adding more emphasis on joint maritime operations and capabilities with sea-lifting as a crucial element of its naval strategy to increase effectiveness.

However, some tactical changes brought out in the US maritime deployments during the Iran hostage crisis and the period following that, led to better coordination between the Navy and the Marine Corps. For instance, five amphibious task force ships of the Sixth Fleet and the 32nd Marine Amphibious Unit (BLT 2/6, HMM 264) joined other US naval deployments in the Indian Ocean in 1980 (Med Mau Shifts to Indian Ocean,Marine Corps Gazette, 1980). It was clear from some other similar steps that the renewed maritime strategy of the US since the 1980s gradually came to focus on joint operations combining the US Navy and the Marine Corps to meet maritime security challenges in this region as elsewhere.

The larger US maritime strategy in the post Cold War focused on a functional shift from open-ocean war fighting strategy towards joint operations conducted from the sea. Sea-control through forward deployment and combat-readiness were emphasised on, to create strategic deterrence through its maritime involvements in the revised US naval focus. This post Cold War naval policy readjustment had significant implications for the Indian Ocean with precedents like the crisis in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan necessitating a more potent maritime strategic deterrence, crisis-response and force projection from sea. In the early years of the post Cold War period, the US saw its naval involvement in the Indian Ocean from a renewed standpoint of assessing the capabilities required to deal with the littoral areas in a more enabling manner. Projecting the US Navy as an integral part of a "sea-air-land" combined force, as opposed to its earlier involvement globally as a standalone force, was a major part of the readjustment in the post Cold War maritime policy of the US. The Persian Gulf significantly figured in that reassessment.

Creating strategic deterrence was another focal point of the US Navy's strategy in the post Cold War period. With the collapse of the Soviet Union the US military felt the need to cut its strength in seas, while still retainingpotent maritime strategic deterrence and operational dominance. For these reasons even in the post Cold War period nuclear ballistic submarines remained central to the maritime strategic deterrence created by the US globally including in the Indian Ocean. This strategy of the US Navy remained critically relevant in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold

War.Nuclear attack submarines remained central to US' strategy in the Indian Ocean.In consistence with its post Cold War maritime trends, the US Navy recently sent an attack submarine to the Indian Ocean during the Malabar series of naval exercises, along with the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, a guided-missile cruiser, and the USS *Fort Worth*, a littoral combat ship (Fairclough, 2015). The strategy adopted by the US Navy to sustain its unilateral maritime dominance inherited in the post Cold War, in the absence of the Soviet Union, related itself very closely with its intention to build Theatre Missile Defence (TMD). Ever since regional turbulences in the last quarter of the twentieth century highlighted America's vulnerabilities in the Persian Gulf, the region became one of the important areas of the US' TMD focus. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 triggered the military involvement of the US in the Persian Gulf. It was during the Persian Gulf War (1990-91) that the US' TMD was tested for the first time in the littoral Indian Ocean. The US' Patriot missiles were placed in Israel and Saudi Arabia to intercept Iraqi Scud missiles. Although the opinion on the effectiveness of the Patriot missiles against Iraqi Scud missiles is divided, the former certainly provided a missile induced regional deterrence in the littoral north-west Indian Ocean. A Congressional report by the Defense Department concluded that, the Patriot had "intercepted a high percentage" of Scuds (Kaplan 2003). However, this perception remains challenged.

Joint Strategy of the US Navy in Desert Shield/Desert Storm

The post Cold War US maritime strategy also witnessed an effort to almost redouble the US Navy's sea-lifting capabilities in order to effectively deal with efficient supplies of heavy equipment and other necessities during combat. Sea-lifting was also very important in reaching air and ground support to the navy in time, thus proving crucial element of the US' joint operations in the post Cold War military strategy. The importance of joint operation as an important part of US post Cold War maritime strategy was depicted in the twin operations of Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the Middle East. As the troop build up started in the aftermath of President George Bush's Presidential command, the US Navy witnessed both the largest and the fastest sea-lifting exercise in history. Nearly 250 ships carried a staggering 18.3 billion pounds of military equipment and supplies to the Persian Gulf region for the troops

involved in the operations against Iraq (US Navy in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, www.history.navy.mil).

The post Cold war US maritime strategy also focussed on the restructuring of naval expeditionary roles. Stress was laid on forward deployment and swift action. Various parts of the Indian Ocean witnessed the naval expeditionary forces of the US operating swiftly both in deployment as well as operations. OPERATION DESERT SHIELD (1990-91) was probably the first time when the swiftness of the US naval response in the Indian Ocean was tested in the post Cold War period. No sooner had the Iraqi forces crossed into Kuwait the US Navy started its deployments led by a joint task force. The US Joint Task Force Middle East provided the requisite sea control to support the 33-nation led air and ground campaigns. The USS *Independence* (CV 62) and USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) led battle groups up close to the Persian Gulf as part of the joint operation (Naval History and Heritage Command, www.history.navy.mil). The US Navy and Marine Corps operated jointly in these operations. The US Navy's Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) stationed at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean proved to be extremely crucial for supplies to the Gulf region. The US Navy's Total Force concept sought an unprecedented maximisation of its strength to overwhelm the Iraqi offensive. As a result of the US naval build up, beginning from the Iran-Iraq War to the Persian Gulf War, the USMIDEASTFOR became a formidable force with more than a dozen ships along with mine countermeasure teams, special warfare units and rotating carrier battle groups.

The US naval strategy in the post Cold War increased its focus on joint operations and closer coordination between its Navy and the Marine Corps. The 33-nation coalition against Iraq in the Gulf War, together with and Navy's Total Force Concept sought a more consolidated force maximisation of its maritime strength in the Persian Gulf and the larger Indian Ocean. The US Navy inherited this amalgamated maritime military culture in the post Cold War as a legacy of growing US involvement in the Indian Ocean since the 1970s. As a result of this, consolidated effort of the US Navy joint operations along with the Marine Corps became more frequent in the post Cold War period. Outlining a future maritime strategy through joint operations between the US

Navy and the Marine Corps the naval document brought out in 1992, *From the Sea* (1992), pointed out that;

> The Navy and Marine Corps are full partners in joint operations. The battlefield of the future will demand that everyone on the field be teammates. Such teamwork "enables" joint combat operations.

Two consecutive wars in the Middle East; the Iran-Iraq War and Persian Gulf War convinced the US Navy for the need to adopt a different approach. In this backdrop the US navy formulated its strategy based on four primary roles; greater sea-control, force projection, employing nuclear deterrence and providing sealift capability for joint maritime operations. In other words, the US Navy pushed the idea of combined arms operations along with the Marine Corps in the Indian Ocean as it did in other global maritime theatres.

Behind the US naval strategies of sea-control and joint operations, was the crucial element of forward defense, achieved through its Navy-Marine Corps joint forward deployments. In the postCold War period the Indian Ocean witnessed the US naval strategy of forward deployment during OPERATION DESERT SHIELD and OPERATION DESERT STORM. The modus operandi involving forward deployment of military came to be reaffirmed under President George Bush. In his speech at Aspen, Colorado on August 2, 1990 President Bush highlighted forward presence and readiness for crisis response as primary pre-emptive military techniques. His speech, which was being made with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in perspective, reflected the relevance of the outlined strategy for the Indian Ocean. In his speech the President highlighted the importance of the US' forward military presence not just to the Mediterranean and the Pacific but also the Indian Ocean. Talking about the way in which the US ought to have reorganised the remaining military force after the collapse of the Soviet Union, President Bush said the following:

> What matters now, then, is how we reshape the forces that remain. Our new strategy must provide the framework to guide our deliberate reductions to no more than the forces we need to guard our enduring interests -- the forces to exercise forward presence in key areas, to respond effectively to crisis, to retain the national capacity to rebuild our forces should this be needed.....And

> in this world, America remains a pivotal factor for peaceful change. Important American interests in Europe and the Pacific, in the Mediterranean and in the Persian Gulf -- all are key reasons why maintaining a forward presence will remain an indispensable element of our strategy.
>
> (Bush, 1992)

This altered post Cold War naval policy, which traced its beginning to the 1980s, had significant impact on the US maritime operations in the Indian Ocean. The Persian Gulf War had drawn large number of US troops to the Indian Ocean. The victory of the 33-nation US-led coalition and the liberation of Kuwait justified the large US naval presence in the Indian Ocean region, particularly the Persian Gulf; in the light of it being a post-war regional stabilising force.

Sea-lift as an Important post Cold War Maritime Strategies

In the run up to, and also during, both the OPERATION DESERT SHIELD and OPERATION DESERT STORM, the US realised the importance of sea-lifting as a major maritime strategy. In an ambience of the post Cold War when the US' altered threat perception had necessitated reduced deployments in the Indian Ocean, as in most other places, strategic lift on the seas became a handy maritime strategy to reach equipment, arsenal and supplies in time for its forward deployed forces. Both OPERATION DESERT SHIELD and OPERATION DESERT STORM made sure that the US' forward deployments in the Indian Ocean continued. The post Cold War sea-lifting strategy was also facilitated by the Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986 which removed complexities in the chain of command by bringing most parts of northwest and southwest Indian Ocean under one command, the US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), rendering decision-making easier.

Sea-lifting emerged in the post Cold War as a major naval strategy that came to focus on combining all the legs of the US military, especially the US Navy and the Marine Corps. Sea-lifting was also very crucial in reaching air and ground support to the Navy in time, thus proving to be very crucial element of the US' joint operations in the post Cold War in the Indian Ocean. The US Navy's strategy also witnessed efforts

to redouble its sea-lifting capabilities in order to effectively deal with efficient supplies of heavy equipment and other necessities during combat. The twin operations of DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM in the Middle East depicted this shift, when nearly 250 ships carried a staggering 18.3 billion pounds of military equipment and supplies to the Persian Gulf region for the troops involved in the operations against Iraq. Importantly, sea-lifting strategy not just improved the US Navy's ability to coordinate better with other wings of the US armed forces but increased efficiency by bettering the command and control systems. This was an important change in the post Cold War naval strategy of the US that emerged out of the US Navy's reassessments after the twin Gulf operations in 1990-91. The sealift undertaken during OPERATION DESERT SHIELD and OPERATION DESERT STORM was unprecedented. The US led the sealift and airlift campaigns involving over a dozen other international players. The US Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) along with the USTRANSCOM played a significant role in achieving a rare feat of transporting 9.2 million tons of cargo by sea during the two aforementioned operations (Mathews and Cora, 1991). The table below tries to present these massive figuresin the form of statistical breakup.

DESRT SHIELD/DESERT STORM Strategic Lift Summary

Passengers and Cargo (As of 10 March 1991)

SEALIFT

	UNIT CARGO[2]	SUSTAINMENT	POL[3]	PAX
Aug 90	253,014	--	333,640	315
Sep 90	252,013	--	508,534	681
Oct 90	326,930	74,614	517,038	436
Nov 9	206,416	54,119	1,011,243	186
Dec 9	356,025	97,499	894,061	465
Jan 91	712,373	166,456	1,088,825	516
Feb 91	297,888	165,353	1,336,807	147
Mar 91 (1-10)	27,210	58,602	412,858	12
TOTAL	2,431,869	616,653	6,103,006	2,758

TOTAL SEA DRY CARGO (short tons):	3,048,532	(84.87%)
% OF ALL CARGO INCLUDING POL[3]:	9,151,547	(94.39%)
TOTAL SEA PAX:	2,758	(.55%)
AIR & SEA TOTAL DRY CARGO (short tons):	3,592,089	
TOTAL AIR & SEA INCLUDING POL[3]:	9,695,095	
AIR & SEA TOTAL PAX:	503,478	

1. Includes both war-stopper requirements (coded "9AU") and Desert Shield/Desert Storm airlift cargo (coded "9BU") cargo.

2. Includes ammunition. 3. Petroleum, oil, and lubricants. 4. As of 4 September 1990.

SOURCE: Military Sealift Command (MSC) Lift Summary Reports and USTRANSCOM Situation Reports (SITREPs).

Source: (Mathews and Cora, 1991: p 13)

Crisis Response as a Strategy by the US Navy in the Indian Ocean

Months after the US military had successfully ended operations Desert Shield/Storm it undertook another operation, this time led by its amphibious task force. It was a major non-military response from the US that in some ways would convince the IOR countries about alternative rationales of the US' involvement in the region. In a major disaster relief operation, the US sent thousands of Marines, C-5 Cargo aircraft, air-traffic control teams, Medical and Construction Teams and more than a dozen helicopters to resurrect a devastated Bangladesh in the aftermath of the deadly 1991 tropical cyclone *Marian,* that is believed to have killed more than 1,38,000 people while displacing many more. The then Spokesperson of the US Pacific Command, Lt. Col. Thomas Boyd assured that at least 4, 600 US Marines and more than 3500 sailors had arrived for assisting Bangladesh (Berke, 1991). The involvement of the US Navy's construction teams and Seabees, was crucial in the rebuilding process in the post cyclone phase.

For the US Navy, the Nature-induced crisis came as an opportunity as well as a challenge. The timing of the response was militarily convenient for the US, as most of its troop build up in the Persian Gulf during the Persian Gulf War had not retreated to their respective bases. Some of the US Navy's ships were in the process of retreating, even as the devastating cyclone hit coastal Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal, making it easier and shorter for the US Navy to sail to the crisis zone in the Indian Ocean. For instance, the US amphibious assault ship *Tarawa*, which was on its way to the Philippines after its retreat from the Persian Gulf, was re-routed to the Bay of Bengal in the southern Indian Ocean. This was part of the larger fifteen-ship amphibious task force composed of Amphibious Group 3 and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade that was diverted to handle the Bangladesh crisis in the Indian Ocean.

The US military was part of many humanitarian relief operations in the past but an exercise of this magnitude was unprecedented. OPERATION SEA ANGEL, as the

operation was named, was one of the largest disaster relief operations ever carried out, simply because of the magnitude of the devastation caused due to the cyclone. Despite a set of problems faced by the US military (McCarthy, 1994), it is speculated to have saved as many as 2, 00,000 lives through the humanitarian relief. The coordination of the US Navy's Amphibious Task Force in carrying out the OPERATION SEA ANGEL with the Contingency Joint Task Force (CJTF) formed under the commander of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) based in Okinawa, showed that joint operations during peacetime too were very crucial. Hence, OPERATION SEA ANGEL, in many ways, further concretised the concept and the need for joint operations in the Indian Ocean between the US Navy and the Marine Corps due to its operational and humanitarian success and its non-military nature.

Self-Sufficiency of Ships in the Indian Ocean

In addition to the joint operations, the US Navy's Expeditionary Forces were strengthened by their ability to stay out in the Ocean for longer periods. Growing number of ship days out in the ocean was already the US Navy's forte in the Pacific and the Atlantic but it also became part of the naval strategy for the US presence in the Indian Ocean since the Iran hostage crisis. Earlier intentions of staying for extended periods in the Indian Ocean were thwarted by the lack of a military base or a naval stationing platform. However, with Diego Garcia becoming fully operational by the 1980s long-term sailing and operations in the heart of the Indian Ocean became possible with operational and logistics support provided from Diego Garcia. Extended periods of ships at sea meant more sea patrols and less delayed dependence on resupplies to the forward deployed troops. During the Iran Hostage crisis, the USS *Eisenhower* task force remained in the Indian Ocean at sea for five months (From the Sea, 1992). The sustainability and the self-sufficiency of ships in the Ocean became a naval strategy to support long-term operations at sea. This ability significantly bolstered the Expeditionary Forces of the US Navy in the Indian Ocean.

However, despite the self-sufficiency achieved by the US ships, its ability to stay for extended periods in the sea near the coast of littoral countries was tested only in a limited manner; by its presence mostly confined in the north-west corner of the Indian

Ocean, the Persian Gulf. Asymmetric presence in the Indian Ocean was one of the limitations of the US Navy in the post Cold War period waiting to be addressed. In the post-Soviet Union phase when the threat perception from a single formidable enemy ceased to exist, the US Navy's ability to combine forces increased allowing its presence to spread out through the Indian Ocean more evenly while focussing on multiple fronts simultaneously. The US Navy's ability to combine forces with the Marine Corps to form a "sea-air-land" team attributed immense flexibility to the Navy, allowing it to focus on multiple fronts in the Indian Ocean. So, while the US Navy was engaged off the Persian Gulf in OPERATION DESERT SHIELD, it also evacuated people from African countries like Liberia and Somalia. Particularly in theimmediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, simultaneous US naval operations at multiple fronts were carried out in the Indian Ocean.

At the height of the Gulf War in 1990-91, while the War transitioned from troop build up in OPERATION DESERT SHIELD to its combative phase in OPERATION DESERT STORM, the US Navy found itself engaged at another front; Somalia, off the east coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. Despite its seriously combative engagements in the Gulf War, as part of its post Cold War strategy of combined maritime operations of the US Navy and the Marine Corps, the US carried out a simultaneous non-combative maritime rescue operation in Somalia evacuating more than 250 American citizens and other foreign nationals. The joint operation involved the US Navy's amphibious assault ship USS *Guam* (LPH 9) and amphibious transport ship USS *Trenton* (LPD 14), 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade from the US Marine Corps and US Air Force's (USAF) AC-130 comprising a nine-man Navy Seal team besides other support such as intelligence (OPERATION EASTERN EXIT, GlobalSecurity.org). At some point during the Gulf War, US naval operations coincided with two other operations; OPERATION EASTERN EDGE in Somalia and OPERATION SHARP EDGE in Liberia. Although OPERATION SHARP EDGE was conducted in the Atlantic Ocean, the fact that it coincided for a small period with two other engagements by the US Navy in the Indian Ocean, signified the capability that the US Navy had acquired in managing military engagements on multiple fronts. The OPERATION EASTERN EXIT reinforced the effectiveness of the "sea-air-land" team in the Indian Ocean by proving that the US Navy's strategy of operating at multiple fronts simultaneously was in consonance

with the “new direction” that it sought as its post Cold War strategy. This team work between the three legs of the US’ armed forces even played out at the level of command and control, when the discretion shifted from land to the maritime domain and vice-versa; and also as threat perceptions changed.

After the Soviet disintegration, the US military began withdrawing forces from overseas bases and relied on its navy as the central mode for forward deployment of its troops and force projection throughout the world. As opposed to the Cold War, when the primary concern of the US was deterring or defeating its arch-rival the Soviet Union, the post Cold War period created the scope of diversifying its goals: like crisis-response humanitarian relief, multi-national joint naval exercises, nation-building, maritime security, promoting US interests abroad etc. This diversification was manifested not just at the level of goals but also countries. It meant that the US now had to deal with many more countries than just the Soviet Union, both in terms of engagement opportunities as well as challenges.

Change of US Threat Perception in the Indian Ocean

As the US moved from the Cold War to the collapse of the Soviet Union and beyond, the maritime strategy of open sea fighting gave way to a narrower, regional focus. This strategy became the core operative mechanism of the US Navy as it emphasised on the control of littorals and relied more on expeditionary units. Green & Shearer (2012) note that the added emphasis on the control of littorals by the US in the Indian Ocean arose from these littoral countries’ own aversion to conform, unlike the littoral nations of the Pacific. The absence of one monolithic enemy in the form of Soviet Union led to the diversification of maritime challenges for the US. In the maritime domain, this meant that the US had to focus on tactical threats from the littorals. The post Cold War maritime strategy of the US placed greater security emphasis on the littorals in the Indian Ocean. In the Indian Ocean, its north-western part including the Persian Gulf remained under the US security radar, as potential tactical ballistic missile coming from Iran, sea mines and low floating submarines in the shallow water of the Gulf remained a persistent threat to the US Navy.

An important factor in changing the US threat perception emanating from the Indian Ocean started with the Iran-Iraq War, when neutral merchant ships floating in the Persian Gulf became targets of Iraqi air raids. After more than 100 Iranian merchant ships became target of Iraqi air attacks (OPERATION ERNEST WILL, GlobalSecurity.org), Iran started carrying out attacks on neutral ships of other Gulf countries like Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. This necessitated OPERATION ERNEST WILL from the US to escort Bahraini ships safely guarding off against Iranian attacks. OPERATION ERNEST WILL could be seen as the beginning of post Cold War US seriousness towards freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean. In the Tanker War, the US faced a new challenge in the freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf. Sea-mining of the Persian Gulf waters by Iran posed a new challenge to the US, in that the latter involved the combined forces approach to deal with it. After USS *Samuel Roberts* suffered a 21-foot hole caused by an Iranian sea mine, the US decided on changing course by embarking on OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS. The US used a combined forces approach in OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS, even as it was building further on the naval cooperation concept since OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS. OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS is still considered to be a hallmark among the US maritime operations in this region, as it was the first combat maritime operation on such a big scale after World War II. Carried out by the Joint Task Force Middle East, the combined force projection of the US Navy and its air wing completely overshadowed the Iranian attacks and caused immense damage. Almost half of Iran's operational fleet was either destroyed or damaged (Comerford, 2013). Although the US Navy successfully carried out OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS in the Persian Gulf it led to the belief in Washington that all was not well with the Navy in some respects. This strand of thought emerged from a string of minor inabilities of the US Navy during the Iran-Iraq War, particularly the Tanker War. For instance, the inability of the US to detect sea-mines laid by Iran, resulting in USS *Samuel B. Roberts* almost being sunk, was one of the major lacunae. However, by the year 1990 the US Navy had worked on this to add more efficient mine hunting and sweeping equipment to their naval repertoire and was better prepared to deal with sea-mines.

The success of OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS led the perpetuation of "sea-land-air" team operative ethos of the US Navy through much of the post Cold War period. The US also deterred tactical threats emerging to its Navy from the littorals of the rest of the Indian Ocean. The strategy of naval cooperation with regional countries in the Indian Ocean emerged as an important part of the US' post Cold War strategy. Following OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS, the unilateralism of the Cold War period gradually paved way for a cooperative approach to deal with maritime security in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period.

Both OPERATION ERNEST WILL andOPERATION PRAYING MANTIS marked, in some ways, the changing nature of threats that the US Navy faced in the Indian Ocean. In the period that followed the Tanker War in the Persian Gulf, the US Navy assessed its primary threats in the Indian Ocean coming from the littorals. The undetected sea-mines that ripped through USS *Samuel B. Roberts* during OPERATION ERNEST WILL exposed some of the maritime vulnerabilities of the US in the north-west Indian Ocean, forcing a rethink on its modus operandi. One of the larger frameworks that emerged out of this assessment called for greater focus on the US' naval expeditionary units and a re-organisational change; employing maritime forces with greater flexibility in operations. As such, the US' maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean after the Cold War incorporated greater capabilities due to combined forces approach which involved Aircraft carrier, submarines, amphibious ships with embarked Marines, maritime patrol aircraft, surface combatants, mine warfare forces and navy special warfare forces (*From the Sea*, 1992). These allowed the US Navy to carry out joint exercises, patrols and crisis-response in the Indian Ocean on much larger scale than it was possible during the Cold War.

Two successive events in the Indian Ocean: The Iran-Iraq War (including the Tanker War) and the Persian Gulf War changed the approach of the US Navy in how it came to deal with maritime threats in the region. One of the most important realisations was the limitations that the Persian Gulf's geography posed to a carrier battle group in wars that had to be fought along narrow straits and near littorals, as opposed to open seas. Big carrier battle groups operating in narrow channels like the Persian Gulf found them constrained in manoeuvrability and were exposed to tactical threats from

the littorals. To deal with wars and crises that confined themselves in the Persian Gulf and other narrow water channels and straits, the US Navy focused on operational breakdown of the large carrier groups into smaller amphibious readiness groups, surface actions groups armed with missiles such as the Tomahawk, minesweepers, missiles atop frigates and destroyers. Besides these, the operational coalition between the navy, army and the air force provided strong military response from the US Navy to regional conflicts. The challenge for US naval operations in the Indian Ocean, however, remained in its ability to adapt to the varied nature of threats emerging from a new security environment in the postCold War period.

After the Persian Gulf War had ended, the US Navy found itself in the middle of a new role in April 1991, one that sought to provide humanitarian relief and assistance to the Kurds by enforcing a "no-fly" zone in Iraq, north of the 36th parallel (CENTCOM History, http://www.centcom.mil/en). This effort was part of OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT.

As per the naval document, *From the Sea* (1992), in the post Cold War period the US Navy built on its operative principles of forward deployment, crisis response, strategic deterrence, and sealift to add four additional operational capabilities:

i) Command, Control, and Surveillance
ii) Battlespace Dominance
iii) Power Projection
iv) Force Sustainment

Since the US Navy and the Marine Corps focussed on joint operations, a flexible but efficient structuring of the command and control systems both at sea and on land was also essential. Combined operations required the flexibility to switch command, control and communications from land to sea and vice-versa on demand. In the post Cold War inter-services interactions in defence were facilitated smoothly by the Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986, which minimised inter-services rivalry allowing

military units to indulge in joint operations more freely. Former Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Colin Powell observed in relation to the impact of the Goldwater-Nichols, "Performance of the Armed Forces in joint operations has improved significantly and Goldwater-Nichols deserves a great deal of the credit" (Powell, 1996). Although the 1986 legislation tended to place greater control in the hands of theatre commanders the US Navy largely held out any such major influence. For instance, it allowed the Naval Force Commander to command a joint task force and function as a Joint Force Commander.

The increased focus on command, control and surveillance became an integral part of the US' post Cold War maritime strategy. This would form the basis of a restructured framework for cooperation between the Navy and the Marine Corps together with the air units. The approach led to increased focus on electronic systems and radars for immediate information as well as blocking the enemy's access to information. The post Cold war period also saw an increased focus on intelligence gathering early on in any crisis. This was planned to be achieved by according high regional focus to the US naval intelligence in areas surrounding the Indian Ocean.

Having an efficient command, control and surveillance was understood by the US Navy as crucial in perpetuating its goal of having "Battlespace Dominance." In the post-1990 period, the US retained its ability to project power in the Indian Ocean through sustained strengthening of its combatant commands like the CENTCOMand USPACOM; in particular the Fifth and the Seventh Fleets. The US Navy's ability to effectively project power both on the surface and under water, on land in the littorals, and through air in the IOR was unmatched. Adding on to this, the US also employed space-based assets in the Indian Ocean towards gaining an upper hand over its enemies. Gaining operational dominance for the Navy also factored its effectiveness in denying access to its enemy. This ability of the US Navy was tested under the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) when it stopped Iran from attacking Kuwaiti tankers in the immediate years that preceded the end of the Cold War. The US conducted OPERATION PRIME CHANCE through a combination of special operations and conventional force operation. The operation employed personnel from the "160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) – the 160th SOAR, or 'Night Stalkers' – SEALs, Special Boat Units, Marines, and the Navy" (Zimmerman, 2013).

Beyond denying access to enemy, the strategy of gaining "Battlespace Dominace" for the US Navy reflected the ease with which it could switch its operational flexibility between land and water in accordance with shifting tides of a war or crisis. In the context of the Indian Ocean, this meant the US Navy's ability to adapt itself to narrow water channels, straits and other geographical constraints from its long drawn history of Mahanian attributes that are akin to open sea naval warfare. Having engaged itself in two successive wars, the long Iran-Iraq War and the Persian Gulf War, the US Navy had become adept to most of the challenges in the Indian Ocean by early 1990s.

By the time the Persian Gulf War had ended in 1991, the US Navy had many operational lessons learnt from the wars in the northern Indian Ocean. One of the important takeaways, as a result of US naval engagements in the Persian Gulf, was to strengthen the Navy's ability to provide support to Marines deployed on land quickly through tactical air support by air units deployed on carriers. This capability was part of the joint operation of the Navy and the Marine Corps to generate immense power projection on the littorals in a relatively short period of time. Indefinite readiness of cruise missile based carriers in the sea, having second strike capability, was seen as the second contingency for force projection on littorals or into deeper land areas. In the area of force projection, the US followed a standard naval-air-land combination in the Indian Ocean that was also part of operations in the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean. *From the Sea* (1992) describes this standard force projection capability as,

> Joint operations between Naval and Air Force strike assets-including carrier-based aircraft, land-based naval expeditionary aircraft, land-based Air Force aircraft from both local and distant bases, and Tomahawk missiles from surface forces and attack submarines…..

The US Navy's role in the sustainability of force projection through the combination of its capabilities was its overarching strategy. This was as true for the Indian Ocean, as for the rest of the world. But the Indian Ocean had gained particular importance in the US' force sustainability as it had faced a regionally potent and resistant enemy in Iran, which had dragged the US in a regional war. Sustaining its force in the Indian

Ocean also meant a lot for the US' ability to stabilise the region that was precariously placed at the end of two consecutive wars; the Iran-Iraq War and the Persian Gulf War. Even in the absence of war, the US strategy of sustaining force in the Indian Ocean required that logistics support was improved as it remained critical to the Navy's ability to successfully carry out an operation. This meant that the US Navy worked on having more logistics support hubs, mobile repair facilities, new ships for immediate replacements and air and sea lifting capabilities in the Indian Ocean.

In so far as the US Navy's operational strategy in the Indian Ocean since the year 1990 is concerned, it relied on improving the combination of the four aforementioned capabilities; Command, Control, and Surveillance, Battlespace Dominance, Power Projection and Force Sustainment. This was part of the change in the US naval doctrine with a new regional security scenario in the absence of the Soviet Union. The effect of this change was also witnessed at the organisational level. The Naval Doctrine Command was established to integrate the Navy and the Marine Corps to function smoothly in joint operations. The Naval Doctrine Command would be alternately commanded by a Navy Rear Admiral and a Marine Corps Major General, serving the larger purpose of closing the gap between the air-land battle and amphibious warfare (*From the Sea*, 1992).

Some of the "Immediate Tasks" outlined in the naval document *From the Sea* (1992) defining the US Navy's larger strategy for the period following the end of the Cold War were;

- Link air, land, and naval warfare to ensure truly joint warfare.
- Organize, train, and implement new naval force packages for expeditionary operations. Train commanders and man their staffs for joint operations.
- Enhance communications, command, and control on naval flag ships to the degree necessary to host the commander of a joint task force.
- Establish Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command as a Vice Admiral billet; provide additional permanent staff billets and communications command and control capabilities necessary to execute his responsibilities.
- Provide the Marines with the medium-lift they require.

- Increase emphasis on generation of high intensity power projection, support of force ashore, and weapons necessary to fulfill the mission.
- Expand the integration of Navy and Marine Corps fixed-wing air capabilities.
- Fully integrate attack submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and mine warfare assets into the expeditionary task forces.
- Resolve sealift deficiencies.
- Continue to reorient naval intelligence resources from the former Soviet Navy to regional, littoral threats.

Re-commissioning of the US Fifth Fleet in 1995

Before the Gulf War, US naval operations in the Persian Gulf were mostly managed by the MIDEASTFOR. Since the US naval engagements continued in parts of the Indian Ocean even after the Persian Gulf War had ended, and as the scale of operations grew in order to gain battlespace dominance in the Indian Ocean, it was felt that a dedicated numbered fleet of the US Navy would manage the tasks in the Indian Ocean and larger IOR more efficiently. The US Seventh Fleet was in charge of the interim responsibility in most of the Indian Ocean waters, until a dedicated numbered naval fleet was commissioned in 1995. In July 1995, the US Fifth Fleet was commissioned after a very long gap of forty-eight years replacing the MIDEASTFOR and assuming responsibility for directing operations in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, and Arabian Sea. The choice of its headquarters at Manama, Bahrain, was a well thought decision by the US to fill the communicative and operational gaps that existed due to the CENTCOM's headquarters located in Tampa, Florida, well outside the region.

The composition of the US Fifth Fleet, since its re-commissioning in 1995 underwent various changes as per the changing naval requirements in its area of operation, which included twenty-five countries. In the immediate years following its formation, the Fifth Fleet comprised a standard composition, including an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), Aircraft Carrier Battle Group surface combatants, submarines, maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, and logistics ships. Its composition as well as responsibilities underwent changes due to the new security environment in the

Middle-East; in the aftermath of the US' renewed approach to global security as a result of its "War on Terror" resolve. By the end of the 20th century the Fifth Fleet found both its composition and role, altered. It added an Expeditionary Strike Group with about 15,000 personnel on sea and a few hundred ashore as support personnel (Fifth Fleet, GlobalSecurity.org).

US Navy's Operation Concept of 1997*: Forward….From the Sea*

After the naval document *From the Sea* in 1992, the Operation Concept brought out by the US Navy in 1997 laid out the naval strategy for the forthcoming century. The *US Navy Operation Concept* of March 1997 emphasised the US' ability to "carry out swiftly and effectively any naval, joint or coalition mission and to prevail decisively" (*The Navy Operational Concept*, 1997) over any opposing force. The emphasis in this concept paper was to outline the ways in which the US Navy operated above, under and from the sea in order to project power on littorals and deeper parts of the continental shelf off its maritime deployments. The Concept Paper also pointed out the element of flexibility that the US Navy-Marine Corps combined force had gained over the years in transitioning instantly from one state to another; from peace to crisis to conflict.

By the late 1990s, extending continental influence through forward deployments of maritime forces was the standard way in which the US projected its influence abroad, including in the Indian Ocean. The presence of expeditionary units abroad complemented the forward deployment of the US' troops in case of large military support requirements. This trend was visible in the Indian Ocean too. The re-commissioning of the US Fifth Fleet, after almost half a century, was evidence of the need in Washington to gain control of the littorals of the Indian Ocean. Highlighting the importance of littorals for the US maritime strategy, the 1997 naval document *Forward…From the Sea* pointed out that;

> Seventy-five percent of the Earth's population and a similar proportion of national capitals and major commercial centres lie in the littorals. These are the places where American influence and power have the greatest impact and

are needed most often. For forward-deployed naval forces, the littorals are a starting point as well as a destination.

Power projection Through Control of Littorals

The emphasis on gaining control of the littorals was a strategy that the US enacted through its maritime forces, particularly its navy. The control of the littorals, combined a variety of motives such as projection of power, gaining political and military influence, maintaining regional stability, building coalition forces etc. The document also mentioned peacetime engagement of the US Navy as a means of American power projection. Two operations early on in the 1990s, stand as good examples of American influence in the Indian Ocean region during non-combat phase; OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT to help fleeing Kurds in the Persian Gulf War and OPERATION SEA ANGEL where the US Amphibious Task Force consisting of 15 ships and more than 2500 men provided humanitarian assistance to Bangladesh after a devastating cyclone. Both these engagements of the US Navy in the Indian Ocean paved the way for future naval involvement in the region to promote regional, economic and political stability.

Deterrence and Conflict Prevention

As the US Navy approached the end of the 20th century, deterrence and conflict prevention through forward deployment became an even important goal in the IOR; as the region had seen quite a few wars in the last decade of the 20th century that threatened to destabilise it. Rotational deployments of forces allowed the US Navy to maintain a strong forward deployment for longer periods even in the most distant ocean from its continent. As preventive measures, the US Navy also increased surveillance and reconnaissance of the Indian Ocean region in order to be better prepared for any crisis. The Indian Ocean witnessed the continued presence of Ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) deterrence patrols by the US Navy in the post Cold War. Even in the post1990 phase, the US Navy factored the Indian Ocean in its nuclear strategy as significantly as it did during the Cold War. This was validated by the presence of its SSBNs in the Indian Ocean even in the period following the Cold War, adding to the US Navy's stealth and lethal characteristics in the IOR.

A More Consolidated Command and Control

Since the 1997 naval document; *Forward…From the Sea* carried further the emphasis on joint operations as a sea-land-air team, the US Navy focussed on sea-based command and control at the level of Commander Joint Task Force. The US Navy adopted an integrated approach to building a unified sea-based command and control system in order to have a common threat perception across all commanders. This would not only bring about a better assessment of the enemy, but would also elicit a unified and organised response. This step was also in consonance with the concept of cooperative engagement between the US Navy and the Marines.

1998: US' Change in Threat Perception in the Indian Ocean

The first change in US' approach to threat perception in the Indian Ocean had taken place with the Soviet Union ceasing to exist at the end of the Cold War. The second major reassessment of threat perception emerging from the IOR was made by the US after second nuclear tests were conducted by India in 1998. The US sensed a potential threat to regional stability in the nuclear tests conducted by India and hence stalled military contact and cooperation with India. Resultantly, the series of MALABAR bilateral naval exercises which had begun in 1992 and had undergone three rounds was suspended as a result of the nuclear tests conducted by India. According to the US, such a step was justified in its deterrence ability to stop other countries of the region from taking the nuclear path, as much as it was the repudiation of the Indian nuclear tests.

Peacetime Operations and Coalition Building

By the late 1990s and early 2000, the US Navy took its peacetime deployments in the Indian Ocean as opportunities to build naval coalition by exercising and training frequently with the naval, ground and air forces of friendly nations in the region. In this regard, albeit the trend from the Cold War continued, in that the US Navy continued its engagements with its CENTO partners like Pakistan in the Indian Ocean, the US did show a scope for engaging other regional powers like India. The

first MALABAR Exercise is a case in point here. The MALABAR Exercises between the navies of India and the US started in 1992, and can be seen one of the first steps to expand coalition building in the IOR with a major regional player lacking any significant history of bilateral cooperation. Other partner countries like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were already involved in multilateral maritime exercises with the US in the Gulf.

An important instance in the post Cold War period came, when the US pursued vigorous coalition building for action in the Indian Ocean was through the Cooperative Defense Initiative (CDI) during the Clinton Administration. The CDI was launched as a Department of Defense initiative by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen in March 1999 to build an effective coalition against potential Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threats in the Indian Ocean. The principles of CDI sought to create a regional consensus against WMD by invoking five areas of cooperation: active defense, passive defense, shared early warning, consequence management and medical counter-measures (Cerami, 2013). The CDI also called for the development of active and passive defences against chemical and biological attacks. Through CDI, the US planned to work with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Egypt and Jordan, much of what forms the littorals of the Indian Ocean, on the basis of the five principles listed above. Through the CDI, the US also sought to incorporate the GCC countries in a larger land-based and maritime coalition. Saudi Arabia, which was already conducting maritime exercises in the Persian Gulf at that point, was invited to be a part of the 11-nation OPERATION BRIGHT STAR- including Egypt, the United States, the Netherlands, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, France, Greece, Britain, Germany, Italy and Kuwait (Garamone, 1999). The CDI, during the Clinton Administration in April 2000, laid out the US strategy to consolidate its role in the Middle-East through a string of bases and extra military presence in the western Indian Ocean.

In the post Cold War period, the Persian Gulf and the larger Middle East area turned into a major military node for the US with the re-commissioning of the US Fifth Fleet as a permanently deployed fleet for any part of the Indian Ocean; with surveillance coverage of almost the entire Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea and western Indian

Ocean. The military presence of the US in the region was already bolstered by the presence of some of the allies of the US in the region like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. With the turn of the century, the US was making efforts to increase its influence in the region by including other countries in its Middle East coalition. The CDI proved to be an effort in the same direction and created enough consensual weight in the region for the US to start OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003. In the matrix of a complicated US coalition in the Middle East, the US claimed to provide naval security to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, the UAE, Jordan and Israel through its presence in the Indian Ocean. However, its presence in the IOR remained traditionally opposed by Iraq, Iran and Syria. This had mitigated the American power projection beyond the first layer of littorals in the Middle East, despite its ability to militarily overwhelm those countries.

The US Navy in the postCold war period indulged in activities such as placing Marines on land to overcome attacks, hostage situations, undertake embassy evacuations, escorting ships to its destination, intercepting ships on sea to impose sanctions, air attacks and missile launches at enemies, providing humanitarian relief to countries and people in distress and so on. However, as the Persian Gulf War ended and energy exports picked up leading to more ships flowing in and out of the Indian Ocean region, the US naval strategy also focussed on providing adequate support to prevent disruption of sea lines of communication for safer trade transit. To a large extent, this was possible as the US Navy strengthened its capabilities to sustain logistics even in the face of crises. In the Indian Ocean, even during the Persian Gulf War more than 95 percent of logistics, material and equipment were transported through water. This capability of the US Navy was further strengthened in the Indian Ocean due to better prepositioning and strategic sea-lifting capabilities after the 1990s.

II

US Post Cold War Naval Strategy: September 11 Attacks and After

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks, the US was faced with a new security situation globally particularly against terrorism. The US' apprehension was aggravated by other factors such as a volatile Middle East and a fast developing Asia. In many ways, it was being considered a paradigm shift in the security situation where the US had to rethink its capabilities and use newer, efficient resources in order to reformulate its strategy. In the maritime domain, one of the earlier efforts in this direction was the naval document; *Sea Power 21*,launched within two years of the September 11 attacks in 2001. The *Sea Power 21* was specially designed with the altered security environment in mind that posed new challenges to the US Navy globally. The document based the US naval strategy on a collective assessment to tackle maritime challenges. The seas across the world became a 'unified battlespace' for the US Navy where emphasis was laid on greater integration of sea, land, air, space, and cyberspace more than ever before (Clark, 2002). The sea became a meeting ground for a combined execution of these capabilities as it provided the desired manuevering expanse. The *Sea Power 21* was one of the first documents emphasising the need for maximising joint capabilities for global navies. As such, it hinted on a cooperative strategy globally to counter threats.

Maritime coalition operations that began in 2001 for furthering cooperation in tackling terrorist and other threats at sea, strengthened the US Navy's ability to make interventions at high sea (Hattendorf, 2004: 9). In these circumstances, the maritime dominance of the US during the Cold War and its unilateral maritime dominance in the decade following the end of the Cold War had to pave way for a more cooperative maritime strategy. Even as the US Navy gradually worked with other countries of the IOR through a cooperative framework, one of the most important naval documents to come out in the post Cold War period highlighting the need for "international cooperation" was *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* in 2007. Building on the new directions provided by two earlier naval documents of 1992 and 1997, the 2007 document provided an unprecedented scope for cooperation between the US Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. The inclusion of US Coast Guards

in the new US maritime cooperative strategy of the US highlighted as much diversity, as the gravity of maritime challenges posed to the US. Third in the line of important naval strategy documents since the end of the Cold War, the 2007 document laid out clearly that for the US' national interests 'preventing wars is as important as winning wars'. With respect to the future naval strategy of the US it also pointed out that the 'challenge is to apply sea power in a manner that protects U.S. vital interests even as it promotes greater collective security, stability, and trust'. The mention of the term "collective security," probably for the first time in an outlined US naval strategy, definitely marked the change in approach for the US in maritime regions away from its homeland. Such an approach was accompanied in most cases by four over-arching concerns in the Indian Ocean; building a collective security framework in the Indian Ocean, protection of trade and shipping lines, preventing nuclear proliferation in the region and addressing the regional strategic imbalance.

The US naval presence in the India Ocean gradually increased in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, mostly as a result of the reassessment of global security and ways to deal with them. The Global War on Terrorism (GWoT) declared by the Bush Administration had an implicit new role for the US Navy too. In the post 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US' naval presence in the Indian Ocean sought to diversify its presence embracing larger parts of the Indian Ocean, even as the nature of threats changed and spread across various parts of the Indian Ocean. Piracy and terrorism, risk of nuclear proliferation due to the presence of quite a few NPT non-signatory nuclear powers in Asia, and growing Chinese military capabilities were some of the reasons why the US deemed it necessary to expand it naval presence across the Indian Ocean. Most of the 20th century had seen the US naval presence concentrated either in the areas surrounding the Persian Gulf or near the MSF Diego Garcia. This was on the lines of one of the six "strategic imperatives" outlined in the 2007 naval document; that "the US maritime forces will be characterised by regionally concentrated, forward-deployed task forces." With regards to regionally concentrated combat deployment in the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean, the 2007 document played up protection of vital US interests in the region, regional security and stability, and sea based deterrence as major focus areas. However, the regional concentration of combat forces as a maritime strategy did not prevent the Navy from repositioning to other maritime

regions in the event of contingencies because of a dispersed and well-networked nature of the US' maritime presence throughout the globe.

The ability of the US space based assets was considered a sine qua non to combined networked operations after September 11 attacks. For instance, in 2003 when the US sent forces to Iraq, space based satellites guided cruise missiles and stealth fighters dropped precision bombs on their targets (The Satellite Wars). In the opening salvo two F-117 Stealth fighters dropped satellite-guided 2,000-pound GBU-27 bunker-buster bombs on the outskirts of Baghdad. Use of space based assets was often used in conjunction with air, land or sea based other forms of deterrence. In 2003, even as the satellites guided precision bombs to targets, about 40 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired into Iraqi territories from a combination of four ships for more effectiveness (Gordon & Trainor 2006).

However, the war on terror agenda had completely changed the nature of US involvement in the Indian Ocean. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the US established National Security Strategy (NSS) which it used to bolster and further justify its presence in the Indian Ocean and world over. Pentagon's classified 2003 *Operational Availability Study* provided a new strategic orientation. Singh (2006) explains the significant increase in lethality and capabilities of the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the post-September 11 attacks by listing that the Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) represented a combination of amphibious warfare vessels, surface warfare ships and submarines, besides the Marines being part of the Seventh Fleet's forward deployed force for the US, bringing a unique maritime capability to the region.

Collective Security

Armed robbery and piracy which ran rampant off the coast of Africa since the early 1990s, if not earlier,in the Indian Oceancontinued to inflict the southern and western parts of the Ocean too. The United States as the preeminent power assumed the role of the guarantor of safety, stability and peace through its presence in the IOR. Both

Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI), a conceptual framework proposed by the United States in 2004 for multilateral maritime security cooperation, and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) were introduced by the US for providing security in Southeast Asia and parts of the Indian Ocean. Through the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the US Navy helped to create a new regional and international norm with respect to interdiction of transfers by dangerous states of materials related to weapons of mass destruction. Through these mechanisms the US laid down the basic structure of collective security in the Indian Ocean. This marked a diversion from the earlier approach of the US to the region in that it also came to embrace countries that were earlier neither friends nor allies. The collective security approach by the US harped on maritime cooperation between regional navies and the US Navy, even as the US felt an "era of declining access" (*A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, 2007) had set in the 21st century. And, the US Navy positioned at the helm of affairs in securing maritime access worldwide had an earmarked role in that pursuit. The document also exhorted US sea services to "forge international partnerships," within a cooperative maritime framework that furthered rule of law to overcome access denial and maritime threats globally. These pursuits of the US Navy became especially relevant to the Indian Ocean, given its chokepoints and their strategic control by countries that didn't quite align themselves with the US maritime views in the region; Iran (Strait of Hormuz) and China (Strait of Malacca). Although China's "Malacca Dilemma," (Schouker, 2015) was still nascent as a regional strategy of access denial, Iran had proven to be a threat in the past with its ability to close the Strait of Hormuz.

Trade Security

The post Cold War period, particularly the 21st century, has seen the rise of globalised economies. Maritime trade is an important part of this network of globalised economies to sustain the movement of energy, raw materials, and finished goods. A major chunk of the global sea-borne trade passes through the Indian Ocean, with about a third of the world's trade and half its oil transiting through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore alone. As China and India continue their strong growth, sea trade through the straits is expected to increase correspondingly. Major economies

such as the United States, China, Japan, and India all have stakes in ensuring the safe passage of shipping through the region. The littoral states of the Indian Ocean are the major regional stakeholders, as any interruption in shipping would heavily impact their economies by disrupting port operations and the smooth flow of raw materials and finished products. The increasing trade relations of the US with major Asian powers such as China, Japan and India in the post Cold War, has necessitated a deeper, cautious and compelling involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean's trade security network.

Addressing Post Cold War Strategic Imbalance

On the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, China's rapid military and naval modernisation raised strategic concerns for the US navy. The eastern regional balance of the IOR shifted in favour of China due to both, lack of an even naval presence of the US throughout the Indian Ocean and the lack of a regional balancer to China whom the US could support. China made rapid economic progress and has grown into a formidable sea power since the 1990 which could challenge the US at least in this part of the world. Continued modernisation of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has catapulted it to becoming the closest competitor to the US Navy in the Asian waters. In such circumstances, an environment of maritime competitiveness maintaining a comparative sea-power advantage is a prerequisite for sustaining maritime influence in the Indian Ocean. This advantage of the US Navy vis-à-vis the PLAN narrowed in the Pacific Ocean in the post Cold War, but remained significantly wide in the IOR.

However, since early 2000 the Chinese Navy has frequented the Indian Ocean and has built enough partners to sustain those efforts. The countries along the so called "String of Pearls" should be counted in that category. Chinese investment and port control in the Pakistani port in the Indian Ocean located at Gwadar is also viewed in the light of Chinese aspirations to dominate the Indian Ocean. Gwadar places China right at the forefront of strategic access to the Indian Ocean putting it within 70 kilometres from the Iranian border and 400 kilometres east of the Strait of Hormuz, a major global oil supply route. Chinese presence at Gwadar has often been seen concomitantly with

Chinese desires to construct a “listening post” making it possible to “monitor US naval activity in the Persian Gulf." Since 2008,Chinese military activities in the submarine base at Sanya located at the southern tip of Hainan has created enough scope for easy submarine access to the Indian Ocean (Pant, 2010). These concerns have created some arguments favouring active strategic involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean as a regional stabiliser. Since the turn of the century, America’s growing closeness with India has created an option of possible inclusion of an important regional player in the balance of power game in the Indian Ocean. Whether the US bolsters its Indian Ocean presence or exhorts a regional country like Indian to take lead in restoring balance of power in the Indian Ocean (arguably tilted in favour of China), remains to be seen.

The rise of the Chinese Navy continues to change the balance both in the Pacific Ocean and the IOR. Many activities and intentions of the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean have not only gone against the interests of the regional countries but also the US. Adherence to the rules of navigation by China in the Indian Ocean is a requisite that all the stakeholders in the region desire. But the unpredictability attached to the Chinese force projection, due to lack of clarity over the modernisation of Chinese military, is an important factor that keeps the regional countries and their naval policies on tenterhooks. A fine example of a regional country in the Indian Ocean that remains perturbed by Chinese moves, is India. Repeated Chinese docking of submarines in Sri Lanka has raised strategic hassles in India. The US has tried to partner with regional navies in the Indian Ocean to deter any unpredictable moves by China in the Indian Ocean. The MALABAR series of naval exercises involving India, Japan and the US has been the best example to depict the kind of naval consensus the US is trying to build in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War; through the involvement of not only the major powers but also like-minded countriesof the region, in so far as freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean is concerned.

Particularly since 2007, the nature of US’ involvement in the Indian Ocean has been shaped by the Chinese involvement in the Indian Ocean, which remained mostly limited until 2012 but with potential escalatory characteristics in the future. Although out of scope for this study, a recent example here could justify the aforementioned

claim. In 2015, China has surpassed the US as the world's largest crude oil importer (McSpadden, 2015). As China's oil needs rose, its dependency on the sea lanes of communication in the Indian Ocean changed, prompting it to enter the Indian Ocean more authoritatively. Imports from African countries like Angola, Sudan and countries in the Middle East like Saudi Arabia and Iran remained crucial to the Chinese energy needs, and that made the security of the Indian Ocean sea route extremely important for China too.

The Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War has been largely assessed as one lacking absolute force projection abilities. The lack of an active Chinese base in the Indian Ocean was an important factor in the lack of Chinese military capabilities in the region. The growing Chinese belligerence since 2007 in the South China Sea cannot be delinked from the Indian Ocean expanse considering the growing 'blue water' characteristics of the PLAN. The security focus attached to the Strait of Malacca by China, or what has famously been referred to as the "Malacca Dilemma" (Storey, 2006) by the erstwhile Chinese Premier Hu Jintao, has been understood as closely associated with the Chinese security framework for the Indian Ocean. Chinese involvement in the Indian Ocean in anti-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia has also been linked to the larger Chinese design of entering the Indian Ocean.

These activities have prompted the regional countries as well as the most important extra-regional power, the US, to indulge in naval cooperation with regional and non-regional countries to maintain the power balance in the Indian Ocean. Since the 2000s the US has partnered with India, Japan and sometimes Australia in the Indian Ocean to carry out naval exercises to exude military readiness. As per most US assessments, including Cordesman and Toukan (2014: 327), the build up in the Chinese navy (PLAN) has been a much more serious challenge to the US Navy than the boost in its ground forces. However, of primary concern to the US, has been the combination of Chinese submarines, surface combatants and amphibious warships that can penetrate the Indian Ocean. With a significantly enhanced military capability in the post Cold War, China can deploy both air and sea forces at a short notice. The so called "String of Pearls," (Holmes, 2016) a chain of Chinese assisted port facilities around the India,

is already being considered as a significant Chinese strategic inroad in the Indian Ocean.

For the US, its naval strategy against the post Cold War Chinese build up still largely revolved around its traditional alliances in the Pacific. However, recent instances of Chinese naval build up and its clear intention to cross the nine-dotted line militarily has necessitated involving Far East countries like Japan in the Indian Ocean (through the MALABAR Exercises), building potential naval partners in the IOR (for instance, India) and involving strategic countries like Singapore in a more militarily and economically engaging way. The nature of US naval involvement in the Indian Ocean has also depended a lot in the manner that it has involved the countries of South East Asia and the Asia-Pacific to build a naval consensus against China. This effort, however, remains in great flux with regional countries' growing dependence on Beijing in the 21st century.

Despite growing Chinese naval prowess, the US has remained the preeminent naval power in the IOR with its unique and strong ability to deploy simultaneously from the CENTCOM and the USPACOM. There is a great US military/strategic balance in the Indian Ocean due to its almost equally lethal abilities to penetrate by both the US Fifth Fleet and the US Seventh Fleet in short time. This strategic balance gets further complimented by the presence of anMSF at Diego Garcia, which is roughly equidistant from both these commands.

The post-2007 US naval policy in the IOR evolved on the basis of twin concerns: preemption against Chinese involvement and involvement with/of regional countries of the littoral IOR. If the Chinese strategy assessed the Indian Ocean as an area of potential naval deployments, in retrospect, the US naval policy seemed preemptive in its engagement of some countries of the Indian Ocean Region. Especially in its assessment of the Indian Ocean as being the southwestern part of its Rebalance strategy, the US maritime policy has involved the Indian Ocean region as an integral part of its larger maritime security policies since 2008. The US' stress on the maritime area of the Indo-Pacific together with its floating of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Corridor (IPMC) as an important maritime area where security is held very important, are important dimensions that have helped the US extend its Pacific military consensus westwards. In doing so, countries of the Indian Ocean region would find

building a naval consensus against China easily justifiable in a futuristic scenario, given the latter's flagrant maritime behaviour in the South China Sea of late.

The nature of US objectives in the Indian Ocean has come a long way from the Cold War days to encompass many different concerns in the post Cold War. That, in turn, has modified the US' strategy in the Indian Ocean. In recent times, the Pentagon's 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) led the way in formulating a more focussed US strategy towards the Indian Ocean through a more ''integrated approach to the region across military and civilian organizations'' (QDR 2010). Building on the need for having a clear picture of the objectives defining the American strategy in the Indian Ocean, Green & Shearer (2012) outlined the broad concerns that have shaped the maritime strategy of the US in the Indian Ocean. Green and Shearer (2012) outline three "clear and abiding U.S. interests are at stake and should remain the focus of U.S. strategy." Maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a secure passage for international commerce is one of the first priorities for the US strategy in the Indian Ocean. This priority is also closely linked to the freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean. Both these priorities are essential for the Indian Ocean region's political and economic stability. Any security threat or obstruction will lead to impeding close to 75 percent of East Asia's energy imports which is contingent on the Gulf and transits through the heart of the Indian Ocean. Green & Shearer (2012) point out that the strategy that should be used by the US Navy to ensure freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean should be pivoted around the two important straits linking the Indian Ocean to the global maritime expanse; Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. Both these straits are considered to be chokepoints for the Indian Ocean and remain crucial in the freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean. Concerns around these chokepoints have grown in the recent years, particularly in the aftermath of gradual increase in significance of the Malacca strait for China (Malacca Dilemma) and Iran's threat to close down the Strait of Hormuz in December 2011 (Iran threatens to block Strait of Hormuz oil route, BBC, 2011).

Both securing the Indian Ocean and ensuring freedom of navigation are subset goals of the larger US objective in the IOR; to swing the strategic balance in its favour in the IOR by gaining an upper hand vis-à-vis the Chinese influence. China has come to

use a vast area of the Indian Ocean as trade routes in the past two decades. Apart from this, it uses many parts of the Indian Ocean as areas under the indirect influence of its Navy through its presence in various countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Seychelles. This pro-active maritime policy by China has only elicited a vigilant but cautious approach from the US in the Indian Ocean. The policy of the US in the post-1990 phase in the Indian Ocean, has been a watchful one; which has moulded itself according to its timely interests in the region. The priority of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War era has seen a gradual inversion from an erstwhile geo-politics-over-geoeconomics approach to geoeconomics-over-geopolitics.

The Indian Ocean figures prominently in what has been called by Erickson (2010) as a "new strategic direction" of the US maritime policy. There is certainly a conviction in US policy circles that the US maritime strategy, particularly in Asia, has taken a new turn. Through his paper titled "Assessing the New Maritime Strategy" Erickson (2008) is of the view that the US has adopted a new maritime strategy in which mutual interests and harmony are central. According to him, the official declaration of this new post Cold War maritime policy took place on October the 17th, 2007 in the Naval War College when it came out with a comprehensive document:*A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The maritime strategy outlined in this document was new in that it focussed on "opportunities—not threats" and was derived from a thorough assessment of the US' security requirements for the new century. *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea power* was a combined strategy document of the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard which captured the larger sense of American perspective on Asian security; from managing the global commons to deterring the use of force by potential adversaries. Importantly, the document highlighted Asia as one of two key theatres for the US' maritime power with the Indian Ocean featuring prominently in it. In the light of this new maritime policy, the US focussed on building new maritime partnerships in the Indian Ocean region. For the US, the period of the post Cold War in the 20th Century and much of the 21st, has been dominated by one thought: How can the United States maintain its existing status and role while China continues to rise? (Erickson, 2008). It's precisely to answer this question that the US is looking towards a new strategic direction in its maritime policy, one that talks of mutual cooperation instead of the traditional

hostility and distrust with the countries in the IOR. This is what some, including Erickson (2008), have referred to as the great power's strategy of 'competitive coexistence' with rising powers of Asia.

Central to the understanding of 'competitive coexistence' is the way in which the US has come to handle, engage and cooperate with major naval powers of the IOR. This holds true for the post Cold War period, particularly in relation to the US vis-à-vis China. That the US has largely adopted a constructive role, led by engagement of other powers in the Indian Ocean, is clear from the changing contours of its naval relationship with the Indian Ocean littoral countries immediately following the end of the Cold War. In this regard, the sharp turn in naval relations between India and the US is extremely significant. The naval relations between India and the US started improving in 1992 with the beginning of the MALABAR series of bilateral naval exercises. The US Navy's relations with both Indian and Pakistan navies remained central to its post Cold War cooperative strategy in the Indian Ocean. The Indo-US Naval Steering Committee was established in 1992 at New Delhi to chart out naval cooperation involving naval personnel exchanges, joint exercises and information sharing. This formed the basis of the Indo-US naval cooperation in the post Cold War period. More importantly, the Indo-US naval relations started with the series of MALABAR exercises in 1992, 1995 and 1996. These exercises paved the way for greater understanding between the two naval forces of India and the US, helping them to develop broad frameworks for operating together in non-military operations such as anti-piracy and terrorism. The Presidency of Bill Clinton proved to be fruitful for Indo-US naval relations as he lifted the ban on naval education and training by 2000 that was imposed in the aftermath of the 1998 nuclear tests by India. It is also important to note here that the graph of US-Pakistan relations in the post Cold War period gradually went down due to terrorist activities in that country and proliferation issues. After the September 11 attacks in the US, there was a strongly felt need for cooperating with countries surrounding the Indian Ocean on a full spectrum of issues; diplomatic, economic, military, law enforcement and intelligence. These requirements have led a cooperative engagement of the regional navies by the US in the IOR.

The US' presence in the Indian Ocean has not always been perceived in good light, particularly by some of the countries in its littorals and their people. Singh (2006) attributes the Cold War presence of the US in the Indian Ocean to having caused "three major and several minor attacks." The unhindered maritime access and presence of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold war, however, did not harm the Indian Ocean in the manner that was reminiscent of the Superpower rivalry of the Cold War. The post Cold War presence of the US in the Indian Ocean turned into being more nuanced as it moved to 'access facilities' apart from maintaining its erstwhile bases. The US shared 'access facilities' with Philippines, Singapore, Morocco, Algeria, apart from having bases in Khanbad (Uzbekistan) and Manas (Kyrgyzstan).

Technology: Military and Logistics Transformations

Although the Cold War period represented an era of great technological revolutions, since 1990 the US further added immense technological value to augment its military arsenal. Many of these technologies have been used in various measures (both military and logistics) in the Indian Ocean. Since the Indian Ocean is far from the primary bases of the US, its presence in this region has always depended on the ability to provide logistics support. In the post Cold War period there have been three major changes that have transformed the way US Navy would operate in the Indian Ocean; revolution in military affairs (RMA), Network-Centric Warfare (NCW) and the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). These three advances made in the US military capabilities coupled with the rise of the unipolar world order had significantly changed the nature of its presence in the IOR in the post-1990 period (Singh 2006). Starting with the implementation of the Carter Doctrine, OPERATION DESERT STORM, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM of 2001-02, have all depicted structural, technological and logistical differences and evolutions in the way US approached the IOR. In essence, the US presence in the post Cold War period has been a combination of both military and logistics evolutions, much of which has been fuelled by technological advancements.

Since the year 2001, as maritime collaborations have significantly increased between the US Navy and other navies of the world, technology as a component remains as much an enabler as hindrance. While technology has helped by bridging the asymmetries between various military partners of the world, the high-end technologies of the US military at times also prove to be undesired impediments in the processes of interoperability with regional navies of the Indian Ocean littoral countries.

Geo-economics over Geo-politics

Rear Admiral William Pendley, in Singh (1997), correctly notes that that in the multi-polar world since the 1990, the US'National Security interests are more closely tied to world markets and economies than ever before. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, these economic and security concerns of the US which were primarily centred in the Asia-Pacific region initially, expanded to cover the Indian Ocean in a significant way. The Indian Ocean's concurrent transitioninto becoming the heartland of global maritime trade effected that transition. The rise of Asian giants like India and China increased the US' trade dependence with these countries. Pendley, in this essay, argues that the US viewed the Indian Ocean as central to its economic future and political wellbeing in the post Cold War. In the early 1990s, the main approach of the US towards regional powers was building strong bilateral relationships with them. The US worked with the countries of South Asia for security and regional stability. In the post Cold War period, the strategy of the US might have changed in the Indian Ocean but its objectives were largely the same; markets, capital, regional stability, collective security and balance of power which would facilitate its access to resources. The involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean since 1990 has been mostly assessed as having long term views. According to Pendley, the US involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War has been futuristic and centred around a policy of prioritising its strategic imperatives in the face of dynamic changes that kept sweeping across Asia. As such, in the post Cold war era geopolitics and geo-economics were the two major concerns of the US in the Indian Ocean, with the latter eclipsing the former gradually since 1990.

Piracy, Counter-terrorism and Other Threats

Modern piracy has posed the most serious threats to the Indian Ocean than it has to any other ocean (Upadhyay, 2011). In the post September 11 attacks period, the US faced the twin challenge of piracy and terrorism in various parts of the world. Since then, the international efforts to deal with the menace of piracy in the Indian Ocean have largely been led by the US. This led to various measures by the US against piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean Region. For instance, a Joint Task Force of the US operated from Djibouti to tackle piracy and other anti-terrorist operations in the Indian Ocean. In 2002, the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) was created with the purpose of providing counter-piracy and counter-terrorism operations in the Indian Ocean. Its responsibility was divided into three tasks: CTF-150 (Maritime Security & Counter Terrorism), CTF-151(Counter Piracy), CTF-152 (Persian Gulf Security Operations).[7] In so far as the strategy to counter maritime terrorism was concerned, there was an effort to tackle such threats by treating them as 'one seamless activity across national and regional borders' (Hattendorf, 2004: 17).

Besides, in 2008 the UN Security Council passed a series of measures targeting Somali piracy, culminating in the unanimous approval of the US-led Resolution 1851 (Alessi, 2012).

A report brought out by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) in September 2010 titled, "Maritime Security, Updating US Counter piracy Action Plan Gains Urgency as Piracy Escalates off the Horn of Africa" illustrates the US resolve and progress made by the US government in implementing its plan to counter piracy. GAO's report (2010) puts forth that US agencies have collaborated with international partners to counter piracy in the greater Indian Ocean region effectively since the 1990s.

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[7]http://rmcmun.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CMF-Background-Guide.pdf

In effectively dealing with maritime threats to the US' interests worldwide, there have been at least two very important documents coming out consecutively in 2005 and 2006. In September 2005, the department of Homeland Security of the US came out with an important document in dealing with diverse maritime threats since the 2001 terrorist attacks; the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS). The document predicated the safety of the US on the safety of oceans of the world. The changing nature of maritime threats prompted the US government to adopt the NSMS towards fully integrating departmental level coordination in handling maritime threats globally. The document focused on the non-military and transnational nature of maritime threats in the post September 11 attacks and ways to deal with them. Some of these threats were identified to be nation-states, terrorists, and transnational criminals and pirates. The maritime domain of the Asian maritime expanse remained critical to controlling these threats in the Indian Ocean as it connected some of the so-called 'rogue nations' with potential for proliferation across the Indian Ocean to other nations. The strategy implications from the NSMS in the Indian Ocean focused especially on dealing with terrorism and transnational criminal and piracy threats emerging from the Indian Ocean littorals. Since the 2005 maritime strategy adopted by the NSMS, the US Navy also assumed special focus in two non-security areas; environmental destruction and illegal seaborne mining.

The other significant maritime global strategy of the US to be formulated post September 11 attacks was Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) of 2012. The goals of MOTR are incorporated in its definition which defines it as, "the presidentially approved Plan to achieve a coordinated U.S. Government response to threats against the United States and its interests in the maritime domain." It was brought out by the Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center (GMCC) based on the need for an inter-agency response to maritime threats involving the US' interests worldwide. The MOTR made difference in enhancing US

sea services' capabilities on sea through better coordination and rapid action in handling maritime threats. The MOTR, since its inception, has been involved in more than 1000 cases of maritime threat prevention ranging from piracy, illegal migration, drug seizures and terrorism. Many of these interdictions have taken place in the Indian Ocean particularly illegal migrants, piracy and terrorism.[8]

Multi-dimensional Maritime Involvement

The involvement of the United States in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War has been multi dimensional, one that has ranged from military, logistics and humanitarian assistance, to disaster management. In the 2004-2005 tsunami relief operations, the US Navy demonstrated that the American pre-eminence also rests, in part, on their ability to provide relief and public goods in times of crisis. Government reports like Congressional Research Report (RS22027) and Congressional Research Report (RL32715) brought out in the year 2005 and Quadrennial Defence Review (2006) particularly, highlighted America's involvement in the Indian Ocean in disaster management and humanitarian relief measures. The 2007 MALABAR Exercise series in the Bay of Bengal (involving naval forces from India, the United States, Japan, Australia, and Singapore) sent a signal that the major maritime democracies had the capacity to work together to maintain open sea lines of communication and welcomed others willing and able to do the same.

According to Erickson (2008), the post Cold War period has been full of strategic uncertainties. The scheme of the US' policy in the Indian Ocean, particularly, has changed as has the nature of threats in the region and the countries. From a policy of hostility towards India in the Indian Ocean (American threat to India in the Indo-Pak War in 1971 by the USS *Enterprise* of the Seventh Fleet), the US has come a long way to embrace a spirit of 'competitive coexistence' with rising powers of Asia in the

[8]http://www.dhs.gov/global-motr-coordination-center-gmcc

Indian Ocean in the post Cold War. This was a major shift of the US from its erstwhile maritime policy mostly pivoted around the Soviet-threat. The US moved away from a deterrence-based approach in the Indian Ocean to the use of soft-power, cooperation and a vibrant multilateral diplomacy.

A different approach to the US policy in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War era can be attributed to a number of reasons. While some of the more conspicuous reasons could be growing terrorism, piracy and the rapid economic rise of the countries in the IOR, the subtler reasons are concerned with securing its maritime and strategic interests vis-à-vis other countries in the region, overcoming security threats and making the optimum use of its naval power in the region to extend American influence. Washington has also outlined, 'conflict prevention and the maintenance of the stability of the region' as another important reason for its presence in the Indian Ocean. This includes non-combative use of its Navy by the US, disaster management, weather-forecasting and rescue operations. While the traditional thinking and the core interests of the US remains the same in Indian Ocean the modes of projecting them have changed (Erickson 2008).

The Indian Ocean along with the Arabian Sea is considered as the strategic energy lifeline. The Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea are the two areas where the US and China have similar interests in securing their SLOC (sea lines of communication). According to Rude (2008), oceans have become the new domain of rivalry in the post Cold War period. In this new domain of rivalry,ensuring security on high seas is also a way of power projection, besides maintaining regional security. Indian Ocean being an important trade route has involved the interests of both emerging and emerged powers in the post 1990 period. The involvement of the US in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period has been a combination of both its soft and hard power goals; with the former eclipsing the latter to a great extent gradually since 1990. Although the reworked post Cold War US' policy in the Indian Ocean hinges primarily on a cooperative framework, in an environment of rapidly rising regional and other Asian powers it also faces a dilemma; one that dangles between trade and economic relations on one side, and alliance building and regional balance of power on the other. Amidst the fight for resources around the world, intense competition and a

desire to gain sea control, it would not be impertinent to ask whether the US would continue to maintain its post Cold War spirit of competitive co-existence in the future?

The sea control that the US demonstrated in the Indian Ocean for a decade following the end of the Cold War mitigated mainly due to reasons such as the rise of regional navies and economies. Particularly these rising regional countries' ability to use submarines more frequently and effectively in the Indian Ocean has posed additional challenges to the underwater capabilities of the US. Increasing number of Indian Ocean littoral countries were using both advanced diesel-electric and nuclear propelled submarines in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War; China, India, Pakistan and Iran being some of them. The 2007 naval document, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, listed addressing sea control as a means to gaining sea control by the US Navy especially by countering the underwater threats by submarines, in a manner that ensures operational maritime mobility and freedom of navigation.

According to Green (2009), for the Clinton Administration economic priorities made Japan an adversary, then an ally to balance China, and then a secondary player in the pursuit of a new "strategic partnership" with Beijing. For Bush, Asia policy centred on Japan and relations with both Tokyo and Beijing improved. Citing previous references, Green (2009) draws home the point that China does not occupy the entire focus of the US' post Cold War maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean. The reason he points out for this, is the fact that there have been other issues of importance like the crises in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of India, the global financial crisis and more importantly the fact that China is not a direct military threat to the US. He highlights these reasons as both present and future justification for the positioning of geo-economic cooperation over geopolitical rivalry in the Indian Ocean by the US. In other words, he advocates a cautious and non-provocative rationale for the US post Cold War presence in the Indian Ocean; as has largely been depicted by the presence of the US in the IOR in the post 1990 period barring a few initial years.

For the above reasons, by most assessments, the IORhas remained a zone of peace in the post Cold War period from 1990 to 2012. Although the United States has continued to remain distrustful of China it has also simultaneously expanded trade relations with the latter. Given the ever-increasing level of economic interdependence between the US and China, and now other countries of the region like India, it would be equally in the interest of both the US and China to keep the sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean safe.

Even though the American strategy in the Indian Ocean limited itself to more economics and less politics, the US' post Cold War involvement in the IOR has not been without challenges. In the absence of the Soviet Union, the post Cold War involvement of the US in the IOR was faced with China. And by most reckonings, the US' maritime involvement in the Asian waters continues to be tested by the Chinese strategy. Goldman Sachs has predicted that China's gross domestic product (GDP) will surpass that of the United States by 2027. Quoting statistics from 'The Chicago Council on Global Affairs' from a June 2008 survey: 64 percent of Americans favour a policy of engagement and cooperation with Beijing and that 67 percent oppose US efforts to contain Chinese power. To some extent, this has been reflected in the presence of America in the Indian Ocean after 1990. In "The Post-American World" Fareed Zakaria (2008) writes about the shift of power to Asia, and he notes that there is a "the rise of the rest", which includes India and China. Zakaria argues that the United States must learn to share power while still being the leader. He also says that the United States is gradually learning to share power and responsibility with the rising powers of Asia. With regards to Asia Green (2009) concludes by saying that 'Asia is a maritime theatre and the U.S. Navy is poised at the cutting edge of each of most of that region's challenges and opportunities'.

Given the rising economic and political status of Asia, it will be in the US maritime interests to diversify its Pacific interest gradually to the Indian Ocean, given potential challenges from China in future. Even without the lack of strategic assets like the US has in the Pacific, Indian Ocean will continue to be on the US radar for both geoeconomic and geopolitical reasons. In this context, Kaplan's (2010) remarks are

worth noting; "the Indian Ocean Region has become the most dynamic region to the US."

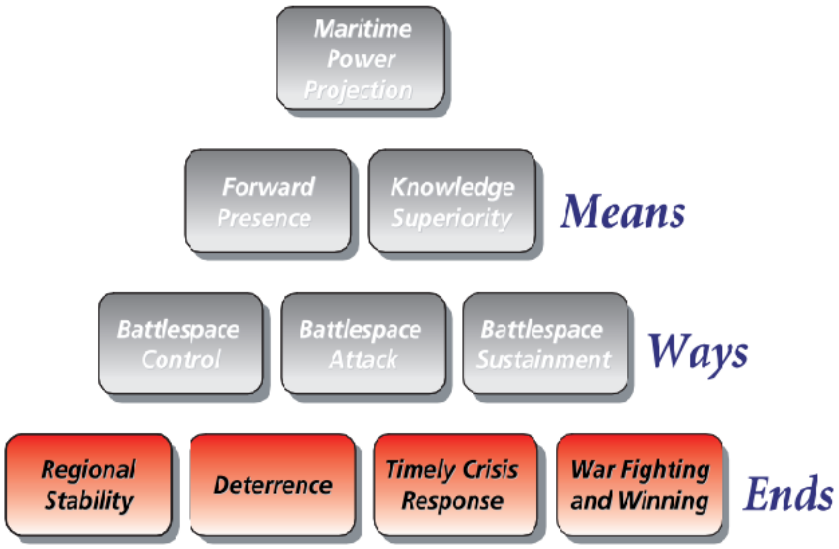
The stated objective of the US Central Command is:

> With national and international partners, U.S. Central Command promotes cooperation among nations, responds to crises, and deters or defeats state and non-state aggression, and supports development and, when necessary, reconstruction in order to establish the conditions for regional security, stability, and prosperity.

The test of validity and sustainability of these objectives of the US in the wake of the post Cold War economical, political, and strategic changes in the IOR has formed a very important part of the corpus of the US' post Cold War maritime policy literature.

A revised US maritime policy was issued towards the last leg of the second Bush administration. Since then, the maritime policy has remained at the centre of US' policy focus under various governments. Most analysts believe that there has no specific policy of the US in the Indian Ocean and that its post Cold War policy in the IOR has changed as per shifting national interests and needs. According to Rude (2008), the US policy in the Indian Ocean will keep shifting between "multinational trade cooperation and transnational military exercises."

To sum, the US maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean depended on a combination of several factors that Hattendorf (2006) describes in three forms; means, ways and end. The following picture describes the aforementioned three constituents of US Navy's maritime strategy.



(Hattendorf, 2006: 205)

Neo-Nixon Strategy in the Indian Ocean: Letting Key Regional Players Lead the Way

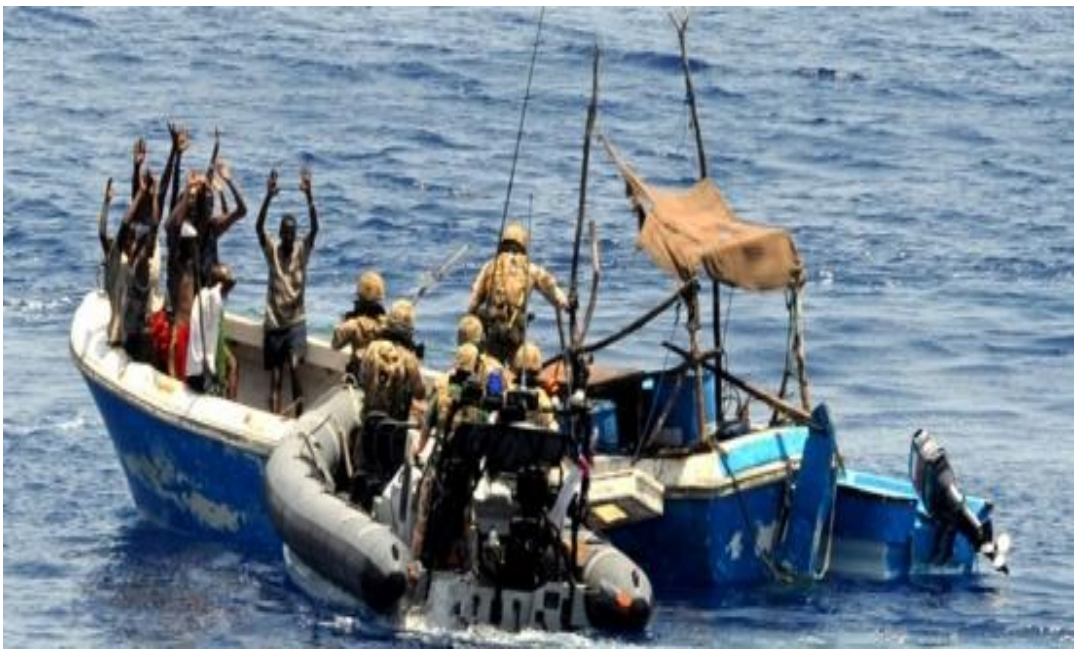
Ladwig III (2014) presents a Neo-Nixonian understanding to assess what has been the post Cold War US strategy in the Indian Ocean. When President Obama announced his 'pivot to Asia' policy it generated high hopes of American assistance among some of the Asia countries, particularly those in Southeast Asia. However, the promise of the rhetoric was never supplemented by adequate resources to keep the policy floating. In the longer term, the pivot changed to 'rebalance' and since then it has remained in flux without much clarity on the present status of the US policy. One of the policy's primary objectives, to deter China, has failed. This, Ladwig III (2014) argues, tacitly pushed forward a US strategy to assist the IOR countries to defend and stand for themselves in times of crises. Moreover, the Indian Ocean did not have very vital US interests in the region for it to commit its military wherewithal and economic resources in the IOR. The IOR, for instance, only accounted for less than 15 percent of its energy needs through most of the Cold War, signifying the lack of its vital political and economic stakes in the region.He goes on to argue that since the US

didnot find its interests hinged in the India Ocean region in a major way, and the best way to engage with the region, while still achieving regional stability, was understood to be in bringing a concert of democracies together in the region to promote its interests through them (also understood as offshore balancing by some extension).

Chapter 3

US Role in Tackling Non-Traditional Security Threats: Piracy and Terrorism

The US' goal of achieving global dominancein the post Cold War period, both land and maritime, has met with newer challenges, particularly since the turn of the century. This chapter focuses on how piracy and terrorism are the twin challenges that have redefined the US' in the post Cold War Indian Ocean. This chapter also looks at the US' role in tackling piracy in the Indian Ocean and its active role in controlling piracy off the horn of Africa, and in containing it from spreading in the southern Indian Ocean. The chapter argues that the nature and expanse of non-traditional threats in the post Cold War period was such that it could be tackled best only by regional cooperation and engagement. As such, it argues how increasing trade with Asian countries and the concomitant need of a safer trade passage in the post Cold War, pushed the US towards a more integrated regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean.



(*Courtesy: Google Maps*)

After the end of intense Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union, the world order moved towards a new kind of world politics, one that carried anticipation of the world as a more secure and stable place. However, the new world order came with its own challenges, particularly in terms of its new security threats. A relatively new aspect of emerging post Cold War security threats found implications in the maritime domain. While terrorism in general assumed new roles through its evolutions and manifestations in various forms, maritime terrorism and sea-piracy became the two foremost threats facing the seas of the new world order. Efforts in tackling these security threats became further complicated as maritime connectivity between littoral nations increased at an unprecedented rate in the post Cold War period, in turn, increasing connectivity and access for perpetrators too. Maritime terrorism and piracy emerged to be one of the most daunting tasks before the navies of the world in the post Cold War; the US Navy being at the forefront of that job. The prolonged weak regional security situation and instability in the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean had made it an easy functional maritime ground for both pirates and terrorists. It became a persistent challenge for the navies operating in the IOR to curb maritime terrorism and piracy even as increasingly large part of global trade became contingent on the Indian Ocean as its transit route. The US Navy's presence in the form of CENTCOM, more specifically its naval component of the Fifth Fleet, geographically placed it right at the heart of counter-terrorism and counter-piracy efforts in the IOR. The real challenge before the US Navy in the post Cold War was one of evolving a sustained cooperative framework while working with other regional navies of the region, especially Russia, China and India, to counter the twin challenges of maritime terrorism and piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Piracy in the Indian Ocean

In the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, piracy in the Indian Ocean gained significant grounds from the failure of state in Somalia in the early 1990s. Ever since the Siad Barre government fell in Somalia in 1991, the country witnessed continued lawlessness, warlordism, armed militancy and the rise of piracy in the Indian Ocean emanating from its littoral territories. Since then, piracy attacks in the Indian Ocean tended to mostly be concentrated around two specific maritime areas;

the Somali Coast and the Gulf of Aden (Onuoha, 2009). These two maritime areas in the Indian Ocean saw growing number of piracy attacks with a concomitant increase in sophistication of attacks since the early 1990s. The Indian Ocean became a fertile domain for growing piracy as it saw an exponential rise in maritime trade traffic. A large section of the contingent commercial traffic had to pass through narrow water channels or chokepoints in the Indian Ocean such as the Malacca Strait, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandab and the Hormuz Strait making it difficult for ships to find manoeuvring space, in turn slowing them down and also making them vulnerable to attacks by pirates. The Strait of Hormuz which, for example, gets as narrow as 1.5 miles at its narrowest point transited roughly 15 million barrels or more of oil daily in 2004, making the Strait very vulnerable to attacks. In this regard, the International Maritime Bureau referred to the Strait of Malacca as the most dangerous shipping route given its narrow routes and very high volume of trade passing through it (Korin and Luft, 2004).

The asymmetrical focus on land-based threats in the aftermath of September 11 attacks also provided some operating space for both pirates and terrorist to use the maritime domain. All these factors contributed significantly to the rise of piracy in the Indian Ocean. Even as the Indian Ocean littorals witnessed an unprecedented rise of piracy, primarily from the east coast of Africa, it was also coupled with the lack of adequately trained and equipped navies for anti-piracy activities, especially in deep waters. Piracy gained centrality as one of the most daunting security challenges in the post Cold War period, as instances of pirate attacks increased persistently since the early 1990s. The attacks increased to about 350 to 450 between the years 2000 and 2004, undulating in between, until witnessing a rise in attacks again in 2008 (Ploch, 2009 p4). Even though a few navies in the region along with other extra-regional navies possessed the necessary capabilities to contain piracy there was a clear lack of any cooperative framework for nations to come together for anti-piracy activities in the Indian Ocean. Probably, what underscores the immediate need for regional maritime cooperation against maritime piracymost coherently, especially which arose in the post Cold War period, was the following understanding from the International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre;

> Before 1992, shipmasters and ship operators had nowhere to turn to when their ships were attacked, robbed or hijacked either in port or out at sea. Local law enforcement either turned a deaf ear, or chose to ignore that there was a serious problem in their waters.
>
> (IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, website)

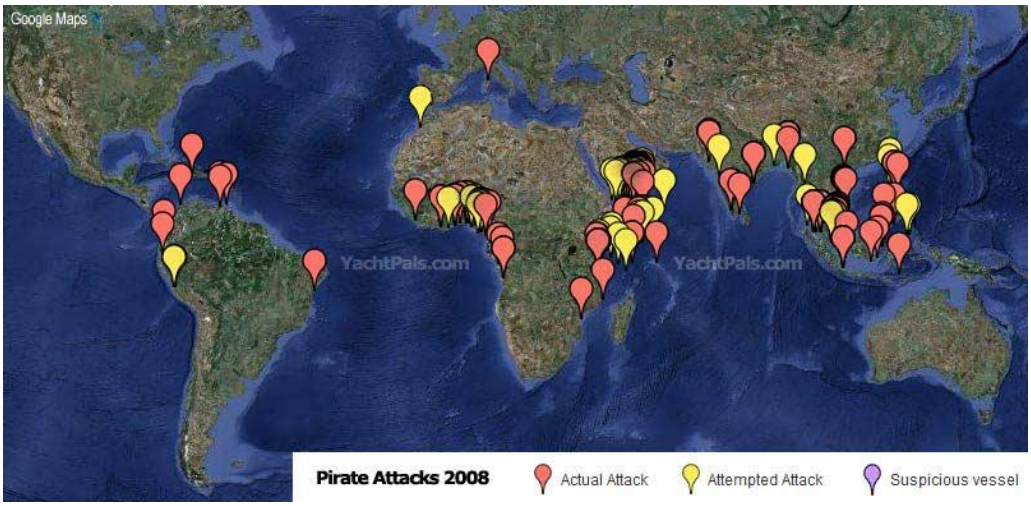
Albeit sea piracy in the Indian Ocean had been a very old problem it remained eclipsed throughout the Cold War as a US security agenda, with little focus in at least in this part of the world. However, as the Cold War ended, the US moved towards adopting a more cooperative framework based on the engagement of regional as well as extra-regional navies in the Indian Ocean. Initially the US led the efforts against piracy through a multinational maritime cooperation primarily comprising the Western navies. The effort gradually expanded in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks to include some of the regional navies as well.

Even as the end of the Cold War fundamentally changed the security structure in the Indian Ocean, as through the rest of the world, a new maritime challenge emerged in the form of threats posed by non-state actors; piracy, terrorism and maritime trafficking. As opposed to the US' Cold War objectives in the Indian Ocean, riddled with animus and a game of one-upmanship with the Soviet Union, its post-millennium crusade against piracy, terrorism and maritime trafficking in the region was premised on a cooperative framework involving some other regional navies and having a juristic justification. This transformed the Indian Ocean maritime environment as it ushered in the era of multilateral cooperation to deal with challenges to maritime security in the region. As a result, regional navies too found their roles redefined, and hence new challenges as well. These redefined roles included constabulary collaboration between navies to keep the maritime traffic safe and mutual cooperation towards building a maritime cooperative security structure to deal with the aforementioned challenges.

Countering Piracy in the Indian Ocean: US Efforts

Controlling piracy in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden increasingly proved to be a daunting task for any navy in the Indian Ocean through the 2000s, which in turn stimulated the need for multilateral cooperation among navies present in the region. In 2002, in an unprecedented form of maritime cooperation, India decided to escort the US' ships carrying cargo through the Strait of Malacca. This was an unprecedented cooperation between the two countries; not only did it depict India's tacit endorsement of the US' naval presence in the Indian Ocean but also exemplified India's cooperation with the US in anti-piracy efforts, albeit induced by the growing menace of piracy in the region.

The scourge of piracy started affecting security in maritime trade and transit and even routine patrolling, as the number of incidences of piracy attained new statistical heights. By the end of the year 2008, the IMB estimated that there had been more than 90 attacks with at least three dozen of them resulting in ship-hijackings that year alone (Schaffer, 2009). While other claims have stated the number to be much higher at about 293 cases of armed robbery and piracy attacks in the year 2008, up by 11 percent over the preceding year (Onuoha, 2009). By 2008 the combination of actual attacks, attempted attacks and suspicious vessels in the maritime domain looked as clustered around the Indian Ocean as shown in the map below.



(*Courtesy:Google Maps*)

Not only does the map show a large concentration of piracy attacks in general but also a typically high concentration in the Indian Ocean littorals, with the east coast of Africa and the Gulf of Aden probably depicting the highest density of such attacks. By the year 2008, Somali pirates had expanded their reach till the Gulf of Aden and had substantially enhanced sophistication in their weaponry and tactics. Through the use of automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenades, faster attack craft with longer ranges, satellite phones, and global positioning systems (GPS) (Onuoha, 2009) the Somali pirates were able to penetrate deep waters of the Indian Ocean even several hundred miles off the coast. Although the piracy attacks continued to grow, the most brazen attack took place on November 18, 2008 when, MV *Sirius Star,* a Saudi vessel was hijacked by Somali pirates carrying energy resources worth over $100 million. The stakes involved in this single piracy attack brought the problem of piracy in the region at the international agenda high-desk. Together with attacks on some of the US-flagged vessels off the Horn of Africa the issue of piracy drew the US' attention as well as international focus (Ploch, 2009).

In April 2009, Somali pirates struck again and captured the US commercial shipping vessel MV *Maersk Alabama* about 250 nautical miles south east of the Somali coast. The captain of the ship, Richard Phillips, was held captive which drew a strong US response. The US naval response involved dispatching of the USS *Bainbridge*, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer and along with it reconnaissance aircraft, snipers and the assistance of some FBI officials. The US response with successful special operation resulted in the release of the Captain and the death of all but one pirate. This kind of response from the US Navy resulted in two separate but related developments. First, a strong backlash in the form of avowal of revenge by the pirates to strong military actions by the US, hinting at the possibility of a marked increase in piracy attacks in the western Indian Ocean. The other consequence of military action against pirates resulted in relocation of pirates' operational base away from the areas that usually witnessed strong maritime naval patrols and surveillance (Ploch, 2009: 1). However, the US Navy understood the limitations of staging earmarked operations against pirates and their hostages. The Navy also factored in the inefficacy and implausibility of a sustained offensive against piracy spread over a very large maritime area in the Indian Ocean. In the past too, the US Navy personnel voiced

skepticism over any anticipation of success in running sustained and strong naval operation over wide maritime areas. Any unilateral effort by the US Navy to guarantee safe passage across the wider Indian Ocean wasunlikely to succeed. This understanding drew the US towards adopting a multilateral approach in curbing piracy in the Indian Ocean. As a response to the growing difficulty of ensuring safety over a vast maritime area, the 2005 US National Strategy for Maritime Security highlighted enhancing international cooperation and maximising domain awareness in order to maintain a continuity of marine transport system. The goals of the US' maritime strategy depicted an underlying indispensable multilateral assumption that it will cooperate with like-minded nations in any maritime region to achieve them.

There were some other direct attacks on the US' ships in the Indian Ocean region by pirates. In 2010, two US vessels; the USS *Nicholas* and the USS *Ashland*, were also attacked (McGlone, 2010). The US security concerns rose to a new high when first American causalities resulted as a consequence of piracy attacks on February 22, 2011 on a US boat,*Quest.* The incident fanned the US' anger even as it upped its ante unilaterally as well as multilaterally to bring offensive as well as legal measures at the focal point of their counter-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean. The US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD) of the US Coast Guard, in addition to the existing suggestions, issued strong maritime advisories for its vessels of all kind against sailing in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Somali Basin, and western parts of the Indian Ocean. In particular, the advisory was directed at vessels and ships with low speed and less height above the water surface.

Renewed Resolve, Updated Arsenal and Revised Mission

Rao (2010) correctly assesses the operational expansion of the US' naval assets and operations in the Indian Ocean as a significant part of the post September 11 terrorist attacks global security overhaul by the US. Since the Indian Ocean and its littorals formed an area of the US' post-9/11 security concentration, the nature of the US' naval presence and maritime operations underwent doctrinal changes. The Indian Ocean witnessed renewed approaches to maritime security by the US particularly

through steps that saw more frequent naval deployments and a significantly augmented maritime surveillance system. The new counterterrorism strategies adopted by the US ushered implications for the Indian Ocean in the following ways; the US-led coalition for maritime security expanded significantly roping in both regional as well as extra-regional navies in the common fight against terrorism and piracy; the frequency and seriousness of combat operations increased; and the area of maritime surveillance covered erstwhile was enlarged to cover other new areas in the region. One of the important regional developments emerging as a consequence of the broad maritime coalition of navies in the Indian Ocean was the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The CMF emerged a joint naval response of more than twenty countries to terrorism and was led by the US. Today, the CMF has expanded to cover 30 nations.

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

The CMF was established in February 2002 to coordinate coalition operations among partner navies. The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) which operates in the Arabian/Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean is commanded by the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT). Since the CMF comprised naval support of more than two dozen nations it was divided into three specific wings with specified area of responsibilities. The three wings of the CMF are:

- Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) – Maritime Security & Counter-terrorism
- Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) – Counter-piracy
- Combined Task Force 152 (CTF-152) – Persian Gulf Security Cooperation

CTF - 150

The history of the CTF-150 goes back to the Task Force 150 under the aegis of the CENTCOM that was expanded and consolidated as a multinational operative force to undertake counterterrorism tasks in parts of the Indian Ocean region after September 11 terrorist attacks. The Combined Task Force 150 led by the US was established around the beginning of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM comprising naval warships from the UK, France, Canada, Germany, Pakistan, Australia, Denmark and the United States. Other participatory nations have included Spain, Portugal, Singapore, Turkey, Republic of Korea, Netherlands and Italy among others. The main goals of CTF-150 include promoting maritime security by preventing counter terrorism and other illegal activities. The CTF-150's AOR spreads over the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman, covering more than two million square miles. The involvement of the US in CTF-150 is in consonance with its integral nature as the CTF-150's AOR vitally concerns the trade from the East including China and Japan. The area also concerns the world trade as a whole with over 25,000 ships passing through the area annually. The US' responsibility apropos the CTF-150's AOR holds particular significance because of the presence of narrow chokepoints in its way that hold the key to freedom of navigation and make the maritime region of the Indian Ocean critically contingent on them. The CTF-150 task force mainly focuses on security and stability in its AOR through Maritime Security Operations (MSOs). The US takes part in these MSOs as per international maritime conventions to deter terrorism and other illegal activities (CTF 150: Maritime Security: Online).

CTF - 151

However, specific operations directed against piracy in the Indian Ocean did not figure in the US' Indian Ocean strategy until the formation of the Combined Task Force 151 in 2008. This was also the year when the piracy attacks, especially in the western Indian Ocean, had peaked. The growing problem of sea piracy was being seen as a law enforcement problem and to deal effectively with it, the CTF-151 was commissioned in January 2009 with a specific purpose under the following United Nations Security Council Resolutions: 1816, 1838, 1846, 1851 and 1897. To that extent, the CTF-151 dealt with the task of deterring and disrupting attacks by pirates

and armed men in its AOR. Piracy, therefore, was seen as distinct from international terrorism. Its counter-piracy operations include sea patrolling in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden, besides independently deployed ships in various piracy-prone maritime areas. The CTF-151 also undertakes counter-piracy operations together with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR), making the anti-piracy resolve in the Indian Ocean region multilateral in character ("CTF 151: Counter-piracy"). In addition to this, support, training and guidance are also provided to the CTF-151 by the US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) who operate aboard CTF-151 vessels. It usually comprises a non-static number of participants drawing resources in the form of ships and personnel including from the US Navy. However, only a few regional countries of the Indian Ocean figure in that list like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen etc. The CTF-151 continues to be dominated by western countries or the US allies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, South Korea and Turkey. As such, in the absence of full integration of major regional navies such as India and other navies present in the region like Russia and China with the CTF-151, the scope of cooperation against terrorism, piracy and other security measures in the Indian Ocean remains short of being fully explored.

CTF – 152

The CTF-152 is the third leg of the CMF operating in the Arabian Gulf and was established in March, 2004. Its main operations include coordinating with other regional partners through Theatre Security Cooperation (TSC) activities. As a crisis response force, its other responsibilities include conducting Maritime Security Operations (MSO) and deterring terrorism and related activities in the sea. Although the CTF-152 has been voluntary in nature it has mostly witnessed cooperation between the navies of Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Italy, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The CTF-152's strategic utility lies in the fact that its AOR covers the Arabian Gulf. Due to its operational domain lying at the heart of world's major energy transport, the Arabian Gulf holds

special significance vis-à-vis maritime security and energy transportation (CTF 152: Gulf Maritime Security: Online).

While the CMF through its three security apparatuses has extended security cover over a wide maritime area in the Indian Ocean, its integrative principles remain limited in that, the larger cooperation between some of the navies present in the region like India, Russia, China on one side and the CTF on the other remain limited. Albeit recently, there have been instances of growing cooperation between the CTF-151 and the PLAN force in the Gulf of Aden, Escort Task Group 150 (ETG-150). The ETG-150 has assisted the CTF-151 by providing escort to vessels sailing in the region, besides sharing information with the CTF-151 regarding maritime threats in parts of Indian Ocean region. For instance, in 2008 when an Ukrainian vessel carrying military equipment was captured near the Gulf of Aden, China followed suit after the US along with a few other countries who sent their ships to assist the CTF-150, the numbered task force dealing with security in the Indian Ocean (Kaplan, 2009). However, from an operational point of view, there is enough scope for improving coordination between multinational security task forces in the Indian Ocean like the CMF and some of the individual nations' "national escort system" operations like India's Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) programme.

The US' effort to galvanise a multilateral security structure in the Indian Ocean through the CMF was backed by the employment of advanced technologies in maritime combat as well as surveillance. The US' effort against piracy saw collaboration between its 30-nation multilateral effort; the CTF-151, NATO's OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD and EU's NAVAL FORCE ATLANTA. As a result, the Indian Ocean Region witnessed a rise in the level of sophistication apropos equipment, vessels and exercises employed to tackle non-traditional threats in the region. In fact, by the turn of the century the US carrier battle group and naval expeditionary units in the Indian Ocean were supported by other naval and air support facilities like maritime patrol aircraft (MPAs), unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons, satellite-aided surveillance system units and other logistical support, making operations in the Indian Ocean very sophisticated. Rao's (2010) understanding in this regard supports such assessments when he argues that the GWoT resolve altered the security dynamics of

the Indian Ocean both in its resolve and its paraphernalia. This change was more specific to the US' role in the Indian Ocean more than any other region.

Maritime Terrorism

The US had been high on the global maritime terrorist list for some time preceding the September 11 attacks but the threat contours became more evident when the terrorist organisation Al-Qaida swore thus in October 2002, issuing direct threat to maritime trade:

> By God, the youths of God are preparing for you things that would fill your hearts with terror and target your economic lifeline until you stop your oppression and aggression.
>
> (Vries, 2002)

The threat carried equal implications for the maritime domain as it did for the continental parts of the world. The vicinity of Al-Qaida's ground operations near the littorals of the Indian Ocean certainly heightened the risk for US vessels sailing through the Indian Ocean region after this threat. The reference to "economic lifeline" as "target" was commonly interpreted as impending terror attacks against US ships carrying its oil supplies mostly from the Indian Ocean region. In fact, after the September 11 terror strikes the frequency of maritime terrorist attacks on oil-carrying vessels went up posing a direct threat to US economic interests in the region.

Albeit in a failed attempt, in January 2000 some Al Qaida affiliates tried to ram an explosive laden boat into the USS *The Sullivans* in Yemen. This proved once again that the US' ships were very much on terrorist radars even in the maritime domain. The US had an unprecedented close encounter with maritime terrorism in the Indian Ocean when the USS *Cole*, a US destroyer, was attacked by suicide bombers on October 12, 2000 in a harbour in Yemen killing 17 sailors (USS Cole Bombing Fast

Facts, 2015). Soon after, in a deliberate act of maritime terrorism, a 157,000-ton French crude oil tanker MV *Limburg* was attackedoff the coast of Yemen on October 6, 2002 (Yemen says tanker blast was terrorism, 2002). These two major attacks along with the September 11 attacks on the US soil made the threats posed by maritime terrorism in the Indian Ocean, especially in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea area, more gravely manifested than ever before. Besides these, the former FBI Director Robert Mueller's claimed that, "any number of attacks on ships have been thwarted," (Terrorist Threats to Energy Security, 2005) which portrayed the actual extent of maritime threat posed to the US' ships and cargo in the early 2000. Apart from these, various other terrorist groups active in the Indian Ocean posed significant threats to the US naval presence in the region. Evidence also showed that terrorist outfits such as Jemaah Islamiyah, Hezbollah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, Liberation Tiger of Tamil Elam of Sri Lanka, along with Al Qaeda acquired maritime interjection and attack capabilities in the first decade of the 2000s (Korin and Luft (2004). The proximity of these terrorist organisations to the Indian Ocean put the region in the heart of potential terrorist activities. The US response to these increasing threats was through a specialised joint naval unit, CTF-150, to deal with growing instances maritime terrorism. The US consolidated this effort by increasing bilateral assistance to a few regional navies in the Indian Ocean. Although the CTF-150 was largely able to ward off any major maritime terrorist attack it did not prove sufficient against piracy in the Indian Ocean, especially off the Horn of Africa.

In 2004 under the Bush Administration, protecting the US' vessels from maritime threats was underscored once again as a serious national interest; more importantly, any threat itself was made tantamount to direct threat to the US' homeland security. This apprehension was addressed by promulgating two Presidential Directives; National Security Presidential Directive 41 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13 (NSPD-4I1HSPD-13, 2004). These Directives were also instrumental in establishing a Maritime Security Policy Coordinating Committee to coordinate interagency maritime security policy efforts. The National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-41 and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-13 of

2004 laid out the following vis-à-vis the protection of US interests against maritime threats:

> The United States must deploy the full range of its operational assets and capabilities to prevent the Maritime Domain from being used by terrorists, criminals, and hostile States to commit acts of terrorism and criminal or other unlawful or hostile acts against the United States, its people, economy, property, territory, allies, and friends, while recognizing that maritime security policies are most effective when the strategic importance of international trade, economic cooperation, and the free flow of commerce are considered appropriately.

As pointed out earlier, the number of piracy attacks off the Horn of Africa had peaked by the year 2004 and was increasing further. This added to the security dilemma of the US in the post September 11 attacks period. After already being under maritime security threats for long, the peaking of piracy attacks in the western Indian Ocean compounded the US' problems in the region. In the need for direction, vision and a guided solution to deal with the new security situation, not just in the Indian Ocean but globally, the US launched its Maritime Security Strategy in 2005.

US Maritime Strategy: 2005

Brought out by a Presidential order in 2005 the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS) was compiled by the Secretaries of the Department of Defense and Homeland with the goal of improving maritime security through better integration and strategy. The NSMS interlinked the US response to the GWoT and its response to illegal maritime activities including terrorism at sea. Importantly, it stated that, "The safety and economic security of the United States depends upon the secure use of the world's oceans" and stressed the much needed revision of security to combat "evolving threats" by "preventing hostile or illegal acts within the maritime domain." However, the distinctive characteristic of this document lay in its intentions to combine security efforts of both public and private enterprise globally at all levels; Federal, State, local and private. The premise for the need of cooperation between private and public enterprises was the fact that the maritime infrastructure belonging

to the private sector increasingly came under attack by terrorists and transnational criminals. Terrorist attacks on the US' own ships in the past and on those of its allies in the Indian Ocean had straight causal relationship to NSMS' resolve to fight terrorism and criminal activities in the maritime domain. Taking a diverse nature of emerging maritime threats into account, including the threat of WMDs, the NSMS harped on the spirit of cooperative security emphasising that, "Since all nations benefit from this collective security, all nations must share in the responsibility for maintaining maritime security by countering the threats in this domain" (The National Strategy for Maritime Security, 2005).

As such, the NSMS was a cooperative security international response led by the US against increasingly complex nature of maritime threats globally. The IOR stood at the forefront of such concerns of the US, with its asymmetric threats combining piracy, terrorism, WMDs, trafficking and other transnational threats. The Indian Ocean with its history of maritime terrorism against the US (the bombings of *USS Cole* and *MV Limburg*) had depicted how terrorists used explosive-ridden boats to target sailing or docked vessels and their use of ship's cargo such as petroleum as explosives to set fire to the sailing vessels.

Besides being a direct policy response to the illegal activities such as piracy and terrorism on global waters, the NSMS also built on the maritime information infrastructure, considered crucial to the movement of global maritime commerce. The potential use of these infrastructures by terrorists to launch cyber attacks in order to disrupt marine transportation was a possibility against which preventive roadmap was laid out by the NSMS. The NSMS tried to achieve such vast objectives through a set of eight supportive strategies:

- National Plan to Achieve Domain Awareness
- Global Maritime Intelligence Integration Plan
- Interim Maritime Operational Threat Response Plan
- International Outreach and Coordination Strategy
- Maritime Infrastructure Recovery Plan

- Maritime Transportation System Security Plan
- Maritime Commerce Security Plan
- Domestic Outreach Plan

US Efforts against Piracy: Internationalisation of Response

The US response to piracy in the Indian Ocean region in the post Cold War has largely been through multilateral approaches. One of the main reasons for this was the US' own realisation about the futility of complex unilateral operations over very vast maritime expanses, drawing large resources. The other reason was the stress on multilateral approach based on cooperative security by the UN to deal with some of the problems of Indian Ocean like piracy. This view is captured in the following testimony of Vice Admiral William Gortney, the Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command before the House Armed Services Committee on March 5, 2009;

> Ultimately, piracy is a problem that starts ashore and requires an international solution ashore. We made this clear at the offset of our efforts. We cannot guarantee safety in this vast region.
>
> (Ploch, 2011: 41)

Clearly, the US lacked the conviction to overcome the problem of piracy on its own. Various US leaders spoke about the need for a more holistic approach to deal with the problem of piracy, especially off the Horn of Africa in the Indian Ocean. The same approach led to the Obama Administration's working together with Contact Group on Somalia and the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (Ploch, 2011: 41). The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) became the nodal centre for coordinating all international initiatives directed towards tackling the problem of piracy in the Indian Ocean (Vespe, 2015). At home, the US adopted an intra-agency response to dealing with the problem of piracy by promoting coordination between the State and Defence Departments, the Departments of Transportation MARAD, Justice, Homeland Security, Treasury, and even United

States Agency for International Development (USAID). Away from home, the US had evinced a great deal of promise by backing a multilateral approach to dealing with piracy as challenges became shared and spread over a vast maritime area.

In March 2011, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) emphasised the need for a "comprehensive strategy to encourage the establishment of peace and stability in Somalia," and a "comprehensive response to tackle piracy and its underlying causes" (Ploch, 2009: 4). This too had bearings on making the US' engagements against piracy in the Indian Ocean multilateral in character. The two most important counter-piracy operations in the region that the US has been a part of in the post Cold War period are; Combined Task Force 151 and NATO's OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD. Both these multilateral platforms have witnessed increasing cooperation between the US and other countries of the EU, sometimes also including China and Russia.

Besides direct military support both on unilateral and multilateral levels, the US had also been part of indirect responses to control piracy in the Indian Ocean region. The US' support to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) security forces count for such indirect responses by the US to curb piracy in the Indian Ocean by bringing political and economic stability. The US supported both these security organisations as part of their larger effort to control threats and render stability both within the land boundaries and beyond the coastline. The US' support had been in the form of training, logistics and financial assistance. The US provided more than $512 million since 2007 to support AMISOM alone, besides obligating $171 million to the Somali National Army (Psaki, 2014). However, only a part of the support extended to the AMISOM and the TFG by the US bore consequences in controlling the problem of piracy. The TGF in particular did not have much role in the maritime domain. But the resolution brought out by the UNSC on December 16, 2008 extended the legitimacy of the TFG in fighting sea-piracy off the Somali coast. The US was a major partner in pushing the adoption along with Belgium, France, Liberia and Greece (UN Security Council Resolution 1851, 2008). The pushing of UN resolutions 1846 and 1851, which was supported by the US, internationalised the response to piracy in the western Indian Ocean. Especially, the UNSC Resolution 1846 called upon states as well as interested

organisations to fight piracy by both might and cooperation. The active participation of the US evinced its willingness for fighting piracy in the Indian Ocean through cooperative mechanisms involving many international partners as opposed to doing it unilaterally.

In the following year, on January 14, 2009, the CGPCS was formed in accordance with the UNSC Resolution 1851 (Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: Quarterly Update,). This was yet another step in the direction of internationalisation of response to piracy in the Indian Ocean, as it sought to combine the efforts of more than 80 countries, organisations and private players against piracy. The Contact Group through a network of five thematic working groups with rotational chairmanship of countries presented a burden-sharing-approach to the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia in the Indian Ocean. Most recently, in 2013, the US chaired the Contact Group on Piracy.

The NATO's operations against piracy in the Indian Ocean are another example of diversification of the US response to piracy across broader multilateral forums. The NATO's operations in the Indian Ocean along with its primary anti-piracy task force in the region CTF-151, headquartered at Bahrain, form the basis of the US' response to piracy in the Indian Ocean. Both NATO and the CTF-151 share common maritime space in anti-piracy operations. For instance, the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) created on February 1, 2009 is commonly used by NATO, CTF-151 and EU ships for conducting patrols and operations (Nordquist, 2012). Since its inception the MSPA has played an important role in separating the merchant vessels and other ships/boats in the region. The separation of sea traffic near the Gulf of Aden by the MSPA has gone a long way in easy identification of commercial transit traffic from those that are not; for instance the local fishermen's boats. The Internationally Recommended Transit Corridors (IRTC) have further demarcated eastward bound traffic from the westward bound in the MSPA.

Terrorism-Piracy Nexus

With the evolving nature of maritime threats, particularly since the turn of the century, piracy and maritime terrorism expanded to gain some overlapping domains, posing difficulty for exact definitions of piracy or terrorism for international policy-makers. This problem was further compounded in the Indian Ocean as the nature of threats merged. The essence of this complexity comes out from the following lines;

> ….piracy is becoming a key tactic of terrorist groups…… Most disturbingly, the scourges of piracy and terrorism are increasingly intertwined: piracy on the high seas is becoming a key tactic of terrorist groups. Unlike the pirates of old, whose sole objective was quick commercial gain, many of today's pirates are maritime terrorists with an ideological bent and a broad political agenda. This nexus of piracy and terrorism is especially dangerous for energy markets: most of the world's oil and gas is shipped through the world's most piracy-infested waters.
>
> (Korin and Luft, 2004)

Not just at the level of definition but in practice too, growing overlapping patterns of maritime terrorism and sea piracy confounded nation states with respect to their responses to maritime threats; whether to employ separate strategies to deal with different maritime threats or one consolidated response to all threats was the better way forward. Eventually, participant nations worked towards a more consolidated response to deal with the twin challenge of piracy and maritime terrorism as one common challenge with some variations.

In the Indian Ocean, piracy and maritime terrorism have run hand in hand in areas such as the Arabian Sea and off the coast of West Africa. As international pressure grew on terrorism after September 11 attacks, terrorists found piracy as an easier means to boost their finances. The Strait of Malacca with its narrow channels became suitable operating grounds for the pirates-terrorists nexus and the number of attacks in the Strait of Malacca alone rose to 42 percent of all attacks on ships in 2005. The Strait of Malacca was already labeled as one of the most dangerous sea routes in the world by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) by the year 2005. By that year, the Strait of Malacca also became passage to a quarter of the world trade including a large

shipment of global energy transport. This prompted both actionable security responses as well as policy responses involving the US either as a leader or a partner country in the process. It is important to note here that no unilateral military response by the US was directed against the twin challenges of piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean. This was because very few states in the region had been in favour of any US military presence in the IOR, as opposed to the Asia-Pacific region. On similar lines of regional beliefs, the US' intention to respond to contain piracy and terrorism near the Strait of Malacca by increasing its naval presence near the Strait was struck down by opposition from two important countries Indonesia and Malaysia (Terrorist Threats to Energy Security, 2005: 48).

Response to Maritime Terrorism: US-led Security Initiatives

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the US posed a different challenge for the US and highlighted the need to overhaul the use of its forces abroad, redefine defence and treat the threat of nuclear as well as WMD proliferation as an immediate risk. With this shift of focus, fighting terrorism and preventing proliferation became two foremost priorities of the US. These goals had obvious implications for the maritime domain as waterways proved rather unregulated a domain, making it easier to carry out terrorist activities and indulge in proliferation. With this background, the US government focused on leading a series of policy initiatives in the region to secure parts of the Indian Ocean as well as global waters in the early 2000s. Specifically, the US took three initiatives to boost maritime safety and security: Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) and the Container Security Initiative (CSI) (Dey, 2011).

Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)

The Indian Ocean remains at the root of the PSI. The So San incident that took place on December 10, 2002, in the Indian Ocean is widely believed to have triggered the idea leading to the announcement of PSI by the Bush Administration. On the basis of intelligence provided by the US, a Spanish ship on regular patrol in the Indian Ocean

apprehended the North Korean ship, So San, secretly carrying several Scud missiles with conventional warheads. However, due to inherent legal complexities involving ships of nation states on high seas; any specific country's ship cannot be searched or interjected. Due to this and other limitations, the Spanish patrol ship was unable to conduct seizure of arms onboard the So San and had to let the North Korean ship carrying illegal arms go scot-free. This incident, along with other fears emerging from the nuclear behaviour of states such as Iran and North Korea led the Bush Administration to announce the PSI on May 31, 2003 with the resolve to prevent the spread of WMDs involving nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (Kaplan, 2006).

The So San incident also brought into limelight the proposed yet eclipsed US' National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction which was issued in December 2002. A concomitant need to adopt strong rules to stop WMD proliferation was felt. In the aftermath of the So San incident the US also realised that in the rules to be adopted for preventing the proliferation of WMD there would be greater emphasis on interdiction of vessels indulging in such illegal activities.

The Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean is the centre for most proliferation concerns in the IOR. Immediately after the announcement of the PSI, the US led a multinational PSI exercise SEA SABER in the Arabian Sea in January 2004 (Eplen, 2004). Since the May 2003 declaration of the Bush Administration, leading to the formation of PSI, the 2004 exercise was the first such initiative in the Indian Ocean (Bergin, 2005). Although the Indian Ocean remained central to the genesis of the PSI, the participation of littoral countries of the IOR was fairly limited. Out of more than the 100 countries that endorsed the PSI, only small countries having limited naval reach in the region such as Yemen, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait figured in the PSI endorsers list. Only Australia and Sri Lanka were the other two countries of the core Indian Ocean maritime area which endorsed the PSI. The geographic contours that emerged out of the combination of these countries' consensus left the heart of the Indian Ocean, without a core regional consensus in favour of the PSI. Some of the navies of the Indian Ocean decided to stay away from this entirely US-led "coalition of the willing" and criticised the PSI of indulging in selective interdiction of vessels (Bergin, 2005). This criticism stemmed from the

apprehension that PSI could be used by the US to fulfill its political objectives in the region. Other fears emerged from the sheer nature of composition of the PSI, involving mostly those countries that also shared mutual defence pacts with the US or happened to be members of military organisations such as NATO and ANZUS. Some navies were yet to support the PSI by agreeing to follow its stated principles because of their belief that the US, in some ways, violated the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). That the US was yet to ratify the UNCLOS further escalated the apprehensions. As per the UNCLOS, a ship on the high seas can only be interdicted in specific circumstances; illegal activities, piracy, stateless ships, drug and other forms of trafficking, besides having permission from the state to which the ship belongs (Song, 2005). The US' continued eschewing off the ratification of UCLOS in the post Cold War period, further compounded the maritime dilemma of some countries vis-à-vis the PSI's mandate and their own respective roles in the same. In that sense, the PSI was understood to be circumventing a few UNCLOS principles fuelling apprehensions. With 145 countries having ratified the UCLOS, together with its institutional backing of the UN, accorded more acceptability to the UNCLOS principles; hence leading to disagreeable distinctions between UNCLOS rules and the PSI principles by most of the regional Indian Ocean countries.

There were other legal concerns such as potential contradictions between PSI principles and some of the regional countries' own scope of non-proliferation policies. India, for instance, has mulled the possibility of such a conflict with differences emerging between two sets of maritime rules being imposed (Bergin, 2005). In another criticism; the PSI also functioned without the UN's official support (Kazi, 2004). The PSI started as a strong response to instances of growing proliferation of WMDs but there still remained several gaps in its structure, implementation and reach. Although the PSI cites its consistency in principle with the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of January 1992, which states that the proliferation of all WMD constitutes a threat to international peace and security, its abidance to the principles of interdiction as opposed to any agreement between participating nations gives manoeuvring space to each participant nations. In that sense, the PSI intended to take a "soft approach" distinguishing itself from legally binding agreements by working like a consensual "activity" (Pena, 2009).

Till date, the PSI aspires to be inclusive of all regional countries in the Indian Ocean to bring about a holistic approach to the problem of proliferation. Although Russia agreed to participate in agreeing to follow PSI interdiction principles, PSI's potential in the Indian Ocean remains unexplored due to the absence of China, India, and possibly Pakistan; a few key regional navies of the region. The Indian Ocean, especially the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, remained central to the post Cold War threat from nuclear and WMD proliferation and called for sustained effective monitoring. In this regard, Griffiths and Jenks (2012) point out that the Indian Ocean has been and is likely to remain the primary route for transit of WMDs and ballistic missile materials posing significant threat in future. The fact that there are very few PSI compliant states in the IOR, should highten that concern. When the Indian Ocean is compared to other oceans vis-à-vis the number of maritime exercises related to PSI, surprisingly only two exercises appear; the US-led SEA SABER and the UK-led EXPLORING THEMIS. Besides these, the Arabian Gulf has seen three LEADING EDGE series of PSI maritime exercise (Pickard, 2012)[9]. In contrast to the Indian Ocean, the other maritime regions have witnessed much greater number and frequency of PSI maritime exercises. Some Indian Ocean countries like the ones on the east African coast, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Bangladesh and Australia have contributed to PSI by putting in place strict port monitoring mechanisms. While some Indian Ocean countries have stayed away from ship interdictions carried out in deep waters, they have contributed through their participation in the Indian Ocean ship monitoring Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). An MoU signed in Goa, India on preventing the passage of illegal cargo through the region forms an important corollary to the PSI in the Indian Ocean, albeit with many differences between them. Australia, a US ally, has probably been the most foregoing in relation to PSI exercises and activities and is seen as the country at the forefront of the PSI push in the Indian Ocean for the US.

[9] The Proliferation Security Initiative," Unclassified Files, Office of Counterproliferation Initiatives (ISN/CPI), Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (Referenced)

Australia has been a key driver of the PSI in the Indian Ocean since 2003 with involvement at the level of administration as well as exercises. However, its active participation along with the US has not brought about any consensual regional maritime cooperation based on a set of uniform PSI principles.

Taking cognisance of the light approach of the PSI and an elusive maritime consensus over maritime threats, the US floated the idea of the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI).

Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI)

The RMSI was particularly relevant to combating the twin transnational threat of maritime piracy and terrorism in the Strait of Malacca and the Singapore Strait. Since the Malacca Straits emerged as the most important maritime traffic route, given its vulnerability and the contingent high volume of trade that passed through it every day, the US focused on securing this maritime area. Evolving as a consensus among Asian nations for the need to conduct joint naval exercises and sharing information between them followed by enforcement operations on errant maritime elements, the RMSI was larger in scope than most counterterrorism and anti-piracy operations that preceded it. The RMSI was a US-led initiative directed at improving maritime regional cooperation in the East Asian waters of the Indian Ocean and parts of the Asia-Pacific, specifically targeted at improving security in the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Singapore at the south-eastern end of the Indian Ocean. The objections raised by Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries to any increase in unilateral naval presence by the US near the Strait of Malacca posed some problems for the US-led RMSI. However, extension of financial aid to these countries by the US (Massey, 2008: 43) circumvented their opposition to some extent and formulated the multilateral security approach of the US to maritime terrorism and piracy in the region.

From the US' viewpoint, the Strait of Malacca has been a very important maritime chokepoint as well as an access point to Asian waters. More importantly, it formed the link between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, probably the two most

important maritime domains for US maritime calculations in Asia in the post Cold War. In the mid-2000s, the Strait of Malacca was a passage to roughly 60,000 ships annually carrying half of the world's oil needs, besides two-thirds of the world's liquefied natural gas, thus involving huge US interests. To add to these, three important allies of the US in the Asia-Pacific depend heavily on the safety of the Malacca Strait: Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Amidst the involvement of such huge stakes the regional countries decided to form a multilateral security framework to ensure safe and smooth maritime traffic and passage of cargo. It is with this background that the RMSI saw its conceptual inception in US Admiral Thomas Fargo's March, 31, 2004 speech to the US Congress (Abuza, 2011: 113) convincing the house about a more proactive US naval response to the deteriorating security situation in eastern Indian Ocean. Although the RMSI was invoked with a strong counterterrorism motives the US' intention to increase naval presence near the Strait of Malacca and carry out interdictions at will was immediately opposed by regional countries, most strongly by Indonesia and Malaysia.

The RMSI sought to form a coalition of consensual countries partnering to identify, monitor and intercept vessels posing maritime threats including trafficking, piracy, terrorist activities in the maritime domain and armed robbery. The RMSI activities were supposed to be coordinated through the combination of international and domestic laws and jointly monitored by the US Department of State and the USPACOM (Song, 2005).

The Malacca Strait, as such, marked the geographical distinction between US military presences in Asia through a clear demarcation. While in the core Asia-Pacific region the US enjoyed full acceptance of its military presence, the acceptability declined on the Indian Ocean side with countries of the IOR being largely opposed to any US military presence in the region. The RMSI appeared to be the US' push for an increased military presence near the Strait of Malacca. However, in the face of opposition from some of the regional countries and China, Washington settled for a cooperative security approach within the RMSI. China's apprehension that the RMSI intended to block its energy route thereby possibly affecting its growth in future, besides other Chinese concerns around possible sovereignty and UNCLOS rules

violations (Guoxing, 2004) had an important role in shrinking the US' proposed unilateral military build up near the Strait of Malacca. Hence, the RMSI which was initially intended to have a US-led military approach against maritime terrorism and piracy, turned out to be a collective effort of participating nations based on information sharing and naval cooperation.

Both the PSI and the RMSI had limited or no success in bringing about a regional maritime consensus against security threats in the Indian Ocean. The main concern of the littoral states was linked to the understanding that any involvement in these maritime consensual activities would mean surrendering control of their territory to a group of extra-regional countries led by the US. The overriding concern stemmed from the US-led nature of these initiatives with possible unilateralism in decision-making and actions along with possible sovereignty violations of littoral countries.

ReCAAP: Regional Security sans US

Although mooted by Japan in November 1999, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) only came to be finalised five years after it was proposed, in November 2004. It was an agreement that was agreed upon by 16 countries and carried immense implications for the security in the Indian Ocean as it included Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, three core Indian Ocean countries (Ho, 2009). As a first regional multilateral government-to-government effort against maritime security threats, ReCAAP presented regional countries with many new options. By establishing an Information Sharing Centre (ISC) in Singapore the ReCAAP presented a well-coordinated option between regional countries to handle the twin threats of piracy and armed robbery in the regional maritime domain.

However, ReCAAP remained eclipsed by the almost parallel announcement of the RMSI led by the US. The ReCAAP's popularity was marred by the conspicuous absence of the US from it. Had ReCAAP received the US' support initially it would have been Washington's best bet to form a more inclusive regional maritime security agreement than its own RMSI, as the ReCAAP included important navies from either

side of the Strait of Malacca. ReCAAP was a new approach to regional maritime security in Asia in its regional solution to a regional problem and thereby lacked a possible hegemonic intent that, for instance, was reflected in the US proposed RMSI. The US had not joined the ReCAAP until 2012 and only joined it as late as in 2014 (Kemp, 2014).

Container Security Initiative (CSI)

As a maritime response to the terrorist attacks on September 11 2001, the US Customs Service, now US Customs and Border Protection, started the CSI as an antiterrorism initiative to ensure safe trade lanes and cargo across the world by providing a "layered cargo security strategy" (Container Security Initiative In Summary, 2011). Announced in January 2002 the CSI intended to accomplish global cargo security through a network of CSI-compliant ports with the US officials stationed at those ports for pre-screening of cargo headed to the US. As one of its main tenets, the CSI depended on high use of technology for detection and pre-screening of cargo at the complaint ports. This meant that while many ports with technologically adequate facilities made the cut for CSI-compliance, most global ports in Asia (also Indian Ocean) did not. In many ways, the CSI came to be seen as complimentary to the PSI (Hautecouverture, 2012). While the CSI provided the first level of security by checking containers at the port thereby reducing risks related to illegal arms/drugs transport through containers, the PSI backed it with a second level security check at sea. However, CSI's predefined security nodes in the form of ports did not prove to be sufficiently complimentary with PSI's random search and rescue procedures at seas.

The US-led initiative which witnessed greater partnership between the ports belonging to the European Union (EU) and G8 countries initially stacked the odds of port-security balance asymmetrically against the Indian Ocean ports in comparison to other ocean littorals. Most of the Indian Ocean littoral ports failed on CSI-compliance either on grounds of inadequate technology or their own inhibitions emerging from sovereignty concerns. As CSI required placing of the US officials on CSI-compliant

ports, it raised concerns about possible intrusion of the US officials in local port jurisdiction and law enforcement (Khurana, 2007) which held some countries back. Sri Lanka became the first country in the Indian Ocean to have a CSI-compliant port in 2005 (Sakhuja, 2005). The Indian Ocean only has three operational CSI-compliant ports besides Sri Lanka: Port Salalah (Oman), Port Qasim (Pakistan), and Dubai (UAE) (Container Security Initiative In Summary, 2011), which leaves the Indian west coast and the East African coast without any such ports. The west Indian and African coast, in essence, remain without any (albeit a few potential) CSI-compliant ports. This does not make significant difference to the containers headed for the US as containers are often routed through CSI-compliant ports in the region; for instance, in the case of the Indian Ocean, the Dubai or the Oman port. However, the absence of any such port in India means significant security risks for at least the inbound containers (Narvekar, 2015).

ISPS Code and MTSA

The US has taken other measures to strengthen its counterterrorism efforts at international ports. Its participation in the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code is one of them. The ISPS Code came out of the International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and was adopted by the contracting governments on December 12, 2002 before going into effect on July 1, 2004. The ISPS Code, among other provisions, allowed for a monitoring through timely assessments of security at foreign ports. Through the ISPS Code the US authorities take a stock of a foreign port's security and especially its counterterrorism capabilities. If the measures prove inadequate and likely to affect trade movement originating from that port, the US takes antiterrorism measures to improve port security. Alternatively, it imposes conditions on the entry of cargo and ships originating from the ports lacking in adequate security (Report by the UNCTAD secretariat, 2004). The ISPS Code therefore was a global effort by countries to adopt standardisation in port facilities in order to improve security and safety of ships and cargos originating from those ports. The ISPS Code proved complimentary to the CSI initiative of the US which also catered to an important part of port security. Notwithstanding the global effort to

create a uniform port and ship security mechanism, the US government announced the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2004, building on a similar MTSA announced in 2002. The purpose of the MTSA 2004 was much the same as the ISPS Code; to develop and improve maritime security through enhanced cooperation between ports and ships. The MTSA 2004 stressed on fixing security through better coordination facilities and achieving a standard in maritime operations (Report of the Committee on Commerce, Science, And Transportation, U.S. Government, "Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2004). The MTSA in many ways was the US' own effort to streamline its maritime practices with the ones set by global maritime bodies like the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to achieve more effectiveness in maritime practices such as communication, information gathering and sharing, maritime drills, restriction of access, searching, security and rescue (McNicholas, 2009).

Both the ISPS Code and the MTSA work in improving the US' supply chain security and do not have a great bearing on the US' imports originating from the Indian Ocean as very few ports have either agreed to these understandings or lag behind in operating standard practices adopted by them. However, the feeling that Indian Ocean countries like India and Pakistan should be ISPS Code compliant countries leading to enhanced safety and security of ports and ships is rising. Iftikar (2015) believes that adoption of ISPS Code by countries in the Indian Ocean will lead to promotion of global maritime standards besides regional integration which, in turn, will create room for a coordinated response among regional nations against maritime security threats. There is at least one more way in which the US tried to push for maritime security in the Indian Ocean against piracy and maritime terrorism; privatisation of security. A different approach by the US to ensure maritime security on ships is the use of Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP). The US is claimed to have achieved a revolutionary and unprecedented success especially over piracy through the deployment of PCASP over ships whose members are usually former members of various armed forces of the US. While the US has officially claimed vis-à-vis PCASP's effectiveness that, "To date, not a single ship with armed security personnel (PCASP) aboard has been successfully hijacked" (Kelly, 2012), international legal hurdles, skepticisms and complications remain as hindrance in the way of acceptance

of the US' armed men over international ships by other countries, especially with the Indian Ocean littoral countries.

The table below gives a comparative picture of some of the main maritime initiatives involving/taken by the US. While most of the rules enshrined in these maritime initiatives have implications for the trade and traffic flowing through the Indian Ocean, the CSI and RMSI could be seen to have less bearings on Indian Ocean trade when compared to other maritime regions of the world. The reason for which is that while the RMSI is oriented towards a very specific maritime area; the Strait of Malacca, more CSI related activities lack in the Indian Ocean because of a limited number of CSI-compliant ports.

Table 3: Comparison of Various Regional Initiatives

	PSI	CSI	RMSI	ISPS
	Proliferation Security Initiative	Container Security Initiative	Regional Maritime Security Initiative	International Ship & Port Facility Security Code
Nature of US Agency Involvement	National Security Council, US Dept. of State and US Dept. of Defense	US Dept. of Homeland Security - - Customs and Border Protection	US Department of State & USPACOM	United Nations – International Maritime Organization
Operational Areas	Global	Global	Asia-Pacific & near Malacca Strait	Global
Role	Deter & disrupt WMD (& related	safety of containers part of US-bound	A partnership of willing nations building	Provide a framework of standard global practices and

	material and delivery systems) proliferation transported on the sea, air & ground. Reduce proliferation by deterring suppliers & customers.	shipping cargo Stationing and exchange of Customs & Border Protection personnel in selected ports More than 90% of global trade arriving via container makes it 7 million containers arriving in US ports annually through CSI	capacities by working together to identify, monitor & intercept transnational maritime threats consistent with existing international & domestic laws	model for evaluating risk and enabling governments to reduce vulnerabilities and risks in ports and ships.

Source: (Song, 2005: 107)

Assessing all the above mentioned maritime initiatives, the US seemed to be in the midst of a holistic approach to regional maritime security in the Indian Ocean, involving a combination of military, diplomatic and multilateral approaches to deal

with the combined threat of piracy and terrorism. The US' effort against piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean, especially since 2001, has been a combination of diplomatic engagement, use of military force, collaboration with private sector for providing maritime security, legal enforcements to bring convicted pirates to justice and also support in development assistance and governance to states like Somalia to bring stability. But even the combination of such efforts has failed to convince a significant number of Indian Ocean littoral countries greater US' role in the region, as many of them continue to have different approaches to security than those adopted by the US.

Although the number of piracy attacks that peaked during the first half of the first decade of the 21st century declined later, much of the challenges emerging from maritime terrorism remained to be tackled. The threats for the US compounded as terrorism came to acquire innovatively dangerous proportions and techniques. This problem was more palpable in the Indian Ocean littorals (Middle East) than anywhere else. The table below outlines the gradual decline in piracy and armed attacks in the Indian Ocean:

A statistical comparison of piracy attacks, disruptions suspicious events off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean as of December 22, 2014. Source: Vespe, M (et.al) (2015) p.10.

Table: 4

Years	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Suspicious events	59	99	166	74	20	5
Total attacks	163	174	176	35	7	2
Of which pirated	46	47	25	4	0	0
Disruptions	14	65	28	16	10	1

Challenges

Subsequent US documents, since the 2005 National Strategy for Maritime Security; the 2010 US National Security Strategy and the 2012 Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st century, have moved towards a consolidated response to all kinds of maritime threats in all regions, as opposed to finding regional and problem-specific panacea. This approach has to do with both the changing nature and manifestations of terrorism world-wide and the decline of piracy since it peaked in 2008. However, the treats from pirates and terrorist groups continue to pose risks in the Indian Ocean. The growing sophistication in pirates' and terrorists' use of technology requires superior maritime domain awareness by the stakeholders in the Indian Ocean.

The US' efforts in containing transnational security challenges in the Indian Ocean have received a wider consensus in Washington since 2001. Especially since 2008, there has been greater policy emphasis in integrating the Indian Ocean as part of US' grand strategy in Asia, combining economics, security and strategy in the US' regional approach. The Obama Administration's defense guidance document[10] in this regard, brought out in January 2012, justified obliquely that the Indian Ocean should be a part of US' "pivot-to-Asia" strategy. The document was unequivocal in linking US' economic and security interests to the Indian Ocean and South Asia, besides highlighting its long-term strategic partnership with regional countries like India in playing a security provider to the Indian Ocean region.

The real challenge for the US presence in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold Warhas rested in containing transnational security threats coming from piracy, maritime terrorism, proliferation of WMDs, illegal trafficking of narcotics and small arms, besides providing humanitarian assistance in the event of natural disasters (Winner,

[10]"Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century," 2012 (Referenced).

2014). The US military and non-military efforts in the Indian Ocean faced many challenges, bedevilled by growing sophistication in the modus operandi of the terrorists, pirates, traffickers and other non-state actors across its maritime domain. Safety, security and free passage of commercial and non-commercial vessels have depended almost entirely on how well the navies of the maritime region have coordinated among themselves. A broad coalition has been necessary and seems justified in the words of Winner (2014), "Because, by nature transnational threats cannot effectively be countered unilaterally." Although, particularly since 2001 the US has led a cooperative security approach in the Indian Ocean with the CMF and the NATO'S OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD, much remains to be done in integrating fully some of the other larger navies sailing in the region; China and India. This remains as a clear impediment in the US' maritime security strategy of the Indian Ocean. The maritime cooperation between the US and China has been marred by various differences; first the two countries differ from each other on the definition of terrorism vis-à-vis a few states. Secondly, the extra-regional status of the US in the Indian Ocean has led to a tacit Chinese belief that China should be a bigger stakeholder in the Indian Ocean security architecture. China accords greater claim to the Indian Ocean because of its strong navy in the region besides organisations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which lie in close proximity of the Indian Ocean region than the CMF, which is essentially a western security framework in the Indian Ocean led by the US and its western allies. Greater security cooperation between the US and China to contain piracy, terrorism and trafficking stands hindered also because of some of the US' own apprehensions about growing cooperation between China and Iran. Related to this have been the US' concerns apropos illegal arms transfer in the Indian Ocean. Especially since 2007, the US has been concerned about illegal arms transfer by China to countries like Iran and Afghanistan. The US claims of possessing evidence of Chinese manufactured arms being used in Afghanistan (Boon, 2012) against its troops deployed there has created enough suspicion with the US about Chinese maritime behaviour in the Indian Ocean and possible use of Indian Ocean waters for illegal arms transfer.

Besides these tensions, China in the post Cold War has adopted a maritime stance in the Indian Ocean which is aligned to confront any US effort to isolate China, either

through primarily western maritime alliances such as the CTF or through Washington's increasing proximity with newer strategic partners like India in the region. The US' efforts to increase maritime cooperation to fight transnational threats in the Indian Ocean has not met with expected reciprocity from China, as there is a new balance of power approach emerging in the region with a new emerging maritime centre of power; India. Besides, China has brought various new dimensions with its security engagements in the Indian Ocean; a recent security aspect that has often come in its engagements with the Indian Ocean since 2008 is the introduction of its exclusive naval task force CTF-525. Through the CTF-525 China has introduced 25 warships in 10 groups in parts of Indian Ocean since 2008. More recently, China has decided to open a naval base in the Indian Ocean in Djibouti (Perlez and Buckley (2015).

After assessing the post Cold War security situation, it appears that a lot has to be done in enhancing cooperation between the US and China to counter maritime terrorism in the Indian Ocean through a joint effort. Especially in terrorism prone area like the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Oman together with piracy prone areas like the Horn of Africa, greater cooperation between the US and China could have curbed the region's terrorism and piracy in a better way. The US in the post Cold War Indian Ocean was mostly placed in the middle of an uncoordinated security structure in the Indian Ocean. The lack of adequate coordination in security matters was a concern that the US faced with small and big navies alike in the Indian Ocean. While smaller navies like Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore tacitly rejected any US-led blanket security structure in East Asian waters of the Indian Ocean, bigger navies present in the region like China, India, Russia and to some extent Japan, focused on their own "national escort systems" or other collaborative mechanisms between some bigger navies in the region with the exclusion of the US. One such operation in the Indian Ocean is the maritime coordination known as Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE). With the exclusion of the US actionable efforts, the SHADE involves naval collaboration in the Indian Ocean between countries such as Russia, India, Japan and China to share anti-piracy information and monitoring of areas of Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean has many vulnerable sea-lanes and especially needs cooperation between the US and other partners in specific regions such as Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and the larger Persian Gulf Area. The nature of transnational threats in the Indian Ocean, particularly maritime terrorism, is expected to rise. Effective US strategy in tackling such security threats will depend on how it partners with Indian Ocean countries like India, Australia, Singapore and South Africa to some extent. To that extent, the Indian Ocean region countries, particularly the four aforementioned countries, requires the US' assistance in regional capacity building to handle security threats more than it needs any direct military US involvement. For instance, the US should show more seriousness towards regional efforts such as the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution and Intelligence Coordination Centre (RAPPICC) launched in a small Indian Ocean nation Seychelles (New anti-piracy coordination centre opens, 2013). As RAPPICC leverages on existing legal mechanisms such the United Nations Convention on Transnational Crime substantial, the US' efforts to strengthen the organisation's capabilities will contribute to the Indian Ocean region's capacity building. The US' working together with another regional country India on the issue of counterterrorism is an example where both the countries have been working towards regional capacity building in maritime security. India and the US signed the Counter Terrorism Initiative (CCI) in July 2010 to work together in the region and carry out counter-terrorism measures through information sharing[11].

The US efforts in bringing about a more consolidated maritime response will be contingent on how well it is able to integrate smaller countries (like for example, Seychelles) of the Indian Ocean regional that lack traditional navies and depend on alternate maritime forces. Although current US diplomatic and military programs are directed towards dealing with transnational maritime threats in the Indian Ocean, they are not necessarily prioritised towards the IOR specifically. In other words, some of the regions of the IOR receive more focus based on bilateral considerations and

[11] "India, U.S. sign counter-terrorism initiative," The Hindu, July 24, 2010 (Referenced)

proximity with US, which in turn renders Washington's efforts half-hearted in bringing the IOR countries on board for a comprehensive regional maritime security architecture. For instance, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea continue to get more attention than the Horn of Africa while the security situation near the latter could be much worse, in some aspects.

The success of the US' efforts against piracy and other transnational crimes in the Indian Ocean will depend on its ability to keep off its tendency to depend on its traditional Cold War alliance partners. Any replication of the Asia-Pacific alliance system to address the security concerns of the Indian Ocean will disturb the balance of power of the IOR region, making a consolidated regional response to regional security threats further improbable. As the Indian Ocean has many reluctant partners to go onboard the US security agenda in the region, a better way for the US would be in finding deeper representation in regional organisations. In the same regard, the addition of the US among dialogue partners in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation in 2012 was a significant development (Keshap, 2013). In another significant step, high ranking officials from the US are now invited to take part in the India-led Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), despite any formal membership or observer status of the US in the IONS.

The Indo-Pacific: A New Gateway to Indian Ocean Security?

The Indian Ocean is the most peripheral nation from most of the continental US landmass. With the US' increased interests in the post Cold War tied to the Indian Ocean and contiguous regions, it could well be in the process of making the strategically convenient Indo-Pacific as the pivot of its freedom of navigation principle. The US' increasing dependence on Asian markets and its energy has in turn left it dependent on the safety of maritime trade transit route. Securing maritime highway also is part of the US' global security provider role. The US has moved to ensure maritime safety and security in the Indo-Pacific area through its presence and has sought more countries to come on board in its effort, since at least 2010. The Indo-Pacific facilitates smooth traffic of cargo and oil ships by connecting the dynamic East Asian region to the energy rich Gulf. The Indo-Pacific region also ties

in with Washington's strategic calculus of its crucial post Cold War regional strategy of rebalance to the Asia-Pacific; where the Indo-Pacific and by extension, the Indian Ocean too are seen as a south-western extension of the Asia-Pacific. As such, the Indo-Pacific becomes the latest effort from Washington to diversify and hence internationalise the security concerns of the Indian Ocean, as of the Asia-Pacific region. In such geopolitical circumstances, undoubtedly, Washington's role in cooperating with regional countries has rehashed the regional security dynamics. The maritime cooperation between India and the US in this relatively new maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific has already been espoused by the US (Kronstadt, 2012). Such an understanding has been further concretised by the "strategic convergence" between US' rebalance strategy and India's "Look East" policy. The naval rise of India has been proclaimed since the turn of the century and it certainly hasn't gone unnoticed by the US. Most of the US' maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific overlap with India's own post Cold War interests in the Indian Ocean. The need for maritime security in the Indo-Pacific is not only congruent with the timely rise of India's naval power in the region but is also an effort to offset any alternate interpretations of international sea laws by China by setting a consensual standard set of maritime laws in the Indo-Pacific.

The post Cold War trends in the Indian Ocean until 2012 suggest that the future of the Indo-Pacific would be very crucial for the US. The US has already pushed the idea of the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor (IPEC) (Haiwen & Chunhao, 2014). Assuming a more active role in its promotion of the IPEC, itplaces the US geographically almost in the middle of the maritime expanse and almost at ideal distances from the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, the two emerging interests of the US in Asia, albeit for entirely different reasons. The US in its latest document: The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a

Changing Environment,[12], has acknowledged that it is "working together with our allies and partners from Northeast Asia to the Indian Ocean to build their maritime capacity" and the maritime area of the Indo-Pacific remains pivotal in that effort. More importantly, in the same document the US has listed a new “Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative” in order to “to build greater regional capacity to address a range of maritime challenges.” The maritime domain of Southeast Asia overlaps a great deal with the Indo-Pacific underscoring categorically the post Cold War security focus of the US in the region. The Indo-Pacific, in many ways, is the buffer zone between the intended maritime security structure by the US in the Indian Ocean and the nature of US security present in the Asia-Pacific, inextricably linking the Indian Ocean’s security to the Indo-Pacific, at least for the US.

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[12] The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment," *U.S. Department of Defense*, July 27, 2015.

Chapter 4

US Naval Relations with Regional Navies: UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan and Australia

This chapter tries to answer questions related to how the priorities of the US in the Indian Ocean have undergone a change: how has the US Navy engaged regional navies of the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period? This chapter will also examine how the combined concerns of collective security and balance of power have necessitated an engagement with the regional powers of the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period. The first part deals with the US' maritime cooperation with smaller Indian Ocean littoral countries, while the second part deals with its relations with three key Indian Ocean navies: India, Pakistan and Australia.

Genesis of US' Cooperative Framework in the Indian Ocean

The US' naval approach to seeking cooperation with other regional navies of the Indian Ocean is not unique to the post Cold War period. Since the 1970s, the US has been teetering between countries that were and could be its allies, and those that were its enemies. In the National Security Study Memoranda (NSSM) 110 research study approved on December 22, 1970, Henry A. Kissinger presumed that there could be an allied naval response to the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean. But such US propositions, or even thoughts, excluded most of the regional countries of the Indian Ocean with the exception of Pakistan and few Gulf countries that were US' allies during the Cold War. President Truman for the first time emphasised on the need to bring Pakistan into the US strategic ambit as an important allied extension in the Indian Ocean (Kumar, 2000). The US naval cooperative framework in the Indian Ocean remained confined through its absence of significant navies of the Indian Ocean littoral countries through much of the Cold War. It was only in the post Cold War period, that the US moved to engage with regional countries of the Indian Ocean.

The US naval presence in the Indian Ocean has come a long way since June 30, 1969, when representatives of the Department of Defense testified[13] before the House Armed Services Committee regarding plans to construct communications and refuelling facilities on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. It took years of Cold War rigours, animosity and struggle for the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean to evolve from establishing its presence, to becoming integral to regional maritime security cooperative framework. If the year 1969 was important in consolidating the US' efforts that led to the geographic basing of US naval presence in the heart of the Indian Ocean in the form of Diego Garcia, the subsequent years were important in giving policy direction to other such forward maritime presence and strategies in the region.

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[13] Congressional Hearings on Diego Garcia Information Memorandum Washington, June 24, 1969.

The years that followed, witnessed President Richard Nixon (1969-74) together with his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger formulate the National Security Council agendas and issue various NSSMs to concretise those agendas into polices. The methodology involved presidential mandated research studies through NSSM to contribute towards policy papers that would provide directions to the government on various issues. Out of more than 200 NSSM studies that were carried out during the Nixon presidency, at least five of them were directly concerned with the Indian Ocean; NSSM 104, 110, 156, 199 and 181. Among these NSSM studies the earliest to come out was NSSM 104 which received presidential approval on November 09, 1970 for a study on, "Soviet and Friendly Naval Involvement in the Indian Ocean Area, 1971-1975," (NSSM 104, 1970). Besides making an intensive assessment of the Soviet threat to the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean in line with the Cold War standard the NSSM 104 quite uniquely focused on an aspect missing in the hitherto US naval introspection vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean; friendly relations and basing alternatives in the Indian Ocean.

President Nixon focussed on the 1971-75 period to explore possibilities for developing friendly relations with regional navies in the Indian Ocean. The NSSMs categorically outlined special focus on cooperation with "British and other friendly forces" in the Indian Ocean region. Albeit Britain had shown signs of decreasing its footprints in the IOR by declaring its "east of Suez" withdrawal plan in 1967, it still enjoyed an unmatched dominance in its naval presence throughout the globe. Given the US' cordial relations with Britain through much of the 20th century, the US' efforts at exploring friendly basing possibilities with Britain did not come as a big surprise. However, what stood out was President Nixon's attempt to find other options of friendly naval relations in the Indian Ocean besides Britain. Probably this was first any such endeavour from the US to reorient its naval strategy in the Indian Ocean towards a cooperative framework in the region.

Throughout the late 1970s, even as the US came to engage itself with other navies in the Indian Ocean, it was simultaneously looking for a "political framework" for a "naval response" to the Soviet presence by mapping those states where the US' interests were tethered more strongly than others (NSSM 110). The strategy adopted

by the US in the Indian Ocean focused on identifying other naval forces for maritime cooperation and maritime zones for exploring basing alternatives. Owing to this need, the study of other naval forces in the Indian Ocean like Australia and South Africa was considered necessary by the US National Security Council. It was through similar naval assessments involving other countries in the Indian Ocean that the US began to see its desire to maintain a dominant regional navy in the Indian Ocean grow. Britain obviously figured prominently in that assessment of the US. Dealing with a formidable Soviet Union during the Cold War, which had asymmetric advantages over the US Navy in the Indian Ocean, would have been almost impossible unilaterally. Especially, in the light of their parity positions of strength and the US Navy's operational distance from the continental US. The US Navy's singular focus on the Soviet Union prevented it from achieving an expanded multilateral cooperation of the US Navy with other regional navies during the Cold War.

However, the post Cold War period became symbolic of a much larger network of naval relations for the US in the Indian Ocean. The gradual assimilation of this thought, together with the altered security environment in the post Cold War IOR, led to many changes in approach by the US Navy in post Cold War.

As such, the genesis of cooperative approach towards the Indian Ocean by the US Navy can be traced back to the Nixon Administration which refereed to it as "development of friendly naval force and basing alternatives" (NSSM 104). However, any such idea remained nipped in the bud throughout the Cold War due to the fiercely contested bipolar animus between the two Superpowers. In the process of developing a naval response for the Indian Ocean region against the Soviet Union, the US also explored other means of furthering its relations with other littoral countries of the Indian Ocean. Some of the vestiges of that Cold War effort formed the foundation stones for the post Cold War naval cooperation of the US with regional countries of the IOR.

Elusive Naval Engagements During Cold War

Although the US based itself in the Middle East through its naval station at the former British base at Bahrain called MIDEASTFOR in 1948, naval cooperation with other regional naval powers of the Indian Ocean was largely elusive. One obvious reason was the lack of any powerful regional navy among the states that comprised the littorals of the Indian Ocean in the middle of the 20th century. Through much of the Cold War, the US remained engaged in a battle of one-upmanship with the Soviet Union and increasing military presence in the Indian Ocean rather than multilateral cooperation remained the dominant objective.

Even as the frequency of the US ships visiting the Indian Ocean increased through the 1960s, they mostly remained contingent on the unilateral capability of the US Navy to conduct missions in the region. The lack of any immediate significant naval mission, besides build up, was also a significant reason why the US Navy did not invoke regional cooperation or lucid bipolarity among the nations of the Indian Ocean. Probably, the most important reason for the lack of US' efforts to build a regional maritime coalition in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War was the littoral countries' combined opposition to the Superpowers' presence in the ocean together with their collective conjuring of the "zone of peace" idea that sought to keep the US' interests in the Indian Ocean at bay. The United Nations principally created legal barriers to the military presence of the Superpowers and any form of coalition building in the Indian Ocean by adopting the "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" in 1971 (UNGA Resolution 2832 (XXVI) (The Indian Ocean Region, Tamilnation.org).

US Navy's Asymmetric Focus on Indian Ocean

Despite the aforementioned obstructions during the Cold War, the US involved itself in cooperative naval activities in the Indian Ocean, which increased gradually as the Cold War ended. Bilateral and multilateral naval exercises involving the US were few but not absent from the Indian Ocean during the Cold War. For instance, in 1963 a US aircraft carrier, few submarines and ships took part in a CENTO naval exercise in the Indian Ocean. That the US took part in the CENTO naval exercise as a non-member

state, depicted the pressing desire for regional maritime coalition building in the Indian Ocean by the US. In the following year, a joint US-Iranian naval exercise was held in the Indian Ocean which included 2300 US paratroopers (Awati, 1989). But most of these US involvements were predisposed towards alienating one set of countries against the other, with the Soviet Union as the focal point of this strategy. When the US moved its USS *Enterprise* into the Bay of Bengal in 1971 in support of Pakistan it alienated itself from an important regional navy; the Indian Navy, while simultaneously improving its naval relations with Pakistan's Navy. This was an unprecedented naval response by the US Navy standing out because of its penetration up to the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean. Following a rare depiction of show of strength in the Indian Ocean, the US Navy in the following year, 1972, declared the Indian Ocean to be the "zone of responsibility" of its Pacific Fleet (Awati, 1989: 87) thus hinting towards more frequent US naval presence there.

The year 1974 was very crucial for the Cold War US naval cooperation with other regional navies of the Indian Ocean. Signalling a major naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean the US came together with the UK, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan for a combined naval and air exercise in the northern part of the Indian Ocean in November 1974 under the banner of CENTO. The exercise was called MIDLINK-74 and was hosted by Pakistan. It was the biggest exercise till then and involved more than 50 ship and at least two nuclear submarines covering almost the whole Arabian Sea (Awati, 1989: 87). The MIDLINK annual series of exercises repeated the pattern and especially the MIDLINK-77 reinforced the scepticism among littoral countries of the Indian Ocean vis-à-vis the US' presence in the Indian Ocean. Three NATO countries, together with an arch-rival Pakistan, being involved in naval and air exercises in the northern part of the Indian Ocean at the height of the Cold War, was definitive in its potential to raise hackles with another important regional navy, India. After the USS *Enterprise* incident of 1971, the MIDLINK-74 Exercise made the possibility of the US' naval cooperation with littoral countries of southern Indian Ocean further remote. In a declassified file by the State Department (R 201345Z NOV 74) from the 1970s, it is revealed that India voiced its concerns with the US especially apropos the MIDLINK-74 exercises in the Indian Ocean, as the former saw the exercises

tantamount to the resurrection of the CENTO alliance system, with the US being a new partner of the CENTO alliance.

The OPERATION BRIGHT STAR series of land, air and naval exercises in the Middle East was one of the biggest exercises to reassure the US' allies in the region of its support to them in times of crises and wars. During the Cold War, OPERATION BRIGHT STARwas a biennial exercise directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), CENTCOM with a goal of increasing regional involvement through improved security and defence capabilities. OPERATION BRIGHT STARstarted as a bilateral exercise involving the US and Egypt and went on to include many other countries like France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom. Once again, the erstwhile asymmetry of the Indian Ocean in terms of power balance persisted, as most of the countries were NATO members with very few regional countries from the Indian Ocean (Bright Star, GlobalSecurity.org).

Since the establishment of US naval presence in the Indian Ocean, its strategy and concerns have been dominated by a 'northern' focus. Such geographically asymmetrical naval involvement through most of the Cold War in the Indian Ocean by the US Navy, in turn, tended to isolate rest of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean, particularly those that were located in the region's southern extension comprising the sub-continent. As a result of this asymmetrical strategic focus in the Indian Ocean by the US Navy, any form of vibrant cooperative mechanism was stymied by divisions between one set of countries against the other during the Cold War.

US Regional Maritime Cooperation

The probability for post Cold War US naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean got propped up, particularly in relation to its Cold War involvement for two main reasons: first, because of the need for creating a scope for sustaining the American influence in a region even in the post Cold War period. This would likely give the US the opportunity for re-engaging its enormous military and logistics wherewithal that was

left without much purpose after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the UN "Zone of Peace" proposition vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean remained indecisive and unimplemented in 1990 even after almost two decades since it was adopted in 1971. The indecisive state of a potential regional opposition to the US' presence due to the inability of the UN to implement the "Zone of Peace" proposition meant that the US could still retain most of its military arsenal, both nuclear and conventional, in the Indian Ocean as it does even today. A strict implementation of the "zone of peace" concept in the Indian Ocean would have had a significant impact on the US military presence in the Indian Ocean leading to possible substantial relocation of its military and logistical capabilities from the Indian Ocean to other regions. This would have diminished further the US' ability to sustain its influence in one of the most peripheral oceans from its continental shelf; the Indian Ocean. Absence of any such stern propositions barring or reducing American military paraphernalia in the Indian Ocean theatre created the tacit mandate for retaining a significant part of its Cold War arsenal in the Indian Ocean. With an already established as well as tested military presence and capabilities in the Indian Ocean, the US in the post Cold War period adopted a cooperation-through-influence approach with the key regional navies of the Indian Ocean.

In the post Cold War, the US moved quickly to address its asymmetric naval engagements of the Cold War period in the Indian Ocean by rapidly improving its naval relations with the key navies of the region, besides reaching out to other smaller littoral nations. The US already enjoyed close military relations with some of the littoral Persian Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain and an important North African country like Egypt with direct maritime link to the Arabian Sea but lacked any substantial history of naval cooperation with them. As the US neared the end of the Cold War, addressing its naval asymmetry in the Indian Ocean became a more serious concern for it. There was no need of a polarised geopolitical environment in the Indian Ocean after the Soviet Union had collapsed. Sensing the impending collapse of the Soviet Union even before it happened, the US felt the need for a more cooperative naval strategy in the Indian Ocean. The absence of a cooperative approach by the US would have left one set of regional countries pitted against the other. As an example of this strategic assimilation in post Cold War US'

naval strategy is the invitation to Saudi Arabia for joining the biennial BRIGHT STAR series of exercises in 1989. After 1990,BRIGHT STAR expanded to include other Indian Ocean littoral countries including United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The pursuit of cooperation in the Indian Ocean by the US Navy continued through the post Cold War period. In the post Cold War period, the relationship of the US Navy with regional navies of the Indian Ocean has expanded significantly to cover many countries that it either opposed to or did not have naval relations with during the Cold war. While there have been some changes in US naval relations with smaller countries of the Indian Ocean, the most significant shift has been through the US Navy's involvement with the navies of three key countries having significantly high stakes in the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean; India, Pakistan and Australia. It is important therefore, that in the wake of such transformative developments vis-à-vis the US Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean, a comprehensive mapping of its post Cold War naval relations with some of the key regional navies is done.

US Naval Relations with Smaller Regional Navies since 1990

The US Navy already had the legacy of cordial relations with some of the Gulf countries that existed before the 1990s. However, the focus in the period following 1990 increased vis-à-vis the improvement of the US' military relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The US still maintained important naval relations with the Gulf countries; United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Particularly Bahrain carried on the legacy of being the pivot of the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean even in the post Cold War period, ever since the MIDEASTFOR was established in 1949.

The strategic significance of Bahrain for the US Navy grew exponentially high after the Fifth Fleet was reconstituted in 1995. The Fifth Fleet of the US stationed at Bahrain remained central to naval activities and operation in the Indian Ocean. As a military numbered command overseeing the Indian Ocean region, the Fifth Fleet monitored maritime deployments that were either pulled from the Seventh Fleet

(Pacific Command) or the Sixth Fleet (European Command). By 1992 the US came to have bilateral defense agreements and access pacts with most Gulf countries allowing the US Navy both access and penetration in most of the northern part of the IOR.

Particularly since the Gulf War, Bahrain had been a key military ally that extended continued support to naval activities of the US in the region. A crucial point in the US-Bahrain relations came in 1991 when Bahrain signed a ten year bilateral agreement with the US, thereby expanding the presence of the US military on its soil and more importantly granting the latter more access to its ports. The 1991 agreement also accorded rights to the US to enhance prepositioning in Bahrain. As a result the Sheik Isa Air Base in Bahrain became the primary ground point for prepositioned stockpile by the US. Besides, the agreement also led to the establishment of a US led Joint Task Maritime Expeditionary (JTME) unit operated through CENTCOM (Cordesman, 1998). Since 1993, Bahrain has hosted the US Naval Forces, Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT) too. In the build up to the US' attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan in early 1998, Bahrain hosted 2 B-1 bombers, 18 F-16s, 30 F-15s and 4 KC-135 tankers from the US. It was a rare depiction of US' post Cold War ability to amass lethal strike capability in the Persian Gulf (Roy-Chaudhury, 2004).

The year 1991 also witnessed 10 agreements between the US and another Gulf country, Kuwait. As a result of these agreements land, air and naval relations between the US and Kuwait increased significantly. In the area of maritime exercises both the countries stepped up bilateral naval exercises and between the years 1991 and 1995 the two countries carried out eight naval exercises in the north-western Indian Ocean. Interestingly, the naval component of some of these exercises focused on offloading tanks and other prepositioned equipment in an effort to increase efficiency in crisis response. The larger context of these US exercises was related to preparation for a possible re-invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. For instance, in the joint Kuwait-US OPERATION VIGILANT WARRIOR in October 1994 the US Navy efficiently supported 13,000 troops already stationed in Kuwait by sending its 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, 24th Infantry Division, besides providing missiles support.

With lesser naval powers in the Gulf too, such as Oman and Qatar, the US continued its old military ties which allowed US ships to sail through the Gulf using the CENTCOM. Oman allowed the US to station ships at its facilities during the Gulf War. Both Oman as well as Qatar had also partnered with the US in the Tanker War during 1987-88. But in the post Cold War period, the US developed better naval relations with Qatar, although a period of tension preceded until the 1990s due to Qatar's deal of "smuggled" Stinger missiles from Afghanistan. In the year 1992 an important agreement between the US and Qatar endorsed access to the US to air and naval facilities in Qatar. Since 1992 Qatar has been an important naval prepositioning destination for heavy US equipment including a large contingent of US M-1A2 tanks and the two countries have conducted quite a few maritime exercises near the Persian Gulf.

The US naval relations with anther Gulf country United Arab Emirates (UAE) also started to become better during the Tanker War and further improved after the 1990. Both in the Tanker War and the Gulf War UAE acted as a crucial partner of the US allowing it to use its ports. Before a few months leading up to the OPERATION DESERT STORM, the US Navy and its Marine Expeditionary Forces conducted naval exercise with the UAE in July 1990 to deter Iraqi threats to the latter. In 1992, the US negotiated an agreement that would allow it to use UAE naval facilities in a more accessible way, than was the case in the past. Post the agreement, throughout the post Cold War the naval relations between the US and the UAE saw an upward trend. Especially the deep port of *Jebel Ali* has witnessed a lot of US naval activities since 1992 as it is one of the busiest ports in the Gulf which is also slated to become the largest container port by the year 2030 (*The Economist*, 6 June 2015). The other important port significant with the US-UAE relations in the post Cold war perspective is the *Fujirah* port situated on the coastline of the Gulf of Oman and is the second largest bunkering port of the world and hence serves as an important refuelling option for US ships in the region. Fujairah's reputation as the "One Stop Shop" for ships in the region with its abilities to provide ship repairing, refuelling, supplies and anchorage to more than hundred ships at a time, is seen as potentially useful not just by the regional navies but by the US both in times of crisis or peacetime sailing. Fujairah's ability to provide logistic support to the US ships sailing to the Persian

Gulf has been a strategic advantage for the US Navy. Importantly, Fujairah port also served to be useful for the US Navy's prepositioning requirements. For instance, in 1995, the US Navy prepositioned a big US Army brigade contingent comprising at least 120 tanks and around 70 Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle (AIVFs) at Fujairah (Cordesman, 1998). Fujairah's importance also lies in its strategic location just 70 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz. (Fujairah Sea Port: online). The US presence at Fujairah gives an important future option of checking Chinese unhindered access to the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Hormuz. With increasing Chinese desire to enter the Indian Ocean, Strait of Hormuz along with Strait of Malacca have become two important access points to the Indian Ocean for China. Both the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca are strategic chokepoints for the Indian Ocean and could significantly impact over 60% of the world's oil moving through its waterways in the case of any geopolitical skirmish between the US with countries like Iran and China. The Strait of Malacca alone accounts for more than 50, 000 transiting ships throughout the year (Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2013).

Saudi Arabia, yet another country near the Persian Gulf, had already partnered with the US Navy to build a stronger naval defence against Iran in 1983. In 1992, the same year in which the US signed agreements with most other countries of the Gulf, it also renewed its Military Training Mission Agreement (MTMA) with Saudi Arabia. Despite no substantial military agreement between the US and Saudi Arabia in the period through much of the post Cold War, the two countries came to expand their bilateral naval relations significantly after 1992. The period following 1992 witnessed combined naval exercises between the two sides and allowance for the US Navy to use Saudi ports more freely (Cordesman, 1998).

The aforementioned labyrinth of US naval relations with some of the important Gulf navies depicts that the US had managed to hold together a very diverse and potentially unstable region through its primary military node in the region; the CENTCOM. The CENTCOM as the central military institution in the region, spearheaded the US' naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean led by its Fifth Fleet. The Fifth Fleet was the numbered fleet of the CENTCOM assigned with the responsibility of the Indian Ocean. The CENTCOM's AOR presently covers 20 different nations in three

different sub-regions; Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea peninsula, South Asia and the Horn of Africa/Red Sea. The CENTCOM is responsible for the following countries in the Indian Ocean; Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and the Seychelles Islands (AOR, CENTCOM: online). Some of the countries of Indian Ocean fall outside the delineated AOR of the CENTCOM. These countries fall under the AOR of the Seventh Fleet, a numbered command under the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM). The Seventh Fleet's AOR include 36 nations including People's Republic of China, Russia, India, North Korea, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Japan, and Thailand (About the U.S. 7th Fleet,online).

A closer look at the US' naval relations with the countries of the Indian Ocean would reveal that there is a characteristic difference between those countries that come under the AOR of the US Fifth Fleet and those that fall under the US Seventh Fleet. The US Navy maintains better relations traditionally with countries under the CENTCOM for somewhat obvious reason; its military engagement with quite a few north and north-western littoral countries of the Indian Ocean dating to very early years of the Cold War. The military, particularly naval, relations of the US with most countries in the Indian Ocean falling under the CENTCOM were a lot more engaging than it was with countries of the Indian Ocean falling under the Seventh Fleet's AOR. This trend continued through much of the Cold War because of the US' own energy interests were tied to the Middle East and its desire to project American influence to secure those interests through both land based and maritime dominance. For reasons such as the neutrality of regional countries during the Cold War, lack of any significant US interests in the Indian Ocean and some opposition from regional countries to the Superpowers' entry into the Indian Ocean during the Cold War, the US did not show much interest in improving relations with the other countries of the Indian Ocean like India, Sri Lanka and other smaller countries. However, the post 1990 period witnessed a gradual expansion of the US maritime engagements with those Indian Ocean countries that earlier did not figure in the US' Indian Ocean strategic calculus. After 1990, the US scurried to reset its naval relations in the Indian Ocean. The year 1992 turned out to be a crucial year in both renewal and expansion of US military

relations with Indian Ocean countries. Within the first two years of the end of the Cold War, the US has either renewed or signed new agreements with about half a dozen Indian Ocean countries. These agreements by the US, ranging from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to a new member like India, came to redefine the US' maritime engagement in the region in post Cold War. An important reason marking the change in approach by the US was the restructuring of its own rules of engagement towards the end of the century. The other reasons pertained to the economic and military rise of some of the Asian countries enforcing changed equations in their respective relations with the US.

More recently, particularly since the turn of the century, the rise of Chinese maritime dominance in the Asia-Pacific and its rather obvious desire to build a well-networked maritime infrastructure in the Indian Ocean have made regional countries like India wary besides having drawn reinforced military and economic attention of the US. Not only has the US witnessed altered relationships with regional countries of the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War period, it has also seen the formation of a cooperative mechanism which besides involving regional countries has gradually evolved to include important US allies like Australia and Japan. Australia as an important US ally sitting on the periphery of the wider Indian Ocean is a very important cog in the wheel of the US' Indian Ocean policy. Facing an altered environment in the post Cold War Indian Ocean, the US Navy expanded its cooperation with other regional navies in a way that involved more bilateral and multilateral naval engagements. For the same reasons, the US simultaneously also improved its naval relations with bigger navies of the Indian Ocean like India. As a result, the two countries had their first bilateral naval exercise in 1992. The Pakistan Navy too was a key component of the US' policies in the Indian Ocean since the Cold War. A mapping of the US Navy's relations with the navies of India, Pakistan and Australia is likely to depict what has changed for the US in the Indian Ocean since the 1990. The choice of these three countries is justifiable to the extent that it will present an opportunity to compare and contrast naval relations of the three countries that had different models of relationships with the US, bringing three different scenarios.

The following analysis will attempt to contextualise the evolution and changes that have characterised the US' naval relations with three key regional navies of the Indian Ocean; India, Pakistan and Australia since 1990.

I. INDIA - "*Shano Varuna*"[14]

US-India Naval Relations in Post Cold War: "Cooperative Engagement"

Improving naval relations with regional countries was significant part of the US' post Cold War military and political reformulations in the Indian Ocean. Although political relations between India and the US was still stricken by the Cold War coldness, the restructured US military policy in the post Cold War created the scope for engaging regional powers like India. The post Cold War "cooperative engagement" between India and the US traces its roots to the Kicklighter proposals, proposed by Lietenant-General Claude M. Kicklighter, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army Pacific Command during his visit to India in 1991 (Ganguly et.al, 2006). The Kicklighter proposal sought to improve military-to-military relations between the US and India through an unprecedented focus on building consultative mechanisms, exchanges of a range of officials across hierarchies, initiation of strategic dialogue between the two sides, establishing a broad defence cooperation framework etc. (Schaffer, 2009).

These proposals paved the way for the formation of Executive Steering Groups (ESG) in both India and the US to work towards improved military-to-military ties between the two countries. Initially an Army ESG was set up in January 1992 which was followed by the formation of the Navy ESG a couple of months later in March 1992. Probably, this was one of the earliest bilateral efforts from both sides in the post Cold War period to improve naval relations between India and the US. The progress in the direction followed and led to the formation of the Air Force ESG in August 1993 consolidating an all-wings military engagement between the two sides. With the help of an expanded cooperative framework covering all the three legs of the military

[14] The Indian Navy's Sanskrit motto translating into 'May the Lord of the oceans be auspicious unto us.'

relations, the naval cooperation between India and the US picked up soon after the 1991 proposals were made.

MALABAR Exercises

It was the Kicklighter proposals that subsequently led to the first naval exercise between the US and India, characterising a first ever any such military exchange between the two sides. The two sides saw the first MALABAR series of naval exercises take off beginning with MALABAR-I in May 1992. The first Exercise was limited in its scope and the strength projected as it only involved basic manoeuvres. After a gap of three years the second MALABAR exercises were carried out in 1995 and the third in 1996, marking it as one the most sustained annual defence exercises between the US and India. A comparison of all the Exercises involved in the MALABAR series since its inception in 1992 will not only evince the nature of the expanding scope of US-India naval ties since 1992 but also the challenges faced over the years in the two countries' bilateral naval cooperation. Highlighting the main aspects of the MALABAR Exercise is also important to depict how the Indo-US naval ties have grown from strength to strength over the years. The tabular collation below compares and contrasts the MALABAR Exercises held from 1992 through 2012 in terms of different aspects like the maritime area in which the exercise was conducted, mission, vessels and warships used and the number of days the exercise lasted.

Table 4 – Malabar Exercises 1992-2012

Year	Countries	Exercise Area	Level and Missions	Platforms	Sea-Days
1992	India-U.S.	Off India's west coast	Elementary. PASSEX. Basic manoeuvres	Destroyers/ frigates	1
1995	India-U.S.	Persian Gulf	2-dimensional, PASSEX, Anti-submarine warfare (ASW)	Indian warship and US SSN on passage (UAE to Kuwait)	1

1996	India-U.S.	Off Kochi	Uni-dimensional	7 ships (3 from each side and a US logistics ship)	2
2002	India-U.S.	Off Kochi	Basic manoeuvres, Underway replenishment (UNREP)	2 destroyers/ frigates from each side	4
2003	India-U.S.	Off Kochi	Medium level. 3-dimensional. Cross-deck helicopter landings, ASW, VBSS	6 ships, including US SSN & Indian diesel submarine, US P3C Orion aircraft	3
2004	India-U.S.	Off Goa	Medium level. Tactical encounter at sea, Night UNREP, VBSS	7 ships, including US SSN & Indian diesel submarine	8
2005	India-U.S.	Off Kochi	Advanced. SSN ops, Carrier ops, Diving salvage ops	7 ships, including 2 carriers (Nimitz, Viraat), US SSN & Indian diesel submarine	11
2006	India-U.S.	Off Goa	Advanced. Diversified. SSN & Expeditionary ops	US SSN, Amphibious ships, US Marines, Indian Army Landing Forces	
April 2007	India-U.S.	Philippine Sea	Highly advanced. Multi-carrier ops, Amphibious ops, SSN ops	12 ships, including 3 carriers (Nimitz, Kitty Hawk, *Viraat*), Amphibious ships, US	4

				SSN & P3C Orion aircraft	
September 2007	India-U.S.-Japan-Singapore-Australia	Bay of Bengal	Highly advanced. Carrier ops, SSN ops, counter-terror/ counter-piracy.	26 ships. US: 13, including 2 carriers & SSN. India: 8, including carrier. Australia: 2. Japan: 2. Singapore: 1	6
2008	India-U.S.	Arabian Sea	Carrier ops, SSN ops, P-3C Orion-based ASW, VBSS, counter-terrorism	15 ships, including US Carrier & SSN, & Indian diesel submarine	10
2009	India-U.S.-Japan	Off Okinawa	Surface Warfare, ASW, Air Defence, VBSS	6 ships including US SSN	6
2010	India-U.S.	Off Goa	ASW, VBSS, Cross-deck helicopter landings	10 ships, including US SSN & Indian diesel sub. US P3C Orion	7
2011	India-U.S.	Off the coast of Okinawa	Missions same as above. Also, Air Defence and screen exercise	8 ships, including US SSN	5
2012	India-U.S.	Bay of Bengal	Surface warfare, helicopter landings	9 ships including US Carrier Battle Group	7

Table Abbreviations: PASSEX – Passage Exercise**, SSN** – Nuclear Powered Submarine**, VBSS** - Visit Board Search and Seizure (maritime/vessel interdiction) operations.**Source**: (Khurana, 2014).

From the above table it is clear that when the Exercises began it was a small affair involving only smaller vessels such as frigates and lasting only for a day. As such, the first MALABAR exercise held of the west coast of India was only exploratory in nature and hence was also referred to as a passage exercise (PASSEX). The first exercise was near the Malabar Coast off India's south-western coastline, and hence the name of Exercise. The second exercise too remained fairly low-key in its scope and did not entail much beyond basic exercises involving passage and communication drills. However, the involvement of a nuclear powered submarine by the US was a signal towards further bolstering the character of the Exercise. The year 2002 turned out to be an important year from the perspective of the US-India maritime cooperation when India, in an unprecedented depiction of cooperation, decided to provide maritime security to a US cargo ship crossing the Strait of Malacca (Schaffer, 2009: 77). This was done to prevent piracy attacks on the ship, as early 2000s saw the spike in piracy in the Indian Ocean as a major problem. Among India's first such step, reflective of its possible intention to don the role of a security provider in the Indian Ocean, the move to escort a US cargo ship in the Indian Ocean went a long way in improving the trust deficit between the two sides that lingered since the 1998 Indian nuclear tests.

The fifth MALABAR Exercise took place in 2003 and marked a significant departure from its hitherto moderate character, especially through its involvement of real-time use of weapons, fleet defence systems and Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW). Importantly, this Exercise also saw ship interdictions being carried out as operations against maritime trafficking of WMD along with other possible elements and piracy. The 2003 Exercise also witnessed advancement in its sophistication, in that it became multidimensional through its involvement of all the operation simulations; underwater, surface and aerial (Khurana, 2014). The 2004 Exercise focussed on tactical encounters at sea and operations involving submarines. The 2005 Exercise marked the beginning of increasing complexities in carrying out sea missions. The 2006 exercise involved aircraft carriers from both sides for the first time, besides involving marine units in challenging search and rescue operations (Khurana, 2008). The 2006 exercises proved very fruitful in developing amphibious capabilities for Indian marine commandos. Ever since the fifth MALABAR Exercise the complexities

grew further, and in the series of exercises carried out in 2007 it culminated to highly advanced level of operations from fairly advanced levels earlier. The 2007 Exercises not only extended its geographic scope by moving out of the conventional Indian Ocean zone into the Philippines Sea but also involved an unprecedented over two dozen ships, five countries; India, US, Australia, Japan and Singapore, and spread over at least ten days. Since 2007 eight exercises have been conducted through 2015 and each has marked advancements over its predecessor exercise.

The evident gap in carrying out the MALABAR Exercises between Indian Navy and the US Navy was between the years 1998-2001 due to India's nuclear tests conducted in Pokhran, Rajasthan in 1998. As the US stalled all military relations with India in the wake of nuclear tests conducted by India, it represented the first significant impediment in not just naval relations but larger military relations as well. Since then the MALABAR Exercises have grown with little hurdles. One rare hiccup appeared in 2009 when India pulled out from the 2009 MALABAR trilateral Exercises because an amphibious assault exercise was scheduled off the coast of Okinawa drawing Chinese opposition and ire. Bilateral naval exchanges continued between India and the US through MALABAR exercises but between 2009 and 2012 it largely remained stable in its character devoid of any significant advancements pertaining to the Exercise. The cautious approach of India with the US Navy was largely understood to have been caused due China's opposition to exercises such as the MALABAR. However, trends in the Indo-US naval relations have depicted a more open approach in conducting multilateral maritime exercises together with the US. These approaches since 2012 have often been reflected in India's openness to expanding the scope of MALABAR Exercises, both in terms of advancements made in technology, artillery etc as well as including new member like Japan as a regular country partaking in the exercise (Gady, 2015).

Regular exercises with the US Navy have helped the Indian Navy to hone its capabilities in newer technologies and skills. For instance, the US nuclear submarines fielded in the MALABAR Exercises over the years have been effectively useful in helping the Indian Navy improve its SONAR capabilities against US Nuclear submarines through constant tests and challenges (Khurana, 2008). The involvement

of aircraft carriers in the MALABAR Exercises since 2004 has given India direction vis-à-vis effectively managing multiple carriers. India is a country with expanding naval fleet and acquisition/building aircraft carriers is a major part of the process of expansion. In such circumstances, it is very crucial that India learns about new technologies that are central to operating multiple aircraft carriers at sea. India's experiences through bilateral naval exercises like the MALABAR have helped it to graduate to a more efficient aircraft launch system: "catapult launched but arrested launching" or "CATOBAR" aircraft carriers as opposed to its conventional "ski-jumping" technique to get airborne. More recently, India has asked for proposals outlining design from global shipbuilders to build a new aircraft carrier (Shukla, 2015). In the 2005 MALABAR Exercise when India fielded the aircraft carrier INS *Viraat* and the US employed USS *Nimitz* the Indian Navy benefited immensely in learning about long-range strikes, managing flight controls in a situation of multi-aircraft carrier operation, Airborne early Warning (AEW) etc (Khurana, 2008).

After the naval relations between India and the US started in the year 1992 the MALABAR Exercises evolved to become the pivot of naval (also military) engagements between the two countries. This relationship was strengthened further when India and the US signed the Agreed Minute on Defense Relations in 1995. After the agreement was signed between the two sides in New Delhi in January 1995, the two sides led by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Joseph Nye and Indian Defense Secretary K.A. Nambiar met between September 13-14 in Washington to take the agreement forward. The meeting focussed on developing India-US naval cooperation in the context of two important maritime regions; the Persian Gulf and the Pacific Rim. Even more importantly, the Indian Defence secretary visited Norfolk, Virginia where he went aboard two important US vessels, the USS *George Washington*, an aircraft carrier of the Nimitz class, and the USS *Stout*, an Aegis class missile destroyer signalling future Indian interest in naval cooperation through vessel purchases (U.S., India Continue Dialogue on Defense Cooperation, Joint press statement, 15/9/1995). The Defense Secretary's visit on US ships, followed by a demonstration of F-15 fighter aircraft at Langley Air Force Base, was in the spirit of "getting to know each other" (Schaffer, 2009: 74) phase of India-US defence relations.

While defence relations between India and the US continued in all the three legs of the military, a naval exercise of significance was the exercise FLASH IROQUOIS between US Navy SEALS and Indian Maritime Commandos (MARCOS) which took place in October 2004 off the western coast of India. The focus of this exercise was bolstering maritime security through ship intervention tactics ("2005: Indian navy chief visit to US," Dawn). In late 2004 and early 2005 the Indian Navy and the US Navy worked together to respond to an Indian Ocean crisis. The Tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean in 2004 and left parts of it devastated, required a massive disaster relief which would only be possible through a cooperation based on common purpose. The Indian Navy, one of the largest regional navies of the Indian Ocean region, cooperated with the US Navy to provide assistance to the coastal countries that were affected. This was a rare instance of maritime cooperation between India and the US and probably marked a defining juncture when the scope of Indo-US maritime cooperation was seen as having much larger potential than what was being reckoned by both the sides.

These military trends were further strengthened by a hallmark agreement between India and the US on June 28, 2005; 2005 New Framework for US-India Defense Relationship. Coming a decade after the Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations in 1995 the 2005 agreement not only was a measure of the transformed US-India defence relations it pledged cooperation and expanding bilateral ties in various security-related domains (Kronstadt, 2005) for the coming decade. The seminal 2005 defence agreement between the US and India soon followed after the two sides cooperated in providing post Tsunami relief. In many ways the bilateral naval cooperation between the two navies prepared the grounds for the decisive 2005 agreement. The agreement propounding shared vision between the US and India stressed significantly on goals to be achieved through naval cooperation between the two countries. Among various military objectives to be achieved, the 2005 agreement outlined the following combined pursuits of India and the US which had direct or indirect implications for bilateral cooperation in the maritime domain;

- Conduct joint and combined exercises and exchanges;
- Collaborate in multinational operations;
- Expand interaction with other nations in ways that promote regional and global peace and stability;

- Build capabilities to prevent and tackle the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- Strengthen the abilities of both the militaries to respond quickly to disaster situations, both individually and in combined operations.

(New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship, 2005)

The above objectives outlined in 2005 meant that the naval relations between the two countries, which hitherto remained restricted to the annual MALABAR Exercises and other areas of insignificant maritime cooperation, had to expand to include more frequent maritime cooperation, security drills, increase in defence trade, multilateral naval exercises, joint counter proliferation efforts, disaster relief and crisis-response. The beginning of the tabletop annual exercise HABU NAG in 2005 was another important step in the direction of improving naval cooperation between the Indian and the US navies to other areas, than achieved hitherto. The inception of yet another bilateral naval exercise HABU NAGmeant that there would not only be diversification of areas of naval cooperation between the two navies but also a focussed approach to some other aspects of maritime cooperation.

As yet another step towards furthering the diversification in India-US naval cooperation, and as a consequence of the "increasing defense trade" pledge enshrined in the 2005 agreement between the two countries, India bought the American Landing Platform Dock (LPD), previously called the USS *Trenton* in October 2005. This was the first ship of its class to be bought from the US by the Indian Navy, marking an important break in the monotony of limited exchanges between the Indian Navy and

the US Navy. Since this was a first of its kind[15] exchange between the two sides the Indian Navy lacked the operational experience required for INS *Jalashwa*, the re-christened USS *Trenton*. The MALABAR Exercise held in 2006 were very useful for the Indian Navy as it subsequently helped the Indian Navy in acquiring operational know-how vis-à-vis its newly acquired Navy ship from the US. The US Navy fielded amphibious ships similar to INS *Jalashwa* in the 2006 MALABAR Exercise thus passing on the necessary technical and operational requirements for the newly sold vessel. Since INS *Jalashwa* was an LPD, landing and launch of helicopters was one of the important technicalities passed on to the Indian Navy (Khurana, 2006). Also, operational compatibility was reached by the Indian Navy after acquisition through retrofitting the INS *Jalashwa* so that future dependence on the US for parts would be substantially reduced (Dutta, 2012).

The 2005 agreement between the two sides also led to the establishment of the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue as a formal platform for exchange between the Indian defence secretary and the US Undersecretary of Defense. The strategic dialogue between India and the US also created the scope for including important issues affecting combined and individual maritime behaviour directly or indirectly. The Indian Ocean, its dependent trade and related freedom of navigation in the region witnessed gradual induction in the customary discussions between India and the US. The vast scope of strategic dialogue between India and the US brought the requisite balance between purely militaristic/defence trade concerns and economic/trade concerns in India-US maritime cooperation.

Schaffer (2009: 76) lists the frequency of exercises and other joint operations between countries as important indicators of the measure of their security relationship. After the stalled defence relations resumed in 2002, combined naval exercises and other

[15] Although the Indian Navy had in 1997 signed a Letter of Agreement for submarine rescue facility for which the India had paid a whopping $500,000 to the US in 1997. Ganguly (ed) et.al (2006) p.85

joint maritime operations have been a frequent feature of India's defence relationship with the US. Particularly since the 2005 agreement between the two countries, the naval exercises have grown in both scope and sophistication. This has been complimented by regular land and aerial exercises between the two countries.

After the devastating Tsunami hit coastal areas of the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004, the US Navy along with four other regional and extra-regional navies including India, Japan and Australia took part in a massive multilateral humanitarian rescue effort lasting for more than a year. The extended period for which the military-to-military interactions between the two navies took place was in the spirit of cooperative security that has since then characterised the combined approach of the US and Indian navies in the Indian Ocean towards both security and disaster management. The 2004-05 combined effort of the US and Indian navies to provide disaster relief was complimented again in 2006 when the two navies worked in tandem to provide other humanitarian efforts; among other missions, the deployment of United States Naval Ship (USNS) *Mercy* in 2006. While the Indian Ocean region was still reeling under the devastating effects of the 2004 Tsunami, the USNS *Mercy* in the summer of 2006 conducted humanitarian assistance for more than three months in the Pacific, Southeast and South Asia (Caballero, 2006). Indian Navy worked closely and professionally with the US Navy in making the humanitarian mission in Bangladesh successful (Leporati, 2006). The years that followed witnessed further growth in US-India maritime cooperation with the agenda to control sea piracy that saw a steep rise in the second half of the 2000s (VLCC hijacked by pirates, ICC). The mutual distrust between the two sides subsided, significantly enhancing military-to-military relations between the two countries for the coming years.

Besides these, the year 2006 stood as benchmark year for maritime cooperation between India and the US because of "The Indo-US Maritime Security Cooperation Framework" being signed (Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation, 2011). The maritime agreement coming on the back of the crucial 2005 New Framework for Defense Partnership, marked an important next step in bilateral defence cooperation. The bilateral maritime security cooperation was signed amidst

growing concerns about sea-piracy and trafficking in international waters, especially in the Indian Ocean.

The 2006 maritime cooperation with the US was among the initial steps taken by the Indian Navy towards participating in maintaining security in international waters at a bilateral level with the US. Not only was such a step beneficial but it helped the Indian Navy build, strengthen the requisite strategies in such operations. The 2006 agreement also expanded the scope of cooperation between the two navies as they faced a list of maritime challenges that was increasing rapidly in the second half of 2000s; piracy and smuggling, proliferation of WMDs, safety in navigation, carrying out routine search and rescue and providing human assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR). Despite these combined efforts, sea piracy in the Indian Ocean continued to grow and almost peaked around 2008 when pirates attacked almost 100 ships off the coast of Somalia that year (Sterling, 2009). The growing threat perception from piracy and trafficking in the Indian Ocean led India and the US to increase exchanges in maritime threats between the two navies. To concretise such the mutual exchanges the two countries signed "The U.S.-India Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative (CCI)" on July 23, 2010. This agreement assumed a holistic approach to tackling sea piracy and abetting or carrying out terrorism through maritime domains. In order to effectively deal with the threats in the future the CCI signed in 2010 brought the Coast Guards together with the navies in effectively dealing with maritime threats. The US Navy together with 20 other navies, including the Indian Navy started a massive offensive against piracy in the Indian Ocean. The issue of piracy bedevilled the Indian Ocean security for a long time and continued in somewhat restricted measures even in the face of multiple navies operating in the Indian Ocean against the threat. Both India and the US decided to prioritise maritime security on the mutual list of bilateral agendas, discussing the issue at the level of the US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Indian Defense Secretary through the Defense Policy Group (DPG) in 2011. The apparent seriousness of the combined resolve to address the issue of piracy in the Indian Ocean was soon evident when both India and the US decided to officially prioritise maritime security, (HA/DR), and counterterrorism cooperation (Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation, 2011). In many ways, this was an effort to consolidate the gains that were made since the 2006 Indo-

U.S. Maritime Security Framework, making it more effective for future times by adding teeth to the previous agreement.

The naval cooperation between India and the US has formed the bedrock of their larger military-to-military relations between the two sides. Since 1992 when the first MALABAR Exercise was conducted as a basic passage exercise between the navies of India and the US in the Indian Ocean, the two countries come a long way in conducting four major annual exercises with naval focus currently; MALABAR, HABU NAG, SPITTING COBRA and SALVEX. The MALABAR series of naval exercises have focused on improving the "tactics, techniques and procedures" (TTPs) (Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation, 2011) of both the navies from mutual operations and is considered to be the single most important naval exercise between the US and India. Its tripartite focus on the TTPs has accorded the bilateral naval exercise an evenly divided focus to strategic concerns, maritime threats like piracy, counterterrorism and HA/DR activities. The other three exercises are not as expansive in their scope, character or sophistication. More importantly, the other three maritime exercises have mostly focussed on mastering a singular objective or one particular aspect of maritime/naval cooperation between the two navies. For instance, the HABU NAGannual Exercise which started in 2005 has since then focussed on improving interoperability between Indian and US navies during HA/DR activities. While the overarching maritime theme of the HABU NAG exercise has remained to be an amphibious training exercise between the US and India, the sub-themes have varied in their yearly focus. For instance, in the 2008 HABU NAG(Exercise Habu Nag, Bharat Rakshak) focussed on testing the rapid response (R2) through a planning process (P2)(together read as R2P2)[16] of specially trained amphibious Indian army division (as India does not have a Marine unit) together with US Marines to an anticipated

[16] The R2P2 process is a swift response to an anticipated crisis situation by Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) on the basis on a quick and strategic decision-making to be prepared for response within six hours of the receipt of notice or warning.

contingency. Since 2010 the Indo-US bilateral Exercise SHATRUJEET has also focused on amphibious aspects of naval cooperation. In 2010 however, while focussing on improving interoperability between the two navies during amphibious operations, HABUNAG also included HA/DR simulations (Smith, 2010). US-India naval cooperation in the area of HA/DR activities has shown a huge potential, particularly in the light of the US' requests to India for it to join the PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP, which is the annual US Pacific Fleet HA/DR event in the USPACOM AOR. However their focus largely remained confined to improving interoperability between the two navies with an amphibious focus in their operation. Another important exercise with the US Navy that has had significant impact on the HA/DR component of the Indian Navy is the JOINT EXERCISE INDIA (JEI). The JEI is an exercise coordinated directly between the USPACOM and the Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) in India. It is a multi-service exercise involving all the three components of the military and is therefore held to be very beneficial to the military-to-military ties between India and the US. The inaugural JEI exercise was held in Alaska in 2010 (Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation, 2011). Similarly the Exercise SPITTING COBRA has an Explosive Ordnance Destruction (EOD) focus in which sailors from the Indian navy and the EOD Mobile Unit of the US are involved. The Exercise SPITTING COBRA is not limited to the Indian Ocean, however, some of its implications certainly are. Yet another annual exercise between India and the US navies SLAVEX, is focussed on diving and salvaging capabilities.

Among all these maritime exercises jointly conducted between India and the US the MALABAR Exercises have proved to be the most broad-based maritime engagement between the two navies relevant to the Indian Ocean. Not only its growing sophistication but also its gradually turning multilateral character has immense promise for a multilateral approach to maritime security the Indian Ocean and by extension in the Asia-pacific. Four annual naval exercises complimented by regular exercises in other legs of the military have brought both India and the US closer than ever. A common approach to freedom of navigation, maritime security and increasing trade in the Indian Ocean have necessitated engagements through various aspects of naval cooperation. While both the navies stand to gain from each other's experience during these exercises, more often than not, the Indian Navy has more to take away

simply because of the superior technologies used by the US Navy. However, implicit in these maritime cooperative exercises lie opportunities for the Indian Navy to realise its technology deficit apropos the US Navy and fill those gap by attaining operational compatibility through adequate research at home in India in technologies that are employed by the US or by importing the military equipment using those technologies. Over the years, it has been a great learning experience for the Indian Navy in the areas of anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, naval special warfare and integrated air/missile defence among other fields. In a specific example, the MALABAR Exercises have benefitted the Indian Navy by way of learning how to use the efficient US CENTRIX system allowing it to communicate at higher speed than it used to (Khurana, 2008). Years of combined naval exercises and interactions have led to a level of comfort in operational coordination between the two navies. These annual exercises therefore, have stood as opportunities for sharing of know-how vis-à-vis technologies, operation and above all strategies for both the navies involved.

The character of naval relationship between India and the US has evolved since it began concretely with the MALABAR Exercises in 1992. Regular exercises and military exchanges have built a much more professional relationship between the two navies replacing the Cold War suspicion and mistrust of either side. The combinedHA/DR activities undertaken by both the navies in the Indian Ocean in the post-Tsunami struck Indian Ocean in 2004-05 went a long way in convincing the US Navy personnel about Indian Navy's professionalism and time-bound execution of duties (Sawhney, 2010). The US has officially commended[17] India's ability to counter piracy in the Indian Ocean depicted mainly through the MALABAR Exercises, and more pragmatically demonstrated through real time anti-piracy exercises off its west coast. Particularly, the US has come out in support of India's SHADEmechanism against piracy. SHADE started in the year 2008 as a mechanism for de-conflicting

[17] India has been lauded for its piracy efforts in the 2011 US-India security report presented to the US Congress

through coordination between countries against piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean.

Maritime exercises are one of the fastest ways to improve bilateral relations and further military-to-military relations between countries. In addition, they also reduce military friction between countries. The transition and continuous evolution of the Indo-US naval exercises over the years have substantiated both the above assertions, beyond doubt. A senior American diplomat correctly noted about the maturity that the Indo-US military cooperation has attained: "Indo-US cooperation has been there since the early '80s. But now there is a qualitative change. We are moving towards institutionalising the military cooperation" (Sidhu, 2013). This assessment is supported almost entirely if the bilateral maritime cooperation between India and the US since 1990 is observed.

Future Cooperation between the Indian Navy and the US Navy too, finds immense potential. The relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard is an area that is still left extensively unexplored. With changing nature of sea-borne terrorism, like the Mumbai attacks in India, cooperation in effective surveillance and high-end maritime missions in the Indian Ocean is a possibility that both the navies could explore. These areas, to a large extent, create the scope for the coast guards of both the countries to expand their extant fledgling relationship further into more complex areas of maritime cooperation.

2. PAKISTAN – "A Silent Force to Reckon With"[18]

Evolution of US-Pakistan Naval Alliance

After the CENTO almost had a rebirth on March 05, 1959 comprising Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom, the US' efforts in preventing the Soviet Union from expanding into the Middle East were abetted by the formation of this regional cooperation. The US found a new regional framework of countries which became the frontier states that would guard against any Soviet expansion in the Persian Gulf, the larger Indian Ocean and other parts of the Middle East. For the same reason, the CENTO states were also called the "Northern Tier" states as these states were geographically positioned at the Soviet Union's south-western border. The geostrategic position of the CENTO countries vis-à-vis the Soviet Union created strong reasons for the US to extend its military support to these countries. While the US naval support to Turkey was already underway in both the east Mediterranean and the Black Sea, improvement of naval relations with both Pakistan and Iran formed an important part of the US strategy to extend military and economic support to the CENTO countries. Pakistan Navy thus emerged as a recipient of the US' military help in the Indian Ocean region, witnessing its first multilateral naval exercise together with the US Navy through the annual MIDLINK series of naval Exercises that began in 1958 (Palmer, 1992). The MIDLINK exercises which lasted for two decades strengthened naval relations between Pakistan and the US during the Cold War and set the platform for subsequent cooperation in the post Cold War period.

Pakistan led by its maritime behaviour was an oddity in the group of countries that formed the Indian Ocean littorals. It was one of the only few Indian Ocean littoral countries whose support with other regional countries in their opposition to the

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[18] The motto of the Pakistan Navy

Superpowers' presence in the Indian Ocean through the "zone of peace" resolution in the 1970s, remained complicated by a tacit support yet an alliance with the US in the region. As the only country that has withstood the test of time as a close US ally in the Indian Ocean since the 1950s, besides Australia, the US-Pakistan strong naval relations in the Indian Ocean date back to the 1970s. When the late 1970s saw a shift in Pakistan Navy's moderate acquisitions from China following throughout the late 1980s, the US followed to better relations with Pakistan. The Pakistan Navy received both financial and military aid to bolster the US alliance against the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean during the same period. The 1980s saw a steep rise in naval acquisition of military equipment by the Pakistan Navy, primarily assisted by the US. By one estimate the number of surface combatants with the Pakistan Navy went up from 9 to 16 between 1980 and 1989, besides the valuable addition of long-range anti-ship missiles and significant improvement in maritime reconnaissance capabilities (Pakistan Naval Modernization, GlobalSecurity.org).

Naval Relations Since 1990

Throughout much of the Cold War, Pakistan remained at the receiving end of substantial military cum financial assistance from the US. The Reagan administration saw one of the highest financial military assistances flow to Pakistan in 1982 through its $3.2 billion military and economic aid from the US. Between 1982 and 1990 the US provided Pakistan a whopping financial assistance of over $4 billion, half of which was for military purposes (Testimony of Senator John Glenn--U.S./Pakistan Nuclear Issues, 1992). Pakistan used a significant portion of the military assistance from the US to bolster its naval capabilities, most of which would play out in the Indian Ocean. In 1988, the Pakistan Navy acquired eight Brooke and Garcia-class frigates from the US on a five year lease, followed by a lease of the erstwhile USS *Hector* in 1989 just on the verge of the end of the Cold War. The former USS *Hector* would be used by the Pakistan Navy as a ship repair depot. These acquisitions and leases by the Pakistan Navy reflect the close buyer-seller relationship that the Pakistan Navy enjoyed with the US through much of the Cold War.

However, things changed after October 1, 1990 when the US brought in the Pressler Agreement due to US concerns over Pakistan's possible involvement in the development of nuclear weapons. Soon after the Cold War ended, the Pressler Amendment was invoked by the US Congress which limited the Pakistan Navy's ability to receive financial and military assistance from the US. In August 1990, the Pressler Amendment sought to ban economic and military aid to Pakistan if annual confirmation about non-possession of nuclear weapons was not given by Pakistan. In 1993 both eight frigates, four each of Brooke (Badr)-class and Garcia (Saif)-class were returned to the US on the end of their five year lease (Pakistan Intelligence, Security Activities and Operations Handbook, 2013) marking several steps in the backward direction vis-à-vis its naval capabilities in the Indian Ocean region, particularly the Arabian Sea. This was followed by other US sanctions such as those imposed after Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998 through the Glen Amendment[19] and Symington Amendment[20] and the "Democracy Sanctions" imposed after military coup in Pakistan in October 1999 (Hussain, 2005). As a result the Pakistan Navy witnessed a series of financial cuts, non-renewal of leases and a starkly slow pace in naval modernisation. One of the major blows to the Pakistan Navy in 1993 was the partial expiration of its Brooke class frigate lease, while the remainder of the lease expiring in the following year, 1994. The implementation of the Pressler Amendment severely impaired the Pakistan Navy as it depended heavily on ships and vessels that formed US exports to the Pakistan Navy. As such, throughout most of the years that followed after the Cold War and the implementation of the Pressler Amendment the US-Pakistan relations seemed to be going through its "crisis years" (Lodhi, 1998) and that significantly impacted the Pakistan Navy, which depended heavily on the US aid and partnership both for expansion and modernisation.

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[19] Glen Amendment was invoked against states that detonated nuclear weapons

[20] Symington Amendment prohibited military and economic assistance to any country that indulged in delivery or receipt of nuclear weapons.

In the post Cold War period, Pakistan remained an important cog in the wheel driving US interests in Asia, albeit its geostrategic significance declined vis-à-vis the Cold War even as the need for potential war alliances by the US in Asia declined (Lodhi, 1998). This subtle change was also followed by the US' other changing interests in the post Cold War. In the Indian Ocean the US' interests driven by the desire to project American power and its energy interests led to a more sub-regional focus in the Persian Gulf and its contiguous areas. Pakistan's place in the scheme of US naval alliance in the Indian Ocean shrunk even as the regional countries of the Gulf region enhanced their military, especially naval, relations with the US. Especially the year 1992 saw a host of bilateral military agreements between the US and the GCC countries, lessening the US post Cold War dependence on Pakistan Navy for operations in the Indian Ocean. The year 1992 was also crucial as the US reached out in developing naval relations to a hitherto non-partner in the Indian Ocean, India. The start of bilateral naval MALABAR series of exercises in 1992 marked an important transition in the post Cold War US' naval behaviour in the Indian Ocean. As the Soviet threat declined precipitously after 1990, so did the geostrategic significance of Pakistan Navy for the US. Pakistan's proximity to the south western border of the erstwhile Soviet Union had little significance in the post Cold War for the US Navy. To add to the shrinking strategic utility of the Pakistan Navy for the US, much to the chagrin of the US, Pakistan also started developing relations with China mainly through military imports including for its navy.

In the post Cold War period the Pakistan Navy mainly reeled under two simultaneous strains; lack of adequate financial support from the US through its foreign military sales programme and a gradually distancing relationship with the US with its own long-term inabilities to counter terrorism emanating from its soil. The Pakistan Navy's modernisation, besides being severely impaired by the Pressler Amendment, has been particularly affected by growing US reluctance against any surplus defence equipment exports to Pakistan (Ansari, 2013). The modernisation process has often either been stalled or delayed due to the US' reluctance or delay in delivery/refurbishment of military exports. Pending for long the Pakistan Navy's request for the transfer of one Oliver Hazard Perry (OHP) Class Frigate, USS McInerney (FFG-8) was approved only in 2008 and was finally transferred to

Pakistan two years later in 2010. It was commissioned in the Pakistan Navy in the subsequent year, 2011, marking significant delays in an important naval modernisation (Oliver Hazard Perry Class Frigates, United States of America). The Pakistan Navy needed the OHP class frigate to bolster its capabilities by positioning itself alongside the US Navy in the Indian Ocean in fighting anti-narcotics, counterterrorism and anti-piracy operations ("Pakistan – Refurbishment of Oliver Hazard Perry Class Frigate," 2010). The Pakistan Navy has used its OHP class frigates alongside those of the same class from the US in multilateral naval exercise AMAN which saw its inception in 2007. The transfer of over three-decade old US frigate, USS McInerney, often symbolises the asymmetric naval relationship that has characterised the US-Pakistan post Cold War naval relations. That the frigate was accepted by the Pakistan Navy even after losing its significance in active US naval services, was reflective of the massive gap in interoperability that both the navies have had to make up for in some of the joint exercises and operations conducted together. One of the reasons why the US and Pakistan did not see the development of a routine bilateral naval exercise between them is probably the challenging gap that exists in the area of interoperability, rendering any parity in operations a remote expectation. This has also prevented the Pakistan Navy from extending its area of Maritime Security Operations (MSO) beyond the Arabian Sea to other parts of the Indian Ocean. The other reason for its limited capabilities in the Indian Ocean is its reluctance to join hands with a very important regional navy; India. The AMAN series of biannual and multinational maritime exercises form an apt example in this regard. The exercise includes even non-Indian Ocean countries like Turkey but excludes a regional naval heavyweight like India.

Even before the AMAN Exercises started maritime cooperation between the US and Pakistan had some history in other instances of cooperation in the IOR. On April 24 2004, the Pakistan Navy took part in counterterrorism efforts for the first time in the US-led Coalition; Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan (CMCP). The collaborative effort saw an increase in managing sea by increased vigilance and focus on areas such as, anti-drug, anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling operations in some areas of the Indian Ocean (Khalid, 2004). On November 21, 2004 *Babur* (DDG 182) together with USS *The Sullivans* (DDG 68) and French frigate *FS Surcouf* (F 711) conducted

maritime operations in the Gulf of Oman as part of the Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan (CMCP) overseen by the Commander Task Force (CTF) 150 under the 5th Fleet (Shaw, 2004).

AMAN Series of Multinational Exercises

As part of the effort to completely absorb the imported technology and to improve interoperability with the US Navy, besides many other world class navies, the AMAN series of multinational naval Exercises have been led by the Pakistan Navy since 2007. Besides the aforementioned goals, the exercise seeks to create a multinational maritime deterrence against piracy and terrorism. The AMAN series of maritime exercises have special relevance to the Indian Ocean as not only is the exercise held in the Arabian Sea but also most of the countries partaking in this exercise are either Indian Ocean littoral countries or have direct access to the Indian Ocean. Also, piracy and terrorism, its two main goals, are more endemic to the Indian Ocean than other maritime regions. In addition to countries like Australia, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan Italy, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UAE and the UK, the exercise also includes the US and Pakistan (Pakistan Navy concludes Aman 2013 multinational exercise).

US-Pakistan naval cooperation has mostly been limited to the Arabian Sea and has focussed on issues such as maritime security, counter-piracy and counter terrorism. The Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) *Babur* has been deployed in the Arabian Sea in the area of responsibility of the Central Command to collaborate with the US Navy as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150. The CTF 150 is a multinational force overseeing maritime security in the Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, North Arabian Sea and other parts of the Indian Ocean (Shaw, 2004). The year 2006 remains historical even today as the year saw an enhanced regional responsibility and status for the Pakistan Navy in regional waters. On March 24, 2006 the Pakistan Navy, in a first, took over the Command of the CTF-150 at Bahrain, witnessing an unprecedented role-change in regional maritime vigilance. The cooperation went a long way in improving its Navy's interoperability with other navies, especially that of the US. The Pakistan Navy commanded the CTF-150 for the second time from

November 2007 through February 2008 demonstrating its growing regional capabilities and heft (U.S., Pakistan Forces Complete Exercise Inspired Union 2008, 2008). During its role it led the maritime patrolling in the crucial area of the Strait of Hormuz, among other maritime initiatives.

Maritime Exercise: INSPIRED UNION

The northern part of the Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean witnessed an important maritime exercise between the navies of the US and Pakistan, in May 2008. While the exercise was called EXERCISE INSPIRED UNION, its collaborative focus was centred around air operations, maritime surface and anti-submarine training. A significant maritime exercise relevant to the security of the Indian Ocean, EXERCISE INSPIRED UNIONwitnessed the participation of two important US ships; USS *Curtis* (FFG 38) and USS *Ross* (DDG 71), besides the US Destroyer Squadron 50 and Combined Task Forces 54, 55 and 57. The Pakistan Navy fielded Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) *Badr* (D 184), PNS *Shahjahan* (D 186), PNS Nasr (A-47) and Pakistan Air Force EOD in the exercise. The Exercise was significant in that it was directed at bridging the existing gap in interoperability between the two navies, an extremely crucial component for conducting efficient operations against trafficking, piracy and sea-borne terrorism emanating from the Indian Ocean. (U.S., Pakistan Forces Complete Exercise Inspired Union 2008, 2008). The EXERCISE INSPIRED UNIONwas started in 2005 between the US and Pakistan Navy as an annual bilateral exercise.

Pakistan Navy's Growing Allegiance Towards China

Through much of the recent history Pakistan has stumbled in keeping the financial help in military assistance flowing from the US resulting in significant reductions in budgetary allocation to its navy. Through much of the recent history the Pakistan Navy's composition has altered. In recent times the Pakistan Navy's acquisitions from the US under its Foreign Military Sales programme have dwindled even as its military imports from China have grown.

China is gradually filling the void that has been created in US-Pakistan naval relations in the Indian Ocean too, mainly through inconsistencies in financial aid and strategic cooperation in the region that was characteristic of the US-Pakistan Cold War cooperation. One outstanding example in this regard is the Chinese involvement in Pakistan's Gwadar port which opens in the Indian Ocean. The Pakistan Navy now includes a significant number of Chinese manufactured surveillance aircraft, radar ships, submarines etc. That trend has grown especially since the turn of the century. A successful negotiation between China and Pakistan since the late 1990s led to an important agreement in 2006 for financing and technology transfer for the construction of four F-22P or Zulfiquar-class frigates for the Pakistan Navy by China. By 2011 three out of the four frigates had been delivered to the Pakistan Navy. For instance, the Pakistan Navy's aviation fleet has included the Chinese Z9EC anti-submarine helicopters (Pakistan Navy receives second batch of P-3C Orion aircraft, 2015) for some time now alongside the US-built P-3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft. The induction of about half a dozen P-3C Orion aircraft in the Pakistan Navy's aviation fleet has boosted its capability to carry out littoral and deep-water maritime surveillance in the Arabian Sea besides bolstering its other important capabilities such as search and rescue, anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare, reconnaissance, drug interdiction, economic zone patrol and airborne early warning (Pakistan Navy Receives Upgraded Surveillance Aircraft, 2010). The Pakistani Navy has also focussed on transfer of technology from China to make up for inconsistencies in the US financial support. The launch of Pakistan Navy's first Azmat-class Fast Attack Craft (Missile), PNS Azmat, at Xingang shipyard in Tianjin, China in April 2012 is worth noting in this regard. Construction of two such vessels began in 2010 on a transfer of technology basis at the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KSEW) after contract for them was awarded to Offshore International Company (CSOC) and China Shipbuilding (Pakistan Navy commissions first Azmat-class vessel, 2012). In 2011 Pakistan signed an agreement with China State Shipbuilding Industrial Corp (CSIC) for six Type 032 Qing-class conventional attack submarines (SSK) from the Wuchang Shipyard. Apart from these, the Pakistan Navy finalised the purchase of seven submarines at least three of which are slated to be made from Chinese assistance (Navy to buy seven submarines, Dawn, 2010). However, due to

historical naval links the Pakistan Navy remains largely dominated by US manufactured items.

Naval Relations Post September 11 Attacks

When the US slapped sanctions on Pakistan just after the end of the Cold War in 1990 in order to deter Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons, it has implications on Pakistan's military including its Navy. However, these sanctions were placed only as potential deterrence while the US still continued to have good relations with Pakistan as it still remained central to the US' presence in the Gulf region. The US found support from Pakistan in its post Cold War Gulf operations. The US Navy also worked with the Pakistan Navy in the Arabian Sea, particularly since 1992 (Chou, 2003).

As opposed to military capacity building during the Cold War the Indian Ocean saw a renewed US focus on regional stability, maritime navigation and free trade in the region, preventing nuclear and WMD proliferation. The focus of the US turned more towards counterterrorism after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US. In the post 9/11 attacks security restructuring by the US globally, although Pakistan remained an important ally in the GWoT, the US cooperated with Pakistan more in other legs of the military than in the maritime. The Pakistan Navy has assisted the US Navy in conducting maritime interception operations through most of the AOR of the US Fifth Fleet by stationing a permanent frigate in the designated area only exclusively for these operations (Shaw, 2004). In the two and a half decades that have ensued after the Cold War ended, there has been a substantial erosion of trust between the US and Pakistan, both at the levels of the state and the military due to Pakistan's own limitations to deal with terrorism both inside and outside its country.
In the aftermath of the September 9/11 attacks, the US-Pakistan naval cooperation experienced a new low, as was evident in the general bilateral relationship. Also for much of the 21st century, Pakistan has looked to ratchet up its naval cooperation with China more than it has with the US, particularly for its unequivocal gain of strategic edge vis-à-vis India. Pakistan's port access to China (Panda, 2015) at the strategic

Indian Ocean node of Gwadar is an obvious sign of the turn which Pakistan naval activities in the Indian Ocean are taking. Over the last few years Pakistan has been actively defending the strategically crucial Gwadar port and its much touted China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by putting a formidable sea defence in the Arabian Sea in north-western Indian Ocean. Such security oriented intentions have come from Pakistan most lucidly through its recently started maritime exercise in the Arabian Sea, SEA SPARK (PM witnesses Navy exercise Sea Spark 2015 in Karachi, 2015).

Pakistan has been on the US nuclear proliferation radar for passing on technologies to Iran, North Korea and Libya. Besides, the US has also raised concerns about possible passing on of non-nuclear technologies by Pakistan to China, as in the case of the technologies from the helicopter that crashed during US' raid (OPERATION NEPTUNE SPEAR) killing Osama Bin Laden in 2011. China (Shuaib, 2014). Pakistan also climbed high up in the US' global proliferation list after it gathered evidence against the A. Q. Khan network.

Growing Sino-Pakistan naval cooperation has also been a retaliatory move of the growing naval cooperation between New Delhi and Washington in the Indian Ocean (Singh, 2015). As such, the graph of US-Pakistan naval cooperation has been sliding gradually through most of the post Cold War owing to intermittent financial sanctions and growing trust deficit. The Pakistan Navy has not seen a strategic collaboration of the Cold War order with the US Navy in the Indian Ocean but has managed to remain one of the key regional navies in the region in some aspects even for post Cold War US interests in this region.

In the post Cold War period there has been a subtle shift in the US-Pakistan naval relations. In the Cold War days the Pakistan Navy, as only the second Indian Ocean littoral country to use submarines, was vital to strategic interests of the US in the region against the Soviet Union. The US interests changed dramatically after 1990 even as the likelihood of nuclear proliferation by Pakistan increased together with the rising inability of Pakistan to contain terrorism emanating from within its own country. These changes led to substantial financial cuts from the US in aid, affecting

Pakistan's naval modernisation and acquisition. More importantly, the altered US interests in Asia after 1990 prioritised economics and trade even as strategic concerns declined and transformed. This change rendered the US-Pakistan naval cooperation almost stagnant for at least a decade after the end of the Cold War. However, the bilateral naval relationship picked in the aftermath of two almost simultaneous threats to US interest; rise of unconventional forms of threats like piracy, trafficking and terrorism including those that were sea-borne, and a new threat perception in the wake of September 11 attacks, brought a renewed security focus on some of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean countries.

Through much of the years that have followed since the turn of the century the US has been sceptical of the Pakistan Navy's ability to guard itself against attacks from terrorists, as have been other regional powers like India. Pakistan Navy's growing nuclear capabilities along with its inability to protect its own naval infrastructure, have stalled its full-fledged and multi-agenda based maritime cooperation with both the regional countries as well as the US. On more than one occasion in the past, the Pakistan naval infrastructure has been attacked by terrorists from within that country evincing the vulnerability that the navy and its equipment and arsenal are exposed to. Al-Qaeda's attack on PNS *Mehran* naval air station (Shahzad, 2011) in Karachi on May 22, 2011 in which at least 10 people were killed and two United States-made P3-C Orion surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft worth US$36 million each were destroyed, and more recently Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent's (AQIS) attempt to seize the frigate, PNS *Zulfiqar* in a surprise attack (Panda, 2014) are examples of the Pakistan Navy's vulnerability to security threats emerging from its own country. However, the existing belief in US military circles that, "We cannot be successful in this region, without the contribution of the Pakistan Navy," vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean (US cannot succeed in region without Pak Navy's support, 2015) has sustained the US-Pakistan naval relationship through most of the post Cold War period.

3. AUSTRALIA - "VIRES ACQUIRIT EUNDO"[21]

Evolution of US-Australia Maritime Relations

Although the 1952 ANZUS Treaty between the US, Australia and New Zealand had no direct implications for the Indian Ocean, steady increase in the US presence in the Indian Ocean after Britain withdrew from the "east of Suez" in 1967 did not find opposition in Australia until the Labour Party led by Gough Whitlam came to power in 1972. The roots of US-Australia cooperation in the Indian Ocean date back to the 1970s when the Labour led government was replaced by the Liberal-Country party. In the year 1970 Australian Prime Minister John Gorton voiced his support for US involvement in western Australian naval development in times to come. Through a press conference in Canberra the Prime Minister said,

> The Government has approved plans for the construction, over five years, of the second stage of Naval Support Facilities at Cockburn Sound, Western Australia.....The Base will enable ships to operate in the Indian Ocean and will significantly increase the flexibility of our Naval Forces. The United States Secretary of Defence has written "Your stated intention to develop a naval base in Western Australia is most welcome...

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton, Canberra (Gorton, 1970)

The response of US Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, under President Richard Nixon to the Australian Prime Minister's proposal was the following:

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[21] A quotation from Vergil's Aeneid which translates as 'She gathers strength as she goes' is the motto for RAN's Melbourne class ships, frequently deployed in the Indian Ocean in the post Cold War.

> The United States recognizes fully the important security contributions Australia is making to free world defense in the Southwest Pacific and Indian Ocean areas. Your stated intention to develop a Naval Base in Western Australia is most welcome. The generous offer to open such a facility to ships of the U. S. Navy is indeed gratifying; such a base would play an important role in U. S. contingency planning for the region; and as operational requirements or opportunities may arise, we would make use of the port.
>
> US Defense Secretary, Melvin Laird's response to PM Gorton(Gorton, 1970)

The Liberal-Country party in Australia led by Malcom Fraser, unlike the previous government, also supported the idea of naval build up in the Indian Ocean by the US (Bezboruah, 1977). This was being done at a time when there was clamour against any such move by most of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean through their "zone of peace" plea at the United Nations. The conservative government in Australia hinted its support for increasing the US presence in the India Ocean by also rejecting the Indian Ocean "Peace Zone" initiative by the littoral countries of the region.

The withdrawal of Britain from the Indian Ocean was followed by Australia's increasing political steps to bring parts of the Indian Ocean under its strategic ambit, especially, consolidating the western flank of Australia as an integral part of the Indian Ocean. This included increasing military infrastructure around the Cockburn Sound inlet of the Indian Ocean near Australia's western coast. On July 28 1978, Australia commissioned one of its largest bases on its western shore; Fleet Base West (HMAS Stirling, Royal Australian Navy), associating, in a first, any kind of military dimension to its Indian Ocean approach. Australia's Fleet Base West at Cockburn Sound also known as HMAS Sterling helped the country in its surveillance of the Indian Ocean coastline. This was also followed by Australia's sovereignty assertions towards some of its Indian Ocean islands like Christmas, Cocos and Heart Islands. An important step included stepping up Australian military infrastructure, especially for its air force, and involvement on these islands in the Indian Ocean. Importantly, the military air force facilities on these Australian islands in the Indian Ocean also came to be used by the US. The mutual sharing of military facilities in the Indian Ocean marked the important transition in Canberra's support to the US in the Indian Ocean; from political to actionable. From the late 1960s Australia supported the US' efforts

in the Indian Ocean with three military installations: the Exmouth communications centre, the Nurrungar early warning satellite station and the Pine Gap reconnaissance station (Braun, 1983: 121). Pine Gap in Australia's northern territory and Exmouth facility in North-West Cape continue to provide the US easy surveillance, communications monitoring and reconnaissance of the Indian Ocean along with the Pacific even in the post Cold War period just as they did during the Cold War. The Nurrungar early warning satellite station was closed in 1999 ("Nurrungar Satellite Tracking, Station Joint Defense Facility Nurrungar").

By the 1980s, almost 50 percent of Australia's imports and exports passed through the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean became an important passage for Australia even as its trade with the littoral Indian Ocean countries remained low. This was supported by a large import of oil from the Persian Gulf by Australia in the 1980s (Braun, 1983: 117). In February 1980, Australia was part of a decision that had direct policy implications for the Indian Ocean. In a meeting of the foreign ministers of the ANZUS countries the decision was taken to include the Indian Ocean for "additional measures of military cooperation" in future ANZUS activities. It was following this three-nation decision taken in Washington that Australia sent ships and an aircraft carrier, *Melbourne*, to parts of the Indian Ocean including the Strait of Hormuz. Interestingly, Australia also carried out joint naval exercises near the eastern Indian Ocean and the Strait of Hormuz. To add to the growing close partnership between the US and Australia in the Indian Ocean, Australia also made its air force base in its northern territory Darwin available to the US for stationing and operations of its strategic B5-52 bombers (Braun, 1983). In a landmark agreement impacting the US-Australia maritime relations in the Indian Ocean, Prime Minister Fraser announced on March 11, 1981 announced that Australia would allow stationing rights to the US for its B-52 bombers along with its KC-135 refuelling planes used for surveillance operations over the Indian Ocean (Ahmed, 1982).

The prospects of cooperation between Australia and the US increased when the naval base in Western Australia was commissioned at Cockburn Sound in 1979. In order to increase naval cooperation with the US in the Indian Ocean and make western Australia stronger in its defence capabilities (which was also a domestic election issue

in Australia), Australian Prime Minister Malcom Fraser made a secret offer to the US at a meeting in Washington on January 30, 1980 to use Australia's new naval base at Cockburn Sound "as either a "home port" or a "base port" for American nuclear aircraft carriers and other warships from Indian Ocean task forces." The Australian offer to the US was a shot in the arm of the long sought joint desire of President Carter and Australia's Conservative Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser to boost the West's military presence in the Indian Ocean (Costigan, 1980).

Particularly since 1984 Australia started specifying its Indian Ocean more clearly than it had done in the past. Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden stated that there were 'unassailable reasons of national-interest" why Australia should focus more on the Indian Ocean in an unprecedented manner. The Minister rooted for Australia's increased role in the Indian Ocean henceforth. Interestingly Australia also supported the 'zone of peace' proposal vis-à-vis the Indian Ocean. However, the new Australian zeal about the Indian Ocean gradually fizzled as Hayden resigned from Office in 1988 (Maley, 1997).

Post-Cold War Maritime Relations

While the US-Australia maritime relations in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War were primarily abetted by concerns from the Soviet Union, the post-Cold War scenario has segued from an ambience of threat perception to the need for a grand strategy in the Indian Ocean region. But the importance of US' Indian Ocean strategy in the post Cold War is as relevant as it was before 1990, for the simple reason that the Indian Ocean touches 9,000 miles of Australia's 12,000 miles coastline (Bezboruah, 1977: 200). Although in 1987 Australia depicted a desire to 'liberate' (Malley, 1997: 295) itself from the Cold War alliance, it found itself engaged in the Gulf War of 1990-91 as an ally of the US Immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 Australian forces were deployed in the northwest Indian Ocean. Since then maritime cooperation with the US and other countries in the Indian Ocean has become routine for Australia.

Throughout much of the post Cold War period Australia remained "a gateway to the south" (Bhatt, 1992: 112) for the US to access, gain and establish influence in the Indian Ocean. In much of the period following 1990, Australia has continued its engagements with the Indian Ocean with its security operations in the Arabian Sea and naval cooperation with other countries like the US, France and India. Australia In the post Cold War the Indian Ocean once again started figuring in Australia's radar, as the country declared a "Look West Strategy" in 1994. In the following year in an important follow up after the declaration of the 1994 strategy Australia hosted an important meeting in Perth in 1995; International Forum on Indian Ocean Region. (Maley, 1997).

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) has frequented the Persian Gulf area several times in the post Cold War era. The RAN's HMAS *Melbourne*, one of the six such guided missile frigates entered the Persian Gulf in 1996 for the first time, deploying in East Timor in 1998 before returning to the Persian Gulf for deployment in 2002. Over the years, the US and Australia have also mutually used each others' naval facilities in the Indian Ocean. For instance, part of Australia's contribution to fighting terrorism was found in stationing assistance from the US Navy at Diego Garcia (Brangwin, 2010). Two important operations in the Indian Ocean in the early post Cold War period, when the RAN collaborated with the US Navy apart from other navies, have been OPERATION SLIPPER and OPERATION CATALYST in 2002 and 2003 respectively (HMAS Melbourne (FFG 05).

Multilateral Dimension Naval Cooperation

The OPERATION SLIPPER was part of Australia's commitments to the US GWoT after September 11 attacks. Australia joined the multilateral coalition against terrorism with supporting legitimisation from the tri-nation ANZUS Treaty. Australia not only contributed to the US' Indian Ocean efforts through its military deployments since 2001 and Special Task Force in 2005 to the Middle East but also in the area of logistics through its AP-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft, besides other means. On October 25, 2001 Australia announced the deployment of the RAN as part of the

coalition forces in the Indian Ocean. The OPERATION SLIPPER saw the deployment of over 32 Australian ships in various parts of the Indian Ocean since 2001 ("Australian Navy takes lead in maritime security in Middle East and North Indian Ocean," 2013). The OPERATION CATALYST started in 2003 and ran parallel to OPERATION SLIPPER. OPERATION CATALYST's contextual importance for the Indian Ocean lay in the fact it was a joint task force comprising maritime forces and commanded by a RAN Commodore. The RAN ship HMAS *Newcastle* had a special role in OPERATION CATALYST as it was deployed in the Persian Gulf to deter, detect and eventually intercept vessels carrying out illegal activities close to Iraqi waters (Operation Catalyst: online).

The RAN has also cooperated with the US Navy in the Indian Ocean under multilateral maritime initiatives like the 30-nation coalition of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) that sought to maintain security and stability in the Middle East through an ocean-oriented approach. The CMF includes three specific maritime forces; Combined Task Force CTF-150, Combined Task Force CTF-151 and Combined Task Force CTF-152, each being responsible for security and counter-terrorism; counter-piracy; and security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf respectively. Importantly, on the basis of sustained commitment to security in the Indian Ocean, the RAN assumed the command of CTF-150 on December 1, 2013 (Australian Navy takes lead in maritime security in Middle East and North Indian Ocean,DoD, 2013). Since the CMF runs under the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central (NAVCENT) and the United States Fifth Fleet, Australia's diligent engagement in this multinational coalition is another ramification of US-Australia maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean that has sought to stabilise the region.

Institutionalisation of Naval Response

Throughout much of the Cold War period the US-Australia alliance in the Indian Ocean, as in the Asia-Pacific, relied on its closeness with the US, cooperating on the US' 'hub-and spokes' model. Even as the economic and strategic relevance of the Indian Ocean increased in the post Cold War period, the traditional 'hub-and-spokes'

model could not relate with its geo-structural and politico-military realities present in the Asia-Pacific, in the Indian Ocean. Consequently, the US-Australia bilateral relationship has had to operate in the Indian Ocean, largely in the absence of the alliance system present in the Asia-Pacific or its multilateral security diplomacy (Phillips, 2013). The post-millennial Chinese economic and military rise together and its efforts to increase footprints in the Indian Ocean have made the missing links in the Indian Ocean vis-à-vis US-Australia relations, starker. The US' resolve to extend its influence from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean through maritime security of trade and its strategic presence, India's phenomenal economic and naval rise, and China growing assertiveness through an increasingly strengthening Navy are likely to upset the regional balance in the Indian Ocean. In such circumstances, Australia has always looked towards building a regional maritime order in the Indian Ocean that encompasses the idea of the Asia-Pacific in some ways.

For the US, Australia's involvement in its Indian Ocean strategy fills the important gap that exists in the absence of a strategic ally to support the US' economic as well as military interests in the region. Albeit, the military intents of the US in the have gradually subsided in the Indian Ocean since the Cold War, the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean has enforced the desire to retain its strategic calculus by the US, particularly since China has shown increased desire to enter the Indian Ocean both economically and militarily (Holmes, 2014). Australia's inclusion in US' Indian Ocean strategy in the post Cold War has been an attempt to find an institutionalised response to the possible militarisation of the Indian Ocean by China which has in turn offset the regional balance. While such efforts being undertaken by the US and Australia run the risk of militarising the Indian Ocean through their own efforts, they has found support of an important regional navy like India and an extra-regional power like Japan in these post Cold War pursuits. The first validation of such an assessment can be found in the genesis of the informal Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QDS) between the US, Japan, India and Australia in 2007, led by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Panda, 2014). As the inaugural QDS talks ran parallel to the 2007 MALABAR naval exercises between the four members; India, Japan, Australia and the US, not only did it herald the future induction of Japan as a partner in the MALABAR maritime exercises but also signalled resurfacing of the US' "soft"

containment approach (Campbell, 2008: 61) towards China in the post Cold War. The second but related trend of support that the US has received among the Indian Ocean littoral countries is more specific to maritime activities having potential military connotations. The sustained effort of the US since at least 2007 to include Japan as a permanent member of the annual bilateral Indo-US MALABAR Exercises in the Indian Ocean surpassed both, Chinese protests and the initial Indian reluctance (Miller, 2015). Australia's distancing from both these US policies in the Indian Ocean finds coincidence in their anti-China character. Australia's squeamish response to the US policies in Asia, directly or indirectly stacked against China, has posed a major challenge to an institutionalised US response to China in the Indian Ocean. In the recent past, the US has taken several steps to dissuade Australia from taking the Indian Ocean less seriously due to growing Chinese pressure. One of such steps has been the navy-to-navy exchange program between Australia and the US launched a few years back. The US Navy's Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) lets chosen personnel from its Navy to go for a one-for-one exchange with personnel from Australia's Royal Australian Navy (Perez, 2013). However, Australia remains one of the strongest post Cold War ally of the US in the Indian Ocean and despite its economic dependence on China, more recently, it has shown willingness to be a part of the "security quartet" comprising India, Australia, Japan and the US. Its maiden maritime exercise in the Indian Ocean, AUSINDEX-15, is not only a signal of its growing maritime proximity with India but the other partners of the originally conceived idea of the QDS (Singh, 2015).

In the post Cold War era, Australia's participation with the US started with a focus on maintaining a regional balance in the Indian Ocean Region through prevention of any major conflict. Australia's traditional alliance with the US and its growing trade dependence with China form an important balancing factor both in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region, especially the eastern Indian Ocean. Australia has been a crucial partner of the US in maintaining maritime security, prevention of terrorism and piracy and providing disaster relief/humanitarian assistance to the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean region. One of the key objectives of combined US-Australia efforts in the Indian Ocean remains ensuring freedom of navigation. Both the US and Australia have together focused on the relatively new maritime domain of

the Indo-Pacific, to attain the twin objectives of guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the IOR (thereby obviating a modular difference between the IOR and the South China Sea (SCS)) while still working towards connecting the two oceans through more frequent activities in the Indo-Pacific. Australia's geostrategic advantage due to its traditional two-ocean strategy (its eastern and western flanks opening at different oceans) has placed it rightly as a potential balancer in both the Indian as well as Pacific Oceans. The US has depicted its intentions of using Australia's two-ocean strategy (Phillips, 2013) to counter, what is now known as China's own "two-ocean strategy" (Kaplan, 2009) which has comprised its growing dominance in the Pacific Ocean together with increasing footprints in the Indian Ocean. The US-Australia relation in the Indian Ocean wields more flexibility in combined maritime operations. Any such possibility is increasingly shrinking in the Pacific Ocean, particularly since the turn of the century due to Australia's increasing trade dependence with China. In the words of Kaplan (2009) Australia's increasing economic and military dependence with China has neutralised its obvious pro-American stance characteristic through most of the Cold War period. When the Australian government under the new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd withdrew from the informal QDS engagement, Australia's ambiguity as a US ally and China's trade partner was more evident than ever before. Australia's continued alliance with other QDS would have destabilised its relationship with China (Panda, 2014).

In sum, in the post Cold War the US and Australia have based their cooperation in the Indian Ocean on a few consensual factors: the stability of the IOR littorals, flow of maritime traffic without any hindrance or security threats, preventing the Indian Ocean from non-traditional security threats like piracy, drug trafficking, terrorism etc. However, there is immense scope for growth of bilateral cooperation between the US and Australia in the area of anti-drug operation in the Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

Maritime strategy in the context of the US naval power has been variously defined over the years. Traditionally, naval strategy in the US has been identified as a subset of maritime strategy. Echoing similar conception, Admiral James D. Watkins of the US Navy defined maritime strategy as having the goal of the overall maritime strategy as "to use maritime power, in conjunction with the efforts of our sister services and forces of our allies, to bring about war termination on favorable terms." Such definitions, if not fully, partially find common grounds in the use of naval components towards forming a nation's maritime strategy. As such, the US maritime strategy employed a broad scope through much its naval history in the twentieth century.

Maritime strategy of the US has traditionally involved its naval assets in an inimitable way, most prominently due to the distance of its areas of operation from its continental shelf. The Indian Ocean further highlighted this unique feature of the US maritime strategy by the virtue of being the most distant ocean from the US. This feature had a significant role in shaping the US maritime strategy of the Cold War when its strategy was characterised by the mix of inhibitions and ambitions. The gap in this dilemma was, to a large extent, bridged in the US' post Cold War strategy in the Indian Ocean when an overwhelming number of naval assets were deployed in various parts of the Indian Ocean, albeit asymmetrically.

The evolution of the US maritime strategy through history has often been categorised into various stages. A popular way to do the same has been by pointing out various evolutionary stages in its sea-power; from a coastal, to an oceanic, to a transoceanic power. To that extent, most of the six attributes of maritime strategy: Geographical Position, Physical Conformation, Extent of Territory, Number of Population, National Character, and Character of the Government, outlined by Alfred Thayer Mahan, remained relevant to the US' maritime strategy throughout much of the twentieth century, including the two World Wars, and much of the post Cold War period. Particularly, the attributes like geographical position, physical conformation and

extent of territory became very crucial in shaping the post Cold War maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean. As the most distant ocean form continental US, the Indian Ocean elicited a response that was contingent on its geographical location and the nature of its littorals. Physical conformation of the US' maritime strategy was the most immediate challenge that the US maritime strategy led by its Navy had to face in the post Cold War in the Indian Ocean. In a new world order without the Soviet Union had changed the strategic calculus of the Indian Ocean, as it did of the rest of the world, requiring a new sense of conformity to the new challenges faced by the US. These changes while having conferred a unipolarity of the US on the world, also expanded its potential territoriality in global waters including in the Indian Ocean. However, the challenge against any unilateral increase in the post Cold War area of responsibility also meant that the US had to increase its resources in the region where its interests immediately following the end of the Cold War were limited. The factors highlighted above depict that some of the Mahanian principles of sea-power remained decisive in shaping even the post Cold War maritime strategy of the US. This was just as true for the Indian Ocean.

In the post Cold War, the Indian Ocean witnessed efforts by the US to defend its interests through coalition building and towards protecting partners' interests in the maritime domain. The Gulf War, for instance, also became instrumental in changing US' perception of threat to one of regional challenges and opportunities in the Indian Ocean region. Massive relocation of its military wherewithal to the region depicted a new form of power projection as a concerted means of establishing dominance and countering security threats. Military posturing of the Cold War by the US Navy subsided immensely but was still retained in enough measure to thwart the influence of 'disruptive' countries. The Indian Ocean witnessed most of the honing of US' military and war fighting capabilities through major combat operations, joint and coalition forces with other countries of the region. Joint exercises not only increased interoperability but also its proficiency for future combat scenarios. These efforts in turn led to newer partnerships of the US Navy with regional naval forces and other their maritime forces such as their coast guard units. The cooperative structure in the Indian Ocean built on the back of an enhanced cooperation of the US with other

regional navies saw a combined deterrence against sea piracy, maritime terrorism and disruptions in the proliferation, transport and delivery of weapons of mass destruction.

In the post Cold War period, even though the constituents comprising the US' maritime strategy grew in scope, the focus narrowed. As the nature of threat at seas changed significantly in the post Cold War period, in that the threats became more diffused, the means employed by the US to tackle a range of threats equally diversified. Replicating this sentiment in the words of a thinker; "the post Cold War maritime strategy of the US reflected a shift from one global threat to a multiple regional threats." This change in maritime threat perception also challenged the traditional Mahanian notion of unilateral mastery of international waters by the US as its Navy moved towards a more cooperative structure of engagement with other regional navies.

As such, the post Cold War maritime strategy of the US started with the realisation that the needs of its Navy would change commensurately with the change in the global order. For the US Navy, it became very crucial to bring back its focus on regional threats by forming a consensus on the post Cold War altered maritime rationales of the US Navy. Some strategies of the US Navy also changed in response to the US Air Force's strategies which factored improving global reach and global power. The US Navy did not just have a changed global word order to cope with but more immediately, budget cuts and fewer resources to manage its strong and newly acquired unipolarity.

Newer challenges emerged for the US Navy in the post Cold War, in that both the number of ships and its budget were reduced. For instance, there were only eleven ships that were authorised in 1991 making the number of ships 42 below from the 1987 number. In another challenge posed to the post Cold War maritime strategy of the US, the decommissioning of all the remaining 46 Knox-class Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) Frigates started in 1991, further depleting the US Navy's capabilities abroad. This decision had an implicit bearing on the Indian Ocean too, as the Knox class frigates had played a crucial role in the Indian Ocean since the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, the USS *Meyerkord* (FF-1058) was a Knox-class frigate of the US Navy

that was frequently deployed in the Indian Ocean for tours, escort and Anti-submarine warfare in the Cold War. The decommissioning was part of the overall reduction of 25 percent in US forces gradually since 1990. Although, any more reduction was not considered viable as it was assessed that the Soviet threat could recur anytime, this change paved the way for a gradual increase in the US Navy's focus on economic concerns worldwide more than strategic concerns.

In the post Cold War period the US maritime strategy made a shift in focus from geostrategic concerns to geo-economic ones. In the aftermath of the Cold War the US maritime strategy, which was primarily centred on sea power until then, started focusing on access to economic markets of the world and the stability of such markets. The littorals of Europe and the Asia-Pacific as two such regions that attracted US' post Cold War economic focus. To a large extent, even the strategic concerns of the US Navy were centred on larger economic pursuits in these regions. Not surprisingly, even in the post Cold War the rest of the Indian Ocean region, besides the Persian Gulf, attracted less US attention than parts of other global economically vibrant littorals.

The post Cold war US maritime strategy also stressed forward deployment and swift action. Various parts of the Indian Ocean witnessed the naval expeditionary forces of the US operating swiftly both in deployment as well as operations. After lessons from OPERATION ERNEST WILL in 1988, the US Navy used Combined Forces Approach in perpetuating the "sea-land-air" team operative ethos of the US Navy for much of the post Cold War period. In addition to the joint operations, the US Navy's Expeditionary Forces were strengthened by their ability to stay out in the Indian Ocean for longer periods. The sustainability and the self-sufficiency of ships in the Ocean became a naval strategy to support long-term operations at sea.

The changes brought in the aftermath of the OPERATION ERNEST WILL were related to lack of effectiveness in the command and control systems of the US military. Consequently, there were changes that made effective coordination between different wings of the military in the event of joint warfare. As such, lessons learnt from the Gulf War changed the maritime strategy of the US in a manner that synchronised the

Navy with the army and the Air Force. The emphasis on joint warfare was reiterated by two important naval documents brought out soon after the Cold War ended. Both *From the Sea* brought out in 1992 and *Forward From the Sea* released in 1996 proved seminal in defining the maritime strategy going forward through their emphasis on joint warfare strategy. Some changes at the operational levels were suggested by these documents, emphasising a renewed naval strategy. For instance, the integration of naval expeditionary units in land warfare was pushed as an important strategy. The 1996 document, while retaining strategic deterrence and forward presence as important strategies of the US Navy, built further through its focus on peace time forward deployment, military readiness, interoperability and strategic sealift capabilities. However, changes in strategy brought about by these two documents were not limited to operational maritime strategy alone. Both these documents also brought recalibrations at the organisational level which was thought to be necessary for accomplishing joint missions for the US military. Importantly, the 1996 naval document, *Forward From the Sea* stressed on multinational naval coalitions to present a joint response to maritime crises.

The transition of the US maritime strategy in the post Cold War from Mahanian unilateralism globally, to regionally targeted coalition response was a result of some collaborative military readjustments, both intra-military and inter military, by the US. For a long period of time one of the mainstays of American naval power globally was the conventionally held "sea power," backed by a Mahanian conception that use of maritime power, could prove decisive in attaining strategic objectives and sustaining a major power status. Especially until the end of the Cold War, such convictions found validity through successful naval campaigns by the US, unilaterally as also globally. In the Indian Ocean unilateral naval power projections by the US became norm ever since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most of such manifestations were seen in the Persian Gulf which witnessed the first geographic basing by the US Navy in the Indian Ocean region. However, once Diego Garcia became fully functional, this regional trend was only to be repeated on a larger scale.

Strategic naval bases and access to them by the Navy's fleet were indispensible constituents to forming a successful and strong maritime strategy, according to

Mahan. In that sense, Mahan was the foremost naval strategist of the so-called "blue-water" school. He emphasised on a wide reaching US naval presence in order to achieve global objectives and maintain its unchallenged position in the world. He famously used the example of England's rise as a sea power as an emulatory past for the US. Such thought among leading naval strategists of the US was reflective of both the unilateralism that the United States Navy had come to symbolise since WW II and its intentions going forward. The US Navy continued its strategy, largely based on this line of Mahanian thought, to obtain a global position of naval pre-eminence both during the Cold War and after.

In the post Cold War, while the US dominated the world with its blue water naval status, the constituents of its essential "Sea-Power" changed with the emergence of a new international order and its security needs post 1990. In the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, the Indian Ocean still lingered with the strategic disadvantage of being the most distant ocean from continental US. Budgetary cuts affecting naval deployments abroad also led to thinning out of the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the post 1990 period. However, as regional dynamics changed and the Indian Ocean became the centre of global trade route in the latter part of the post Cold War period, the US' focus in the region returned. Gulf War in 1991, embassy attacks in Africa in 1998, and the September 11 attacks posed new asymmetric threats emerging for the US Navy from the Indian Ocean littorals. While these developments certainly changed some of the strategies and constituents comprising the US' "sea-power" in the region, there were some recalibrations in its naval strategy resulting in changing relations with other regional navies like India, Pakistan, Australia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other Indian Ocean littoral countries.

Although the US' unilateral naval dominance in the post Cold War period still rested on the erstwhile Mahanian principle of fleet concentration, multinational fleet concentration became a renewed strategy to tackle the diffused nature of threats in the post Cold War. This signalled a major change in the US Navy's post Cold War sea-power constituents, even as it moved from unilateral fleet concentration towards the involvement of multinational navies. Even though the US Navy continued to hold a position of unrivalled maritime dominance even in the post Cold War, its rationales

changed. The US maritime strategy shifted in the post Cold War from merely being centred on threat perception to one that sought to develop as well as sustain military capabilities and promoted interests. Resultantly, trade security, freedom of navigation, anti-piracy, counterterrorism, sea patrols, human assistance and disaster management became a range of targeted contingencies to look at as collaborative agendas for the US Navy in the post September 11 attacks.

As such, the US Navy's post Cold War cooperation with regional and extra-regional navies in the Indian Ocean relied on its own intra and inter-military collaborative readjustments. The maritime strategy of the US gradually came to focus on joint operations combining the US Navy and the Marine Corps to meet security challenges in the Indian Ocean, as elsewhere. A transition from open sea warfare to its focus on tactical threats emerging from the Indian Ocean littorals required a more targeted response in the post Cold War from the US Navy and formed a crucial constituent of the US Navy's post Cold War coalition response strategy in the Indian Ocean.

Besides these intra-military readjustments, the post Cold War era also saw the start of inter-navy collaboration of the US Navy on an unprecedented scale. The US Navy's cooperation with other regional and extra-regional navies in the Indian Ocean emerged as a unique strategy in the post Cold War depicting the US' willingness to work in an environment of cooperation. No sooner had the Iraqi forces crossed into Kuwait in 1990 the US Navy started its deployments led by a joint task force of 33 nations. The US Joint Task Force Middle East provided the requisite sea control to support the 33-nation led air and ground campaigns. With additional help from the Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPSs) stationed at Diego Garcia, the US Navy was executing its "Total Force Concept". The concept was based on the idea of an unprecedented maximisation of its strength. The Total Force Concept as understood in post Cold War was unique because its scope extended well beyond just combat response. In 1991, months after the US military had successfully ended OPERATION DESERT STORM it undertook another operation, this time led by its amphibious task force. It was a major non-combat response from the US that in some ways would have convinced the IOR countries about alternative rationales of US' involvement in the region. Christened as OPERATION SEA ANGEL, it involved close to 5000 US marines

seeking to assist Bangladesh after the devastating cyclone that hit the country in 1991. In sum, the US navy formulated its post Cold War strategy based on four primary roles; greater sea-control, force projection, employing nuclear deterrence and providing sealift capability for joint maritime operations.

The post Cold War transition to cooperative framework and coalition response to tackle with regional threats also meant that there was retraction in the US' naval offensive characteristic of the Cold War. This was particularly true after the Gulf War of 1990-91. The US Navy reeled under the double problem of budgetary cuts and substantial reduction in the number of the Navy's ships. The number of active warships in the US Navy declined between 1991 and 2000 from 526 in 1991 to 318 in 2000 and the total number of active personnel fell by 1,97,069 between the same years. As the probability of naval combat lessened worldwide and more so in the Indian Ocean, the US Navy employed much of its resources in gaining access and control of international commons and focused less on ready combat situations. This also coincided with the deflection of US Navy's interest towards piracy in the Indian Ocean. But more importantly, this was also the time when China began to evince its interests in the Indian Ocean more clearly than ever in the past. By 2010, the Chinese Navy had come to attract the US Navy's attention in an unprecedented way. As a counter-measure, the US Navy started a renewed focus on the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The sustained assertion of the Chinese Navy in the Asia-Pacific led the US to focus on multilateral naval cooperation most notably referred as the famous "1000 Ship Navy" proposed by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Mullen in October 2006, as a multinational naval coalition to counter the new challenges faced by the US and improve maritime security.

Shifting the focus to the strategic dimension of the US' maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean; the US has left the nuclear dimensionof Indian Ocean strategy open-ended, which in turn leaves many questions surrounding US' nuclear strategy in the region unanswered. When the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 2832 (XXXVI) declaring the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace" on December 16, 1971 it called the major powers of the world to remove military units, support facilities and bases from the Indian Ocean through a dialogic process with the

littoral countries of the Indian Ocean. These were mainly those countries that had raised the need for the Indian Ocean to become a zone of peace. This step was immediately followed by the setting up of an Ad Hoc Committee by the UNGA to implement the resolution. The end of the Cold War however diluted the immediacy vis-à-vis the implementation of the resolution and the US withdrew without ratifying the resolution, leaving the nuclear question in the Indian Ocean open-ended. Besides this, continued reluctance by the US to ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba has added to the speculations that the nuclear weapons in store on Diego Garcia are on a relatively large scale with the possibility of escalation of such stockpiling in future. In this regard, the $31.9 million contract handed over to a Colorado-based construction company on March 30, 2007 for improvements to be made in wharfs in order to accommodate the SSGN nuclear attack submarines on the Diego Garcia has given to a new debate on the importance of the island to emerging US' strategic naval strategy in the Indian Ocean. As Diego Garcia is not listed in the inspectable sites of the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-1), placing of nuclear submarines in violation of the START-1 treaty would be giving the US tremendous advantage in the region. The exception for Diego Garcia's nuclear inspection and restrictions on entry has left many questions unanswered for the international community, especially the regional powers.

Diego Garcia's ability to serve as a transit point for nuclear material transport is a useful but risk-prone dimension of its maritime activities in the Indian Ocean. As early as May-June 2008, Diego Garcia served as a transit point for low grade uranium transport from Iraq fuelling speculations about nuclear risks and military secrecy by the US in the region. This has been in consonance with the US' non-committal attitude vis-à-vis nuclear treaties as it has not ratified even a single nuclear free zone treaty. The continuance of an unbounded US' nuclear approach which is not constrained by UN resolutions, any regional body or global treaty has been a real and present concern for the countries of the IOR ever since the "zone of peace" resolution was proposed in the 1970s.

The aforementioned developments since the end of the Cold War in the maritime domain portray a picture in transition in so far as the US strategy in the Indian Ocean

is concerned. There have been gradual readjustments to deal with a changed world order in the US' cooperation with the littoral countries of the IOR. However, there are certain common stands of security-related, political and economic objectives that have been sustained by the US in the Indian Ocean since the Cold War. Access to markets, energy supplies and raw materials has continued to be persistent US goals in this region. In the area of security, a major concern in the Indian Ocean remains guarding their interests against potentially hostile states such as Iran and China. If Iran was a major maritime concern for the US in the Indian Ocean in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, concerns from China have shaped much of US' maritime strategy in the 21st Century. Besides, the prevention from the threats posed by both established and new extremist groups to the US interests or those of its allies in the Indian Ocean continues to form a part of the US' post Cold War strategy in the region. This was a significant departure from the Cold War concerns of the US in the Indian Ocean, as new terror networks emerged in the littorals of the region posing newer and graver asymmetric threats. As terrorism grew in the littorals of the IOR and the US bore the brunt with attacks on its vessels, particularly in the Persian Gulf, defeating terrorist actions became a stated goal of the US Navy and a major theme of its multilateral cooperative approach in the region. In another post Cold War departure of strategy from its Cold War strategy, the US looked to replicate its Asia-Pacific alliance and friendship in the Indian Ocean though not with much success. Much of the strategy that has witnessed the US partnering with newer partners in the IOR, and hence the emergence of a new balance of power in the region, has been the result of its attempt to build a new cooperative framework in the region, geared towards protecting its maritime interests. As in the Asia-Pacific since the 1950s, the US looked towards ensuring that its post Cold War policy in the Indian Ocean is supported by a network of diplomatic relations with which to secure trade relations, military co-operation and influence. However, what has most conspicuously shaped the US post Cold War maritime strategy in the IOR has been its efforts to ensure the security of maritime chokepoints and SLOCs.

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