

Vulnerability to the International Constraints: A Study of Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Challenges

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's marine area and maritime security is vulnerable to the international and regional constraints which are not only military but also commercial too. It appears that traditional realist approaches and a liberal approach are not adequate for protecting, maintaining and managing the maritime security of Sri Lanka. In this context, this paper analyses how the Government of Sri Lanka can effectively face the country's maritime security challenges and safeguard its maritime security by establishing a maritime strategy applying available resources. The research involves qualitative methods, draws information from a wide range of primary and secondary sources and makes a descriptive analysis. The findings reveal that as a result of the regional and extra-regional power rivalry in the Indian Ocean region between India, China, USA and Japan, island nations such as Sri Lanka have encountered maritime security challenges. The paper concludes with implications for some realistic policies to overcome such challenges, especially structural and practical nature, of maritime security issues of the country.

Keywords: *Maritime Security, International Constraints, Traditional Realist Approach, Liberal approach*

Introduction

Maritime security has been a core concern among major global security actors from the beginning of the 1990's (Bueger and Edmunds, 2017). But the term 'maritime security' implies different aims to different academics and nations depending upon their interests, or even political or ideological bias. According to Christopher Rahman, the new maritime strategy of United States of America consists of piracy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities. Countering these irregular and transnational threats protects our homeland, enhances global stability, and secures freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations (Rahman, 2009: 30). In general, the maritime security has become a broader task of major global security actors aiming at preserving, maintaining and managing the

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International and national peace and security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, freedom of the seas, facilitating and defending commerce, security of Sea Lines of Communications, security protection from crimes at sea, resource security, access to resources at sea and to the seabed, environmental protection, security of all seafarers and fishermen and maintaining good governance at sea.

Among the major oceans in the world, the Indian Ocean is considered one of geo-strategically significant area for achieving global and national interests. Therefore, during and after the Cold War, the maritime security in the Indian Ocean region has become subject to the competition between the superpowers. In this broader context, the maritime security of Indian Ocean region is important not only for maintaining and balancing power among major powers but also for preserving and managing its energy resources and minerals such as gold, tin, uranium, cobalt, nickel, aluminum and cadmium, and also contains abundant fishing resources. In addition to this, the Indian Ocean provides key commercial shipping routes and raw material, oil as well as gas and sea lanes of communication between the Pacific region, East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. As these choke points are strategically significance for security, global trade and energy flow, a number of major extra-regional powers maintain a naval presence in the Indian Ocean region.

In the region of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is of prominence because as an island its geographical location is vital for the maintenance of the maritime domain. Sri Lanka is a party to the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea acceded to on 10th of December 1982 (Tantrigoda, 2010: 1-2). Therefore, the Government of Sri Lanka has authority to exercise its jurisdiction over the territorial sea, contiguous zone, continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone in cooperation with the provisions laid down in the convention. The territorial waters of Sri Lanka extend 22 km (12 Nm) beyond the coastline. The area covers about 21,500 km². Additionally, Sri Lanka enjoys rights to an un-mandated 'Exclusive Economic Zone' (EEZ). The Exclusive Economic Zone of Sri Lanka consists of 370km (200 Nm) from its coasts. It covers an area of about 510,000 km² (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2003: 11). Sri Lanka lies near to a regional power 'India' and it lies strategically on important shipping routes connecting the Western to the Eastern part of the world.

From the global powers' point of view, Sri Lanka's marine area and its location in the Indian Ocean region, historically, assumes serious strategic importance in the aspect of security for balancing power in the global rivalry.

Further, the global competition for resources in and under the oceans has given a significance economic value to Sri Lanka's marine area. Access to energy resources of Sri Lanka's marine area has become one of the core strategies for sustaining the growing industrial and economic progress of some of major powers such as USA, India and China. In this broader context, Sri Lanka's marine area serves as a hub to most of the powerful nations in the contemporary world. Due to the significance of Sri Lanka's marine area, a number of major regional and extra-regional powers have made their presence in Sri Lanka in various approaches such as ports, aviation and power plants constructions etc. In this context, the research problem of the present research deals with how and why the Government of Sri Lanka prevents, manages and controls numerous maritime security issues within its marine area and sustains a long term and short term national maritime security strategy for Sri Lanka.

In this background, this paper argues that the changing nature of maritime initiatives and activities both military and economical point of views in the marine area of Sri Lanka throughout the past three decades has been given a multiple significance for the geo-strategic location of Sri Lanka. Further, the paper discusses that being a hub in Asia, Sri Lanka will have to face some unavoidable challenges within the parameters of rivalry or completion among major powers. Moreover, the paper highlights the maritime security of Sri Lanka, it is something more than traditional and non-traditional security issues. Finally, the author debates that the changing nature of maritime initiatives and activities in the marine area of Sri Lanka as well as its military, trade and commercial importance makes Sri Lanka vulnerable to the international and regional constraints.

The author aims at summarizing some of the core observations on contemporary developments and activities in the Sri Lanka's marine area focusing attention to the role of major global security actors. It is to elaborate on the fascinating challenges of Sri Lanka raised by maritime security phenomena in debates within security studies. It enables highlighting that the possible strategies for protecting, maintaining and managing the maritime security of Sri Lanka has national, regional and global perspectives. Finally, the study provides direction and foundations for further maritime security studies about Sri Lanka.

The research will be drawn from wide range of primary and secondary sources. In this process systematically collected primary data from maritime expertise in military, civil and public sector was utilized to find out the numerous maritime security challenges that Sri Lanka might face. The

secondary sources involve various texts, journals, website releases, video and audio material, dissertations, articles, newspapers and the internet and the information from both sources is subjected to a qualitative, descriptive analysis.

Conceptualization of Existing Literature

The maritime security is probably the single most important and contested issue in the discourse on security study. Therefore, the term ‘maritime security’ has different meanings and is used in multiple ways. In this context, the theoretical and conceptual discourses help us in defining the framework essential for the present research on maritime security of Sri Lanka. In the contemporary academia, there is no shortage of theory-oriented studies on maritime security. In keeping with the existing literature, the field of maritime security has gained wider significance in recent times, encompassing traditional and non-traditional security challenges including legal matters related to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982. Nevertheless, traditional high-end maritime security remains acute. It involves inter-state disputes over resources and control over vital sea lanes (Roeben, 2020: 83-103). Specifically, most of contemporary literature on maritime security of small states argue that although traditional state-centric security has transferred into modern human centric approach in the context of post-cold war context, the small states are always threatened by it in different forms and nature (Baral, 2017: 1-17). In addition to this, some researchers and scholars argue that ultimately efforts to pursue enhanced maritime security of small states will be determined by how they plan a path between emphasizing their own vulnerability and the opportunities associated with their maritime domain (Malcolm, 2017: 237-245). In the context of Indian Ocean Region, some scholars have highlighted that small states certainly face challenges as their smaller as well as lack of the capacity to enhance their maritime domain awareness and successfully react to insecurity (Malcolm & Murday, 2017: 234-256).

Literature on maritime security of Sri Lanka can be categorized under two phases. The first phase denotes the cold war period in the context of realistic paradigm. In the first phase, the academia has subordinated developments at sea to wider themes in International Relations and International Politics, such as Great Power politics, regional power hegemony, geo-strategy or international regime-building. Moreover, most of first phase literature on maritime security of Sri Lanka deal with the cold war politics paradigm and traditional security issues in the Indian Ocean in general and Sri Lanka’s marine area in particular (Cordner, 2018: 189-224).

The second phase of literature on maritime security of Sri Lanka has given more priority to the non-traditional security issues such as piracy, climate change, illegal, maritime terrorism, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, illegal immigration, and smuggling of arms and drugs in the marine area of Sri Lanka. The changing nature of literature on maritime security of Sri Lanka considers a global trend of the post-cold war paradigm and theoretical tendency of the neo-realistic and constructivist standpoints.

Existing literature on Sri Lanka's maritime security tends to consider issues such as maritime piracy, power struggle, port security, illegal fishing, human trafficking and drug trafficking etc. At the same time, some of most important maritime security issues such as environmental crime, protection of natural resources, maintaining the economic value of the maritime routes and managing power struggle of marine area of Sri Lanka have received less attention. Therefore, all these themes remain underexplored. Notwithstanding, there have been very limited academic contributions in Sri Lanka's maritime security that have been done focusing deep attention to the current developments, initiatives and activities in Sri Lanka's marine area.

Global Powers and Maritime Security

In short, maritime security reflects a wider conceptual discussion on security. Most of studies on maritime security have focused in depth attention on traditional and non-traditional perspectives of maritime security issues. With the changing global scenario, the concept of maritime security reflects a different perspective than the traditional and non-traditional perspectives. The new perspective of maritime security is interrelated and represent different features of the same issue such as marine environmental security, ocean governance, maritime border protection, military activities at sea and security regulation of the maritime transportation system. At the forefront of maritime security concerns, the first perspective implies the significance of protection of the marine environment and management of both living and non-living marine resources. The second perspective promotes a 'stable marine regime' based on the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) principles (Leifer, 1991: 126-136). Thirdly, effective maritime border protection includes not only regional and international maritime security cooperation but also successful supervision by coastal states throughout their own zones of maritime jurisdiction. The perspective of military activities at sea reflects matters related to managing military issues such as disarmament, arms control, demilitarization, arms limitation, elimination of sea-based nuclear weapons and arms reduction at sea (Soares, 1998: 50). Finally, security regulation of

the maritime transportation system covers all sectors of the traditional and non-traditional maritime security such as transportation industry exploitation due to piracy and other maritime crime and terrorism as well as emerging new security regimes.

Returning to the aspect of security set out earlier, preserving, maintaining and managing maritime security is a key factor which concerns Sri Lanka as it is an island. Historically, despite its size, Sri Lanka's marine area in the Indian Ocean was significantly vital not only for the stability of regional power but also for achieving their long term and short-term national interests of global powers. Ceylon as was then, was colonized by Western Europeans from 1505 to 1948 (Portuguese, Dutch and the British) in order to mainly use it as a transit hub of the maritime shipping trade. Further, those powers utilized Ceylon's ports for docking and refueling their ships which were navigating their vast domains.

Sri Lanka's Strategic Location

During the period of the Cold War, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) acquired importance in the global strategic considerations. By considering the strategic location of Sri Lanka in terms of maritime security in the Indian Ocean, the Japanese air force attacked the island targeting Colombo and Trincomalee ports in 1942 (The Battle of Ceylon or The Easter Sunday Raid). But, these Japanese offensives towards Sri Lanka cannot be considered as invasion but mostly as scouting action to clear the Indian Ocean of hostile fleets (Mendis, 1992: 25). According to Winston Churchill's (Prime Minister of Great Britain) point of view, the Battle of Ceylon or The Easter Sunday Raid was, 'the most dangerous moment of the War, and one which caused him the greatest alarm, as the Japanese Fleet was heading for Ceylon and the naval base there. The capture of Ceylon, the consequent control of the Indian Ocean, and the possibility at the same time of a German conquest of Egypt would have closed the ring and the future would have been black' (Ratnayake, 2010: 35; Birchall, 2004; John, 2015).

More importantly, during the period of the Second World War, the South East Asian Command (SEAC) of Axis powers deployed its naval military strength in Colombo and Trincomalee ports and air facilities were improved in Ceylon by the SEAC to make military operations against Japanese bases in northern Sumatra, Port Blair in the Andamans and to disrupt Japanese communications in Sumatra, Burma and the Gulf of Siam (Jayasekera, 1992: 87-89).

During and after the Second World War, Sri Lanka was listed out one of strategically important islands in the Indian Ocean region. Therefore, most of global powers concern the maritime significance of Sri Lanka in the context of global power rivalry. The British Defense and External affairs Agreement of 1947,² the Maritime Agreement with USSR of 1962 and Sino-Ceylon commercial maritime agreement in 1963 are some of excellent examples for the Western and Non- Western concern on Sri Lanka's maritime strategic location. In the 1950s, considering the maritime significance of Sri Lanka, a senior British Naval Chief Admiral Norris highlighted the fact that the strategic location of Trincomalee would be available for use in the event of a conflict (Bandaranaike, 1954).

In addition to this, the United States of America has also been highly interests in Sri Lanka's maritime strategic location. For example, during the periods of presidentship of J.R Jayewardene (1978-1989) and Ranasinghe Premadasa (1989-1993), Sri Lanka was chosen as the site for the Voice of America transmitting station, that was suspected of being used for intelligence gathering purposes in the Indian Ocean. In 1983, Sri Lanka and the USA reached two controversial agreements on the Oil Tank Farm Development Project at Trincomalee and the Extension of Facilities to the Voice of America (Keerawella, 1995: 283; Sivarajah, 1995: 48-55). More than anything else, those agreements were related to the USA's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean Region rather than the commercial or trade cooperation with Sri Lanka (Kumara, 2012: 163).

In addition to the Western Europeans, given its regional role, size, proximity and close ties, India is more concerned about the maritime strategic location of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean. From the maritime security point of view of India, Sri Lanka assumes serious strategic importance in the Indian Ocean region. Moreover, the maritime strategic importance of Sri Lanka becomes crystal clear from the statement of the then first Prime Minister of Ceylon, D. S. Senanayake, said, 'We are in an especially dangerous position, because we are in one of the strategic highways of the world. The country, which captures Ceylon could dominate the Indian Ocean' (Sinha, 1992: 20). Having attained its independence after a long colonial rule, Sri Lanka was repugnant for India to think of dominating her neighbors in the name of safeguarding its security (Kaushik, 1987: 110). Hence, it has sought to prevent any external military presence in the Indian Ocean by promoting

² As per the provision of Defense agreement, Ceylon had agreed to let the Government of the United Kingdom use naval and air bases, ports, military establishments, telecommunication facilities, and the right of service courts and authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said forces as they exercise at present.

good neighborliness and peaceful regional co-operation. But, during this period, Sri Lanka entertained intermittent fear of hostile intentions from India. It was made clear by John Kotelawala when he stated in 1955 ‘the day Ceylon dispensed with Englishman completely, the Island would go under India’ (Kodikara, 1982: 21). Though there was no clear-cut threat from any quarter at this stage, there were however some indirect references to India. On the contrary, under Nehru, India pursued a policy of enlightened self-interest without any antagonism towards its small neighbors. But it has its own geopolitical sensitivities to the developments in Sri Lanka (Muni, 1993: 13-28).

India and Strategic Unity of South Asia

Further, India views the military presence of any major power in the South Asian region as a threat to regional security, which in itself is the main concern of India. In this context, the concept of ‘strategic unity’ of South Asia has been raised in Sri Lanka as a main part of its defense calculations. Separated from India by a narrow stretch of water, Sri Lanka ‘is close enough to be influenced by India but unlike the other small states in the region which are geographically linked to India by a land mass, she is distant enough to maintain her own identity’ (Keerawella, 1990: 179).

In the 1950s, India introduced a model quite similar to the Monroe Doctrine to safeguard India’s security interests by excluding extra-regional powers from the vicinity of the Indian Ocean. In the 1940s, Kavalam M. Panikkar, India’s most famous maritime strategist, argued that the Indian Ocean should remain “truly Indian”, advocating the creation of a “steel ring” around India through the establishment of forward naval bases in Singapore, Mauritius, Yemen (Socotra), and Sri Lanka. The study has highlighted the significance of marine area of Sri Lanka for achieving and safeguarding the national interests of India (Panikkar, 1945: 84-94).

As a result of changing regimes in the 1980s, Sri Lanka granted certain facilities and concessions to the United States of America (USA) in the nature of Trincomalee Tank Farm deal and the Voice of America (VOA) agreement. The Trincomalee Tank Farm deal was given to a Singapore based USA Company after rejecting the Indian tender (Phadnis, 1989: 223). Thus, India became extremely sensitive to the USA’s role in the marine area of Sri Lanka. Provision of the strategic harbor of Trincomalee for the use by the American Navy in such a scenario was highly dangerous for India as it constituted a grave threat to its security (De Silva, 1995: 152-153). In this regards, Khursheed Alam Khan, minister of state for external affairs, stated; “We are aware about the intrusion of foreign agencies in Sri Lanka. This is a

very serious thing because we do not want any foreign agencies so near our country and particularly the SAS which is providing training to the commandos or the Mossad which is a notorious agency like the CIA. Therefore, we never want that these agencies should be allowed to come into Sri Lanka. We have made this very clear to the Sri Lankan government. Similarly, we do not appreciate that they have allowed a broadcasting station of the Voice of America to be installed there; it will not be in the interest of this region which should be free from all such agencies. Just as we want that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace, similarly, we do not want any kind of intrusion into our region” (De Silva, 1995: 152-153)

Following the July 1983 disturbance in Sri Lanka, there emerged a new strategic thinking in India, which emphasized the strategic unity of South Asia and India’s predominant role in it. Relating to defense and security, which took concrete shape through Mrs. Indira Gandhi who enunciated the idea, is popularly known as the ‘Indira Doctrine’ (Kodikara, 1987: 644-645). This doctrine was reflected in the foreign policy-making of India, which sought for the consolidation of regional security interests. In this context, the military presence of external power in Sri Lanka had a serious impact on the Indo-Lanka relations. Jayasekera, analyses political and geo-strategic aspect of Sri Lanka’s security dilemma up to the beginning of 1980s (Jayasekera, 1992). This study applies the concept of security, including not only colonial legacy, political, defence and foreign policy factors but also social, economic and cultural vulnerability, to Sri Lanka. Moreover, it deals with Sri Lanka’s maritime security dilemma and in this, one of main concerns is how Sri Lanka could accommodate its security requirements within the demands of the regional medium power. The second part of the above study Jayasekera and Werake (1985) analyse Sri Lanka’s internal crises and their implications leading to direct external involvement after 1983. They have tried to analyse the issues confronting the post-colonial state and society and the different dimensions of the crisis. Moreover, the contributors have focused their attention on Indian intervention in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka focusing special attention on the significance of maritime security of Sri Lanka. Moreover, De Silva (1995) analysed the nature of the India and Sri Lanka security issues as well as the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka in a historical perspective. According to the author, India’s involvement in Sri Lanka’s internal affairs in the period from 1987 to 1991 is connected with the significance of geo-strategical location and marine area of Sri Lanka.

In this context, India has been concerned about Sri Lanka’s interests in the Indian Ocean. India has nothing to worry about as long as Sri Lanka is friendly or neutral but if there is any danger of Sri Lanka’s falling under the

domination of a power hostile to India, India cannot tolerate such a situation endangering her territorial integrity (Poulose, 1982)

After the end of the cold war, with the changing global political, economic and trade scenario, the significance of Sri Lanka's marine area has undergone a change with the existing power rivalry in the Indian Ocean region. The role of India, as a traditional power player in the Indian Ocean region, has been challenged by new power players. As an emerging new power player in the Indian Ocean as well as at global level, China has given more priority for building very close relationships with Sri Lanka. This has become an important component of Sri Lanka's maritime strategic linkages to safeguard its interests at the regional and global level. Sri Lanka looks at China not only as a valuable and stable Asian power but also as a rapidly growing economy and a source of knowledge. Sri Lanka's pro dominant maritime policy towards China has also resulted in creating a new balance of power system in the Indian Ocean region. It seems that the new power competition in the Indian Ocean region is a challenge to Sri Lanka in achieving its short-term and long-term maritime security interests.

China's Maritime Interests

Today, Chinese support remains to be of special interest to Sri Lanka. But, it is important to mention here that China did not have strategic interests in Sri Lanka until recently when its maritime position became more important to China's trade and energy routes (Wheeler, 2012: 15). Therefore, China's maritime interests towards Sri Lanka are more strategic than political (Kelegama, 2014: 132).

In 1952, prior to its establishment of diplomatic relations with China, Sri Lanka, ignoring the sanction of some Western countries against China, signed the trade agreement on rubber for rice with China, thus ushering in friendly cooperation in economic and trade between China and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka had close ties with the People's Republic of China during Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government in infrastructure and economic development aspects. Such interconnectedness was a strategic concern for India owing to its proximity to Sri Lanka and the overtones on national security. For instance, Sri Lanka and China signed the Sri Lanka-China Maritime Agreement on 25 July 1963 with the objective to further economic ties and mutual benefit (Jayawardane, 2005). This agreement was mainly concerned to promote Sri Lankan and Chinese vessels operating from port in their respective countries, to engage in foreign trade, cargo and passenger service (Dhanapala & Gooneratne, 2012). According to Mendis, there was also a politically motivated attempt to discredit China on the

grounds that the Maritime Agreement which it signed with Sri Lanka in 1964 had a secret clause which allowed China the use of Trincomalee as a naval base (Mendis, 1992).

Since 2009, there has been a visible increase in China's presence in the marine area belonging to Sri Lanka. The Chinese are building a port of regional and global levels in Hambantota, 230 kilometers south of Colombo, at an estimated cost of \$1 billion, and over 85% of the project is being funded by the Chinese. The four-phase project is scheduled to be completed in 15 years and work on the first phase began in 2007. The second phase envisages construction of an industrial port with a 1,000-meter jetty and an oil refinery. The entire project includes the construction of a gas-fired power plant, a ship repair unit, a bunkering terminal, an oil refinery and storage facilities for aviation fuel and liquefied petroleum gas (Jayasuriya, 2008). Concerning the Chinese presence in the marine area of Sri Lanka, in his book, Robert D. Kaplan analyzes the growing importance of the Indian Ocean in general and Sri Lanka's marine area in particular and argues that the Indian Ocean remains at the heart of the geopolitical center of the developing world. Kaplan points out that countries such as China and India have increasingly begun to expand their naval resources in the Indian Ocean region while Americans were withdrawing due to budgetary limitations. Further, in his study, he has highlighted the commercial significance of Indian Ocean region and prominence of Sri Lanka in terms of its location. In this context he mainly considers the presence of Chinese investment interest in the Hambantota port project (Kaplan, 2010).

According to Thomas Wheeler, Chinese relations with Sri Lanka have been characterized as part of China's 'String of Pearls' strategy. Further, he highlights that this term conceived in the US context implies that China seeks to eventually deploy its navy into the Indian Ocean. It requires a collection of strategically placed naval bases in Myanmar, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Chinese funded and constructed Hambantota Port which has come under special scrutiny (Wheeler, 2012: 15). With the purpose of taking control over the Indian Ocean in terms of military, trade and commerce, China is engaging with development projects in the marine area of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's maritime area provides the strategically important shipping routes connecting the Western to the Eastern part of the world. In this context, Sri Lanka's marine area creates a hub in the Indian Ocean, as well as a key trans-shipment port for the Bay of Bengal trade (De Silva, 2018: 13-22). Hence, Lanka's location is significance in the nautical corridor between

the East and West. Therefore, global and regional power players such as the USA, China, Japan and India are willing to maximize trade and foreign investments relations with Sri Lanka.

As a result of global demand and technological development, competition for natural resources in and under the oceans, specifically energy, is increasing. Global energy and natural resources consumption is growing rapidly, particularly in Indian and Chinese economies. They may be the key energy and natural resources consumers in the near future.

Conclusion

The total marine area of Sri Lanka including the territorial sea, contiguous zone and Exclusive Economic Zone is supposed to be 23 times larger than the total land area. In the Indian Ocean context, Sri Lanka's marine area has been considered as rich and has been rated among the highly productive seas of the world. The natural resources of the coastal region of Sri Lanka include the land, minerals, mineral sand, surface and ground water, flora and fauna and other natural habitats which include coral reefs, mangroves, sea grass beds, lagoons, tidal flats (salt marshes), sand dunes, beaches and spits and the coastal waters. Further, Sri Lanka's marine area consists of economically important resources such as fish³, crustaceans, mollusks and marine plants. In addition to this, Sri Lanka's marine area (sea bed) can be used for exploration and exploitation of oil, minerals and hydrocarbon resources. Management of marine resources in Sri Lanka is hindered by the sectoral approach of many government agencies.

In addition to the importance with regards to national security and trade, Sri Lanka's marine area is significant for the regional and global consumption of energy and natural resources. Therefore, the management of marine resources is essential to safeguard the sustainable development of Sri Lanka, which has been hindered by the sectorial approach of the Government of Sri Lanka.

The trade activities in the Indian Ocean in pre-modern times covered a vast area that comprised the territory from South China to the Eastern coast of Africa and the Arabian coast of the Mediterranean region which was activated collectively.

³ Sri Lanka's marine fisheries resource base has a total extent of 538500 km² (For more details, Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka: The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, p. 3

The conclusion deals with major findings of the present study and some policy recommendations for maritime security policy making. In a broader context, the field of contemporary maritime security study is concerned with the nautical integrity of all the fundamentals that form the basic and crucial features of the maritime domain and the safety of all external entities existing in or making use of the maritime domain. Consequently, countering these asymmetrical and transnational threats protects states, enhances global peace, stability and secures freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations. In this background, most global security actors consider the creation and maintenance of security in the Indian Ocean as essential to mitigating threats short of war, including piracy, terrorism, and weapon proliferation, drug trafficking as well as other illicit activities.

With the global development of soft power and smart power strategies, this discussion on maritime security of Sri Lanka implicates some other important aspects which are more important than the aspects of military. Historically, maritime initiatives and activities of trade and commerce in the Indian Ocean in general and marine area of Sri Lanka in particular is an important component of a global maritime trade and commerce.

In this context, the importance of Sri Lanka's marine area to the United States, China, Japan and India is viewed by some as a key piece in a larger geopolitical dynamic, what has been referred to as a new 'Great Game'. Sri Lanka's maritime security is vulnerable to international constraint in the context of global power rivalry in the Indian Ocean region. While all four countries share an interest in securing maritime trade routes, the United States has invested relatively few economic and security resources in Sri Lanka, preferring to focus instead on the political environment. Therefore, the strategic location of Sri Lanka is rapidly becoming one of the most important islands in the Indian Ocean region in terms of global maritime trade, commerce, natural resources and military purposes. Further, it is clear that the key global highways of the maritime shipping run South of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's marine area has a long history of military, trade and cultural interaction with the rest of the world. Currently, Sri Lanka's traditional maritime status as a global trade highway is more significant than ever before, while global military presence in the marine area is unprecedented. Therefore, Sri Lanka's maritime security issues have the potential of disrupting not only its own economy but also the regional and global economy, energy security and military existence. Hence, a number of

regional and extra-regional powers have a stake in Sri Lanka's maritime security and deploy forces in the area.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of Sri Lanka should identify realistic policies to overcome structural and practical challenges of maritime security issues of Sri Lanka paying attention to the following areas. First, the Government of Sri Lanka must clearly estimate the economic value of Sri Lanka's marine area concerning the long term and short term blue economic policy aspect separately from a point of view of military significance. Second, the Government of Sri Lanka needs to realize the changing nature of sea power and the role of formal and informal actors for maritime security governance in Sri Lanka's marine area. Third, the Government of Sri Lanka needs to pay attention to the possibility of enforcing new legal coordination and capacity-building mechanisms considering the provisions of international maritime law. Finally, the Government of Sri Lanka should examine the possibility of the establishment of international security cooperation focusing regional and global security actors' attention on the strategic significance of Sri Lanka's marine area for international security, trade and commerce as well as categorize potential national, regional and global partners for enhancing the blue economic strategy of Sri Lanka.

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