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இலங்கை சனாதிபதி
President of Sri Lanka

Message

I am pleased to send this message on the occasion of the launch of the first flagship journal 'INSSSL Defence Review· of the Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka (INSSSL).

I am glad to note that the INSSSL, as the premier national security think tank in Sri Lanka, is producing the first defence journal which consists of articles from eminent scholars and academics from the region and beyond, to provide a research platform for security studies with a priority to enhance the understanding of national, regional and international security. It is clear that relevant research and policy on national security is of the highest importance to the Ministry of Defence in order to better understand the country's security environment and craft evidence-based policy options and strategies for debate and discussion that would lead to the formulation of policies to safeguard national security.

It is with a long term vision that I established the INSSSL to become one of the leading security think tanks in the region, to improve policy and decision making through high quality research and analysis with excellence. This initiative was aimed to fill the void within the Ministry of Defence which was in need of a core academic and research division. Hence, the institute has been entrusted with the task of conducting a broad array of research for the ministry of defence on key areas of security and strategy. The mission of the institute being to continuously support the Ministry in formulating and executing strategic plans and policies for a safe, secure and sovereign nation, I launched this establishment keeping in mind the future generations of our nation who will benefit from the far-thinking and targeted plans and policies of strategic importance to national security that will be formulated and implemented with the support of an organization of this nature.

When considering Sri Lanka's critical geo-strategic location where it lies within the crossroads of all maritime routes in the region, it is extremely important that we foresee the traditional and non-traditional, hard and soft threats to our national security. As a reason of this geo-strategic importance, this island nation continues to generate much interest in the foreign policies of regional and international superpowers in the east as well as the west. Considering these dynamics, through the premiere national security think tank INSSSL the government could attract and utilize the best minds and strategic thinkers to advise and assist decision makers within the government to formulate policy to safeguarded national security.

I congratulate the Director General and staff of INSSSL for their tireless efforts in producing a timely and relevant publication of such high quality within a very short time and wish them all the best to achieve every success envisaged for the future of this institute.

Maithripala Sirisena

December 15, 2016

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இலங்கைச் சனநாயக சோசலிசக் குடியரசு
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Message from the Chairman

It is an honour and privilege to announce the launch of the first flagship journal "**INSSSL Defence Review**" of the newly established Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka (INSSSL), which is the premier think-tank of the Ministry of Defence. His Excellency the President, Maithripala Sirisena as the Head of the Ministry of Defence, felt the need for an establishment within the Ministry that could conduct high-quality research, academic debate and discussion on subjects related to national security vis a vis the regional and international context. Thus, in August this year, he launched the initiative to create INSSSL as a think-tank which would fulfil an existing gap within the Ministry.

As one of it's core activities, soon after its inception, the Institute began work on the first National Defence Journal in Sri Lanka which is aimed at providing a platform for in-depth and high-quality research in the areas of security and strategic studies in a national, regional and extra-regional context. Contributors range from senior academics, practitioners and researchers to, officers of the Sri Lanka armed forces. The articles cover a wide array of topics on international security, maritime issues, conflict theories and maintaining the status quo between states in the Far East to name a few. The contributors have been drawn from Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Norway, Japan and Sri Lanka which will indeed make this publication an insightful read for senior academics, students, practitioners as well as the general public who have an interest in international relations and security/ strategic studies.

As we have now entered a phase of reconciliation after a 30 year war that affected the economic, political and social fabric of this country, it is extremely vital and relevant that the Ministry takes steps towards a more holistic approach in the reconciliation process as well as maintaining transparent communication with the public in this regard. As such, the establishment of a national security think tank that conducts a broad array of research and advocacy as well as generates debate and discussion in this area could greatly contribute to a novel approach taken with regard to defence and security in the country. We, at the Ministry are pleased to support such an initiative that is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka

I congratulate INSSSL for its success in compiling the first issue of this flagship journal in a comparatively short time, and strongly believe that the institute has the potential to become one of the leading think-tanks in the field of security studies. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the editorial board and all the contributors for their efforts in ensuring the production of a high-quality and very timely publication. I hope the readers obtain useful insights by perusing, analysing and reflecting on the very enlightening and relevant articles published in this issue.

Eng. Karunasena Hettiarachchi

PREFACE

According to Prof. Klaus Schwab, Founder of World Economic Forum, we are at the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It has potential to empower individuals and communities but also create new security risks and we are witnessing this everyday. Global conflict and security threats have been a primary concern of all nations escalating in the past few years with intensifying violence in several parts of the world, which has resulted in destabilising governments, societies and displacing multitudes of people. According to the UNCHR Global Trends report of 2015, an unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world have been forced from home and nearly 34,000 people are forcibly displaced everyday as a result of conflict or persecution. The year 2015 has also recorded the highest amount of conflict related deaths and number of refugees after World War II. In the same year, more than US$ 14 trillion has been spent on international conflicts, according to reports by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), which represents 13% of global GDP and is roughly the combined value of the economies of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Spain and Brazil. It is also a disturbing factor that we are now in a world of uncertainly with the new global order being challenged.

After World War II there has been considerable interest in national security issues worldwide and since the last decades of the 20th century, a remarkable change in the way security is interpreted, studied and practiced. The field of Security Studies has been the subject of much academic, intellectual and political debate during this period. In recent years the traditional problems of international relations which focused on conflicts between sovereign states have been taken over by a new and more complex situation dominated by "non-traditional" conflicts and threats to security. As such, the concentration of Defence and Security Studies is now particularly not just about states but related to all human collectivities. In this framework, Defence and Security Studies has developed significance as an academic discipline as governments need trained planners, strategists and analysts to advice and assist in far-sighted and appropriate policy-making.

The discipline of Defence and Security Studies also provides an insight into an in-depth analysis of contemporary events and issues in this tumultuous and unpredictable world. Internal, regional and international political instability, economic inequalities, improper foreign policies and international relations have led to even more friction within nations, among governments and non-state actors. While diplomacy and peace building endeavours play a significant role in considerably neutralising these effects, establishing and maintaining peace between and within nations, safeguarding internal security and defence are areas that are an integral part of governance.

In this regard, the premier national think tank of the Ministry of Defence, the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) plays an important role in supporting the government by providing sound and timely assessment on facets of national security with the aim of safeguarding the country from internal and external threats; utilising its rich resource pool of eminent security analysts and practitioners; and serving as a central repository of knowledge for both scholars and practitioners committed to the nation's unity, harmony and sovereignty.

Established under the Ministry of Defence, INSSSL is the first and only national security think tank in Sri Lanka. It serves under the President, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena who is also the President of the Institute, Eng. Karunasena

Hettiarachchi Secretary Defence as the Chairman along with Commanders of the armed forces and Chief of Defence Staff which forms its Board of Governors with an eminent advisory council. Following the completion of a nearly thirty year conflict, the war-ravaged country now needs to focus on peace building and post-war reconciliation with a view to preserve and maintain the country's national security and sovereignty for the benefit of our future generations.

It is with great honour that we present to you the first national defence journal **"INSSSL Defence Review 2017"** by a Sri Lankan security think tank with contributions from renowned local and international academia along with Officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces. This marks a momentous occasion for all of us at the Institute as this signifies the completion of one of the inceptive projects undertaken by the institute established by His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena President of Sri Lanka with a long term vision to foster a better understanding of the national, regional and extra-regional security environment with a view to provide necessary policy options and strategies to the Government of Sri Lanka through debate and discussion. The institute also supports the Ministry of Defence to formulate and execute timely strategic plans by means of high quality research and expertise.

"INSSSL Defence Review 2017" aims to provide a research platform on defence and security studies with a priority to enhance the understanding of national, regional, international security and geopolitics. The authors of the articles have been identified as those who could make a significant contribution with their expert views on recent events and occurrences in the national, regional and international security paradigm. Their writings focus on regional superpowers in the Indian Ocean region; the endless conflict in Afghanistan; theories of conflict and its relevance in the Sri Lankan context; security in the Gulf; India in the new world order; perspectives of security and power balance in the Taiwan strait; visions for smart air power in the region; Sino-Sri Lanka relations in the Indian Ocean; and insurgency and counter-insurgency strategies with regard to Sri Lanka. We are certain that these enriching and very informative articles will be beneficial and create an interesting read for all those with an interest in Defence and Security Studies.

We thank His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist republic of Sri Lanka for his vision in creating this independent, critical-thinking establishment which essentially belongs to the people of this nation. In publishing the journal within a short space of time in an establishment that was launched just a few months back we have had to face numerous limitations. However, we are indeed graciously thankful to Eng. Karunasena Hettiarachchi Chairman INSSSL and the Ministry of Defence, the staff of INSSSL and all those who supported us in this endeavour for their tireless efforts towards the accomplishment of this objective.

As our great Sri Lankan scholar Kumarathunga Munidasa clearly explained, "A nation not innovative cannot prosper". To achieve this it is essential that we invest in research. We believe that this small but important step will be a starting point for our future generations and policy makers to invest in and engage in research in the coming years.

Asanga Abeyagoonasekera
Editor / Director General

Gayathri de Zoysa
Co-Editor / Research Analyst

Contents

Changing US–China Power Balance and the Role of Japan – Sri Lanka – India Co-operation

Satoru Nagao

Abstract

Currently, a new dynamic is taking place in Japanese foreign policy. Japan regards Sri Lanka as a maritime security partner. Japan is also promoting maritime security co-operation with India. Why has Japan sought to engage in maritime security in the Indian Ocean? This article presents an analysis based on three questions: What changes are happening around Japan? How are Japanese security and the Indian Ocean related? What is the role of Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation? China has expanded military activities around Japan and the South China Sea. Furthermore, changing the US–China military balance is the background of China's assertiveness. In the Indian Ocean, China has also increased military activities. A need exists to maintain a military balance with China despite its larger military budget than that of Japan. Therefore, a new system is gradually emerging. A network of these several mini-lateral and multi-lateral security initiatives might soon culminate in a collective security system in which Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation serves an important role. If Japan and India were to collaborate to establish the maritime communication network system for the entire Indian Ocean in Sri Lanka, then the three countries might easily become aware of events and changes occurring in the Indian Ocean region. To achieve this goal, a Japan – Sri Lanka – India strategic dialogue must be established, through which Japan and India can share information, better identify Sri Lankan needs, and choose courses of co-operation or support. Now is the time to do so.

Key words: Japan, Indian Ocean, Strategy, Defence, Maritime Security

A new dynamic is prevailing in Japanese foreign policy. Although Japan has been a stable supporter of Sri Lankan development for a long time, little actual change has come to maritime security up to the present. Nevertheless, Japan now regards Sri Lanka as a partner in maritime security. As one example, when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met President Maithripala Sirisena in May 2016, the media statement reflected Japan's new perception: "Both leaders welcomed the convening of the first round of the Policy Dialogue at the Senior Official Level of the two Foreign Ministries and the inaugural Sri Lanka-Japan Dialogue on Maritime Security, Safety

and Oceanic Issues in January 2016 in Colombo, where the two maritime states reconfirmed the importance of maintaining the freedom of the high seas and maritime order based on the rule of law. As a part of strengthening maritime co-operation between the two countries, both leaders also acknowledged the importance of the steady progress of the Project for Maritime Safety Capability Improvement (worth approximately 1.8 billion yen), that includes the provision of two patrol vessels."[1] Vessels of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force also called at a port 22 times during April 2011 – June 2016. In light of these examples and others, one can anticipate a new age of Japan–Sri Lanka relations.

Japan has also promoted maritime security co-operation with India. Actually, Japan and India have held joint exercises such as Japan–India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) and Japan–India–US Malabar Exercises. Japan has also participated in the Indian Ocean Rim Association and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium.

Why has Japan tried to engage in maritime security in the Indian Ocean? This article presents one related analysis based on three questions: What changes have occurred around Japan? How are Japanese security and the Indian Ocean related? What is the role of Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation?

What changes have happened around Japan?

Japanese engagement with Sri Lanka and India has advanced since the 2000s as Japan has begun to confront difficulties with China. Therefore, the China factor cannot be overlooked while assessing Japan–Sri-Lanka – India security co-operation.

China has been expanding military activities around Japan and countries surrounding the South China Sea. For instance, in the East China Sea, a Chinese nuclear attack submarine violated the territorial seas of Japan in 2004. China started naval exercises on the Pacific side of Japan in 2008.

In the air, 40 Chinese fighters, bombers and intelligence planes have started "routine drills" on the Pacific side of Japan. Eight of them flew from the Pacific side to the East China Sea between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako, Japan in September 2016[2]. Since then, the area of these naval and air exercises has been expanding from the first island chain to the second island chain, which forms the defence line of China (Fig. 1). As a result, "In FY 2012, the number of scrambles against Chinese aircraft exceeded the number of those against the Russian aircraft for the first time[3] (FY=Fiscal Year)." Incidents of scrambles aircraft against Chinese aircraft during 2015 increased to 571[4].
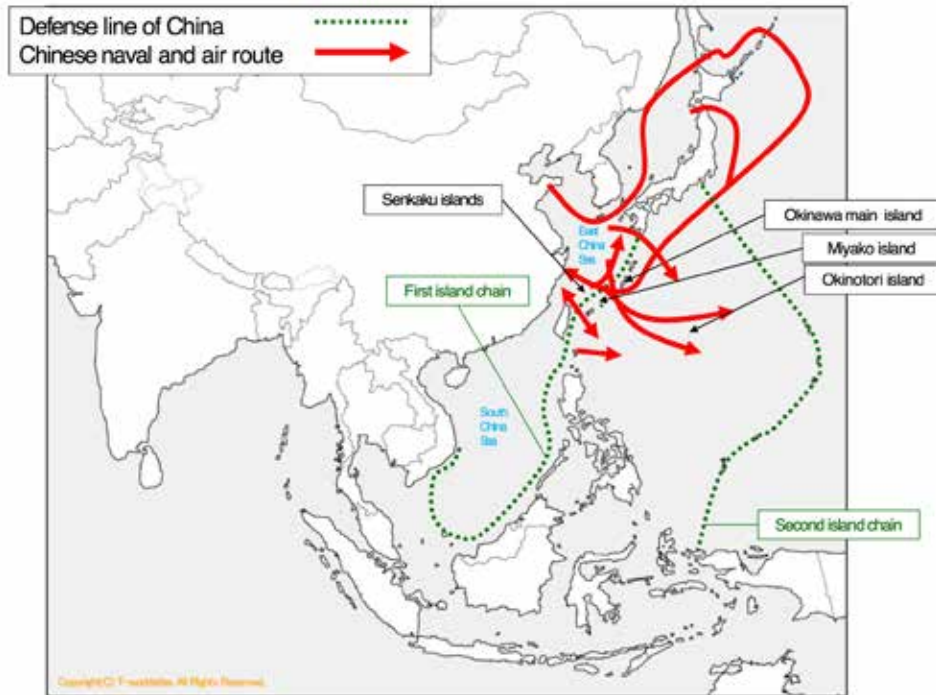
Figure 1: China's naval and air activities around Japan.

From the Japanese perspective, the South China Sea situation is also an important matter. Although the Permanent Court of Arbitration rejected China's ownership claim of 90% of South China Sea in 2016, China is ignoring the verdict and building three new airports on their seven artificial islands in the South China Sea[5]. These facts indicate that China will deploy ballistic missile submarines under the protection of fighter jets launched from these artificial islands and then exclude all foreign ships and airplanes that might identify their submarines[6]. A report written by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pointed out that "If Japan were to yield, the South China Sea would become even more fortified[7]".

Why has China's assertiveness intensified so much lately? In August 2013, then Japanese defence minister Itsunori Onodera's statement at a symposium in Tokyo carries one important point worth taking notice. He reiterated that "China has made increasing advancement into the seas." "When it did not have as much military capability, China tried to promote dialogue and economic co-operation, setting territorial rows aside" "But when it sees a chance, any (daylight?) between a nation and its ally, it makes blunt advancements. This is what is happening and what we should learn from the situation in Southeast Asia."[8] This statement denotes clearly that Southeast Asian countries cannot deter China's assertiveness because they have

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insufficient military power to do so.

It seems that the tendency of China's maritime expansion has been based on military balance, if history is any guide. For example, when France withdrew from Vietnam in the 1950s, China occupied half of the Paracel Islands. China occupied the other half of the Paracel Islands in 1974 immediately after the Vietnam War ended and the United States withdrew from the region. After the Soviet Union withdrew from Vietnam, China attacked the Spratly Islands controlled by Vietnam in 1988. Along similar lines, after the United States withdrew from the Philippines, China occupied Mischief Reef, which both the Philippines and Vietnam claimed[9].

As background of the current situation, the military balance between the United States and China has also changed after the Cold War. The United States has acquired only 13 submarines while China has acquired at least 42 submarines between 2000 and 2015. Vice Admiral Joseph Mulloy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Capabilities and Resources of the US Navy, reported that China has more diesel-powered and nuclear-powered submarines than the United States in February 2015[10]. As a result, China has been expanding its military activities.

As described above, rising Chinese influence and declining US power are degrading the security situation around Japan. Their military modernization is occurring too rapidly. Japan and countries around the South China Sea are likely to suffer from China's assertiveness in the near future. Therefore, a need exists for us to maintain a military balance with China despite their larger military budget than that of Japan.

How is Japanese security related to the Indian Ocean?

Such a situation in the sea around Japan and the South China Sea is a close link with the situation in the Indian Ocean. China has started to increase its military activities in the Indian Ocean. China is concerned about their over-dependence on their Sea Line of Communications (SLOCs) from the Middle East to China through the Strait of Malacca. Therefore, they have tried to make an alternative route via Middle East–Pakistan–China or Middle East–Myanmar–China etc. However, all these routes must run through the Indian Ocean.

Since the middle of the 2000s, China's military activities in the Indian Ocean have been expanding. In 2012, at least 22 contacts were recorded with vessels suspected to be Chinese nuclear attack submarines patrolling in the Indian Ocean[11]. Since 2014, at least four Chinese submarines and one submarine support-ship have docked at a port in Pakistan and Sri Lanka[12]. Currently, these submarines have been sighted, on average, four times every three months[13]. The activities of these submarines indicate that the area of Chinese influence will expand in the Indian Ocean because these Chinese submarines can attack India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines and SLOCs of many countries, including Japan, at will.

China exports naval and air weapons to countries surrounding India. Submarines, especially, serve an important role for both Japan and India. Pakistan chose to import eight Chinese submarines for their navy. Bangladesh is also set to import two submarines from China. These submarines will, to a great degree, regulate

India's naval activities because the Indian Navy must have sufficient ships to maintain regular oversight over the locations and purposes of other countries' submarines.

A weak point in China's strategy, however, is that they have no naval port in this region. Therefore, conforming to the "String of Pearl Strategy", China is investing in the development of numerous ports in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka located within the Indian Ocean. China can alleviate their vulnerability of not having a naval port in the region if the Chinese navy uses civil-purpose ports as naval supply bases. According to one report, China is planning to deploy a navy ship to Gwadar in Pakistan, which is an important port in China's "String of Pearl Strategy"[14].

Why has China's assertiveness increased in the Indian Ocean lately? The changing US–China military balance might have affected the situation. The United States became an influential country in this region, especially after the 1970s. The United States dispatched aircraft carrier battle groups several times to respond to conflicts within the region, such as the Indo-China War, the third Indo-Pakistan War, the Gulf War, *Operation Enduring Freedom* after 9/11, and The Iraq War. The United States used the island of Diego Garcia as a hub to deploy military power. Consequently, the United States continues to be the most powerful presence within the region. However, because US naval power has been declining, China has been increasing their own naval activities in the Indian Ocean, as in the oceans around Japan and South China Sea. Therefore, we must find some alternative country to fill the power vacuum in this region.

What is the role of Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation?

(i)   Emerging new security network

How should that be done? Two strategies might be effective. First, maintaining the military balance is the topmost priority to deter any worst case scenario. Secondly, great powers around China including Japan should demonstrate to China that responsible behaviour will have mutually beneficial outcomes for all concerned, and that the outcomes are better than those that can be obtained from a forceful attitude. A co-operative system should emerge for these countries in this region to fulfil these two conditions.

For a long time, bilateral alliances led by the United States such as Japan–US, US–South Korea, US–Philippines, US–Australia have maintained order in the Pacific. However, despite the many US alliances, a deep defence relationship is lacking. For example, both Japan and Australia are US allies, but they share no close mutual security relations. This system would function effectively if the United States had sufficient military resources to tackle all the looming difficulties in this region.

However, because US military resources have been declining, the "old" bilateral system is insufficient to maintain peace and order in this region. This changing power balance is best reflected in 'China's assertiveness' in the region, emphasizing the need for an alternative system that can function better in changed circumstances.

Therefore, a new system is currently emerging gradually. Several multinational security co-operation arrangements have been recently formed among Japan–

India–US, Japan–US–Australia, Japan–India–US–Australia–Singapore, and other countries. The possibility exists that these several bilateral, trilateral, and other multilateral security networks can culminate in a collective security system in the near future (Fig. 3).

Especially, the first Japan–India–Australia Trilateral Dialogue held in June 2015 was symbolic because it did not include the United States. This Trilateral Dialogue which did not include the United States is an effort to share responsibilities of the United States. In January 2015, the Seventh Fleet Commander of the US Navy described that they would welcome Japanese patrols in the South China Sea[15]. Therefore, in the near future, it is likely that countries in this region will start new trilateral frameworks such as those including Japan–India–Vietnam[16] and India–Indonesia–Australia[17]. In a worst case scenario, this alliance system will maintain a military balance with China.
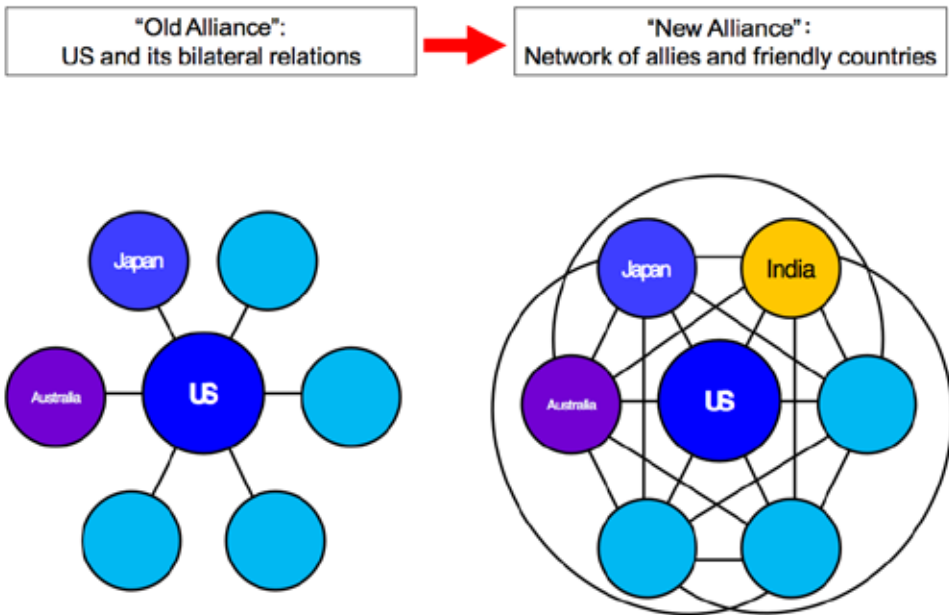
Figure 3: "Old alliance" and "New alliance".

However, it is crucially important that the concerned countries not ignore the flexibility of this new system. The new system is not solely limited to allies and friendly countries. It can be extended to others including China and Russia if these countries

act responsibly under an agreed set of rules. For example, in anti-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia, not only Japan, India, the United States, and other Asian and European countries but also China and Russia mutually co-operate. These examples demonstrate that this co-operative multilateral security framework has good potential not only for maintaining military balance but also for defusing tensions.

Therefore, in light of negative aspects related to China's rise, this new system might be effective. Furthermore, in this system, Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation serves an important role. An analysis of two related points is presented next: "The importance of India's role" and "Sri Lanka is important".

(ii)   Importance of India's role

In this new security network system, the role of India is extremely important because a high probability exists that India will be the most influential sea power to fill the power vacuum of the Indian Ocean Region in the near future. Six reasons were pointed out by Alfred Thayer Mahan, who analyzed why Britain had been a sea power: 1) "Geographical Position", 2) "Physical Conformation (especially, the length of coast line)", 3) "Extent of Territory (especially the balance between the extent of coastal line and military defence resources)", 4) "Size of Population (for working at sea)", 5) "Character of the People", and 6) "Character of the Government"[18].

First, India occupies an advantageous "Geographical Position" because India is located at the northern centre of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, is not only able to access Southeast Asia, but also all sides of the Indian Ocean, including the Middle East and East Africa. The history of Cholas, located in Southern India, includes an expedition to Southeast Asia in the 11th century, which underscores the geographical advantage held by India alone. India has a "Physical Conformation" because it has 7517 km of coastline (mainland only, 6100 km). Furthermore, the Indian Navy is the only strong coastal force in the Indian Ocean Region, meaning that India has sufficient "Extent of Territory". Presently, India is acquiring more than 100 warships. Furthermore, in the next ten years, India is planning to increase its warships from 136 to 200[19]. The possibility exists that India will possess three aircraft carrier battle groups and nine nuclear submarines by 2030. In fact, India has the sixth largest population at sea, comprising 55,000 sailors employed in various countries. Consequently, India also satisfies the condition of "Number of Population" to work at sea. Based on the history of the Chola Empire, the possibility exists that the "Character of the People" in India can be sea-power oriented. Furthermore, finally, along with the "Character of Government" point to the fact that the navy share of India's defence budget has increased from 12.7% in 1990 to 15.8% in 2015.

However, India will no longer be held trustworthy by Japan and the United States if India too challenges the status quo and disturbs stability in the region as China has done. However, India's attitude is more responsible than China's. For example, the Permanent Court of Arbitration rejected China's ownership claim in 2016, but China has not accepted the verdict. In India's case, India accepted a United Nations tribunal ruling in favour of Bangladesh regarding the India–Bangladesh sea boundary dispute in 2014.

As a result, it seems that Japan and the United States would wish India to exhibit a more positive role in the Indian Ocean. India's rise helps lower the heavy burdens of Japan and the United States in the Indian Ocean and helps them to concentrate naval and air military resources toward areas around Japan and the South China Sea.

(iii)   Sri Lanka is important

What is the role of Sri Lanka in the new system? The perception toward Sri Lanka in Japan's maritime security is noted clearly in a statement issued when Japan's Prime Minister visited Sri Lanka in 2014. The joint statement described it as "the two leaders noted the strategic geographical location of Sri Lanka, in the Indian Ocean sea lanes straddling Asia and Africa[20]" It is noted clearly that "strategic location" is an extremely important phrase included here.

For a long time, its location has affected the history of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon). Because of its location, Portugal, the Netherlands, and the UK colonized the islands. For the same reason, then Chinese Premier Zheng came to Sri Lanka on route to his visit to Africa. During World War I, Japan escorted convoys passing between Sri Lanka and Australia. This move proves how important the location of Sri Lanka is to safeguard SLOCs in this region. In World War II, a Japanese aircraft carrier battle group attacked British naval warships including aircraft carriers around Sri Lanka to prevent the approach of British naval fleets from attacking Japan's interests in the Pacific[21]. These historical observations demonstrate that the location of Sri Lanka is connected closely to the security of the Pacific. One reason why India dispatched its Indian Peace Keeping Force is because of the location of Sri Lanka and India dreaded the possibility that the United States might use Sri Lanka as a naval base at that time[22]. For anti-piracy measures near the coast of Somalia, private security guards get on and off the ships they are guarding near Sri Lanka because of its convenient location. These historical incidents prove that the location of Sri Lanka will affect security not only in the Indian Ocean but also in other areas including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the eastern coast of Africa.

Because of this location, it seems that Sri Lanka faces one important dilemma. Currently, China is building a port there. Furthermore, their submarines visit Sri Lanka because of its important location as naval base. If China supports the development of Sri Lanka, then there is little motivation for Sri Lanka to refuse economic support from China. However, from India's perspective, Chinese activities in Sri Lanka represent an encirclement strategy limiting India's influence in the Indian Ocean. In addition, China has difficulties with other countries around it, including Japan. Although receiving China's support is economically beneficial for Sri Lanka, receiving this support has created new difficulties with India and other countries including Japan, strategically.

Under such circumstances, what can Sri Lanka do? There are at least three recommendations. First, as Sri Lanka is increasingly accepting Chinese support, they should also increasingly emphasize co-operation with India.

Secondly, Sri Lanka should enhance co-operation with other countries that are friendly to India. India has not provided sufficient support that Sri Lanka seeks.

Furthermore, because of the ethnic Tamil (Sri Lanka) – Tamil (India) connection, Sri Lanka has been concerned about India's intervention in domestic ethnic issues in Sri Lanka. To maintain its independence, Sri Lanka has great motivation to co-operate with other countries. Consequently, Japan has an important role. Japan has also been a stable supporter of Sri Lanka for years. Furthermore, Japan has a strong will to support India's rise. If Japan and India mutually collaborate, then the two countries can support Sri Lanka more effectively. For example, if Japan and India collaborate to establish a maritime communication network system in Sri Lanka that would serve the entire Indian Ocean, it would be easy for the three countries to be aware of what occurs in the Indian Ocean. These collaborative projects are preferable to accepting China's support, which would create strategic difficulties. Therefore, under Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation, a win-win-win situation can be created.

Thirdly, to achieve this goal, what kind of systems ought to be established? The joint statement described that "the first round of the Policy Dialogue at the Senior Official Level of the two Foreign Ministries and the inaugural Sri Lanka-Japan Dialogue on Maritime Security, Safety and Oceanic Issues in January 2016 in Colombo, where the two maritime states reconfirmed the importance of maintaining the freedom of the high seas and maritime order based on the rule of law." It will be useful if such dialogue will promote a more practical Japan – Sri Lanka – India strategic dialogue. Through such dialogue, both Japan and India can share information, better identify Sri Lankan needs, and choose courses of co-operation or support. Furthermore, the possibility exists that the network of these trilateral security initiatives would culminate and contribute to India initiatives including the Indian Ocean Rim Association and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium as a collective security system in the near future.

Conclusion: Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation will be vitally important

To summarize the salient points of the article, from the Japanese security perspective, negative ramifications of China's rise have gained leverage. A background reality is the changing US–China military balance. It is expected that Japan and countries around the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean are likely to suffer from China's assertiveness in the near future. Therefore, countries around China, including Japan, Sri Lanka, India must seek to deter China's assertiveness by maintaining a military balance and by persuading China to show more responsible behaviour. Under such circumstance, a new system has gradually emerged. The possibility exists that the network of these several bilateral, trilateral and other multilateral security initiatives would culminate in a collective security system in the near future. Under this new system, Japan – Sri Lanka – India co-operation has an important role. High probability exists that India will be the most influential sea power to fill the power vacuum in the Indian Ocean Region in the near future. The strategic location of Sri Lanka has affected the security of the entire Indo-Pacific. Because of its location, it seems that the Sri Lanka – India relationship has confronted a dilemma. To support its own development, Sri Lanka wants to accept China's economic support. However, when China is building a port in Sri Lanka and their submarines visit Sri Lanka,

these moves create new difficulties with India. Consequently, Japan has a role as a stable supporter for Sri Lanka and a strong supporter for India's rise. Japan can be an important stabilizer for cordial Sri Lanka – India relations and establishment of a Japan – Sri Lanka – India strategic dialogue. Furthermore, through such dialogue, both Japan and India can share information, better identify Sri Lankan needs, and decide how to conduct mutual co-operation or support. Now is the best time to do so.

Endnotes

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What do we know about Armed Violence and how best to Prevent it? Some Extended Lessons for Sri Lankan Defense Posture & Policy

Indra de Soysa

Abstract

Internal armed conflict against a state occurs when it is feasible. These feasibility, or opportunity, factors generally trump grievance-based explanations of why some people choose to take up arms against the superior forces of a state. These factors explain why one rebel group out of many succeeded in surviving against the Sri Lankan state rather than the intensity of grievances alone. Such an explanation can incorporate why there is intra-ethnic violence and why states ultimately are able to overcome insurgent groups, and more importantly why many discriminated groups and oppressed ethnic groups never rebel. The upshot of this theoretical insight is that the likelihood of rebellion against the Sri Lankan state, whether from the North or the South is extremely remote because the Sri Lankan state is now militarily and administratively too strong. However, Sri Lanka remains vulnerable to external political and economic support for a potential rebel force or non-violent movement that could bring high global audience costs that would affect the economy adversely. To cauterize such an eventuality, Sri Lankan defence and foreign policy establishments should actively seek to harmonize policy with large regional powers and seek a demilitarized, de-securitized future for the strategic martime routes in the Indian ocean region.

Key words: feasibility of rebellion, Sri Lankan state capacity, non-violent movement, Demilitarized maritime zone

Introduction

This paper will review important theoretical and empirical work related to research on civil war and political violence with an eye to instructing Sri Lankan defense policy and posture.[1] Understanding real and potential threat to our country´s

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[1] Political violence comes in many forms, but I refer specifically to organized armed rebellion that poses a threat to state security.

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national security will allow more efficient investment in a durable peace. Moreover, an internally secure and self-confident Sri Lanka could play an extremely positive role in terms of insuring peace and security in the region, which should be *the* long-term ambition of our foreign and defense policy establishment. No longer can Sri Lanka live in the splendid isolation of India´s shadow, due largely to its ever-increasing strategic geographical position and the interest of other great powers in our strategic location.[2] This paper will argue that there are very few external threats in terms of armed violence to Sri Lanka´s security, but with a proper defense posture and international diplomatic standing, Sri Lanka could potentially be a critical actor in shaping a secure, peaceful and prosperous South Asian region into the future.

Sri Lanka is a small country in a fairly "large" neighborhood that is likely to undergo considerable geopolitical struggle and tension into the future.[3] A rising China, continued instability in the Middle East, and an Indian ocean region traditionally dominated by a powerful India pose long-term challenges to Sri Lankan foreign and defense policy. However, Sri Lanka cannot be a direct participant in any of the larger geopolitical questions in terms of trying to balance active participant or belligerents, or playing a strategic role herself. Sri Lankan policy must be limited to ensuring Sri Lanka´s territorial integrity guaranteed by larger global institutions even if its strategic location amidst one of the major sea routes from Asia to Europe and the importance of sea routes transporting strategic resources, such as Middle Eastern oil to the Far East, will pose severe challenges to Sri Lankan defense and foreign policy. Sri Lankan policy will somehow have to be in sync with the three major strategic powers in the area, India, China and the US. This paper argues that there is an alternative choice, which is to lead the way in building a security regime for the region by coordinating with all maritime powers in the region to build a "South Asia peace and prosperity zone." Indeed, such an initiative is likely going to be highly welcomed by all powers that depend on a peaceful maritime zone in the region. First, however, internal security must be secured, a factor not entirely divorced from external geopolitics and great power interests.

Theory: What do we know about the causes of civil war and why might we not worry?

A country´s security in terms of armed conflict is threatened by two flanks. First, there are threats from outside, and secondly, threats emanate from endogenous sources. Fortunately, direct threats from outside in the World as we know it today are minimal to non-existent (See Figure 1). While there has been a long-term gradual reduction in the chance of interstate wars, however, this scenario might not be a permanent feature of the international system and much depends on how international

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[2] It is not just the strategic location of Sri Lanka that heightens the need for a coherent policy, but the more troubling long-term scenario of the geopolitical ambitions of two rising powers and inevitable erosion of US hegemony globally will matter.

[3] By "large" neighborhood, I mean a region with large powers with ambition and strategic interests for securing geopolitical advantages for peaceful and perhaps even non-peaceful purposes.

institutions can survive and thrive absent the hegemony of a great power or even a few like-minded powers.[4]

Figure 1. Armed conflicts by type of conflict, 1946-2015 (UCDP data).[5]

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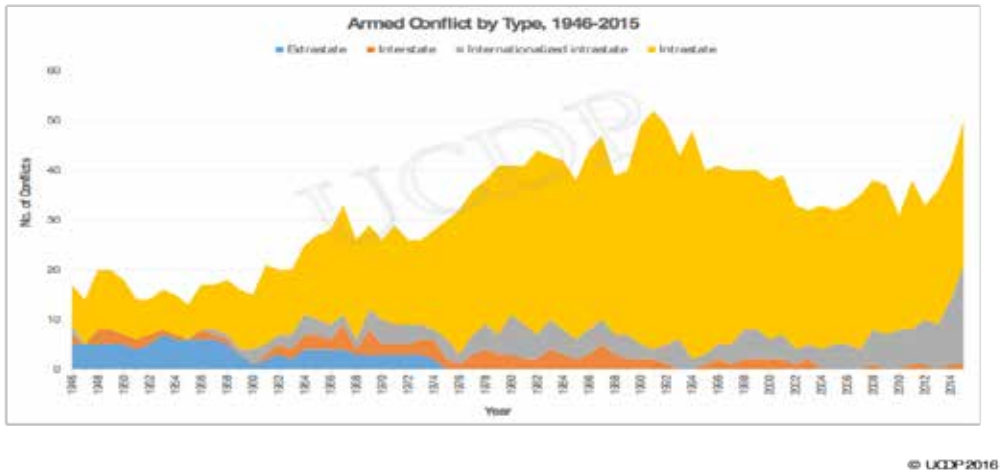
The dark orange band at the bottom of the figure shows the incidents of international armed conflict. States simply do not invade their neighbors anymore, the reasons for which are many, but in general, there is a strong norm against external uses of force and very strong international laws that outlaw external aggression. The international community does not recognize anymore the principle of "might is right" and states that violate this are severely punished.[6] In other words, there are no more "spoils of war" worth the costs of fighting externally. As the figure shows, international wars even at very small casualty levels are disappearing, and the largest portion of organized armed violence are within states—so called civil wars. This form of armed violence is what we are potentially most vulnerable to. So, what are their causes and how do we respond?

The dominant view of why civil war occurs, or why this costly form of human interaction takes place, is that people organize armed conflict (at great cost) because they are aggrieved at their government´s policy, or they would like to secede from a political union by force. This simple grievance-based explanation, although highly intuitive faces theoretically and empirically untenable logics on closer examination (Collier 2000, de Soysa 2000). Critically, if armed conflict is organized to provide justice, which in the language of experts, is a "public good," then why a few people (rebels) would bear the

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[4]   While neoliberal institutionalists see institutions autonomously bringing stability in an anarchic world, realists have much less faith, arguing that institutions are only as good as great power support for them. See Mearsheimer, John J. 1994-1995. "The False Promise of International Institutions." International Security 19(3):5-49. See also Bremmer, Ian and Nouriel Roubini. 2011. "A G-Zero World: The New Economic Club Will Produce Conflict, Not Cooperation." Foreign Affairs March/April(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2011-01-31/g-zero-world).

[5]   The figure is taken from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program´s website. See http://www.ucdp.uu.se.

[6]   There are many sanctions available to the international community, such as collective security responses, the freezing of international assets, weapons embargoes, trade sanctions, travel bans, etc.

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high costs of bringing justice for all (the public) can only be true if the few are truly martyrs or they selfishly harbor private motives (they want power, they want revenge, they want to do well) and hold private information about their true costs (we won´t suffer much even if others really suffer). If conflict is about solving a social grievance and the provision of justice, and justice is a public good, then most people will freeride on the martyrs.[7] In other words, justice will be underprovided because of the problem of freeriding. This does not mean that there are no widely-held grievances among the population from which rebels emerge, it simply means that grievances alone cannot amount to rebel armies capable enough to survive against superior forces of states—i.e. the martyrs must be able to finance a rebel army. Importantly, the martyrs might be people to whom concentrated benefits accrue from the use of armed violence even if the losses from conflict are diffuse among the population.[8] In other words, even if grievances are widely shared the costly method of achieving redress (armed violence) might not be widely sanctioned. The conflict option may provide high payoffs to just the few. The logic of collective action, thus, suggests that conflict is organized for private gain (greed, power, vengeance), rather than public goods (justice, freedom, rights etc.).

Figure 2. The global and selected regional risk of civil war, 1960-2015
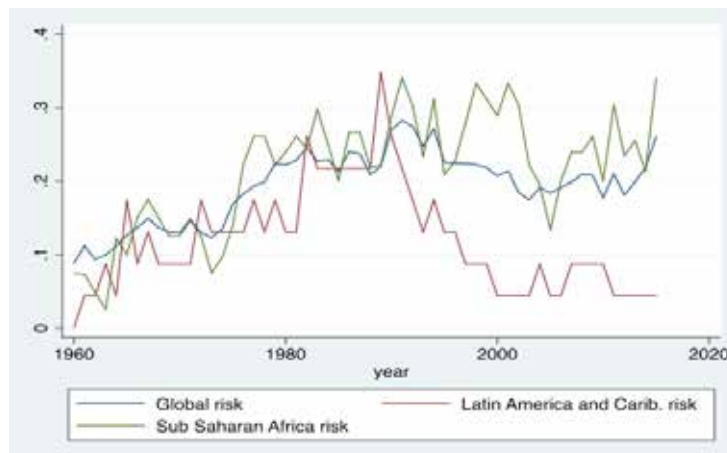
*A civil war is measured at 25 deaths per year for countries above 500k population where a civil war might also have external actors directly involved. The data are obtained from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. http://www.ucdp.uu.se.

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[7]   A public good is non-excludable (you cannot exclude people from enjoying it) and non-rival (use by any one person does not diminish use by others). Clean air or justice come close to being pure public goods. Since people cannot be excluded, why should they pay the cost—in other words, they can free ride. This "logic of collective action" powerfully explains many different outcomes in society, politics, economics etc. It explains why people who receive concentrated benefits organize more easily compared with those whose losses are diffuse—for example, a few producers of goods can lobby for protection or higher prices but consumers suffer collective action problems because the costs are diffuse (widely shared). See Olson, Mancur. 1965. The Logic of Collective Action. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[8]   This logic powerfully explains why rebel groups, even when they come from the same aggrieved population, fight each other for supremacy; i.e. so called martyrs apparently require as much concentrated benefit as possible. Why share?

Looking at the world in terms of civil war risk over time and examining selected regions in a stylized manner can be very revealing. As Figure 2 shows, the global risk of civil war started decreasing dramatically after the end of the Cold War and shows an upward trend again in the most recent years. This upward trend seems to be driven by instability in Sub Saharan Africa and North Africa and the Middle East. Many of these conflicts can be traced to older conflicts but have morphed into new ones with new rallying cries, such as Jihadist Islam. Importantly, the trend for Latin America and the Caribbean is highly illustrative. This region has seen the most dramatic shift in the risk of civil war. Can it be that all those grievance-causing factors, such as income inequality and other sources of relative deprivation have dramatically shifted in Latin America? Not likely, since Latin America remains one of the regions with the most social inequities between peoples, not to mention historical reasons for large grievances, for example, among the indigenous peoples against the wealthy land holders and other elites. Yes, the region has democratized, but rather than being a positive factor for peace, specialized studies of civil war are highly ambiguous about democracy´s effect on peace, as witnessed most recently in places such as the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Collier 2009, Hegre 2014, Snyder 2000). The issue is that it may not be democracy per se, but existing economic conditions that secure peace and democracy. Indeed, per capita income and country size have the most robust effects on peace and the best predictive power in cross-country analyses (Ward, Greenhill and Bakke 2010).

The fact that grievance causing factors, such as the lack of democracy and political repression predict the onset of civil war poorly and income and country size and other opportunity causing factors, such as the availability of lootable income (natural resources), tend to matter more, suggest that armed violent conflict occurs when it is feasible (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner 2009, de Soysa 2011, Fearon and Laitin 2003). It is the opportunity to fight rather than the motives of groups that matter. This is an interesting clue to understanding the theoretical puzzles described above and suggests how we may go about cauterizing costly violence. First, poverty may be a grievance-causing factor, but poor people are hardly able to organize costly violence. More meaningfully, poor countries are likely to fall into civil war because states of poor countries fail to monopolize violence. Poor states are weak at discouraging rebellion and rebels in poor states have very cheap recruits, making violence more feasible, even if the losers from these sorts of confrontations are often the poorest, who face very high collective action problems for organizing peace. Thus, civil wars occur in poor countries more-often-than-not because of weak states and weak societies. Ethnic and other antagonisms don't always add up to costly armed violence although distinct ethnic groups often fight, but more-often-than-not they live together in peace (de Soysa 2002, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Mueller 2000). Secondly, it is not obvious at first glance why large countries should be high predictors of conflict beyond the probabilistic association between more people amounting to a higher chance of violence reaching the critical threshold of death to be counted as a civil war. It might very well be that state capacity decreases with increasing population. Large populations are also likely to be more strategically interesting for regional and global powers. We return to this theme later, but for the moment, understanding factors that increase the feasibility of rebellion is critical. Where to begin?

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At a minimum, regardless of how weak a state is, rebels require finance. There may be multiple sources of finance, but they need to add up to enable the financing of large-enough armies.[9] Insurgency is a technology of war fighting that advantages small groups of rebels to survive state forces, but insurgency works best when the rebels have access to rough terrain and adequate logistics of escape and supply. This factor relates to the availability of lootable income, such as natural resources, porous borders, friendly or ineffective neighboring countries, inaccessible territory, and lots of hard cash to buy the required supplies. These supplies are also available for free if rebels have strategically-placed patrons, an issue that is very loosely covered in studies of civil war that focus exclusively on endogenous sources of grievances (de Soysa 2017).

Indeed, state and rebel capacities can very easily be augmented exogenously, a position that seems to be supported by the long-term trends in the risk of conflict displayed in Figure 2. Cold war related strategic factors clearly explain the steadily rising risk of civil war since the 1960s up until the end of the Cold War. These wars are often referred to as "proxy wars" since the two superpowers could not fight directly (Mumford 2013, Westad 2007). Similarly, we may have entered a new era of proxy wars following the 911 attacks on the US and the formation of loosely organized global jihadi groups and the US´s war on terror, begun with the attacks on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq (Beehner 2015). Some of these jihadi conflicts seem also to have spread to Africa, given the rise of groups such as Al-Shabab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Whatever the level of global tension and the finance of conflict from outside, internal state capacity to prevent groups from establishing themselves and flourishing is critical.

Given these theoretical insights, how might the so called "ethnic war" in Sri Lanka fit in? Most territorial states are multinational and most of them are peaceful. Botswana in Africa is the only poor country that is expected to join the rich world in the next decades, and Botswana is ethnically highly fractionalized. North Korea, on the other hand, is relatively homogeneous and is unquestionably a social, political and economic basket case. The longest-running civil war is in Colombia, where people kill each other in large numbers without ethnicity as a factor. Sri Lanka has had two rebellions originating in the South, suggesting that Sinhalese are quite capable of killing each other for reasons other than ethnicity, an issue also true for Tamils in the North. The Sinhalese and Tamils were not destined to clash, nor is having ethnic conflict at the level of high politics a predictor of why one armed group would succeed in violence against a state. Moreover, there are plenty of ethnic groups that face active discrimination that never rebel. Consider the political and social freedoms enjoyed by Tamils in Sri Lanka relative to their ethnic brothers in Malaysia or Singapore. What explains successful armed violence in Sri Lanka by one Tamil group (LTTE) and why Tamils or another group have not rebelled in Singapore and Malaysia can only be explained by state capacity and opportunity factors. African Americans or Native Americans in the USA "could not" rebel, it is not that they "would not" if at least some

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[9]   Rebel groups often survive initially simply by looting (extortion, kidnapping, bank robbery, protection rackets etc.) but to become serious players they require heavier financing that is secure (patronage from external source, diaspora funding etc.).

"could have." Those that tried are dead or still in jail. What explains how the Tigers were finally vanquished in May 2009 after almost 30 years of the state trying also suggests state capacity factors (opportunity factors) rather than motive.

The reason why the Sri Lankan state prevailed in the insurgency against it can be easily summed up along two broad points. First, Sri Lankan state capacity (administrative & military) increased massively—largely due to the rapid economic growth through the 1990s and increasing productivity of the Sri Lankan workforce (see Figure 3).[10] While insurgencies (given all the right elements in place) survive against even strong states (Taliban vs NATO, PKK vs Turkey etc.), those right elements for successful insurgency were fast disappearing for the LTTE for many reasons. This brings me to the second reason. The 911 attacks in the US and the subsequent war on terror as well as the Indian and later US and EU proscription of the LTTE began slowly to choke off finance and access. In other words, the LTTE´s hold on its "war chest" began slipping. In this period, the LTTE started becoming even more of a "tax" burden on the people under their control. This burden was possibly felt most in the East, which also explains the subsequent rift. The Eastern Tigers began to feel used. This explanation solves a very big puzzle—why did the LTTE not go back to fighting an insurgency that it was so successful at? The answer is most likely that they were beginning to feel the constraints of fighting insurgency (restricted finance, no external support, a less pliant or actively-helpful population), faced also with a better trained, equipped, supported, and tactically savvy Sri Lankan armed force (Chandraprema 2012, Narayan Swamy 2010).[11]

Figure 3: Per capita income growth in Sri Lanka, 1960-2015
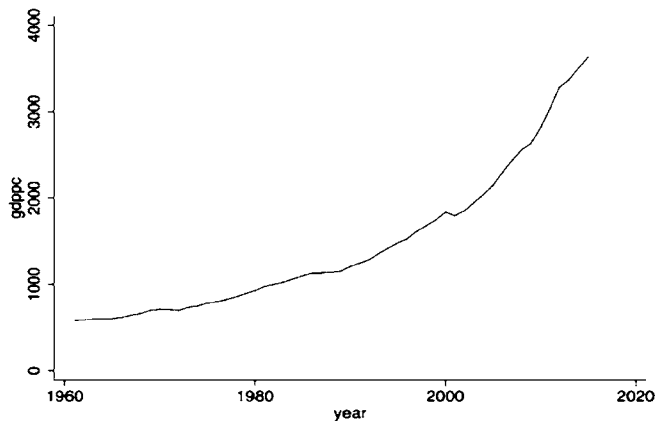
Source: World Development Indicators online data (constant 2010 $)

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[10] Per capita income is a rough proxy for state capacity because it captures the extent to which a state can extract taxes from its population and deploy those taxes on security, particularly through the enhancement of administrative capacity. The Sri Lankan government simply outspent the LTTE, which foolishly adopted conventional warfare tactics at a time when it could least afford it. Good administration also thwarted the LTTE´s ability to strike at will through, for example, suicide bombing.

[11] The easier (lazy) explanations could be the personal hubris of Prabakharan, the dullness of his son, who made bad decisions etc. While such explanations may also matter, it is doubtful that someone who ruthlessly survived for 30 years succumbs to the exhortations of others rather than hard constraints.

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The LTTE simply faced reality— "nowhere to run, nowhere to hide." The study of civil war simply suggests that states face successful insurgency due to conditions that favor the success of rebellion. The Sri Lankan state is now simply too strong to be taken on by armed groups, whether from the North or from the South.

Policy

Getting rid of rebel groups, however, does not mean that "conflicts" within our society do not exist, and political solutions should be ignored. There are many vexing issues that require urgent and sincere effort at resolution. Resolving these conflicts through institutional channels ultimately is the best defense policy. An internally strong and secure Sri Lanka can be achieved largely by ensuring sound economic and social policy that enhances ethnic and political unity and development broadly. There is no substitute for good governance and political cooperation. The current state advantages can easily dissipate given external support for a potential rebel group, but even more dangerously a non-violent movement that insists on separatism. Recent research shows that non-violent movements, such as that witnessed in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world succeeds more often in terms of achieving objectives compared with violent movements (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). This phenomenon is particularly salient in the current age of global (24-hour) media. In a globalized world, Sri Lanka is extremely vulnerable to a non-violent movement that gains the sympathy of a global audience. These "audience costs" to Sri Lanka are likely to be very high due to already strained relations with global institutions, the alienation of powerful countries with a stake in the region, the loss of trade and investment, and the vulnerability of the tourist trade to bad press. Sri Lanka simply cannot ignore these costs for two fundamental reasons---a small country´s security is only guaranteed by global institutions since small powers cannot afford to play power politics; i.e. thumbing our noses at institutions is akin to looking up and spitting, and because small countries are basically reliant on external markets and global goodwill.

The upshot of insights from theory is that Sri Lankan defense forces can be concentrated on building goodwill domestically by reducing the size of its foot print. The armed forces should become technologically sophisticated, geared towards counter insurgency, focusing more on intelligence, rapid deployment, and flexibility (the Costa Rica solution). Our police forces should be better trained at handling demonstrations and peaceful, non-violent peoples movements. Government administrative capacity for handling these exigencies should be improved as part of an overall internal security policy. This strategy should be part of a comprehensive cleanup of the "white van" image of internal security and of the post-war image abroad.[12] Few people will want to trade with, invest in and holiday in countries with such an image. This security strategy should be part of reconciliation and nation building towards a strong, secure

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[12]   The white van image refers to abductions supposedly carried out directly by military or paramilitary groups associated with the state that mysteriously use only white vans. In Sri Lanka, the white van has become a euphemism for abduction.

democracy into the future. Security forces should be guardians of democracy rather than violators of the rule of law.

As part of internal security, how might we build in a bold strategy of leading the way in regional security efforts? As an island nation, we clearly need adequate Naval forces to ensure our rights and duties within our maritime jurisdictions—interdict smuggling and other illegal activities, such as illegal fishing, and protect the borders. Indeed, any cuts in ground forces could mean bolstering our naval forces, building in an air wing following the model of the US armed forces for maximizing surveillance and intel. Here, we also have the Japanese model as a blueprint. Our Naval forces should be a bolstered as a coastguard and self-defense force rather than a naval force with the mandate of insuring Sri Lankan territorial integrity. Countries such as Japan and Australia would help us in this process because of their interest in a stable maritime environment in Sri Lanka. On the strength of this, Sri Lanka might lead the way in a demilitarization effort in the Indian ocean region that might call for an "end" to the "securitization" of Indian ocean affairs and the founding of a regime for the peaceful exploitation of maritime resources and a site for regional cooperation, trade and development.

Conclusions

In summary, there are very low threats to our security from external sources, but this could change with evolving politics among regional powers as well as geopolitical struggles that lurk on the horizon. The chances of an endogenous development of a violent movement against the state is now very low to non-existent. Today, the Sri Lankan state and its administrative and military capacity are too strong for such a movement to take root and become successful. However, the security structure needs to be cognizant of the vulnerability of current policy to the development of a non-violent movement. The administrative agencies, foreign and defense policy, as well as the internal security forces must gear up for such an eventuality. A lasting solution to the political questions, however, is critical.

There is little in terms of a direct threat to Sri Lanka´s national security, but the geopolitical importance of Sri Lanka´s geographical position poses challenges for the future. Our strategic position is likely to be of great political interest to great powers that will be tempted to meddle in the internal politics of Sri Lanka. This means that Sri Lankan policy must synchronize with regional and extra-regional powers with an interest in the region. On this count, Sri Lanka could potentially take a lead role in establishing a movement that demilitarizes and de-securitizes the Indian ocean by building a regime for peaceful cooperation. Sri Lankan foreign and defense policy are at a crossroad and a good understanding of vulnerabilities and strengths will allow intelligent decisions moving forward into the future.

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The Forgotten Phases of the Counter Insurgency Strategy and the Debate on Reconciliation

Rear Admiral Dharmendra M.B. Wettewa

Abstract[1]

Sri Lanka is passing through a post conflict period after the end of a three decade brutal insurgency. The country is going through the transition from conflict to coexistence with divergent views and debates on the process of reconciliation.

This essay is an effort to discuss the necessity of a holistic counter insurgency strategy in the aftermath of a conflict that halted the progress and prosperity of this nation. An effort is taken to understand as to how social movements occur and evolve into insurgencies, when appropriate actions to mediate grievances are not initiated at the most critical times. Understanding the fundamentals of social changes will help Sri Lanka to formulate policies that will pave the way to bind all citizens to a common Sri Lankan Identity. How and why should such a process be pursued, has been discussed in relevance to Counter Insurgency (CI) models and also considering the necessity and the responsibility of elected governments to establish a social structure that ensures every peoples natural rights.

The article is based mostly on counter insurgency theory and academic research. Critics may pose the question of the practicality of transferring such models to ground realities due various other social dynamics involved. However it is always better to understand how such models and research could be best used to find solutions to issues that has tested the strength and resolve of many Governments and yet remain unresolved. The model that this paper suggests, highlights the strategy that should be pursued once the violent segment of the insurgency is over. It's an accepted fact that 'winning peace' goes much beyond the strategy of defeating violent insurgents. The 'social contract' between the government and the people has to be re-established in a manner that ensures the Natural Rights of all the people. Consequently, an Economic, Social and Political opportunity structure needs to be created, promoting equal opportunities to all citizens. A single Sri Lankan common identity could possibly be achieved through such a process.

Introduction

This essay is an effort to understand how social movements occur and evolve into insurgencies, when appropriate actions to mediate grievances are not initiated at the most critical times. Understanding the fundamentals of social change will help Sri Lanka to formulate policies that will pave the way to bind all citizens to a common Sri Lankan identity. How and why such a process should be pursued, has been discussed in relevance to counter insurgency models and also considering the necessity and the responsibility of elected governments to establish a social structure that ensures every person's natural rights.

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The historical backlog

Sri Lanka is going through a post conflict stabilization period after a destructive 3 decades of civil conflict. The root causes of mistrust which gave birth to an insurgency goes back even years beyond independence from the British Empire in 1948. Some, not all salient aspects which are not commonly highlighted are elaborated here to understand the polarization of the two communities and the historical backlog attached to the dissent between each other.

The connection to the South Indian Dravidistan movement

This movement became a major threat to the Indian Union.[2] Through draconian anti secessionist amendments to the Indian constitution in 1963, this was halted. But south Indian support for a surrogate Tamil state in the North and East of Sri Lanka expanded.[3] Indian political scientist K.P Mukerji noted in 1962, that the Tamil problem in Ceylon could not have arisen had not the Indian Tamil Nadu been geographically contiguous to Ceylon's Jaffna.[4]

The world confederation of Tamils, justifies the existence of the Dravidistan movement as "there is no state without Tamils, but there is no state for the Tamils". In his "Hero's Day" speech in 2007, the LTTE leader expressed very similar sentiments and urged the Tamil Diaspora to seek support in their host countries to establish a separate state in Sri Lanka[5].

On the other hand, the concept of a Buddhist hegemony to be protected from the inroads of South Indian derived Tamil groups, has been pervasive from around the 4th Century AD. These issues have led to the enactment of certain language, employment, land settlement and other state policies causing further obstacles to bringing all communities together. Especially after 1815, colonial policies contributed to new forms of ethnic and religious competition and stratification.[6]

They promoted policies which saw ethnic groups as inherently separate. The Colebrook – Cameroon reforms of 1832 – 1833 laid the framework for dividing the Island in to 5 administrative provinces, North, South, East, West and Central. This was in violation of the terms of the Kandyan convention of 1815 (when the British took over the Kingdom), which required the British to uphold the kingdom's institutions. The Kandyan Kingdom was dismembered and its different parts attached to the artificially created new provinces.[7]

The traditional homeland being demanded today in the North and East provinces was carved out by the British largely from the Kandyan Kingdom, rather than a unified Tamil political entity as is claimed to have existed from the beginning of history.[8] However, the above references are not an attempt to deviate attention from the fact that the Tamil and Muslim communities were living in the Northern and Eastern areas much before the periods of colonial rule.[9]

There are many other discriminatory policies by the British. On such incident is in 1924, Manning, the Colonial Governor, carried out constitutional reforms wherein he achieved his objectives through deliberate manipulation of communal differences and tensions. Manning's handling of constitutional reforms was a classic example of *divide et empera.*[10]

As a result, by the time of independence, both the majority Sinhalese and Tamils had their own grievances. The Tamil population claim that they have been discriminated through language, education, and other policies of every government, since independence. Conversely, the Sinhalese majority complains about the special privileges given by the British to Tamils by way of English education and employment which discriminated the majority community, especially the Buddhists. Hence, a requirement of changing the constitutional structure existed, but the desired consensus never matured to productive levels. In this backdrop, a Tamil social movement started from late 1950's and evolved into a full grown insurgency by early 1980's. The resultant violent uprising continued until 2009.

In this crucial post conflict period, the challenge facing the country is to achieve national unification and evolving a common national identity - a Sri Lankan identity. In this respect leaders of Tamil and Muslim minority communities have the challenge to move along a moderate path (whether they are willing to do so without depending on undue international influence and pressure is a matter of concern and analysis). On the other hand, to win the confidence of the minorities and encourage them to follow such a moderate path, the responsibility lies with the government to formulate a strategy to achieve a liberal, secular and pluralistic societal framework.

The need of the hour then is to examine the most appropriate strategy the government should formulate to address the concerns of the majority and minority communities, and designing a lasting framework for sustainable peace and progress. In this context; the focus of any government should be to promote peaceful social integration and building a common national Sri Lankan identity, focusing on bridging the gaps in the economic, social and political opportunity structure through appropriate changes to the framework of governance, while ensuring the territorial integrity of the country.

Why do social movements occur and grow into insurgencies

For a section of a society to go against the system, a real or perceived societal disadvantage needs to be promoted. Resistance or revolt therefore, is considered to be something initiated by those in positions of disadvantage or the so called "deprived". People will not try to change society if they are satisfied with the social structure they live in. In order for a social movement to form, people have to feel that they are subjected to significant disadvantages. In such instances they rely upon the weapons of the weak, asymmetric warfare - or guerrilla warfare for some analysts, and the outcome is an insurgency. Here, it is important to note the two youth uprisings which erupted both from the South and the North of Sri Lanka, involving the majority and minority communities.

How do we understand these uprisings; as revolts or insurgencies? What is the difference between a mere revolt and an insurgency? A revolt is most often carried out against a state/ regime or a person to overthrow the same. But an insurgency goes much beyond that, it is more specifically resistance against structural issues at stake. Hence both the South and North uprising are insurgencies.

Insurgencies aim not to change personalities, but rather institutions and their interactions.[11] This requires building a counter state in which the new order can be made real. In political science, a revolution is held to be akin to an earthquake, a massive upheaval bounded in time and place, the place a particular nation state, the time undetermined but "short"[12]

Whereas, insurgent movements begin as "Fire in the Minds of (people)"; what leaders do is to give hope to a new world. What we in Sri Lanka experienced was an insurgency aimed at establishing a "counter state", using terrorist acts as a method of action (tool), one weapon among many. It was not just terrorism alone.

MAO's Peoples War strategy

The strategic and operational actions of the insurgents, falls mostly within the context of "Mao's People War" strategy, except the fact that the LTTE used acts of terrorism more than any other such movement which existed before. Mao's concept was to recognize that the solution to the challenge of seizing state power rests in forming a counter-state, an alternative infrastructure akin to the "nation in arms", which is created from scratch. His approach, as briefly elaborated below comprises five essential components.

a. **Mass line:** Organizing an alternative society through the construction of clandestine infrastructure, that is, "a counter-state".
b. **United front:** Making common cause with those individuals and groups, who share concerns but not necessarily party goals.
c. **Violence:** The new society, existing as it does illegally and clandestinely, necessarily rely upon armed action to maintain its security within and without. The 'liberation' struggle progresses through these armed warfare.
d. **Political warfare:** Using nonviolence; such as participation in political

activities, under-mining the morale of enemy forces or offering to engage in negotiations as an adjunct to violence and with proper information warfare campaigns.

e.   **International action:** International pressure upon the state, or in favour of the insurgents, is recognized as an important element in the equation.

Understanding social movements

Rodney Stark, by using a very simple frame work, based on a foundation of Donatella Della Porta and Micheal Wieviorka's research, has explained the evolution of social movements and insurgencies.13 This framework conceptualizes reasons for social movements to occur and succeed to become an insurgency, with terrorism as a method of action.

The framework is depicted as Figure 1. This effort is to comprehend the idiom "devil is in the detail".[14] For a social movement to occur, grievances in the society have to be present. And the reaction/response to the grievances by the government has a direct bearing on the formation of a social movement. If mediated by the state, the movement would end. The mediated solutions should address the gaps in Economic, Social and Political Opportunity Structure (ESP), since the social movement revolves around unmediated grievances.

Transformation into an insurgency

When the government's mitigation actions fail to provide solutions, a social movement gathers momentum.Thereafter, with the influence of the key intervening variable 1 and 2 as depicted in Figure 1, and lack of prompt and constructive engagement with the aggrieved, space is created for mass support of a long drawn out insurgency.

The stark framework for social movements to occur[15]
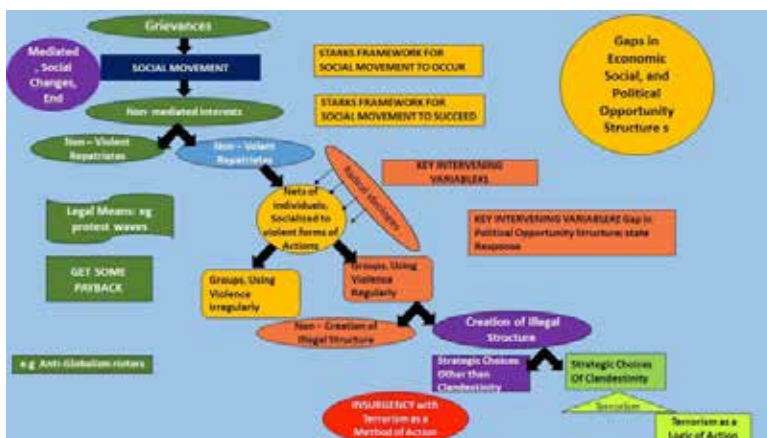
Figure 1

The analysis of the Stark framework is purely to understand, in a socio - political context, how and why unmediated grievances could cause a social moment to form into an insurgency, which is quite relevant to the Sri Lankan experience.

Comprehending the above analysis and Mao's doctrine of carrying out an insurgency in 5 lines of operations as described earlier, would be helpful to policymakers in formulating the strategic way forward. With the defeat of the insurgency, violent groups have been made to be nonexistent. This would mean that as demonstrated in the amended STARK framework in Figure 2, the government now has a fresh opportunity to move to the top of the framework and make a renewed effort to address non mediated grievances.

'STARK' Framework once violent groups are non-existent
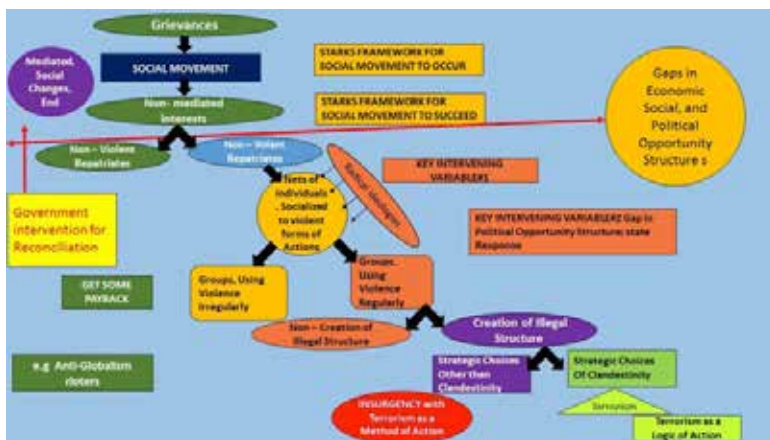
Figure 2

Countering Insurgencies (CI); the five questions a state should deliberate

A state needs to ask five analytical questions in its "counter insurgency" strategy. (i) What is the political content of the insurgency? (ii) Who are its allies outside the movement? (iii) How does it use violence? (iv) How do the insurgents use non-violence? and (v) what is it doing internationally? These questions flow from the "Mao's peoples war strategy" as elaborated earlier.

The insurgents' strategy and an appropriate counterstrategy for the Government, based on the 5 questions posed above are proposed in Figure 3 and 4 respectively. The objective of negating the insurgents' violent path has been achieved through military action and further elaboration is not intended.
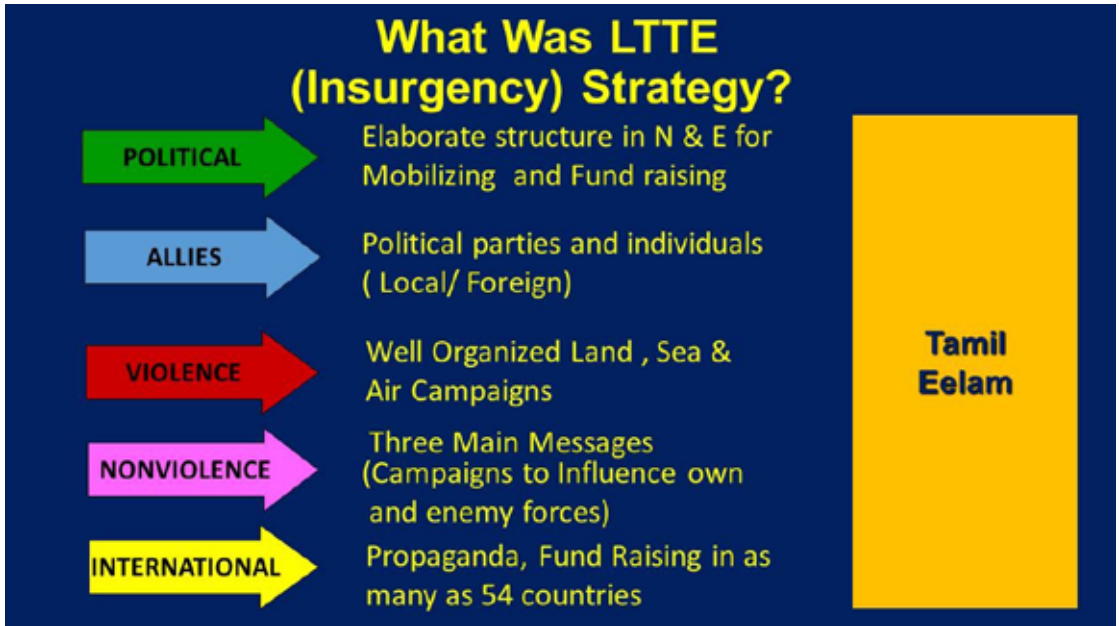
Figure 3

Figure 4

In the post-conflict period the government has to work on countering the 4 strategies of the insurgency, except the counter violent strategy, which has already been achieved as depicted in figure 4 to achieve enhanced Economic, Socio Political Opportunity structure.

The "Social Contract"

Governance is a "social contract" between the people and the Government or who governs. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke of Great Britain and their writing help us to understand the importance of the contract between governments and the subjects. Both of them made published their theories at a time of great turmoil in Great Britain. Such a comprehension could help understand the need for change of government structures.

The violence and bloodshed of the English Civil war, prompted Hobbes to reflect on the question: How may a society ensure a level of internal order that will enable its members to attend to their vital affairs and go about their business peacefully? The tumult, strife, and general insecurity that prevailed during those times, made it painfully evident that the social order cannot be taken for granted.

Hobbes produced the Leviathan (1651)16. Locke's wrote the "Second Treatise of Government" in and around 1670's.17 Both of them based their ideas on the principle of the "State of Nature" of the world (people). For Hobbes the State of Nature is "all against all" and the life is brutish, nasty and short. In order to escape this primitive condition and to progress, human beings need to form a structure. Therefore people need to create a contract and give up all their rights to a common power. The common power or the state in return gives people only the right to life.18

For Locke, the "state of nature" is not at a 'state of war'. Humans are capable of both conflict and cooperation. He argued that the state of nature is governed by the "Law of Nature", which gives the people their natural rights: right to life, freedom and liberty and right to hold property. Therefore in the "Social Contract" people retain the natural rights, because those cannot be taken away by anyone and the state's duty is to ensure that justice is done, while preserving the rights of its citizens.19

As expressed by Locke, only a "civil government" can restrain partiality and mediate disputes, and people come to a contract with the state for this primary purpose of keeping life safe rather than to enjoy other freedoms.

Conclusion

Filling the blanks; concentrating on all phases of the counter insurgency strategy

The country is yet to complete all the phases of the counter insurgency strategy (except countering the violence). The possible template to begin the process is working on the remaining 4 lines of counter operations indicated in figure 4. So that Sri

Lankans could start the healing process between the North and the South. Until and unless such a governmental structure is established, it can be argued that the counter insurgency approach as a whole is not completed. Bridging the gap between the haves and have nots and establishing strategic relationships between the country and the rest of world, enabling the nation to come out of international isolation is important as economic progress is connected to this process of integration.

The justification of the counter strategy

The justification of the proposed counter insurgency strategy could be summarized as follows;

Q - What was the form of the uprisings Sri Lanka faced during the critical   three decades since late 1970's?

A - *An insurgency; against structural issues of state – Not a revolt.*

Q - What were the causes of the insurgency?

A - *A social movement transforms in to an insurgency when grievances are not mediated by a government. Figure 1.*

Q - How do social movements transform into insurgencies?

A - *Mostly based on Mao's people war strategy.*

Q - What is the outcome?

A - *Loss of the "social contract" between the Government and the people.*

Q - How could a state comprehend the insurgent's strategy?

A - *Ask the 5 questions – The sub heading; The 5 questions a state should deliberate.*

Q - What should be the solution?, and the counter strategy?

A - *Implementing the strategy at Figure 4.*

Q - When violence is defeated what is left of the Counter Insurgency strategy?

A - *Figure 2; start afresh from non-mediated grievances; Find solutions to Economical Social Political (ESP) opportunity structure.*

Responsibilities of political leadership

At this point in time the Sri Lankan government has the prime responsibility to deliver its obligation of the "Social Contract" and create conditions for all citizens to enjoy every freedom and embark on reconciliation to achieve a common national identity. The Tamil political leadership should follow the same policy and aim to transform polarized communities to form a common identity. They still seem to be struggling to deviate from the agenda of separation or self-governance. Such an approach is not conducive to provide space for reconciliation.

Tamil political leaders have to cooperate. They cannot expect to achieve the same goals of the separatists. Without practical wisdom and compromise, there cannot be any agreement. Sri Lanka is not a country that can afford to have mono-ethnic separatist entities, but instead multi-ethnic, multicultural integrated regions, is the solution. We need to build a modern Sri Lanka, a post-conflict modern Sri Lanka where no community should live in fear of the other, whether it is the majority or minority communities.

Winning the confidence of the new generation

Arguably the war is over but the whole counter strategy is not. There is a whole new generation of Tamil Youth who grew up with the insurgency within and outside the country. The challenge of winning them to become Sri Lankans cannot be by fire power. It has to be won by soft power; brains, education, economics, diplomacy, communication.[20] It is a task Sri Lanka will lose, if the notion of what is to be a Sri Lankan is not revised and revisited. For that, a broad inclusionary Sri Lankan identity based on equality and merit has to be constructed.

One of the most successful Foreign Ministers produced by Sri Lanka, Hon. Lakshman Kadiragamar, a Tamil himself, assassinated by the LTTE for the 'sin' of working for a national identity, once expressed;

> "I am first and foremost a citizen of Sri Lanka. I don't carry labels of race or religion or any other label. I would say quite simply that I have grown up with the philosophy that I am probably kind of a citizen of the world. I don't subscribe to any particular philosophy; I have no fanaticism: I have no communalism. I believe that there should be a united Sri Lanka. I believe that all our peoples can live together, they did live together. I think they must in the future learn to live together after this trauma is over. We have four major religions in the country. Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity. All these religions exist very peacefully. They get on very well. I see no reason why the major races in the country, the Tamils and Sinhalese cannot again build a relationship of trust and confidence. That is my belief. That is what I wish for and working for that I will not be deterred by having some *labels on me.*"[21]

Endnotes

1   This article is based on a paper written on August 2014. No detailed assessment has been made on the ongoing efforts of reconciliation due to the nature of the position held by the author.
2   Bandarage, A. (2009). *The Separatist conflict in Sri Lanka, Terrorism ,Ethnicity , Political economy.* New York:Routledge. P. 20.
3   Ibid P. 20
4   Ibid P. 20
5   Ibid P. 21
6   Ibid P, 29
7   Ibid P. 29
8   Bandarage, A. (2009). *The Separatist conflict in Sri Lanka, Terrorism ,Ethnicity , Political economy.* New York:Routledge. P. 31
9   The debate of how many centuries back in history the Tamil/ Muslim communities started settling down in North and East is intentionally kept open in this article. Since the counter insurgency process proposed in this article is not based on facts connected to traditional homeland theories.
10 Bandarage, A. (2009). *The Separatist conflict in Sri Lanka, Terrorism ,Ethnicity , Political economy.* New York:Routledge. P. 31
11 Marks, A. (2007). *Maoist People's War in Post-Vietnam Asia.* Bangkok: White Lotus. P. 1-14.
12 Ibid P, 1-14
13 National Defense University. (2006). *Report on Terrorism, Spring Semester 2006.* Washington: National Defense University, based on Michel Vieviorka, Terrorism in Context, ed. Martha Crenshaw. (2007). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. P. 154-159.
14 Refers to a catch or mysterious element hidden in the details
15 National Defense University. (2006). *Report on Terrorism, Spring Semester 2006.* Washington: National Defense University, based on Michel Vieviorka, Terrorism in Context, ed. Martha Crenshaw. (2007). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. P. 154-159.
16 Zeitlin I. M. (1997). *The Rulers and Ruled: An Introduction to Classical Political Theory from Plato to the Federalists.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated. Pp. 81-131.
17 Ibid P. 81-131
18 Ibid P. 81-131
19 Zeitlin I. M. (1997). *The Rulers and Ruled: An Introduction to Classical Political Theory from Plato to the Federalists.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated. P. 81-131.
20 Jayathilaka, D. (2012). *Long War Cold Peace.* Colombo, Sri Lanka; Vijithayapa Publishers. P,.441.
21 Ibid P. 434

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India in the World: Interesting Times and New Dynamism

Uttam Kumar Sinha

Abstract[1]

An interesting shift of global power has begun. However, the landscape of the world is not yet well inscribed and thus difficult to frame the politics, particularly on how states should respond. Should it be hard power of coercion or the soft power of attraction or a combination of the two popularly described as "smart power". Some characterise the world order as a "multiplex", while some view the world as being interdependent with regionalism as a defining trend. Where does that leave India? What world order does India seek? Can India leverage its role to make itself a "diplomatic superpower? Will it be a *status quo* power or a *revisionist* one seeking to redefine the norms of international engagement? This article captures the emerging geopolitical and geo-economic trends and how India is responding and reappraising itself to the changes.

Keywords: Global Order; Multilateral, Regionalism, Anthropocene, Hydropolitcs

The global order

It is always perplexing analyzing current dynamics of the emerging world order. Be that as it may, it can be reasonably agreed that the world entered the 21st century with no great power rivalry as was prevalent in 20th century. But peace and harmony are relative and can easily be disrupted as seen in the South China Sea, the Crimea and West Asia.

The world order is always almost an argument about balance of power. Many would disagree with this, considering balance of power an archaic and outdated European concept with little relevance in the contemporary glocalised world. Likewise, many would regard balance of power as "incompatible with democracy, free enterprise, welfare economy and peace". While the balance or imbalance of power may not be the best way forward in an anarchic state system, it nonetheless cannot be totally dismissed. So long as the reality of power exist the management of that power, the balance so to speak, will always exist. As Henry Kissinger expresses in his book World Order: "There can be no peace without equilibrium. Without balance".[2]

The world is invariably and often mistakenly looked at as a binary conceptualization – peace or conflict, confrontation or engagement, idealism or realism. All these are a continuum. Much like idealists do not have monopoly on moral values, realists must recognize that ideals are also part of reality. Likewise resolution of conflict will be an essential component of democracy and development and this will be tested frequently with the new contours of global politics.

Transition tends to be invariably painful and difficult. The US is used to unipolarity and therefore finds it uneasy to surrender its power and reduce its global footprint. But in the 21st century unipolarity is untenable and therefore the US will have to learn to accommodate itself to the growing power of other major states and can only guard its interests by guiding a transition to a multipolar and multilateral format. Also the rapid pace of change; the unexpected and the uncertain outcomes challenges decision making. As old enmities, alliances and blocs dissolve and reform rapidly, it becomes difficult to have a strategy.

There is little doubt that a shift of power has begun. However, the landscape of the world is not yet well inscribed. But it is a complex world for sure and thus difficult to frame the politics, particularly on how states should respond. Should it be hard power of coercion or the soft power of attraction or as Jospeh Nye says a combination of the two for which he along with Richard Armitage used the word "smart power" in 2008. Interestingly a noted Indian scholar Amitav Acharya describes the world order as a "multiplex", a metaphor response to the inadequacies of the 'bi-polar' and 'multi-polar' world – a medley world or to simply put it an interdependent world with regionalism as a defining trend.[3]

When realists ask the old question 'who can do what to whom' in the 21st century, the blunt and the most deterministic response to it is geography. Indeed, the interdependent world today is reinforcing geography. Today issues are anchored to specific terrains. For example, to understand the challenges of climate change, warming Arctic seas, resource scarcity such as water and oil the environmental interpretation will be crucial. Viewing seas as a great "commons" or considering Himalaya as the ultimate watershed or charting the monsoon as a rain-dependent phenomena gives us a new lens to look at the world. Mackinder's summarization of his article 'The Geographical pivot of history' that "man and not nature initiates, but nature in large measures control" is critically relevant to understanding the interplay between the geo-physical, geo-economic and geo-strategic.[4]

In the 21st century, no state is an island. In fact, no state can afford to be an island. This is to say that states without any exception are heavily engaged in a world that is integrated and interconnected. Thus, states have to manage the linkage between internal and external, regional and global, commercial and political, and defence and diplomacy. These are the central challenges of strategic policy making that states will have to contend with.

Yet among these multiplicities, according to Kissinger, four specific orders can be mapped – European system and its Westphalia model of sovereignty; Islamic system and the idea of the Ummah; Chinese system based on traditional ideas of a middle kingdom; and the American order, trying to find a new purpose in the 21st century.[5] But there is another important determinant, the Anthropocene that has the potential

to alter significantly the geophysical landscape. Informally we are in a geological epoch described as the Anthropocene. There is now no greater challenge to the wellbeing of the global commons than human-induced climate change.

Since the industrial era began to trigger large-scale releases of fossil fuels, global average surface temperatures have risen by 0.8°C, already resulting in significant changes in physical, hydrological and ecological systems. Worldwide warming of 2-3˚C above pre-industrial temperatures is very likely to herald major changes in terrestrial, marine and mountain ecosystem. These developments are all connected and there is a risk of an irreversible cascade of changes leading us into a future that is profoundly different from anything we've faced before. The current anxieties about climate change impacts challenges the state-centric conceptualisations of international security as inadequate and raises doubts about the 'naturalness' of the modern nation states.

Asia order

Asia is at the centre of all attention. But what is Asia one would argue. As a concept Asia is imported and it never existed till the Europeans arrived as colonial powers. Because a number of great civilizations shaped the ethos and world view of modern states like China, Iran and India, the collective will always remain absent. Asia in essence is only a geographical expression. None of its sovereign states ever considered themselves as Asian. There is no common religion and language is varied. Some countries like Japan, South Korea and Singapore are economically prosperous and technologically advanced; India and China are in a sense planetary power of continental scale and with combined population of 3.5 billion. Interestingly the world population, just 50 years ago, equaled the current population of India and China and hence the two are planetary in scale and impact. Vast stretches of Asia are Muslim populated. Asia indeed represents a complex tapestry and Asian states are no longer, to use the phrase, "an adjunct of European powers". There is growing confidence in many states in Asia to actively engage in rule-making and not merely follow rules. But also on the other hand there is a national interest driven diplomacy.

Asia is the world's largest and most populous continent. With approximately 4.5 billion people, it makes up 60 per cent of the world's current human population. Asia's growth rate has quadrupled during the last 100 years and is currently the largest when measured in purchasing power parity. There is little doubt that Asia—stretching from the Eurasian landmass to the maritime reaches of Australia and the South Pacific—is experiencing a major shift in the global balance of power. Expressions like the 'Indo-Pacific' and 'Asia-Pacific', contested they maybe, capture Asia's expanse and dynamism.

But for one brief and dramatic financial crisis in 1997, growth rates in Asia have been averaging well above the rest of the world. The rise of China along with the increasing global footprint of Russia and India in G20 and the ASEAN states, soaring economies have made Asia the powerhouse and centre of gravity. Yet, Asia struggles with numerous conflicts in spite of its 'alphabet soup' of regional organisations and security structures.

Asia's economies are increasingly vital to each other and to the world with both

the US and Europe continuing to post low GDP growth. The economic shift is shaping two different approaches to trade liberalization in Asia. One paved by the ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the other by the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and it has to be seen how these approaches will determine the economic choices in the coming years. While, at one level, certain investment and trade barriers will continue to hinder business in Asia, at another, poverty eradication will have to remain an essence of economic growth for Asian countries.

The economies of Asia have to continuously grow fast along with being sustainable and inclusive. India's economy is set to soar by a huge 6.9 percent in the next decade and a half, jumping from a GDP of $2,557 billion in 2016 to $7,287 billion in 2030. Following a 5 percent increase from its 2016 GDP of $9,307 billion, China is set to boast an economy worth $18,829 billion by 2030. Other challenges that will impact the economy are an increased number of natural disasters that interrupt the supply chain, security concerns emanating from terrorism and cyber security, where hacking, espionage and lack of privacy fuel concerns for companies as well as politicians and governments. Asia is on the threshold of change—the known and the unknown.

A power shift from the West to the East is well under way. But what is not understood is how this global re-distribution of political, economic and military power will impact the global and regional geopolitical order. IR experts warn us that power transitions of this magnitude can prove to be destabilizing. The argument that the world is interdependent to an unprecedented degree offers some hope that the transitions to new world order may turn out to be peaceful.

The challenge is to take a measure of these changes and try to understand their impact on peace and stability. Interestingly, these changes are also changing the mindset of the people who are pushing for political reforms and accountability.

Where does that leave India? What world order does India seek? Can India be an influential part of the world order? Can it leverage its role to make itself a "diplomatic superpower", a carry forward from the Non-Aligned Movement. Will it be as many strategic analysts comment, a status quo power that accepts liberal norms and behaves as a "responsible stakeholder" in the global system; or a revisionist power that seeks to redefine the norms of international engagement.

India's engagement: A recalibration

For India, the emerging geopolitical and geo-economic trends raise questions as to how it will lock into the new continental power matrix and how it will respond and reappraise to the changes. The big question is how India is responding to the strategic changes in Asia? China sits atop the power pyramid with its physical size, military capability and economic clout that combines to assert regional dominance. Powers like India would not like to easily cede the hegemonic space to China but, at the same time, would realise that its power is pervasive and difficult to counter balance. The arrangement possibly would be for India to trade and invest intensely with China while seeking a security alliance with the US. Will India follow this path? How is India as an emerging power looked at in the region? Can India be a guarantor/balancer or

will it be seen as an opponent?

No one can say that India is not an important factor in global interdependence. National strategy is not whether there should be continuity or change. It is largely about reviews and priorities, which is to say recalibrating national strategy. This is what India is going through and this clearly requires a different set of policy ideas. Achieving external objectives and shaping international regimes cannot be delinked from building national capacity.

India's global political and economic footprint is growing. A figure suggests that more than 50 percent of India's GDP is linked to the world. India is undergoing notable economic transformation that will provide it the requisite assets to have a purposeful footprint in world affairs. India's engagement in the world is having high resonance and this is abundantly seen in the building of relations with all major powers but importantly not distinguishing from its principal role in the neighbourhood. The changing global order is encouraging India to think of policy outcomes and of activities with achievements.

This is reflected in some of the initiatives like the "Make in India", "Digital India", "100 Smart Cities", "Skill India" and "Clean India". There is also a set of whole new lexicon in India's engagement with the region and the world. Terms like 'Neighbourhood First', 'Look East' to 'Act East' are slogans to start up actions. Even on the climate change debate, India is changing the narrative by emphasizing 'lifestyle emissions' and 'sustainable consumption'. In the changing global order India does not merely want to be a balancer but a 'strategic influencer'. Also important is to take responsibility and lead as being a 'first responder' in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief situations. India is looking at the world in terms of possibilities rather than risks. It seeks resources, technology, and good practices from international partners.

At a global scale the interaction between India-China and the US will be one of the most important factors in determining the strategic balance in Asia and beyond. China and India are both undergoing external and internal transformation. The US, on the other hand, is trying to come to terms with the changed geopolitical landscape. In the larger global setting, India would clearly welcome the growing reality of a multi-polar world including a multi-polar Asia.

Interests are constructed through the process of social interactions. India's national interest is being redefined in enlightened and modernizing ways. One can also argue that there is a sociological perspective to its national security thinking. Issues dealing with norms and culture are becoming more salient. Another notable trend in India's national capacity building is societal empowerment and the sharing of power in the system of governance. These are consciously designed to marry principles of democracy with the need for conflict management.

Recall to civilization and culture

There are strong considerations of national honour and past greatness that is driving decision making in India. For example, soft-power initiatives like the International Day of Yoga, is an expression of greater self-confidence and a recall

to the ancient spiritual culture. Such initiatives create common cultural spaces for convergence. What we see in some of India's current policy is a recall to a traditional notion of *sri-yantra* or geo-philosophy. This means a confluence of science, philosophy, spirituality, and politics to achieve peace and prosperity. In many ways some of India's response to the changing global order is triadic, i.e., *ichcha* (will); *gyan* (knowledge) and *kriya* (action).

Regional integration

The idea that the state was being transcended was an important component in the emergence of "functional" interpretations of IR that have become firmly embedded as means of understanding regional integration. Increased knowledge, know-how and technological access is driving cooperation. Territorial organisations (states) would be transcended and replaced by functional organisations dealing with tourism, trade, water and electricity. Resultantly nationally-based identity and nationalism will decline – what David Mitrany, the British scholar and political theorist describes as "a working peace system". This will also spill over into other forms of integration.

A neigbourhood thrust has been visible with connectivity, culture and commerce. Settlement of the land boundary with Bangladesh; with Nepal tapping hydro-electric power and with Bhutan the relationship has been further consolidated. A sub-regional grouping involving all these countries is taking forward the connectivity and cooperation agenda. India appreciates national reconstruction and reconciliation while its "Act East" opens up possibilities for cooperation. The relationship with Pakistan is challenging but it will never be off the agenda.

The 'Neighbourhood First' approach has revitalised South Asia as never before. By signing the Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh, welcoming the democratic transformation in Myanmar, nurturing an all-weather friendship with Bhutan and launching India's largest disaster relief operation abroad in Nepal, the image of India as a positive regional power has taken a new frame.

Even small-island nations like Maldives and Mauritius become inclusive to this philosophy. The comprehensive nature of cooperation with the South Asian states is a dominant theme not a domineering one. Continued commitment towards reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, pushing the frontiers of ties with Sri Lanka by granting US$318 million LOC for railway and currency swap agreement of US$1.5 billion to help stabilize the Sri Lankan rupee define regional policies that are enduring and that bind India to the region.

Non-Traditional security issues

The distinctions between traditional and non-traditional security issues are increasingly blurred. In fact traditional and non-traditional security issues overlap and often reinforce each other. At the policy level there is a growing understanding of the connection between these two threats. Another aim is to understand their impact on the region and what can be done to tackle them. For example, water food and energy

security arguably carries the largest societal, political, and economic consequences. "Linkages between non-traditional security threats and weak political and economic performance not only reinforce the negative development but also threaten the very fabric of the state."

In South Asia, complex relationships evolve and interact by linking environmental-societal dynamics to economic and political systems. For example, rivers in South Asia as they criss-cross the political boundaries introduce interdependencies that can either reinforce or reduce differences. These rivers link its upstream-downstream riparians in a complex network of environmental, economic and security interdependencies. Upper riparians are concerned about the river basin in political terms while lower riparians are concerned about the basin in the physical sense. Each riparian has its own domestic consideration that influence bilateral or sub-regional water cooperation.

It is interesting here to note that rivers, as a source of freshwater and economic dividends, are bringing in new dynamism in regional cooperation. This is not an easy outcome despite the fact that South Asian states have shown remarkable riparian sensibilities by agreeing to water treaties, many of which are water sharing agreements, for example, the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan and the 1996 Ganga Treaty with Bangladesh. Rivers at one level are political, divisive and emotive and at another they are civilisational, spiritual, and localized in its interpretation. India's riparian position vis-à-vis its neighbours make it a dominant hydro-player but not a domineering one.

Rivers are central in India's current neighbourhood approach, and are being considered from every possible angle: policy/politics and science. A re-conceptualization of South Asia as a "riverine neighbourhood" is capturing the imagination of the people. Hydro is becoming a powerful and widespread prefix. Hydro-diplomacy along with hydro-sensibility and hydro-frankness will greatly help cut through hydro-hubris and hydro-suspicion.

Himalayan river systems, including Indus River System and the Ganga-Meghna-Brahmaputra (GMB) basin, bind Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and China together. Reductionist understanding of the complex hydro-ecology of the South Asian rivers has restricted the scope of sharing rivers to volumetric divisions of water flows. On the other hand, geopolitical tensions have led to 'securitization' of water in which data sharing and transparency in water use is difficult to achieve. Historical relations among riparian countries, economic and power asymmetries, and varied levels of basin dependence have fuelled mistrust and restricted cooperation.

It will be fundamentally important therefore to structure a broader water dialogue with China on the Brahmaputra and to also bring in other basin partners like Bhutan and Bangladesh. The rapidly changing Himalayan hydrology will require genuine willingness of states to engage in greater river basin cooperation and evolve new mechanisms and approaches to channelize water in the sub regional economic development. The BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India and Myanmar) economic corridor; the BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India and Nepal) sub-regional connectivity; and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) among nations in the coast of Bengal including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal. India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand provide a platform for knowledge

integration and implementation. Hydrological knowledge will be key to broader development and economic prosperity.

There are also critical eco-system issues in the neighbourhood that are gaining ascendency, and rightfully so. In an enlightened spirit, trans-boundary protected areas (TBPA) on the Sunderbans between India and Bangladesh are being considered. South Asia cannot always be thought about as a flashpoint!

Conclusion

As India recalls its rich heritage, civilization, its great minds and thinkers' one is reminded of Swami Vivekanand, the great social reformer and one of India's greatest *vishwatma* (the spirit of the universe). As he travelled through India and the world, he observed the four shortcomings of India as poverty, lack of education, disrespect for women and low confidence.

While the first three still remain critical challenges to overcome to make India internally strong and resilient, it is the fourth that today has dramatically changed. We are witnessing a more confident India in its engagement with the world, a more "business-like India", largely assured and to a great degree quite certain. In doing so it is looking beyond the 20th century orthodoxies. If equilibrium is what the global order thrives for then shared power is the outcome and will be at the heart of Asia's emerging security architecture. India would certainly like to be part of it.

The global order is a paradox. At one level the world is multipolarising and multilateralising at an unprecedented scale and speed. One the other hand, the world also seems to be bilateralising or at best regionalising. The world has never been more interdependent in terms of production processes, economic stability, food security, climate security, and even health and political security. Foreign policy is back being dominant and might conceivably help countries build domestic support for multilateral co-operation. This interdependence can only be viewed as very positive. Nothing can be better than preserving a functional international order.

Emerging countries, given daunting development challenges, will continue to claim for flexibilities in the form of "special and differential treatment" in WTO and "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" in the UN climate process. India's priorities are clearer with respect to its neighbourhood, its broader region, and in making a global impact. Diplomacy is not foreign or alien. It is public affairs and it is helping play a role in India's national development.

Endnotes

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Shaking Things Up:
Gulf Security after the Iran Deal

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Abstract

The security situation in the Gulf was shaky at the start of 2015, and became more unsettled as the year went on and throughout 2016. Long standing problems were generally not resolved, and new ones arose in the course of the last two years. The major outside effort to bring stability to the Gulf – the Iranian nuclear deal – paradoxically was the prime driver of anxiety and possibly even of military conflict in the region. This article reviews the major events of the past two years and draws out the implications on the regional security complex.

Keywords : Security, Gulf, Middle East, Nuclear, Yemen, Missile Defense

The security situation in the Gulf was shaky at the start of 2015, and became more unsettled as the year progressed. Long standing problems were generally unresolved, and new ones arose in the course of this most extraordinary year. The major outside effort to bring stability to the Gulf – the Iranian nuclear deal – paradoxically was the prime driver of anxiety and possibly even of military conflict in the region.

The Gulf at the start of 2015

The security situation in the Gulf at the start of 2015 was unsettled. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states were uneasy about the ongoing Iranian nuclear talks, and feared that the West, in particular the United States, was on the verge of a "grand bargain" wherein which America would swap Arab chess pieces for Persian ones.

At the same time, the GCC states looked around themselves and saw conflict, much of which they viewed as Shi'a inspired – the ongoing shambles of a government in Iraq, which proved incapable of dealing effectively with ISIS unless it gave the color of law to Shi'a militias; the continuing slaughter in Syria by an Asa'ad regime propped up by Hezbollah and Iranian support; and the Houthi occupation of Sana'a and northern Yemen, in which the treachery of Ali Abdullah Saleh enabled conquest of most of the former Northern Yemen and allowed Houthi expansion to Aden.

The aftermath of the sadly misnamed Arab Spring continued to bedevil the GCC members. The post-Morsi regime in Egypt has managed to enlist the Saudis and

Emiratis to continue to fund Egypt's chronically disordered and unproductive economy to the tune of billions of dollars – this is a never-ending liability in which the cessation of Saudi payments would probably lead to a regime collapse in the most populous Arab state. The conflict in Bahrain has been subsumed but not resolved – in spite of (or perhaps because of) a massive security presence, the island remains no closer to a political settlement than at any time since 2011, and the fundamental political conflict remains unresolved, simmering on low boil just below the surface.

The slide in oil prices, which began in the fall of 2014, continued unabated. Some pessimistic analysts predicted that this decline would undermine the basic governance contract in the Gulf by leading to cuts in social spending and subsidies and thus lead to the fall of regimes in the Gulf. There was much speculation that military and security spending in the Gulf (which is the largest market for arms imports in the world) would decline and that this, again, would lead to the weakening if not the fall of these regimes.

Qatar, which had been at loggerheads with its GCC allies over support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and elsewhere, saw a reconciliation with its partners under the reign of its new Emir. No doubt some hard feelings and policy differences remain, but Qatar and its partners have avoided open disagreements.

Developments in 2015

A king passes

The death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was the most significant political development in the Gulf in 2015. His passing did not come as a surprise, particularly as he had spent a significant amount of time in his last years working on a plan for succession. However, The rule of King Salman has confounded analysts of the Kingdom.

The first action of the new king after the funeral of Abdullah was to go on a spending binge. State employees received a month's pay as a bonus, and promotions were liberally granted in the armed forces. The succession, which Abdullah and his Allegiance Council had confirmed as non-reviewable, had Muqrin, the youngest son of Ibn Saud, as Crown Prince and Muhammad bin Nayef as the Deputy Crown Prince – the grandson of Ibn Saud to be in line for the crown.

In April, the new King modified this line of succession. He removed Muqrin from his position, elevated Muhammad bin Nayef to Crown Prince and – most notably – named his 29 year old son, Muhammad bin Sultan, as the Deputy Crown Prince. Again, and in spite of the strain on national finances caused by low oil prices, the King granted significant bonuses to government employees.

Muhammad bin Sultan was largely unknown outside of the Kingdom. Unusually for a senior royal of his generation, he has never studied in the West and does not speak English. Those who knew him from his time as Deputy Minister of Defense describe him as energetic, decisive and change-oriented – a person who understands what needs to be changed and isn't afraid to confront tradition and bureaucracy if it

stands in the way of this needed change.

Muhammad bin Sultan was showered with a number of important titles, to include Royal Court Minister and Minister of Defense, and has received praise or blame for just about every action the Saudi government has taken. For example, even though the Saudi policy of not cutting oil production pre-dated Muhammad's elevation to the post of Crown Prince, it is now widely seen as his policy.

Oil prices slide

There is an old Russian proverb: "when you're running from a wolf, you'll bump into a bear." In the summer of 2014, oil was above $100 a barrel. It was hovering around $40 a barrel at the start of 2015, and has steadily declined over the year, to below $30 a barrel at the start of 2016.

All of the countries of the Gulf, to include Iraq and Iran, are extremely dependent upon the export of oil. Most other industrial activity in the Gulf is either a downstream product of oil (such as plastic production) or is dependent upon extremely low energy prices (such as cement). Commercial air travel, which has boomed in recent years, is also subsidized by governments which are enriched by energy exports.

The general consensus is that the Saudis hold the controls in the current oil glut. They are the "swing producer" which can either expand production to cause a glut of oil and thus low prices, or can contract production and drive up prices again. Beyond this assessment, however, analysts differ both on the motives of Saudi Arabia as well as on the ability of the market to rebound to the previous high oil prices.

Speculation abounds as to the Saudi motives, but explanations are generally either economic or geo-political. The economic camp views the oil glut as a Saudi attempt to drive high cost producers as well as alternative energy out of the market. If this is in fact the motive, it has had some success. Brazilian deep water and new Russian arctic off-shore developments have been shelved as too costly at current market rates, and the Canadian tar sands project limps along at an operating loss.

The real revolutionary development in the energy market, however, has been American shale oil production. Here, the record is much less clear. Shale oil production costs are dropping exponentially, and individual drillers who were highly leveraged did not vanish, but rather sold their operations to more efficient producers. Shale oil appears to be very responsive to market factors, and wells could be sunk relatively efficiently in response to an uptick in oil prices. It may be that a Rubicon has been crossed, and oil prices will remain low for some time.

The second camp focuses on the geo-strategic, and sees the Saudi effort to keep prices low as a political effort designed to prevent Iran from gaining any advantage from re-entering world oil markets, while at the same time punishing Iran's prime partner in supporting Asa'ad – Russia and crippling the Iranian client regime in Iraq.

No one outside of the Saudi inner circle is in a position to prove which of these theses is correct, and it is quite possible that both motives were taken into account in deciding to maintain Saudi oil production. The Saudi regime appears to be engaged in a game of chicken, and calculates that its ability to withstand the economic pain of low prices is greater than its rivals. At the start of the oil price slide, Saudi Arabia had

estimated foreign currency reserves of $750 Billion – it has since burned more than $100 billion. Unlike its wealthy neighbors, Saudi Arabia does not have a sovereign wealth fund and thus has no easy way of replenishing these funds short of selling national assets, for example by floating shares of ARAMCO, the national oil fund. The resilience of the Saudi political compact, in which subjects support the house of Saud in exchange for social spending benefits, is being questioned for the first time in decades.

The Iran deal and its discontents

The deal between the Western powers, led by the United States and Iran over its nuclear program was negotiated throughout 2015 and only came into effect in early 2016. Unusually for a diplomatic deal, this was rolled out over the course of the year in a series of informal agreements, areas to negotiate, extensions and meetings. The implementation of the agreement – the deactivation of Iranian nuclear capabilities and lifting of sanctions – only occurred in January 2016.

At each turn of this prolonged process, the GCC states, Israel and many critics within Europe and the US opposed the deal. It was disapproved by a majority of the American Congress, and publicly decried by Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu in a joint address before the Congress. GCC leaders generally made their reservations known in private, or through proxies, but their criticisms were broadly in line with Israel's.

The Iran deal, regardless of its merits, is not seen by any of the Arab states of the Gulf as a positive. Instead, it has served to highlight the underlying paradoxes in the relationship between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members and the West, more specifically the United States.

This Arab unease has several causes and takes many forms. The first is related to the infelicitous timing of the announcement that the United States and Iran had been involved in secret negotiations. In an act of particularly unfortunate timing, these talks became public knowledge almost immediately after the Obama administration's threat of military action against Syria was shown to be a hollow threat. While American domestic opposition to military action in Syria was the driver behind the American erasing of "red-lines" in the summer of 2013, the almost immediate unveiling of the Iran talks was easily viewed as a quid pro quo – by looking at the sequence of actions, it was easy to conclude that the Americans swapped inaction against Asa'ad as a concession to Iran in order to begin nuclear negotiations.

Compounding this atmosphere of unease was another paradox which is at the heart of any issue-specific negotiation: by considering just one aspect of Iran's policy (nuclear development), the negotiations grant de-facto license for Iran to continue with other policies of concern, such as meddling in GCC states, supporting the Houthis in Yemen and Asa'ad in Syria, and subverting the Iraqi government.

Put simply, the fear of many in the GCC states was that Arab equities were being compromised for the sake of an Iran deal which many see as fundamentally flawed and overly limited. Much of the advocacy in the United States in favor of the Iran deal relied on two points: 1.The existing regime of sanctions was crumbling

and the only alternatives to a deal were either accepting Iranian nuclear weapons or going to war; and 2. A deal with Iran would be the first step in a transformative reconciliation process between Iran and the West which would eventually result in improved security.

Mitigating unease

GCC states (save Oman) never felt these arguments were persuasive. The United States appeared to recognize this unease as it began to grant significant security concessions to the GCC states while the Iran negotiations were underway. For the first time, the United States approved the sale of long-sought after beyond visual range stand-off ground attack missiles to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This weaponry represents an advanced capability not currently present in the Gulf, and thus violated a long-standing US policy not to introduce new technology in a region where it doesn't exist. It also presumably required significant groundwork with Israel and Israel's American supporters to mollify concerns over maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge.

These missiles are air launched, but can attack targets far beyond the visual range of the aircraft which launches them. They are fire-and-forget, and have a range long enough that they could be launched over the Arab side of the Gulf and still hit targets well within Iran. They are also smart missiles – they do not follow a parabolic arc to their targets but instead are capable of dropping to a low altitude to avoid radar detection and then pop up close to the target and attack from above. This capability had been repeatedly sought by the Arab Gulf States

Another presumed concession from the United States was the granting of a "free hand" and significant support to the Saudi-led war against the Houthis and Ali Abdullah Saleh's loyalists in the security apparatus. While some have portrayed this war as a continuation of the 2009 Saudi- Houthi war, there are significant differences in how the other GCC countries and the United States views the war.

In the 2009 Saudi-Houthi war, America was largely agnostic, and viewed the Saudi effort as a limited border operation which didn't merit much American support. The contrast with the current war in Yemen is marked. The Saudis have built a coalition which has a significant and impressive Emirati and Bahraini component, and a significant numbers of others, most notably Eritreans and Sudanese. The United States has played a significant role in this coalition, establishing an active forward support presence in Riyadh to augment Saudi capabilities, particularly in operations, intelligence and logistics. The United States has already approved a resupply of Saudi precision guided munitions expended in battle, and notably rescued the crew of a Saudi F-15 which had gone down in the Red Sea.

The ongoing bombing campaign in Yemen and the accompanying blockade, which is designed to prevent Iranian resupply of the Houthis, has led to significant destruction and human suffering. While it is questionable that the United States would publicly decry the actions of such a close partner as Saudi Arabia, the American silence in the face of this slow motion humanitarian crisis is notable.

Mollifying the GCC countries: The Camp David Summit

May's US-GCC Camp David summit was America's attempt to bring the Gulf leaders into public acceptance of the Iran deal, and reassure them of America's commitment to their defense. What was hoped to be a public relations success, an exemplar of solidarity, was billed as a failure before it even began. Several heads of state decided not to attend, and most press reported this as a snub and a rejection of American policy, particularly towards the Iran deal.

It is always tenuous to try to read policy motives into the reluctance of octogenarians with health concerns to fly halfway around the world. It should also be noted that Saudi Arabia, in particular, feels that its size and prominence in the Gulf merits it the status of a "special partner" and that it bridals as being treated by the US as one among equals within the GCC. Nevertheless, the Camp David Summit failed to yield the show of solidarity which was hoped for, and most viewed the summit as a damp squib.

There were, however, a number of positive outcomes from the Camp David summit. The GCC and the US agreed to cooperate on counter-terror operations, security assistance, and regional security. They issued common goals for Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Israel-Palestinian conflict. And the summit communique reaffirmed the American commitment to defend the Gulf States against outside aggression.

Typically for America in the Gulf, the field of security cooperation has led to the most concrete actions. America has committed to fast-tracking weapons sales to the GCC countries, although how feasible this is in the face of a convoluted legal arms-transfers regime designed to decelerate such actions is questionable. The summit communique also committed the nations to cooperation in ballistic missile defense, enhanced training and military exercises, and enhanced maritime security measures.

The most promising field for US-GCC military cooperation and the most likely driver to closer GCC military integration due to technical considerations and the undeniable improvement in effectiveness from cooperation, is in ballistic missile defense.

The vulnerabilities of the Gulf

The rulers of the Gulf States are right to be concerned about their security. There are few other places in the world where prosperity is so fragile and easily disturbed. No state in the Gulf is immune from Iranian missile attacks. Given the global mobility of most Gulf citizens, an adversary wouldn't have to defeat a Gulf state, only reduce the quality of life significantly within the Gulf to render the state ineffective due to the reliance of the GCC states on foreigners – who have significant requirements.

The Western powers have long hoped to see Gulf military integration. The nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council have developed some joint institutions, but these invariably pursue a simple level of cooperation. True military integration, which would enhance interoperability and present a more effective deterrent to potential enemies such as Iran, is marred by mutual distrust as well as fear of being incorporated

into the sphere of Saudi Arabia, whose security forces are much larger than all of the others combined.

Promoting GCC military integration was a major aim of last summer's Camp David summit. Unfortunately, absent an urgent outside threat, mutual distrust and shallow cooperation remain the order of the day. There is, however, one area where the technical benefits of cooperation may outrace the political ones – that of missile defense.

For the United States - the prime outside provider of security to the region – the promise of true Gulf military integration would mean that there would be one set of protocols and procedures, one common series of military exercises, and a uniformity of equipment which could lead to true interoperability. With this, American forces would cede some functions and rely on Gulf forces to perform them. At the moment, interoperability is at the shallow level of deconfliction – in a general conflict, GCC forces would be given "boxes" to operate in distinct from American forces, except for those who have pursued greater integration on a bilateral basis, such as the UAE air force.

Because a missile defense system requires a complex network of sensors to acquire, track and follow a target missile, there are incontestable advantages to linking national sensing assets (satellites and radars) and interception assets (missiles). There is some evidence that this work is proceeding apace. The Chief of the Bahraini Air Force noted in January that cooperation in missile defense was proceeding apace.

The logic and benefits of integrated missile defense is undeniable. National missile defense assets (such as Patriot or THAAD, which are in used in every GCC country save Oman) have limited ranges and detection fans. They need to be cued by midcourse radars, which in turn need to be directed or alerted by a launch sensor.

In the current system, the launch sensor is an American satellite, which notices the flash from a missile launch. Midcourse sensing is provided by US Navy Aegis-equipped ships (which also have a midcourse interception capability). Once a target missile passes the midcourse stage and begins to descend upon a GCC target, a GCC radar could cue intercept missiles, which operate at the very end of the flight path.

By pooling existing assets and cooperating on the acquisition of future missile defense assets (such as a shore-based Aegis system or the development of a GCC launch-detection satellite), all the GCC states will benefit from increased warning and reaction time. The timespans are extremely short – the flight path for a ballistic missile from Tabriz to Abu Dhabi is less than ten minutes. Any interceptor would benefit from enhanced early notice and tracking.

Once the GCC states see the benefit of an integrated missile defense system, they will then seek to reap these gains in other fields. The most logical candidate for this enhanced collaboration will probably be the development of a common air command and control system which integrates military aircraft, ground-based missiles and air defense assets, and eventually surface-based assets such as naval ships and ground artillery systems.

Such a system would allow the GCC states to operate in a truly interdependent manner, not just in nationally defined "boxes" where the air forces of one country operate alongside another, but never in the same airspace. Instead, UAE strike

aircraft could deploy with Saudi fighter escorts and Bahraini search-and-rescue. We are seeing some of this sort of complex interdependency in operations in Yemen, but past practice suggests that this is only an ad hoc expeditionary arrangement, and won't be incorporated into the development of GCC national air defenses.

Currently, the GCC states all maintain national liaisons at the American air command center at al-Udeid air base in Qatar. They are dependent upon the US's command and control network, and must route critical information through a human link (the national liaison) which may simply be incapable of the rapid response needed to intercept an incoming missile. In an integrated GCC missile defense network, the alert, cueing, and tracking processes would be automated; GCC missile interception assets could be pooled regardless of nationality. A Qatari missile could intercept an Iranian missile targeted at Saudi Arabia.

To engineers and military planners, the benefits of integration are self-evident, as is the inevitable progress from an integrated missile defense network, to an integrated air defense network, to an integrated fires network (incorporating surface ships and artillery). This integration will, it is hoped, create a "virtuous cycle" of enhanced collaboration which would lead to joint adoption of command and control software, standardization of military communications and intelligence systems, and truly integrated and interoperable armed forces. These new forces would be capable of seamless integration into the command and logistics systems not only of other GCC forces, but also into the systems of the United States and its NATO allies.

This is the true promise of GCC military integration. There has not been a better time to achieve it - as Iran gains access to world financial markets and GCC militaries are forced by low oil prices to become more efficient, the threat to GCC states increases and the imperative to build more effective military defenses gains momentum. GCC states are being forced by the situation to abandon the inefficient isolation they have indulged in before, and look to reap the benefits of mutual defense collaboration. At the same time, the GCC's distrust of President Obama has eroded the implicit confidence each GCC state has in relying on bilateral relations with the USA for their defense.

The GCC has the opportunity to emerge from a period of profound security challenges with a defense infrastructure which is uniquely suited to achieving their national security goals and preserving their security interests better than at any other time in their history. The driver of this promise is missile defense. The only question is if the GCC states will be able to seize this opportunity, or if they will allow historic mistrust to betray their true security interests.

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Three Conditions to Maintain the Cross-Strait Status Quo: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract[1]

The Cross-Strait relations between People's Republic of China and Taiwan have been on a strategic impasse for many decades. The US strategic interests in China-Taiwan bilateral relationship further complicate maintaining the peaceful status quo and create the stakeholder trinity in US-Sino-Taiwan relations. However, the key contestation is whether this peaceful stalemate will sustain, and if so, under what conditions. This paper, therefore, conceptualizes that there are three essential conditions to maintain the peaceful status quo in Cross-Strait relations within the realm of US geopolitical interest. These three are: (1) Nothing other than a peaceful settlement for the dispute, (2) Understanding that economic benefit outweighs sustaining economic costs, and (3) Continual dialogue between the leaders of all three stakeholders. Accordingly, the paper argues that these are three necessary conditions to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait relationship and uses structured, focused comparison to analyze these conditions for the US-Sino-Taiwan interrelationship under three international relations theories: neorealism, democratic peace theory and international liberalism to substantiate the core idea of the academic enquiry. Finally, the theoretical analysis concludes that the posited three conditions to maintain the peaceful status quo are effective under various levels of acceptance under the three separate theories of international relations. In addition, the findings prove that these necessary conditions are valid options for peaceful Cross-Strait relations in the changing contemporary political context.

Keywords: Cross-Strait relations, Status quo, neorealism, democratic peace, international liberalism

Introduction

The tremulous relations across the Taiwan Strait are in a strategic stalemate wherein parties to the issue are acquiescent to the status quo. However, the questions mused in the scholarly community are: how long would this strategic impasse last? And would this status quo sustain in the foreseeable future? Despite the uncertainty in the

future of the bilateral relationship, the domestic and international political backdrop silhouettes the interactions between the two parties. Furthermore, the external forces driven to preserve their own national interests influence these protracted claims over sovereignty. The United States (US), motivated to preserve its security interests and as a "resident power in Asia"[2], is arguably the most influential stakeholder creating the trinity in the Cross-Strait relations. Therefore, it is conclusive that the two parties to the dispute cannot bilaterally resolve the disaccord or even maintain the present status quo. Contextually, the prevailing political perceptions, strategic notions and geopolitical security do affect the stakeholders' decisions. For instance, history provides evidence that classical realism, strategies of collective security and balance of power rearranged the international political landscape on multiple occasions. The Great War, WWII and the Cold War between US and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) are the most noticeable changes that occurred in contemporary history.

Figure 1: Map of Taiwan Strait[3]

Despite scholars arguing that realist notions are obsolescent in the present context, the strategic uncertainty in the Cross-Strait relations raises the concern vis-à-vis maintaining a peaceful status quo. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze and answer the question under what conditions the status quo could be maintained in the China-Taiwan-US interrelationship. The litany of available literature on China, Taiwan and US relations are predominately focused on a historical narrative and concludes by recognizing the strategic impasse or gridlock. However, in a generic sense, these conclusions are based on a single, yet prevailing international relations theory

and do not attempt to discern the outcome within the realm of changing ideologies. A comparative analysis, using multiple theories that mold international relations is a logical approach to derive the answer to the primary question. Moreover, strategic reasoning to maintain the present status quo can be dependent upon stakeholders' strategic policies to preserve its fundamental interests. Hence, this inquiry is well placed to provide comparative perceptions on maintaining the peaceful status quo in Cross-Strait relations.

This paper theorizes the conditions that would maintain the status quo in the Cross-Straits relationship in the contemporary context, for the predictable future and conceptualizes that there are three conditions that will preserve the present status quo among the three parties. These conditions are: (1) Nothing other than a peaceful settlement for the dispute, (2) Understanding that economic benefit outweighs sustaining economic costs, and (3) Continual dialogue between the leaders of all three stakeholders. Therefore, we can argue that these are three necessary conditions to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait relationship. This postulation does not necessarily mean that the three conditions are sufficient measures to perpetuate the present status quo; however, these are necessary conditions that can provide grounds for perpetual peace and stability. The analysis uses structured, focused comparison to substantiate the three conditions under contemporary socioeconomic and political context.

The methodological structure consists of three international relations viewpoints called lenses in the analysis. They are: neorealism, democratic peace theory and liberal internationalism. The three-lens structure is cogitated as the most suitable for the comparative study because of three reasons. First, arguably realism has been the most prominent theory in international relations and contemporary politics for centuries. The realist notions underpin strategies and policies on preserving territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. Further, it structures the coercive apparatus and its rules of engagement in threats against the nation-state. Therefore, analyzing the three conditions for a status quo under the realist ideology is prudent. Secondly, democracy is a political system that is built upon the concept of equality and responsiveness of the polity to its citizens.[4] These democratic values and ideals are elements that affect the multilateral relations among democracies and between democracies and non-democracies. Hence, democratic peace theory is well placed to prove the validity of the conceptualized conditions. Finally, the present drive of globalization and economic preeminence is arguably the most influential factor in present-day international relations. The theory of liberal internationalism is structured around mutual economic gain and economic costs and benefit, thus providing an ideal viewpoint to assimilate how the bilateral or multilateral relations are shaped, even among countries with hot or cold tensions.

The tripartite structure: The theories of International Relations

The definitions of the three international relations theories are an essential component of this analytical study. Firstly, neorealism is a scholarly extension of the classical notion of realism that was conceptualized in the latter part of the 20th

Century.[5] The international relations landscape has been shaped by realism and the realist behavior of the state for many centuries. Even though there are multiple definitions of realism, this study uses the seminal approach of Robert Gilpin that defines realism with three assumptions. Accordingly, realist thinking encompasses, firstly, "the essentially conflictual nature of international affairs", secondly, the "essence of social reality is the group" and thirdly, "the primacy in all political life of power and security in human motivation"[6]. This synthesizes the anarchy in the international system and the state's self-interest in decision making as foundations of the realist notion. Despite neorealism being conceptualized by extending the ideology of realism, according to Jack Donnelly it contrasts in a "rigorous structural emphasis from earlier, more eclectic realists".[7] Kenneth Waltz defines neorealism as an international politics based theory that focuses on the constituent (state) - structural interaction in an international system that is congenitally anarchic.[8] Furthermore, metamorphosis of the system depends upon the great power arrangements and the "assumed motivation of the units and the structure of the system in which they act.[9] As the definition elucidates, this theory is vital to draw conclusions on the present systemic changes in the Asia-Pacific and the arrangements of the Unit's (US, China and Taiwan) motivations. Secondly, the democratic peace theory crystalizes democratic ideals and its implications on international politics. Democratic peace theory was first mused by Immanuel Kant in the seminal manuscript: Perpetual Peace (1795)[10]. This ideological conception was based upon the presupposition of implementing republican constitutions and judiciary tenets that preserve peace.[11] Further probing these ideals of democracy, Bruce Russet et al., conceptualizes democratic peace based on three characteristics.[12] They are,

> First, democratically organized political systems in general operate under restraints that make them more peaceful in their relations with other democracies. Democracies are not necessarily peaceful, however, in their relations with other kinds of political systems. Second, in the modern international system, democracies are less likely to use lethal violence towards other democracies than toward autocratically governed states.... Third, the relationship of relative peace among democracies is importantly a result of some features of democracy, rather than being caused exclusively by economic or geopolitical characteristics correlated with democracy.[13]

US and Taiwan being liberal democracies and China being a single-party authoritarian state warrants this theory highly appropriate to analyze the status quo and the relative peace among the three parties.

Finally, liberal internationalism is a conflation of economic motivations and democratic ideals.[14] However the locus of the theory is the economic cost and benefit that influences the decisions in international politics. Furthermore, its theoretical precepts were "laid in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by liberals proposing preconditions for a peaceful world order".[15] Notwithstanding, the theory substantiates peace among states through economic cooperation and the notion that the value of economic benefit outweighs the cost of traditional realist behavior. Furthermore,

liberal internationalism coins war as an unnatural and irrational state of behavior that cannot be linked to the natural state of humans.[16] The path to peace among states is the "spirit of commerce"[17] and trade that is mutually beneficial for all the units (states) in the international system. Scott Burchill states, "trade would create relations of mutual dependence which would foster understanding between peoples and reduce conflict".[18] Therefore, this notion is ideally suitable to evaluate the status quo in the China-US-Taiwan trinity, especially, under the influence of globalization and continuous economic power struggles.

Exploring the existing literature on the Cross-Strait relations

Litany of Literature probes the possible outcomes of the Cross-Strait tensions between China and Taiwan under the influence of US power politics and quintessentially infers three possible conclusions. These are: reunification with the mainland, independence of Taiwan and maintaining the status quo. However, this paper focuses its academic analysis on the literature vis-à-vis the strategic impasse and maintaining the relationship status quo. Fittingly, Jing Huang and Xiaoting Li provide a comprehensive historical narrative of events that surrounds the China-Taiwan relationship.[19] The exploratory research recognizes the shift in Chinese policy towards Taiwan from a classical realist approach to a neorealist character and then remained at a more accommodative "One-China" notion[20]. Furthermore, this highlights the consequences of the mainland's domestic political landscape on the Cross-Strait relations. For instance, these authors clearly elucidate the effects of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) politics on the mainland's Taiwan policy.[21] Moreover, the authors postulate three conditions (1) Acknowledging each other's interests and constraints, (2) Recognizing that there is only one China, and that (3) Taiwan does not pursue separation as to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait relations.[22] Even though the conditions are not comparatively analyzed, it provides the foundation to discern the salient points defining the status quo.

In a more one-sided realist approach, David Shlapak et al. probes the necessities for a balance of power between China and Taiwan under the patronage of US military assistance to Taipei.[23] Even though this scenario analysis explains the outcome of war between China and Taiwan, it superfluously underestimates the modernization of the Chinese military. Hence, it lacks credible implications that could benefit a critical analysis of the present status quo between the three stakeholders. The comparative study by Aaron Friedberg posits the inevitable possibility of war between the two great powers and explores the outcome of the uncertain relationship through optimistic and pessimistic viewpoints.[24] Interestingly, the analysis uses three theoretical perspectives to determine the most likely outcome between China-US political tensions.[25] Even though the analytical perception probes the propensity of conflict between US and China, it restricts the relationship's outcome to war or peace, and does not consider the strategic option of maintaining the status quo. Robert Ross uses the deterrence theory to determine the likelihood of the US maintaining strategic dominance and control conflict escalation with China.[26] The crux of the argument analyses the continuous capacity of the US to deter China in the Asia Pacific region under the precondition

that Taiwan does not declare independence.[27] The emphasis on averting a separatist movement from Taiwan draws a key conclusion on the significance of a status quo rather than tipping the situation into conflict.

Similarly, Robert Scalapino explains the complexity of the cross-strait relations and highlights the paradox faced by all three parties.[28] This paper also probes the economic and political sway in decision-making and recognizes that US strategic interests formulate the status quo.[29] For instance, the US recognizing Taiwan as a "de facto political entity"[30] precludes any unitary action by China against Taiwan. With respect to the trilateral relationship, both the studies highlight the preeminence of economic interests and attaining the moral high ground by protecting democratic ideals. Providing a holistic assessment, Phillip Saunders argues that long-term foreign policy trends within the trilateral relationship causes a metamorphosis in the regional security architecture.[31] This change is caused by the political, economic and military trends in the Cross-Strait relations and their corollary effects. In addition, the Chinese and Taiwanese policy pendulum provides insight into the Cross-Strait relationship and its outcomes. For instance, Alan Romberg delineates the process in which the domestic political order in China and Taiwan changes the structure of the bilateral relations.[32] This provides a glimpse of liberal internationalist policies that capitalize on mutual economic benefits to ameliorate the tensions across the straits.

Therefore, it is palpable that the strategic impasse manifests the present peaceful status quo. Furthermore, the initial analysis recognizes the need for a comprehensive comparative study that probes the conditions to maintain this state. However, the existing literatures provide vital insight in to the political landscape, strategic decisions, foreign policies and stakeholder decision patterns. These silhouette the present status quo and become a blueprint for this paper's comparative analysis.

Comparative analysis: condition 1 - nothing other than a peaceful settlement for the dispute

The first condition to sustain the present status quo in the China-Taiwan issue is the agreement between the three key stakeholders to only seek a peaceful resolution. In a realist point of view this arguably might be the most difficult precondition to preserve. Under the notion of neorealism, balance of power and theory of deterrence breeds misperceptions and fosters a security dilemma between states. Even though neorealism does not ostracize democratic ideals it prioritizes protecting the nation-state and its self-interests. The present military expansion of China can be assimilated as creating a military power hegemony in the Asia Pacific. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) database on global military spending, China has increased it military budget from USD 191.2 bn in 2013 to USD 216.4 bn in 2014 indicating a 13.2 percent increase in military spending.[33] On the contrary, US military spending has declined to USD 610 bn in 2014 indicating a 4.6 percent decline in military spending.[34]Analogously, Taiwan's military budget has been an almost constant with 2.75 percent drop from USD 105.3 bn in 2013 to USD 102.4 bn in 2014.[35] This proves that even amidst the Chinese military expansion and

rising assertiveness in South and East China Seas, US and Taiwan do not recognize the shift as an eminent threat to the status quo. It also provides evidence that in a neorealist perception, US and Taiwan are both signaling a peaceful settlement rather than a military arms race.

However, it is difficult to clearly predict the outcome under a unilateral or unprovoked military action by either party. Further it can be mused that strong military powers are highly unlikely to declare war with equally powerful militaries because of the lessons learnt from WWI and WWII. In addition, the escalation of the conflict can become an existential threat to all the belligerents involved in it. Therefore, the Chinese military expansion propels the other parties to seek a peaceful settlement than resolve the dispute through violent use of force. For instance, the Chinese military, especially the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is becoming a blue water navy that is forecasted to equal US Naval power in 2020.[36] This threat is more likely to maintain the status quo rather than pushing the US and Taiwan navies to balance against the PLAN. This is because such hostilities can initiate a regional catastrophe rather than resolving the issue. From a neorealist point of view, states will act based on the present structure in the international system, rather than individual state interests. Additionally, the US pivot towards an inclusive security strategy in the Asia Pacific fosters a peaceful engagement in security affairs. Notwithstanding, the US rebalancing strategy towards Asia focuses on capturing the opportunities for mutual development rather than managing the crises in the Region.[37] According to a senior US government official, US believe and support a "prosperous and stable China" that values an open security order in the region.[38] Even with the neorealist lens this policy shift is evidence that US foreign policy is tilted towards a peaceful resolution of Cross-Strait relations.

Further, Taiwan also values a peaceful settlement even amidst the pressure of rising nationalism. Taiwan accepts that a movement towards independence can only result in a military showdown between the three key stakeholders. Moreover, China even being adamant on the "One China" policy does signal a peaceful settlement regarding the Taiwan issue. For instance, although China adopted the Anti-Secession Law (ASL) in 2005[39], the Chinese foreign policy recognizes that the dispute with Taiwan cannot be resolved unanimously. Despite China and US under the third communiqué recognized that both parties would not interfere in respective domestic affairs[40], in reality, US strategic interest on Taiwan is resolute for the near future. Therefore, within the neorealist approach of protecting its sovereignty, China is most likely to maintain the status quo rather than escalating the tensions to a point of conflict with another nuclear power. Even though a peaceful settlement in the Cross-Strait dispute might moot realist thinking of establishing a power hegemony in Asia Pacific, the calculated risk carries a dire cost in the regional and international political landscape. As discerned through neorealism, the state-structure interactions avoid such a power change and preserve the status quo. Thus, the condition of peaceful settlement is valid under the precepts of neorealism and can be established at a moderate level of acceptance from a neorealist point of view.

Contrary to neorealism, the democratic peace theory fully supports the first condition to only seek a resolution through peace. For instance, the Taiwan Relations

Act (TRA) Section 2 Paragraph 2 states that the normalization of US-Sino relations are based upon peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue and any action that would violate such a measure is a grave concern for the US.[41] This indicates the democratic peace theorist approach to protecting democratic rights. The political bond created between the US and Taiwan polities are strengthened by democratic ideal, value for human rights and respect of international laws. As stated by Richard Bush, "Taiwan's democratization has profoundly transformed the Taiwan strait's issue"[42] In addition, preserving the ideals of democracy and creating a "polyarchial"[43] society is fostering peaceful means of settling the dispute with the mainland China. Moreover, under these democratic ideals, even though Taiwan's nationalism might be on a rise, the domestic political landscape will not allow the situation to escalate into an armed conflict.

China also has a similar stake in adhering to a peaceful settlement to the Cross-Strait dispute. As an authoritarian state driven by neorealist ideology, it cannot threaten democratic ideals in a liberal international political structure. Therefore it sees value in playing the waiting game and letting its economic expansion bring forth a peaceful settlement rather than creating a conflict to destabilize the region. Though democratic peace theory conceptualizes that democratic states are more likely to use means of violence against a non-democracy, in the case of China it is a highly unlikely scenario. For example, democratically motivated and justified by higher moral authority, the US presently sustains its military involvement in already destabilized Iraq and Afghanistan. However, in Asia Pacific such instability will be detested by world economic powers such as Japan and South Korea. Therefore, even in the vantage of democratic peace theory, the first condition for a peaceful settlement of the issue is highly accepted.

Finally, liberal internationalism also supports the first condition of peaceful settlement to maintain the present status quo. The liberal internationalist thinking overlaps with democratic ideals and draws a similar attitude towards the precondition. For instance, the political stability created on a peaceful region proportionately improves trade and investment. Furthermore, all three stakeholders are linked through bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that are bolstered by a stable political environment. Alan Romberg recognizes that the Taiwanese investment inflow to China triggered the possibility of reinvigorating the relationship between the two parties to the dispute.[44] This evidence is linked to the status quo of Cross-Strait relations that was strengthened through the last two decades. Further, a key component of the US rebalancing strategy is to promote liberal internationalist ideology, specifically through trade and financial linkage with Asia.[45] Though these transnational policies carry remnants of neorealist self-interests, the mutual benefits are compromising on those threats. Hence, it is evident that the first condition is self-reinforcing within the ideals of liberal internationalism. The tripartite theoretical analysis provides proof that the first condition for a peaceful settlement is justified and can be accepted on logical grounds. Therefore, the peaceful settlement to the Cross-Strait issue is an essential precondition to maintain the present status quo for the foreseeable future.

Condition 2: understanding that economic benefit outweighs sustaining economic costs

In the contemporary context, economic and trade policies unprecedentedly structure international politics. As mused by Adam Smith and Tom Paine, "free movement of commodities, capital and labour" becomes the path to international harmony.46 Within a globalized economy, strong interdependence among states has created the opportunity to compromise on traditional emphasis on territory and sovereignty. Even though realist values protect the nation-state and the nationalistic identity, the global trade politics realigns these traditional aspirations. For instance, the 1979 US-Taiwan commercial partnership under the TRA[47] is a legislatively established relationship that expanded through the years. Furthermore, the US-China economic relationship was established after normalization of relations and this has grown to propel China to the No 2 economy in the World. This relationship can even be strengthened into a G2 relationship between US and China[48]. Ramon Pacheco Pardo states that the "factor behind Sino-American cooperation relates to Beijing's most important goals - economic growth and jobs"[49] Moreover, the China –Taiwan relationship is strengthened after President of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou signed business pacts with China even under domestic pressure from the nationalist opposition forces.[50] This evidence proves that even under neorealism, the economic benefits are prioritized by states to achieve their development objectives. Arguably this can be seen as a temporary swaying from the traditional realist policies to preserve territorial integrity and sovereignty. Nonetheless, the economic benefit over cost is a condition that the neorealist lens justifies as a condition to maintain the status quo.

The democratic peace theory supports this condition because democratic ideals foster through a strong economic interrelationship and vice versa. For instance, the US provided development aid to Taiwan in the 1950s that created the foundation for the Taiwanese economic growth and development.[51] This was amidst the deteriorating US-Sino relations, which was catalyst to promote democracy. In a democratic peace theorist point of view, the best option to manage China would be to create a strong economic connection that entails mutual dependency and value for democratic ideals. This would result in an unbearable economic cost if to subvert from international norms and behavioral consensus. For example, the economic sanctions faced by Russia corollary to the annexation of Crimea have devastated the recovery of the Russian economy. The Executive orders 13660 and 13661 signed by President Barack Obama in March 2014 has restricted the cash flows, financial dealings and trade substantially affecting the Russian economic base.[52] Furthermore, US as the present custodian of the international consortium react to protect the rights of a democratic nation. This is recognized by China and it would be a rational choice not to jeopardize the rising peace between the liberal democratic polity and the single-party authoritarian state. Therefore, the democratic peace theory validates the value of economic benefit over cost and highly accepts the second condition to maintain the status quo in Cross-Strait relations.

Liberal internationalism is conceptualized on fundamentals of prioritizing economic benefits over sustaining costs on economic progress. Hence, liberal internationalism supports this precondition more than the neorealist and democratic

peace theorist ideologies. The present trade relationships among the three parties provide evidence that the mutual dependency is stronger than ever before. For instance, the total trade between US and China is USD 579 bn placing it at the second place in US economic partnerships.[53] Furthermore, US trade partnership with Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions are calculated at USD 64 bn and 446 mn respectively.[54, 55] In addition, the US –Taiwan trade relations accounts for USD 82 bn and is the 12th largest trading partner with US.[56] Therefore it is evident that the three stakeholders are deeply and strongly dependent on economic terms and cannot afford to jeopardize the present status quo. In addition, it is safe to state that US-Sino relationship is the most important economic partnership for both the countries. Moreover, regional instability can cause massive economic tremors in the regional and global markets and China or US are not willing to paralyze their economies. Furthermore, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), even with its popularity subsiding, seeks to establish the strategic economic link between the Asia Pacific and the US. This rationally proves that liberal internationalist ideology highly accepts this condition to maintain the peaceful status. Therefore, as accepted under the tripartite analysis, prioritizing economic benefits over suffering through economic costs will preserve the present status quo in the Cross-Strait relations.

Condition 3 - Continual dialogue between the leaders from all three parties

Dialogue between leaders from the three parties is also essential to sustain the present status quo in the Cross-Strait relations. Even through the neorealist lens, dialogue can preserve national interests by signaling concerns and raising issues regarding territory and sovereignty. Neorealism does not necessarily seek conflict or change in the international system, unless there is a need for such change to obtain national objectives. Therefore, neorealists share a common ground with the democratic peace theorists and liberal internationalists accepting the need to promote dialogue. For instance, The US rebalancing strategy towards Asia does indicate shades of neorealist thinking patterns. The rebalancing strategy specifies four key fundamental objectives: (i) building strategic alliances, (ii) investing on regional security arrangements, (iii) building partner capacity in the region and (iv) security planning for the Asian Area of Responsibility (AOR)[57]. These objectives are based upon the underpinning of continual dialogue to preserve peace in the region. Furthermore, US recognize the need to protect Taiwan from a Chinese military coercion if there is any and "continue to conduct military-to-military activities with China, such as planned talks between the US Head of Strategic Command and the Head of the Chinese Second Artillery.[58] Furthermore, US and China can continue strategic military partnerships that will promote confidence building measures and joint military exercises on counterterrorism and maritime anti-piracy missions.

The dialogue between China and Taiwan is also taking a positive turn towards mutual understanding and recognizing the sociopolitical identities. According to Wang Kao-Cheng, former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou's foreign policy drive regarding the

Cross-Strait relations signals a peaceful and positive settlement through understanding and cooperation.[59] Furthermore, the Taipei-Washington consensus on defense policies and the Zhang Zhijun visit to Taipei shows commitment from both parties to preserve peace and maintain a peaceful status quo.[60] From a democratic peace theorist lens, mutual dialogue is key to mitigate tensions between two structurally and fundamentally different political systems. As stated by US secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, "The US and China are not allies, but we don't have to be adversaries"[61] Furthermore, US and China talks on an extradition treaty that would curb cross-border corruption,[62] are positive multilateral approaches moving beyond political differences. Furthermore, the recent discourse from both Beijing and Taipei on bilateral discussions and attempts to reinvigorate the relations recognizes the commitment for an amicable status quo. Therefore, similar to neorealist acceptance, democratic peace theorists highly accept the third condition to sustain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

Analogous to the two previous theories, the liberal internationalist accedes that continual dialogue is necessary to build strong relations among the three stakeholders. For instance, the United States-China Strategic Economic Dialogue that was initiated by the President George W. Bush Administration and President Hu Jintao in 2006 is a consensus-based platform to promote economic and bilateral cooperation.[63] The same was continued by the President Barack Obama administration that ensured continual dialogue between the two great powers. Similarly, the annual Cross-Strait economic, trade and culture forum between Taiwan and China is a consensus based platform that allows the parties to share interests and foster harmonious relations.[64] Therefore, identical to the former two theoretical outcomes, liberal internationalism highly supports and justifies the third condition on a continuous dialogue between the leaders of all three parties to preserve the present status quo.

	Neorealist	Democratic Peace Theorist	Liberal Internationalist
Condition 1 - Nothing other than a peaceful settlement for the dispute	Moderate acceptance	High acceptance	High acceptance
Condition 2 - Understanding that economic benefit outweighs sustaining economic costs	Moderate acceptance	High acceptance	High acceptance
Condition 3 - Continual dialogue between the leaders from all three parties	High acceptance	High acceptance	High acceptance

Table 1: Summary of the Comparative Analysis

In conclusion, the Cross-Strait relation is a complex trilateral geopolitical issue that still remains with an uncertain outcome. Diverging interests of China and Taiwan and the strategic ambiguity of US in the Asia Pacific has made this dispute a paradox. However, in the contemporary international political landscape, compromising policies from the three stakeholders has attained a peaceful status quo. The litany of literature that probes the Cross-Strait issue through different analytical approaches draws a common conclusion on the strategic impasse. However, maintaining this peaceful status quo for the foreseeable future is altogether a different issue. This, this paper conceptualizes three necessary conditions that permit the Cross-Strait relations to maintain its status quo which are conceived from extending the present conclusion on the gridlock in the Taiwan Strait relations within the sphere of influence of the three parities.

Though these postulated conditions are deduced necessary through this study, they can be contested whether sufficient to perpetuate peace in the Cross-Strait relationship. Nonetheless, the three preconditions are justified through a comparative analysis using a theoretical structure that consists of neoliberalism, democratic peace theory and liberal internationalism. The tripartite structure focuses its inquiry to recognize the nuances in each condition and supporting the fundamental argument through qualitative evidence. Further, this theoretical analysis proves that the three conditions are viable under various levels of acceptance. The summary of findings recognizes that in the changing international political and security architecture, the different ideological notions can converge on a common solution. Though US, China and Taiwan foreign policies ameliorate the tension in the Cross-Strait relations, further academic inquiry is warranted to discern the effects of unilateral changes in national interests. Therefore, the international community can only hope that these postulated three conditions can maintain the present peaceful status quo.

Endnotes

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Declining Hopes: The Never-ending Conflict in Afghanistan

Mariam Safi

Abstract

Afghanistan has undergone 16 years of international state-building and counter-terrorism efforts, yet it continues to find itself in the middle of an expanding conflict, growing insurgency, and vastly despondent public. Afraid of getting entangled in a dangerous and costly war the international community made several grave mistakes early on in the international intervention. These led to the emergence of the insurgency and the obstruction of the state-building process. In 2014, NATO ended its 13-year military mission and though some gains had been made in the fight against the insurgency the Afghan government and its national security forces remained too weak to build upon these gains. Thus, the security environment that was left behind was one where internal and regional armed groups found space to flourish; heavy casualties, equipment and capacity challenges eroded the efforts of the Afghan army and police forces; and efforts towards the development of political, social, and economic sectors fell hostage to rising insecurity. These factors have created a scenario where prospects for an end to the conflict seem limited instilling a deep sense of hopeless in the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

Keywords: Taliban, Mujahidden, radicalization, civil war, state-building,

"This long war will come to a responsible end. But the war will not end in 2014. The US role my end, in whole or in part, but the war will continue – and its ultimate outcome is very much in doubt," stated U.S. President Barack Obama in 2013[1]. Now, two years after the end of the US-led NATO combat operations in Afghanistan, rising levels of insecurity has left both local and international stakeholders deeply worried about the future. The international community is found gravely uncertain about the sustainability of the military and civilian structures it left behind. The Afghan government is found constantly at the brinks of collapse unable to maintain unity within its leadership or delivery of its election commitments. These uncertainties have forced the citizens of Afghanistan to once again avert to the fight-or-flight mode, with most opting to flee. Local perceptions of security and stability have reached an all time low, fatalities amongst civilian and the Afghan military continue to rise, government controlled territory has decreased and the number of Afghans migrating to Europe has placed this group second to Syrian refugees. This grim reality of the security situation

on the ground is a consequence of an ill-prepared and contradictory international state-building agenda that lead to the growth of the insurgency, the shortcomings of the Afghan National Security Forces and the uncertainty that plagues Afghanistan's future peace and stability.

In 1989 the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan was accompanied by the sudden withdrawal of western support, particularly the US, leaving a power vacuum that eventually became source for their return in 2001. The Soviet invasion (1979-1989) followed by the civil war (1992-1996), and Taliban rule (1996-2001) left Afghanistan's infrastructure in utter shambles. The terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 seemed to mark an end to "the long international ennui with Afghanistan"[2]. On 7 October 2001, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the leadership of the Taliban was toppled by US military operations setting the stage for a quasi state-building and counter-terrorism strategy aimed to build a 'new Afghan nation'[3]. Having learnt that the consequences of abandoning Afghanistan once before, the US, its allies, and the UN agreed to pursue 'nation-building' to prevent the state from becoming a safe heaven for terrorists again[4].

However, the greatest challenge that faced peace-builders in 2001 was what type of state to build that could promote durable peace and prevent the country from being used as a safe heaven by terrorists. To this end, the international community launched the Bonn Process where four Afghan parties under the auspice of the UN agreed upon the principles for the "Re-establishment of Permanent Institutions in Afghanistan". This agreement (lasting from 2001-2005), including subsequent agreements and conferences thereafter, set in motion a series of activities that were eventually undermined by the prioritization of security over reforms. Thus while the consensus at Bonn (5 December 2001) led to the convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga* which selected a Transitional Authority (TA) in June of 2002, then led to the adoption of a new Constitution in January 2004, and thereafter presidential elections in October 2004 and National Assembly and Provincial Council elections in 2005. These achievements, as they were considered at the time, now seem superficial with many arguing that the benchmarks set at Bonn were "vague and disconnected from formal conditionalities"[5]. This was a result of the international community's shortsightedness and gross evaluation of its capacity to implement an ambitious peace-building mission with a light-foot print approach and minimal resources.

Consequently by trying to avoid getting caught up in a dangerous and costly war the opting of a "light-foot print," led by the U.S. in the initial years of the international intervention, saw the unfolding of a top-down strategy where local militias were used by international forces to stabilize the country. By pumping millions of dollars to dying warring factions, the U.S. once again mobilized these former mujahidden groups. Moreover, its focus on counter-terrorism efforts and military spending rather then development aid also neglected to stimulate efforts to build legitimacy and capable sub-national institution, the economy, basic services and infrastructure. Thus by 2004, as the anomalies to the state-building process accumulated, including the emergence of the Taliban insurgency and spoilers from amongst the remobilized factions, the state-building strategy also became gradually more aggressive. Thus the international community reverted to a heavy footprint approach while co-opting a number of spoilers into the broad-based government that was formed in the 2004 and 2005 elections.

Nonetheless, this 'trade-off' in incorporating power-brokers and warlords, within state institutions not only paralyzed the growth of the democratization process by breathing new life into the historical tradition of distributing and maintaining power through 'client-patron' relations. It also led to the institutionalization of mass corruption, eroded the legitimacy and capacity of the central government, extended the time-line of the international military foot-print which led to more intensified clashes and rising civilian casualties and atrocities which ended up creating a key pool of disenfranchised and frustrated Afghan male youth- the perfect breeding ground for radicalization and recruitment by the insurgency.

Local perceptions of security

The annual Asia Foundation survey, "A Survey of the Afghan People: Afghanistan in 2016" shows that in 2016, 69.8 percent of Afghans fear for their personal safety either always, often or sometimes[6]. Those who expressed the strongest sentiments citing feelings of fear either always or often, has in fact increased from 30.9 percent in 2013 to 39.1 percent in 2016[7]. These fears are lodged in the spread of the insurgency and battlefield. Some 80 out of 400 plus districts are currently under the control of the insurgency[8], a trend that is on the incline. In recent years, the Taliban have attempted to shift the conflict from villages to populated areas such as major cities and district centers. The objectives of this new tactic have been to reinforce the strength of the insurgency while showing the weakness of the government and its security forces, thereby instilling fear and doubt in the hearts of the public. The impact of this has also been reflected in The Asia Foundation Survey that shows that in 2016, "more Afghans living in urban areas (73.5%) fear for their personal safety than those living in rural areas (68.6%)[9]. The survey underscores the relevancy of this trend describing it as a recent development, which has been documented for the very first time since the Asia Foundation started its reports. Fear of cross-province travel have also reached an all time high with 81.5 percent of Afghans citing some or a lot of fear when traveling to other parts of the country[10]. This is also reflects key Taliban tactics which aim to obstruct of main traffic routes, cutting off roads connecting major population centers[11].

Furthermore, local perceptions of how well government institutions are functioning have also reached extremely low levels with fewer then half (49.1%) of those surveyed by the Asia Foundation say the NUG is doing a good job[12]. This is down from 57.8 percent recorded in 2015[13]. In addition to insecurity, unemployment followed by corruption and bad economy are also factors cited by locals as the main reasons for pessimism in both rural and urban areas[14]. The Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) conducted by NATO between 25th August – 2nd September 2016, echoes the findings of the Asia foundation. NATO's report shows that insecurity and loss of freedom of movement are not the only concerns locals have. Perceptions around support for the National Unity Government (NUG), the economy, quality of life and outlook on the future were are all identified to be at all time lows[15].

The youth population, a major demographic and main target for recruitment by the insurgency, has been most impacted by these declining trends. 71.2 percent of youth selected unemployment as the biggest problems facing in 2016[16]. Youth often

cite the lack of unemployment second to lack of education opportunities, as the main cause for pushing them to migrate to Europe and elsewhere[17]. In 2014, the National Union of Afghanistan Workers reported that about 60 percent of eligible workers in Afghanistan were unemployed[18]

The downward trajectory of optimism amongst Afghans is a trend that began in 2014 with the drawdown of international military and civilian assistance. Since then, the percentage of locals citing pessimism on the direction of the country has increased. In 2013, 58.2 percent of Afghans felt the country was moving in the right direction while in 2016 only 29.3 percent feel this way[19]. This means that a staggering 65.9 percent feel the country is moving in the wrong direction[20]. These figures correlate with rising civilian deaths and injuries, which have gradually increased since 2013 (see below image). In its 3rd quarterly report, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented 8,397 conflict-related civilian casualties representing only a one percent decrease compared to the same period in 2015[21]. This has given the insurgency a strong narrative to use against international forces and the Afghan government.

Civilian Deaths and Injuries January to September 2009 - 2016
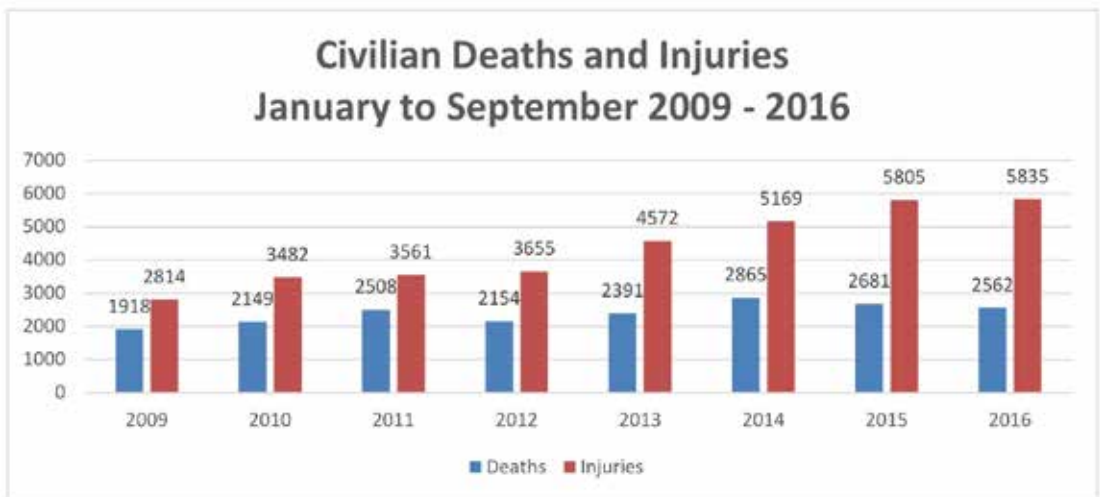
(UNAMA, 2016)[22]

The Taliban regime

Prior to 2001, the Taliban was a movement that had established its regime (1996- 2001) after successfully gaining control of the government from the mujahidden and creating the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The Taliban movement started in 1993-1994, formed by Islamic clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin. There are various stories of how the movement was actually founded however one story that has been cited by many scholars is a supposed incident that took place in the spring of 1994 when founder of the Taliban movement and self-proclaimed Supreme Leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar enlisted some 30 Talibs (students) to rescue two teenage girls who had been

abducted and raped by a mujahidden commander and his men[23]. After this incident, there are reports that citizens began approaching the Taliban for assistance with similar challenges. Through these "seminal Robin Hood" instances, Mullah Omar's popularity and followers began to grow. However prominent, these events alone did not propel the movement to take over the country, Pakistan's support in the form of resources, intelligence, training, and sanctuaries have also been key to their rise.

Many of the movement's members consisted of former mujahidden fighters who had become disillusioned with the civil war and moved to Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries following the "Deobandi" school of Islam and Sunni-Hanafi jurisprudence. The movement attracted many of its fighters from the refugee camps and madrassas that were created in the tribal border belt in Pakistan during the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989) and the subsequent Civil War (1992-1996). When taking over Kabul in 27 September 1996, the "Taliban's immediate goals were to disarm all rival militia, fight against those who refused to disarm, enforce Islamic law and retain all areas captured by the Taliban"[24]. Outside of these goals, they bared no manifesto or plans for establishing a functioning government that could address the economic and social needs of the people. "There was no administration and no foreign policy, no public services and no economic plan"[25] just complete evisceration of institutions "erecting in their stead only three functions: morality, commerce and war"[26].

Gradually, the movement's imposition of strict adherence to Sharia, its sheer lack of respect for people's human rights, particularly those of women, latent state institutions, a dead economy, widespread poverty, absence of even the most basic health care services, and deteriorating educational institutions, all began to erode local support for the Taliban's regime. Then following the attacks of September 11, the Bush Administration launched operations on 7 October 2001, topping the Taliban government in less than two months when Mullah Omar refused U.S. demands to extradite Osama bin Laden. Thereafter, President Bush articulated a policy that equated those who harbor terrorists to terrorists themselves, and asserted that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda members there. This ushered a new era of U.S. – Afghan relations lodged within an international state-building agenda overseen by the United Nations, aiming to rebuild the country along the lines of liberal peace-building so to to prevent the country from ever again posing a threat to U.S. security. However, the shortsightedness of the international community at the beginning of the its intervention not only prevented the establishment of an enabling environment for state-building but also gave rise to the insurgency and security challenges Afghans face today.

Post-2001: The rise of the insurgency

Presently, several armed groups who are allied with each other and make up the insurgency challenge security in Afghanistan. The Taliban continue to lead the insurgency and have various affiliates including the Haqqani Network, the Pakistani Taliban called Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Lashkar-i-Janghvi and Harakat ul-Jihad Islami. A new player in

the theatre of conflict now includes an Islamic State (IS) affiliate, called the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP), which emerged in mid-2014.

In 2002, the Taliban reconstituted themselves in the form of a "neo-Taliban"[27] seeking to "reclaim the moral highroad in Afghanistan" by re-branding themselves as an independent movement"[28]. They observed two aims, one to expel foreign forces from the country and the second to institute Sharia Law. By 2005-2006, the insurgency began to gain momentum and strength and was successful in recruiting young Afghan men who had become increasingly doubtful of the newly established Afghan government under President Hamid Karzai and the international community. Nepotism, corruption, and injustice were becoming a daily concern for citizens. The severe political cleavages that marked the immediate post-war period, facilitated by a weak central government, strong sub-national powerbrokers, and the constant prioritization of military efforts over peace-building activities corroded the legitimacy of the post-2001 Afghan state.

Nevertheless, in the recent years, while still achieving significant tactical gains, the insurgency has also faced its share of difficulties. Nevertheless, their resolve to reestablish their Islamic Emirate founded on an ideal Islamic system "unpolluted by Western political ideas"[29] continues to remain strong despite a 320,000 strong Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and what was until 2014, a 140,000 NATO troop presence representing 50 contributing nations.
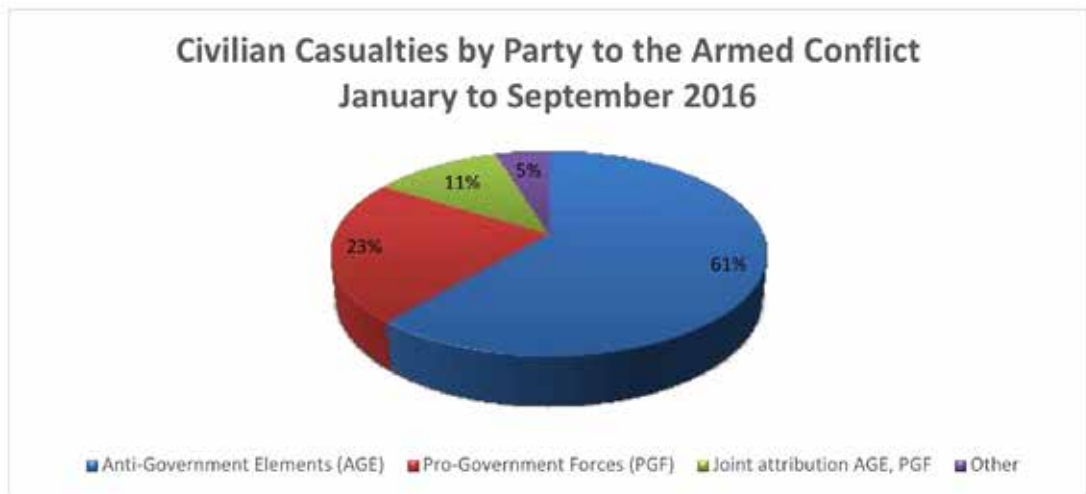
Current status of the insurgency: Fragmented yet resilient

The Taliban's messages and narratives no longer resonate with locals as it did once. The withdraw of foreign forces, the rise of civilian deaths caused by insurgent related attacks, the loss of thousands of fighters and death of two of its Supreme leaders, financial difficulties, and fragmentation due to infighting between the insurgency and its affiliated groups has pushed some members to join the ranks of ISKP and others to splinter out.

While 2014 marked the most volatile year since the international intervention commenced, the reduction of NATO forces did assist in damaging the Taliban's *jihad (*routinely translated as "holy war") narrative, which was founded on expelling foreign forces. Now, with only a small contingency of approximately 13,000 foreign troops left under NATO's 'Resolute Support' framework of training and advising the ANSF, the Taliban can no longer convince locals of the legitimacy of their fight with in the same vigor. UNAMA's annual civilian casualties report, which have long attributed the majority of civilian casualties to insurgent attacks, has chipped away at the very premise on which the insurgency stands- the protection of the Afghan people against foreign military aggression.

UNAMA reported that civilian deaths caused by the insurgency stood at 80 percent in 2011[30], which a slight decline to 72 percent[31] in 2014 and 62 percent[32] in 2015. UNAMA's repeated stance that the insurgency deliberately targets civilians perpetuates illegal and indiscriminate attacks such as the use of landmines put immense pressure on the Taliban. Consequently, they began to issue statements to all their fighters to protect civilians during combat. "Take every step to protect the lives

and wealth of ordinary people"[33] read one such statement issued by Mullah Omar in 2011. In that statement he also instructed that civilian casualties caused or believed to have been caused by the Taliban are to be reported to superiors for investigation. The gradual decline in Taliban related civilian casualties, for instance in October of 2016 UNAMA reported 61 percent[34] of casualties to be caused by the insurgency, a 19 percent decline from 2011. This could be a result of precautions taken by the insurgency but that has not necessarily translated into restoring its lost support or building a less hostile image of the insurgency.

Civilian Casualties by Party to the Armed Conflict January to September 2016

- Anti-Government Elements (AGE) — 61%
- Pro-Government Forces (PGF) — 23%
- Joint attribution AGE, PGF — 11%
- Other — 5%

(UNAMA, 2016)[35]

Internally as well, the Taliban have undergone several transformations. In 2015, the Afghan government revealed that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar was dead, and had in fact been since 2013. His successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour acknowledged the news in a published statement in August of 2015, stating that Omar had died on 23 April 2013 and that only a handful of members of the Supreme Council of the Taliban were aware and had kept it secret on tactical grounds[36]. However, to their foot-soldiers, news of the death of its Supreme Leader, and more so, deliberate efforts by the Taliban leadership to cover this news from its very own followers, led to infighting with several groups within the insurgency splintering. This revealed, for the first time, the insurgency's internal weaknesses.

In May 2016, the drone killing of its new leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour in Baluchistan, Pakistan, the Taliban was yet another blow to the insurgency. Nonetheless, despite predictions of further infighting resulting from this incident, the insurgency was able to swiftly replace Mansour with Mawlawi Haibatullah Akunzadeh, avoiding the legitimacy problems and internal struggles that surrounded the former's appointment. However, unlike Omar and Mansour, Akunzadeh is a religious scholar and had served as the Minister of 'justice' during the Taliban's regime, and thus had no military experience[37]. Some believe that Akunzadeh's lack of military experience could result in weakening his authority amongst the military commission of the Taliban. This, in return, could translate to losses in the battlefield. Others feel that unlike

Mansour, Akunzadeh will also be unable to garner the same level of funds, as the former was a well-connected businessman who dealt with the finances of the insurgency personally. Whether this will be the case or not, the reality is that the Taliban actually began to face shortfalls in funds following the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. Moreover, others such as former senior diplomat under the Taliban regime, Mullah Rahmatullah Kakazada believe that the cash crises is a result of the bad publicity the Taliban attracted due to civilian casualties[38]. "The war is becoming unpopular because of all the bad publicity on civilian casualties. These people who give money don't want to spend it on mines that kill children"[39]. But despite these internal difficulties, the Taliban's military energy has showed "no signs of fizzling out"[40] and in fact they have scored "important tactical and even strategic victories" despite the fragmentation.

Afghan National Security Forces: Successes and challenges

The effectiveness of the ANSF, consisting of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), is considered the key to the security of Afghanistan. The ANA has about 175,000[41] personnel and the ANP about 157,000[42]. The total figure of ANSF stands at about 320,000 not including the approximately 30,000 local security forces[43].

Since assuming the lead in all security operations at the end of 2014, the ANA have gained much public support. Its ability to regain control of most district centers lost to the Taliban while preventing the insurgency from holding and establishing its presence has been impressive considering that it was built from "scratch"[44]. But this has not been enough to stabilize areas taken back and instead these areas remain precarious and apt to further penetration from the insurgency. Even areas once perceived to be safe have fallen insecure with sporadic attacks, fueling local perceptions of insecurity and lack of safety. During the transition period, the insurgency was relatively successful in eroding the confidence of the ANA by increasing its attacks to unprecedented levels. This caused many army commanders to overestimate insurgent strength and even led many to panic at the first sign of insurgent assault- leaving their weapons behind and fleeting their posts as was witnessed in the takeover of Kunduz province in October of 2015 and then again in the same period in 2016. This has caused the ANA, which was once "regarded by Afghans as a symbol of nationhood and factional non-alignment" to begin to gradually losing its status as an unquestioned symbol of nationhood[45].

The Asia Foundation survey reflects this declining confidence in the ANA, as the number of Afghans who said they strongly agreed that the ANA protected civilians dropped from 56.8 percent in 2015 to 48.7 percent in 2016[46]. The number of Afghans who strongly agreed that the ANA was honest and fair also fell from 63 percent in 2014 to 55 percent in 2016[47]. Moreover, the number of Afghans who believed strongly in the ability of the ANA to provide security fell 6.8 percentage points in 2016[48]. The declining positive perceptions concerning the ANA, similar to the context of the Taliban, are also largely related to the rise in civilian casualties. With foreign forces gone from the battlefield the ANA found itself at the forefront of all security operations and with little Air Force power and largely light weaponry systems, the army had to

increasingly resort to ground engagements, often close to villages. UNAMA reported that pro-government forces caused 23 percent of civilian deaths, representing a drastic 42 percent increase compared to last year[49]. Another 11 percent of civilian deaths were reported to have resulted from ground fighting between armed groups and pro-government forces[50].

The rapid withdrawal of NATO forces and handover of all security responsibilities placed an unrealistic responsibility on an army that was still in the process of developing its capacity. As a result, in the post-2014 environment ANA casualties also rose dramatically with some Afghan analysts suggesting the current number of casualties to stand at approximately 25 per day though these figures are not official and remain unconfirmed. Though, it was reported that more than 5000 forces were killed and over 14,000 wounded in 2015 alone[51].

The ANP on the other hand has had a relatively negative track record since its establishment unlike the ANA. Rampant corruption, inadequate of training, and general disregard for citizen's rights has actually caused citizens to fear and mistrust the police. The number of Afghans who strong agreed that the ANP was honest and fair dropped from 48 percent in 2014 to 37 percent in 2016[52]. This illustrates that perceptions regarding the ANP's capacity and performance continue to reflect discontent. Compared to the ANA, the ANP continues to have higher desertion rates, substantial illiteracy, and involvement in local factional and ethic disputes[53].

At the current juncture, the Taliban and the Afghan government are at a grinding stalemate. The Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford testified in September of this year asserting that the battlefield situation was roughly a stalemate and that insurgents were possibly holding or be active in up to 30 percent of Afghan territory[54]. The Taliban are able to launch impressive attacks on district centers but unable to retain them for too long. Similarly, the ANSF are able to defeat the insurgency when in direct combat but unable to dismantle or prevent the insurgency from re-infiltrating cleared territory. Under these circumstances, the ANSF might be able to sustain this deadlock but only until the U.S. and NATO allies keep its financial contributions flowing to the ANSF, which will last only until 2020. After 2020, the international community military spending in Afghanistan will decline drastically with the Afghan government expected to assume the bulk of military spending and by 2024 all international funding to the ANSF will cease.

The way forward

At the 2nd Bonn Conference held in 2011 local and international stakeholders celebrated a decade of progress and achievements in Afghanistan. Though doubts remained and gaps were identified Afghans largely felt they were on the right path to bring durable peace. Fast-forward five years and only doubt now looms across the minds of Afghans.

To reverse this pessimism and secure a more prospective future, three steps can be taken by local policymakers with the support of regional and international actors. This includes, first, establishing a national consensus amongst all stakeholders in Afghanistan to come together and genuinely accept that military means alone will not end the conflict

and that a transparent and bottom-up peace process is the only solution to the conflict with the Taliban. Second, economic and humanitarian development spending must equal that of military spending to bridge the gap between citizens and the state and prevent easy recruitment by the insurgency. Third, the National Unity Government (elected in 2014) must implement in the immediate future its election promises of bringing much needed reforms to boost the economy, improve rule of law, reform the electoral system, address rising levels of corruption and nepotism, and build the capacity of its employees to efficiently deliver government services. Without progress in these areas the Afghan government will not be able to secure a peaceful future further abrading Afghan hopes while threatening the achievements of the past sixteen years.

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Dhows and Dreadnaughts to the Digital: An assessment of Indian Ocean contacts with special reference to Sino- Sri Lanka Relations

Ramla Wahab-Salman

Abstract

The Indian Ocean island of Sri Lanka has through time had to grapple with changing tides in security strategy. Her location in the southern extremity of the Indian Ocean has tempered decisions on strategy in keeping with regional and international political climates. At home, the Sri Lanka Navy stands as a powerful regional player backed by their recent defeat of terrestrial and maritime based domestic terrorist units within the country. In understanding maritime security as an extension of national security, this research provides a historical framework to global trends in maritime regimes from the age of West Asian dhow ships and Chinese Junks through the Dreadnaught era of the 20th century to the Digital Age in maritime activity. Further understanding State led initiatives of soft power it attempts to historically contextualise the Chinese 21st century Maritime Silk Road project amid other Asian initiatives at sea. It explores the topic through the lens of a project placed at the intersection of civilizational dialogues and a concentrated soft power initiative.

Key words: Maritime regime, Soft power, Indian Ocean Order

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The article to be published in the inaugural journal of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka comes out of present deliberations on the political pasts and options for future paths to securing and maintaining pragmatic approaches toward a sustainable security architecture in the Indian Ocean region. Shaping much of the arguments over this article include the expert perspectives presented by political and

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military policy shapers at the annual Defence Seminar 2016 on the theme of Soft Power and its influence on Global Issues, the Galle Dialogue 2016 on the theme Fostering Strategic Maritime Partnerships, the Indian Ocean Conference held in Singapore in 2016, Nishan World Civilizations Forum on Southeast Asian Civilizational Contacts held at the Beijing National University and the monthly closed door security salon sessions hosted by the Institute in Colombo.

Following the establishment of a globally balanced Asia centric foreign policy of the H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, the President of Sri Lanka, the island has witnessed a renegotiation of its foreign policy since January 2015. This renegotiation aims at achieving and maintaining good relations with all nations. The visits over the last decade of Chinese President HE Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Hon. Narendra Modi and high level US officials to the country including Secretary John Kerry have indicated in no uncertain terms the rise of international interest and return of the global gaze upon the island as a significant player in the Indian Ocean arena.

As an island, to Sri Lanka, the past, present and future are intrinsically connected to the Indian Ocean surrounding her. As cited by maritime security experts from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, the Colombo Port handles 70 percent of container transhipment in the Indian Ocean, and over the past two years, 95 foreign warships from around the world have visited the island's ports. The capacity of the nation's naval expertise through the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) extends into the realm of security of her littorals and key SLOC's backed by a recent history of successfully eliminating terrestrial and oceanic battles by active terrorist organizations[1.]

Research in an era of nuance and dialogue

Maritime strategy may be understood as a subset of national strategy. Thus it needs to be located in a context of regional and international political movements. As much as oceans remain the conduits for the shipping industry which could be understood as the unsung industry the global community relies on, it is also oceans that facilitate a large extent of drug and human trafficking. While demand and supply along global resource and commodity chains command the interests of private and State led initiatives, climatic conditions, particularly the rise of sea levels threaten to change coastal geographies leaving the Indian Ocean region to grapple with issues of refugees born out of climatic crises. Over the past decade, more maritime forces have been operating in the Indian Ocean. While thirty to forty percent of global trade passes through the Indian Ocean, a trend can be noticed of a gradual slowdown in the levels of global shipping. As estimated by the Centre for Naval Analyses, Washington, South Asia will require an estimated 2.3 trillion dollars for infrastructure in the region.

Further, in order to grapple with the issues of human, climatic and resource based crises that carry into the new year, the rise in the field of Indian Ocean research presents the outcomes of a need for an interdisciplinary understanding of oceans connected and worlds connecting in different ways in the electronic age. These new frontiers to research would connect multiple stakeholders. It may stimulate the thought processes at work behind transnational initiatives in overcoming challenges

presently hindering a common maritime consensus between governments creating global political challenges in formulating a maritime regime in the digital age.

The resurgence of an Indian Ocean order

The Indian Ocean arena has witnessed a significant increase in importance both politically and in the approach of study of academia across the world. While the region is an important player in the shipping industry, the State led initiatives' of Project Mausam and SAGAR by the Indian government, the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor by the United States of America,Japan's BIG-B Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative by the Chinese government have cemented not just an Asian resurgence of political interest in the region but a global shift of gaze.

The 21st century projects of the Maritime Silk Road in the case of Sino-Sri Lanka relations falls within the purview of the large scale Chinese One Belt One Road initiative which encompasses 6 economic corridors connecting over sixty sovereign nation states over land and sea. In an attempt to understand the formation of identity through a community of common destiny through a historical relation, my paper seeks to approach the relations between the Indian Ocean island of Sri Lanka and China through its connected histories over the Silk Road of old.

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Looking back on history, multiple societies that have risen, developed, prospered and in certain cases declined through this trading network since antiquity. The next decade politically calls for the rise of an Indian Ocean Order[2]. A need for a geopolitical and geo-economic revival from Asian powers of the region was expressed by Sri Lankan Prime Minister Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe at the Indian Ocean Conference in September 2016. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka clearly appealed to regional actors to work toward a shift in the politics of the Indian Ocean arena. While articulated differently by different nations, since antiquity, oceanic connections may be linked to the creation of new societies and changing orders of maritime power .

The year 2017 onward continues to face new era of volatile challenges at sea. Challenges continuing into the new year call for timely and sustainable responses from State actors. Traditional and non-traditional security threats exist shadowed by fundamental existential threats to regional security.

Existential security threats such as in the case of the Maldives have proved the case of climate refugees destabilizing the law and order based maritime order. Terrorism and persecution with the movement of refugees over the seas across the world from Myanmar to the crisis in the Middle East have propelled the movement across oceans as a final beacon of hope toward safety and survival. Such movements on an unprecedented scale within a limited time scale present a global shift in strategic studies toward rethinking existing security architecture.

Closer to home, the dawn on the new year 2017 presents a dynamic rebalancing of the Indian Ocean arena in order to prevent a state of strategic competition of naval

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supremacy going out of control. Some schools of thought see a threat to existing Asian security architecture indicating that the bodies of SAARC and ASEAN urgently need to work towards securing regional security frameworks increasing South and Southeast Asian interdependency. On the other hand, security may be argued as a concept relative and directly relational to national security. Thus, it may not be understood simply through convergence and collaboration. Rather, it may be understood as a strategy of national security embedded in the context and backdrop of national and regional safety in the wider context of international security.

Despite the rise of electronic surveillance on land and sea, transnational issues of insurgency and terrorism are causes of concern in the realm of human movement and trafficking across the seas. Global responses to conflict, victimhood and safety at sea over the year 2016 leaves much to be done in harnessing a holistic rule based maritime order.

A historical periodization to global maritime order

The 1920's to the Second World War from 1939-45 was witness to what can retrospectively be understood as a traditional maritime regime. Immediately after the Second World War the focus shifted until the 1960's toward coastal interests. From the late 1960's into the new millennium international law such as UNCLOS led to the formalization of maritime regimes on the base of rule of law with the creation of charters within the United Nations. Within this periodization, it was in the 1970's that Hon. Sirimavo Bandaranayake was instrumental in converting the Indian Ocean region to a zone of peace followed by the Law of the Sea Conference and Charter that followed. Globally, in 1972, at the height of the Cold War the two blocs of the USSR and USA came to an agreement on incidents at sea called the Incidents at Sea Agreement further basing maritime regimes within agreed legal frameworks. Since 2010, the regime based rule of law adhered to by nation states have been challenged on multiple frontiers by non-state actors in new ways, among the challenges include new responses to pirate activity and smuggling through the seas[3].

As described at the Galle Dialogue 2016 by Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, the world has shifted from the early 20th century dreadnaught era, past the nuclear warfare phase, to the present electronic age in seafaring. Historically, taking this periodization further, prior to European colonial presence in the region, Chinese junks and West Asian dhows were a prominent factor in steering diplomatic and cultural interactions in the region. Thus, the Chinese influence in the region may be understood not as a rise of power but a reassertion of historic spheres of influence. To place in context a summation of the history of Chinese power in the region, historian Louise Levathes states in his 1994 publication, "Half the world was in China's grasp...and the other half was easily within reach, had China wanted it. China could have become a great colonial power a hundred years before the great age of European exploration and expansion, but did not."[4]

While the historical experience of China has led it follow a path of economic corridors and soft power initiatives rekindling a nostalgia for the Silk Road, its resurgence in the region has led to both collaboration towards China's win-win

ambition for mutual gain and strategic suspicions expressed openly through debate among traditional powers of the region. This initiative and subsequent initiatives by other nations have lead to an all round increase in naval presence(s) in the region.

In the new era of maritime security, the Chinese administration reaches for a security goal within the region comprising of 4 C's. As described by Rear Admiral Wang Dazhong at the Galle Dialogue in Sri Lanka, the PLA Navy and Chinese administration aims at Common, Comprehensive, Cooperative and Continuous security in the region fulfilling the 4 C's in its approach to the South China Sea, Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean regional presence and activity[5]. While the Chinese assertions of a purely peaceful economic corridor are cast with shadows of doubt by regional powers, it is clear that sitting strategically astride the busiest shipping lanes of the world, the Indian Ocean which straddles three continents and fifty states is a historical unit of reference rising in strategic, political and academic arenas.

While the 21st century Indian Ocean political unit is the era of partnership, it leads to questions as to the boundaries between the divergence and convergence of State interests in this regard. A question that rises of this contemporary scenario may be posed as such: Is the State losing monopoly of the region?

The Silk Road: exploring the political geography of an Indian Ocean island

In the case of the multiple State led initiatives particularly with the Chinese 21st century MSR project, the Silk Road initiatives today championed by the Chinese State in seeking political and economic alliances with other governments along its One Belt One Road is a shift from the past. China was not always the final destination along the Silk Road over land or sea with multiple entrepots along the way serving as trade centres, Present day initiatives serve as a fundamentally different case study to the past. Previously such networks were to a very large extent headed by trade and merchant guilds who sought patronage of the State for safety and security on land and sea .The State as we understand it was not the key player in the Silk Road of old thus leading to the conclusion that it was an established and thriving 'informal' international trading network spanning the Far East to Europe.

Described as the largest cultural continuum until the 15th century, the Indian Ocean Region presents a case of a community not of a common destiny in the centuries past. Instead it was a community of commonalities and contrasts in civilization which displayed elements of cohesion and unity over several aspects. Travel, movements of goods and people and economic exchanges created a distinct sphere of shared interests. Religion, social systems and cultural traditions on the other hand provided contrasts between co-existing civilizations along the Silk Road of the Sea.

The Silk Road over land or sea was not a ribbon of highway or a single clear cut sea-lane spanning a continent. Thus, to say what lies or does not lie along this imagined community depends on how one may approach the history of the multiple routes within the wider Silk Road both geographically and chronologically. The Silk Roads in a historical relation have been described by the global historian Peter

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Frankopan as wide and varied paths spanning land and sea as a Roads of faiths, Roads of Fur (luxury goods), Roads of revolution, Roads of concord, A Slave road, The Road to Empire, The Road to War and finally and probably most befitting the theme of civilizational contacts in the 21st century, Roads of Dialogue and The Road to Compromise[6].

Soft power, memory and a shared past

"We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world."[7] President Xi Jinping (2014)

Memory may be regarded as a strong factor in identity formation. The 21st century broad and wide ranging approach of Chinese foreign policy seeking economic and cultural co-operation draws on one underlying memory of a glorious era past - the memory of the Silk Road, arguably once a world system which connected Europe to the East affecting and influencing nations on land and sea along this route.

The 1990 UNESCO and Central Cultural Fund publication titled Sri Lanka and the Silk road of the Sea shed new light on the concept of Sri Lanka being located as a terminus and hub holding its own with its distinctive island character, location at the southern extremity of the South Asian subcontinent and position at the centre of the Indian Ocean. From the 1st-15th centuries AD China and Sri Lanka maintained prolonged political relations backed by economic interests paving the way for diplomatic and religious delegations in constant communication. Civilizational contacts along the Silk Road of old were largely positive between China and Sri Lanka before the 1403 withdrawal of Chinese fleets from its Western routes[8].

To this memory is an example of a tangible tactile memory from the Silk Road, a trilingual inscription presented by the Ming Admiral Zheng He in the 15th century along the southern coast of Sri Lanka, of diplomatic tokens brought to the island. The Galle Trilingual Slab Inscription discovered in 1911 lists alms bestowed to the "Buddhist Temple in the Mountain of Ceylon" by the Emperor of the Ming Dynasty in Chinese, Persian and Tamil languages.

In a post 1945 nuclearized world, the island of Sri Lanka remains surrounded by nations that hold nuclear power. This makes soft power a far more necessary tool in civilizations' dialogues in maintaining a rule based order to the lands and the oceans surrounding her[9].

Conclusion

From classical dhows from West Asia to Western dreadnaughts to democracy through the digital in the world's most cosmopolitan ocean, the Indian Ocean remains an arena constantly reconfiguring relations between her littoral landscapes in the face of global opportunities and challenges. From cooperation over coercion, shared histories to shifting political realities, collaboration over cooperation and convergence over divergence, the cultural, trading and political continuum of the Indian Ocean arena is securely placed on the pedestal of maritime relations to build new bridges and rebuild those burnt.

Indian Ocean research from the lens of strategic studies needs to factor in the "density of pre- colonial inter oceanic networks"[10] within the region. Bearing in mind networks of the past which may or may not continue into the present, the present political arena has set the stage for a rise of regional powers culminating in an Indian Ocean Order, as articulated by the Sri Lankan Prime Minister. 2017 opens to a theatre of Indian Oceanic politics by nations large and small. The challenges will remain for nations smaller in size and scale of naval capacity to have an equal say at the table of treatises.

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India – China in the Indian Ocean: The Imperatives for Island States in the Region

W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar

Abstract[1]

The significance of island states in International Relations and their geo-strategic location has important implications for regional maritime trade, security and for the stakes of great powers whose vital economic and security interests are determined by various factors that are competitive, cooperative and convergent. Island states and small states have always been flexible and robust in their foreign and security policy choices.

The post-globalization phase has witnessed the resurgence of Asian civilizational powers in terms of the economic growth, rising power indices in industrial and technological strengths that had resulted in commensurate political-diplomatic leverages, economic power derived in terms of infrastructure development assistance, technical assistance, increased trade flows and the obvious military support and arms transfers.

India and China are the two civilizational powers in Asia that have emerged as pivotal states in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Attributing greatness to these two civilizational states is an inherent trait of history, culture, economic and commercial eminence as the two largest economies in the precolonial period. The tryst with Indian Ocean and the East Pacific has been historic with memories of voyages, trade and people movement. Ancient Asian International Relations witnessed the pre-eminence of China, Japan, India and Korea.

Rediscovery of the ancient civilizational and cultural icons of trade, connectivity and maritime power have been the salient sources of contemporary power rise of China and India.

The Indian and Pacific Oceans are now witnessing the "*crisscross*" of China, India, Japan as Asia's preeminent powers that are expanding influence, building access and leveraging economic and integration networks like the Maritime Silk Road that are iconic of their civilizational past.

The impact and implications for Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles of the expanded economic-political-diplomatic outreach of India and China would be a significant dimension of analysis. This essay would analyse the competitive dynamics of balancing and engagement of India and China in shaping the Asia-Pacific economic and security architecture; the civilisational contexts of the India, China tryst in Indian

Ocean; and the impact assessment of this outreach on the island states of the Indian Ocean region.

Introduction

The civilizational tryst of India and China in the Indian Ocean had its long ancient historical, cultural and trade engagements that had been enduring. Sea voyages and trade had plied the sea routes of the Indian Ocean and the East Pacific. Long sea voyages did however result in the port calls and what in contemporary naval terms could be known as 'access' that began to develop over a long epoch of time.

The Chola maritime voyages of trade and conquest and the Ming Dynasty's mercantile trade and naval voyages did result in the ancient Indian and Chinese 'connect' with the island states of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and perhaps Maldives, Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands on to the Chagos archipelago, Seychelles and Madagascar with the East African coast with which China and India had rich trading, cultural and diaspora movements. Similarly, the Coromandel Coast access of India had resulted in the Cholas engaging with perhaps the Andaman & Nicobar Island chain with their onward voyages across the Straits of Malacca even as new outposts and trading links were established.

The proposition that India and China have come a full circle overcoming the interregnum of the imperial-colonial period and have been able to position in terms of economic rise, cultural and civilizational renaissance and the attendant derivatives of science & technology, industrial power, military power projected through varying matrices of National Power and Comprehensive National Power is now being in its realization in the Indian and Pacific oceanic theatres.

Why the civilizational aegis of India and China in the Indian Ocean would be the dominant theme in this part of the region? Why and how the maritime power of India and China would be the defining pivots in the Indian and Pacific regions? What are the competing templates of balancing and interdependence that impact on the region? How island and small states in the region would be impacted could be some questions that could be briefly elucidated in this analysés.

The Competing Civilizational Aegis of China and India

China and India present contrasting International Relations visions of the Asia-Pacific and their divergent engagement with the region. To understand the contemporary perspective of Indian and Chinese deep maritime engagement in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, it would be useful to locate the ancient civilizational perspectives of the two powers and draw inference to the contemporary engagement with the region.

.China's International Relations Theory is profoundly embedded and reflects the Hierarchical system in the ancient civilizational and social contexts envisaging the Tributary system. The Tributary system was more in terms of an 'international society' that was in existence in East Asia and was also a structure of inter-state relations, strategic interaction and economic exchange between ancient imperial China and other states in the region.

The Tributary system also referred to the 'pacification' strategy of China with its neighbors and was considered the source of institutional innovation by East Asian states. The Tributary system acknowledged the hierarchical relations between China, its East Asian and Southeast Asian and South Asian neighbors based on the Middle Kingdom construct. It also envisaged the super-ordination and subordination relationships between the Chinese and non-Chinese world.

The Chinese Tributary system was a comprehensive framework of strategic interaction, economic exchange between Imperial China and other participants in the system. The international order was akin to an international social order that had political salience in inter-state relations. China's ancient as well as contemporary exercise of its foreign policy and diplomacy have often invoked the social, cultural and civilizational aspects of Tributary system and has engaged within East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia.[2]

Yet another theoretical correlate is evident in China's economic and strategic rise is seen in the context of a possible Power Transition in the Asia-Pacific – challenging and denting the US hegemony. This has been open to wide debate of its possibilities and also the improbabilities of whether such a power transition is in evidence.[3]

The mainstream perceptions on China had been strongly premised on the contexts of offensive realism to China's behavior that tends to predict China would be prone to armed conflict[4]. The revisionist view however posits that China has pursued foreign policies consistent with the status quo and revisionist intentions[5] with its deeper economic engagement with the Asia-pacific[6].

India's International Relations Theory on the other has been reflective of the "Raja Mandala" system in the ancient and contemporary contexts, it has been engaged with Southern Asia—in the immediate; Southeast Asia –in the intermediate and East Asia in the extended neighborhood.[7] In its ancient civilizational engagement with China and East Asia, India elucidated the Raja Mandala approach in its International affairs in its engagement with its immediate, intermediate and extended neighborhoods that was characterized by economic trade, cultural and religious exchanges and military expeditions that went from Southern Asia into Southeast Asia.[8]

India's Raja Mandala approach to International and strategic affairs was an eclectic blend of philosophical, social, cultural and political stratagems.[9] It is interesting to note that India's International Relations theory of the Mandala approach has a blend of realism and social tenets of identity and culture as means to identify India's enduring engagement with East Asia.

Thus India's International Relations theory of the Raja Mandala being an eclectic blend of realism with a 'native' constructivist salience of culture, identity and the histories of ancient trade and social ties with Southeast and East Asia provides the rich salience for analysis from the prism of the English School of how a civilizational

power with its ancient history of engagement and trade could use the social premises to leverage its contemporary diplomacy and economic engagement. Although the English School has deep and profound deficits on the salience of Eastern strategic and diplomatic historical sources.

It is this context of the respective civilizational an 'native' cultural constructivist prism that India and China have deep engagement and interest into the Indian Ocean and their intrinsic linkages have been not only with the littoral powers but importantly with the island states of the Indian Ocean region that often have had ancient pre-colonial historical, cultural contacts, linkages of trade and commerce and people movement.

The English School and civilizational power rise: The India-China contexts

To view the India-China connect with Indian Ocean and the island states would be more conducive if the premises of "International society" as a primary construct is examined. In examining this premise of how civilizational powers connect with social and cultural constructivist lenses, the English School is poised to evaluate the contemporary contexts of Chinese and Indian International Relations Theory rather than the neorealist framework. The English School robustly offers a better framework with a pluralist perspective of how China and India approach to shape the regional and impact on the global order either on competitive or convergent terms.[10]

The English School emphasis on International Society presents the growing convergence between China and India in expanding cooperation in international and regional multilateral engagements despite the persistence of geopolitical and security divergences.[11] Although China and India exhibit anti-hegemonic views of the US-led western domination of the international order, their sharp differences and differing historical experiences influences their world views provide competing civilizational narratives.[12]

Yet another context of the India-China dynamics in Asia-Pacific, Indian and Pacific Oceans has been the premises of the theoretical construct of Rising Powers and their competitive Asia Pacific engagement in the context of China and India in Southern Asia, Indian Ocean Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific.[13] It is a fact that China and India have been dominant economic powers until the 18th century and their cycles of their respective decline set in with the advancement of imperial colonialism. The phenomenon of Rising Power that came in after the end of the Cold War and the onset of globalization transformed the economic development profile of the two Asian powers. In the contemporary context, the significance and the critical impact on India and China on the Asia-Pacific and the Indian-Pacific Oceans go a very long way in determing the emerging Asian economic and security architecture- although the United States would continue to have its hegemonic sway for a period of time.

The templates of economic regionalism and interdependence in the India-China conundrum

One of the vital aspects of the "new economic regionalism" has been the ability of China to articulate, craft and build architecture for pan-regional economic cooperation frameworks like the Silk Road Economic Belt and the engagement in regional networks like the Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar (BCIM) besides the East Asia Summit (EAS). China had always focused on economic interdependence and security convergence in its engagement in Asia and the Pacific in Southern Asia, Southeast Asia and East Pacific. India has been vigorously engaged in its Look East-Act East diplomacy and economic partnerships with Southeast Asia and East Pacific.

Small States and Island States in Southern Asia, Southeast Asia had been engaging with India and China by deepening economic interdependence through the framework of regional economic cooperation and institutions through two well-time tested approaches:

Omni-enmeshment[14] has been a favoured strategy in Southeast Asia and specifically adopted by Singapore to engage China and India through the maze of economic and trade forums ARF ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN +3 that includes China; ASEAN +6 that includes China and India; ASEAN – India Free Trade Area and Agreement). Similarly in Southern Asia, Sri Lanka and Maldives have been focused in the dual pursuit of engaging India and China. Omni-enmeshment comes from enmeshment, which is a strategy of smaller states that hedges against the possibility of violent rivalry among the major powers and deter great power aggression against smaller states[15] Thus Omni-enmeshment of the Rising and the Great Powers is leveraged by island states and small states in Southern Asia and Southeast Asia with respect to India and China through good political relationships, deep and preferential economic exchanges, and to some degree of defence dialogue and exchange.[16]

The second approach involves a variety of balancing policies vis-à-vis major powers that is premised on the realist tenet by which small state align/bandwagon with the relatively weaker regional state China to "balance" stronger external Great Powers. In Southern Asia, Sri Lanka. Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles have been perpetually engaged in equidistant approaches of balancing both India and China—yet in reality have pursued closer binding ties with the Asian Civilizational Powers. Balancing approaches while they have optimized the security interests of the island states, they have also enhanced the economic benefits from both India and China in the diverse sectors of their respective economies.

Thus Island states have been able to deftly employ the dual diplomatic-economic and security engagement of India and China and leverage their interests in the region. This dynamic catalyzed the India-China competition in the region in the economic-infrastructure buildup as well as maritime engagement and competition.

The India-China competing templates of balancing and interdependence: Impact on the region

The India-China competing templates in balancing and interdependence in the Indian and Pacific oceans and the Asia-Pacific region has emerged as the indispensable factor that determines the political, economic and security dynamics of the states in the region.[17] Given the intense and aggressive tempo of this maritime competition, the India-China balance of power in the Indian Ocean is rapidly transforming the region with their assertion—although the United States continues to hold the sway in the region.[18] This escalatory competition between China and India in the Indian Ocean jostling for domain and influence reminiscences the Second Cold War rivalry between US and Soviet Union. However, China faces major geo-strategic disadvantages in the Indian Ocean—given *the tyranny of geographical distance"* to the Indian Ocean that comes along with the pangs of sustaining flotillas in distant waters even though there has been progressive modernization of the PLA-Navy capabilities.[19]

China's core strengths have been its aggressive economic-commercial and infrastructure diplomacy pursuit when compared with India is quite superior; While India has been able to develop robust security relationships with the Indian Ocean states.[20] However, the Chinese extended economic investments in the region have actually enhanced its security dilemma as its economic commitments to the region and its security commitments are not evenly balanced and the geostrategic value of India in the Indian Ocean exceeds that of China.[21]

China's dependence on maritime trade and eventually its strategic vulnerability in the Indian Ocean is thus principally a geographical inevitability that is reinforced by the scarcity of overland transport connections between it and the Indian Ocean.[22] The land terrain that China contends to the West constitutes the formidable geographic barriers created by the mountain ranges, deserts and jungles along the southern edge of the Eurasian continent make the development of such links very difficult. This has been attempted to be overcome by its recent Belt Road Initiative (evoking a historical-cultural tryst) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor along with its engagement in Bangladesh-China-India- Myanmar corridor envisaging the Chinese attempts to harness the geographical obstacles into opportunities. These opportunities are harnessed to overcome China's energy security dilemmas: "Hormuz Dilemma" and "Malacca Dilemma".

Thus the combination of the Belt and Road initiatives are synchronized to augment China's Indian Ocean access and in the process of mitigating its vulnerabilities in the Indian Ocean. In terms of its projection of power, China is developing capacities and capabilities to project limited naval and air power in the region that would essentially be a vanguard for its merchant- marine fleet that is critical to its economic lifeline as well as sustaining its influence and domain in the region.[23]

China is enhancing its Indian Ocean port access in the region and significantly, it aims to enhance and link the land-sea corridors linkages through Myanmar and Pakistan. This has been achieved by China as the dominant trading partner for many states in the Indian Ocean region constituting a predominant major source of investment, especially in infrastructure growth and development.[24] This has resulted

for China emerging as a comforting factor for various regional countries to use China as a partial balance or to use as a hedge in their political and economic relations with bigger powers such as the United States and India resulting in better bargains with India and United States.[25]

India's interests are also changing with the impact of the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Development Bank (AIIB) as this economically dents the US influence and India's participation in the AIIB would certainly enhance the economic-security leverage it has with the United States. However, China does not concede to the due rightful ambitions of India as a major power, but its recognition of India as a regional power hyphenating with Pakistan and has been engaged in various hedging strategies in Southern Asia. This has increased India's angst against China and has deepened the rivalry. In its economic interdependence equations, India has in recent years has steadily deepened its economic relations with China, while not conceding its acceptance of China's Maritime Silk Road, which it views as the economic corollary to the Chinese naval access in the Indian Ocean that India views it as hostile to its domain and core interests.[26]

But on the other, India has enhanced its value addition to the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) engagement both through the engagements in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) thus that brings India and China to select convergences in regional and sub regional cooperation. In recent developments, China has developed a new construct of 'common, comprehensive and cooperative security' to deal with the shifting world security paradigm. In this context, China elucidates that its perspective of security is ambient engaging the contours of economic growth and security convergence with Asia and the rest of the world. China is intensifying its three-pronged approach of a) Cooperation; b) Development and c) innovation with its emphasis on "common, comprehensive and cooperative security construct"—with sustainable security at its core --based on the spirit of mutual respect, equal negotiation, transparency and win-win cooperation.[27] It is this consensus that makes China to be focused to craft an economic and security Asia-premised China-centric order and India responds with equal energy. However, the real contention of the India-China dynamics lies in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the access points of the island states that dot the Indian Ocean.

Having examined the India-China maritime dynamics in the Indian and Pacific Oceans; engaged in the context of a possible "civilizational connect" with the Silk Road and Mausam initiatives, it would be perceptive to evaluate the imperatives that Island states with regard to the India-China engagement in the region.

Island states of the Indian Ocean and the India-China dynamics in the region

The Island states of the Indian Ocean of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles have been the intense cynosure of competing diplomatic, economic and strategic energies of India and China.[28] The Island States have often been able to

connect with the two civilizational powers in terms of the past historical connect, a shift from their colonial linkages and the quest to be able to adopt adroit diplomatic policies and postures that often projected a) the imperatives for a peace and stable order in the Indian Ocean; b) the dexterity to derive economic assistance and security guarantees from the major regional and extra-regional powers; c) the ability to leverage for offering competitive maritime and naval access for the regional and major powers and d) the capacity to absorb assistance that goes into the development of infrastructure that is based on joint and cooperative development patterns that result in the regional and sub regional development.

This analysis may not be able to present specific case studies in detail of each island state, yet the common patterns of Island States and major powers could be analysed in terms of their engagement.

Seven trends are evident in the engagement of the major regional powers and extra-regional powers with the island states of the Indian Ocean region.

Island states in the Indian Ocean offer the tremendous prospect of ocean resources exploration in terms of organic and inorganic resources. The comprehensive matrix is known as 'Blue Economy' that had been well elucidated in recent scholarship as well as policy notes and recommendations. India and China are keenly investing in Blue Economy as they tend to develop offshore assets that deal with the mining and extraction of the resources from the sea. The potential and the quantum of these resources mined and extracted from the Exclusive Economic Zones of these countries are immense. Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles offer excellent in-site potential for the exploitation of these resources. With generous offers of capital assistance and technological inputs, China and India are in the competing sinews to develop and exploit the 'Blue Economy' of the island states of the Indian Ocean that offers tremendous resource potential in fisheries, mineral resources, energy in terms of oil and natural gas.[29]

Two, island states are engaged in the constant diplomacy of securing and balancing aid commitments of receiving aid and infrastructure development assistance. Long term loans and soft loans are often the instruments in this diplomacy.[30] Quite often the infrastructure development patterns and aid quantum is usually high and disproportionate that the expenditures of the smaller economies of the island states have grave challenges to cope up with. Conditional aid is yet another vital instrument that constrains the options of island state economies to make optimal choices and thus are subject to constraints.[31] Besides the ability to repay loans and offset commitments have often turned to be challenges. How would India and China address this potential challenge and how could their generous aid go to cater the needs of the island states would have to be examined in the longer run;

Three. the role of regional institutional cooperation agreements like the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Indian Ocean Region-Association for Regional Cooperation offer greater prospects for island states to leverage their position to derive optimal gains in diplomatic, economic and commercial trade benefits that could be in the form of greater inter-regional trade that would serve their interests.[32] India's Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, Project Mausam and its various bilateral capacity building measures are focused on the building synergies in addressing security concerns—

along with the free trade agreements and preferential trade that is bilateral between India and the island states; while China's Maritime Silk Road in the 21st Century addresses in terms of the economic and infrastructure building capacities that goes well into addressing the specific requirements of security needs of each island state. (Rumley & Chaturvedi:2015) These trends are enduring and would go into the building of capacity of these island states in the long run in return for preferential access in maritime terms for India and China;

Four, Island states contend with the prospect of dramatic climate change that are specifically arising from rising sea-levels and the erosion of their coastlines, besides the challenge of their prospective submergence. This brings to fore the critical vulnerabilities of their coastal infrastructure that promotes tourism, offshore exploration of resources and the inevitable displacement of their resident populations within their territories or as in the case of Maldives, the prospect of relocating their populations in third countries forfeiting their homelands and livelihood.[33] The role of major and extra-regional powers like India and China as first responders to such contingencies emerges even as their maritime forces of the navies and coast guards would respond in humanitarian and disaster relief and rescue. This contingency is more amplified when natural oceanic disasters like cyclones, Tsunami threats slam the fragile homelands of the island states. India and China given their regional proximity and their civilizational connect have a greater stake in aiding and building capacity for the island states of the Indian Ocean.

Five, counterterrorism cooperation spawns in a great deal of convergence and cooperation between island states security and the engagement with India and China. Given their fragile security order and the constant prospect of being subject to violent attacks by transnational terrorism, Island states do rely on major powers for security guarantees.[34] Shared intelligence and capacity building in tackling terrorism and its possible weapons of mass destruction usage by violent non-state actors would be an important focus of the various island state counterterrorism agenda and their engagement with India and China would be on those accents of cooperation;

Six, maritime security cooperation between the island states and the major powers India and China would be a very premium agenda of the imperatives that Island states would have in the future.[35] Maritime security cooperation brings to fore the entire gamut of issues of platform transfers, capacity building in training, joint exercises in constabulary and humanitarian and disaster relief, maritime intelligence cooperation, Coast Guard fleet buildup and their training; Exclusive Economic Zone protection and preservation; the imperatives to build Good Order at Sea in terms of Ocean governance and their capacities, maritime risk reduction measures are some of the important issues that a comprehensive maritime security dialogue between the island states and major powers via India and China.

Seven, Island States in the Indian Ocean region long run would need to build in administrative and institutional capacities in governance that would aid in their political, economic, security and human development of their respective states.[36] The Asian experience of Governance is rich and replete in India and China. Although India and China offers contrasting ideological choices of democratic and nondemocratic templates; yet there are core strengths in the civilian bureaucratic

systems and processes of the two powers that offer complementary strengths to the states. Governance capacity and the ability to build stability in the political, economic-commerce and security processes of the Island states with a convergent approach from India and China has seminal contributions to the systems of government and their processes that would have an innate Asian culture.

In summation, the emergent contours of the India-China balancing and interdependence dynamics would be premised on the access capacities that India and China develop in the region. They would be determined by a liberal means of civilizational, cultural connect; rediscovery and reinforcement of enduring historical ties, buoyed by economic and commercial ties, infrastructure buildup assistance; security convergence and the joint stakeholdership of oceanic resources that is inclusive of energy, organic and mineral resources. In this dynamic engagement, India and China would be in relentless pursuit of their destinies in the region.

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Rising ChinIndia and Benefits for Smaller South Asian States

Nishchal N. Pandey

Abstract

This paper shall delve into the salient issue of how India and China are recognized the world over as the economic giants of the 21st century yet smaller countries in South Asia have collectively failed to reap the advantages of being in close proximity with these two powerhouses. Major powers such as China, the EU and Japan are Observers of SAARC yet it is unfortunate that the member states have not been able to utilize the experience and expertise of these regional powers on core areas. Therefore, a real re-think is necessary at the level of the leadership of South Asia on how to reinvigorate the SAARC process by utilising the close proximity of these powerful states. It also needs to be underscored that there is a greater need for India and China to cooperate in the neighbourhood, be it in Southeast Asia or South Asia, since both are vulnerable in certain areas with a dire need to cooperate and stabilize the neighbourhood for the benefit of all.

Keywords: Regionalism; Connectivity; Trilateral-alliance; Geo-politics

All South Asian countries are at the moment functioning democracies. Periodic elections in each of the eight countries have brought about peaceful change in political leadership. South Asia has also lately been peaceful barring a few instances of terror attacks in some of these countries. The challenge however lies in their inability to stabilize internal politics, pursue sustained economic growth and promote regional cooperation in a vast region of teeming millions living in destitution and poverty. Despite having in its midst India and China that are termed as the rising political, economic and military giants of the 21st century, SAARC has collectively failed to piggy-back on their economic success. This paper shall delve into the salient issue of how India and China are recognized the world over as the economic giants of the 21st century yet smaller SAARC countries have collectively failed to reap the advantages of being in close proximity with these two powerhouses. Individually, the paper discusses the Indian democracy and its Constitution being stable throughout the last six decades but for the rest of the South Asian countries, the real difficulty has been on the very basic issues of nationhood culminating on the general feebleness to provide good governance to their peoples. This has had direct bearing on the national security of our nations. On the second segment of the paper, China's advancement into the

world stage as a global power will be analyzed together with why we must develop infrastructural connectivity with this neighbour for our own benefit.

As the largest democracy in the world, with a constitution that is democratic, federal, inclusive and forward looking – India's Constitution has been studied and admired not only within India but also in the neighborhood and emerging democracies around the world.

The Constitution of India, which was adopted on Nov. 26th 1949 by the Constituent Assembly has been to borrow Dr. Ambedkar's words, "Workable, flexible and strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and war time." As all of us know, 67 years have passed by and under the same constitution, India which at the time of independence was a poverty-stricken country hit regularly by famine and riots has today emerged as a political and economic powerhouse of the 21st century. This is something that is extraordinary and remarkable. The vastness of the country, the cultural diversity, the teeming millions, compelled the framers of the constitution to make provisions for the promotion and protection of the interests of different regions. The Constitution has elaborate provisions for the minorities, scheduled castes and tribes and interests of different regions – all due to the hard work of Dr. Ambedkar.

The word federalism does not appear in the Indian Constitution but article 1 of the Constitution says, "India that is Bharat shall be a union of states." And through this phrase and enabling structures, India emerged as a successful federal formation. Respecting regional differences: federalism has enabled different states to govern themselves in the way that best suits them.

Not just federalism but also the word 'secularism' was not included in the Constitution when it was promulgated. It was only with the 42nd Amendment enacted in 1976, that the Preamble to the Constitution asserted that India is a secular nation. But the culture of tolerance and respect for each other's beliefs without sacrificing their ethos and cultural values, Indians have marched towards modernity. Certainly, there have been aberrations but generally, India has maintained its coherence as a nation state and resolved internal problems within the parameters of its Constitution.

Nepal in the last 60 years has had six constitutions. Other countries in South Asia have also struggled to stabilize their internal politics. But in India, the same Constitution has endured for over sixty years and during periods of acute crisis, it has shown its inherent strength and resilience. This in turn has helped to stabilize their internal politics which las led to a national focus on economic growth and providing governance to the people. This is a work in progress but we can see that if politics is stabilized by visionary leadership in the formative stages of nation building, it is easier for a nascent democracy to move along the path of national development.

In fact, this brings us to the second point that the leaders of India of those days had only democracy and national interest in mind instead of nepotism and favouritism. They were towering personalities. They had no personal desire or greed of money. They wanted to build institutions – most of which survive till today. They gave importance to merit than political affiliations, family relationships or monetary gain. Looking at the first Nehru cabinet:-

it took office on Aug. 15, 1947 had Sardar Patel as Home Minister, Dr. Ambedkar as Law Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Minister for Education, Jagjivan Ram

as Minister for Labour, Amrit Kaur-Health, the legendary Shyama Prasad Mookherji as Minister for Industries and Supplies among others. Each one of these personalities are legends in their own right.

The third point to be stressed is the political stability that India was fortunate to gain after independence which has been another hallmark of its success. Most other countries in our neighborhood were not as fortunate. Prime Minister Nehru ruled from August 1947 to May 1964 – a total of 18 years. According to MJ Akbar in his book *Nehru: The Making of India*, "He was an idealist, and his ideas commanded an empire far larger than the India he ruled for 18 years." Therefore, with this visionary and selfless leadership that encouraged merit in all areas of nationhood that stood firm on their ideals that wanted to build democratic institutions – it was but natural that India today reaps the benefits of the sacrifices made by this first generation of legendary leaders in those early years of independence.

And as Nehru spoke at the Constituent Assembly "At the stroke of the mid-night hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."

Therefore, merely having democratic constitutions is not enough. We need to have a democratic political culture and a leadership that truly desires to make a change, that rises above family, factional and party interests to the larger interests of the nation. As Dr. Ambedkar himself said, "The constitution only gives the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."

When looking around our region, we the smaller countries of SAARC also need to be cognizant of the fact that the rising power of China is an opportunity for all of us. In the span of a single generation of Chinese, the agrarian nation of civil war, famine, shortages, isolation and deprivation has emerged as an economic powerhouse that all countries of the world want to engage in trade and commerce with. It is in our benefit to promote connectivity in all its aspects i.e. land, air, sea, tourism, investment, optical fibre, and people to people relations with China. If African states and Latin American countries can be active in fostering cooperation with China, it is noteworthy that we as a region have the benefit of being in closer proximity with several provinces of China mainly Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions and Yunnan Province. All of us benefit individually and collectively by exploring newer avenues of cooperation with China as it expands its political and economic clout in Asia. This is not playing off the China card to offset India or vice versa, as some pundits believe. Rather, it is being prudent to the emerging geo-political realities of our time.

Talking specifically about Nepal, Chinese investment in the smaller state is growing exponentially, in fact it is on an upward scale all over South Asia. It is important for India to adapt to the Chinese rising influence in South Asia for the same reason that the Chinese have to adjust themselves to the rising Indian influence in Southeast Asia. India's expanding relations with Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore and its involvement in ASEAN can't be divorced with China's deepening of relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, The Maldives, Afghanistan and Nepal. China's Observer Status in SAARC has opened a new vista of opportunity in the region for China and one of the several major events held each year is the Kunming South Asia Expo wherein South Asian products are showcased for Chinese buyers which helps to generate awareness and interest in South Asia in the huge

Chinese market. In the year 2010, total of 46,360 Chinese tourists had visited Nepal. In 2013, this number has doubled. There is a possibility that very soon, Chinese will be the largest segment of tourists visiting Nepal. Today Kunming, Lhasa, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Hong Kong are directly connected with Kathmandu by air. Recently, China's Civil Aviation Construction Company has bagged to upgrade the Gautam Buddha International Airport in Bhairhawa. The company was the lowest bidder. The second lowest bidder was also a Chinese company. Like in many other tenders of construction projects and bids, Chinese companies tend to win the contract all over South Asia- mainly due to the low costs and also because they have a reputation of completing the projects on time. There has to be a realization in New Delhi that as far as airports, roads, railways and overall infrastructure development is concerned, Chinese investment is good for South Asia and this is a win-win model of partnership.

The overall nature of geo-politics is changing. Therefore, whether we want to call it a trilateral alliance, the bridge state or a transit state, Nepal is emerging as a viable gateway from North India to Tibet and vice versa. All South Asian countries – Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or The Maldives are already envisaging their strategic location as crucially important for China and this must be augmented and promoted in the years to come.

India-China bilateral trade itself is US$ 75 billion today. You don't need a bridge to cross over to China because their maritime trade route is already doing very well. When we talk about economic cooperation, first the sub regional aspect of North India, Nepal and Tibetan Autonomous Region or North India, Nepal and South West Tibet must be understood. This is the political geography we have to conscious of and we need to translate this vision into the wider periphery of South India, Sri Lanka, The Maldives and the seaboard of China. Now, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will take South Asia even more closer to China.

South Asian countries will do their part but it is high-time that India and China also start concentrating on infrastructural development connectivity, roads and railways, better health sector, better education in their own bordering districts, not only along the Pakistan-Nepal-Bhutan-Bangladesh-Myanmar border but also the borders along other countries. Without the development of bordering areas, this marvel of rising India and rising China will not be felt in the smaller countries of the neighbourhood.

It needs to be underscored that there is also a greater need for India and China to cooperate in the neighbourhood, be it in Southeast Asia or South Asia. Since both are vulnerable in certain areas, there is a dire need to cooperate and stabilize the neighbourhood. Zero sum games and strategic competition within the internal politics of smaller countries will only divert their attention and resources away from the main destination which is to become global powers of this century.

Unfortunately, our common project, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has failed to live upto expectations. Although created with the lofty vision of promoting peace, stability, harmony and progress, and later also creating a free trade region in South Asia, SAARC has not been able to formulate and implement projects, programs and activities in a prioritized, focused and result-oriented manner. Indo-Pak relations, India's relations with smaller neighbors that

function like traffic lights, and the structurally powerless Secretariat has resulted in the organization turning into a picnic of heads of states and governments. Although several projects in the agreed areas of cooperation, mainly in the areas of poverty alleviation, infrastructure building, connectivity, climate change and energy have been initiated, there has been very little concrete outcome thus far.

Despite all these challenges, SAARC is a manifestation of the determination of the peoples of South Asia, that brings together leaders from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to work together towards finding solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding and to create an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits. South Asian civil society and think-tanks, media-persons are industrialists have been bearing the torch of SAARC in order to sensitize the people on the need to rise above nationalistic passions and embrace the collective good of the region. Major powers such as China, the EU and Japan are Observers of this regional organization yet we have not been able to utilize their experience and expertise on core areas. A real re-think is necessary at the level of the leadership of South Asia on how to reinvigorate the SAARC process.

How India and China handle relations with their immediate neighbours is a matter of global curiosity in contemporary international relations. This is because it itself yields a view of the possible paths these two countries could follow as they navigate through in their long voyage to become global powers. Just as the world is benefitting from increased interaction with these burgeoning economies, South Asia's own economic strength depends on trading and investing with both China and India, which are the engines of world growth.

Smart Air Power in South Asia

Asanga Abeyagoonasekera
Piyumani Ranasinghe

> *"Air power is the most difficult of military force to measure or even to express in precise terms. The problem is compounded by the fact that aviation tends to attract adventurous souls, physically adept, mentally alert and pragmatically rather than philosophically inclined."*
>
> *-Winston Churchill-*

Abstract[1]

Air power in a strictly military sense is the "ability of a nation to project military force by or from a platform in the third dimension above the surface of the earth."[2] Even if early visionaries such as Churchill underlined the difficulty in propounding a definition that enclasps the notion of air power, modern security literature has outlined its essence in comprehensive forms of explanation. Accordingly, air power can be understood as means of exerting a nation's will though the medium of air. This unfolds a wider understanding of air power as an arena of both hard and soft power capabilities at the hand of a nation's will. The importance of air power lies in its unique advantage over the other two mediums of military power; as the control of air translates into power over land and water. However, air power is a relational phenomenon, which should be understood in relation to the terrain and the seas. Regional Security, similarly, is a relational phenomenon, and as Barry Buzan[3] notes, one cannot understand the security of any given state without understanding the international pattern of security interdependence in which it is embedded. In this context, the conventional definition of air power, as an offensive military tool, is obsolete at the face of the complexity and changing strategic environments within regional blocs across the globe. This paper asserts that air power in the current regional context should extend into smart power[4] dimensions given the transformed security threats at the face of every nation. This stance is discussed by looking into: first, the ability of Sri Lanka to export its competence in countering terrorism in the regional context; secondly, the vitality of placing Sri Lanka as a humanitarian hub, at the face of the changing security complexities in the region due to natural and

man-made disasters; thirdly, the essay would introduce space security, as the fourth dimension that air power should extend into, as a part of a smart air power approach, especially in the context of the changing global security landscape and technological advancements.

Key Words: Smart Air Power, Sri Lanka Air Force, Humanitarian Hub, Space Security

Exporting the competence in countering terrorism: the perfect mix in understanding the terrain

Sri Lanka's ability to invest in a regional counter-terrorism strategy and stringent security architecture should be highlighted in line with the nation's expertise in unfolding the *prefect mix* of military capabilities in terms of understanding the terrain (Figure 1)[5]. The Sri Lankan narrative of confronting terrorism is known to all. Although it left scars of ethnic discrepancies and grave costs of life, money and material at dusk, the competence of the tri-forces in excelling this perfect mix of land, air and sea over thirty years, in countering terrorism accredited the military with a capital of knowledge and experience which only a handful of countries can boast of. At the heart of the perfect mix rests the notion of apprehending the terrain to suit the requirements of the collision, where even if the military organization was predominantly land oriented[6] the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) played a key role as a supportive actor in the battle against the known-unknown.

Ergo, the Sri Lankan air strategy was highly in line with Counter Insurgency warfare (COIN)[7], where despite its limited assets the SLAF acclaimed unprecedented eminence in the air power employment of COIN and COIN warfare. Historically, COIN was employed by the European Nations in air power strategies prior to enlisting it in conventional warfare, during World War I. However, despite its historical wielding, since air power in insurgency has delivered mixed outcomes in various circumstances, it is problematic to generalize its offensive efficiency at the face of every insurgency. For example, the United States (US) employment of air power in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan consigned indecisive outcomes, where it was debated whether air power should play a gradualist, supportive role in certain circumstances, or whether it should demonstrate a dominant role that the military technical revolution (MTR) had made possible for air power.[8] As previously noted, "US

"THE PERFECT MIX

LAND   SEA   AIR

Figure 1

Air power was seen as invincible against any geography until the soldier's boots hit the ground to work with Iraqi people to establish a democratic system of governance which became a nightmare. Following the collapse of the state what we could witness today is a sectarian carnage with many lives lost."[9]

This signifies the underlying dilemma of contemplating a clear doctrine of air power efficiency at the face of an insurgency which lies in the ability of insurgents to adapt to air power and the often asymmetric insurgency tactics. For example, the LTTE acquired a rudimentary form of air power to suit the strategic implications of the battle which created complexities in terms of national and human security for the entire island. However, amidst these complexities the SLAF employed COIN warfare effectively, subsequently liberating a terror-stricken island and marking a milestone in the air power employment of COIN. Accordingly, the SLAF's air power systems mastered:

1. Providing imagery intelligence, real-time situational awareness using UAVs;
2. Accurate target acquisition and bombing via fighter jets;
3. Providing CAS for troops by Mi-24 helicopter gunships;
4. Carrying out resupplying operations and casualty evacuation in support of the troops;
5. Establishing an Air defence system, within a short period of time, which aided the destruction of the LTTE's air capability;
6. Centralizing command and control using digital infrastructure to establish secure and high speed data transfer;
7. Establishing a faster OODA loop[10] (Observe, Orientate, Decision, Action) than that of the LTTE, which enabled action before the enemy;
8. Supplementing the air strategy about 17,000 personnel of the SLAF Regiment of specialized ground combat corps provided security for the SLAF hierarchy, air bases and liberated areas;
9. Providing technical, logistical, medical and administrative support in order to execute the air strategy smoothly;[11]
10. Engaging in Maritime Air operations; and
11. Engaging in Combat support operations.

As Mendis (2013) notes,

> "[T]he air strategy of the SLAF played a vital role in the Sri Lankan government's victory over the LTTE. The simultaneous application of offensive air action in support of ground troops as well as identified independent targets away from the battle zone formed the basis of the two pronged strategy adopted. This strategy together with some fundamental measures incorporated at the highest level of SLAF decision making synergized to reap benefits beyond expectations."[12]

Thus, the propensity embedded within the SLAF is unarguably a resource that ought to be exported into the South Asian stage, which is antagonized by the threats

of transnational terrorism in the present day. As the SLAF Corporate plan 2016-2018 notes, one of the major threats to the air power of Sri Lanka lies in the rapid development in air power in the South Asian theatre[13]. Thus, on one hand extending such an informative arm on the part of the SLAF breaks a new opportunity to collaborate with regional counterparts in sharing resources, technology and expertise of those nations in order to further enhance the air power capabilities of the country and mitigate potential threats that can stem from an imbalance of regional powers in South Asia. On the other hand, it allows Sri Lanka to serve as an informative platform in diffusing its wealth of knowledge in countering terrorism to the South Asian arena. The SLAF, in this regard, should play a pivotal role in order to enable such diffusion of information to fellow military counterparts in the region.

The preponderating evidence on the regional security environment furbishes the simultaneous rise of pressing intra-state security issues alongside the persevering inter-state security tensions within the region. Hence, in the post-IS age of terror and extremism, it is apparent that the self-radicalized homegrown cells and individuals within the boundaries of nation states can disseminate transnational terrorist propaganda which can seed fundamental security threats from within state boundaries as opposed to the conventional external threats. Thus, the post-IS world has established that the enemy is no more an intruder. The attack on Bangladeshi soil in 2016 is one among many exhibits, which showcases the relational security threats that can kindle within the region in the near future due to transnational terrorism. Hence, the air power capabilities of SLAF, in terms of countering terrorism as a part of excelling the prefect mix, are undoubtedly of epitome value in terms of enhancing the regional security infrastructure that is stringent against the threat of terrorism. Thus, a smart air power approach in the context of regional security and defence would require the exportation of in-house expertise in countering terrorism, to the region. In addition, a smart air power approach necessitates the extension of a humanitarian arm for the region which enables an active regional presence which is as follows.

Sri Lanka as a regional humanitarian hub: humanitarian assistance and relief in times of need

Augmenting a smart air power approach in the region requires the extension of national air power to suit the requisites of the changing regional and global security environment. Air power as a military instrument can extend into offensive as well as non-offensive means as it comprises unique characteristics such as height, speed and reach. In the post-cold war world order, global air forces have simultaneously partaken in far more non-conventional conflicts (East Timor 2001; Libya 2011; Mali 2012) and disaster relief operations (2004 Tsunami in Asia; 2008 Cyclone Nargis; 2009 Padang Earthquake; 2010 Pakistan Floods; 2011 East Japan Earthquake; 2014 Typhoon Haiyan) as opposed to the offensive air power campaigns that illuminated the cold war skies at the height of the bi-polar war between the USA and the USSR. In this regard, evidently smaller air powers in the world have deferred from their offensive flair and have restructured the strategic air power capabilities in order to suit more pressing

peacetime requirements. Examples furbish the decision taken by the New Zealand Ministry of Defence in 2001 to remove the Royal New Zealand Air Force's (RNZAF) air combat capability by cancelling the purchase of *28 Block-15 F-16 Fighting Falcon* fighters and disbanding its *Skyhawk* and *Aermacchi* fighter squadrons.[14] Today, the RNZAF operates only helicopters, transport and maritime patrol aircraft.

In this view, the SLAF's humanitarian assistance prospective should similarly extend to complement the pressing non-offensive regional security issues that can impede human security, especially given the geopolitical setting of Sri Lanka, as an air power located in the focal point of the Indian Ocean. Accordingly, the Sri Lankan government's "Global Hub concept," which is a grand strategy that unfolds five strategically important areas of performance for the nation in the global arena, could be utilized by the SLAF in pioneering an initiative in extending its non-offensive capabilities unto creating a humanitarian hub within the region. In 2021, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) aims to be the first global logistics hub for distributing humanitarian aid in response to regional disasters and crises. The strategy was launched at International Humanitarian City, the aid logistics centre in Dubai, which already hosts nine United Nations agencies and more than 40 Non-Governmental Organizations and companies that deliver urgent crisis aid and also support long-term economic development.[15] This initiative foregrounds the potential Sri Lanka holds in terms of geopolitical significance and capacity in creating a similar humanitarian hub that can be a logistical focal point in times of regional disasters and humanitarian catastrophes in Asia and South Asia.

Referring to the humanitarian logistics hub in Dubai, The International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies notes that, "[T]he facilities and strategic location, from which two-thirds of the world's population can be reached in eight hours, have helped to deliver assistance in some of the worst humanitarian crises of the past decade, including the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, drought in the Horn of Africa, civil unrest in Afghanistan and Darfur, and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Organizations working in the city have also been heavily engaged in the emergency responses to Syria and the Philippines."[16] Accordingly, the population density within the South Asian region, which already holds over 1 billion of the world population within India itself, and the geo-strategic location of the Sri Lankan island nation outlines the marked potential vested in the Sri Lankan state in creating a humanitarian hub within the region.

Noteworthily, the efficiency harbored within the military discourse renders the SLAF to play a pivotal role in enabling an initiative in creating a humanitarian hub, along with the supportive network promulgated by the army and the navy. The SLAF is already a regional actor in Search and Rescue Operations (SAR operations) where the effectiveness of helicopters and other air assets, the operational readiness, correct and timely use and the operational proficiency of the SLAF have saved many lives in distress over land and sea at difficult times. Examples of SAR operations conducted during the 2004 Tsunami, recent floods, landslides and such other adverse weather conditions prove the above. Accordingly, this efficiency should extend in the regional context with the assistance and collaborative partnership of other humanitarian organisations and states, where Sri Lanka could act as an enabling platform of

logistical and operational support in the region at times of natural calamities and man-made disasters. This would enable a smart national air power strategy within the region.

In this light, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Act as a maritime humanitarian hub. Given the geo-strategic location of Sri Lanka, a few kilometres away from the South Coast to the Sea Lines of Communications, of the busiest international shipping lines, SLAF can facilitate SAR operations of vessels in distress situations due to ship wreck, fire, mechanical failure etc.
2. Function as an airborne communication medium in monitoring and coordinating humanitarian assistance with regard to refugees or in the event of manmade calamities such as oil spills.
3. The geographic location of the Indian Ocean nations renders the countries vulnerable to natural calamities such as seismic related earthquakes and tsunami. Sri Lanka as a humanitarian logistical hub in the focal point of the Indian Ocean in this regard is of substantial significance.

Extending air power in to a fourth dimension - introducing space security

Introducing Space security as the fourth dimension, in terms of extending a smart air power approach in the region has proven to become an essentiality given the changing security environment within the South Asian stage. Over the past few years, especially in the age of the fourth industrial revolution (industry 4.0), the concept of space security has gained substantial interest in the military arena all over the world, despite the little attention paid to the space security dimension in Sri Lanka in the present context. It is apparent that national and commercial interests of states are now increasingly tied to space. An interesting change can be seen in emerging economies, where states are investing in space programs in addressing geopolitical concerns, to enhance national prestige and also to ripen socio-economic benefits. Harding (2013)[17] notes that, space has become "the ultimate venue for the growth of national power and socioeconomic development among a number of the world's emergent states" (p. 1). Accordingly, more than 25 developing states and emerging markets now possess increasingly active space programs, including China, India, Brazil, South Korea, Iran and Indonesia with global outlays on national space programs reaching more than $70 billion in 2012, which grows at five percent annually.[18]

At the onset of the space age, marked by the launch of *Sputnik 1* in 1957, space technology was limited to national security and telecommunication, although in the world today societies are exceedingly reliant on space technology for GPS navigation, weather forecasting, satellite television and even personal telephone calls. By 2016 almost 1,300 satellites orbit the earth, operated by 80 different countries and organizations, providing a wealth of services for billions of earth dwellers.[19] Thus, both civilian and military actors use space systems for a wide range of activities, including

earth observation and environmental monitoring, early warning and reconnaissance, navigation and communications. Noteworthily, given the ever evolving cutting-edge technology, many developed economies, of both the East and the West, are now heavily dependent on space technology which renders their military capabilities to be far stronger and stringent. In military terms this dependence involves constituencies of precision weaponry, drone surveillance and real-time field communications. The pursuit of security and development, catalyzing space, has in this regard pushed space programs to new heights, especially in the developing world.

As Harding notes, space policies of states can be categorized into three tiers. The first tier comprises states such as, the United States and Russia, which holds the most advanced space technology including resilient national space agencies.[20] The second tier constitute states such as, China, India, and Brazil, that produce some domestic space technology, but collaborate with more advanced powers out of necessity. Finally, the third tier is a catch-all category of nations with some space-related technology geared to accomplishing targeted goals.[21] The importance of this classification lies in the underlying idea of the drivers of space policymaking and the alternative avenues that developing nations explore as their space policies evolve. It is apparent that collaboration is employed by states as a key avenue in sharing resources that enable the aforesaid targeted goals of security and socio-economic development. Harding, exploring the International Relations (IR) nuances of space policy of states, further notes that space policies are largely driven by the underlying notion of state survival than purely scientific pursuits. In this regard as more nations seek access to space not only does the space frontier get crowded, but it also marks new security implications in the international system. Evidently, Harding outlines the potential for an Asian space race between China, India, and Japan which can create serious shifts in the international relations and international space governance.[22]

Figure 2

Thus, on the one hand, the extension of air power into a fourth dimension and introducing space security into a regional security framework is of essence and timely, especially in combating new security issues that persist within the region, which stem from the weak space security infrastructure that is prevalent in the South Asian arena. On the other, since India is one among ten other nations in the global stage that have 29 governmental, 4 military - including the Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) reconnaissance satellite capability[23], and 3 civil and commercial operating satellites, collaborative initiatives can mellow a wealth of benefits to the other regional counterparts in combating non-traditional security issues such as cyber threats and transnational terrorism. (Figure 2)[24]

Furthermore, in the East Asian neighborhood, Japan and China are two other advanced space faring nations that encompass the space dimension as global and regional giants. For example, the Japanese Self-Defence Forces utilize the X-band satellite technology as a communication tool, to command and control operation units, covering areas from the Northwest Pacific to the Indian Ocean, as these satellites ensure a wide-area of communication and mitigates adverse effects of weather and other geographic conditions. (Figure 3)[25] Japan has already set the stage as a technological giant in the region for joint operations in terms of intelligence sharing with the US, where the US uses Japan as a space security platform. The Government of Japan and the United States have announced the establishment of a new Partnership Program for cooperation regarding operation of the International Space Station known as the "Japan-U.S. Open Platform Partnership Program (JP-US OP3)." The Japanese Government stated that "this program will assist in ushering in a new phase of cooperation in the advancement of human space exploration between our two nations."[26] The importance of these partnerships lies in the notion of collaboration of
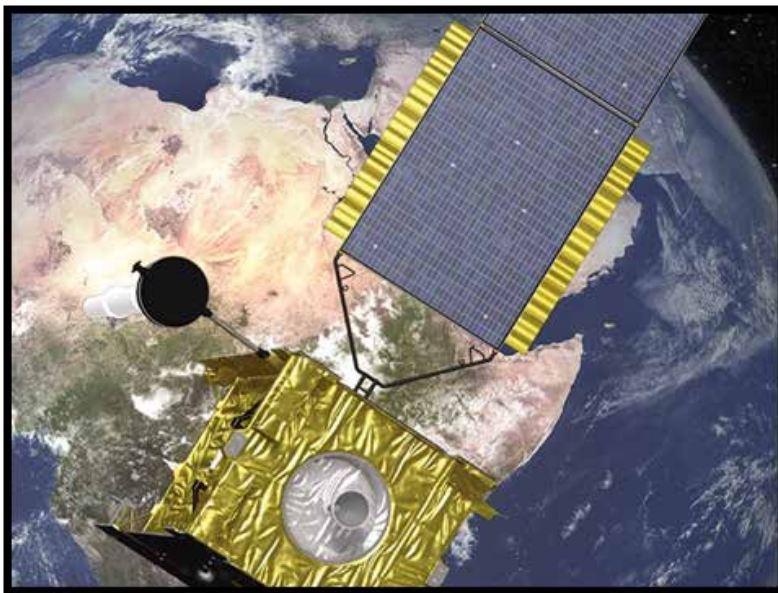

Figure 3

space power which is a strategy that should be initiated in the South Asian stage, not only to realize security objectives but also advance socio-economic benefits that the fourth dimension offers.

In this light, the regionally less debated novel dimension of security should be brought into the forefront in order to facilitate the creation of a new security architecture that is resilient against the emerging threats of cyber warfare and space insecurity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has asserted that air power in the current regional context should extend into smart power dimensions given the transformed security threats at the face of every nation. In this regard, firstly the ability of Sri Lanka to export its competence in countering terrorism in the regional context was vitalized in terms of promulgating a smart air power approach in the region with the intention of confronting transnational terrorism. Secondly, the vitality of placing Sri Lanka as a humanitarian hub, in the face of the changing natural and manmade security complexities, in the region was highlighted, given the nation's strategic location as a focal point in the South Asian stage. Thirdly, Space Security was established to be the fourth dimension that air power should extend into, as a part of a smart air power approach, especially in the context of the changing global security landscape and technological advancements.

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He has been a Chevening Scholar at the London School of Economics in 2008; and in 2015 at the Harvard Kennedy School on a South Asia Leaders' Programme. He is actively engaged in the Track II dialogue process and was India's representative to the CSAP Working Group on Water Resources Security.

A doctoral in International Politics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, he is the author of the book *Riverine Neighbourhood: Hydro-politics in South Asia* (Pentagon Press, 2016). Some of his recent edited volumes include, *The Modi Doctrine: New Paradigms in India's Foreign Policy* (Wisdom Tree, 2016); Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Asia: Approaches and Responses (Routledge 2015); and *Emerging Strategic Trends in Asia* (Pentagon Press, 2015).

Matteo Legranzi

Matteo Legrenzi is Associate Professor of International Relations at Ca'Foscari University of Venice and President, Italian Association for Middle Eastern Studies (SeSaMO). He holds a D.Phil. in International Relations and a M.Phil. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from St. Antony's. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on the Arab monarchies and the international relations of the Gulf as well as writing a column on Middle East politics for the Italian journal "Il Mulino". He wrote two monographs "The GCC and the International Relations of the Gulf: Diplomacy, Security and Economic Coordination in a Changing Middle East" for I.B. Tauris and "Cognitive Analysis of Decision making: The Case of Israel in October 1973 Conflict" for Vita e Pensiero (Milan Catholic University Press). He also edited three volumes "Beyond Regionalism? Regional Cooperation, Regionalism and Regionalisation in the Middle East" and "Shifting Geo-Economic Power of the Gulf: Oil, Finance and Institutions" for Ashgate Publishers and "Gulf Security: Legacies of the Past, Prospects for the future" for Routledge. Before returning to Venice, his hometown, he taught in Oxford, Ottawa and Seoul winning the Capital Educators' Award in 2009 in Canada. He deals with international relations and comparative government of the Middle East, in particular the political economy, regionalism and security of the Arab monarchies of the Gulf.

Squadron Leader Naveen Gunaratne

Naveen Gunaratne is a Commissioned Officer of the Sri Lanka Air Force currently serving in the rank of Squadron Leader. He joined the Sri Lanka Air Force in 2003 and graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado USA in 2007 with Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering. He was also awarded honours in Engineering and Aerospace Engineering for academic excellence during the degree program. Subsequently, he obtained the Master in Public Policy degree specializing in international relations as a Li Ka-shing scholar from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy of National University of Singapore, Singapore in 2015.

He has also followed the Junior Commanders' Course at Junior Command and Staff College, Sri Lanka Air Force Academy China Bay in 2013 and won the best book review award for the course. Consequently, he attended the Junior Command and Staff Course at the Command and Staff Training Institute of Bangladesh Air Force in 2016 where he was presented with command, staff duties and instructor grading for meritorious achievement. His research background includes aerospace engineering, public policy studies, international relations, defence policy, security studies, good governance and public administration and management. At present, he is assigned to the Air Secretariat at Sri Lanka Air Force Headquarters as the second in charge for the Command Media Officer and Staff Officer Protocol to the Commander of the Air Force.

Mariam Safi

Mariam Safi is one of the few female researchers and experts from Afghanistan who has contributed widely to the field of post-conflict peace-building, rule of law, human security and countering-violent extremism (CVE) offering a grassroots and gender perspective. Since becoming an active member of the think-tank community in Afghanistan in 2010, she has led six major research projects on these issues. She has authored over 50 articles on South Asian security, politics and economic matters. Mariam is also a member of the Afghanistan Policy Group which is part of a network of think-tanks in the region that aims to develop a new working relationship between Afghanistan and the region by providing a strong platform for discussion on critical issues. Her contribution to the field was recognized by Diplomatic Courier which listed her as one of the 100 Top Global Women in 2014. She is founding director of the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS), which is committed to strengthening democratic ideas and values in Afghanistan by conducting research that provides policymakers with sound alternative solutions to national issues and by raising awareness on women's issues and creating a role for women in policy dialogue. In the past Mariam has held many prestigious positions including Deputy Director of the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies and Co-Founder of the Strategic Studies Program at the Afghanistan Justice Organization based in Kabul. She is a columnist at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (New Delhi), Peace-Building Expert for Peace Direct based (UK) and Resource Person at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (Sri Lanka). She holds an MA from the United Nations Mandated University for Peace and a BA in Political Science from York University.

Ramla Wahab-Salman

Ramla Wahab-Salman is a Research Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL). She has written and published on the topic of One Belt One Road and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiatives. Ramla has worked on international collaborative research projects related to the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and One Belt One Road with the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies.

W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar

W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar (PhD) is Associate Professor, International Relations and Strategic Studies, Department of Political Science Madras Christian College, Chennai, India and Distinguished Fellow, Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka. His work includes: *Growth of Naval Power in the Indian Ocean Region: Dynamics and Transformation (2016); Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Critical Issues in Debate (2008); The Maritime Balance of Power in the Asia-Pacific: Maritime Doctrines and Nuclear Weapons At Sea (2006),* and academic and policy research in Nuclear Missile issues in Southern Asia; Maritime Security issues in the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific Region; Grand Strategy of China, India and United States.

He is Consultant and Doctoral Program Advisor at the Naval War College of the Indian Navy, India; Co-supervisor, PhD programme, China Studies Centre, and Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology-Madras. He has consulted on several projects by the Net Assessment Directorate and Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India. He has conducted Research Consultancies in Working Groups, Near East South Asia Center, National Defense University, Washington DC, USA; Research fellowships at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies 2004-05; S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (2007); Fulbright Fellowship at the Center for Political Studies, Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan Ann Arbor; Policy Research Fellowships as Visiting Fellow at The Henry Stimson Center, USA, Centre for Naval Analysis, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC USA and is credited with numerous publications that have appeared in reputed national and international journals and other edited volumes.

Nishchal N. Pandey

Nishchal N. Pandey (PhD) is Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), an autonomous think-tank of Nepal. He was Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2006). He is Ph.d in political science from Tribhuvan University. He was also Advisor to the National Planning Commission for the tourism and civil aviation sectors in 1996-97. He was task force member to draft the ninth five year plan of Nepal Government. Currently, he is also an expert at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Nepal.

A man of letters, he is the author of 3 books published by SAGE and Manohar Publishers, New Delhi. Dr. Pandey was visiting research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore in 2006-07 and visiting fellow at the University of Hull, UK in 2009. In Sep. 2013, he was visiting fellow at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), a leading think-tank in Berlin, Germany.

Dr. Pandey is currently member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Colombo. He teaches at the department of conflict, peace and development studies under the Tribhuvan University and Armed Police Force Command and Staff College, Kathmandu. In April-May 2015, he was part of the U.S.-South Asia Leader Executive Program at the Harvard Kennedy School. A well-known strategic analyst of Nepal, his comments and interviews are regularly published in international newsmagazines and telecast in t.v. channels.

Asanga Abeyagoonasekera

Asanga Abeyagoonasekera is an international columnist (Dateline Colombo IPCS, New Delhi), commentator and author. He is the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL), the premier national security think tank under the Ministry of Defence. He is a visiting lecturer in International Political Economy for University of London (Royal Institute Colombo) in Sri Lanka. Asanga has more than a decade of experience in the government service and he was the former Executive Director of Lakshman Kadiragamar Institute (LKIIRSS), the government foreign policy think tank and previously held positions as the Head of several government institutions.

Asanga is an alumnus of the US State Department (IVLP) and the National Defense University, Washington DC. He was also recognised as a Young Global Leader for the World Economic Forum. He holds an MBA and BSC and was educated at Harvard Kennedy School, Yale University, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Edith Cowan University (Perth). He has published articles in international journals and media on foreign policy, security and geopolitics. He has delivered lectures in many international forums and universities around the world. Asanga's latest book *Towards a Better World Order (2015)* depicts his broad perspectives on the Sri Lankan socio-political scenario and his vision for the future. In 2016, his expertise in the global and regional political dynamics led him to author a chapter in *The Modi Doctrine: New Paradigms in India's Foreign Policy*.

Piyumani Ranasinghe

Piyumani Ranasinghe is a past student of Musaeus College, Colombo and is a graduate of International Relations from the University of London and in 2015 she emerged the worldwide highest scorer for International Political Theory and International Political Economy. She is a Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL). She is also reading for her LL.B Degree at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. She is an activist and a member of the Sinhala Women's Welfare and Development Foundation, Colombo. Piyumani aims to cover an array of issues ranging from international affairs to gender-based violence and education in Sri Lanka though her writing.