INDIA'S MARITIME SECURITY POLICY DURING COLD WAR AND POST COLDWAR PERIOD: A COMPARATIVE PRESPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: Analysis of India's maritime security policy during cold war and post-cold war period reveals that it underwent significant shifts. In the cold war period India's foreign policy reflects the continental mindset and not much heed was paid towards the maritime domain which during ancient period was the main factor for India's rise as a renowned civilisation across the world. The demise of USSR in the 1990's and the emergence of new international order insists India to give up its continental mindset and draw its focus towards the maritime domains. This paper seeks to examine the objectives, strategies and issues confronted by India's maritime security policy during the cold war and post-cold war period. It further seeks to examine what prompts a proactive maritime policy in the last decades and what policy stances India should undertake to achieve its endeavours in the region.

KEYWORDS: Maritime, Mausam, Indian Ocean, geopolitical, continental.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, India's rich civilisation culture and prosperity in the world can be due to its strategic location and its capability to make use of this to fulfill its national interest as well. It is well-known that we are an ancient sea-faring nation, as the 4,000-year-old port at Lothal and other Indus Valley sites ostensibly reveal that (Menon, 2010). India's inclination towards the maritime sectors despite having its peculiar geography didn't remain intact as one can delineate numerous transformations since from the ancient tradition to modern and then in the contemporary period. These shifts in India's maritime security policy can be attributed due to numerous reasons. Nevertheless, India maritime security policy always remains a matter of discussion and debates in the foreign policy discourse of India.

The ubiquitous nature of India's maritime security policy is mainly because of the geopolitical compulsion of India as the country is surrounded by the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian sea, and the Indian Ocean on the three sides. Furthermore, the richness of resources and a perpetual medium of trade and communication also make maritime sector a significant matter of foreign policy discussion. This paper seeks to examine what encompasses the maritime security policy during cold war and post coldwar period, besides what factors responsible for the transformation, India's policy strategy and issues confronted during the cold war and post-cold war period.

MARITIME SECURITY POLICY DURING COLD WAR AND POST COLDWAR PERIOD: SOME COMPARISON

OBJECTIVES

India's maritime security policy in the initial period after independence didn't attract the attention of India policymakers. Moreover, it is said that during the Cold War period, India's perspective on the Indian Ocean was primarily territorial. Territorial here means securing the territorial waters and island territories. Its prime concerns were to assert sovereignty over territorial waters and island territories and stake claims over the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for resources, apart from advocating the demilitarisation of the high sea of the Indian Ocean (Mann,

2018). This can be attributed due to numerous reasons. It is cited by many that he British colonial administration in India, especially after the Crown took over power from the East India Company in 1858, did not try to foster India's rich maritime image. In its projection of Indian history, the colonial administration almost ignored India's maritime tradition and highlighted only its continental history. The British Crown also disbanded the indigenous navy created by the East India Company and entrusted the maritime defence of India to the British Navy. This undermined India's shipbuilding and shipping industry, even coastal shipping, by promoting British-owned companies at the cost of Indian-owned companies (Singh, 2003).

Moreover, Post independence inertia and predominantly traditional landward threats led to a continental mindset and ignorance of maritime security (Khurana, 2008). The power structure prevailing in the Indian Ocean was not conducive to the expansion of India's naval reach because the US succeeded the UK as a dominant power in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War. New Delhi was not sailing well with Washington at that time (Mann, 2018).

The demise of the Soviet Union and emergence of uni polar world order has far reaching ramifications for the world politics in general and India's maritime security policy posture particular as well. It is said that the changed environment since the 1990s prompted India to 'build bridge' with the Southeast Asian nations. The sub region comprises largely of maritime states and has the potential for immense economic dividends through maritime cooperation (Khurana, 2008). Moreover, it is said that India's maritime security policy during post coldwar is not only concerned securing the territorial water and island territory rather it moved beyond a merely territorial understanding of the sea. This change can be emanated due to the various factors, international power shift from the Euro-Atlantic zone to Indo-Pacific region of the world and its consequences for the international and India's maritime security policy (Abingdon & Wojczewski, 2020).

Other factors like rising threat of piracy and armed robbery on the open sea, India's geopolitical location along the major sea lanes connecting Southeast Asia with Central Indian Ocean, as well as its willingness and capability to provide security to these sea lanes also contributed towards India's inclination towards its maritime security policy (Singh, 2003). More than 80% of the global oil trade passes through the IOR and hence, the safety of the se sea lines are very substantial indications of the strength of world political economy (DeSilva-Ranasinghe,2011). Furthermore, it is said that the shift of world politics towards Indian Ocean has implications for India's maritime security policy and its aspiration of benign power in the region particular and in the world politics general. Moreover, India's objective during this period not only become comprehensive but also gave a pan India perspective to India's maritime Security policy (Singh, 2003).

MARITIME STRATEGIES UNDERTAKEN DURING COLD WAR AND POST COLDWAR PERIOD
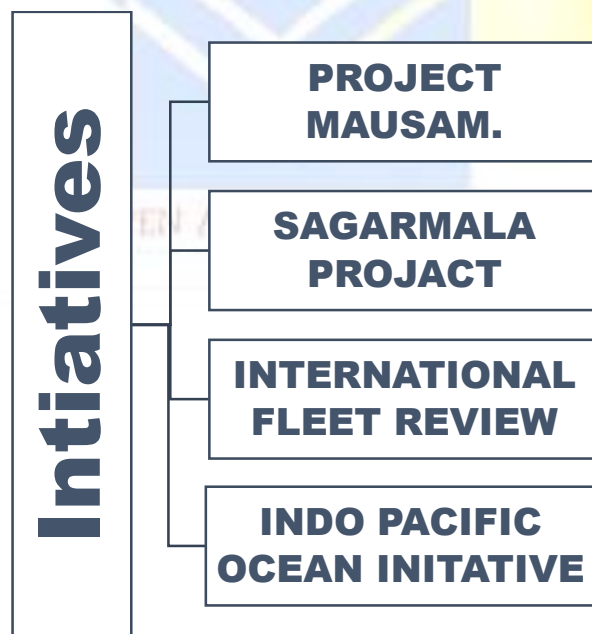
During cold war period India was more inclined towards continent hence no concrete strategy had been taken under maritime domain. Nevertheless, India perpetually tried to resolve certain irritants which constraints India's national interest during cold war period, like India and Sri Lanka signed a maritime boundary agreement in the year 1974 (Deshpande & Manoharan, 2018). It is further said that India has considerable interest in the declaration of the Indian ocean region as a zone of peace, because for the states of the Indian ocean region, peace is a must for the orderly development of their nascent economies. During Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to the USSR, India and Russia issued a joint statement re-affirming their readiness to co operate for the implementation of the UN declaration on the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. India's major endeavour will therefore have to be to work with other like-minded littoral states to put diplomatic pressure on the USA to work for the implementation of the December 1971 United Nations resolution (Doctor, 1990). It can be summarised that India maritime security strategies during cold war period more inclined towards bilateral agreement and shaped by India's NAM posture as well.

The disintegration of USSR in the 1990's, transformation in India's Economic policy prompted India to launch a proactive maritime security policy which finds its explicit mention in India's participation in various bilateral and multilateral Naval exercise in the early 1990's The Indian navy's engagements with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean and extra-regional powers in the IOR have been expanded substantially (Mann, 2018). Notwithstanding this only the beginning of 21st century saw India's proactiveness when in 2004 India for the first time launch India's

maritime doctrine define the maritime seascape and identify the contours of maritime strategy while defining the role of the navy in a maritime India. The emphasis in the narrative was obviously on the role of the navy and how it can be a major instrument for power projection, presence and for serving the maritime interests of India. Certain modifications to the doctrine were made in the Maritime Strategy Vision Statement entitled 'Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy', which was released in 2007. However, this too does not directly identify/indicate core maritime interests but lays greater emphasis on maritime military strategy which is but an adjunct of a cohesive national strategy (Vasan, 2012).

In 2012 another significant initiative launched Nonalignment 2.0 is an attempt to identify the basic principles that should guide India's foreign and strategic policy. Due to a growing post-9/11 gambit of global security challenges, India realizes that their primary aim is to maintain territorial integrity which encompasses land, sea and space frontiers. It also includes the protection of trade routes, access to resources and protection of the Indian diaspora. It can be argued that as part of India's strategic culture, India has propounded the concept of conventional space being available under a nuclear overhang . This means the shaping of India's military power must have a significant maritime orientation which should be India's strategic objective (Alatas, 2015). The Indian Navy released its latest maritime strategy, titled Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy in October 2015. This edition is an updated version of the previous strategy document, Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy, which came out in 2007. The new document anticipates a renewed assertion at both cognitive and pragmatic levels about India's evolving maritime security considerations within and outside the region. India's interests in the maritime domain have increasingly come to incorporate security risks in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) vis-à vis the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and, more importantly, the choke points of the IOR. India also seeks to further strengthen its resolve regionally apropos pressing issues like maritime terrorism and piracy (Mishra, 2017).

Since the formation of (NDA) government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy is more inclined towards its maritime domain, the maritime policy of Modi that it is encapsulated in the acronym SAGAR, i.e., security and growth for all in the region. This vision also spells out that maritime security is the primary responsibility of the littoral states, while stressing cooperation and collaboration. It also highlights aspects of the Blue Economy and suggests that SAGAR is nonassertive, seeks peaceful resolution of disputes and calls for a commitment by all countries to adhere to international maritime laws (Padmaja, 2015). Furthermore, the proactiveness is further substantiated through the numerous initiatives undertaken by Modi led Govt.

Initiatives

- PROJECT MAUSAM.
- SAGARMALA PROJACT
- INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW
- INDO PACIFIC OCEAN INITATIVE

ISSUES CONFRONTED INDIA'S MARITIME SECURITY POLICY DURING COLD WAR AND POST COLDWAR PERIOD

The nature and scope of maritime security policy underwent significant transformation from the cold war period to post coldwar period. Likely, the constraints engulfed the India's maritime security also follow the same track as well. During cold war period as India had not a very coherent maritime security policy so challenges were there but not sophisticated like that of the contemporary period. The main challenges faced by India during coldwar period are USA deployment of newly developed Polaris A- 3 sub-marine launched missiles in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in the early 1960s (Doctor, 1990). Besides, this maritime boundary dispute with countries in the region, piracy and issues over fishermen interests are the major issues confronted India's maritime security policy during the cold war period.

The post coldwar period not only saw the rise of Indo Pacific region in the global politics but also this region become the hot bed of the contemporary politics. India being prominent player in the region though have numerous advantages but simultaneously have to face numerous challenges in its maritime security policy. Post coldwar period saw the emergence of non-state actors on the scene. Their emergence has significantly changed the context of maritime security. The threats by non-state actors can be broadly classified under three main heads: actions undertaken for private gains (piracy), actions related to political struggle (insurgency) and acts of suicide attack (Singh, 2003). Moreover, military attacks are another cause of concern for India's maritime security policy as in November 2008 attacks in Mumbai-Unlike 26/11, when terrorists had used the sea route to enter Mumbai and stage attacks on land targets, the plan this time around was to deploy trained jihadi divers to target an Indian or coastal facility, but unfortunately that plan was collapsed. Hijacking of naval vessels, hostages, attacking ports, attacking coastal installations, attacks against civilians on warships are major threats from the terrorist activity (Joy, 2021). India faces significant strategic challenges from both China and Pakistan in the IOR, while also grappling with considerable threats of the non-traditional kind in the larger Indo-Pacific (Gopal, 2020). China's belt and road projects aim at connecting China with Europe and Africa by road, rail and sea. This would not only increase China's influence in the region but also revive its economy which has serious implications for India's maritime security policy (Padmaja, 2015). Another major concern that has dominated the Indian maritime security paradigm is the strategic balance in the Indian Ocean. There are two dimensions to this. First is the exponentially growing nuclear arsenal of Pakistan that seeks to bring unsettling regional asymmetries in the IOR. Second is the rising power asymmetry in the IOR in relation to China. China's creeping advance in the Indian Ocean has been a pressing concern for India's security apparatus (Mishra, 2014). Beyond interstate disputes, criminal activities and non-state political violence, the dangers to maritime security also includes ecological destruction. (Bradford, 2005). Climate change is always a problem to maritime security, it may make challenges to the proper working of machines and unpredictable situations in the security, unclear aims are making problems in naval systems. The water pollution affecting the life mechanisms in the ocean will seriously affect the fisherman and other coastal problems at the seashore (Joy, 2021)**.**

The increased density of shipping and the large volumes of hazardous materials including crude oil and chemicals carried in large ships pose great dangers to the environment around the Indian sub-continent. The collision of Chita and Khaleja10 off Mumbai, which caused environmental degradation and also commercial losses, illustrates the gravity of such incidents. The incident also brought out the lacunae in port control and aspects of liability and jurisdiction of different agencies in a port. Likewise, the sinking of MV Rak11 off Mumbai and the grounding of a few ships during the monsoon period is indicative of the likely breaches that can occur in addition to the potential for marine disasters that impact the environment (Vasan, 2012).

WAY AHEAD

In the end, it can be said that India maritime security policy has lot many areas to work upon, however India's maritime security policy in the last decade made certain significant changes through various projects such as Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), Project Mausam and Sagarmala project, developing historical and cultural links in the IOR and, above all, forms a renewed strategic outlook in the evolving maritime milieu of the IOR which has a huge role in strengthening India position in the Indian Ocean region in particular and global politics in general (Mishra, 2017). Along with other regional and multilateral initiatives, there is also a need to focus on the IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation) in the coming decades. Though the organisation has existed for many years, regrettably it has failed to deliver even with regard to the primary focus of getting the IOR countries to engage in mutually beneficial economic initiatives (Vasan, 2012). It is also argued that considering the rise of power politics and other security concerns in the region, India not only requires to stress on bilateral and multilateral engagements rather this has to be accompanied by rapid development of hi-tech industries, particularly in aerospace, shipbuilding and communications. The défense ministry will have to be restructured with greater integration between the armed forces, defense scientists and bureaucrats. The nuclear command structure also has to be revamped (Alatas, 2015). A vibrant and comprehensive maritime security policy has its role in strengthening India position in the global politics and also to achieve its national interests in the region as well.

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