Papers

Green Waters: Strategic Opportunity in the Indian Ocean Region
Mr. Jeffrey Payne

Policy Paradigms in Managing Pandemic in Sri Lanka
Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage,
Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara and
Mr. K Don Vimanga

The Easter Sunday Attack: Unpacking Islamic Radicalization in Sri Lanka
Dr. Ranga Jayasuriya

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations
Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Smuggling of Narcotic Drugs from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka
Ms. Udeshika Madhubhashani and
Ms. Parvin Hejran

The Dynamics of Culture-Commerce-Connectivity in the Competing Pivots of the Indo-Pacific
Dr. W Lawrence S Prabhakar

ABOUT US

The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) is the premier think tank on national security, functioning under the aegis of Ministry of Defence. This is established to understand the security environment and to work with government to craft evidence-based policy options and strategies for debate and discussion to ensure national security. The institute will conduct a broad array of research on national security.

OUR VISION

To secure Sri Lanka by nurturing visionary, collective, and decisive leaders in security policy and decision making

OUR MISSION

To enhance National Security of Sri Lanka through excellence in research, education, and networking.

INSSSL DEFENCE Review

2020
Volume III

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

It is an honour and a privilege for me as the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) to declare the launch of "Defence Review 2020".

Since the establishment of this premier think tank on national security, the INSSSL has successfully launched two journals to date encompassing a multitude of researches on a vast array of topics in order to assist the Ministry of Defence by providing assessments on facets related to National Security.

When the world was experiencing the cruelty of artificial threats posed in the form of insurgencies/terrorism which was quite evident in today's era, the natural threat posed by the COVID 19 pandemic has caused a severe threat to the human kind in a dramatic scale and continues to create uncertainty among the public, the world over. These Non Traditional Security (NTS) threats in multitude of forms have formulated a highly complex threat perception which demands a continuously updated, meticulously evolved, integrated and synergistic approach incorporating all elements of national power along with the people of the country in order to ensure the National Security. In such a intricate context, in which there is a greater demand for different views and perceptions for the preparation of such a hybrid security apparatus for Sri Lanka the role being played by the INSSSL acting as the think tank for the national security had been instrumental in the decision making process.

The Defence Review 2020, has also brought together a multitude of scholars from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and USA to discuss comprehensive research conducted on areas pertaining to National Security encompassing papers covering a broad selection of topics on health security, maritime security, regionalism, narcotics, human smuggling, geopolitics, great power rivalry, violent extremism and radicalization that would be fruitful for the readers and researchers.

Whilst sincerely appreciating the arduous efforts exerted by the members of the Board of Governors of INSSSL on its great endeavour towards excellence, I would like to convey my heartiest wishes to the authors for a set of exceptional research papers and all the experts behind this success, including the peer reviewers and the Editorial Board. Finally, I would like to congratulate the team INSSSL for compiling Defence Review 2020 as I look forward to seeing many more work of excellence in future.

Kamal Gunaratne WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil
General (Retd)
Secretary
Ministry of Defence

In an era of bilateral and multilateral commitments, cooperation while ensuring sovereignty is of utmost importance. Even though international relations have evolved and many non-state actors have emerged and become prominent, the role of the state is irreversible. The state acts as the main player in devising a comprehensive security, while the non-state actors become the pillars on which economy, politics, environment, health, cyber, maritime, personal and community security and overall national security is framed. In order to achieve these goals, International relations with the neighborhood as well as extra regional countries are required. His Excellency and the government are determined to develop the country with three pillars as National security, Economic development and foreign relations. Hence comprehensive national security is of utmost importance to national development whilst using foreign relations as a tool.

Sri Lanka laid foundation to a peaceful society, after battling a three-decade long war with extremists. Sri Lanka has become more peaceful in 2020 compared to 2008. This peace of mind was perturbed dreadfully with the Easter Sunday attacks, which came as a blow to the entire nation. Sri Lanka ranks 77 in the Global Peace Index 2020, which has deteriorated from four since 2019 Peace and stability lay the basis for development of any nation. It is necessary that the country does not become vulnerable with any group that tries to destabilize the country.

Being an island nation, we bear high risks from global warming and become vulnerable from environmental degradation. Sustainable environmental policy would become successful only if the impact on environment is evaluated before conducting all activities, linking to pollution emission, eco system services, agriculture, fisheries, ecosystem vitality, water and sanitation. The unexpected pandemic of 2020 has blown all nations, bringing most economic activities to a halt. Lives and livelihood have become insecure. In this background, poverty alleviation has become strenuous task for a state. Added to the matrix of security threats is the influx of narcotics to the country; for use and transit. Despite the high number of apprehensions each day, this illegal trade is spreading all over the country. The single answer for all these remains achieving the sustainable development. Most of the issues today are transboundary in nature and therefore regional cooperation is highly craved for.

With ongoing discussions on Belt and Road Initiative on one hand and the Indo Pacific on the other, Sri Lanka should be careful when balancing relations with major powers in the world. Sri Lanka's stance on the rules based international order should always remain strong and precise not to get caught up in a power game. Neutrality should be the way forward.

In this backdrop, I have the greatest pleasure in launching "Defence Review 2020". This is the third edition of the journal on national security by the Institute of National Security Studies, functioning under the aegis of Ministry of Defence. This year's journal has captured pressing issues that pose threats to security. I convey my heartiest wishes and gratitude to all the authors, Board of Peer Reviewers and the Editorial Board for their dedication and commitment to bring "INSSL Defence Review 2020" a success. This will be a value addition to all keen readers in the domain of national security.

Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage
Director General
Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka

Contents

Green Waters: Strategic Opportunity in the Indian Ocean Region

Mr. Jeffrey Payne

Abstract

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is increasingly considered a vital strategic area. Rising powers are increasingly flexing their muscles throughout the region. The economic prospects of littoral states continue to advance. Comprehensively, the IOR, along with the Pacific, is seen as the future geostrategic and geoeconomic area of greatest importance. Despite the region's strategic importance and centrality to the health of the global economy, the littoral states remain relatively separated from one another. Interregional trade, while growing, remains below 20% of the region's comprehensive global trade and multilateral cooperative efforts consistently underperform. Part of the region's lack of cohesion is due to political barriers, but also part of the problem is that many littoral states are developing economies whose resources must be directed within or close to its own borders. This is where the maritime domain comes into play. All littoral states rely heavily on the Indian Ocean, but most maritime security conversations inevitably are drawn towards the blue water, or what is called the global commons. The blue water is the realm of navies and where traditional maritime strategy takes shape. What is overlooked in conversations about the maritime domain is the importance of green waters-the near coastal zones that are within a state's territorial waters. This paper examines the efforts made by Indian Ocean littoral states to cooperate in green waters. Framing the paper through the lens of maritime strategy, the paper reveals how maritime cooperation in littoral zones is the immediate challenge for littoral states. The paper moves on to argue that securing littoral zones in our current environment will mean taking on an IOR - wide perspective.

Keywords: Maritime, Strategy, Indian Ocean, Cooperation, Littoral Security

Introduction

In the long run, cooperation creates more secure environments. The maritime domain has long presented specific challenges that require cooperative action, as the global commons are administered not by a state or organization, but by nature itself. In the Indian Ocean, there is considerable hope of a brighter future for all littoral states. Much like the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean is perceived as a new centerpiece of the global economy.[1] Asia's economies are expected to account for nearly 50% of global GDP by 2040, which means that the region's waters will only become more vital (Tonby et al, 2019). As such, maritime security will become more essential for all littoral states. Maritime security is not achieved by building more vessels and further securing one's shoreline. It is achieved by gaining greater awareness of how the sea impacts a nation's prosperity and constructing a methodology that best addresses the myriad of challenges that exist in the maritime domain. There are multiple methodologies that can be employed, but the one that has proven time and time again to work best is cooperation with other actors.

Indian Ocean littoral states have a mixed record of cooperation that corresponds to sub-regional challenges. South and Southeast Asia are connected through a myriad of organizations, but interregional tensions linger. Eastern Africa both recognizes the challenges coming from the maritime domain and seeks greater coordination with regional neighbors, but fiscal constraints limit state capacity. Throughout the Middle East, regional rivalries remain and impede various methods for greater regional coordination and cooperation. Yet, despite impediments, this region is home to a growing set of institutions designed to promote maritime cooperation. More and more littoral states are not only realizing the importance of the sea, but also taking steps to make their territorial waters more secure. There are substantial challenges in the littoral zones throughout the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and this security environment will likely become more complex in the future. This paper argues that maritime cooperation among Indian Ocean (IO) littoral states

---

[1.] Per the International Monetary Fund, Asia's expected growth for 2020 is 0% (IMF Regional Economic Outlook, 2020). The first time non-growth has occurred in 60 years. The reason for the stall, like the rest of the world, is due to the global Covid-19 pandemic

should remain focused on littoral zones, but should adopt an IOR - wide perspective.

Maritime Strategy and Littoral Zones

As Alfred Thayer Mahan, the prominent American maritime strategist, argued, naval power and ability is "simple accessory and subordinate to the other greater interests, economical and commercial" (Mahan, 1987: 138). Naval power, which refers cumulatively to all state-sanctioned law enforcement and military services directed towards the sea, is a tool that can be used to secure national interest. Littoral states are predisposed to be nations that rely on the sea, through either trade or the various sea-based industries. If the sea provides for the nation's prosperity, then the sea becomes part of national interest.

Of the Anglo-American tradition of maritime theory, Sir Julian Stafford Corbett has used historical lessons to argue that any nation's naval operations have to be tied to the fiscal limits of the nation and implemented to support the vision for national defense (Corbett, 1911). Mahan also emphasized that maritime security requires an understanding of the sea within the halls of government (Mahan, 1987). Times have changed since Corbett and Mahan theorized about naval strategy and conflict at sea, but their emphasis that a state's reliance on the maritime domain requires a comprehensive vision is only more poignant today. It begs a question-how many states develop a maritime strategy based on a calculation of the national interest? The answer would be fewer states than you would imagine. Regardless of the calculation, it is a weakness for any littoral state to not use the sea as a metric for deciding strategy.

As Hattendorf says plainly, "…[m]aritime strategy involves the other functions of state power that include diplomacy; the safety and defence of merchant trade at sea; fishing; the exploitation, conservation, regulation and defence of the exclusive economic zone at sea; coastal defence; security of national borders; the protection of offshore islands…" (Hattendorf, 2013: 7). All littoral states must concentrate substantial effort towards the goal of protecting their coastal zones. The green waters are the transitional zone through which the state's prosperity and security is determined.

In modern terminology, a state must take Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) seriously. MDA is an understanding of the multifaceted ways in which the maritime domain impacts the functions of a state or territory (United States Navy, 2007). As Mahan once argued for vision on the water, MDA is a mechanism by which we today understand how the sea directs the economic, cultural, political, and security functions of a state (Stubbs, 2007). MDA reflects the evolution of maritime strategy from a concept focused primarily on warfare in the water to one that imagines maritime security as a multifaceted and essential process.

MDA as a component of a state's maritime posture will emphasize the various threats near one's littoral zones. In turn, this leads to focus on the territorial waters of a state instead of an emphasis on blue water capability and force projection far from home waters. Those capabilities are developed over time and are inevitably tied to the economic and political successes of a state. In a region constituted primarily of developing economies, territorial waters are the most feasible focal point for maritime security operations in the IOR. The downside of such a focus is that most threats from the maritime domain do not abide by territorial boundaries, so prioritizing territorial maritime security limits a state's reach. Yet, we no longer live in a world defined by maritime conflict between massive navies. We live in a world where maritime challenges take various forms and no state can address them all alone. Cooperation is a necessary multiplier effect.

Common Challenges

Much of the IOR faces a similar set of threats emerging from the maritime domain, many extending from what is called "sea-blindness", or the inability of a population to recognize the importance of the oceans to the people's wealth and security. Problems do not emerge in the global commons and remain there. They inevitably find their way to shore. It is important to highlight these threats, as they not only reveal the complexity of today's IOR, but they also point to the types of threats that exist on the horizon.

Maritime criminality is a common problem throughout the IOR's littoral zones. Various illicit networks exploit the waters of the IO, taxing the resources of regional states. Such criminal enterprises employ a variety of methods that range from the highly technical to the extremely low tech. These groups exploit instability on land and are attracted to coastal zones where authorities lack the capacity to impede their actions. These criminals make their money on land but use the sea for their enterprises. The reason the sea is attractive for such criminal enterprises is that there are plenty of places in which to hide due to the immense size of the maritime domain and there are fewer law enforcement and security services to avoid, especially in international waters.

Piracy is the most prominently known common criminal act in the wider IOR, though less a critical threat today than in years past. A rapid increase in piracy near the Horn of Africa in the mid - 2000s disrupted transoceanic trade and inspired a multilateral response. There were various causes of the piracy boom in the last decade. As Farley and Gortzak noted,

> The reasons for the rise in piracy in this region are easy to identify. The breakdown of governmental authority in Somalia, ongoing economic woes, and the ready availability of small arms have clearly created an environment conducive to maritime lawlessness and provided an incentive for individuals and groups to engage in piratical activities (Farley and Gortzak, 2010: 12).

Piracy off the Horn of Africa is not the same type of threat it once was, because of the substantial international attention it garnered that in turn led to a multilateral naval response. To this day, various major naval powers routinely patrol the waters off the Horn to provide security for vessels in transit and to respond to potential acts of piracy. While the most prominent case, piracy is not merely a problem off the coast of northeast Africa. Acts of piracy continue to sporadically occur in the Arabian Sea and in the Bay of Bengal, though such acts are not commonly successful due to faster response times by regional coast guards and better reporting mechanisms (IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, 2020).

Piracy is the well-known maritime threat undertaken by non-state actors, but illicit trafficking, in terms of scale and danger, are a much more widespread and persistent threat. Smugglers of arms, human beings,

narcotics, and other legal or illegal commodities have proven to be nearly impossible to stop. Such criminals are attracted to conflict zones or to littoral zones that have limited naval or maritime law enforcement capacity.

Illegal Goods Trafficking in the Indian Ocean
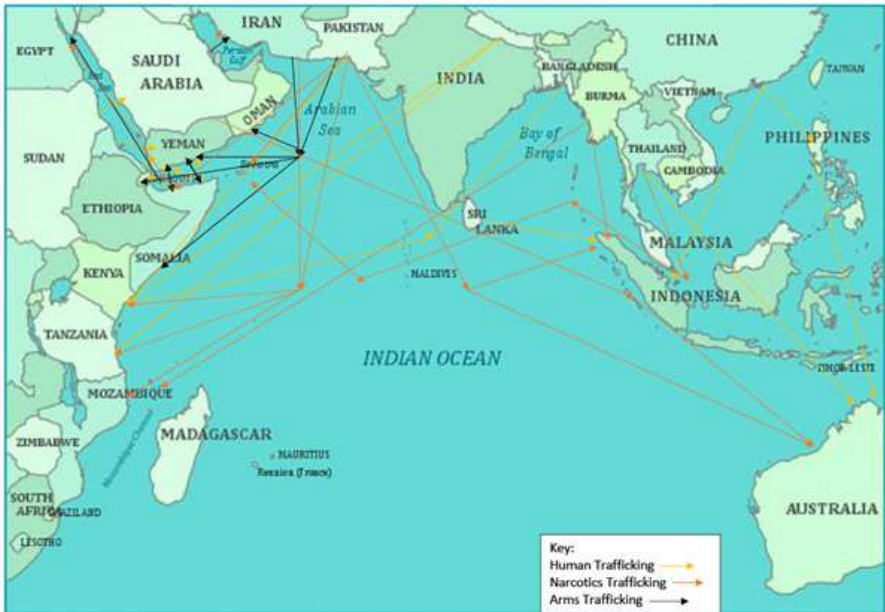
Source: Author created map, 2020

As the map above shows, these criminal enterprises operate throughout the IOR by using the protection of international waters to hide their activities, while at the same time having clear access to coastal zones by which to deliver their products. A particular hotspot for smuggling currently is the Red Sea Region. As a recent United States government report states, "…insecurity in Yemen has led to a remarkable degree of criminal innovation in the Red Sea, including remote-controlled bomb boats posing a threat to commerce and unmanned submersibles threatening maritime infrastructure. These developments have implications for the entire region" (Gilpin, 2019: 2). Mitigating the impact of these criminal

enterprises cannot be achieved by any single actor, regardless of wealth or capability. These are criminal networks that do not rely on a particular territory to operate and they have proven themselves adaptable. For instance, several criminal actors that currently smuggle in the Red Sea Region were once affiliated with pirate operations off the Horn of Africa. These actors, familiar with the region's waters became viable smugglers when the Yemen crisis emerged.[2]

Another form of maritime threat impacting the IOR that deserves highlighting is criminal acts that degrade the ecosystem of the IO itself. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and illegal waste dumping are persistent problems that have long-term and potentially region-wide negative impacts. IUU not only puts added pressure on fish stocks, potentially harming local communities that rely upon fishing for their livelihoods, but it can also create tensions between countries due to many illegal fishing enterprises are foreign flagged vessels that routinely engage in such activities far from their home ports (United Nations, 2020). China's commercial fishing fleet is the world's largest and is known for its persistence in obtaining profitable hauls. IUU fishing accusations against Chinese commercial fleets is on the rise in the Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2018).

[2.] Author's interview with Seychelles government officials, Royal Jordanian Navy officers, and Royal Saudi Navy officers, November 2019.

Illegal Fishing and Dumping and Environmental Attacks in the Indian Ocean
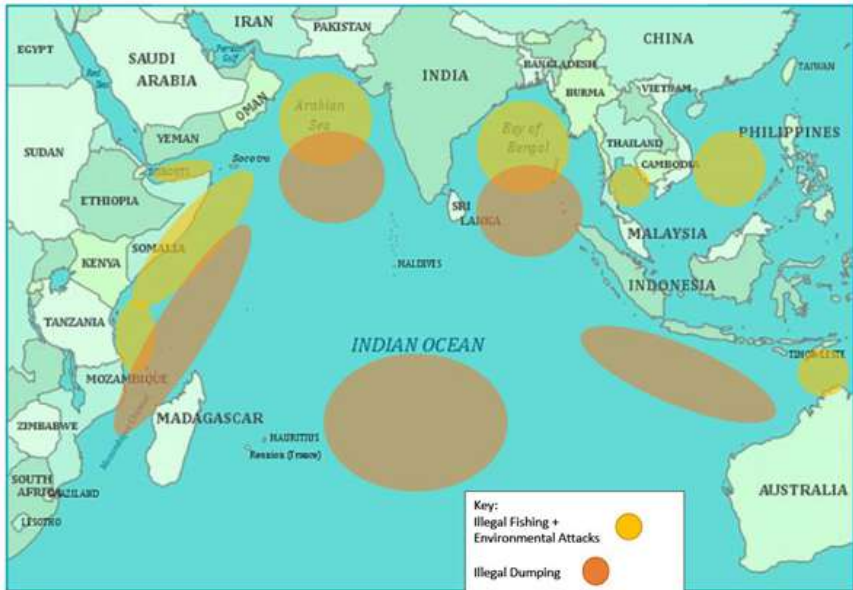
Source: Author created map, 2020

Illegal dumping can also destroy oceanic life due to the disregard of ecological balances and create the same type of international tensions that emerge in cases of IUU. The map above highlights common zones for these types of criminal action. Illegal fishing tends to be concentrated near littoral zones, while dumping waste is often performed as deep into the global commons as possible. It is worth noting that IUU and illegal dumping are often undertaken by individual actors seeking to eliminate costs associated with legal fishing or waste disposal, but they are also undertaken by corporate entities seeking to maximize profit. Thus, IUU and illegal dumping are sometimes overlooked, despite the massive damage such acts caused, because they are hidden amidst larger legitimate enterprises.[3]

[3.] Author's interview with European Union officials, January 2020.

These three categories of maritime threats in the IOR are not the only threats present. There exist state rivalries that increase tensions between navies, as well as the threats posed by natural disasters and violent extremism. Piracy, illicit networks, and IUU/illegal dumping are highlighted because they either take place within littoral zones or substantively impact littoral zones and highlight the realities that no single state actor can mitigate their impact. Addressing threats in the IOR means building connective tissue among littoral states.

Institutional Depth

The IOR has its fair share of maritime challenges. On the positive side, regional states are increasingly aware of these threats, as well as being familiar with the efforts of their neighbors to counter the same challenges they face. The main hurdle for building the connective tissue essentially for addressing challenges is to escape the sub-regional mechanisms that largely define the IOR.

In the northwestern regions of the IOR, there exists one of the most successful multilateral maritime partnerships in world. Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), based in Bahrain, is an international maritime security effort focused on upholding the international rules-based order. Its three task forces are comprised of thirty-three member states (Combined Maritime Forces, 2020). CMF not only counters piracy, illicit trafficking, and other forms of maritime challenges, but it provides a continuous mechanism for states both of the IOR and for those outside it to gain operational experience and familiarity with cooperative operations.

CMF is a critical resource for maritime security in the wider Gulf region, a region that has been perceived as being blind to the importance of the sea. Yet, its principal stakeholders remain non-regional states. The Gulf's natural resource wealth and increasing importance in finance and international commodity trading make the region geopolitically important. Its importance globally has led to non-regional actors to be a consistent presence in the region's waters, with the United States serving as the most prominent actor in the security realm. CMF's impact is often overlooked, which is unfortunate given the records of the various task

forces under its banner helping to impede smuggling and other illegal activities near the region's chokepoints. In recent years multilateral efforts like CMF, European Union Naval Force Operation Atlanta (EUNAVFOR), and others are being joined by regional-led efforts that share the same methodology and interest in maritime security as CMF (Combined Maritime Forces, 2020).

Gulf security is still defined by the status of regional rivalries and these rivalries have led to proxy competitions in several locations throughout the wider Middle East and North Africa. One area of competition has been the Red Sea. In response, several states in the Arabian Peninsula are intensifying their cooperation in the Red Sea to ensure that their national interests are protected and that this critical trade corridor remains unthreatened. While still in its infancy, the Council of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden is a Saudi Arabian-led effort that includes Egypt, Jordan, Eritrea, Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia (Arab News, 2020). This council is certainly the result of various rivalries Saudi Arabia has throughout the region, but it is a multilateral effort that follows a model like CMF and EUNAVOR. Its goal is Red Sea security.

Across the Red Sea from the Arabian Peninsula, states within the Horn of Africa and many states along the eastern African coastline are also pursuing regionally led efforts to enhance maritime security. Most littoral African states within the IOR are limited by the resources they can direct towards maritime security efforts, but the recognition of how much the sea will determine prosperity has increased the political will throughout Africa to experiment in the maritime domain. The African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are pursing regional efforts focusing on the Red Sea, with each having a maritime security dimension (Vertin, 2019). African island states Seychelles and Mauritius, being comprehensively dependent on the maritime commerce for economic development, have aligned their own law enforcement mechanisms to counter maritime criminal activity in accordance to established international rules. Their ongoing work with other African states and with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has helped to expand their capacity to interrupt criminality (Ralby, 2018).

Moving east from the western IOR, South Asian littoral states have a long history of establishing mechanisms for building cooperation. In the maritime domain, much of littoral South Asia is active in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). Both IORA and IONS cover the entirety of the IOR, with IORA emphasizing human security concerns and IONS specifically interested in maritime security topics. Both organizations are successful politically, but less so in sustaining practical cooperative efforts among participating states.

Much of South Asia's operational experiences in maritime cooperation emerge out of regional tragedies, such as the 2004 Asian Tsunami and Cyclone Nargis in 2008. These natural disasters have impacted all South Asia in some form and required cooperative efforts to muster resources to assist those impacted. Such disasters have led to cooperative efforts in the Bay of Bengal to maintain networks of buoys designed to mitigate the impact of future natural disasters (Republic of India, 2020). The experiences of cooperative natural disaster response have led to greater coordination to counter illicit trafficking, problems the entire region experiences. For example, Sri Lanka, as an island state near major sea lines of communication, is increasingly targeted by narcotics traffickers. The Sri Lankan navy has adapted its methodologies to make traffickers efforts less successful, but it knows that it cannot be most effective in isolation (Fernando, 2019). Sri Lanka actively pursues assistance from its neighbors and other naval powers to better equip its sailors to undermine such criminality.[4] Likewise, Sri Lanka offers up its own best practices to neighboring states to further enhance regional capabilities.

Like the Gulf, regional tensions persist in South Asia and this complicates diplomacy. However, the region has a long maritime tradition that has familiarized maritime security services from each state with the operational styles of their neighbors. Comprehensively, South Asia possesses the most comprehensive infrastructure devoted to cooperation, as well as professional navies and coast guards, and firm commitments to the established principles of the international system. Though like the Middle East and eastern Africa, operational cooperation needs to deepen.

---

[4] Author's interview with Sri Lankan defense subject matter expert, October 2019.

Connective Tissue

From a political, cultural, or socioeconomic lens, it makes sense for the massive IOR to be subdivided by sub-regions. Maritime challenges in the IOR require a different perspective. State maritime security services must continue to operate locally in defense of the homeland and in the enforcement of law, but methodology must increasingly be adopted from beyond the neighborhood and local tradition. This is what is meant by developing connective tissue in the IOR.

Take the case of CMF, an organization with a substantial record of success in addressing maritime challenges. Yet, CMF is viewed, even by its main contributor the United States, as a Middle East-focused multilateral maritime partnership. CMF's mission should stay anchored to the waters surrounding the Middle East, but the lessons learned over its history should be commonly adopted in the IOR. Not only the lessons should be shared with navies and coast guards throughout the IOR, but also with other organizations with an interest in countering challenges coming from the waters of IO.

A regional state that actively explores new methodologies in its pursuit of maritime security is India. India's navy, along with the Australian navy, possesses the most operational depth of any IOR littoral state. India's maritime vision operates under the logic that securing India from maritime threats means intensifying engagement throughout the wider IOR. India's IOR island state outreach is still in its infancy, but is aimed at enhancing engagement, gaining operational familiarity away from India's shores, and building the capacity of island state maritime forces. India's national security interests are served by facilitating IOR-wide outreach and expanding the contact points by which to trace maritime threats against the homeland (Samaranayake, 2020). Related to India's island state outreach is the results of the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue with the United States, which among several developments, agreed to pursue the placement of Indian naval officers, liaison officers in United States Central Command and its component Naval Forces Central Command, as well as for United States liaison officers being sent to India's Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (Chaudhury, 2019).

To create the connections that serve to form connective tissue there must be some actors that take on a leadership role, such as what India is pursuing. Furthermore, more states need to use existing institutions that operate throughout the entire IO to gain knowledge that could be essential. For instance, Sri Lanka's littoral zone is increasingly being exploited by illicit networks. Sri Lanka's maritime forces are not yet adapted to such challenges but work with regional neighbors and major naval powers to enhance capacity. That investment in cooperation have proved advantageous in September of 2020, when Sri Lanka and India cooperatively put out a fire on board of the oil tanker MT New Diamond (al Jazeera, 2020). Yet, Sri Lanka should also look to the Western IOR to gain insights from other island states to determine how they address similar challenges. States like Comoros and Seychelles could be as valuable to Sri Lanka as could India or Australia in addressing challenges ranging from illicit trafficking to disaster response.

Conclusion

Looking at IOR littorals in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia reveals positive trends. More states are recognizing the importance of the sea to their national prosperity and security. More states are directing energies into enhancing their maritime capacity and addressing maritime security challenges. Most importantly, institutions are strengthening throughout the IOR that seek to support real cooperative action.

Despite this, a region facing common challenges is not adequately interconnected. The IOR needs to address maritime challenges now. The most logical maritime space for cooperation is the near littoral zones, or green waters. Yet, this paper argues that the best mechanism for cooperation should increasingly be an IOR-wide perspective leading to interstate cooperation with all willing participants. Cooperation must not merely exist within the immediate neighborhood of a littoral state.

References

Brewster, David. 2018. "Chinese fishing fleet a security issue for Australia." The Interpreter. Digital Edition (7 November 2018). Retrieved from https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/chinese-fishing-fleet-security-issue-australia.

Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy. 2019. "India and USA conclude several landmark agreements in 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue." Economic Times (English Edition). Digital Edition (19 December 2019). Retrieved from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-and-usa-conclude-several-landmark-agreements-in-22-ministerial-dialogue/articleshow/72892719.cms.

Combined Maritime Forces [homepage]. 2020. Retrieved from https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/

Combined Maritime Forces [CTF 152: Gulf Maritime Security]. 2020. Retrieved from https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-152-gulf-security-cooperation/

Corbett, Julian S. 1911. Principles of Maritime Strategy. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

European Union. 2020. EUNAVFOR [homepage]. Retrieved from https://eunavfor.eu/

Farley, Robert M. and Gortzak, Yoav. 2010. "Fighting Piracy: Experiences in Southeast Asia and off the Horn." Journal of Strategic Security, Volume 2, No. 1: 1-24.

Fernando, Natasha. 2019. "Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Dilemma." South Asian Voices. Washington, DC: Stimson Center.

Gilpin, Raymond. 2019. Trends in Africa Maritime Security. Washington, DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies/National Defense University.

Hattendorf, John B. 2013. "What is Maritime Strategy?" Soundings, Volume 2013, No. 1: 1-10. 7

IMB Piracy Reporting Centre [homepage]. 2020. Retrieved from https://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre.

International Monetary Fund. 2020. "Asia and Pacific Economic Outlook, 2020." IMF Data. Digital Edition (27 April 2020). Retrieved from https://data.imf.org/?sk=ABFF6C02-73A8-475C-89CC-AD515033E662.

Mahan, Alfred Thayer. 1987 (reprint). The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783. New York: Dover, 1987. 138.

Ralby, Ian. 2018. "Innovating Security Solutions on the Seas in the Seychelles", Washington, DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies/National Defense University.

Republic of India. 2020. India Information Fusion Centre [homepage]. Retrieved from https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/ifc-ior/

Samaranayake, Nilanthi. 2020. "India's Naval and Maritime Power." Conceptualizing Maritime & Naval Strategy. Baden Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG.

Staff Writer. 2020. "Fire on stricken oil tanker off Sri Lanka extinguished." al Jazeera. Digital Edition (7 September 2020). Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/7/fire-on-stricken-oil-tanker-off-sri-lanka-extinguished.

Stubbs, Bruce B. 2010. "Maritime Domain Awareness: the Key to U.S. and Global Maritime Security." Proceedings. Volume 67, No. 2: 8-10.

Tonby, Oliver et al. 2019. "Asia's Future is Now." McKinsey Global Institute Discussion Paper Series. Digital Edition (14 January 2019). Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/asia-pacific/asias-future-is-now#.

United Nations. 2020. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [homepage]. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/en/

United States Navy. 2007. Navy Maritime Domain Awareness Concept. Washington, DC: United States Navy.

Unknown. 2020. "Saudi Arabia and 7 countries form council to secure Red Sea and Gulf of Aden." Arab News. Digital Edition (6 January 2020). Retrieved from https://www.arabnews.com/node/1609121/saudi-arabia

Vertin, Zach. 2019. "Toward a Red Sea forum: The Gulf, the Horn of Africa, and Architecture for a New Regional Order." Brookings Report. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Policy Paradigms in Managing Pandemic in Sri Lanka

Admiral (Prof.)Jayanath Colombage[1], Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara[2] and Mr. K Don Vimanga[3]

Abstract

COVID 19 - the great Pandemic is driving the world to a period of crisis. This public health crisis spreading across all continents is exposing human fragility and economic and societal structural weaknesses. Neither the developing world nor the developed world were prepared to face a public health crisis of this magnitude, thereby highlighting a lack of foresight in policy making. The pandemic has exposed the existing system failures and made everyone realize the importance of rapid response and solid long-term strategies. However public policy seems to be the main tool used to combat the pandemic by state, as well as non-state stakeholders. Sri Lanka has paid attention to three main policies; namely containment, repatriation and rebuilding in order to battle this pandemic. This paper seeks to examine how the pandemic produced overnight transitions in public policy, especially in the sphere of public health and governance and how revisiting these novel paradigms could better manage future challenges, as well as retrench the exposed weaknesses of our societies. This paper discusses the evolution of public policy in the context of Sri Lanka's decisions and strategies instituted to combat the pandemic. The paper highlights key accomplishments, as well as key challenges faced by the country at social, political and economic spheres. The paper will argue out the merits and demerits these strategies and how they could be converted to effective public policies. This is done through an analytical

---

[1.] Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage is the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Director General of Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL).

[2.] Ruwanthi Jayasekara serves an honorary Associate Research Fellow at Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL).

[3.] K Don Vimanga is a Policy and Advocacy Executive at Advocata Institute.

discussion of the how Sri Lanka's public health strategy has evolved from the time the pandemic reached Sri Lankan shores.

Keywords: pandemic and Sri Lanka, containment, repatriation, rebuilding, self sufficiency

Introduction

"Security symbolized protection from threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflicts, political repression and environmental hazards" (Human Development Report, 1995). The whole world is grappling with a hitherto unknown and unseen enemy in year 2020 that has put that has placed many under privileged societies in hunger, unemployment, crime and social conflicts. This enemy evaded the attention of all top intelligence agencies. It has come as a shock to many. The most mighty, powerful economies and militaries have proven to be not effective against this enemy. Some developed countries such as the United States of America have fared very badly against this enemy, whilst countries such as Sri Lanka with a much smaller economy and military has managed the crisis more effectively.

Corona Virus, which started in the city of Wuhan in late 2019, has proven to be the deadliest enemy of humankind hitherto that contemporary history has witnessed. The entire world has been brought to its knees, even without the use of a single bullet. Moreover, there is no identified enemy, source of weapon or a specified target. The total weight of this virus, which is impacting the world, may be around one gram.

Michele Wucker coined the term 'Grey Rhino', which are threats that are very clear and highly obvious but ignored. "These big threats do not have to be hidden" (Wucker, 2016). Though COVID-19 was viewed as a Black Swan (Taleb, 2010), rare and unpredictable events with extreme impact, it more seems to be a 'grey rhino' event when analyzed carefully. When the first case was reported from Wuhan in 2019, the rest of the world had ample time to strategically prepare to minimize the consequences.

This brings us to ponder on John Allen when he said "History will be written by the victors of the COVID-19 crisis" (Allen, 2020). This paper will examine if Sri Lanka has become a victor in the pandemic crisis, strategies taken by Sri Lanka in the three phases namely; pre-lockdown, lockdown and post lockdown. This paper will analyze each phase with regard to strategy, social policy of physical engagement and digital engagement, the involvement of actors, and over-dependence and self-reliance. The paper will furthermore analyze how Sri Lanka can learn from best practices from other countries such as Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea etc. Finally, recommendations to ameliorate the domestic conditions in order to secure socially, economically, and politically will be proposed.

Phase 1: Pre-lockdown

COVID-19 arose when Sri Lanka was in the process of regaining the economy at the backdrop of the Easter Sunday attacks on 21st April 2019. The services sector led by tourism, retail, and financial services declined by 4.6% (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2020) in the aftermath of the Easter attacks. The mission to battle COVID-19 began in the pre-lockdown. This consisted of early warning and rapid response. Sri Lanka declared a step by step approach during this phase namely Testing, Tracing and Treatment. Random sample testing is conducted every day apart from testing suspected patients.

A) Containment

The critical component of Sri Lankan situation was the pre-lock down strategy. The main objective behind this was the containment. Prominence was given to the health security of the people living in the country. Sri Lanka was preparing for the pandemic, even before the first case, a Chinese tourist, was identified on 27th January 2020. The fatality rate in Sri

Lanka is 0.57%, while the global rate is 5.37%. In terms of recovery rate, Sri Lanka accounts for 73.86% while the global rate is 52.63% (Health Promotion Bureau as at 18th June 2020). There seems to have triple constraints in terms of battling the pandemic and they are the social, economic and political impact. The priority of Sri Lanka's contingency plan was the social impact. The first mission was the repatriation of 33 Sri Lankan students from Wuhan, making Sri Lanka the 1st country in South Asia along with India to evacuate citizens from Wuhan. During the phase of pre-lockdown, repatriation was unexpected. However, Sri Lanka was prompt to react to the situation. This is because measures were taken even before the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this as A Pandemic- a global public health emergency.

B) Minimal Digital Engagement

Sri Lanka has not yet geared up digital platforms in day to today engagement. A limited number of digital devices are in use for travelling and delivery services and people tend to visit shops and meet people physically. Since there were no restrictions to physical engagement, people did not understand the gravity of the pandemic, until the second phase of the lockdown was imposed.

The second pillar of the Sri Lankan approach, tracing was solely done by state intelligence service (SIS), police, village officials and public health inspectors. It should be noted that this was done with the unavailability of digital tracing. Countries like Singapore ranks 2nd in the World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (IMD World Competitiveness Centre, 2019) and have been able to manage the situation well in the initial phase with the aid of digital platforms like "Trace Together" and "Safe Entry". An already established system of digital governance supported the country tremendously by linking the travel details to health services.

C) The Role of State Actors

Followed by the first Sri Lankan case on 11th March, immediate steps were taken to close island-wide pre-schools, schools and universities, shared two hotlines for the general public to gather information and updates on COVID-19 and to seek assistance for any emergency, initially imposed travel bans for 11 countries, followed by a suspension of all passenger arrivals, screening of movies, banned public gatherings and closed national museums. These actions were followed up by providing emergency health and economic measures to the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the country. In order to carry out a solid plan of action, a national task force was set up by the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, which was led by the Commander of the Army. During this phase, the strong leadership of the state actors was highly visible and effective. Moreover, the role of tri-forces has never been limited to traditional security apparatus in Sri Lanka and this was another period that the committed service and dedication by tri-forces came to the fore. Sri Lanka possessed the potential and the resources to alter and act responsibly. This has made all citizens realize that Sri Lanka has passed the test of leadership. With regard to treatment; the third step, is performed at 36 hospitals. Nicholas Burns says that "in every country, there are many examples of the power of human spirit of doctors, nurses, political leaders and ordinary citizens demonstrating resilience, effectiveness and leadership" (Burns, 2020). In the case of Sri Lanka, human spirit was further illuminated by the Tri forces, police and public health officers.

D) Over dependence on other countries

Pre-lockdown further made citizens realize that Sri Lanka, with an import-based economy, is over depended on other countries. This was visible during the 3-step approach taken to battle the pandemic. In terms of testing, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test was identified as the gold standard. At the initial phase, the number of testing remained low

due to lack of sufficient PCR machines, test kits, extraction kits, swabs and the Viral Transport Medium (VTM). Sri Lanka had to depend on imports of all this medical equipment from Malaysia, Singapore, China, Netherlands and Germany. A pandemic had to make the country aware of the system failures and at the same time the pandemic has pushed us to 'slowbalisation' with closed borders and protectionist measures. However, this "made us realize our potential, innovation and significance of rich natural resources, which have gone unrecognized due to dependence on other countries to fulfill our needs" (Jayasekara, 2020).

Phase 2: The Great Lockdown

A) Containment + Repatriation

The Lockdown phase of the pandemic was tackled by countries using unique and localized strategies. Sweden did not incorporate a lockdown, while Japan did not impose a complete lockdown, deciding to keep some economic activity going, whereas a vast majority of countries decided to go in for a complete lockdown (Aljazeera, 2020). The existing data shows us that counties that went into early, strict lockdowns were able to substantially reduce COVID 19 deaths (Aljazeera, 2020).

In this regard Sri Lanka followed a "Lives first policy" where the main objective was to reduce or have no deaths from the pandemic. What makes Sri Lanka's lockdown strategy significant and distinctive was that, a complete strict lockdown was imposed with an Island-wide curfew from the 19th of March 2020 onwards. The aims of the government during the lockdown can be broken down into two main areas: Containment and Repatriation. Containment was carried out using a strict lockdown, while the repatriation of stranded Sri Lankans was carried out from key destinations as the national lockdown was in place.

Unlike East Asian Countries, Sri Lanka, along with most South Asian countries did not have prior experience fighting a pandemic such as

the SAARS outbreak of 2002. In contrast, East Asian Countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore had prior experience fighting a pandemic nationally. It must be acknowledged that Sri Lanka learnt and responded faster than before other South Asian states in adopting a lockdown strategy. The use of lockdowns to counter the spread of COVID 19 was first adopted by China. Vietnam by the 9th of February put 700 hospitals on alert on decimating information on COVID 19 prevention. By 31st of March with signs of an early outbreak, the Prime Minister issued an early directive that enforced national isolation, banned gatherings and encouraged staying home, closing borders and implementing quarantine policies. Minh Vu and Bich T. Tran observe that "Vietnam's model for containing the outbreak has been touted as a successful low-cost model. Whereas its neighbors Taiwan and South Korea could afford mass testing, Vietnam lacked the resources and instead opted for selective but a proactive model" (Vu and T. Tran, 2020). This anecdote is reflective of Sri Lanka's strategy too. Sri Lanka's lockdown strategy was based on a proactive model of containing the virus through preventing human mobility and social interactions as opposed to a sophisticated mass testing regime, especially during the early stages of the outbreak.

Containment significantly reduces community transmission and in instances where this directive was disobeyed, formation of transmission clusters could be observed. The first significant one being in Banadaranayake Mawatha Colombo North, where 62 people were infected from a lady who returned from a pilgrimage in India, while the first significant non civilian cluster formation was at the Welisara Navy during the 1st wave. This highlights the rapid transmission rate of the novel corona virus and how the strict lockdown helped in limiting community transmission to a certain identified set of communities.

The health authorities also took strict measures to completely close down areas without any inward or outward movement. Thus, a policy of containment helped to limit the virus to certain identified areas which was demarcated as risk zones, while reducing the chances of a mass

transmission. Containment also gave the health authorities the agility to better treat identified COVID 19 patients. All patients who tested positive for COVID 19 were placed under constant supervision of health authorities.

It was noticeable that Sri Lanka not only implemented the policy of containment but paid attention to increased repatriation. Once the lockdown was imposed with a complete closure of Sri Lanka's airports the second objective of the task force was preventing transmission from incoming Sri Lankans who were being repatriated. This was done through a quarantine program headed by the Sri Lankan military. Resources had to be allocated to allow for the development of these facilities. This humanitarian paradigm of the lockdown strategy by making essential services available to these returnees demarcates a change and highlights how the concept of life was prioritized over other factors such as the economy. Thus, Sri Lanka's lockdown strategy was a low cost and reactive in the likes of Vietnam, with the deployment of the military along with medical officers and regional health inspectors to maintain public health and order during the pandemic.

According to data on repatriation (Annex 1) carried out by the Government of Sri Lanka during the Lockdown till 18th May 2020 (Government of Sri Lanka, 2020), a fact that can be highlighted is that Sri Lanka has sent flights to India for 15 times. In a way, this re-emphasizes that people to people contact between India and Sri Lanka remain high and Sri Lanka tries to strengthen relations further with India, which is emerging as a net security provider in the region. Overall, this once again brings the "people first" policy of Sri Lanka.

B) Digital Engagement

There was a visible shift from physical engagement to digital engagement. The significance of the decision of "work from home" is based on the fact that Sri Lanka's work from home capabilities was strictly limited to a

vast majority relying on traditional methods of work. However, with the announcement of the work from home period, private companies, as well as public institutions adopted to working from home technologies and the government facilitated these measures by giving grace periods and extensions to settle such bills.

Digital engagement is also reflective of the significant transformations that took place during the pandemic in e-commerce and delivery of goods and services. The government proposed plans to arrange home delivery of the essential goods to curb the coronavirus pandemic and also to control the movement of people. The government urged the main supermarkets of the country such as Cargills, Arpico Super Centre, Keells Super, Sathosa and LAUGFS Holdings to sell the products to the customers via home delivery methods. PickMe, one of the popular peer to peer transport networks in the country, offered services regarding the provision of essential items such as bread, gas, and grocery. A large number of online sellers popped up with hundreds of traders resorting to either go online or trade in neighborhoods with permission from the authorities.

The demand for online banking transactions increased substantially while digitalization accelerated overnight due to the pandemic. The platforms introduced showed that simple day today activities can be performed digitally. This was a success to be achieved and can be considered as an improvement due to a health crisis that affected all systems.

C) Non-State Actors with State-Actors

On 23rd March, the Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa introduced a relief fund named "COVID-19 Healthcare and Social Security Fund" to combat the novel coronavirus pandemic. This marked the transformation of a state lead effort to a public-private partnership in handling the pandemic. From the time of the initial outbreak a vast majority of the effort was led by the state, while utilizing the public resources in trying to contain the pandemic. However, as the lockdown continued the role of

the private sector crystallized with organization contributing to the effort whilst also innovating. Sri Lanka's main apparel manufacturer Brandix and similar companies offered their factories as quarantine centers to assist the government's fight against the coronavirus, while also adopting their manufacturing processes to meet the growing demand for PPE's. This proves the understanding of social responsibility of all actors.

D) Self-Reliance and Self-sufficiency

The government took necessary actions to resolve the issues faced by the general public and allowed farmers, estate workers, bankers, fishermen and cleaners to carry on their duties amid curfew and under the guidelines extended by the Medical Health Officials. Thereby local agricultural production along with our essential exports was prevented from reaching a state of decline and thereby prevention of a breakdown in national supply chains.

In order to prevent shortages of essential food supplies, a national paddy buying programme was initiated to maintain buffer stocks of paddy. This provided a better selling price to thousands of poor farmers and sharecroppers. Further action was taken to maintain the supply of essentials such as oil, tea, flour and vegetables, backed by a national vegetable planting project. All this was done when the strict curfew was in action. These actions contributed greatly towards the protection and maintenance of stable food supplies during the national lockdown. The government further motivated home-based gardening by donating seeds to many households. This set people to pay attention to self-reliance and self-sufficiency even as a last resort.

On 7th April Army Corps of Engineer Services (CES) turned the former Voice of America building complex at Iranawila, Chilaw to an isolation hospital (Sri Lanka Army, 2020). It is equipped with robotic technology and autopilot vehicles for the safety of medical staff working in the hospital and patients are confined to separate cubicles where robots transport

medicine, drinks and foods to patients through a special airlock system. Moreover, Sri Lanka commenced to innovate many medical equipment locally.

The pandemic accelerated local innovation and brought together communities to find localized solutions to the pandemic. This demarcated a shift from interdependence to local innovation to achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency and sets precedence to find a right balance between interdependence in trade to a sustainable interdependence.

Phase 3: Post-Lockdown

A) Containment + Repatriation + Rebuilding

Sri Lanka was under lockdown till 18th May and afterwards the government took steps to gradually re-open. While the previous two objectives are still in place there is an addition, rebuilding. Repatriation continued from countries like Kuwait, Indonesia and Russia etc. With large number of repatriations, this further led to escalated positive cases in Sri Lanka. Measures of rebuilding included relaxation of the island-wide lockdown. However, it was after this decision that clusters were identified from people repatriated form Qatar and Kuwait. These clusters were identified, isolated and sent into quarantine. Thus, a policy of containment helped limit the virus to certain identified area which was demarcated as risk zones, while reducing the chances of a mass transmission.

Now, Sri Lanka is in the phase of post-lockdown with the main objective of reaching normalcy. Currently, transportation in both private and public vehicles are allowed with the maintenance of social distancing. Initially, people without access to private vehicles faced difficulty in reporting to work, as there were long queues and not sufficient public transportation that could accommodate all working class. Traveling in taxi is limited to 2 passengers. This is the time that we learn from pandemic and adopt best practices from all over the world. UK was the first country to promote

cycling by keeping bike shops open even though it counted as non-essential service. Cycling was perceived as essential during a crisis like this, as this created a trend in the limited use of public transportation. UK created an emergency travel fund of £250 million to "set up pop-up bike lanes, safer junctions and cycle-only corridors and handed out half a million £50 vouchers for people to get their old bicycles repaired" (El-Bar, 2020). This not only saved people from pandemic, but lead towards sustainable living.

B) Limited Digital Engagement

People were reporting to office, while many of the private sector continued to work from home. Temperature checks, disinfecting vehicles and shoes, hand sanitizing at the fingerprint machines, elevators limited 2-4 people were some of the actions that were made compulsory. People now have got comfortable with the uncomfortable. However, according to Jackie Wiles, "Employers in Asia find safety measures, flexibility and transparency ease the transition for employees starting to return to the workplace as COVID-19 infection rates flatten" (Wiles, 2020). However, these seem to be an issue if these have created overconfidence among the people, where people tend to ignore social distancing and hand sanitizing.

Most importantly, people are back at more physical engagement with limited digital engagement. Even though some suppliers continue to take online orders and continue home delivery, this has not become the new normal. People are seen at supermarkets and other shops queued for their daily needs. However, this is the time that we get used to the new normal of digital platforms, encouraging digital innovation with the ultimate goal of reaching digital governance.

C) Involvement of State + Non-State Actors

The prominence of non-state actors is visible. The COVID fund, which was created by the government, has passed 1370 million (President's Media Division, 2020), thanks to each and every non-state actor that got involved in the donation. However, in the rebuilding phase, the involvement of non-state actors will depend on the decision taken by the state, such as re-opening of the airport, re-opening of factories and mega scale trade and service. With the re-opening the airport which completely halted all travels since March 22nd 2020, measures that should be taken were declared. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) will be issuing COVID 19 free certificate for hotels to ensure security for the travelers (Gunasekara, 2020). Non-state actors will have to continue collaboration and cooperation with the state, if we are to become a victor of the crisis. It is proposed that Tourist Police will be formed and prominence will be given to ones with fluency in foreign languages (President's Media Division, 2020). However, re-opening will be in different phases allowing only selected countries to enjoy the island paradise. Even though details haven't been officially declared, there's a tendency that Sri Lanka will go ahead with the extra regional countries, as the numbers are still in the rise in regional countries.

Battling the Civil War and the Pandemic

The role of institutions played during the civil war and the pandemic can be compared to comprehend the strengths and weaknesses that we possess. The health sector, military and the government can be identified as three institutions that is committed to see an end result of both of the above-mentioned situations. First being a protracted conflict and the latter being a pandemic, both were strenuous tasks for the institutions.

The main task was played by the military during the three decade long civil war, where they were deployed all over the country in a strategically oriented manner. Although the battlefield was in North, military was

on duty in South. In the same manner, the military was deployed in quarantine centers, areas with strict lockdown and all over the country to ensure health security of the country. Sri Lankans marked history on 19th May 2009 by winning the war and this proved the capabilities of our military beyond belief. They were trained, methodical, committed and dedicated which supported well even in managing the pandemic. One reason for winning the war was the intelligence service carried out by military, police and state intelligence systems. The same intelligence mechanisms were utilized for contract tracing. However, since the war to date, we've not been able to launch a digital intelligence system, which would have facilitated the process with the skills and prowess of the intelligence officers.

During both the civil war and the pandemic, the government remained as the major stakeholder with a successful whole of government approach. Decisions taken at the last phase of the civil war, from 2006-2009 were very crucial to combat LTTE terrorism. In the same manner, although there were many stakeholders involved, state played the most prominent role in a centralized system. All the non-state actors, including the private institutions and individuals were out in front endorsing the government and this was visible during the lockdown and the post lockdown phases, to achieve the end results of containment, repatriation and rebuilding. However, during both scenarios, the economy faced negative consequences. It should be applauded that survival is the main objective, yet, a negative economy creates a long-lasting impact on the life and livelihood of many.

The next institution that we are highly indebted is the health sector. As Sri Lankans, we are gifted with free health care, by giving each and every citizen access to medical treatment and medicine. Our health personnel have prior experience in treating patients at emergency incidents such as during the war, preventive community medicine, immunization programmes, combating malaria and minimizing the impact of dengue etc. Specially during the war, military medics were deployed in the front

line of the battlefield, in the same manner the military medics were deployed at quarantine centres to look after suspects of COVID-19. Dedication of civil medical personnel was boundless and indispensable both in treating sick and the wound from the battlefield and the COVID 19 patients, by stepping out of their comfort zone to carrying out tasks beyond their responsibilities. It remains the duty of the state to reconsider the budgetary allocations for health and ameliorate both traditional and western medicine.

Recommendations

The great Pandemic is a turning point to reassess and revaluate Sri Lanka's strategic and economic priorities. The pandemic has illustrated the need for effective public health policies to face growing health concerns and future risks of pandemics. Therefore, greater focus must be placed on developing local technologies, capacity building, resource allocation to expand essential facilities such as ICU and integrated laboratories. Further special emphasis must be placed to manufacture, design and produce medicine, medical equipment and related technologies. Leading companies in the health sector are shifting their production base away from China towards other low-cost destinations. Sri Lanka must utilize this outflow of medical research investment out of China. Effort must be placed to develop Private Public partnerships in the medical research field to propagate local growth.

The Pandemic also illustrated the importance of the agricultural economy and reliance on local produce. Therefore, it is important for the implementation of policies that empower sustainable agricultural production, protects local agricultural produce and implements much needed reform in resource allocation. We believe that this agricultural revival must be a public private initiative with the transfer of vast loss-making agricultural resources into public private partnerships. The rural farmers must be empowered by implementing coordinated buying

systems with key corporate sellers. Significant investments must be made to build storage facilities to store agricultural produce, thereby bringing in sustainability to a novel green revolution within the rural agrarian economy. Key agricultural exports of Sri Lanka include tea, rubber and coconut. Unfortunately, small and medium tea, rubber and coconut planters are leaving their trade due to underlying problems such as unhealthy price fluctuations, inadequacy of resources, mismanagement of National Policies and a lack of focus to develop these sectors. Hence it is important that significant resources are allocated in creating a novel green revolution.

Another key recommendation would be the empowerment of medical tourism. This would become successful in Sri Lanka for two reasons. Sri Lanka has a long history of practicing indigenous medicine and this could be further developed. Even during COVID, indigenous medicine was identified as finding alternative medical solutions to the pandemic. However, it is much needed that traditional medicine and western medicine go hand in hand, when improvising the medical sector. Next, Sri Lanka is well known for hospitality even during the COVID crisis by treating and feeding many stranded tourists. Medical tourism in Sri Lanka could be linked with promotion of medical tourism among regional countries in the longer run. It is time that we consider sustainable tourism.

Conclusion

The overall analysis seems to unfold that Sri Lanka's objectives have been on three main policies; namely containment, repatriation and rebuilding. While we have managed containment and repatriation, the rebuilding phase has not been soothing due to existing vulnerabilities. The Pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities in public health, governance and economic model of our nation state. Therefore, it is imperative that governments identify these fundamental loopholes that continue to hold back our nation state from reaching optimum productivity. COVID 19 has and

will continue to affect the most vulnerable cross-sections of our society, therefore it is essential that we continue to rethink of a more inclusive and productivity driven economic model that goes beyond interdependence. It is important than ever before to reassess the effectiveness of our policies to meet newer and more effective paradigms of sustainability and inclusivity, while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of our strategy. A global health crisis of this nature tests and strains the very foundations of nation states. The rippling effects of such a phenomenon are already testing democratic institutions across the world. Sri Lanka needs to learn and think strategically if they are to rebound from the depths of this crisis which they have fought with great determination.

References

P. M. D. N. (2020, June 12). 'ITUKAMA' COVID – 19 Fund balance surpasses Rs. 1,374 million... Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/itukama-covid-19-fund-balance-surpasses-rs-1374-million/

P. M. D. N. (2020, May 28). Proposal to reopen airports for tourists from 1st August. Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/proposal-to-reopen-airports-for-tourists-from-1st-august/

P. M. D. N. (2020, May 28). Proposal to reopen airports for tourists from 1st August. Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/proposal-to-reopen-airports-for-tourists-from-1st-august/

P. M. D. N. (2020, May 14). President optimistic that economy could be re-built. Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/president-optimistic-that-economy-could-be-re-built/

P. M. D. N. (2020, March 27). Presidential Task Force empowered with the responsibility to maintain the civilian life. Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/presidential-task-force-empowered-with-the-responsibility-to-maintain-the-civilian-life/

P. M. D. N. (2020, March 27). Home delivery of essential commodities begins. Retrieved from http://www.pmdnews.lk/home-delivery-of-essential-commodities-begins/

Al Jazeera. (2020, June 8). Lockdowns prevented over 3 million deaths in 11 countries: Study. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/lockdowns-prevented-million-deaths-11-200608164109822.html

Allen, J., Burns, N., Garrett, L., Haass, R. N., Ikenberry, G. J., Mahbubani, K., … Walt, S. M. (2020, March 20). How the World Will Look After the Coronavirus Pandemic. Retrieved from https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/20/world-order-after-coroanvirus-pandemic/

PricewaterhouseCoopers (Private) Limited. (2020). Covid-19 Outbreak Impact on Sri Lanka and Recommendations.

El-Bar, K. (2020, June 2). On your bike! Coronavirus boosts British cycling. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/on-your-bike-coronavirus-boosts-british-cycling/1861837

Gunasekara, S. (2020, June 2). When tourists arrive in the country: No quarantine, only PCR tests. Retrieved from http://www.themorning.lk/when-tourists-arrive-in-the-country-no-quarantine-only-pcr-tests/

Oxford University Press. (1995). Human Development Report. New York.

IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2019. (2019). Retrieved fromhttps://www.imd.org/wcc/world-competitiveness-center-rankings/world-digital-competitiveness-rankings-2019/

Mallawarachi, B., 2020. Sailors Become Biggest Cluster Of Infections In Sri Lanka. [online] Thediplomat.com. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/sailors-become-biggest-cluster-of-infections-in-sri-lanka/>.

New Isolation Hospital, Improvised by Army Troops in Record Time Opened for Use. (2020, April 8). Retrieved from https://alt.army.lk/covid19/content/new-isolation-hospital-improvised-army-troops-record-time-opened-use

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations. (2020, March 28). Retrieved from https://www.un.int/srilanka/news/establishment-covid-19-healthcare-and-social-security-fund

Taleb, N. N. (2007). The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable. Random House Publishing Group.

Vu, M., & Tran, B. T. (2020, April 28). The Secret to Vietnam's COVID-19 Response Success. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/the-secret-to-vietnams-covid-19-response-success/

Wiles, J. (2020, April 26). 7 Early Return-to-Workplace Lessons from Asia. Retrieved from https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/7-early-return-to-workplace-lessons-from-asia/

Wucker, M. (2016). Grey Rhino (1st ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Annex 1: Repatriated Sri Lankans as of 18.05.2020

Date	Country	Total Number of People
01.02.2020	China	33
20 - 22 March 2020	India	839
19.03.2020	India	111
20.03.2020	India	74
20.03.2020	India	211
21.03.2020	India	298
22.03.2020	India	97
22.03.2020	India	48
21.04.2020	Pakistan	106
23.04.2020	India	101
24.04.2020	Nepal	76
25.04.2020	India	166
26.04.2020	India	113
27.04.2020	Bangladesh	73
28.04.2020	India	164
29.04.2020	India	142
30.04.2020	India	125
03.05.2020	United Kingdom	208
03.05.2020	Maldives	05
05.05.2020	United Kingdom	112
05.05.2020	Netherlands	04
05.05.2020	USA	45
05.05.2020	Canada	40
06.05.2020	Singapore	186
07.05.2020	UAE	197
10.05.2020	Malaysia	178
10.05.2020	Australia	272

11.05.2020	India	10
12.05.2020	India	320
14.05.2020	Maldives	284
14.05.2020	China	12
16.05.2020	Japan	225
16.05.2020	Myanmar	72
17.05.2020	Thailand	69
Total		**5016**
Number of Countries		**18**

(Source: Government of Sri Lanka)

The Easter Sunday Attack: Unpacking Islamic Radicalization in Sri Lanka

Dr. Ranga Jayasuriya[1]

Abstract

Islamic extremism in Sri Lanka is a product of decades-long radicalization process, much of which was comprised of below-the-threshold, non-violent extremist indoctrination and propagation. This paper isolates Wahhabism, an austere ultra-conservative strain of Sunni Islam as the most formidable driver of radicalization in Sri Lanka. Wahhabism displaced moderate Sri Lankan Islam and imposed a suffocating Arabized narrative and a way of life that eventually led to Arabization of Muslim community and risked their self-alienation from the mainstream society. This paper analyzes the multiple sources of enablers that served in the spread of Wahhabism and their role in the societal and ideological change of the community. Finally, this paper introduces a causal loop diagram to visualize the causal relationship between the radicalizing drivers of Wahhabi indoctrination and Islamic extremism. It also proposes a variety of interventions that the state can deploy to reverse the process of radicalization.

Keywords: Easter Sunday attack, extremism, Islamic radicalization, Terrorism, Wahhabism

---

[1.] Ranga Jayasuriya is a journalist and a researcher in international politics and security. He holds a PhD in International Relations from School of Politics, Central China Normal University (CCNU), China and MSc in Strategic Studies from S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is an alumni of The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Hawaii.

Introduction

Easter Sunday terrorist attacks on multiple churches and upscale hotels in Sri Lanka on April 21, 2019, killed 259 worshipers and tourists and wounded 500 more; the worst ever terrorist atrocity in the Indian Ocean island since the end of the civil war in May 2009 (Gunasingham, 2019; Perera, 2019). Subsequent reports, including court proceedings and a Parliament Select Committee of inquiry, have found all-encompassing inaction and inertia in the political leadership and law enforcement apparatus leading up to the attack even after a foreign intelligence service shared information of the forthcoming attack (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2019). That the President, who is also the Commander in Chief, was oblivious to the intelligence tip-off of the upcoming attack and learnt it from Facebook is one of the kind miscarriage of national duty (Daily Mirror, 2019; Srinivasan, 2019). Timely action on intelligence would have prevented the calamity.

This paper, however, argues that an incremental process of radicalization began decades ago and that it was comprised of a well-orchestrated, below-the-threshold campaign of ostensibly non-violent indoctrination. The Easter Sunday attacks were a premature violent manifestation of that long haul social re-engineering exercise to reorient the Muslim society in the reflection of an implanted ultra-conservative strain of Islam, Wahhabism, and its suffocating Arabized norms and traditions. The Easter Sunday Attacks were premature because, despite a sizeable fellowship of indoctrinated zealots and inroads made by the extremist ideology, Islamization of the local Muslim society was still latent when the hurried terrorists blew up churches and hotels. Since then, public scrutiny and the outrage within the Muslim community have stalled and at times rolled back the Wahhabi expansion in Sri Lanka.

Islamic radicalization in the West has taken a familiar path, though there are variations, depending on the social-economic context of Muslim communities in particular societies. For instance, though the American foreign policy is a much more contested than its European counterparts,

the number of Americans in the ranks of Islamic State and the extent of radicalization in Muslim communities in America is significantly lower than in Europe. The difference could be attributed to better economic standards of the Muslim community in America (Khosrokhavar, 2017). However, there are identical patterns on Islamic radicalization: Extremist preachers of Middle Eastern origin are ostensibly experiencing persecution in home countries, opened mosques in the Western capitals. In Britain, one of the earliest peddlers of Islamist extremism was Al-Muhajiroun (Arabic for "the Emigrants"), a currently outlawed group that was set up in 1996 under the leadership of Syrian extremist preacher Omar Bakri Muhammad to establish a religious theocracy in Britain (Kenny, 2018). Soon, others, such as notorious hate preacher Anjem Choudary, Abu Hamza of Finsbury Park Mosque joined the fray (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006). Everywhere in Europe, immigrant preachers exploited political and economic marginalization and spiritual alienation of the children of Muslim immigrants (Pargeter, 2008; Kepel, 2017).

The European inroads of Salafism and Wahhabism were further aided by Saudi and Qatari bankrolled initiatives to spread Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative strain of Sunni Islam, which is the ideological fountain of global Salafi Jihad. (B. Choksy and K. Choksy, 2015; Dorsey, 2016). With their enormous financial clout, Wahhabis captured Islamic institutions and reshaped their agenda to reflect the goals of Pan-Islamism (Racimora, 2013). Governments and politicians, driven by electoral calculations and a sense of political correctness turned a blind eye. With time, extremism preached in fringe mosques and immigrant ghettos found its practical articulation, erupting in July 7 attacks in London, bombings in Paris, Madrid and other European capitals.

This paper argues that Islamic extremism in Sri Lanka has followed this well-trodden path. An ultra-conservative strain of Islam that arrived in the island displacing moderate Sufi infused Sri Lankan Islam from its dominant position. Backed by petrodollars from the Gulf countries that engaged in a relentless promotion of Wahhabism, new mosques were built

and Islamic institutions were formed, all for promotion of Wahhabism. The Muslim political leaders coopted Wahhabis,   providing them with a degree of legitimacy and state patronage. During the General Election in 2015, Muslim leaders in the East agreed to a set of demands put forward by Zahran Hashim, a known extremist preacher by then, in exchange for his endorsement. (Shazuli, 2020; Jayasuriya, 2019a).

Wahhabism brought with it a new way of life, Arabized social and cultural norms and a dress code. Women hid behind all-encompassing Burkas, and children went to Madrasas. Muslims were on a fast track to self-alienation from the rest. Parallel societies were in the making. Hate bread in those claustrophobic corners was bound to come out and find its practical expression. The terrorist preacher Zahran "called to wet the earth of this country from the blood of people of other faiths" (Kirinde, 2019a). With time, non-violent extremism graduated to violent extremism. Easter Sunday attacks were the product of that incremental societal and ideological change.

The Objective

This paper aims to analyze the drivers of radicalization in Sri Lanka. It identifies Wahhabism as the most formidable driver of Islamic radicalization in the country and examines multifaceted enablers and networks that served in the spread of Wahhabism. Their role in incremental radicalization is examined. Finally, this paper visualizes the complex causal relationship between the drivers of radicalization and terrorism, using a causal loop diagram. It also explores the ideal counter-extremism interventions that could be adopted to roll back extremism.

Key Terminologies

Terrorism: There is no universally agreed definition of terrorism. The primary source of disagreement has been that states have tended to overlook the means of terrorists in favour of their political goals, which effectively led to calls to exempt some groups based on their goals. (Rapoport, 2004; Schmid, 2011). From the early years of the United Nations, the newly independent states of Asia and Africa opposed the designation of national liberation and anti-colonial movements as terrorists. Lately, the debate shifted to Palestinian groups who in their struggle against Israel are continuing to resort to overt acts of terror that target civilians. The ongoing "freedom fighter versus terrorist" conundrum has implications on the international community's ability to take collective action and make laws in their battle against terrorism. Nonetheless, in the absence of a consensus universal definition, the states have adopted their own definitions on terrorism. For instance one of the most influential, the US State Department definition states terrorism as 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience' (US Department of State, 2009).

Similarly, extremism suffers from a definitional ambiguity for the notion of extremism is culturally, religiously and socially subjective. A belief that is abhorrent in a freewheeling liberal society could well enjoy mainstream support within another social milieu.[2] The disagreements on a unified definition emanate from inherent bias and prejudice. That also stresses the need for the policymakers to pay attention to domestic nuances and connotations when legislating against what constitutes as an act of extremism. That is especially important when the states are to deal with imported ideologies of foreign origin.

[2.] For instance, the World Value Survey by PEW research provides interesting insights. In one study, 78 per cent of Afghans, 62 per cent of Pakistanis and around 38 per cent Bangladeshis believe the death sentence should be given to those who convert from Islam(PEW Research Centre, 2013).

In the absence of a consensus definition of extremism, there is a wide range of common sensical definitions adopted by states. For instance, FBI defines violent extremism as the "encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals" (FBI). According to the USAID (2011, p.2), violent extremism refers to "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives."

Violent extremism is the most visible phase of extremism. It manifests in all forms of high profile violent attacks, as wide-ranging as suicide bombing, arson, murder and stabbing, etc. However, it is generally the tip of the iceberg of a much larger radicalization process and extremist enterprise. Beneath that is a large nexus of individuals and apparatus that share the same ideological goals, though they may not necessarily take part in acts of violence to achieve their goals. However, in practical implications, there is only a thin line between non-violent extremism and violent extremism. Non-violent extremists often share the same ideological allegiances and empathize with acts of violence in the name of ideological goals. They also serve as accessories and accomplices in promoting the extremist ideology. They are members of vast networks of extremist social infrastructures that are dedicated to propaganda, fundraising and propagating of the ideology. As the UN General Assembly noted, "violent extremism encompasses a wider category of manifestations" than terrorism since it includes forms of ideologically motivated violence that falls short of constituting terrorist acts (General Assembly report A/70/674, para. 4).

The legal ambiguity of violent extremism and its cultural connotations often constrain proactive security measures against extremists, who in turn exploit the free speech of free societies to preach hate and advocate attacks against these very societies. The starting point of violent extremism is non-violent extremism, which is preaching hate, but not acting on it. In practice, the two elements are cross-fertilizing each other. Most violent extremists, during a certain point of time in their radicalization process,

were part of these non-violent extremist groups. Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called twentieth hijacker from the attacks of 9/11, and Mohammed Sidique Khan, the ringleader of the 7 July London bombings frequented Finsbury Park Mosque of extremist preacher Abu Hamza are some examples (O'Neill and McGrory, 2006). The ringleader of Easter Sunday attack, Zaharan Hashim and his extended family were members of Sri Lankan Thawheed Jamath, a local Wahhabi group.

A combination of personal and structural factors have contributed to radicalization pathways of violent extremists. State crackdown may hasten the process. For instance, President Nasser's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and hanging of Sayyid Qutb in Egypt hardened the Islamists elsewhere and provided the ideological justification for violent means adopted by latter-day Islamist groups such as Al Queda and Hamas. However, there is no guarantee that the absence of state response would deter it. Given the formidable pull factors of modern day, Salafi-Jihadist ideology, violent extremism is the predictable outcome of non-violent extremism.

Therefore, a study into violent extremism should pay attention to the mass of the iceberg, of which violent manifestations are only the tip of the iceberg. The mass is comprised of the personalities, institutions and apparatus that serve in the proliferation of the ideology. If extremism is a pyramid, its composition would look like as illustrated below. To grasp the full scope of the radicalization process, policymakers and security planners should inquire into each of the layers of the pyramid.

Extremism Pyramid
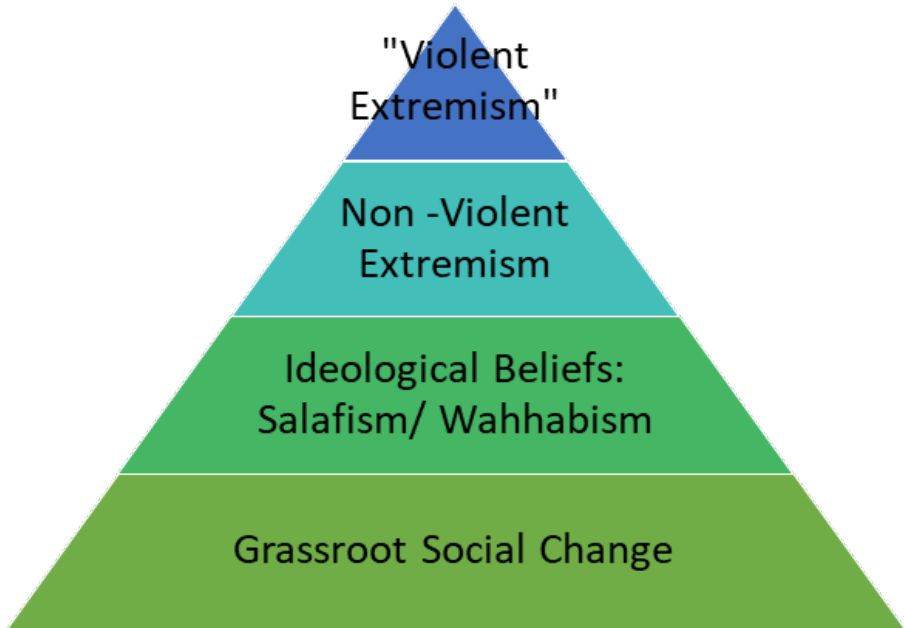
Non-violent extremism: British Home Office offers a commonsensical definition on extremism, which is better suited to explain the non-violent extremists: "Extremism is defined as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, as well as calls for the death of United Kingdom armed forces at home or abroad." (Home Office, 2015, p.9).

Non-violent extremists share the ideological goals of their violent counterparts. But unlike the mad rush to martyrdom by their violent counterparts, non-violent extremists infest and reprogram their societies through a gradualist approach. They rely on below-the-threshold activities to advance their goals, and doing so, they exploit the freedoms of their societies to destroy them from within. They are the most active promoters of extremist ideology. They build institutional apparatus for

the promotion of the extremist narrative. Among them are shadowy Islamist organizations that ostensibly co-exist in free societies while covertly promoting an agenda that undermines its core values. They indulge in systematic efforts to impose an intolerant monoculture through the infiltration of institutions catering to community interests, school curriculum (Birmingham school Trojan horse plot'), building extremist mosques, and through seemingly harmless relief and humanitarian groups that cater to the wider Islamist agenda and idiosyncratic publicity stunts such as Sharia patrols (Wintour, 2014; CNN,2013).

Law enforcement authorities are often constrained due to the lack of legal remit in confronting these below-the-threshold-activities. Dean Haydon, the head of London Police Counter-Terrorism command put it aptly after the conviction of hate preacher Anjem Choudary: "These men have stayed just within the law for many years, but there is no one within the counter-terrorism world that has any doubts of the influence that they have had, the hate they have spread and the people that they have encouraged to join terrorist organizations" (Holen, 2016).

Ideological beliefs: Salafism and Wahhabism provide the ideological justification for the global Salafi Jihad. Those are essentially a foreign implant and policymakers are constrained by the limited insights into these alien ideologies. Salafism is a fundamentalist Sunni Islamist movement that strives to practice Sunni Islam as it was practiced by Muhammad and his closest disciples, the salaf al-salih, i.e. the first three generations of Muslims (Hitchens, 2018). They strive for the literal interpretation of two primary Islamic texts, the Quran and the sayings of Muhammad (hadith), and advocates the strict implementation of Sharia.

Salafis are broadly divided into three strands, Quietist who stress the importance of Islamic study and eschew politics; Activists who unlike the former emphasis on the political organization such as Muslim Brotherhood and are influenced by Islamist ideology; and Jihadists, who unlike both groups believe violence as the only legitimate form of activism to achieve the goals. In practice, though, the spread of Salafism

in non-Muslim majority states is incremental; it began with Quietists and culminated in Jihadism, foreign and local-born.

Similarly, Wahhabism is a puritanical form of Sunni Islam, aimed at its "purification" and the return to the Islam of the Prophet Mohammed and the three successive generations of followers. Wahhabism derived its name from its founder, the 18th century cleric Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab. In 1744, Muhammad bin Saud, the founder of the house of Saud entered into a pact with Abd al-Wahhab, in which the latter provided the crucial religious underpinning for the former's project to unify and centralise the warring tribes of Arabia, bringing them under his control (Firro, 2018).

Wahhabism is the state ideology of Saudi Arabia. Wahhabi clerics were co-opted to the Saudi State. Also, Saudi authorities extended patronage to the Salafis such as the Muslim Brotherhood as part of the Saudi quest for the leadership of the Muslim world. This effectively led to the cross-pollination between Wahhabism and Salafism.

Later, after the oil boom, the Saudi State extended active patronage to the spread of Wahhabism around the world. This was a catalyst to major social and ideological change in the non-Arabic Muslim societies. Al Qaeda, Islamic State and their ideological supporters have advocated a violent message that many observers have identified as an extremist interpretation of this line of puritanical Islam (Armanios, 2003; Naval Post Graduate School, 2015).

Incremental Social change: The spread of Wahhabism and Salafism has created noticeable changes in Muslim societies in their lifestyle, dress code and religiosity. These changes are incremental and may date back to the innocuous early activism and proselytization by groups influenced by the Arabized strains of Islam. These were the precursor to the Salafi Jihadi ideology. The spread of the latter in most non-Muslim majority states began only after the 9/11 attacks, which triggered a wave of global Salafi Jihad.

This wave, unlike its predecessors, reached a larger share of a receptive global community of Muslims who were better connected with the world and shared an enhanced sense of belonging to 'Umma'. Wahhabists and Salafists infiltrated the already established institutions that cater to Muslim interests and received tacit political backing by political leaders. Wahhabism introduced a new way of life, Arabized social and cultural norms, and dress code. This, in turn, resulted in the gradual self-alienation of Muslim communities from mainstream society.

Radicalization

'Radicalization' is the process by which individuals adopt violent extremist ideologies that may lead them to commit terrorist acts, or which are likely to render them more vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organizations (Romaniuk, 2015, pp.7-8). The process of radicalization often tends to take place in the grey area, where freedom of expression is intermingled with hate speech and extremist indoctrination. A combination of pull factors and push factors serve as drivers of radicalization. They are varying depending on the context.

'Push factors' are the conditions emanating from the structural context. These include, for instance, lack of socioeconomic opportunities; marginalization and discrimination; poor governance, violations of human rights and the Rule of Law; prolonged and unresolved conflicts; and radicalization in prisons.

'Pull factors' are the individual motivations and processes, which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action. These include individual backgrounds and motivations; collective grievances and victimization stemming from domination, oppression, subjugation or foreign intervention; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and leadership and social networks (UNODC University Module on Counterterrorism 2).

In general, a combination of mutually reinforcing factors serves as the drivers of radicalization. For instance, economic deprivation leads to marginalization, and both are products of poor governance. Such conditions lead to prolonged conflicts that in turn drain the fiscal capacity of the state and also contribute to the violation of the human rights and deterioration of the Rule of Law.

Domestic Nuances of Radicalization

Of the multiplicity of factors that serve as drivers of radicalization, depending on the domestic context, some factors tend to have greater influence while others remain marginal. Different pathways and mechanisms operate in different ways for different people at different points in time and different contexts (Borum, 2011: p.8). For instance, economic deprivation is a major push factor in Niger Delta, or in Sahel Africa, where Islamist militants with allegiance to Islamic State have made major strides recently. Similarly, recruitment strategies of al-Shabab and Boko Haram also heavily rely on the economic and political marginalization of the youth (UNDP, 2017). Whereas, in Palestine territories, a mixture of collective grievances of the Israeli occupation and the allure of martyrdom in the popular narrative are far more significant (Litvak, 2010). However, for the droves of the second or third-generation European Muslims who joined the ranks of the Islamic State, religious justification of Jihad and resentment towards the Western policy on Muslim nations are far more influential drivers than other factors.

Analysis of Islamic extremism in Sri Lanka should also dig into the domestic context and the possible explanation about the radicalization pathways. There, unholy rush to find politically correct explanations do not hold water. Consider the background of the Easter Sunday attackers. They were affluent, foreign-educated mansion-living elites, which rules out the factors of economic deprivation and marginalization. Another argument is that the attackers were influenced by a previous bout of

anti-Muslim riots. Should their anti-Sinhala Buddhist rage be the driver, the attackers would have picked, with much ease, targets where the Sinhalese Buddhist would have made the preponderance of the victims. Instead, they bombed Catholics praying in the churches and tourists in the upmarket hotels. Those were classic targets of Salafi Jihadists, influenced by messianic hate to Christians, and the West. The terrorists themselves have described the attack as a religious duty. "If I regret this path, it will be a serious matter for the whole Muslim community," Insaf Ibrahim, one of the suicide bombers tells in an audio clip left for his wife (The Island, 2020). Easter attacks were act plotted and organized locally, but were, inspired and intended to serve the global Salafi Jihad.

Drivers of Islamic Radicalization in Sri Lanka

Muslims first arrived in the island nation in the 8th century as traders, sailors and mystics. Over the ensuing centuries, they adopted the country as their permanent abode and seamlessly integrated into society (Dewaraja, 1994). One and a half a century of British colonialism did not change the status-except for a brief spell of Sinhala-Muslim clashes in 1915. Over the generations of their coexistence with the majority Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Muslims developed a unique Sri Lankan Islam, a fusion of Sufi mysticism and Sri Lankan customs and traditions. Muslim political elites of the pre-independent Ceylon were uniquely conscious not to upset the applecart. Despite their distinctive identity, they eschewed calls for separate political representation and stayed firmly within the umbrella of the mainstream politics, which by their demographic preponderance is dominated by the Sinhalese. They became powerful Cabinet Ministers, diplomats, bureaucrats, writers, thinkers and soldiers. Late Colvin R. De Silva, the LSSP minister in the 1970-77 government, once describe Muslim attachment to Sri Lanka as one between a cow and the grass (Ali,2019a).

In the 20th century, the Islamic world underwent a whirlwind change. During the anti-colonial struggle and after the emergence of post-colonial

states, a new wave of political Islam emerged and led to an expansive role of Islam in the public and political life.

Sri Lankan Muslims were largely insulated from the global trend. However, one of the earliest domestic initiatives to proselytize a more doctrinaire version of Islam was undertaken during that period. According to Ameer Ali, a Sri Lankan Muslim scholar, the catalyst was the advent of Tabligh Jamaat (TJ) in the mid-1950s, which marked a departure from the syncretic Islam that was practised in Sri Lanka for centuries. (Ali, 2006). In contrast to the latter-day manifestations, TJ was a peaceful missionary movement, that that invited Muslims to 'enjoin good and forbid evil', as commanded by the Quran. However, similar to the incremental shift of Salafism from Quietists to Jihadists, despite TJ's claims to eschew politics and stick to religious observations, the next step of its ideology was all too predictable.

Developments in the Islamic world in the 80s had a magnifying effect on the religious identity and the transnational identification of the local Muslims. The emergence of theocracy in Iran emboldened the cause of political Islam. The newly rich Sunni orthodoxy in Riyad competed for influence with its Shia rival. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Islam was inducted into the battle against Soviet occupation; zealots travelled to Afghanistan to fight the holy war, funded by the Saudis, armed by the Americans and trained by the Pakistanis. The Al Qaeda was founded in Peshawar in 1988.

Those developments did not have an immediate radicalization effect in Sri Lanka. But, the seeds of Islamization were sown. Modest structures that would later become the key apparatus of Wahhabism in Sri Lanka were set up during that period, financed by religious charities and Individuals from Gulf countries. One such institution, the Saudi financed Institute of Islamic Guidance was set up in 1990 in Kattankudy, the Muslim enclave in the East. It was one of the earliest purveyors of Wahhabism. It abhorred the local Sufi infused Islamic traditions, demanding strict adherence to the literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith.

The local Muslim youth went to the Middle East and returned with an Islamic education that conflicted with moderate local Islam (Jayasuriya, 2010). Foreign clerics, who arrived on the tourist visa, taught in unregulated local Madrasas; 200 of them were deported after the Easter Sunday Attacks (PTI, 2019). Electoral politics also had a galvanizing effect. The founding of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, with its implicit Islamic leaning, and to bring together the disparate Muslim voters under one umbrella also deepened the Islamic identity of the local Muslims.

The transformation of the Muslim society during this period did not attract much attention primarily because the country was engulfed in a civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The mild Islamization was the least of political and security concern. Yet, during that period, the identity of Sri Lankan Muslims underwent a major change. It also made the community more susceptible to the next wave of ideological forces.

The 9/11 Attacks and the New Wave of Global Salafi Jihad

The 9/11 attacks were classic propaganda of the deed. Globally broadcast footage of the burning World Trade Centre, a symbol of the American primacy of the global capitalism demolished the invincibility of the American power and demonstrated to the faithful the commitment of the Jihadists to the cause. The subsequent coalition military response fed into the Muslim anger and grievances. Al Qaeda became the torchbearer of the global Salafi Jihad; its affiliates sprung up across the globe (Moghadam, 2011).

Post 9/11 global wave of Salafi Jihad had a greater influence on the Sri Lankan Muslim community than any of the previous watershed events, in part due to the ready access to the mass media and already cultivated transnational attachment. In Sri Lanka, it fed into an already evolving sense of a transnational religious identity. Ad-hoc Institutions that were previously propping up religiosity and transnational identity became the accessories of a more virulent strain of Islam, Wahhabism.

Institutional Apparatus of Wahhabism Spread in Sri Lanka

One of the most active forces of Wahhabization of Sri Lankan Muslims in Sri Lanka was Thowheed Jamaath (SLTJ), which was originally set up as a branch of Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamaat. There was an immediate push back from the local Muslims when the SLTJ first expanded its control. In 2002, when the first SLTJ mosque in Beruwela was opened, there were protests and clashes with the local Muslim of moderate Sufi Islam. In 2009, another clash between the Wahhabi factions and moderate Sufis in Beruwela resulted in one death (Jayasuriya, 2010). In 2012, SLTJ split, leading to the formation of the National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), under the leadership of terrorist preacher, Mohammed Zahran, the ring leader of the Easter Sunday attack (Farisz, 2019; Roul, 2019; Jayasuriya, 2019a).

Local Muslims in Kattankudi, a crowded Muslim enclave in the East, also opposed the increasing dominance of Wahhabis. The first mosque of National Thowheed Jamath was set up in a ramshackle hut in Kattankudy. Over the coming years, it grew in followers, resources and controversy it courted. In March 2018, Zahran and a group of key followers went underground and reportedly fled the country after a clash with local Sufi Muslims. Zahran and his followers later set up a group known as Jamathei Millathu Ibraheem (JMI), which is a collection of well-to-do young Muslims inspired by the Islamic State. The difference between the two local Thawheed factions and JMI is mostly semantic. All three are religious puritans are dedicated to the introduction of Sharia and suffocating Arabized norms and traditions. They shared a visceral hatred towards non-Muslims, Jews and the West. The difference is in their acceptance of the use of violence against Sri Lankans within Sri Lanka as part of the global Salafi Jihad. SLTJ is said to have opposed the use of violence, while NTJ condoned it, though disagreed on the timing. JMI considered the use of violence as a matter of urgency (Jayasuriya 2019b).

Wahhabi Capture of Islamic Institutions and State Bodies

Since early 2000, Islamic and state institutions that cater to Muslim interests were gradually captured by the Wahhabis. The All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), the foremost body of Islamic theologians, was encroached by the Wahhabis. In 2009, ACJU issued a Fatwaa mandating women to wear Burkas, all-encompassing Islamic garment, the signature dress of Saudi religious puritanism, borrowed by Islamic State and Al Qaeda (All Ceylon Jamayathul Ulama, 2009). Anti-Semitism of Wahhabism crept into local textbooks. After the Easter Sunday attacks, a review of Islamic textbooks found they have recommended killing those who converted from Islam (Indrajith, 2019). Extremist mosques and Maddarasas of dubious credentials mushroomed during the period. For instance, the Department of Islamic Affairs, approved 190 new Wahhabi mosques in 2015, 50 in 2016, and 80 in 2017. (Wijedasa, 2019; Jayasuriya, 2019c). Local satellite TV operators continued to broadcast the Peace TV of the controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, even after Muslim majority Bangladesh banned it after Holey Artisan bakery attack in 2016 for peddling peace and extremism (BBC, 2016). It was only after the Easter Sunday attacks that the Telecommunication regulators banned it.

The institutional capture by the Wahhabis was made easier by the connivance of the Muslim political leadership. Politicians viewed association with religious ultra-conservatism as a ploy for political legitimization. Political patronage emboldened the Wahhabist enterprise, enabled it to infiltrate the government bodies, which are generally filled by political appointees. Also, mainstream political leaders hobnobbed with Zahran (Siriwardana and Perera, 2019). NTJ extended its political support to President Maithripala Sirisena in the presidential election of 2015 (Siriwardana and Perera, 2019).

Arabization and Parallel Societies

Wahhabism presented an entirely new way of life of 'true Islam'. It was the catalyst of a whole new social engineering exercise aimed at remaking Sri Lankan Muslims in the image of their Arab cousins. This result in an incremental Arabization of the Muslim society, in their attire, norms, education and the way of life. More and more women retreated into the all-encompassing Burqa and Niqab; Children were enlisted in Madrasas (Balachandran, 2007a). Affluent parents sent their children to a new brand of Muslim international schools which taught an Arabized curriculum and practised strict segregation of gender.

Parallel societies began to rise in the East. The Arab influence in the social and cultural life became omnipresent in the Muslim majority towns in the East and Puttalam (Balachandran, 2007b). To replicate Arabia, Palm trees were planted along the roadside in Kattankudy. Arabic street name boards were put up (Siriwardana and Perera, 2019). An Islamic university financed by Saudi Arabian benefactors was built in imposing Islamic architecture. Calls for Sharia were made and the Muslim organizations, especially the All Ceylon Jamayatul Ulama (ACJU) opposed the government's plans to reform the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (Wettimuny and Rajap, 2018; Saroor, 2019). Reforms envisaged to give women a say in their divorce proceedings and to raise the minimum age of marriage for Muslim girls in line with the national age of consent. Muslims were slowly but steadily self-alienating from the rest of the Sri Lankan society.

This brought back a historical dilemma that the Sri Lankan Muslims have successfully navigated: The debate between 'believing and belonging', which is born out from a binary view of the world which some Muslim theologians developed from a Quranic edict. It split the world into 'dar-al Islam' (abode of peace) and 'dar-al harb' (abode of war). What this binary meant in practice was a division of the world into one part ruled by Muslims and another yet to be conquered and brought under Muslim rule (Guidère, 2012, p75).

The binary was revisited. Zahran Hashim, with a growing number of followers of local Muslim youth, described Sri Lanka as dar-al kufr (land of unbelievers) to which Muslims should have no belonging and it is haram for Muslims to live here (Ali, 2019,b). Easter Sunday terrorist leader Zahran prohibited children from standing up to the national anthem and respecting teachers (Kirinde, 2019b).

Unchecked Islamic radicalization at home began to spill over. Radicalised local youth went to Syria to join the Islamic State. In July 2015, the first Sri Lankan, Mohamed Muhsin Sharhaz Nilam (37) (known in the IS as Abu Shuraih Sailania), a karate instructor and a teacher in a Muslim international school in Galewela, was killed in an airstrike in Syria (Jayasuriya, 2015). Following month, the defence secretary Karunasena Hettiarachchi admitted that at least 36 Sri Lankans have gone to Syria and joined the Islamic State (Daily Mirror, 2016; Aneez, 2016).

At home, radicals were finally turning to violence. On Christmas day, 2018, scores of Buddhist statues in Mawanella were vandalized. Investigations led the Police to a plantation in Wanathwilluwa, where a large cache of explosives and detonators were discovered. An aide to a senior Muslim Minister, who helped the Police to track the vandals was shot by unidentified gunmen at home. Despite incriminating evidence of explosive cache, police released four suspects due to political pressure (Daily Mirror, 2020). The last straw of opportunity, a well-detailed intelligence alert by the Indian intelligence on forth-coming attacks were not followed up. The Prime Minister and the State Minister of Defence were barred from the Security Council meetings since the end of a constitutional crisis in November the previous year. Since then, it met ad-hoc at best and had no sittings for over a month leading up to the attack. Intelligence warnings were never discussed there. Terrorists carrying explosives in their rucksacks took the government and the nation by surprise on the Easter Sunday, unleashing serial carnage.

Visualizing the Drivers of Radicalization: Causal Loops of Radicalization

Religious radicalization or radicalization, in general, is a complex non-linear process which involves multiple variables; their dynamic interaction dictates the process. Multiple drivers of radicalization tend to function in tandem and create reinforcing loops leading to a vicious cycle of radicalization. Without breaking the cycle, combatting radicalization is a near impossibility. As for the policymakers who are devising plans to combat extremism, the starting point would be understanding the dynamic interaction and causal relationship between these multiple drivers and their causal effect, i.e. the prevalence of religious extremism and resultant violence. After which, they can insert appropriate interventions, i.e. strategies to reverse the radicalization process.

Causal loop diagrams are a foundational tool that is used to understand and analyze complex problems. They visualize the causal relationship between various pairs of elements in a system and identify feedback loops. They help understand the fundamental nature of complex and dynamic situations, frame the problem and evaluate and prioritize strategic options (Lumbaca, 2019).

A Causal Loop Diagram shows variables represented as texts and causal relationships between them represented as arrows. Arrows indicate the nature of the relation between the two variables, the direction of causality. A link marked positive (+) indicates a positive relation and a link marked negative (-) indicates a negative relation. A positive causal link means the two nodes change in the same direction, i.e. if one variable starts decreases, the other also decreases. A negative causal link means two nodes change in the opposite direction. If the node in which the link starts increases, the other node decreases, and vice versa.

Loops can be reinforcing, in which action produces the same kind of action. They can also be balancing, where the action is negated by the opposite reaction. States can use appropriate interventions to reverse or control the trajectory of events to reach a favourable outcome. Such interventions also create balancing loops, effectively holding back the runaway process of radicalization. The dynamic interaction between causal loops can also lead to unintended consequences.

A causal loop diagram is a snapshot of all relationships that matter. Effectively, it enables the policymakers to identify the dynamic interaction and insert balancing loops to guide the interaction into a preferable end.

The Causal Loop Diagram of Islamic Extremism in Sri Lanka
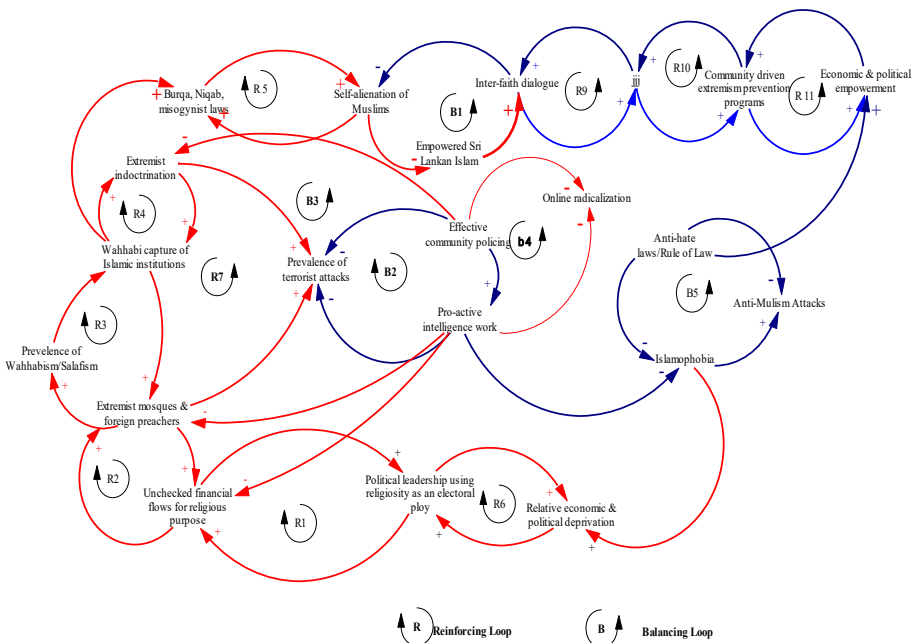
The above Causal Loop Diagram of Islamic radicalization in Sri Lanka maps the relationship between variables. i.e. enablers of Wahhabism's spread in the country and extremist attacks. The enablers come in various forms. They include:

1. External actors such as unregulated financial inflows and visits by extremist preachers of foreign origin.

2. Tacit local actors and machinations such as politicians using religiosity as an electoral ploy.

3. Institutional apparatus, such as extremist mosques and madrassas and other community institutions captured or co-opted by the Wahhabists.

4. Structural factors such as relative economic and political deprivation of certain Muslim communities, and Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attacks.

The Causal diagram visualizes the causal effect of the dynamic function of the above drivers, i.e. long term conditioning effect of Wahhabism, such as:

1. Self-alienation of Muslim communities and the emergence of parallel societies.

2. Arabization, the growing visibility of Arabized way of life, norms and social practices: Burka, Niqab and the defence of misogynist laws.

3. Wahhabist capture of Muslim community institutions such as Jamayathul Ulama.

The relationship between these variables is mutually reinforcing. For instance, unregulated financial flows from the Gulf countries increase the number of extremist mosques (R2). Such financing also helps the Wahhabist capture of the traditional Islamic institutions, which effectively enables them to reach out to a much larger receptive audience(R3). The increasing reach of Wahhabism and its appeal to some quarters of

society, in turn, prompts the politicians to co-opt Wahhabist ideologues as an electoral ploy (R1). The combination of these factors, external financing, mushrooming of mosques, the growing domestic appeal of the ultra-conservative narrative, tacit political patronage, in turn, helps the spread of the ideology even further. They are mutually reinforcing. Each variable therein has a positive (+) relationship with another. They reinforce each other, incrementally escalate, leading to consolidation of Wahhabism in the country. This is a reinforcing loop, or a vicious cycle (R1, R2, R3). The majority of fellow travelers of this initiative are not violent extremists. But, the permissive conditions created by the spread of Wahhabism and incremental change it unleashed in Muslim societies, make them more vulnerable to extremist indoctrination (R4).

The continued function of these enablers of Wahhabism generate long term conditioning effects within the community, effectively leading to self-alienation of Muslim communities, Arabization, the increased visibility of Arabized dress code and Arabized social and cultural norms and the emergence of parallel societies (R5). The function of these variables also reinforcing. More the influence of Wahhabism, greater the self-alienation of Muslims, greater the Arabization of the Muslim way of life and the emergence of parallel societies.

Also, there are structural factors, such as political and economic marginalization of Muslim communities (R6) and Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attacks that could push Muslim youth towards extremism. The causal relationship between these variables are also positive and they are reinforcing, creating a vicious cycle.

All of the above contribute to the displacement of the moderate Sri Lankan Islam. It is being replaced by an implanted ultra-conservative narrative of Islam, which has a strong ideological relationship to global Salafi Jihad. Thus, the relationship between Wahhabist inroads in the country's Muslim community and moderate Sri Lanka Islam is negative (-). Wahhabism advances. Moderate Sri Lankan Islam retreats.

Finally, the greater the inroad of Wahhabism, its domestic appeal, extremist indoctrination and the self-alienation of Muslims, the greater the likelihood of extremist/ terrorist attacks (R7). At times, misplaced political correctness overlooks this explicit link. However, countries, including Sri Lanka, and a majority of Western societies have learnt the lesson hard way.

The policymakers should identify the appropriate intervention points to disrupt the reinforcing process of Islamic extremism. Appropriate counter-terrorism/ terrorism prevention measures should be devised and adopted. Those interventions form the balancing loops that holdback the reinforcing effect of the vicious cycle of radicalization.

A comprehensive counter-terrorism/ extremism prevention approach should include both social and legal interventions and kinetic and intelligence-led measures.

To begin with, the first line of defence against extremism is moderate Sri Lankan Islam. Thus, appropriate measures should be adopted to strengthen Sri Lankan Islam against both the Wahhabist onslaught and Islamophobia. The relationship between empowered Sri Lankan Islam and Wahhabism (and resultant extremism) is negative. Thus a concerted approach to empower Sri Lankan Islam is the first balancing intervention (B1). In this regard, some of the appropriate measures are inter-faith dialogue, community-driven extremism prevention programs and economic and political empowerment of the community. Each of these variables is also reinforcing, but it is positive reinforcement (R9. R 10, R 10). Community driven extremism programs should be modelled as a way to reinforce economic and political empowerment and promote interfaith dialogue. They all, in turn, reinforce the empowerment of local Islam (B1).

The second strategy is intelligence and kinetic driven approach. Effective intelligence work and community policing reduce the extremist

indoctrination (B3), terrorist attacks (B2) and online-radicalization (B4). Therefore, additional resources should be allocated to community policing. Intelligence networks should be strengthened while making sure that their activities were not alienating the target constituency.

The third strategy is legal. Islamophobia, hate speech and attacks on Muslims are a push factor of the radicalization. The government should adopt sound legal instruments such as anti-hate laws and guarantee equal protection for all communities (B4). The relationship between sound anti-hate laws and Islamophobia is negative (-). The effective resort to the Rule of Law could dissuade hate speech, which in turn reduces its virulence as a push factor of radicalization. Also, anti-hate laws contribute to political and community empowerment.

Finally, counter-terrorism and extremism prevention are multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder initiatives. Ideally, the government should onboard as many as like-minded groups into the wider initiative of terrorism prevention, while maintaining the monopoly of kinetic measures of counter-terrorism campaign. Such initiatives should also be versatile. Terrorists reevaluate their strategies and make adjustments in order to undermine, bypass and delegitimize counter-terrorism strategies and de-radicalizing initiatives. In order not to concede the initiative to terrorists and extremists, practitioners of counter-terrorism should proactively take note of the evolving nature of the terrorist strategy and design counter-strategies, accordingly.

Conclusion

Islamic radicalization in Sri Lanka is a product of a well-orchestrated long-haul process, which consisted of a series of below-the-threshold initiatives. It was undertaken by the capture and cooption of traditional Muslim institutions. On the surface, this process was not normatively illegal, but it had been destabilizing from the very outset. Easter Sunday

attacks were the ultimate violent manifestation of that incremental process.

This paper emphasized the Wahhabism and the resultant social and ideological change in some quarters of the Muslim community as the most formidable driver of the radicalization process in Sri Lanka. However, that is not to exclude the other structural, economic and societal factors that could become increasingly influential in the years to come. One of the most consequential is the disturbing phenomenon of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim attacks, hate speech and the resurgent Sinhala Buddhist alt-right. The government must confront them through appropriate legislation and fair and equitable enforcement of the rule of law. A record of near-zero convictions of such crimes feeds into the Muslim sense of victimhood.

The post-mortem of the Easter Sunday attack is dominated by a debate on political and intelligence failure in preventing the attack from happening. However, an equally important lesson is the almost certainty of the 'non-violent extremism' and Arabized narrative leading to violent extremism, parallel societies and self-alienation. Effective interventions should be deployed to contain radicalizing drivers and reverse the radicalization process. Also, equally importantly, the moderate Sri Lankan Islam should be empowered, because it is the first line of defence against the implanted foreign ideologies of religious extremism.

References

Ali, A. (2006a). 'Tabligh Jama' at and Hizbul Tahrir: Divergent Paths to Convergent Goals. Dialogue and Alliance, vol.20, no.2, 2006, pp. 51-66

Ali, A. (2019b) Believing and belonging: A Muslim dilemma. Daily FT. June 13, 2019. Retrieved from http://www.ft.lk/columns/Believing-and-belonging--A-Muslim-dilemma/4-679896

All Ceylon Jamayathul Ulama. (2009). 'ruling concerning the attire of Muslim women. (Removed from the website after the Easter Sunday attacks)

Aneez. S. (2016). Sri Lanka says 32 'elite' Muslims have joined Islamic State in Syria. Reuters, November 18, 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sri-lanka-idUSKBN13D1EEz

Armanios, F. (2003). The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya. Congressional Research Service. Library of Congress.

Borum, R. (2004). Psychology of terrorism. University of South Florida: Tampa.

Choksy, C. E. B. and Choksy, J.K. (2015). The Saudi Connection: Wahhabism and Global Jihad. World Affairs.Vol. 178, No. 1, pp. 23-3, Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/43555279

CNN (2013). London's 'Muslim Patrol' aims to impose Sharia law in East London, Feb 1. 2013. Retrieved from Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcsG-u2GtZE

Daily Mirror (2019a).Easter blasts in Sri Lankan hotels and churches kill at least 207. April 22, 2019. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/business-news/Easter-blasts-in-SriLankanhotels-and-churches-kill-at-least-207/273-165725

Daily Mirror(2019b). Didn't receive prior intel warning on 21/4: Prez. Daily Mirror, September, 21 Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Didnt-receive-prior-intel-warning-on-214-Prez/108-174882

Daily Mirror(2016, January, 4). 36 Sri Lankans gone to Syria; some to join ISIS: Def. Secy. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/101721/36-sri-lankans-gone-to-syria-some-to-join-isis-def-secy

Daily Mirror(2020). ASP says suspected political influence in Mawanella probe. Daily Mirror. February 1, 2020. http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/ASP-says-suspected-political-influence-in-Mawanella-probe/108-182336

Dewaraja, L.S. (1994).The Muslims of Sri Lanka: One Thousand Years of Ethnic Harmony, 900-1915. The University of Michigan Press.

Dorsey, J. M. (2016.July). Creating Frankenstein: The Impact of Saudi Export Ultra-Conservatism in South Asia. SSRN. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=2813898 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2813898

FBI. What is Violent Extremism? Retrieved from: https://www.fbi.gov/cve508/teen-website/what-is-violent-extremism

Farisz, H. (2019) From the Den of the Mastermind, Daily Mirror, April 25. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/liveblog/165648/From-the-Den-of-the-Mastermind

Firro, T., K. (2018). Wahhabism and the Rise of the House of Saud. Sussex Academic Press.

Guidère, M. (2012). Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalism. Scarecrow Press, Langham.

Gunasingham, A. (2019). Sri Lanka Attacks: An Analysis of the Aftermath. Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, 11(6), 8-13. Retrieved August 22, 2020, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26662255

Holden. M. (2016). Radical UK Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary guilty of inviting support for Islamic State, Reuters. August 16, 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-choudary/radical-uk-islamist-preacher-anjem-choudary-guilty-of-inviting-support-for-islamic-state-idUSKCN10R1KH

Home Office. (2015). Counter- Extremism Strategy. Counter-Extremism Directorate, Home Office, October 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf

Hitchens, A.M. (2018). Salafism in America: History, Evolution and Radicalization. George Washingtom Univerity, September 2018. Retrieved from: https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Salafism%20in%20America.pdf

Indrajith, S. (2019, July, 11). Islamic school textbooks recommended killing those offending Islam-top officials. Sunday Island, July 11, 2019

Jayasuriya, R. (2015). Sri Lanka's IS militant: Why we should be (very) worried. Daily Mirror, July 28, 2015. Retrieved from. http://www.dailymirror.lk/81155/sri-lanka-s-isis-militant-why-we-should-be-very-worried

Jayasuriya, R. (2010). Encroaching Wahhabism among Sri Lanka's Muslims. Asian Conflict Reports. Council for Transnational Threat Research. Retrieved from https://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download.jsp?id=50216

Jayasuriya, R. (2019a). How Wahhabism was fostered until it's too late. Daily Mirror. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/How-Wahhabism-was-fostered-until-it%E2%80%99s-too-late/172-166180?f-bclid=IwAR3OytbXRKAmY1hgqFahs_rkj67u8N9w3YLSwPTzNPrtRZGO6n-Vd4-4SvnI

Jayasuriya, R. (2019b). Carnage on the Easter Sunday and a country in a state of denial Carnage on Easter Sunday and a country in a state of denial. Daily Mirror. Retrieved from https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Carnage-on-Easter-Sunday-and-a-country-in-a-state-of-denial/172-165769

Jayasuriya, R. (2019c). Wahhabism and radicalization of local Muslims: Fix it For Good. Daily Mirror. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Wahhabism-and-radicalization-of-local-Muslims-Fix-it-For-Good/172-167069

Kepel, G. (2017). Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West. Princeton University Press.

Khosrokhavar, F. (2017). The Patterns of Radicalization in Contemporary Europe and the Middle East. Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Retrieved from https://www.spf.org/en/islam/news/24608.html

Kirinde, C. (2019, June, a). Zahran spent years advocating violence against Sufi Muslims, witness tells PSC. Daily FT. Retrieved from http://www.ft.lk/news/Zahran-spent-years-advocating-violence-against-Sufi-Muslims-witness-tells-PSC/56-680359

Kirinde, C. (2019, June, b). Zahran kept students from standing for National Anthem, respecting teachers: Kattankudy witness. Daily FT. Retrieved from http://www.ft.lk/news/Zahran-kept-students-from-standing-for-National-Anthem-respecting-teachers-Kattankudy-witness/56-679919

Lumbaca, L. System thinking frameworks: causal loops and appreciative inquiry. Presentation, Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies.

Meir Litvak (2010). "Martyrdom is Life": Jihad and Martyrdom in the Ideology of Hamas. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 33:8, 716-734, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2010.494170

Moghadam, A. (2011). The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Naval Post Graduate School (2015). Wahhabism: Is It a Factor in the Spread of Global Terrorism? CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Mar 19, 2015

O Neill, S. and McGrory, D. (2006). Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque. London: Harper Collins

Pargeter, A.(2008). New Frontier of Jihad: Radical Islam in Europe. University of Pennsylvania Press.

PEW Research Centre (2013). World's Muslims: Religion, Politics, and Society. Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-beliefs-about-sharia/

Perera, B. (2019). Easter Sunday Bombing and their Impact. Daily Mirror, May 22, 2019. Retrieved from:http://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/EASTER-SUNDAY-BOMBINGS-AND-their-IMPACT/172-167521

PTI. (2019). Sri Lanka expels 200 clerics after Easter Attacks. The Hindu. May 5, 2019. Retrived from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/sri-lanka-expels-200-islamic-clerics-after-easter-attacks/article27039322.ece#

Racimora, W. (2013). Salafist/Wahhabite financial support to educational, social and religious institutions. Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/457136/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)457136_EN.pdf

Rapoport, D.C. (2004). The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism. In Audrey Kurth Cronin, James M. Ludes (Eds.) Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy. George Washington University.

Roul, A. (2019). Sri Lanka Struggles to Solve the Islamic State-Local Network Puzzle. Terrorism Monitor Volume: 17 Issue: 17. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/sri-lanka-struggles-to-solve-the-islamic-state-local-network-puzzle/

Parliament of Sri Lanka (2019). Report of the Select Committee of Parliament to look into and report to Parliament on the Terrorist Attacks that took place in different places in Sri Lanka on 21st April 2019. Retrieved from https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/comreports/sc-april-attacks-report-en.pdf

Romaniuk, P. (2015). Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism. Global Center on Cooperative Security. Retrieved from https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf

Schmid, A.P. (2011). The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research. Routledge

Siriwardana, A. and Perera, Y. (2019, June). Hizbullah began Arabization in Kattankudy: Muslim Org, Daily Mirror. Retrieved from http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Hizbullah-began-Arabization-in-Kattankudy:-Muslim- Org-/108-169121

Srinivasan, Meera. (2019, April, 24). I wasn't aware of threat, says Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena. the Hindu. Retrieved from https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/i-wasnt-aware-of-threat-says-sri-lankan-president-maithripala-sirisena/article26929025.ece

Shazuli, Hassaan. (2020). Political influence thwarted Zaharan Hashim's arrest – witness, News First. Retrieved from https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/09/19/political-influence-thwarted-zaharan-hashims-arrest-witness/

The Island. (2020). One suicide bomber went on spending spree before Easter attacks, Inspector tells PCoI, Retrieved from http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=223997

UN Office of Drugs and Crime. The University Module on Counterterrorism 2. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/references.html.

UNDP (2017). Journey to Extremism: Drivers, Incentives and Tipping Points of Recruitment. Retrieved from: file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/Journey%20to%20Extremism_report.pdf

United Nations, General Assembly (2015). Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General. 24 December. A/70/674.

US Department of State (2009).Glossary. Retrieved: https://2001-2009.state.gov-/s/ct/info/c16718.htm

USAID (2011) The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency. Retrieved from: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf

Wettimuny, S. and Rajap, H. (2018), Reforming the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act. Verité Research Pvt Ltd. Retrieved from: https://www.veriteresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Verit%C3%A9-Brief_Muslim-Marriage-and-Divorce-Act.pdf

Wintour, P. (2014). Leaked report reveals 'aggressive Islamist agenda' in Birmingham schools. Guardian, July 18, 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jul/17/leaked-report-aggressive-islamist-agenda-birmingham-schools

Wijedasa.N. (2019). Official Statistics Reveal There Are 1669 Quran Madrasahs, 317 Arabic Colleges and 277 "Ahadiya" Muslim Education Schools Linked to Mosques in Sri Lanka. Sunday Times. Retrieved from http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/63894

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

Professor Shahab Enam Khan[1]

Abstract

With the evolving COVID19 geopolitical trends, the Bay of Bengal is set to emerge as a new flashpoint for renewed geopolitical contrariety. The geostrategic outlook of the region has emerged as more complex than ever before. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are dynamic economies in South Asia, share the same oceanic waters, and belong to a landmass between the Himalayan mountain range to the Indian Ocean. Both the countries hold relatively similar aspirationsand values in their foreign and security policiesinter alia to balance between China and the US, hold good ties with their immediate neighbours India and beyond. Not to mention, both the countries have also been a victim of terrorism, radicalization in multiple forms, and dealt with external threats mostly stemming from miscalculated foreign and security policies of the global powers. These two countries, once remained in the global backburner, have emerged as important actors in the complex geostrategic priorities of two global power and their alliances-led by the US and China-in the wake of the US-China competition over the Indo-Pacific region. Henceforth, the common aspiration to establish the Bay of Bengal-Indian Ocean as a neutral ground and subsequently to develop an admissible Bangladesh-Sri Lankan narrative of maritime security is increasingly becoming a crucial feature in their bilateral discussions.

[1.] Author: Professor Shahab Enam Khan, Department of International Relations, Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh, and Research Director, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.
Email: shahab.e.khan@gmail.com ; sekhan@juniv.edu

The Bay of Bengal and the Emerging New Geopolitics

Asia, of course along with other regions, is at the crossroad - a resultant of the COVID19, now a source of debate between 'vaccine nationalism' and 'vaccine multilateralism'. The COVID-19, comprised of challenges between lives and livelihoods, contradictions between development and politics, and pendulum swing between traditional security and uncertain insecurity, has significantly altered the social capitals and social contracts between the state and the public. This is a hard reality that has become evident as the governments are struggling with delivering public goods, e.g. health, while the grand theories of economic development are becoming incisively apocryphal. Asian nations either must choose to do business as usual or take a transformative turn to reform their economic priorities and strategic approaches.

While the COVID19 is unlikely to lead to a complete overhaul of the prevailing global order, it looks sure to change the nation-to-nation behaviours, at least in four critical ways: (a) it could bring to the overlooked developments, i.e. uncertainties relating pandemics and climate change, into the core of domestic and global economies; (b) Sino-US rivalry to establish more significant strategic footholds in the unnoticed regions will continue to take newer shapes, (c) a shift in the geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic balance of power from West to East, and (d) social changes to set in new social contracts leading to new (deepening) forms of nationalism and ethnic polarization.

With the inevitable changes in geopolitical trends, uncertainty in the newer forms of insecurities - be in the form of undiscovered virus from the melting ice in the Siberian tundra or the Arctic or, scientific inability to put early warning mechanisms in place - national security will now be endorsing Climate Change and Sustainable Development (e.g. responsible extraction of resources from the planetary sources). The Bay of Bengal's [hereafter referred to as the Bay] geophysical health relies considerably upon responsible use of the sea and its ecosystem - a prime concern for post-Tsunami Sri Lanka and the climate-vulnerable Bangladesh. For the

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

first time in the Bay region, ecosystems, climate change, and the very idea
of traditional security have merged. There is now o a 60,000 sq.km. of
vast Dead Zone in the Bay of Bengal, located between Bangladesh and Sri
Lanka.

Hence, the very definitions of national security and traditional security
are to change in the near future. But how? While the traditional forces
are prepared to deal with epidemics, natural disasters, or any other state
of emergencies, the COIVD19 came with the trans-border snowball
effect, i.e. no single State in the continental spheres was spared. Hence,
the geostrategic values of pandemics, human security, development, and
strategic assets are increasingly becoming interrelated in determining hard
national security. The irony is that phenomenal scientific breakthroughs
seem inadequate to counter uncertainties of astronomical scale. The
politics of vaccine and its distribution, political assaults on the World
Health Organization (WHO) or, perhaps the Chinese mask diplomacy
will set a new precedence in the global alliance patterns.

The virus that originated in Wuhan China can well be seen as the world's
greatest equalizer that has brought all the nations to cooperate (Khan,
COVID-19 Notes from Bangladesh: A Human Security Discourse, 2020).
Now, the Gordian questions are: how does the aftermath of COVID
pandemic world impact or shape the Bay of Bengal? Would we witness
renewed geopolitical contrariety in the Bay? How would the geostrategic
outlook of the regions surrounding the Bay look like once the world gets
reasonably back to normalcy?

Two key countries in the region can be taken as cases to the point to
assess possible uncertainties and contrariety; namely Bangladesh and
Sri Lanka. Both the countries have been thriving economies, shares the
same waters, and belongs to a landmass between the Himalayan range to
the Indian ocean. As functioning Democracies and open societies and
liberal economies, both the countries share similar values and aspirations
in their development pursuits to balance between the great powers,
e.g. China and the US and hold good ties with their most significant,

immediate neighbours, i.e. India and beyond. Not to mention, both the countries have also been the victim of terrorism and radicalization in multiple forms and dealt with external threats mostly stemming from miscalculated foreign and security policies of the global powers. It means: the two countries, once remained in the global backburner, have become geostrategic focal points of two global blocs, i.e. the US-backed bloc and the China-backed bloc.

Both countries have significant economic and strategic interests in the Bay of Bengal. They have been founding, proactive members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in order to advance effective regional multilateralism for collective wellbeing and security. The countries also affirm support in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) while it is somewhat dormant of late, thanks to power politics between India and Pakistan. Both countries also share similar understanding and approach in engaging in blue waters, i.e. IORA, IONS or Indian Ocean Dialogues. In spearheading regionalism, Bangladesh has engaged in rather narrow sub-regional initiatives, e.g. Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal initiative (BBIN) and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar initiative (BCIM). However, it is not certain when and how either of the initiatives would effectively emerge as result-oriented sub-regional platforms.

The relationship between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has been a time tested one. While these countries have a colonial past with footprints of multiple European colonial powers, the interactions between the two peoples can be traced as far back as in the ancient period ruled by the Vanga Kingdom, situated in the lower Ganges delta during the period of Northern Black Polished Ware (or what is known as the urban Iron Age Indian culture lasting between BC 700 and 200 BCE). The Vanga Kingdom had controlled many islands of the delta with its naval fleet, and the Kings encouraged and financed overseas exploration. Hence, the India records identified the Vanga as a hub of sailors, naval fleets and commercial centre. The historians also notated hat the Vanga King

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

Sihabahu's son, Prince Vijaya, sailed across the Bay of Bengal to conquer and establish a kingdom that is now known as Sri Lanka (Bhaattacarya, 2008).

However, the critical point in contemporary Bangladesh-Sri Lanka ties perhaps lies in stable states and the two people who believe in harmony-pluralism-secularism. That has created the base for sustained people-to-people contacts so much so that several thousand skilled Sri Lankan professionals and experts have been gainfully employed in Bangladesh for nearly two decades now. The Sri Lankan expatriates are not only employed in areas as diverse as FMCG, apparel, finance or service sectors but also increasingly making strategic investments in Bangladesh economy which is leading to internationalization of Sri Lankan capital.

As of April 2018, one official estimate put that 3,777 Sri Lankans are legally employed in Bangladesh (Prothom Alo, 2018) while various industry estimates put the figures a few times more. Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka was only US$148 million (2016), of which Bangladesh's import was US$119 million and Sri Lanka's US$29 million. Sri Lanka's exports to Bangladesh have seen a steady increase during this decade (Kabir, 2017). Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are finalizing a bilateral coastal shipping agreement that would cut trans-shipment costs and reduce travel time between Chittagong (Bangladesh) and Colombo (Sri Lanka).

The governments of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have highlighted the importance of the early implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ceylon Shipping Cooperation & Bangladesh Shipping Cooperation which could facilitate closer linkage between the Ports of Colombo and Hambantota and the Ports of Bangladesh including for transshipment and bunkering facilities (Ministry of Foreign Relations, Sri Lanka, 2017). Since the signing of the MoU on Economic Partnership (July 2017), a Joint Study Group (JWG) is at work to deal with the scope and negotiating modalities of the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which should be a Comprehensive

Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) (Kirinde, 2018). Clearly, deepened connectivity and integration of the two economies should go hand in hand. Paltry bilateral trade volume does not merit to be a proxy to the extent or potential of Bangladesh-Sri Lanka economic relations.

Aside trade and investment and people-to-people contacts, both the countries reiterated their commitment to intensify their bilateral engagements, including collaboration at regional fora. Conversations are ongoing to establish joint venture partnerships in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, FMCG, logistics, agriculture, deep-sea fisheries, hospitality as also enhance cooperation in education and defence. In the past three decades, Cricket has uniquely drawn the two peoples even closer in a spirit of 'cooperative competition'.

Encompassing global security architecture to the evolving contours of geopolitics in such expansive Bangladesh-Sri Lanka ties, time is apt for both the countries to pursue common security agenda and collective response mechanisms against internal and external threats emanating from various insecurities - traditional and non-traditional, e.g. cybercrime, transnational extremism, narcotic drug trafficking, homegrown terrorism, counter-terrorism and money laundering. This also means that not only the social and political challenges have to be dealt with cooperatively, but technological and challenges in the digital space need to addressed through real-time information sharing and exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise.

The Geo-strategic Dynamics and the Realpolitik in the Bay of Bengal

In order to appreciate the importance of the Bay of Bengal, a relook at the history of the region should merit our attention. Since the end of World War II, South Asia remained in the back burner of the US foreign policy. China remained primarily focused on the South China Sea, while the

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

US-European allies mostly focused on the energy supply and commercial routes from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca and the Pacific. Since the present article focuses on the Bay of Bengal and the contiguous landmass of Asia, energy and commercial routes, remain a critical factor in shaping the Asian geostrategic questions. The geostrategy experts, foreign policy analysts and the geographers preferred to divide the Bay of Bengal into two: drawing a sharp distinction between what is known as South Asia and South-east Asia. While South-East Asia became geostrategic pivot as an aftermath of the World War II, Chinese revolutions, Vietnam and Korean wars, South Asia remained in the low.

However, these mental maps and geographical divisions added more sense in the last century, perhaps until the talk between South and North Korea along with the United States was held in Singapore. The Bay started to pick up on its pivotal role when the US-backed IPS started to surface over the past few years. However, the geographical gaps and maps now make a lesser impact as the historical interconnections across the Bay have become an integrated focus issue for the Chinese led Belt and Road initiative and the US-touted Indo-Pacific strategy. A growing narrative among the public in both countries seem to question the robustness and clarity of the economic content of Indo-Pacific Strategy vis-à-vis BRI. Thus, the Bay has grown as an economic flashpoint and is increasingly becoming a geostrategic pivot.

The politics of energy remains as one of four critical determinants in the geopolitics of the Bay of Bengal. In March 2012, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) gave a verdict in favour of Bangladesh to settle her dispute over maritime border with Myanmar (see Annex I). The two countries had conflicting views of their respective maritime boundaries, but the dispute largely remained on the back burner until late 2008, when South Korea's Daewoo, at the behest of Myanmar, began natural gas exploration in waters claimed by Bangladesh. Weeks later, Bangladesh submitted its continental shelf claim to the United Nations' Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Watson, 2015).

Notably ITLOS had never before ruled on a maritime boundary dispute and its perceived neutrality and status as a blank slate increased the two countries' willingness to submit the case to the tribunal (Watson, 2015).

Subsequently, in 2014, the Bangladesh-India maritime border dispute was resolved by a tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague. The ruling in favour of Bangladesh mentioned: "regarding the delimitation of the maritime boundary between them in the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf within and beyond 200 nm in the Bay of Bengal (In the Matter of the Bay of Bengal Maritime Boundary Arbitration between the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Republic of India, 2014)." The ruling has generally been accepted as fair, as evidenced by the commitment of the parties to abide by it. The tribunal rejected and accepted arguments by each side, resulting in a ruling in which both sides "won" in certain respects and, indeed, there was no clear loser (Mark E. Rosen, 2017). The PCA Ruling holds implications for India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, maritime disputes in the South China Sea and elsewhere and for the US ocean policies (Mark E. Rosen, 2017).

Both the cases under ITLOS and PCA provided equitable delimitation of boundaries and associated maritime space which now allows Bangladesh, India and Myanmar to exercise their sovereign rights in their respective Maritime Zones peacefully. Perhaps these decisions have helped in legally stabilizing the Bay of Bengal which is also crucial for the landlocked countries in the region. Moreover, the verdicts have paved for ways and means for the Bay of Bengal Countries to set regional norms, standards and institutions to exercise their strategic autonomy over their Maritime Zones. The Government of India and the US Geological Survey (USGS) jointly undertook research expedition to discover accumulations of natural gas hydrate in its maritime territory in July 2016. The expedition comprised of scientists and representatives of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited of India, the USGS, the Japan Drilling Company and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (Sarkar,

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

2016) (USGS, 2016). On the other hand, the Australian company Woodside
Energy discovered gas off the coast of Myanmar (January 2016) in blocks
shared with Myanmar Petroleum Resources and French oil major Total.
A month later, Woodside made another gas discovery in a block operated
by Daewoo International of Korea (Shin, 2016).

After the settlement of the disputes with India and Myanmar, Bangladesh
has a total number of 48 gas blocks. Of these, 22 are onshore, and 26
are offshore blocks. Of the offshore blocks, 11 are shallow blocks, while
the remaining 15 are deep-sea blocks (The Financial Express, 2020). The
US companies produce over 55 percent of Bangladesh's domestic natural
gas supply and are among the largest investors in power projects. The
US-made power turbines currently provide 80 percent of Bangladesh's
installed gas-fired power generation capacity (export.gov, 2018). In March
2017, without public tender, the government and state-run Petrobangla
signed a Production Sharing Contract with POSCO Daewoo Corporation
of South Korea for oil and gas exploration in deep-sea block 12 (export.
gov, 2018). On February 17, 2014, India's largest international oil and gas
E&P company ONGC Videsh (OVL) signed Production Sharing Contract
(PSC) with Bangladesh for two shallow-water exploration blocks SS-09 &
SS-04 in the Bay of Bengal of Bangladesh (Offshore Energy, 2014). The
joint venture of Australian Santos and Singapore's Kris Energy had carried
out a 3D seismic survey in block SS11 to explore hydrocarbon resources
(The Financial Express,2018).

Meanwhile, the International Seabed Authority has entered into 15-year
contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides
and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the deep seabed with thirty
(30) contractors. Eighteen of these contracts are for exploration for
polymetallic nodules in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (16),
Central Indian Ocean Basin (1) and Western Pacific Ocean (1). There are
seven contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the South
West Indian Ridge, Central Indian Ridge and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge
and five contracts for exploration for cobalt-rich crusts in the Western

Pacific Ocean. Under regulations, each contractor has the exclusive right to explore an initial area of up to 150,000 sq. km. Over the first eight years of the contract, half of this area is to be relinquished (Ocean Mineral Projects, 2017).

The opening up of the exploration for deep seabed minerals, often known as Blue Acceleration, have added to the post-Forth Industrial revolution competition over the sea resources. Human demands on the ocean are growing more intense and more varied. Scientists say that could lead to unpredictable consequences, including military conflict and economic and ecological collapses (Irwin, 2020). Rising demand for fresh drinking and irrigation water, for example, means there are now 16,000 desalination plants worldwide, which transform 65 million cubic metres of seawater per day, with rapid growth predicted for floating plants (Irwin, 2020). Demand for fish - wild and farmed - is soaring worldwide and is projected to reach 154 million tons by 2030. There is also the US$385 billion nutraceutical market. All these activities compete with the 9,000 offshore oil and gas platforms worldwide and the exploration of the seabed for metal ores (Irwin, 2020). Hence the competition over the control of seabed extraction is not only an issue of economics, but a factor to intensify geostrategic tensions. The politics of the Chinese Maritime Silk Route (MSR) has become the second critical element in the geopolitics of the Bay of Bengal. Since late 2013, Beijing has been promoting its Maritime Silk Route (MSR) initiative as a proposed oceanic complement to its various overland 'Silk Route' projects (Brewster, 2014). Nonetheless, the views of Washington and New Delhi primarily focused on Chinese interests in ports and infrastructure that would dominate the development of new production and distribution supply chains across the Indo-Pacific region.

On the other hand, strategically speaking, MSR seeks to bind the Bay of Bengal and the northern Indian Ocean much closer to the Chinese economy. For instance, Kunming, the epicentre of eastern China, is around 900 km. by road from Chittagong seaport in Bangladesh. Kunming

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

- Chittagong direct multi-modal (road-rail) connectivity is viewed not just to yield mutual benefits for eastern China and Bangladesh, but also the North-eastern Indian States, though fraught with considerable geopolitical tensions and perceptions. The vast landmass from eastern China to eastern India, dotted with over a quarter billion population is not only a potential market, but also a strategic connecting space. Hence, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives have emerged with a significant focus for Beijing (Brewster, 2014).

The Chinese President Xi Jinping has visited Myanmar in 2020 focusing on China-Myanmar Economic Corridor under BR projects, the Maldives and Sri Lanka in 2014, Pakistan in 2015, Bangladesh in 2016 to sign BRI, Nepal in 2019 and India in 2014, 2016 and 2019. In turn, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China five times between 2014 and 2019. The Chinese government, under its flagship BRI, has initiated a deep-sea port at Kyaukphyu (Myanmar) on the Bay of Bengal, a railway project to connect southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan to Myanmar's coastal cities, an inland-waterway through the Irrawaddy River and a mega-hydropower dam project are either stalled or making little progress (ORF, 2020). Much of the investments in Myanmar is viewed owing to Beijing's securing footprint in the Bay, while their expected advancement through BCIM-EC could not yield many thanks to New Delhi's stalling approach.

Parallel to the Chinese investments, India completed the construction of a seaport and the inland water terminal in Sittwe, Rakhine State in Myanmar. This forms a part of the US$484 million Kaladan multi-modal transit transport project mooted in 2008 that would link Kolkata Port (India) to Sittwe (Chern, 2019).Despite the Chinese and Indian efforts to build connectivity, the irony though remains that the intra-regional connectivity among the BIMSTEC and SAARC countries remain absolutely below any rational level: while world exports in 2017 stood at around US$ 17.8 trillion, rising from around $ 16.1 trillion in the previous year, South Asian total trade is about 2.7% of the 'global trade.

At present, intra-regional trade contributes only 5% of South Asia's total trade compared to 25% in ASEAN (Dasgupta, 2018). It is 20% cheaper for India to trade with Brazil than Pakistan (Dasgupta, 2018).

As the connectivity and intraregional trade remains scrambled, the extra-regional states have naturally joined the bandwagon, i.e. Japan has been showing a growing interest in securing economic footprint through significant investment in the region,e.g. to develop Dhaka-Chittagong economic corridor and subsequently enhance deep-sea port facilities as against the Chinese focus on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

However, the growing complexities of the unsettled Rohingya refugee issue between Bangladesh and Myanmar, and Myanmar and its immediate neighbours, e.g. Thailand and Malaysia, remain as a significant irritant among these states. This is a concern that is gaining multi-layered traction among the extremist outfits - domestic, regional and transnational ones. Perhaps, this a crude form of realpolitik leading to the creation of the largest stateless population in the post-World War II world. The UN had labelled the military operation as a "textbook case of ethnic cleansing"; and the Turkish and French presidents described the situation as "genocide" (Khan, Securing Rohingya fates with sound foreign policy, 2017). The issue has made the entire stretch from the Indian Northeast to the Gulf of Thailand as a boiling point that can well be exploited by state and non-state actors.

As the emerging and evolving complex scenario denotes the return of realpolitik, harnessing energy resources, extractions from the seabed and control over supply chains - both in terms of commercial and strategic - is likely to make the Bay much more volatile in the days ahead. The relative decline of the US to be engaged militarily in the Bay could further allow three nuclear powers - China, India and Pakistan - to manoeuvre more openly in the region. Moreover, Thailand's move to acquire three submarines from China has further complicated the 'strategic autonomy' equations in the Bay.

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

In this complicated equation, Sri Lanka has become a critical factor. Chinese built Port of Hambantota, situated in the strategic southwestern part Sri Lanka and right along with the global merchant maritime traffic, dominates the Indian discourse of national security and Delhi's narrative of Indo-Pacific strategy or, worries thereof. This is perhaps one reason when former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe's vision of positing Sri Lanka as a multi-dimensional hub in the Indian Ocean and consequently floating Sri Lanka's idea of securing the Indian Ocean as a zone of growth and prosperity since 2017 was markedly fraught with ambivalence by 'QUAD'. However, one message is clear in the balance of power equations in the Bay, Indian and Pacific oceans, if China succeeds in displacing US power in the Indo-Pacific during the post-COVID period, the regional and global geopolitics will be moved to a different era. BIMSTEC and Southeast Asian countries will inevitably become compliant to Chinese strategies, and India can face a perilous new reality with China in control of the seaborne lifeline of the region. India can potentially lose its current freedom of access into the Bay and much of Southeast Asia. As an aftermath of COVID pandemic and the volatile economic situation under the Trump administration, the era of American international leadership and predominance may become weaker too (Ott, 2019).

China has also played a vital role in the expansion of port facilities in the Colombo Port, which earns 70 per cent of its revenues from transit fees on goods destined for India. Of the three independent Terminals functioning in the Port, the China Merchant (CM Port) operated Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT) handles over two-third of annual business, including Indian transshipment, on a most competitive and transparent basis. There are however growing voices in India as to why Indian business has to rely on 'Chinese Terminal' for global business. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) could finally sign a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between the three countries to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT) of the Colombo Port, next to the Chinese-run container jetty in Colombo harbour. India and Japan will likely deepen and develop this facility to allow large container

ships to enter seamlessly. SLPA is to retain 100% ownership of the ECT, whereas all operations at the terminal will be owned jointly: Sri Lanka to retain 51% and the remaining stake split between India (20%) and Japan (29%). A large portion of the financing for the project will come through Japanese ODA (Chansoria, 2019). Years' of negotiations leading to the agreement were marked by colossal controversy in which then-President Sirisena relieved Ranil Wickramasinghe of his duties in October 2018 for allegedly exceeding his brief in negotiations with India on the Colombo Port. Wickramasinghe was, however, reinstated as Prime Minister in December 2018 (The Straits Times, 2018) (The Hindu, 2019).
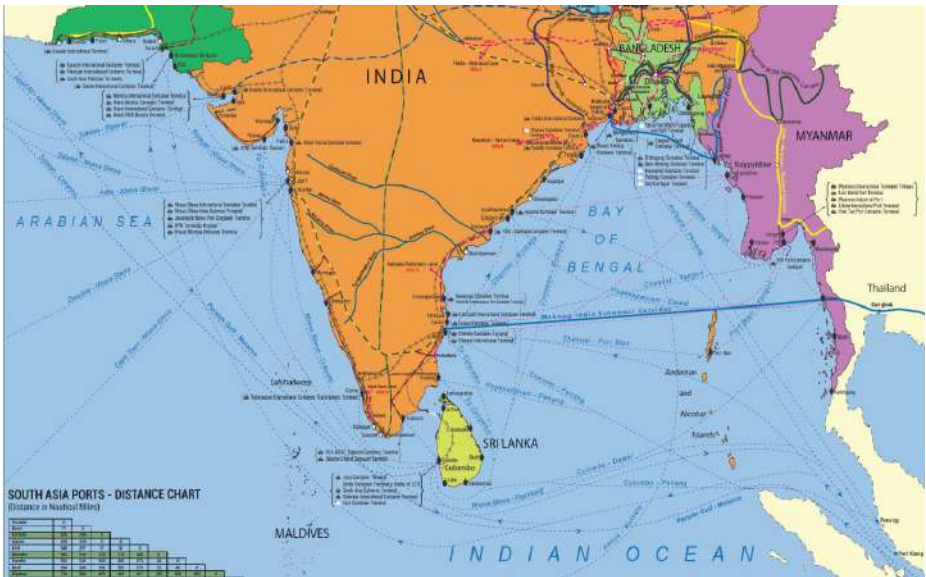
Map: South Asia Maritime Map

Source: South Asia Maritime and Logistics Forum 2018, Dhaka: Bangladesh

On the other hand, Indian ports such as Vizhinjam and Colachel are entering into the logistics chain. Two trans-shipment ports, Vallarpadam port in Cochin and the under-construction Vizhinjam port in Trivandrum are already in existence. The proposed Colachel port would be the third major trans-shipment port in the region. The logic of competing with Colombo port was used while building the Vallarpadam trans-shipment

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

port at Cochin and in clearing the Vizhinjam trans-shipment port in
Trivandrum (Jamwal, 2017). The Western powers, including Australia and
the US, have sought to counter-balance China's growing influence across
the region by launching their infrastructure funds, e.g. US$113 million
US fund announced in August 2018 for the digital economy, energy, and
infrastructure projects (Jeffrey, 2019).

The growing Chinese footprints in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have made
Delhi suspicious enough to reinforce the string of pearls hypothesis,
initially coined by a US consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton, and forced
it to strengthen its ties with Colombo further. Sirisena government quickly
picked up Delhi's security neurosis and allowed Delhi to jointly operate
the World War-era oil facilities in Trincomalee, a strategically crucial port
town located in the east coast of Sri Lanka. Progress on Trincomalee front
though looks uncertain in spite of interests from India, Japan and the
US. At present, on a modest scale, Indian Oil Corporation is engaged in
bunkering operations, running 15 out of 99 storage tanks in the lower tank
farm in Trincomalee (Srinivasan, 2017). However, Trincomalee is rising
as a strategic point which is of vital interests for the BIMSTEC countries.

In the whole milieu, Japan has emerged as another key actor in the Bay of
Bengal. The Government of Bangladesh has tasked a Japanese consortium
to build a deep seaport in the vital strategic point - Matarbari (southern
Bangladesh) - under Japanese Overseas Development Assistance (ODA),
along with the construction of an Ultra Super Critical Coal-Fired Power
Project (V) under Japanese ODA Credit of up to Yen 143.127 billion near
the Port (JICA, 2018).

The overall competition over strategic assets, i.e. the ports, has created
twin challenges in the Bay - (a) renewed potential for an escalated arms
race and military engagement; and (b) strategic conflicts between BRI
and IPS. However, the post-Sirisena Colombo has different priorities with
President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in
the helm of power - balancing between the US and China - a sharp move
from the political rhetoric of balancing between China and India (Khan,

Uncle Sam and the Mandarin dragon in Colombo, 2019). Meanwhile, India supplied a Russian-built Kilo-class submarine to Myanmar in 2019, Bangladesh purchased two Ming-class submarines from China in 2016 as also granting China to build a submarine port in south-eastern Bangladesh. China has been providing naval support to Sri Lanka and recently also gifted a P625 frigate as a sign of its deepening military cooperation (The Economic Times, 2019).

While Bangladesh sees its submarines as a defensive tool, nevertheless the unfolding maritime scenarios have brought the debate of 'sea control' and 'sea denial' into the security discourse. After all, Sri Lanka is strategically located along the vital Chinese shipping routes between the Straits of Malacca and its new naval base and stations in Djibouti and the Suez Canal. As much as 80% of Chinese energy supply is routed through this route (Lintner, 2019). This has further drawn global attention to view Sri Lanka as a geostrategic ebullition.

The other key country in the Bay region, Thailand, is in the process of buying three submarines from China - the first in over sixty years. The Thai Navy signed an agreement to buy three submarines, including a Yuan Class S26T submarine from China in 2017. The submarines are expected to be delivered to the Thai Navy in 2023 (The Economic Times, 2019b). Thailand has taken note of the submarine acquired by Myanmar from India. The Royal Thai Navy is preparing to deal with the "new situation" in the Bay of Bengal (The Economic Times, 2019b). Meanwhile, Bangladesh has signed a radar MoU with India, as a part of Indian Network of Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems, to be set up to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). However, one of the key objectives of the MoU is to detect any seaborne terrorist attack along its eastern coastline along with keeping watch on the maritime neighbourhood, where India suspects that the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has frequently been deploying its warships and submarines over the past few years (Deccan Herald, 2019). Perhaps, for the post-COVID recovery of the Sri Lankan economy, over a telephone conversation with President Gotabaya

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

Rajapaksa, President Xi Jinping has pledged to provide unstinted support to the Rajapaksa government. The conversation between the two premiers highlighted the necessity of 'practical cooperation' in various fields, advance major cooperation projects, and promote high-quality construction projects under BRI (Daily News, 2020).

While the afore-mentioned geostrategic equations are rapidly evolving, quite remarkably three high ranking officials from Moscow, Beijing and Washington (Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councilor Wang Yi and Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells) visited Colombo on January 13 2020 - to establish initial outreach to the new Rajapaksa dispensation in Sri Lanka. The timing and sequence broadly underscored each of their growing focus on Colombo. In particular, Washington faces a standoff with Colombo on the issues concluding the US$ 480 million grant from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), making it by far the single largest non-IFI grant in Sri Lankan history. Washington's ties with Colombo is marked with further bitterness over the debate on the possible conclusion of the Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA) which popular Sri Lankan perception equates with the MCA grant.

The Future of the Competition and Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal

Undoubtedly the Bay of Bengal has emerged as a pivotal zone of strategic competition. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka both share common issues in terms of geopolitics and geostrategic conundrums. While the issues of development and growth remain crucial priorities for these two countries, the geostrategic competitions are becoming interlinked with their national security and interest. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have suffered from colossal impacts of intelligence failures which led to a heinous

terrorist attack in Dhaka (July 2016) and destructive and disruptive attacks in Sri Lanka (April 2019). Given the conflicting and multiple agenda of the international actors, this is high time for the two countries to work on counter-terrorism collective security, and adequate money laundering regimes to prevent transnational and homegrown terrorism and radicalization.

While none of the countries has been able to develop a full-proof counter-terrorism regime, Bangladesh's counter-terrorism experience, buoyed by the whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approaches, merit to be shared to strengthen social and religious resilience against extremism (Daily Mirror, 2020). Sri Lankan academics highlighted the necessity for counter-terrorism strategy and anti-money laundering regimes in Sri Lanka (Mohan, 2020). Bangladesh also has a strong AML strategy which can prove useful for Sri Lanka in countering terrorist financing. Bangladeshi model could be helpful, and the implementation of a strategy can bridge several grey areas, e.g. mutual legal assistance, due diligence rules for Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), NGOs or non-financial entities, and risk-based supervision (Mohan, 2020).

Robust bilateral conversation and cooperation to mitigate the adverse effects of tension between BRI and IPS are desirable. SAARC and BIMSTEC are the two dominant regional institutional platforms which can facilitate confidence building, conflict management and prioritize development over delusion stemming from the potential arms race in the Bay of Bengal. Both the countries can - and should - voice their views on effective, result-oriented functioning - if not a certain degree of reform - of SAARC and BIMSTEC. Expansion of BIMSTEC, for instance, should also merit, like the inclusion of other regional countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia) to pave the way to bolster inter-regional cooperation like BIMSTEC-ASEAN, SAARC-ASEAN. These could help to avoid future escalation of tensions leading to both economic and strategic impasses. Both Dhaka and Colombo ought to stress the need for BIMSTEC and

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

SAARC to advance 'security' as a critical regional public good, and indeed create a broader playing field.

Strategically speaking, the Bay of Bengal and BIMSTEC not only cater to the broader concepts of 'Indo-Pacific' and an Indian Ocean community that Washington espouses and the MSR that Beijing espouses, but it also includes two ASEAN member states (Myanmar and Thailand) in its profile. This strategic equation is crucial for Dhaka and Colombo's foreign policy priorities in balancing the US and China. In respect of security and piracy, unregulated and undocumented migration of different forms of radical and extremist groups in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and parts of Sri Lanka pose significant threats to the countries. Exchange of best practices and policy options in these areas is critical. These should be complemented by faster materializing the initiatives in sustainable development, e.g. bilateral and regional coastal shipping agreement(s)/ arrangement(s), mechanisms to further liberalize bilateral trade, joint venture partnerships, enhanced cooperation in learning and skills development, overall agriculture and defence.

The early implementation of the MoU to facilitate closer linkage between the Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi ports can be a significant game changer in the geostrategic equations, as emphasized at the First Shipping Secretary Talks (Dhaka, October 2016), that calls for responsible use of common oceanic wealth and resources (including fisheries), exchange of technologies - knowhow - ecosystems. The contemporary tools and applications coming by way of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), i.e. Artificial Intelligence, Drones, Internet of Things (IoT), Block chain should not only deliver in advanced warfare and surveillance but also across a range of sectors that contribute to people's lives and livelihoods. That way, both the defensive and offensive security concerns impacting on territorial and strategic autonomy of the states could be addressed, together. It is in this context that renewed collaboration among the academic - professional - policy institutions should be articulated anew, inter alia with the broader objective of developing common and standard

maritime norms and cultures - based on South Asian economic realities and moral grounds.

The new, multi-layered strategic environment has made the Bay of Bengal region once again a new-old centre of the world joining the two young demographic, i.e. of the Indian sub-continent and East Asia. In this complex atmosphere, for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the challenges lie in finding balanced options in dealing with these changes. The post-COVID19 world is certain to have transformative norms, practices, standards and patterns in the functioning - behaviour - preferences of individuals, business and governments. Factoring such unsettling facts and the factors, Bangladesh and Sri Lankan bilateral relations should structurally take a renewed look at the overall setting in the region and how it may impact on the Bay, and indeed on the conduct or the positioning of the key actors who hitherto conducted themselves in certain known or predictable ways.

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

References

Bhaattacarya, M. (2008). *Glimpses of Buddhist Bengal*. Kolkata: Indian Institute of Oriental Studies & Research.

Brewster, D. (2014, December 09). *The Bay of Bengal: the Maritime Silk Route and China's naval ambitions*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Australian Strategic Policy Institute: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-bay-of-bengal-the-maritime-silk-route-and-chinas-naval-ambitions/

Chansoria, M. (2019, July 01). *Japan and India to Jointly Develop Sri Lanka's East Container Terminal Port*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Japan Forward: https://japan-forward.com/japan-and-india-to-jointly-develop-sri-lankas-east-container-terminal-port/

Chern, K. W. (2019, July 15). *More Indian investments expected with better connectivity, bilateral ties*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Myanmar Times: https://www.mmtimes.com/news/more-indian-investments-expected-better-connectivity-bilateral-ties.html

Daily Mirror. (2020, March 05). *Community participation is important in countering extremism - Prof. Shahab Enam Khan*. Retrieved 05 12, 2020, from http://www.dailymirror.lk/hard-talk/Community-participation-is-important-in-countering-extremism-Prof-Shahab-Enam-Khan/334-184331

Daily News. (2020, May 14). *China-Sri Lanka leaders in phone conversation: China pledges unstinted support for recovery*. Retrieved May 14, 2020, from Daily News: https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/05/14/local/218610/china-pledges-unstinted-support-recovery

Dasgupta, A. (2018, October 23). *South Asia Trade with emphasis on Intra-regional Trade Integration*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/south-asia-trade-emphasis-intra-regional-integration-dasgupta

Deccan Herald. (2019, October 06). *India's radars in Bangladesh to monitor Bay of Bengal*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://www.deccanherald.com/national/east-and-northeast/indias-radars-in-bangladesh-to-monitor-bay-of-bengal-766567.html

export.gov. (2018, December 10). *Bangladesh - Power & Energy.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Bangladesh Country Commercial Guide: https://www.export.gov/apex/article2?id=Bangladesh-Power-and-energy

In the Matter of the Bay of Bengal Maritime Boundary Arbitration between the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Republic of India (The Permanent Court of Arbitration July 07, 2014). Retrieved from https://pcacases.com/web/sendAttach/383.

Irwin, A. (2020, February 19). *'Blue acceleration': the mounting competition for ocean resources.* Retrieved May 14, 2020, from https://chinadialogueocean.net/13128-blue-acceleration-competition-ocean-resources/

Jamwal, N. (2017, December 10). *Does South India Need Three Trans-Shipment Ports to Compete With Colombo?* Retrieved May 14, 2020, from thewire.in: https://thewire.in/economy/south-india-trans-shipment-ports-enayam

Jeffrey, C. (2019, January 15). *Why the Indian Ocean region might soon play a lead role in world affairs.* Retrieved May 13, 2020, from The Conversation: https://theconversation.com/why-the-indian-ocean-region-might-soon-play-a-lead-role-in-world-affairs-109663

JICA. (2018, June 14). *Signing of Japanese ODA Loan Agreements with Bangladesh: Contributing to the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Japan International Cooperation Agency: https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/press/2018/180614_01.html

Kabir, R. (2017). *Bilateral Trade Relations between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.* Dhaka: BKMEA.

Khan, S. E. (2017, October 13). *Securing Rohingya fates with sound foreign policy.* Retrieved May 11, 2020, from The Daily Star: https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/the-shadow-violence/securing-rohingya-fates-sound-foreign-policy-1474891

Khan, S. E. (2019, November 20). *Uncle Sam and the Mandarin dragon in Colombo.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/2019/11/20/uncle-sam-and-the-mandarin-dragon-in-colombo?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=c7c8d9093750f7d5e71cf344580682da62e05419-1589256973-0-AYsbQgILiDeyRIYzU_8PM87fOaexKh2rmbgd20AYr86Twqmx0M3bMXsnI-UbEGvW2TbLlgwu7vX2OXB5PV5dD_KEw

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

Khan, S. E. (2020). COVID-19 *Notes from Bangladesh: A Human Security Discourse.* Washington DC: Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. Retrieved from https://nesa-center.org/covid-19-in-bangladesh-a-human-security-discourse/

Kirinde, R. (2018, September 10). *Joint feasibility study on FTA with Bangladesh.* Retrieved from Daily FT: http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Joint-feasibility-study-on-FTA-with-Bangladesh/44-662565

Lintner, B. (2019, December 19). *Sri Lanka's transition opens the way for China.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Asia Times: https://asiatimes.com/2019/12/sri-lankas-transition-opens-the-way-for-china/

Mark E. Rosen, J. L. (2017). *Bangladesh v. India: A Positive Step Forward in Public Order of the Seas.* Virginia: Center for Naval Analyses.

Ministry of Foreign Relations, Sri Lanka. (2017, August 09). *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to Intensify Bilaterl and Regional Cooperation.* Retrieved May 11, 2020, from https://www.mfa.gov.lk/bangladesh-and-sri-lanka-to-intensify-bilateral-and-regional-cooperation/

Mohan, S. R. (2020, April 05). *Sl Needs Framework To Combat Terrorist Financing, Money Laundering.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Ceylon Today: https://ceylon-today.lk/print-more/55203

NewsFirst. (2020, January 10). *Sri Lanka plays host to 3 top diplomats from the US, China and Russia on January 13.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/01/10/sri-lanka-plays-host-to-3-top-diplomats-from-the-us-china-and-russia-on-jan-13th/

Ocean Mineral Projects. (2017, October 16). *Clarion-Clipperton Zone: Updates.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Ocean Mineral Projects: http://oceanmineralprojects.com/2017/10/clarion-clipperton-zone-updates/

Offshore Energy. (2014, February 18). *ONGC Videsh acquires two exploration blocks offshore Bangladesh.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://www.offshore-energy.biz/ongc-videsh-acquires-two-exploration-blocks-offshore-bangladesh/

ORF. (2020, January 16). *Xi's Myanmar visit and China's Regional Diplomacy.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Observer Research Foundation: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/xis-myanmar-visit-and-chinas-regional-diplomacy-60370/

Ott, M. (2019, May 14). *The South China Sea in Strategic Terms.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from The Wilson Center: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms

Prothom Alo. (2018, April 17). F*oreigners in Bangladesh formally remit $2b a year.* Retrieved May 11, 2020, from Prothom Alo English: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/Foreigners-in-Bangladesh-formally-remit-2b-a-year

Sarkar, A. (2016, July 26). *India, US discover large deposits of natural gas in Bay of Bengal.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from International Business Times: https://www.ibtimes.co.in/india-us-discover-large-deposits-natural-gas-bay-bengal-687934

SASEC. (2018, October 26). *Bangladesh, Sri Lanka Finalize Coastal Shipping Deal to Cut Transshipment Cost.* Retrieved May 11, 2020, from South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC): https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=news&nid=955&url=bangladesh-sri-lanka-coastal-shipping

Shin, A. (2016, February 15). *Second gas column discovered in the Bay of Bengal.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from Myanmar Times: https://www.mmtimes.com/business/18976-second-gas-column-discovered-in-the-bay-of-bengal.html

Srinivasan, M. (2017, April 08). *Sri Lanka, India to jointly develop Trincomalee oil tank farm.* Retrieved May 13, 2020, from The Hindu: https://www.thehindu.com/business/sri-lanka-india-to-jointly-develop-trincomalee-oil-tank-farm/article17893989.ece

The Economic Times. (2019, July 17). *China gifts warship to Sri Lanka.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-gifts-warship-to-sri-lanka/articleshow/70255526.cms?from=mdr

The Economic Times. (2019b, December 11). *Thai Navy takes note of Myanmar acquiring Indian submarine.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/thai-navy-takes-note-of-myanmar-acquiring-indian-submarine/articleshow/72467809.cms

The New Geopolitical Reality in the Bay of Bengal: Implications of
Competition and Cooperation on Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations

INSSSL
DEFENCE
Review

The Financial Express. (2018, July 04). *Hydrocarbon exploration: Santos, KrisEnergy carry out 3D seismic survey in block SS-11.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from The Financial Express: https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/ hydrocarbon-exploration-santos-krisenergy-carry-out-3d-seismic-survey-in-b lock-ss-11-1530684180

The Financial Express. (2020, January 11). *Intensifying offshore drilling for hydrocarbon.* Retrieved May 12, 2020, from The Financial Express: https:// www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/intensifying-offshore-drilling-for-hydrocarbon-1578759813

The Hindu. (2019, November 17). *The China factor in Sri Lanka's politics.* Retrieved May 13, 2020, from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/ opinion/columns/g-parthasarathy/the-china-factor-in-sri-lankas-politics/ article29902120.ece#

The Straits Times. (2018, October 27). *Sri Lanka plunges into crisis as President Maithripala Sirisena sacks Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.* Retrieved Mmay 13, 2020, from https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka-president-maithripala-sirisena-sacks-prime-minister-ranil-wickremesinghe

USGS. (2016, July 25). *Large Deposits of Potentially Producible Gas Hydrate Found in Indian Ocean.* Retrieved May 11, 2020, from United States Geological Survey: https://www.usgs.gov/news/large-deposits-potentially-producible-gas-hydrate-found-indian-ocean

Watson, S. (2015, October 19). *The Bangladesh/Myanmar Matitime Dispute: Lessons for Peaceful Resolution.* Retrieved May 10, 2020, from Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative: https://amti.csis.org/the- bangladeshmyanmar-maritim e-dispute-lessons-for-peaceful-resolution/

Smuggling of Narcotic Drugs from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka

Ms. Udeshika Madhubhashani[1] and Ms. Parvin Hejran[2]

Abstract

Smuggling of narcotic drugs appears as one way traffic; that is from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka. The most prominent narcotic drug that is smuggled from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka is opium and heroin. Afghanistan is the world's largest global opium producer. The opium production has proved to be a serious challenge to almost all reconstruction efforts led domestically and or internationally as "funds from the sale of heroin were used to bolster the position of autocratic figures, drug barons and, by some accounts, the Taliban-led insurgency" (Keane, 2016, p. 138). Taking this into consideration, smuggled opium and heroin offers a market for an increase in opium cultivated within Afghanistan. The direct relation between opium demands outside and the amount cultivated inside is in itself a great concern to Afghanistan and the international community. Thus, it needs to be addressed. Tackling Afghanistan's opium issues and stopping the trafficking elsewhere takes a broad, international effort making a joint effort eradicating illicit drugs both in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka successful. According to the United Nation Drug Control Program (UNDCP), despite international and local level efforts to combat the cultivation and production of opium poppy in Afghanistan since 2001, Afghanistan produces more than 90% of heroin globally trafficked to every region of the world mainly through the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in 2019. Most of the drugs available in Sri Lanka originated in Afghanistan. However, there are signs of a changing trend

---

[1.] Udeshika Madhubhashani is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL).

[2.] Parvin Hejran is a is a Political Affairs Assistant at Political Affairs Section, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

since the prominent roads are getting more challenging and expensive for the traders, one of which could be mentioned as the southern route. The Indian Ocean is a potential route for traffickers to send sizable shipments using boats departing from unofficial ports and jetties in India. Maritime trafficking also presents opportunities to smuggle large quantities of narcotic drugs to third world countries. This study will make an effort to investigate into possible cooperation between the two countries, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, to address drug trafficking of opiates and heroin along the southern route as a recent development in drug trafficking, by highlighting the importance of cooperation as an important factor in combating the illicit trade. This study will be based on Sri Lankan data and statistics primarily obtained from the Police Narcotic Bureau (PNB), Sri Lanka Customs, Sri Lanka Navy, National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB), and Sri Lanka Anti-Narcotics Association (SLANA), Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and the United Nations Organization on Drug Crime (UNODC). Data will be analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: Smuggling, Narcotic Drugs, Trafficking hub, Transit country

Introduction

According to the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB), heroin was originally introduced in Sri Lanka by the tourists in the late 1970s with the onset of economic liberalization. At the early stage, the tourists brought their heroin supply with them for personal consumption. Later, the Sri Lankans began to supply to the tourists. This led to the introduction of heroin consumption among the native Ganja users, particularly in the Galle district, a popular tourist destination. However, there is a myth that tourism is the cause of the heroin epidemic in Sri Lanka.

Iran, Pakistan and India sharing a border with Afghanistan appears to be a destination market for Afghan heroin and opium smuggled along the southern route to South Asian markets and further to East and West. This paper examines how Sri Lanka has felt a threat as a narcotic market and a transit country consequently becoming a trafficking hub connecting to several regions of the world.

Origin

Historically, betel and tobacco are mild stimulants used in Sri Lanka and are legal. Traditionally, cannabis is an illegal narcotic drug consumed in Sri Lanka primarily for traditional medicinal purposes in rural areas. However, since the early 1980s heroin has also entered the consumer market. The brown sugar type of heroin is the most sought after by Sri Lankan consumers. Ganja is cultivated in Sri Lanka but heroin is entirely smuggled via India and Pakistan, originating in Afghanistan. Ganja which is grown in the interior could not reach the urban markets, and hence the narcotic drug users turned to heroin as their narcotic drug of choice, which was smuggled and reached the urban areas first. Thus, the heroin contraband reached Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy and Galle via sea and air quicker than Ganja from remote jungles in the south-eastern dry zone of the island. When the Government was faced with the gravest threat to its survival in 1983 and 1987 the entire law enforcement efforts was concentrated on safeguarding the Government. (Sarvananthan, 2016). This diversion of law enforcement activities facilitated the smuggling of heroin from Afghanistan with a lesser risk premium.

Opium poppy cultivation has steadily increased in Afghanistan since the 1980s. In this newly independent state, opium cultivation keeps many farmers busy in response to huge benefits from drug mafias and other illegal markets. Poppy is a high-level value crop, making it high in demand. The cultivation often takes place in rural areas where a connection is to be made between opium production as a valuable crop and rural poverty.

Except for opium poppy cultivation in 2001, cultivation has increased in Afghanistan since the mid-1980 s, peaking in 1999. In 2003 opium was cultivated on 80,000 ha, up 8% from 74,000 ha in 2002. By 2006, twenty-one of Afghanistan's thirty-four provinces were producing 94 percent of the world's supply estimated at a pre-export value of $4 billion and equivalent to nearly 50 percent of the country's GDP (Gavrilis 2010). Furthermore, despite all the US-led and Afghan-led counter narcotic policies since the fall of Taliban, Poppy cultivation increased by 63% [in 2017] from the previous year [2016] to 328,000 hectares and production increased 87% to 9,000 tons (Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan 2017, 193). There has also been the expansion of opium cultivation in new regions. Despite the tremendous investment of $87 billion to the counternarcotic war, Afghanistan remains the world's largest opium producer and exporter (Sopko 2018, 7).

Current situation

In Afghanistan smuggling of narcotics takes place through different routes and by a complex chain of smugglers. The following numbers highlights that the levels of opium poppy cultivation within the country, creates multiple challenges for the country, neighbours and the many other countries that are transit for or destination of Afghan opiates as in the case of Sri Lanka. In 2017 insurgency groups, including the Taliban accrued a minimum of US$ 116-184 million from taxing the opiates production in Afghanistan, according to the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN)/ UNODC. Hence, addressing the opiate problem in Afghanistan remains a shared responsibility. Billions of dollars are made from trafficking opiates into major consumer markets; mainly it happens in Asia.

Figure 01: Afghanistan Opium Cultivation, Production, and Eradication (2008-2018)
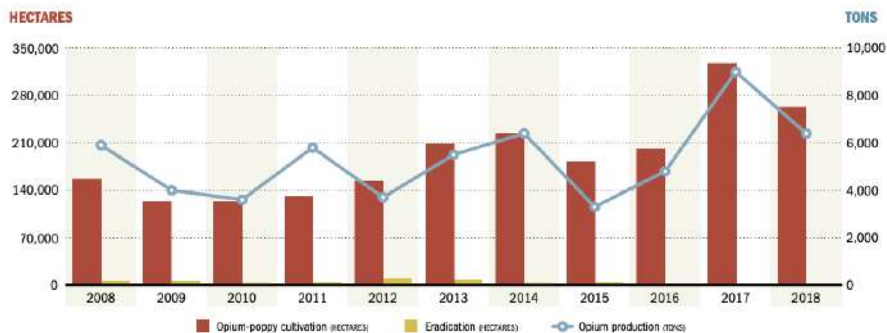
Source: UNODC, World Drug Report 2016, 5/2016, Annex, vii, ix, xii; UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018: Cultivation and Production, 11/2018, pp. 5, 61–68.

Figure 02: Drug Trafficking Cases in Sri Lanka 2008 - 2019
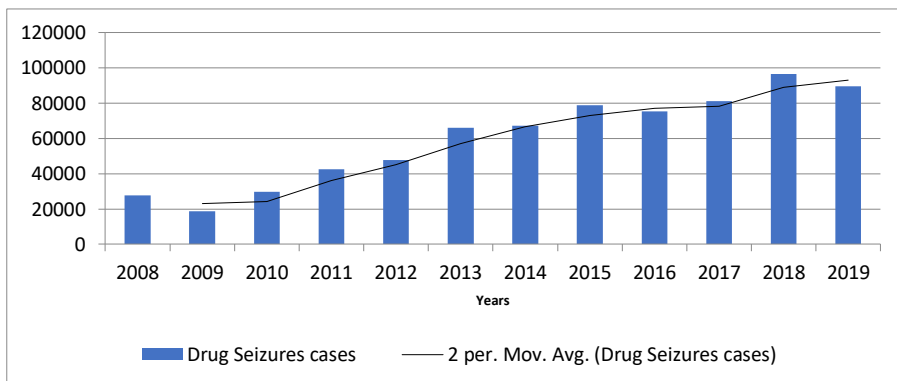
Source: Police Narcotic Bureau, 2019

Over the past decade, Sri Lanka has been used as a trans-shipment point for drug trafficking and Sri Lanka accounts for a disproportionately large number of arrests increasingly. When there is a high demand the supply will be encouraged even though it is an illicit production. These charts indicate that there is a link between high productions of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan and the high consumption in Sri Lanka over the last ten years. The bulk of heroin and opium contraband cultivates and produces

in Afghanistan, but those narcotic drugs are trafficked on fishing boats or by air with couriers entering as tourists and carriers through India, Iran and Pakistan to Sri Lanka. Reducing the Afghan opiate production requires an international and cooperative approach that targets the supply chain of opiates along all its stages, from source to destination. Sri Lanka plays a major role as a narcotic hub in the Southern route of smuggling. Thus, Sri Lanka is a focal point to begin the eradication process.

Price and Market

When considering the Afghanistan drug market, a low-risk crop in a high-risk environment (experiencing drought, state's inability to reach out to its population, low wage, lack of job opportunities, hot weather), opium cultivation and trade brings considerable benefit to the country's economy. In 2017, the farm gate value from poppy cultivation was equivalent to seven percent of Afghanistan's estimated GDP, or around 1.4 billion USD. The average farm-gate price follows the laws of demand and supply: following the years of high production (for example 2011 or 2018), the average price decreased, whereas following a supply shortage (for example the Taliban ban opium in 2001) the average price strongly increased. (UNODC 2019)

Figure 03: Farm-gate Prices of Dry Opium Production in Afghanistan, 2008-2018 (Million US Dollars)
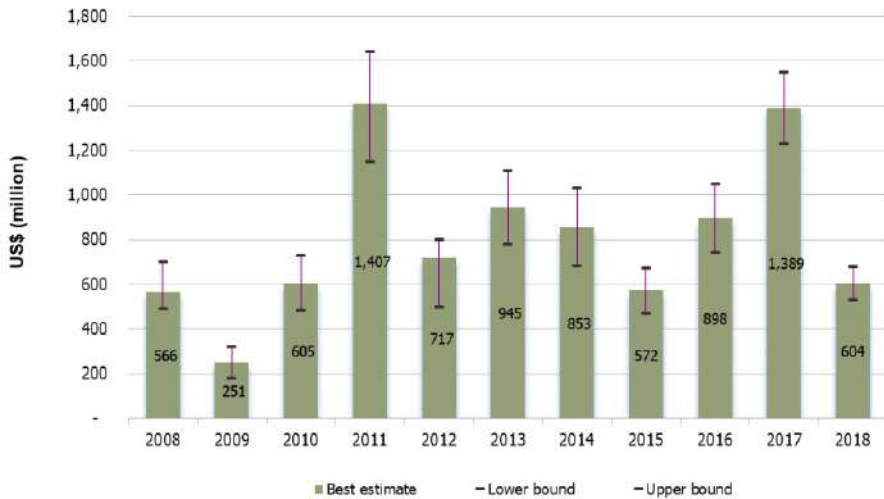
Source: UNODC, 2019

Heroin is low volume and high-value contraband to Sri Lanka. Heroin smuggling is big business in Sri Lanka. According to average street-level prices of drugs, Heroin has a high price than others. The main reason is it has a very high demand than others. The unit cost of heroin is higher than the others. It only signifies the greater risk involved, in overland and air-borne or seaborne transportation of heroin as the distance becomes longer from the production base. The bulk of the profits earned in heroin trafficking is in the distribution. The majority of the drug traffickers who bring heroin into Sri Lanka are Sri Lankan nationals, but its origins are in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the source of 80% supply of heroin to the world, majorly trafficking through the Southern route. (UNDCP, 2019) The number of proceeds from the heroin trade repatriated abroad is far less than the total heroin market in Sri Lanka, contrary to the popular perception. Besides, since Sri Lanka is a transit country in heroin trade to West Asia and Europe, a considerable amount of profits accrues to Sri Lanka by this entrepot trade albeit in the complementary market. Therefore, the net financial drain due to heroin smuggling into Sri Lanka

may be far less than the total heroin market in Sri Lanka. This is a complex web that requires close inspection.

Mode of Smuggling

Narcotic drug smuggling into Sri Lanka takes place by air and sea. Kalpitiya, Udappuwa, Negombo, Wattala, Colombo and Beruwala are the coastal areas mostly used for Drug Trafficking in Sri Lanka. It confirmed that contraband is seaborne in large quantities and airborne in smaller quantities. Because the nations around the Indian Ocean (The Southern route), is the most concerned market for drug dealers. The advantage is using a sea route, is the lack of coastguard. Any arrests can only be made in a nation's territorial waters. It makes the unmonitored high sea as a sanctuary for these type of activities. In the case of a raid in the open sea, it requires flag state consent or consent from the nation that the target vessel is registered in. This takes far too much time for any kind of arrests to be made.

Figure 04: Drug Seizures in Sri Lanka (Originated from Afghanistan)
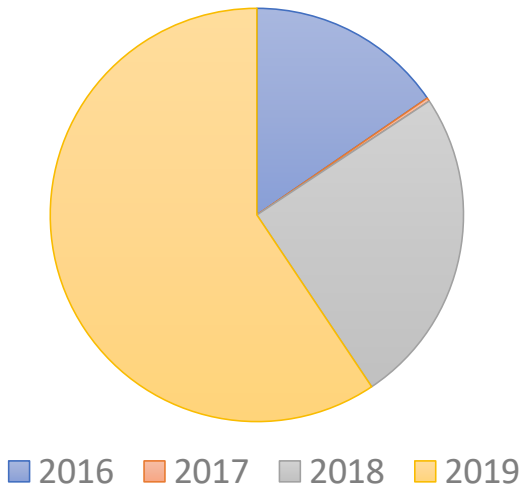
Source: Police Narcotic Bureau, 2019

There are very few incidents reported on direct narcotic drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka, most of the drug trafficking happens indirectly, but the origin of those narcotics drugs is Afghanistan. From 2016 to 2019 there is an incensement of the drug trafficking cases from India, Iran and Pakistan, but those drugs originated in Afghanistan. (Police Narcotics Bureau 2019)Sri Lanka has emerged as one of the transit countries of narcotic drugs from the Golden Crescent (the region that overlaps Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan with their mountainous peripheries). This has emerged as the leading heroin and opium-producing region in the world. Afghanistan is the focal point of this crescent, has long been a hub for poppy production and a major producer of the global supply of heroin. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan virtually closed the land routes to Europe for Heroin traffickers through Northern Afghanistan during the 1980s. Hence, the Afghanistan drugs traffickers started using the land route to Pakistan and from there to the neighboring countries (India, Iran) as well as to whole Asia, via land, air and sea.

Figure 05: Countries involved in Trans-shipment of Narcotic Drugs from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka
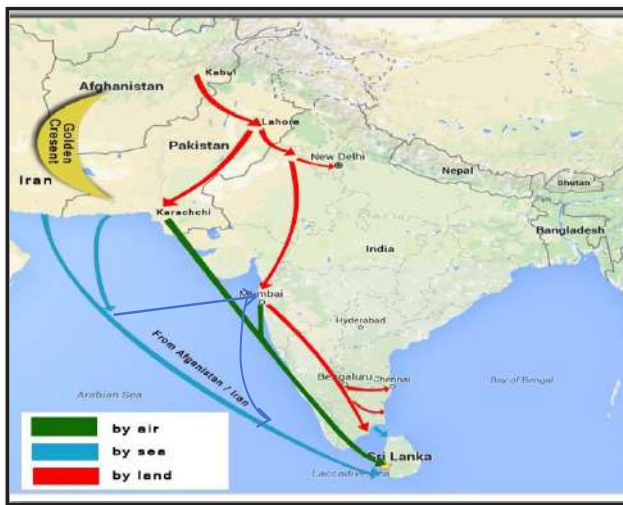
Source: ORCHARD The Virtual Rehab:
Narcotics Smuggling and Border Security, 2020

The Opium and Heroin market in Afghanistan seems to operate efficiently as a small scale, rapid turnover business. Based on the changing pattern of seizures of opiates in neighbouring countries, it appears that much more opium is now processed into morphine and heroin; within Afghanistan, however, the numbers change. Opium production and trade in Afghanistan becomes much easier as corruption and lack of strong border control make it easy for the traffickers. Moreover, , money transfer and laundering can easily be done through the paperless Hawala system (a system of transferring money without documents), which is difficult to monitor. The law enforcement effort at the border areas is weakened by corruption and lack of accountability and resources. Narcotic smuggling takes place through multiple routes, the northern borders connecting Central Asia and Europe, Eastern and Western neighbours Pakistan and Iran found a way to other South Asian and Southeast Asian countries and use Sri Lanka as a trafficking hub in the southern route.

Smuggling of methamphetamine by the sea in this region is an emerging trend; investigations into the seizures in the recent past have revealed that large consignments of heroin, processed mostly in laboratories located in Pakistan using the opium sourced from Afghanistan, are lately being transported via sea route to Sri Lanka. (UNDCP, 2019) Since 2015, about four dozen Pakistani nationals have been arrested in connection with various seizures in the high seas off the coasts of Sri Lanka. Most of the drugs produced in Afghanistan are routed through Pakistan, India or Iran. The drugs smuggled from Afghanistan are first taken to the coast of Pakistan by facilitators who connect with the networks that traffic heroin. They take the drugs to the Makran coast of Balochistan, a sparsely controlled, semi-desert coastal strip across Pakistan, India and Iran. There are several legitimate dhows like cargo transport in the Indian Ocean, but Dhows are the predominant form of drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean. Afghan heroin and opium, smuggled via a maritime route and transferred to a Sri Lankan fishing boat, because there is some local consumption of heroin, the larger consignments are likely to be transhipped. The

Colombo port attracts a huge number of drug traffickers to Sri Lanka, who use containers for the entire journey and onward movement.

Detecting Authorities and Narcotic offences

Demand and supply are the two sides of the narcotic drug trade. In Sri Lanka, the institutions involved in drug demand reductions are the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB), Sri Lanka Anti-Narcotics Association (SLANA) and various other NGOs. The institutions involved in drug supply reduction are the Police Narcotic Bureau (PNB), Customs (Narcotics unit), Sri Lanka Navy and the Department of Excise (Narcotics division) in Sri Lanka.

Figure 06: Drug Seizures in Sri Lanka by Agencies - 2020

DRUG SEIZURES BY AGENCIES - YEAR 2020																			
From 01.01.2020 0600 Hrs - 13.05.2020 0600 Hrs																			
Agency	Heroin			Cannabis			Cocaine			Hashish			Kath			Synthetic Drugs				
	kg	Case	Person	kg	Case	Person	kg	Case	Person	kg	Case	Person	kg	Case	Person	Kg	Capsule	Tablets	Case	Person
PNB	110.864	69	80	26.805	24	24	0.002	1	1	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	1.037	0	18	11	10
Island Wide Police Stations	214.122	13046	13044	874.941	13845	13767	0.086	6	6	0.227	37	38	0.000	0	0	7.005	722	5275	673	669
Special Task Force	16.004	451	469	7378.128	292	282	0.000	0	0	0.284	2	2	0.000	0	0	3.571	387	3730	53	53
Central Anti Vice Striking Unit	0.119	64	64	3.922	52	52	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	1.078	0	0	8	8
Colombo Crime Division	0.272	86	86	1.664	40	39	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.112	0	0	12	12
Organize Crime	0.106	1	1	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
TID	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
CID	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
PNB & Navy	437.038	1	27	170.420	1	3	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	130.474	0	0	1	27
Sri Lanka Army	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
Sri Lanka Navy	279.591	1	7	577.290	7	12	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	648.084	0	0	2	10
Sri Lanka Air Force	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
Custom	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	1.094	1	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
PNB / Custom / GPO	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.005	1		54.833	5	1	1.463	0	3888	2	0
Army&Police	0.000	0	0	16.975	7	7		0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1058.115	13719	13778	9050.146	14268	14186	0.088	7	7	1.610	41	40	54.833	5	1	792.823	1109	12911	762	789

Source: Police Narcotic Bureau, 2020

Narcotic drug offenses are the single largest crime in Sri Lanka. Narcotic drug offenses are the single largest crime mostly committed by males. Narcotic drug smuggling entails the death penalty in Sri Lanka. Yet a large number of persons are involved in drug smuggling and trafficking due to the enormous profit realizable. Possession of a minimum of two grams of Heroin is punishable by a death sentence in Sri Lanka. However, in practice, all death penalties are almost automatically commuted to

life sentences by the chief executive of the country. Recently there was a campaign initiated by the new government to eliminate drugs from society and the apprehension of major traffickers in Sri Lanka, this anti-drug campaign could change the perception that Sri Lanka is a major transit point.

The Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) established by the National Security Council in October 2002 is referred to as Counter-Narcotics Directorate CND and later was transformed into MCN (History MCN n.d.). The MCN is among one of the leading counter narcotic organizations in Afghanistan. The MCN is responsible for policymaking and evaluations of counter narcotic strategies at the national level. Also, it has been working closely with many other ministries, taking into account the different possible aspects of the policies before implementing them (History MCN n.d.). In 2003 with the contribution and consultation of experts and officials from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the UNODC, a National Drug Control Policy (NDCP) was created by the Afghan authorities (Blanchard 2009, 1-49, Rep.). The Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense are among other organizations in Afghanistan that supervise Afghan counter-narcotics law enforcement and military entities with close assistance from the US and British counter-narcotics authorities (Blanchard 2009, 40). For instance, the "Counter-narcotics Police Afghanistan (CNP-A) is an investigative and enforcement division whose officers work closely with US and British counter-narcotics authorities" (Blanchard 2009, 40). CNP-A officers will be provided with training and equipment to support their ability to plan and execute counter-narcotics activities independently (Blanchard, 2009, 40).

Figure 07: Activities of Interdiction resulting in Detentions and Seizures 2009-2019

INTERDICTION RESULTS, FISCAL YEARS 2009 - 2019												
	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19[1]	Total[2]
Number of Operations	282	263	624	669	518	333	270	190	156	195	20	3,656
Detainees	190	484	862	535	442	442	394	301	152	274	34	4,103
Hashish seized (Kg)	58,677	25,044	182,213	183,776	19,088	19,088	24,785	123,063	227,327	42,842	2,742	1,168,736
Heroin seized (Kg)	576	8,392	10,982	3,441	3,056	3,056	2,859	3,532	1,975	3,242	1,442	42,263
Morphine seized (Kg)	5,195	2,279	18,040	10,042	5,925	5,925	505	13,041	106,369	10,127	7	183,006
Opium seized (Kg)	79,110	49,750	98,327	70,814	38,379	38,379	27,600	10,487	24,263	23,180	626	479,247
Precursor chemicals seized (Kg)	93,031	20,397	122,150	130,846	53,184	53,184	234,981	42,314	89,878	22,863	1,040	851,643

Note : The significant difference in precursor chemicals total seizures between 2014 and 2015 is due to a 12/22/2014 seizure of 135,000 kg of precursor chemicals.

1. Results for period 10/1/2018-12/20/2018.
2. The following FY 2008 results included in the total are not indicated in the table: 136 operations; 49 detainees; 241,353 kg of hash; 277 kg of heroin; 409 kg of morphine; 15,361 kg of opium; 4,709 kg of precursour chemicals.

Note : Since the dissolution of MCN in February 2019, the opium survey of the 2019/2020 season is conducted by the Afghanistan National Statistics Authority (NISA) in partnership with UNODC.

Afghanistan has a document also referred to as Counter Narcotics Drug Law of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, containing eight chapters each explaining drug-related crimes, offenses, etc. Chapter six, in particular, discusses Drug Trafficking offenses and penalties. According to this document, any person who engages in production, manufacture, distribution, possession, extraction, preparation, processing, offering for sale, purchasing, selling, delivery, concealment, or storage of any substance or mixture of drugs shall be punished by the provision of the law. And whoever commits a drug trafficking offense involving quantities of heroin, morphine, or cocaine, or any other mixture shall be sentenced to imprisonment and cash penalty (vary according to the quantity of the substance-exposed). (Sabit, 2005, 20).

Anyhow, those law enforcement efforts are weakened by corruption and lack of accountability and resources. In the absence of effective law enforcement and of a working judicial and penal system, drug trafficking and processing have been virtually unchecked. Thus, it is crucial to address the deep-rooted injustices in criminal justice systems and make amendments to fill the holes and make strong the legal system in both countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Sri Lanka is a focal point to the narcotic drug market and subsequently becoming a smuggling hub connecting to several regions of the world. Thus, if Afghanistan and Sri Lanka are cooperatively able to eradicate drug trafficking from Sri Lanka, definitely both countries would be able to eradicate drug trafficking in the Southern route. Sri Lanka has a key role to play in the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) of the Indian Ocean. It means responsible authorities must know what ships are in Sri Lanka's waters. MDA requires data from as many sources as possible, such as share satellite imagery or synthetic aperture data imagery from other countries. GPS trackers, communication devices and tracking devices are lacking in both countries when countering drug trafficking, nevertheless Sri Lanka is located at a strategically important location, thereby welcoming a great deal of maritime traffic. Hence, the country of origination and the country of destination, both need to lead the charge in gathering and sharing information by using new technology and communication methods. Also, it is essential to provide comprehensive training (local and international) for detecting officers in both countries to better tackle drug trafficking.

Afghanistan and Sri Lanka must have cooperation between two countries, to address drug trafficking along the southern route as a recent development in drug trafficking and combating against this narcotic drug trade. The initial steps should be taken to reduce the demand for illegal drugs and then in the second step, should take to prevent the narcotic drug smuggling. A crucial solution is addressing the root causes of the drug trafficking happening in both countries. Governments should pay their attention to the underlying socio-economic factors such as lack of education, ill-health, poverty, unemployment, and lack of housing that are leading people to engage in drug trade. Governments also should address the other long-standing concerns such as ensuring equality and non-discrimination, avoiding black trade and violence associated with drug trafficking.

The Government, as well as non-governmental organizations in both countries should conduct various forms of drug abuse prevention programs such as community awareness programs, begin from school level, including lectures, round table discussions, exhibitions, essay writing competitions, training programs etc. by aiming especially youths, parents, community leaders and professionals. There are some ongoing programs within the country, but that is not at a adequate level. Prevention is more efficient and cost-effective. A multi-pronged approach should be employed as the major components of preventive education and public awareness, and international and regional co-operation. This should facilitate better use of all opportunities for the prevention of drug use and to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of different prevention philosophies and strategies. While developing and refining strategies, the need to make preventive responses internally consistent, comprehensive, and participatory and directed not only to short-term goals are recognized. The treatment strategy is to integrate detoxification, treatment, rehabilitation and after-care facilitating the integration of former drug dependents into society. These approaches aimed at generating optimism, increasing control that people have over their lives, and demystifying the recovery process or growth.

Raising awareness regarding the challenges that the illicit opium economy poses to the state wellbeing and stability should also become an important step fighting drug trafficking. As part of US counter-narcotics strategy, several US agencies are working with Afghan authorities on a public information campaign, using posters, as well as radio and television sports to persuade the Afghan people to reject opium poppy cultivation and trade ("Counternarcotics,"2018, p.9). Raising awareness regarding disadvantages or harms that illicit opium production and trade could cause in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and worldwide educates many poor farmers as drug trafficking in Afghanistan and elsewhere has become a source of funding for the insurgent groups who are starting to challenge world peace and stability. As mentioned earlier, poverty is considered to be of the central reason many tend to cultivate and trade opium. A

recent study by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) shows that, for millions of Afghans, the drug economy is the only source of income for many communities, not only farmers or drug dealers (Suroush, 2018). Hence, extreme counter-narcotics initiatives could lead to counterproductive outcomes making any effort a failure.

Weak trade policies in Afghanistan is another major factor that contributes to the increasing number of opium production and trade in Afghanistan. The state should create an environment in which the local people have some incentives to cultivate or use alternative crops instead of opium. Then it also will support the economic development of the country. However, using the commonalities both countries hold, if Sri Lanka and Afghanistan urge to find ways to increase cooperation in areas of opening opportunities to invest and trade alternative ways are put forward, thus will result in a possible decrease in illicit trade. The experience of the US drug war in Afghanistan has proved extreme counter-narcotics measures as counterproductive since a large population, if left behind with no option, will resort to other groups such as Taliban who promise them protection and means for survival. Unless there are alternatives provided for the farmers, the US-led strategies to combat narcotics in Afghanistan remain a failure. However, "even the aid programs supposed to provide alternative livelihoods...are derisory when compared to what the opium smugglers offer. The best functioning programs to help the farmers are run by the drug smugglers who provide improved varieties of poppy seeds, fertilizer and better methods of cultivation...." (Fraser, 2018)

Afghanistan and Sri Lanka should provide cooperative assistance in countering drug trafficking in the South Asian region because both countries had the potential in increasing security and defence cooperation. Already, a significant initiative was taken by the Sri Lankan government. That is the establishment of the 'South Asian Regional Cooperative Intelligence Coordination Centre' (SARICC) based in Colombo with liaisons from ministries of all member countries (Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Maldives, India, and Bangladesh) to counter drug

and other transnational crime in the South Asian region. But this should include Afghanistan to it, and share the intelligence information, as an intelligence-sharing agency with each nation. Then all countries can dispose of the drugs and documents they have discovered, and that will help them to improve the understanding of drug trafficking patterns and routes in each country and take necessary bilateral decisions to eradicate them.

Besides, national drug enforcement agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders in both countries should improve coordination and collaboration on counter-narcotics initiatives along the Southern Route and they should meet annually to discuss matters ranging from strategies and maritime drug enforcement dialogues, to train on how to board vessels and provide necessary resources to help with information gathering, if an arrest is made in an each of their nation's sovereign waters. Taking all the above approaches in addressing drug trafficking, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan could become partners in tackling illicit trade and encourage other countries also targeted by drug trafficking to take initiatives addressing drug trafficking which has become a global issue. This joint effort will subsequently lead to a reduction in demand hence affecting those involved in smuggling. While Sri Lanka and also Afghanistan have already taken some strategies to combat drug trafficking, it will become important not just to solidify the progress made, but both countries should use them as a foundation to improve the countries' maritime capabilities. But no country can tackle its drug problem in isolation. Relevant government authorities and NGOs are encouraged to actively engage in international cooperation through bilateral, and international collaboration.

Annex :   Opium prices 2017-2018

Region	Average Dry Opium Price (US$/Kg) 2017	Average Dry Opium Price (US$/Kg) 2018	Change 2017 - 2018 (%)
Central	NA	NA	NA
Eastern	184	107	-42%
North - eastern	63	70	12%
Northern	82	56	-31%
Southern	155	87	-44%
Western	241	165	-32%
National average weighted by production*	**155**	**94**	**-39%**

Source: UNODC, 2018

References

Adler, P.A. (2006). *Wheeling and Dealing:An Ethnography of an Upper-Level Drug Dealing and Smuggling community.* 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bhagwati, J. N. (2015). *Illegal Transactions in International Trade: Theory and Measurement.* Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company.

Blanchard, C. M. (2009). *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy.* PP. 1-49. Congressional Research Service, Afghanistan.April 20, 2019, from https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32686.pdf

Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan. (2017). (2530 CRYSTAL DRIVE, VIRGINIA: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction)April 18, 2020, from https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf#page=62.

Ellawala, N. (2020). *Changing Social Attitudes and Values for a Change in Lifestyle, and Subsequently, Demand Reduction.Jeevana* (Drug Dependence Journal). (August): PP 28-32, Colombo: National Dangerous Drugs Control Board.

Fraser, D. (2018). *Afghanistan The Realities of Peace-Building in a Failed State.* April 20, 2019, from https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/globalstudies/assets/docs/publications/Afghanistan CanadianClub2.pdf

Gavrilis, G. (2010, February 4). *The Good And Bad News About Afghan Opium.* Council On Foreign Relations.April 22, 2020, from https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/good-and-bad-news-about-afghan-opium

History MCN. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2020, from http://mcn.gov.af/en/page/1835/history-mcn

Jeyanathan, B. A. (1994). *The Aspect of Prevention in Drug Law Enforcement.* Jeevana (Drug Dependence Journal). (August). PP 37-40. Colombo: National Dangerous Drugs Control Board.

Keane, C. (2016). *US nation-building in Afghanistan.* 1st ed. p. 138. New York: : Routledge. ISBN: 9781472474841 (hbk)

Pandey, S. S. D. (1994). *Trafficking In Drugs And Economic Theory.* Varanasi, India: Ganga Kaveri.

Police Narcotics Bureau. (2019). *Annual Report*

Research Division, National Dangerous Drugs Control Board. (2018). *"Drug Related Information Annual Report"*.

Sabit, Dr. A. J. (2005). *Counter Narcotics Drug Law.* Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Ministry of Interior Affairs. Retrieved April 20, 2020, from https://www.refworld.org/cgibin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf? reldoc=y&docid=5475b6574

Suroush, Q. (2018). U.S. *Bombing of Drug Labs in Afghanistan Is Counterproductive to Fighting the Taliban.* Retrieved April 21, 2019, from https://www.justsecurity.org/60598/u-s-bombing-drug-labs-afghanistan-counterproductive-fighting-taliban/

Sarvananthan, M. (2016). *An Assessment Of Narcotic Drugs Contraband Trade Between India And Sri Lanka.* Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences 22 (1 & 2): 1 - 25. doi:10.4038/sljss.v0i0.7427.

Sopko, J. F. (2018). *Oversight of U.S. spending in Afghanistan.* pp. 1-17, Rep. (P7), VIRGINIA: 2530 CRYSTAL DRIVE. Retrieved April 20, 2020, from https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/testimony/SIGAR-18-46-TY.pdf.

Sri Lanka Navy. (2020). *Sri Lanka Navy - Sea Ops.* Navy.Lk. Accessed April 22, 2020. https://www.navy.lk/sea-ops.html.

Tretyak, I. A. (2020). *Prevention And Resolution Of Constitutional Conflicts: Concept And Methods.* Law Enforcement Review 3 (4): 37-40. doi:10.24147/2542-1514.2019.3(4).30-41.

The Dynamics of Culture-Commerce-Connectivity in the Competing Pivots of the Indo-Pacific

Dr. W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar[1]

Abstract

The Indian and Pacific Ocean regions have emerged as a vital maritime theatre for a grand convergence of great power competitive dynamics of: access, rivalry, competitive infrastructure and connectivity buildup, competitive strategic access that features new deployments of naval and air expeditionary and amphibious forces, the dotting of the oceanic domain with access points using island state territories as 'lily pads' and forward operating bases.

The dynamics of geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific is important in the quest for access in terms of trade and security in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Region. This has ramped up the insatiable appetite for the regional littoral states and the extra-regional great powers with maritime access to build competitive access through means of economic infrastructure. The quest to build Maritime infrastructure with dual-capable civilian and military strategic access facilities for seamless surface, subsurface and aerospace deployments has been the primary motivation for the Competing Pivots in the region.

The Asia-Pacific and the Indo-Pacific are defined in the dual scope of the inherent continental and maritime geopolitics vistas, thereby emphasizing the comprehensive importance of the Indo-Pacific.

---

[1] Dr. W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar is Author, Researcher & Professor, International Relations & Strategic Studies

In the Cold War, post-Cold War, Globalization and post-Globalization phases, the United States, China, Japan, India, Russia and the European Union have been maintaining 'steady forward presence' that have been 'substantive and symbolic', 'benign and strategic'-leveraging their domains of influence and outreach of power, and sustaining their interventionist capabilities,

Diego Garcia (naval-air support facility) Djibouti, Reunion, Gwadar, Hambantota, Doqum, Chhabar, Socotra, Aden, Seychelles etc. have become the most familiar 'maritime pivots' of 'multinational presence and posture of extra-regional powers and India'.

The competitive dynamics of the 'pivots' has been escalating great power rivalry throughout the region stretching from the Babel Mandab Straits to the Western Pacific. Even as economic corridors are 'constructed', the templates of strategic access and posturing of the extra-regional powers has been enhanced.

At stake in this competitive dynamic in the Indo-Pacific region is the colossal potential of Blue Economy of the island states of the Indo-Pacific region, the sea-bed mineral resources at stake for polymetallic nodule extraction and the penchant for energy sea-lanes security catalyze great power presence and posture.

This essay endeavours to examine: a) the interplay of Strategic access and its intertwining with the cultural icons, commercial vital interests and the connectivity diplomacy in the region b) the salience of maritime 'pivots' defined as 'access' in economic and strategic connectivity contexts and their impact; and c) the dynamics of the regional island forward operating access and facilities and great power dynamics.

Keywords: Regionalism, maritime regionalism, strategic and economic 'pivots', great power dynamics, economic and strategic access, maritime great power rivalry, culture, commerce, connectivity

Introduction

The Competing dynamics of Indo-Pacific between the United States and China along with India, Japan and Australia had featured competitive race for naval access, competitive infrastructure build-up and the competitive naval and air forces deployment in the region. This trend had seen the UK and France vying to access this region with the same patterns of access and presence.

This patterns of access and competition has continued in the post-Cold War period following into the Globalization and post-Globalization phase with the resurgence of Asia's "Civilizational States" that are "Aspiring "and "Rising Powers".

China and India as Asia's Civilizational Powers have premised their Status and Position in the Global Order on the narrative and realization of 'New Regionalism' and the reassertion of the Civilizational States non-Westphalian and non-Western narrative (Amitav Acharya; Barry Buzan; 2010)

"New Regionalism" in Asia is featured predominant in the Asia-Pacific and in the Indo-Pacific, a large regional or global power as the hub or the dominant economic powerhouse linking smaller regional states. (Wheeler, Stephen;2002) In the post-Globalization phase, several smaller states in the Trans-Asian, African region and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans have gained much from the economic and structural reforms apparently enabled them in a relative smooth integration and even featured liberalisation. (Hette B;2003) In this context, China took a very early lead since 2013 in New Regionalism, followed by India and Japan in the post-Globalization phase—while the United States that led the world in Regionalism had been slow to adapt to the fast-paced change of "new regionalism"—but in the response to the New Regionalism of Belt and Road Initiative, the United States, Japan took a quick initiative.

The new Regionalism of Asia's civilizational powers are reflected in the contemporary context -the economic, science & technological and industrial expansion with a proven 'lateral expansion' of the Comprehensive National Power of the Asian Civilization States and their advertised Rise in the region. Asia's civilizational powers, namely China, India, Japan and Korea are augmenting their national power and their economic industrial resources to a trans-regional economic, commercial and transport corridor connectivity that hopes to enhance the economic value addition to the medium and smaller states through land and sea corridors—while synergizing its *motivations-intent-purpose-strategy* (Derr, Amy;2015)

Thus, in its salience, New Regionalism became the 'transformative paradigm' and catalyst to Great Power strategic dynamics and the dynamics of emerging competing pivots in the Asia-Pacific and the Indo-Pacific maritime scape.

The military-strategic connotations of the BRI has been a fulcrum point of Chinese intent-motivations to 'Build-Operate-Lease-Own" (instead of the usual "Build-Operate-Lease-Transfer) critical infrastructure projects like roadways, railway corridors, ports and other infrastructure with a partial civilian lease to the host country and the remnant being taken over by China from the host state due to the inability of the host state to repay the loans is now an emerging narrative, as well as reality. (Rorry, Daniels; 2013)

In understanding the dynamics of strategic access and the nexus of New Regionalism, it would be instructive to understand the vistas of Great Power Dynamics of Strategic access in a framework of Culture-Commerce and Connectivity.

Vistas of Great Power Dynamics in Strategic Access: Interplay of Strategic Culture, Commerce and Connectivity

The Great Power dynamics in terms of strategic access in the Indo-Pacific is ramping up the interplay of the dynamics of Culture-Commerce and Connectivity. This equation provides to the competing powers, the ability to build Great Power Pivots in the region. Each great power, be in the region or extra-regional power, flaunts its cultural icon as a strategic symbol that embellishes its presence and augments the build-up of presence, posture and the pivoting.

In its foundational essence, Culture and its manifestations are the evident "sources of conduct" of a state. These provide the state its "Identity manifestation," in terms of the "pursuit of core economic interests and strategic gambits". Cultural icons and its impact on political, economic, social, commercial and strategic dimensions and conduct of a state in its policy is a reality that influences public policy in its internal and external contexts that provides any state or great power, the planks of access.

Great Power strategies for strategic access and building regional pivots exemplify certain styles of Strategic Culture. Strategic in its historical and contemporary scope are reflective of how motivations-intentions sync with core national interests and are premises by the historical continuity in foreign and security policy to preserve respective powers spheres of interest. The vistas of any great power in projecting power and sustaining the footprint of strategic access is based on its historical and civilizational connect to its strategic thought and culture over decades and centuries. Therefore, strategic culture is essentially an attempt to integrate cultural considerations, cumulative historical memory, and their influences in the analysis of states' security policies and international relations. (Swindler, 1986: 273-286);

In the context of Culture and strategic access, a great power or an aspirational state would premise its choices of foreign policy from an identity-culture perspective. This is essentially the Constructivist vista in International Relations theory. Strategic Culture could be elucidated from a social and cultural and identity lens (apart from the neorealist lens) whereby it is defined as 'a set of evaluative standards, such as norms or values, and cognitive standards, such as rules or models defining what entities and actors exist in a system and how they operate and interrelate' (Jefferson, Wendt, Katzenstein, 1996: 33-75). In its dual scope, Strategic Culture has two components in its structural foundation; one is the central paradigm that is generic about the nature and salience of the International order, the nature of force, war, efficacy of war, perceptions of the adversary, his actions and responses. The second component is the articulation and shaping of Grand Strategy of a state that is characterized by operational details of policy elucidated by the members of the strategic community of the state (Lantis, Jeffrey: 2006). Asia's Civilizational states and powers of China, India, Japan and Korea are more premised on the 'constructivist' lens of Strategic culture that determines its economic statecraft and security calculus.

The Salience of the Indo-Pacific Pivots and their dynamics

The Indo-Pacific region as a maritime theatre of ancient civilizations and contemporary globalized states have been able to harvest the eclectic blend of cultures, ideas and the transmission of historical memories of ancient voyages through the region in the age of Trade-winds, monsoons, mariners and migrations. (Kaplan: 2010)

The Competitive Pivots in the Indo-Pacific has been witnessing three paradigm shifts in the last two decades of the twenty-first century (Scott, David: 2018) In the first paradigm shift, the Indian and Pacific Oceans are the two vast Maritime Regional Security Complexes in the world that

have been experiencing several critical political, economic and security transformations in the areas of traditional and nontraditional security. The two maritime regions have featured rapid economic growth and regional economic integration through globalization and new regionalism. It had also witnessed the complex interplay of nontraditional and transnational challenges that have grown and has been intensely conflictual in nature and scope. This has resulted in the serious call for a 'rules-based order' in the region since great power rivalry, regional maritime contestations and the threat of escalatory war has been evident.

The second paradigm that has been evident in the rise of China and the debate of the apparent perception of Power shift (Lemke and Tammen, 2001) from the United States to China. This has accentuated in the current COVID crisis even as the trust deficit widened and has resulted in the reinforced US surge into the Pacific as a strategic response to escalatory trade and pandemic centric conflicts.

The third paradigm of the escalatory potential of conflicts is from the West Asian-Gulf region of regional conflicts escalation to the Korean Peninsula. These have accentuated extra-regional power intervention and the consolidation of access and basing in the entire swath of the region. (Alagappa:2003; 45-47). This is contending into the domain of exploiting sea-bed resources and rare earths, whose control and monopoly is driving great power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific.

The Indo-Pacific region in the age of Globalization and post-Globalization has emerged as a vital maritime theatre for a grand convergence for a 'great power competitive dynamics' laced by 'maritime-based economic interdependence' and 'competing strategic access'. The matrices of this nexus between post-Globalization-Strategic access power play based on either a civilizational and cultural narrative or a nationalist or hyper-nationalist narrative has seriously eroded any prospect of neo-liberal cooperative and convergent global order. These matrices are built on the following patterns:

Strategic access and competitive infrastructure Buildup: China had commenced the Belt and Road Initiative as the dominant paradigm. This was followed by Japan in its access strategies in Djibouti and the South Asia East Africa Growth Corridor, India's Project Mausam. The United States in the Trump Administration had initiated the Blue Dot Network and the renewed accents of engagement with the earlier Pivot to the Pacific. Russia had followed it with its Pivot to the Pacific with the new opportunities of the opening of the Northern Sea Route and the increasing importance of the Sea Lanes of Communication of the South China Sea and the East China Sea

The matrices of Globalization-Strategic Power Play are evident through the basing in the island states in the Indian and Pacific Oceans-specifically in the Western Pacific and the Southern Indian Ocean. While these maritime infrastructure projects display the growing Port infrastructure are all built for dual use maritime and naval connectivity for the various forward deployed naval expeditionary forces that usually co-locates allied and coalition forces both in Joint forces, as well as individual air and naval flotilla.

The United States Indo-Pacific Pivot had enabled it to be well entrenched in the Diego Garcia Naval Support Facility that also houses the Conventional Global Prompt Strike Capabilities platforms, its access facilities are by Visiting Forces Agreement with Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines in recent years have gained traction besides its basing in Yokosuka and other Japanese access and basing. These have been well backed by its permanent facilities in Guam and Hawaii that form the most robust access for its sustained forward presence.

The United States launched the Blue Dot Network as a grandiose infrastructure building network in response to China's Belt and Road Initiative in November 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Thailand. (Kaewkamol Karen Pitakdumrongkit: 2019) The US led initiative had the strong backing of Japan and Australia. The Blue Dot Network is a global initiative with high accents on Transparency, Sustainability and

with high value developmental impact. It aimed at the rapid and robust investment of nearly US $ 94 trillions in global projects in infrastructure. The United States stake in the Blue Dot Network was to leverage its huge advantages in technology and the robust emphasis on transparency, accountability and inclusive scope to include all countries had the strong backing of Japan and Australia (Dolven, Ben, Vaughan Bruce 2020). The US Congress creation of the US International Development Financial Corporation allied with the Japan Bank of International Cooperation and the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The US Development Financial Corporation had an empowered investment of US$ 60 billion in equity positions with the autonomous role to support US foreign policy objectives and investments.

The US Blue Dot Network had India as a strategic partner in this initiative has been able to create and sustain the initiatives to push back China's BRI debt traps in various client states. The US Pacific Surge in the recent months has been the strategic response that supplements the Blue Dot Network initiative. The Pacific Deterrence Initiative aims to provide for a surge capability of the US carving its Pacific sphere of influence within the Indo-Pacific providing a variety of deterrence and warfighting options against regional threats. (Rimland, Benjamin & Buchan Patrick, 2020) The Pacific Deterrence Initiative aims to bolster shortfalls in force readiness and enabling of joint operations with US allies in the region.

The US surge in the Pacific is to ensure strategic predictability and operational unpredictability. This has been in continuation of the Trump Administration robust approach of Asia Reassurance Initiative Act that had a Congressional authorization of US $ 1.5 billion in US programmes in East Asia and Southeast Asia to "develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled US policy for the Indo-Pacific region." (Storey, Ian & Cook, Malcolm, 2018)

Russia's *'Asia-Pacific Pivot'* has been its strategy of counterbalancing the United States and China by fortifying its Indo-Pacific pivot by enmeshing a robust regional role. While Russia emerged from its Ukraine crisis,

Vladimir Putin's Asia-Pacific shift was a robust and strategic flexibility action to adapt to the stinging impact of the US and Western sanctions over Russian interference in Ukraine. (Shagina, Maria:2020) Moscow's approach to the region is only on the basis of its engagement with China, the two Koreas, Japan and the United States as the Pacific power. Russia's fixation has been predominantly continental (Asia-Pacific) rather than the maritime dimension of the Indo-Pacific.

Broadly, Russia's Asia-Pacific Pivot has been along the lines of the following approaches:

a) It aimed at the reinforcing of the "comprehensive strategic partnership" with China that is pivotal for its core interests, as well as the critical element in maintaining regional and global power balances. (Lo, Bobo 2019)

b) Simultaneously, Russia has maximized its strategic flexibility in strengthened ties with Japan, India, the two Koreas, Vietnam and ASEAN states to minimize its overly China dependence.

c) Russia has taken proaction lead in conflict resolution measures and denuclearization in Korean Peninsula and broad based its diplomatic role and enhance economic engagement in the Northeast Asian region in the areas of comparative advantages in energy sector and military production and exports.

d) This has been well balanced by its diplomatic and economic engagement in various multilateral and multisectoral initiatives in Asia-Pacific Economic Council, East Asia Summit, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Japan's *Indo-Pacific* Pivot has been a typical Culture-Commerce-Connectivity elucidation of the 2006 Abe administration of "Freedom and Prosperity" initiative that was followed by in 2007 by "Confluence of Seas" paradigm. (Abe, Shinzo:2012) The

active elucidation of Japan's extended neighbourhood engagement came in the contexts of how Tokyo perceived the relative decline of the United States and apparent power shift to China that had emerged more assertive with the Belt and Road Initiative. (Koga, Kei:2020) Prime minister Shinzo Abe's policy has been a vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). Tokyo outlined in 2016 to promote enhanced connectivity, free trade and infrastructure across Asia, Africa and the Middle East, which constituted the foundational pillars of Japan's Pivot to Asia. The maritime/ naval operational dimensions of the FOIP emerged as robust response to China's growing military and economic power in the region. (Rossiter, Ash: 2018)

Tokyo broad based this initiative with a security dialogue known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue since 2017 endeavouring a robust strategic partnership between the US, Australia, India and Japan that consolidated and intertwined Tokyo's link with US, India and Australia. In terms of New Regionalism, Tokyo adopted the Trans Pacific Partnership and its newer version of Comprehensive Trans Pacific Partnership to counter China's BRI and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Flanking West, Japan established the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor in 2016 along with India. (Berkofsky, Axel: 2019)

India's Indo-Pacific Pivot has been incremental and growing with its Act East Policy since 2014 and the follow-on projects of Project Mausam and the South Asia-East Africa Growth Corridor that it has been working with Japan. In its comprehensive scope, India aims to build an Indo-Pacific presence and a viable pivot through the rationale of assessing and comprehending China's rise and assertiveness and the prevalent Inadequacies of the Indo-Pacific regional security order. (Rajagopalan: 2020)

It makes a reasonable assessment of India's growing capabilities in response to the emerging dynamics in the region. India's vista of the Indo-Pacific concept endeavours strategically to unite Indian & Pacific Oceans as an ambient theatre for its maritime and naval presence with an enhanced emphasizes maritime domain awareness in the sphere of its operations.

India's Indo-Pacific 'pivot' ambiently expands India's role from "Look East" to "Act East" policy, providing a better comprehensive scope of economic and security dialogue and engagement. While at the same time, India's maritime neighbourhood in the Indian Ocean requires focus. India's imperative is to secure the Indian Ocean with enhanced Maritime domain awareness. Expanded scope of Naval operations and accrual of new capabilities-focusing on vital naval infrastructure building and capacity building of its navy, as well as regional maritime forces. In its institutional scope, India looks into augment the robust framework of Regional institutions that has its objective of Integrating with Southeast Asia for regional institutional integration. The priorities of building Military relations complemented by Commerce and connectivity. In the extended neighbourhood, India is forging engagement with Great Powers such as the United States, Japan, Australia, Russia, France, UK, etc.

India's immediate strategic priorities are the strategic management of relations with China to enhance prospects of Bilateral security and manage the Regional security implications of the Belt & Road Initiative. In the immediate and intermediate neighbourhood, India's focus of its priorities of the Indo-Pacific priorities lie in the promotion of the Bilateral trade and economics, fostering Multilateral cooperation and norms that goes with its prospective target of accelerating naval acquisitions building capacity for regional trade. India looks forward to a strategy to enhance overseas project implementation and using the Make in India initiative to boost defense exports along with improve regional air connectivity with the object to attract and screen investments. (Jaishankar, Dhruva :2019)

Australia's Pivot to the Indo-Pacific has been following the United States and Japan, since Australia has been a treaty partner of the United States in the Mutual Security Agreement and the Australia New Zealand United States Treaty of 1951. Australia's has been engaged with the United States since the Korean War until the recent US-led global coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq. It has been a focal point in the US Rebalance to Asia-Pacific in 2011 with Port Darwin as the US access point of US deployment of its Marine Corps and had been a very key partner in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or QUAD since 2017. (Wilson, Jeffrey: 2019)

Australia's Pivot to the Indo-Pacific comes along with its partnership with India, United States and Japan in the Malabar Exercises that India had been hosting in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea since 2007. (Taylor, Brendan: 2020)

Since the US Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific in 2011-2012, Australia has been enhancing the level of strategic ties and its importance to the Indo-Pacific by responding to various bilateral and multilateral initiatives with US, Japan and India-given the economic and geopolitical uncertainty with the abrasive response of China. Reinforcing the US relationship, enhanced defence spending and forging deeper strategic relations with Japan and India have been the multiple responses of its enhanced footprint in the Indo-Pacific.

As each Indo-Pacific power has been responding to the Belt and Road Initiative of China, it has fostered a series of Regional Pivots in the Indo-Pacific that has come by deepening economic engagement, infrastructure investment and cooperation to build regional connectivity in a competitive rivalry. Pivots are thus the 'complex interplay' of connectivity, corridors that energize maritime-based trade and catalyze access. Pivots have also emerged as frameworks that promote 'alliances' based on 'regional security complexes' with a spectrum of convergence and coalitions.

Regional Pivots and Domains of Influence have led to the development and promotion of each power's Indo-Pacific vision. China's Belt and Road Initiative had been the cynosure of every contending Indo-Pacific Pivot of the United States, Japan, India and Australia and even Russia. (Zhu, Zhiqun:2017) The well-etched Culture Commerce and Connectivity of China has evoked varying national and cultural symbolism of values of "Democracy", "Transparency", "Accountability" "Development" "Open and Free" are the normative planks by which the United States and its allies have responded in competitive patterns to the Chinese assertive diplomacy of its Belt and Road Initiative.

Great Power Competitive Base access has increased ever since China's Maritime Silk Road had been building port infrastructure across the Pacific-Indian Oceans maritime space in Kyaukpyu (Myanmar), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Gwadar (Pakistan), and Chabahar (Iran), Djibouti and access facilities in Maldives. This has enhanced US, Japanese, Indian and European responses to gain access for competitive access bases in Djibouti, with possible talks on the multilateral access to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Changi naval support facility in Singapore, the new Visiting Forces agreement between United States and Philippines for the Subic naval facility, Guam and Wake island access for the United States. (He & Li 2020) Great Power Competitive base access enables the surge of US naval and air expeditionary and strike forces into the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean that entails for the US allies multi-nation access in the region focusing to contain China in its declared First Island chain. The Great Power competitive base access has been fueled by China's quest for access and the stream of various maritime infrastructure projects that it has constructed or has been in construction throughout the region. The US, Japanese, Australian and Indian responses to the China's quest for competitive base access have been to seek and develop similar maritime infrastructure access in Djibouti, Chhabar and Duqumb. The island assets and the ensuring maritime infrastructure are now being developed with a view to co-locate the various prepositioned assets for deployment, as

well as provide allied access to these assets. The United States has perhaps the widest range of access in the region from West Asia to the Far East and is now in the process of developing various instruments of Logistics access agreements with India and Philippines in the light of the Chinese zestful quest for access and building of maritime infrastructure, besides what it enjoys with Japan and Australia and South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and other ASEAN states. Buoying the maritime infrastructure connectivity is the growing sea-surface and space connectivity of communication platforms, which is evident in the various space-based communication and navigation satellite systems of the competing powers of USA, China, Japan, Russia, Europe and India.

Space Based Satellite Constellations thus feature a vital role in the competitive dynamics of the pivots in the Indo-Pacific are ever increasing in the focus new orders of battles that are integrating the Sea-Shore-Space continuum with integrated Cyber and Space warfare potential. The competing pivots are also bringing in the respective space-based constellation of satellites and their navigation eg. Global Positioning System of the United States, GLONASS of Russia, Beidou of China, Galileo of Europe that are augmenting the cybernetics of connectivity in the maritime corridors of the Indo-Pacific.

Culture constitutes the 'bridge' dimension in the Commerce-Connectivity equation of the competing pivots of the Indo-Pacific. Culture is the icon by which China has premised its assertive rise portraying the 'soft power' quotient of its power. Culture is the intangible dimension of China's Comprehensive National Power that has been the laced foundation of all its economic and infrastructure; science and technological prowess that presents a robust sense of its autonomy of action in global affairs. The United States in its earlier phase of global public diplomacy deployed Democratic values and Liberalism as the cultural and ideational constructs of its premising its global power projection earlier under the Marshal Plan and thereafter with regard to the reconstruction of war-torn regions of the world since 1945. It had effectively used various Public Law provisions

to help and assist reconstruction and offered development assistance often linking audits of human rights and democracy to development assistance and Foreign aid. Similarly, the European Union followed suit whereby the cultural values and ideational norms formed the premises of the expansive European Union investments in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In this regard, China has employed Culture from a Civilizational perspective of noninterference in the internal affairs of the aid recipient countries, unlike the United States and the western powers. But on the other hand, China's subtle sue of Culture to 'soft pedal' hegemonic intent of encompassing its client states with the lucrative offers of loans have often resulted in the unsustainability of repayment of the client and recipient countries and thus the burdens of Debt Trap has resulted in the enslavement of the countries to China's whim.

China's Confucius Institutes and Mandarin language programs have often been magnanimously endowed with huge grants that has promoted Sinic culture studies and language and they have often created more local resentment. China's Culture and Soft Power diplomacy had also reciprocally hosted significant numbers of nationals from the Belt and Road Initiative recipient countries in China, there have been mixed reports as to the treatment of these nationals.

Whereas the United States, Japan and Australia's Cultural and Soft Power diplomacy have been far more nuanced, the Blue Dot Network has served to enhance greater capacity building in the host countries and in the US, Japan and Australia serving to provide the Democracy Dividend to the Civilizational narrative of China.

Thus, the competitive pivots of the Indo-Pacific feature multidimensional impact of the great power dynamics in the lens of culture, commerce, and strategic connectivity. These factors induce the transformational Dynamics of the Indo-Pacific Pivots. Seven 'transformative' features

characterize the salience of 'Maritime Pivots" in the Indo-Pacific region with its outflows to the Western Pacific and Western Indian Ocean:

i) The re-emergence of the Asian states as Aspirational Powers embellished their profiles in their "Civilizational-Cultural iconic imagery" Contemporary Asian Maritime Powers embellished by their high degree of contemporary globalization of trade with its interdependence of security: China, India, Japan, South Korea had well transitioned into post-Globalization Civilization States with a greater degree assertion to identify culture and its constructions to economic growth and strategic access.

ii) Asian maritime powers of China, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are incrementally expanding their maritime/ naval footprint with the technological capabilities in platform building and integrating operations in the Sea. The Asian maritime powers are now in a position of embarking on what the Western naval powers could do as the 'Operational Maneuver for the Sea'. The growing profile of technological capabilities and Joint Doctrines has enabled them to operate in seamless 'interoperable' terms with the US, European and NATO navies and have well embedded themselves into the Revolution in Naval Affairs by building and are capable of operating in the spectrum of the cyber-space-sea continuum with tremendous potential for networked platforms at sea, featuring enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness and are in constant striving to maintain domain supremacy.

iii) The dynamics of "New Economic Regionalism" in its maritime salience in the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region is the primary transformative paradigm that addresses the Aspirational status of Asia's Powers of China, India and Japan featuring the economic, science & technological and industrial expansion with a proven 'lateral expansion' of the Comprehensive National Power of the Asian Civilization States and their advertised Rise in the region. Each of these Asian Aspirational Power have the heritage of a

proud civilizational heritage and have transformed themselves into a growing economic and technological powerhouse and the dynamics of their strategic culture and quest for access had enabled them to link smaller regional states in the maritime theatre of Indian and Pacific oceans in the Trans-Asian, African region with a crusading zest for infrastructure development and in the process have augmented their strategic connectivity in the region. Smaller states in the Indian and Pacific Oceans have gained much from the economic and structural reforms that enabled them in the smooth integration and even featured liberalisation.

iv) The Indo-Pacific pivots reflect the "Maritime "Complex Interdependence" envisaging the growing economic interdependence in resources and markets between littoral and extra-regional powers. This equation provides the framework of offsets in raw materials resources, markets, basing of littoral based Special Economic Zones, strategic access, sea-lane security are all vital aspects of the growing interdependence. In the same vein, Maritime Complex interdependence augurs for competitive Public diplomacy of investment, growth corridors are the modes of Pivot building in the Indian and Pacific Oceans Region.

v) The Indo-Pacific Pivots are actively catalyzing the trends of "Coalition Building Dynamics" like the Quad that are focused to build collective defence measures to contend regional hegemonic or revisionist patterns of aggressive behaviour. Competitive coalitional building is the primary basis of the Pivots in the region featuring Military arms sales, forward basing, naval and air exercises; defence diplomacy and the continuous fostering of interoperability in missions and platforms deployments.

vi) The Indo-Pacific pivots are primarily focused on the top-heavy slant of competitive dynamics of power-play. But the given the transnational and regional maritime commons of the world's largest maritime theatre, the inevitability of maritime commons challenges

and perils do induce a sense of a commons Stakeholdership. This initiates the imperative for a *"Maritime Global Commons Stakeholdership in the Indian and Pacific Oceans"* that impels the necessity for the convergence of the competing Pivots to ensure the survivability and sustenance of the Maritime Commons and the mitigation of Challenges and Perils at Sea, Hence the imperative for a common minimum "rules-based order" has its promising prospects even in the face of competitive dynamics.

vii) The Indo-Pacific maritime pivots operating in the vast regional maritime security complex domains of the Indian and Pacific Ocean are now embellishing on the respective flagship initiatives of a *Competitive "Public Goods At Sea" Initiatives.* The imperative for a standard of Public Goods At Sea Initiatives have gained immense momentum over the years as exemplified by the US. The United States leads the world in this initiative followed by its allies and India. The importance and imperatives of Public Goods At Sea exemplifies the greater momentum for transnational cooperation framework and convergence to standard protocols. The dynamics of 'Competing Pivots' provides the momentum for transnational convergence for Global Maritime Order stability and well optimized by 'Public Goods diplomacy'. Having assessed the trends and dynamics of the competing pivots and the salience of their transformation, it would be significant to assess the interacting dynamics between the regional island states and the competing pivots of the Indo-Pacific.

The Interacting Dynamics between Regional-island States and the Competitive Pivots of the Indo-Pacific

The vast Indo-Pacific maritime theatre features a scattered island-geography that are vital for their strategic location and resources importance. In the circumferential maritime highway of the Indo-Pacific, Island states in the region offer to the competing powers, the vital access and basing and provide for significant prospects of resources mining both organic and inorganic. In other words, in the contemporary context of ocean economy domain or the Blue economy, every island state or territory is a vital hub in the location of Blue economy infrastructure that is perhaps the most alluring incentive of the competing great power pivots in the region. In assessing their enduring value, seven catalytic and transformational dynamics are evident:

a) *Island states in the Indian Ocean offer the tremendous prospect of ocean resources exploration in terms of organic and inorganic resources.* Competing powers are vying for the access and endeavour for the prospect to locate and co-explore the potential and the actual quantum of these resources that could be mined and extracted from the Exclusive Economic Zones of these countries. Competing pivots are engaged in such endeavours in agreement with island states. The future potential and leverage of the island states in this regard are immense. In the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles offer excellent in-site potential for the exploitation of these resources. The prospect thus emerges for the competing powers to invest and offer generous capital assistance and technological inputs. Thus, the agenda for the Competing Powers to develop and exploit the 'Blue Economy' of the island states of the Indian and Pacific Ocean, especially the South Pacific islands emerges. The island states and their surrounding Exclusive Economic Zones potential is colossal and their as a tremendous resource potential in fisheries, mineral resources, energy in terms of oil and natural gas would

accelerate the strategic competition between China, United States, Japan, India and Australia.

b) *Island states are engaged in the constant diplomacy of securing and balancing aid commitments of receiving aid and infrastructure development assistance.* Competing Pivots would vie with one another to offer long term loans and soft loans. These patterns of assistance are often the instruments in this diplomacy. 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 this has led to the infrastructure debt trap that China's BRI has imposed with high costs. On the other hand, the US-led Blue Dot Network offers high quality infrastructure with transparency that are not sustainable and affordable for the economies of the island states.

c) *Lease of Strategic Port Infrastructure and maritime infrastructure* has renewed again with new patterns of leasing agreements like the Visiting Forces Agreement that are now typically accessed by multi-nation coalition. The prospect of multi-nation access of strategic real estate to build infrastructure access offers the prospect of lease investments to the island states and this enhances the leverage of the island states to offer to multiple nations on competitive offers that would actually spurn the local economy, as well as infrastructure and economic development with commercial prospects. The patterns of strategic maritime infrastructure in Djibouti, Gwadar, Hambantota, Duqumb exemplify this trend.

d) *Island states offer vital strategic access and basing of Prepositioned Military Hardware and terrain usage for military operability.* This leverage is known as 'Lily Pads" or Forward Operating Bases. While the security guarantees are given to the island states, the Island state do derive maximum bargain for their optimal benefit. The

arrangement provides for vital capacity building for the island's security sector and also enhances the prospect of a prospective extended deterrence status by the competing power in the region.

e)   Island states could in future gain the status of *Preferred Military Partnership: (Non-NATO Ally Status)*. This could depend on the extent and scope of the strategic significance of the island state and the prospective resource gains that the great power hopes to extract in the partnership with the island state. This could be possible, if the island states are in 'pivotal' position in a region and they could be of immense military-strategic value.

f)   Island states in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain would gain immensely with *Regional Economic Integration through Maritime Corridors* the US Blue Dot Network Japan's Asia-Africa Growth Corridor and China's Belt and Road Initiative offer multiple benefits to such island states that would straddle in the maritime connectivity routes. Djibouti, Duqumb and other offshore states would be gaining from such endeavours.

g)   Island States that are geographically positioned straddling the littorals of the Indian and Pacific Oceans would have the immense benefit of not only the redefined United Nations Law of the Sea, but also the redefinition of maritime cartography that are now being *redefined by Maritime Cartographic-Hydrographic* Surveys opening the prospect of new ocean-based resources and their exploitation. Competing Pivots would be focusing on such hubs for their resources access and exploration and gain strategic access.

In summation, the competing pivots of the Indo-Pacific promise the prospect of commerce and connectivity at the cost of gaining strategic access in the region. Whether the competitive pivots would assure regional stability or would add to the escalatory dynamics of the prevalent conflicts in the region would be a different question.

The Competing Pivots have employed Culture as a Soft Power instrument of diplomacy to build their domains of influence and have employed various operational measures, building capacities in littoral states and island states through promotion of investment, infrastructure buildup and enhancing regional connectivity. Engaging in Blue Economy projects and port infrastructure buildups. While their intents-motivations have been building of regional connectivity and infrastructure, the competing pivots of the United States, China, Japan, India have aimed to enhance regional influence through military diplomacy of arms exports, alliance building and interoperability in military exercise with the allies in the region. This has not only enabled them in enhancing their respective public diplomacy profiles but have served to be credible instruments of Hard Power. The Competing Pivots have thus enhanced strategic profile and presence that has gone well with dual purpose infrastructure and connectivity building initiatives that has enhanced maritime trade as well as secured sea-lanes of communication. However, given the vast maritime domain and the increasing pace and scope of transnational threats and challenges, the competitive pivots would have to address the issue of a "rules-based order" and the importance of a Free Open and Inclusive Maritime Indo-Pacific based on the convergence of norms and interests. Simultaneously the issue of maritime global and regional maritime commons solicits the imperative for effective code of conduct and governance in terms of addressing humanitarian and disaster relief and constabulary maritime scope of operations. This in the long run would enhance regional stability and ensuing Good Order at Sea.

References

Amitav Acharya, & Barry Buzan (Eds.) Non-Western international relations theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia. New York: Routledge. 2010.

Amy Derr (2015) The Pursuit of Peaceful Expansion: China's Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century through Offensive Realism and Complex Interdependence accessed at https://21stcenturymaritimesilkroad.wordpress.com/2015/01/26/the-pursuit-of-peaceful-expansion-chinas-maritime-silk-road-of-the-21st-century-through-offensive-realism-and-complex-interdependence/

Ann Swindler (1986) Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,American Sociological Review, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Apr., 1986), pp. 273-286 URL:http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095521?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Ash Rossiter, "The 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' Strategy and Japan's Emerging Security Posture", Rising Powers Quar¬terly 3, no. 2 (2018): 113–31.

Axel Berkofsky, Tokyo's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific": Quality infrastructure and defence to the fore, ARI (Analyses of the Elcano Royal Institute) 34/2019 (Madrid: Elcano Royal Institute, 14 March 2019), http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/ rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/ari34-2019-berkofsky-tokyos-free-and-open-indo-pacific-quality-infrastructure-defence-fore

Ben Dolven & Bruce Vaughan (2020) Indo-Pacific Strategies of U.S. Allies and Partners: Issues for Congress; (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service) accessed at https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20200130_R46217_770a61c4856a9a5aed99d6699f3423b6240ff1c3.pdf

Benjamin Rimland & Patrik Buchan(2020) Getting the Pacific Deterrence Initiative Right, The Diplomat May 02, 2020 accessed at https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/getting-the-pacific-deterrence-initiative-right/

Bobo Lo (2019) ONCE MORE WITH FEELING: RUSSIA AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC: How Moscow is rebooting the 'turn to the East' as part of its global strategy Analyses,20 August 2019 accessed at https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/once-more-feeling-russia-and-asia-pacific

Brendan Taylor, Is Australia's Indo-Pacific strategy an illusion?, International Affairs, Volume 96, Issue 1, January 2020, Pages 95–109, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz228

Daniels, Rorry. (2013)"Strategic Competition in South Asia: Gwadar, Chabahar, and the Risks of Infrastructure Development." American Foreign Policy Interests 35, no. 2 (2013): 93–100

David Scott Volume 3, Issue 2 (The "Indo-Pacific" - Regional Dynamics in the 21st Century's New Geopolitical Center of Gravity), Aug. 2018, pp. 19-43 in The Indo-Pacific in US Strategy: Responding to Power Shifts accessed at https://risingpowersproject.com/quarterly/the-indo-pacific-in-us-strategy-responding-to-power-shifts/

Dhruva Jaishankar (2019) Acting East: India in the Indo-Pacific, Impact Series, Brookings India accessed at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Acting-East-India-in-the-INDO-PACIFIC-without-cutmark.pdf

Douglas Lemke & Ronald L. Tammen (2003) Power Transition Theory and the Rise of China, International Interactions, 29:4, 269-271, DOI: 10.1080/714950651

Hettne B. (2003) The New Regionalism Revisited. In: Söderbaum F., Shaw T.M. (eds) Theories of New Regionalism. International Political Economy Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London

Ian Storey and Malcolm Cook (2018), "The Trump Administration and Southeast Asia: America's Asia Policy Crystalizes", ISEAS Perspective, no. 77.

Jeffrey Lantis, (2006) Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to ConstructivismProject of Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Washington DC accessed at https://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dtra/stratcult-claus.pdf

Jeffrey Wilson, "Diversifying Australia's Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Diplomacy", Australian Outlook (Australian Institute of International Affairs), 16 April 2019, http://www. internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/diversifying-australias-indo-pacific-infrastructure-diplomacy/

Kai He, Mingjiang Li, Understanding the dynamics of the Indo-Pacific: US–China strategic competition, regional actors, and beyond, International Affairs, Volume 96, Issue 1, January 2020, Pages 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz242

Kaewkamol Karen Pitakdumrongkit, "The Impact of the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy on Regional Economic Governance", East West Centre Policy Studies, no. 79 (2019).

Kei Koga (2020) Japan's 'Indo-Pacific' question: countering China or shaping a new regional order?, International Affairs, Volume 96, Issue 1, January 2020, Pages 49–73, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz241

Maria Shagina (2020) Has Russia's Pivot to Asia Worked? Russia's pivot to Asia is instrumental for offsetting Western sanctions, The Diplomat 10 January 2020 accessed at https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/has-russias-pivot-to-asia-worked/

Muthiah Alagappa (2003) Asian Security Practice: Instrumental and Normative Features (Stanford: Stanford University Press)

Peter J Katzenstein (1996) The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics, Columbia: Columbia University Press)

Rajesh Rajagopalan, "Evasive Balancing: India's Unviable Indo-Pacific StrategyInternational Affairs, Volume 96, Issue 1, January 2020, Pages 75–93, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz224

Robert Kaplan (2010) Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and Future of American Power, (New York: Random House)

Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond", Project Syndicate, 27 December 2012, https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe

Stephen M. Wheeler (2002) The New Regionalism: Key Characteristics of an Emerging Movement, Journal of the American Planning Association, 68:3, 267-278, DOI: 10.1080/01944360208976272

Zhiqun Zhu (2017) Is the Indo-Pacific the 'New' Pivot The National Interest, November 23, 2017 accessed at https://nationalinterest.org/feature/indo-pacific-the-new-pivot-23321

Contributors

Mr. Jeffrey Payne

Mr. Jeffrey Payne is the Manager of Academic Affairs at the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, DC. As part of the Center's academic team, he helps to manage over 50 strategic and educational engagements a year. Mr. Payne conducts analysis on Chinese foreign policy, maritime security and the regional dynamics of the Indian Ocean Region. He is particularly interested in how major powers seek to gain influence in the Indian Ocean Region and how IOR littoral states pursue cooperation in the maritime domain. Presently, he serves as the NESA Center's lead for programs that address the U.S. Indo Pacific concept. He also serves as the director of NESA's programmatic series on maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region. The views expressed in this article are his alone and do not represent the official policy or position of the NESA Center, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage RSP, VSV, USP, rcds, psc, (SS), M.Sc. (DS), MA (IS), Dip in IR, Dip in CR, FNI, JP (Whole Island)

Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage is the Secretary to the Foreign Ministry, Secretary to the State Ministry of Regional Cooperation and the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. He is the former Additional Secretary to the President (Foreign Relations). He is a former chief of Sri Lanka navy who retired after an active service of 37 years as a four-star Admiral. He is a highly decorated officer for gallantry and for distinguished service. He is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College in India and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK. He holds a PhD from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (Sri Lanka). He was the former Chairman of Sri Lanka

Shipping Corporation and an adviser to the President of Sri Lanka on maritime affairs. He is a Fellow of Nautical Institute, London UK. He is a Guest Professor at Sichuan University and Leshan Normal University in China and a visiting lecturer at Colombo University, Defence Services Command and Staff College. He is also an adjunct professor at National Institute of South China Sea Studies, Haikou, China.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara serves as an honorary Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL). Previously, she interned at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was the Manager of AIESEC Corporate Internships during the term 2016/17 in University of Colombo. She's a Kautilya Fellow at India Foundation. She is a graduate from University of Colombo, with an honors degree in 'International Relations'. She was awarded from George Mason University in the United States in partnership with Hong Kong University to study on 'International Political Economy'.

She has been a guest speaker at the International Conference on Digital Revolution in Bangladesh, BIMSTEC Think Tank Summit on Regional Security in India and Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia and national discussion on the Indo-Pacific: Security, Geopolitics and Connectivity. She was a panelist at webinars on COVID-19 and Future of SAARC, Water Security and Pandemic - the Implication of COVID-19 in South Asia, Post-lockdown Strategies in a Changing World Order, COVID-19 Response by BIMSTEC Countries, International Women's Summit and International Youth Summit. She is interested in the areas of National security, foresight analysis and climate change, water security and sustainable development.

Mr. K. Don Vimanga

K Don Vimanga currently works as a Policy Executive, coordinating public policy initiatives and advocacy engagements at a Colombo based Think Tank. He is deeply passionate about inclusive development, sustainable macroeconomic management, and developing policy solutions to tackle socio-political challenges. He has interned with the Political Intelligence Group in London. He received his bachelor's degree in Law from the BPP Law School in London, United Kingdom. He is a node member of the Millennium Project.

Dr. Ranga Jayasuriya

Dr. Ranga Jayasuriya is a Sri Lankan journalist and newspaper columnist. He has served as a news editor, defence correspondent and political columnist for several leading Sri Lankan English language newspapers for 15 years and currently writes an op-ed column to Daily Mirror. He is a senior fellow of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. He obtained his PhD in international relations from the School of Politics at Central China Normal University (CCNU), an MSc in Strategic Studies from S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and BA in English and Journalism from Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Professor Shahab Enam Khan

Professor Shahab Enam Khan is currently serving at the Department of International Relations, Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the NDC E-Journal, the National Defence College, Bangladesh. His expertise includes Security, Foreign Affairs, International Institutions, and Public Policy. Professor Khan has worked with various international organizations, i.e. UNODC, UNDP Maldives, UNDP Bangladesh, UN Women, IUCN, USAID, International Fund for

Agricultural Development (IFAD), Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK. He is a Board Member of the Jaago Foundation, Bangladesh. He is a member of various high-level committees on security and armed forces formed by the Government of Bangladesh. He is a Senior Fellow at the Hainan Institute of World Watch, Hainan, China, a non-resident Visiting Fellow at the Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement, and an alumnus of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, US Department of Defense, USA. He studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Harvard University, University of Manchester and University of Dhaka. He received prestigious UK FCO Chevening Fellowship, US State Department fellowship, and Kodikara Award for Strategic Studies from the Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka. He can be reached via shahab.e.khan@gmail.com; sekhan@juniv.edu

Ms. Udeshika Madhubhashani

Ms. Jayasekara Liyana Arachchige Udeshika Madhubhashani is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies of Sri Lanka (INSSSL). She received a Bachelors (Honors) Degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution from the University of Kelaniya. She is a country coordinator of online circle of Compassion, Country Representative of Youth Talents platform in Bangladesh and Country Ambassador for International Youth Development Summit, Bangladesh 2020.

She has served in several community projects and several civil society organizations. She was a Research Assistant of the media monitoring team of the election monitoring process (NSSMR) in general election 2015 under Transparency International. In 2015 she was a member of the research team that conducted a study on the progress and the impact of the Public Consultation Committee for Constitutional Reformations (PCCCR) under Rightsnow organization. She is varying capacity also served in a number of reconciliation projects which were conducted by

the Office for National Security and Reconciliation (ONUR) under the Presidential Secretariat Office. She was a Research Panelist of Global Youth Research Panel, in Bangladesh. She has also presented and published several research papers, commentaries, on national security to the local and international booklets and magazines.

Ms. Parvin Hejran

Ms. Parvin Hejran is a Political Affairs Assistant at Political Affairs Section, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Previously she has worked as an Associate Political Affairs Officer at UNAMA, Research Assistant at Administrative Office of the President on Agriculture and Development in Kabul, Afghanistan and interned at Afghan Women's Educational Center, Kabul, Afghanistan. She received a Master of Arts in International Relations from OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) from Asian University for Women (AUW), Chittagong, Bangladesh.

She has held different leadership positions, which include Founder of Kabul TOEFL School, Kabul, Afghanistan, Mentee at Wedu, Investing in Women Leading the Change and Founder of "Children and Women in War" club, Asian University for Women in Chittagong.

Dr. W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar

Dr. Lawrence Prabhakar Williams is Author, Researcher & Professor, International Relations & Strategic Studies, Dr. Prabhakar affirm his unequivocal conviction on the indispensable primacy of the Holy Bible in Global Affairs. His books are Growth of Naval Power in the Indian Ocean Region: Dynamics and Transformation (New Delhi: National Maritime Foundation, 2016) The Maritime Balance of Power in the Asia-Pacific: Maritime Doctrines and Nuclear Weapons At Sea (Singapore: World Scientific Publications, August 2006), Maritime Security in the Indian

Ocean Region: Critical Issues of Debate (New Delhi: Tata - McGraw Hill 2008-His earlier research fellowships have been at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, & S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies Nanyang Technological University, Singapore 2004-07 ; The Fulbright Fellowship at the Center for Political Studies, Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan Ann Arbor 1996; Policy Research Fellowships at The Henry Stimson Center, Washington DC, USA, May-August 2001 the Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria Virginia June-July 2001 USA. Other research assignments have been with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia;

Formerly he was a Member, Co-Chair & Chair Research Working Groups on Weapons of Mass Destruction, Border Security, Maritime Security in Indian-Pacific Oceans, Energy Security in the Regional Network of Strategic Studies Centers, Near East South Asia Center, National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington DC, USA (2009-2012); Adjunct Professor, PhD Co-Supervisor China Studies Centre, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology - Madras, Chennai; Doctoral Program Supervisor & Adjunct Professor, Naval War College, Indian Navy Goa; Board of Advisors, Institute of Transnational Studies, Landshut, Bavaria, Germany. He can be contacted via Email:<lawrence.prabhakar@gmail.com>