

Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Strategy in the 21st Century

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INTRODUCTION

"Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century; the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters."

Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, US Navy^①

Background of the study

The choice of focusing on "Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Strategy in the 21st Century" stems from the changing geopolitical landscape of the world as well as the strategic importance of maritime security for island nations. Being a significant maritime actor in the IO, Sri Lanka has a variety of complex challenges that make its maritime security plan especially important. With emerging powers vying for control of vital maritime lanes, the world order has become more multipolar in the 21st century. Sri Lanka must review and modify its maritime security policy in light of the changing global landscape and the emergence of both traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the region.

First and foremost, Sri Lanka's geographical location at the heart of one of the world's busiest shipping routes makes it particularly vulnerable to maritime threats. The IO is a major conduit for global trade, linking Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to Europe. The significance of this maritime space, both for economic and strategic reasons, places Sri Lanka at the crossroads of global trade, which makes its maritime security central not just for national interests but for regional and international stability.

Sri Lanka's maritime policy is made more complex by the island nation's closeness to the Strait of Malacca, one of the most important chokepoints in the globe, and its control over crucial shipping lanes. Because its policies are closely related to protecting international economic flows and maintaining regional security, it is crucial to comprehend how Sri Lanka has managed its maritime security in the 21st century.

The choice of this topic is also informed by the significant geopolitical shifts that have occurred in the IOR. In recent decades, Sri Lanka has found itself in the midst of a growing contest for regional dominance, primarily driven by powers like India, China, and the United States. India and other regional countries are concerned about China's growing naval presence, the BRI, and its strategic partnerships with smaller island governments in the area. As a little but well-positioned country, Sri Lanka has had to strike a delicate balance between maintaining its maritime security and maintaining diplomatic ties with these more powerful nations. The study explores how Sri Lanka has managed this difficult balancing act, especially its maritime security strategy, which needs to take into consideration both domestic priorities and external influences.

Furthermore, Sri Lanka's maritime security issues cover a wide range of non-traditional difficulties in addition to more traditional military threats, including territory disputes and naval might. These include the impacts of climate change, illegal fishing, environmental degradation, and piracy. Sri Lanka's maritime domain is directly threatened by the rise of transnational maritime crime and piracy off the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, a more

^①Hassan. M.Z., "Indian Ocean: The Strategic Heart of the Maritime World", *Strategic Foresight for Asia*, 2019, <https://strafasia.com/indian-ocean-the-strategic-heart-of-the-maritime-world/> (Accessed date on 03.07.2023).

comprehensive approach to maritime security that incorporates environmental issues with military and economic goals is required due to Sri Lanka's coastal regions' susceptibility to climate change, including rising sea levels and harsh weather occurrences.

The utilization of Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan and Geoffrey Till's Sea power theories provides an intellectual foundation for this inquiry, allowing for a deeper analysis of Sri Lanka's maritime security in terms of both historical and contemporary challenges. Mahan's emphasis on naval power and control of strategic maritime chokepoints is highly relevant for understanding Sri Lanka's security concerns, particularly about its maritime trade routes and its role in regional power dynamics.^① Meanwhile, Till's more comprehensive approach, which includes elements of diplomacy, environmental sustainability, and the use of maritime power beyond military force, offers a holistic framework for evaluating Sri Lanka's security strategy in the 21st century.^② Lastly, this study aims to advance the understanding of study aims to advance the understanding of how small island governments might handle difficult security issues in a maritime environment that is becoming more interconnected and contested by examining these facets of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. The decision to focus on Sri Lanka was made due to the country's exceptional location at the intersection of regional geopolitics and international trade, as well as the urgent need for a comprehensive and progressive approach to maritime security in modern times.

Significance of the study

This study on "Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Strategy in the 21st Century" holds significant academic and practical value, contributing to understanding both theoretical advancements and practical applications in the domain of maritime security studies.

The academic value of this research is substantial, as it expands the understanding of maritime security in small island states, particularly within the strategic context of Sri Lanka. There aren't many thorough studies that particularly examine how mid-sized nations like Sri Lanka deal with their maritime security concerns in the 21st century, even though the majority of the literature on maritime security focuses on the policies of major maritime powers. By concentrating on how Sri Lanka has handled its maritime security challenges in light of the changing geopolitical and security landscape of the IOR, this research addresses this knowledge vacuum.

Using the theoretical frameworks of Mahan's and Till's sea power theories, this research offers a fresh perspective on Sri Lanka's strategic use of its maritime domain to enhance national security and economic stability. Mahan's emphasis on the importance of control over key maritime choke points and Till's conceptualization of sea power as a combination of military, economic, and diplomatic elements provide a robust theoretical lens through which to analyze Sri Lanka's maritime security strategies.^① By applying these theories, this study deepens the understanding of how small island states can assert their influence in a region dominated by great powers.

Additionally, this study analyses Sri Lanka's reaction to both traditional and nontraditional maritime threats, such as piracy, illegal fishing, and the impact of climate change, by critically evaluating the nation's maritime security strategy. Due to increasing regional instability, external powers' naval presence, and worldwide competition for maritime trade routes, the IO is becoming a more contested area. Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy is essential for protecting both its own national interests and the stability of the region as a whole, given its advantageous location at the crossroads of important international trade lanes.

In a practical sense, this study is extremely valuable to those involved in shaping Sri Lanka's maritime security

^① Mahan. A. T, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, Boston: Brown and Company, 1890, pp.4-5, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13529/13529-h/13529-h.htm> (Accessed date on 12.07.2023).

^② Till. G, *Sea power: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN 9780203105917, 2013, pp.3-5, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203105917/seapower-geoffrey-till>, (Accessed date on 15.04.2023).

^① Till. G, *Sea power: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN 9780203105917, 2013, pp.3-5, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203105917/seapower-geoffrey-till> (Accessed date on 15.04.2023).

policies, including politicians, defense analysts, and experts in international relations. The important question: How has Sri Lanka negotiated with its maritime security challenges in the 21st century? is addressed by the study. Given the new opportunities and challenges brought about by the changing geopolitical and environmental context, this question is extremely pertinent. With a focus on enhancing its naval capabilities, protecting vital maritime chokepoints, and promoting multilateral cooperation within regional security frameworks like the IORA, the study's conclusions give strategic recommendations for enhancing Sri Lanka's maritime security posture. The study additionally examines how Sri Lanka's relationships with larger regional powers, such as China and India, impact the nation's maritime security strategy. With China's influence in the Indian Ocean growing, especially through the Belt and Road Initiative, this research offers significant insight into how Sri Lanka can leverage its maritime position and preserve its sovereignty in a multi-polar world order.

Furthermore, the practical implications of this study go beyond Sri Lanka's national security to include the broader regional context. The study's findings can help shape more comprehensive regional security plans as maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region gains importance in international relations. The study offers insights for other small and medium-sized maritime nations with comparable concerns by focusing on Sri Lanka's response to 21st-century challenges. Recognizing that maritime security is not just a defense issue but also one of economic and environmental sustainability in today's interconnected world, the research advocates a multifaceted strategy to maritime security that integrates military, diplomatic, and environmental tactics.

In conclusion, the academic significance of this study lies in its contribution to the theoretical development of maritime security studies, particularly in the context of small island states and regional security. It offers new perspectives on how the sea power theories of Mahan and Till can be modified to meet the needs of the 21st century and applied to a minor maritime state like Sri Lanka. Practically speaking, this study offers a thorough framework for dealing with contemporary maritime threats and practical insights that might assist in establishing Sri Lanka's maritime security strategies. This study has the potential to provide a significant contribution to the body of literature by addressing the theoretical and practical aspects of maritime security. It will also offer important policy recommendations for Sri Lanka and the broader Indo-Pacific region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sri Lanka is currently at an important turning point in global geopolitical interests due to the growing importance of maritime security in the IO. Through several key themes, this study examines the academic literature on Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy, analyzing how various authors have contributed to our understanding of this complex subject.

Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy has become a critical area of focus in the 21st century due to its strategic location in the IO, a vital route for global trade and maritime traffic. As an island nation, Sri Lanka faces growing threats, including piracy, terrorism, climate change, and regional geopolitical rivalries, necessitating an adaptive and robust maritime security framework.

Several studies, books, and academic journal articles have explored Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy, providing valuable insights into its historical and contemporary challenges. The researcher has selected a few key books and academic journal articles for review, drawing on the works of the authors. Also, the researcher will critically review the views presented by these authors, particularly regarding the evolving geopolitical dynamics, the influence of regional powers like India and China, and the role of emerging technologies in bolstering Sri Lanka's maritime security. This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Sri Lanka navigates its maritime security challenges in the context of changing global and regional security landscapes.

Historical Evolution and Theoretical Foundations

Sri Lanka's maritime legacy stretches back through centuries of rich trading history, with its strategic position in the IO shaping both its historical development and contemporary security challenges. The existing literature reveals a complex interplay between historical patterns, geopolitical dynamics, and evolving theoretical

frameworks in understanding Sri Lanka's maritime security landscape. According to Wakkumbura Manik, the article emphasizes Sri Lanka's role as a crucial maritime hub, with historical evidence indicating its significance in ancient maritime trade routes.^① This historical perspective provides essential context for understanding how Sri Lanka's maritime security strategies have evolved, as documented in studies showing the island's transition from a pre-colonial trading center to its current position in regional maritime affairs.

Contemporary literature increasingly focuses on the theoretical frameworks underlying Sri Lanka's maritime security policies, particularly in the context of emerging geopolitical challenges. Scholars have identified a significant shift in how maritime security is conceptualized, moving from traditional naval defense perspectives to more comprehensive approaches encompassing economic, environmental, and transnational security dimensions.^① This evolution in theoretical understanding has been particularly evident in studies examining Sri Lanka's response to modern maritime challenges, including piracy, illegal fishing, and environmental threats.

Contemporary research has increasingly focused on Sri Lanka's role in regional maritime security arrangements. Scholars emphasize the importance of understanding how domestic political factors influence maritime security policy decisions. According to Eudon Tshering, the article provides valuable insights for analyzing Sri Lanka's strategic choices in maritime security cooperation.^② However, the literature remains somewhat limited in its analysis of how internal political dynamics affect maritime security policy implementation.

Building upon this historical framework, Gowdara Shivamurthy Aditya's analysis in "An evolving IOR and dilemmas in Sri Lanka's security calculus" offers critical insights into how both regional and global powers have shaped Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. Shivamurthy's work is particularly noteworthy for its detailed examination of Sri Lanka's military modernization efforts and the country's strategic response to emerging maritime challenges, although it could have explored the theoretical underpinnings of these strategic shifts more deeply.^③

In a theoretical context, Kumara. S. J's "The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka" provides a crucial application of Mahan's sea power theory to Sri Lanka's maritime context, effectively bridging the gap between classical maritime theory and contemporary strategic realities. While Kumara's theoretical framework offers valuable insights into how small states can leverage their maritime capabilities, the analysis could be enhanced by incorporating more recent theoretical developments in maritime security studies.^③ Collectively, these works demonstrate the evolution of Sri Lanka's maritime security from its historical foundations to its current strategic positioning while highlighting the ongoing tension between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation in the context of a small island nation navigating complex geopolitical waters.^④ The synthesis of historical analysis, contemporary strategic assessment, and theoretical application in these works provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding Sri Lanka's maritime security transformation, though there remains scope for further research into the integration of emerging maritime security challenges with traditional theoretical frameworks.

① Wakkumbura. Menik *Sri Lanka's Maritime Affairs in the Changing Indian Ocean*, LKI's Blog on International Relations, 2018, pp.6-7, <https://lki.lk/blog/sri-lankas-maritime-affairs-in-the-changing-indian-ocean/> (Accessed date on 05.10.2024).

① Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

② Eudon. Tshering, The role of domestic factors in Sri Lanka's foreign affairs, Implications for the United States' Engagements, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 2024, pp.55-60, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859456/the-role-of-domestic-factors-in-sri-lankas-foreign-affairs-implications-for-the/> (Accessed date on 14.08.2024).

③ Gowdara Shivamurthy. Aditya's, *An evolving IOR and dilemmas in Sri Lanka's security calculus*, 2024. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/an-evolving-ior-and-dilemmas-in-sri-lanka-s-security-calculus> (Accessed date on 04.03.2024).

③ Kumara S.J. The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 17(2), 2021, p. 151. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n2> (Accessed date on 10.05.2024).

④ Walakuluge. CDR CRP, and CDR BAR Abeysekara, In Pursuit of Sri Lanka's Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region, *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs (JIPA)*, Vol. 7 No. 5, ISSN 2576-5361, August 2024, pp.1-5, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859339/in-pursuit-of-sri-lankas-strategy-in-the-indian-ocean-region/> (Accessed date on 04.06.2024).

The transformation of Sri Lanka's maritime security from its colonial past to its present form has been notably examined by several scholars. According to Attanayake Chulanee in her comprehensive book provides a thorough analysis of how Sri Lanka's maritime identity has evolved. Her research particularly emphasizes how successive governments have attempted to position Sri Lanka as an IO hub, integrating maritime security with economic development and defense relations.^① While Attanayake's work offers valuable historical context, it sometimes lacks a detailed analysis of specific policy implementations.

According to Meegoda Malinda's article analysis presents a more focused examination of contemporary developments. His work particularly highlights how Sri Lanka's maritime strategy has become more assertive following the end of the LTTE conflict, though he notes that the country still lacks an all-encompassing maritime policy document that addresses national security, trade, and foreign policy cohesively.^② Meegoda's research is particularly strong in analyzing current capabilities, but could benefit from more comparative analysis with other regional maritime nations.

Lieutenant Commander Kulathunga Roshan's study offers a military perspective on Sri Lanka's maritime evolution. His work emphasizes how Sri Lanka's strategic location has become increasingly significant in the changing security environment of the IOR.^③ While Kulathunga provides valuable insights into military aspects, his analysis could be enhanced by incorporating more civilian maritime security considerations.

Geopolitical Influences and Power Dynamics

Sri Lanka is an important focus for understanding maritime security dynamics in the 21st century because of its strategic location in the IO, which has historically placed it at the intersection of conflicting geopolitical interests. This review of the literature examines how the modern study has examined the intricate interactions between strategic rivalries, domestic variables, and regional power dynamics that influence Sri Lanka's maritime security situation.

IOR has emerged as a vital theater of strategic competition, particularly as global power dynamics shift eastward. Recent scholarship emphasizes how the confluence of traditional and emerging powers has transformed the maritime security landscape. As documented in contemporary research, the IOR comprises 28 states spanning three continents, covering 17.5 percent of the total landmass and hosting 35 percent of the world's population.

The influence of external powers on Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy has been extensively analyzed by several scholars. Attanayake Chulanee, in her role at the Institute of South Asian Studies, has produced significant work examining how the competition among major powers affects Sri Lanka's maritime policy choices.^① Her research particularly emphasizes the challenges Sri Lanka faces in balancing relations between India and China while maintaining its strategic autonomy.

The examination of domestic factors' influence on Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy is significantly advanced by recent scholarship. The comprehensive analysis presented in "The Role of Domestic Factors in Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs" illuminates how Sri Lanka's internal political environment and socioeconomic needs fundamentally shape its maritime security engagements. This research particularly emphasizes how external shocks, including global pandemics and regional conflicts, have made Sri Lanka increasingly susceptible to external influences.^② While this analysis provides crucial insights into the domestic-

^① Attanayake. Chulanee, *Maritime Sri Lanka: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ISBN: 9789811222030, ISBN-10: 9811222037, World Scientific Publishing Company Inc, 2021 ,p.3, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=chulanee+attanayake+maritime+security&btnG= (Accessed date on 15.07.2024).

^② Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kdiragamar Institute, 2020, <https://iki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy/> (Accessed date on 17.08.2024).

^③ Kulatunga. SACR, *Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka*, 11th International Research Conference 11th 10th, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, 2020, p.2. https://www.defence.lk/Article/view_article/2499 (Accessed date on 27.06.2024).

^① Attanayake. Chulanee, Sri Lanka: Indian Ocean Security and the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, 2024, pp.1-2. <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/sri-lanka-indian-ocean-security-and-us-indo-pacific-strategy> (Accessed date on 07.04.2024).

^② Eudon. Tshering, The role of domestic factors in Sri Lanka's foreign affairs, Implications for the United States' Engagements, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*,

international nexus, it could benefit from a more detailed examination of how these factors specifically impact maritime security decision-making processes.

Kapur Roshni and Chulanee Attanayake's collaborative work highlights how external pressures, particularly from the United States, have influenced Sri Lanka's maritime strategic alignments. Their analysis reveals how diplomatic isolation and economic constraints have pushed Sri Lanka toward alternative partnerships, particularly with China.^① Although their work provides valuable insights into external influences, it could benefit from a more detailed analysis of domestic policy responses.

The combined analysis of these works reveals several crucial insights about the nature of geopolitical influences and power dynamics affecting Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. First, they highlight the increasing complexity of managing relationships with multiple external powers while maintaining strategic autonomy. Second, they emphasize the critical importance of domestic factors in shaping external security relationships. Third, they underscore the need for practical, implementable solutions that acknowledge both resource constraints and strategic imperatives.

A more focused analysis of current geopolitical dynamics is presented in Abeyagoonasekera Asanga's "Conundrum of an Island: Sri Lanka's Geopolitical Challenges". He examines the complex interplay of domestic politics and external influences shaping Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. The book's strength lies in its comprehensive coverage of various themes, including the Belt and Road Initiative's impact on Sri Lankan foreign policy and the broader implications of regional power dynamics, though it sometimes lacks detailed analysis of specific maritime security mechanisms.

However, a notable gap exists in the current literature regarding the practical implementation of theoretical frameworks in the context of Sri Lanka's limited resources and complex geopolitical environment. This is partially addressed by recent works examining Sri Lanka's response to emerging maritime challenges^②, but further research is needed to fully understand the implications of evolving power dynamics on Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy.

Great Power Competition and Regional Dynamics

Significant scholarly attention has been paid to Sri Lanka's evolving maritime security environment in the 21st century, especially about the intersection of regional dynamics and great power competition. Several theoretical frameworks and analytical techniques have been used by academics to comprehend Sri Lanka's shift in maritime security, according to a critical review of the body of extant literature. The literature demonstrates the theoretical richness of IOR maritime security and its practical difficulties.

Contemporary studies increasingly recognize Sri Lanka's pivotal role in the Indo-Pacific security architecture. Lieutenant Commander Kulathunga Roshan's analysis provides a comprehensive examination of how the changing nature of security in the IO has drawn attention from both state and non-state actors. His work particularly emphasizes how extra-regional countries such as the U.S., China, and Japan have shown keen interest in establishing their presence in the IO, while regional powers like India maintain their traditional influence.^① This perspective aligns with Geoffrey Till's theoretical framework of sea power, which emphasizes the importance of maritime geography and strategic positioning in determining naval influence.

The theoretical underpinnings of maritime security studies frequently draw upon Alfred Thayer Mahan's sea power theory, which has found renewed relevance in the context of Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. As

2024, pp.55-60, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859456/the-role-of-domestic-factors-in-sri-lankas-foreign-affairs-implications-for-the/> (Accessed date on 14.08.2024).

① Kapur, Roshni and Chulanee Attanayake, *The Role of Domestic Factors in Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs*, 2024, pp.55-84, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859456/the-role-of-domestic-factors-in-sri-lankas-forem> thesis regarding on " Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy in the 21st century" (Accessed date on 13.09.2024).

② Abeyagoonasekera, Asanga, *Sri Lanka's Geopolitical Challenges (Hardcover)* | *Reiter's Books*: World Scientific Publishing Company, ISBN: 9789811227844, ISBN-10: 9811227845, 2021.p.122, <https://www.reiters.com/book/9789811227844> (Accessed date on 23.08.2024).

① Kulathunga, SACR, *Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka*, 11th International Research Conference 11th 10th, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, 2020, https://www.defence.lk/Article/view_article/2499 (Accessed date on 17.07.2024).

highlighted in recent scholars of Anjum Niazi Zubeda's Journal article, Mahan's theory emphasizes the crucial role of maritime power in shaping a country's geopolitical and strategic influence.^② The theory's six primary elements - physical conformation, geographical position, the extent of territory, character of the people, size of the population, and character of the government - provide a robust framework for analyzing Sri Lanka's maritime potential and challenges.

Recent literature has increasingly focused on the geopolitical complexities facing Sri Lanka. Meegoda Malind's analysis reveals how Sri Lanka's maritime diplomacy and aspirations were historically constrained by the three-decade conflict with the LTTE but are now becoming more assertive in the regional security context.^③ This transformation reflects broader changes in the Indo-Pacific security environment, where maritime security has become increasingly intertwined with economic and strategic interests.^④ Scholars have also examined the evolving nature of great power competition in Sri Lanka's maritime domain. The research conducted by Shivamurthy Aditya Gowdara demonstrates how China's geopolitical aspirations and economic growth have significantly increased its presence in the IOR since the early 2000s.^① This has created new dynamics in regional security, particularly as India, a traditional player in the region, has also intensified its engagement with Sri Lanka. The literature suggests that this competition has created both opportunities and challenges for Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy.

According to Brewster David, the article reveals an emerging focus on non-traditional security threats. Research by Sri Lankan scholars emphasizes how maritime security challenges have evolved beyond conventional military concerns to include issues such as environmental protection, resource management, and MDA.^② This expansion of security concepts represents a significant shift in how maritime security is conceptualized and addressed in academic discourse.

Furthermore, the literature indicates a growing recognition of the importance of MDA in Sri Lanka's security strategy. Brewster David emphasizes how improved MDA capabilities are crucial for addressing various maritime security challenges, from traditional military threats to non-traditional security issues such as piracy and illegal fishing. This emphasis on technological and operational capabilities represents a significant evolution in how maritime security is conceptualized in academic literature.

Theoretical Foundations: Sea Power Theory and Maritime Strategy

Power at sea, or sea power, has a well-documented history. Therefore, in contemporary academia, there is no lack of theory-oriented studies on states' sea power in general. However, there is a lack of theory-oriented scholarly works on the sea power of small powers in particular. Thus, the current literature on the sea power of states in general and the sea power of small powers, in particular, can be analyzed in traditional and non-traditional paradigms.

The theoretical frameworks governing maritime strategies underscore the significance of naval power as articulated by historians such as A. T. Mahan and G. Till. Mahan's theories, which emphasize the strategic control of sea lines of communication, are relevant in understanding how Sri Lanka navigates its geopolitical

② Anjum Niazi Zubeda, Future of Maritime Security: Navigating Complex Waters in the Indo-Pacific. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, March-April 2024, pp.114-115, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3703796/future-of-maritime-security-navigating-complex-waters-in-the-indo-pacific/> (Accessed date on 11.09.2024).

③ Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualising Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kdiragamar Institute, 2020, <https://lki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy/> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

④ Anjum Niazi Zubeda, Future of Maritime Security: Navigating Complex Waters in the Indo. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, March-April 2024, pp.114-115, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3703796/future-of-maritime-security-navigating-complex-waters-in-the-indo-pacific/> (Accessed date on 11.09.2024).

① Shivamurthy Aditya. Gowdara, *An evolving IOR and dilemmas in Sri Lanka's security calculus*, 2024, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/an-evolving-ior-and-dilemmas-in-sri-lanka-s-security-calculus> (Accessed date on 10.06.2024).

② Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

landscape amid external influences. His work, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783," argues that control of maritime routes is paramount for national security and influence. Further, Mahan's theory emphasizes six fundamental elements of sea power: physical conformation, geographical position, extent of territory, character of the people, size of population, and character of the government. These elements provide a crucial framework for analyzing Sri Lanka's maritime strategic position. Contemporary scholars have applied Mahan's principles to understand how smaller maritime nations like Sri Lanka can leverage their strategic location to enhance their security capabilities.^① Meanwhile, Till's interpretations extend Mahan's concepts into the modern context, stressing the importance of a coherent maritime strategy for smaller states within the competitive dynamics of larger powers.^② In a broader context, the non-traditional paradigm highlights that the sea power of a state is a system characterized not only by the presence of links between its components like military, merchant shipping, fishing, and scientific research fleet, etc., but also by the inseparable union with the environment, i.e., the ocean.^③ In short, the non-traditional paradigm of sea power deals with armed naval power and the managing, controlling and absorbing of maritime natural resources, namely food, hydrocarbons, energy and minerals, and defenses connected to the commercial purposes at sea.

It is noteworthy to mention here that there is a shortage of theory-oriented scholarly works on the sea power of Sri Lanka. Most of the existing literature has analyzed the maritime security of Sri Lanka by focusing attention on the superpower rivalry of the IO R in the context of Cold War politics, either balancing or bandwagon. Therefore, the positive and negative parameters of Sri Lanka's sea power have been neglected. Most scholars have prioritized analyzing the positive and negative impacts of Sri Lanka's geo-political location in the IOR rather than developing theory-oriented scholarly works that can be applied to enhance the sea power of Sri Lanka. This scenario highlights the impact of the colonial legacy and Cold War politics.^② In the post-Cold war era, the existing literature on maritime security in Sri Lanka tends to consider issues like maritime piracy, power struggle, port security, illegal fishing, human trafficking, and drug trafficking. Moreover, matters related to managing the sea power of Sri Lanka, namely environmental crime, protection of natural resources, maintaining the economic value of maritime routes, and managing the power struggle over the marine area, have received less attention. With the emergence of the triangular balancing power system in the IOR and the domination of China in Sri Lanka's marine area, some academic works investigate its positive and negative impacts on the maritime security of Sri Lanka.^①

Evolution of Maritime Security Challenges

In the 21st century, the evolution of maritime security issues has become a vital field of study, and scholars are addressing the topic from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives. The growing complexity of maritime security challenges and their consequences for regional and national security strategies have been brought to light in recent scholarly discussions. As demonstrated in "The Future of British Sea Power," G. Till's significant research offers a thorough framework for comprehending how maritime security issues are evolving. Although Till's study mostly focuses on Western naval viewpoints and might not adequately reflect the subtleties of developing maritime powers in the Indo-Pacific region, it is especially useful for its historical contextualization of the evolution of maritime security.

The particular maritime security issues that Sri Lanka faces in the 21st century have begun to be addressed by recent studies. Premarathna Isuru's research identifies key non-traditional security threats, including maritime terrorism, climate change, environmental degradation, and illegal trafficking.^① This work is particularly valuable for its focus on Sri Lanka's unique position in the Indian Ocean security architecture, though it could benefit from a more detailed analysis of potential solutions.

^① Kumara. S.J, The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka. *European Scientific Journal*, *ESJ*, 17(2), 2021, pp.151-156, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n2>. (Accessed date on 05.04.2024).

^② Jayasekera, P. V. J, *Security Dilemma of a Small State, Part One, Sri Lanka in the South Asian Context*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1992, pp.24-30.

^③ Premarathna. Isuru, P.K.B, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* /Volume V, Issue, ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, p.156, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka. (Accessed date on 21.07.2024).

Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on the geopolitical dimensions of Sri Lanka's maritime security. A significant contribution comes from the research examining Sri Lanka's evolving relationship with major powers in the IOR. This work emphasizes how domestic political factors and socioeconomic needs increasingly shape Colombo's foreign policy engagements.^② The analysis is particularly valuable for understanding the complex interplay between internal and external factors, though it could better address the historical continuities in Sri Lanka's maritime strategy.

Contemporary scholarship has also begun to address the emerging challenges of the 21st century. Meegoda Malinda's analysis of Sri Lanka's maritime transformation strategy highlights the need for developing both blue-water capabilities and coastal security measures.^① This research is particularly valuable for its forward-looking approach, though it could benefit from a more detailed analysis of resource constraints and implementation challenges.

The literature reveals a growing consensus on the need for a more integrated approach to maritime security. Recent studies emphasize how Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy must balance traditional security concerns with emerging non-traditional threats. This body of work highlights the importance of developing comprehensive MDA capabilities while strengthening regional cooperation frameworks.^② However, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the practical implementation of these theoretical frameworks, particularly in the context of limited resources and competing priorities.

The evolution of maritime security challenges in Sri Lanka reflects broader regional and global trends, as highlighted by recent scholarship examining the country's role in the IO security architecture. This research emphasizes the need for a coherent strategy that addresses both traditional and non-traditional security challenges while maintaining strategic autonomy.^③ While these studies provide valuable theoretical frameworks, there is still a need for more detailed analysis of practical implementation strategies and resource allocation decisions in the context of Sri Lanka's specific maritime security needs.

Contemporary literature thoroughly explores the technological dimensions of maritime security challenges, particularly cybersecurity threats to maritime transportation systems. Recent studies have identified a critical disconnect between maritime transportation systems and the various cybersecurity threats they face from both criminal enterprises and state actors. This emerging focus on cyber-maritime security represents a significant shift in how scholars conceptualize maritime security challenges in the modern era.

The literature reveals a growing consensus on the need for a more integrated approach to maritime security. Fernando Sithara's book emphasizes how Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy must balance traditional security concerns with emerging non-traditional threats.^① This body of work highlights the importance of developing comprehensive maritime domain awareness capabilities while strengthening regional cooperation frameworks.^② However, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the practical implementation of these theoretical frameworks, particularly in the context of limited resources and competing priorities

② Eudon .Tshering, The role of domestic factors in Sri Lanka's foreign affairs, Implications for the United States' Engagements, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 2024, pp.55-60, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859456/the-role-of-domestic-factors-in-sri-lankas-foreign-affairs-implications-for-the/> (Accessed date on 14.08.2024).

① Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualising Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kdiragamar Institute, 2020, <https://lki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy/> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

② Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualising Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kdiragamar Institute, 2020, <https://lki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy/> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

③ Walakuluge. CDR CRP, and CDR BAR Abysekara, In Pursuit of Sri Lanka's Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region, *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs (JIPA)*, Vol. 7 No. 5, ISSN 2576-5361, August 2024, pp.1-10, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859339/in-pursuit-of-sri-lankas-strategy-in-the-indian-ocean-region/> (Accessed date on 04.06.2024).

① Fernando. Sithara, *Comprehensive Maritime Security in The Indian Ocean Region: Challenges and Opportunities*, K W Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2020, pp.25-30, <https://www.amazon.com/Comprehensive-Maritime-Security-Indian-Region/dp/9389137411> (Accessed date on 04.03.2024).

② Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

The investigation of maritime security issues in international waters has also gained prominence in recent academic discourse. As evidenced in current research, scholars are increasingly examining potential security issues that may arise in areas beyond national jurisdiction. This expanding scope of maritime security studies reflects the growing complexity of challenges facing the international maritime community. However, many of these studies could benefit from more practical policy recommendations and implementation strategies.

The evolution of maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region has received particular attention, with scholars examining U.S. geopolitical discourse through presidential communications and policy statements. This analytical approach provides valuable insights into how major powers perceive and respond to evolving maritime security challenges. However, there remains a need for more comprehensive studies that integrate perspectives from smaller maritime nations and regional stakeholders.

This review of the literature reveals several significant gaps in current maritime security studies. First, there is a need for more integrated approaches that combine traditional security perspectives with emerging non-traditional threats. Second, the voices and experiences of smaller maritime nations are often underrepresented in major academic works. Finally, there is a pressing need for more research on the intersection of technological advancement and maritime security challenges, particularly in developing regions. These gaps present opportunities for future research to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of evolving maritime security challenges in the 21st century.

Research on Sri Lanka's maritime security challenges has evolved significantly in the 21st century. Fernando Natasha's article highlights the multifaceted nature of these challenges, ranging from traditional security concerns to emerging non-traditional threats. ^① The literature identifies several key areas of concern, including:

IUU fishing

Drug trafficking and human smuggling

Maritime terrorism and piracy

Environmental security challenges

Recent research emphasizes how the combination of regional power dynamics and local capacity limitations has made these issues more complicated. The literature specifically highlights Sri Lanka's struggle to strike a compromise between its limited financial resources and its need for maritime security.

Maritime Domain Awareness and Technological Evolution

Recent research emphasizes the growing importance of maritime domain awareness and technological capabilities in Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. Sri Lanka's MDA capabilities have evolved significantly since the early 2000s. According to Jayarathna Y.N.'s article, the Sri Lanka Navy developed a Network-Centric integrated coastal Radar system in 2006, which later expanded to cover the EEZ and contiguous zones. ^② This system, initially designed for counter-insurgency operations, demonstrated the potential of integrating advanced technologies like MTT for enhanced maritime surveillance. The development of Sri Lanka's MDA capabilities reflects a broader regional trend toward technological integration in maritime security operations. ^③ The literature increasingly recognizes the significance of information sharing and interagency

^① Fernando, Natasha, *Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Dilemma - South Asian Voices*, 2019, <https://southasianvoices.org/sri-lanka-maritime-security-dilemma> (Accessed date on 15.06.2024).

^② Jayarathna, Y.N, *Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and Sri Lanka: Why we need to*, 2024, <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/kn8wqs52PbVssHntxnQt>. (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

^③ Pathak, Samarth, *Sri Lanka: Improving Interagency Coordination on Maritime Domain ...* 3 Aug. 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/frontpage/2024/May/sri-lanka-improving-interagency-coordination-on-maritime-domain-awareness-of-national-maritime-law-enforcement-agencies.html> (Accessed date on 06.02.2024).

cooperation in maximizing the effectiveness of MDA capabilities. Recent studies conducted by the UNODC in Sri Lanka demonstrate the importance of coordinated efforts among various maritime agencies.^④ The findings underscore that effective MDA requires significant collaboration between military and civilian agencies, particularly in managing high maritime traffic density areas. However, this research also reveals gaps in the current literature regarding the specific challenges faced by developing nations in implementing sophisticated MDA systems.

The literature also reveals a growing emphasis on cybersecurity in maritime operations. Scholars have identified increasing vulnerabilities in maritime infrastructure due to digitalization, with studies highlighting the potential risks of cyberattacks on port facilities, navigation systems, and maritime communication networks. This emerging body of research suggests a need for integrated approaches that combine traditional maritime security measures with robust cybersecurity protocols.

The evolving discourse on maritime security technology also reveals tensions between aspirational goals and practical implementation challenges. Research by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute highlights Sri Lanka's efforts to enhance its MDA capabilities through various technological investments while acknowledging the constraints posed by limited resources and institutional capacity.^① This tension between technological potential and practical limitations represents a significant theme in the literature that warrants further investigation.

Recent studies have also begun to explore the role of regional cooperation in enhancing maritime security capabilities. The literature suggests that collaborative approaches to MDA, particularly in the IOR, offer promising solutions to resource constraints and technological limitations.^② However, scholars note that such cooperation often faces political and operational challenges that require careful consideration in policy development and implementation.

Although there has been a lot of progress in understanding the role of technology and MDA in maritime security, more thorough research that takes into account the unique circumstances and difficulties faced by developing maritime nations is still required, according to the literature review. Future research might benefit from paying more attention to the real-world implementation challenges that nations like Sri Lanka face, particularly when balancing institutional capabilities and resource limitations with advancements in technology.

A wide range of intricate studies and analyses can be found in the literature on MDA and the advancement of technology in maritime security. There is also much room for more research on implementation challenges, regional collaboration, and integration of conventional and contemporary approaches to maritime security, even while the body of current research offers insightful information about technology capabilities and strategic approaches. According to this analysis, future research should concentrate on obtaining a more sophisticated knowledge of how countries like Sri Lanka may successfully take advantage of technical advancements while resolving institutional and practical limits in their maritime security strategies.

Institutional Development and Policy Reforms

A growing body of literature examines the institutional reforms and policy changes in Sri Lanka's maritime security framework. Proposal for Sri Lanka Navy's Strategy 2030 and... studies highlight the evolution from traditional naval defense to a more comprehensive maritime security strategy.^① However, according to

④ Sri Lanka: UNODC advances Maritime Security by improving ,2023, <https://www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2023/October/sri-lanka-unodc-advances-maritime-security-by-improving-maritime-domain-awareness.html> (Accessed date on 02.07.2024).

① Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, 2020, <https://lki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy/> (Accessed date on 12.02.2024).

② Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

① *Proposal for Sri Lanka Navy's Strategy 2030 and...*, 2024. pp. 53-60, https://www.navy.lk/assets/img/doctrine/strategy_2030.pdf (Accessed date on 25.08.2024).

Brewster. In David's article, critical gaps in the literature exist regarding these reforms and implementation challenges. Also, it indicates that Sri Lanka lacks a comprehensive Civil Maritime Security Strategy that would provide a framework for interagency cooperation.^② Further, Brewster David's seminal assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime governance framework provides valuable insights into the institutional landscape, highlighting that while Sri Lanka achieves reasonable MDA despite limited resources, the absence of a central coordinating agency creates significant operational challenges. His analysis particularly emphasizes the fragmentation of maritime security responsibilities across multiple agencies, necessitating complex coordination efforts between military and civilian institutions.^③ However, while Brewster's work offers comprehensive coverage of institutional structures, it falls short in addressing the historical evolution of these institutions and their transformation in response to changing maritime threats.

The UNODC's recent evaluation of Sri Lanka's maritime security infrastructure offers fresh perspectives on institutional capacity building. Their assessment identifies the Sri Lanka Navy and Coast Guard as primary responders for maritime security, while highlighting the specialized roles of Customs, Immigration, and Fisheries departments.^④ This institutional mapping reveals both strengths and vulnerabilities in Sri Lanka's maritime security architecture, though the analysis could benefit from a deeper examination of inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

Attanayake Chulanee makes a significant contribution to understanding policy reforms. She analyzes how Sri Lanka's strategic location near key sea lanes presents both opportunities and challenges for institutional development.^① Further, Attanayake's work is particularly valuable in examining how Sri Lanka balances its non-aligned foreign policy with the need for international maritime security cooperation, though it could more thoroughly address domestic institutional constraints.

Moreover, recent research has also highlighted the importance of regional cooperation frameworks in institutional development. Sri Lanka's participation in various regional maritime security initiatives, including cooperation with India and the Maldives, demonstrates institutional engagement at the international level.^② However, the literature suggests limited operational cooperation with other Bay of Bengal countries, indicating potential areas for institutional expansion.

The evolution of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy and its institutional development has garnered significant scholarly attention, particularly in the context of 21st-century challenges and reforms. A comprehensive analysis of the existing literature reveals several key perspectives on institutional development and policy reforms. The Maritime Safety and Security Working Group's framework, as documented by the IORA, provides a foundational understanding of how regional institutions approach maritime security challenges.^③ This institutional framework emphasizes the importance of coordinated policy approaches and capacity building, particularly in addressing emerging maritime security threats. The IORA's work is

② Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

③ Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

④ Pathak. Samarth. *Sri Lanka: Improving Interagency Coordination on Maritime Domain ...* 3 Aug. 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/frontpage/2024/May/sri-lanka-improving-interagency-coordination-on-maritime-domain-awareness-of-national-maritime-law-enforcement-agencies.html> (Accessed date on 06.02.2024).

① Attanayake. Chulanee, *Sri Lanka: Indian Ocean Security and the US Indo-Pacific Strategy*, 2024, <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/sri-lanka-indian-ocean-security-and-us-indo-pacific-strategy> (Accessed date on 04.02.2024).

② Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

③ Brewster David, *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: An assessment of Sri Lanka's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*, ANU National Security College, September 2024, pp.10-11, <https://nsc.anu.edu.au/content-centre/research/governing-sri-lankas-maritime-space> (Accessed date on 12.09.2024).

especially valuable for its detailed examination of the institutional mechanisms necessary for effective maritime governance, though it sometimes overlooks the specific challenges faced by smaller nations like Sri Lanka in implementing these frameworks.

Premarathna Isuru's analysis "Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka" offers a critical examination of the institutional reforms necessary to address contemporary maritime security challenges.^① His research is particularly noteworthy for its comprehensive assessment of how institutional development intersects with both traditional and non-traditional security issues in the Sri Lankan context. While Premarathna's work provides valuable insights into the policy reform process, it could benefit from a more detailed analysis of the practical implementation challenges faced by maritime security institutions.

A particularly significant contribution to the field comes from the Max Planck Foundation's research on "Supporting Maritime Governance in the IO," which details the implementation of UNCLOS and its impact on institutional development in Sri Lanka.^② This work is especially valuable for its analysis of how international legal frameworks influence domestic institutional reforms and policy development. The study effectively demonstrates how Sri Lanka's position at the center of the IO has shaped its institutional approach to maritime security, though it could expand further on the specific mechanisms for policy implementation at the national level.

The evolution of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy and its institutional development has garnered significant scholarly attention, particularly in the context of 21st-century challenges and reforms. A comprehensive analysis of the existing literature reveals several key perspectives on institutional development and policy reforms. The Maritime Safety and Security Working Group's framework, as documented by the IORA, provides a foundational understanding of how regional institutions approach maritime security challenges.^③ This institutional framework emphasizes the importance of coordinated policy approaches and capacity building, particularly in addressing emerging maritime security threats. The IORA's work is especially valuable for its detailed examination of the institutional mechanisms necessary for effective maritime governance, though it sometimes overlooks the specific challenges faced by smaller nations like Sri Lanka in implementing these frameworks.

The study of the literature shows that although understanding Sri Lanka's maritime security institutions and policy reforms has received a lot of scholarly attention, there are still several gaps in our understanding. A more thorough examination of the procedures used to execute reforms, evaluation of the efficacy of policies, and investigation of institutional adaptation to emerging maritime security issues should all be beneficial for future research. Comparative research with other maritime nations could provide important information for policy reform and institutional development in Sri Lanka.

Marine and Coastal Tourism

According to Attri. V.N., a key component of Sri Lanka's blue economy, is the marine and coastal tourism industry. Both domestic and foreign tourists are drawn to the nation's coastline because it has a wide variety of attractions, such as beaches, coral reefs, and marine life.^①

Additionally, Sotiriadis & Shen, Ozturkcan et al., emphasize that local economies may benefit from marine and coastal tourism, which can create employment and income. We can find methods for developing

^① Premarathna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* | Volume V, Issue I, |ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 01.02.2024).

^② *Supporting Maritime Governance in the Indian Ocean (Part IV)*, 2023, <https://www.mpfpr.de/projects/sri-lanka/the-implementation-of-unclos-supporting-maritime-governance-in-the-indian-ocean-part-iv/> (Accessed date on 11.09.2024).

^③ *Maritime Security and Safety and IORA*, <https://iora-sa.saeon.ac.za> > (Accessed date on 17.04.2024).

^① Attri. V. N, *The Role of Marine Tourism in IORA: The Pathways Ahead*. Durban: Garden Court Marine Parade, 2018, p.25.

sustainable tourism that strike a balance between economic benefits and social and environmental effects by examining the potential and problems associated with marine and coastal tourism.^②

According to Huong et al., in recent decades, there has been a surge in coastal tourism, which includes a variety of resources and activities like beaches and varied landscapes. Accurately evaluating its economic worth is necessary to encourage ethical and sustainable travel activities. It is widely recognized that coastal tourism is one of the fastest-growing parts of the travel and tourism sector.^③ However, assessing the tourism sector as a whole continues to be an important challenge. According to Bari. A reveals another significant economic sector in the developing and growing South Asian region is coastal tourism. Coral reefs can be found in the shallow coasts of India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.^④ Pakistan has dryland mangroves with a wide variety of flora and wildlife that make for great tourist destinations.

Research Question

Sri Lanka has historically been at the center of maritime trade worldwide due to its strategic location in the IO, which makes maritime security its top concern. In the 21st century, the country faces a wide range of challenging issues, such as maritime terrorism, illicit fishing, human trafficking, piracy, and geopolitical rivalry between major powers. A strong and flexible maritime security strategy is required to address these challenges and protect regional stability, economic interests, and national sovereignty.

This study examines how Sri Lanka has dealt with these challenges, analyzing how its maritime security strategy has changed over time, how it aligns with international frameworks, and the steps it has taken to improve its coast guard and naval capabilities. By situating Sri Lanka's endeavors in the broader context of sea power theories, the study attempts to provide insights into the effectiveness of its strategies and the consequences for Indian Ocean regional security.

In this context, this study seeks to evaluate the critical question: How has Sri Lanka negotiated its maritime security challenges within the 21st century? By examining the strategies, policies, and actions undertaken to confront these challenges, the research aims to evaluate their effectiveness and broader implications for regional stability and national security.

Main Concepts

Maritime security plays a pivotal role in ensuring the stability, sovereignty, and economic prosperity of coastal nations. The significance of marine security for Sri Lanka, an island nation located strategically in the IO, cannot be highlighted enough. Sri Lanka is situated at the intersection of world commercial and strategic interests due to its geostrategic location along important international shipping routes that connect East and West.

Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century due to evolving issues such as environmental dangers, geopolitical conflicts in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, Sri Lanka's reliance on maritime resources and commerce underscores the need for a comprehensive plan to secure its maritime domain.

The examination of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy reveals how the country has leveraged its strategic position to adapt to contemporary maritime challenges. By examining its historical foundations, current policies, and strategic responses to emerging threats, this research sheds light on the multifaceted approach that Sri Lanka employs to maintain sovereignty, ensure regional stability, and foster sustainable development in its maritime domain.

② Sotiriadis, M., & Shen, S, *Blue Economy and Sustainable Tourism Management in Coastal Zones*. Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku: Asian Development Bank Institute, 2020, pp-15-29.

③ Huong, H., Dang, K., & Rompaey, V. A, Comprehensive assessment of coastal tourism potential in Vietnam. *Vietnam Journal of Earth Sciences*, 2022, pp.12-18.

④ Bari. A, *Our Oceans and the Blue Economy: Opportunities and Challenges*. *Procedia Engineering*, 2017, pp.5-11.

Moreover, Sri Lanka's proactive participation in regional and international maritime security initiatives further enhances its ability to address shared security challenges. For example, Sri Lanka joined the CMF in 2023, a coalition of nations dedicated to ensuring the security of global maritime routes and combating piracy. Through such collaborations, Sri Lanka can contribute to regional stability while also benefiting from the expertise, resources, and diplomatic support of its international partners.

The country's comprehensive maritime security strategy, which integrates diplomatic engagement, the strengthening of maritime capabilities, and an emphasis on sustainability, ensures that Sri Lanka can effectively navigate the complex security environment of the IO. By enhancing its internal maritime security infrastructure, improving cooperation with regional allies, and maintaining a neutral foreign policy stance, Sri Lanka is positioning itself as a key player in the maintenance of peace and stability in the IOR. This multi-dimensional strategy not only secures Sri Lanka's maritime interests but also ensures its continued sovereignty amidst the growing competition for influence in the region.

Maritime Security

It would be useful to think about what security is in general before addressing maritime security. For as long as there have been human societies, security has been studied and discussed. However, security studies are often seen as a relatively new field of professional studies that gained substantial popularity after World War II.^① The 21st-century security landscape is quickly evolving. IO is of importance to both state and non-state actors. Among the extra-regional nations keen to have some kind of presence in the IO are the USA, China, and Japan. Nonetheless, ensuring regional stability is a top priority for India and Pakistan, both regional superpowers. They are interested in expanding Sea Power outside their local area to reach political and economic sustainability in the global arena, where the IO is a significant battlefield of struggle.

The aforementioned facts indicate that maritime security is a general term used for classifying marine challenges that frequently relate to economic development, human security, national security, and the marine environment. This includes not just the oceans of the world but also rivers, ports, territorial waters, and regional seas.^② Although there is no recognized standard of maritime security, the phrase has been frequently utilized to describe both new and existing international and regional challenges to the maritime domain.

“Maritime security is central to the strategy, with the Navy and Coast Guard playing vital roles in addressing various traditional and nontraditional security threats. These threats encompass issues like drug trafficking, human smuggling, illegal fishing, and poaching. A well-structured and strategic maritime security plan is essential to protect Sri Lanka’s interests and uphold national objectives.”^①

Furthermore, territorial integrity, law and order in the maritime domain, marine assets, and varied maritime practices are all included in the concept of "Maritime Security." In general, "maritime security" is a defense concept in several countries. In general, many nations consider "maritime security" a defensive concept. Not only should this be considered a defense concept, but it has to be combined with efficiently managing the ocean's resources and environment while utilizing the same capabilities used for national defense.

The primary reason maritime security is important is that it is still an important component of overall national security. To support the maritime industries' continued profitability and growth, maritime security contributes to providing a stable and tranquil sociopolitical and administrative environment in the nation. Along with ensuring readiness for a successful response to both natural and man-made disasters, it also addresses the

^① Premarathna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume V, Issue I, |ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka

^② Premarathna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume V, Issue I, |ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 01.02.2024).

^① Meegoda. Malinda, *Conceptualizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Transformation Strategy*, Colombo: Lakshman Kdiragamar Institute, 2020, <https://lki.lk/blog/conceptualising-sri-lankas-maritime-security-transformation-strategy> (Accessed date on 14.01.2024).

challenges of protecting and maintaining the integrity of the nation's marine resources. ^②According to the researcher, "Maritime Security" is significant primarily because it remains an essential part of national security. A stable, harmonious sociopolitical and administrative environment that fosters the maritime sector's long-term growth and economic growth is largely dependent on maritime security. It tackles the problems of protecting the integrity of the nation's maritime resources and ensuring that preparations for an efficient response to natural and man-made disasters are achieved.

However, since the early 1990s, maritime security has been the main concern for major global security actors. Nevertheless, depending on their interests or even political or ideological discrimination, various scholars and governments may have different goals in mind when they use the term "maritime security." Christopher Rahman claims that terrorism, drug trafficking, weapons proliferation, piracy, and other illegal activities make up the United States' new maritime strategy. For the advantage of all countries, countering these irregular and transnational threats safeguards freedom of passage, promotes global stability, and protects our homeland.^①The general goals of maritime security have grown to include all major global security actors and include the following: international and national peace and security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, freedom of the seas, the facilitation and security of commerce, security of SLOC, security protection from maritime crimes, resource security, access to resources at sea and the seabed, environmental protection, security of all seafarers and fishermen, and upholding good governance at sea. Furthermore, the area of maritime security includes several real-world issues, including illicit fishing, armed robbery at sea, piracy, human and illegal goods trafficking, and marine pollution. Interstate rivalry and violent extremism (maritime terror) are frequently significant. The sea has been identified as an important component for maritime security in addition to being a "stage for geopolitical power projection, interstate warfare or militarized disputes, as a source of specific threats such as piracy, or as a connector between states that enables various phenomena from colonialism to globalization."^② The concepts of maritime security are understood through international relations, creative thinking, international involvement, and cognition rather than by referring to a list of risks and variables associated with maritime security. Professor Christian Burger highlighted several maritime security concepts, including the maritime security model,

1. Marine environment (including Maritime security)
2. Economic development (including the Blue Economy)
3. National security (including Sea power)
4. Human security (including Human trafficking)^③

The term "maritime security" can mean many things depending on the context or person implementing it. From a military standpoint, maritime security has traditionally focused on challenges related to national security, like protecting a state's territory from armed conflict or other forms of force and directing the state's interests in other areas. Since then, more threat kinds have been incorporated into military perspectives on maritime security. For instance, according to the US Naval Operations Concept, the objectives of "maritime security operations" include safeguarding "the maritime domain from nation-state threats, terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration," as well as ensuring freedom of navigation, commerce, and ocean resource protection.

However, the events of 9/11 and subsequent perceptions of a terrorist threat to shipping and seaborne trade have forced a reappraisal of what we mean by "maritime security". It has a traditional meaning for navies and defense forces, which have the role of protecting the nation and its national maritime interests against

^② Joseph. Rohan, RSP, *Maritime Security Concerns and the Future Role of the Sri Lanka Coast Guard*, p.2. <https://www.defence.lk/upload/ebooks/Maritime%20Security%20Concerns%20and%20the%20Future%20Role%20of%20the%20Sri%20Lanka%20Coast%20Guard.pdf> (Accessed date on 04.04.2024).

^① Kumara.S. J, Vulnerability to the International Constraints: A Study of Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Challenges, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 2020, pp.1-2, <https://pgihs.ac.lk/research/6/5%20-%20Vulnerability%20to%20the%20International%20Constraints.pdf> (Accessed date on 19.05.2024).

^② Premarathna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* | Volume V, Issue I, ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 01.02.2024).

traditional threats. These threats are usually military and formulated based on strategic assessments and an appreciation of the regional security environment. The concept of maritime security expanded following 9/11. It is still about protecting the security and well-being of its citizens, but instead of overt threats from military forces, the threats of concern are veiled and perhaps even "unthinkable".

Maritime security is central to the strategy, with the Navy and Coast Guard playing vital roles in addressing various traditional and non-traditional security threats. These threats encompass issues like drug trafficking, human smuggling, illegal fishing, and poaching. A well-structured and strategic maritime security plan is essential to protect Sri Lanka's interests and uphold national objectives.

Maritime is regarded as an important sector in modern society due to the majority of global commerce being carried out by sea. Furthermore, the sea has been categorized as a rich source of natural resources, including fish, oil, gas, and minerals. As a result, maintaining maritime security is critical. Threats from transnational illegal activities such as theft, piracy, and maritime terrorism have additionally become more complex. Maritime security is a crucial aspect of a maritime strategy as it impacts all other sectors. Several natural and human-induced safety and security concerns affect Sri Lanka's maritime interests, including maritime accidents, natural disasters, and the potential rise of sea levels.

Furthermore, Sri Lanka's maritime activities may be impacted by security risks like pollution, terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy, and illegal trafficking. Furthermore, Sri Lanka is now in a position of geostrategic conflict, which is a danger to Sri Lanka's interests, given the growing foreign power presence of China and the USA in the region, in addition to the dominant force, India. Effective use of Sri Lanka's maritime arm, the Navy, and its maritime law enforcement component, the Coast Guard, is one potential way of combating these threats. These two organizations ought to be a crucial part of Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. ^①As a result, Sri Lanka's maritime forces ought to be prepared and ready for any difficulties in that way.

Sri Lanka's Maritime Zones

The geo-strategic location of Sri Lanka in the IO, which is a part of global and regional power competition, is close to the key and busy naval routes between the East and the West. Particularly, the marine area of Sri Lanka has critical geopolitical importance due to its location between the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca, which are essential transit zones in the world. (see figure 01).^② The marine area of Sri Lanka has gained much attention from industrial and other nations due to the living and non-living natural resources contained in the surrounding sea. It can be illustrated as follows.

Since Sri Lanka is a sea power due to its proximity to India and the key sea route connecting the West and East, maintaining sea power has remained important since ancient times. Sri Lanka has long supported cross-border trade, which includes the maritime silk route between China and Europe, because of its strategic location at the center of the IO and the availability of natural ports. The two most important maritime passage centers in the world, the Strait of Hormuz and Malacca, are approximately 2,000 miles away from Sri Lanka. As a result, Sri Lanka's physical location makes it easier for its citizens to participate in commerce and trade with other nations.

Sri Lanka's Position on the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca

^① Trinco Dialogue, Maritime Symposium -2023, *Importance of Maritime Security In Realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy*, Ninth Edition, 2023 p.8, <https://nma.navy.lk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Trinco-Dialogue-2023-compedium-Final.pdf> (Accessed date on 07.04.2024).

^② Kumara S.J, The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 17(2), 2021, p.151, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n2> (Accessed date on 24.07.2024).



Figure 1: Sri Lanka's Position of the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca

Source: Hostage Foundation Research

Sri Lanka has an ideal position as a logistics hub due to its strategic location in the IO, at the intersection of international trade from the east to the west and vice versa. The Port of Colombo is one of the ports with the fastest rate of growth in the country's shipping sector. Sri Lanka ranked 22nd in the world for overall container handling and 13th for connectivity in 2018. The Port of Colombo is currently used by 20 mainline operators worldwide for their shipping operations. A higher level of protection for SLOC and port infrastructure is required due to the increased shipping in and around Sri Lanka. ^①

In addition, Sri Lanka is a recognized entity in the IOR because of its island status, which is essential for maintaining its maritime domain. On December 10, 1982, Sri Lanka became a party to the UNCLOS. Thus, by the convention's laws, the Government of Sri Lanka has the right to exercise its jurisdiction over the continental shelf, contiguous zone, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zone.

With the territorial sea, contiguous zone, and EEZ included, Sri Lanka's overall marine area is expected to be 23 times greater than its total land area. Sri Lanka is a highly resourceful island nation with an EEZ nine times larger than its own, and its maritime resources are important in the geopolitical. According to international law and the UN's "sovereignty" tenets, Sri Lanka asserts 200 nautical miles of its EEZ, which divides it from the Indo-Sri Lankan maritime border line and the historic waters of Palk Bay. Under the provisions of international law and the UN's "sovereignty" guiding principles, Sri Lanka occupies a larger maritime zone (see figures 02 and 03), ^② claiming 200 nautical miles to its EEZ, which separates it from the Indo-Sri Lankan maritime boundary line and the Palk Bay's historic waters.

According to the IO, Sri Lanka's maritime area is wealthy and regarded as one of the world's most productive seas. Beyond the coastline, Sri Lanka's territorial waters extend 22 km (12 Nm). The region is roughly 21,500 km² in size. Sri Lanka also has the right to an EEZ, which is not required. Sri Lanka's EEZ is located 370 kilometers (200 nautical miles) offshore. Its total size is roughly 510,000 km². Sri Lanka is strategically located on important shipping routes that link the western and eastern parts of the world, and it is close to India, a regional power.^③ Furthermore, fish, mollusks, crabs, and marine plants are among the economically important resources found in Sri Lanka's marine area. ^① Furthermore, the sea bed, or maritime area, of Sri Lanka can be utilized for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon, mineral, and oil resources. The

^① Trinco Dialogue, Maritime Symposium -2023, *Importance of Maritime Security In Realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy*, Ninth Edition, 2023 p.8, <https://nma.navy.lk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Trinco-Dialogue-2023-compendium-Final.pdf> (Accessed date on 07.04.2024).

^② Trinco Dialogue, Maritime Symposium -2023, *Importance of Maritime Security In Realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy*, Ninth Edition, 2023 p.8, <https://nma.navy.lk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Trinco-Dialogue-2023-compendium-Final.pdf> (Accessed date on 07.04.2024).

^③ Kumara.S. J, Vulnerability to the International Constraints: A Study of Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Challenges, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 2020, pp.1-2, <https://pgihs.ac.lk/research/6/5%20-%20Vulnerability%20to%20the%20International%20Constraints.pdf> (Accessed date on 19.05.2024).

^① *Sri Lanka's marine fisheries resource base has a total extent of 538500 km²* (For more details, Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka: The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce), p.3, https://investment-consultantslk.com/industrial_reports_doc/Fisheries-Sector%20in%20sri Lanka.pdf (Accessed date on 21.08.2024).

sectoral strategy taken by many different governments hinders Sri Lanka's maritime resource management agencies.^②

Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary



Figure 2: Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary

Source: Sri Lankan maritime boundary.: https://frnkltlsly13\b.compat.objectstorage.ap-mumbai-1.oraclecloud.com/cdn.ft.lk'/ftadmin/wp-content/uploads'2016_04125221622_DFT-16-011.jpg

Maritime Zones Around Sri Lanka

Total Coastal Belt -1340km

Total Land Area - 65,525 Sq. km

Internal Waters - 1,570 Sq. km

Historical Waters -12,060 Sq. km

Territorial Waters -18,060 Sq. km

Contiguous Zone -19,620 Sq. km

EEZ- 437,400 Sq. km

Continental Margin-, 400,000Sqkm (Claimed)

^② Kumara.S. J, Vulnerability to the International Constraints: A Study of Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Challenges, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 2020, pp.1-2, <https://pgihs.ac.lk/research/6/5%20-%20Vulnerability%20to%20the%20International%20Constraints.pdf> (Accessed date on 19.05.2024).

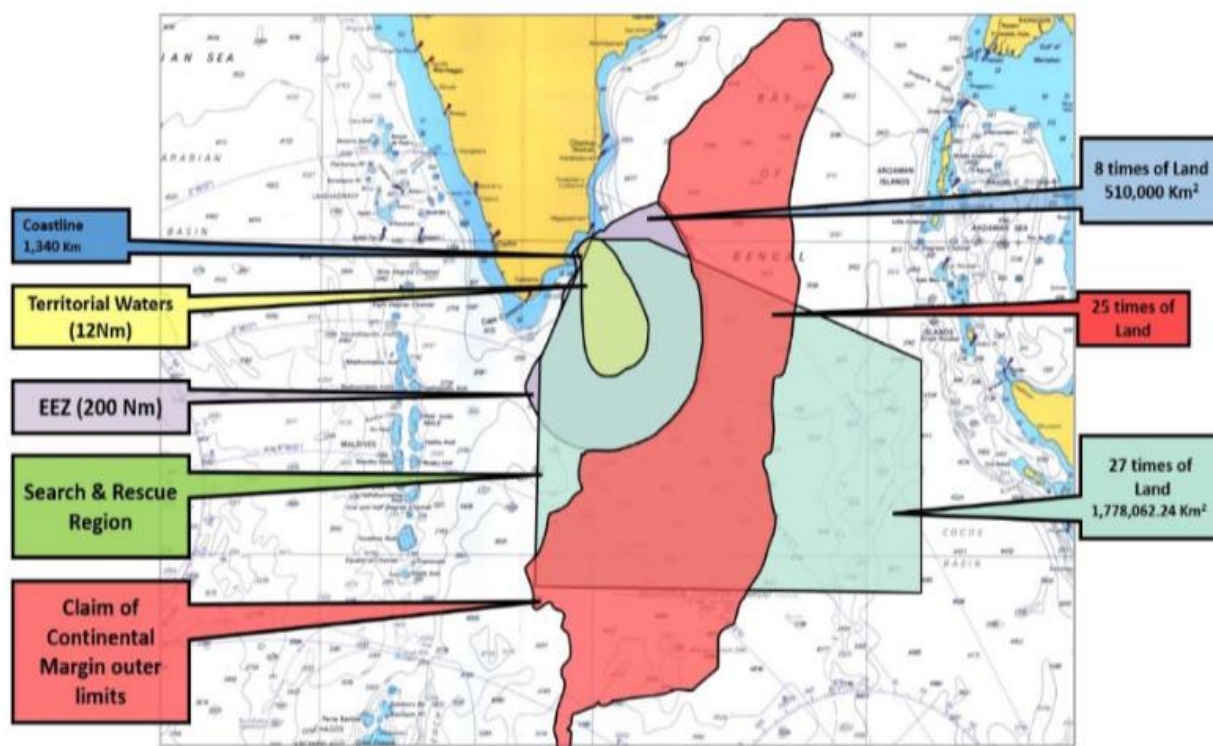


Figure 3: Maritime Zones Around Sri Lanka

Source: *Trinco dialogue*, maritime symposium-2023, ninth edition, importance of maritime symposium ninth edition importance of maritime security in realizing Sri Lanka's maritime strategy, 2023, p.91, <https://nma.navy.lk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Trinco-Dialogue-2023-compedium-Final.pdf>

A maritime boundary is a theoretical part, based on geopolitical or physiographic variables, of the Earth's water surface areas. The SLNMS must be a forward-looking plan that recognizes the maritime sector's immense potential and strategic importance in determining the destiny of the country. It is carefully designed to accomplish both immediate and long-term national development objectives. The 2025 strategy shows a deep comprehension of the dynamic character of events occurring in the maritime domain, both nationally and internationally, requiring a flexible and adaptable approach.^①

As such, it usually bounds areas of exclusive national rights over mineral and biological resources, encompassing maritime features, limits, and zones. Generally, a maritime boundary is delineated at a particular distance from a jurisdiction's coastline. However, in some countries, the term maritime boundary represents the borders of a maritime nation that are recognized by the UNCLOS.

The terminology does not encompass lake or river boundaries, which are considered within the context of land boundaries. The UNCLOS highlights the following salient aspects related to maritime security: (see figure 04)

- Military Dimension
- Environmental Dimension
- Food Dimension^①

^① Trinco Dialogue, Maritime Symposium -2023, *Importance of Maritime Security In Realizing Sri Lanka's Maritime Strategy*, Ninth Edition, 2023 p.8, <https://nma.navy.lk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Trinco-Dialogue-2023-compedium-Final.pdf> (Accessed date on 07.04.2024).

^① Joseph. Rohan, RSP, *Maritime Security Concerns and the Future Role of the Sri Lanka Coast Guard*, p.2, <https://www.defence.lk/upload/ebooks/Maritime%20Security%20Concerns%20and%20the%20Future%20Role%20of%20the%20Sri%20Lanka%20Coast%20Guard.pdf> (Accessed date on 04.04.2024).

UNCLOS Maritime Zones

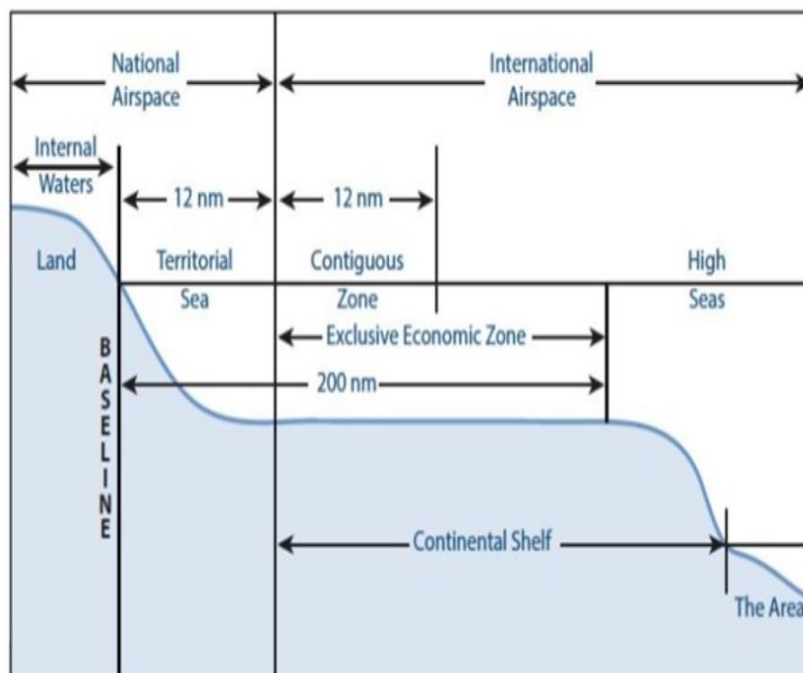


Figure 4: UNCLOS International Maritime Boundary Line (Imbl)

Source: Maritime Security Concerns and the Future Role of the Sri Lanka Coast Guard, p.2, <https://www.defence.lk/upload/ebooks/Maritime%20Security%20Concerns%20and%20the%20Future%20Role%20of%20the%20Sri%20Lanka%20Coast%20Guard.pdf>

Furthermore, the IOR has become one of the major commercial and energy routes in the world. The strategic location of Sri Lanka is very important. Many traditional and nontraditional safety and security challenges confront the IOR. For example, terrorism, armed robberies at sea, piracy, human trafficking, unauthorized travel, drug trafficking, illegal wildlife trafficking, arms trafficking, illegal fishing, climate change, etc.^② Finding and examining the barriers to the preservation of marine security strategies in the IO and contemporary times Sri Lanka is the main objective of this study.

Nonetheless, maritime security has emerged as a key topic on the international maritime agenda in recent years. Starting with the themes of piracy and cargo theft in early maritime history, maritime security has expanded to include stowaways, drug and human trafficking, information security, and, of course, maritime terrorism in the wake of the September 11th attacks.^① The study indicates that there are numerous maritime security concerns in Sri Lanka and the IO. International and nontraditional challenges are becoming more and more common. Soft power is a significant maritime concern with an ever-increasing impact.

Finally, a new trend in international relations is thought to be the traditional and non-traditional security challenges in Sri Lanka and the IOR. Additionally, identifying the security strategic issues and challenges that exist in Sri Lanka and the IOR is the primary motivation behind this thesis. Furthermore, research studies in this area are particularly unusual. Additionally, the IO has drawn substantial interest from many countries outside the region and has developed as an arena for an increasing level of global geopolitical rivalries.

^② Premarathna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* | Volume V, Issue I, |ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 01.02.2024).

^① V Thai Vinh, *Effective Maritime Security: Conceptual Model and Empirical Evidence*, Department of Maritime and Logistics Management, Australian Maritime College, April 2009, p.2. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248989174_Effective_maritime_security_Conceptual_model_and_empirical_evidence (Accessed date on 13.09.2024).

Research on maritime security is relevant nowadays. Every nation has its own goals, and marine security is both directly and indirectly related to national security. However, this is not true for a landlocked country. Among the superpowers, the IO has always been a strategically important leader. Here, maritime security and a strategic maritime location are important.^② Thus, the main objective of the research is to look into maritime security in the modern IO and analyze the main problems and difficulties that this region faces.

Maritime Security Strategy

A maritime security strategy is a comprehensive framework that aims to defend maritime commerce, protect regional stability, and protect and advance national interests in the maritime domain.

It is "a state of affairs of the global maritime domain, in which international law and national law are enforced, freedom of navigation is guaranteed, and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment, and marine resources are protected," according to the European Union Maritime Security Strategy.^③ Furthermore, a state's procedures, rules, and activities to protect its maritime interests from threats and optimize the exploitation of its maritime resources are collectively referred to as its maritime security strategy. It includes defending against both conventional and nontraditional threats, protecting maritime commerce routes, using marine resources sustainably, and adhering to international maritime laws.

MDA, threat detection and response, international cooperation, and protecting important maritime infrastructure are some of the pillars supporting a maritime security plan.^① A robust maritime security plan aims to manage EEZs, secure territorial seas, and protect maritime commerce routes. Economic growth is another goal of the sustainable use of marine resources. The theoretical basis of maritime security measures often incorporates the views of A. T. Mahan and G. Till.

Mahan emphasized the importance of sea power in a nation's strength, particularly through command of vital maritime chokepoints and strong naval capabilities, which he thought were essential for gaining influence internationally. Meanwhile, Till called on countries to adjust to changing threats by emphasizing the dual function of sea force in upholding maritime dominance ("command of the sea") and supporting more general national goals ("control from the sea"). Despite its strategic significance, there are challenges to overcome in implementing maritime security strategies.^②

Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Strategy

Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy is shaped by a combination of internal challenges and broader geopolitical dynamics in the IOR. Due to its strategic position at the crossroads of major international shipping routes, Sri Lanka faces unique challenges in protecting its maritime domain. As a result, the country has developed a multifaceted approach that focuses on diplomatic engagement, strengthening maritime capabilities, and ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach to maritime security.

Additionally, Sri Lanka's significant location in the IO, which is an important route for international trade, is reflected in its marine security strategy for the 21st century. With over 60,000 ships passing through its waters each year, including two-thirds of the world's oil shipments and almost fifty percent of all container traffic, the

② Premaratna. Isuru, Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean: Special Reference to Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, |Volume V, Issue I, |ISSN 2454-6186, 2021, pp.158-159. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348997274_Maritime_Security_Challenges_in_the_Indian_Ocean_Special_Reference_to_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 01.02.2024).

③ Péron-Doise. Marianne and Wirth Christian., *The European Union's Conceptualization of Maritime Security*. 4 Mar. 2022, <https://amti.csis.org/the-european-unions-conceptualization-of-maritime-security/> (Accessed date on 06.10.2024).

① *National Strategy for Maritime Security (USA)*. 11 Sept. 2001, https://www.maritime-cybersecurity.com/National_Strategy_for_Maritime_Security.html (Accessed date on 16.07.2024).

② Mahan. A. T., *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. Little, Brown, and Company, 1890, pp.5-7, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13529/13529-h/13529-h.htm> (Accessed date on 12.07.2023).

nation is situated along important maritime routes that link the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca.^① This position underscores how important it is for Sri Lanka to manage traditional and nontraditional security threats while preserving secure SLOCs. Internally, the nation struggles with organized crime taking advantage of its maritime territory, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal fishing. Its external concerns include environmental threats such as natural disasters and increasing sea levels, which pose coastal and maritime infrastructure at significant risk, piracy, and geopolitical unrest.^②

A core component of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy is its commitment to maintaining a neutral and non-aligned position amidst rising geopolitical tensions. The country has long prioritized diplomatic engagement with key powers such as India, China, and the United States, aiming to maintain positive relationships with all parties while safeguarding its sovereignty. This diplomatic balancing act allows Sri Lanka to navigate the complex web of external interests and pressures without becoming overly dependent on any single nation. By diversifying its foreign relations, Sri Lanka seeks to ensure its strategic independence and continue to benefit from international cooperation, economic investments, and security partnerships.

Further, developing countries like Sri Lanka struggle with limited resources, technological constraints, and the need for extensive inter-agency coordination among navies, coast guards, and fisheries departments. Additionally, Sri Lanka's strategic position along the Indian Ocean's vital sea lanes makes it both an economic opportunity and a security challenge, exposing the nation to geopolitical rivalries, piracy, and transnational crimes. Effective maritime security strategies for Sri Lanka must, therefore, balance safeguarding sovereignty, addressing contemporary threats, and leveraging its geographic advantage while fostering regional cooperation to navigate complex geopolitical dynamics. This necessitates collaborative initiatives with international partners to enhance MDA and ensure the sustainable management of maritime resources.

In response to these challenges, Sri Lanka has prioritized regional cooperation and capacity building as core components of its maritime strategy. As an active member in regional frameworks like the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia and the IORA.

Local initiatives to upgrade naval capabilities, including purchasing OPVs and setting up the MRCC in Colombo to enhance response and surveillance systems, complement these partnerships.^① Furthermore, Sri Lanka's maritime security is intricately tied to its economic aspirations, particularly the development of its blue economy. Thus, the delicate balance between leveraging foreign investments and maintaining strategic autonomy has become a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's maritime policy. In addition to port development, Sri Lanka is focusing on sustainable resource management to harness its EEZ, which holds vast potential for fisheries, renewable energy, and seabed mining. Under China's BRI, ports like Colombo and Hambantota have become crucial nodes for global shipping; however, this alignment has not been without controversy, as the leasing of Hambantota Port to China in 2017 raised issues regarding debt sustainability and sovereignty.

Sri Lanka aims to expand its maritime policy from now on to enhance its geostrategic advantages and fend off emerging threats. MDA is being improved through technology and data-sharing agreements to preserve Sri Lanka's standing as a reliable collaborator in regional security frameworks. The government is also advocating for a rules-based maritime order in the IO, emphasizing the need for a cooperative code of conduct to preserve regional security and stability. It will be crucial to strengthen the nation's naval capabilities, encourage regional cooperation, and incorporate environmental concerns into maritime policy as it deals with the complexity of the 21st-century marine environment.^②

In this context, preserving sovereignty and using its advantageous location for economic growth are two issues

^① Integrated Country Strategy: Sri Lanka." U.S. Department of State, 2019, https://2017-2021.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ICS-Sri-Lanka_UNCLASS_508.pdf. (Accessed date on 02.09.2024).

^② Kulatunga. Roshan., "Sea power of Island Nations in 21st century: Challenges and Opportunities in Sri Lanka." Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka, 2020, https://www.defence.lk/Article/view_article/2499. (Accessed date on 22.07.2024).

^① Sri Lanka: UNODC advances Maritime Security by improving Maritime Domain Awareness." UNODC, 31 Oct. 2023, https://www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2023/October/sri-lanka_unodc-advances-maritime-security-by-improving-maritime-domain-awareness.html (Accessed date on 14.09.2024).

^② Walakuluge. CDR CRP, and CDR BAR Abysekara, In Pursuit of Sri Lanka's Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region, *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs (JIPA)*, Vol. 7 No. 5, ISSN 2576-5361, August 2024.,pp.1-10, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3859339/in-pursuit-of-sri-lankas-strategy-in-the-indian-ocean-region/> (Accessed date on 04.06.2024).

that Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy must tackle. It is a target for both opportunities (port development, transshipment centers) and threats (piracy, geopolitical conflicts) due to its proximity to important sea lanes.

Theoretical Framework

A narrow view of naval power projection affects the theoretical idea of maritime security. The framework of a nation's maritime defense strategy and policy had to be built using maritime security theory to establish maritime defense capabilities. Sri Lanka is located in the IOR in a strategically significant area. According to the international system, this island nation could be classified as a small state. Balhur identifies four basic factors—population, territory size, GDP, and military capability—that indicate whether a nation qualifies as a small state. The sea, maritime law, power, and conflicts are some of the concepts that have historically been used to analyze maritime security. In terms of maritime security, sea power is superior to both air and ground power. Important figures of maritime or sea power include the maritime historians Julian Corbett, G. Till, and A.T. Mahan, as well as modern maritime specialists like Robert Kaplan. Although the phrase "sea power" is a relative one, the researcher prefers to use it while analyzing Sri Lanka's maritime capabilities. ^①

The eminent maritime historian A. T. Mahan recognized the geostrategic significance of the IOR. The USSR was a land power while the USA was a sea power throughout the Cold War. To defeat the USA in the Cold War, the USSR's lack of maritime expansion appeared to be an advantage. The majority of modern maritime security architectures are founded on the maritime concepts developed by A.T. Mahan, who made an important impact on the subject of maritime studies. Since Sri Lanka is an island nation and these historical instances demonstrate the range of the nature of the idea of "sea power," these strategies need to be incorporated into the nation's security policy. ^②

The US Navy's A.T. Mahan emphasized the significance of sea power by identifying six basic elements.

“The six fundamental principles of the 'Sea Power Theory' were geographical position, physical characteristics, territory extent, the number of populations, and the character of the government and people.” ^③

Alfred T. Mahan argues that among these fundamental thoughts, a state's geographic position is crucial for retaining its military might and conducting trade. Furthermore, those littoral republics are strategically important due to the importance of the physical conformation of the region, especially when considering their connectivity with the sea. People may interact with the rest of the globe through the maritime domain as well. Mahan's "sea power" arguments emphasize the nature of territorial extent, emphasizing that the length of a territory's extent and its natural characteristics should be used to determine its extent rather than just its size in square miles. ^① Given this background, the discussion of Sri Lanka and the sea power aspect of national security is the main subject of this study. To compare their theories of maritime security and their strategic and practical consequences for building the nation's maritime defense, this study was carried out. Furthermore, the following diagram shows how Sri Lanka's sea power interacts closely with other factors (figure 05). ^②

^① Kulatunga. SACR, Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka, 11th International Research Conference 11th 10, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University,

https://www.academia.edu/39319498/Sea_Power_of_island_nations_in_21_st_Century_Challenges_and_Opportunities_in_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 24.10.2024).

^② Kulatunga. SACR, Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka, 11th International Research Conference 11th 10, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, https://www.academia.edu/39319498/Sea_Power_of_island_nations_in_21_st_Century_Challenges_and_Opportunities_in_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 24.10.2024).

^③ Wakkumbura. M, The Geopolitical Rivalry of India and China in the Indian Ocean as a Crucial Determinant of the Future of Littoral States: Case Study of Sri Lanka, *Journal of Colombo Geographer*, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp.6-8, 2023, <https://arts.cmb.ac.lk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Wakkumbura.pdf> (Accessed date on 12.06.2024).

^① Albrecht. T., Tsetsos, K., & Grunwald, P, Concept of sea power. *Handbook of Military Sciences*, pp, 1-17, 2020.

^② Kumara S.J, The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 17(2), p.165, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n.2021>.

Mapping Sea Power of Sri Lanka



Figure 5: Mapping Sea Power of Sri Lanka

Source: The Sea Power of Small States: A Case Study of Sri Lanka. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 17(2), p.165, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n>, 2021.

Mahan noted that regardless of a state's size, the maritime doctrine is an essential part of both sea power and national power in general. Since achieving its independence, Sri Lanka has not focused much on developing an integrated maritime doctrine that takes into account its geostrategic importance. According to him, Mahan highlights the importance of a robust navy to maintaining peaceful shipping and providing security through a dispute.^③

A detailed analysis of the idea of Sea Power further strengthens the study. Geoffrey Till's (1945–2021) maritime security theory is the foundation of the third updated edition of *Sea Power: A Guide for the 21st Century*, which is essential reading for anyone interested in naval power and maritime security.^① Till develops a theory of maritime defense that emphasizes the value of collaboration between sea power and other security components to deal with maritime security issues. He argues that additional security elements, such as law enforcement, the police, and surveillance organizations for the navy, must be a part of maritime security. This idea suggests that all security components should work together to address more intricate and multifaceted maritime security challenges. Within the framework of this all-encompassing maritime security approach, he emphasizes the value of regional and global cooperation for improving nations' capacity to manage maritime security. ^① In the views, G. Till is well versed in attributes at sea, such as resources, the sea as a medium of transportation, the sea as a medium of information, and the sea as a medium for domination (See figure: 06). ^②

^③ Mahan. A. T, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, Boston: Brown and Company, 1890, p. 27, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13529/13529-h/13529-h.htm> (Accessed date on 12.07.2023).

^① Leorocha1 Ferdy, Pujo Widodo, Achmed Sukendro, Herlina Juni Risma Saragih and, Panji Suwarno, "Comparative Study on Maritime Security Theory of Mahan Alfred Thayer (1840-1914) and Geoffrey Till (1945-2021)", *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies (IJPSAT)*, ISSN: 2509-0119. Vol. 38 No. 1 April 2023, p. 457, <https://ijpsat.org/index.php/ijpsat/article/view/5249/3290> (Accessed date on 27.08.2024).

^② Kulatunga. SACR, *Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka*, 11th International Research Conference 11th 10, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, https://www.academia.edu/39319498/Sea_Power_of_island_nations_in_21_st_Century_Challenges_and_Opportunities_in_Sri_Lanka (Accessed date on 24.10.2024).

Sea Power, A Guide for the Twenty-First Century by Geoffrey Till

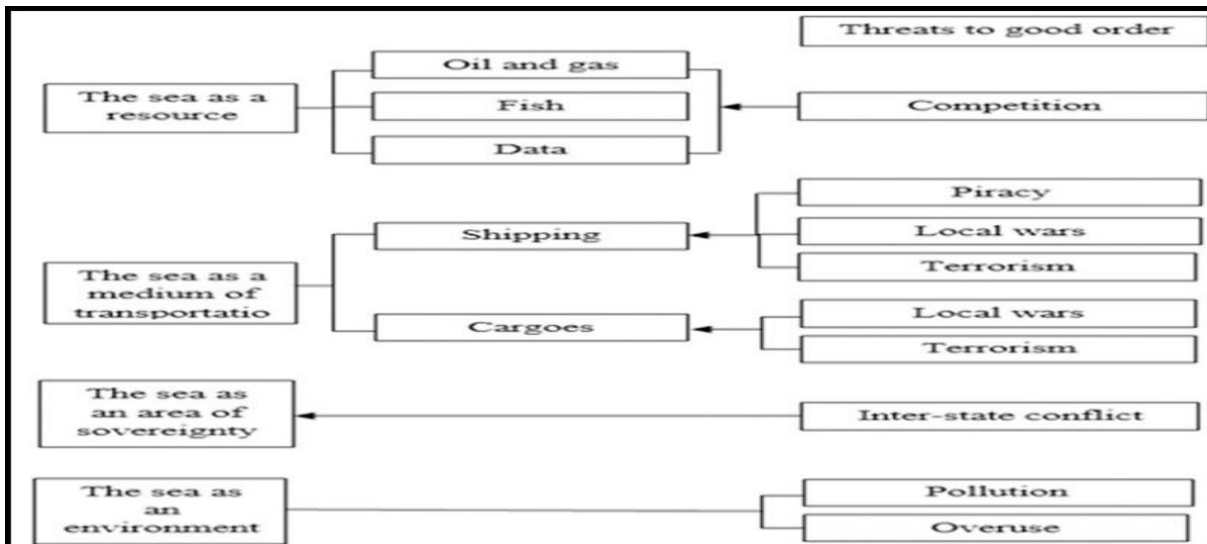


Figure 6: Sea Power, A Guide for the Twenty-First Century By Geoffrey Till, Threats to the attributes and good order

Source: Sea Power of Island Nations in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka, 11th International Research Conference, 11th 10, https://www.academia.edu/39319498/Sea_Power_of_island_nations_in_21_st_Century_Challenges_and_Opportunities_in_Sri_Lanka

According to Till's theory of maritime security, a country's internal policies can be strengthened by establishing sea power. Since Sea Power is the outcome of a nation's combined military and commercial maritime capabilities, this could be accomplished by naval and commercial endeavors. Military maritime capabilities include things like naval ships, coastal protection forces, and naval surveillance systems. To develop sea power, a nation must integrate its civil maritime capabilities, which include merchant shipping, fishing, marine insurance, shipbuilding, and maintenance.

However, Till argues that key characteristics at sea are essential foundations for maintaining maritime order. There are two categories of maritime security in the 21st century: "home" and "away." While international maritime collaboration is necessary to combat external threats, government departments, agencies, and foreign partners can work together to address internal security challenges. The non-state actors involved in transnational maritime crimes today operate without regard to national borders, which is the reason.

When describing maritime strategy, it is common to refer to the military aspect of the strategy. Maritime strategies are important in military planning primarily because of their ability to project power to areas of interest along the coastline as well as inland, known as the "littoral." A maritime strategy is broader than naval strategy and involves creating and orchestrating the elements of sea power in the spectrum of conflict (peace and war) to achieve national maritime policy objectives.^① However, it is important to understand the difference between the "military concept" of maritime strategy and the "national concept of maritime strategy."

The geographical area of the littoral is "the areas inland from the coast which are susceptible to influence from the sea and the areas seaward of the coast which are susceptible to influence or support from the land." Whether a nation is landlocked or has wide oceans, its maritime strategy can have a significant impact on its far more comprehensive military strategy. Understanding the fundamentals of maritime strategy is essential since the military's understanding of it is equally important for maximizing the potential of the national idea of maritime strategy. Although naval forces and naval strategy are not the only components of maritime strategy,

^① *Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka*, SLN BR 1, To Natural Stable Environment at Sea, 2020, pp.11-13, https://www.navy.lk/assets/img/doctrine/sln_br1_ctp.pdf (Accessed date 24.07.2023).

many people consider these two to be the most important ones. The following is a description of the three main elements mentioned above:

- Sea control is the state that results from having the freedom to use an area of the sea for one's purposes for a certain amount of time. Proceedings of the 8th International Research Conference, KDU, November 2015, and, if needed, restrict an adversary from using it.
- In Western military literature, the term "power projection" has historically referred to the deployment of naval forces and tactical support for intervention forces.^①

Research Methodology

This study on "Sri Lanka's Maritime Security Strategy in the 21st Century" employs a qualitative research approach, primarily utilizing secondary sources to analyze the subject. A. T. Mahan's Sea Power Theory and G. Till's contemporary interpretations provide the theoretical framework for the study, which examines Sri Lanka's maritime security from both historical and geopolitical perspectives.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources form the foundation of this research, offering historical context, policy analysis, and contemporary insights. The key categories of secondary sources used include:

Academic Literature: Assessments focus on books, journal articles, and theses about international relations, maritime security, and geopolitical studies. These sources provide historical context and crucial theoretical perspectives that are essential to analyzing Sri Lanka's maritime strategy.

Newspapers and Articles: Contemporary reports from both domestic and foreign media outlets provide up-to-date information on security strategies, maritime incidents, and regional geopolitical developments affecting Sri Lanka.

Government Reports and Policy Documents: Significant information about Sri Lanka's maritime governance and security priorities can be found in reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and other government institutions. Understanding official directions and strategic decision-making processes is aided by these documents.

International Conventions and Agreements: The study analyzes Sri Lanka's maritime rights, obligations, and participation in international maritime governance institutions by examining legal frameworks, including the UNCLOS.^①

Statistical Data: Quantitative data related to trade volumes, maritime incidents, and regional maritime activity are sourced from international organizations such as the IMO and regional maritime authorities. These statistics contribute to an empirical understanding of maritime security trends.

Think Tank Reports and Analysis, Lectures, and Reports: Contemporary insights on major powers' involvement in the IO, strategic maritime dynamics, and new security challenges can be found in publications from regional and global think tanks. Furthermore, professional evaluations that improve the research analysis are provided by expert lectures and reports from maritime research programs.

These secondary sources ensure a thorough understanding of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy by combining historical contexts, contemporary security issues, and evolving trends.

^① Joseph Rohan, *Maritime strategy for national development: Sri Lankan perspective*, Proceedings of 8th International Research Conference, KDU, November 2015, Naval Headquarters, Colombo 01, p.87, <http://ir.kdu.ac.lk/bitstream/handle/345/1243/dss-133.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (Accessed date 26.09.2024).

^① United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, (UNCLOS), 1982, p.22, https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf (Accessed date 15.04.2024).

METHODS

Qualitative Analysis: To analyze narratives, policy documents, and scholarly discussions, this study mostly uses qualitative methodologies. An in-depth comprehension of the historical, sociopolitical, and strategic factors affecting Sri Lanka's maritime security is made possible by the qualitative method. Among the key subjects explored include the following:

1. Geopolitical competition in the IO.
2. Regional cooperation and diplomatic engagements.
3. Governance structures shaping maritime security policy.
4. Emerging threats and MDA strategies.

Additionally, in the analysis, the following types of data are typically utilized:

1. **Economic Data:** Maritime trade volumes, revenue generated through ports (e.g., Colombo, Hambantota), and investments in maritime infrastructure.
2. **Security Data:** Number and types of maritime security incidents, such as piracy, illegal fishing, and trafficking cases, reported annually.
3. **Naval Capability Metrics:** Fleet sizes, patrol coverage, technological advancements, and budget allocations for maritime security.
4. **Geopolitical Engagements:** Frequency and outcomes of maritime security agreements, joint naval exercises, and foreign collaborations.

A comprehensive and context-driven examination of the research issue is ensured by the qualitative analysis, which aids in the interpretation of intricate relationships between global maritime trends and Sri Lanka's strategic responses.

The study aims to provide a thorough analysis of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy using this analytical framework, offering insightful information on its historical, contemporary, and future research developments.

Theoretical framework

Mahan's Sea Power Theory provides the foundation for the research and emphasizes the significance of economic might, strategic location, and naval power for achieving maritime dominance.^① G.Till's concepts of interagency cooperation, cooperative maritime diplomacy, and the application of technology to modern maritime dangers are complementary to this.^② When combined, these frameworks offer a strong lens through which one can examine Sri Lanka's strategic approach to negotiating both opportunities and challenges in the IO.

The study delivers a thorough and trustworthy analysis of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy by utilizing these secondary sources and theoretical insights, which help to clarify its place in regional and global maritime dynamics.

^① Mahan. A. T, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, Boston: Brown and Company, 1890, p.27, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13529/13529-h/13529-h.htm> (Accessed date on 12.07.2023).

^② Till. G, *Sea power: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN 9780203105917, 2013, pp.3-5, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203105917/seapower-geoffrey-till>, (Accessed date on 15.04.2023).

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into five comprehensive chapters, a conclusion, and recommendations. The first chapter of the thesis examines the transformation of Sri Lanka's maritime security, tracing its evolution from colonial foundations through the post-independence era to the development of a modern maritime security framework. It also analyzes contemporary maritime security architecture, emphasizing maritime domain awareness, regional cooperation, and legal frameworks, alongside the strategic importance of maritime resources for economic development.

The second chapter explores the internal and external factors influencing Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. Under internal factors, it examines socio-cultural dynamics, which shape maritime traditions and policies, and political stability, which determines the continuity of governance and security strategies. In terms of external factors, the chapter looks at the influence of global powers, specifically the United States and China, focusing on their military cooperation, geopolitical interests, and economic initiatives such as the BRI. It also discusses the role of regional powers, particularly India and China, in shaping Sri Lanka's maritime policy through strategic proximity and security concerns. Additionally, the influence of small island nations like Seychelles and Mauritius, as well as New Zealand and Singapore, is considered in the context of regional maritime cooperation, security, and governance. These internal and external factors collectively shape the evolution of Sri Lanka's maritime strategy in the 21st century.

Chapter three explores the multifaceted benefits of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. It begins with Environmental Protection and Sustainable Resource Management, covering sustainable ocean resource management, marine conservation and international cooperation, and climate change adaptation and coastal protection. The chapter then shifts focus to tourism and marine-based industries, discussing the role of maritime security in promoting sustainable tourism, the impact of marine biodiversity on tourism development, and the interconnection between fisheries and maritime tourism. Lastly, it examines the benefits of enhancing national security and sovereignty, including strengthening border security and immigration control, protecting territorial integrity, and leveraging Sri Lanka's strategic positioning in the IO. These elements collectively highlight how maritime security contributes to environmental, economic, and national security priorities.

Chapter four examines the challenges facing Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy. The chapter begins with contemporary maritime security challenges, focusing on geopolitical rivalries, particularly between the USA and China. It then addresses domestic challenges, such as insufficient naval facilities and budgetary constraints, economic limitations impacting maritime defense development, and a lack of equipment and intelligence gaps. Next, the chapter explores emerging threats in the IOR, including the growing risks from non-state actors and maritime piracy. It also covers human and resource constraints in maritime security enforcement, highlighting the issues of dependence on external assistance for security operations, legal and regulatory framework gaps, and the need for interdepartmental training and capacity building. These challenges collectively impact Sri Lanka's ability to effectively manage its maritime security strategy.

Chapter five focuses on improving Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy and operational readiness. It begins with the Retooling Maritime Strategy, which includes integrating new technologies and practices into naval security, modernizing and adapting strategically to emerging threats, and adopting a multi-dimensional approach combining defense, diplomacy, and economic security. The chapter then examines MDA Enhancements, including the use of advanced surveillance systems (satellite, AIS), fostering regional MDA collaborations, and expanding national and regional maritime security capabilities. Lastly, it discusses Port Security Risk Mitigating Strategies, highlighting the adoption of international security standards, strengthening port facilities to prevent illicit activities, and developing crisis management and response **systems** for maritime incidents. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance Sri Lanka's maritime security for a safer future.

The conclusion of this thesis highlights the importance of the research by summarizing its key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It emphasizes the need to strengthen Sri Lanka's maritime security through enhanced collaboration with international partners, modernization of naval capabilities, and securing essential investments. These measures are aimed at enabling Sri Lanka to effectively address the complexities of maritime security in the 21st century. Additionally, the conclusion reflects on the broader significance of the

study, summarizing the main points and their implications for the field. Based on the results, several suggestions are provided to guide future research and practice. These include adopting innovative strategies to achieve better outcomes and conducting further studies to address specific gaps identified during the research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Sri Lanka's strategic location as an important hub for global maritime trade routes between the Middle East, Asia, and Africa highlights the significance of maritime security in the IOR. Before the 21st century, colonial interactions and post-independence security dynamics influenced Sri Lanka's maritime security approach. Considering the historical background, it is clear that Sri Lanka's maritime approach was mostly reactive, responding to current problems rather than foreseeing potential challenges in advance. In the absence of a comprehensive, overarching maritime security strategy, this required preserving cordial ties with regional countries and safeguarding national waters against illegal fishing and smuggling. With a focus on enhancing naval capabilities and increasing the efficacy of the SLN, which became a crucial institution in defending maritime interests, the post-colonial era witnessed a greater emphasis on national security, particularly after the Civil War.

As globally and the region changed in the 21st century, Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy changed significantly. Sri Lanka sought to reconcile its non-aligned foreign policy with enhancing its maritime capabilities in light of the IOR's increasing significance as a site of geopolitical rivalry, particularly involving major powers like China and India. To address various challenges, such as piracy, human trafficking, and IUU fishing, as well as the effects of climate change on marine resources, this plan acknowledged the need to enhance MDA. The creation of a maritime identity that affirmed Sri Lanka's position as a legitimate participant in the IOR started to be emphasized in that nation's strategic documents. A theoretical framework for understanding the importance of naval force in controlling sea lanes and protecting economic interests was established by the integration of theories such as G. Till's interpretation of maritime strategy and A. T. Mahan's sea power theory. Sri Lanka's goals of preserving a stable marine environment that promotes economic expansion were strongly aligned with Mahan's emphasis on naval superiority as essential for safeguarding trade routes and ensuring national security.

It is evident in analyzing the impact of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy in the 21st century that the maritime domain is being increasingly recognized as being essential to the growth of the country. To protect maritime interests and deal with transnational issues, the administration has started to cultivate alliances with both international friends and regional players. Enhancing regional security frameworks and fostering maritime cooperation have been made possible through collaborative efforts with groups like the IORA. Furthermore, Sri Lanka is committed to leveraging its unique geographical position, as seen by its strategic plans to improve port infrastructure and maritime services. As one of the biggest transshipment hubs already, Colombo's ports demonstrate how maritime security and national economic interests may coexist. However, despite these developments, Sri Lanka has encountered several difficulties, such as a lack of resources, problems with interagency coordination, and outside pressure from more powerful maritime powers. The successful execution of maritime governance has been hampered by the absence of a cohesive civil maritime security policy, calling for a systemic approach to better align agency mandates and improve operational capabilities. As Sri Lanka tackles these challenges in the 21st century, several initiatives have emerged to strengthen its maritime security strategy. Programs aimed at enhancing interagency cooperation have accelerated, as demonstrated by training and cooperative structures developed with support from global agencies such as the UNODC. By successfully enhancing the capacities of maritime law enforcement organizations, such measures have strengthened Sri Lanka's will to combat maritime crime and safeguard important sea lanes. For Sri Lanka to better respond to illegal activities in its territorial waters, important training programs have been created to improve proficiency in utilizing advanced technologies for maritime surveillance and enforcement.

Furthermore, making the most of alliances with countries such as Australia, Japan, and India has made it easier to exchange information and conduct cooperative maritime security operations, which has resulted in a thorough grasp of the opportunities and challenges that the IOR shared.

In conclusion, addressing the research question of how Sri Lanka has negotiated its maritime security challenges in the 21st century involves understanding the interplay between enhanced maritime strategies and external geopolitical pressures. The findings suggest a diversified strategy incorporating contemporary economic and environmental issues with conventional maritime security measures. Future strategy recommendations stress the significance of creating a cohesive framework for civil maritime security that encourages stakeholder collaboration, resource allocation, and interagency coordination.

Additionally, Sri Lanka should concentrate on developing strong naval capabilities and international collaborations that improve collective security in the IOR, utilizing the advantages of Mahan's and Till's sea power theories. The path forward requires a dedication to sustainable maritime practices and the creation of a regional security architecture that protects Sri Lanka's maritime borders and resources for coming generations while taking into account the interests of all parties involved.

Recommendations

Sri Lanka, strategically located in the heart of the IO, has long been a vital player in maritime affairs, serving as a crossroads for global shipping routes. Historically, Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy was shaped by its colonial legacy, wherein maritime interests were predominantly managed by imperial powers to safeguard their trade routes and project naval supremacy in the region. The island nation made gradual progress toward developing its maritime security framework after gaining independence, but these initiatives were frequently hampered by a lack of funding and a well-thought-out plan. In the second part of the 20th century, little effort was made to modernize naval assets, instead concentrating on combating piracy, illegal fishing, and the exploitation of maritime resources. Additionally, the nearly three-decade-long civil war shifted focus and resources toward internal security, making maritime issues less important. To take advantage of its geostrategic location and handle new threats, Sri Lanka realized in the 21st century that it needed a comprehensive maritime security plan. The growing importance of the IOR in international trade and geopolitics served as the impetus for this change. By strategically positioning itself as a major participant in regional maritime security, the island nation used its ports and naval prowess to contribute to regional stability. To take advantage of its geostrategic location and handle new threats, Sri Lanka realized in the 21st century that it needed a comprehensive maritime security strategy. The growing importance of the IOR in international trade and geopolitics served as the impetus for this change. By strategically positioning itself as a major participant in regional maritime security, the island nation used its ports and naval prowess to contribute to regional stability.

A key component of Sri Lanka's maritime strategy in the 21st century has been cooperation with regional and global powers. The nation has taken an active position in multilateral projects like the IORA to promote regional cooperation. Sri Lanka's participation in the BRI is another indication of its dedication to using global alliances to improve its security and maritime infrastructure. To avoid becoming entangled in the geopolitical contests that define the IOR, the country has also attempted to preserve a delicate balance in its relations with China, India, and other superpowers. This delicate balancing act demonstrates Sri Lanka's practical strategy for protecting its maritime interests while navigating the intricate geopolitical landscape of the region.

The influence of Sri Lanka's maritime security strategy in the 21st century has been significant in several ways. First, it has enhanced the nation's role in ensuring regional stability. Through anti-piracy patrols, search and rescue operations, and maritime law enforcement, Sri Lanka has contributed to the safety and security of the IO. Second, the country's strategic investments in port infrastructure have elevated its status as a major logistics hub, attracting international shipping and boosting its economy. Ports like Colombo and Hambantota have become vital nodes in the global supply chain, underscoring the economic dimension of Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. Third, Sri Lanka's active participation in regional security dialogues and exercises has strengthened its partnerships with key stakeholders, reinforcing its position as a reliable partner in the IOR.

Despite these advancements, Sri Lanka faces numerous challenges in its quest to secure its maritime domain. Geopolitical tensions between major powers, particularly India and China, pose significant dilemmas for Sri Lanka, given its reliance on investments and partnerships from both nations. The Hambantota Port, leased to China under a 99-year agreement, has been a focal point of controversy, raising concerns about debt

dependency and the strategic implications of Chinese influence. Resource constraints further exacerbate the challenges faced by Sri Lanka. Limited budget allocations for the navy and coast guard have hindered the modernization of naval assets and the development of advanced surveillance systems. This gap in capabilities leaves the country vulnerable to a range of threats, including illegal fishing, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and maritime terrorism.

Environmental issues also present a growing challenge for Sri Lanka's maritime security. The island nation is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events. These environmental threats not only jeopardize Sri Lanka's maritime infrastructure but also exacerbate competition over dwindling marine resources. Additionally, the rise of transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and human smuggling in the IO underscores the need for enhanced maritime law enforcement. Sri Lanka's ability to address these challenges is critical to safeguarding its maritime domain and ensuring long-term security and prosperity.

To strengthen its maritime security strategy, Sri Lanka has undertaken several initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges and capitalizing on emerging opportunities. One key focus has been fostering international collaboration to enhance maritime domain awareness and security capabilities. By participating in joint naval exercises and multilateral security frameworks, Sri Lanka has sought to build stronger partnerships with countries like India, the United States, and Japan. These collaborations have facilitated the sharing of intelligence, technology, and best practices, enabling Sri Lanka to address transnational maritime threats more effectively. The acquisition of modern naval vessels and surveillance equipment has also been prioritized to bolster Sri Lanka's maritime defense capabilities. Investments in satellite-based tracking systems and advanced radar technology have improved the country's ability to monitor and respond to activities within its territorial waters and EEZ.

Legislative reforms have played a crucial role in strengthening Sri Lanka's maritime security framework. The government has enacted laws to combat illegal fishing, regulate shipping activities, and protect marine ecosystems. These measures align with Till's concept of a balanced maritime strategy that integrates military, economic, and environmental dimensions. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has embraced the principles of the blue economy, emphasizing the sustainable use of marine resources to promote economic growth while preserving environmental integrity. Initiatives to develop fisheries, aquaculture, and marine tourism have underscored the economic potential of Sri Lanka's maritime domain.

Mahan and Till's Sea power theories provide a valuable lens through which to analyze Sri Lanka's maritime strategy. Mahan's emphasis on controlling key maritime chokepoints is evident in Sri Lanka's focus on ports like Colombo and Hambantota, which serve as gateways to the IO. These ports are not only vital for economic growth but also enhance Sri Lanka's strategic leverage in regional geopolitics. Till's theory, which highlights the dual military and economic roles of sea power, is reflected in Sri Lanka's efforts to balance naval modernization with initiatives to promote trade and sustainable development. The integration of these theoretical perspectives underscores the strategic depth of Sri Lanka's maritime security approach.

Mahan's theory of sea power posits that national greatness is inextricably linked to naval strength and maritime dominance. It advocates for a powerful navy, vital shipping lanes, and strategic naval bases as essential components to ensure a nation's security and global influence. Adopting Mahan's advice would require Sri Lanka to enhance its naval forces to defend its territorial waters in the face of growing maritime traffic. However, there are significant constraints due to the reality of limited national resources. For example, fiscal restrictions and an imbalance that favors the army over the navy in military spending frequently threaten the Sri Lankan Navy's capability, despite its past strength. Due to this circumstance, Sri Lanka's defense budget allocations must be reevaluated to give maritime security top priority, particularly through investments in naval modernization and surveillance capabilities.

In contrast, G. Till's approach emphasizes the strategic interplay between land and sea power, advocating for a balanced defense strategy and highlighting the importance of MDA. Till suggests that effective MDA is crucial for small maritime states like Sri Lanka, which must contend with both traditional and non-traditional security threats. There has never been a greater need for a cohesive and well-coordinated maritime security plan than

makes use of both military and civilian capabilities. Inter-agency frameworks for operational readiness and information sharing can improve Sri Lanka's ability to respond to emerging maritime challenges. This understanding is shown in recent efforts, such as the joint training programs that UNODC has arranged to bolster MDA capabilities. These initiatives provide as an example of how interagency collaboration could be formalized to produce a comprehensive strategy for maritime security.

Additionally, Sri Lanka might use the SAARC to strengthen its maritime security. To combat non-traditional threats including drug trafficking, the SAARC can promote regional cooperation and intelligence sharing. By increasing maritime patrols, regional navies can work together to address maritime threats in the IOR and help Sri Lanka combat maritime threats for improved regional security.

The country can use its location to boost trade through busy ports, but it also runs the risk of becoming a conduit for illegal activities because of its lack of enforcement capabilities. The growing volume of maritime traffic in Sri Lankan waters makes it more difficult to maintain effective oversight and respond to illicit activities, including drug trafficking, which is made possible by small, unregulated fishing vessels. These key findings highlight the dual opportunities and risks that result from Sri Lanka's geographic location.

On the other hand, the following suggestions are meant to be put into practice to improve Sri Lanka's maritime security.

1. Develop a maritime doctrine for Sri Lanka.
2. Establish a joint operation center with a domestic cooperative security approach to investigate issues about the maritime sector. The operation commander could use this to respond quickly to a specific scenario.
3. Establish an academic maritime security center to facilitate collaboration among policymakers, scholars, and policy analysts.
4. To ensure maritime security, a political choice should be made to prioritize funding for the Coast Guard and Navy.

Partnerships and alliances become crucial elements in negotiating Sri Lanka's maritime security challenges as it traverses the complex geopolitics of the IOR. Amid concerns over China's growing influence, Sri Lanka has taken action to strengthen its relationship with India. A proactive attitude to strengthening regional cooperation is demonstrated by agreements like the creation of the MRCC, which was significantly supported by Indian resources. To coordinate maritime security initiatives in the area, Sri Lanka actively participates in international forums such as the Colombo Security Conclave, which is reflected in this joint venture. Sri Lanka's aim to diversify its security partnerships to improve its capabilities in the face of conflicting regional interests is further demonstrated by its engagement with international stakeholders, including the USA and Australia.

Several recommendations emerge in light of these dynamics. First and foremost, Sri Lanka must increase its naval capabilities investment through partnerships that provide access to cutting-edge naval technology and industry best practices for maritime governance. To increase its surveillance capabilities without significantly increasing its defense budget, the country should concentrate on building a mixed fleet that combines cutting-edge offshore patrol boats and UAVs. A strong defense posture against illegal maritime activity will be promoted by promoting a comprehensive maritime strategy that unifies military and civil efforts for MDA.

Secondly, fostering operational cooperation with neighboring countries can amplify Sri Lanka's MDA. Addressing the issues raised by transnational maritime crimes may be made easier by formalizing information-sharing procedures with maritime neighbors through bilateral or multilateral agreements. Taking use of regional cooperation under the IORA and BIMSTEC frameworks can also be a way to coordinate maritime strategies and share intelligence. Improving public-private collaborations may also help to mobilize resources and knowledge for maritime surveillance efforts.

Sri Lanka must reconsider the implications of its non-aligned stance in the context of the escalating great power competition as it continues to develop its maritime security approaches. To avoid being a pawn in their

strategic rivalry, one must skillfully navigate the difficult balance of maintaining neutrality while utilizing ties with both China and India. Policymakers should develop particular maritime policies centered around maintaining the Indian Ocean as a "Zone of Peace" in order to further streamline this balance, while reaffirming pledges to refrain from militarization while safeguarding national interests.

Furthermore, the Government of Sri Lanka should identify realistic policies to overcome structural and practical challenges of maritime security issues of Sri Lanka paying attention to the following areas.

The Sri Lankan government must estimate the economic value of its marine area, consider the changing nature of sea power, and consider enforcing new legal coordination and capacity-building mechanisms, considering international maritime law provisions, for long-term and short-term blue economic policy.

Sri Lanka's government should explore international security cooperation, focusing on its marine area's strategic importance for international security, trade, and commerce, and identifying potential partners for enhancing its blue economic strategy.

Sri Lanka's strategic location and emerging Indian Ocean hub require sophisticated naval power to protect its marine area, providing security for 900 daily commercial ships. The government should focus on port strength and naval expansion to enhance national security interests.

Sri Lanka should focus on developing a trade hub on the Indian Ocean, enhancing its ports to accommodate 50% of global container traffic and 70% of seaborne oil. It should also enhance its industrial capacity, scientific knowledge, and human resource management. Improving maritime diplomatic relations and focusing on the protection, conservation, and consumption of sea-born resources can minimize maritime challenges.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka's maritime security challenges encapsulate a complex interplay of internal resilience and external pressures. To overcome these challenges, cooperation frameworks, capacity building, and strategic maritime governance are essential. Sri Lanka can strengthen its framework for maritime security and establish its sovereignty in a geopolitical environment that is changing quickly by adhering to Mahan and Till's theories. The recommendations made here are intended to strengthen prosperity and national security by managing the maritime domain in a thorough and cooperative approach.

Abbreviations

ACSA	: Acquisition and Cross Services Agreement
ADB	: Asian Development Bank
AEO	: Authorized Economic Operator
AIS	: Automatic Identification System
AOPVs	: Advanced Offshore Patrol Vehicles
ARF	: ASEAN Regional Forum
ASY	: Annual Sustainable Yield
BBNJ	: Beyond National Jurisdiction
BC	: Before Christ
BCE	: Before the Christian Era
BCIM	: Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar
BIMSTEC	: Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technival and Economic Cooperation
BIOT	: British Indian Ocean Territory
BRI	: Belt and Road Initiative

CARAT	: Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training
CC&CRMD	: Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department
CGPCS	: Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia
CICT	: Colombo International Container Terminal
CMF	: Combined Maritime Forces
COPs	: Coastal Observation Posts
CORPAT	: Coordinated Patrols
CSC	: Colombo Security Conclave
CSI	: Container Security Initiative
C-TPAT	: Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism
DFC	: Development Finance Corporation
EDA	: Excess Defense Articles
EEZ	: Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	: European Union
FASTPAC	: Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Pacific
FTA	: Free Trade Agreement
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GMCP	: Global Maritime Crime Programme
GPS	: Global Positioning Systems
HACGAM	: Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting
HADR	: Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HFSWR	: High-Frequency Surface Wave Radar
HSOPs	: Harmonized Standard Operating Procedures
IFC	: Information Fusion Centre
IFC-IOR	: Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region
IMBL	: International Maritime Boundary Line
IMLI	: International Maritime Law Institute
IMO	: International Maritime Organization
IO	: Indian Ocean
IONS	: Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IOR	: Indian Ocean Region
IORA	: Indian Ocean Rim Association
IoT	: Internet of Things
IOZP	: International Ocean Zone of Peace
ISG	: Institute for Security Governance's
ISPS	: International Ship and Port Facility Security
ISR	: Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
ISSC	: International Ship Security Certificate

IUU	: Illegal, unreported, and unregulated
JMICC	: Joint Maritime Information Coordination Center
KDU	: Kotalawela Defense University
KLEs	: Key Leadership Engagements
LTTE	: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDA	: Maritime Domains Awareness
MDSL	: Maritime Doctrine of Sri Lanka
MEPA	: Marine Environment Protection Authority
MLE	: Maritime Law Enforcement
MPAs	: Marine Protected Areas
MRCC	: Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
MSDI	: Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure
MSMSS	: Multi-Spectral Maritime Surveillance System
MSR	: Maritime Sea Silk Road
MSTT	: Marine Small Target Trackers
MTSA	: Maritime Transportation Security Act
OCP	: Ocean Country Partnership Programme
OPVs	: Offshore Patrol Vessels
OSDS	: Oil Spill Detection Sri Lanka
PCUs	: Port Control Units
PFSOs	: Port Facility Security Officers
PPP	: Public-Private Partnerships
RMSPs	: Regional Maritime Security Patrols
SAARC	: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAGAR	: Security and Growth for All in the Region
SCG	: Seychelles' Coast Guard
SCMA	: Special Coastal Management Area
SEA	: Strategic Environmental Appraisal
SEACAT	: Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training
SLCG	: Sri Lanka Coast Guard
SLN	: Sri Lankan Navy
SLNMS	: Sri Lanka National Maritime Strategy
SLOC	: Sea Lines of Communication
SLPA	: Sri Lanka Ports Authority
SLTDA	: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
SLTPB	: Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau
SLVMS	: Sri Lanka Vessel Monitoring System
SOFA	: Status of Forces Agreement
SOLAS	: Signatory of the Safety of Life at Sea

SOPs	: Standard Operating Procedures
SSCI	: Security Significant Security Cooperation Initiative
SSOs	: Ship Security Officers
UAVs	: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UK	: United Kingdom
UNCLOS	: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNO	: United Nations Organization
UNODC	: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	: United States
VMSs	: Vessel Monitoring Systems
WCO	: World Customs Organization
WMU	: World Maritime University
ZoP	: Zone of Peace

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