PAKISTAN NAVY'S 10th COMMAND TAKEOVER OF COMBINED TASK FORCE - 150
PNS HAFEEZ is named after the late Vice Admiral Hasan Hafeez Ahmad TQA who was Commander-in-Chief/Chief of the Naval Staff of Pakistan Navy from 1971 to 1975. The establishment was commissioned as a First Aid Naval Hospital on 24 March 1986.

On shifting of the Naval Headquarters to Islamabad in 1974, a Sick Bay was established in PNS ZAFAR to provide medical facilities to the NHQ employees and their families. It had capacity to detain 2-4 patients pending recovery/evacuation to CMH/MH Rawalpindi.

In 1976, due to shifting of the remaining portion of NHQ and its supporting units, the work load of sick bay increased; therefore, the sickbay was upgraded to 24 bed Naval Medical Center (NMC), under administrative control of PNS ZAFAR.

With the establishment of Naval Complex, the work load of NMC increased further. A large number of retired personnel of Armed Forces residing in Islamabad were also dependent on NMC for medical facilities. A case for up gradation of NMC to 100 bedded hospitals was taken up with the Govt to cope with the additional work load. PNS HAFEEZ started functioning as a 100 bed hospital w.e.f 20 June 1993.

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Command and Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy was held at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. The Conference was chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah.

Matters related to operational preparedness, developmental plans of Pakistan Navy and prevailing security situation were reviewed. Detailed briefings on various ongoing and future Pakistan Navy projects and plans as well as operational activities and security aspects at Gwadar Port particularly with respect to Maritime Components of CPEC Project were also given to Chief of the Naval Staff.

While making an overall appraisal of the prevalent security environment, Chief of the Naval Staff expressed satisfaction over operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy in the presence of prevalent Maritime challenges. The Naval Chief while expressing Pakistan Navy’s resolve to ensure seaward defence of vital maritime infrastructure and protection of the maritime interests of Pakistan against all threats, reiterated PN’s unflinching resolve and determination to safeguard maritime frontiers of Pakistan at all costs. The Admiral also reiterated that Pakistan Navy will continue to play a significant role in sustenance of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean Region in the midst of complex, challenging and evolving contemporary security environment. He also urged the field commanders to remain at the highest state of preparedness and maintain a constant vigil in their Area of Responsibility.

The Naval Chief emphasized to conduct coastal security exercises regularly in coordination with other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and Organizations to acquire the highest degree of professionalism and interoperability.

The Naval Chief also expressed satisfaction over operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy in the face of prevalent Maritime challenges and lauded the morale and motivation of troops at all levels.

Command and Staff Conference is the apex decision making body of Pakistan Navy in which all Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders undertake strategic review of Pakistan Navy’s Policies and Plans. 

02 August 2017

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Pakistan Navy took over the Command of Multinational Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) from French Navy at an impressive change of command ceremony held at Headquarters US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Rear Admiral Naveed Ahmed Rizvi of Pakistan Navy took over the Command of CTF-150 from Rear Admiral Olivier Lebas of French Navy.

It is the 10th time that Pakistan Navy has been entrusted with this honour. Vice Admiral Kevin M Donegan, Commander US Naval Force Central Command & Commander Combined Maritime Forces presided over the ceremony.

At the outset of the ceremony, Rear Admiral Olivier Lebas, the outgoing CTF-150, presented resume of CTF 150’s accomplishments. Commander Maritime Forces Vice Admiral Kevin M Donegan, during his address also congratulated him for a job well done.

While addressing the audience, Rear Admiral Naveed Ahmed Rizvi, new CTF-150 assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this prestigious responsibility. CTF-150 also lauded the outgoing French Navy team and their dedicated efforts to achieve objectives of CTF-150 during their tenure of Command and reaffirmed his resolve to continue operations with the same zeal and zest. He further highlighted that relations between Pakistan Navy and coalition Navies will continue to strengthen due to our focused commitment in support of collaborative maritime security to bring peace and stability to this region.

Combined Task Force 150 is one of the three Task Forces within the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). It is a Multinational Coalition for Counter Terrorism operations at sea in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) with the mission to promote Maritime Security at sea, deter, deny and disrupt acts of terrorism while countering related illicit activities at sea. The number of participating countries in CMF has risen to 31 over the period of time.

Prior to present Command tenure, Pakistan Navy had the exclusive distinction of commanding CTF-150 for nine times and Multinational Combined Task Force 151 (Counter Piracy Task Force) eight times which is a manifestation of the trust and respect enjoyed by Pakistan Navy among coalition partners. Over the years, Pakistan Navy has not only served the maritime interests of Pakistan but has also very effectively fulfilled its international obligations.

The ceremony was attended by Pakistan’s Ambassador to Bahrain H.E Mr Javed Malik and several high-ranking military officials from coalition countries.
Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah officially visited Germany. During the visit, the Naval Chief called on Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Germany, Vice Admiral Ruehle, German Naval Chief (Inspector of German Navy), Vice Admiral Andreas Krause and also visited German Naval Academy at Flensburg and German Submarine Naval Base at Eckernförde.

Upon his arrival at Federal Ministry of Defence Germany at Berlin, Admiral was received by German Naval Chief (Inspector of German Navy), Vice Admiral Andreas Krause. A ceremonial Guard with Military Honours was also presented to the Naval Chief on the occasion. Thereafter, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah laid wreath on German Armed Forces Memorial at Federal Ministry of Defence.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah called on Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Germany, Vice Admiral Ruehle in his office. During the meeting, professional matters of mutual interest and bilateral defence ties were dilated upon. Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Germany highly appreciated the role and contributions of Pakistan in spearheading various initiatives for maintaining peace and stability in the region. Both the dignitaries agreed and looked forward to further enhancing the interaction between Pakistan and Germany in the diverse fields of training, mutual visits and defence collaboration. During discussions with German Naval Chief, various matters of
mutual interest including bilateral naval collaboration, Maritime Security and Stability, Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan (CMCP), Counter Piracy Operations, drug trafficking and various avenues to enhance interoperability between Pakistan and German Navy were pondered upon. Naval Chief also highlighted Pakistan’s commitment and performance in fight against terrorism in general and Pakistan Navy’s efforts for maintaining regional peace and security in particular. Vice Admiral Andreas Krause acknowledged Pakistan Navy’s efforts and focused commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in the region and also hoped to extend cooperation between both the Navies in diverse fields of Naval collaboration.

During his visit to German Naval Academy, Chief of the Naval Staff was received by Flotillen Admiral Kay-Achim Shonbach, Commandant German Naval Academy. Professional matters of mutual interest came under discussion during the meeting. Subsequently, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah visited German Submarine Training Centre at German Submarine Naval Base Eckernförde, where, Chief of the Naval Staff was given detailed briefings regarding Submarine Training Centre.

Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah also visited German Navy Ship and Submarine. During his visits onboard, the Naval Chief interacted with crew of the Ship and Submarine and lauded their operational competence.
Ground Breaking Ceremonies of Maritime Counter Terrorism Centre (MCTC) and 2nd Force Protection Battalion were held at Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah graced the ceremonies as Chief Guest. Commander Coast Rear Admiral Abdul Aleem was also present.

Maritime Counter Terrorism Centre (MCTC) is being constructed with an aim to fulfill the training requirements of Special Operation Forces and special wings of own and other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in Maritime Counter Terrorism domain. MCTC will house state of the art training facilities including Live Fire Shoot Houses, Sniper Ranges, Military Training in Urban Terrain, Close Quarter Combat Ranges and simulators etc.

The 2nd Force Protection Battalion is an operational segment of Pak Marines and has been raised for protection of Karachi Harbour and offshore infrastructure including sensitive installation at Karachi, Anti Amphibious Operations and Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief Operations.

The inauguration ceremonies were attended by a large number of Naval officers and CPOs/Sailors. MCTC is being constructed with an aim to fulfill the training requirements of Special Operation Forces and special wings of own and other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in Maritime Counter Terrorism domain.
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Ground Breaking of new Runway at Naval Air Station Ormara and inauguration of newly constructed academic block of Cadet College Ormara (CCO) was held at Ormara, Balochistan. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah was the Chief Guest on the occasions.

Upon his arrival the Naval Chief was received by Commander Coast Rear Admiral Abdul Aleem. After the inauguration ceremony of the academic block of CCO, Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah interacted with the project team and congratulated for timely completion of the project. He appreciated their spirit and expressed hope that the college will play an important role in the nation building. He said that the role of teachers is most significant in educational institutions. The admiral further added that the teachers of Cadet College Ormara should also focus on character building of cadets along with educational and training activities.

The foundation of Cadet College Ormara was laid in June 2012 and it started functioning in a temporarily arranged building in 2013, with an aim to bring the young generation of Balochistan in the socio-economic stream of the country at par with other provinces through quality education and training, and facilitate them to come forward to serve the nation. Since its inception, 05 batches of cadets have enrolled in the college. In addition to the academic block, the new building of CCO will comprise cadet hostels, shooting range, science and computer labs, auditorium, play grounds, library and a mosque.

The Naval Chief also attended ground breaking ceremony of the new runway at Naval Air Station (Ormara) and unveiled the plaque. During the welcome address, Commander Coast Rear Admiral Abdul Aleem highlighted the significance of the new runway for Naval Air operations in Balochistan and said that the construction of new runway at Ormara is yet another manifestation of Pakistan Navy’s aim of westward expansion.

Both the ceremonies were attended by officials of Pakistan Navy, Frontier Works Organization, Civil Aviation Authority, Civil administration, educationists and a large number of local notables. Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah interacted with the project team and congratulated for timely completion of the project.
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22nd Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship

The 22nd Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship was held at Karachi Golf Club. The leading golfers around the country participated in the championship. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah graced the prize distribution ceremony as Chief Guest.

At the conclusion of four days long championship Muhammad Ashfaq emerged as a new champion and Shabbir Iqbal stood second. Vivek Anand stole the show by winning the biggest prize of the championship by hitting hole-in-one.

The championship was open to various categories. The categories in the championship included 36 holes each for caddies, semi professionals, senior professionals and junior professionals. 18 holes matches were played for seniors and ladies, 9 holes for veterans and 72 holes each for professionals and amateurs. With prize money of Rs 7.0 million, the event continued to be the highest prize money golf event of Pakistan. The richest-ever golf event of the country attracted more than 600 golfers from across the country and featured the cream of national golf, in all categories.

Commending the untiring efforts of Pakistan Navy, KGC staff and the organizers for seamless conduct of the championship, Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah said that the successful conduct of the 22nd CNS Golf Championship is the manifestation of highest level of patronage enjoyed by this game. The Naval Chief also said that golf is a fast emerging game for all ages in Pakistan and Pakistan Navy takes pride in organizing a golf championship of this stature every year.

The chief guest appreciated the participants of 22nd CNS Golf Championship for providing excellent entertainment to the golf enthusiasts in Pakistan and congratulated the winners for their remarkable success. He also paid special gratitude to the sponsors and media for their support to the game of Golf and Pakistan Navy’s efforts to promote sports in the country.

The Ceremony was attended by a large number of dignitaries from Armed forces of Pakistan, civil organizations and Golfers of the country.
John Chaffey, in his famous poetic tribute to submariners, says in ‘Soul of a Submariner’, “Each year he grows more restless, the salt flows through his veins, but the depths are for the young, not the old with many pains.” This couplet sums up the self-immolating temerity of those silent prowlers who risk death and discomfort by moving intrepidly across the ocean currents in the stygian gloom of sea depths. Life under the sea is not for the fainthearted; it takes a special breed to come up to the verity of John Chaffey’s poetic tribute to the submariners.

For a country like Pakistan – which is faced with the threat of a much larger and aggressive Indian navy – submarines are the ultimate levellers. The fear of submarines can induce circumspection and a little humility in Indian military planners that set great store through a blue water navy bristling with arms to browbeat smaller regional navies in a quest for the dominance of the Indian Ocean.

The Tench-class fast-attack diesel electric submarine called Ghazi by the Pakistan Navy was leased to Pakistan in 1963 and was the only submarine that was held by any navy during the 1965 war. The result of Ghazi’s aggressive deployment was the bottling up of the Indian fleet that did not dare to sail out of its harbour, deciding to sit out the war due to fear. S N Kohli, the Indian Deputy Naval Chief, writes in ‘We Dared’ about the infuriation and shame of the Indian sailors who felt belittled by the timidity of their high command.

The memory of such pusillanimity rankled with the Indian military planners who set about raising the stock of their navy during the inter-war years. The upshot of the 1965 humiliation was the comprehensive modernisation and development of the Indian Navy that effectively tripled its size by 1971. The Indian naval build-up in the shape of four submarines and eight OSAs, a class missile boats, was not matched by Pakistan where a phasing out plan of the WWII vintage surface fleet was under progress.

The 1971 war that was mostly fought in the eastern half of the country saw a daring action by the Pakistan Navy. In order to keep the Indian Fleet confined to its coast, the Pakistan Navy deployed three submarines on nodal points along the Indian Western coast.

The Daphne-class submarine Hangor prowled the sea along the coast opposite Bombay. It came across a mouth-watering opportunity to sink the Indian fleet, which was moving out of Bombay on the night between December 3/4. But it restrained itself due to the rules of engagement given by the Pakistan Naval Headquarters to not attack any warship unless it attacked first. However, in subsequent duels, when permission was granted, Hangor sunk an Indian anti-submarine frigate INS Khukri off the coast of Kathiawar on December 9. Hangor...
defied Indian attempts to destroy it through 150 depth charges and remained instrumental in bottling up the Indian fleet.

The Pakistan Navy – in order to hunt Vikrant and also relieve pressure on depleted naval resources in the eastern theatre – decided to send the only submarine with pluck and range to accomplish the arduous mission: the redoubtable veteran of 1965, i.e., the Ghazi.

In the eastern theatre, the Indians had a decisive superiority with a Task Force comprising aircraft-carrier Vikrant, two frigates, a destroyer, a submarine and a few patrol vessels. Pakistan just had four gunboats and few small riverine crafts. Some war historians also reported that Indians had hidden the INS Vikrant, their much-vaunted aircraft carrier, in the backwaters of the Andaman Sea as they feared Pakistani submarines.

The Ghazi, with a 93-member crew under the command of Commander Zafar, embarked upon its daring and hazardous 2,000 miles trek from Karachi to the eastern theatre on November 14, 1971. Its last message was received on November 26 while rounding the coast of Sri Lanka. It bypassed Vishakapatnam, the Indian Navy’s eastern base on the scent of the Vikrant like a bloodhound. As Vikrant had moved far ahead to hide in the Andaman Sea, the submarine could not locate its intended prey. It turned back and came towards the Vishakapatnam Port for the second part of its mission to lay mines in the narrow approach to the harbour. The intention was to bottle up Indian heavy naval concentration in its strategic eastern port base. The submarine successfully laid mines during the day in a linear fashion and intended to retreat to the deep sea due to the presence of Indian patrol vessels. The mines – which were laid 150 metres apart and at a depth of 30 metres – had later damaged an Indian vessel too.

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When the Ghazi returned during the night to complete its remaining task, it committed the cardinal mistake of re-crossing its earlier path – most probably due to the obstreperous post-monsoon heavy tides. As the musical whir of the diesel engines and the sweet purr of electronic gadgets created an auditory sensation akin to a lullaby, the intrepid crew of the Ghazi prepared to lay the second string of mines.

The dangerously aggressive gambit tempted fate as the submarine accidentally struck one of its earlier laid mines. A deafening crescendo of sound heralded the martyrdom of 93 brave souls as the Ghazi went up in a blaze of glory, striking terror in the hearts of Indian sailors at Vishakapatnam. It was a classic act of self-immolation by a daring crew that had defied Indian surveillance and sea hazards on one of the most hazardous and daring war patrols in naval history.

The result of the Ghazi’s destruction was the liberty of action available with the Indian eastern fleet that blockaded the eastern theatre, disallowing any successor or naval evacuation of Pakistan forces.

The Indian revisionist historians and Bollywood filmmakers that have tried to credit the Indian Navy with the Ghazi’s sinking have their lies drowned out by a soulful ditty composed by Robert King in honour of the martyred submariners, “No markers herald their watery graves/ Under wind swept seas and rolling waves/ Silent sailors on eternal patrol/ Scan endless skies for kindred soul.”

The Ghazi saga reminds us what a single daring submarine can achieve – a fact we can ignore at our own peril while according due diligence to our naval development.
The CPEC has a potential to revolutionize the regional cooperation in the fields of socio-economic development, trade, shipping, road and railway transportation, communications, industry and banking.

Since the announcement of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project in April 2015, Pakistan and China have been endeavours to construct and operationalise its infrastructure as soon as possible.

Both sides are cognizant to the immense dividends of the project. Pakistan has categorised it as a “game changer.” Chinese also consider it imperative for their “One Belt, One Road” initiative. Simultaneously, the adversaries of both nations have been struggling to sabotage the project. Therefore, both sides need to remain vigilant to the implicit and explicit challenges to the project.

CPEC project has amplified Pakistan’s pivotal role in the connectivity of West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia. Though, Pakistan and China would be the main beneficiary of the project, yet other regional countries would be equally benefited from the operationalisation of the project. Pakistan has always advocated that without increasing economic cooperation among the regional countries, the Central, West and South Asian nations could not resolve their economic challenges. The regional organizations such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Organisations primary objective is to promote trade between/among the members of these organizations. The member nations of these organizations are economically underdeveloped and also encountering socio-political challenges. Perhaps, without economic stability, the political stability is a wishful thinking. These nations need mutual cooperation for the sake of their socio-economic improvement. Hence, CPEC would be having positive consequences for the members of regional organizations.

Pakistan is encouraging the neighbouring states to invest in the CPEC project. Indeed, the neighbouring states’ investment enhances the significance of the project, but it also has constructive
impact on the investors’ economies. On April 21, 2015, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated: “it is catalytic project that will help us combine the geo-economic streams of our countries. The corridor symbolizes our commitment to create win-win partnerships which threaten none and benefit all.” Precisely, CPEC would be having dividends for the entire region.

The ruling elite of the neighbouring countries, except India, also expressed their immense confidence in the CPEC project. On March 1, 2017, Pakistan successfully held the 13th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit at Islamabad. The participants in the ECO expressed their resolve to enhance the regional connectivity. Therefore, they endorsed the theme of the summit—“Connectivity for Regional Prosperity.” Certainly, without regional connectivity, the ECO members cannot resolve their socio-economic problems.

The CPEC has a potential to revolutionize the regional cooperation in the fields of socio-economic development, trade, shipping, road and railway transportation, communications, industry and banking. It would also encourage tourism in the region. The CPEC project seems very advantageous for the ECO member states. It is because one of the main objectives of ECO is “development of transport & communications infrastructure linking the Member States with each other and with the outside world.” Importantly, out of 10 ECO member states 7 are landlocked. The operationalisation of CPEC routes would provide shortest route to sea at least 6 members of ECO. In addition, CPEC would also facilitate the Eurasian trade.

The 13th ECO Summit Islamabad Declaration states: “CPEC is a far-reaching initiative that would act as catalyst for development of entire region.” Perhaps, CPEC would enhance ECO-wide connectivity in terms of transport and transit; telecommunications; cyber and
all forms of energy; as well as people-to-people exchanges, including through regional tourism arrangements.

Pakistan with the assistance of China has built the Gwadar Port. The port obviously holds enormous promise for neighbouring countries and regions such as Afghanistan, China, West Asia, Central Asia and Eurasia. The successful implementation of the CPEC would provide Turkey, Iran and Pakistan access to Central Asian States, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan-Russian Federation and Europe through China. The shipping, trucking and logistics industry of these states would have immense opportunity to grow after operationalisation of the CPEC. Certainly, this unprecedented sea and road link would have far-reaching positive geo-economic dividends for the entire region.

With the operationalization of CPEC/ Gwadar Port, maritime activity off Gwadar and North Arabian Sea is set to grow exponentially. This will include increased shipping activity to/ from our ports as well as development of maritime economic activities along the coast. Therefore, success of CPEC and Gwadar Port is intrinsically linked with conducive maritime environment along our coast. In fact, seaward and coastal security including security of ports is a prerequisite for security of the CPEC project.

Pakistan Navy being cognizant of its responsibilities, has taken a number of initiatives to ensure security of CPEC and Gwadar Port and to augment maritime security arrangements all along the coast including ports and anchorages/approaches. First of all to enhance vigilance and to respond to any emerging threat all along the coast, Pakistan Navy has raised Coastal Security and Harbour Defence Force (CS&HDF). The force comprises a number of Security Stations from Jiwani to Sir Creek. Each station is being equipped with requisite surveillance/ monitoring equipment and response elements.

In addition a suitably configured Task Force-88 comprising ships, air units, UAVs, Fast Attack Craft, shore based surveillance assets and Pak Marines has been raised. Task Force – 88 is aimed at ensuring security of Gwadar Port, its seaward approaches as well as CPEC related and other maritime projects. This especially configured Task Force works in coordination with elements of PMSA and other concerned agencies to ensure economy of efforts and creating synergy.

Further, Pakistan Navy has also established a Joint Maritime Information Coordination Center (JMICC) to improve inter agency coordination amongst various in country and regional organizations associated with the Maritime Domain. The centre acts as the nerve centre for collecting and collating information related to maritime security so as to synergize responses of multiple agencies operating in the maritime domain. At present, JMICC is coordinating actions amongst number of organizations within Pakistan and abroad.

There is no doubt that operationalisation of CPEC definitely leads to a new era of regional socio-economic stability through enhanced regional cooperation for development.
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The Twentieth century has befallen an epoch of insecurity across the globe since the beginning of the new millennium. The post 9/11 world can see the South of Asia and the Middle East as the hub of global politics. The dominant features of this era are based on security, commerce, and communication. As the volume of trade and other commercial activities have gained momentum, the interaction among states have changed its course drastically. As the world is getting more into complex interdependence, the spilled-over “peace” will mostly be present for the states involved into the multilateral approach and are direct party to these arrangements. On the contrary, the other regional as well as global actors might not necessarily be enjoying such interactions, especially since the involvement of the major powers and great powers has increased in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, the peace of these regions would have been jeopardized. In this age of insecurity, the increased reliance of the states on the maritime trade and supply as being more than 90% opens new and complex vistas for the future of the inter-national relations.

The phenomenon of security in the maritime domain is not quite unique or novel. In the realms of security, maritime security is one of the oldest one being considered exceedingly important since ages. Yet it could not be limited or described in any given definition over the centuries of seaborne trade and travelling. Rather it has broader boundaries when the issue of definition comes to the researchers or the academicians working on the topic. The term maritime reflects a plethora of meaning related to all the activities and objects being undertaken with regards to the sea, but carving a definition will never be possible as the concept has to deal with a
number of variables i.e. states as unitary actors and their shifting interests with the passage of time, and changing order within the maritime domain, and constantly altering nature of the threats.

The significance of the maritime boundaries, rights, trade routes, law enforcement in the territorial and regional seas, the issues of maritime security, and maritime safety, have now been enhanced with the development of technologies due to heightened research to tap and explore the maritime resources of the world. Therefore, the maritime security is considered to be about the fortification and defence of all the interests of the states regarding the seas. All the strategies and policies made in this regard have particular purpose to deal with any kind of apparent threat which will include not only countering promptly against any unlawful action or threat at both internal and external levels, but to foil them in advance.

Another thing which is important while talking about maritime security is to differentiate the safety issues within the maritime domain from the security concerns. Maritime safety is absolutely a different area as the safety issues only deal with the calamities, or damages related to the environment, whichever risking or losing the whole ecological balance. These issues could be caused either by the natural forces like volcanic activities or eruptions, earth quakes, tsunamis, tornadoes etc; or accidents like oil spillage, leaking of other dangerous chemicals; or intentional activities like throwing sewage and untreated solid waste and/or factory wastes to the marine waters which could jeopardize or demolish the natural ecological balance of the seas. It involves preclusion as well as responding to such issues. The maritime safety is the area which is mainly

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considered the responsibility of the civilian, states’ governments along with the other stakeholders.

Historically, there had always been significant strategy and policy making in the realms of the maritime security being important for trade and travelling for all the littoral states. It had been believed that controlling and dominating the sea lanes through trade and establishing of stronger naval forces could give impetus to the empires and other emerging imperialist nations. Since the sixteenth century, a famous excerpt “whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself;” by Sir Walter Raleigh had been mentioned in the books and speeches to reflect the importance of maritime. This desire of commanding the seas and seaborne trade had raised different challenges to the world orders of the history, and the same phenomenon is present likewise in the recent times.

There are numerous maritime security issue-areas which need to be dealt or resolved at all the times. One of the most important subjects has been the question of security of the territorial maritime boundaries of the littoral states since beginning. The international laws and principles, and particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have sorted out majority of the issues somewhat effectively. Now the states have jurisdiction upon their territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zones, and/or the Continental Shelves, and are responsible to defend their national maritime borders and to protect their economic and security concerns in their jurisdiction as part of their political independence and sovereignty as the nation-states. Then there are security concerns of the states at international level in which security of maritime trade routes known as Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

In view of the fact that the reliance of the states onto the shipping trade along with the other sea-centric economic activities are increasing in the recent times; around 90% world trade volume is being commenced through the seas. On one hand, the maritime reliance by the states has been increased remarkably; the number of threats would also have been soared to dangerous extent. Especially the mounting number of crimes at sea, piracy, smuggling and trafficking, robbery, acts of terrorism related to the maritime, interference in territorial waters, intrusion by the other state and non-state actors, and external aggression or acts of violence by the enemy states all have become considerable part of the threat perception regarding maritime security.

Since the SLOCs are the core concern of the maritime security, these sea-lines have tremendous strategic significance as the SLOCs are believed to be the lifelines of the littoral states, where as maritime security encompasses all areas of seaborne trade and merchant vessels, economic activities ranging from complex tasks of tapping of the seabed resources to the simpler job of fishing and other sea food, fishing trawlers, crude oil shipping traffic, tourism and cruising, as well as port security; and the naval forces of these states along with the other paramilitary forces especially the Coast Guards are dignitaries to provide security to the SLOCs.

Then the choke points on the SLOCs have different level of importance. These maritime choke points are strategically much important than many other aspects of the maritime security. These are the narrow passages which bring the maritime traffic towards specific ports. Besides the extra cautiousness for the ships being passed through these choke points to avoid any accident, these choke points can adversely be used too to do naval or economic blockade through blocking these passages. As the maritime trade has emerged as the backbone of the littoral states, the trade or energy blockade could prove a backlash to the economy of the targeted states.

It could be claimed that the international laws regarding seas, either customary laws or achieved through the treaties and agreements have developed profoundly in the recent times. The securing of the seas has now taken rather different path. It has predominantly been dealt as an inter-agency task at the state level, and internationally a task with wider narratives and a transnational reach to deal with the insecurities of this epoch. Different laws, agreements, and the codes of conduct regarding management of the maritime security issues have been transpired as global arrangements of security of the seas, and to keep them open and free but regularized for the nations of the world, either the littoral ones or the heartland. ☻ ☻