

Press Coverage

“Major Powers’ Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan”

18-19 November 2014, Serena Hotel Islamabad.



Cooperation among nations of the Indian Ocean stressed

November 20, 2014

ISLAMABAD: “A United States naval strategist once said that whoever holds the key to the Indian Ocean holds the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century. The destiny of the world will be decided in these waters,” said Dr Muhammad Khan, head of international relations at the National Defence University, Islamabad.

He was speaking to participants at the international conference titled ‘Major Powers’ Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan’.

The conference was jointly organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation. Dr Khan said 80 per cent of the global trade is carried out by ship, so there is need for freedom of navigation at sea. Major challenges facing the navigation of the Indian Ocean are terrorism and piracy, he said.

He said that there are three straits where ships have to pass by land and these must be considered focal points for antipiracy and antiterrorism efforts.

Dr Khan said Combined Maritime Force was established in 2002 which has been working against piracy. Pakistan joined it in 2004 but so far piracy and other issues have not been entirely controlled.

“There is a need for joint efforts to eradicate piracy,” he added.

“India thinks that Indian Ocean is ‘India’s Ocean’ which is causing problems; the US also needs to pull back on its involvement,” he said.

Former chief of naval staff retired Admiral Muhammad Asif Sandila said there is a need to create awareness in developing countries regarding naval strategy.

He added that greater cooperation was required among Indian Ocean navies for development and economic prosperity of the region.

Quaid-i-Azam University, School of Politics and International Relations, Associate Professor Dr Nazir Hussain said the Indian Ocean was highly militarised and needed to be demilitarised.

“Pakistan should adopt multilateralism rather than having a bilateral approach, given its geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean region,” he said.

Retired Lt. Cdr. Adil Rashid from the National Centre for Maritime Policy Research said Pakistan’s maritime strategy is defence-driven with no element of seeking parity with neighbouring countries that are reportedly opting for a full-fledged blue water navy.

A.Z. Hilali from the University of Peshawar said that a strong and fully equipped navy is crucial for Pakistan’s security and its role cannot be undermined.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1145623/cooperation-among-nations-of-the-indian-ocean-stressed>



Maritime security: Call for greater focus on Indian Ocean

By News Desk Published: November 20, 2014

Defence analysts have called for greater attention to developments in the Indian Ocean as it was important for Pakistan’s economy and security.

They were speaking at a two-day international conference on “Major Powers’ Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan” which was jointly organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation, said a press release.

Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral (retd) Muhammad Asif Sandila said that greater cooperation was required among Indian Ocean navies for development and economic prosperity of the region. He also highlighted the dangerous challenge of piracy being faced by the seafarers of the Indian Ocean which had become an organised crime in recent years.

Quaid-e-Azam University School of Politics and International Relations Associate Professor Dr Nazir Hussain said that Pakistan needed to develop an Indian Ocean strategy. He said that Indian Ocean was very militarised and there was a need to demilitarise it. Hussain said Pakistan should adopt multilateralism instead of the bilateral approach given its geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean region.

“Indian Ocean does not have a single focal point, it has many,” said Pakistan Navy War College research fellow Muhammad Azam Khan. He called for reinforcing regional maritime security. He said that Indian Ocean had diverse economies and systems of governance and had seen many conflicts after the cold war.

Lt Commander (retd) Adil Rashid of the National Centre for Maritime Policy Research said Pakistan’s maritime strategy is defense-driven with no element of seeking parity with the neighboring countries that are reportedly opting for a full-fledged blue water navy. “The imperatives of the strategy include protection of Pakistan’s territorial waters, securing sea resources and to ensure free and smooth economic access for trade. Pakistan’s is a medium-sized navy with no offensive designs,” he said.

He said Pakistan Navy had cooperated with the international community as part and sometimes as the command of task forces in collaboration with NATO to carry out anti-piracy campaign in the Horn of Africa, Gulf of Eden and waters around it.

AZ Hilali of the University of Peshawar said that a strong and well-equipped navy was crucial for country’s security and its role could not be undermined.

National Defence University International Relations Head of Department Dr Muhammad Khan said that India needed to realize that Indian Ocean is not an ‘India Ocean’. He said that enhanced Indo-China cooperation and due shares of littoral and rim land states were also important. He said revamping existing security architecture to suit region, rather than global players was also a need of the hour to maintain security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

IPRI will soon publish a book based on proceedings of the conference.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/794025/maritime-security-call-for-greater-focus-on-indian-ocean/>

Ex-navy chief for cooperation among Indian Ocean navies

November 20, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Former chief of naval staff Admiral (r) Muhammad Asif Sandila on Wednesday said that a greater cooperation was required among Indian Ocean navies for development and economic prosperity of the region.

He said this at the two-day international conference titled “Major Powers’ Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan” jointly organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation. Admiral (r) Sandila stressed the need to create awareness in the developing countries with regard to naval strategies.

Quaid-e-Azam University School of Politics and International Relations Associate Professor Dr Nazir Hussain said that the Indian Ocean was very militarised and there was a need to demilitarise it, adding that Pakistan should adopt multilateralism than the bilateral approach given its geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean region.

“Pakistan needs to develop Indian Ocean Strategy,” he said.

Pakistan Navy War College Senior Research Fellow Muhammad Azam Khan said that the Indian Ocean had diverse economies and systems of governance and has seen maximum number of conflicts post-Cold war.

“Indian Ocean does not have a single focal point, it has many,” he added. He highlighted the role of multinational exercise “Aman” which aims to develop shared understanding on maritime security operations, counter-terrorism operations and operations related to humanitarian assistance in the Indian Ocean region. “Pakistan’s maritime strategy is defence-driven with no element seeking parity with the neighbouring countries that are reportedly opting for a full-fledged blue water navy. The imperatives of the strategy include protection of Pakistan’s territorial waters, frustrating all efforts of exploiting its sea resources by others and to ensure free and smooth economic access for trade. It is a medium size navy with no offensive designs and it does not aim at sea access denial to its neighbour. Pakistan has always treated sea as a binding agent than as a divisive element in its relations with neighbours. Pakistan has always used its modest maritime forces to strengthen peace and security of the lanes in the Arabian Sea, which is strategic for the safety of energy corridor.

The Nation

The Nation, Islamabad, Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Pakistan can't ignore Indian Ocean situation: Ex-navy chief

**OUR STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD**

Former Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral (R) Noman Bashir has said that Pakistan cannot remain oblivious to the developments taking place in the Indian Ocean.

In his inaugural address to the two-day international conference on "Major Powers' Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan" here Tuesday, he said that continental mindset in Pakistan had distracted it from paying due attention to the developments in Indian Ocean.

Admiral Bashir said that Pakistan could not remain oblivious to developments taking place in the Indian Ocean as it directly impinged on its security and prosperity. He highlighted that Pakistan was heavily dependent on Indian Ocean with 95 per cent of its trade through sea, 100 per cent of its oil supplies were also through the Arabian Sea. Also, it had a reservoir of marine economic resources in its EEZ. He also said that the Indian strategists had propounded dominance of Indian Ocean and they argued that colonization of the subcontinent through East India Company was due to its weakness at sea.

The Admiral also highlighted the challenges like terrorism, piracy and armed robberies, drug and narcotics trade, human trafficking and transportation of illegal migrants, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and marine pollution in Indian Ocean. He was of the opinion that the only way to ensure the 'freedom of navigation' on its highways and equitable use of resources and counter future challenges was through a 'cooperative approach'.

He also said that Pakistan supported the traditional freedom of navigation on high seas and would not like to see the international law undermined.



Former Naval Chief addresses international conference: challenges facing Pakistan in Indian Ocean highlighted

November 19, 2014

AAMIR SAEED

Pakistan cannot remain oblivious to the developments taking place in the Indian Ocean, as it directly impinges on its security and prosperity. Admiral Noman Bashir (Retd), former Chief of Naval Staff, said this on Tuesday while addressing a two-day international conference on "Major Powers' Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan."

The conference was organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute in collaboration with Hans Seidel Foundation. He said continental mindset in Pakistan had distracted it from paying due attention to the developments in Indian Ocean. "Pakistan is heavily dependent on Indian Ocean with 95 percent of its trade through sea as 100 percent of its POL supplies were also through Arabian Sea," he said.

The ocean had also a reservoir of marine economic resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone, he said, adding that the Indian strategists had propounded dominance of Indian Ocean and they argued that colonisation of the sub-continent through East India Company was due to its weakness at sea.

Bashir also highlighted the challenges like terrorism, piracy and armed robberies, drug and narco-trade, human trafficking and transportation of illegal migrants, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and marine pollution in Indian Ocean. "The only way to ensure the freedom of navigation on its highways and equitable use of resources and counter future challenges was through a co-operative approach," he said.

Ambassador Sohail Amin (Retd), President of Islamabad Policy Research Institute, said that the importance of Indian Ocean was increasing with every passing day due to rising prosperity in "Asia and its growing dependence on natural resource flows to and from the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the United States," he said.

The rise of China as a global power and also a major stakeholder in Indian Ocean and the interests of the United States in the region had made the area of crucial geo-strategic importance, he said. Amin said the Indian Ocean connecting East Asia with West and beyond and being part of the region Pakistan was at the center stage of that politico-economic competition or co-operation and was aware of its immediate and extended neighbourhood in the Region.

Brigadier Dr Muhammad Khan, Head of Department International Relations at National Defence University, said that the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean had risen due to the US Indian Ocean strategy to deal with the growing influence of China. To contain China, the US was giving strategic importance to India, Australia and other states like Malaysia.

Rear Admiral Pervaiz Asghar (Retd), former Director of the National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University Karachi, Campus said that trans-boundary challenges like climate, piracy, terrorism and trafficking should be given more importance than the regional neighbours' tensions and rivalries. Iranian Scholar, Dr Nasser Hadian of University of Tehran said that the US considers Japan, Australia, South Korea and India together as potential states to balance China's rise in Indian Ocean in particular and otherwise in general.

Chinese scholar, Dr Wang Hanling, Director Center for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Institute of International Law, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China said that peaceful settlement of maritime disputes is essential for maintaining international legal order in regional sea.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/1243600:former-naval-chief-addresses-international-conference-challenges-facing-pakistan-in-indian-ocean-highlighted/?date=2014-11->