

Upcoming International Conference

on

**Major Powers' Interests in Indian
Ocean: Challenges and Options
for Pakistan**

Organized by



Islamabad Policy Research Institute

in Collaboration with



Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF)

at

**Serena Hotel, Islamabad
November 18-19, 2014**

The Institute

Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) is an autonomous think tank. It is dedicated to undertaking research, analyses and evaluations of important national and international politico-strategic issues and developments affecting Pakistan and the region. One of the prominent areas of activity of the institute is organizing national and international seminars/conferences. To know more about IPRI, you may visit our website, www.ipripak.org



Conference Outline

A US naval strategist, Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, once remarked, “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.” The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) having 36 states around its littoral belt with additional eleven hinterland states, which though landlocked, make it important as they are all involved in one way or the other in its politics and trade. The region today stands as an arena of contemporary geopolitics and geo-economics as the major sea route that connects the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the Americas. Travel across the IOR and passage from its waters into neighboring seas is both facilitated and potentially constrained by chokepoints.

At present, there are many challenges as well as opportunities facing the IOR and the South China Sea (SCS) as these areas, with the passage of time,

have emerged as central theaters of 21st century geopolitics. The Indian Ocean once regarded as a “neglected ocean” has, today, become the hub of political, strategic and economic activities due to the presence of conventional and nuclear vessels of the major powers and nuclear weapon states like Pakistan, China and India. Key regional powers are placing great reliance on the deployment of fleet missile submarines and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) for second strike capability as well as for maintaining balance of power in the region. The US has established its naval base in the IOR at Diego Garcia to protect the US’ vital interests in the region. There are significant implications attached to the US’ new “Asia Pivot” strategy. The Indo-US collusion in the IOR has naturally made Pakistan and China wary affecting as, it does, the strategic balance in the IOR.

Regional and extra regional powers are now paying increasing attention on the IOR issues within a complex geopolitical framework where their interests and objectives are inextricably meshed. The post-Cold War scenario has somehow relegated the Atlantic Ocean to a less important position compared to the IOR as a conduit for Western military supplies and the Persian Gulf hydrocarbon resources. Add to this, the turbulent regional socio-political environment (including America’s military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan), and the rise of China as a global power has made IOR an area of crucial geo-strategic importance. As a result, traditional maritime security concerns have become more important due to the conflict in the Persian Gulf and piracy near Bab-el-Mandeb, due to unrest in Somalia. Stretching eastward from the Horn of Africa all the way to the Indonesian archipelago and beyond, the IOR has the potential to be the centre of global conflicts because most international commerce will flow through this route.

Pakistan is aware of its immediate and extended neighbourhood in IOR. Pakistan has to evaluate its options and come up prepared to face any challenges that IOR might offer in the near future as the Gwadar Port located at the end of the proposed “Pakistan-China Economic Corridor” is not only a shortcut to Africa and the Mediterranean but also the shortest route between Pakistan and

China to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Moreover, Pakistan has to strive for a win-win situation in the IOR where almost all the states should peacefully benefit from the dividends available in the region.

In this backdrop, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), together with the Germany's Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), Islamabad is organizing a two-day international conference on "*Major Powers' Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan*" at Serena Hotel, Islamabad on November 18-19, 2014.

IPRI-HSF has invited six scholars from US, China, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Iran and India. They will present their papers in various sessions of the conference. Another six prominent scholars, professionals and intellectuals from within Pakistan will also be speaking at the conference. The proceedings of the conference will be published in the form of a book by IPRI.

Note: Entry is through card only.

Sessions of the Conference

- Inaugural Session—Keynote address by the Chief Guest: **Admiral (R) Noman Bashir, Former Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Pakistan Navy**, on November 18, 2014 at 1000 hrs.
- Indian Ocean: Centre Stage for the 21st Century
- Major Powers' Interests: Competition & Cooperation in Indian Ocean
- Regional Power Play in Indian Ocean: Challenges & Options for Pakistan
- Working for Peaceful Indian Ocean Rim: A Win-Win Situation for All
- Concluding Session—Keynote address by the Chief Guest: **Admiral (R) Muhammad Asif Sandila NI (M), Former Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Pakistan Navy**, on November 19, 2014 at 1235 hrs.

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