Issues and Challenges of Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean"
Case of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The countries in the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka face many maritime security challenges. Therefore, identification and analysis of the maritime security challenges that are being faced by Sri Lanka and the establishment of preventive mechanisms is the focus of this research. The objectives are the identification of the root causes of maritime security challenges of Sri Lanka, analysis of existing maritime security challenges of Sri Lanka and the establishment of preventive measures. The methodology is based on qualitative analysis of secondary data. It is identified that threats are addressed on a global basis by establishing international legal frameworks. The International Maritime Organization plays a leading role in the international efforts in ensuring maritime security. The United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea 1982, Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation Convention 1988 and many International Maritime Organization instruments including the recently adopted International Ship and Port Facility Security Code have constituted a complete package of effective tools in addressing maritime security concerns. Nevertheless, it is evident that the effectiveness of any international convention or any similar instrument largely depends on national compliance and implementation. Furthermore, to enhance the maritime security in Sri Lanka several initiatives such as establishment of a Coast Guard in 2007, acquisition of more ships with modern and sophisticated sensors and weaponry, making Sri Lanka a venue for maritime conferences for information sharing, engaging in naval exercises with regional navies, participation in regional maritime initiatives to enhance regional cooperation, joint patrols in International Maritime Boundary Lines have been taken. Therefore, it is evident that individual countries cannot find solutions for any of the issues and challenges faced in the maritime sector and Sri Lanka's Navy is an active partner in the maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, especially due to the strategically vital location where the country is situated. Therefore, greater cooperation and partnership between the naval powers in this region will benefit not only the nations in the Indian Ocean but the entire world, and it will enable all to face the future with confidence.

Key words: Indian Ocean, strategic environment, maritime threats, maritime securitization, security practice.

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