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**EVALUATING MULTILATERAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE
MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS REGARDING NON-
TRADITIONAL THREATS**

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ABSTRACT

For generations, people who work at sea have tried to comprehend the oceans. In this context, data collection in the US has been dependent on technology. A shared understanding of the threats that exist now is even more crucial given their complexity and ambiguity knowledge of the maritime industry. Making excellent and efficient decisions is necessary to properly handle these dangers. Making sure that global marine information dominance is maintained by the gathering, combining, and sharing of intelligence and information, as well as the creation of knowledge, allows for decision superiority. A thorough grasp of the international marine realm facilitates targeted military and law enforcement action, operational threat response, and strategic decision-making. This Plan is in line with the Maritime Security National Strategy (NSMS) strategic goals and components, which place a strong emphasis on "the ability to know, so that pre-emptive or interdiction actions may be taken as early as possible." Furthermore, putting this plan into action will directly support the Presidential Directive on Maritime Security Policy's mandate for Global Maritime Intelligence Integration and Maritime Operational Threat Response Plans.

Keywords: Oceans, Marine, Maritime, NSMS, Threat, Information, Realm

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important components of the security plans assigned in NSPD-41/HSPD-13 is the National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness. The purpose of this plan is to integrate the federal government, the corporate sector, civil authorities domestically, as well as our friends and partners, in order to accomplish multilateral development agreements (MDA). This long-term project involves the close coordination of many different federal ministries and agencies. A team of representatives from multiple agencies will supervise the execution of this plan.

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The marine domain is one of the few sectors of significant strategic importance. The oceans are worldwide thoroughfares that are essential to both our security and economy as a country. Maritime domain: Unlike other domains (such air and space), it offers a broad route over the world commons. Terrorist groups are aware of this and understand how crucial it is to take use of the maritime realm for monetary gain, personnel and equipment transportation, and as a platform for attacking targets. The maritime domain offers terrorists a wide range of prospective targets that align with their operational goals of causing mass fatalities and economic damage.

Knowledge of the threat and awareness, as well as reliable deterrent and interdiction skills, form the cornerstone of successful preventative measures. Possibilities for a prompt reaction may be lost if there is insufficient comprehension of the actions in the marine domain, which can only be obtained by continuous awareness. The ability to recognise, discourage, elude, and ultimately vanquish enemies is made possible by awareness. The 21st-century marine threat environment calls for a more expansive view and a wider breadth. We need to go beyond the conventional monitoring of harbours, rivers, and seas and always adjust to new possibilities and difficulties.

Prioritising current and emerging capabilities will help us effectively reduce risks while navigating an uncertain future. Intelligence previously obtained in foreign land areas must be incorporated into our understanding of the maritime realm as well as intelligence data and domestic law enforcement. Operational maritime commanders can neutralise hostile nation and transnational terrorist threats almost instantly thanks to MDA.

DANGERS IN THE BAY

Security issues in the Bay of Bengal can be divided into two categories: traditional threats, or those that come from states, and non-traditional threats, or those that come from sources that are not state-centric. Given its strategic importance as a shipping route for energy trade and its storied hydrocarbon deposits, the Bay of Bengal has regained interest from strategists in an era of intense competition for energy resources. China's aggressive rise in these waterways as a result of its energy search has given rise to long-standing security worries and raised doubts about the safety of maritime lanes.

Resource politics meet geopolitical aspirations in the Bay, creating a stage for strategic cooperation, competition, and possible confrontation as other interested nations come together to oppose the apprehensive monopolisation, protect the autonomy of the shipping routes, and further their own interests. The Bay also presents a number of non-traditional security

challenges that further complicate operations. These fall into two categories: environmental and man-made. Terrorism, drug trafficking, maritime piracy, unauthorised immigration, and human trafficking are among the illicit activities that take place in the Bay. The BIMSTEC nations are all either terror attack victims or have served as havens for terrorists.

There is an innate connection between the networks of terrorists and the illicit arms trade, drug trafficking, and money laundering. The BIMSTEC member nations all have rankings among the top 100 of the 2022 Global Terrorism Index. Furthermore, to keep in mind is that Indonesia shares marine borders with both India and Thailand, whereas Pakistan and Afghanistan share land borders with India. This increases the BIMSTEC members' susceptibility to terror attacks because these nations have high terrorist index rankings. A few areas of the Bay area, such as the Bangladeshi Chittagong anchorages and the Sundarbans mangroves, are still plagued by piracy, armed robberies, and kidnappings of fishermen for ransom.

In the Bay itself, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is becoming more and more of a problem, especially in the Palk Strait, which is causing friction in bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and India. Along the Bay's Bengal coast, it could be a problem for relations between Bangladesh and India. It is also common around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI). As the Rohingya Muslims flee Myanmar to avoid official persecution, the issue of illegal and undocumented migration is also a major concern. Certain individuals traversed the border into Bangladesh, while others ventured across the Bay, where they became victims of fatal illnesses and, in the worst situations, were trafficked. BIMSTEC countries are deeply concerned about the rising number of women and children in particular.

When it comes to environmental issues, the Bay is notorious for its turbulence, which frequently results in storms and sporadic tsunamis that severely disrupt the lives of those who live and work along the Bay's coastline. The Bay of Bengal area saw 41 strong cyclonic storms and 21 cyclonic storms between 1891 and 2018, and calamities claimed 317,000 lives in the Bay littorals alone between 1996 and 2015. Because of these worries, the BIMSTEC is prevented from examining the long-standing security danger to freedom of navigation by its founding principle of "non-interference in internal affairs" and the countries' substantial reliance on China for commerce.

Instead, it concentrates on the unconventional issues that fall under the purview of "Security." Since these threats are international, managing or resolving them will require cooperation. Due to the Bay of Bengal's semi-enclosed shape, which allows its littoral countries to share continuous and occasionally even overlapping Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), cooperation

of this kind is particularly important in marine spaces. As a result, only 20% of the Bay is made up of the high seas, although over 80% of it is an EEZ. On the other hand, while having such large EEZs, the littoral regions have relatively little monitoring capability. A more effective and cooperative MDA would enable ongoing monitoring and assist in identifying current risks. Thus, MDA must be broad and all-encompassing.

LEAD NATION CAPACITY AND POTENTIAL FOR THE REGION

India is ideally positioned to foster MDA at the regional level as the BIMSTEC lead nation for "Security." Through initiatives like the National Maritime Domain Awareness, which aims to unite all union territories, states with coastal regions, and marine agencies into a single network and aggregate data through "interfaces with additional data sources, such as from the shipping and fisheries sectors," the nation has been working to strengthen its MDA capabilities since the terrorist attacks of September 26, 2001. India benefits from the Andaman Nicobar Islands when growing MDA in the Bay. Because of its close vicinity to key SLOCs and the chokepoints it produces by straddling them, the ANI is frequently referred to as one of the world's most strategically situated island chains.

India and Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka have bilateral White Shipping agreements that facilitate information sharing on commercial shipping in order to improve public awareness. There are plans for a such arrangement with Thailand as well. Additionally, India is helping Thailand set up a sophisticated navigation system. and Myanmar with sonar and radar apparatus to improve their monitoring powers. With the exception of Sri Lanka, which it conducts naval drills with, India also conducts coordinated patrols for surveillance purposes with all of the BIMSTEC nations. These kinds of projects have not yet been launched by the other BIMSTEC nations.

By monitoring shipping traffic and important developments under a cooperative framework with a few chosen nations, the Indian Navy also built the Indian Ocean Region's Information Fusion Centre in 2018 to further maritime security in the area. Remarkably, only Myanmar is included in this group even though all BIMSTEC nations are located in the Indian Ocean Region. Due to the institutional lethargy of BIMSTEC, limited finance, and lack of actions from its member nations, the need to foster MDA has not been discussed on a multilateral level until lately. This multilateral conference has acquired impetus, particularly in light of security, as a result of the strategic momentum in the Bay that has forced its littorals to reengage with one another in order to protect their interests.

As a result, BIMSTEC has started operating more actively over the last ten years, attempting to go beyond merely signing security cooperation accords. It also formed numerous sub-groups under its "Security" sector, each of which was intended to handle a certain issue. In 2014, it founded the Centre for Weather and Climate Change for research purposes. Most recently, it has started to hold cooperative disaster management exercises. While MDA did not discover any clear indication of intelligence sharing in these sub-groups, it is noteworthy that one of them has Sri Lanka as its head shepherd. It has already convened four times. Accelerating the establishment of the BIMSTEC Information Sharing Centre is another item on BIMSTEC's agenda: strengthening cooperation.

MDA GOALS

The capacity to keep an eye on things in a way that makes trends and abnormalities easy to spot is essential to achieving MDA. Data on their own are insufficient. To handle massive, divergent data streams, data must be gathered, combined, and analysed—ideally using algorithms for computer data integration and analysis — such that those who make operational decisions may foresee hazards and take proactive measures to counter them. The MDA Essential Task List, when completed, will give the GMCOI a comprehensive understanding of the marine domain and will direct the US government's pursuit of developing capabilities. The list consists of the following objectives.

1. Continue to keep an eye on the worldwide maritime area:
 - Crafts and vessels
 - Cargo
 - Passengers and crews on vessels
 - All areas of interest indicated
2. Obtain and preserve information on infrastructure, facilities, and ships.
3. Gather, combine, evaluate, and share information with decision-makers to promote efficient comprehension.
4. Obtain, create, and preserve data about mission performance connected to MDA.

GUIDING CONCEPTS

Ensuring all levels of GMCOI stakeholders are aware of what they can do to help, how to do it, and—above all—why Maritime Domain Awareness is in their best interests as a group is the first step towards adhering to these principles. The transparency of American culture and the design of our customary government work against the centralization of all MDA functions

into a broader federal infrastructure. It will, nevertheless, necessitate a shared objective and established protocols.

1. Oneness of Purpose

Coordinated efforts from the GMCOI, which includes international partners and organisations from the public and business sectors, are necessary for MDA. Security is a shared interest that calls for government and business collaboration.

2. Information Integration and Exchange

MDA relies on unmatched information exchange. MDA needs procedures to safeguard confidential information belonging to the private sector. International conventions and bilateral or multilateral agreements pertaining to information sharing and accords will facilitate MDA.

The common operational picture (COP) for national maritime is the main means of exchanging information. All federal, state, and local government entities in the United States with an interest in or responsibility for the maritime sector share the COP, a virtual information grid that is network-centric, nearly real, and dynamically configurable. There will be no restriction on who can access COP data when restricted by laws, policies, or security measures. Additionally, the COP has decision-maker toolkits that are sourced from one or more databases for exchanged and distributed objects and tracks. These enable cooperative planning and help all levels of the organisation attain situational awareness. Depending on their level of access, duties, and information demands, any user can add to and filter these databases.

3. A secure and effective flow of business

Economic security and public safety are mutually supportive. Each and every GMCOI member must acknowledge that a thorough understanding of improves and harmonises the safe and effective flow of commerce the sea domain. It further verifies that MDA is improved by accountable involvement in a transparent commercial system. The two ideas complement one another.

ASSUMPTIONS FOR PLANNING

The following presumptions are made by the plan:

- Partners from the federal, state, municipal, tribal, commercial, and international sectors will participate;
- Leverage and integrate existing systems and capabilities;

- Balance the necessity for security against the need to safeguard basic freedoms, the right to free passage, and the legitimate use of the waters for both business and pleasure;
- Adopt a collaborative approach among all maritime stakeholders to establish unprecedented levels of information exchange and resource pooling; and
- Every country chooses to engage in voluntary international maritime security operations, such as sharing information with other nations or defending against threats.

DANGERS

Among the numerous risks to the maritime realm are:

1) Attacks by nation-states

It is not implausible that significant regional conflicts may break out, intensify, and involve powerful nations. However, governments pose a greater threat to international security in the short run. Criminals and terrorists find sanctuary in some states of concern, and they use these nations as operational hubs from which to export their illicit activities into the maritime domain and other parts of the world. Throughout the course of the next ten years, there is a greater chance of a rogue government utilising a WMD. The possibility that a state of concern will supply vital advanced conventional weaponry, WMD components, delivery methods, and associated materials, technology, and weapons knowledge to another rogue state or terrorist group willing to carry out WMD attacks is even more concerning.

2) Threats from terrorists

Terrorists can utilise the breadth of the maritime sector to tremendous advantage. The transportation of WMD/E by smaller commercial and leisure vessels that are stationed nearer to our coasts and places of interest is a serious matter. Terrorists can also transport potent conventional explosives or WMD/E for detonation in a port or next to an offshore site using big merchant ships. Terrorist organisations have shown that they are able to deploy their agents, assist their operations, and generate income through the use of ships as a mode of transportation. Terrorists have demonstrated their capacity to wield suicide boats loaded with explosives as weapons. This skill might be utilised to ram another ship, warship, port facility, or offshore rig with ease when using merchant ships as kinetic weapons.

3) Threats from international piracy and criminality

In order to accomplish human smuggling, modern pirates and other criminals are well-organized and well-equipped, frequently with cutting-edge weapons, high-speed vessels, and sophisticated communications.

4) Environmental and social threats

Narcotics, guns, and other contraband; and piracy. There is a chance that the maritime domain may be harmed or unstable areas of the world may experience major migratory movements, nation-state conflicts over maritime resources, and catastrophic damage of marine resources. The ensuing financial effects are frequently substantial.

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

1) Governmental Institutions

The main venue for coordinating and carrying out the policies, plans, and initiatives of the NSC and HSC staffs is NSPD41/HSPD-13 established the Maritime Security Policy Coordinating Committee (MSPCC), which is co-chaired by staff members from both departments. Through the MSPCC and other organisational implementation initiatives, the US government will work with relevant international, state, local, private sector, and intergovernmental partners to implement this strategy.

2) Worldwide Organisations

Enhancing global maritime security requires integrating MDA into all maritime operations. It takes close, ongoing collaboration with international organisations to attain MMA. The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code was approved by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) as a first step towards integrating security into the global maritime realm. By providing a standardised and consistent approach to risk assessment, this allows governments to adapt to fluctuations in hazard and different levels of vulnerability for ports and ships. By employing the NSMS International Outreach and Coordination Strategy, this plan seeks to improve marine defence on a worldwide scale. A framework for organising all international organisations and countries participating in maritime security initiatives is provided by this plan, which also aims to garner cooperation from other countries for enhanced maritime security.

3) Organisations in the Private Sector

To ensure total information domination in the marine domain, business sector-backed measures are also necessary. collaboration between the governmental and commercial sectors. Templates for increasing awareness and providing financial incentives to the commercial sector are provided by programmes such as the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). MDA relies heavily on the security and visibility of the global supply chain, both of which have been enhanced by these projects. We must include the private sector in a lot of ways in (Website-lexscriptamagazine.com) 10 (lexscriptamagazine@gmail.com)

order to accomplish this. These are organisations and consortia that are part of the GMCOI, like the National Maritime Security Advisory Committee (NMSAC), harbour safety committees, shipping corporations, and other advisory organisations from the business sector.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Using conventional intelligence tools and procedures that are fed by and synchronised with operational decision-making processes will result in an understanding of the marine domain. The gathering, combining, evaluating, and sharing material are core components of MDA are all-source data and prioritised categories of marine intelligence. It is necessary to focus more on the many interconnected and interlocking systems that function inside, outside, and around the actual oceans and waterways that make up the global maritime domain. It takes ongoing awareness to identify and stop dangers in a system that spans national and international borders. A multi-layered strategy combining intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities is needed to provide a more thorough understanding of potential threats and illicit activity as it pertains to the United States. Combining intelligence, data, and information from multiple sources, divided into the following categories, is necessary to achieve MDA:

- **Ships:** attributes such as flag, class, weight, top speed, starting point, and course;
- **Cargo:** data obtained from sensors for explosive detection, chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiation detection, as well as information from a vessel's manifest, shipment origin, and human intelligence (HUMINT);
- **Maritime Areas of Interest:** these are geographic areas where surveillance capabilities are concentrated, such as sea lanes or oceanic regions;
- **Behaviours and Threats:** these are actions that pose a risk in and of itself and are recognised as threats, such as illegal migration;
- **Friendly Forces:** operational intelligence on military, federal, state, municipal, and/or allied assets working in the maritime sector; • **Financial Transactions:** illicit money trails, hidden vessel or cargo ownership."

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Effective decision-making cannot be ensured by knowledge capacities alone. Decision makers can only act on information and intelligence if they are well-informed and are prepared to take action. Building a dynamic knowledge base takes commitment and persistence, but the reward is the ability to know enough to take prompt or deliberate action whenever and wherever we

choose. The two main pillars of knowledge growth geared towards decision-making are the emphasis of this plan.

- "Expert" knowledge is functional knowledge. Traditional academic study is the main way that functional knowledge is acquired. This kind of information is held by specialists designated to a specific field or operational area.
- Experience and action are the foundation of operational expertise. This information is acquired by decision makers and supporting staff members through situational experience gained from successful training programmes, real-world case prosecution, and effective exercises.

The process of developing knowledge, especially operational knowledge, requires an ongoing, dynamic feedback loop. Every choice has intended repercussions as well as an outcome. It is necessary to assess these findings, apply the lessons learned to MDA priorities, and capacities as well as the growth of knowledge. The application of knowledge is the one area where working with a wide range of federal, state, public and private, and international partners is more crucial than anywhere else. To improve their capacity to make the best decisions at the appropriate times, federal agencies must leverage the substantial reservoirs of functional and operational information at every level of decision-making. The creation of training and exercise programmes, together with the establishment of virtual and physical Lessons Learned Centres of Excellence, will be undertaken.

CONCLUSION

The evolving geo-security landscape within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) maritime domain has grown more intricate as a result of the diversification and intensification of non-traditional threats. The blindness to the sea and continental direction of the island and littoral governments in the region has increased the level of insecurity predicted by these non-state entities. A new perspective on maritime affairs has been brought about by the recognition of the opportunities that arise from the ocean, emphasising the necessity of a stable and safe maritime domain. To achieve comprehensive marine security and sustainable development, it is necessary to have a response strategy that is organised, interconnected, and multifaceted to tackle maritime crime in all its forms.

Development and defence must serve as each stakeholder's dyadic reaction plan and serve as the region's reform agenda for the maritime industry. Collaboration, cooperation, and enhancing the capacity and mutual capabilities of the states in the larger WIO region requires interoperability. An inclusive and responsive structure in the form of a security and defence (Website-lexscriptamagazine.com) 12 (lexscriptamagazine@gmail.com)

partnership is required for resilience to and mitigation of the vulnerabilities posed by NTS. Because of this, India's defence and security cooperation with the East African SIDS in the WIO is primarily motivated by similar strategic considerations, with the goal of enhancing mutual capabilities and building capacity to address new and emerging NTS threats. India has a long and distinguished history of being the first responder and chosen security partner in the region and beyond, which is built upon by its current activities. The proficiency of New Delhi in coaching organisations that need support for defence and related security capacity and capabilities enhancement is unmatched and unrestricted.

A free, open, and rule-based marine realm is now required due to the understanding that oceans and seas are essential to national, regional, and global progress. India uses its experience to engage in maritime security as a cornerstone of its foreign policy objectives and to engage more actively with the littoral and island governments in the WIO region and beyond. In this regard, the Indian Navy, as the main government body in India, is essential to bolstering and improving marine security in the area. We have seen from India's defence and security cooperation with SIDS that cooperation is allowed both at the operational and policy levels.

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