

Issue No. 8

May 2008

# Security & Terrorism

Research Bulletin



**Gulf Research Center** Knowledge for All

## Maritime Security in the Gulf



# TARGET THE GULF

## Understand Gulf Security Today: The Security and Terrorism Research Program Gulf Research Center (GRC)

- Informative Analysis and Information published in Arabic and English
- Monitoring of Terrorist Activities, Arms Control and Security Issues
- Briefings on Critical Strategic and Security Developments
- Assessments, Reports and Publications
- Workshops and Seminars
- Tailored Consultancy



Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge for All



A regional think tank.  
Based in the Gulf.  
Monitoring the Gulf for you.

For more information contact: [infoSecurity@grc.ae](mailto:infoSecurity@grc.ae), [www.grc.ae](http://www.grc.ae)



# Security & Terrorism

Research Bulletin

## Maritime Security in the Gulf

Issue No. 8  
May 2008

### CONTENTS

Editor-in-Chief: Abdulaziz Sager

Editor: Nicole Stracke

Asst. Editor: Radhika Menon

#### Editorial Policy

The Security and Terrorism Research Bulletin is intended to contribute to a constructive discussion of critical security issues facing the Gulf Region. Articles do not represent the opinion of the Gulf Research Center but that of the individual author. The Security and Terrorism Research Bulletin is published three times a year in both Arabic and English and can be read on the GRC website at [www.grc.ae](http://www.grc.ae)

#### © Gulf Research Center 2008

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Gulf Research Center.

#### Published by

Gulf Research Center

P.O. Box 80758

187 Oud Metha Tower, 11th Floor

303 Sheikh Rashid Road

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Tel.: +971 4 324 7770

Fax: +971 4 324 7771

Email: [info@grc.ae](mailto:info@grc.ae)

Website: [www.grc.ae](http://www.grc.ae)

#### Insights

- Protecting Middle East Seaborne Energy Exports  
*Andrew Forbes*.....4
- Maritime Terrorism: A Threat Magnified by Arms Proliferation  
*Michael Richardson*.....10
- US Navy Changing the Rules of Engagement: Maritime Security and 'Accidental War' Scenario in the Gulf  
*Mustafa Alani*.....16
- Maritime Confidence-building in the Gulf  
*Peter Jones*..... 20
- The Applicability of the Pakistan-India Maritime Cooperation Model in the Gulf Region  
*Faryal Leghari*.....24
- Maritime Confidence-building Measures in South Asia – The Case of India and Pakistan  
*P K Ghosh*.....32

GRC Publications .....38

# Protecting Middle East Seaborne Energy Exports

**Andrew Forbes\***

Global reliance on fossil fuels has seen many energy-reliant countries place a strategic importance on the Middle East that would not apply in normal circumstances, leading to major power involvement and occasional intervention in the region. The North Asian economies in particular are heavily reliant on both oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, with nearly all of Japan's, South Korea's and Taiwan's oil requirements supplied by Middle East countries.

The extent of Middle Eastern countries' fossil fuel reserves and production are well known: they hold 61.5 per cent of proven oil reserves while producing about 31.2 per cent of global oil supplies; for natural gas, they hold 40.5 per cent of reserves but at present only produce about 11.7 per cent of global gas supplies. Saudi Arabia and Iran are the largest oil producers in the Middle East, while Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman are the largest natural gas producers.<sup>1</sup> Total global oil production in 2007 was about 85 million barrels per day (mbpd) with around 43 mbpd moved at sea by tankers.<sup>2</sup> About 20 mbpd of oil was exported from the Middle East, with 17 mbpd transported by tanker through the Strait of Hormuz into the Indian Ocean, of which 13 mbpd is bound for Asia: for example, in 2006 China imported 3.9 mbpd and Japan 5.2 mbpd of oil. Forty nine billion cubic metres (bcm) of LNG was exported by Qatar, Oman and UAE, with India receiving 7.12 bcm, Japan 19.9 bcm, and South Korea 16.1bcm.<sup>3</sup> Since around half of total oil production moves by sea, with nearly two thirds of it transiting to Asia, the security of this shipping assumes strategic importance. What then, are the vulnerabilities of international shipping?

## Shipping Vulnerabilities

Security planners considering the protection of shipping face the difficulty that potential attackers have changed, as

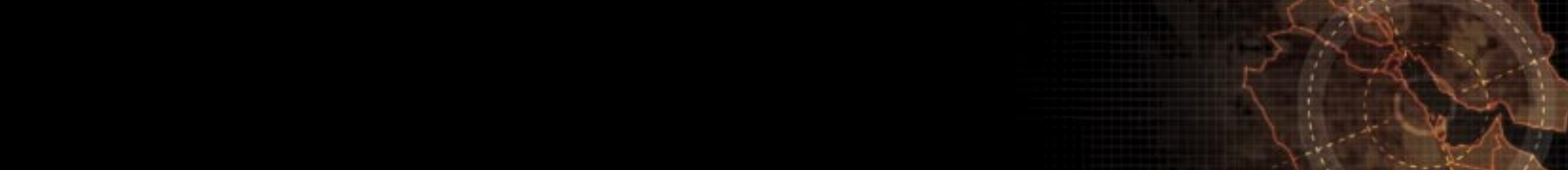
have their potential methods of attack. This is partially offset, however, by a corresponding expansion of the organizations and/or capabilities to counter these threats. Oil tankers have high economic value and could be hijacked for their cargo, or turned into an explosive weapon; while LNG carriers also have a high economic value, but are difficult to set on fire, as the conditions necessary to ignite a vapor spill are very limited; however, they are at heightened risk when they are loading/unloading in port.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally, navies are concerned with countering high-end threats to shipping by nation states using military forces, usually in a declared war. Coastguards and maritime police are concerned with the low-end threats usually presented by non-state actors

Traditionally, navies are concerned with countering high-end threats to shipping by nation states using military forces, usually in a declared war. Coastguards and maritime police are concerned with the low-end threats usually presented by non-state actors; such activities are generally regarded as a law enforcement role, although these organizations may, of course, also have a major role in maritime safety and regulation. New to the threat matrix, however, are non-state actors who may become capable of high-end attacks on shipping, necessitating a possible military response to a law enforcement problem.

The following analysis of where shipping might be attacked adopts a geographical perspective in order to delineate the responsibilities of navies and maritime forces for the protection of shipping. Historically, attacks on shipping

\* These are the author's personal views and do not necessarily represent those of any institution with which he is associated.



have been carried out by a nation state using military forces. The public's perception of this is based on the Battle of the Atlantic in World War II which saw warships, submarines and aircraft attacking merchant shipping, supplemented with the use of mines. Updating to current technology, attacking forces could use missiles instead of naval gunfire and bombs, and unmanned combat aerial vehicles to attack shipping. This enables attacks over the horizon rather than within line of sight, albeit with the difficulty of ship identification. A critical issue is the capability of an enemy force to locate and identify its desired target, before electing whether to attack it. This is compounded by the difficulty in determining the ship's destination, so as to avoid indiscriminate and counterproductive attacks against third party shipping. In World War II, convoying was the response to attacks on shipping, with the aim of not just protecting shipping, but also to draw adversary forces to the convoy in order for naval forces to destroy them and thereby lessen the ability of an adversary to attack ships in the future. However, it is important to note that convoying is a very resource intensive operation, both from the point of view of the warships involved and the extensive administrative structure required. Given range issues on the open ocean, both attacking and defending forces will come from a nation-state; therefore the protection of merchant shipping on the open ocean remains a role for blue water navies.

While on the open ocean a merchant ship can be anywhere within the obvious confines of the most economical route, at some stage they must pass by or through a focal/chokepoint, such as the entrance to a port or an international strait. Based on historical experience, conventional military forces, such as submarines, warships and aircraft, with a probable increased use of mines, could be used for attack at these points. However, non-state actors can also obtain the necessary capabilities, including mines, armed fast boats, missiles, and sabotage of the ship after infiltrating the ship's crew to attack shipping in focal/chokepoints. The difficulties for a defending force are the different types of potential attack, and critically, the low to non-existent warning time of such an attack. Against a conventional attack, the defenders know they are in a hostile area and good maritime battlespace awareness provides adequate notice of an attack. As non-state actors do not have conventional military forces, the defender's battlespace awareness might not be able to identify an intruder, such as a fast boat, in time to

take preventative action. Further, such attacks will take place in crowded shipping lanes and anchorages where the sheer number of ships and the radar shadows they cast, as well as the presence of legitimate small craft, will make it almost impossible to identify targets accurately. Navies can deal with the conventional military threat as they are equipped to fight that type of battle but will have difficulties dealing with the unconventional threat as their weapons systems, sensors, training and rules of engagement may not be optimized against this type of threat. Adding to this complexity is the rise of armed robbery at sea which generally occurs in focal/chokepoints; this is a maritime law enforcement issue and not necessarily the role of navies to deal with. This suggests that both navies and coastguards have a role to play in protecting shipping in a focal/chokepoint, depending on the nature of the threat.

Navies can deal with the conventional military threat as they are equipped to fight that type of battle but will have difficulties dealing with the unconventional threat as their weapons systems, sensors, training and rules of engagement may not be optimized against this type of threat

Where security planning has changed is when the ship enters port and berths. In conventional warfare, an adversary attack on the port and its approaches would be heavily defended. But with the terrorist groups apparently having ready access to low-end technology, they have a range of options available to attack shipping, best demonstrated by the USS Cole and the MV Limburg, which were attacked by fast boats laden with explosives. Mines are also readily available and can be used, but it is thought that terrorists do not yet have this capability. Shoulder-fired missiles are also readily available, while the use of improvised explosive devices placed against a ship's hull remains a possibility. Onboard sabotage/seizure of the ship if terrorists have infiltrated the crew is also a possibility. As these types of attacks may occur within a port and may be conducted by non-state actors, it appears to be a law enforcement issue in the first instance; that is, to stop a possible attack by arresting the alleged perpetrators, or capture them after an attack, albeit with a requirement for security measures within the port to hinder any attack. These security measures will involve the ability of a merchant or warship to force away any

vessel impinging its security zone, with waterborne security patrols to monitor events within the port. Blue water navies are built to operate at the medium to high-end of military capability, and while they operate across most of the conflict spectrum, they are not optimized to operate at the lower end of capability. As such they are not the best response option for port security, and as these activities are a law enforcement problem, it appears responsibility for port security would rest with the maritime police or coastguard. Given the jurisdictional issues of law enforcement within a port and naval activities offshore, both navies and coastguards would be involved in aspects of port security.

The maritime security dilemma in the Middle East is a combination of focal/chokepoint and port security. Both offshore and land-based oil and gas installations may be attacked, as happened in the 1980-88 Gulf Tanker War, where 411 ships were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, leading to the reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers under the American flag to allow escort by the US Navy.<sup>5</sup> More recently, there have been attacks on oil installations in Saudi Arabia, leading to the recent decision to set up a 35,000 strong security force at a cost of \$4-5 billion; and attacks on Iraqi offshore oil installations, which Coalition naval forces are now tasked to protect. Iran has harassed shipping, as in the case of the recent 'kidnapping' of Royal Navy personnel in disputed international waters and the swarming of US Navy vessels, and it could attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz. A terrorist attack against shipping, such as against the USS Cole and the MV Limburg, is distinctly possible. Endemic piracy off the Somali coast has the potential to impact tankers leaving the Red Sea. The use of mother ships, from which smaller boats operate to attack targets, extends the range of sea robbers/pirates, complicating tanker security as crews must remain vigilant for longer periods at the beginning of their transit.

## Cooperation between Maritime Forces


Having identified a role for both navies and coastguards in the protection of shipping, it is useful to consider their respective capabilities and capacities to determine how they might operate together. An important initial point is that the capabilities that navies and coastguards bring to the protection of shipping are complementary; they are not in competition, although this might not yet be evident in the financial resources allocated to each of them by their government.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, not all navies and coastguards

are the same in size, capabilities and the roles they may undertake, including whether they are an armed paramilitary force, or an unarmed maritime safety agency.

*As a general principle, protection of shipping responsibilities could transition between navies and coastguards based on geography, the threat and relevant capabilities*

Where both organizations exist, a delineation of roles is required. As a general principle, protection of shipping responsibilities could transition between navies and coastguards based on geography, the threat and relevant capabilities. Open ocean protection will remain a navy responsibility given range/endurance and capability factors. Navies will also have primacy in focal/chokepoints against state-directed attacks using high end capabilities and where a coastguard also existed, the coastguard will have a role with regard to possible maritime terrorist attacks. In practice, however, this delineation is fraught with difficulties and considerable effort is required of governments, navies and coastguards to ensure their procedures are harmonized to meet the perceived threat. Protection of ships when they enter and berth in ports will be a coastguard responsibility as a conventional military threat would be low, albeit recognizing that navies might be involved in long-range interception of suspect ships before they enter port.

Before cooperation can be contemplated, agreement is needed on the actual common threats facing each country's trade and shipping in order to demonstrate a common purpose. From this flows the identification of possible responses to the common threat, where some form of common agreement between countries could progressively lead to cooperation between agencies, then bilateral and eventually multilateral naval cooperation. In order to manage its maritime security a state must know what merchant shipping is transiting its waters and whether it constitutes a threat, as well as any foreign naval forces or non-state actor threats.<sup>7</sup> In naval terms this is maritime battlespace awareness or maritime domain awareness. Importantly, the 'basic' maritime picture will be compiled ashore, using both civil and military information and incorporating ship tracking and reporting data, and surveillance data from aircraft, radar and satellites, which will be distributed to those requiring



the information. Surface wave radar will be used for port security, including longer-range surveillance outside the port. Quality intelligence is also required to determine the probability of terrorist attacks on ports, as well as any suspect ships. Critically, both navies and coastguards must have access to this information, although it will more likely be the case that only limited information is transmitted to a coastguard vessel with limited communication capabilities, while the naval vessel has the capacity to receive the full picture as well as the ability to supplement it with its own sensor data.

All agencies involved in maritime security must be able to communicate with each other. This is critically important for the coastguard if their vessels do not have sensors and rely on having the battlespace picture transmitted to them. Effective communications are important to allow for the change in responsibility for ship protection as ships transit the open ocean through a chokepoint into port. Importantly, the coastguard must also be able to communicate with the harbor master, civil and law enforcement authorities to ensure effective port security. Ideally, all relevant agencies will have the same equipment and the same training. All agencies must train together to better understand their responsibilities and the changeover in responsibilities. If the

Before cooperation can be contemplated, there needs to be agreement on what the actual common threats are facing each country in order to demonstrate a common purpose

nature of the threat is high enough, navies can operate in ports in conjunction with coastguards, so cooperation is essential. Many naval skill sets are relevant to coastguards and there will need to be a mechanism for shared training, where appropriate and necessary. Training, exercises and exchanges remain critical, initially to improve individual skill sets, then collectively across a vessel and then between vessels. Involvement in multilateral exercises increases the benefits gained by participating navies. However, given the law enforcement role in counterterrorism, an inter-agency approach to training is also required, so that all agencies concerned with maritime security are involved in all relevant training and importantly gain an understanding of individual agency culture. Joint exercises and then patrols enable

navies and maritime forces to work together. Basic passage exercises and then more involved activities provide the skill sets for basic sea keeping tasks for surveillance, interception and eventually enforcement. At this level, both organizations should be able to communicate with each other and more importantly, understand each other, with a thorough understanding of each other's doctrine and operating procedures.

## Naval Cooperation for the Protection of Shipping

Generally, blue water navies are the tools of choice for the protection of shipping in the first instance, and if this protection role is to include port security, then coastguards have an important supplementary role. How have navies planned for this role in the past?

During the Cold War, extensive arrangements were put in place to ensure the protection of ship-borne logistic support and personnel transported across the Atlantic Ocean from the US to Europe, in order to reinforce NATO if Warsaw Pact forces ever moved west.<sup>8</sup> This global administrative framework known as Naval Control of Shipping (NCS), and using the Allied Naval Control of Shipping Manual, is concerned with the mandatory reporting, routing and organization of merchant vessels in times of tension or major conflict. During times of tension, naval authorities provide the organization for controlling and protecting shipping, while the management, operation and crewing of the merchant ships remains the responsibility of the shipping companies.

The end of the Cold War in 1989, combined with the experience of the Gulf Tanker War, showed that a crisis or conflict may occur in a limited area requiring the adoption of Regional Naval Control of Shipping (RNCS). This concept was introduced into NATO Doctrine in 1996, allowing for a more flexible and mobile response to a crisis or conflict. NCS evolved into Naval Cooperation and Guidance of Shipping (NCAGS), based on developing and implementing measures to facilitate the conduct of military activity at sea either involving, or in the presence of, merchant shipping. In 2000, NATO Doctrine was completely rewritten to acknowledge that in order to assist in the protection of shipping, irrespective of ship flag, a basic level of cooperation between navies and maritime industry was required.<sup>9</sup> NCAGS concerns military

cooperation, guidance, advice, assistance and supervision to merchant shipping to enhance the safety of merchant shipping that has agreed to be under navy supervision. In this context, naval supervision includes mandatory rerouting, control of movement and/or convoy of merchant shipping. The protection of merchant shipping involves the employment of military forces or procedures to prevent or defend against offensive actions directed at merchant ships. The benefits of NCAGS to merchant shipping are: an improvement in safety and security in the crisis area; minimized disruptions to passages through areas where military operations are being conducted; maintenance of seaborne trade; quicker reaction to changing threats; better understanding of military constraints; the potential for stabilizing insurance costs; minimizing disruptions to commercial schedules; and improved support for maritime counterterrorism and anti-piracy activities.

There are also two international naval trade protection fora known as Shipping Working Groups: NATO, and the Pacific and Indian Oceans, which are designed to ensure that participants of each group know how each views trade protection, to develop common strategic and operational level concepts and annually to test communications links.

## A Way Ahead

Given the strategic importance of the Middle East, and the attacks on and harassment of shipping that has occurred over the past 30 years, the development of a framework for cooperation to protect this shipping is prudent. What issues need to be considered by the Gulf countries as well as external major powers?

First, before cooperation can be contemplated, there needs to be agreement on what the actual common threats are facing each country in order to demonstrate a common purpose. From this flows the identification of possible

responses to the common threat, leading to cooperation. Until some level of agreement is reached, the following options will be difficult to implement.

Joint exercises and then patrols enable navies and coastguards to work together. Basic passage exercises and then more involved serials provide the skill sets for basic sea keeping tasks for surveillance, interception and eventually enforcement

Second, Maritime Domain Awareness is vital to identify if, when and where an attack might occur. This will involve the fusing of intelligence and surveillance information and its transmission to those who need access to it. This will entail inter-agency cooperation within each country, evolving over time to a combined activity between countries.<sup>10</sup> At the naval level, such cooperation could form a regional contribution to the US Navy proposed maritime global partnership concept.

Third, where navies and coastguards co-exist, it would be prudent for governments to consider interoperability issues when developing their respective forces. Basic equipment and communications are a first step, followed by logistic support and training. An option where both organizations exist is to have a senior naval officer on secondment command the coastguard. For example, an Indian Navy Vice Admiral commands the Indian Coast Guard, while an Australian Navy Rear Admiral commands Border Protection Command (an interagency organization responsible for Australia's civil maritime surveillance program). Officers of this rank are used for their greater experience and the ability to 'link' both organizations.

Fourth, training, exercises and exchanges are important, initially to improve individual skill sets, then collectively

1 British Petroleum, Statistical Review of World Energy 2007 (London, 2007), 6,8, 22, 24.

2 Energy Information Agency, Country Analysis Briefs - World Oil Transit Chokepoints, January 2008, [www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov)

3 British Petroleum, Statistical Review of World Energy 2007, 30.

4 Philippe Crist, Security in Maritime Transport: Risk Factors and Economic Impact, Maritime Transport Committee, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, July 2003.

5 M.S. Navias and E.R. Hooten, Tanker Wars: The Assault on Merchant Shipping during the Iran-Iraq Conflict, 1980-1988 (Tauris Academic Studies, I. B. Tauris Publishers, London, 1996), 1, 181, 183.

6 Colin D

7 As an example, in December 2004, D

8 Paul H D

9 The French Navy has been conducting Voluntary Naval Control of Shipping (VNCS) in the northern Indian Ocean with the voluntary exchange of information between the navy and relevant French shipping companies.

10 Canadian, Singapore and Malaysia, to name but a few countries, have or are in the process of, creating such centers.

across a vessel and then between vessels. An inter-agency approach to training is required, so that all agencies concerned with maritime security are involved in all relevant training and importantly gain an understanding of individual agency culture.

Fifth, joint exercises and then patrols enable navies and coastguards to work together. Basic passage exercises and then more involved serials provide the skill sets for basic sea keeping tasks for surveillance, interception and eventually enforcement. At this level, both organizations should be able to communicate with each other and more importantly, understand each other, with a thorough understanding of each other's doctrine and operating procedures.

Sixth, joint and/or combined operations centers which fuse the intelligence and surveillance picture, but also plan and conduct exercises, as well as planning operations are needed. Importantly, the common threat assessment must be high enough to justify this level of cooperation.

A suitable framework for SLOC protection in the Middle East might be the adoption of NATO NCS/NCAGS standards as the doctrine, administration and training already exist

Seventh, a suitable framework for SLOC protection in the Middle East might be the adoption of NATO NCS/NCAGS standards as the doctrine, administration and training already exist. Either the NATO or Pacific and Indian Ocean Shipping Working Groups could be the administrative mechanism to bring these standards into effect, while also providing the framework for command post exercises to test administrative procedures, as well as exercises to test NCAGS scenarios.

Andrew Forbes is Visiting Senior Fellow, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong.



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All

# The Gulf and Africa

## Developing a new Strategic Partnership

The "Gulf and Africa: Developing a New Strategic Partnership" forum will bring together key leaders from business, academia, government and media to outline the main challenges facing more constructive relations between the key regions of Africa and the Gulf. The purpose of this event is to cover a wide range of issues enabling the proposition of policy recommendations that will ensure closer ties.

February 24-25, 2009  
International Convention Centre  
Cape Town, South Africa

For further information please call  
04-3247770 Ext. 450, visit the website  
[www.grc.ae](http://www.grc.ae) or email directly [mililo@grc.ae](mailto:mililo@grc.ae)

# Maritime Terrorism: A Threat Magnified by Arms Proliferation

**Michael Richardson**

The increasing access to advanced weapons by terrorists, militia groups and anti-government rebel networks operating at sea in the Asia-Middle East region is causing mounting anxiety among intelligence agencies and navies in the area. The energy-rich Arabian Gulf, the Arabian and Red seas, the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean are vital links in sea trade between Asia and the West. The Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean are also vital links in energy and other trade exchanges between Asia and the Middle East. Referring in part to developments in this zone, Lieutenant General Michael Maples, head of the US Defense Intelligence Agency, warned recently that as the proliferation of weapons and information technology accelerates, non-state actors “will have more opportunities to develop very capable conventional and asymmetric military, intelligence and counter-intelligence abilities, perhaps matching or even exceeding those of some advanced nations, including US allies.” This, he added, “could further destabilize regions critical to US interests.”<sup>1</sup> Three organizations are of particular concern: the decentralized Al-Qaeda movement whose top leaders are believed to be in the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border zone; the Lebanese Hizbollah; and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam based in northern Sri Lanka.

## The Sea Tigers

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were pioneers in showing how non-state actors can use ships in support of political violence. Indeed, some analysts believe that the Tamil Tigers and Al-Qaeda have learned from each other. They say that the Sri Lankan guerillas trained in Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and that the attack on the USS Cole in October 2000 and the French tanker Limburg two years later, both near Yemen, copied LTTE strikes against shipping. The Sri Lankan government has lost several dozen naval vessels, both in harbor and at sea, during its long war with the Tamil Tigers who have used high-speed boats filled with explosives to ram naval vessels. There have also been reports that members of


Jemaah Islamiyah, the Southeast Asian terrorist group linked to Al-Qaeda, have been trained in the seaborne guerrilla tactics developed by the LTTE.<sup>2</sup>

The increasing access to advanced weapons by terrorists, militia groups and anti-government rebel networks operating at sea in the Asia-Middle East region is causing mounting anxiety among intelligence agencies and navies in the area

Founded in 1976, the LTTE claims to represent the predominantly Hindu Tamil minority in a country with a Sinhalese ethnic majority, most whom are Buddhists. The LTTE, which at one time was estimated to have a 12,000-strong armed force, has used both overt and illegal methods to raise funds, acquire weapons, ammunition and explosives and to publicize its cause in fighting since 1983 for a separate state for Tamils in the northeast of Sri Lanka. The conflict between government troops and Tiger fighters has cost the lives of 70,000 people in the past 25 years. The LTTE has frequently used suicide bombers in operations against the government and exploited commercial shipping, both to make money and bring in arms, ammunition, and other war-related material for attacks in Sri Lanka. Before Norway brokered a ceasefire between the government and the Tigers that took effect in February 2002, the LTTE had developed into a prototype terrorist organization with a potentially global reach.<sup>3</sup>

## Suicide Attacks

Unlike Al-Qaeda, the Tamil Tigers did not strike extensively outside their home base but, like Hizbollah, has the capability to do so. The LTTE is the only group to have successfully assassinated two national leaders – Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991 and Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka in 1993. Both were well-orchestrated suicide operations that evaded tight official security cordons. Sri Lanka’s former President Chandrika



Kumaratunga narrowly survived a Tamil Tiger suicide bomb attack in 1999. The key to the LTTE's fighting strength was its international support network. It collected money from large Tamil communities in North America, Europe and Australia. There is also some evidence that the LTTE officially sanctioned drug smuggling as well as arms smuggling to support its independence struggle.<sup>4</sup>

### Tamil Tiger Shipping

Since the mid-1980's, the Tamil Tigers have controlled an extensive and profitable network of freight forwarders and a fleet of cargo ships. The latter were not registered in Sri Lanka. To help disguise their ownership, they flew Panamanian, Honduran or Liberian flags. Indeed, the heart of the LTTE's military procurement was a secretive shipping network which, by 1999, included at least 10 freighters. Most of the time, the Tamil Tiger ships made money carrying legitimate cargo like timber, tea, rice, cement and fertilizer. But in some cases, the Tigers carried weapons and ammunition for other paying terrorist groups, among them the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen of Pakistan which is a member of the Al-Qaeda-linked International Islamic Front. And when needed, Tamil Tiger ships and traders played a vital role in supplying explosives, weapons, ammunition and other war-related material to the LTTE in Sri Lanka.<sup>5</sup>

### External Crackdown

The operating environment for the LTTE outside Sri Lanka has become more difficult since the late 1990s, especially after the US and other countries launched their global campaign against terrorism following Al-Qaeda's attacks on America in September, 2001. The LTTE has been proscribed in the US, Canada, Britain, India and 28 other states. Since large-scale hostilities resumed in Sri Lanka's civil war in 2006, the LTTE has faced new challenges in sustaining its international support and supply lines as foreign governments have cracked down on its fund-raising and arms purchasing. Many of the arms markets and transshipment countries that the Tamil Tigers once used are now being more closely monitored by governments anxious to counter terrorism and protect themselves from attack.<sup>6</sup>

Sri Lanka's navy has been enlarged and provided with improved equipment. Naval intelligence has improved and India has tightened surveillance on its side of the maritime border with Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan navy has taken the fight to the Sea Tigers. In the past two years, it claims to have destroyed eight Tiger ocean-going cargo vessels and 11 of the fishing trawlers used to offload clandestine shipments and ferry them

to shore. The Navy also claims to have destroyed a number of Tiger floating warehouses containing arms and ammunition.<sup>7</sup> Three Tiger cargo ships were intercepted and destroyed by the navy in international waters several thousand kilometres from Sri Lanka off the coast of Sumatra, the westernmost of Indonesia's main islands in a counter-terrorist operation that spanned a number of countries including the US. Some analysts believe that this crackdown, although it failed to net the LTTE's head of arms procurement based in Thailand, nonetheless disrupted at least 75 per cent of the rebel group's supply chain.<sup>8</sup>

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were pioneers in showing how non-state actors can use ships in support of political violence. Indeed, some analysts believe that the Tamil Tigers and Al-Qaeda have learned from each other

As part of the crackdown, four Indonesians, a Sri Lankan and a Singaporean were charged in US courts in 2007 with involvement in two arms-dealing conspiracies, one to export arms to Indonesia illegally and the other to funnel weapons to the LTTE in Sri Lanka. The six tried to buy sophisticated weapons, including shoulder-fired heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles, night vision devices, sniper rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers and ammunition. According to the US Justice Department, two down-payments totaling over \$700,000 were made from a Malaysian bank to an account in the US set up by FBI agents to trap the six Asians who were arrested in September 2006.<sup>9</sup> Despite these setbacks, the LTTE's overseas fund-raising, arms procurement and smuggling network continues its work, reportedly raising between \$200 million to \$300 million a year from among at least 600,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living abroad, mainly in Canada, the US, Britain, Western Europe and Australia. Some of the donations are voluntary while others are coerced. The LTTE uses front companies and middlemen to buy arms from legitimate weapons manufacturers in Europe and Asia.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the terrorist network associated with Al-Qaeda has understood the vital role of sea transport and exploited it for years.

### East Africa

For example, an Al-Qaeda-controlled cargo ship delivered the explosives that its operatives used to bomb two US embassies in East Africa in August 1998, killing 224 people and injuring more than 5,000.<sup>11</sup>

## Yemen

In September 2004, two Al-Qaeda operatives were sentenced to death and four others jailed in Yemen for the suicide attack in October 2000 on the American destroyer Cole.<sup>12</sup> They used a small boat packed with explosives to ram and seriously damage one of the US navy's most sophisticated warships. An earlier attempt to attack another American destroyer, The Sullivans, in Yemen had failed when the over-laden attack boat sank. It was salvaged and used in the operation to strike the Cole. The blast, which left a gaping hole in the side of the destroyer, killed 17 American sailors and wounded 40. It took more than 14 months and cost around \$250 million to repair the ship.<sup>13</sup> In October 2002, two years after the Cole was hit, the French-registered oil tanker, Limburg, carrying crude oil off the coast of Yemen, was crippled and set ablaze in another terrorist attack using an explosive-laden small boat. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

## Iraq

In April 2004, suicide terrorists in several small boats packed with explosives tried to attack laden tankers and pumping and storage facilities in the main oil export terminal in southern Iraq. The attack boats either blew up or were blown up before they reached their targets. But they came perilously close and it took several days to restore normal output from the terminal.<sup>15</sup> The assault was ordered by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, then head of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. He was killed in June 2006 but the movement has a new leadership and fights on, although on a more restricted scale and under increasing pressure from both local and US forces in Iraq.

## Jordan

The terrorist group led by Zarqawi, who was born in Jordan, claimed responsibility for the Katyusha rocket attack in August 2005 that narrowly missed two US warships in the Jordanian Red Sea port of Aqaba. Three rockets were fired at the two docked vessels, the amphibious assault ship Kearsarge and the landing ship Ashland. The Katyushas missed the ships, but a Jordanian soldier was killed and a taxi driver wounded when the rockets exploded.<sup>16</sup>

## Turkey

Also in August 2005, authorities in Turkey arrested Louai Sakka, a senior Al-Qaeda operative and longtime associate of Zarqawi in Iraq. Sakka was picked up and interrogated after a one-ton bomb he was making in a rented harbor-side

apartment in the resort town of Antalya, in southern Turkey, went off prematurely. He had intended to put the bomb into final shape on his 27-foot motorized yacht, the Tufan, which was moored in a marina close to the apartment. Sakka planned to ram the explosive-laden yacht into a cruise ship carrying Israelis – and, he believed, US soldiers on rest and recreation – as it approached Antalya to disembark passengers. Sakka said later that he was prepared to attack NATO warships in the area if he was unable to locate Israeli passenger vessels.<sup>17</sup>

## Morocco

In March and April 2007, Moroccan officials and media reported a series of arrests of dozens of people suspected of planning attacks on a range of targets, including blowing up foreign ships in Casablanca port and striking at facilities in three of the country's main tourist destinations. There is evidence to suggest that this was an Al-Qaeda plot.<sup>18</sup>


## Strait of Gibraltar

Abd Al-Rahim Al-Nashiri, captured in late 2002, gave investigators information that reinforced concerns about plans for terrorist attacks against shipping. He was Al-Qaeda's head of operations in and around the Arabian peninsula and its de facto naval chief. Al-Nashiri is the alleged mastermind of the attack on the USS Cole and the tanker Limburg. He has also been linked to the bombings of the two US embassies in east Africa in 1998. In addition, Al-Nashiri was planning attacks on shipping in the Strait of Gibraltar. Early in 2002, he sent a team of several Saudis to Morocco to prepare for bomb-laden speedboat attacks on US and British warships as they passed through the strait between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>19</sup> The Saudis had been trained in Afghanistan. The Moroccan intelligence service, working with Western intelligence agencies, foiled the scheme.

## Arabian Gulf

Evidently drawing on information from interrogation of Al-Nashiri and other captured Al-Qaeda operatives, President George Bush said in October 2005 that America and its partners in the war on terror had disrupted at least 10 serious Al-Qaeda terrorist plots since 9/11. Two of these attempts were directed against shipping.

The White House noted that, in late 2002 and 2003, the US and a partner nation disrupted a plan by Al-Qaeda operatives to attack ships in the Arabian Gulf.<sup>20</sup> This may be a reference



to an abortive attempt to bomb the US Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain, a plan linked to Al-Nashiri who was captured in the United Arab Emirates in October 2002. Or it may be a reference to another audacious plot Al-Nashiri was working on at the time of his arrest. He was arranging funding to crash a small aircraft into the bridge of a Western navy vessel when it was docked in UAE's Port Rashid.

### **Strait of Hormuz**

The White House said that in the second plot in 2002, the US and partners disrupted a plan to attack vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping channel both for tankers carrying oil exports from the Gulf to Asia, Europe and America, and for US and allied warships patrolling the area and supporting military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Al-Nashiri's procurement arm in the United Arab Emirates, through a series of front companies, had bought a general cargo vessel and several speed boats. The aim was to fit a special lifting rig on deck to lower the boats, packed with shaped explosive charges, into the water when they were close to the Hormuz Strait, which is about 40 miles wide. The waterway consists of 2-mile wide channels for separate inbound and outbound tanker traffic, with a 2-mile wide buffer zone between them. Once in position within striking distance of a passing US warship, the small craft manned by suicide crew were to be launched from the mother ship in a combined attack from different directions on the chosen target. The freighter itself was to be loaded with explosives and blown up in the shipping lanes as close as possible to the transiting US naval target. The plot was reportedly intended to coincide with the attacks on the US in September 2001. But Al-Nashiri, fearing that the operation's coordinators were under surveillance, called it off.<sup>21</sup>

### **Future Trends**

Al-Qaeda and other Sunni extremists were involved in all the plans and operations outlined above. They caused only limited disruption to naval operations and seaborne trade, mainly because the weapons used by the groups involved lacked sophistication. But this has changed in the past couple of years as the Shiite Hizbollah, with assistance from Iran and Syria, deployed advanced technology weapons against Israel. Yet unlike Al-Qaeda, Hizbollah is not widely branded as a terrorist organization. It has a well-developed political arm in Lebanon, with substantial representation in parliament and a social welfare program that is reputed to be more effective

than the Lebanese government's counterpart services.

Only a small number of states, among them the US, Israel and the Netherlands, have proscribed Hizbollah as a whole. Australia and Britain treat part of Hizbollah, its paramilitary arm, as a terrorist organization. The Lebanese Hizbollah and predominantly Shiite Iran have become increasingly involved in the Palestinian struggle against Israel in recent years, providing arms and other assistance to fighters of Hamas and other units.<sup>22</sup> Israeli forces have intercepted at least three major shipments of these weapons by sea in the last five years.

### **Singapore**

In June 2002, Singapore's Internal Security Department disclosed that Hizbollah had planned several years earlier to attack US naval vessels and Israeli commercial ships in Singapore or as they approached, using small boats packed with explosives.<sup>23</sup> The minister for home affairs said that Hizbollah had no links with the Jemaah Islamiyah and that the Hizbollah members had been expelled. They had tried to recruit Singaporeans and establish a cell in the island-state similar to those elsewhere in Asia, Australia and in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.<sup>24</sup>

### **Hizbollah: Iran's Arm's Length Strike Force**

These cells, front organizations and support groups have been involved in fund raising, recruitment, and intelligence gathering as well as criminal activity and money laundering. They have also been preparing for armed attacks should Hizbollah and its main patron, Iran, decide to launch them. Hizbollah gives predominantly Shiite Iran an international capability for retaliation against US and Israeli interests on several continents.<sup>25</sup> Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has warned that if attacked, Iran would hit back with all its capabilities at US and allied interests worldwide. In contrast to Al-Qaeda and the now decentralized Sunni extremist network, Hizbollah is centrally directed from Lebanon and works in tandem with state patrons, Iran and Syria.

### **Hizbollah's Lethal Arsenal**

The military wing of Hizbollah in Lebanon is sometimes described as a militia. But the fighting with Israel two years ago revealed it to be one of the best equipped guerrilla forces in the world. Hizbollah is a militia trained like an army and equipped like a state, an Israeli soldier who had just returned from combat against the group in southern Lebanon in August 2006, told the *New York Times*. With some 3,500 fighters, an

infantry brigade size force, Hizbollah proved to be very well organized, equipped and armed. Its weapons included some that have rarely, if ever, been seen before in the hands of non-state actors:

...advanced anti-tank missiles and rocket-propelled grenades such as the Russian-designed RPG-29 which proved to be effective against Israeli tanks and armored vehicles. The RPG-29, which Russia had sold to Syria, has a tandem warhead. The first explosion is designed to blow away the target's protective armor while the second penetrates it;<sup>26</sup>

...the Ababil unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), a pilotless aircraft with a self-guidance system that is capable of carrying an 88-pound warhead for up to 150 miles. Iran builds the Ababil and supplied it to Hizbollah. Three were launched against Israel but were shot down.<sup>27</sup> One carried an explosive charge. The UAVs and the armor-piercing missiles are potentially new weapons in the hands of non-state actors for use against ships.

## C-802 Anti-Ship Missile

Among Hizbollah's arsenal of modern arms was a weapon not normally associated with even the fanciest guerrilla group. On July 14, 2006, two days after Hizbollah triggered the conflict by capturing and killing some soldiers inside Israel, it fired two C-802 radar-guided cruise missiles. One seriously damaged an Israeli corvette about 16 kilometres off the coast. The ship was helping to enforce Israel's blockade of Lebanon. Four sailors were killed. The second C-802 narrowly missed another Israeli corvette. Instead, it hit a Cambodian-registered freighter, sinking the vessel and killing 11 Egyptian crewmen.<sup>28</sup>

Neither Israel nor the US knew that Hizbollah fighters had such sophisticated weapons as the C-802 in their arsenal. As a result, the Israeli vessel did not have its missile-defense system on. Even if it had, the system would probably have been unable to protect it from the sea-skimming missile traveling at just under the speed of sound.<sup>29</sup> The C-802 is rated as one of the most lethal anti-ship missiles in the world. It has a range of around 120 kilometres and a warhead packed with 165 kg of high explosives. How did Hizbollah get such an advanced weapon? From Iran – by sea, air or overland through Syria, another Hizbollah ally. Iran bought at least 75 of the missiles from China in the mid-1990s. It reportedly received help from China and North Korea to extend their range and improve their accuracy. With its own product line, Tehran clearly felt it had enough of the C-802s to send some to Hizbollah in Lebanon and provide the training needed to operate them successfully.<sup>30</sup>

## Conventional Arms Bazaar

The arms trade is a huge, valuable and competitive global business. Arms smuggling is rife in many parts of the world and the weapons and equipment available for use are increasingly sophisticated and difficult to counter. The Al-Qaeda network, Hizbollah and the Tamil Tigers all exploit the weapons trafficking business to get, or try to get, new and more potent weapons. The trade in small arms and light infantry weapons is already extensive in conflict-prone parts of the Middle East and Asia, and the demand for more advanced equipment is strong.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, the problem is global in scope. There are around 100 countries that make weapons and ammunition. Sales of these products were estimated to be worth over \$1,000 billion in 2006 – 15 times the annual spending on international aid. In October 2006, negotiations started in the United Nations General Assembly on a binding treaty to control the so-called light arms trade that kills at least 300,000 people each year, destabilizes nations and ruins the lives of millions. But the negotiations are likely to be contentious and slow.<sup>32</sup>

## Quantum Leap

For those who regard Hizbollah as an international terrorist organization armed by Iran and Syria, its acquisition of more potent weapons is an alarming development. Hizbollah has gone one-up by showing Al-Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups it can use these weapons in combat. As a result, navies and commercial shipping face a significantly higher level of threat, especially if there is a resurgence in fighting between Hizbollah and Israel or a major conflict with Iran over Iraq or the Iranian nuclear program. The use of the C-802 anti-ship missile by Hizbollah shows the increasingly dangerous nexus between technology and non-state actors. It is a warning about the quantum leap in the weaponry available for maritime-related attacks.

The US military intelligence community is extremely worried about these trends. In testimony to the US Senate Committee on Armed Services on February 27, 2008, Lieutenant Michael D. Maples, director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency, noted that Hizbollah had inflicted significant Israeli casualties and challenged Israeli ground operations and plans in the fighting in south Lebanon in July and August 2006 by using scores of advanced anti-tank guided missiles against Israeli ground troops and armored vehicles. Hizbollah had also

“heavily damaged an Israeli warship with an anti-ship cruise missile, a military capability once limited to nation-states and that Hizbollah was not known to possess prior to the conflict.”

Spelling out the implications, General Maples said that highly-accurate long-range guided weapons “help non-state actors inflict losses against technologically superior opponents at a relatively low cost and with little training. These weapons can produce operational and even strategic-level effects beyond the battlefield when used to their maximum effect at the tactical level and publicized through the media or Internet. This provides terrorist and insurgent groups with a magnified politico-military potential that exceeds their historical norm.” He added that when available in combination, “advanced weapons, sophisticated information technologies, ungoverned spaces and external sponsorship give non-state criminal or terrorist groups the chance to develop credible military, intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities once limited to nation-states.” Yet largely unencumbered by traditional internal and external governance responsibilities aside from attending to their own supporters, these groups can operate beyond the reach of traditional statecraft tools, such as economic

and diplomatic sanctions.<sup>33</sup> Indian intelligence agencies are also concerned at these trends. M. K. Narayanan, National Security Advisor to the Indian prime minister, said in December that both the Gulf and South Asia must remain prepared for a new wave of terrorism and that Gulf nations, with major oil resources, were highly vulnerable to such threats. Speaking in Manama and quoting Indian intelligence reports, he said that new schools specialized in training an international brigade of terrorists were being established on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Recruits from as many as 15 countries had been identified among the trainees. These were highly specialized schools. Their targets included high-profile political and other personalities, vital infrastructure and installations, including large ocean liners, oil pipelines, oil dumps and electricity pylons, as well as the usual military and political targets. The sea, he added, was becoming a favored route for carrying out attacks.<sup>34</sup>

Michael Richardson is a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore. He is former Asia editor of the International Herald Tribune. His book, *A Time-bomb for Global Trade: Maritime-related Terrorism in an Age of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, was reprinted recently by ISEAS.

- 1 Unclassified statement for the record on “Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States” by Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, Defense Intelligence Agency director before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, February 27, 2008, 33.
- 2 Vijay Sakhujia, “Terrorist Sea Strategy: The Kamikaze Approach,” Peace Forum Essays, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, April 2003.
- 3 Peter Chalk, “Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam’s (LTTE) International Organization and Operations – a Preliminary Analysis,” Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Commentary no. 77, p. 9, March 17, 2000.
- 4 Peter Chalk, *ibid.*, 8.
- 5 OECD Report on Security in Maritime Transport: Risk Factors and Economic Impact, July 2003, p. 5-6.
- 6 Australian Broadcasting Corp., “Cambodia Announces Plans to Destroy its Obsolete Air Weapons Systems,” March 2, 2004. This report noted that the US had launched a global drive to secure, or eliminate, shoulder-fired and man-portable air defense rockets which it feared could be used by international terrorists to attack civilian aircraft. The report also noted that Cambodia was suspected of being a major source of illegal weapons for armed rebel groups across Asia, including the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and separatists in Indonesia’s Aceh province.
- 7 Rafik Jalaaldeen, “Navy’s Pivotal Role in Battle against Terrorism,” Ceylon Daily News, December 10, 2007.
- 8 Robert Karniol, “Tamil Tigers’ Hangout: S-E Asia,” Straits Times, Singapore, October 22, 2007.
- 9 AFP, “US Busts Asian Network Seeking Arms for Tamil Tigers,” April 5, 2007.
- 10 Matthew Rosenberg, “Sri Lanka’s Tamil Tiger Rebels Run a Global Fund Raising and Weapons-Smuggling Network,” Associated Press, November 5, 2007.
- 11 John Mintz, “15 Freighters Believed to be Linked to Al-Qaeda,” Washington Post, December 31, 2002.
- 12 Associated Press, “Two Sentenced to Death for Bombing of USS Cole,” New York Times, September 29, 2004.
- 13 US Department of Justice press release, “Al-Qaeda Associates Charged in Attack on USS Cole, Attempted Attack on Another US Naval Vessel,” May 15, 2003.
- 14 Lloyd’s List, “Limburg Attackers Had Inside Knowledge,” May 15, 2003.
- 15 Chip Cummins, “US Military Increases Oil-Facility Protection as Global Threats Rise,” Asian Wall Street Journal, July 1, 2004.
- 16 Hassan M. Fattah, “Search Continues for Clues and Suspects in Rocket Attack in Jordan,” New York Times, August 21, 2005.

- 17 Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) online, Israel’s Navy Steps up to Security Challenges in Wake of Gaza Pullout, May 31, 2006, 7-8.
- 18 Craig Whitlock, “In Morocco’s ‘Chemist’, a Glimpse of Al-Qaeda,” Washington Post, July 7, 2007.
- 19 Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 6, 2006, press release on Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, section on Abd Al-Rahim Al-Nashiri.
- 20 White House, Fact Sheet: Plots, Casings and Infiltrations Referenced in President Bush’s Remarks on the War on Terror, October 6, 2005.
- 21 “Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain,” page 10 of paper by Rupert Herbert-Burns for the IDSS Maritime Security Conference, Singapore, May 20-21, 2004..
- 22 Amit Cohen, “The Hezbollah with Us,” Maariv International, June 3, 2004.
- 23 Melvin Singh, “Which Terror Squad Once Wanted S’porean Recruits?” New Paper, Singapore, June 8, 2002.
- 24 Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore, Press release, Minister for Home Affairs’ comments on the Hizbollah case, June 8, 2002.
- 25 US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, joint hearing of the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation and the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia on Hizbollah’s global reach, page 7 of testimony on September 28, 2006 by Frank C. Urbancic, Principal Deputy Coordinator for Counter-terrorism, US State Department.
- 26 Joshua Brilliant, “Anti-tank Rockets Menace Israelis,” UPI, August 14, 2006.
- 27 Newsweek, “A Worrisome Weapon,” September 11, 2006.
- 28 Richard Fisher Jr., “China Sows The Whirlwind: Implications of Hezbollah’s Iranian-Chinese Weapons,” International Assessment and Strategy Centre by July 26, 2006.
- 29 Mark Mazetti and Thom Shanker, “Arming of Hezbollah Reveals US and Israeli Blind Spots,” New York Times, July 19, 2006.
- 30 GlobalSecurity.org. C-802 fact sheet and history.
- 31 Brian White, “Six Indicted in Arms Brokering for Tamil Tigers and Indonesia,” Associated Press, September 29, 2006.
- 32 Jeremy Lovell, “World Has Unique Chance to Curb Arms Trade,” Reuters, October 2, 2006.
- 33 Unclassified statement for the record on Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States by Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, Defense Intelligence Agency director before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, February 27, 2008, 32-33.
- 34 M.K.Narayanan, National Security Advisor, India, summary of speech to IISS Manama Dialogue, Plenary session no. 3 on Energy and Regional Security, December 8, 2007.

# US Navy Changing the Rules of Engagement: Maritime Security and ‘Accidental War’ Scenario in the Gulf

**Mustafa Alani**

It was just after sunset on Monday, March 24, 2008 when a motorboat carrying three Egyptian traders approached the US container ship ‘Global Patriot’ in the Gulf of Suez as it prepared to sail towards the Mediterranean. The ‘Global

This incident happened on a major oil shipping route, and the consequences of such an incident could have sparked off a major military confrontation

Patriot’ was carrying used US military equipment. When the Egyptian motorboat came too close to the US ship, it was warned to stop. These warnings went unheeded, and the crew of the US ship was ordered to open fire. One person was killed and two were injured as a result. According to US Navy sources, the crew of the US ship had warned the small boats to turn away via bridge-to-bridge radio besides a series of other warning measures. However, one small boat continued to approach the US ship, and that was when the order to open fire was issued. Egyptian sources explained that it was usual for fisherman and hawkers on small boats to ply the waters of the canal trying to sell cigarettes and other local products to ships passing through, and that the crew of the US ship possibly acted nervously and in an unjustifiable manner. A statement issued by the US Fifth Fleet disputed the Egyptian claim about casualties stating that the crew of the ‘Global Patriot’ had only fired warning shots at a small boat approaching the vessel, following multiple warnings to turn away. “There were no reports from the Global Patriot of casualties,” the statement said. Later the US admitted responsibility for the death of the Egyptian citizen.

This incident in the Gulf of Suez is not an isolated one. In January 2008, five Iranian speedboats challenged three US ships (identified as Navy cruiser USS Port Royal,

destroyer USS Hopper and frigate USS Ingraham) in the Strait of Hormuz. According to US version of the event, the Iranian speedboats had not only behaved provocatively and harassed the US vessels, but also made a threat through the radio communication to ‘blow them up.’ The speedboats, believed to belong to Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Naval command, came within approximately 200m (650ft) of the US vessels. US Navy said that the Iranians withdrew as the US ships prepared to open fire and that the order to open fire had been issued to the crew. The confrontation, which occurred in international waters, lasted about 20 minutes. This incident happened on a major oil shipping route, and the consequences of such an incident could have sparked off a major military confrontation that would have undermined the security and the freedom of navigation in one of the most vital regions for the global economy.

The US Navy’s rules of engagement seem to have specified the danger zone or the engagement zone as a distance not exceeding 200 meters

What alarmed the US Navy even more is the series of naval exercises conducted by the naval command of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps during 2007, which focused, among other skills, on perfecting mock attacks on ships by small speed boats packed with large amount of high explosives and on operations by divers using limpet mines. Following the Strait of Hormuz incident, the US naval command in the region expressed its concern about the conduct of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps-Naval command describing it as ‘provocative and irresponsible.’ Indeed, since Al-Qaeda organized suicide seaborne attacks just off the Yemen coast on USS Cole in October 2000 and later on the French oil tanker Limburg in October 2002, the US Navy has been fully aware of the threat posed to its

vessels by small speedboats and motor powered boats in general and understands the serious consequences of such attacks. Indeed, from the two incidents which occurred in 2008 – the Strait of Hormuz incident and the Gulf of Suez incident – it seems that the US Navy operating in the Middle East waters has a new and more forceful rule of engagement, which gives ‘standing authority’ to the commanders of US vessels to open fire on any suspected target believed to pose a potential threat to the safety of their ships. By examining the two incidents when fire was either actually opened and caused casualties (Gulf of Suez incident) or when the order was actually issued to the gunners to open fire (Strait of Hormuz incident), the US Navy’s rules of engagement seem to have specified the danger zone or the engagement zone as a distance not exceeding 200 meters. Thus any unidentified vessel (mainly small boats) approaching US vessels and failing to heed warnings to stop, by coming within the distance of 200 meters (or more) will be subject to attack by US forces.

Iran would overlook its ideological differences in favor of a temporary strategic alliance based on mutual interests and confrontation of a common enemy

Such a change in the rules of engagement could be seen as necessary in the context of the escalating and multiple security challenges facing the US forces in the region. These challenges arise from the US confrontation with Iran over the state’s nuclear file and over the Iranian interventionist policy in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. Besides, the unstable security situation in Iraq, and the continuing threat from Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups also pose security challenges.

The escalating US-Iran standoff has inspired the Gulf Research Center to examine scenarios for conflict between the two states, focusing on two main possible developments: a planned war and an accidental war.\* In view of the recent developments related to the assumed changes in the US Navy’s rules of engagement, the accidental war or accidental military confrontation scenario seems more possible than before.

## Scenario 1: Planned War

“War by design” or planned military confrontation assumes that a decision is made in the top policy making echelons in the US and is based on military and political planning similar to the conflicts in Iraq or Panama. The study downplays this possibility, at least for now, on the grounds that the US administration lacks the conducive environment to guarantee political and military success.

US military has made preparations for the incidental war scenario. The military has strict orders from the political leadership to deal immediately and conclusively with any Iranian provocation

In particular, Iran possesses important keys to the US conundrum in Iraq, which would allow it to turn the current situation into a complete defeat. Iran could apply “indirect retaliation strategy” in Iraq and elsewhere, using its political, military and security influence in several regional countries to conduct a proxy war against US interests. In revenge for a US attack, Iran might choose to:

- Engage the capabilities of its Iraqi allies to intensify military operations against US forces in Iraq, while providing military and intelligence support to Shiite militias, most of which already have strong links to Iranian intelligence and military
- Send a large number of Revolutionary Guards across the border to directly engage US forces in Iraq, while Iraqi allies provide cover and logistical support
- Provide, directly or indirectly, military, intelligence and financial support to Al-Qaeda to intensify its war against the US and its allies in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. Iran would overlook its ideological differences in favor of a temporary strategic alliance based on mutual interests and confrontation of a common enemy. This would reflect existing effective but limited cooperation between the two sides in Iraq. Iran could also provide support to the Taliban in Afghanistan; and
- Draw on the capabilities of organizations in several Middle Eastern countries that are publicly or discreetly linked to Iran, politically or operationally, particularly Lebanon’s

\* This part of the study was originally published in “Energy Intelligence” XVIII, no. 39 September 28, 2007.

Hizbollah, pro-Iranian Palestinian organizations, and some Shiite opposition groups in the Gulf States, to conduct military operations or terrorist attacks against US and Israeli targets, and possibly against some other regional countries. In addition to indirect retaliation, Iran could use its military for a direct response. Iranian forces could attack US forces in the Gulf with missiles and deploy its navy to attack US vessels. It could also interrupt oil exports through the Gulf, as it has threatened.

## Scenario 2: Accidental War

“War by coincidence” or incidental confrontation, which could develop into a large-scale conflict, is considered the more plausible and realistic scenario. The US would not actively seek a military confrontation, but would not hesitate to confront Iran if forced to do so. In this scenario, the US administration’s weakness and loss of credibility from the failure in Iraq means that it would not be able to ignore or dismiss any provocation by Iran without responding. The US administration has already sent strong public warnings to Tehran that it represents a threat to security and stability in the region. If Iran defies the US in a provocative manner, using its forces in Iraq or its ships in the Gulf, this could force the US political and military leadership to respond immediately and decisively, leading to a wider military confrontation.

“War by coincidence” or incidental confrontation, which could develop into a large-scale conflict, is considered the more plausible and realistic scenario

One example of an incident that could have spiraled into confrontation was the Revolutionary Guard’s March seizure, in an apparently pre-planned operation, of 15 British Marines in the Gulf. When Iran paraded the hostages on television, the UK chose to swallow the insult – but the US would not have taken such an accommodating stance.

There are several dangerous points of friction between US and Iranian forces. Furthermore, miscalculation by the Iranians cannot be ruled out, particularly through undisciplined acts by the Revolutionary Guard, which is active in the same areas as the US, including Iraq and the Gulf waterway. War games with live ammunition or missile testing could

provide the spark, intentional or otherwise, that leads to wider confrontation. Another possible source is the daily tension between Revolutionary Guards and US forces along the Iran-Iraq border, which is used to smuggle arms and fighters for Iraq, as well as border areas in the Shatt al-Arab and Gulf of Basra waterways. Inside Iraq, the Revolutionary Guard and its Quds Force intelligence arm manipulate Iraq’s internal strife through arms smuggling, training and financing, even maintaining a direct presence in Iraqi towns in the south and border areas.

Following the seizure of British sailors and Marines last March, the US military has made preparations for the incidental war scenario. The military has strict orders from the political leadership to deal immediately and conclusively with any Iranian provocation or intrusion on US forces in the area, and there would be no leniency in the rules of engagement.

It is not possible to predict the extent and nature of a US military response. What’s certain is that US forces have orders to respond decisively to “sources of threat,” including Iranian units active in the theater of operations. It is also possible that the US would seize an opportunity and expand the operations area to include pre-selected targets inside Iran, particularly Revolutionary Guard camps or bases along the border with Iraq, or along the Gulf coast and its islands. Other potential strategic targets include Iranian nuclear facilities; missile launchers, bases, storage sites and production facilities; and air defense facilities, including radar network. The scale of any US action/reaction would be based on a political decision at the highest level.

The US administration would find it easier to justify military action sparked by a provocative act against US forces, believing this – as an act of self-defense – would secure support from Congress and the American people, and would earn a degree of international support and legitimacy.

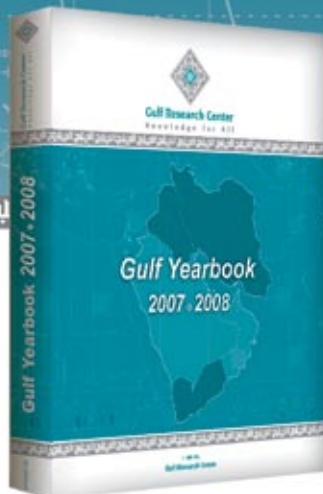
Mustafa Alani is Director and Senior Advisor in the Security & Terrorism Department at the Gulf Research Center.



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All

# ***Gulf Yearbook*** **2007-2008**

The Gulf Yearbook 2007-2008 provides an analytical perspective on the main and critical developments of the year for the Gulf region with particular focus on the key political, economic, security, social and environment issues that have defined Gulf relations over the year.



**To order your copy, contact:**

Tel.: +971 4 3247770

Fax: +971 4 3247771

sales@grc.ae

www.grc.ae

# Maritime Confidence-building in the Gulf

**Peter Jones**

The Gulf is a region of considerable tension and military activity. Much of this is maritime in nature. In addition to the indigenous navies of the region, several extra-regional navies operate there routinely – most notably the US Navy, which maintains a Fleet Headquarters in Bahrain. The British and French Navies maintain a continuous presence, and others, such as the Canadian Navy, operate in the region frequently in support of UN and other mandates. But it is not just the volume of naval and general maritime activity which poses a danger, though that volume is considerable. It is the twin facts that: a) the bulk of the world's vital supply of crude oil moves through narrow straits in the region; and b) that considerable antagonism exists between one regional state (Iran) and several others which are maritime powers in the region, including the US. Added to this, the waterway is a vital lifeline for the countries of the region, as there is no rail transportation network of any significance. This is a combustible mix. Though some of the threats which one hears are in the realm of hyperbole, there are real dangers that a maritime incident could spark hostilities. Such an incident could be either intentional (a show of force over a geographic or political point), or unintentional (a misperception or accident). Either way, incidents can escalate quickly and in unintended ways.

This brief paper will review past incidents in the Gulf. It will then use a typology of different types of Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) to quickly outline some hypothetical maritime CBMs which could be introduced in the Gulf, if the political will exists. Finally, the paper will ask whether this political will is, in fact, present and suggest some possible ways forward in the creation of the right circumstances for CBMs to be developed and implemented.

## Past Incidents

There have been several incidents, some of which have proven deadly. In 1988, the USS Vincennes accidentally

shot down an Iranian civilian airliner, killing 290 people. The Vincennes believed that the airliner was a military aircraft with hostile intent. The US eventually paid compensation.<sup>1</sup> In its belief that a threat was unfolding, the Vincennes may well have been influenced by the events surrounding the USS Stark in 1987. In that incident, an Iraqi fighter fired two Exocet missiles at the Stark (despite the fact that the US was assisting Iraq at the time in its war with Iran). The Stark did not take evasive action rapidly enough, mistakenly believing that there was no threat, resulting in considerable damage and the deaths of 37 US sailors.<sup>2</sup>

CBMs are now seen as essential components of any strategy to develop new relations between adversaries. They can stand on their own as measures to help prevent unintended conflicts, or they can be a component of a wider strategy aimed at setting the stage for more ambitious arms control agreements

More recently, in 2007, 15 British sailors were “detained” by naval units of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The British maintain they were operating in international waters, while the Iranians maintain there had been an incursion into Iranian waters. It became a serious diplomatic incident, with the British sailors being held for almost two weeks before being released. It could have become a serious military confrontation had the British sailors resisted at the time of their capture.<sup>3</sup>

Most recently, in January of 2008, a group of US Navy ships alleged that they were “swarmed” in a threatening manner by fast patrol boats of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and that threatening radio communications were made. There is some confusion as to what actually happened, and who was at fault – if anyone. But this curious incident itself

served to raise tempers and tensions, and underlines the manner in which routine operations can suddenly lead to tense situations and diplomatic incidents.<sup>4</sup>

### Maritime Confidence-building

All of this has led to calls for consideration of measures to calm the maritime situation in the Gulf.<sup>5</sup> What does this mean? What sorts of measures could be considered and how would they work? During the Cold War, some proponents of arms control at one point derisively referred to Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) as “arms control junk food,”<sup>6</sup> a term meant to imply that such measures were, at best frivolous and, at worst, detrimental to the “serious” business of actual arms control. There is now widespread consensus that this view was wrong.

Instead, CBMs are now seen as essential components of any strategy to develop new relations between adversaries. They can stand on their own as measures to help prevent unintended conflicts, or they can be a component of a wider strategy aimed at setting the stage for more ambitious arms control agreements or even a “transformation” of a relationship. In the mid-90s James Macintosh developed a widely-used typology of different kinds of CBMs:<sup>7</sup>

- Information, Interaction and Communication measures (notification of exercises, sharing of information on intentions and forces, etc.);
- Verification and Observation Facilitation measures (inspection measures, observations of exercise measures, etc.); and
- Constraint measures (voluntary constraints on deployments of certain weapons in certain areas; voluntary constraints on certain types of activities; voluntary, mutual constraints on the acquisition of certain technologies, etc).

Using this typology one can imagine possible maritime CBMs. For example, under the first types of CBM (Information, Interaction and Communication measures), one could imagine navies active in the Gulf exchanging notification of maritime exercises.

In terms of the second type of CBM (Verification and Observation Facilitation measures), one could imagine regional navies, and those that operate there frequently, inviting observers to attend exercises.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in terms of

the third type of CBM (Constraint measures), one could imagine agreements to modify behavior to prevent incidents at sea. Beyond this, one is getting into the realm of actual arms control with various agreements aimed at limiting the deployment of various kinds of weapons.

It is not clear that the Iranian Navy or the maritime units of the Revolutionary Guards would join any talks on creating a Gulf INCSEA arrangement. There is some speculation that the Guards might fear that their ability to use provocative tactics in support of political aims would be compromised by the achievement of such an agreement

Of course, these CBMs are specific to military and naval forces. There is also a range of CBMs that can be considered for paramilitary and civilian maritime services. These would include measures to promote cooperation in such areas as Search and Rescue and maritime environmental protection.

### Preventing Incidents at Sea

A particular word is warranted on the idea of a measure to prevent incidents at sea, since that is a CBM which is often mentioned as a possible aid to maritime stability in the Gulf. Incidents at Sea (or, as they are known, “INCSEA”) agreements are a long-standing and highly successful CBM. The first one was signed in 1972 between the US and Soviet navies, when both sides came to the conclusion that incidents between their ships were getting sufficiently serious that unplanned conflict might break out.<sup>9</sup>

INCSEA agreements lay out procedures to prevent provocative actions on the part of ships when operating in proximity to each other. They also provide a special set of communications procedures for use in such circumstances, in order to assist the ships involved in communicating their intentions clearly, in spite of any language barriers that might exist. Finally, INCSEA agreements stipulate an annual meeting at which the two navies can review any incidents that may have happened and discuss how to improve maritime safety. This final provision is generally regarded to have been one of the most important as it helped to begin the process of developing relations between adversaries that eventually went beyond the issues contained

in the INCSEA agreement and opened up other areas for maritime CBMs and understandings.

The participation of the Revolutionary Guards would be crucial to the success of any talks over possible maritime CBMs

The first INCSEA became the model for a series of such agreements between various NATO navies and the Soviets, and then others. Most INCSEA agreements have followed the US-USSR model, though some later variants worked out in Asia and South Asia, have developed the model in interesting and novel ways. In particular, the classic INCSEA agreement is relevant to naval ships, operating on the high seas. In other regions, the key issues are between all government ships (including fisheries patrol vessels, for example) operating in disputed territorial waters. The recent INCSEA agreements developed in Asia have incorporated ways of including this problem and have adapted the INCSEA model to the cultural and historical norms of these regions.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, there has been extensive experience in the Middle East in developing an INCSEA model. During the work of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS) – one of the multilateral groups of the Middle East peace process<sup>11</sup> – a team of regional maritime officials negotiated an INCSEA agreement.

The ACRS INCSEA agreement was negotiated on a region-wide basis, including the Middle East and North Africa. It was also negotiated without the participation of Iran and Iraq, as both countries were not invited. Still, even though it was never implemented, as ACRS went into abeyance due to differences over other issues, the ACRS INCSEA agreement exists as an interesting example of the adaptation of these types of agreements in a new regional context. The navies of the GCC countries participated in its negotiation and thus have a cadre of officers who are conversant with these issues. There are also rumors that at least some regional navies have informally implemented its provisions between themselves in order to prevent unwanted incidents.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion – From Theory to Action

So models exist for maritime CBMs in the Gulf – some of them exist in depth. But how realistic is it to imagine that

such measures could be negotiated and implemented in today's Arabian Gulf? In particular, is it realistic at present to imagine that such measures could be developed and implemented in a way that would include both the US and Iranian Navies (including the maritime forces of Iran's Revolutionary Guards)? The current political situation would make it appear somewhat unlikely. Neither the US nor Iran seem willing to talk to each other about such issues, and both have laid out a difficult series of pre-conditions before official discussions between the two countries can begin.

It is thus not clear that the Iranian Navy or the maritime units of the Revolutionary Guards would join any talks on creating a Gulf INCSEA arrangement. In the latter case, there is some speculation that the Guards might fear that their ability to use provocative tactics in support of political aims would be compromised by the achievement of such an agreement.

By taking a broader set of maritime concerns as the starting point, these discussions could avoid the trap of beginning with the most controversial issues where agreement is unlikely

The participation of the Revolutionary Guards would be crucial to the success of any talks over possible maritime CBMs. This situation may change after Presidential elections in both the US and Iran.

In the meantime, it is to be hoped that some informal, tacit arrangement may be developed, even if quietly, to reduce the prospect of unwanted incidents. Moreover, there may be some prospect that informal discussions between maritime experts of the region could go forward on a "Track Two" basis until such time as official discussions are possible. To be particularly effective, such discussions could include officials, in their "private capacities"<sup>13</sup> or others who hold positions of some respect and influence, such as high-ranking, but retired officers. The purpose of such discussions, which could be hosted by a respected neutral institution or a country which enjoys good relations with all concerned, would be to lay the intellectual ground-work for the day when official discussions were possible. Moreover, by taking a broader set

of maritime concerns as the starting point (including such issues as maritime environment protection, for example), these discussions could avoid the trap of beginning with the most controversial issues where agreement is unlikely.

This would be a worthwhile beginning, provided all parties would participate. But it would not do much to prevent incidents in the immediate future. That is regrettable, but appears to be the case until the US and Iran are prepared to talk to each other. In the meantime, a "Track Two" project on Gulf maritime issues, such as outlined here, can play the role of beginning the development of ongoing regional relations over maritime issues. This nascent beginning could serve as a spring-board

for more in-depth, and hopefully official, discussions, once the regional political circumstances are right.

Peter Jones is Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa. Prior to his present appointment he was a Senior Policy Advisor in the Privy Council Office (the Prime Minister's Department) in Ottawa and an official in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade where he served as Desk Officer for Canada's involvement in the ACRS process. From 1995 to 1999 he was Project Leader of the Middle East Security and Arms Control Project at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

- 1 For a report which generally placed the bulk of the blame on the crew of the Vincennes see J.F. Burns, "World Aviation Panel Faults US Navy on Downing of Iran Air," *New York Times*, December 4, 1988. For a fascinating exchange over the issue, see the article by N. Friedman, "The Vincennes Incident," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, May, 1989, 72-79, which makes the case that there were plausible reasons for the Vincennes to believe it was under attack and the incident was a regrettable example of the "fog of war." A stinging rejoinder comes in a letter from Commander David Carlson, who was commanding officer of the USS Sides, which was in the immediate area when the incident happened, and who argues that there was ample reason why the Vincennes should have got it right, and that an overly aggressive attitude on the part of her crew contributed greatly to the tragedy. The letter is printed in *Proceedings* (Summer 1989): 87-90.
- 2 Both Friedman and Carlson, *ibid*, note that the Stark incident had created a greater sense of tension among US Navy crews in the Gulf.
- 3 For more on this incident, see "Iranians Release British Sailors," *BBC World Service*, April 4, 2007. Accessed on March 22, 2008 at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/6525905.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6525905.stm)
- 4 For more on this incident, see R. Wright, "Iranian Boats May Not Have Made Radio Threat, Pentagon Says," *Washington Post*, January 11, 2008, A13.
- 5 See, for example, D. Ignatius, "Calming the Waters of the Gulf," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2007, A21, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/05/AR2007040501789.html> For more on the idea of developing maritime CBMs in the Gulf context, see D.N. Griffiths, "Maritime Aspects of Arms Control and Security Improvement in the Middle East," *Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation Policy Paper #56*, (San Diego: IGCC, 2000), available at: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=igcc> and P. Jones, "Maritime Confidence-building in the Persian Gulf" *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs* (Summer 1996).
- 6 The quote is a characterization of these views made by Strobe Talbot (who did not support them) and may be found in J.E. Goodby, "The Stockholm Conference: Negotiating a Co-operative Security System for Europe," in *US-Soviet Security Co-operation* by A. George, P. Farley, and A. Dallin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 171.
- 7 James Macintosh, *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View*, *Arms Control and Disarmament Studies*, no. 2 (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1996), 53-4. It should be noted that a rather esoteric battle rages over the differences between CBMs and CSBMs (Confidence and Security-building Measures). In this paper, the term CBM is used to cover both meanings.
- 8 Rumors exist that Oman has proposed and has even exchanged notifications of maritime exercises and observers with Iran.
- 9 For a good general history of the development of the first INCSEA agreement see D. Winkler, *Cold War at Sea: High-Seas Confrontation Between the United States and the Soviet Union* (Maryland: US Naval Institute Press, 2000).
- 10 See D. Winkler, *Preventing Incidents at Sea: The History of the INCSEA Concept* (Halifax: Center for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, forthcoming). This is an updated version of Winkler's *Cold War at Sea*, which contains a new afterword which reviews these new cases.
- 11 For more on ACRS, see S. Feldman, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997) esp. 7-16; B. Jentleson, *The Middle East Arms Control and Security Talks: Progress, Problems Prospects*, IGCC Policy Paper #2 (Los Angeles, CA: University of California 1996); P. Jones, "Arms Control in the Middle East; Is It Time to Renew ACRS?" *Disarmament Forum*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Issue 2, 2005, available at [www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-article.php?ref\\_article=2278](http://www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-article.php?ref_article=2278); P. Jones, "Negotiating Regional Security in the Middle East: The ACRS Experience and Beyond," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 3, (September 2003); P. Jones, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Some Reflections on ACRS," *Security Dialogue* 28/1 (1997); E. Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Restraints* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2006); E. Landau, *Egypt and Israel in ACRS: Bilateral Concerns in a Regional Arms Control Process*, Memorandum No. 59 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2001); J. Peters, *Pathways to Peace: The Arab-Israeli Multilateral Talks* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996); and M. Yaffe, "An Overview of the Middle East Peace Process Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security," in *Confidence-building and Security Co-operation in the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East*, ed. Fred Tanner (Malta: University of Malta, 1994).
- 12 Canada served as facilitator of the discussions over the ACRS INCSEA agreement, and the present author was a member of that team in his then-capacity as Desk Officer for ACRS within the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The ACRS INCSEA agreement has never been made public, but in-depth discussions of the negotiation may be found in D. Griffiths, *Maritime Aspects of Arms Control and Security Improvement in the Middle East*, *op cit*; and P. Jones, "Maritime Confidence-Building Measures in the Middle East," in *Maritime Confidence-building in Regions of Tension*, ed. Jill Junnola (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 1996).
- 13 The region has much experience of such "Track Two" projects on security issues. For more see H. Agha, S. Feldman, A. Khalidi, and Z. Schiff, *Track II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), chapter 8; P. Jones, "Filling a Critical Gap or Just Wasting Time? Track Two Diplomacy and Regional Security in the Middle East," *Disarmament Forum*, forthcoming; P. Jones, "Track II Diplomacy and the Gulf Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone," *Security and Terrorism Research Bulletin*, Issue 1, October 2005 (Dubai: GRC), at: [http://www.grc.ae/bulletin\\_WMD\\_Free\\_Zone.pdf](http://www.grc.ae/bulletin_WMD_Free_Zone.pdf); D.D. Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy; Track Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia* (Santa Monica: RAND Corp, 2007); D.D. Kaye, "Rethinking Track Two Diplomacy: The Middle East and South Asia," *Clingendael Diplomacy papers*, no. 3, (The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Diplomacy, 2005), available at: [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050601\\_cdsp\\_paper\\_diplomacy\\_3\\_kaye.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050601_cdsp_paper_diplomacy_3_kaye.pdf); D.D. Kaye, "Track Two Diplomacy and Regional Security in the Middle East," *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, 6, 1 (2001); E. Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East; Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Restraints*, *op. cit.*, and M. Yaffe, "Promoting Arms Control and Regional Security in the Middle East," *Disarmament Forum*, Spring 2001.

# The Applicability of the Pakistan-India Maritime Cooperation Model in the Gulf Region

**Faryal Leghari**

This paper is partly hypothetical, and partly based on case study and experience. It endeavors to apply the Pakistan-India maritime cooperation model to a similar case in the Gulf region. Such a maritime security venture in the Gulf region comprising the six GCC states, Iran and Iraq would focus on developing a collective system that would entail cooperation on a wide variety of maritime projects, regional security issues and counterterrorism. This could be the starting point to establish Confidence-building Measures between the regional states and is bound to have far reaching consequences even for other international parties, considering the high security and economic stakes of this strategic region.

The concept of Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) to defuse tensions among states is not a new one. It is a tool to prevent a breakdown of communication especially at times of crisis, and is meant to create an atmosphere of trust and cordiality even between rival states. Often analysts are skeptical about the feasibility of CBMs as a sustainable or effective measure and regard them more as a crisis prevention tool. However, CBMs have often been used successfully as an important tool in building maritime interstate security cooperation. The implementation of Confidence-building Measures in maritime cooperation as a means to bridge differences and prevent accidents with serious repercussions has produced far reaching benefits.

The idea of establishing a maritime security system in the Gulf region is inspired by many successful cases of confidence-building. The most well known and high profile case is the signing of the INCSEA Agreement (Prevention of Incidents at Sea) in 1972 between the United States and the USSR at the height of the Cold War. The two nations wanted to prevent any untoward accidents or happenings, especially taking into account the fact that they were

both nuclear powers; besides, they also had naval missile capability for nuclear second strike attacks.

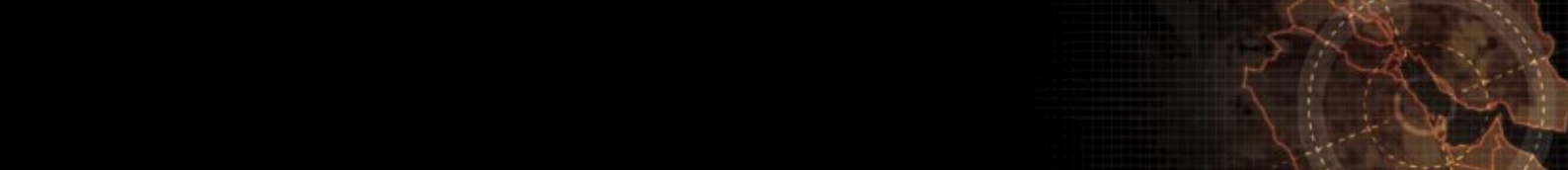
It is argued that if the two hostile superpowers could successfully reach an agreement which was never breached, why cannot other countries do the same? Other states have also successfully entered into such agreements for they realize their usefulness in addressing joint security concerns as well as concerns related to the marine environment and illegal fishing.

With regard to the Gulf States, there is no history of dialogue which seeks to address any of the long list of maritime security concerns, or of efforts to establish a joint initiative that would serve the regional countries by looking into their concerns and evolving a strategy to overcome any contentious issues

The need for a maritime collective security system for the Gulf region is based on three main reasons. These are:

1. the geo-strategic significance of the Gulf region
2. the instability of the region and
3. the absence of any sort of maritime security dialogue/initiative in the region

The Gulf region is one of the most important geo-strategic regions in the world with 17-19 million b/d of oil passing through the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf. The world is dependent on energy supplies from the Gulf region which is also a vital transit zone for commercial activities linking Asia, Africa and Europe. Therefore the security of the narrow waterway through which much of the world's oil supply – and other goods – transits is a matter of high priority. Security in the Gulf, consequently, is not only a



regional concern but an international one too. The presence of a military superpower to safeguard the production and shipping of the region's oil supplies is a natural given especially in an age where terrorism has emerged as a real threat even to economic interests.

The Gulf region has for decades been faced with unrest and instability. It has seen many wars, and provocative actions by some Gulf States have only added to the instability governing the region. The recent incident of Iran taking 15 British naval sailors hostage in March 2007 as well as the January 2008 incident of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' boats indulging in provocative measures against US naval ships reveal the extent of the region's maritime security problem. A review of a few incidents from the past is important in order to understand the sensitivity of the region and how easily it is turned into a battleground by the concerned powers.

The Tanker War (1981-1987) especially in its second phase from 1984-1987 was part of the Iran-Iraq war that resulted in large-scale destruction in both the countries. The naval confrontation involved both sides attacking each other's oil tankers as well as merchant ships in the Gulf waters. This resulted in the war being internationalized when Kuwaiti tankers were attacked by Iran and Kuwait asked for international help. With the Soviet and American involvement along with other Gulf States it soon became an international war. According to the Global Security.org the Gulf was a crowded theater of operations in early 1988 with at least 10 Western navies and 8 regional navies patrolling the area.<sup>1</sup>

The Gulf region has also seen serious accidental mishaps resulting in civilian casualties. One example is the allegedly mistaken shooting down of Iran Air Flight 655 by the US Navy cruiser, USS Vincennes in July 1988 killing all 290 passengers on board. In another incident, Iraq accidentally attacked USS Stark (a Perry class frigate) in May 1987 resulting in the death of 37 people. Apart from accidental or deliberate military strikes there is tension between some Gulf States over territorial disputes and demarcation of maritime boundaries. This issue is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Finally, the need to initiate a dialogue in the region pertaining to a collective maritime security system is imperative

considering the sensitivity of the region. With regard to the Gulf States, there is no history of dialogue which seeks to address any of the long list of maritime security concerns, or of efforts to establish a joint initiative that would serve the regional countries by looking into their concerns and evolving a strategy to overcome any contentious issues.

It is believed that establishment of a comprehensive maritime cooperation system will be an important foundation towards establishing solid Confidence-building Measures that could serve the states well in times of crisis. More importantly it would serve as a platform for creating trust, understanding of each other's security concerns and needs and would also pave the way for further cooperation in defense and naval issues.

In order to apply such a model to the Gulf region, we may draw upon the case of the Pakistan-India maritime security cooperation model, which we find to be the best applicable based on factors of geographical proximity and practicality. Though the Pakistan-India model is also in its infancy, the good news is that it has taken off and is likely to reach its intended culmination. Besides it also has some distinctive features.

Iran's refusal to come on board for any sort of regional maritime arrangement could be only construed as deliberate and calculated. After all Iran only stands to gain by cooperating with other Gulf States for it faces multiple security concerns and could be relieved of much pressure and cope better with those specific concerns

We will also be looking at the shared concerns among the Gulf States about Iran in view of the latter's emergence as a growing regional player. This is necessary as we try to envisage how to reach a maritime cooperation agreement. By studying the Pakistan-India model where they managed to find a median way to collaborate, we find a starting point would be to delink or separate some major issues from others that have impeded progress.

### **Maritime Concerns in the Gulf**

Following its emergence as a defiant, ambitious regional power that seeks nuclear power, Iran's standing in recent years has been highly controversial regionally and

internationally. Its continuing role and visible influence in conflict-affected Iraq and Lebanon has caused much regional and international concern. The belligerent posture of the Iranian regime and the Revolutionary Guards is not limited, however to their alleged activities in Iraq. There is a general perception in the region that Iran has assumed an expansionist and interventionist role even in the naval arena. The deliberate provocative actions taken by the Iranian Naval Revolutionary Guards are best exemplified in the hostage taking incident when British sailors were seized in Iraqi territorial waters in March 2007 and the January 2008 incident of provocative maneuvers around American warships in international waters. These incidents especially the latter could have led to a serious incident – including war – had restraint not been shown.

Despite the hostile relations between Pakistan and India, they initiated an important maritime dialogue which could pave the way in the future for a comprehensive agreement to prevent incidents at sea, the INCSEA

Sometimes provocative and/or accidental incidents between states could unintentionally trigger conflict. The strategic significance of the Gulf region cannot be underestimated or forgotten, it is a major source of the world's oil supply. If an Iranian blockade of the Strait of Hormuz were to occur – as is feared – it could pose serious political and economic implications for the entire world, even if it could not be maintained for a long period. Regional Gulf States are bound to be affected in case of a conflict with Iran. The geographical proximity to the Gulf region that also hosts a large Iranian expatriate population, besides the expected retaliatory measures which could be unleashed by Tehran through its established networks of influence in states like Bahrain, and in the Middle East are also expected to compound the problem.

Is it a lack of maturity and understanding that is missing in this case? Iran's refusal to come on board for any sort of regional maritime arrangement could be only construed as deliberate and calculated. After all Iran only stands to gain by cooperating with other Gulf States for it faces multiple security concerns, by cooperating it could be relieved of much pressure and cope better with those specific concerns. The issue of piracy, weapons smuggling, narcotics trafficking,

pollution, environmental concerns, illegal fishing could all be addressed within the ambit of the arrangement.

## Iran's Disputes/Tensions with the Gulf States

As far as the maritime territorial disputes are concerned, Iran's relations with the neighboring states in the Gulf region are affected by the outstanding territorial disputes and the lack of demarcation of maritime boundaries with some states.

The main territorial dispute is with the UAE over the island of Abu Musa (Jazireh-ye-Abu-Musa), and the two Tunb islands (Tunb al Kubra and Tunb as Sughra) that have been illegally occupied by Iran since 1971. Iran has since then refused to go to the international Court of Justice as suggested by the UAE which has sought a peaceful resolution to the dispute. The islands issue is brought up on different occasions in the Gulf region by regional leaders but Iran refuses to relent from its obdurate stand. Despite several talks between leaders on the issue, there has been no visible progress nor has a strategy emerged on how to resolve the dispute.


Secondly, the demarcation/delineation of maritime boundaries between Iran and the Gulf regional states is not defined or decided. This is the case between Iran and Saudi Arabia and also with Kuwait. Even in the case of Iran/UAE when the UAE says that the islands are forcibly occupied by Iran, it leaves the issue of maritime demarcation between these two states undecided.

The general perception is that there has been little progress in developing maritime cooperation between Tehran and the Gulf States because there are existing political tensions mainly arising out of the Iranian nuclear program and Iran's influence and actions in the region.

## The Pakistan-India Model: Applicability to the Gulf Region

The India/Pakistan maritime cooperation initiative is a non military agreement and established at a lower level between the Indian Coastal Guards and the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. More significant is that this initiative was undertaken despite a long standing maritime territorial dispute and the problem of the lack of demarcation of maritime boundaries.

The central argument is that despite the hostile relations



between Pakistan and India, they initiated an important maritime dialogue which could pave the way in the future, for a comprehensive agreement to prevent incidents at sea, the INCSEA. This is expected to be the catalyzing factor that would set the ball rolling for a future strategic dialogue between the naval commands of the two neighbors.

The same model could be applied to the Gulf region focusing on the GCC, Iran and Iraq. Iran's relations with the Gulf States with which it has a territorial dispute related to demarcation of maritime boundaries are similar to the maritime relations between Pakistan and India. If those two countries can achieve the degree of maritime cooperation we see today why is it not possible for it to be applicable in the Gulf region?

### **Geo-strategic Significance of the Arabian Sea**

The Arabian Sea, that is the northern part of the Indian Ocean, is bordered by among others, India, Pakistan, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula. The maximum width of the Arabian Sea is approximately 2,400 km, and its maximum depth is 4,652 meters, in the Arabian Basin approximately at the same latitude as the southernmost tip of India.

Linking the world's largest oil supplying region to the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea is the main conduit for the shipping of oil and other goods to both the Gulf region and the rest of the world. Its importance for Pakistan and India, among other states, cannot be stressed enough. The crucial energy and trade channels for both countries run through the Arabian Sea. The fact remains that the major part of their trade amounting to nearly 95 percent is conducted by sea. Heavily dependent on oil from the Gulf region, both states get a large number of tankers carrying the vital supply of energy through the Arabian Sea.

In case of a possible naval conflict between India and Pakistan related to an armed conflict on land or arising from an accident or miscalculation at sea, it could lead to a serious imbroglio for the international community. As aptly put by strategic naval analysts, this situation could rapidly develop into a financial crisis for countries such as Japan and the US. It is likely to raise oil prices and shipping freight charges, as shipping lines will opt for securer though longer routes, along with shipping insurance hikes. Hence the strategic significance of the Arabian Sea at the mouth

of the Gulf and central to the oil and trade shipping lanes is paramount.

The Gulf waterway at the Strait of Hormuz and leading out to the Arabian Sea is a narrow passage used by the regional states for their commercial and military activities and is abuzz with a lot of activity. The military presence of outsiders like the United States and France adds to the Gulf's strategic significance. The random Iranian naval provocations in the Gulf waters have been a cause of concern and can lead to an accidental triggering of a possible confrontation.

### **Pakistan-India Maritime Cooperation Initiative**

Maritime security cooperation is possible in spite of territorial disputes between countries; issues of more serious import have been successfully implemented between nuclear superpowers.

The fact that Pakistan and India have initiated a maritime cooperation initiative, despite territorial disputes like Kashmir that has been the reason for two of the three wars fought between the two states and continuing cross border tensions, is commendable. Analysts feel that the reason why naval/maritime cooperation was the best and most feasible alternative for starting a confidence building process was because despite the history of conflict between the two states, the navy had not seen as much direct and intense confrontation as was witnessed between the land and air forces of the two countries.

In 2005 the two states signed an MoU and thereby established the first step in maritime Confidence-building Measures, including the setting up of hotlines between the respective coast guards. This was an important initiative; it is expected to set the precedent for the Prevention of Incidents at Sea or the INCSEA Agreement, the draft of which both sides are already working upon. At the risk of sounding overly optimistic, it could also act as a precedent initiative on developing cooperation in other security arrangements. Such agreements have been reached before between many other international naval powers. It might be useful to have a brief overview of some important international agreements at sea that could serve as role models for the Pakistan-India case. It is also necessary in the context of this paper to focus on the geo-strategic Arabian Sea and the significance it holds for both Pakistan

Maritime Routes: Gulf-Asia





and India. In the light of significant research done by some maritime experts towards developing maritime cooperation between the South Asian states, we will analyze the needs and possibilities of developing the cooperation to the level of the INCSEA agreement. Ansari and Vohra in a paper for the Cooperative Monitoring Center, comment that the “INCSEA is not an end in itself, but a beginning. Whereas it may not prevent all incidents, it will be a catalyst for a change in relationship.”<sup>2</sup>

The Pakistan-India INCSEA Agreement if finalized and implemented could incorporate a more comprehensive agenda for maritime cooperation between the two countries. Such an agreement could evolve into a bigger regional agreement that would be beneficial to other countries as well.

### The Initiation Process

The Pakistan-India ‘Lahore declaration’ in February 1999 was a breakthrough in bilateral relations. The prime ministers of the two states, Nawaz Sharif and A.B. Vajpayee, agreed to conclude an agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea besides, “commencing negotiations/consultations for formulating a set of CBMs along similar lines as INCSEA which would minimize the risk of initiating a war by accident.”<sup>3</sup>

The Lahore initiative resulted in Pakistan and India signing a MoU for setting up hotlines between the Indian Coast Guards and Pakistan’s Maritime Security Agency in October 2005. It is felt that credit must be given to the naval commanders and officers from both sides, who over the years worked diligently with a sincere intent to facilitate communication by exchange of visits and engaged in discussions on the need to initiate this process. The communication link is expected to lead to early exchange of information between the two sides regarding apprehended fishermen who inadvertently strayed into the other side’s territorial waters.<sup>4</sup>

The signing of the MoU signaled the first step in the process; direct communication between the coastal guards and maritime security agency was established. Following up on the MoU, both countries have been reviewing the implementation of that agreement in meetings held between the delegations. Their talks have been also focusing on the plight of fishermen, repatriation of fishing boats, poaching,

narcotics trafficking, smuggling, search and rescue operation and pollution.<sup>5</sup>

It is believed that the INCSEA Agreement that is expected to be signed between Pakistan and India at a yet undetermined time in future is already worked upon to a considerable degree. Details of the agreement, though undisclosed, are expected to follow the San Remo document initiated by the ICRC and highly recommended by naval and security analysts.

### Pakistan-Indian Naval/ Maritime Disputes

There are three major maritime disputes between Pakistan and India. These are the:

1. Sir Creek dispute
2. Delimitation of maritime boundaries
3. Arrests of illegal fishermen from both sides

Pakistan’s lack of strategic depth has led its naval command to strive to attain nuclear capability in the past. It is very likely that Pakistan will also try to match the Indian nuclear naval capability at the earliest to complete its own nuclear triad matching India’s

Like the UAE-Iran dispute, the South Asian states also have a territorial dispute. The territorial dispute relates to Sir Creek a disputed 60 km long estuary dividing the Indian state of Gujarat and the Pakistan province of Sindh; this dispute dates back to 1857 much before the partition of the subcontinent. Like other controversial partition issues Sir Creek has also remained unresolved to date. One reason for this is that it is linked to the two states’ conflict over Kashmir. The Lahore declaration of 1999 and subsequent talks at the foreign secretary and ministerial levels have discussed the need to resolve the dispute. It is believed that resolution of the dispute would be a good omen and a practical implementation of Confidence-building Measures between the two countries.

Naval analysts remind us of the fact that a war was fought in this area in 1965 with the two countries seeking arbitration but as yet not reaching a resolution to the dispute.<sup>6</sup> They recommend that “both sides develop boundary mapping technologies including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing imagery for the maritime boundary

and Sir Creek in order to facilitate critical discussion between technical and policy stakeholders in both India and Pakistan.”<sup>7</sup> Geographical and topographic experts have stated that there has been a shift in the orientation of the creek due to the environmental impact. Any progress on the boundary demarcation at the estuary will have to take into account the latest finding of jointly supervised hydrographic surveys to determine the geographical specifics of the estuary.

The delimitation of the maritime boundary with India remains unsettled to date which can be attributed to a number of issues, some of which have been pending since partition. However, Pakistan signed demarcation boundary agreements with its other maritime neighbors such as Iran and Oman. Pakistan signed the Muscat Agreement on the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary with Oman in June 2000. The agreement says that the delimitation of the maritime boundary between the exclusive economic zones of the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall be based on the median line principle, in conformity with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Pakistan signed an agreement on the delimitation of maritime boundaries with Iran in 1997.

A problem affiliated with the maritime boundary demarcation is the arrest of fishermen caught fishing “illegally” in the waters of the neighboring state. This problem of illegal fishing has security and serious human dimensions. Over the years there have been arrests of thousands of fishermen from both sides for illegal fishing. This is the result of lack of communication between the maritime agencies of the two countries and the fact that they could not take an immediate decision about the apprehended fishermen. “Only operational cooperation and coordination and establishment of communications between the Indian Coast Guard and Pakistani Maritime Security Agency ships at sea may help mitigate the suffering of fishermen and their families.”<sup>9</sup> An understanding on this issue was reached between the Prime Ministers in the Lahore declaration in 1999 but could not be implemented due to political developments. Both countries could take further steps to prevent this problem. These steps could include granting time specific fishing licenses, establishing better communication links between the respective coastal agencies and authorizing them to make decisions regarding the return of such boats and citizens who are apprehended due to misunderstanding or miscommunication.

The two countries also have to decide the issue of the Continental Shelf by 2009 under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Continental Shelf lies more than 200 nautical miles from a state’s baselines which, under the terms of the 1982 UNCLOS must be approved by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.<sup>10</sup>

It must be kept in mind that maritime cooperation includes joint initiatives and even information and intelligence sharing related to issues such as piracy on the seas; smuggling of contraband items, small arms and light weapons; narcotics and human trafficking. An often unspoken issue but one that is recognized to be especially problematic is the human dimension of these issues. While these issues hold serious implications for the security of the state, they also serve as powerful factors that could affect interstate relations.

## Current Developments and the Emerging Naval Threat

A long-term naval strategy that has also taken note of maritime security issues and concerns and the views of the naval command in both countries on strategic issues had led to the evolving of a doctrine on a joint maritime cooperation system. Among other things, the political developments in Pakistan had delayed the process which is now expected to be taken up and finalized. It is particularly crucial in Pakistan’s interest to reach such an agreement that could in future include strategic issues. It must be borne in mind that Pakistan’s economic jugular is its sea links for energy and trade from its coasts on the Arabian Sea. Any naval blockade in case of war of its main ports at Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar (as a recently initiated functional deep-sea port), would badly affect the country.

However, the future of this process, though removed from the mainstream naval strategic issues, could suffer a setback with India’s latest venture into naval nuclear arms capability. India tested a sea based nuclear capable missile from a submerged pontoon in late February 2008. The reaction from Pakistan Naval Chief Admiral Afzal Tahir warned of an imminent naval nuclear arms race in southwest Asia. A report quoted the Naval Chief as saying, “these developments... put nuclear weapons at sea and it is a very, very serious issue. This is going to start a new arms race in the region.”<sup>11</sup> Pakistan’s lack of strategic depth has led its naval command

to strive to attain nuclear capability in the past. It is very likely that Pakistan will also try to match the Indian nuclear naval capability at the earliest to complete its own nuclear triad matching India's. However, it is hoped that Pakistan and India can rise above their strategic naval issues and go ahead with finalizing and implementing the cooperation initiative that was successfully launched.

## Conclusion

The paper aimed at studying the Pakistan-India maritime cooperation model. Despite apprehensions about a possible impasse due to the naval strategic developments we hope that the cooperation process will not get affected. In fact, because of the history of conflict between India and Pakistan, the two countries had a challenging task in coming up with a model of maritime cooperation. The Gulf region can benefit by drawing upon this model. It would be useful to have discussions and visits by delegations of the regional countries to identify issues of concern and contention and evolve a working plan that would set the process for the future. It is important to stress to all concerned states in the Gulf region, which includes the GCC states, Iran and Iraq, the significance of such a dialogue. Not only would it address individual and collective security concerns but it would also generate an atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust and better relations. This platform, if successfully established, could be the start of a cooperative strategic dialogue that would in future address other serious concerns.

Faryal Leghari is Researcher in the Security and Terrorism Department at the Gulf Research Center.

## GRC Publications

### *Gulf-Pakistan Strategic Relations*

Edited by: **Faryal Leghari**



The significance of the Gulf States derives from their vast energy resources and their geographic position in the politically volatile and strategically significant Middle East region. Pakistan's strategic location in relation to the Middle East, Central Asia, China and India coupled with it being the only Muslim nuclear power has added a significant dimension to its ties with the Gulf. Besides, the long-standing relations between the Gulf States and Pakistan are multifaceted and encompass political, economic, cultural and security aspects.

This edited volume looks at the issues that play a significant role in Gulf-Pakistan relations. It covers the historical ties between the regions, political relations in the changing geo-strategic landscape with China and India emerging as Asian giants, economic relations governed by energy, trade and manpower issues, and security ties entailing defense cooperation, counterterrorism and soft security issues. With eminent commentators and analysts presenting well-informed insights on bilateral issues, this book aims to address the dearth of research material on Gulf-Pakistan relations.

1 [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/earnest\\_will.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/earnest_will.htm)

2 "Confidence Building Measures at Sea: Opportunities for India and Pakistan," Rear Admiral Hasan Ansari (r) and Rear Admiral Ravi Vohra (r), Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper/33, Sandi National Laboratories, December 2003, 34.

3 Ansari and Vohra, *ibid.*, 7.

4 Pakistan, India Sign Pact on Missile Tests, October 4, 2005. <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=711357d=4&m=10&y=2005>

5 The News, August 10, 2007. [http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=67669](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=67669)

6 Ansari & Vohra, *op. cit.*, 18.

7 *ibid.*, 41.

8 <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/OMN-PAK2000MB.PDF>.

9 Ansari & Vohra, *op. cit.*, 31.

10 [http://www.economist.com/blogs/theinbox/2007/03/boundaries\\_between\\_india\\_and\\_p.cfm](http://www.economist.com/blogs/theinbox/2007/03/boundaries_between_india_and_p.cfm)

11 "India Missile Test to Start Arms Race: Naval Chief," Dawn, Feb 27, 2008.

# Maritime Confidence-building Measures in South Asia – The Case of India and Pakistan

**P K Ghosh\***

*“India and Pakistan should place all their CBMs in one incubator or good basket, watch the eggs nurture in it and see that no one kicks it over”*

*APJ Abdul Kalam, President of India  
(April 17, 2005, New Delhi)*

South Asia has had a chequered history, a seminal event of which was the turbulent partition of an undivided India into present day Pakistan and India. The two nations have chosen to evolve on different trajectories with differing ideologies. Unfortunately, the legacy of the turbulent past continues to this day and manifests itself in mutual distrust and repeated skirmishes. Among other factors, the rationale for this mutual animosity is also rooted in an incomplete delineation of geographical boundaries in both continental and maritime spheres.

There is little doubt that some creative “out of box thinking” may throw up a win-win situation for both sides, and the border issue could be resolved. However, given the current level of relations such moves get branded as “wishful thinking.” The issue has been complicated further by the nuclearization of the region. A delicate geo-strategic scenario such as this demands the tactful handling of real or imagined fears that can easily lead to the start and escalation of conflict. In such a situation, the best acceptable solution for achieving a sustained level of genuine peace hinges on an incremental approach that would help in lowering the threat concerns. Confidence-building Measures (CBMs)<sup>1</sup> not only enable the lowering of the threshold of animosity between the two adversarial nations considerably but also lower the degree of mutual distrust. Given the dire necessity of maintaining a strategic balance between the two distrusting nuclear neighbors, a considerable amount of energy has been devoted to discussing/evolving nuclear CBMs. Simultaneously, attendant procedures for testing of

ballistic missiles along with other military CBMs have also been evolved and operationalized. However, despite maritime CBMs being discussed during 1991-92 and subsequently finding mention in the Lahore Declaration, it is felt that the emphasis on strategic/military aspects has somehow resulted in the maritime aspects being marginalized despite their considerable potential in diffusing mutual distrust. Admittedly, efforts have been made earlier to raise maritime confidence levels by evolving effective, tangible maritime CBMs. Unfortunately these efforts have not always proved successful as had been the case during 1991-92 talks. The talks were comprehensive and covered a wide array of related military subjects; however, while they produced some path-breaking agreements on military exercises, troop movements and space violations, with respect to maritime CBMs they produced mixed results.<sup>2</sup>

Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) not only enable the lowering of the threshold of animosity between the two adversarial nations considerably but also lower the degree of mutual distrust

This article seeks to highlight the maritime CBMs between India and Pakistan and estimate their efficacy in enhancing maritime cooperation between the two states while reducing the level of mutual distrust in the oceanic sphere. Thus it would involve analyzing the spirit of observance of such agreements by the two countries. Since the article is focused on the maritime angle, the viability of the equally pertinent military/nuclear CBMs and their role in regional stability and bilateral relations will be glossed over.

## In the Past

Before presenting an overview of the existing maritime CBMs, it is important to briefly explore the past trends in

\* The views expressed in this article are those of the author.

establishing such measures in the bilateral context. Even though India and Pakistan have shared adversarial relations since their birth in 1947, several measures on the lines of CBMs have been in existence since 1946. In this context, a Joint Defense Council (JDC) was created in 1946. The Council was mainly required to oversee the division of military assets between the India and Pakistan but it continued to function till 1948 serving virtually as a “hotline” between Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan’s leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah<sup>3</sup> during the first war in October 1947 that broke out over the State of Kashmir. The Council also proved to be the main conduit during the conflict for Lord Mountbatten who wanted to communicate with both the armies that were then commanded by British officers.

In a similar fashion, the subsequent Karachi Agreement of 1949 could also be considered a CBM of sorts since it helped maintain peace till 1965. The Shimla Agreement of 1972 had more ingredients of an effective CBM since it was successful in maintaining peace along the Line of Control till 1989 after which Pakistan resorted to extensive proxy war giving rise to cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>4</sup> It was in the post 1971 conflict era that the requirement of classical CBMs was keenly felt by both sides leading to the operationalization of a hotline between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs). This could probably be construed as the first true CBM between the adversarial neighbors. Exercise Brasstacks in 1986-87 and the Kashmir crisis in the 1990s led to tense situations accentuating the demand for viable CBMs that would assist in de-escalation of tensions, inadvertent conflict situations and a gradual build-up of mutual trust. Thus, in the early 90’s, a series of CBMs between the two countries was signed that hinged on Agreements on Advance Notice of Military Exercises, Air Space Violation, Prohibition of Attack on Nuclear Installations and Accord on Chemical Weapons.

The international community, particularly the US, “encouraged” both the countries to adopt the CBMs, and there is no doubt that these measures did manage to achieve a mixed bag of success in ensuring transparency and mutual trust. It is noteworthy that the talks between the two Foreign Secretaries in April 1991 led to significant decisions on Wullar barrage, Siachen and Sir Creek and a recommendation for the recommencement of an Indo-Pak

committee to counter drug smuggling. Again in September 1998, a meeting of the Prime Ministers of the two countries led to a joint statement wherein the Foreign Secretaries reiterated their commitment to numerous types of CBMs. On the maritime front, they concluded that the survey of Sir Creek was to be taken up by the respective Surveyor Generals and the discussions by Additional Secretaries of Defense.<sup>5</sup> Most significantly this matter also found mention in the Lahore Declaration of 1999. Unfortunately such laudable efforts took a backseat with the commencement of the Kargil conflict.

The international community, particularly the US, “encouraged” both the countries to adopt the CBMs, and there is no doubt that these measures did manage to achieve a mixed bag of success in ensuring transparency and mutual trust

The subsequent sequence of events did little to improve either the spirit of cooperation between the two countries or the situation of mutual animosity on the ground. The initial hype associated with the Agra Summit in 2001 between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee dissipated by the end of the event. The talks proved inconclusive and were branded a failure. Later the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 and the subsequent Kaluchak massacre of 2002<sup>6</sup> led to Operation Parakram that had the two adversarial armies deployed along the border in an eyeball to eyeball situation, ready for war. With bilateral relations touching a nadir, India refused to discuss improvement of relations with Pakistan unless the latter discarded terrorism as a state weapon. After a long gap, the talks finally commenced again though the emphasis now shifted to nuclear CBMs.<sup>7</sup> This shift was probably a result of the apprehensions created by the nuclear saber-rattling witnessed during Operation Parakram and the Kargil conflict coupled with the threat of use of “non conventional weapons” delivered by the Pakistani President (the statement was later termed as a misinterpretation).<sup>8</sup>

### Maritime CBMs – the Current Scenario

Though nuclear CBMs have received primary attention in the overall gamut of measures for enhancing mutual trust between the two countries, it is important to establish the potential of maritime CBMs in increasing trust and enhancing maritime cooperation. It is important to consider

the existing maritime atmospherics on which CBMs have been/are being based.

The two largest maritime bases of India and Pakistan, Bombay (Mumbai) and Karachi respectively are geographically separated by only 400 miles. Since large-scale maritime exercises require considerable sea room for exercising/opposing forces, there are chances of overlap that may cause considerable anxiety and an unwanted incident especially since both sides have a fairly large inventory of sea-going maritime assets. Apart from the geographical proximity of major ports, the other factor is that the coast off Saurashtra is rich in fish. Unfortunately shoals of fish do not respect man-made political boundaries and move from one area to the other leading the fishermen on both sides to follow. The arrest of such “straying” fishermen by the maritime enforcement agencies of India and Pakistan is a common phenomenon and invariably leads to tension in the area. Fortunately, most high-level talks between the two countries have been preceded by the release of such poor fishermen as goodwill gestures.

With this background it is necessary to enumerate and analyze the efficacy of existing maritime CBMs<sup>9</sup> after gleaning them from the overall military agreements that have been signed:

- a) It has been agreed that both the navies of India and Pakistan will avoid holding major military maneuvers and exercises in close proximity. In addition, the strategic direction of the primary force being exercised will not be directed towards the other side and should involve no logistic build up close to it;
- b) The schedule of any major exercise involving six or more ships of the size of destroyer/frigate or above, exercising in company and crossing into each other's EEZ will constitute a major exercise;
- c) Schedule of such major exercises should be transmitted in writing to the other side through diplomatic channels at least 30 days in advance;
- d) Information on type of exercise area, duration and type of formations participating is to be intimated (in case of Navy and Air Force exercises only type, level and area is required while exercises by the Army require more information);
- e) Naval ships and submarines are not to close less than three nautical miles from each other so as to avoid

- accidents while operating in international waters;
- f) Aircraft of either country will refrain from ‘buzzing’ surface units of the other country in international waters;
- g) Military combat aircraft, helicopters, bomber reconnaissance and jet trainers are not to close within 10 kilometers of each other from the ADIZ (Air Defence Identification Zones) except in some special cases. However unarmed aircraft and helicopters are permitted to close to 1000m from the ADIZ and each other's airspace.<sup>10</sup>

On cursory look, these extensive and detailed measures seem quite comprehensive. However, a trend analysis of infractions of such agreements is necessary to reveal their efficacy and adequacy. While many of these initiatives are in existence on paper, the spirit of observance of these agreed clauses often varies depending on the nature of bilateral relations at a particular time. When the relations run into a bad patch the tendency is to suffer deliberate infractions though this is not really an abiding principle since in such matters the maritime agencies often act due to extraneous reasons and independently of the tenor of the existing relationship between the two governments. Hence this often raises the debate about the true intent of the concerned parties and whether such efforts have really succeeded in their overall objective of enhancing trust.<sup>11</sup> Incidents of non-observance of CBMs are difficult to analyze because of diametrically opposing claims and the lack of authentic material from both countries. However, published articles and news reports often suggest that, reminiscent of the Cold War era, units from the navies often shadow each other especially during exercises.

In addition, Pakistan Naval ground aircraft have often been known to ‘shadow’ and ‘buzz’ Indian warships that exercise in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf. Consequently, Sea Harriers operating from the aircraft carrier INS Viraat have repeatedly been used to warn off Pakistani P3C Orions or Atlantiques that have come snooping.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, advance notification for major exercises is generally adhered to by both sides to prevent any escalation in maritime tension.

Hence, on the whole, notwithstanding numerous irritants, a cynical approach to the entire effort of observing the spirit of CBMs would be grossly erroneous – a positive spirit should be adopted while investigating and mutually resolving incidents of failure/infractions.

## Maritime Boundary: A Bone of Contention

A brief overview of the long festering contentious issues would help in identifying areas which if resolved would entail a quantum jump in enhancing mutual trust.

India has signed a host of maritime boundary agreements with some of its maritime neighbors, but such a settlement with Pakistan and Bangladesh has proved elusive. Most of these agreements with neighbors were signed between 1974 and 1976 while the agreement on fishing rights with Sri Lanka was signed in 1985. With Pakistan, the primary area of contention has been the delineation of the boundary along Sir Creek. This is an area that has been known to be rich in various types of fish (especially prawns) leading fishermen from both sides to stray into each other's territory. Regular arrests of these fishermen has also led to a scenario wherein the fishermen at times prefer to fish under the watchful eyes of nearby patrol boats of their own country. The delineation of the Sir Creek boundary is exceedingly complex and has defied a viable solution for decades that could be attributed in part to a lack of political will and in part to the naturally changing topographical characteristics of the creek. While a detailed treatment of the complex problem would be outside the purview of this article, suffice it to say that due to the unique changing nature of the area there exists considerable debate as to positioning of the reference points (on land) from which the maritime boundaries can be delineated. Thus the end of land boundary between India and Pakistan at Sir Creek is in dispute. Normally land boundaries are marked by a series of pillars but the Sir Creek area faces two unique problems: because of the creek shifting at a number of places, the boundary line drawn on the original 'Reconciliatory map' no longer runs along the eastern bank as had been initially perceived; the other important issue is that due to erosion, the coastline has moved where the original land boundary terminated.<sup>13</sup> Notwithstanding the vagaries of nature, compounded by adversarial relations between the two states, it is felt that new initiatives for a joint survey, marking of a zone of disengagement etc. may actually solve the problem but only if there is willingness to solve the contentious matters at all levels, especially the political level.

## The Need for Prevention of Incidents at Sea Agreement INCSEA

The Cold War brings to mind the intrusive and blatant way in which the two superpowers were constantly engaged

in closely monitoring each other's maritime activities both covertly and overtly. This often led to incidents of collision between warships or aircraft leading to fatalities or injury. Eventually the realization that these incidents were basically due to the non-observance of the 1972 International Regulations for Prevention of Collision at Sea and that the loss of life was unnecessary and could well be prevented led to a series of meetings and protracted negotiations conducted directly between the navies of US and USSR. The result was the inking of the INCSEA which proved enormously successful for various reasons. The agreement was simple "made by a sailor for a sailor" which largely contributed to its success.<sup>14</sup> The other reason for success was that a climate of détente prevailed then and it is possible that some of the senior naval officers thought that by negotiating the agreement they were actually displaying their support for the détente.<sup>15</sup> Another reason was that this agreement was relatively free from politicization and did not require Senate approval in the US.

There is no doubt that closer cooperation in the maritime sphere can act as an impetus for the betterment of overall state to state relations

The main aspect of the original INCSEA that needs to be templated on to the South Asian context is that the verification and accountability of incidents of violation were discussed during annual consultations which infused a sense of responsibility on both parties for stricter observance. Across the world many navies emulated the INCSEA and concluded similar agreements that were tempered to suit local conditions. Such agreements include the USSR-UK agreement (1985), USSR-Germany (1988), USSR-Spain (1998), USSR-Norway (1990), USSR-Netherlands (1991), and Russia-Republic of Korea (1993).

## INCSEA between India and Pakistan

One of the primary components missing in the maritime CBMs between India and Pakistan is an agreement similar to INCSEA. While it is difficult to pinpoint the precise reason for this, maritime practitioners in both countries do feel that a structured mechanism tailored to local conditions is a necessity to prevent untoward incidents between the two navies operating out at sea. This feeling found reflection in the Lahore Declaration document but further progress on the issue has been negligible and this needs to be changed at the earliest.

Given the various incidents of “buzzing” leading to “near misses” during exercises and the notable example of the fatalities involved in shooting down of the Pakistani Naval Atlantique,<sup>16</sup> it is important that the two navies think congruently on issues that would lead to a reduction of life and property. In such circumstances, the need for a structured mechanism on the lines of an INCSEA is not a luxury but a dire necessity that should not be ignored.

## Brief Recommendations

There is no doubt that closer cooperation in the maritime sphere can act as an impetus for the betterment of overall state to state relations. Since most seafarers and maritime practitioners around the world harbor similar generic perceptions, thought processes and use similar jargon, it has often been felt that it is easier to cooperate between maritime agencies than with other continental agencies. In this context, maritime CBMs are ideal as incremental small steps towards achieving better relations and enhancing trust in a gradual fashion.

Some pragmatic steps that can possibly be undertaken by the maritime agencies of the two states without undue controversy are suggested below. These are some of the basic CBMs that need to be developed between India and Pakistan:

- a) *Reciprocal visits/exchanges of high-level Naval delegations:* Such reciprocal visits would sensitize the higher echelons in the respective navies. However the recent attempt by Pakistan to avoid participating in the IONS seminar at New Delhi proved to be a damper since appropriate Pakistani representation at the event was sadly lacking;<sup>17</sup>
- b) *Communication:* The designation of direct communication channels with maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) would greatly reduce the chance of accidents in exercise areas, aircraft landing circuits etc. Hot lines, now in existence between DGMOs (and now including CGHQ) need to be upgraded and also built between operational commanders;
- c) *Direct talks* between navies on the evolution of an INCSEA type agreement;
- d) *Cooperation on environmental issues (such as oil spills):* Keeping the US-USSR Bilateral Oil Spill Contingency Agreement for Bering and Aleutian Seas of 1989<sup>18</sup> in mind, in the Indian Coast Guard (IN CG) and the Pakistani MSA or any other appropriate organization could sign a similar agreement. In this context, the Pakistani refusal to accept the help of IN CG in containing the hazard caused

by the MV Tasman Spirit<sup>19</sup> oil spill would be perceived as a negative step;

- e) *Management of marine resources/reciprocal fishing rights:* It is important to understand that reciprocal fishing rights in each other’s areas may lead to a mutually beneficial solution. Instead of arresting fishermen, they should be let off with a stern warning, and there should be a mechanism to ensure there is no repetition; this may help alleviate the problem;
- f) *Cooperation on non-military issues:* Cooperation is necessary on issues like piracy, drug/gun running (especially since the Indian subcontinent is in the pivot of the Golden Triangle in the North East and the Golden Crescent on the West and has emerged as a primary conduit for the international flow of drugs using the sea route. This problem has affected both the countries equally).

Unrestricted commercial shipping with built in adequate security measures for ships and crew would be beneficial for both countries dependent on the seas for trade transportation

Since the CBMs are expected to be incremental by nature and encourage transparency, the gradual acceptance of the existing CBMs and those mentioned above would demand a more advanced level of such measures that can be achieved by the following:

*Participation in joint/multilateral peacekeeping/enforcement operations:* Especially since both countries have some of the largest numbers of UN peacekeepers deployed around the globe.

*Cooperation in joint humanitarian operations:* Natural disasters respect no political borders and are capable of causing misery universally. Cooperation on this account may not only earn goodwill but will help in developing a degree of camaraderie between adversarial forces.

*Maritime training:* The Indian Navy has one of the most advanced maritime training facilities in the developing world where personnel from friendly countries often participate. While it is unrealistic to expect the Pakistani naval personnel to undergo extensive training at Indian facilities or vice versa, as an introductory step, specially designed training capsules covering non-combatant subjects on a reciprocal basis would prove to be an important CBM.

*Cooperating on hydrographic surveys:* The Indian Navy possesses the fourth largest hydrographic service in the world with extensive expertise. Pakistan, on the other hand, has a small hydrographic service. Contracts of surveys of areas that are unclassified and have little security bearing can be given to the Indian Navy which can also train the Pakistani survey personnel.

*Greater shipping contacts:* Unrestricted commercial shipping with built in adequate security measures for ships and crew would be beneficial for both countries dependent on the seas for trade transportation. Consequently, a review of the restrictive clauses 5 and 9 of the Shipping Protocol of 1975 (supposed to be reviewed yearly) would help significantly in enhancing economic linkages.

## Conclusion

CBMs are probably the best and surest way to enhance trust in a gradual incremental fashion between neighboring

nations which share adversarial relations. Given the unique geo-strategic dynamics of Indo-Pakistan relations, a lot has already been done in this direction. However, the efficacy of any CBM is only as good as the 'observance will' of the concerned parties. Hence prior to enhancing the sheer numbers of agreements and their clauses, it may be more beneficial to undertake a true trend analysis of the performance patterns of these agreements. In the bilateral context, while there has been a lot of focus from both the governments on 'talks' on matters such as the nuclear issue and others such as opening of borders with the commencement of bus services, the maritime subjects need flagging since they form the easiest agenda for enhancing confidence. After all there is an old saying "the seas unite but the land divides."

Probal Ghosh is Senior Research Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi

- 1 The term CBMs has come into extensive use mainly since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. It is noteworthy to mention that the document didn't define the term but it listed measures to be adopted to build confidence. The UN sponsored "Comprehensive Study of Confidence Building Measures", states that the goal of CBMs is to remove/reduce mistrust fear tension and hostility. The second goal being that it should reinforce confidence where it already exists. The entire process is for arms control, verification settling international disputes etc. As cited in Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov, "Sailor Made," Confidence Building Measures in Maritime Security Building of Confidence", ed Jozeph Goldblath, 69. J J Holst has defined CBMs as a process designed to enhance assurance of mind and belief in trustworthiness of the state. See J J Holst, "Confidence Building Measures – A Conceptual Framework," Survival (January/ February 1983), 2.
- 2 During this period in April senior defense planners led by Lt Gen Satish Nambiar met a Pakistani delegation led by Lt Gen SA Khan. By July an agreement on many CBMs (including maritime CBMs) had been reached. In the meantime the Foreign Secretaries also met on April 8 1991. Subsequently there were a number of visits of both military delegations and the Foreign Ministry officials. The tangible results included an agreement on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Maneuvers and Troop Movements and one on Prevention of Air Space Violations and for Permitting Over Flights and Landings by Military Aircraft.
- 3 Also see India Today, May 2, 2005, 21.
- 4 Satish Nambiar, "Existing CBMs in South Asia," in CBMs in South Asia : Potential and Possibilities, ed. Dipankar Banerjee (Colombo: RCSS, 2000), 38.
- 5 See Joint Statement of India and Pakistan Foreign Secretaries, September 1998, available at <http://www.clw.org/pub/clw/coalition/indpak98.htm>
- 6 There were a total of 31 killed, including 3 Army personnel, 18 Army family members and 10 civilians. There were 47 wounded including 12 Army personnel, 20 Army family members and 15 civilians. All the three terrorists killed in this incident had been identified as Pakistani nationals. The Kaluchak incident was the last straw that almost led to a war between India and Pakistan.
- 7 See John Cherian, "Building Confidence," at <<http://www.flonet.com>>
- 8 See Zafar Abbas, "Pakistan Denies Nuclear Threat," December 30, 2002 at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/2614401.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2614401.stm)
- 9 Agreement between Pakistan and India on Advance Notice of Military Exercises, Manuvers and Troop Movements, April 6, 1991. (Signed between the Foreign Secretaries of both nations Muchkund Dubey and Shariyar Khan) available at many web sites or see Strategic Analysis (Special Issue) October 2001, Vol XXV, no. 7, 871-873.
- 10 For details of each of these CBMs see, Ibid.
- 11 Currently India and Pakistan have made positive gestures that echo a reconciliatory approach. Unfortunately these statements have at times failed to generate the enhanced level of trust/confidence between each other. Also see P R Chari, "Declaratory Statements and Confidence Building in South Asia," in Declaratory Diplomacy: Rhetorical Initiatives and Confidence Building," ed. Michael Krepon, Jenny S. Dreizin, Michael Newbill, Report No 27 Henry L Stimson Centre, April 1999.
- 12 "Buzzing Fleets in High Seas," Asian Defence Journal 10/99, 34.
- 13 For a detailed treatment of the Sir Creek problem see Ravi Vohra and Hasan Ansari, "Confidence Building Measures at Sea Opportunities for India and Pakistan," CMC Occasional Papers 33, December 2003.
- 14 David F. Wrinkler, "US Soviet Maritime Confidence Building Measures," in Maritime Confidence Building Measures in Regions of Tension ed. Jill R. Junolla, Report No 21 May 1996, Henry L Stimson Centre, Washington DC, 18.
- 15 Sean M. Lynn Jones, Agreement to Prevent Incidents at Sea and Dangerous Military Activities: Potential Application in Asia Pacific Region.
- 16 On August 10, 1999 a Pakistani Naval Breguet Atlantique carrying 16 personnel was shot over the Rann of Kutch by Indian Air Force jets. All the crew of the Atlantique died in the incident. Claims and counter claims followed in which Pakistan claimed that the aircraft was unarmed, on a training mission within their own airspace, while India stated that the aircraft was violating the 1991 Agreement not to allow military aircraft to come 10 km within the border. It was asserted that the aircraft was snooping well within Indian airspace and that it had been fired after many warnings. Debris of the aircraft picked from the Indian side was also put on display to prove that the aircraft was shot over Indian territory. On September 21, 1999, Pakistan took the matter to the International Court of Justice for compensation with disastrous results for Pakistan and where it was ruled in India's favor in that the ICJ decided it had no jurisdiction over the issue.
- 17 The IONS seminar was organized by the NMF and the IN during February 2008. All littoral Chiefs of Navies (or Coast Guards or even Police where navies do not exist) were invited. Twenty-six Naval Chiefs attended. Pakistan refused to attend initially – finally after considerable efforts, relented to the extent of designating the local Pakistani High Commissioner and the Naval Attaché as their delegates. The author was the coordinator/ convener of the entire seminar on behalf of the NMF.
- 18 Signed in as late as 1989 in towards the end of Cold War, led the US Coast Guard and the Soviet Min. of Marine Transportation to cooperate on the issue of oil spills in the area.
- 19 On July 28, 2004 the Greek tanker MV Tasman Spirit carrying 67,500 tons of crude grounded off Karachi in bad weather and broke up into two. It leaked nearly 25,000 tons of crude while the balance was delicately drained off. UAE sent a salvage tanker for the purpose. The event destroyed the entire marine life off Karachi including the beaches.

## Nuclear Terrorism after 9/11

By Robin M. Frost



The very mention of nuclear terrorism is enough to rouse strong reactions, and understandably so, because it combines the most terrifying weapons and the most threatening of people in a single phrase. The possibility that terrorists could obtain and use nuclear weapons deserves careful analysis, but discussion has all too often been contaminated with exaggeration, even hysteria. For example, it has been claimed that nuclear terrorism poses an 'existential threat' to the United States. This Adelphi Paper attempts to develop a more measured analysis of the risk of terrorists detonating a true fission device. The study attacks the problem from two perspectives: the considerable, Possibly insurmountable, technical challenges involved in obtaining a functional nuclear weapon, whether 'home-made' or begged, borrowed or stolen from a state arsenal; and the question of the strategic, political, and psychological motivations to 'go nuclear'. The conclusion are that nuclear terrorism is a less significant threat than is commonly believed, and that, among terrorists, Muslim extremists are not the most likely to use nuclear weapons.

Language: Arabic

## Libya and Nuclear Proliferation: Stepping Back from the Brink

By Wyn Q. Bowen



For over three decades, driven by the core motive of deterring external threats to its security, Libya sought to acquire nuclear weapons. Having attempted but failed to procure them 'off the shelf' from several states during the 1970s, by late 2003 it had succeeded in assembling much of the technology required to manufacture them. Nevertheless, following secret negotiations with the UK and US governments, in December 2003 Colonel Muammar Gadhafi resolved to abandon the pursuit of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. This decision reflected the regime's radically altered security perceptions during the 1990s and early twenty-first century. The pursuit of nuclear weapons had come to be viewed as a strategic liability.

This Adelphi Paper examines the motives for Libya's pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, from Gadhafi's rise to power in 1969 through to late 2003. It assesses the proliferation pathways that the regime followed, including early dependence on Soviet technology and assistance and, subsequently, its reliance on the A.Q. Khan network. It examines the decision to give up the quest for nuclear weapons, focusing on the main factors that influenced the regime's calculations, including the perceived need to re-engage with the international community and the United States in particular. The process of dismantling the nuclear programme is also addressed, as is the question of whether Libya constitutes a 'model' for addressing the challenges posed by other proliferators.

Language: Arabic

## Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival

By Tim Niblock



"Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival" gives the reader a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary trends in Saudi politics, society, economy and international relations. It is a valuable source for those who are interested in a balanced understanding of Saudi Arabia and its vital role in the Middle East and global developments. The evolution of the Saudi state occurred over three main stages: the formation stage, which ended by 1962, was followed by the transformation of the state into a powerful centralized polity with a capable administrative machinery and the intensification of economic development during the period 1962-1979. The third stage, which started in 1979 and extends up to the present time, witnessed the redirection of the new polity. The author tackles the main challenges currently facing the Saudi state. He gives special attention to problems faced in the fields of foreign policy and the economy, and the critical role of Saudi Arabia on issues of radical Islamism and its struggle with international terrorism and al-Qaeda since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s through the events of September 11, 2001, and the US-led war on Iraq in 2003.

Language: Arabic



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All

# Gulf Research Center Premium Membership

The GRC's Premium Membership is designed for companies and organizations that wish to improve their understanding of key regional and international issues in fields including Politics, Security and Terrorism, the Environment, Economics and Energy. It is a source of indispensable information that analyzes the Gulf region objectively, provided by specialists who live and work in the region. Members can add invaluable depth to their knowledge about the region and its challenges in the 21st Century. Each Premium Member may nominate two representatives who will each receive:

1. Full and privileged access to the members' area of the GRC website, including research program portals, resource materials, Gulf in the Media, alerts, expert opinions and breaking news.
2. Free admission to the GRC Annual Conference (excluding air tickets and accommodation).
3. Free participation in two corporate members' lectures or group briefings (GRC premium members may also request individualized face-to-face meetings with our specialists).
4. Priority to attend additional selected GRC events.
5. A full paper copy set of the latest GRC publications as they are published, including books, research and analysis papers, newsletters, research bulletins and Araa magazine.
6. 10% discount on purchases of additional paper copies of GRC publications and much, much more...

For more information on this unique offer, prices, and other membership packages tailored to suit individual needs, please contact Flo Weisweiler at 00971509780709 or email to [fweisweiler@grc.ae](mailto:fweisweiler@grc.ae).



## Jane's Information Group –

comprehensive news, analysis and reference providing complete understanding of global and regional security and risk situations

For further information please contact Jane's Middle East office in Dubai

Tel: (+971 4) 390 2336

Fax: (+971 4) 390 8848

e-mail: [mideast@janes.com](mailto:mideast@janes.com)

[www.janes.com](http://www.janes.com)

**Jane's**

Intelligence and Insight You Can Trust