

# Changing Dynamics in the Indian Ocean: Geostrategic Competition and Challenges for Sri Lanka

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**Abstract** – *The Indian Ocean has become an area for geo-strategic competition since there are strategic security groupings and contest for influence. The uni-polar world dominated by the world's sole super power, the USA, is being challenged by emerging super powers such as China, India, Russia and Japan. The Indian Ocean plays a key role in this 'Asian Century'. This ocean is heavily militarized and nuclearized, and consists of a large number of flash points, which can erupt into a conflict anytime. There is an unofficial 'cold-war' brewing up here. The Indian Ocean is also the world's economic life line in trade and is considered as the energy super highway. There are many players either in, or interested in the Indian Ocean and these include a large number of non-state actors as well. Maintaining the freedom of maritime commerce and a rule based international maritime order in this ocean is essential for peace and prosperity of the whole world. Sri Lanka, which is located in the centre of this ocean, is subjected to spheres of influence of major players and need to chart its course very strategically in the future. Sri Lanka's destiny has always been shaped by the ocean and its location. All invasions have come across the sea. The country's future lies on how it exploits the blue ocean to her advantage. Sri Lanka cannot remain immune from what is happening in the neighbourhood and even the Western Pacific, and need to make extremely calculated choices to face the emerging realities and narratives of the ocean surrounding the country. This paper is based on an exploratory research method to understand the way forward for Sri Lanka in these turbulent waters. The data collection and analysis is based on qualitative interviews and literature review and analysis will be based on the grounded theory.*

**Keywords**-Indian Ocean, Geo-strategic Competition, Maritime Security, Challenges for Sri Lanka.

## I. Introduction

### A. The Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean is the third largest water-body on planet earth. There are two billion people living in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This ocean has played a strategically significant role in the history. Its strategic significance has now become even more important in this 'Asian Century'. The IOR connects the world through an extensive shipping network that links Asia, Oceania, Africa and the rest of the world. Hence, the developments in the IOR only affect the regional

countries, but also the world at large. The IOR has gained importance as the world's 'Energy Highway' and an area of emerging economic and military power rivalry. The economic interactions across this ocean have increased in the recent past and there is a new world economic order shaping upon its waters. The IOR has attracted the attention of major naval powers of the world and this ocean has now become the most militarized ocean in the contemporary world. In 2009, piracy in the Horn of Africa compelled major naval powers to come to this ocean to safeguard their merchant marine from this menace. Piracy, which threatened the maritime commerce in the Western Indian Ocean, has declined over the years, but has not been completely eradicated. Yet, international navies are still operating here.

### B. Maritime Cold War.

There is an unofficial 'maritime cold war' brewing up in the Indian Ocean. However, confrontations involving major maritime powers are unlikely at this juncture, due to the fact that states are focusing on economic development and a war-environment would not be conducive in the economic endeavours. Nonetheless, threats to freedom of maritime commerce can come from a variety of non-state actors. Violent extremist groups; human smugglers; illegal weapon and narcotic traders, Illegal, Unreported and unregulated fishermen, as well as pirates are focusing their attention on IOR to carry out illegal activities. Therefore, guaranteeing freedom of the high-seas and maritime security has become a critically important factor governing international maritime activities.

### C. Maritime Security

Maritime security in the IOR has now become a dynamic and multifaceted concept due to the complex nature of players, their networks and motives. There are few unstable states within the IOR. These potential flash points pose a serious threat to the freedom of maritime commerce in this ocean. There are also several choke points at key entrances/exits to and from the Indian Ocean. The choke points at Bab-El-Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle-East have the potential to seriously impact freedom of navigation. Further, as the connector to the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean is not totally immune from the developing security situation in the Western Pacific Ocean and the spill over effect of that is clearly seen here.

### D. Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean

Sri Lanka is a small Island nation located in a key geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean. Admiral Harris, the United States Navy's Pacific Commander, whilst attending

Galle Dialogue international seminar in November 2016, indicated that the strategic significance of this country as "Location, Location and Location" (Harris, 2016.p.11). The United States is a major power in the Indian Ocean. The value of the location of Sri Lanka for USA and other major players is clearly expressed in the above statement. As per Colombage "The Island of Sri Lanka has only one frontier, the sea. Even the early seaborne travellers were cognizant of this fact. This appreciation of Sri Lanka's uniqueness did not happen overnight. It was an awareness built up over centuries of contact with other nations of the world, particularly other maritime nations. The island's insularity from mainland Asia was known by other non-seafaring kingdoms too. It is this awareness that has shaped the history of Sri Lanka" (Colombage, 2017. p. 48). The island, Sri Lanka, can be considered as the southernmost landmass of Asia, since there is no other land mass between Sri Lanka and the South Pole. Geographical location has often been a key enabler for Sri Lanka to attract many a nation to focus their strategic attention on its position. In this regard, Silva describing the importance of location says; "In a geographical and historical context, the greatest attraction of Sri Lanka was her location in relation to the rest of the world, from where she had functioned as a midway island fortress, situated longitudinally halfway on the eastern meridian and laterally almost on the equator" (Silva, 2013. p. 20). Sri Lanka is trapped between the major power rivalry, especially between India and China. During the long-lasting conflict which ended in 2009, Sri Lanka needed weapons and other military equipment to fight against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and many western countries and India had enforced an official and unofficial embargo on providing lethal weapons to fight the war. However, China was willing to provide weapons to fight even on long term credit and established a bonded warehouse in Sri Lanka for the military to obtain required arms and ammunition. That support was crucial in defeating the LTTE in May 2009. When the war ended, there was a need for an accelerated development of devastated and ineffective infrastructure projects, and western countries did not come forward to undertake any major projects citing human rights considerations. The western countries, together with India, even went to the extent of passing resolution against Sri Lanka in the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR). China again came forward to fill the strategic vacuum and became the main development partner for Sri Lanka, although it has now led to a debt burden for the country.

## II. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

Sri Lanka, which is located in the centre of the Indian Ocean, is subjected to spheres of influence of major players and need to charter its course very strategically to the future. Sri Lanka's destiny has always been shaped by the ocean and its location. All invasions have come across the sea. The country's future now depends on how it exploits the blue ocean to her advantage. Sri Lanka cannot remain immune from what is happening in the

neighbourhood and even the Western Pacific, and need to make extremely calculated choices to face the emerging realities and narratives of the ocean surrounding the country.

Sri Lanka has come out victoriously after battling a violent insurgency, which devastated the country and retarded the progress by a few decades. Sri Lanka cannot afford to miss this opportunity to develop the country economically and fulfil the infrastructure needs of its population. Sri Lanka should capitalize on the attention it is receiving due to the geostrategic competition in the Indian Ocean by major economic and naval powers present in the region. Sri Lanka's foreign policy and international relations at this juncture would determine the future of the country. The objective of this research is to understand the complex geostrategic situation in the Indian Ocean and to identify how Sri Lanka should charter its course in navigating to the future.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This research is aimed at examining the phenomenon of geostrategic competition and spheres of influence of the major players in the Indian Ocean in order to undertake a more detailed in-depth study regarding the way Sri Lanka should handle this situation to develop the country into a stable, secure and prosperous nation. The researcher will attempt to seek to understand social reality in its own terms, through talk and interaction, to gain access to inside experience and hence will follow the key traditions of qualitative research. The main research methods associated with qualitative research such as participant observation, discourse and conversation analysis will be used to collect data. A literature review will be carried out to understand various aspects of the situation. Theories of International Relations will be used to analyze the research findings. The data analysis will be done using interpretive paradigm to find the meaning of data collected by the researcher. The geostrategic situation in the Indian Ocean will be considered as the independent variable and foreign and economic policies of Sri Lanka will be the dependent variables.

### *E. Data Analysis*

Grounded theory has become the most widely used strategy for the purpose of analysing qualitative data. Strauss and Corbin (1988, p. 12) describes the grounded theory as 'theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship'. This research was aimed at generating theories to find a lasting solution to a protracted conflict. There were no grand theories selected in this research for testing. Rather, it will allow the generation of theories through systematic collection of data and analyses. The researcher will look at interconnectedness of action through data analysis. As Bryman states 'coding is one of the most central processes in Grounded Theory. It entails reviewing transcripts,

and/or field notes and giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appears to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied' (Bryman, 2008, p.542). In this research, Selective coding is being used to identify core categories and then to identify the interconnectedness and relationship between the core category and other categories.

#### *F. Theories of International Relations*

A theory of international relations is a set of ideas that explains how the international system works. The two major theories of international relations are realism and liberalism. As stated by Smith (2013), "The study of International Relations has clearly focused on the analysis of the causes of war and the conditions of peace". International relations and power politics are increasingly related to economic activities in this globalized world. This research will focus on finding answers to the following questions through the study of International Relations

- a. How does the Inter-state power relations take place in the Indian Ocean?
- b. What are the effects on smaller less powerful states, such as Sri Lanka, due to the power rivalry in the Indian Ocean?
- c. How could Sri Lanka survive in these major power struggles and overcome the challenges?

If all actors have similar security needs and perceptions, and they cooperate with one another, all can benefit. However, this is very difficult in the international system as it is difficult to identify the interest of nations or whether they will genuinely cooperate. This is the maritime security dilemma present in the Indian Ocean. Balance of power predicts that rapid changes in international power and status, especially attempts by one state to conquer a region, will provoke counterbalancing actions. For this reason, the balancing process helps to maintain the stability of relations between states.

### IV. DISCUSSION

#### *G. The Indian Ocean Region*

The Indian Ocean region is home to nearly one-third of the world's population and is of high economic and strategic significance due to its location and traffic that passes through it (Daniel, 2016). It is estimated that nearly half of world's containers, one third of bulk cargo traffic and two thirds of the world's oil shipments pass through the Indian Ocean (Bergin, 2012). Hence the sea lanes through this region is not valuable only to the Indian Ocean littoral countries but to the entire world. This ocean is now becoming the key ocean in the world surpassing the prominence enjoyed by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans during the last two centuries. The global economic balance is swinging towards Asia and the Indian Ocean plays a significant role in this new shift. Therefore, the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the Indian Ocean is growing at a rapid pace. India is the main player in the Indian Ocean. With a rapid developing economy and the

largest navy in the region, India naturally looks to assert its position in this region. Sri Lanka is invariable within the security umbrella of India, especially in the maritime domain and airspace due to the close proximity of the two countries. Raja Mohan reasons out that New Delhi's new interest is driven by the growing importance of trade, especially seaborne trade, in India's economy (Mohan, 2016). This is why Shiv Shankar Menon, former Secretary of State, wrote in his book Choices that "Sri Lanka is an aircraft carrier parked fourteen miles off the Indian coast" (Menon, 2016.p. 143). India will not tolerate its national security being threatened by an outside power who might have a foothold in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka should be very mindful of this consideration.

#### *H. The Indian Ocean as a Global Commons*

The Indian Ocean cannot be seen merely as a localized ocean. It is pretty much a part of the global common and maritime commerce. It is the life line not only for the Indian Ocean littorals, but for most of other developed and developing economies such as China, India, Japan, South Korea and hence ocean governance is essential. As per Rear Admiral Goldrick, "Traditional great power naval competitions are re-emerging after a quarter-century hiatus (Goldrick, 2016. p.99). His argument is based on the premise that some countries believe that there should be open seas policy in the Indian Ocean as is the international norm but few countries feel that the ocean should be having restricted use for non-resident navies. This has led to a conflict situation and escalating tension between maritime powers.

#### *I. The United States of America (USA) in the Indian Ocean*

The USA, the world's only super power, is conscious about declining of its uni-polar power projection, especially in the Indian Ocean. Their main focus, however, is the Western Pacific Ocean. China's unilateral action in the South China and East China seas and the developing situation in North Korea are two major concerns for USA and its allies in the Western Pacific region. The unpredictable behaviour of North Korea is worrisome for Japan and South Korea, who are partners of USA and depend heavily for their security. Therefore, the USA is keen to maintain sanctity in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the USA will remain the leading security provider in the Indian Ocean and will remain so in the foreseeable future as well. India, despite having the biggest navy in the region, still depend on USA to act as a guarantor of maritime security. Enhanced cooperation between India and USA in defence procurements and technology transfers and formally signing of Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, in 2017, after years of negotiations since 2004, are clear signs of this aspect. This agreement would facilitate access to each other's military facilities for logistic during port calls, joint military exercises, military training, disaster relief operations and humanitarian operations (IDSA, 2016). India has now become the biggest buyer of US weapons and this fact was even appreciated by the US president when the Indian

Prime Minister Modi visited Washington in July 2017 (Natarajan, 2017). The USA with their major naval facility in Diego Garcia is interested in maintaining freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean. The USA maritime force's Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> century Sea power (US Coast Guard, 2015. p. 11) states that "With strategic attention shifting to the Indo-Asia-Pacific, we will increase the number of ships, aircraft, and Marine Corps forces postured there. By 2020, approximately 60 percent of Navy ships and aircraft will be based in the region". This is the official version of the US government and gives a clear indication of their commitment to maintain naval presence in the IOR. USA is now engaged with India, Japan, and Australia in conducting joint naval exercises as well.

#### *J. China as a Major User of the Indian Ocean*

China is another major economic and maritime power presently operating in the Indian Ocean. Koh indicates China's concern as, "Energy security remains a perennial concern for Beijing since it underpins sustained economic growth that forms the basis of peaceful development" (Koh, 2016, p.148). China has shown a keen interest in maintaining unimpeded access to the Indian Ocean shipping lanes as it depends heavily on petroleum transport from the Middle East and East Africa. Also, China is dependent on the Indian Ocean to transport their export products to Europe, Africa and South Asia. Therefore, China is enhancing its strategic outlook and wishes to maintain its presence in the Indian Ocean. Chinese involvement in development projects in Sri Lanka was not seen favourably by India, USA and even Japan. From a western perspective, Sri Lanka, to be precise the port of Hambantota, is a pearl in the 'String of Pearl' theory. Colombo International Financial City (Formerly known as Port City) and Hambantota port projects, undertaken by Chinese companies with Chinese EXIM bank loans, are being looked at with suspicion mainly by India, which was alarmed that these two projects would be used by China to ensure a strategic military foothold in the Island nation.

#### *K. India in the Indian Ocean and Strategic Competition*

India and China are fast emerging major powers in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. As their economic power, wealth and strategic interests expand, they increasingly come into contact with each other. The security relationship between these two countries are volatile as they have unresolved land borders. New Delhi perceives the growing Chinese presence in South and South-East Asia, East Africa as an attempt by China to form strategic alliances and military facilities that could be used against India. Both countries are linked through trade but the balance is in favour of China. India has to counter not only growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, but the developing 'all-weather' friendship between China and Pakistan. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is seen by India not as an opportunity but as a threat to their sovereignty. India argues that CPEC is not merely an economic oriented project but another attempt by China to encircle India strategically. This negative dynamic is the main contest for

power in the Indian Ocean. China believes that it has the right to freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean like any other maritime power and they need to protect their maritime commerce, including energy supplies. Sri Lanka is caught up between this power dynamic. India with its 'look east' policy is increasingly looking to USA and Japan to partner in maintaining freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean.

#### *L. Japanese Concerns and relations with Sri Lanka*

Japan is another major player who is interested in maintaining freedom of navigation and a rule based maritime order in the Indian Ocean. Nagao indicates that "a new dynamic is prevailing in Japanese foreign policy" (Nagao, 2017. p.1). A paradigm shift has taken place in Japanese foreign policy in the recent past. In September 2015, Japan amended its constitution to allow its military forces to play a more effective role in maintaining world peace and a more robust role in the maritime domain to ensure the safety and freedom of maritime commerce. This change has paved the way for the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Forces (MSDF) to participate in a number of overseas operations in the recent past. This is a move away from the mere protection of homeland role for MSDF. Japanese Prime Minister Abe emphasized this policy indicating that "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" of Japan and their determination to shoulder a major role and responsibilities as a major user of the IOR (Press Conference, 2017)

Japan looks to Sri Lanka as a key partner together with USA and India. Japan has pledged to support the development of Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG). Japan pledged to build two 30-meter patrol boats for the SLCG in Japan. Beginning of 2017, the SLCG also placed an order for the construction of two 85-meter Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) with the Colombo Dockyard (Pvt.) Ltd. (CDL) to enhance its capabilities in deep sea surveillance. This project too will be undertaken by a loan provided by the Japanese government (Colombage, 2017). These two OPVs will have the capability for the launch and recovery of helicopters and small utility boats at sea. There had been many high-level visits by Japanese maritime delegations to Sri Lanka and SLCG has benefitted immensely from these visits and is receiving a higher level of training and skills development on maritime disaster measures, particularly on oil spill combat skills, from the Japanese Coast Guard. Japanese marine environment protection and oil spill measure experts have been conducting regular courses and drills with the SLCG to enhance the latter's level of competency in emergency response procedures in maritime pollution activities. Japan has also donated equipment, along with skills training.

#### *M. Maritime Cold War in the Indian Ocean*

This renewed interest also aims at countering rising Chinese influence in the region and in Sri Lanka. There are other state players such as Russia, South Korea and ASEAN

countries that depend on the freedom of maritime commerce in this ocean. Despite the presence of a large number of powerful navies and heavy militarization of the Indian Ocean, a major confrontation between states is unlikely in the present scenario as the states are more focused on economic development and hence the tension is low. All the states are following a rule based maritime order and attempt to cooperate and collaborate in enhancing maritime security. However, there is an undeclared maritime cold war taking place in this ocean.

#### *N. Non-state Actors in the Indian Ocean.*

States are not the only players who are exercising interest in this ocean. There are a variety of non-state actors who are using and trying to develop their capacities in the Indian Ocean. These actors could include, pirates, illegal drug and weapon traders, religious extremists and terrorists, Illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishers and human smugglers. The world witnessed the impact of Somali piracy in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) in the recent past. International navies were compelled to come into the Indian Ocean to protect their merchant marine from attacks by Somali pirates. There are International task groups and individual naval ships engaged in counter piracy operations. There are also on board armed security guards deployed in most ships traversing the Indian Ocean. Due to these combined efforts, piracy has decreased. Maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships have dipped to the lowest number in five years, according to the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) report, though the decline has been marred by the more serious incidents of vessel hijacking (Liang, 2017). However, the international navies are still operating in large numbers in the pretext of countering piracy. Sri Lanka should increasingly look to the ocean for living and non-living resources and alternate energy. Sri Lanka will have to ensure that the marine environment is protected from IUU fishers who are engaged in destructive fishing methods. There are also drug smugglers who are always trying to stay ahead of law enforcement authorities and to carry on with their nefarious activity. Sri Lanka should not allow its territory and the ocean be used by transnational drug traffickers, whether it is heroin from Afghanistan or Kerala Ganja (Cannabis) from India. Religious extremism and fundamentalism are two other threats from the Non-state actors in the regions. There should be a collective mechanism to share intelligence and combat the spread of these extremist ideology.

#### **V. CONCLUSION: STRATEGIC DILEMMA FOR SRI LANKA**

The strategic competition by major powers in the Indian Ocean invariably put the smaller states like Sri Lanka in a strategic dilemma. India's 'Look East' policy, USA's 'Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> century sea power' and Japan's 'free and open Indo-Pacific Strategy', have found a convenient strategic convergence of this maritime trinity in the Indian Ocean. The three major maritime powers have developed a 'strategic Global Partnership' in the Indian Ocean mainly to counter Chinese foray in to this

ocean. China, with its newfound wealth and modernized maritime power has clearly stated that they need to perform a maritime role beyond their local domain and especially in the Indian Ocean, since they depend heavily on this ocean for their energy supplies and to continue with trade. China's unilateral behaviour in the Western Pacific Ocean gives rise to suspicion of major maritime powers that China would aim to develop military facilities in the IOR as well.

#### *O. Sri Lanka as the Maritime Hub of South Asia*

Sri Lanka's aspirations to be a maritime hub of the region goes well with the China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as it is aimed at developing port and related infrastructure to facilitated trade connectivity across the 21<sup>st</sup> century maritime silk road. Recently, India and Japan launched their own initiative named Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) to counter the Chinese BRI. The vision of AAGC as stated by the Prime Minister Modi is to "Propel growth and Investment in Africa and to create a free and open Indo-Pacific Region by rediscovering ancient sea routes and creating new sea corridors to link African continent with India, South and South-East Asia" (Basu,2017). Countries such as Sri Lanka which are aspiring for economic development may most probably be forced to choose between the BRI and AAGC. This is a clear indication that Sri Lanka is in a strategic dilemma and invariably, this is hampering the economic growth of the country. Sri Lanka cannot ignore the geo-political and geo-strategic reality and concerns of major players in the region and especially that of India. India is Sri Lanka's closest neighbor and the fastest developing economy in the region with the most powerful navy and the coast guard. India sees itself as the preeminent maritime power in this ocean and does not like to see other maritime powers, especially China trying to influence its neighbors. Sri Lanka is well within the spheres of Indian maritime and air strategic area of interest due to the close proximity and shallow unnavigable water body, Palk Strait separating the two countries. Sri Lanka cannot afford to provide military facilities to any other country, which are not considered friendly by India. Sri Lanka need to leverage its geographical location and maintain unbiased relations with all the stake holders but without upsetting India. Sri Lanka can benefit from BRI or AAGC for economic development. How Sri Lanka handles its strategic location to leverage international, regional relations will determine its future.

#### *P. Recommendations*

1) Sri Lanka need to move away from being reactive to the interests of its neighbors and prospective partners and take proactive initiatives to benefit from global shift in economic power by focusing on 'commercial Diplomacy' as highlighted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ravi Karunanayake (Daily FT, 2017).

2) Sri Lanka need to carefully enhance economic cooperation with major players in the Indian Ocean and

obtain the much-needed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to develop its economy. The economic interdependence could be considered as a way to reduce strategic mistrust and increase mutual dependency. Sri Lanka should be careful not to develop closer relations with a particular country at the expense of another, especially India.

3) Sri Lanka need to enhance defence cooperation and cooperative relationships with all players in the region and play a more effective role in maintaining freedom of navigation in the region. Sri Lanka is in an ideal geographical location to act as a catalyst for regional cooperation. Sri Lanka has the unique advantage of being easily accessible for all the countries due to its balanced foreign policy and should make use of this opportunity to play a more strategic role than its comparative size.

4) Sri Lanka should become the center for Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) for the region to share information on non-military shipping, by capitalizing its vantage geographical location and ease of access for major maritime users in the ocean.

5) Sri Lanka should focus of carrying forward the initiative it has launched on developing a Code of Conduct (COC) for Major Maritime Users (MMU) in the Indian Ocean, which should ensure that all stake holders abide by the internationally accepted, Rule based maritime order in the Indian Ocean.

6) Sri Lanka should also focus more on developing its Coast Guard capabilities so as to allow it to operate as a standalone coherent unit and to perform more constabulary and law-enforcement missions and to prevent maritime crime and pollution in the region.

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US Diplomat Based in Colombo, Discussion, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support given to me by Pathfinder Foundation to embark on this research. I would also like to appreciate the KDU-IRC for giving me the opportunity to present my research findings.

#### **BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR**



Admiral (Dr.) Jayanath Colombage is a former chief of Sri Lanka navy who retired after an active service of 37 years as a four-star Admiral. He served the Sri Lanka navy during the entire spectrum of war with the LTTE Terrorism and commanded various

ships and four naval areas. He is well known expert in maritime security issues in the region and has held important positions in Sri Lanka's maritime sector. He holds MSc on defence and strategic studies from Madras University and MA on International Studies from Kings College, London. He also holds a PhD from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. Currently he is employed as the Director of The Center for Indo-Lanka Initiatives at Pathfinder Foundation