

OCEANIC
OPPORTUNITY:
MARITIME
COOPERATION
BETWEEN INDIA
AND EUROPE

JIVANTA SCHOTTLI

South Asia Scan

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Oceanic Opportunity: Maritime Cooperation between India and Europe

Jivanta Schottli

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Executive Summary

India and Europe share a common vested interest in maritime security, especially within the context of the Indian Ocean, which brings India and the European Union (EU) physically closer, thanks to the French overseas territory of La Réunion, an outermost part of the EU. Over the years, formal security cooperation between India and various European actors, including the EU has been slow to emerge. However, as a long-time provider of maritime security for the international sea lines of communication (SLOC), India's naval diplomacy and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) missions have provided a public good that has also benefitted European markets, businesses and citizens, enabling the global traffic of trade, people and energy flows that criss-crosses the Indian Ocean.

The EU on the other hand, is a more recent maritime security actor, principally active within the Horn of Africa and the wider Western Indian Ocean, an area of particular security interest to India. Both India and the EU, especially in the context of global economic and political uncertainties, have expressed the strategic goal to enhance maritime activities and capacity. Official pronouncements have identified the importance of building on established networks and cumulative operational expertise but also note the urgent need to enhance cooperation with partners. For India and the EU, which do not regard each other as strategic competitors and in fact hold in common the ideal of strategic autonomy as a guiding principle for foreign policy decisions, the opportunity for convergence on maritime issues, could not be greater.

The paper is divided into four parts, the first of which examines institutional arrangements and ideas that in the past may have prevented convergence but which could act as the framework for renewed efforts at security cooperation. Part two and three explore the areas where India and the EU have expertise as maritime security providers and the limited collaboration and coordination that has occurred to date in the realms of anti-piracy and HADR operations. Finally, the implications for maritime order and governance, as both actors express and pursue a growing ambit of strategic ambitions are considered.

Introduction

It has been suggested that India and Europe make for natural partners.¹ The two have common interests, complementary ambitions and a shared past from which to learn as well as build stronger foundations for the future. The EU, with its current membership of 28 states, is India's largest trading partner and India is the EU's 9th largest trading partner. Furthermore, given estimates that roughly 80 per cent of global trade by volume, and 70 per cent by value, is transported by sea, the Indian Ocean is a central conduit, and an area of concern, for India-EU trade. In the early 2000s, it was piracy off the coast of Somalia that galvanised attention of the world and, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, this was compounded by concerns with transnational terrorism.² India's own wake-up call occurred in 2008 with the seaborne terrorist attack on the financial capital of Mumbai. However, despite a shared interest in improving regional maritime security, especially in the Western Indian Ocean, actual operational cooperation has been limited. India participated in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden but remained an independent contributor. It was a founding member of the *Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia*, a voluntary, ad hoc international forum in 2009 and which continues today as an important international governance mechanism.

The call for greater maritime cooperation between India and the EU has been made often. Most recently, in 2018, a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council titled "Elements for an EU strategy on India" highlighted how vital it was to secure the SLOC, for both the EU and India. Earlier documents urged joint action on maritime security and freedom of navigation, but in the most recent there are concrete details on why cooperation is needed. A strong motivating argument is present in the extract below, combining a normative and instrumental rationale:

"Both are strong promoters of the respect for international law, in particular, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Enhanced engagement is needed on maritime security to discuss the non-traditional security challenges, such as piracy and armed robbery; transnational organised crime; illegal trafficking; cooperation at sea, including at the operational level as well as in law enforcement and

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1. <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Maritime-security-cooperation-the-next-port-of-call.pdf>
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/eu-india-are-natural-partners-based-on-values/article19847327.ece>
 2. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/oceans/2004-11-01/terrorism-goes-sea>

conflict prevention; promotion of confidence building measures; sharing of experiences in maritime situational awareness, maritime surveillance and information sharing, possibly in cooperation with other partners and international organisations (e.g. UN). Cooperation on the Indian Ocean should be developed, notably on security and governance, building on counter-piracy activities, and promoting respect for the international law of the sea.”³

On the Indian side, a vision has also been put forward, promoting a maritime regional order based on collaboration and collective action. In March 2015, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated a five-pronged agenda for the future of the Indian Ocean called *Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)* (or ‘lake’ in Hindi). Its key elements envisaged that “collective action and cooperation will best advance peace and security in our maritime region. It will also prepare us better to respond to emergencies”, while seeking “a more integrated and cooperative future in the region that enhances the prospects for sustainable development for all”. Finally, he noted that “the time has come for a strong grouping around the Indian Ocean. We will pursue this with new vigour in the years ahead”. Perhaps most importantly, the speech also recognised that other nations around the world have an interest and stakes in the Indian Ocean, and with whom India would engage in the form of “dialogue, visits, exercises, capacity building and economic partnership.”

The paper, therefore, explores if the congruence in the EU’s and India’s values, interests and growing maritime orientation, translate into a strategic convergence in terms of priorities and action. To do this, it is divided into four parts.

The first part considers ideas and institutions that emerged historically thanks to relations of commerce and conquest between Europe and Asia. *Mare liberum* or the notion of ‘the free seas’ is one such example that continues to be central to the organisation and regulation of maritime security. During the post-war and Cold War years, India supported alternative ideas of maritime order and governance. However, today there is a much greater convergence on the principles and mechanisms underpinning a rules-based maritime order.

The second part discusses the emergence of India and the EU as security providers in the Indian Ocean and examines concrete areas where limited cooperation has occurred, contributing to international maritime governance. The third part presents two areas where some collaboration has occurred,

3. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/jc_elements_for_an_eu_strategy_on_india_-_final_adopted.pdf

namely in anti-piracy and HADR operations. The reasons why operational coordination between India and Europe has been limited are also considered. The fourth part considers the growing importance that the maritime domain has played in recent formulations of Indian and European strategic agendas.

In conclusion, the paper argues that while there has been a strong emphasis on both sides to promote an Indian and a European vision of global order respectively, there is also recognition of the need to be pragmatic and to more effectively leverage resources and assets. Leaders in India and the EU have indicated a readiness to pursue a more robust and pro-active foreign policy. This is the result of ongoing processes of internal institutional change as well as being a deliberate response to evolving geopolitical challenges. With the emergence of the Indo-Pacific and a more competitive geopolitical environment, the need for maritime governance has grown all the more pressing. This can become a galvanising force for further strategic convergence between India and Europe.

Freedom of the Seas and the Maritime Order

From the 15th century onwards, European adventurers began to visit the Indian Ocean and the waters and lands to its east and north. The activities of European mercantilist trading companies, explorers, diplomats, and military expeditions were not confined to narrow 20th century conceptions of Asia. The British Indian Empire, for instance, depended on links via Singapore to China and Australia, and westward to Africa and Suez. Throughout colonial times, European maps entitled “Asia”, in fact, encompassed an Indo-Pacific arc, stretching from the Indian Ocean rim, through Southeast Asia to China, Korea, and Japan.

In terms of ideas and institutions that emerged over the centuries of commerce and conquest, one idea of maritime order stands out. The treatise, *Mare Liberum* or The Freedom of the Seas, written by the Dutch jurist and philosopher, Hugo Grotius, was first published in 1609. This treatise formulated the new principle that the sea was international territory and all nations were free to use it for seafaring trade. In propounding his thesis about the “Freedom of the Seas or the Right which belongs to the Dutch to take part in the East Indian trade”, it is significant that, not only was Grotius well aware of the long tradition of freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean, but he also took inspiration from the Asian state practice of the freedom of commerce and trade between various countries and peoples without any let or hindrance. As Professor C H Alexandrowicz has noted in his pioneering study, *History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies*, in studying Grotius’ treatment of the freedom of the high seas – “historians have often overlooked one aspect of the problem which was significant to Grotius, that is the impact of the study of the actual regime of the Indian Ocean, which he carried out in the archives of the Dutch company, on the formulation of the doctrine of *Mare Liberum*, at a time when *Mare Clausum*⁴ was more prevalent in European state practice than the ideal of the freedom of the high seas.” Without going into the struggle between European powers for Asian trade and the vicissitudes of the doctrine of the freedom of the seas, it may be pointed out that it only came to be accepted in the late 18th or early 19th century, then serving the purposes of colonial expansion.

Of course the Freedom of the Seas came to be regarded as an unequal freedom or freedom for the few. It was used by the maritime powers,

4. *Mare Clausum* translates literally from the Latin as ‘closed sea’ and famously featured in the title of a book published in 1652 that challenged the Grotian idea of *Mare Liberum*. It is also used as a term in international law for a navigable body of water under the jurisdiction of a state that is not accessible to other states.

especially during wars, to close off large areas of the ocean. After World War Two, states got increasingly concerned about a number of activities that had continued in the name of the freedom of the seas — activities such as naval military operations and manoeuvres; testing rockets and missiles; using the high seas as a dumping ground, particularly for radio-active wastes; stationing and operating submarines armed with nuclear missiles; so-called data-gathering by electronic procedures along the coasts of other countries. For some, the freedom of the seas came to be considered as a form of tyranny.⁵ Strong criticism of the freedom of the sea was common during negotiations in the Third UNCLOS.⁶

While the Cold War was being fought in hot spots on land across Africa, Latin America and Asia, the littoral states tried to promote the idea of the Indian Ocean as a “zone of peace”. Reflecting different agendas, including a desire to contain a growing Indian naval power, the initiative gave rise to the United Nations (UN) Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean in 1971. The committee continues to exist, with 43 members today and issues a biennial report to the General Assembly on regional peace, security and economic growth. While issuing mostly anodyne statements, the 2015 report did note that, “In recent times, the economic and military strength of the countries in the region has increased substantially.”⁷ This marks a change compared with the original aim of highlighting the negative impact of extra-regional powers and, the need to circumscribe their role.

As a region, the Indian Ocean has performed poorly on measures such as intra-regional trade or connectivity indices and many arguments have been made as to why the Indian Ocean is far too disparate and diverse to have strategic coherence. However, given the continued importance of the Persian Gulf to the global economy, and the fact the Indian Ocean hosts one of the world’s busiest maritime trade routes, much global attention has been given to the framing of rules and institutions to regulate international maritime safety and security. The Secretariat of the UN, inter alia, has assisted states in the uniform and consistent application of the international legal framework for combatting acts of piracy, as reflected in the 1982 UNCLOS, and complemented by other relevant international legal instruments.⁸ The international legal framework is complemented by a number of resolutions in the Security Council. The UN

5. See R P Anand, “Tyranny’ of the Freedom of the Seas Doctrine” (1973) *International Studies*, Vol 12, Issue 3, pp. 416-429

6. For references to debate and several such views see, R. P. Anand, “Winds of Change in the Law of the Sea” (1977), *International Studies*, Vol 16, Issue 2, pp. 207-226

7. See the July 2015 report <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/70/29>

8. <https://www.un.org/depts/los/index.htm>

also participates in the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia which facilitates discussions and the coordination of actions among states and organisations to suppress piracy off the coast of Somalia, pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions. These activities are coordinated by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia. Furthermore, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialised agency of the UN, has been responsible for regulating commercial shipping.

If one turns to the case of India, it is notable how far the country has moved in its position and strategy on issues of international maritime governance. In the early 1950s India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was very active on the global stage and yet, very quickly, a logic of insularity came to define Indian foreign policy. The attitude towards the oceans was similarly constrained and circumscribed given that they were seen as having enabled imperialist expansion and mercantilism. Thus when India ratified the UNCLOS in 1995, it made a declaration that contained two points: (1) That the Government had the right to decide what instruments to use for the settlement of disputes; and (2) that The Government of the Republic of India understands that the provisions of the Convention do not authorise other states to carry out in the exclusive economic zone and on the continental shelf military exercises or manoeuvres, in particular those involving the use of weapons or explosives without the consent of the coastal state.

These declarations conveyed India's sensitivity and wariness about the activities of extra-regional powers in the Indian Ocean and even an inherent suspicion regarding the idea of 'freedom of navigation'. The UNCLOS had recognised coastal states' territorial seas of up to 12 nautical miles but guaranteed the right of innocent passage of ships and aircraft through other countries' territorial seas and archipelagos, as well as through straits used for international navigation and set forth maximum navigational rights and freedoms for ships and aircraft in exclusive economic zones, which go up to 200 nautical miles.

India and the EU as Maritime Security Providers

Within the space of less than a year the Indian Navy and the EU both released documents outlining their maritime strategies. For India this was a revision and update on the 2007 maritime strategy whilst for the EU it was the first of its kind. In the case of India, the 2015 strategy elaborated the idea of India as a ‘net security provider’ in the region. Within India, the use of the term can be traced back to an address on 12 October 2011, by A K Antony, then-Defence Minister in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s government. Speaking to the Naval Commanders Conference, he argued that that the Indian Navy has been “mandated to be a net security provider to island nations in the Indian Ocean Region”. He said “most of the major international shipping lanes are located along our island territories. This bestows on us the ability to be a potent and stabilising force in the region”.⁹ The 2015 maritime strategy goes well beyond this to state, that enhancing net security is the equivalent to shaping a favourable and positive maritime environment for India.¹⁰ Unlike previous naval strategy documents, there is a whole chapter on the “Strategy for Shaping a Favourable and Positive Maritime Environment” with concrete principles and actions to be taken.

Similarly, the EU’s maritime security strategy, which was revised most recently in 2018, contains concrete actions aimed at aligning more closely with the implementation of the EU’s Global Strategy,¹¹ the renewed EU Internal Security Strategy for 2015-2020, the Council’s conclusions on Global Maritime Security,¹² and the Joint Communication on International Ocean Governance.¹³ This linking together of the EU’s general foreign policy agenda, economic as well as defence interests, has elevated maritime cooperation to a new level of strategic significance. Thus, the EU has been depicted as, “a global maritime security provider in promoting maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, including the importance of cooperation in the area of international law, in particular the universal application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)”.

Both in the case of India and the EU, there is a concerted effort to galvanise greater legitimacy and resources for a more active maritime strategy.

9. <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=76590>

10. https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Maritime_Security_Strategy_Document_25Jan16.pdf

11. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10715-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

12. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24000/st10238en17-conclusions-on-global-maritime-security.pdf>

13. https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/ocean-governance_en

In the case of India, there is a growing civil-military consensus on the importance of the sea for prosperity and peace while in the EU, the need to improve the coordination of external and internal security dimensions of EU policies has been recognised, particularly in maritime expertise and capacities. Furthermore, both India and the EU have veered towards an ‘internationalisation’ of maritime security in the Indian Ocean.

At a global level, the annual international conference on oceans, named Our Ocean, started by former United States (US) Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 in response to the widespread deterioration of the marine environment, has provided the opportunity for countries to make voluntary commitments. The EU has been actively involved, hosting the 2017 conference in Malta, where it committed to 36 actions amounting to over €550 million (\$\$846 million), and making 23 new commitments at the 2018 conference held in Bali. The commitments made by the EU covered a broad range of topics, from maritime security to marine pollution, a sustainable blue economy, climate change, marine protection and sustainable fisheries. Concrete examples include allocating €64 million (\$\$98.5 million) for international marine and maritime research projects along and across the Atlantic Ocean, committing €37.5 million (\$\$57.7 million) to improve maritime security and counter piracy along the south-eastern African coastline and in the Indian Ocean, and contributing to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to develop international guidelines for maritime spatial planning worldwide.

Prior to that, in 2016 the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy adopted a joint communication on international ocean governance. Pitched as an integral part of the EU’s response to the UN 2030 agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDG), in particular SDG 14 which is ‘to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources’, the communication set out a number of actions around three priority areas: “improving the international ocean governance framework”, “reducing pressure on oceans and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy”, and “strengthening international ocean research and data”. Concrete examples of actions linked to these three priority areas include: the development of ocean partnerships with key ocean players such as Australia, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand and the US; engagement in multilateral negotiations in the WTO to ban harmful fisheries subsidies; and action to strengthen an ‘All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance’ through enhanced marine cooperation frameworks in the southern Atlantic.

The EU is also playing an active role in the negotiations on a new international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. It will be the third UNCLOS implementation agreement (after the agreement related to deep seabed mining and marine scientific research in the seabed area beyond national jurisdiction and the agreement related to conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks). The negotiations are currently ongoing. A first substantive session of the intergovernmental conference was convened in September 2018, during which the EU outlined a number of key objectives and deliverables to be taken into account in the future agreement, in particular regarding marine genetic resources, area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, capacity building and technology transfer.

Traditionally India has promoted India-led maritime initiatives in the Indian Ocean such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. This was launched in February 2008 as a cooperative maritime security initiative at a meeting in New Delhi with 27 Chiefs of Navy (or coast guards where there was no navy) from across the Indian Ocean. Of late, however, there have been ever more occasions of joint naval exercises and naval diplomacy in zones of the Indian Ocean which India regards as its primary areas of maritime interest, namely: The Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, and their littoral regions.

India has often been described as a reluctant or half-hearted global player. However, the first decade of the 21st century saw a number of important changes. The creation of the G-20, the establishment of strategic partnerships with the major powers – the US, the EU and China – the decision to join key East Asian institutions such as the East Asia Summit and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, as well as the engagement in multilateral naval exercises are just some examples. Each of these provided the basis for which India is today increasingly viewed as a stabiliser, potentially a balancer, within the region but, most importantly, as a contributor to multilateral frameworks that support peace and prosperity. Most Indian analysts would agree that India's most substantive multilaterals are in maritime security. Beginning some 20 years ago, with countries of ASEAN seeking to ensure the safety of the sea-lanes from the Indian Ocean to the Malacca Straits, the Indian Navy today engages in naval exercises with over 40 countries in the Asia-Pacific and Persian Gulf and patrols the sea lanes from Aden to Malacca.

In Southeast Asia, India initially combined economic partnerships and security operations with Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia, and was a founding member of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) Association for Regional Cooperation, established in Mauritius in 1995. By the 2000s, the maritime cooperation had expanded to include naval exercises with the US, Australia, Singapore and Japan (Exercise Malabar). The Indian navy's Milan programme, a biennial naval event was launched in 1995 involving the littoral Asia-Pacific states and occurs at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its most recent edition in March 2018 comprised sixteen foreign nations.

This reflects a major change in orientation given that in the past India was itself reluctant to join multilateral operations. Today the Indian navy operates a deployment pattern known as Mission Based Deployment, involving Indian warships remaining on station, on a continual basis, at six vital points in the IOR. This includes, off the Assumption Island (Seychelles), off the Agalega (Mauritius), off the East Coast of Africa, off southern Sri Lanka, in the northern Bay of Bengal and in the Persian Gulf. On the Andaman and Nicobar islands efforts have been made to enhance surveillance and operational capacities, most recently in January 2019. Renamed INS Kohassa, it will be India's fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the Andaman overlooking key SLOC and strategic points. These islands dominate the Bay of Bengal with more than 60,000 commercial vessels passing through each year.

Recently, Oman has permitted India the use of its Duqm port. France, with its naval assets in Djibouti, Comoros, Reunion and Abu Dhabi, is perhaps the last of the major European powers to maintain any significant presence in the north and southwest quadrants of the Indian Ocean. In March 2018, an agreement was signed with France to ensure military use by India of these. This along with the earlier Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement with the US, and, more recently, with Indonesia for the deep-water port of Sabang, are crucial for India, both individually and collectively. The agreement with Indonesia ensures the Indian navy's reach across the eastern IOR, while the agreement with France ensures the same for the western IOR.

A major critique of the limitations to India-EU engagement on maritime security has been that a cognitive dissonance prevented either side from recognising the security priorities of the other. India was seen as unwilling and under-prepared to play a leadership role in the region, while the EU was also regarded as being reticent to go beyond the remit of its "proximate seas" as the Eastern African littorals, were perceived to be. The two documents considered above however, point to a much more ambitious agenda on either side as well as evidence of greater intra-institutional coordination to commit

more resources. In the following section, the concrete security challenges of anti-piracy and HADR operations are examined to identify how India-Europe maritime cooperation has taken shape.

Anti-Piracy Operations and HADR

From just 10-15 incidents in 2004, the waters of the Gulf of Aden saw acts of piracy and hijacking spiralling rapidly to 80 in 2008, and growing increasingly audacious in nature. In an attempt to tackle this menace, the UN Security Council (UNSC) first adopted Resolution 1816 in June 2008, authorising nations to deploy warships for counter-piracy operations in Somali territorial waters. This was followed by Resolution 1838 in October 2008 urging all maritime states to despatch naval units to fight piracy, off the Horn of Africa.

The outbreak of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast shifted Indian maritime attention west, given the value of exports and imports passing through this area. At the time it was highlighted that between 20 and 24 Indian merchant ships transited the Gulf of Aden every month, and with India's seafaring community accounting for nearly seven per cent of the world's seafarers or about 100,000 Indian seafarers plying on the high seas under different flags, the security concerns were acute. Furthermore the declaration, by the IMO, of a High Risk Area running from the waters west and south of India up to the east coast of Africa resulted in a steep increase on shipping premiums, adding another motivation for India's involvement.

In the most recent report by the Secretary General to the UNSC,¹⁴ the Indian navy was described as having undertaken anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden since 23 October 2008. As of 7 November 2017, seven naval ships had safely escorted 60 vessels (52 foreign flagged and eight Indian flagged or World Food Programme flagged) through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor. India is a member of the *Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia* and participates in the Mercury online communications platform, established to coordinate anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. India will also establish a regional information fusion centre to contribute to counter-piracy information-sharing efforts.

While piracy was seen as being on the decline, more recent reports have demonstrated an uptick. In a report entitled 'The State of Maritime Piracy 2017: Assessing the Economic and Human Cost', the *Oceans Beyond Piracy* anti-piracy programme noted that a total of 54 incidents occurred in the western Indian Ocean region in 2017. This indicates an increase of 100 per cent over 2016. The number of seafarers affected by incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea also rose, from 545 in 2016 to 1,102 in 2017. In its report entitled 'Stable seas: Somali waters', issued in 2017, the *One Earth Future*

14. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2018_903.pdf

Foundation noted the increasing complexity of the region, with multifaceted and cross-over issues, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, coastal violence and human trafficking, intersecting to create a uniquely insecure maritime environment in Somali waters. Regional conflicts have shifted human migration flows, further accelerating the smuggling of both trafficked persons and arms across the Gulf of Aden. It was observed in the report that poverty, a lack of jobs, a lack of markets and poor management of fisheries were factors that had contributed to the re-emergence of Somali piracy in 2017.

In their threat assessment dated 1 September 2018, the Combined Maritime Forces and the EU's Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) concluded that piracy networks seemed to be meeting their financial objectives by pursuing lower-risk activities such as the smuggling of people, narcotics, weapons and charcoal. It also noted that, with respect to other significant maritime incidents in the Maritime Security Transit Corridor-Red Sea area, there were four attempted attacks that were attributed to Houthi rebels launching long-range rockets on Saudi-flagged ships off the coast of Yemen, which could pose an even greater threat to the region's stability.

The EUNAVFOR has a dedicated multinational counter-piracy force called Operation Atalanta, which comprises up to two warships, two maritime patrol aircraft and up to 800 personnel. It spans from the southern Red Sea into the western Indian Ocean and as far south as Madagascar. Now in its 10th year, the EUNAVFOR has successfully protected humanitarian supply ships delivering more than 1.75 million tons of World Food Programme assistance to Somali ports and to support vessels of the African Union Mission in Somalia. This is occurring as the Horn of Africa continues to experience high levels of food insecurity. In July 2018, the EU extended Operation Atalanta until 31 December 2020.

The Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa is an integral part of Operation Atalanta. It provides around-the-clock regional maritime domain awareness to naval, coastguard and law enforcement agencies around the world. It also maintains details of transiting vessels through voluntary registration, as recommended in the fifth version of Best Management Practices, in conjunction with the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations; categorises convoy and protection requirements in the newly established Maritime Security Transit Corridor; and acts as a conduit for periodic (EUNAVFOR-Combined Maritime Forces) threat assessments and incident-related threat bulletins issued to global shipping industry counterparts.

Despite India's critical geographical location and substantial maritime capabilities and experience in dealing with piracy, collaboration with the EUNAVFOR programme has been limited.

Most recently, an Indian Navy frigate reached a milestone as it became the first Indian warship to escort a vessel of the UN's World Food Program. INS Sunayna completed the escort for the first time since counter-piracy deployments began in 2008, following an escort request by the EUNAVFOR. A WFP dhow was transporting 360 tons of food aid from Bosaso to Berbera, in northern Somalia. Over 1.5 million people face acute levels of food insecurity in Somalia, and 2.6 million are internally displaced. INS Sunayna has been deployed for anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden since 6 October 2018. The EUNAVFOR sent an escort request to other international naval forces earlier in December, to which the Indian Navy responded. This support demonstrates the good work and cooperation that can be achieved in the region between the EU and partner nations.

Coordinated efforts between the EUNAVFOR and other international maritime organisations are vital to ensure the free flow and safe passage of commerce around the Horn of Africa. The frequent Shared Awareness and De-confliction conferences held in Bahrain provide a critical mechanism to work out and share best practices.

The Indian navy has joined training exercises in order to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean. During the exercise, Naval, Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from a number of East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from the US, India and the Netherlands, with support of international organisations like the IMO, Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and EUNAVFOR. The Indian Navy played a significant role in 'CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19', being involved in planning, coordination and execution. Through INS Trikand, the Indian Navy provided a platform for live Visit Board Search Seizure drills, which proved to be of immense training value to participating nations.

Joint exercises provide opportunities to interact professionally with the crews of other ships, for instance in Djibouti, Indian crews interacted with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) ship Samidare, Spanish naval ship ESPS Relampago and the US ship Chung Hoon. Mutual ship visits were organised with a view to promote inter-operability between the Indian Navy and the other navies, as also understanding of best practices. Officers from

the ship's Operations team also visited Camp Lemonnaire, the American base at Djibouti. During this visit, the Commanding Officer called on Major General James D Craig, Commander of the US Army Joint Task Force of the Horn of Africa. The IN officers also visited the Japanese military base at Djibouti, where they were briefed about the JMSDF operations towards anti-piracy in the region.

As part of expanding engagement maritime engagement, India has stepped up cooperation with Indian Ocean littoral states and maritime neighbours. Under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the Navy undertakes joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius and Coordinated Patrols with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.

India's participation in international disaster relief has primarily been through its navy, though the air force and army have also been involved in some operations. The Indian Navy recognises HADR in the IOR as a key aspect of its maritime security strategy. Not just for the military, HADR is a priority for the political establishment as well. Prime Minister Modi has articulated in various speeches that natural disasters are a common regional challenge and responding to them effectively is one of India's key maritime objectives (an objective also specifically mentioned in the Bharatiya Janata Party's 2019 pre-election manifesto).

Perhaps the most widely recognised contribution is the leading role India has played as part of multilateral efforts to aid and stabilise countries such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Maldives in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The Indian Navy sent 32 ships, seven aircraft, and 20 helicopters as part of five operations (two domestic and three international) to render assistance to the affected areas. Indian ships were most recently at Port Beira, Mozambique after undertaking a HADR mission, Operation Sahayata, in the wake of the devastating Cyclone Idai which hit that country in March 2019.

Maritime Strategy and Geopolitics

India's Maritime Doctrine

Among the notable changes in Indian strategic thinking in recent years has been a reorientation in India's outlook towards the maritime domain. Clearly, Indian strategic thinking has traditionally had a continental outlook. For thousands of years, military threats to India have been perceived as coming primarily from the northwest, reinforced by the country's experience in the 20th century when any direct military threats (from Japan, Pakistan and China) were land-based. The continuing threats on India's western and northern borders and from domestic insurgencies has led to the Indian army holding an undisputedly dominant position within the Indian military establishment. However, there is a developing view among some Indian strategists of India as a maritime power: that India's peninsular character and geographic position gives the Indian Ocean a preponderant influence over the country's destiny.¹⁵ For example, Subhash Kapila, a former Indian diplomat, writes:

"The Indian Ocean stands aptly named because India's peninsular geographical configuration... places [it in a] unique commanding position on the Bay of Bengal on the eastern flank of the Deccan Peninsula and the Arabian Sea on the western flank. In strategic maritime terms, India is in a position to dominate the vast expanse of maritime waters from ... the Gulf of Aden ... all the way down south to the outermost extremities of the ... [Southern Oceans]. Some Indian leaders have also drawn a close connection between India's maritime ambitions and its destiny as a great power."¹⁶

Furthermore as former Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee noted in 2007, "... after nearly a millennium of inward and landward focus, we are once again turning our gaze outwards and seawards, which is the natural direction of view for a nation seeking to re-establish itself, not simply as a continental power, but even more so as a maritime power, and consequently as one that is of significance on the world stage."

Thus, one could argue that any significant geographical expansion of Indian influence can only take place in the maritime domain. Many in the Indian Navy see it as destined to become the predominant maritime security provider in a region stretching from the Bab-el Mandeb to the Malacca Straits, and also

15. See Brewster, 2014, pp. 11- 15 & 23-35; Brewster, 2010a, p. 1; Menon, 2009.

16. Kapila, S. (2012). Indian Ocean: Strategic Imperatives for India to Keep It Indian. Paper No. 5242. New Delhi: South Asia Analysis Group, p. 1.

in playing a significant security role in areas beyond.¹⁷ This view was amplified by former US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates affirming that the US was “... look[ing] to India to be a partner and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond”.¹⁸ Indian maritime strategists see predominance in the Indian Ocean as potentially also delivering significant influence in East Asia. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the 19th century American naval strategist, is frequently cited by Indian strategic thinkers, including a statement (incorrectly) attributed to him: “Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. In the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its [the Indian Ocean’s] waters”.

During the Cold War, India’s ability to pursue its maritime ambitions was severely constrained and for decades following independence the Indian Navy was known as the ‘Cinderella’ of the Indian armed forces. However, increased enthusiasm for and interest in maritime power has been accompanied by an expansion in India’s naval capabilities. Since the mid-1990s the country has embarked on a major programme to develop a ‘blue-water’ navy with significant increases in naval expenditure. The Indian armed forces budget grew at an annual rate of 5 per cent from 2000 to 2005, at around 10 per cent from 2005-2008, and to a massive 17.63 per cent in 2012/13, but fell back to a rather modest 5.31 per cent in 2013/14, primarily due to economic constraints. Under the BJP government of Prime Minister Modi, the defence budget was boosted by 12 per cent for 2014/15. The Navy’s share of the increasing defence budget rose from 11 per cent in 1992/93 to 18 per cent in 2008/09, and in the Interim Defence Budget 2019-20, reached 15 per cent.

Increased capital expenditure encouraged plans for significant changes in the Indian Navy’s force structure, with an emphasis on sea-control capabilities. Already, the Navy is undergoing substantial expansion with 40 ships and submarines, including two nuclear submarines and two aircraft carriers, either on order or already commissioned. According to Admiral Arun Prakash, the former Indian Chief of Navy Staff, India aims to exercise selective sea control of the Indian Ocean through task forces built around the projected three aircraft carriers that will form the core of separate fleets in the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea. The rapidly expanding Indian Coast Guard may also play an important complementary role to the Indian Navy, particularly in circumstances where there are reasons to emphasise policing functions over those of the military.

17. Scot, 2006, p. 99.

18. Murphy, 2009.

In conjunction with an expansion in naval capabilities over the last decade or so, India has been expanding its strategic influence throughout the Indian Ocean. The Navy has been active in developing security relationships that are intended to enhance India's ability to project power and restrict China's ability to develop similar security relationships in the region. Given that the Indian Ocean is in many ways an enclosed sea, the Indian Navy has placed particular emphasis on the 'choke points' at entrances to the ocean around southern Africa (including the Mozambique Channel), the Arabian Peninsula (including the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb) and the straits connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans through the Indonesian archipelago (the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits).

India's naval ambitions have not been without its critics. Given the longstanding lack of co-ordination in strategic planning in New Delhi, the Indian Navy's activist role in the Indian Ocean has often been way ahead of the views within the other armed services and the government. There is long-running tension between the Indian Navy and the Ministry of External Affairs over the Navy's assertive regional policy, including over the 2008 decision to participate in anti-piracy operations of Somalia. According to some, the Ministry of External Affairs repeatedly turned down requests from the Indian Navy to conduct naval interceptions.

It is not clear to what extent these tensions merely reflect bureaucratic caution or a more fundamental disagreement over the Indian Navy's regional strategy.¹⁹ Others are sceptical about the ability of India to transform itself from a continental to a maritime power. Varun Sahni (2005), for example, warns that the Soviet Union's failed attempts to become a naval power in the 1970s and 1980s should act as "a cautionary ... [note] for India's Mahanian navalists ... [and] a grim warning of what happens to a continental state that harbours overly grandiose maritime ambitions".

Over the last decade or so, India has developed good security relationships with many states throughout the Indian Ocean, with particular emphasis on the maritime choke points of the Mozambique Channel in the south-western Indian Ocean and the entrance to the Persian Gulf in the northwest, as well as the Malacca Strait in the northeast. India is also developing a security presence in the central Indian Ocean, astride the east-west SLOC across the Indian Ocean. India's security relationships in the region are anchored by its close relationship with Mauritius, the island state that lies around 900km to the east of Madagascar. Indo-Mauritian relations have often been described

19. Brewster, 2010a, p. 4; Maitra, 2005

in superlatives by leaders on both sides. In March 2018, India's President, Ram Nath Kovind, was the Chief Guest at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Mauritian independence and, in addressing the Indian diaspora, he reminded them, "We are two countries, but one people. We have common civilisational roots. We share with you much more than any other country or society."²⁰ According to the last available census, approximately two-thirds of the Mauritian population are of Indian descent, with over 48 per cent identifying themselves as Hindu. As a result, Mauritius is the only country in Africa with a majority Hindu population.

The special relationship with Mauritius extends well beyond the spiritual and cultural realms to that of politics and security. Since independence in 1968, all Mauritian prime ministers, save one, and all Mauritian presidents, except one, have been of Indian origin. Close political relations were institutionalised, especially in the 1980s, and steps taken to ensure and consolidate India's influence over the country. Since 1983, it has been the practice to recruit the country's national security advisor from India's security forces and a commander for the National Coast Guard from the Indian navy. Furthermore, India has been regularly training the Mauritius National Police Force and conducting joint patrols of the country's vast EEZ. India has also backed Mauritius' territorial claims to the Chagos Islands including Diego Garcia which was separated from Mauritian administration in the 1960s. Mauritian political leaders have also publicly indicated on several occasions that India would be permitted to establish naval facilities on Mauritius if it so wished and there are claims that India already operates a signals intelligence station.

A major controversy however, erupted over the Agalega Islands in 2006 when reports appeared in Indian and Mauritian papers about plans to cede the twin islands to India. Then-Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam had to categorically issue a denial in the Mauritian parliament, stating that the "Government of India was willing to develop an economic development plan for the islands". However, leaked Wikileaks cables from that time document a number of reasons why the US also believed then that India was pursuing a geo-strategically-motivated "hidden agenda" vis-à-vis the islands.²¹

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20. "Address by the President at Reception hosted for Indian Diaspora in Mauritius by the High Commissioner of India in Mauritius, (March 13, 2018)", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 14 March 2018. mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29611/address+by+the+president+at+reception+hosted+for+indian+diaspora+in+mauritius+by+the+high+commissioner+of+india+in+mauritius+march+13+2018
21. Public Library of US Diplomacy, Wikileaks. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06PORTLOUIS752_a.html

India also has growing security relationships with Madagascar, Mozambique and the Seychelles, littoral states in and around the crucial Mozambique Channel, the SLOC used by shipping transiting the Cape of Good Hope.

Dating back to the 1980s, the Indian navy has played a role in the Seychelles' domestic politics, helping to avert a coup against the government, and in the country's national security apparatus. Thanks to the Indian diaspora population (more than 10 per cent of the total population), there is also a sense of ethnic affinity, although this pales in comparison with Mauritius. There has long been a sense amongst Indian leaders of this region being part of a natural sphere of influence for India. However, an important change in the geopolitics of this region can be traced back to the early 2000s when multilateral anti-piracy operations began off the coast of Somalia. The Seychelles' capital city port, Port Victoria, became the preferred port of call for rest and recreation for military vessels based in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa, especially for the EU's 'Operation Atalanta'. During this time, China participated in international efforts, contributing a naval task force in December 2008 that marked the first deployment of the Chinese navy on an operational mission outside its claimed territorial waters. In the process, the navy of the People's Liberation Army gained experience and access to this part of the Indian Ocean. Since then, China has been building up its presence and clout in the Western Indian Ocean with regular patrols, and investments in ports and coastal infrastructure projects, and, in 2017, through the opening of a Chinese military support base in Djibouti, located in the Horn of Africa.

A European Maritime Strategy

In 2015, for the first time in more than two decades, Europe as a whole increased its defense spending. This reversal of trends can be attributed directly to a range of security-related concerns with which the European states see themselves confronted. The most worrying is the re-emergence of great-power rivalry. After a "honeymoon period" of more than twenty years, Russia's military intervention in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea have reminded Europe that it cannot take its security for granted. What is more, Russia's irredentism and its increasingly assertive behaviour along Europe's northern, eastern, and southern borders coincided with one of the largest refugee crises since the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, terrorist attacks by radical jihadists across the continent have caused a growing sense of insecurity within Europe. As if these challenges were not daunting enough, the US rebalancing toward the Indo-Pacific region and President Donald Trump's "America First" policy have heightened uncertainties about the future.

Against this backdrop of intersecting security challenges, European countries' respective military strategies and defense postures (both national and the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance [NATO]) are being revisited. It appears that, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, governments across Europe no longer can afford to reduce their own defense spending while readily investing large sums of money in their welfare states, all the while remaining utterly dependent on U.S. security guarantees. Consequently, all twenty-nine NATO member states have pledged to increase their financial contributions toward common security and defense. Meanwhile, neutral Sweden and Finland also have made concerted efforts to forge closer ties with their Western partners and strengthen their armed forces, not least in the maritime domain.

The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) was remarkably silent on maritime issues. The only reference to the topic is in regard to organised crime, but even here it fails to provide specific details about how the EU should respond to this challenge. Several other challenges and threats listed in the ESS could be interpreted as related to maritime security, but no such connection is explicitly made by the document. In contrast, the subsequent Implementation Report (2008) on the ESS contains a whole separate paragraph devoted exclusively to piracy. The report states that piracy is the result of state failure and points out the dependence of the world economy on maritime trade. It specifically notes the piracy activities in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden and points to the EU's track record in responding to these threats.

On 26 June 2018, European ministers adopted a revised action plan for the EU's maritime security. The Council's revisions on the EU's Maritime Security Strategy specifically mention, the need to renew "commitment to maritime security through a regional approach".²² Three areas of maritime interest are identified: the EU seas and subsea-basins (the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean), the shared maritime spaces and choke points in the global maritime domain (Indian, Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific Oceans) as well as maritime zones of great strategic interest (that is, the Horn of Africa/Red Sea, the South China Sea, the Gulf of Guinea and the Caribbean Sea). In the detailed action plan provided, four concrete actions are recommended for the Indian Ocean area and a further four, for the 'Indian and Pacific Oceans'. Mostly the proposed actions point towards improved coordination amongst the European states and building on current activities, most importantly the EU's comprehensive approach in the Horn of Africa.

22. <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2018/jun/eu-council-conclusions-revision-maritime-security-action-plan-10494-18.pdf>

Suggestions of extension include promoting “a wider approach to maritime security policy in the Indian Ocean, addressing other forms of maritime crime beyond piracy, from the high seas to ports, and threats to critical maritime infrastructure in the wider Western Indian Ocean and the Red Sea region while exploring options to create a platform dedicated to maritime security and governance in the region.” Existing frameworks are mentioned including the High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security established between the EU and ASEAN, as well as in the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the fifth Our Ocean conference and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). The addition of BIMSTEC is noteworthy for this is where opportunities lie for a renaissance in Indian-European maritime cooperation.

The EU has kept a relatively low profile in South East Asia’s maritime tensions despite sizeable navigational interests. Whilst maritime stability is a vital outcome, it cannot be seen to be interfering. As a result, many have complained that the EU’s overall political engagement in South East Asia remains negligible. It is hindered by differences between member states, and is especially divided over its policy towards China. The EU will thus not be a lead player in Asian maritime security but could be doing far more to encourage collaborative solutions, raising perceptions about its political clout in a way that would be more concomitant with its economic weight. The EU’s main interests lie in ensuring the stability of global commons and maintaining SLOC open. Given how integrated Asia and Europe are in terms of trade, the risks of regional maritime tensions hold the very real threat creating disruptions to global trade.

Hence it has been argued that in the Straits of Malacca, the EU ought to encourage more effective maritime partnerships and build on its traditional attributes of soft power. Suggestions have been made that the EU increase technical assistance to littoral states, share legal expertise to help better manage disputes over maritime resources and territorial claims. The EU can also contribute towards greater institutionalisation of existing regional frameworks, such as the ASEAN Maritime Forum and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships (RECAAP). The RECAAP includes the ASEAN states (except Indonesia and Malaysia), Japan, China, Korea, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

On 15 October 2018, the Council adopted conclusions on “Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU strategy”, following the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of 19

September, in the same year.²³ This is the third document outlining an EU strategy towards Asia – the first was issued in 1994²⁴ and the second in 2001.²⁵ Over the past 25 years, both the EU and Asia have been transformed by regional and global developments. In many ways, the documents reflect the concerns and compulsions of the times, as well as responding to the constraints and opportunities of institutional frameworks and political configurations. Security, and particularly maritime does not feature very strongly in the 2018 communication but it is embedded within the document as indicators of emerging priorities. These are cyber security, migration and the need to strengthen EU borders and the efforts to promote ocean governance. Finding and maintaining a balance between facilitating flows through connectivity while ensuring their safety is the challenge for the future.

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23. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_communication_-_connecting_europe_and_asia_-_building_blocks_for_an_eu_strategy_2018-09-19.pdf
 24. <http://aei.pitt.edu/2949/1/2949.pdf>
 25. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-europe-asia-strategic-framework-com2001469-20010904_en.pdf

A Time of Strategic Convergence

India and Europe are key stakeholders in the Indian Ocean's institutional infrastructure and have traditionally contributed to the creation of global organisations. The EU represents the largest market and the second largest economy in the world and the first trade partner for several countries. It is also the world's biggest contributor as an investment and development cooperation partner. For economic as much for strategic reasons, the EU's proclaimed approach to addressing security threats and development challenges is "the European way – a cooperative way – investing in partnerships and in multilateralism."²⁶ Since the 2016 launch of the EU's global strategy, the maritime realm has grown significantly in importance as an area where Europe can showcase its ability to act as a global security provider and as a leader in managing the maritime or blue economy.

For India, since March 2015, when Prime Minister Modi announced a maritime vision of SAGAR and the five points pertaining to India's maritime vision, concrete actions have followed through. Strategic agreements have been reached with key littoral states, including Indonesia, where the jointly issued 'Shared Vision of India-Indonesia Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific' carried a reference to improving connectivity between the strategically-located Sabang Island of Indonesia and India's Port Blair. Prior to that, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Oman in February 2018 was another example of increasing India's visibility and access in the western Indian Ocean region. In addition, crucial steps have been taken to reach agreements that provide India with the use of American and French bases across the length and breadth of a unified maritime expanse that constitutes the idea of the 'Indo-Pacific'. These mark significant and substantial breakthroughs in India's maritime diplomacy.

India's 2015 maritime security strategy uses the term, Indo-Pacific to denote the extent of India's maritime relations, both in terms of economic and security cooperation. Furthermore, there is a whole section devoted to defining and outlining the importance of maritime governance and its intersection with maritime security. Even more noteworthy is the use of the term, 'Freedom of Navigation' which is mentioned for the first time in the official maritime strategy, and appears a number of times to advocate, promise and justify the Indian navy's role in providing "safety and security of seaborne trade and energy routes, especially in the IOR, considering their

26. Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the Munich Security Conference, Munich, 15/02/201 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/58232/speech-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-munich-security-conference_en

effect on global economies and India's national interests". It goes on to state that "maintaining freedom of navigation and strengthening the international legal regime at sea, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), (is) for all-round benefit." Considering the sensitivity expressed in India's 1995 accession to the UNCLOS regarding the activity of other naval powers in its waters, it is indicative of the change in thinking and practice today where the Indian navy is promoted as a legitimate security-providing actor for the Indian Ocean Region and beyond.

As the EU and India look towards framing and implementing a more proactive global strategy, the opportunity for furthering maritime cooperation is at its highest. In the past the EU and India projected and pursued a strongly normative foreign policy agenda, emphasising the importance of European values or the alternatives offered by the non-aligned movement or that of the global south. These approaches may have held similar goals and even rested on shared principles, but they highlighted and aggravated grievances and biases of difference.

Today, with common interests at stake such as protecting the sea-lanes of communication, building the rules and regulations for international ocean governance and improving maritime security, both India and the EU have moved towards a less didactic and more pragmatic basis for engagement. Enhancing collaboration on anti-piracy actions and HADR operations are concrete realms where cooperation has already taken place and the need for deeper partnership has been recognised.

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