



IONS 2016 SEMINAR – CONCEPT PAPERS

SEMINAR THEME: FOSTERING PARTNERSHIP IN IOR: CHARTING COURSE FOR MARITIME COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT

SESSION-5 THEME: FUTURE OUTLOOK

CONCEPTS

TOPIC 1 - PARTNERS BEYOND HORIZON: FEASIBILITY OF INDO-PACIFIC MARITIME COOPERATION

Proliferation of globalization and the rise of transnationalism have bonded the human-ocean relationship more resolutely than ever before. Today, all the states across the globe commonly share many of their vested interests in the ocean, while faced with multitudes of common challenges with increasing complexities. Given, the transnational character of ocean and the interconnectedness of ocean-related affairs, these challenges are causing far reaching implications in today's interdependent world. By the same token, the transborder nature of oceans that paves the way for many opportunities also invites transborder form of non-traditional threats that are difficult for any state to handle alone, like IUU fishing, piracy, smuggling, gun-running, human/drug-trafficking, etc. The oceans are also breeding grounds for inter-state rivalry and disputes over the resources they offer. Yet, the irrefutable fact remains predominant, that ensuring 'maximised' boons for one state engenders banes for the others, which in turn perturbs the entire interdependent world. Thus, in today's world, there is no alternative to inclusiveness; mutual cooperation is indispensable for attaining the desired benefits from the oceans. Given the growing strategic and economic importance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) vis-à-vis the quantum of challenges encountered there, the need for meaningful partnership among the littorals is strongly felt by all concerned. In this backdrop, IONS 2016 seminar has been premised on fostering partnership for maritime cooperative engagements by the littorals of Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Accordingly, the seminar topics have been chosen to bring some pertinent issues under spotlight, which hinge upon cooperative engagements in the IOR. The seminar topics are distributed over five sessions, with individual session theme, e.g. strategic and economic outlook, security, cooperation, HADR, etc. The seminar aims at exploring some vital grounds of cooperation in the IOR while offering a comprehensive understanding of its various dynamics, and a piercing vision through the challenges and barriers to a thriving future.



In a rapidly changing global scenario with political and economic instabilities, increased proliferation of non-state actors, regional conflicts, etc, it is difficult to envisage the future dimensions of maritime cooperation and partnership building with certainty. Rather, the changes in the global affairs are indicative of even more criticalities and uncertainties in the future. Two aspects are important to focus - the 'nature' and 'extent' of cooperation. The nature of future cooperation will be governed by the emergence of new security threats and transformation of old threats, which do not conform to any conventional military doctrine. The extent of future cooperation will be dominated by the aspirations of 'Asian Century', which perhaps has encouraged the US to formulate the 'Asia Pivot' strategy and 'Strategic Rebalancing of Asia-Pacific'. More so, all signs and symptoms indicate towards a thriving IOR in the foreseeable future. As such, considering the geo-strategic and geo-economic perspectives, it is important to correctly set a new vision to ascertain the future outlook of the IOR. In this backdrop, the last session of the seminar is premised on '*Future Outlook*' of IOR, with a view to envision the projected future of various dynamics of maritime cooperation in IOR and derive some plausible recommendations.

While visualizing the future outlook of IOR in terms of the extent of maritime cooperation, geographic dimension is of importance. If we look at IO's immediate neighbour i.e. Pacific Ocean, specifically the economically vibrant Western Pacific, then we would agree that both the oceans' fates are intertwined as a result of many shared interests. Moreover Asia's transformation for realizing the 'Asian Century' cannot be even contemplated without the cooperation between the littorals of these two oceans. Even to denote the significance of mutual cooperation among these littorals, it is often convincingly referred as "two oceans but one region". Given the prevalent geo-strategic and geo-economic reality, there are scopes to take this collaboration even beyond the immediate neighbours and bring about an extended neighbourhood. In this backdrop, the first topic of session 5 has been chosen as '*Partners beyond Horizon: Feasibility of Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation*', with a view to discussing the prospect and feasibility of an effective Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation under the broad umbrella of extended neighbourhood. In this connection highlighting the ways, means, and areas for the both the littorals to grow together will also be pertinent.



TOPIC 2 - CHARTING COURSE FOR IONS: FUTURE OUTLOOK AND WAYS AHEAD

*P*roliferation of globalization and the rise of transnationalism have bonded the human-ocean relationship more resolutely than ever before. Today, all the states across the globe commonly share many of their vested interests in the ocean, while faced with multitudes of common challenges with increasing complexities. Given, the transnational character of ocean and the interconnectedness of ocean-related affairs, these challenges are causing far reaching implications in today's interdependent world. By the same token, the transborder nature of oceans that paves the way for many opportunities also invites transborder form of non-traditional threats that are difficult for any state to handle alone, like IUU fishing, piracy, smuggling, gun-running, human/drug-trafficking, etc. The oceans are also breeding grounds for inter-state rivalry and disputes over the resources they offer. Yet, the irrefutable fact remains predominant, that ensuring 'maximised' boons for one state engenders banes for the others, which in turn perturbs the entire interdependent world. Thus, in today's world, there is no alternative to inclusiveness; mutual cooperation is indispensable for attaining the desired benefits from the oceans. Given the growing strategic and economic importance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) vis-à-vis the quantum of challenges encountered there, the need for meaningful partnership among the littorals is strongly felt by all concerned. In this backdrop, IONS 2016 seminar has been premised on fostering partnership for maritime cooperative engagements by the littorals of Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Accordingly, the seminar topics have been chosen to bring some pertinent issues under spotlight, which hinge upon cooperative engagements in the IOR. The seminar topics are distributed over five sessions, with individual session theme, e.g. strategic and economic outlook, security, cooperation, HADR, etc. The seminar aims at exploring some vital grounds of cooperation in the IOR while offering a comprehensive understanding of its various dynamics, and a piercing vision through the challenges and barriers to a thriving future.

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While visualizing the future outlook of IOR in terms of the nature of maritime cooperation, and the rising importance of Indo-Pacific region, the fast-evolving global security environment and the maritime security challenges in particular, need to be understood. The maritime security challenges include the unrelenting threats from expanding and evolving terrorist and criminal networks, the increasing frequency and intensity of maritime territorial disputes, threats to maritime commerce particularly the flow of energy, increasing rate of human trafficking, maritime disasters, etc. Considering the evolving context, many suggest that the future partnership should be characterized by inclusivity and lesser and less singularly focused. Hence, in a time when the importance of IOR in shaping global economy is on the sharp rise, IONS needs to play the correct role in transforming the existing strategic and economic standing of IOR to the next level. It is equally important to know, how IONS can help the IOR littorals to synergize their individual interests with the regional interests. It would also be prudent to visualise how IONS would function in the future, with necessary jurisdictional and financial authority and responsibility under a common legal framework. In this backdrop the final topic of the seminar has been chosen as ‘*Charting Course for IONS: Future Outlook and Ways Ahead*’ with a view to highlight the impending challenges for the IONS navies, and suggest the future outlook and way ahead.