

The Significance of Co-operative Maritime Diplomacy to Curb Transnational Maritime Crimes in Sri Lanka

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Abstract— In this paper, the researcher attempts to research contemporary requirement of Sri Lanka to build better international relationship with countries through co-operative maritime diplomacy, in order to curb the transnational crimes to the Island. This area of study mainly concentrates on management of international relations through the maritime domain. The co-operative maritime diplomacy is a sub concept of maritime diplomacy and it is used for maritime assets and resources to manage international relations with co-operation. The Island features of Sri Lanka and geo strategic location in the Indian Ocean Region, give greater prospects to exploit maritime opportunities. On the other hand, this country faces many non-traditional security issues. Therefore, Sri Lanka has to manage the maritime environment around the country, building better understanding with regional and extra regional countries to counter this menace which greatly affects the national security. My research problem highlighted the timely requirement of interstate cooperation to curb transnational maritime crimes in Sri Lanka. This puzzling issue highlights the significance of understanding the concept of cooperative maritime diplomacy and its use. The objective of this paper is to draw attention to understand the methods that could be used under co-operative maritime diplomacy to curb the transnational maritime threat to the country. The researcher has selected qualitative research method with collecting data from secondary sources and this includes scholarly articles, books, case studies, journals, etc. Further, the researcher forwards data with his personnel observations. A

theoretical review is discussed with the theory of 'Strategy as Practice'.

Keywords: *Co-operation, Interstate, Strategy*

Introduction

In this paper, the researcher is attempts to determine the concept of co-operative maritime diplomacy to curb transnational maritime crimes in Sri Lanka. These issues are mainly non-traditional in nature. Non-traditional security factors are extremely wide-ranging, mainly; economic security, financial security, ecological security, environmental security, information security, resource security, terrorism, weapon proliferation, the spread of epidemics, transnational crimes, narcotics and weapon smuggling, illegal migration, piracy, money laundering, and so on' (Craig, 2007, p. 103). In this research, given more prominence to non-traditional security issues which is affecting to maritime domain. The researcher is interested in knowing and possibility of applying the strategy of 'co-operative maritime diplomacy' as an effective tool to counter these threats to the country.

'Diplomacy' is basically the management of international relations. Therefore, maritime diplomacy is management of international relations through the maritime domain (Miere, 2014, p. 7). The co-operative maritime diplomacy could be further elaborated as an attempt to support soft power through the use of hard power assets. This area of study encompasses a spectrum of activities, such as port visits, combine maritime exercises, civil maritime activities, combine operations, combine patrol, intelligence operations, maritime surveillance etc. The components are not only a Navy and Coast Guard whereas, commercial and civil maritime elements such as the Department of Fishery, Department of Custom, Narcotic Bureau, Port Authority,

Department of Emigration and Immigration etc. also play a vital role in a country for diplomatic activities. According to the readings of the researcher, maritime diplomacy is largely neglected in academic literature and rarely witness studies relevant to the Sri Lankan maritime domain in present day literature. Further, it is rare to find any clauses specifically use the term of 'maritime diplomacy' in the Sri Lankan foreign policy (BIDTI, 2009). The use of maritime diplomacy can reflect the changes in the international order and reduce the international tension. This research has specifically put on attention over combine maritime operations and sharing maritime intelligence to conduct operations. Therefore, co-operative maritime diplomacy could be a valuable tool to curb transnational maritime threats to the country.

With the geographical location of Sri Lanka all the main sailing lanes in the region are running closer to her. Adams Bridge is a barrier for sailing which connects Sri Lanka with Indian sub-continent. These geographical features of Sri Lanka faced horrific consequence when transferring people and goods to the country from the history (Kulatunga, 2018). The "Easter bomb blasts" taken place in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019 has become an eye opener for better maritime protection to curb smuggling of weapon and explosive and illegal migration to the island. Further, existing COVID 19 pandemic has given greater impact to the national security of the country, Island nature of Sri Lanka given an advantage to restrain from border crossing. However, any potential transmitting of diseases through the maritime borders cannot be neglected at this juncture. Therefore, responsibility is lies over Sri Lanka Navy been the most vital maritime security component in the country. Further, navies and coast guards are the one of the main constituents of sea power. Sri Lankan maritime strategies need to develop with understanding the priority of the requirement for national security. Maritime strategies need to be developed by understanding the suitability of practice them as a phenomenon, perspective and philosophy. The Sri Lankan maritime strategies must inculcate with maritime diplomatic approaches to garner political and international relation advantages.

In this research, the main concern has been given to the transnational maritime crimes to the country. There are reported incidents of Sri Lanka

that continue to be utilized as a transit point for drug smuggling from the 'Golden Triangle', which is lying through Thailand, Myanmar and Laos in the South East Asia and the 'Golden Crescent', which is lying through Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the South Asia (Wijegunaratne, 2012). Sri Lankan geo-strategic location in the IOR has given the most suitable platform for contraband to passes to another part of the world. This has given a negative impact to the international image of the country and it has given direct impact to the Sri Lankan national security and national security of the countries in the region. On the other hand, Sri Lanka faced notable implications by affecting political-economic-cultural-societal stability of the country. Therefore, countering strategies should be implemented as practices. This vacuum would be addressed in this research based on the theory of 'Strategy as Practice', through the view of 'Cooperative Maritime Diplomacy'.

Methodology and Experimental Design

This research is about the social behavior of maritime security components by applying of strategies into practice of international relations. This broader area of social science needs to prove with logical reasoning of theories based on laws of cause and effect and this will helpful to understand the ontological and the epistemological path to this study. The researcher will be using qualitative methods to collect data. This will be collected from the secondary source of books, articles, journals, website releases, dissertations, video and audio materials and published data of expertise in the field of maritime strategies and researcher's own observations.

Result

A. *Theory of 'Strategy as Practice'.*

Policy makers build strategies to maintain the behaviour of the organizations and transfer to practitioners in the respective field. The strategy is to understand as an activity or practice, strategy as nothing only to have, but something that people do. Strategic management is art or science, of governing an organization with the aim of implementing intentions (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). When apply this theory into the Sri Lankan maritime domain and the researched area of maritime diplomacy, Sri Lankan diplomacy must inculcate with maritime diplomatic activities and a way forward. The bi-lateral and multilateral

relationship must incorporate with maritime diplomatic sections specifically related to counter transnational maritime crimes. Those are the security strategies and national security policies which shape the maritime security and, these strategies must flow to the practitioners in the field of maritime domain. There are many areas come under security in diplomacy, such as, political intelligence, espionage, defence, ground security, confidentiality of documents and many. There should be a concern to maritime diplomacy in Sri Lankan context, and strategic decision-making process in foreign cooperation.

The 'Practice' is a very special concept and by studying practices enable one to examine the issues that are relevant to those are dealing with building strategies. This is helping to understand suitable theoretical background to address particular issues (Golsorkhi et al., 2010,p.1) Therefore, there should be a fine amalgamation of co-operative maritime diplomacy and its uses in the reality. The idea of maritime diplomacy as a maritime strategy in Sri Lanka should be deeply studied and discussed when developing national security policies and the same must come to the agendas of practitioners.

B. Concept of co-operative maritime diplomacy

The maritime diplomacy, also older term of 'Gunboat diplomacy in the bygone era, are the same concept. Naval diplomacy only addresses the naval components, whereas, there are many non-military agencies that can have similar diplomatic effects in this domain. Therefore, maritime diplomacy broadly covers all the military and non-military components engage to build international relationships. There are a variety of activities, which come under maritime diplomacy, namely, port visits, humanitarian assistance, co-operative security, combine exercise, maritime intelligence operations, bi-lateral and multilateral agreements on maritime trade, maritime conference diplomacy, etc. Further, according to Miere, maritime diplomacy could be divided into subcategories of co-operative, persuasive and coercive maritime diplomacy. This research specifically studies the subject areas of co-operative maritime diplomacy.

The co-operative maritime diplomacy is an attempt to support soft power through the use of hard power assets. It is not only naval components are engaged in these events, coast guard, maritime

constabulary agencies also able to undertake maritime diplomatic operations. Following figure 1 illustrated the forms of co-operative maritime diplomacy and its goals.

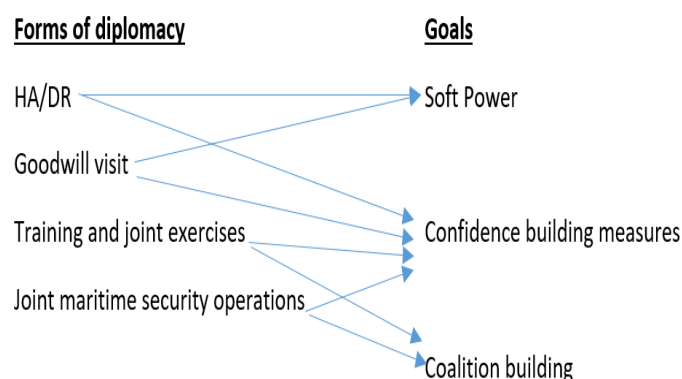


Figure 1. Form of co-operative maritime diplomacy and its goals (Miere, 2014, p. 9)

According to the above figure, researcher has given concern only to the joint maritime security operations, where it achieves the goals of confidence building measures and coalition building. The joint maritime security operations, with regional and extra-regional countries are essential to conduct to curb transnational maritime security threats to Sri Lanka and it will provide win-win situation to every country. This area of subject need to develop as a national security strategy to identify the possible transnational maritime threats. It is mandatory to take initiative and appreciate the current situation in the country and design a combine operation plan along with selected countries. Therefore, it is worth to understand the key transnational maritime crimes in Sri Lanka, to implement such a maritime strategy.

C. Transnational organized crimes

Under the Organized Crime Convention in United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) is any serious transnational offence undertaken by three or more people with the aim of material gain. According to the report of 'Globalization of Crimes', UNODC (2010) Human trafficking, migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, firearm trafficking, environment resource trafficking, product counterfeiting, maritime piracy and cyber-crimes are most notable transnational crimes in the globe. Therefore, Sri Lanka also vulnerable to these crimes and island features and geostrategic location gain keen attention from non-state actors.

The narcotic menace to the country, mainly could witness through the directions of 'Golden Crescent'. Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan are the main source countries for opium trade and India is a main source country for cannabis (Kerala Ganja) trade. Both the threats are mainly lying over the maritime environment, where the concept of co-operative maritime diplomacy has to apply as joint maritime security operations. This would achieve the goals of confidence and coalition building measures. Therefore, it is compulsory to discuss the threats to the Sri Lankan maritime environment and cooperative maritime diplomatic strategies in in-depth, which could be applied as a possible solution.

The recently developed security situation with catastrophe of 'Easter Bombing' has developed the attention of the world with the growth of Islamic extremism. The existing threat could be identified as a radicalisation of human to conduct violent extremist activities against another human being and spreading their wrong religious interpretations or ideologies in transnational nature. Human Security is the most vulnerable aspects of security in this context. Human security means "Protecting fundamental freedoms, freedoms that are the essence of life. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity" (Browning, 2013). Therefore, human security implication has become a greater challenge to domestic security with violent extremist activities. The regional extremist groups could use the maritime environment for transport people and goods, and this definitely could impact the human security.

The violent extremist activities relate with Radicalisation. Therefore, the process of radicalisation is worth to understand. Radicalisation is a process. It is not happening in overnight. According to Hafez (2015) Radicalisation is legitimize use of violence as a method to affect societal and political change. He has researched and introduced the Radicalisation puzzle, where there are four components which has given great impact of violent extremist activities, namely, *grievances, networks, enabling support structure and ideologies*. In this paper, researcher has taken keen interest to explore the effects of these areas through maritime domain. The network and enabling support structure, are the key areas which could use the maritime

environment as a platform to support their activities. Sri Lanka being an island nation, possibility of smuggling explosive, chemicals, biological components which could spread epidemics, radioactive materials, underwater sabotage, weapons smuggling and illegal migration to the country, through sea transport cannot be ruled out. The transnational nature of these crimes has strong international link through physical and conceptual network to support the violent extremist activities. The past insurgency period in Sri Lanka, the LTTE has used the sea as a medium of transport to smuggle their items. 'Heroin is routed via Sri Lanka from Pakistan or India on a big scale by sea, by containers and mechanized fishing craft' (Wijegunaratne, 2012). Admiral Colombage argued that money raised by these illegal means, the LTTE used to purchase weapons and ammunitions and transported to Sri Lanka via sea routes (Colombage, 2017). Similarly, possibility of gun smuggling and infiltrating of extremist groups to Sri Lankan waters could be expected and need to be handled diligently to avoid possible disasters.

D. Use of co-operative maritime diplomacy

Maritime stakeholders have the ability to operate more freely overseas, where gives them the opportunity to create interaction with maritime forces in adjacent waters. This would be an ideal opportunity to operate together while enhancing maritime partnership. Individual interest and commitment of maritime security policy makers in the nation towards to domestic and international security will be determined the effectiveness of these activities. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Maldives are the closest countries to Sri Lanka and share maritime environment among each of them. The regionalism is a newly discuss topic under 21st century international relation. Regionalism is defined as a political ideology that favours a specific region over a greater area. It usually results due to political separations, religious geography, cultural boundaries, linguistic regions, and managerial divisions (Kiptoo, 2018) South Asian countries have more similarities and share interconnected maritime boundaries. Transnational maritime crimes are more overuse the maritime environment interconnected to the above countries. Therefore, regional countries have a greater responsibility over co-operative maritime security network.

There are many notable occasions of combine exercises, port visits, international maritime conferences and many more co-operative maritime activities, which were conducted along with Sri Lankan maritime stakeholders and foreign nations. The researcher's arguments in this paper is the result of these events and practical applications of the cooperativeness into reality has been rarely witnesses. Therefore, it is worth to understand what has been going wrong in Sri Lankan context. According to the theory of 'Strategy as Practice' strategies made by policy makers must flow into practitioners to follow the decisions made by the hierarchy. The researcher has observed a lacuna in maritime policies in Sri Lankan context, addressing a very important aspect of maritime diplomacy. This lacuna should address in highly strategic level and security policies need to be reoriented to address this aspect of diplomacy. Since, this is a largely neglected field in academic as well as practical context, maritime strategies must newly develop to address co-operative maritime diplomacy.

The developed countries use co-operative maritime diplomacy to build capacity among less developed countries. Even though India and Pakistan are not developed countries, they have comparatively impressive maritime capabilities than Sri Lanka. Coalition actions could be built between maritime security components to enhance regional security to curb maritime crimes. Unfortunately, the India -Pakistan rivalry negatively influence to the regional cooperation as well as combine maritime operations. According to the readings of the researcher, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan haven't conduct any maritime operation in multilateral nature. This lacuna is the main blunder to counter transnational crime in the IOR. The greatest example is the Australian initiative to counter human smuggling activities. They were clearly found the root courses for this threat and counter strategy was implemented in Sri Lankan soil and succeeded. They have deployed envoys in Sri Lanka and provided intelligence assistance to identify human smuggling networks and culprits. This strategy led to save both their human and physical resources. Similarly, Sri Lanka could apply this strategy to identify potential transnational maritime threats through coalition with adjacent counties in the IOR.

The Sri Lankan maritime environment is vulnerable to drug trafficking, illegal

transportation of items and illegal migration. All these activities combine or rather link to each crime. Bilateral or multilateral diplomatic ties, in order to share intelligence and conduct combined operations would be more effective rather than working in isolation. Sri Lankan intelligence units have to visit to the locations where these activities and crimes are originated. We must build a strong intelligence network to enhance interoperability in maritime operation. According to the great Chinese warrior and philosopher 'Sun Tzu's the book of Art of war, clearly signifies the importance of intelligence to warfare and to a kingdom. This teaches the value of intelligence and making any kind of negative situation into a positive situation and to identify particular psychological weaknesses of the opponent. Therefore, it is essential to share intelligence with maritime stakeholders, since there are common enemy/adversary to face. Further, combine maritime patrol and operations could be conducted as a result of sharing intelligence.

In the year 2019 'Galle Dialogue', India be elated of 'Establishing a Maritime Domain Awareness Center' in South Asia. The Sharing of maritime intelligence regarding above discussed crimes is very important. In here especial attention must take to identify possible Gun Running activities in the IOR. Island nature and feature of Sri Lanka, obviously, have to accept any illegal weapon must come via either Air or Sea transportation. There is less probability to Gun Running to conduct through Air transportation due to heavy weight and infiltrate through detection systems in the Airports. However, Sea transportation is the easiest, economical and safest method to the smugglers to transfer weapons, explosive, chemicals, radioactive materials, biological weapons etc. This would be an eye opener for maritime policy makers to build strategies based on threat perception and give the priority for necessary human and technological resources. The co-operative maritime diplomacy would be an ideal tool for less developing countries to bargain with developed countries based on their national security requirements. Because this would be benefited both the parties and national security would be secure.

When the recent catastrophic blasts happen in Sri Lanka, many worlds leaders pledge to support to Sri Lanka to curb transnational crimes. In this moment it is important to analyse the maritime security requirement for the country and

establishes bilateral discussion, especially with neighbour India and propose our operational requirement, in order to identify possible illegal maritime transportations and movement. Co-operative maritime diplomacy is the tool which could really help to both the countries at this juncture. Therefore, it is the responsibility of security hierarchy to discuss these matters and take initiative to act accordingly. Similarly, non-military maritime security components could take the initiative to create person to person contact and discuss their organizational/unit requirements and inculcate them to national security. Institute of National Security Studies in Sri Lanka (INSSL) is the prime think tank platform to research and forward their findings to policy makers to take necessary security measures. Therefore, it is highly essential to give a prominence to the subject area of maritime diplomacy, which Sri Lanka largely neglected.

Sri Lankan intelligence operatives must conduct combined operations with selected countries, where necessary. Sharing of intelligence, insufficient to counter this much of well organizes cross border crimes. National security policy decisions must develop to send our envoys to require countries to discuss and create, combine operation plan to conduct maritime operations. This could be either bi-lateral or multi-lateral and rehearse must conduct with countries on counter smuggling operations pertaining to expected scenario. It is compulsory to conduct such an exercise with Indian maritime stakeholders to develop, operational readiness in this operation, since both countries are sharing closest maritime boundaries. These proposals of co-operative maritime diplomacy have to convince by maritime stakeholders to higher authorities. To achieve persistent co-operative maritime diplomacy, existing maritime strategies alone are no longer sufficient. We must reorient and integrate these legacy systems with current and emerging capabilities, creating synergy within maritime security stakeholders in interstate and intrastate.

The theory of 'strategy as practices', very well signifies the relationship between strategy and practices. This research tried to convince the requirement of clearly understand about co-operative maritime diplomacy by the maritime strategy developers for national security. Until unless the policy makers become understanding with these concepts, it is hard to build maritime strategies relevant to co-operative maritime

diplomacy. The awareness of this particular subject area will be helpful to build interest and appreciate the necessity of this subject area to curb transnational crimes in the country. The researcher argument is based on theory of 'Strategy as Practice' where, practitioners could not proceed any sort of operation in bi-lateral and multilateral dimension, until unless policy makers make strategies under co-operative maritime diplomacy. Therefore, it is the ultimate responsibility of maritime stakeholders to take an immediate approach on the concept of co-operative maritime diplomacy and develop them as policies to build strategies to curb transnational crimes to this island.

Conclusion

The comprehensive understanding of maritime concepts and theories is very important in the field of maritime warfare. The conceptual understanding of these theories is the key success for practical implication in maritime operations. The concept of 'co-operative maritime diplomacy' is the main area of study in this research. Under that, the researcher comprehensively discussed about the application of maritime diplomacy to curb transnational maritime crimes. The political ideology of regionalism in international relations would be an ideal tool to build better understanding between nations to counter border security issues. Further, theory of Strategy as Practice has given a theoretical value to this research. Naval warfare is an art and a deep study of maritime strategies will sharpen the national security of the country. Therefore, this subject area of maritime diplomacy must inculcate essential security policies and make them flow to practitioners in the field of maritime security.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested to be implemented to strengthen co-operative maritime diplomacy in order to curb transnational maritime crimes in Sri Lanka.

- a. Incorporate the concept of cooperative maritime diplomacy, under the clauses/regulations in foreign policy.
- b. Maritime strategy developers must convince policymakers on the timely requirement of incorporating co-operative maritime diplomacy into Sri Lankan maritime strategies.

- c. The Institute of National Security Studies of Sri Lanka needs to conduct comprehensive research in this particular subject area and forward findings to policymakers
- d. National Security Council of Sri Lanka is essential to discuss this subject area and decisions must be taken to build co-operation with regional and extra regional countries through bilateral and multilateral agreements.
- e. Establish an academic maritime strategy section under Ministry of Defence (MOD) to cooperate policy analysts, and scholars in the field of maritime security and give necessary advices to policy makers to take decisions.

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Abbreviations

Indian Ocean Region – IOR
Ministry of Defence – MOD
Transnational Organize Crime – TOC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC

Author Biography



Lieutenant Commander Roshan Kulatunga is a specialist in Gunnery. He followed a Diploma in Diplomacy and World Affairs in BIDTI, holds a degree in Bachelor in Naval Studies from University of Kelaniya, MSc in Security & Strategic Studies, MSc in Defence and Strategic Studies from Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka. Further, he has presented and published research papers and articles in local and international forums.