



India-Africa Defence Cooperation: A Common Threat to Maritime Security

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: This study aims to identify shared threats to maritime security and India-African defense cooperation.

Methods: The defense and security alliance between India and Africa has grown recently. It is ingrained in inequality, common ideals, and a dedication to stability, security, prosperity, and peace. Her two guiding ideas, "SAGAR," "Security and Growth for All in the Region," and "Vaishnava Kodambakkam" serve as the cornerstone of India-Africa defense cooperation.

Results: The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean in the world, spanning around 74 million square kilometers and accounting for 20% of the world's ocean area. It is important to note that this region has faced previously unheard-of serious marine security issues for the past 20 years. These issues are cross-jurisdictional and dynamic, which is intimidating. Therefore, fighting them requires states to work together.

Conclusion: This article examines the effectiveness of the marine security framework in the nations bordering the Indian Ocean, particularly emphasizing collaboration between African and Indian states. The paper highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the existing framework before making suggestions for a more successful transnational strategy.

1. Introduction

For a long time, India's political attention was directed towards its East, through its 'Look East' policy (later renamed 'Act East'). Yet, most of the Indian Diaspora (both NRI and PIO) remittances, border conflict (with Pakistan), energy interests (crude oil, petroleum), and inner-core of security lies to the country's west. From an Indian perspective, therefore, as important as securing the east, is its western maritime security, where the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet. In recent years, this viewpoint has gained prominence, and today there is a rebalancing towards the West, especially the African Indian Ocean Rim littorals. This is reflected in the 'top priority' status accorded by the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the African continent in the country's foreign and

economy policy. Indeed, there has been an unprecedented intensification in India's political engagement with Africa; one indication is the growing number of high-level visits from the two sides. Both India and African countries agree on the need to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all nations. This is reflected in India's 'Ten Guiding Principles for India-Africa Engagement', as enunciated by PM Modi during his address to the Ugandan parliament last year.

This paper explores the driving factors behind India's increasing maritime security cooperation with African countries in the Western Indian Ocean. The paper highlights the existing challenges to India and Africa's cooperation in the maritime domain, and calls on India to play a greater role in shaping the maritime security architecture in the Western Indian Ocean. India and



Africa shared a relationship about 140 million years ago, the Indian Plate crossed Gondwana with present-day Africa, Australia, Antarctica, and South America. It was part of a supercontinent. The supercontinent Gondwana, which includes South America, Africa, Antarctica, Australia, Madagascar, and India, has split up during Earth's history. What are you up to today? Did India also start moving northeast about 130 million years ago? So, all these circumstances and conditions are proven by the theory of continental drift. India is at the forefront of the international community's support for the anti-apartheid movement. South Africa was the first country to cut trade ties with the apartheid government (1946), subsequently imposing a sweeping diplomatic, commercial, cultural, and sports embargo on South Africa. India and African countries share a close, historical and diverse relationship. The India-Africa defense and security partnership has developed in recent years. It is embedded in shared values, the principle of equality, and a commitment to peace, security, stability, and prosperity. The foundation of the defense relationship between India and Africa rests on her two guiding principles: 'SAGAR', 'Security and Growth for All in the Region', and 'Vaishnava Kodambakkam', 'The World is Her One Family. It is based on. India's approach to Africa is guided by the Kampala Principles promulgated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 2018. Over the decades, as India and Africa faced many common security challenges, including piracy, drug, and opium trafficking, illegal fishing, terrorism, riots, violent extremism, and conflict, defense Relationships have strengthened. India's defense engagements with African countries are based on African priorities and include training and provision of military equipment. Riot control and counter-terrorism training; maritime technical assistance; Joint exercises and friendly port calls. A joint effort to build an inclusive dialogue platform. Notable recent developments included the first-ever Indian and African Defense Ministers 'Meeting (IADMC) held in conjunction with the DefExpo in February 2020, resulting in the adoption of the "Lucknow Declaration" it was done. Later, during his biennial DefExpo, the Indo-African Defense Dialogue (IADD) was institutionalized. The 2nd IADD was held in October 2022, and the "Gandhinagar Declaration" was adopted. Because of these

developments and the growing potential for a mutually beneficial India-Africa defense partnership, the special issue examines the existing common security challenges facing India and Africa (Mboce H *et al.*, 2019).

- Various aspects of African defense cooperation, and new areas of defense and security sector cooperation. Intelligence's role here is to collect, analyze and produce complete, accurate, timely, and relevant threat assessments that inform decision-makers as they act on them. A strong enterprise intelligence program is built on three pillars: strategic, operational, and tactical. Under SAGAR, India has helped countries such as the Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and other East African countries to secure maritime security and exclusive economic zones.
- India's coastline is over 7,000 km, so maritime security is an important aspect of national security. As technology advances, physical threats in the maritime region are now overshadowed by technological threats.
- Copyright Infringement
- Terrorist Attack
- Environmental Destruction

Having seen all scenarios and possibilities from a national security perspective, we can address all of the above issues, but we cannot consciously forget. The China is planning and working on her 21st-century Maritime Silk Road. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a planned sea route with integrated port and coastal infrastructure projects from China's east coast via the South China Sea and Indian Ocean to Europe, India, Africa, and the Pacific. In East Africa, long-distance trade across the waters of the Indian Ocean enabled the exchange of goods from Asia for goods from Africa, spurring the rise of trading centers and the city-states that facilitated them rice field. Indian aid to Africa is Indian government aid to African governments. India provides development assistance to Africa through credit lines, capacity building, duty-free and preferential market access, education grants, and humanitarian assistance. A second wave of Native American immigration to Africa came as a result of colonization. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, large groups of Native Americans were brought into the colonial empire as forced laborers. Indian indentured



laborers have replaced freed slaves in the plantation economy (<https://www.tandfonline.com>).

2. The rest of the paper is structured as follows

The next section provides a brief profile of the Western Indian Ocean region. It introduces the Western Indian Ocean, highlights the security challenges faced by its littorals, and describes the role played by various organizations operating in the region. The subsequent section analyses the nature of India's broad-based maritime security cooperation approach towards African countries and describes India's bilateral maritime partnership with select African countries in the Western Indian Ocean, highlighting the challenges in the relations. The paper then gives recommendations on what India priorities to improve its maritime cooperation with Africa (<https://www.tandfonline.com>).

3. Importance of Maritime Domain for India and Africa

A secure maritime environment in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is crucial for both India and African countries for securing national interests and achieving sustained national development. Such security means not only guarding the coastline or territories, but also safeguarding the countries' interests in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs), as well as protecting trade and shipping routes, and sea-lanes of communications (SLOCs). India has a vast coastline of 7,500 kilometers and an EEZ of two million square kilometers. It occupies a central position in the IOR, straddling the main international shipping lanes. The African continent, for its part, has a vast coastline with 38 of its 54 countries being either coastal or island nations. Africa's maritime environment is globally significant as huge amounts of international shipping activities pass through its seas. Indeed, around 90 percent of the continent's trade is carried out by sea, thereby making the African Maritime Domain (AMD) crucial for commercial, security, environmental, and developmental reasons. For the longest time, however, African countries suffered from a culture of 'sea blindness', i.e. it largely ignored its maritime domain—and had little knowledge of the benefits of its water bodies. It is in the last few years that African countries have started paying more attention to the

maritime domain and as a collective entity has come to realize the importance of its maritime security.

With a booming oil and mining industry, Africa has been at the center of global attention: various global players like India, China, and the European Union, are keen to engage Africa's waters. However, with an increase in resource extraction activities in the seas, there has been a corresponding rise not only in the volume of sea-traffic but also the rate of maritime crimes. Unfortunately, most African countries lack the capacity to ensure the security of their declared maritime zones. This has resulted in vast illegal capture and exploitation of the continent's marine resources, which in turn is provoking a clamor for better maritime governance. The high incidence of piracy off the East African coast in Gulf of Aden and in the Niger Delta Region and Gulf of Guinea in West Africa has brought the issue of African maritime security to the world's attention. While challenges posed by piracy has brought the attention of global players to African waters, it is necessary to understand why the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region is becoming more vital for maritime partnership between India and the littoral countries of the African Indian Ocean Rim. Is it the region's geographical proximity to India and its rich natural resource profile, which has caught the attention of global players like China and India (<https://en.wikipedia.org>).

4. Security Challenges in the WIO

The Western Indian Ocean is facing a diverse range of complex, interconnected security challenges, including both traditional and non-traditional. To be sure, piracy has been on the decline in the region beginning in 2013, primarily due to successful multi-national efforts to patrol East African waters. However, the WIO region remains vulnerable to radical terrorism from outfits like Al-Shabaab, and the activities of Somalian pirates. The outbreak and escalation of Somali piracy from 2008-2012, off the East coast of Africa and in the Gulf of Aden has shown that maritime insecurities are interconnected and that "the capacity of African states are insufficient to prevent crime at sea and to realize the developmental potential of the maritime economy." Somali pirates have been attacking vessels within the maritime boundaries of countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles,



Madagascar, and further off into the Indian Ocean. These insecurities—whether related to piracy or organized crime, or terrorism—are closely linked to instabilities and state fragility on land, “highlighting not only the luminal nature of challenges, but also their relationship to wider issues of development and insecurity.” WIO littorals have attempted various experiments in the enforcement of sanctions and counterterrorism operations to arrest the challenges of piracy and criminality at sea. The majority of the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) functions in the region are not provided by African or regional actors, but rather by international actors and stakeholders. Nature of inter-regional cooperation in WIO region.

4.1. Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security (MASE):

The MASE Programme was adopted on 7 October 2010 in Mauritius, and is jointly run by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The programme is entirely funded by the EU and is collectively implemented by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). The programme’s primary objective is to strengthen the maritime security capacity of Eastern and Southern Africa and the WIO (ESA-IO) region in order to implement the Regional Strategy and Action Plan against Piracy.

4.2. Djibouti Code of Conduct (DC):

The Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden (or the Djibouti Code of Conduct) provides a framework for capacity building in the WIO region in order to counter the threat of piracy. This is the first such code to be operational in the Western Indian Ocean waters. The code was signed on 29 January 2009 and its membership includes 20 of the 21 eligible countries.

4.3. Jeddah amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC+):

A high-level meeting of the signatories to the DCoC held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in January 2017 adopted a revised code of conduct, known as the DCoC+. The

amendment recognizes the role of the ‘Blue Economy’ including shipping, fisheries, seafaring, and tourism in supporting sustainable economic growth, food security, employment and stability. The revised code builds on the earlier 2009 code and encourages signatory states to cooperate to the fullest possible extent to repress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, and IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing. “A key article of the code includes the intention of participants to develop and implement a national strategy for the development of the maritime sector and a sustainable ‘blue economy’ that generates revenue, employment, and stability.” The Jeddah meeting was attended by high-level representatives from 17 DCoC signatory states, France (Reunion) and four observer states, as well as observers from EU, UNODC, Interpol, and East African Standby Force (ASF).

4.4. Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) 2050:

The 2050 AIMS is the African Union’s (AU) concerted attempt to reclaim the continent’s maritime sector for the development of its own citizens. The strategy aims to foster more wealth creation from Africa’s oceans, seas, inland waterways by developing a thriving maritime economy and realizing the full potential of sea-based activities in an environmentally sustainable manner. Africa’s total length of coastline, including its islands, is 26,000 nautical miles. Thirty-eight African countries are either coastal or island nations while 52 of its over 100 port facilities handle containers and various forms of cargo. “While African owned ships account for 1.2 percent of world shipping by number and 0.9 percent by gross tonnage, African ports handle only six percent of worldwide water borne cargo traffic and approximately 3 percent of the worldwide container traffic.” The AU is attempting to implement the 2050 AIMS in conjunction with the relevant AU, national, and international regulatory frameworks and on-going maritime activities in Africa. While the AIMS 2050 are indeed an ambitious plan to enhance maritime viability for a prosperous Africa, it is not an end in itself, but rather a way to nurture Africa’s growth. This will require committed and enhanced cooperation and coordination between local communities, member countries, RECs and



regional mechanisms, and the broader international community. There is no doubt that a comprehensive action plan is in place to harness Africa's ocean waters for wealth creation, and that security organizations and maritime governance structures and agencies exist in the WIO region. Thus, it behooves maritime neighbors like India and African Indian Ocean rim countries to enhance their cooperation on maritime security initiatives.

5. Locating India and African littorals in Western Indian Ocean

Both from a geo-strategic and geo-economic point of view, the Western Indian Ocean hold immense value and provide numerous opportunities for the countries in the region. Indian analysts and policymakers consider it as an imperative for India to exert greater influence in strengthening regional maritime security efforts, and at the same time, for Africa to expect increased commitment from its partner states. Therefore, India's focus on enhancing its maritime cooperation with WIO littorals assumes greater significance due to the region's geo-strategic location and abundant natural resources. Resource-rich East African littorals are increasingly turning towards the Indian Ocean in order to achieve sustainable growth and development. African countries such as Kenya, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, Mozambique, Comoros, Somalia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania are members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), which was established in March, 1997. The organization is now known as Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Moreover, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has brought India closer to several African littoral states of the IOR. The IONS was launched in 2008 and has six African member states: Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, and South Africa; Madagascar is an observer state (India Africa dialogue et al., 2022).

India's approach to maritime cooperation with Africa has essentially revolved around its central security concerns in African waters. India has reached out to African states through offers of military aid, capacity building, and training assistance. A proactive re-orientation in India's nautical outlook towards Africa is also reflected in India's 2015 Maritime Strategy

document. In the document, India declares that its policy towards the countries in the Western Indian Ocean region has expanded and diversified into abroad-based security approach, one which is supplemented by regular naval visits, sharing of best practices to build capacity through trainings, transfer of naval hardware and logistical support, naval intelligence, joint military exercises and patrolling of seas, and development of listening stations and posts which are essentially monitoring stations, complete with radars and surveillance gear for monitoring maritime communications.

Such a broad-based maritime security approach towards African countries entails four principle avenues of cooperation:

5.1. Training of African naval personnel: Defence officers and civilian personnel engaged in maritime administration in Indian institutes like Indian Naval Academy and Naval Institute of Educational and Training Institute. In his address during the India Africa Higher Education and Skills Development Summit in New Delhi in August, India's Secretary (East and Southern Africa), Ministry of External Affairs, T. S. Tirumurti pointed out that several current or former presidents, prime ministers and vice presidents have attended trainings or educational institutions in India.

5.2. Conducting Hydrographic Surveys and helping African littoral nations develop basic capabilities in hydrography: – At present, half of the world's coastal states have no hydrographic capability, while only a few states have limited capabilities. However, India has adequate hydrographic capabilities. There is, therefore, immense scope for international cooperation in hydrography, particularly so in Africa, "where 64% of the waters is yet to be surveyed systematically." Indian Survey Ships in the past have conducted hydrographic surveys for five African countries – Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Currently, India has MoUs on Hydrographic cooperation with three African countries: Mauritius (October 2005 to 2020), Tanzania (June 2015 to 2020), and Seychelles (March 2015 to 2020).

5.3. Conducting anti-piracy patrols: – A large percentage of India's trade, including oil and



fertilizers, passes through the Gulf of Aden. According to estimates by the Ministry of Shipping, Indian imports through the Gulf of Aden were valued at US\$ 50 billion, and exports at US\$ 60 billion. Therefore, the safety and unhindered continuity of maritime trade, by ships that use this route, is a primary national concern as it directly impacts the economy. The Indian Navy was one of the first countries to commence anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden as early as in October 2008. Since then, Indian ships have been deployed in the region continuously. Indian naval vessels also regularly patrol the Mozambique Channel and have supplied equipment and training, apart from providing maritime security during two summits – the African Union summit in 2003 and the World Economic Forum meeting in 2004 in Maputo, Mozambique. Besides escorting Indian flagged vessels, the Indian Navy has also provided protection to ships of other countries. No ship under Indian escort has so far been hijacked. The Indian Navy's involvement in anti-piracy operations since 2008 has led to greater bilateral interactions with other navies in the region. Complemented by the Indian Navy's 'mission-based-deployment' (MBD) approach, Indian mission-ready ships are prepared round the clock to carry out anti-piracy patrols and provide humanitarian assistance when required.

5.4. Port visits and development of monitoring stations: – In a display of more purposeful maritime diplomacy, Indian naval ships have increased their port visits to Africa's East coast and Indian Ocean island states. These goodwill visits to Africa's Indian Ocean Rim countries and naval exercises with African navies have helped to increase inter-operability and foster greater synergy between Indian Navy and African navies and coast guard. These regular port visits also demonstrate the Indian Navy's blue water capability to deploy, operate, and sustain a maritime task force well away from home for an extended duration. Additionally, India is partnering with Indian Ocean Rim countries for the development of monitoring stations. PM Modi's five-day Indian Ocean tour in March 2015, to Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka was an important outreach. During the visits, PM Modi signed MoUs to develop infrastructure on Agalega Island in Mauritius and Assumption Island of Seychelles. These two island nations re of immense

strategic importance since two-thirds of the world's energy supplies passes through the region. Agalega is more than 1000 km north of Mauritius and Assumption Island is 600 nautical miles southwest of Seychelles' capital Mahe. These two islands will add to the Indian monitoring station in Madagascar, off the coast of Africa, commissioned in 2007 to monitor activities of foreign navies in the Indian Ocean Region. Although these deals with Mauritius and Seychelles will help to improve India's strategic foothold in the region, both deals have faced protests and opposition by the locals in the region. In recent years, India has adopted an expansive maritime strategy driven by its great-power aspirations and by strategic rivalry with China, which continues to expand its own maritime capabilities as it engages in unilateral actions in the IOR. To counter China's presence, India is seeking to expand its own and IOR littoral countries' naval capabilities and security partnerships, especially with Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and Comoros, at, or near the key entry points into the Western Indian Ocean. The Indian Navy is working to secure key maritime 'chokepoints' at the entrances to the Indian Ocean, like Bab-el-Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, and Mozambique Channel (<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspxr>).

6. Conclusion

This paper has explored the emerging nature and trends in India's maritime security partnership with African states in the Western Indian Ocean region. The Western Indian Ocean's global strategic importance as a nexus connecting North America, Europe to Asia and its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players including India to view the region with increasing interest. India's compulsion of energy security and dependence on overseas resources has been the biggest pull drawing India closer to the region. However, India is cautious about the assertive manner in which China is operating and demonstrating maritime power in the Indian Ocean—with its financial prowess, industrial and manufacturing capacity, and the manner in which it has carried out financial overtures to IOR littorals. Unfettered great power rivalry is back in India's backyard and is something which it cannot afford to overlook. As PLA-N's ability to maintain and sustain its maritime militia in the Indian Ocean enhances, India's freedom



of navigation will get restricted and could soon overcome India's current advantages of geography. Therefore, India must look to increase its own regional engagement by coordinating and working together with its African partners. In this respect, sustaining the momentum will hold the key

Agreement to Publication

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