

**IONS OPERATIONAL SEMINAR AND PREPARATORY WORKSHOP**  
**HELD AT MUMBAI FROM 10 TO 12 SEP 13**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The IONS Operational Seminar and Preparatory Workshop – 2013 was held at Mumbai from 10 to 12 Sep 13. The theme of the Seminar was, '***Role and Expectations of Emerging Navies in Cooperative Engagement for Peace and Stability in IOR***'.
2. **Participation**. The event was attended by 39 overseas delegates from 21 nations.
3. **Broad Programme**. The IONS Operational Seminar and Preparatory Workshop was conducted in phases as follows:-
  - (a) 10 Sep 13 - Arrival of Delegates.
  - (b) 11 Sep 13 - IONS Operational Seminar.
  - (c) 12 Sep 13 - Preparatory Workshop.
4. **Presentation of Papers**. During the IONS Operational Seminar, delegates from 10 IONS navies/ maritime forces presented papers on three broad topics as given below:-
  - (a) **Session I**. '*Role of Emerging Navies and Maritime Security Forces in Collective Prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region*'.
    - (i) Indonesia.
    - (ii) Maldives.
    - (iii) Mauritius.
    - (iv) UAE.
  - (b) **Session II**. '*Challenges and Opportunities for Maritime Cooperation among Indian Ocean Region Navies*'.

- (i) Iran.
- (ii) South Africa.
- (iii) Sri Lanka.

(c) **Session III.** *'Essential Interfaces required for Strengthening Naval Co-operation, Inter-Operability and Confidence Building Initiatives amongst IONS Maritime Forces'.*

- (i) Australia.
- (ii) Bangladesh.
- (iii) Oman.

## **PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR (11 SEP 13)**

### **Introductory Remarks**

5. **Welcome Address.** In his welcome remarks Rear Admiral Monty Khanna, ACNS(FCI) stressed upon the importance of IONS and its emergence as a unique consultative and cooperative movement. Highlighting HADR, MDA and anti-piracy as the focal areas, he brought out that the shared awareness of maritime problems plaguing the IOR generated through platforms like IONS provides the basis of building shared mechanisms to counter maritime challenges in an effective way. He emphasised the importance of table top exercises to establish the efficacy of draft mechanisms and the need to test them in the real world scenario prior formulating them into SOPs.

6. **Keynote Address.** Dr C Rajamohan in his keynote address stressed upon the relevance of changing international situation wherein the lone superpower was no longer able to act in a coordinated manner due to the deep division in major international bodies like the G20, Arab League, UN Security council etc. He further brought out that most of the larger navies of the world were shrinking due to the recent economic crises that engulfed most of the world. Evaluating the impact of these developments on the security of IOR, he concluded that though historically the larger navies have

been leading the security initiatives in IOR, in future, it would be prudent for the regional navies to evolve a deliberate and definitive process to shoulder the responsibility themselves.

### **Session I - Role of Emerging Navies and Maritime Security Forces in Collective Prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region**

7. The Session I of the seminar was moderated by Vice Adm Pradeep Kaushiva (retd).

8. **Paper by Indonesia.** The Moderator, introduced Col Dwi Sulaksana from Indonesian Navy who highlighted the role and contribution of Indonesian Navy in enhancing the maritime security cooperation in the IOR. He stated that the geo strategic location of Indonesia in the IOR with three strategic choke points viz Malacca, Lombok and Sunda straits along with the rise in non-traditional maritime threats like piracy, drug/ human trafficking, robbery etc has led to a deliberate shift in the primary role of Indonesian navy from military to constabulary.

9. He stressed the importance of a strong maritime cooperative relation between the stakeholders to effectively counter various maritime threats and brought out various joint maritime security initiatives being undertaken by Indonesian Navy in coordination with other maritime institutions such as Marine Police, Coast Guard and Customs etc under the aegis of the Maritime Security Coordination Agency. He also brought out that recent augmentation of defence budget has allowed modernization and replacement of ageing and obsolete Indonesian Armed Forces through a program known as 'Minimum Essential Force'. He further highlighted the active participation of Indonesian Navy in ASEAN Maritime Forum, UNIFIL – MTF, IONS etc and need to develop HADR capability to cater for natural disasters.

10. He recommended increased cooperation in capacity building and interoperability through multilateral exercises as an effective way ahead and reaffirmed the commitment of Indonesian Navy in expanding the Maritime Cooperation in IOR. Bringing out some of the forthcoming initiatives viz International Maritime Symposium in Dec 2013 at Jakarta and 'Komodo'

Multilateral Exercise in Mar 2014, he concluded with the remarks that maritime cooperation was the key to ensure peace and security at sea and in IOR.

11. **Paper by Maldives.** Captain Ahmed Mujuthaba Mohamed from Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), presenting a Maldivian perspective on the theme of seminar brought out the peculiarities of the constraints imposed in countering non-traditional threats by his countries due to its archipelagic geography. Emphasising the importance of interagency cooperation at national level he highlighted the collective and integrated approach adopted by his country by means of joint exercises, joint training and operations, MOUs and other legal arrangements between various internal agencies. He stressed the importance of reforming legislature at national level to ensure effective coordination between internal agencies.

12. Captain Mujuthaba also elaborated upon the importance of enhancing resources and reviewing existing training procedures to cater for the emerging maritime threats. He brought out that establishment of VHF listening posts and AIS stations along with maritime capacity building by induction of Fast Patrol Crafts, Landing Craft, RHIBS etc through mutual cooperation with India, US and Pakistan was being undertaken by MNDF along with multilateral cooperation maritime security exercises viz DOSTI with India and 'Flash Metal' with US Navy. He concluded by emphasising the need to create maritime awareness amongst general population to garner their cooperation in information gathering and government to ensure augmentation of resources critical to success of operations against non-traditional maritime threats.

13. **Paper by Mauritius.** Inspector Ali Raza Jawarun of Mauritian Police Force brought out the Mauritian perspective on maritime piracy. Highlighting the recent spurge of 300% in the merchant traffic density observed in Mauritian EEZ, he brought out that the anti-piracy efforts of his country viz integration of NCG Commandos in NCG Operations, training of officers of the NCG by the UNODC and anti-piracy agreement/ legislation coupled with short term anti-piracy measures like surveillance by Dornier aircraft and NCG ships in EEZ, firing exercises at sea, Armed Special Mobile Force (SMF) contingent as a quick reaction group posted at Agalega for preventing

landings etc. have ensured that no incident of piracy have taken place in Mauritian EEZ. He also submitted that an agreement had been concluded between Mauritius and European Union on 'transfer of Pirates and associated seized property from the EU- led Naval Force to Mauritius and on their treatment after transfer' and a prison dedicated to Somali pirates was under construction in Mauritius.

14. Emphasising the advantages of being collective, Deputy ASP Mr. S Moodo of National Coast Guard, Mauritius stressed upon the importance of integration of naval capabilities in IOR through multilateral agreements towards ensuring a robust and sustainable naval presence in IOR. He highlighted the efficacy of some successful collective efforts like EU's anti-piracy task force, IOC MCS, ReCAAP's Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and MRCCs. He also made a mention of the fact that in spite of an international naval presence, the recent trend of hiring of armed private security teams by merchant vessels transiting through western Indian Ocean was a serious risk mitigating measure.

15. The Mauritian delegate concluded with the recommendation to blend public and private maritime security activities, ideally within a specific legal framework, to tackle maritime threats by integration of efforts. He also recommended that a structure be evolved to address maritime security capacity-building involving both regional and extra-regional countries.

16. **Paper by UAE.** Lt Col Butti Al Mukhaini from UAE Navy emphasized the importance of sea transportation and its vulnerability to disruption by non-traditional maritime threats. He brought out that his country has initiated a two pronged approach to tackle the issue. At the first level was ensuring the security of territorial waters through strict monitoring and implementation of 'Laws of the Land' followed by the second level of securing the high seas by participation in multinational task forces like Task Force 151 and 152. He highlighted that such an approach had inherent advantages. In Territorial Water, the individuals caught can be easily prosecuted to ensure effective deterrence and in international waters the regional navies resources get augmented by the multinational task force and multinational task force benefits from the local knowledge of the regional force.

17. He expressed that the main concern must be to ensure safe passage of ships through IOR especially the choke points and towards this UAE in collaboration with the GCC was in the process of setting up Regional Centre for Maritime Information at Bahrain.

### **Session II - Challenges and Opportunities for Maritime Cooperation among Indian Ocean Region Navies**

18. Moderator for the second session, Cmde Uday Bhaskar (retd) introduced the speakers and highlighted the challenges ahead laying emphasis on the need to ensure management of maritime challenges in the IOR, cooperation required among navies post Cold War era, paradigm shift post 9/11 and 26/11, role in HADR, increase in criminality at sea and tasks ahead.

19. **Paper by Iran.** The first speaker of the session, Capt Hossein Khanzadi of Islamic Republic of Iran Navy, highlighted the need for collaborative milieu from the existing capacities. The speaker emphasised the vast dependence of 27 countries comprising the IOR RIM, on the Indian Ocean and brought about details of total trade in the region. The speaker also focused on the challenges in the region namely population, role of non-state actors who have been exploiting the region due absence of a collaborative milieu, lack of credible Navies and lack of organised information sharing mechanism.

20. The speaker concluded by describing the need to establish a positive relationship between players and key stake holders in the IOR including collaboration in various aspects through development of coasts and establishment of reasonable sea power. The speaker recommended recognition of existing capacities that consolidates interests and which will stabilise the collaboration milieu.

21. **Paper by South Africa.** The second speaker Capt Peter J Elden from South African Navy introduced the topic by emphasising the importance of IOR in resource, economic, environmental and human issues. He highlighted the need for describing new challenges and finding solutions.

The speaker went on describing the challenges which included the need for understanding the maritime security architecture in their own front before looking at a broader front and raised concerns regarding role of modern Navies in constabulary role. The feasibility of such role in developing Navies as compared to established Navies was also questioned by the speaker.

22. The speaker touched on the need for information sharing and mentioned that even though the topic had been discussed at various forums, the requirement has still not been conceptualised. The speaker also explained the hardships faced in putting such a complex multi-national plan in place. The need for immediate neighbours to first cooperate and grow in their neighbourhood was given as a solution that will ultimately lead to the regions being linked together.

23. The speaker concluded by describing how the 1000 ship Navy ideology by US Navy had floundered earlier but in the present situation, provided the circumstances are created, is best suited to boost the idea again and also while combating security challenges, budget constraints and lack of political will, Navies should strive to do the best that they can achieve.

24. **Paper by Sri Lanka**. The final speakers of the session were Capt PS De Silva and Capt Hgud Kumara. Capt PS De Silva introduced the topic by describing the significance of the IOR as a maritime region. The speaker also highlighted the need for identifying potential threats, cooperation between Navies and importance of safe sea lanes.

25. On describing the challenges on maritime security operations, the speaker brought about the need to deny non-state actors from using sea lanes. Distrust among the Navies, lack of information/ intelligence sharing, out modelled legal frameworks and lack of state of the art joint mechanisms to face the environmental challenges were named as other major concerns.

26. Capt Hgud Kumara concluded by proposing that all the members of UN should support the states that are being challenged by terrorists through their global terror networks. He further emphasised on developing a robust IOR security architecture through collaboration and maintained that the required security system was beyond the capacity of a single nation.

**Session III - Essential Interfaces required for Strengthening Naval Co-operation, Inter-Operability and Confidence Building Initiatives amongst IONS Maritime Forces**

27. Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, Commandant INA Ezhimala, the moderator of the third Session introduced the topic and speakers for the Third Panel Discussion. He explained how IONS provides the basis for building up shared mechanisms to counter the problems and challenges faced by the IOR. He also emphasised how various interfaces like Staff Talks, Training, Intellectual, Operational and Non-cognizant interfaces could help solve these problems in an effective way.

28. **Paper by Australia.** The first speaker of the session, Capt Ken Macaulay-Black, Royal Australian Navy emphasised upon the Indian Ocean Region and its importance in terms of Oil and transportation of Cargo. Depicting, how the Indian Ocean has become the world's busiest trade corridor surpassing the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean he elaborated upon the challenges hindering the enhancement of maritime security in the region and the role that IONS can play in Maritime Security. Hence being a region of strategic Importance and with the increase in trade and population in the region it can lead to Strategic Co-operation or competition between the Nations in the future.

29. Captain Black then recommended that the protection of the IOR is the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders. He proposed an IONS Mission which would pave a greater role for IONS Collaborative Capacity Building. This could be essentially undertaken by:-

- (a) Working together to achieve a common goal within the IOR. This can be undertaken by all the IONS Navies or its lead Agencies.
- (b) Increasing the quality and quantity of work that IONS Navies can do as a collective.

- (c) Generating a collaboration of trust between the IONS Navies and other Lead Agencies.

30. Another key point that was highlighted by Capt Ken Macaulay was to leverage the hard work from the collaborative success of engagement experience(s) in other Multi-lateral Maritime Organisations like the WPNS (Western Pacific Naval Symposium) and the ASEAN defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Emphasising the advantages of working as a collective he proposed for the formulation of Five IONS Working Groups, that would work towards the achieve of the goals as set up by IONS. These were namely:-

- (a) Human Assistance and Disaster Relief
- (b) Piracy
- (c) Information Sharing
- (d) Smuggling
- (e) Environmental

31. Captain Black concluded with requesting all the members for their support for Collaborative Capacity Building by the proposal and potential for concept endorsement that can be undertaken on during the Conclave of Chiefs Conference scheduled on 28 Mar 14 in Australia when the host country will assume the IONS Chair and Secretariat in 2014.

32. **Paper by Bangladesh.** The Second Speaker, Captain Mir Ershad Ali (G), Bangladesh Navy introduced the topic by touching upon the size of the IOR viz-a-viz its importance in the world. He explained how trade has been enhanced in the region and along with it the crime. He then emphasised upon the problem of Maritime Security and how it was impossible to carry out complete surveillance of the IOR by a single nation and how trans-national crimes have made the task of surveillance even more challenging to deal with.

33. Captain Mir stressed upon the importance of the Indian Ocean and how the Littoral states share many threats that are of a common nature to almost all the nations. These threats could be summed up as Gun running and Drug Trafficking, Piracy and Ship Jacking, Marine Pollution and Illegal/ Unregulated and unreported fishing. The speaker elaborated how continuous and effective surveillance of the IOR was impossible and can be achieved to an extent by co-operative approach to the EEZ Surveillance and use non-military methods of surveillance. The speaker went on to present a common data sharing model which would have the Central database at the Apex and Surveillance Co-ordination centres functioning at various locations. He finally concluded by presenting that Co-operative surveillance will reflect nation states affinity for meeting geo-security, social economic needs.

34. **Paper by Oman.** The third speaker Commander Khalfan Al Braiki from Royal Navy of Oman introduced the topic by explaining how the sea has become the world's second living domain and the importance of sea for transportation. He emphasised how the challenges of marine security has existed for hundreds of years and the functioning of organised crime and the use of marine spaces by non state actors. He presented the various threats and challenges that the IOR faces which are namely due to Piracy, Illegal Fishing, Pollution, Search and Rescue, Trans-National Crime and Marine Terrorism. He stressed upon how collaboration amongst maritime forces of regional countries in terms of information sharing and exchange can be achieved. He emphasised how visits, seminars and operational workshops would help in achieving the desired outcome.

35. He finally concluded by elaborating upon the interests of regional states on the ocean and how the challenges faced were hindering the enhancement of maritime security in the region and how the sea was important for mankind and its survival.

36. The Moderator summarised the third session by amplifying how strong maritime cooperative relation between the stakeholders of IOR can effectively counter various maritime threats and challenges. He elaborately brought out the various Interfaces like Staff, Training, Intellectual, Operational and Non-cognizant interfaces that can be effectively used for joint maritime security initiatives. He also elaborated upon how the idea of

Collaborative Capacity Building as proposed by Captain Black, RAN was a thought in the right direction but was a vision of the far future. The freedom of Navigation within the IOR as proposed was also left to the decision and interpretation and approval of the Political Leadership.

37. Admiral Chauhan, emphasised the need to develop a Concordance of Terms for the nations within IOR to understand the expectations and have a common understanding within the participating nations. He explained how regional disparities in terms of language, culture, economy was not limited to the IOR alone. He explained how regional disparities in terms of economy culture and language existed by giving examples of countries in Atlantic and Pacific Ocean. However he stressed upon how countries with low technical capabilities will have a difficult time in carrying out effective surveillance of the IOR.

38. Finally Admiral Chauhan concluded by explaining to the audience how international and intra-regional trade was burgeoning at an unsurpassed level and the necessity to carry the trade on more international bottoms than national bottoms. Hence Maritime trade of a nation would not be protected in entirety if protection was provided to only the national trade bottoms. Thus the necessity of more international co-operation protection trade for trade carried on international bottoms.

## **PROCEEDINGS OF PREPARATORY WORKSHOP (12 SEP 13)**

39. The final day of the seminar was dedicated to the Preparatory Workshop, which was chaired by Rear Adm Monty Khanna, ACNS(FCI). The salient aspects discussed during the workshop are enumerated in succeeding paragraphs.

40. **Draft IONS Charter of Business (CoB)**. The draft IONS CoB was tabled by the SAN representative. During the presentation of the CoB, the speaker brought out that the latest iteration of the CoB was drafted after taking into consideration the observations/ suggestions put forth by various IONS nations. Highlighting the key principles of the IONS forum, viz., inclusive, voluntary initiative, decision through consensus and consultative and cooperative, the speaker brought out that the CoB in its present form was considered to be complete with the option of amendments with consensus available for the same. The key issues discussed during deliberations on the draft CoB were:-

(a) **Definition of Consensus**. This point was raised by representative of RAN. Citing the example of WPNS, the RAN rep further brought out that there was a requirement to define the size of the quorum to clearly establish the rule for defining consensus. The Chair brought out that, unlike WPNS, IONS was a nascent multinational construct and therefore, it was too premature to quantify the size of the Quorum. He further brought out that consensus could be defined as non-opposition to a particular agenda by any member nation, including those who wish to abstain from voting.

(b) **Official Language of the IONS**. The RTN rep brought out the need to relook Art 8 of the draft CoB which dealt with into the 'Official Language' of IONS. He suggested that English could be retained as the only official language for the purpose of IONS. The RTN rep supported his proposal by citing infructuous expenditures to be undertaken by the organisers in hiring translators to meet the requirement of having French and Arabic too as the official language

for the IONS. The proposed suggestion was seconded by Australia, Iran, Maldives, South Africa and Sri Lanka. However, the representative from France disagreed with the suggestion and referred to the UN Charter, which had six official languages including French and Arabic. The Chair proposed that it was best not to have mention of any language as the 'Official Language'. The proposal was accepted by all participants.

(c) **Word 'Stability' in Art 3.2.** Rep from Seychelles brought out that the word 'stability' in Art 3.2 was out of context and could confuse the actual meaning of the article. The suggestion was supported by rep from Bangladesh as well. The Chair proposed that the word could be removed from the text of art 3.2 so as to avoid different interpretation by nations. The proposal was accepted by all participants.

(d) There being no more observations or suggestions on the Draft CoB, the Chair requested SAN rep to forward the amended CoB to *IN* for uploading on the IONS website for all nations to have a detailed deliberation prior the forthcoming Conclave of Naval Chiefs at Perth, Australia in March 2014.

41. **Concept Papers.** As part of the tangible deliverable, decided during IONS Conclave of Chiefs – 2012, which the IONS should be seen as providing to its member nations, concept papers on the following topics were presented by nations as shown:-

- (a) HADR - *IN*
- (b) MDA - RSN
- (c) Anti-Piracy - RAN

42. All participants agreed in principle to the way ahead proposed by the Chair which stipulated lead nations to draft SoPs on their respective topics for deliberations and subsequent planning of Table Top exercises.

43. **Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) – 2014**. Rep from RAN informed the delegates that the broad programme for the Conclave of Chiefs – 2014 had been finalised and it was scheduled to be held at Perth, Australia from 25 to 28 Mar 14. The theme for the seminar was '***Protection of Trade in the Indian Ocean Maritime Economy***'. He further brought out that the RAN would forward a synopsis on the proposed agenda for the CoC – 2014 within next three months. The salient aspects of the proposed agenda include following:-

- (a) Establishment of IONS Working Group (IWG) on HADR, Anti-piracy, MDA, Pollution and Climate control.
- (b) Cooperative capacity building.
- (c) Award of 'observer' status to Canada, Japan, UK and US.
- (d) Nomination of Bangladesh as the IONS Chair for the period 2016-18 and decision on the subsequent Chair for the period 2018-20.