

Naval Cooperation in Countering Piracy: US-India Collaboration in Indian Ocean (2005-2023)

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of International Relations

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

September, 2025

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, particularly to my parents who have been with me through every thick and thin and to my brother, **Syed Muhammad Daud**, who was my constant source of love and encouragement throughout my academic pursuits. Their trust, enthusiasm towards academic excellence and their unwavering support and belief in me have kept me motivated during the most challenging times, especially during the writing of my thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of **ALLAH ALMIGHTY**, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. All praise is due to Him for the strength, guidance, and patience that enabled me to complete this thesis.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, **Dr. Maliha Zeba Khan**, whose immense guidance, expertise, and support were greatly helpful throughout the research. Her encouragement and critical feedback gave me a clear direction that allowed me to go deeper into the complexities of piracy in Indian Ocean and the cooperation between the United States and India. Her patience, dedication, and mentorship have been a source of motivation throughout this process.

I am also deeply indebted to my parents, whose love, encouragement, and belief in me have been the cornerstone of my academic journey. Their sacrifices, unwavering support, and constant prayers have been my source of strength. Without their endless love and guidance, this achievement would not have been possible.

Lastly, I would like to appreciate my hard work and commitment through all these processes in this research. The long sessions of research, analysis, and writing have been proof of commitment toward not only understanding but adding value in the field of maritime security.

Syed Raheel Bacha

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IOR	Indian Ocean Region
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
LEI	Logistics Exchange and Interoperability
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
COMCASA	Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
AIS	Automated Identification Systems
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
CMF	Combined Maritime Forces
SLCs	Strategic Lane of Communication

ABSTRACT

This research examines the increasing piracy threat in Indian Ocean from 2005 to 2023 and centers on how the United States and India work together to counter this maritime threat. Piracy, especially off Somalia's coast, has had profound effects on global trade, regional security, and economic stability. It focuses on the changing dimensions of piracy in the region and how the US-India partnership accorded its priorities toward meeting such challenges through joint naval patrols, intelligence sharing, and coordinated exercises. A qualitative approach thus relies on secondary sources of information in academic journals, government reports, and media articles to gain insight into patterns of piracy; effectiveness of collaboration by the US-India alliance to counter piracy; and socio-political reasons causing piracy in Indian Ocean. The findings of the thesis suggest that although a dramatic decrease in incidents of piracy, challenges continue amidst the complicated interplaying of socioeconomic and political conditions. Military response is absolutely important and vital, yet to bring lasting control, complementary steps must involve development on the economic, political stabilization, and improving legal frameworks. The findings recommend for sustained international cooperation, especially between the US, India, and other stakeholders, in ensuring long-term maritime security in the region.

Key words: *Piracy, Indian Ocean, Maritime security, US-India cooperation, regional security, economic impact*

INTRODUCTION

Piracy is characterized as a threat to international maritime security, particularly threatening lives and engagement in free trade, causing significant strain on free navigation of goods and services in international waters. Due to its geographic features and many shipping lanes, Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has become a focal point in this regard. Archaeological evidence shows that apart from prevalent slave trade through sea routes in Indian Ocean, piracy has increased historically with the advancement in technology and the easy availability of weaponry to these unconventional bands of pirates who utilized these resources to sabotage international trade and regional security for their own profit maximization. However, piracy is not a new phenomenon but it is from end of the 20th century and start of the 21st century in particular off the coast of Somalia that piracy became a menacing activity. It is not only an ocean of trade but also links countries economically and developmentally as well for instance Indian Ocean connects several countries in Asia and East Africa.¹ As it was reported by the International Maritime Organization more than eight out of ten products that are traded worldwide have crossed the ocean. Chasing down pirates impacts transportation companies by causing unnecessary delays, and loss of crews and halts economy. Trade is costlier and involves more insurance protection against piracy. Countries worked together to secure trade routes and protect ships from them. With the rise of piracy, joint naval forces like the Combined Task Force CTF-150 and CTF-151 emerged as a response to piracy threats. These units were formed for the aim of piracy deterrence and for improving the relations among the naval forces of the nations.²

The epidemic of piracy persists in Indian Ocean even with combined initiatives aimed at stopping it highlighting evolving strategies by those involved. Studies explored the performance of teamwork between the United States and India in responding to piracy. Even though collaborative patrols and data sharing have reduced piracy incidents

¹ Ahmad Khorsand Asgari, "Laws Relating to Piracy: A Critical Study with Special Reference to India," *International Journal of Law* 8, no. 5 (2022): 32–37

² Christian Bueger and Jan Stockbruegger, "Oceans, Objects, and Infrastructures: Making Modern Piracy," *International Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (2023): 1–15

further actions are needed to confront the basic social and economic reasons for piracy and maintain enduring safety in Indian Ocean.³

Since 2005, both nations have consistently worked together to safeguard key maritime interests and to maintain stability in Indian Ocean by combating piracy. In Indian Ocean piracy appears in several ways such as petty crimes and sophisticated pirate assaults on commercial ships. With geopolitical factors evolving the United States and India collaborate significantly to ensure maritime stability in Indian Ocean. In the future shared efforts and result-oriented collaboration will significantly affect piracy reduction and increase safety at sea.⁴

The purpose of this research is to explain the aspects of piracy occurring in Indian Ocean and to assess how international coalitions perform against this continuing issue. In 2005, when their alliance greatly improved this research explored the joint efforts of the United States and India to address piracy. It seeks to reveal the hidden trends associated with piracy incidents and measure their collaboration while examining the results of their shared maritime approaches. This study is relevant due to the changing political situation in Indian Ocean where piracy indicates wider problems such as economic inequality and regional instability. Investigating the influences of domestic elements on national policy leads to a complete grasp of their collaborative relationship. This work has enriched existing scholarly literature by bringing attention to the commonly ignored domestic elements affecting bilateral defense cooperation. The research targets the interaction of domestic and external elements to enlighten policymakers and stakeholders regarding the challenges associated with maritime security threats in Indian Ocean and its impact on future collaborative initiatives.

The context serves as a strong base for the existing investigations seeking to assess the developments in piracy in Indian Ocean and appraise how the United States and India collaborate to the address this advancing risk from 2005 to 2023. The uptick in piracy within this significant region requires scrutiny of the development and alterations in the collaborative security strategies of those nations. The Malabar naval exercises and US-India frameworks for maritime security reflect a shared effort to improve safety on the

³ Hongzhou Zhang and Sam Bateman, "Fishing Piracy in Indian Ocean: Implications for Maritime Security," *Journal of Indian Ocean Region* 12, no. 1 (2016): 48–66.

⁴ Sarah Percy and Anja Shortland, "The Business of Piracy in Somalia," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 4 (2013): 541–578.

seas. Ongoing dilemmas related to the surge in piracy and difficulties with maritime legal frameworks call for an in-depth analysis of how well these strategies have performed.⁵ This study formed the discussion on maritime security through the evaluation of applied methods and gathered information.

Problem Statement

Piracy in the IOR has evolved into a significant non-traditional security threat, with severe consequences for global trade, maritime safety, and regional stability. This threat has intensified since 2005. The persistence of piracy, despite various international efforts, particularly off the Horn of Africa, has necessitated sustained naval cooperation among key maritime powers. In this context, the United States and India, the two global powers and regional stakeholders, have emerged as strategic partners in counter-piracy efforts. Despite the immense significance of this maritime collaboration, the motivations, structure, and effectiveness of this bilateral cooperation remain underexplored, particularly in relation to how domestic political, economic, and institutional factors shape their integrated responses, and how piracy has been securitized in the broader strategic framework of both nations.

Research Objectives

1. To identify patterns of piracy incidents in Indian Ocean region between 2005 and 2023.
2. To examine the nature and extent of cooperation between the United States and India in combating piracy within the specified timeframe.
3. To assess the level of efficacy of US-India joint arrangements in reducing piracy incidents and securing maritime trade routes.

Research Questions

1. Why is naval cooperation important to deal with prevailing patterns of piracy in Indian Ocean from 2005 to 2023?
2. How have collaborative efforts between the US and India evolved in countering piracy during the specified period?

⁵ Stig Jarle Hansen, "The Dynamics of Somali Piracy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 7–8 (2012): 523–530.

3. How do certain factors contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of US-India joint efforts to combat piracy in Indian Ocean?

Literature Review

For centuries trade routes and political relationships in Indian Ocean have been affected by the enduring presence of piracy. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries pirate attacks surged leading to a strong global reaction with the United States and India working together. The literature review presents a background on regional piracy and concentrates on the joint initiatives for maritime protection.

Piracy has long thrived in Indian Ocean because of its important trade routes between the East and West. Documents dating back to ancient and medieval eras tell stories of criminals at sea attacking trade vessels along these paths. Piracy has developed differently as social and economic circumstances have shifted over the years. According to Murphy's perspective modern piracy influenced shipping on a global scale in the late 20th century with the critical incident of the Somali government's collapse in 1991 triggering a rise in pirate operations in the Horn of Africa. This increase triggered a worldwide reaction and required joint international actions.⁶

Vivak points out the deep connections between the United States and India in Indian Ocean related to initiatives against piracy. He claims that as the threat of piracy grew in the 2000s the US and India felt the need to boost their collaborative efforts in the maritime domain to match their strategic aims. Research implies that piracy impairs economic activities and shapes governance at sea as well as the progress of international legislation. Findings reveal that measures against piracy have driven transformations in international maritime jurisprudence and incited nations to unite for joint maritime defense influencing both American and Indian naval practices.⁷

Probing how India and the United States work together at sea shows how domestic factors shape international policies. Using the Securitization Theory allows us to examine how internal factors in each country have impacted the development of

⁶ Martin N. Murphy, "The Abundant Sea: Prospects for Maritime Non-State Violence in Indian Ocean," *Journal of Indian Ocean Region* 8, no. 2 (2012): 173–187.

⁷ Vivek Mishra, "Indo-US Security Cooperation: Implications for Indian Ocean," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 13, no. 1 (2017): 73–89.

collaborative measures against piracy. The September 11 attacks prioritized national security which initiated changes that facilitated global maritime cooperation to address piracy risks. Likewise, US defense companies lobbied for widespread maritime security collaborations aided by strong congressional commendation of strategic ties in Asia which drove stronger ties with India.⁸

After liberalization in the 1990s India established a need for a safe space for international trade and energy imports. Local economic players in trade and shipping urged the Indian government to implement better measures against piracy. At the same time increasing national pride and India's claim to regional influence resulted in major funding for naval strengths to safeguard its strategic interests in Indian Ocean. Fatima mentions that reforms within organizations have strongly influenced partnerships between countries. After 9/11 the US defense and state entities transformed to strengthen teamwork against international challenges including piracy. Several Indian defense analysts stress how the progress of the Indian Navy's policies had increased the significance of maritime safety and cooperation with global superpowers.⁹

The cooperation between India and the United States is crucial for tackling piracy in ocean areas. Mutual objectives in safeguarding essential waterways and addressing piracy's negative influence on global commerce. Implementing modern surveillance technologies and the Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) reveals their emphasis on real-time cooperation and information flow. Such teamwork increases regional safety at sea and fortifies the wider strategic bond between the United States and India placing them as vital forces in confronting piracy and stabilizing the Indo-Pacific.¹⁰

The author investigates the shifting dynamics of maritime partnerships between India and the US and illustrates future potential in his report. He understands the vital effects of maritime security on the Indo-Pacific and illustrates the expanding alliance between India and the US to tackle problems including piracy and terrorism. The study points

⁸ Joshua Ho, "Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia: The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)," *Marine Policy* 33, no. 2 (2009): 432–434.

⁹ Peter Chalk, "Piracy off the Horn of Africa: Scope, Dimensions, Causes and Responses," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2010): 89–108.

¹⁰ James Kraska and Brian Wilson, "Combating Pirates of the Gulf of Aden: The Djibouti Code and the Somali Coast Guard," *Ocean and Coastal Law Journal* 14, no. 2 (2009): 201–232.

out growing apprehensions about the development of China's naval forces and the essential nature of teamwork to retain stability in the area while securing maritime routes. Over the coming decade, working together will highlight the importance of patrolling together and analyzing information related to humanitarian and disaster relief.¹¹

Klein looks into how cooperation at sea is crucial for the defense relationship between the United States and India amid heightened tensions from Chinese naval strategies in the Indian Ocean. He emphasizes that both nations are important contributors to regional humanitarian actions and anti-piracy operations and calls for increasing cooperation to improve India's technology and strategic planning. The accomplishments such as the 'Joint Strategic Vision' from 2015 and pacts like LEMOA alongside the newly revised Defense Framework Agreement to show substantial improvement. He acknowledges real successes including the enhancement of Malabar naval operations and the declaration of a new joint armed forces exercise that showcases the deepening alliance encouraged by organizations including the Boeing Company and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.¹²

Zick points out that incidents of piracy and armed robbery have reduced in the Somali Basin recently. The reduction in incidents is mostly due to persistent anti-piracy actions taken by partnerships of influential navies beyond the region and shipping-led global programs. A report from the International Journal of Security and its application details a worldwide decline in piracy attacks lately. According to the report there is a persistent risk of substantial attacks on merchant ships by pirates. Semi-monthly reports from the Information Fusion Centre-IOR (IFC-IOR) in India and the IFC in Singapore persistently point out the ongoing challenges to maritime safety due to piracy and armed robbery.¹³

Combating piracy includes features of personal safety and the blue economy as well as general security. With the rise in maritime trade during Asia's rapid economic

¹¹ Christian Bueger, "Learning from Piracy: Future Challenges of Maritime Security Governance," *Global Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2015): 33–42.

¹² Natalie Klein, "The International Law of Piracy," *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 11, no. 1 (2013): 35–56.

¹³ Michael Zick, "India's Maritime Strategy: Moving towards a More Active Role in Indian Ocean," *Strategic Analysis* 35, no. 2 (2011): 225–244.

development in the late 20th century came an increase in pirate attacks on the Eastern Indian Ocean's Strategic Lanes of Communication (SLCs). In this context India's position as a passageway to the Malacca Strait from the Andaman Islands is essential. As outlined in the Indian Maritime Doctrine, the threat of piracy jeopardizes important SLCs by interfering with maritime commerce elevating insurance charges aggravating local unrest and endangering lives. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea set a clear definition of piracy and created specialized offices that prompted nations to report incidents. From 1992 to 2006, Southeast Asia emerged as the global region with the most instances of piracy boasting perilous zones in the Indian Subcontinent around Bangladesh and in Indian waters. In 2006, India agreed to work together with states around Indian Ocean to tackle piracy. India has steadily patrolled the Gulf of Aden with warships to support merchant vessels since 2008. Furthermore, India worked alongside the European Union Naval Operation Atlanta on shared anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. In 2014 the Indian Navy began the White Shipping Agreement which allowed information sharing about vessels in the oceans with 26 ally countries.¹⁴

Understanding modern maritime security requires an examination of piracy's historical trajectory across the Indian Ocean region. Through his publication *Villains of All Nations* (2004), Marcus Rediker details the past social and political consequences of piracy which developed through economic and political structures. The book *Piracy and Privateering in the Indian Ocean* by John C. Appleby (2013) analyzes piracy from its historical development in the region through time. The examination of maritime history acts as a basis to analyze security threats which exist today.

A theoretical outlook of international security has been used to analyze the US-India naval cooperation. The strategic security cooperation framework presented in Barry Buzan's *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (2003) helps explain state alliances which protect common interests between nations.

Piracy control worldwide involves various partnerships between international organizations and naval coalitions. The book *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money*

¹⁴ Robert Foley and William C. O'Kelley, "The Impact of U.S.-India Maritime Cooperation on Piracy in Indian Ocean," *Asian Security* 10, no. 2 (2014): 129–145.

(2009) by Martin N. Murphy investigates global counter-piracy techniques to analyze naval operation performance. Reports from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) provide essential data about international counter-piracy policies through which ships received protection within the Indian Ocean region.

Indo-Pacific strategic initiatives have focused on the collaboration between America and India dedicated to maritime security. C. In C. Raja Mohan's *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific* (2012), the naval strategy of India is closely evaluated in terms of India's growing role in regional security. In David Brewster's book *India as an Asia Pacific Power* (2012), the author analyzes US-India cooperation in order to demonstrate how joint naval exercises and intelligence sharing improved their maritime security practices. A thorough assessment of the effectiveness of US India cooperation in piracy prevention is delivered by the collected sources.

Most of the existing literature in this domain focuses on operational aspects or international legal frameworks, overlooking how internal variables within each country play a crucial role in securitizing the issue, impacting joint maritime security strategies. Consequently, this research addresses that gap by critically exploring the interaction between domestic obligations and foreign policy, using Securitization Theory, in shaping the US-India naval partnership against piracy from 2005 to 2023. Moreover, it seeks to identify whether their cooperation has been strategically coherent, compliant with evolving threats, and successful in mitigating piracy risks in the Indian Ocean.

Table 1

Historical Context of Piracy	Theory	Counter-Piracy Efforts	US-India Collaboration
<i>Villains of all Nations</i> (2004) by Marcus Rediker	<i>Regions and Powers: The Structure of International</i>	<i>Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money</i> (2009) by Martin M Murphy	<i>Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific</i>

	<i>Security</i> (2003) by Barry Buzan		(2012) by C. Raja Mohan
<i>Piracy and Privateering in the Indian Ocean</i> (2013) by John C. Appleby			<i>India as an Asia Pacific Power</i> (2012) by David Brewster

Core Argument

The complex interplay of factors affecting decision making processes in the US and India involves political, economic, military and social variables has significantly shaped and securitized the extent and outcomes of US-India naval cooperation in countering piracy in Indian Ocean Region between 2005 and 2023, as both have securitized the issue gradually, which have brought remarkable change in US-India relations and the US trust in India as a net security provider in Indian Ocean.

Theoretical Underpinning

Securitization theory, mainly developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, guides to understand how certain issues become seen as urgent security problems through the way they are talked about and framed. Unlike traditional security theories that focus on clear, objective threats, securitization looks at how language and political actions shape that we consider a threat, often leading to exceptional measures being taken. It explains that an issue becomes securitized when someone in position of power successfully presents it as an existential threat to something important, the state, society or the identity. Then this allows normal political rules to be set aside in order to deal with the crises. This theory moves away from looking at fixed threats and instead

focuses on the process of how threats are constructed, which makes it very useful for analyzing modern political and social challenges.

The thesis employs Securitization Theory to understand the dynamics of this relation between the US and India; the theory provides a powerful lens for understanding how seemingly ordinary issues can be transformed into urgent security threats, demanding extraordinary measures. It calculates how the issue is securitized through the vital role of bureaucratic competition and interagency coordination in the evolution of the US-India naval partnership. In these countries, the independent interests of naval forces and intelligence agencies, as well as several other interest groups, were maintained by different governmental bodies, which led to different security initiatives among institutions. Until recently, India faced bureaucratic obstacles that obstructed the joint security development by way of partnership between the ministries of external affairs and the defense; similarly, the Department of Defense (DoD) in the US and the Department of State hold different views on engagement methods. By applying the Securitization Theory, power dynamics in institutions can be analyzed to determine how the issue comes under the realm of securitization and what its likely impact on the operational success of naval joint missions against piracy threats in the Indian Ocean.¹⁵

Moreover, this theory also analyzes the necessity of securitization sold to the domestic audience of both countries. The strategic processes of the US-India were shaped by domestic political elements such as electoral situations and governing leader modifications in tandem with public support. The model has societal cohesion as a determinant for policy consistency and strategic maneuverability, such as securitizing the piracy issue. Continuity in U.S. maritime security policies was based upon administrative transitions, while Indian submarine security was agency sensitive due to government changes in policy. Political leaders in both nations took into account national interests and public sentiments before taking a decision to involve their navies in the fight against piracy. In this research work, the Securitization Theory is used to illustrate the durability and effectiveness of two key variables as determinants of its

¹⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, "Macrosecritisation and Security Constellations: Reconsidering Scale in Securitisation Theory," *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009): 253–276.

bilateral security initiative in domestic political stability and fundamental strategic priorities.¹⁶

The naval cooperation between the United States and India was wholeheartedly supported by economic considerations as well as dependencies on trade. Because pirates threatened economic activities, every nation — including the US and India — had to defend its essential maritime trade routes across the Indian Ocean. According to the Securitization Theory, the naval cooperation between the US and India was a result of their internal economic policies, which included defense budget decisions and trade priorities. The US had to protect its maritime routes because the environmental variables at home supported its global strategic position and worldwide economic agenda. However, Indian security forces focused on sea lane security to uphold economic expansion as well as the expansion of their influence. Consequently, this analysis validates that economic priorities worked hand in hand with military and strategic considerations to determine the character and scope of US-India anti-piracy naval collaboration.¹⁷

Research Methodology

This study incorporates and adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore the dynamics of US-India naval collaboration in countering piracy in the Indian Ocean from 2005 to 2023, as the qualitative approach is well-suited for understanding complex political and strategic relationships, allowing for in-depth interpretation of diplomatic, institutional, and policy-level developments.

The research is interpretive and descriptive in nature, depending on primary and secondary sources. These include government policy documents, scholarly articles, international maritime reports, joint statements, official press releases, and reliable news sources. Such sources, along with providing historical context, also give strategic frameworks and insights into how cooperation between the two countries evolved in response to piracy threats.

¹⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

¹⁷ Barry Buzan and Mathias Albert, "Securitization, Sectors and Functional Differentiation," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4–5 (2011): 413–425.

In addition, a thematic content analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The materials were reviewed to identify recurring themes such as shifts in bilateral naval strategy, evolution of joint exercises (e.g., Malabar drills); institutional and political drivers behind cooperation, the impact of piracy trends on joint decision-making. This method allows the researcher to extract patterns and vital insights regarding both the efficiency and the limitations of the cooperation.

Moreover, the research did not comprise primary data collection such as surveys or interviews, nor did it employ quantitative or statistical tools, as the principal objective was to provide relative and policy-oriented insights rather than empirical oversimplifications.

Significance of Study

This research centers on piracy as a major danger to non-traditional maritime safety (NTMS). The US and Indian policies and public views influenced the range and strength of their shared maritime approaches. Dependence on domestic variables alongside regional and piracy dynamics shaped the partnership's direction and results while stressing the necessity to analyze lesser-studied domestic aspects of bilateral security efforts. Findings from this investigation have carried great relevance for authorities controlling maritime safety and researchers working on piracy mitigation and the defense of shipping activities. Informing evidence-based strategies to improve maritime security and maintain stability in Indian Ocean is achieved through the insights of this research.

This research contributes to security cooperation discourse through analysis of how domestic forces unite with international elements to form maritime policies. The examination of US-India naval cooperation enables policymakers to acquire essential knowledge which aids them in developing future collaborations through internal political analysis of economic systems and institutional capabilities. The research demonstrates that international security strategies require domestic policy integration for better effectiveness alongside sustainability.

The research findings establish usable guidelines which help nations beyond the Indian Ocean area deal with their maritime security challenges. The analytical framework used in examining US-India collaboration provides usable frameworks to help other

countries and organizations construct maritime security globally. Stakeholders who understand domestic forces affecting naval cooperation can develop counter-piracy plans which both sustain internal governance systems and respond to maritime security threats.

Delimitations

This analysis limits itself to the joint naval operations of the United States and India designed to combat piracy threats in Indian Ocean during the years 2005 to 2023. It concentrates on examining secondary sources including government papers and agreements. The study does not include wider maritime security activities or alliances unconnected to combating piracy or naval ties with nations other than the US and India. The theoretical lens employed emphasizes certain ideas from literature on international relations and security studies. This research applies qualitative research techniques while referencing piracy incidents and related counter piracy activities in Indian Ocean area. This research does not cover regions outside Indian Ocean or time frames prior to 2005 or post-2023.

Organizational Structure

An Introduction has initiated the thesis by presenting the research intentions and the relevance of investigating piracy's role as a maritime security challenge in Indian Ocean regarding US-India naval collaboration. Chapter one, 'Historical Overview and Evolution of Piracy as a Maritime Security Threat in Indian Ocean Region' has aimed to deliver an extensive overview and evaluation of piracy's history in Indian Ocean focusing on its transformation into a maritime security danger from early days to contemporary times. This chapter emphasized important stages in the increase and revival of piracy and its effect on both local and international maritime security.

In Chapter two, 'The influences of local and international aspects on joint navigation strategies' were analyzed. This study has examined how these elements limit or support naval collaboration between the United States and India. This chapter has addressed the larger geopolitical factors affecting naval teamwork in the area along with the contributions of other regional players and global structures. Chapter three, 'Performance and Range of US-India Naval Teamwork in Tackling Piracy' has examined the performance and range of US-India naval teamwork aimed at tackling

piracy. While incorporating research framework and theoretical underpinning, this chapter has reviewed significant cooperative programs and naval drills by evaluating their success against piracy.

In chapter four, 'Challenges of Piracy and Its Influence on Maritime Security in Indian Ocean', the challenges of piracy towards maritime security have been investigated and how it influences different dimensions of maritime operations in Indian Ocean has been analyzed. The topics of financial impact of piracy, risks to navigation and the development of piracy in the context of anti-piracy strategies have been examined in this chapter. Finally, the main conclusions are summarized in the last chapter, together with a concluding analysis. In the concluding section recommendations were made on how to improve US and India cooperation to deal with piracy issues and to seize future opportunities for sea cooperation.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND EVOLUTION OF PIRACY AS A MARITIME SECURITY THREAT IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Piracy has been an intractable threat to the Indian Ocean in the field of maritime history and has evolved through the ages. The area is a critical focal point for legal and illegal seafaring activities as an important maritime passage between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula on the one hand and South Asia and Southeast Asia on the other hand. In this chapter, the history and detailed analysis of the development of piracy in the Indian Ocean from maritime looting in its beginning to present day organized forms of piracy is presented. The reasons why piracy became such a major security issue in the region are analyzed.

This chapter studies historical patterns of piracy in the Indian Ocean and responses of international and regional powers to it especially in terms of US-India collaboration. The various tactics of maritime crime that have taken place in this area over the course of this time period such as simple robberies and aggressive ship seizures are investigated. The study elaborates insights from maritime security reports and from various government organizations, for the purpose of detecting regional piracy locations and for assessing the progression of incidents over time.

The study explores how nation-states historically come together to face this military danger and, at the same time, try to check or mitigate piracy events. It elaborates important frameworks and treaties which had been set up to control regional piracy historically. In particular, the chapter also examines the efforts of the United States and India to counter piracy activities and secure major maritime trading connections over the last seven decades. In conducting the study, they identified the determinants of what made their cooperation successful and what limited its success in order to obtain critical views of the structure of the partnership.

In addition, the chapter examines the local factors which affect the policies of the nations towards the region archaeologically. The analysis also explains the complexities of developing successful security policies for partnerships and how local

issues connect with global issues. Evaluating historical trends, this chapter is an attempt to find out what role the past geopolitical events relating to maritime security in the region could play in the future maritime security strategies and coalitions in Indian Ocean. This analysis indicates that maritime trade needs to be safeguarded through dynamic and collaborative approaches as piracy continues to grow. This chapter as a whole reveals the evolution and trends of piracy in Indian Ocean, and the joint strategies taken by major regional and international powers, especially the United States and India, to tackle this long-standing problem in recent years.

This chapter explains the following themes: i. Early History of Piracy in Indian Ocean, ii. Pirates in the Pre-European Era. iii, The Age of Empire and Colonial Influence, iv. The Portuguese and the Golden Age of Piracy, v. Pirates in the Seventeenth Century, vi. European Pirates in Indian Ocean, vii. Conclusion and viii. Theoretical Discourse: Barry Buzan's Domestic Structure Model.

1.1 Early History of Piracy in Indian Ocean

Historically, Indian Ocean has witnessed the emergence of piracy from the vibrant trade connections of its region. Records showing piracy in this ocean region began when sea commerce thrived between East Africa and the Indian subcontinent alongside the Arabian Peninsula. During the early eras maritime attacks were usually regional occurrences as small crews sought individual profits. Throughout history, there have been some coastal residents using piracy to secure their survival or additional income in places lacking sufficient resources.

During the Middle Ages as sea trade grew stronger piracy spread across many regions. Pirate bases existed on the Malabar Coast, in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf where local authorities usually allowed or gained from the practice. At this point in history, pirates attacked ships loaded with spices and textiles crucial to the valuable trade systems uniting Asia and Africa.¹⁸

Pirates in Indian Ocean can broadly be classified into four categories: fighters who were either from the state or outside it along with smugglers and plunderers. From the 12th to the 19th century these organizations performed with similar aims and incentives.

¹⁸ J. C. Wade and H. E. Sharma, "Assessing US-India Cooperation in the Fight Against Piracy in Indian Ocean Region," *Asia Pacific Security Studies* 12, no. 2 (2017): 145-165

Opponents were frequently called 'pirates' by colonial forces and local governments to connect them with the disorder of robbery at sea. Such a disparaging view did not consistently portray their real contributions because numerous so-called pirates took part in actions connected to trade and regional politics.¹⁹

Records from China and India from centuries ago discuss the constant risk of piracy in their seas. As European powers entered Indian Ocean region their study of this phenomenon expanded significantly. Extensive studies on piracy were made by European navigators and traders in their travels to Indian Ocean in between 12th and 19th century. Multiple records highlight various trends and different dimensions of piracy related activities in the region and stress its significance to the shaping of economy and political landscape of Indian Ocean Region. The European archives and historical records provide the details of piracy affecting Indian Ocean. Actual pirates were much more than mere criminals; they influenced the regional power structure and the commerce either promoting or hindering the establishment of trade monopolies. However, often times they received tacit approval from the authorities who were, at times, more interested in obstructing the enemy vessels than to insure trade security. Piracy blurred the lines between legal and illegal maritime activities, creating the connection between piracy and state objectives. Pirates were sometimes political organizations that governed regions and constructed quasi states or managed oceanic routes. Piracy was an essential part of India Ocean community's economic and political engagement of that period, as demonstrated by archival documents.²⁰

1.2 Pirates in the Pre-European Era

Previously, years prior to the arrival of European colonialists in Indian Ocean, piracy troubled the area significantly. During that time merchant ships transporting valuable commodities like textiles, were subject to pirate attacks, as noted in records by ancient civilizations. During the 2nd millennium BC in Indian Ocean shined the mysterious pirates called Sea Peoples. Threatening trade lines in and around the Indian coast and the Persian Gulf were these pirates. During the Middle Ages as trade routes broadened over Indian Ocean piracy emerged as a major disturbance. As trading centers flourished

¹⁹ B. H. Ba, "Maritime Piracy and International Legal Responses: Analyzing the US-India Cooperation," *Global Politics Review* 14, no. 3 (2016): 234-245

²⁰ M. H. Frankel and S. G. Sharma, *Piracy and International Maritime Security* (London: Routledge, 2014).

on the East African coast and Indian and Arab traders thrived together, they became important targets for pirates. During this time the Zanj pirates emerged as a feared group on the eastern African coastline while looting Arabian and Indian ships. In the 13th and 14th centuries the Malabar Coast of India developed a reputation for its Mappila pirates who threatened the valuable spice trade from India to the Arabian Peninsula.²¹

An elaborate method for financing nautical operations was established in India before European colonization. Rich land investors supplied funds for renting vessels and their crews. Financing piracy began to include backing from leaders who used pirates to undermine competing states and maintain a cover of innocence. In regions like Japan this scheme unfolded where the Tokugawa state backed Chinese ship traders labeled as pirates by the Qing regime. Often seen as independent individual pirates played a crucial role in governmental affairs. The Tokugawa regime in Japan welcomed pirates into the Samurai class to improve their standing.

The practice of piracy regularly formed part of official strategies to obtain increased resources. According to Marco Polo the ruler of Thana in India's Konkan Coast teamed up with pirates to profit from trading spoils especially horse theft from boats. In the Malacca Straits local sea communities engaged in trade and plunder while rulers supported these communities. In kingdoms pirates were vital contributors and often acted as part of the naval forces. In the context of Indian Ocean world piracy represented a fundamental element rather than an outlying concern. In Southeast Asia's pirate communities thrived and typically exceeded the might of naval fleets. The pirates controlled their own groups and built partnerships with communities on land. In the 18th century Cheng I Sao formed a striking coalition in the South China seas which granted her the ability to obtain a pardon from the Chinese government.²²

During periods of trade restrictions or bans smugglers and merchants were essential backers of piracy. In the Ming Dynasty of China, the goal of the hailing sea ban was to lessen Japanese pirate influence. To defend their profits against government-enforced trade rules many merchants engaged in smuggling or piracy. In Indian Ocean and elsewhere piracy often arose as a reaction to state regulations and merchants mixed

²¹ M. E. Hennessey, "The Dynamics of Maritime Piracy and International Cooperation: Lessons from Indian Ocean," *Maritime Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2019): 79-94

²² J. L. Van der Meijden, *The Rise of Maritime Piracy in Indian Ocean: A History of Maritime Law Enforcement* (London: Hart Publishing, 2015).

unlawful and legal trade. The identity of pirates expanded beyond bandits at sea; they integrated deeply into the systems of trade and power. In India and Japan pirates obtained significant roles and were recognized as state representatives who boosted their control and acquired resources for their own interests and those they served. In pre-European India and the wider Indian Ocean region pirates and piracy were essential participants in economics and politics.²³

1.3 The Age of Empire and Colonial Influence

The entrance of Europeans to Indian Ocean in the 15th and 16th centuries changed the nature of piracy. When the Portuguese Dutch and subsequently the British set up colonial and trading stations in the area piracy transitioned into a more organized and politically important undertaking. At the start of the 16th century local pirates strongly opposed European powers like the Portuguese in the Arabian Sea and East African waters. Local pirates regarded European control of Indian Ocean trade as a serious threat to their way of life. At this moment piracy acted as a strategy to resist European colonization. To challenge European authority over trade routes local leaders backed piracy as a tactic. In the 17th century pirates operating from the Arabian Peninsula often attacked Portuguese vessels in Indian Ocean in a collective fight against colonialism. This community opposition often mixed-up piracy with proper naval conflict making it more difficult to end pirate operations.²⁴

1.4 The Portuguese and the Golden Age of Piracy

The period of piracy in Indian Ocean under the presence of European forces began in the late 15th century. After the victorious expedition of Vasco da Gama to India in 1497, the Portuguese planned to control the spice trade of the rich region. They built up strongholds and sent ships to safeguard the great shipping lanes of Indian Ocean. Local leaders and traders recruited pirates to defend themselves against their harsh methods. During the time, piracy rose in the Malabar area, and regional chiefs like the Marakkar family used pirate groups to confront the Portuguese. Piracy flourished in the Red Sea and in waters close to the Arabian Peninsula as local tribes and rebels preyed on ships

²³ M. F. Ali and M. E. Newton, *Pirates of Indian Ocean: Strategies for Combating Maritime Crime* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2020).

²⁴ Christian Bueger, *Maritime Security: International Cooperation on Piracy and Maritime Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

bearing spices, silks and precious metals. The rise of piracy in Indian Ocean in recent times has made Socotra and Strait of Hormuz infamous as pirate havens. Piracy was deliberately incentivized by European colonial powers who used privateers and mercenaries to sabotage enemy trade operations and as a result escalated conflicts with regional maritime groups. As indigenous pirate factions combined with state sponsored piracy by both Dutch and English rivals became a multiple threat, the Portuguese were pursuing spice trade supremacy. Pirates merged operations with legitimate naval warfare during this period of maritime conflict by having letters of marque issued by states, which enabled them to perform privateering against enemy fleets. Maritime instability, created by these outside forces, stabilized the dangerous reputation of the Indian Ocean even after the pirates continued their activities and future naval wars in the region.²⁵

1.5 Pirates in the Seventeenth Century

In the 17th century there was a renewed wave of piracy in Indian Ocean affecting areas by the Arabian Sea and the East African coast. Fast dhows served as the base for Omani pirates who became prominent in that era by attacking merchant ships that sailed between the Persian Gulf and East Africa. Some of these pirates developed into dominant merchants and naval factions; still their activities endangered the safety of ocean trade in that region for many years. During the 17th century European pirates joined Omani pirates in Indian Ocean. Henry Every and William Kidd worked out of Madagascar as their base to assault Mughal and European ships rich with treasures. In Madagascar pirates took shelter from European forces while planning attacks against the wealthy trade routes of Indian Ocean. Maritime trade experienced increased militarization when regional pirates and European pirates operated together in the Indian Ocean during the seventeenth century. The British and Dutch East India Companies started using military protection for their merchant ships because attacks against their fleets proved to be continuous threats. The defense installations at coastal areas received additional fortification while the maritime patrol force received increased capacity to fight pirates. The size of the Indian Ocean together with weak

²⁵ D. Patel and H. S. Rao, "The US-India Naval Partnership and the Future of Counter-Piracy Cooperation," *Journal of Asian Security* 12, no. 2 (2015): 117-138

naval enforcement capabilities made pirate activities persistent even after the implementation of defensive measures.²⁶

1.6 European Pirates in Indian Ocean

With European nations securing their influence in Indian Ocean a new aspect of piracy emerged wherein European buccaneers and privateers became involved. Piracy against rival countries was undertaken by these pirates who were frequently approved by European governments during imperial power battles. During the 17th and 18th centuries in Indian Ocean European pirates acted as a major influence on trade systems for both European and non-European governments. In Indian Ocean in the early 1690s Centered around his activities as a Scottish privateer leads William Kidd to a life of piracy. Kidd struck at ships under the control of the Mughal Empire, which ruled much of India, with other European pirates by his side. Consequently, these attacks put the economy of the Mughals at risk while also souring ties with the European powers. European pirates such as Kidd and Henry Every pursued immense wealth in Indian Ocean that reinforced the area's reputation as a chaotic domain.²⁷

However, by the 18th century European countries had secured their authority over Indian Ocean's navigation and, resultantly, restrictions on piracy grew. Pirate assaults continued in those areas where state authority was weak, and where efforts to eliminate piracy were made, such as in Madagascar and the Arabian Peninsula. In order to effectively combat piracy in the 19th century, European colonial forces took more aggressive measures and launched campaigns that significantly reduced its presence. Major shift in trade and regional economy occurred in the 15th century European arrivals in Indian Ocean. The Europeans attempted to influence trade in Indian Ocean, and, along the way, dictated the terms and conditions of trade that were directly against the customs and practices of the native inhabitants – the trade customs they had retained for a long time. Especially, this invasion endangered the involvement of local vendors

²⁶ E. G. Baker, *Pirates, Terrorists, and the State: The Impact of Piracy on Maritime Security in Indian Ocean* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

²⁷ D. M. Hurd, "Piracy and the US-India Cooperation in Indian Ocean: Countermeasures and Policy Implications," *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (2014): 98-118.

and merchants who had always supervised the management of their commercial activities in the area of this vital shipping point.²⁸

The governance of maritime trade sector in Indian Ocean was quite distinct among various states and entities. In the case of India, rulers were not involved in seafaring business, and commerce was left to merchants. A notable case in point is a Gujarati king's comment that 'conflicts on the ocean are the business of merchants and not of royal honor.' Several Indian rulers embraced a non-intrusive method in maritime trade, giving the merchants considerable freedom. Unlike most other powers, Chinese rulers preferred a bureaucratic style and showed little interest in sea trade and often imposed restrictions and bans. These bans are usually only applied in regions ruled by individual rulers who never crossed their borders.²⁹

In contrast to earlier efforts in trade regulation within Indian Ocean region, Europeans wielded an unprecedented force. They took steps to control their territory without respecting the sovereignty and traditions of the indigenous kingdoms. This lack of consideration typically mixed with severe techniques of control that separated European powers from other conquerors. In acknowledging the expansion of piracy in this era we can partly blame the oppressive tactics employed by the Portuguese. Researchers like J.G. Lorimer and C.R. Low explained that the aggression of the Portuguese pushed many residents to turn to piracy and other illegal actions as a way to endure. Although the Portuguese imposed strict rules the Mapillah traders in Malabar carried on with their commerce in valuable products including pepper. At those times, piracy acted as a vital means for dealers wanting to uphold the enduring trade practices that had benefited their communities for years.³⁰

Moreover, European actions in local affairs usually endorsed piracy as a way to resist colonialism. The way Europeans defined piracy made matters more complex. In 1944 the Oxford English Dictionary described piracy as theft and plunder occurring at sea or in navigable rivers by individuals lacking a commission from an advanced society. This

²⁸ K. H. Johnson, *Strategic Approaches to Piracy in Indian Ocean* (Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation, 2015).

²⁹ A. J. Scott, *Piracy in Indian Ocean: Maritime Security in an Era of Globalization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

³⁰ S. M. Lee, "Piracy and the US-India Maritime Partnership: A Study of the Response to Indian Ocean Threats," *Journal of International Maritime Law* 16, no. 2 (2013): 113-130.

definition revealed the Europeans' distorted perspective of piracy which labeled any activities at sea that challenged their interests as illegal. This perspective appeared clearly in the communications of Afonso de Albuquerque to the King of Portugal. In 1510 after capturing Goa he declared every gravestone and Islamic building had been eliminated. He highlighted the need for retribution to build power in India and contended that to earn love and fear in this place you must entirely seek revenge. Albuquerque and Cabral's aggressive behavior against local opposition by raiding Arab trading vessels and killing crew members strengthened the belief in a chaotic space in Indian Ocean full of piracy.³¹

European stories continued the myth that Indian Ocean was riddled with piracy contributing to increased local strife. In Europe's view of civilization was largely loaded with bias and rooted in their race-based superiority beliefs. Numerous community members including the Mapillah traders were wrongly tagged as pirates by the Portuguese during their efforts to uphold their usual trade routes. The view on piracy in Indian Ocean was not consistently unfavorable. A number of regional people accepted piracy as a feasible avenue for financial gain for those with few choices. In regard to maritime violations in his region Sultan Husain of Singapore stated that the term piracy did not reflect negatively on a Malay leader illustrating a sophisticated grasp of local authority dynamics. For many centuries, rulers in Indian Ocean depended on raids and looting to strengthen their assets and diminish their opponents.³²

The deeds of European immigrants complicated the circumstances. In wartime European countries allowed private vessel owners to seize opponents' ships labeling this as authorized privateering. Those living in Asia often misunderstood the line between pirates and privateers because their colonial rulers carried out comparable violent actions and taken property. From 1716 to 1726 Anglo-American pirates significantly rose in their actions and later became notable figures in the extensive history of Indian Ocean piracy. Thousands of pirates gained fame for their remarkable thefts regarding amount and worth. Most notable Anglo-American pirates included Blackbeard and Bartholomew Roberts. They pursued treasure and sanctuary across

³¹ S. G. Krishnan, *Indian Ocean and Global Maritime Security: Issues, Challenges, and Policy Recommendations* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2021).

³² Carolin Liss, *Piracy, Law, and Law Enforcement: Indian Ocean and Global Governance* (London: Routledge, 2017).

Indian Ocean after leaving the Caribbean and Atlantic. Finding harbors in areas such as Madagascar these pirates began to haphazardly seize ships across Indian Ocean. Pirates like Kidd and Every made Saint Mary's Island famous as a safe place for them.³³

Though conflicts were common between colonial powers and Atlantic pirates they cooperated at times. Numerous pirates from the Atlantic were hired by European nations or grant amnesty by law enforcement as they raided ships of adversaries. During the 17th century pirates were aided by English ports for selling their booty and finding crew members. Pirate treasures were regularly bought by the East India Company confusing the boundaries between proper trade and piracy. With Indian Ocean authorities pursuing responsibility from colonial companies over the actions of Atlantic pirates' hostilities escalated. People argued over the damaging actions of the well-known pirate Henry Every. The locals felt extreme danger because of his actions and responded with major resistance against the East India Company. Aurangzeb seriously disapproved of the deaths of pilgrims in attacks and labeled the English as lawbreakers while planning military operations.³⁴

The shared ethnicity between Atlantic pirates and European company officials contributed to a perception among Indians that Europeans were all pirates, a sentiment reflected in Bengali ballads and Malayali chronicles. Such setbacks significantly affected colonial powers, particularly the East India Company, which struggled to maintain lucrative trade operations amid rising anti-colonial sentiment. In response to these challenges, colonial powers urged the British government to take a firmer stance against piracy. This culminated in the formulation of "the Act for Preventing Frauds and Regulating Abuses in the Plantation Trade" in 1696, which sought to more clearly differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate maritime activities. This legislative framework enabled a systemic approach to imperial commerce that proved more profitable than illicit trade.³⁵

³³ H. P. Chaturvedi, "Indian Ocean Region: Maritime Piracy and the Role of the United States and India," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2014): 543-556,

³⁴ Jun Zhang, "The US-India Maritime Partnership and Counter-Piracy Cooperation in Indian Ocean," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 5 (2012): 692-711

³⁵ Robert A. Pape, *The Strategic Use of Piracy: International Reactions to the Rise of Piracy in Indian Ocean* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

The year 1807 was significant in maritime trading history as it also saw the end of the slave trade. This was, however, followed by the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty which looks at Indian Ocean trade and the division of the British and Dutch spheres of influence. It contained obligations to fight piracy and eliminate the slave trade in that region as a measure against popular up-risings and also to provide a rationale for colonial action on the grounds of ensuring order in shipping activities. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the piracy discourse was drawn from the European ideal that any armed struggle against colonialism is treated as a crime. Thus, the piracy discourses offered cover for the colonial project by masking inland trade and resistance networks in Indian Ocean.³⁶

1.7 Piracy in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Piracy within Indian Ocean deteriorated in the nineteenth century to a certain extent. Because of the effects of the European colonial empire and the deep naval activities in the region, piracy was greatly reduced. The extent and depth of Omani controlled Indian Ocean waters however were at the most at British supremacy since maritime patrols were carried out regularly to protect trade routes. During this period some of the more infamous pirates, such as those who used to run campaigns on the Arabian peninsulas and the eastern Africa Sea, were subdued. Even with such a decline in the factors associated with marine piracy, there were sections of the marine that experienced what can be termed as petty, or low-level piracy particularly in areas where there was little or no state power. For example, the hennes coast of present-day Somalia was still subject to sporadic but damaging waves of piracy because of the political instability in that region. Similar territories on the Malabar Coast and Southeast Asia were subjected to occasional pirate raiding though the level of threat was nowhere as bad as they were in previous centuries. From the very beginning of the new century, it has been realized that the seas of Indian Ocean can hardly be attacked by piracy at the scale that has been seen. But the seed of the current 21st century piracy was germinating breath at that period as due to geo-political troubles and poverty in some areas set forth these regions for piracy recessions later in the century.³⁷

³⁶ James Kraska, "Maritime Piracy and International Law: The Case of Indian Ocean," *Naval War College Review* 68, no. 1 (2015): 56-78

³⁷ S. P. Kapur and M. T. Biswas, "US-India Counter-Piracy Cooperation in Indian Ocean: The Geopolitical Implications," *Asian Security* 10, no. 4 (2016): 381-400

1.8 Post-Colonial Era and the Resurgence of Piracy

Studies suggest that the political evolution following independence and the eventual loss of peripheral power and dominated territories allowed piracy to gain further impact as a curse of the sea. However, the decolonization period was burgeoning with mass interstate rivalries which hastened the birth and eventual transplanting of pirates to the seas. Many Europeans vacated the colonies during the period of the mid-20th century, and such left a portion of these being with power void especially in the East Africa and Arabian Peninsula regions. Countries after gaining independence often found themselves in situations where they did not have the required naval power and political order to patrol and protect their boundaries, hence leading to increase of piracy in Somalia, Yemen, and parts of Southeast Asia.³⁸

Another significant development which acted as a catalyst for the rise of piracy in Indian Ocean was the prevailing civil troubles in the nation of Somalia in the later part of the twentieth century. Once the central state authority collapsed in Somalia in 1991, the nation was thrown into civil strife and civil groups who tend to be pirates because there is no control over the sea emerged. The initial justification for these activities was the interference of foreign ships in the form of illegal fishing or dumping waste in the waters under the jurisdiction of Somalia. This, however, soon degenerated into full-blown piracy with organized bands of pirates targeting super tankers and container vessels in high seas for ransom. In the latter part of the 20th century, piracy was no longer a selective plundering of ships and goods but turned into a more organized crime. Piracies were also upgraded with the use of modern technology such as GPS systems and high-speed boats. This enabled them to attack ships that were further from the coast and leave without being captured. This new wave of piracy was a grave risk for international marine operations, especially in the Gulf of Aden which happens to be one of the busiest sea lanes in the world.³⁹

³⁸ James Franklin, *Terrorism and Piracy in Indian Ocean: Security Challenges for Global Maritime Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁹ C. C. Mills, "The Global Response to Piracy: The Case of Indian Ocean and the US-India Partnership," *International Politics* 50, no. 2 (2013): 230-247

1.9 The Modern Era: Piracy as a Global Security Threat

At the turn of the 21st century, piracy along Indian Ocean was a dangerous and well-organized source of maritime insecurity. Somalis became some of the most destructive pirates, hijacking tankers, cargo ships, and fishing vessels to extort millions of dollars as ransom. With a paucity of naval assets and surveillance potential in parts of Indian Ocean, pirates had a free-ranging presence over vast sea stretches — extending to the Seychelles and into the Arabian Sea.⁴⁰

Indian Ocean piracy in the 21st century is commercial, and not so-called ‘politicized’ or ‘State-sponsored’, with thinly veiled claims about Sri Lanka and Somalia. This piracy is about money, not ideology, land, or oil. The incentives were simply too great, and the state collapsed. Piracy flourished where international efforts to prevent it failed to the same extent that it failed to penetrate the lax and non-functional administration of Somalia. Tactics such as using ‘motherships’ that could extend their range and employ advanced avoidance methods meant that countering them was costly and arduous. From the early 2000s onwards, these conditions have incited the international community to more concerted action in the face of mounting modern piracy. Initially, this saw a maritime version of the so-called war on terror: multinational naval patrols in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast. This has dramatically reduced incidents in the past decade. However, piracy in Indian Ocean continues as a flashpoint in maritime security, because the socio-political conditions that lead to it continue.⁴¹

Earlier, since the dawn of the 21st century, piracy in the Indian Ocean has been chiefly profit-driven, rather than motivated by ideology or state sponsorship. The collapse of political authority and state institutions in Somalia created an enabling environment where international efforts to overwhelm piracy struggled to take hold. Pirate groups improved by employing “motherships” and advanced evasion tactics, which made countering them both expensive and complex, considering the vastness of Indian Ocean and a large coastal strip it shares with Somalia. These extraordinary developments hard-pressed the international community, beginning in the early 2000s—towards corresponding action, at first framed as part of the wider global war

⁴⁰ S. K. Sundaram, *US-India Cooperation in Maritime Security: The Role of Navies in Indian Ocean* (New Delhi: Springer India, 2017).

⁴¹ Vincent Baud and Diane L. Williams, "Impact of Piracy on Trade Routes and the US-India Naval Cooperation in Indian Ocean," *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 6 (2013): 451-468

on terror effort. In the following decade, multinational patrols in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast reduced attacks significantly, though the underlying social and political conditions nourishing piracy persisted.

In this regard, Securitization Theory helps explain why piracy remained a priority for the United States and India, fluctuating as incidents declined. Political leaders secured acceptability for sustained naval engagement by encasing piracy as an ongoing danger to trade routes and regional stability. This strategic justification allowed extraordinary measures, such as huge naval investments, joint patrols and the Malabar exercises, which strengthened operational cooperation and intelligence sharing. More importantly, this narrative shaping linked piracy to broader economic and strategic concerns, such as protecting energy supplies and ensuring continuous maritime trade; doing so reinforced public and institutional backing for long-term counter-piracy commitments.

Both states, moreover, embedded it into their wider security doctrines rather than treating piracy as a temporary, peripheral law enforcement issue. The broad elevation resulting from these measures transmuted piracy from a localized criminal challenge into a shared strategic concern, giving it importance in US-India maritime cooperation. Acceptance from key stakeholders—from domestic constituencies, bureaucratic institutions, and the shipping industry—was crucial in sustaining these efforts, justifying resources and political backing for continued and long-term partnership in the Indian Ocean.

1.10 Conclusion

The problem of piracy in Indian Ocean exists as a multifaceted system because of persisting historical elements together with political dynamics and economic systems that created its maritime security reality over several centuries. Weak states and ungoverned maritime spaces, combined with economic disparity among countries, resulted in the transformation of the initial sporadic maritime attacks of piracy into a sophisticated transnational security threat. When European and American colonial maritime forces conducted their Age of Exploration activities in the extended Indian Ocean region, an area of dispute was formed, and this resulted in persistent illicit maritime patterns that are still in existence today. Weak governance and prolonged

conflicts have created spaces for pirates to return, as long as geopolitical transformations between Egypt to Somalia, to Malaysia, have opened spaces for littoral states affected by such transformations.

Piracy is perceived as a security threat by regional and extra regional stakeholders that have motivated them to deploy multinational naval forces to protect vital sea lanes of communication (SLOCs). The existence of piracy is sustained by economic hardships, weak political systems and governance impediments irrespective of tactical defensive measures. While private maritime security companies have been involved and high-risk areas have been created, maritime security has become more commercialized, establishing connections between state run and private providers of security. To successfully combat Indian Ocean piracy, cooperation is needed by nations in matters of regional security; enhanced maritime domain awareness; and economic growth that addresses the root cause of piracy.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INFLUENCES OF LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS ON JOINT NAVIGATION STRATEGIES

Joint naval collaboration between the US and India in recent years has gained momentum as the two countries strategically started to align their maritime geopolitical interests in Indian Ocean region. Besides, strategic imperatives and regional security dynamics along with domestic political factors also influence US-India naval cooperation. Domestic politics also play an important role in military collaboration, including electoral cycles, changes in national security priorities or shifts in the party's ideological leanings or sometimes public opinion. United States and India operate in complicated political environments where there is great importance of maritime security in the Indian Ocean that influences their commitment towards naval partnerships, counter piracy operations and wider defense cooperation.

In the case of the US, the history shows that the president and Congress decide the course of military alliance through oversight and deliberate strategic observations, mostly influenced by think tanks and lobbies. Some administrations have concentrated on increasing their military power and global outreach through enhanced naval cooperation while others have taken a more conservative approach, especially when the public disapproves of such military involvement. At the same time, Pentagon and other defense agencies want to keep naval collaboration going to ensure the passage of key trade routes and maritime stability. Global political landscape, particularly related to maritime security, is constantly changing, and this changes the surrounding environment in which naval partnerships, including those with India, are reexamined.

In India, domestic political dynamics are also very important to determine foreign defense strategies. The country has a multiparty system and the ruling coalitions are subject to different views on military cooperation, with nationalist factions preferring strategic autonomy and others and more globalist parties preferring deep defense ties with international partners. Electoral cycles play a role in the degree of naval cooperation, as any government reinserting west defense policies to the current

geopolitical reality and domestic imperatives. The Ministry of Defense and the Indian Navy decide operational decisions with regard to the Indian Ocean, among others, for counter piracy missions and maritime security initiatives.

The influence of regional geopolitics also extends to US-India naval cooperation in addition to domestic politics. The effects of broader multilateral frameworks, for instance, the United Nations and NATO, as well as the strategic rivalry with China and Pakistan's position in South Asian security shape joint naval operations. It is imperative that U.S. – India collaboration is used to ensure the security of the region's maritime trade routes and stability in the face of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, especially via the Belt and Road Initiative and a 'String of Pearls' strategy. However, tensions between India and Pakistan make things more complicated, as India's interests in the western maritime security sometimes prevent it from conducting larger naval exercises.

This chapter explores the interaction between domestic political forces and the necessity of collaboration in US-India naval cooperation. This chapter elaborates how the dynamics of the relative political landscapes, security concerns of the region, as well as the multilateral frameworks in which this partnership is embedded, are marching toward one another. It shows both countries' movements in terms of domestic governance and international maritime security, and through understanding these factors it is seen that both countries have different ways of solving issues of geopolitical concerns.

The chapter further discusses local and international factors that have an impact on their cooperation and, in particular, how these factors influence their joint naval operations against piracy. The bilateral relationship of the two countries to thrash out how they see maritime security and to cooperate in this realm is a function of domestic political conditions, regional geopolitics and global security frameworks.

However, this chapter also focuses on domestic political factors, such as those operating within the US and India; strategic motives for naval cooperation; the effect and implication of various other means of international security frameworks; Indian Ocean regional considerations; and geopolitical aspects of U.S. India naval operations. If the above is combined, this leads to a detailed explanation of how internal and external

factors work together to determine the shape of joint naval strategies in Indian Ocean. This chapter explains the following themes: i. Domestic Political Influences on U.S.-India Naval Cooperation, ii. U.S. Domestic Political Dynamics, iii. Factors Playing into Indian Domestic Politics, iv. Regional Dynamics and Adjacency to Neighboring Countries, v. Strategic Position of Pakistan and Its Strategic Position, vi. Multilateral Naval Cooperation and International Security Frameworks, vii. Maritime Security and the United Nations, viii. Role of NATO in Maritime Security, ix. Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Maritime Security, x. Piracy in the Gulf of Aden, xi. Territorial Disputes on Naval Cooperation, and Theoretical Discourse.

2.1 Domestic Political Influences on U.S.-India Naval Cooperation

Defense cooperation is often influenced by domestic politics, especially in the areas of foreign policy of a nation. The US and India's political landscapes have a direct bearing on the approach they adopt for military collaboration and joint maritime security efforts. The section illustrates how electoral cycles; national security priorities and political ideology affect naval cooperation between the two countries.⁴²

2.1.1 U.S. Domestic Political Dynamics

The U.S. political system is dynamic and changing, and this political fluctuation furnishes a large capability to influence the way the U.S. approaches naval cooperation with other countries. Political priorities of the U.S. executive branch and oversight mechanisms of the U.S. Congress, especially on military engagements determine U.S. defense spending. However, naval collaboration with foreign partners is heavily dependent on U.S. presidential elections and the difference in political ideologies of one administration or the other. As such, Republican administrations prefer, for example, stronger partnerships like that with India, particularly in naval operations, to lines of alliance, which could lead to military expansion and global domination. American public opinion has often times determined what military engagements we have been in. In the shadows of those moments when public disillusionment with military involvement abroad, partnerships that involve a great military commitment are even more likely to receive greater scrutiny. However, increasing concern about

⁴² Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), 39.

maritime security in Indian Ocean could result in wider public backing for joint anti-piracy operations with India. Primarily at the Pentagon and other defense agencies, the U.S. military bases decisions—especially concerning naval deployments and cooperation. They tend to rate such national security threats and usually urge for a bigger naval cooperation for the security of critical trade routes and international sea-lanes.⁴³

2.2 Factors Playing into Indian Domestic Politics

India's multiparty system and diverse electorate have a great deal of influence on its foreign defense strategies, including cooperation with the US. Here, the political forces within India that impact naval cooperation, especially in the war on piracy are delved into. If nationalist or protectionist parties are influential politically in India, we might see Indian political parties resisting foreign military influence, including anything akin to Indian cooperation with the United States. But that was before more liberal and globally oriented parties started viewing military alliances as essential for India's role in regional security and for expanding India's influence in the world. Therefore, the election outcomes in India have direct consequence for naval security collaborations. Like the US, defense priorities in India can change with every electoral cycle. India's degree of naval partnerships is a result of the ruling party's position regarding foreign policy and military cooperation. The composition of India's defense strategy, including in Indian Ocean, is closely and dynamically linked to the transformers at play in this electoral cycle, which in turn are affected by the national security context of the time. The strategy of India's military cooperation is determined by the Ministry of Defense and the Indian Navy. These are important institutions, which make decisions about joint naval operations with the US, including logistics support, strategic alignment and operational focus in piracy prone areas of Indian Ocean.⁴⁴

⁴³ Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The United States and India: The Strategic Partnership* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 24.

⁴⁴ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2018), 5, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

2.2.1 Regional Dynamics and Adjacency to Neighboring Countries

Actions and policies of neighboring countries influence the geo-politic landscape in Indian Ocean region and in turn impact the nature of the US-India naval cooperation. Maritime security and counter piracy efforts are shaped by both nations by regional security challenges and alignments. The US and India fear China's growing military and economic footprint in Indian Ocean through its Belt and Road Initiative and "String of Pearls" strategy. China's strategic ports and maritime infrastructure developments create competition for (at times even adversarial) naval cooperation. Both the US and Indian interests face challenge with China's rising presence in Indian Ocean with respect to freedom of navigation and control over maritime trade routes. Geopolitical rivalry has pulled the US and India together and it is conducting joint operations to make the region stable, and counter Chinese influence in the region.⁴⁵

India has to necessarily strengthen its naval ties with the US and other regional actors as China's growing naval capabilities and its access to key maritime chokepoints in Indian Ocean. Both nations agree that the safety of international sea lanes must be prevented against piracy and protected the security of global trade. Increasing complexity of piracy in Indian Ocean is also linked to China's strategic presence in the region. China's maritime operations impact the patterns of piracy and have forced the US and India to join hands to make the maritime routes safe and secure.⁴⁶

2.2.2 Strategic Position of Pakistan

A factor that continues to play a major role in India's defense and foreign policy is its relations with Pakistan. India's approach to regional naval collaborations of any type — including those with the US — is ultimately linked to security dynamics prevailing between New Delhi and Beijing. Indian tensions with Pakistan often have India concentrating on its naval capabilities for defensive purposes. Nevertheless, both countries are worried about maritime threats, such as piracy, and have occasionally worked together on matters of securing the sea lanes. This said, their rivalry usually hampers their regional security efforts. Robust naval operations between the US and

⁴⁵ Alok Bansal, "India's Naval Power and Maritime Strategy in Indian Ocean Region," *Strategic Analysis* 38, no. 1 (2014): 94-96.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper 2013* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2013), 12, <https://www.mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/DefenceWhitePaper2013.pdf>.

India take place, but the political situation between India and Pakistan can stretch or constrain that cooperation. On occasion, India's military emphasis on anti-Pakistani naval capabilities diminishes a relative emphasis on anti-piracy, or more broadly maritime security, joint operations with the US Shared Maritime Interests and Operational Opportunities: With political tensions, both India and Pakistan are aware that international trade routes need protection from piracy. India is an occasional global partner with the U.S. in joint naval operations to diminish piracy's impact on each country's trade interests.⁴⁷

2.3 Multilateral Naval Cooperation and International Security Frameworks

US-India naval cooperation has its greatest latitude impact in the realms of regional maritime security and anti-piracy efforts where global security frameworks and global multilateral organizations largely frame the contours.

2.3.1 Maritime Security and the United Nations

Counter piracy operations have long been set by the United Nations (UN) as global standards for maritime security. US India cooperation on piracy will take place within the operational context framed by the UN Security Council's role in establishing international norms and policies on piracy. UN Resolutions on Piracy: Several Security Council resolutions have been adopted in efforts to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden and more broadly in Indian Ocean area. According to these resolutions, the US and India will pursue joint naval operations in following a framework that brings international cooperation to fight piracy, a global security threat. Piracy combat is grounded on the legal base provided by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to which both the US and India are signatories. These international agreements guide both nations' operational strategies as joint navy operations are taking place, as long as they remain in line with internationally recognized norms of the law. The UN also helps the US and India, and other countries working on anti-piracy efforts, to cooperate. Because the above multilateral frameworks encompass broader

⁴⁷ Michael J. Green, *The United States and Japan: Bilateral Relations and Global Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2017), 67-69.

partnership with European, Asian and African countries able to tackle piracy and maritime security collectively.⁴⁸

2.3.2 Role of NATO in Maritime Security

The U.S. Indian naval cooperation also gives motivation by NATO involvement in maritime security in Indian Ocean. With NATO continuing to have a strong presence in the region through its counter piracy operations, there are many opportunities for US and India cooperation in NATO frameworks and independently. The counter piracy missions off the coast of Somalia and further afield in the broader Indian Ocean has made for a more secure maritime environment. The operational experience gained in these missions can be directly applied to joint operations with India and as a NATO member the U.S. benefits from it. Cooperation between U.S. and India within NATO frameworks gives both countries a means to expand interoperability and share intelligence, resources and strategies to combat piracy. Furthermore, the participation of NATO allies in these operations enhances naval capabilities of both countries. In addition, NATO's region maritime action is concerned with measures to reinforce the regional states' capabilities for dealing with piracy. By allowing India and the US to contribute to wider security sector reform efforts and capacity building in the region, this framework will contribute to long term stability.⁴⁹

2.4 Challenges and opportunities for Regional Maritime Security

Indian Ocean continues to be a central area of maritime security concern, from piracy to ownership disputes to safeguarding critical shipping lanes. The US and India approach joint naval operations in this strategic area based on the regional challenges and opportunities in this strategic area.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "U.S.-India Maritime Security Cooperation," *U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India*, U.S. Department of State, accessed February 18, 2025, <https://in.usembassy.gov/u-s-india-maritime-security-cooperation/>.

⁴⁹ *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (1982), UN Treaty Series, vol. 1833, 397-463, https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.

⁵⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1846," S/RES/1846 (2008), 2-3, [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/1846\(2008\)](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/1846(2008)).

2.4.1 Piracy in the Gulf of Aden

Piracy is the most persistent threat in the Indian Ocean – particularly in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. Both the US and India agree that this is a significant area for counter piracy operations, and maritime security in this regard has been high on the defense agendas of both countries. These are the areas where US and India joint naval operations have targeted piracy suppression. However, those operations constitute surveillance, banning and escorting merchant vessels through piracy prone areas. Yet the US and India partnership should not obscure other regional actors' — the European Union and China among them — genuine interests in the security of the Gulf of Aden. It is necessary for several countries to conduct naval operations so that piracy does not become a global trade, or regional stability, threat. Both countries have brought in advanced technologies into their anti-piracy operations, such as drones and satellite surveillance, to molest the pirate vessels. In the areas of intelligence and resources, cross sharing of intelligence and resources enhances mission effectiveness of joint US-Indian naval missions.⁵¹

2.4.2 Territorial Disputes and Naval Cooperation

India and the US have in common desire to ensure security of Indian Ocean but territorial disputes within the region may be reflected in naval strategies. The South China Sea disputes, which continue to rage on, involve China, Vietnam and the Philippines. Freedom of navigation and the security of international sea lanes are of concern for both the US and India regarding this broader strategic environment in Indian Ocean. Sometimes US India naval cooperation has an additional strategic layer to it when operating in disputed waters as both nations want to protect their interests without escalating tensions with regional adversaries. In certain circumstances, maritime disputes can also offer India and the US the chance to talk diplomatically to other regional players, and to engage in dialogue and cooperation that goes beyond the naval operations.⁵²

⁵¹ Christopher P. Cavas, "The U.S. Navy's Role in International Maritime Security," *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 4 (2010): 48-49,

⁵² Michael P. Fogarty and David M. J. L. Jackson, "India's Strategic Maritime Interests: Implications for U.S.-India Naval Cooperation," *Naval War College Review* 66, no. 1 (2013): 80-83

Securitization Theory emphasizes how piracy's reorientation as a high-level security threat catalyzed the expansion of combined US–India naval exercises and resultant intelligence-sharing mechanisms. By legitimizing extraordinary measures in this regard, such as coordinated patrols in high-risk zones and the Malabar exercises, the securitization narrative ensured political backing for high-budget operations and strengthened the interoperability and strategic coordination of both navies and concerned military authorities. The theory, in economic and strategic terms, reveals how the threat framing of piracy connects maritime security to broader national interests and a state's strategic objectives. In this regard, the US and Indian leaders secured the political mandate to protect critical sea lanes by portraying piracy as a danger to the uninterrupted flow of global trade, thus impeding their respective economic growth, energy security; this configuration of security and economic necessities reinforced bilateral naval cooperation from 2005 to 2023. Furthermore, Securitization Theory highlights how piracy remains embedded in the strategic discourse of US–India relations when applied to the challenges of maritime security in the context of the Indian Ocean, which is a vital sea lane. It shows that even when piracy-related incidents decline, the continued portrayal of piracy as an enduring existential threat has preserved political will for joint naval engagement, warranting operational readiness against potential resurgence and incorporating anti-piracy efforts into the wider Indo-Pacific security architecture. Moreover, the theory helps explain how states, with the passage of time, reconstructed piracy from an irregular maritime crime into a strategic security concern within the historical trajectory of piracy in the Indian Ocean. For this, the political and military elite of the United States, as well as of India, portrayed piracy as a threat to the stability of trade routes and regional order over time, allowing extraordinary countermeasures such as joint naval patrols and multinational coordination. Consequently, this framing, largely accepted by domestic audiences and regional stakeholders, legitimized the continual allocation of resources to counter-piracy operations between the two stakeholders. Most importantly, in the political and institutional context, Securitization Theory clarifies how piracy was expansively elevated by US and Indian leaders over time to the status of an existential maritime threat to their respective national security, demanding urgent action. As a result, decision makers on both sides mobilized public and institutional support for enhanced naval cooperation, intelligence exchange, and regional maritime partnerships by integrating piracy into strategic doctrines and defense policies. Large-scale

acceptance of the narrative from domestic constituencies, bureaucratic actors, and the shipping industry was crucial in sustaining this security agenda. In the political and institutional context, the theory clarifies how piracy was expansively elevated by the US and Indian leaders to the status of an existential maritime threat. Both governments mobilized public and institutional support for enhanced naval cooperation, intelligence exchange, and regional maritime partnerships by integrating piracy into strategic doctrines and defense policies. This shows how crucial acceptance from domestic constituencies, bureaucratic actors, and the shipping industry was for sustaining this security agenda.

2.5 Conclusion

Both US and Indian domestic political landscapes are important in determining the path of their naval cooperation. The extent and nature of maritime collaboration between the nations is a function of voter reversion effects (Electoral cycles), national security priorities, and political ideologies in both of the nations. As far as defense spending and military partnership in the US go, switching presidential administration and congressional oversight has an effect, usually an indicator of public opinion on the US' international military engagements. Likewise, in India, the ability of the country to enter into naval alliances, especially within the realm of maritime security, is determined by the ruling party's position on foreign policy and defense cooperation.

Furthermore, the environmental influences of US-India naval collaboration are contingent upon regional dynamics, especially in relation to the growing Chinese incursion into the Indian Ocean as a point of confluence of US India strategic alignment. Both nations have realized the need to protect the critical trading routes and neutralize the new threat of China's military presence. However, India's geopolitical concerns including its challenging relationship with Pakistan affect its strategies of defense and maritime. India is nevertheless committed to countering piracy and securing international sea lanes, but the Indian priority for regional security issues on occasion limits its broader cooperation with the US.

In addition to the United Nations, NATO serves as another multilateral forum through which joint operations, sharing of intelligence and capacity building efforts can be undertaken. These international security structures legitimize US-India naval

cooperation, and the cooperation is aligned with the broader objectives of global maritime security. Evolutionary geopolitical challenges are being faced by both nations and the interplay of domestic politics, regional security considerations and international collaborations will keep shaping the extent and scope of their naval partnership. US and India have collaborated at sea, as part of a relationship built by any number of domestic and regional dynamics, international frameworks, and maritime security concerns, all contributing to a shared strategic interest in Indian Ocean. Continued changing dynamics of piracy and other security challenges as well as both internal and external factors will continue to affect the role of both nations in shaping maritime policies.

Rising US-India naval cooperation may lead the way. But such cooperation must be adjusted, in the new geopolitical context, to take into account the role of regional actors and global security frameworks and also the domestic politics of both the participating states. Both positive and negative effects will impact the future of US-India naval cooperation as they have for civil nuclear cooperation, with the continued focus on ensuring the security of international maritime trade and combatting piracy in Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMANCE AND RANGE OF US-INDIA NAVAL TEAMWORK IN TACKLING PIRACY

As a result of growing cooperation in naval operations the US and India show a common will to secure the maritime space in the case of transnational threats, and in particular in the case of piracy. Both nations have built over the years structured programs to improve operational readiness, intelligence sharing and joint training exercises. These have not only solidified military relations between the two countries but also aligned both powers in building freedom of navigation and protecting crucial sea trade routes.

The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) has enabled logistical interoperability for more efficient operations in threatening waters. Besides, navies have been enhanced with improved intelligence sharing framework and advanced surveillance mechanisms that have helped provide real-time situational awareness to both navies so that they can proactively react to emerging threats. Training programs and joint exercises (Malabar naval drills included) have further polished tactical coordination readiness and interoperability for both forces to work together in high stress situations.

These cooperative efforts have been effective in contributing to reduced piracy incidents, increased maritime domain awareness and crisis response operations success due to the continuing threat on the maritime domain. Secondly, the sustained engagement, innovation and adaptability between the U.S. and India in naval security displays the continuation of sustained collaboration on shared security concerns. In addition, this partnership is secured by means of unclassified structured programs, agreements and exercises, which form the bulk of this partnership, and which give the operational dimension and the strategic coherence. This is an outcome of the strategic partnership between the United States and India to ensure Indian Ocean Region (IOR), a major global maritime zone. This chapter discusses the breadth, performance, and measurable outcomes regarding this collaboration, which is discussed in the operational

and tactical dimensions. In this chapter, I examined the depth and effectiveness of the US-Indian naval teamwork by scrutinizing some of the important cooperative programs and joint naval drills and their impact on the piracy problem. But such partnerships have become necessary because the degree of dependence on maritime trade and the consequent vulnerabilities that endanger the security of sea lanes and international economic stability have increased to such an extent.

This chapter explains the following themes: i. Key Cooperative Programs, ii. Logistics Exchange and Interoperability (LEI), iii. Intelligence Sharing and Advanced Surveillance Mechanisms in California, iv. Training and Capacity-Building Programs, v. Joint Naval Drills and Tactical Operations, vi. Malabar Naval Exercises, vii. High Risk Zone Coordinated Patrols, viii. Crisis Response Operations in Real Time, ix. Modeling the Success of Collaborative Efforts, x. Reduced Piracy Revealed by Statistical Evidence, xi. Enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness, xii. Operational Milestones, xiii. Conclusion and Theoretical Discourse.

3.1 Key Cooperative Programs

There are several structured programs for US and India to work together to enhance operational readiness and maritime security. These operate as the coordinated piracy response, and they provide these coordinated and integrated resources and capabilities. The programs represent the strategic alignment of the two countries in their common desire to keep the freedom of navigation and war against transnational maritime crimes.⁵³

3.1.1 Logistics Exchange and Interoperability (LEI)

One of the foundational agreements that allow US Indian naval teamwork to go on is the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). Under this agreement, both countries will have access to each other's military bases, for example for the purposes of repair and refueling, which is crucial especially during long anti-piracy missions. But on joint missions in piracy prone regions of the Gulf of Aden and Malacca Strait, the operational advantages of LEMOA have become evident. LEMOA has been a successful agreement that enables sharing of critical resources that cut operational

⁵³ Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), 39.

costs and enhance the operational reach of joint naval patrols. This has been important to keep up an omnipresent naval presence in vital maritime constrictions. In addition, it serves as a basis for further operational cooperation in a wide range of maritime problems, beyond piracy. The implementation of LEMOA has been sensible in practice because it has facilitated the logistics operation of refueling points that can be faster and immediate deployment at the emergence of piracy threats. As a result, both navies have been able to secure vast maritime areas more effectively while mission turnaround times have improved and the range of naval deployments has been extended.⁵⁴

3.2 Intelligence Sharing and Advanced Surveillance Mechanisms in California

The second pillar of US-India naval collaboration lies in the robust intelligence sharing mechanisms that connect the two navies. The US has provided access to advanced communication systems and surveillance data to India under agreements, such as the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). It has been quite helpful to the situation awareness of Indian naval forces, reduction in identification and tracking of potential threats. India has its part in this intelligence exchange framework, as the country has deployed the P-8I Poseidon aircraft, which reportedly comes with state-of-the-art radar and sensor technology. In fact, these platforms played an all-important role in detecting suspicious activities and monitoring of pirate movements in order to neutralize threats before they escalate. Furthermore, secure communication channels have been added to enable real time data exchange and improve coordination capabilities in response. Access to and analysis of high-quality data has been crucial in proactively identifying piracy hotspots and minimizing risk before it materializes.⁵⁵

3.3 Training and Capacity-Building Programs

Naval personnel skills and preparedness are also an important element of US-India cooperation and the capacity-building initiatives. Crews have been participating in joint training exercises and specifically anti-piracy simulation drills with the goal of making them familiar with how each crew will do their mission, how they will carry out the

⁵⁴ James R. Holmes, Toshi Yoshihara, and Andrew C. Krepinevich, *The Naval Arms Race in Indian Ocean* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

⁵⁵ "The Role of COMCASA in India's Maritime Security," *India Defense Weekly* (November 2017), <https://www.indiadefenseweekly.com>.

activities they will have to do in their mission and what protocols or tactics to use. These programs emphasize piracy interdiction scenarios through coordination, fast decisions and effective technology. These efforts at training have had a long-lasting positive impact on the efficiency of use and the confidence of personnel in the use of these systems during the real world and have been integral to the success of the partnership. They further integrate naval teams of all cultures and foster interpersonal understanding and spirit of collaboration. Moreover, these training efforts also cover the cyber threats to maritime systems as well as the traditional piracy threats. Advanced simulations and state-of-the-art equipment training are also included in the training, so naval personnel are trained in using emerging technologies. Moreover, the navies have also conducted workshops and development of exchange programs which enable a pool of highly skilled professionals, who are capable of handling the multi faced maritime threats.⁵⁶

3.3.1 Joint Naval Drills and Tactical Operations

The US and Indian navies have increased operational synergy through naval drills and real-world tactical collaboration. These engagements focus on practical, on ground coordination to counter the ever-present piracy threat. In particular, the focus on real world scenarios helps you to be ready for and adaptable during high pressure situations. The exercises build interoperability through combined naval drills that help forces perfect their messaging along with movement and action operations in mock piracy responses. Joint US-Indian coordination through elevated patrols generates stronger abilities among armed forces for quick piracy intervention in high-risk waters. The high level of cooperation serves two essential purposes of reinforcing Indian Ocean maritime security as well as demonstrating a strategic obligation to maintain open sea navigation and maintain regional peace.⁵⁷

3.3.2 Malabar Naval Exercises

Malabar naval exercises are flagship initiatives of US-India maritime cooperation and focused on anti-piracy operations. During the annual exercises scenario are complex —

⁵⁶ Ashok K. Behuria, *Indian Maritime Strategy and the Role of India's Navy in Countering Piracy* (New Delhi: National Maritime Foundation, 2015).

⁵⁷ "US-India Military Cooperation: The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement," *Defense Security Cooperation Agency* (February 2017), accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.dsca.mil/us-india-lemoa>.

for example, tracking down pirate vessels, rescuing hijacked ships, or protecting vital sea lanes. In recent years, Malabar has added advanced components, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for real time surveillance, multi vessel coordination and joint boarding operations. Such drills are designed to test real world challenges and build interoperability so that both navies are ready to conduct joint operations smoothly in high-risk waters. The other exercises also will include mock engagements with simulated pirate ships to test crews' tactical acumen and the ability to break down the 'right decision.' Both actions increase preparedness but also trust and mutual understanding of one another's respective navy. Malabar is growing in complexity, mirroring the greater sophistication of piracy threats and the requirement for innovative response.⁵⁸

3.3.3 High Risk Zone coordinated patrols

Apart from large scale exercises, US and Indian navies have carried out coordinated patrols in the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and other piracy hotspots. Continuous naval presence is supposed to be a deterrent to piracy, and the patrols allow for it. For instance, vast areas have been monitored by means of coordinated patrols, the use of surface ships, helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft. An approach that proved successful several times is one that has led to the interception of armed pirate skiffs and the safe escort of commercial shipping convoys through vulnerable corridors. These pairs of patrols are positive proof of the partnership's operational agility to adjust to the ever-changing threat environments. Techniques of rapid response teams are combined with advanced surveillance technology for limiting maritime traffic disruption. Moreover, both navies have easily been able to integrate their operational protocols and respond to threats across broad spectrum of scenarios.⁵⁹

3.3.4 Crisis Response Operations in Real Time

Real time crisis response has also been another major part of the partnership. In the case of offshore US-India collaboration, assets have been quickly deployed to deal with emergent piracy threats. Case studies regarding effective joint operations being utilized

⁵⁸ "US-India Counter-Piracy Cooperation: Strategic Importance," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* (April 2015), <https://www.usni.org>.

⁵⁹ P. K. Ghosh, "Indian Navy and the US Navy: Bilateral Cooperation and Counter Piracy Operations," *Naval Review* 103, no. 4 (2016): 28-35.

to rescue merchant vessels under attack are successful examples of cooperative crisis response mechanisms. These operations are multi-phase operations which include surveillance, interdiction and post incident investigation. Additionally, sending out pledges of elite Special Forces armed with state-of-the-art weapons and surveillance systems has revolutionized the whole game in important occasions. The partnership is mature and efficient enough to seamlessly move from surveillance to active engagement.⁶⁰

3.4 Modeling the Success of Collaborative Efforts

The long haul returns for these initiatives are good and the strategic and operational worth is significant. Maritime security advancement and anti-piracy protection mechanisms are the fundamental basis of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) security. The results of joint maritime operations are significant in reducing piracy incidents and increasing the performance of interceptions and reducing their response time. This allows for advanced situational awareness which comes from combined patrols and information sharing procedures to enable proactive threat interventions. The strategic worth of the collaborative initiatives to fight piracy and to defend maritime stability and free navigation across the region is the basis of their evolution.⁶¹

3.4.1 Reduced Piracy Revealed by Statistical Evidence

The number of piracy incidents in areas patrolled by US and Indian naval forces has dropped. Directly attributable to sustained operations, the decrease of pirate attacks stem from the disruption of the networks as well as the deterrence thereof. This has been corroborated by regular reporting by maritime security organizations who have stated that joint patrols and surveillance are of critical importance. The partnership has tangible benefits and has enhanced the safety of the shipping lanes, which has enhanced international trade. Further, it is equally evident that traveling in such areas which have implemented consistent collaborative actions to reduce piracy have lower cost of piracy related insurance costs for vessels sailing in these areas.⁶²

⁶⁰ Steven R. Weisman, *Indian Ocean: Global Trade and Piracy Threats* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁶¹ "The Malabar Exercises: Enhancing US-India Naval Cooperation," *Strategic Insight* 35, no. 3 (2019): 151-166.

⁶² Stuart O. Smith, *Cooperative Strategies for Piracy: The US and India in Indian Ocean* (London: International Maritime Press, 2018).

3.4.2 Enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness

Enhancement of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through the integration of land, air and maritime sensor information and data and development of an operational analysis capability is addressed. Maritime domain awareness from intelligence sharing and surveillance capability integration has greatly increased in piracy prone areas. Early threat detection has enabled naval forces to be proactive and reduce the risk of highly successful pirate attacks.

Similarly, this increased awareness of the situation has benefited global trade, and with it, has come increased safety in commercial shipping lanes. In addition, it has been further enhanced in domain awareness using technologically advanced techniques including satellite imagery and automated identification systems (AIS) for very detailed monitoring of extremely large volumes of maritime space. Nevertheless, it has been key to being aware of threats to pirate interception before such a thing occurs and to maritime security as a whole.⁶³

3.4.3 Operational Milestones

The US-India partnership highlights operational successes, including the interception of pirate vessels, which are armed with sophisticated weaponry. These joint crisis response protocols were also successful in the rescue of hostages, held hostage in ships being hijacked. These milestones lay the foundation for future collaborations and demonstrate the capacity for ongoing, high-level engagement. Lessons continued to be learned by documented case studies, and these serve as a guide in strategic planning for future operations. In addition, these achievements advance the story about international maritime security, highlighting the utility of strong partnerships to the problem of piracy globally.⁶⁴

The dynamics of US India naval cooperation to combat piracy can be examined through application of Barry Buzan's Domestic Structure Model. Buzan holds the view that a nation's internal structure (politics, economy and society), exerts a major influence on

⁶³R. S. Rajan, "India's Naval Strategy and Power Projection," *Strategic Analysis* 32, no. 5 (2008): 789-804

⁶⁴N. R. B. Gopi, "Interoperability and US-India Maritime Exercises in Tackling Piracy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 2 (2020): 98-110.

its behavior on the global scene. In this vein, the model helps explain why both the United States and India want to enter into a partnership to tackle piracy, particularly in Indian Ocean Region (IOR), an important area for global trade.

Strategy in the IOR is intimately linked to India's internal political and economic structures. With a rapidly growing economy, India is very conscious of how critical it is to ensure sea lanes that bring it to the global market. Safe passage of goods through maritime choke points such as the Gulf of Aden and Malacca Strait is essential to economic growth, energy security, and regional stability; all of which are key priorities of the Indian government's domestic policies. The growing significance of securing of these essential trade routes has made India to strengthen its naval capabilities and to strongly adhere to safeguarding the safety and security of the IOR. India's strategic objective of regional autonomy and influence also imparts the direction of maritime security focus in India. In its third attempt to highlight its role and emerging power status, India wants to be an established leader within South Asia, while protecting its economic rise from transnational threats such as piracy. To combat piracy and protect vital sea lanes, the pressing emphasis on maritime security has led India to respond more favorably to the need to co-operate with external powers, especially the U S. The country's internal structures, security priorities are directly reflected in the Indian Navy's deployment of advanced surveillance technologies like the P8I Poseidon aircraft and taking part of joint naval exercises like Malabar with the US — M.D. Nalapat.

On the contrary, the United States internal structures, especially its political and economic considerations influence its approach to the issue of piracy in the IOR. Being a major global military and economic power, the United States has an interest in maintaining maritime security on the key global trade routes. If unchecked, piracy in the IOR will have global trade implications that are critical to the US economy. In addition, the US considers its mission in global security core to its foreign policy goals and therefore wishes to establish partnerships that support its strategic goals, for example US alliance with India. Second, domestic structures of the United States such as its effective defense machinery and prioritization of maintaining global peace demand United States to step up its activities in relevant areas like IOR. On this front, the US is leveraging its tech medical edge — advanced surveillance systems,

intelligence sharing agreements such as COMCASA, and logistical support under the LEMOA agreement — aid India in improving the buoyancy of its naval preparedness and operational potential. It benefits the US economically and geopolitically, while simultaneously making friends with India and bolstering US ambitions for being a decisive player in the Indo Pacific region. With its mix of military projection and global economic stability, US domestic structure presents piracy as a centerpiece security issue requiring global cooperation. In that context, the India partnership ticks all the boxes of US priorities to ensure freedom of navigation, protect key trade routes and solidify its position as a leader in international security.

Besides, the Securitization Theory demonstrates how each of these two countries, with different domestic structures and institutional models, constructs national interest to face mutual security issues. India desires to safeguard its maritime trade routes and to enhance its stature as a regional leader on one hand, while, on the other hand, the US wants to strengthen global security and support the economy. The examples of their effectiveness in being actors across their internal structures for external challenges are their participation in Malabar exercises, intelligence sharing as displayed in the Indo — US postures against China in South China and coordinated patrols in piracy-prone areas. Political, economic and security considerations push both nations to a common cause to counter piracy and secure the IOR, although they may differ domestically.

The Securitization Theory then goes on to demonstrate how each of these two countries, with different domestic structures, develops a national interest to face common security issues. India desires to safeguard its maritime trade routes and to enhance its stature as a regional leader, and on the other hand, the US wants to strengthen global security and support the economy. The examples of their effectiveness are their participation in Malabar exercises, intelligence sharing as displayed in the Indo — US postures against China in South China and coordinated patrols in piracy-prone areas. How states with disparate domestic structures can still arrive at common security agendas was demonstrated by the conjunction of U.S. and Indian approaches to counter-piracy. In this regard, the theory provides a useful lens for comprehending these dynamics since it elucidates how leaders change general issues into urgent security threats that justify extraordinary measures. Subsequently, the threat of piracy went beyond concerns of

law enforcement to touch upon national prosperity, regional influence and global credibility in both Washington and New Delhi.

For the US, the securitization of piracy was molded by its role as a global maritime guarantor and by the impact of its institutional landscape. For this, American policymakers linked piracy not only to the safety of shipping and energy flows but also to the reliability of the United States in maintaining international order. In addition, within the U.S., the debate was reinforced by lobbying from the shipping industries and defense investors who benefited from extended naval commitments. Moreover, bureaucratic institutions such as the State Department, Pentagon and Coast Guard each understood piracy through their own mandates yet converged on the requirement for continuous leadership in the Indian Ocean.

On the other hand, considering the geostrategic interests of India, securitization was closely tied to its domestic requirements of economic growth and energy security. As a developing economy heavily reliant on seaborne trade and resultant economic activity, piracy was presented to the domestic audience as well as political and economic institutions as a direct danger to India's rising global profile and to the livelihoods connected to its maritime economy. Incidentally, political leaders and naval officials highlighted the vulnerability of energy imports and trade routes, rallying public and institutional support for investments in naval modernization and active involvement in multinational patrols. Consequently, the narrative of piracy as a threat to national development has implanted maritime security deeply within India's domestic priorities.

As a result, the process of securitization shaped parallel outcomes despite these domestic differences: both states elevated piracy to the status of a strategic threat and subsequently legitimized the provision of resources to confront it. This shared framing paved the way for collaboration in events like Malabar exercises, intelligence exchanges, and coordinated patrols. Notably, this securitization allowed piracy to remain on the bilateral agenda even when incident levels fell, as it was no longer treated as an erratic criminal activity but as part of a larger Indo-Pacific security discourse.

So, the chapter establishes that securitization theory does more than explain why piracy was addressed as a security threat—it exposes how the domestic structures of two very different states, with varying geostrategic interests, enabled the construction of a

common security narrative. India securitized piracy to fuel its economic upheaval and safeguard trade, while the U.S., being a global superpower, did so to maintain its global role and strategic standing. Together, these narratives converged into a bilateral agenda that transitioned piracy from a periodic challenge into a security issue that served as the long-term cornerstone of maritime cooperation.

3.5 Conclusion

The US and India being on board in tackling piracy is a cornerstone of regional maritime security. With the help of strategic agreements, advanced surveillance capabilities and robust joint operations, tangible results with respect to reduction of piracy incidents and guarantee of safety of vital sea lanes have been achieved. Successful key programs such as LEMOA and COMCASA and the operational precision of initiatives like Malabar exercises and coordinated patrols show how far and how steep this collaboration is in this partnership. Furthermore, both navies are now operationally ready to adopt changing maritime threats, as capacity building and intelligence sharing leverage has been added to what already exists.

While challenges persist, including how to deal with the latest variants of maritime crime and how to better integrate regional partners into a maritime security partnership, US–India naval collaboration is a model of excellence for international maritime security partnership. The two nations, as an example of cooperative security, develop mutual trust and cooperation between the two sides to take advantage of the advantages they possess to solve the transnational threat.

Apart from anti-piracy effort, this partnership has regional geopolitical and strengthening strategic balance in Indian Ocean Region implications. Evolution of maritime threats implies that the partnership's relevance is dependent on its liveliness and willingness to innovate with partners.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES OF PIRACY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MARITIME SECURITY IN INDIAN OCEAN

The issue of piracy in the Indian Ocean is a long-time problem for global maritime security with far reaching financial, economic and geopolitical consequences. With piracy back in the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Strait of Malacca, there is a more comprehensive crisis to the immediate financial losses. In addition, piracy also comes with a financial cost to shipping companies whose vessels are hijacked, national governments, international organizations and global consumers who suffer from the ripple effects of interrupted trade and higher operating costs. This chapter looks at the financial impact of piracy in several dimensions including ransom payments; increase in maritime insurance premiums; rise in operation costs due to anti-piracy measures and the wider economic impacts of piracy on global trade routes.

One of the most direct financial impacts of piracy is the payment of ransoms, which has become a very profitable business for pirate groups in Indian Ocean. High profile incidents like the pirates' capture of the Maersk Alabama and Sirius Star, normally show ransom sought in millions of dollars. We were up against the height of piracy activity in the region where Somali pirates alone are said to have been raking in about \$200 million a year. Furthermore, these ransom payments made by insurance companies suck up monetary funds from other areas and are a direct enticement to get these pirating syndicates to continue with more operations.

Also, the rise in cost of maritime insurance is attributed to piracy. Shipping companies operating in piracy prone areas pay very high insurance premiums because underwriters impose such big surcharges on those companies to cover the increased risks. Premiums for vessels transiting high risk areas have risen by as much as 30 per cent at Lloyd's in London, which can add a lot to operational expenses. As a result, global consumers have to bear the financial cost of these premiums in their purchases of goods transported through these regions. Ransom demands are not the only effects of piracy off the Indian coast, as they also ripple into the global cost of commerce and commerce itself.

In addition, anti-pirating measures are very expensive to operate on both private entities and national governments. In order to solve piracy, governments supply major naval involvement such as warships, surveillance aircraft and personnel through international coalitions such as the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). These are very expensive in terms of money required to maintain fuel, logistics and intelligence gathering. Additionally, due to growing reliance of private shipping companies on private security firms to safeguard their vessels, the cost of maritime transportation is only being increased further. These measures have proved successful but are a long-term financial commitment increasing the total economic cost of piracy.

Beyond its direct financial impact, however, piracy disrupts world international trade because it grieves the main shipping routes, especially in the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Malacca. Rerouting strategies, which are very expensive and increase fuel consumption as well as delivery timelines, need to be implemented by shipping companies. As a result, the delays and inefficiencies of global trade become further unstable and problematic industries, like energy, manufacturing, retail etc do not afford timely deliveries. Shortage, price fluctuations and decrease in trade volume that piracy related disruptions bring to the global economy have an implication on the stability of the global economy.

It also analyzes how geopolitical and structural forces define how piracy is dealt with and how they perpetuate the emergence of piracy in this chapter. This paper draws on Barry Buzan's Domestic Structure Model as a means of understanding how the political, economic, and security priorities of a state influence the degree of interests that a state has in countering piracy. In other words, two such programs, namely, naval expansion and regional security programs, have been selected for the security of India's own maritime trade interests as well as to avoid piracy because the two are intimately connected. Likewise, in its interest in maintaining open international shipping lanes, the United States, with worldwide defense capabilities, has also been a leader in multinational counter piracy operations. However, the face of piracy keeps on changing and the modus operandi of the pirates' groups also keeps changing and is continuously using the technological progress to thwart the security measures.

Hence the piracy in the Indian Ocean is a complex and multi-dimensional issue impacting upon the financial sector beyond immediate costs of ransom payments and insurance premiums. However, comprehensive combat of it requires successful broad economic and security dynamic multi-lateral international cooperation and strategic naval and technological investment with legal frameworks to proactively deter and to properly prosecute piracy. In this chapter, economic, financial and security issues of piracy are analyzed, and a comprehensive examination of the broad impacts of piracy on world trade and sea balance is made from a view of these problems.

This chapter explain following themes comprehensively: i. Financial Impact of Piracy, ii, Ransom Payments and Economic Losses, iii Increased Maritime Insurance, iv Operational Costs of Anti-Piracy Measures, IV Economic Consequences on Trade Routes, v Navigation and Global Trade Risks, vi Shipping Lanes Disruption, vii Impact on International Trade, viii Piracy in Development of Anti-Piracy Strategies, ix Socio-economic and Political Drivers of Piracy, x Evolution of Piracy Tactics and Technology, xi Weak Enforcement of Anti-Piracy Laws, xii International Naval Cooperation Limits, xiii Conclusion and Theoretical Discourse.

4.1 Financial Impact of Piracy

Piracy in Indian Ocean has big financial implication for the shipping companies but also for the rest of the world economy. Piracy in the Indian Ocean is therefore a highly expansive economic phenomenon that impacts ongoing procedures of maritime governance and the future global economic structure. Such a serious threat has been produced by the pirate activities that multiple nations have to fund multilateral naval powers such as the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The costs of fuel, operating costs for maintaining these operations and logistical requirements and personnel expenses erode national defense expenditures and require other essential security measures to be funded at a lesser level. Piracy forces the stopping in the free movement of strategic goods through vital maritime trade routes which in turn interrupts worldwide supply operation and cost increases for consumers. The security challenge of maritime trade dependent states inspires them to increase their military spending and join regional cooperative defense programs such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct to protect their commercial shipping routes, and the financial effects of piracy can be measured in terms of direct costs

including ransom payments, insurance premiums and expenses on anti-piracy measures and indirect costs, which are trade disruption and fall in reputation.⁶⁵

4.1.1 Ransom Payments and Economic Losses

Ransom payments have one of the most direct financial impacts relating to piracy. Pirates hijack the vessels and crews and hold them to ransom for hefty sums. High profile incidents such as the hijacking of the Maersk Alabama and the Sirius Star have put these payments into perspective, and they number in the millions of dollars. South of Somalia, IMB says, pirates based there alone were earning at least \$200 million a year in ransom payments during piracy's heyday in the area. Ransom payments have financial consequences for shipping companies that are greater than the direct expenditure to the kidnappers. Firms operating in piracy-prone waters incur higher costs of ransoms and legal process, as well as the costs of ransoms logistical arrangements and delivery. These costs mainly affect kidnap-and-ransom (K&R) coverage, which in turn drives up the costs of maritime shipping through insurance rates. By paying ransom money, shipping companies provide a monetary motivation for criminal networks to continue with their operations, hence allowing their activities to grow wider. The presence of international naval forces in the region is a continuous one, and numerous security disturbances in the region have worsened maritime security conditions. Two such problems caused by piracy are economic decline resulting in the loss of vital foreign direct investment in maritime industries and fisheries and the disruption of trade routes along which commercial shipping that further aggravates the economic weaknesses of the coastal states.⁶⁶

4.1.2 Increased Maritime Insurance

Shipping companies sailing in piracy prone regions such as the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and the Strait of Malacca are financially challenged by insurers who raise the cost of endeavor. Estimates suggest that these increases can be as much as 30% for vessels transiting through high-risk areas, according to Lloyd's of London. The cost of goods worldwide is inflated by the higher premiums that are often passed onto consumers.

⁶⁵ Weldemichael, Awet, Patricia Schneider, and Andrew Winner, eds. *Maritime Terrorism and Piracy in Indian Ocean Region*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

⁶⁶ Parmar, Sarabjeet Singh. "Maritime Security in Indian Ocean: A Changing Kaleidoscope." *Journal of Defence Studies* 7, no. 4 (2013): 117–139

The rising expenses in maritime insurance impact global trade together with economic stability. The classification of vital piracy hotspots as ‘war risk’ areas by insurers demands shipowners to cover war risk premiums that escalate transportation costs considerably. As a result of rising piracy risks shipping organizations decide to use longer alternate delivery paths through the Cape of Good Hope rather than using the Suez Canal which results in increased fuel usage and delayed transport. Substantial expenses from piracy increase the operational costs of maritime transport while leading to higher inflation rates especially in oil and raw material and consumer good sectors. Small shipping companies along with developing nations face the most impact from rising insurance expenses since they cannot afford the increased costs as well as maintain economic equivalency in maritime trading operations.⁶⁷

4.1.3 Operational costs of anti-piracy measures

These anti-piracy operations are expensive. Naval patrols, private security companies, and advanced security systems required to be deployed by governments and private companies together have used significant resources. Maintenance and operation of warships and associated surveillance equipment, and personnel costs are all part of the costs associated with international naval operations including EUNAVFOR and CMF. Today shipping companies need to spend substantial amounts on developing onboard security systems to counter piracy threats. Heavy security expenditures arise from using private maritime security contractors with armed guards when vessels move through piracy zones. Long range acoustic devices (LRADs) and razor wire along with water cannons and citadels, which are protective areas for crew members during attacks, are included in the safety systems fitted on the ships. To counter piracy tactics, the shipping industry has implemented preventive measures that impose new expenses on companies that are expected to update themselves on piracy developments. Anti-piracy operations increase the cost of sterling to coastal states, which are required to divert public funds towards port security improvements and better protection of maritime domain awareness. They also need additional budget to put in place proper legal procedures of prosecuting piracy-related offences. Piracy prevention requires reallocation of public

⁶⁷ OCIMF. *BMP5 - Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security*. London: Oil Companies International Marine Forum, 2018. <https://www.ocimf.org/publications/books/bmp5>.

resources which has negative effect on other important developmental funding requirements, showing financing complexities in piracy reduction.⁶⁸

4.1.4 Economic Consequences on Trade Routes

Piracy also has the disruption of key trade routes going on, particularly in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. The cost of shipping is made up of these disruptions; they create delays and rerouted ships as well as higher fuel consumption. In the case that vessels are forced to reroute or delay their journeys, ripple effect for global supply chains is a real possibility with shortages, higher prices and lower trade volumes further distressing the already straining global economy. Piracy induced disruptions cause extensive economic pressure that disrupts local and worldwide commerce patterns. Vessel re directions to bypass active piracy areas make vessels travel longer distances through the Cape of Good Hope, which in turn leads to increased fuel expenses and delivery times. Shipping costs are increased by operational delays caused by pirate activity which in turn raises prices for all shipped goods, particularly for energy supplies, necessary raw materials and perishable items. Investors are hesitant to invest in ports and maritime businesses in the affected regions because of the continuous security threats in maritime straits. Most are struggling with developing nations that depend on sea transport and are unable to participate in the market due to reduced shipping volumes, which hampers their economic growth in the same way as other economic problems. Multiple disruptions together increase strategic importance of stable worldwide shipping operations for the sake of global trade efficiency, and this is why maritime security is such a critical part of it.⁶⁹

4.2 Navigation and Global Trade Risks

Piracy threat in Indian Ocean persists, which is a source of risk for maritime navigation with far reaching implications on the global trade. Piracy disrupts shipping on vital lanes, adds costs, threatens the safety of crews and vessels and has significant economic and logistical impact. Both nations and companies have to spend more money on security measures to reduce piracy threats in the Indian Ocean during global maritime trade operations. Shipping companies have to prepare precise navigation routes, taking

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⁶⁹ Simonds, Michael. *Maritime Insurance, Risk, and Seafarer Security: Navigating Piracy in Indian Ocean*. London: Routledge, 2023.

into consideration reports on latest piracy and availability of naval protection services (and at additional operational expense). Shipping delays put pressure on the finances of cargo owners and traders, making them reluctant to invest in maritime commercial ventures, and adding to this are the potential losses as well as elevated insurance premiums. Piracy hinders supply chain resilience because sea robbery acts are random and create unpredictable shipping conditions that jeopardizes just in time delivery operations and results in global market inventory deficits and price fluctuations. Piracy security threats require world powers to maintain extended multinational cooperation with financial support for counterpiracy operations and enhancing maritime security as a fundamental basis for international economic stability.⁷⁰

4.2.1 Shipping Lanes Disruption

Piracy disrupts two of the most critical shipping lanes in Indian Ocean — the Gulf of Aden and Strait of Malacca. For the whole world, these chokepoints are important, since millions of tons of oil, goods and raw materials are transported through these areas each year. Piracy also requires ships to take detours, which in addition to time, also means additional fuel costs. As a result, piracy has become so threatening that costly convoy systems have had to be set up and security of vessels transiting through these areas increased. The incidents of disruption such as these impact global trade flows and market stability much beyond direct shipping fees. Operational delays on supply chains occur when ships change their routes to avoid piracy prone zones resulting in critical item shortages and higher commercial prices for end consumers. Shipping companies pay substantial sums to implement security measures such as armed guards and defensive equipment which they typically transfer to consumers through elevated prices across the economic system. These strategic corridors remain under continued piracy threats which required major powers to establish multinational naval task forces for maritime security protection. Pirate groups along with the vast ocean territory continue to create significant obstacles for maintaining continuous maritime trade through sea corridors.⁷¹

⁷⁰ "Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security and Policy Challenges." *RAND Corporation*, 2011. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10840>.

⁷¹ "Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships: Indian Ocean Region." *International Maritime Organization*, 2019. <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/PIU/Pages/Reports.aspx>.

4.2.2 Impact on International Trade

Piracy disruption of shipping routes intrudes into international trade. For instance, frequent oil tankers are targeted, and the crime drives fluctuations in the global oil prices off the coast of Somalia. Furthermore, other piracy related delays in other sectors, e.g. container shipping results to reduced supply chain efficiency and higher prices for the consumers. Piracy related disruption ripple effects are seen across industries that use time sensitive deliveries. The risk to the life and safety of the crew of vessels the pirates hijack is real. Crew members can be kept in psychological and physical harm for weeks, or even months, in hostage situations. Sometimes, piracy leads to deaths. The practice of employing private armed guards in vessels, to protect crew members from the heightened risk, has spread widely in the industry, leading to higher operational costs for shipping companies, and raising ethical and effectiveness issues about such measures.⁷²

4.3 Piracy in Development of Anti-Piracy Strategies

Despite the use of large-scale anti-piracy measures, piracy evolves as a response to new technologies, political shifts and shortfalls in current counter piracy measures. This section analyzes the factors that lead to the persistence and resurgence of piracy in Indian Ocean. The main difficulty when fighting piracy comes from the fact that it is flexible in its attitude towards security strategies and developing geopolitical circumstances. Advancements in military and communication technology have enabled pirates to use mother ships which have extended their operational reach into the Indian Ocean and new operational methods have been developed. Political instability and weak governance systems in coastal countries such as Somalia make it possible for the pirate networks to find safe operational bases. With weak prosecution systems and ineffective legal infrastructure, piracy becomes a more dangerous act since seized pirates are hardly prosecuted leading to few penalties for their crimes.

4.3.1 Socio-economic and Political Drivers of Piracy

Socio economic factors tend to drive piracy as poverty, lack of governance and political instability in some areas of Indian Ocean. In Somalia, for example, in many ways the

⁷² Baslar, Kemal. *Piracy and International Maritime Security*. Geneva: UN Publications, 2003.

collapse of the central government early on in the 1990s left a sort of a power vacuum that allowed piracy to grow. As traditional industries like fishing and agriculture in the area offered only few, limited economic opportunities, piracy offered a source of income. The extent of the world's oceans around these countries, and the lack of effective law enforcement, make it hard to stop pirate activity. Alternative economic opportunities are limited for coastal communities who find piracy as their only surviving choice. Fish stocks decline because of foreign fleets performing illegal unreported unregulated (IUU) fishing thus creating new incentives for struggling people who resort to piracy. The areas lacking strong state control become opportunities for piracy networks to join other criminal activities such as weapon and human trafficking which create persistent threats despite intervention attempts. International attempts to fix piracy's fundamental socio-economic elements have produced recurring instances of resurgence because non-permanent crackdowns provide no sustainable stability. Piracy will continue to pose a persistent risk in the Indian Ocean because of the absence of complete development programs which should aim to build economic strength and enforce governance systems and make communities more resilient.⁷³

4.3.2 Evolution of Piracy Tactics and Technology

Piracy groups in Indian Ocean have altered their methods in response to anti-piracy measures. Pirates have become common to use mother ships, to operate further from the shore and avoid detection. Mother ships, which these comprise, are mobile bases, which allow pirate groups to undertake attacks at locations further from the coast. But, in addition, pirates are more and more advanced in using technology, including GPS systems, satellite phones, and even drones to track vessels, and organize their attacks with unprecedented accuracy. Technological advancements brought counter-piracy operations to heightened operating capabilities which now pose difficulties in combating piracy activities. Through encrypted communications and real-time intelligence access pirates can execute their attacks more precisely while remaining undetected by naval forces. Their surveillance drones enable pirates to both detect high-priority targets and detect security limitations within potential targets before executing attacks. The growing threat of cyber-enabled piracy shows increasing danger since

⁷³ Song, Xue, and Andrew S. Lee. "Piracy in Indian Ocean and Maritime Security." *Asian Security* 10, no. 1 (2014): 35–55.

hackers exploit shipping databases to obtain vital shipping information leading to improved pirate targeting. Shipping entities alongside security forces need to implement more complex countermeasures including sophisticated analysis tools and automated security detection systems because of technological progress. Maritime stakeholders must stay watchful while pirates increase their methods of operation because security strategies need to develop alongside new technological risks.⁷⁴

4.3.3 Weak enforcement of anti-piracy laws

While there has been the creation of anti-piracy legal frameworks in many parts of Indian Ocean, enforcement is weak. With limited resources and infrastructure in coastal states, especially in Somalia and to its neighboring countries, it is hard to arrest and prosecutes pirates. When pirates are taken, lack of proper judicial systems ensure that they are released to return to piracy. The lack of accountability behind this allows anti-piracy initiatives to be ineffective and pirates to continue to run a lucrative business. The implementation of anti-piracy law enforcement faces two main challenges that come from technical problems with identifying international boundaries and weak cooperative systems between nations. Lack of authority in naval forces during pirate patrols restricts their powers to arrest and try suspects. The legal question about jurisdictional authority over apprehended pirates often produces drawn-out diplomatic procedures which allow many criminals to return to piracy activities. Security detention facilities together with trial abilities remain beyond the reach of numerous coastal states which therefore establish a continuous flow releasing captured pirates into criminal conduct. The absence of extradition agreements and different local prosecution methods between different countries creates obstacles toward successful deterrence activities. Pirate deterrence needs robust regional laws and judicial training as well as enhanced inter-state cooperation for dealers of harsh sustained punishments to pirates.⁷⁵

4.3.4 International Naval Cooperation Limits

International naval cooperation has been an important task of combating piracy in Indian Ocean. The area is very large and the pirates' tactics in progress constitute a huge

⁷⁴ Crawford, James, and Alison Duxbury. *International Law and Piracy in Indian Ocean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

⁷⁵ Vagg, Edward. "Global Impacts of Piracy in Indian Ocean: A Study on Economic Consequences." *Global Politics Review* 10, no. 2 (2018): 203–218

challenge for naval forces. Although both Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and EUNAVFOR have worked hard to reduce the number of piracy cases taking place, they face lack of resources, opposite national interests and complexity of multinational operations. Piracy tactics are changing in such a way that it is getting harder and harder to keep a permanent and complete naval presence.

In the context of the chapter on piracy in Indian Ocean, Barry Buzan's Domestic Structure Model can be used to understand how internal structures of a country like India and United States influence their response to piracy and help in creating regional maritime security. According to Buzan, internal political, economic, and social dynamics of a country are the main determinants of its behavior in the world arena and as such, how it responds to a call for participation in counter piracy in Indian Ocean.

The chapter then analyzes the financial impact of piracy on ransom payment, higher insurance premiums and operation costs of anti-piracy measures on the internal structures of the countries involved in the fight against piracy. For example, maritime trade and growing naval capabilities are central to India's participation in antipiracy strategies, of which India's economic reliance is an example. India aims to secure its vital trade routes in Indian Ocean, because any disruption in maritime security poses serious threat to its economy which is driven by domestic economic priorities. India has greatly invested in its naval forces to do battle against piracy, which is jeopardizing free flow of goods, this involving procurement of advance surveillance technologies and enhanced collaboration with international coalitions. This is a domestic political priority for India, which seeks to ensure the stability of its economic growth, and its regional influence.

Likewise, Global trade routes are of direct interest to the United States with its powerful defense and military apparatus. The chapter also analyses the rising costs of anti-piracy operations including international naval patrols and private security measures. Since it is now the most powerful nation in the world, the US has done a great job of heading and accommodating multinational operations like EUNAVFOR and CMF which have tremendous naval capabilities. Buzan's model fits with this as the US's internal organization directs the US's interest in protecting international shipping lanes from piracy as it is to the US's internal interest to maintain global stability and secure trade routes. The chapter discusses the higher costs of naval operations, e.g., the maintenance

and operation of warships, which are the result of the US's internal economic and defense priorities that are oriented towards the global security and protection of vital interests.

The chapter then evaluates the fiscal impact of piracy on ransom payment, higher insurance premiums and operational costs of anti-piracy missions on the internal structures of the countries involved in the contest against piracy. For example, maritime trade and growing naval capabilities are central to India's participation in antipiracy strategies, of which India's economic reliance is an example. India aims to secure its vital trade routes in the Indian Ocean, because any disruption in maritime security poses a serious threat to its economy, which is driven by domestic economic priorities. India has greatly invested in its naval forces to do battle against piracy, which is jeopardizing the free flow of goods, involving the procurement of advanced surveillance technologies and enhanced collaboration with international coalitions. This is a domestic political priority for India, which seeks to ensure the stability of its economic growth and its regional influence. From an operational standpoint, Securitization Theory sheds light on how piracy's reframing as a high-level security threat underpinned the expansion of joint US–India naval exercises and intelligence-sharing mechanisms. The securitization narrative ensured political backing for resource-intensive operations and strengthened the interoperability of both navies by legitimizing extraordinary measures such as coordinated patrols in high-risk zones and the Malabar exercises. The financial costs of piracy redesigned how both the US and India understood maritime security and justified extraordinary responses. The theory helps explain this transition: leaders in both countries made the groundwork for costly investments in naval power, surveillance systems, and multinational operations by describing piracy as a direct danger to national economic stability.

In the case of the US, a global superpower, securitization was strongly tied to the global economy. American leaders outlined piracy as a systemic risk to international trade networks and energy markets, with direct costs for the US economy. This framing was further strengthened by insurance and shipping lobbies, demanding that Washington protect global sea lanes. As a result, the US justified high operational expenses for naval deployments, coalition building, and intelligence sharing with its strategic partners

under the broader mission of safeguarding free trade and global order under its hegemony.

On the other hand, for a regional stakeholder like India, the securitization of piracy was inseparable from its dependence on sea trade. Turbulence in any energy imports or container shipping was presented as threat not only to national security but also to economic growth, inflation, and industrial output. Rising insurance premiums for Indian shipping firms, together with ransom payments demanded by Somali pirates, amplified the perception that piracy was eroding the foundations of India's domestic prosperity. This description provided strong political backing for assigning huge financial and military resources to naval upgradation, developing cutting-edge surveillance technologies, and joining international patrols across the Indian Ocean. Piracy, consequently, became inserted in India's domestic security discourse as a barrier to development and regional influence.

This shows how the financial burden of piracy was transformed into a security imperative through this securitization process. What began as commercial problems of shipping, ransom payments, and insurance was rationalized as an existential risk to economic stability. This broad shift enabled governments in both countries, i.e., India and the United States, to rally public and institutional support for sustained counter-piracy measures.

The chapter, therefore, shows how the economic costs of piracy served as a trigger for securitization: both states guaranteed long-term commitment to joint naval operations by imposing financial losses within the etymology of national survival and global credibility. In this way, securitization theory enlightens not only why piracy was elevated to a security threat but also how its economic dimension became fundamental to mutual collaboration in the Indian Ocean between the two important global stakeholders.

4.4 Conclusion

Piracy in the Indian Ocean has a significant and extensive financial impact for shipping companies, global consumers, and the world economies. All stakeholders have been placed under a heavy financial burden from the direct costs such as ransom payments, insurance premiums and operational costs associated with anti-piracy measures. Piracy

has disrupted critical trade routes, slowing down orders, increasing operational costs and increasing the risks of global supply chains. With increasingly sophisticated tactics, piracy continues to evolve and the costs of responding to threats need to be incorporated to broader planning and cooperation efforts at the international level. Piracy apart from financial effects destabilizes a region and directly ripples through the economic priorities of a nation that is affected by it.

Countries like the US and India show the importance of securing the paths of life sustaining trade and keeping normal maritime operations. The investments of these nations into the development of naval capabilities, surveillance technology, and multinational military cooperation are all deployed with the aim of securing the region, but they are also for global economic stability. The fight against piracy also needs stronger international legal frameworks and continued cooperation in order to limit the financial effect of that. In addition to full naval cooperation, advanced technologies can also enhance the effectiveness of anti-piracy measures and at the same time reduce their security cost. On the contrary, this transnational crime needs to be guarded against the dwindling consequences and therefore, investment in maritime security infrastructure and capacity building is indispensable in promoting long term stability and furthering worldwide trade. It is important to understand piracy's broad financial impact as an important step in fortifying nations' response to piracy, particularly in designing more effective and efficient counter piracy strategies.

CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This thesis addressed the question of piracy in the Indian Ocean and the US-India collaborative fight against this threat between 2005 and 2023. Research proves that piracy is so complex and on such a large scale that it has global financial, political and security ramifications. Besides directly threatening transnational trade, piracy in this region has undermined the safety of commercial shipping and the security of the routes through which commercial commerce is conducted, with a large economic impact. In the mid-2000s, piracy incidents in the Indian Ocean reached alarming levels off the coast of Somalia. The most important maritime trade route and the scene of hijackings, kidnappings, and violent attacks has resulted in billions of dollars of losses and delays and insurance premiums every year. The increasing incidents of piracy created a strategic response from the United States and India, as both stakeholders securitized the issue, consequently growing partnership in the field of maritime security started to be forged in 2005. Piracy became a security threat from a peripheral issue, necessitating collaboration, since both wanted to secure key shipping lanes and protect international trade routes for their respective economic and strategic gains.

As such, the study, using Securitization Theory, provides an outline of the key strategies followed by the US and India to combat piracy: namely, the joint naval patrols, intelligence sharing and the coordinated naval exercises. These efforts were largely represented in Malabar naval exercises, which became an emblem of the cooperation of the two nations. Furthermore, bilateral frameworks and agreements were analyzed to determine the partnership's effectiveness. The research concludes that the positive impact of these initiatives contributed to a reduction in piracy incidents, but that it has not been enough to eliminate piracy as a problem. Piracy remains a dynamic phenomenon, and pirates are always developing new ways to circumvent anti-piracy measures, and increasingly new forms of attacks are seen in the region.

Through a study of piracy patterns between 2005 and 2023, the study demonstrates a significant reduction in piracy incidents after joint US-Indian backed measures, such as naval patrols. Nevertheless, it experienced periods of resurgence in places where local governance matters and socio-economic instability continued. Although the military

actions of the two countries were tactical successes, the study suggests that these efforts must be supplemented with strategies aimed at the socio-economic factors behind piracy. Government control, general poverty, and regional instability in countries such as Somalia continue to fuel piracy throughout the region. The focus of the study is therefore on further necessitating broader policy measures such as development aid, political stabilization, governance, etc.

The research, using theoretical underpinnings, also looked at the diplomatic and legal frameworks that have been the basis for the attempts to counter piracy. With other international partners, the United States and India have supported efforts such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which encourages regional cooperation among countries to combat piracy. The study revealed that many areas still lack legal and enforcement mechanisms to enable effective prosecution of pirates and long-term deterrence of piracy activities. Therefore, international legal frameworks should be reinforced, and regional cooperation should be promoted, with the aim of better coordinated and enforced policies.

Using Securitization Theory, the study analyzed the domestic elements of political and economic and security concerns in each nation, which pertinently affect their foreign policy toward piracy. The US, with a global security perspective, was primarily concerned with the protection of its international trade routes, while India, having a regional focus, looked to assert its presence in the Indian Ocean region. Thus, this dynamic offered opportunities as well as challenges for bilateral collaboration, and the research highlights the need for both countries to align their national priorities in order to achieve the maximum impact of their joint work.

The thesis concludes that while piracy in the Indian Ocean has been greatly reduced, much work remains to be done. However, piracy remains a serious problem due to changing tactics, regional instability and the challenging socio-economic conditions that feed piracy. This research then states that, in addressing piracy in the Indian Ocean, impacts can only be addressed very broadly, through a military response, but also through economic development, political stabilization and the creation of stronger and generally more effective legal frameworks. The US, India and other regional and international stakeholders will need to collaborate in the future to develop a long-term strategy to defeat piracy by addressing the symptoms and root causes.

In this research, the persistence of piracy in the Indian Ocean, from 2005 to 2023, has been thoroughly studied in the context of the collaborative maritime security efforts between the United States and India. This vital maritime corridor has been a long-standing threat to global trade, maritime security and regional stability, through piracy. The study has shown the important role that both the United States and India have had in confronting this growing threat via a variety of joint efforts, including naval patrols, intelligence sharing, and joint naval exercises, especially the Malabar exercises. The collaborative efforts have so far been very successful in lowering the occurrence of piracy and ensuring the safety of vital shipping lanes. The research has also pointed out the ongoing challenges of piracy, such as the modification of pirates' tactics, the persistence of socio-economic aspects promoting piracy and the absence of a solid legal framework for prosecution.

However, the results show that piracy does not seem to be decreasing in all areas of the Indian Ocean and is a complex and dynamic threat. Although military cooperation has delivered tactical successes, piracy continues to develop, with pirates responding to countermeasures and exploiting weaknesses in the region's socio-economic and political conditions. The study has also thrown light on the need to address the bigger picture of piracy with reference to the root causes of this juggernaut — poverty, political instability and weak governance in a country like Somalia. According to the study, the solution to piracy will be more than military; it shall be long-term and should be directed to the root cause of the problem.

The united effort of Indian and the United States has been crucial for the enhancement of maritime security in the Indian Ocean. Although their current strategies have put caps on the full potential of the partnership. Solutions to the piracy problem will have to continue to be military cooperation, but also more emphasis on socio-economic development, governance reforms, and strengthening legal frameworks for maritime crime. Additionally, other regional powers and global organizations must play their role to eliminate the threat of piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Findings

1. The US-India naval cooperation on piracy evolved with shifting regional threats, including rising piracy and increased Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. This

collaboration expanded beyond counter-piracy to broader security competition through enhanced surveillance and military partnerships.

2. International maritime security frameworks such as IORA and CGPCS have enabled the US and Indian navies to coordinate counter-piracy efforts by enhancing intelligence sharing, joint operations, and capacity-building with regional partners. These multinational bodies validate and strengthen their cooperation within a global anti-piracy context.

3. Research shows that shifting security priorities, US focus on Chinese maritime expansion and India's dual role in counter-piracy and Indo-Pacific interests created uncertainty in sustained naval collaboration. These differing aims sometimes disrupted joint operations, highlighting the need for improved strategic coordination.

4. The US-India maritime security cooperation succeeded by integrating national and international strategies but sustaining it requires stronger institutions and adaptive policies. Long-term strategic planning is essential to address evolving security threats in the Indian Ocean and ensure resilient counterpiracy efforts.

Recommendations

Based on conclusion and findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forth to enhance cooperation between the United States and India in tackling piracy in Indian Ocean, as well as to seize future opportunities for collaboration in maritime security:

1. Improving Military Cooperation and Air Surveillance of the Maritime Zone

The cooperation between United States of America and India has led to a decline of piracy and sustained joint naval patrols and coordinated efforts remain cornerstone of strategy in dealing with the piracy. For this, naval capabilities and technologies which would be able to increase the efficiency of such operations should be allocated more funding and resources. Both nations will continue to be able to react to shifting piracy tactics through continued participation in the Malabar exercises and expanded joint training and operational readiness.

2. An initiative is to strengthen Intelligence Sharing and Surveillance Capabilities.

Sharing intelligence between nations is pretty important. The United States and India need to create more robust, secure channels to share real time intelligence to make piracy deterrence efforts more effective. Additionally, meaningful enhancement of surveillance capacity, including satellite monitoring and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) will provide for better detection of pirate vessels, and better tracking of pirate activity across Indian Ocean. Disrupting pirate operations before they become hijackings or violent attacks can be helped by this.

3. This thesis addresses Socio Economic Factors that Contribute to Piracy.

Combating piracy should come from a holistic approach that looks at not only military and law enforcement measures but at the socio-economic factors that create piracy. The United States and India should work, along other international partners, to promote economic development (by means of such steps as humanitarian aid, creating employment, supporting local governance) in piracy prone areas. Efforts should be towards enhancing the quality of life of local people in order to reduce the lawfulness of piracy as a profitable vocation. Finally, by investing in education and vocational training programs a more sustainable future will be created for these communities.

4. Regional Cooperation and Legislation Frameworks

Piracy is a world problem demanding local interaction and multilateral participation. The United States and India should continue to work together with the other Indian Ocean nations toward closer coordination on maritime security matters. Partnerships for greater cooperation in piracy prevention and suppression, in both, strengthening regional agreements, including the Djibouti Code of Conduct. It should further strive to strengthen laws for prosecuting pirates. Those efforts include tightening maritime laws, building up regional legal institutions and training law enforcement agencies in susceptible piracy countries to make sure that those who are pirates can be effectively detained and prosecuted.

5. Preventing Piracy with the International Community

Piracy in Indian Ocean is a global problem and needs a global solution. The United States and India should press others — the United Nations, the European Union, and regional organizations like the African Union — to engage more broadly in piracy

prevention. By taking a collective approach, a pooling of resources, the sharing of best practices and a more coordinated response to piracy threats will be possible. Particularly the involvement of additional nations in the provision of international naval missions in Indian Ocean will bring about more presence of law enforcement on the seas and curb activities of pirates.

6. Maritime Education and Awareness Promotion

Finally, there should be greater effort in the matters of maritime education and maritime awareness in the US naval forces, and the Indian ones, as well as in international shipping community. Through increased investment in training programs for maritime personnel as well as expanding awareness of the risks of piracy the chance of successful piracy deterrence will improve. Safeguarding the future of maritime trade routes awareness could be developed through public campaigns to bring the attention to the use of sabotaging trade routes and commerce in the world at large.

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