

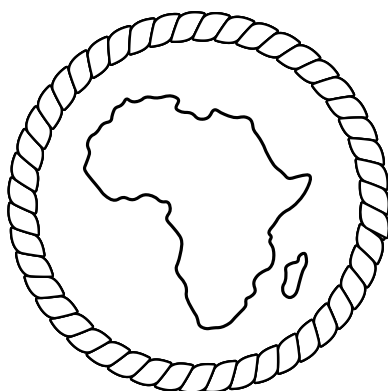


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AFRICAN MILITARY STUDIES

Volume 6



5TH SEA POWER FOR AFRICA SYMPOSIUM 2024

GOOD ORDER AT SEA IN THE
AFRICAN MARITIME DOMAIN

**NUS
PRESS**

5TH SEA POWER FOR AFRICA SYMPOSIUM 2024

Good order at sea in the African Maritime Domain

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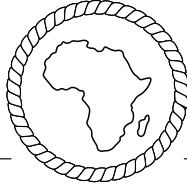
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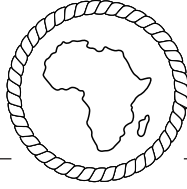
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AFRICAN MILITARY STUDIES

SERIES EDITOR: IAN VAN DER WAAG,
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

African Military Studies is an exciting, new series of books on war, conflict and armed forces in Africa. Covering the whole span of African history, and the full conflict continuum, the series seeks to encourage works on the drivers of armed conflict, the ways in which societies and armed forces prepare for and conduct war, the development of technology, strategy, tactics, and logistics in the African battlespace, and the impact of warfare on African societies. African Military Studies presents the latest research and accepts high-quality monographs, collections of essays, conference proceedings, and annotated military and historical texts. It is a library for the academic specialist, for the policymaker, and for the practitioner with “boots on the ground”.



FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY

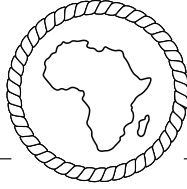
VICE ADMIRAL MONDE LOBESE

The South African Navy [SA Navy] was pleased to host the 5th *Sea Power for Africa Symposium* (SPAS) from 15–17 October 2024 on South African soil once again, the last [time] being 2009. This year’s iteration was themed ‘Good Order at Sea in the African Maritime Domain’ and was attended by 35 countries. SPAS is the only Pan-African forum that brings together African naval leaders, as well as academics, maritime security experts and policymakers, to deliberate on common maritime challenges and opportunities to enhance maritime security and cooperation on the African continent. Platforms such as these afford a common understanding of the African Maritime Domain (AMD) and how African navies, can work together toward a more comprehensive approach to securing the African continent’s maritime spaces. It is undeniable that the sea has always been central to the world’s globalised trading system, ergo, to any nation’s economic development. While navies are certainly not the only role-players, navies have always had an important role to play within this system.

Platforms such as SPAS can also serve as a mechanism to advance and prioritise Africa’s maritime security agenda. To this end, a Declaration of Intent (DoI) was signed by the 15 African Chiefs from Angola, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Togo. The declaration was aimed at finding ways to make regional cooperation and collaboration more practical so that it could be applied to real-world challenges, such as ways to mitigate the capacity limitations African navies face, unlocking the potential of the blue economy, particularly

in securing Africa's maritime interests, as well as advancing the maritime security agenda within the existing African peace and security architecture. This publication contains a signed copy of this important undertaking. It furthermore articulates the key [issues] that were deliberated upon within the context of traditional and non-traditional maritime security.

The SA Navy's heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to all those who participated in this very important dialogue, as well as those who produced this publication. In particular, the unwavering support of the Military Academy (Faculty of Military Science) deserves a special mention. It is hoped that this publication will provoke further thought on contemporary traditional and non-traditional maritime threats, as well as set the stage for the 6TH *Sea Power for Africa Symposium* scheduled to be held in Nigeria in 2026.



WELCOMING AND OPENING ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY

VICE ADMIRAL MONDE LOBESE

The following transcription retains the speaker's original wording to reflect the speech as delivered.

It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the Sea Power for Africa Symposium 2024, held in Cape Town, South Africa. (But) let us get to the business of the day.

Navies are an instrument of maritime security cooperation. Ninety percent of Africa's trade is by sea, highlighting the importance of the maritime arena to Africa, which consists of developing countries, with seventy percent of the countries being coastal or island countries. Delays in the delivery of cargo have the potential of causing unwanted socio-economic consequences in many affected States. Maritime trade and maritime security are thus essential for the economic growth of the continent as well as for its daily livelihood. The maritime security matrix developed by Bueger consists of four components: national security, marine safety, economic development and human security. The four concepts need not be integrated but this matrix is a tool for how different actors might understand and interpret maritime security.

The 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy identifies threats and vulnerabilities such as Transnational Organised Crime, Illegal Unreported Unregulated Fishing, Environmental Crime and Natural Disasters, just to

mention a few, to the African Maritime Domain. Africa must effectively combat these threats because it will hinder economic development, exacerbate food security issues and weaken African governments. In other words, a lot of Africa's new risks come from the water which threatens human security and economic development.

When utilising the maritime security matrix the focus of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy is more towards Economic development (Blue Economy) and Human Security (resilience). I believe that the exclusion of interstate maritime disputes or conflicts was a serious oversight on the part of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy as National Security (in the form of Sea power) plays an important role in maritime security. Sea power is the essence of any navy be it a blue -, green- or brown water navy.

The military role of a navy relates to the protection of national interests, the protection of the country's Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), it ensures international order at sea, it facilitates freedom of trade and movement on the high seas. Thus the military role covers the maritime security matrix developed by Bueger. The diplomatic role strengthens relationships and cooperation on both military and political levels. The policing or constabulary role is generally performed by coastguards, divided between various agencies or performed jointly. This role promotes the basic interest of a coastal State, protection of sovereignty, resources and good order at sea. For developing countries, coastguard responsibilities and nation building represent the extent of their naval responsibilities, either due to international/regional stability or financial limitations. In Africa this role is carried out by navies in support of other governmental agencies due to financial limitations. This is the challenge facing African Navies.

It must be emphasised that the military role oriented navies can perform both diplomatic and policing roles. The training required to perform law enforcement functions within territorial waters differs from the military training that naval sailors receive. Navies must have relationships with other arms of services internally, and other militaries externally, in order to perform their functions and exercise their skills. Coastguards' functions rely on relationships with civilian organisations.

African maritime security can be enhanced through naval cooperation. Cooperation between navies is inherent in their operating procedures as well as through their diplomatic roles. Cooperation between navies in conducting

patrols in the maritime arena of Africa is essential if Africa is to meet the emerging threats and challenges to its maritime security.

IsiXhosa is one of the 11 official languages here in South Africa and my mother tongue. A direct translation of the word SISONKE from IsiXhosa means “together” or “we are together.” SISONKE is one of the crucial African Values. Other nations must find us together. African Navies must strive for cooperation to ensure the maritime security of the continent. The focus must be on togetherness through action utilising the continental, regional and national initiatives to ensure maritime security.

Several initiatives focus on cooperation in the maritime security arena. The 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS), the SADC Maritime Security Strategy and Yaoundé Code of Conduct are examples of such initiatives and they lay the foundation to take action.. SISONKE. The 2050 AIMS is the overarching document that should be utilised by all African Nations to establish cooperation. The strategic end state has been defined as follows: “Increased wealth creation from African Maritime Domain (AMD) that positively contributes to socio-economic development, as well as increased national, regional and continental stability, through collaborative, concerted, cooperative, coordinated, coherent and trust-building multi-layered efforts to build blocks of maritime sector activities in concert with improving elements of maritime governance.” This is SISONKE. It is only through a combination of efforts that African Nations can secure the AMD. The cooperation of African Nations must also be implemented in conjunction with existing and relevant African Union, national and international regulatory frameworks and ongoing maritime initiatives in Africa.

I would like to highlight two important concepts. First the establishment of a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA). CEMZA is anticipated to provide Africa with significant, cross-cutting advantages in terms of geostrategic, economic, political, social, and security benefits since it will foster cooperation and lower the risks associated with all international threats and poor environmental management. Aiming to "Boost intra-African Trade," the CEMZA is a concept that aims to remove or streamline administrative procedures in intra-AU maritime transport to make it more appealing, efficient, and competitive as well as to do more to protect the environment. Establishing the CEMZA would assist in ensuring the African continent's maritime security, especially from an enforcement and governing point of view and thus, by extension, related to naval activities/operations and navies as a whole. I believe

that the nature and roles of navies can assist in this regard whilst the arduous process of establishing the CEMZA is underway.

The second concept is Inter-Agency/Transnational Cooperation and Coordination on Maritime Safety and Security. The crux of this concept is Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and how to enhance the African MDA within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the establishment of a representative continental working group of Chiefs of African Navies and/or Coast Guards (CHANS). These are steps toward promoting inter-agency and transnational cooperation and coordination on maritime safety and security. Since the establishment of the 2050 AIMS, 12 years ago, few or none of the objectives have been achieved. The objectives speak directly to SISONKE; on paper, SISONKE is alive, the foundation and building blocks are in place, it is time to build the house, and the builders are the African Navies and/or Coastguards.

The establishment of Regional Maritime Headquarters (MHQ) and Maritime Operational Coordination Centres (MOC) is lagging and must come online and function properly as this will indeed coordinate the patrolling of the AMD and ensure that African maritime security is enhanced. MHQ and MOC are key to realising the 10 objectives that were set out for establishing enhanced maritime security in the AMD. Out of the 38 coastal States in Africa, none has sufficient assets to ensure maritime security in their maritime domains, including the adjacent maritime areas' insecurities that could affect their prosperity or economic development. Furthermore, most of these coastal States if not all, have no financial muscle to acquire the required and appropriate assets. Therefore, African States have no choice but to be together, 'SISONKE.' As the Heritage Special Report of 2005 rightly says: "In this era of international terrorists, narcotics traffickers, and sophisticated transnational criminals, either the world's navies and coast guards will command the high seas or non-State actors will exploit the power vacuum for an unlawful purpose." Together we will command the sea not individuals. SISONKE is the African way. But as Innocent A. Daudu stated: "African renaissance goes beyond excellent rhetoric or justification of a philosophy, it requires commitment to duty and a strong will to bring about a transformed Africa. The need for unity among people of African descent has gained wide acceptance, as a way of enhancing solidarity as well as mobilizing resources that are required to improve the African image and prospects."

I therefore propose, because of limited financial resources dedicated to the maritime arena, African navies are obligated to perform coastguard roles even

though they are not equipped or trained for this role. Therefore, Africans have no choice but to work on the principle of SISONKE. Cooperation between navies is inherent in their operating procedures through multi-national exercises, multi-national operations and exchange programmes at all levels of training. Cooperation between navies in conducting patrols in the maritime arena of Africa is essential, if Africa is to meet the emerging threats and challenges to its maritime security.

It is only through cooperation that we can face the threats to our survival head-on. I am further of the opinion that the warriors of the seas, our navies and coastguards, can and must play a more engaging role. The proper functioning of the MHQ and MOC must be prioritised, however, nothing prevents navies and coastguards from patrolling together or on behalf of each other. This means that should South Africa conduct a patrol in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the West Coast of South Africa it could extend the patrol to cover an area beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the South Coast of Namibia and vice versa. Since the patrol is conducted on the high seas, there should be no concerns about diplomatic clearances. If neighbouring countries have vessels available combined, coordinated patrols could also be conducted in territorial seas.

Furthermore, each coastal State must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Maritime Security Cooperation with its coastal neighbours. This will ensure coverage of the entire Africa. For example, South Africa has a tripartite MOU on Maritime Security Cooperation with the United Republic of Tanzania and Mozambique in the east. In the west, the maritime security cooperation MOU is being drafted and soon it will be signed between South Africa and Namibia. This allows for incapable States to benefit from capable States, resulting in the mutual benefit of maritime security that promotes economic development for Africa.

CHANS must focus on the 10 objectives that it has been charged with by 2050 AIMS and establish workshops and engagements at least twice a year as a starting point. Naval exercises between African Navies and Coastguards must be executed regularly with a focus on green-water operations such as Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations to ensure the honing of skills and standard operating procedures. For example, African Countries can all schedule their maritime exercises with each other during one year, and maritime exercises with international navies during alternate years. This will allow Africa to remain on

par with other international Navies and at the same time ensure that cooperation and interoperability exist within Africa.

Integration of national Maritime Domain Awareness Centres with Regional Maritime Domain Awareness Centres will ensure that information is shared and appropriate action can be taken. If integration of Maritime Domain Awareness centres is cumbersome or impractical for any reason, coastal States should immediately commence entering into Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) to share information of common interest to contribute to maritime security. “The sea is a vital national interest and that is why we maintain the navy. As a nation we believe in the freedom of the seas. That is a matter of national strategic interest. We are a maritime nation trading all over the world. We accept our obligation to combine with other maritime nations to uphold the freedom of the seas and to protect our national interests through naval power” (Nelson Mandela, 1997).

The time for depending on the external forces is over, it is our time to rise up and take our destiny into our own hands. That is what is meant by an African Renaissance. SISONKE SIYANQOBA, together we are victorious.

In conclusion Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like to introduce the keynote speaker for today’s Opening of the Sea Power for Africa Symposium.

The Honourable Minister was appointed in her portfolio from 03 July this year. She is an educator by profession, holding several degrees from various Universities in this field. She has extensive experience in Government, both at Provincial and at National level. She has served as a Director in the Office of President Mandela for three years and was also elected Chairperson of the African National Congress Women’s League since 2007. She was the Minister of Basic Education for a period of 15 years before her recent appointment as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans. The South African National Defence Force, and specifically the South African Navy, is very grateful to have a leader of her calibre leading our National Defence Force at this most critical time in our history. As Chief of the Navy, I am delighted and humbled for the Minister to make time out of her busy schedule to come and attend this Sea Power for Africa Symposium, and to address us all here this morning.

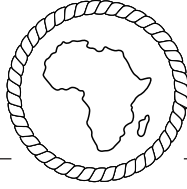
Esteemed ladies and gentlemen, Chiefs of Navies and Heads of Delegations here today, I don’t have to mention that without political support, our attempts to address the maritime security challenges of our continent will not succeed. As maritime security specialist we know what must be done to overcome these

challenges. However, many African governments have to overcome so many socio-economic challenges, that in many instances the Defence Forces have to stand at the back of the line when it comes to funding.

That is exactly where a strong Political leader is required to fight out battles in the corridors of Government power. I am proud to say today that we could not have received a better Minister for this role. So, ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to request all of you to stand, and to welcome the Guest of Honour for this morning, the Honourable Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Angie Motshekga.

I thank you.





ADDRESS BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

MS MATSIE ANGELINA MOTSHEKGA

The following transcription retains the speaker's original wording to reflect the speech as delivered.

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) is a maritime nation, endowed with a double geo-political identity, which is, the land and the sea. From the land side, our country is seen as one of the gateways into the African Continent. Whilst from the ocean side, our country has an international Search and Rescue responsibility for Area Hotel, as well as a Hydrographic responsibility for Navigation Area 7. These two vast areas necessitate a large and capable Navy. Our country is also situated along a strategic maritime trade chokepoint along the African coast. This double blessing shapes to a large degree our maritime and naval interest as a nation.

Strategically situated along vital sea routes of the world, the South Atlantic, Indian and the Southern Oceans, South Africa has a coastline of more than 3 900km, along which its maritime resources are spread, ranging from the Orange River in the west to Punta do Ouro in the east. However, South Africa is but one of 38 coastal states in Africa. Many of the maritime security challenges experienced by our country are echoed by these countries as well. The other 16 land-locked African countries are also dependent on their trade on those fellow African countries endowed with access to the world's trade routes.

The geo-strategic position of the African continent in world trade, is concentrated in 3 choke points along our continent. These are the Straits of Gibraltar which separates Africa from Europe, the Suez Canal in the Red Sea that serves as the main maritime trade route between Asia and Europe, and South Africa in the South makes the third. Should these 3 choke points all experience challenges simultaneously, the vast majority of world trade will come to a grinding halt.

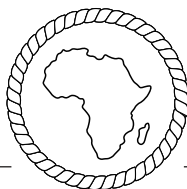
As all of you are acutely aware, all coastal states, have a responsibility to monitor and protect their maritime zones, marine resources, marine ecology and conservation as well as their maritime trade. **All of these factors carry with them immediate national, regional and international obligations.**

The geo-strategic position of the African continent, along with the inter-connectivity of the African Maritime Domain makes maritime co-operation and information sharing within the African Continent and the World, non-negotiable. Current day maritime threats requires an integrated approach which is the cornerstone of the African Integrated Maritime Security Strategy 2050.

The 5th Sea Power for Africa Symposium 2024 is currently the only rendezvous on the African continent, that brings together senior maritime / navy minds with a strategic blend of maritime academia that interrogates maritime threats and challenges for the entire continent. The strategic importance of holding regular Sea Power for Africa Symposium's is critical for the eradication of current as well as future challenges / threats within the African Maritime Domain.

The Government of South Africa and therefore by extension the people of the Republic of South Africa, would like to warmly welcome all the delegates and participants of the 5th Sea Power for Africa Symposium 2024 to the shores of South Africa, and would like to wish you all a pleasant and a safe stay in South Africa. The Ministry of Defence wants to articulate its wishes for a productive Symposium that will propel the accelerated milestone implementation of the African Integrated Maritime Security Strategy 2050. Let the 5th Sea Power for Africa Symposium 2024 be the gyroscope that provides a reference direction for maritime co-operation and information sharing within the African Continent and the World.

Fair Winds and following seas for the duration of the Symposium, to all present!!!



REMARKS BY THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF, NIGERIA

VICE ADMIRAL EI OGALLA AM GSS PSC fdc(+)

The following transcription retains the speaker's original wording to reflect the speech as delivered.

It is an honour to address this distinguished assembly on the topic, *Non-Traditional Maritime Security Challenges/Threats in the African Maritime Domain*. This is particularly relevant to the theme of this year's Symposium, *Good Order at Sea in the African Maritime Domain*. As African nations, we are collectively striving to secure our expansive maritime environments, which hold immense economic potential. The African maritime domain holds enormous resources, including hydrocarbons and fisheries. According to the World Bank Report of 2022, economic activities in African domain are projected to generate over USD 405 billion by 2030, including USD 100 million by coastal tourism, with the capacity to create over 57 million jobs across the continent. The sustainable management of these resources is crucial, as they are key drivers of economic growth and food security.

The future of Africa's maritime economy is encapsulated in the African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) -2050, which aims to foster wealth creation through the development of an ocean economy within a secured maritime domain. This vision is further supported by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is projected to increase intra-African freight by 28 per cent and demand for maritime transport by 62 per cent. Notably, a substantial portion of global trade passes through African waters, contributing over 20 per cent of

national revenues for some African countries. However, the richness of these waters and the intense economic activities within them expose our maritime domain to a range of non-traditional threats, posing significant challenges to regional stability.

Non-traditional threats in Africa's maritime domain often stem from the activities of non-state actors and organized criminal networks engaged in illegal exploitation of natural resources motivated by financial gain. These groups exploit socio-economic vulnerabilities, including poverty and gaps in maritime law enforcement, to advance their activities. As a result, African nations contend with a diverse array of challenges, such as piracy and sea robbery, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, human trafficking, pollution, and environmental degradation. The repercussions of these activities are far-reaching, manifesting in increased shipping costs, higher insurance premiums, trade disruptions, economic instability and financial uncertainty.

Addressing these transnational maritime crimes and maximizing the economic potential of Africa's maritime environment require a collective approach involving navies and coast guards of the continent. As Africa develops new frontiers for commercial maritime activities, it is crucial that our security architecture is continually strengthened. Indeed, the Sea Power for Africa Symposium serves as a vital platform for these efforts, offering a forum for African heads of navies and coastguards to collaborate in addressing non-traditional maritime threats through enhanced regional cooperation, capacity-building initiatives, and international partnerships.

Through this collaborative framework, we can deepen our capabilities for information-sharing, coordination of law enforcement activities, and the combined use of resources. This also includes the sharing of global best practices through joint maritime security exercises, partnerships in international maritime law enforcement, and access to global expertise. Such collaborative efforts are indispensable in addressing the complex and evolving nature of non-traditional maritime threats, which require multidimensional solutions for the sustainable use of our maritime domain.

Nigeria's maritime area of interest spans from her internal waters, territorial seas, Exclusive Economic zone to the wider Gulf of Guinea, constituting the operational environment of the Nigerian Navy. Notably, economic activities within Nigeria's maritime domain significantly contribute to Nigeria's Gross

Domestic Product and foreign exchange earnings, with sea-borne trade accounting for over 85 per cent of Nigeria's trade volume. However, this region remains vulnerable to various non-traditional threats and criminal activities. To counter these challenges, the Nigerian Navy has implemented a Total Spectrum Maritime Strategy, designed to project naval power across a wide range of threats. This strategy is executed through a Trinity-of-Action Concept, emphasizing surveillance, response, and law enforcement. Surveillance is carried out through our Maritime Domain Awareness infrastructure, while response includes the deployment of air and surface platforms for patrols. Law enforcement is achieved through the prosecution of offenders in collaboration with relevant agencies. These measures have enabled Nigeria's removal from the list of piracy-prone countries since March 2022, a status we have maintained to date.

In support of these efforts, the Nigerian Navy has undertaken significant fleet renewal initiatives, including the acquisition of new platforms and increased local shipbuilding efforts. Over the past decade, the Naval Dockyard Ltd has constructed three 38-meter Seaward Defence Boats, with 2 additional boats expected to be completed by mid-2025. Recognizing that many non-traditional threats originate within coastal communities, the Nigerian Navy collaborates closely with stakeholders and government agencies to adopt a whole-of-society approach to maritime security.

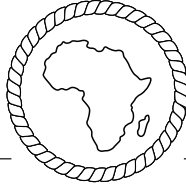
The Nigerian Navy is also actively involved in regional and international maritime security collaborations. We play a pivotal role in the ECOWAS Standby Force and other regional security initiatives, such as Zone E of the 2013 Yaoundé Code of Conduct, comprising Benin, Niger, Togo, and Nigeria. This code prioritizes cooperation and information-sharing between the navies of ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States, facilitating joint patrols of our shared maritime domain. In the area of capacity-building, we host a Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) training program under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which provides secure training for countries in West and Central Africa. This enhances interoperability among the navies of the Gulf of Guinea region.

Additionally, the Nigerian Navy collaborates with the European Union through the EU Strategy and Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea, aimed at addressing transnational organized maritime crimes in West and Central Africa. We also support the Combined Maritime Task Force initiative for the Gulf of Guinea region, reinforcing the capacity of the Yaoundé Architecture. These initiatives are geared towards fostering a collaborative maritime security framework

to combat maritime crimes. We remain committed to strengthening these partnerships, expanding our international cooperation, and enhancing our operational capabilities for greater effectiveness.

In conclusion, the incentives for enhanced cooperation among navies and coast guards in addressing maritime security challenges cannot be overemphasized. Ensuring the security of African maritime routes will facilitate increased trade, fostering economic growth and prosperity. A thriving maritime industry not only creates employment opportunities but also attracts tourism, thereby generating additional revenue. Moreover, preventing maritime crimes, such as piracy, can help reduce insurance premiums, ultimately lowering the cost of goods and services. From an environmental perspective, it is imperative that we take decisive action to prevent oil spills, reduce waste dumping, and ensure sustainable fisheries management to secure long-term food security. Ultimately, the security of our maritime borders is essential for regional stability and the achievement of our national objectives.

I express my gratitude to the South African Navy for this opportunity to share my perspectives. I look forward to engaging in thought-provoking discussions throughout this Symposium. Thank you all for your attention, and I wish you a productive and successful event.



PRESENTATION BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY

REAR ADMIRAL BUBELE KITIE MHLANA

TURNING THE LENS TO TRADITIONAL MARITIME SECURITY – AFRICAN NAVIES AS AGENTS OF SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY DEFENCE

The following transcription retains the speaker's original wording to reflect the speech as delivered.

As we navigate the complexities of maritime security, it is crucial to recognize the significant transformations that have occurred in recent years. The period characterized by the war on terror and international piracy as well as dangerous maritime crimes has shifted the focus of maritime security debates, often sidelining the traditional warfighting roles of navies in favour of secondary functions.

In 2024, the geopolitical landscape presented profound challenges that underscore the necessity of returning our focus to traditional maritime security. The ongoing conflict between Russia and the Ukraine has reverberated across the black sea, while Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden continue to pose serious threats to commercial shipping and the maritime based global economy. Moreover, tensions in the Indo-Pacific region are drawing attention back to the fundamental responsibilities of navies as instruments of national defence and security. Notably the increasing frequency of naval exercises,

accentuating naval warfare, highlights a return to warfighting readiness rather than non-traditional roles.

For African Navies, these developments are not just distant echoes but pressing realities that require proactive engagement. African navies must therefore navigate a way to balance their roles effectively. While smaller navies may excel in secondary roles, they must also cultivate the ability to transition between their primary and secondary functions. This intellectual and operational agility is essential within the African context.

The presence of international naval forces along the African coast, particularly in the Northwest Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Guinea and Southern Africa, is a testament to the global recognition of the region's strategic importance. However, it is concerning that the Southeast Atlantic remains significantly under-patrolled by both international and African Navies.

While foreign navies contribute to regional stability and security, their involvement raises an important question: who will address the naval void when global events divert attention and naval resources away from Africa?

This brings us to a pivotal question: how can African Navies enhance their role in defending and securing the vast African littoral domain, particularly the Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone for Africa (CEMZA). Achieving this goal necessitates a robust defence of both African and international economic interests, positioning African Navies (and coastguards) as contributory maritime security providers.

Several key considerations arise in this context. Firstly, the waters off Africa are increasingly dominated by foreign navies, leading to a proliferation of actors and interests that must be effectively coordinated. To ensure African agency in maritime security, it is imperative that African voices are amplified in deliberations, backed by naval means. Foreign navies should not operate as the primary security providers without meaningful African naval participation. Even small African Navies can leverage naval diplomacy to assert their relevance, especially given Africa's proximity to critical maritime routes through Gibraltar, the Suez Canal and the Bab el Mandeb Strait.

African navies possess untapped potential. To overcome challenges such as sea blindness African Navies must take proactive steps to assemble and assert their capabilities and responsibilities. This requires a shift in mindset to prioritize

the establishment and maintenance of capable naval forces that can address emerging maritime threats.

Historically, African Navies have demonstrated resilience and capability such as operations off Liberia and Mozambique, as well as off Somalia despite limited resources. Securing and defending African maritime interests must begin at home; countries with the capacity must invest in building affordable naval or coast guard capabilities. Cooperation is central to this as it can enhance the overall effectiveness of African maritime security efforts.

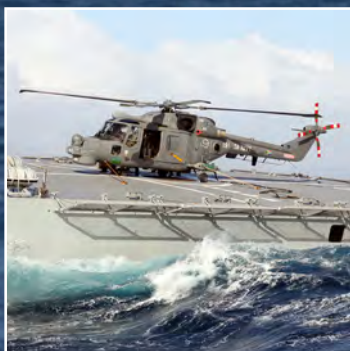
To achieve a more robust maritime security framework, African Navies must engage collaboratively with foreign navies and various agencies. This may involve moving beyond historical colonial ties and aggressively exploring partnerships within the global south. Collaborations with countries such as Brazil and India and perhaps drive for a maritime/naval connection or programme in the BRICS+ grouping can reinforce Africa's maritime presence and response capabilities.

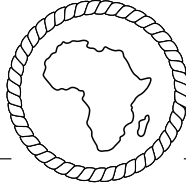
Developments in the red sea highlight the urgent need for a maritime response, with navies serving as first defenders. However, there remains a notable lack of naval presence from the global south in these critical areas. Addressing this gap requires not only the acquisition of naval assets but also a concerted effort to showcase the skills and capabilities of African navies through effective maritime diplomacy and cooperative engagements.

Moreover, building capacity within Africa's maritime industry – encompassing shipbuilding and related sectors – is essential to support both naval operations and broader economic interests. A focus on collaboration, skills development and innovative partnerships can enhance Africa's maritime security posture, enabling navies to transition into more assertive roles when necessary.

It is vital to prioritize African, regional, and national interests. A zero-sum approach will only hinder progress; instead, we must strive for collaborative, win-win solutions that advance maritime security and economic interests across the continent. Here the nexus between investment in maritime assets and the maritime industry becomes important as these can result in significant economic returns.

Let us therefore explore how we can transform our collective maritime security strategies and strengthen the capabilities of African Navies to ensure the protection of our maritime interests as well as unlock the economic potential of our shared waters.





RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

Co-ordinators:

- **Professor Michelle Nel, Vice Dean Personnel, Community Interaction, Internationalisation, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University**
- **Professor Francois Vreÿ, Research Coordinator, SIGLA, Stellenbosch University**
- **Doctor Moses B. Khanyile, Director, Centre for Military Studies, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University**
- **Captain (SA Navy) Mark Blaine (retired), Research Fellow, SIGLA, Stellenbosch University**
- **Captain (SA Navy) Graeme Plint, Researcher, Centre for Military Studies, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University**

The speakers' programme is a response to a request from the South African Navy to the Dean in the Faculty of Military Science at Stellenbosch University, Professor Samuel Tshehla. The overarching theme selected was 'Good Order at Sea in the African Maritime Domain', to which the faculty's team responded by structuring the planned presentations into two main categories: non-traditional and traditional maritime security.

The non-traditional maritime security segment focused on soft security threats and the responses to these vulnerabilities, while the traditional maritime security segment had a strong naval focus, particularly on the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and South Atlantic.

The symposium attracted many African naval chiefs and their staffs, emphasising Africa as the central theme. Speakers invited were predominantly from the Global South, with a strong representation from Africa, Asia, and South America, also reflecting the BRICS+ group of countries. This diverse group of speakers covered a range of topics relevant to the symposium's theme, which are summarised in the sections below.

Day 1: 15 October 2024

The academic leg of the symposium commenced with opening remarks from the Deputy Chief of the Namibian Navy. This was followed by a keynote address from a representative of the People's Republic of China (PRC), who spoke about building friendships and partnerships. The subsequent paper presented discussed the need for an integrated maritime strategy, which was then followed by a paper on the nature and use of maritime diplomacy.

The next speaker offered a unique perspective from Ethiopia, a landlocked country, highlighting the importance of maritime matters, risks and insecurity even for nations without direct access to the sea.

The critical aspect of cooperation and partnerships to promote good order at sea was underscored by a keynote from the UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP). This was followed by three presentations on the roles of the African Union (AU) and agency and strategic communications, the Djibouti Code of Conduct in the Western Indian Ocean, and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in the Gulf of Guinea. The day concluded with closing remarks from the Chief of the Nigerian Navy.

Day 2: 16 October 2024

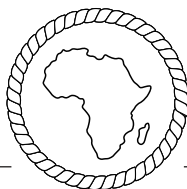
The second day opened with strong views on naval matters presented by the Deputy Chief of the South African Navy. A keynote from Brazil then addressed maritime security and the role of navies in the South Atlantic. The theme subsequently shifted to India's role in anti-piracy efforts in the Western Indian Ocean, followed by a paper on the Red Sea dilemma and Africa's role in addressing this narrow sea's threat landscape.

Egypt's bicoastal challenges were then discussed, providing insights into the unique maritime issues faced by the country, with Africa's combined exclusive maritime zone the proceeding paper, covering the importance of claiming and using this landscape. An industry perspective on vessel specifications

followed, offering a practical viewpoint on aligning specifications and maritime security needs.

The day's panels concluded with a discussion on the coast guard debate, a complex and critical issue for many nations. The speakers' panels ended with an admiral's panel, where flag officers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana shared their opinions on Africa's maritime security and the future direction for African navies. A concluding summary tied together the main themes and ideas, with a call for more African agency and cooperation to underpin the African maritime security agenda.

Overall, the symposium provided a comprehensive overview of both traditional and non-traditional maritime security issues, with a strong focus on Africa and contributions from a diverse group of speakers, primarily from the Global South.



ABSTRACTS AND PAPERS READ

Title: Build a Maritime Community with a Shared Future and Maintain Peace and Security at Sea for Africa [Speech]

Author: Senior Navy Captain Lyu Xianchen

Affiliation: Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), People's Republic of China (PRC)

Abstract:

At the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping proposed that China and Africa collaborate to advance modernisation grounded in peace and security. The Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the concept of 'Building a Maritime Community with a Shared Future' aim to maintain good order at sea for Africa by fostering peaceful, secure, and prosperous maritime environments. This approach involves addressing security threats, promoting maritime development, integrating cultures, and protecting marine ecology. It emphasises common, comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable security while respecting all parties' concerns. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy will continue to engage in oceangoing escorts, international rescues, and strategic cooperation with African navies, supporting the Partnership Action for Common Security.

Discussion:

Although China and Africa are thousands of miles apart, we are as close as a family, and share a longstanding friendship. Just over a month ago on 5 September,

the 2024 Summit of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held in Beijing. Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech titled ‘Joining Hands to Advance Modernisation and Build a Community with a Shared Future’, proposing that the overall characterisation of China-Africa relations be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community, with a shared future for the new era. President Xi proposed that China and Africa work together to advance ‘six modernisations’, including to jointly advance modernisation, underpinned by peace and security. In the next three years, China will work with Africa to take 10 partnership actions for modernisation, one of which is the Partnership Action for Common Security.

In recent years, China has put forward the Global Security Initiative (GSI), offering a new path for the international community to bridge differences, resolve disputes, and jointly address security challenges. China stands alongside Africa in promoting the implementation of the GSI, fostering solutions to regional hotspot issues, injecting strong impetus for upholding world peace and tranquillity. Livelihood is a key factor to security and stability in Africa. Currently, some African participants in Belt and Road cooperation projects are developing their economies and improving livelihood in a safer environment. This is a comprehensive approach to address African security problems. Based on the utmost preferences of Africa, non-interference in Africa’s internal affairs and the basic norms of international relations, China actively explores constructive participation in affairs concerning African peace and security. China supports the African people in solving African issues in the African way, and is a longstanding supporter of the leading role of the AU, and Africa’s subregional organisations in resolving regional conflicts. We support and contribute to the implementation of ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa’ and ‘Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa’. We implement security assistance projects in Belt and Road cooperation and social security areas to enhance African countries’ independent peace, stability and counter-terrorism capabilities. Since China’s participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) in 1990, over 80% of our peacekeepers have been deployed in Africa, making it the biggest contributor to peacekeeping to the region among permanent members of the UN Security Council. From Mali to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of South Sudan, from mine-clearance, road construction, to escorts and volunteer medical consultations, ‘Chinese Blue Helmets’ have been awarded UN Peace Medals for their dedication and commitment to maintaining peace in Africa. We have close interactions at all levels and enjoy fruitful cooperation

in force development, personnel training, maritime security, peacekeeping operations, healthcare, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), etc. We had three editions of the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum, and meetings within its framework, to pool wisdom and strength for the peace and security of Africa. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will continue to uphold the principle of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith, strengthen strategic communication and practical cooperation with its African counterparts, to provide reliable safety and security for a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future.

With almost seven decades of dedicated work, the China-Africa relationship is at its best in its history, and our mutually beneficial cooperation has reached an unprecedented height, offering exceptional opportunities for China and Africa to carry out maritime security cooperation, jointly safeguard peace and security in African maritime domain, and to build good order at sea.

Please allow me to take this chance to introduce an important concept of building good order at sea and safeguarding maritime security, that is building a maritime community with a shared future. On 23 April 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated the key concept of building a maritime community with a shared future at the 70th Anniversary of the Chinese PLA Navy. What is “a maritime community with a shared future”? I would like to interpret it from two dimensions. First, from a man-and-nature perspective, oceans and people are in a community of harmonious coexistence. The ocean is the source of life, a living space, a reservoir of resources, and a lifeline of transportation. The ocean nurtures human civilisation. Second, from a people-to-people perspective, humans are living in communities of shared interests, security, responsibilities and cultures because of the ocean. From the bigger marine ecosystem, maritime trade, maritime transport, to a smaller merchant ship sailing at sea with its crew and cargo, they all carry the interests of different countries and stakeholders, interdependently. To build a maritime community with a shared future is to create peaceful, secure, prosperous, open, inclusive, clean and beautiful seas and oceans, for jointly safeguarding maritime peace and tranquillity. To build a maritime community with a shared future is to jointly address maritime security threats, jointly promote maritime prosperity and development, jointly advance the integration of maritime cultures, and jointly protect the marine ecological environment .

Peace and prosperity, as well as good order, serve as the basic objectives and cornerstones for building a maritime community with a shared future. We promote common security, respecting and accommodating legitimate concerns of all parties regarding maritime security rather than seeking one's own security at the expense of others. We promote comprehensive security, considering the historical and current context of maritime security issues in a holistic manner, adopting multi-pronged approaches, implementing integrated measures, as well as tackling root causes. We uphold collaborative security through dialogue and cooperation, promoting maritime security via enhanced communication, seeking common ground while respecting differences, fostering mutual trust, reducing misunderstandings, broadening cooperation areas, innovating collaboration methods and striving for peace through cooperation and security through collaboration. We champion sustainable security, developing together for deeper integration of interests, and resolving conflicts and disputes through shared growth, thereby achieving a dynamic balance between security and development.

Over the past five years, the Chinese initiative to build a maritime community with a shared future has obtained general acceptance and gained widespread recognition. The Chinese PLA Navy has been vigorously safeguarding the security of regional and strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs) through oceangoing escorts, international rescues, and medical services. The PLA Navy has continued to provide maritime public security goods and services for the international community. As of August 2024, over 150 ships in 46 PLAN Escort Task Groups (ETGs) have been dispatched for 16 consecutive years. In April 2023, two ships of the 43rd PLAN ETGs were sent to evacuate 1 171 Chinese and foreign nationals from Sudan. The PLAN hospital ship *Peace Ark* (*Daishan Dao*), nicknamed the 'big white ship' by international friends, has provided medical services to nearly 290 000 people from 45 countries and regions in 12 overseas humanitarian medical missions. The ship, symbolising love and hope, has become an expression and well-known brand of the initiative to build a maritime community with a shared future. Since its commission, *Peace Ark* has paid port calls to many African countries and provided quality medical services. In late August of 2024, the ship made a port of call to Cape Town and provided medical services for 3 700 people. Medical teams performed operations onboard. Units of subject-matter experts also carried out joint treatment in local hospitals and academic exchanges with their South African colleagues in Cape Town. It has also recently visited the Seychelles, Tanzania, Madagascar and Mozambique.

Today, the world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation. Amid the tense geopolitical situation and growing deficits in peace, development, security and governance, as well as a spillover of the deficits at sea, we shoulder the progressively difficult tasks of maintaining maritime peace and security. Africa is located at the junction of the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, surrounded by important SLOCs. Among the 54 African countries, 38 are coastal or island countries, with a collective coastline of 47 000 kilometres. Over 90% of the continent's imports and exports are transported by sea. In recent years, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) have become hotspots for criminal activity in Africa – and even the world – with emerging maritime threats, such as piracy and armed assaults on ships. The escalating conflicts in the Middle East have further increased the risks of shipping in the Red Sea, leading to a continuous rise in premiums for vessels passing through the region. According to the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC), in 2020, the waters of the GoG accounted for 95% of pirate attacks and hostage-taking incidents worldwide. In 2023, there were 22 pirate incidents in the GoG, slightly higher than the 19 incidents in 2022. Some call it “the most dangerous waters” in the world. In addition, Africa has long been facing non-traditional security threats, such as terrorist attacks, drug and arms trafficking, proliferation of small arms, human trafficking, climate change, food security, the spread of infectious diseases, and illegal fishing. The *Global Terrorism Index 2022* states that among the top 10 countries with the highest casualties in global terrorist attacks, five are sub-Saharan African countries, where consecutive terrorist attacks have caused a large number of civilians to be displaced and homeless. The fragile ecosystems in Africa are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as rising temperature, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters, leading to reduced food production and widespread famine. How do we tackle the above-mentioned non-traditional security threats? I think we can act on the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the concept of building a maritime community with a shared future. Here, I would like to use an excellent interpretation on ‘oceans with a shared future’ by Admiral HU Zhongming, Commander of the Chinese PLA Navy.

Security is the first priority for a shared future. Maritime security concerns the safety and interests of all countries. It is imperative to uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, continuously improve regional maritime security architectures, establish mechanisms for cooperation and coordination, and provide the international community with more and better public security goods.

Harmony is the essence of a shared future. Countries need to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and legitimate and reasonable security concerns. Furthermore, it requires our reverence and kindness, in order to achieve peaceful coexistence between nations and harmony between humanity and the sea.

Inclusiveness is key to a shared future. It is imperative to be broad-minded, magnanimous and as inclusive as the ocean, and correctly view each other's reasonable development. Let us choose openness and inclusiveness instead of isolation and exclusiveness, transcend barriers and conflicts through exchanges and mutual learning.

Partners are the foundation of a shared future. We ought to have regular interactions at all levels to enhance friendship and trust. We can actively engage in ship visits and exchanges between younger officers, experts and scholars. We may deepen our cooperation in fields like information sharing, personnel training, and joint exercises and training to build a new maritime security partnership based on mutual respect, equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

The acronym of 'Security, Harmony, Inclusiveness and Partners' is SHIP, a symbol of the sea and the navy. This SHIP coincides with the connotation of a Chinese proverb, 'tóng zhōu gòng jì': 'When on a common boat, cross the river peacefully together'.

Africa is indispensable to world peace and development, and greater progress in Africa will bring more hope and light to the world. China is ready to work with African countries towards the brighter vision of a security community and to make new contributions to resolving the global security deficit and maintaining lasting peace and universal security in the region and the world.

Title: Adaptive Maritime Security: Developing Resilient Strategies for Safeguarding African Waters in a Dynamic Threat Environment

Author: Doctor George K. van Dyck

Affiliation: University of Plymouth

Abstract:

The African continent faces a complex array of maritime risks, including piracy, illegal fishing, trafficking, environmental degradation, and geopolitical tensions. The evolving nature of these threats, in addition to new threats and black swan events, challenges traditional maritime security strategies (MSS), which often rely on static, one-time solutions due to constraints such as limited resources, fragile institutional frameworks, and political pressures. While in theory, MSSs are designed to be dynamic and subject to periodic reviews, they frequently fall short in adapting to the changing threat landscape. The paper proposes a process-driven framework that prioritises ongoing monitoring, learning, and adjustment, while acknowledging implementation challenges related to resource constraints, technological integration, and regional coordination. The findings provide practical insights for maritime security practitioners and policymakers, emphasising the importance of developing evaluation frameworks that can assess both immediate security outcomes and long-term adaptive capacity in Africa's dynamic maritime environment.

Introduction:

Maritime security is fundamental to global trade, economic stability, environmental sustainability, and the protection of national sovereignty. African waters, particularly the Gulf of Guinea (GoG), the Horn of Africa, and other coastal regions, face significant security challenges. These range from piracy and armed robbery at sea, to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, trafficking of arms and humans, and environmental degradation.¹ The maritime domain's significance is underscored by Africa's growing population and increasing

¹ F. C. Onuoha (2020), 'Sea piracy and maritime security in the Horn of Africa: The Somali coast and Gulf of Aden in perspective', *African Security Review*, Vol. 29(4), pp. 259–281; C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2017), 'Beyond seablindness: A new agenda for maritime security studies', *International Affairs*, Vol. 93(6), pp. 1 293–1 311; A. T. Weldemichael (2012), 'Maritime corporate terrorism in the western Indian Ocean: Illegal fishing, waste dumping and piracy in twenty-first-century Somalia', *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, Vol. 8(2), pp. 110–126; I. Okafor-Yarwood, M. Pigeon, A. Amling, C. Ridgway, I. Adewumi, and L. Joubert (2020), *Stable Seas: Gulf of Guinea*, One Earth Future, Colorado.

reliance on maritime resources for economic development, with 90% of African trade being seaborne.² The annual value of Africa's maritime industry, estimated at US\$1 trillion,³ represents a critical economic frontier on which African nations cannot fully capitalise without implementing comprehensive maritime security strategies.

In response to these threats, several national and regional initiatives have emerged. The African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), released in 2012, articulates the maritime vision for the continent: "to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner."⁴ The strategy recognises security as an indispensable component of the blue economy and emphasises the principle of subsidiarity, which allows for freedom at the local level, while maintaining coordinated action across different governance tiers. This research examines how complex adaptive system (CAS) theory can provide a framework for developing more resilient and adaptive maritime security strategies in this complex environment.

Aim and Scope:

This research investigates the application of CAS theory as a framework for developing adaptive and resilient maritime security strategies in African waters. By examining maritime security through the lens of CAS theory,⁵ this study seeks to understand how maritime security strategies can be enhanced in complex environments.⁶ While the 2050 AIM Strategy provides a foundation for addressing maritime security, economic development, and environmental protection,⁷ implementation challenges persist.⁸ These include resource constraints, coordination difficulties, and rigid command structures that impede

² I. Okafor-Yarwood, N. I. Kadagi, D. Belhabib, and E. H. Allison (2022), 'Survival of the richest, not the fittest: How attempts to improve governance impact African small-scale marine fisheries', *Marine Policy*, Vol. 135, pp. 1–13.

³ I. Okafor-Yarwood (2020), 'The cyclical nature of maritime security threats: Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing as a threat to human and national security in the Gulf of Guinea', *African Security*, Vol. 13(2), pp. 116–146.

⁴ African Union (2014), *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa.

⁵ J. H. Holland (1992), 'Complex adaptive systems', *Daedalus*, Vol. 121(1), pp. 17–30.

⁶ M. Gell-Mann (1994), *The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex*, W. H. Freeman, New York.

⁷ African Union (2014).

⁸ I. Okafor-Yarwood, et al., 'Survival of the richest, not the fittest'.

rapid response to evolving threats.⁹ The research extends beyond traditional security paradigms, to explore how maritime strategies can effectively adapt to multifaceted threats while maintaining operational coherence across regional and national levels. This research examines how CAS principles can address these challenges while acknowledging the dynamic nature of maritime threats. The central research question guiding this study is, “how can maritime security strategies adapt to complexity and ensure the resilience of the system?”

Discussion:

Security and development are at the heart of why states, regions and international organisations around the world are constantly developing, implementing, assessing, and revising maritime strategies. A strategy recognises the existing state of affairs, provides a vision for what the future should look like, and devises a plan of action for how to get from the present to the future. Maritime security threats in Africa present a complex web of challenges that span traditional, emerging, anticipated, and wildcard scenarios. The continent's historical struggle with piracy, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea and off the Horn of Africa, continues to evolve, with sophisticated criminal networks adapting their tactics to counter international naval presence. Illegal fishing, another persistent threat, depletes Africa's marine resources, with annual losses estimated in billions of dollars and severe implications for coastal communities' livelihoods and food security.¹⁰

The maritime sector now faces emerging challenges, particularly in cyber security, where vulnerabilities in port infrastructure and vessel management systems present attractive targets for malicious actors.¹¹ Environmental degradation compounds these issues, with marine pollution and climate change effects threatening coastal ecosystems and maritime operations. Looking forward, geopolitical tensions among regional and international powers could reshape maritime security dynamics (as evidenced by the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea forcing global shipping to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope, significantly impacting African maritime traffic patterns and security considerations), while

⁹ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2017), 'Beyond seablindness: A new agenda for maritime security studies'.

¹⁰ D. Willima and D. Reva (2021), 'Illegal fishing: Another target in West Africa's maritime battleground', *ISS Today*, 18 November, viewed 8 December 2024, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/illegal-fishing-another-target-in-west-africas-maritime-battleground>.

¹¹ E. A. Tachie-Menson (2024), 'An in-depth analysis of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea', *ACCORD: Conflict Trends*, 5 September, viewed 8 December 2024, <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/an-in-depth-analysis-of-maritime-security-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/>.

rapid technological advancement in autonomous vessels and AI-driven systems introduces both opportunities and vulnerabilities.

Perhaps most concerning are the wildcard/stochastic threats – low-probability, high-impact events that could dramatically alter the maritime security landscape. This was dramatically illustrated in 2024, through two major submarine cable disruptions: first in March when multiple subsea cables failed off West Africa, causing widespread Internet outages across West and Central African nations,¹² and again in May, when the SEACOM and Eastern African Submarine System (EASSy) cables were damaged off the coast of KwaZulu-Natal, significantly impacting East African connectivity.¹³ These incidents exposed the vulnerability of Africa's critical submarine infrastructure, which carries approximately 2 000 Gigabits (Gb) per second of regional traffic, and forms the backbone of international Internet connectivity. Such wildcard events, whether caused by dragging anchors, deliberate sabotage, or other factors, can have cascading effects across multiple nations, particularly impacting landlocked countries that depend on coastal neighbours for connectivity.

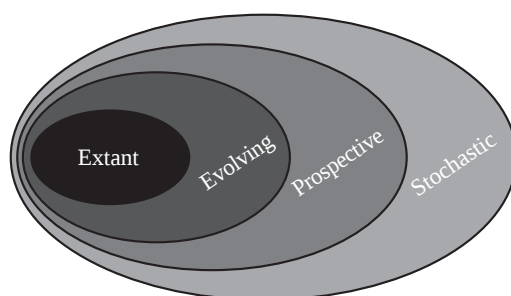


Figure 1: Temporal-Probabilistic Threat Framework (Maritime Threat Horizons)

Beyond infrastructure vulnerabilities, other potential wildcard threats include sudden geopolitical upheavals, unprecedented natural disasters, or emerging security challenges that current frameworks are ill-equipped to address. This multifaceted threat environment necessitates a comprehensive, adaptive approach to maritime security in Africa, particularly in protecting critical undersea infrastructure that supports digital connectivity and economic activities.

¹² *The Guardian* (2024), 'Much of West and Central Africa without internet after undersea cable failures', *The Guardian*, 14 March, viewed 8 December 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/mar/14/much-of-west-and-central-africa-without-internet-after-undersea-cable-failures>.

¹³ Internet Society (2024), 'East Africa Submarine Cable Outage Report', *Internet Society*, 23 July, viewed 8 December 2024, <https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2024/2024-east-africa-submarine-cable-outage-report/>.

COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS THEORY

Complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory emerged from systems thinking¹⁴ and the study of complex phenomena in fields such as biology, economics, and sociology.¹⁵ It views organisations, ecosystems, and other systems as dynamic entities composed of numerous interconnected and interdependent components. These components continuously interact with each other and their environment, leading to emergent behaviour that cannot be predicted solely by examining individual components in isolation.¹⁶ One of the key tenets of CAS is that systems adapt and evolve in response to changes in their environment, often through decentralised decision-making and self-organisation.¹⁷

MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGIES THROUGH THE LENS OF CAS

In the context of maritime security, CAS theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex, interrelated nature of the maritime domain and the actors involved. Maritime security involves numerous stakeholders, including national governments, regional organisations, international bodies, private shipping companies, and local communities. These actors interact in ways that are often non-linear and unpredictable, making the development of security strategies particularly challenging.¹⁸

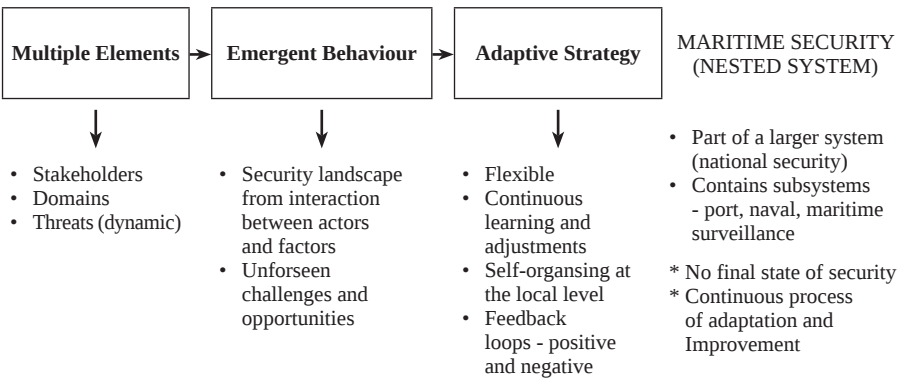


Figure 2: CAS through the MSS lens

¹⁴ J. H. Holland (1992), 'Complex adaptive systems'.

¹⁵ M. Gell-Mann (1994), *The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex*.

¹⁶ P. Cilliers (1998), *Complexity and Postmodernism: Understanding Complex Systems*, Routledge.

¹⁷ J. H. Holland (1998), *Emergence: From Chaos to Order*, Perseus Books, Cambridge, MA.

¹⁸ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2017), 'Beyond seabindness'.

CAS theory suggests that rather than attempting to control every aspect of the maritime environment, security strategies should focus on enhancing the system's ability to adapt to changing conditions and emerging threats. This can be viewed through the key tenets of CAS theory.

Flexibility

Maritime security strategies represent a crucial balancing act between adaptability and stability in addressing complex maritime challenges. From a strategic perspective, this flexibility must accommodate multiple stakeholders while maintaining coherent frameworks for action. The 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIM 2050 Strategy) exemplifies this approach, allowing member states to adapt continental strategic frameworks to their specific contexts, while preserving alignment with broader regional objectives.

Maritime security strategies require built-in mechanisms for rapid response to emerging threats, as demonstrated by the evolution of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), through its 2017 Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA). This adaptation expanded the scope beyond piracy to address wider maritime security challenges including transnational organised crime, maritime terrorism and others, showcasing how strategic frameworks can evolve without complete restructuring. Such flexibility extends to resource allocation, where strategies must enable quick redeployment of assets and specialised capabilities, while maintaining accountability and efficient international cooperation.

Perhaps most challenging is the need for jurisdictional adaptability, particularly when addressing threats that cross multiple maritime zones. Effective strategies must establish clear protocols for cross-border cooperation while respecting sovereignty and providing adaptable operational frameworks for addressing maritime crimes. However, this flexibility operates within constraints including international legal obligations, national sovereignty considerations, and resource limitations. The key to successful maritime security strategy lies in creating frameworks that can adapt to new challenges while maintaining the stability necessary for effective operations. This might involve developing tiered response protocols and establishing clear escalation pathways, all while ensuring that the fundamental principles of maritime security remain intact. Such an approach allows for both immediate tactical responses and long-term strategic adaptation to evolving maritime security challenges.

Decentralised decision-making and self-organisation

One of the key principles of CAS is decentralised decision-making. In a CAS, decision-making is distributed across various agents, rather than being concentrated in a single central authority.¹⁹ This decentralisation enables the system to be more flexible and responsive, as local actors can make decisions based on real-time information and their unique understanding of their environment. In the maritime security context, this means empowering local maritime authorities, regional organisations, and private sector stakeholders to take more active roles in security efforts.

The Yaoundé Code of Conduct, adopted by West and Central African states in 2013, exemplifies decentralised maritime security in practice. The Code empowers regional entities to address piracy and maritime crimes, while promoting inter-regional cooperation. The Lomé Charter also takes this decentralised approach, by explicitly formalising the principle of subsidiarity – a key operational principle where central authorities delegate tasks to local levels where they can be handled more effectively. This unique formalisation in the Lomé Charter distinguishes it from other AU documents, advocating for local-level autonomy in security operations, while enabling comprehensive evaluation of Regional Economic Communities' (RECs') contributions to maritime security.²⁰ However, for these decentralised structures to be effective, they must be supported by robust communication networks and data-sharing mechanisms. The successful implementation of both the Yaoundé Code and Lomé Charter principles depends on enhanced regional coordination, standardised information sharing protocols, and technological infrastructure that enables real-time response to maritime threats.

The establishment of a multi-tiered maritime coordination network in the Gulf of Guinea exemplifies the implementation of decentralised security structures currently in practice. The system combines localised Maritime Multinational Coordination Centres (MMCCs), regional security centres (Central Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre (CRESMAC) and West Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre (CRESMAO)), and national operations centres, all interconnected through the Yaoundé Architecture Regional Information System (YARIS) platform. The YARIS platform serves as the technological

¹⁹ J. H. Holland (1998), *Emergence*.

²⁰ A. Khan (2023), 'Africa's maritime security: From strategy to solutions', *National Maritime Foundation*, 30 June, viewed 7 July 2024, https://maritimeindia.org/africas-maritime-security-from-strategy-to-solutions/#_ftnref3.

backbone, providing real-time maritime situational awareness and standardised incident reporting across all levels, demonstrating how robust communication networks can effectively support decentralised maritime security operations while maintaining strategic coherence.

Feedback loops and continuous learning

Another critical aspect of CAS theory is the role of feedback loops, which allow systems to learn and adapt over time.²¹ Feedback loops enable the system to adjust its behaviour in response to new information or changing conditions. In maritime security, this could involve the continuous monitoring of shipping traffic, environmental conditions, and threat patterns, with security measures being adjusted accordingly. Advanced technologies, such as satellite surveillance, artificial intelligence, and predictive analytics, can play a crucial role in creating effective feedback loops. These technologies allow maritime authorities to detect emerging threats in real-time and adjust their responses based on the latest information.

Feedback loops are not only relevant at the operational level, but also at the strategic level. National and regional maritime security strategies must be designed to evolve in response to new challenges. This requires both scheduled periodic assessments and incident-triggered strategic reviews. While regular assessment cycles provide systematic evaluation of security strategies, serious maritime incidents serve as critical trigger points demanding immediate strategic reassessment. These incident-triggered reviews complement routine assessments by ensuring that significant events receive immediate strategic attention rather than waiting for scheduled review cycles. This dual approach to feedback – combining scheduled reviews with incident-triggered assessments – ensures security strategies remain responsive to both gradual changes and sudden shifts in the threat landscape. The integration of operational data, intelligence gathering, and incident analysis creates a comprehensive feedback system that prevents strategies from becoming outdated or ineffective in the face of rapidly evolving threats.²²

Adaptation and resilience

Perhaps the most critical contribution that CAS theory can make to maritime security strategy development is its emphasis on adaptation and resilience. In

²¹ M. Gell-Mann (1994), *The Quark and the Jaguar*.

²² E. Waltz (2003), *Knowledge Management in the Intelligence Enterprise*, Artech House, Boston.

CAS, resilience refers to the system's ability to maintain its core functions in the face of disruption and to reorganise itself in response to new conditions.²³ Applying this concept to maritime security, strategies should be designed to ensure that critical sea lanes, ports, and other maritime infrastructure can continue functioning even when confronted with significant threats.

Resilience also involves building redundancy into the system so that if one component fails, others can take over its function. At the operational level, it requires redundant systems and capabilities. For example, a resilient maritime security strategy employs multiple surveillance platforms – such as satellites, drones, and manned patrols – ensuring that the failure of one system does not create critical security gaps. This multi-layered approach extends to command-and-control systems, communication networks, and response capabilities.

Strategic resilience manifests through adaptive governance structures that can rapidly reconfigure in response to emerging threats. Also, technological resilience has become increasingly crucial as maritime security systems face sophisticated cyber threats. This involves, not only redundant digital systems, but also maintained capability for manual operations during digital disruptions. For instance, ports maintain both electronic and traditional navigation systems, ensuring continued operations even during cyber incidents. Infrastructure resilience requires both physical and operational adaptability. This could be in the form of not only physical port capacity, but also adapted customs procedures, security protocols, and resource allocation.

Regional cooperation serves as a crucial multiplier of resilience. Through regional cooperation, nations can share resources, information, and capabilities, creating a more robust collective security system. This cooperative approach ensures that when one nation's capabilities are stretched, regional partners can provide support, maintaining system functionality under stress.

Additionally, learning capacity forms a critical component of resilience. Systems must not only adapt to immediate challenges but also incorporate lessons learned into future strategies. This involves systematic analysis of incidents, regular testing of response capabilities, and continuous updating of security protocols based on emerging threats and technological advances.

²³ B. Walker, C. S. Holling, S. R. Carpenter, and A. Kinzig (2004), 'Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems', *Ecology and Society*, Vol. 9(2), p. 5.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The application of CAS theory to maritime security strategies, while promising, faces several implementation challenges that merit careful consideration. First, the inherent complexity of maritime threats requires strategies that can operate across multiple time horizons simultaneously. Long-term planning must coexist with immediate response capabilities, creating potential tensions in resource allocation and strategic priorities. The challenge lies not only in developing flexible strategies but in ensuring they remain coherent and actionable across different operational levels.

Regional coordination presents another significant challenge. While regional agreements may provide structural guidance, practical implementation often encounters obstacles related to varying national capabilities, competing priorities, and resource constraints. The success of maritime security strategies depends heavily on the ability to harmonise diverse national approaches while maintaining sufficient flexibility to address local contexts. This becomes particularly evident in areas where maritime jurisdiction overlaps or where transnational threats require coordinated responses.

Technological integration represents both an opportunity and a challenge for maritime security strategies. While advanced surveillance systems, artificial intelligence, and data analytics offer powerful tools for threat detection and response, their effective implementation requires significant investment in infrastructure and training. Moreover, the rapid pace of technological change means that strategies must be designed to incorporate new capabilities without becoming overly dependent on specific technologies that may become obsolete.

The human dimension of maritime security strategies deserves special attention. Training and capacity building must extend beyond technical skills to include strategic thinking and adaptive decision-making. Personnel at all levels need to understand both the principles of CAS and their practical application in maritime security contexts. This includes developing the ability to recognise emerging patterns, understand system interconnections, and make informed decisions in complex, rapidly evolving situations.

Financial sustainability represents another critical consideration. Adaptive maritime security strategies require consistent funding to maintain capabilities, update technologies, and support ongoing training. However, many African

nations face significant resource constraints that can limit their ability to implement comprehensive maritime security measures. This highlights the importance of developing strategies that are not only technically sound but also financially sustainable within the constraints of available resources.

Looking forward, the evolution of maritime security strategies must also account for emerging global trends that could reshape the maritime security landscape. Climate change, for instance, could alter shipping routes, affect coastal infrastructure, and create new security challenges. Similarly, shifts in global trade patterns and geopolitical relationships could introduce new dynamics that maritime security strategies must address. The challenge lies in developing strategies that can anticipate and adapt to these long-term changes while maintaining effectiveness against current threats.

The role of international cooperation in supporting maritime security strategies also deserves greater attention. While regional frameworks provide important foundations, the global nature of maritime security challenges often requires broader international engagement. This includes not only operational cooperation but also sharing of best practices, technology transfer, and capacity building support. However, international cooperation must be structured in ways that enhance rather than undermine local and regional ownership of maritime security initiatives.

Measuring the effectiveness of adaptive maritime security strategies presents unique challenges that must be addressed. Traditional metrics focused on specific outcomes may not capture the full value of adaptive capabilities and system resilience. New evaluation frameworks are needed that can assess both immediate security outcomes and long-term adaptive capacity. This might include developing indicators for system flexibility, response diversity, and learning capacity alongside more traditional security metrics.

This expanded understanding of maritime security strategy implementation challenges and future directions highlights the complexity of applying CAS principles in practice. Success requires careful attention to both theoretical foundations and practical constraints, while maintaining focus on the ultimate goal of enhancing maritime security in Africa's dynamic maritime environment.

Summary:

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the application of CAS theory to maritime security strategies in African waters, addressing the critical need for more adaptive and resilient approaches to maritime security in an increasingly complex threat environment. The research demonstrates how traditional static approaches to maritime security strategies are insufficient in addressing the dynamic nature of contemporary maritime threats, which range from established challenges like piracy and illegal fishing to emerging threats in cyber security and critical infrastructure vulnerability.

The examination of maritime security through the lens of CAS theory reveals several crucial insights for developing more effective security frameworks. First, the research establishes that maritime security challenges in Africa represent a complex web of interconnected threats operating across multiple temporal horizons, from immediate tactical concerns to long-term strategic challenges. This is particularly evident in recent events, such as the 2024 submarine cable disruptions off West and East African coasts, which demonstrated the vulnerability of critical maritime infrastructure and the cascading effects of security failures across multiple nations and sectors.

The paper theoretical contribution lies in its systematic application of CAS principles to maritime security strategy development, emphasising four key components: flexibility, decentralised decision-making, feedback loops, and adaptive resilience. The analysis shows how some of these components can be effectively integrated into regional frameworks, while addressing practical implementation challenges.

The research highlights the critical role of flexibility in maritime security strategies, demonstrating how frameworks must balance adaptability with stability to maintain operational effectiveness. This is exemplified through the evolution of regional agreements like the DCoC, which successfully expanded its scope through the 2017 DCoC/JA to address broader maritime security challenges while maintaining strategic coherence.

A significant finding emerges regarding the importance of decentralised decision-making structures in maritime security operations. The paper demonstrates how frameworks, like the Lomé Charter's formalisation of the subsidiarity principle, enable more effective local-level responses while maintaining coordinated regional action. This approach proves particularly valuable in addressing

transnational maritime threats that require both local expertise and regional coordination.

The analysis of feedback loops and continuous learning mechanisms reveals their essential role in maintaining strategic relevance in rapidly evolving threat environments. The research emphasises how advanced technologies, including satellite surveillance and artificial intelligence, can enhance these feedback mechanisms, enabling real-time threat detection and response adaptation. However, the study also acknowledges the technological and resource constraints facing many African nations in implementing such systems.

The paper makes a substantial contribution to understanding resilience in maritime security contexts, demonstrating how CAS principles can enhance system-wide ability to maintain critical functions during disruptions. This is particularly relevant given the increasing frequency of low-probability, high-impact events affecting African maritime domains, as evidenced by recent infrastructure vulnerabilities and geopolitical developments.

Implementation challenges identified in the research highlight the complex interplay between theoretical frameworks and practical constraints. The study emphasises the need for strategies that can operate effectively across multiple time horizons while maintaining coherence between immediate tactical responses and long-term strategic objectives. The research also addresses the critical challenge of resource allocation, particularly in contexts where maritime security competes with other national priorities for limited resources.

The paper's findings have significant implications for future maritime security strategy development in Africa. It establishes the need for more sophisticated evaluation frameworks that can assess both immediate security outcomes and long-term adaptive capacity. The research also highlights the importance of international cooperation in supporting regional maritime security initiatives while maintaining local ownership and effectiveness. Looking forward, the study identifies several key areas for future research and development in maritime security strategy. These include the need to better understand the implications of climate change on maritime security, the role of emerging technologies in enhancing adaptive capabilities, and the development of more effective metrics for measuring strategy effectiveness in complex environments.

In conclusion, this research makes a significant contribution to the field of maritime security by demonstrating how CAS theory can inform the development

of more effective and resilient security strategies in African waters. The paper's analysis provides a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the complex challenges facing maritime security in Africa, while offering practical insights for strategy development and implementation. The findings underscore the importance of adaptive approaches that can respond effectively to both current and emerging maritime security challenges while building long-term systemic resilience.

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Title: The Nature and Utility of Maritime Diplomacy for African States

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Abstract:

Maritime diplomacy has become an increasingly important tool for states to employ in achieving their foreign policy goals, especially in the context of several maritime issues' rising importance on the global agenda. Maritime diplomacy can be employed in a variety of different ways, using cooperative, persuasive, and coercive approaches, each with their own set of benefits and challenges. This paper examines the nature of and utility of maritime diplomacy for African states, examining these three different types of maritime diplomacy, providing examples of their use on the continent, and comparing their effectiveness and strategic impact, risks and challenges, and long-term implications, before offering certain policy recommendations for the use of maritime diplomatic tools as part of African states' broader diplomatic efforts.

Introduction:

As issues in the maritime domain have steadily gained greater prominence and importance on the international agenda, maritime diplomacy, as a particular tool of diplomatic practice, has also gained traction. Indeed, in the contemporary geopolitical landscape, where the maritime domain is increasingly recognised as a strategic theatre for both cooperation and conflict, the significance of maritime diplomacy cannot be overstated. Whilst some states remain relatively 'sea blind' in their approach to integrating maritime concerns into their foreign policy playbook, more and more African states are seeing the importance of bringing maritime issues in from the periphery, as they recognise the strategic benefit to securing sea lanes, for example, or protecting the economic resources found at sea.

Conceived more broadly than naval diplomacy ("the use of naval force as a diplomatic tool")¹ or gunboat diplomacy ("the demonstration, threat, or use of

¹ L. Otto (2022), 'Exploring maritime diplomacy of small island developing states in Africa: cases of Mauritius and Seychelles', *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 18(2), pp. 133–148.

limited naval force for political objectives”),² maritime diplomacy is understood as “the behaviour of a nation in pursuit of its maritime interests, usually by combining and/or applying the instruments of state power.”³ Expanding on this, Otto offers a typology of maritime diplomacy, further categorising it into three distinct types: cooperative, persuasive, and coercive.⁴ Cooperative maritime diplomacy involves collaborative efforts between states to address common challenges, such as joint naval exercises and humanitarian missions. Persuasive maritime diplomacy focuses on soft power strategies, aimed at influencing other states and engaged when cooperation is not possible. Coercive maritime diplomacy involves the use of naval forces to exert pressure or achieve compliance, often through blockades or shows of force.⁵

Aim and Scope:

Using this typology as an analytical lens, this paper explores the nature and utility of maritime diplomacy for Africa’s littoral and island states, offering different cases demonstrating how maritime diplomacy is employed by African countries, highlighting both successes and challenges. It begins by offering a theoretical framing by further unpacking the typology, before moving through each of the three types of maritime diplomacy and their application and utility, before offering a comparative analysis and policy recommendations.

Discussion:

THEORETICAL FRAMING

Maritime diplomacy, according to Otto’s typology, serves economic, political, and security interests of states, and may be driven by a number of factors including: socio-economic goals, austerity or resource deficits, national security, sovereignty, human security, geopolitics, and international law.⁶ This affects a variety of themes ranging from trade, investment, jobs and growth, to security concerns such as smuggling, trafficking, and terrorism, among others. Carried out

² R. Mandel (1986), ‘The Effectiveness of Gunboat Diplomacy’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 30(1), pp. 59–76.

³ A. van Nieuwkerk and C. Manganyi (2019), ‘South African maritime foreign policy: A conceptual framework’, *Scientia Militaria*, 47(2), pp. 2–17.

⁴ L. Otto (2022).

⁵ L. Otto (2022).

⁶ L. Otto (2022).

across bilateral and multilateral levels, states may thus take either a cooperative, persuasive, or coercive approach to maritime diplomatic engagement (or perhaps an integration of more than one type of diplomacy), depending on the relevant interests and drivers underlying said engagement, as well as their capabilities, and the geopolitical context in which they operate.

Cooperative maritime diplomacy is ultimately about collaboration between states, to address shared challenges or advance mutual interests. This may come in several different forms, including joint naval exercises, bi- or multilateral patrols and humanitarian assistance missions, as well as joint efforts to combat transnational organised maritime crime or blue crime like piracy or illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.⁷ This form of diplomacy is effective for building trust and fostering regional stability, while also reducing the threat of conflict, given the emphasis on open and transparent partnership.

Persuasive maritime diplomacy involves a more subtle approach and may be used when cooperation is not immediately possible, but momentum is sought towards a particular goal. This may focus on the use of naval forces and maritime activities to influence states into taking certain positions or actions, ultimately referencing the deployment of soft power. This may take the shape of a diplomatic monologue or dialogue, participation in global maritime fora, port visits, and other activities that showcase a state's naval capabilities and priorities.⁸ Persuasion may be utilised to enhance a state's standing, attract investment, and build alliances without resorting to the use of force.

Coercive maritime diplomacy employs either the threat or use of force, to achieve a diplomatic objective, by seeking to compel compliance or deter aggressive behaviour by another state.⁹ This may include actions such as blockades, maritime sanctions, shows of force, and other measures designed to compel compliance or to deter aggressive behaviour by other states. It is often employed in situations where diplomatic efforts have failed, or where a state seeks to assert its dominance in a particular maritime domain.¹⁰ Coercion, while useful for achieving short-term goals, carries risk, including the potential for escalation, and should, as such, be employed as a last resort.

⁷ L. Otto (2022).

⁸ L. Otto (2022).

⁹ L. Otto (2022).

¹⁰ C. La Mièrè (2014), *Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Drivers and Challenges*, Routledge, London.

MARITIME DIPLOMACY: EXAMPLES FROM AFRICA

How do African states use maritime diplomatic tools to achieve their objectives? This section provides brief examples for each of the three types of maritime diplomacy explained above.

Cooperative maritime diplomacy

- ***Maritime security cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea.*** Cooperative efforts to address maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea have broadly been viewed positively, with the region having been hailed for its collaborative efforts in tackling transnational issues. While these cooperative activities are far from perfect, and have faced their own challenges,¹¹ the 2013 Yaoundé Code of Conduct (which serves as a maritime security protocol for the region, which, for example, enables the establishment of maritime coordination centres and facilitates legal reform) was, at least initially, characterised positively for laying out a comprehensive architecture for addressing maritime security concerns.¹² States in the region have also entered partnerships with foreign powers to address these challenges, including via a number of efforts conducting jointly with the European Union (EU). One of these is the Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in Western Africa (PESCAO) project, which sought to enhance regional fisheries governance to serve sustainable development, food security, and poverty alleviation, and ran between 2018 and 2022.¹³ A second example is the pact entered into by Benin, Ghana, Togo and the EU to combat IUU fishing, falling under the remit of PESCAO.¹⁴

¹¹ O. O. A. Euraga (2021), 'Towards Effective Maritime Security Cooperation in Addressing the Threat of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in the Gulf of Guinea: A Review of Extant Issues and Challenges', *Ajayi Crowther University Law Journal*, 4(1), pp. 1–22; H. Yücel (2021), 'Sovereignty and Transnational Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea: How a Network Approach can Strengthen the Yaoundé Architecture', *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 4(1), pp. 146–157.

¹² R. K. Anabia-Tiah (2022), *Assessing the Effectiveness of Maritime Centres in the Context of the Implementation of the Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa (Yaoundé Code of Conduct)*, unpublished dissertation, World Maritime University, Sweden.

¹³ FNSSA (2024), 'PESCAO: Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in Western Africa', *FNSSA Project Database*, viewed 4 December 2024, <https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects/117>.

¹⁴ *Africa Defense Forum* (2022), 'Nations join forces to fight illegal fishing in Gulf of Guinea', *African Defense Forum*, 25 January, viewed 9 September 2024, <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/01/nations-join-forces-to-fight-illegal-fishing-in-gulf-of-guinea/>.

- ***Maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean.*** Many of the states in the Indian Ocean have taken a proactive and cooperative approach to addressing the challenge of Somali piracy, which was at its height in the late 2000s and early 2010s. The Contact Group of Piracy off the Coast of Somalia provides an example of multilateral cooperation that Tardy describes as “an innovative approach to crisis management”.¹⁵ It emerged as a result of a United Nations Security Council resolution and has been active since 2009, with its membership spanning 80 countries and groupings including Mauritius, Seychelles, the African Union, and the EU.¹⁶ It has four main working groups: one on capacity building, in which the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) acts as co-chair; a second dealing with legal matters, where Mauritius is co-chair; the third dealing with counter-piracy operations, where Seychelles plays a central role, and finally another that works to disrupt pirate networks ashore.¹⁷ The group’s activities dwindled alongside the decline of piracy, and was renamed in 2022 as the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activity.¹⁸

Persuasive maritime diplomacy

- ***South African naval diplomacy in Southern Africa.*** South Africa has endeavoured to promote peace and security in the Southern African region through the maritime domain, if not necessarily as a maritime agenda. Often regarded as one of the best-equipped navies in Africa, South Africa has utilised its naval forces as a foreign policy actor to influence regional stability and foster cooperative security arrangements across the region. A central element of South Africa’s naval diplomacy has been its participation in and hosting of multinational naval exercises, such as IBSAMAR (India-Brazil-South Africa-Maritime), which involves the navies of India, Brazil, and South Africa. These exercises are not merely about showcasing naval power but are crucial platforms for building interoperability, enhancing mutual

¹⁵ T. Tardy (2014), ‘Introduction’, in T. Tardy (ed.), *Fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia: Lessons from the Contact Group*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, October, viewed 8 January 2025, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Report_20_Piracy_off_the_coast_of_Somalia.pdf.

¹⁶ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. (2016), *Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia*. US Department of State, Washington, DC. Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2016/255175.htm> (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

¹⁷ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (2016)

¹⁸ C. Bueger (2024), ‘Somali pirates are back in action. A strong global response is needed’, *SafeSeas*, 19 January. Available at: <https://www.safeseas.net/piracy-2024/> (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

trust, and fostering collaboration among participant nations.¹⁹ Moreover, South Africa's involvement in anti-piracy operations in the Mozambique Channel under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the early 2010s, in response to the increasing threat of piracy off the coast of East Africa, provides another example. South Africa has deployed naval vessels to patrol the Mozambique Channel, working in coordination with Mozambique and Tanzania. Moreover, South Africa's involvement in anti-piracy operations in the Mozambique Channel is another critical aspect of its persuasive maritime diplomacy. In response to the increasing threat of piracy off the coast of East Africa, South Africa has deployed naval vessels to patrol the Mozambique Channel, working in coordination with Mozambique and Tanzania,²⁰ where a pirate attack was thwarted in collaboration with EU forces. In addition to multinational exercises, South Africa has employed port visits and naval diplomacy to build and maintain strong bilateral relations with other African nations. These port visits serve as a visible demonstration of South Africa's naval reach and its commitment to regional security.²¹

- ***Djibouti as a hub for naval bases.*** Djibouti has leveraged its geostrategic location at the intersection of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea to position itself as a “sustainable maritime hub”.²² At the time of writing, the country was host to military bases for countries including the United States, China, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Spain, France, and Japan.²³ Djibouti utilises this approach as a revenue stream, with many of the bases being subject to multi-million dollar leases – the United States reportedly pays US\$63 million per annum, China around US\$20 million, Japan about US\$30 million, and France pays US\$36 million – while the agreements have often also been

¹⁹ L. Otto (2022), 'South Africa's Maritime Diplomacy', in Masters, L., Mthembu, P. and Van Wyk, J. (eds) *South African Foreign Policy Review: Volume 4*. AISA Press, Pretoria.

²⁰ L. Otto (2014), 'South Africa and Anti-Piracy: Pragmatic Foreign Policy or Misguided Intervention?', *African Armed Forces Journal*, November, pp. 30–34.

²¹ A. van Nieuwkerk and C. Manganyi (2019), 'South African maritime foreign policy: A conceptual framework'.

²² S. H. Ali (2023), 'Developing Djibouti as a Sustainable Maritime Hub', *Forbes*, 20 December. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/saleemali/2023/12/20/developing-djibouti-as-a-sustainable-maritime-hub/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

²³ T. Cassinelli (2024), 'The Strategic Importance of Djibouti for the World Superpowers', *IARI*, 12 June. Available at: <https://iari.site/2024/06/12/the-strategic-importance-of-djibouti-for-the-world-superpowers/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024); K. D. Ezech and G. E. Ezirim (2023), 'Foreign Military Bases (FMBs) and Economic Security in Africa: Overview of FMBs in Djibouti', *International Journal of Geopolitical Governance*, 2(1), pp. 10–26.

accompanied by aid. France donated US\$82 million in aid in 2006, and in 2023, Japan's development agency supplied a US\$4 million grant to supply medical equipment to hospitals in Djibouti.²⁴ The bases have emerged for a variety of different reasons, ranging from historical defence agreements to more contemporary desires to secure trade routes and the resources that pass through them with the various missions performing different roles based on differing goals, but from Djibouti's point of view, it is able to increase its own security by virtue of their presence, projecting a degree of influence it would not otherwise have, increasing its own standing, and using it as a way to improve its financial position,²⁵ although there are some questions as to how well this income has been utilised and distributed to the country's populace. Nkala cites Cobbett and Mason, who summarise that "military bases in Djibouti are part of its 'worlding' strategy, which entails "embedding global security networks in its territorial space" with a view to reap its economic and security dividends".²⁶

Coercive maritime diplomacy

- ***Egypt's gunboat diplomacy in the Mediterranean.*** Egypt has deployed coercive maritime diplomacy in the eastern Mediterranean in the context of significant gas discoveries made there since the late 2000s. Competing maritime claims with Turkey have led to tensions – in 2014, Egypt signed a maritime boundary agreement with Greece and Cyprus, which Turkey considers as a violation of its continental shelf.²⁷ While Ankara views drilling for and exploiting the gas in this region as "a symbol of a much larger alignment hostile to its broader interests,"²⁸ Egypt has sought to assert what it believes are its rights. Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus hold regular joint military exercises known as 'Medusa', which, although promoted as being intended to promote cooperation,²⁹ some view as part of efforts by Egypt to engage in a show of force to send a message to Turkey over its

²⁴ S. Nkala (2023), 'Locating Africa in the Indo-Pacific: The Case of Djibouti', *E-International Relations*, 12 September. Available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2023/09/12/locating-africa-in-the-indo-pacific-the-case-of-djibouti/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

²⁵ K. D. Ezech and G. E. Ezirim (2023).

²⁶ S. Nkala (2023).

²⁷ S. Shay (2019), 'Gunboat diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean', *JNS-Jewish News Syndicate*, 19 May. Available at: <https://www.jns.org/gunboat-diplomacy-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

²⁸ A. Aydıntaşbaş (2020), 'Turkey: A deal is possible', *European Council on Foreign Relations*, May. Available at: https://ecfr.eu/specials/eastern_med/turkey (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

²⁹ S. Shay (2019).

own aggressive stance.³⁰ Turkey has itself taken umbrage at the exercises, labelling the 2017 event as ‘illegal’³¹ and in 2020 attempted to disrupt the exercise,³² alongside terse remarks having often been made by either party about the other.³³ Since then, the countries have worked to cool tensions, with Egyptian President Sisi visiting Ankara in September 2024 to meet with his counterpart. The two leaders announced a strategic cooperation council during the visit, described as a ‘turning point’ in their relations. However, regional dynamics render the rapprochement fragile at best.³⁴

- ***Gaddafi’s line of death in the Gulf of Sidra.*** In 1973, Libya unilaterally declared the Gulf of Sidra to be part of its territory, warning that it would exercise what it deemed to be its sovereign rights over these waters,³⁵ drawing a so-called ‘line of death’ at 32°30’N.³⁶ The United States had, for some time, conducted freedom of navigation operations in this area, having on occasion been fired on. But, in 1981, the United States’ Sixth Fleet engaged in an exercise, a portion of which was to occur south of the line, leading to hostilities when Libya launched surface-to-air missiles at American aircraft. The commander of the Sixth Fleet had the discretion to return fire, and deeming Libya’s a hostile act, did so, resulting in two Libyan planes being destroyed.³⁷ The incident also led to later retaliation in the form of an attack a number of terror plots orchestrated by Libyan leader Muamar Qaddafi, and a subsequent response from the United States,

³⁰ L. Berman (2021), ‘Egypt uses military to send message to newly conciliatory Turkey’, *Times of Israel*, 7 July. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-uses-military-to-send-firm-message-to-newly-conciliatory-turkey/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

³¹ M. Awany (2017), ‘Egypt-Greece joint military exercise “illegal”, warns Turkey’, *Arab News*, 4 November. Available at: <https://arabnews.com/node/1187916/middle-east> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

³² P. Antonopoulos (2020), ‘Turkish Navy humiliated by Egypt when attempting to interrupt MEDUSA 2020 exercise’, *Greek City Times*, 6 December. Available at: <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/12/06/turkish-navy-humiliated-medusa-2020/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

³³ L. Berman (2021), ‘Egypt uses military to send message to newly conciliatory Turkey’

³⁴ K. Mezran and N. Pedde (2024) ‘Egypt-Turkey cooperation brings profound changes in ties with African countries’, *Atlantic Council*, 18 November. Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-turkey-cooperation/> (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

³⁵ Y. Z. Blum (1986), ‘The Gulf of Sidra Incident’, *The American Journal of International Law*, 80(3), pp. 668–677.

³⁶ R. C. Haerr (1987), ‘The Gulf of Sidra’, *San Diego Law Review*, 24, pp. 751–767.

³⁷ S. R. Ratner (1984), ‘The Gulf of Sidra Incident of 1981: A Study of the Lawfulness of Peacetime Aerial Engagements’, *Yale Journal of International Law*, 7, pp. 59–77.

deepening tensions between the countries,³⁸ and demonstrating the risks inherent in such coercive measures

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This comparative analysis examines the effectiveness, risks, and long-term implications of these approaches, providing insights into how they can be strategically balanced to achieve sustainable maritime security and development.

Effectiveness and strategic impact

Cooperative maritime diplomacy can create a stable environment conducive for economic growth and investment, while leading to improved management of marine resources,³⁹ exactly because it is based on partnership and openness. Where interests are shared, this type of maritime diplomacy can be effective to achieve the parties' goals in question, while also improving relations more broadly.⁴⁰

By comparison, persuasive maritime diplomacy can be an effective way to showcase a country's naval capabilities and build long-term relationships that can contribute to peace and security, while also allowing states to assert maritime interests and generate support for those interests by leveraging their soft power.⁴¹

Finally, coercive maritime diplomacy, while it can be effective for the achievement of immediate tactical objectives, has limited strategic impact given the risk for escalation, which can in turn challenge long-term stability and exacerbate any underlying tensions in bilateral or regional relations. It can also be difficult to sustain for extended periods of time.⁴²

³⁸ S. Romeo (2016), *Coercive Diplomacy, Theories and Application: A Case Study on US Administration and Libya*. Unpublished dissertation. Free International University of Social Studies, Rome.

³⁹ M. S. Islam (2024), 'Maritime Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation Mechanisms: Insights from the Black Sea and Bay of Bengal', *Millennial Asia*, pp. 1–28.

⁴⁰ S. Bashir, S. Noreen and M. B. Awan (2021), 'Building Influence and Strengthening Partnerships: Pakistan's Cooperative Maritime Diplomacy towards Africa', *Asian Social Studies and Applied Research*, 2(4), pp. 309–320.

⁴¹ C. La Mièrè (2014), *Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Drivers and Challenges*. Routledge, London.

⁴² United States Institute of Peace (2003), 'The United States and Coercive Diplomacy: Past, Present, and Future'. *United States Institute of Peace*, 8 August. Accessed 5 December 2024. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2003/08/united-states-and-coercive-diplomacy-past-present-and-future>.

Risks and challenges

Cooperative maritime diplomacy, while largely positive in its effects, does rely on either the existence of trust and sustained commitment, or the ability to cultivate these. Where priorities between states may differ, rivalries may already be present, or levels of capacity and the ability to commit may not be level, and generating trust and political will can be challenging. These factors can hinder effective collaboration.⁴³ Furthermore, given this type of diplomacy would often involve multilateral cooperation, decision-making at this level can be slow, which can also impact efficacy.

Persuasive maritime diplomacy, on the other hand, may be difficult for some states to employ, particularly those that are smaller and have limited naval capacity and a weaker presence on the international stage. Furthermore, because persuasion can be slow to take hold, the impacts of this type of diplomacy may be gradual, and would thus only be appropriate for addressing non-acute concerns, where slow-yielding results may be acceptable.

Of course, as already indicated, coercive measures are inherently risky and the reliance on the threat or use of force to achieve certain ends carries the risk of an expansion, rather than containment, of insecurity.⁴⁴ Moreover, the effective use of coercive maritime diplomacy also necessarily relies on significant military force and the ability to show this force, which may not be available to many African states.

Long-term implications for regional stability and development

In the long-term, cooperative maritime diplomacy is likely to yield the most positive effects, provided there is sufficient political will and proper implementation takes place, and can result in strengthened regional institutions that are well-capacitated for dealing with maritime threats and challenges.

Persuasion can also contribute to long-term stability of the states employing it, by enhancing its soft power and international standing, which in turn can help

⁴³ A. A. B. Perwita and I. T. Meilisa (2018), 'Co-Operative Maritime Diplomacy: The Resolution of the Philippines-Indonesia Maritime Border Dispute (1994-2014)', *Andalas Journal of International Studies*, 7(2), pp. 126–144.

⁴⁴ United States Institute of Peace (2003).

to improve relations, open doors diplomatically, and provide the state more room to manoeuvre in achieving its goals.⁴⁵

Lastly, coercive maritime diplomacy can, over time, detract from prospects for collaboration and lead to cycles of instability and/or conflict, especially in regions that may already face political and socio-economic challenges. The use of coercion must thus be carefully managed to prevent the actualisation of down-side risks.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

What policy positions can states then take to enhance their maritime diplomacy and achieve their foreign policy goals?

- First, the use of a **balanced approach** is advisable. States should assess their interests, available tools, risks and threats, and explore the ways in which different types of diplomacy can be best integrated or ordered based on the individual circumstances.
- Next, focusing on **strengthening regional cooperation** can enhance prospects for collaboration and the potential to address (often transnational) maritime threats. This will necessarily involve transparency and trust, alongside the presence of genuine political will.
- Third, states can **invest in enhancing their soft power** capabilities by properly funding their navies to conduct the diplomatic efforts with which they are often tasked. Well-capacitated naval forces that understand their diplomatic role can serve as an important actor in a state's diplomatic practice.
- Next, **coercive measures should be used sparingly**, being deployed only when they can be calibrated to avoid escalation and to positively contribute to broader diplomatic efforts, ideally accompanied by initiatives to resolve any conflict that may arise.
- Finally, **maritime diplomacy should be linked to the state's development goals and strategies**, such that blue growth can result from the secure marine environment a state seeks to achieve, requiring an integrated strategic and policy outlook that links the oceans to the country's national interest. Concerns such as environmental protection and sustainable resource management can, for example, be centred on maritime diplomatic efforts.

⁴⁵ M. Nasir and S. Seniwati (2024), 'Building the World Maritime Axis: Strategies and Challenges in Indonesia's Maritime Diplomacy under Jokowi', *Presidensial: Jurnal Hukum, Administrasi Negara, dan Kebijakan Publik*, 1(4), pp. 204–224.

Conclusion:

Maritime diplomacy is a tool that can successfully form part of states' diplomatic toolkits, offering alternative strategies for the achievement of their goals, especially in the context of maritime issues' prominence on the international agenda. The utilisation of maritime diplomacy can extend beyond security to environmental and economic issues, all of which are important for prosperity, especially in the African context, where there is a drive to leverage the many opportunities that lie at sea. By leveraging maritime assets effectively, states can enhance their influence, protect their interests and resources, promote regional cooperation, and address transnational challenges like IUU fishing, smuggling, and trafficking. The integration of maritime diplomatic approaches with other tools of diplomacy can support states' national interest, while ensuring the ocean remains a source of opportunity and security.

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Title: Maritime Security from the Perspective of African Developing Landlocked States

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Abstract:

Maritime security is essential to international trade and economic stability, and extends beyond coastal states, to landlocked states. Even without direct access to the sea, developing landlocked African countries rely significantly on coastal neighbours for trade and economic activities. Maritime routes must be secure to remain stable and economically expand.

This paper explores the maritime security challenges of developing landlocked African states, which are deeply intertwined in maritime activities through regional trade networks, dependency for port access, and influenced by maritime crime. The paper discusses the collaborative efforts required between landlocked and coastal states to enhance maritime security, emphasising the role of regional organisations and international partnerships. By addressing these dynamics, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how African developing landlocked states can contribute to and benefit from robust maritime security frameworks. The paper concludes that maritime security is vital for the economic and social wellbeing of developing landlocked African states.

Introduction:

Landlocked countries rely heavily on maritime routes for their international trade. Maritime security (MARSEC) is therefore crucial for several reasons:

- The economies of landlocked countries are significantly dependent on maritime trade. Over 90% of imports and exports are conducted through the seaports of neighbouring states. Ensuring the security of these maritime routes is vital for the uninterrupted flow of goods, which directly impacts the country's economic stability and growth.
- The coast of Africa is a region marked by geopolitical tensions and conflicts. Access to maritime routes through neighbouring countries requires stable and secure maritime environments. Any disruption due to piracy, smuggling, or regional conflicts can severely affect trade and economic activities.

- Most of the landlocked states have strategic agreements with coastal neighbours to facilitate their maritime trade. Maintaining maritime security is essential to uphold these partnerships and ensure mutual benefits. For instance, the Djibouti Corridor is a critical trade route that needs to be secure to support Ethiopia's import-export activities.
- The national security of landlocked states is intertwined with maritime security. The risks of piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing in the region can have spillover effects, impacting internal security and stability.

As landlocked states aim to integrate more deeply into the global economy, secure maritime routes are essential. MARSEC ensures that these states can participate in international trade without significant disruptions, fostering economic development and international cooperation.

Aim and Scope:

This paper explores the particular challenges and opportunities facing developing landlocked African states in the realm of maritime security. These states are deeply intertwined with maritime activities through regional trade networks, dependency on coastal neighbours for port access, and the impacts of maritime crime on their economies. The study examines the strategic importance of maritime security for landlocked states, highlighting how issues such as piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing affect their economic and national security. Furthermore, it discusses the collaborative efforts required between landlocked and coastal states to enhance maritime security, emphasising the role of regional organisations and international partnerships. By addressing these dynamics, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how African developing landlocked states can contribute to and benefit from robust maritime security frameworks.

Discussion:

GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

Formerly, the seaports were owned and operated by states. But the current ports are more globalised, private operations carrying out businesses, and the role of coastal/port states is limited more to the regulatory side. Additionally, the rise of piracy and terrorism brought in other state actors, who are scattered around Africa, mainly on the Horn of Africa side, as well as the western side

of the Indian Ocean. The accumulation of foreign state actors in the region sometimes brings unnecessary tensions. Hence, considering geopolitics as one of the factors of maritime security is essential.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Without direct access to the sea, landlocked states had to rely on neighbouring countries' ports, significantly for trade and development, increasing transportation and logistical costs.

Landlocked states depend on coastal states and rely on coastal neighbours for access to ports, and maritime routes can create vulnerabilities, both natural and human made. Landlocked countries have limited control over maritime security policies and the capacity for enforcement, in addition to limited resources and an ability to contribute to regional maritime security initiatives.

Moreover, supply chain vulnerabilities may bring disruptions to maritime trade routes than can severely impact landlocked countries' economies and development. Strengthening partnerships and improving logistics with coastal states are crucial for landlocked countries' long-term prosperity.

For example, Ethiopia became heavily dependent on the Port of Djibouti for its import and export activities, which now handles over 95% of its trade. The reliance on a single port made Ethiopia vulnerable to any disruptions in Djibouti, whether due to political instability, infrastructure issues, or regional conflicts. The loss of coastline diminished Ethiopia's direct influence in maritime affairs and regional geopolitics, particularly in the strategically important Red Sea region. The above became one of the main causes of conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, leading to a bloody war that claimed more than 70 000 lives.

To mitigate the impact, Ethiopia has sought strategic partnerships with other neighbouring coastal states, aiming to secure reliable access to maritime routes. Ethiopia had to diversify its economic strategies, focusing on developing robust overland transport networks and enhancing its logistics capabilities to remain competitive in regional trade.

SECURITY IMPACT

Landlocked countries are affected by maritime crimes such as terrorism, piracy, smuggling, trafficking, and illegal fishing, which can disrupt regional trade and security. Moreover, the security of hinterland long routes and land

borders are also vulnerable to other threats, such as contraband, pilferage, and conflict-driven disruption.

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING MARITIME SECURITY

- **Regional collaboration:** Strengthening cooperation with individual coastal states is crucial for landlocked countries to address shared maritime security challenges. Active participation in regional security frameworks and joint operations such as DCOC, AU, IGAD, ECOWAS, and COMESA can enhance maritime domain awareness and response capabilities.
- **Maritime security information sharing also plays a great role:** Effective information exchange and coordination among countries in the region can improve early detection and prevent threats. As some of the threats originate or affect the landlocked states, their contribution will have a great impact on getting positive results in combatting the threat.

Summary:

WAY FORWARD

Landlocked states should work on developing robust legal frameworks, governance structures, and institutional capacity to manage maritime security effectively. Capacity building and resource allocation are necessary to improve maritime security infrastructure. Landlocked states should also invest in the training and education of personnel to enhance their skills and expertise in maritime security operations.

The other aspect is resource mobilisation, securing adequate financial and material resources to sustain long-term maritime security initiatives and infrastructure. The role of international organisations and foreign aid in supporting maritime security efforts is of paramount importance for landlocked states and fostering collaboration and cooperation with coastal communities to promote maritime security as a shared responsibility.

Conclusion:

Landlocked countries need to be actively involved in the maritime sector, collaborate with coastal states on maritime security matters, invest in port infrastructures, be visible in the IMO, register and own vessels to gain the benefit of the sector, and use their right to access to the sea. The alternative is to lock itself, which becomes miserable and costly.

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Title: Capacity Building in Maritime Security: Challenges and Opportunities in Africa [Speech]

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of capacity building within the framework of maritime security, focusing on Africa's diverse maritime threats. Capacity building, defined as enhancing skills, resources, and structures to function effectively, is a dynamic process tailored to regional and organisational contexts. This paper outlines the key maritime security challenges facing Africa, including piracy, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, human trafficking, and environmental degradation. It also highlights the Global Maritime Crime Programme's (GMCP) approach to countering these threats, through capacity-building efforts across 34 African countries. The discussion will focus on the need for tailored solutions, regional cooperation, and the strategic role of legal frameworks and enforcement. The paper concludes by emphasising the importance of sustainable, long-term capacity building to enhance maritime security in Africa.

Introduction:

Africa's maritime domain, encompassing vast coastlines along the Atlantic and Indian oceans, as well as the Mediterranean Sea, play a critical role in global trade and regional economic development. However, these waters are also a hotspot for various maritime crimes, including piracy, drug trafficking, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and human smuggling. These challenges pose significant threats to regional stability, governance, and sustainable development.

Capacity building, defined as the process of enhancing the skills, resources, and structures needed for effective and sustainable operations, is crucial to countering these threats. The Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) of the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working with African nations to strengthen maritime security through tailored capacity-building initiatives. These initiatives focus on improving law enforcement capabilities,

judicial systems, and regional cooperation, to ensure that national authorities can secure their waters, protect maritime resources, and enforce the rule of law.

The complexity of maritime security in Africa demands a multifaceted approach. Effective capacity building is not just about providing technical assistance or training; it also requires strong leadership, cultural adaptability, and the ability to integrate new knowledge into daily operations. This paper examines the current maritime security threats in Africa, the GMCP's capacity-building efforts, and the critical factors that contribute to the success of these initiatives.

Aim and Scope:

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the role of capacity building in enhancing maritime security across Africa. The focus is on understanding the specific threats facing Africa's maritime domain and how tailored capacity-building efforts can help mitigate these challenges. The paper also aims to highlight the importance of regional cooperation, robust legal frameworks, and sustainable development in ensuring long-term maritime security.

This discussion covers the various initiatives led by the GMCP in 34 African countries, with a particular emphasis on the programme's efforts in the Atlantic, Gulf of Guinea, Mediterranean, and Eastern and Southern African regions. By focusing on specific case studies and examples from these regions, the paper will demonstrate how capacity-building interventions can be adapted to meet the unique needs of each area.

The scope of this paper is limited to the GMCP's capacity-building activities in Africa, with an emphasis on key maritime crime issues, including piracy, illegal fishing, trafficking, and environmental degradation. The paper does not cover non-African regions or broader global maritime security issues.

Discussion:

Africa's maritime landscape presents a complex array of security challenges. From piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, to illegal fishing in the Atlantic, and drug trafficking in the Mediterranean, these threats are both varied and evolving. The GMCP's capacity-building approach is designed to address these threats by strengthening the law enforcement capabilities of African states, supporting legal reforms, and fostering regional cooperation.

In the Atlantic Ocean, capacity-building initiatives have focused on tackling piracy, marine pollution, and drug trafficking in 19 countries across West and Central Africa. Similarly, in the Gulf of Guinea, six countries have benefitted from enhanced maritime law enforcement capabilities and legal reforms, which have enabled more effective prosecution of maritime crimes. The Mediterranean programme has addressed issues such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, and the illegal trade of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials.

The GMCP's approach emphasises sustainability, regional cooperation, and practical skills. By promoting maritime domain awareness and information sharing, the programme has helped member states better understand and respond to emerging threats. A key priority moving forward is to enhance regional collaboration through frameworks, such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) and the Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA), which provide a platform for joint action against transnational maritime crimes.

As maritime crime does not respect national borders, cooperation among regional states is crucial for creating resilient maritime security structures. Capacity building efforts that strengthen legal frameworks and promote information sharing are essential in creating a strong deterrent to maritime crime and ensuring that Africa's coastal regions are secure for future generations.

Title: Exploring Constructive Roles and Ambitions of the African Union in Africa's Maritime Security Dynamics

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Abstract:

The African Union¹ (AU) has laid out ambitious frameworks to address maritime security and promote the blue economy, notably through the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy² (2050 AIM Strategy) and the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety, and Development in Africa³ (Lomé Charter). These initiatives aim to harness Africa's maritime potential for sustainable economic growth and African prosperity, but their implementation has been inconsistent and slow. Despite various regional achievements in improving maritime governance over the last 10 years, the AU's leadership in coordinating Africa's maritime security remains weak due to fragmented approaches, insufficient resources, and a lack of political will. This article delves into the challenges impeding the effectiveness of the AU's maritime strategies, and proposes actionable steps, to strengthen its leadership in driving a unified approach to maritime governance both at continental and international levels. By bolstering institutional capacity, improving coordination between regional bodies, and securing sustainable funding, the AU can better leverage regional achievements and implement a coherent Pan-African maritime strategy. Strengthening the AU's leadership on global platforms such as the G20⁴ and BRICS⁵ are also essential in amplifying Africa's voice in the global maritime security debate.

¹ The African Union, 'Overview', *African Union*, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://au.int/en/overview>.

² African Union (2015), *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, African Union, Addis Ababa, viewed 30 January 2025, https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33832-wd-african_union_3-1.pdf; African Union (2014), 'Assembly/AU Dec.496(XXII): Decision on the Adoption and Implementation of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)', *Assembly of the Union Twenty-Second Ordinary Session*, Addis Ababa, 30-31 January 2014, section 6; African Union (2012), *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, African Union, Addis Ababa, viewed 30 January 2025, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/30929-doc-2050_aim_strategy_eng_0.pdf.

³ African Union (2016), *African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter)*, Lomé, 15 October 2016, viewed 30 January 2025, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37286-treaty-african_charter_on_maritime_security.pdf.

⁴ G20 South Africa 2025, 'Overview', viewed 30 January 2025, <https://g20.org/about-g20/overview/>.

⁵ BRICS, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://infobrics.org/>.

Introduction:

Africa's vast maritime domain holds significant potential for socio-economic development, with oceans and seas crucial avenues for trade, food security, and regional development and integration. The African Union (AU) has long recognised this potential and, in recent years, has tried to develop a series of strategies, either sectoral or covering the peace and security sector as a whole.

However, they might be criticised for being too land-centric and traditional in addressing security matters, with limited attention to human security and to the oceans and the seas.

Agenda 2063,⁶ the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), and the African Charter for Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter) (among others), are all laudable initiatives that have put blue economy and maritime security in the limelight as the 'new frontline of Africa's renaissance'. These frameworks seek to address emerging maritime threats, and enhance a sustainable blue economy, and maritime development across the continent. However, despite these forward-thinking goals, the genuine uptake and implementation of these strategies have been limited, hindered by various challenges, ranging from political fragmentation to insufficient resources and lack of coordination between regional and continental mechanisms.

The African maritime landscape faces a growing spectrum of conventional and unconventional threats and crimes, including piracy, illegal fishing, human and drug trafficking, and climate change impacts on coastal communities and the ecosystem, which demand a comprehensive and unified response from key players. The AU, as the continent's primary body for peace and security, seeks to promote Africa-centricity and speaks on behalf of 55 African nations in a unified voice. But this seems insufficient to create ownership.

Aim and Scope:

This article delves into the challenges impeding the effectiveness of the AU's maritime strategies, and proposes actionable steps, to strengthen its leadership in driving a unified approach to maritime governance, both at continental and

⁶ African Union, 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want', *African Union*, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.

international levels. The article reviews the strategies and leadership within the African domain, to find ways to promote a unified voice for African maritime security.

Discussion:

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH THE STRATEGIES?

The continent is not short of strategies. For the past 10 years, the AU has been developing an array of strategies, aimed at improving security and governance of Africa, to “foster increased wealth creation from Africa’s oceans and seas by developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and an environmentally sustainable manner,” as specified in the 2050 AIM Strategy adopted in 2014.

Similarly, the Lomé Charter could be a powerful guiding tool to countries in improving blue economy development and maritime security. The principle of subsidiarity⁷ pleaded in the Lomé Charter, advocates freedom of initiatives locally, thereby implying shared competence at different levels.

This explicit acknowledgement makes Africa a unique case and recognises the vital contributions of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms in the maritime domain. But (for example), to date, only three countries (Benin, Senegal and Togo) ratified the Lomé Charter.

THE CHALLENGES TO AU MARITIME STRATEGIES

Globally, the AU is confronted by a series of challenges, either endogenous or exogenous – emanating from political fragmentation, lack of resources and inconsistent implementations – which take the institution further away from its core objectives; that is, to achieving continental integration while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political issues.

Academics, analysts, and journalists alike have expressed strong criticism of the AU, especially when it comes to the implementation of strategies. As mentioned by Bruce Byiers, from the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), “the gap between the number of continental initiatives

⁷ W. A. Knight (1996), ‘Towards a Subsidiarity Model for Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy: Making Chapter VIII of the UN Charter Operational’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17(1), pp. 31–52, at p. 39.

and their entry into force has widened over time.”⁸ Similarly, Mr Paul Kagame,⁹ President of Rwanda and former AU Chair, pointed out in his 2018 *Report on Reform Implementation*,¹⁰ that the Union suffered from a “chronic crisis of implementation”.¹¹

The AU is criticised for its inability to effectively engage and involve the continent’s citizens in its activities. A survey conducted by the polling organisation, Afrobarometer¹² reveals that more than a third of Africans either consider the AU to be “useless, or have no opinion of it at all”.¹³ This sentiment echoes the words of Mr Kagame in his speech, where he highlighted the ‘dysfunctional’ nature of the organisation, in which “member states have limited value ... and our citizens have no trust.”

The leadership of the African Union (AU) is often called into question, as the Commission has yet to fulfil its commitments to building “an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and serving as a dynamic force on the global stage,”¹⁴ as outlined in the AU’s vision and mission statement. This issue is evident both among member states and citizens. Over the past three years (2021–2023), 93% of African Union decisions have not been implemented by its member states, according to AU-mandated audit reports.¹⁵

⁸ The Economist, ‘The African Union is Less Effective at 20 Than It Was at 2’, *The Economist*, 12 February 2022, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2022/02/12/the-african-union-is-less-effective-at-20-than-it-was-at-two>.

⁹ P. Kagame viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.paulkagame.rw/>.

¹⁰ P. Kagame (2018), ‘Report on Reform Implementation by President Kagame: Closed Session 30th African Union Summit’, *Paul Kagame*, 28 January 2018, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.paulkagame.rw/report-on-reform-implementation-by-president-paul-kagame-closed-session-30th-african-union-summit/>.

¹¹ P. Kagame (2017), ‘The Imperative to Strengthen Our Union: Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union’, *African Union*, 29 January 2017, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/34915-file-report-20institutional20reform20of20the20au-2.pdf>

¹² M. Olapade, E. S. Selormey, and H. Gninafan (2016), ‘Regional Integration for Africa: Could Stronger Public Support Turn "Rhetoric into Reality?"’, *Afrobarometer Round 6, Dispatch No. 91*, 25 May 2016, viewed 30 January 2025, https://www.afrobarometer.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/02/ab_r6_dispatchno91_regional_integration_in_africa_en.pdf.

¹³ *The Economist*, ‘The African Union is Less Effective at 20 Than It Was at 2’.

¹⁴ African Union, ‘Vision and Mission’, *African Union*, viewed 30 January 2029, <https://au.int/en/about/vision>.

¹⁵ F. M. Moussa (2024), ‘Speech of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Thirty-Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union’, *African Union*, 17 February 2024, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240217/speech-he-moussa-faki-mahamat-chairperson-african-union-commission-thirty>.

THE AU'S LONG-STANDING WEAKNESSES: LEADERSHIP AND LACK OF OWNERSHIP

Despite rhetoric regarding the involvement of citizens, in particular women and youth in decision-making, the AU remains an organisation of member states rather than African people.

Political fragmentation due to states' rivalries, including geopolitical and national interests, is one of AU's main challenges over the past two decades. This has led to a decline of the Pan-Africanist¹⁶ ideology – which aims to cement African unity and collective actions. More than a framework, Pan-Africanism was once considered a driving force to build a common identity, with the aim of unifying and integrating Africa. It is argued that this state of play is due to “a rise of sovereign nationalism over continentalism”, reducing consequently the commitment of member states to achieve the core objectives of developing a “collective security” and provide “African solutions to African problems”.¹⁷

The AU's successes have been more significant when driven by strong member-state leadership or coalition of states with mutual interests. It is often argued that the AU is weak because its “members want it that way”.¹⁸ Indeed, the organisation has struggled with a consistent inflow of leadership committed to implementing agreed-upon norms and holding member states accountable for their actions. Moreover, some member states have been hesitant to allow leadership to be ceded to more capable nations, and even when such leadership occurs, there are often expectations that the “leading state should bear the entire burden of responsibility, rather than sharing it equitably among all members.”¹⁹

¹⁶ B. Fagbayibo (2025), ‘Pan-African Integration Has Made Progress but Needs a Change of Mindset’, *The Conversation*, 24 May 2025, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://theconversation.com/pan-african-integration-has-made-progress-but-needs-a-change-of-mindset-183541>.

¹⁷ W. Okumu and A. Atta-Asamoah (eds) (2023), *The African Union at 20: African Perspectives on Progress, Challenges, and Prospects*, Institute for Security Studies, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/AU%20at%2020%20book.pdf>.

¹⁸ U. Staeger and B. Fagbayibo (2025), ‘The African Union is Weak Because Its Members Want It That Way – Experts Call for Action on Its Powers’, *The Conversation*, 5 March 2025, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://theconversation.com/the-african-union-is-weak-because-its-members-want-it-that-way-experts-call-for-action-on-its-powers-224191>.

¹⁹ U. Staeger and B. Fagbayibo (2025).

In such circumstances, it is clear that the “AU cannot achieve its set goals, particularly Agenda 2063 in the next 40 years, with ideologies that serve State and [the] political elite’s interest rather than the African continent.”²⁰

Therefore, when evaluating the implementation of maritime strategies in particular the 2050 AIM Strategy, like other strategies in other sectors, it is important to review the context and take into account the different internal and external parameters. Scholars, journalists and analysts often pointed out the procedural, tactical and operational deficiencies of the 2050 AIM Strategy, and the range of resources required to achieve its maritime security objectives,²¹ but it also vital to include among others the issue of “ocean wealth blindness”,²² the scourge of conflicts (inter-states, intra-state), and the fast-evolving transnational maritime crimes and threats.

While it is natural for AU member states to pursue their national strategies and goals to safeguard their own interests, it is essential for them to shift their mindset and focus on achieving mutual gains when it comes to the AU’s priorities. This approach will foster greater cooperation and strengthen ownership of the strategy’s key objectives, even with its inherent flaws. The confusion between security, national interests, and the notion of state sovereignty can often obscure the broader narrative. A new approach to security – one that focuses on actors being responsible for both insecurity and security – should be explored. In this context, a nation’s maritime strategy should not be conflated with that of the continent. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on identifying and leveraging the fundamental commonalities that drive collective action.

MULTIPLICITY OF MARITIME SECURITY INITIATIVES

Though established as a ‘dynamic force’ representing Africa in ‘global arena’, when it comes to maritime security, the African Union Commission has been relatively passive in recent years. Its lack of engagement during the piracy crisis off the coast of Somalia in the 2000s, and more recently its absence from

²⁰ W. Okumu and A. Atta-Asamoah (eds) (2023).

²¹ J. Potgieter (2013), ‘Revisiting AIMS 2050: A 2013 Perspective’, *Third International Conference on Strategic Theory, Maritime Security Off Eastern Africa: Beyond Piracy*, Dar es Salaam, 18–20 September 2013, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/milscience/Documents/Papers/captain%20san%20johan%20potgieter.pdf>; see also I. J. van der Waag (2013), ‘Conference Report, Third International Conference on Strategic Theory, Maritime Security off Eastern Africa’, *Journal of African Union Studies*, Vol. 2(3/4), pp. 11–26.

²² I. Ralby (2017), ‘From Seablindness to Wealth Blindness’, *Stimson*, 8 February 2017, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.stimson.org/2017/sea-blindness-wealth-blindness/>.

addressing the escalating situation in the Red Sea, which directly and indirectly affects several of its member states, has created a significant security vacuum. This void has led to an over-reliance on a range of ad-hoc and long-term initiatives, which have sometimes resulted in uncoordinated and fragmented responses.

Some key initiatives that have been put in place to fill this gap include:

- The **Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS)**²³ is an international ad-hoc platform established to address piracy in the region. The platform, which brought together regional states and the international community, was later renamed Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (CGIMA),²⁴ with an expanded mandate covering a wider range of maritime crimes and threats. The platform has been chaired by regional states and regional organisation for the past eight years.
- The **Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, also known as Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment (DCOC/JA)**,²⁵ is a regional framework that was launched in response to the rising incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia. The DCOC/JA, supported by the IMO, encourages cooperation among regional states to enhance maritime security, share information, and coordinate efforts to combat piracy and other maritime threats.
- The **Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in the West and Central Africa (the Yaoundé Code of Conduct)**,²⁶ was developed in

²³ B. G. Kinyua (2022), 'UN's Contact Group on Somali Piracy Changes Its Mandate', *The Maritime Executive*, 18 February 2022, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://maritime-executive.com/editorials/un-s-contact-group-on-somali-piracy-changes-its-mandate>.

²⁴ Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (2022), '2022 Strategic Framework: Re-envisioning the CGPCS as a Platform for Strategic Dialogue on Maritime Crime in the Western Indian Ocean: Report of the Chair of the Strategic Planning Steering Group for Consideration at the 24th Plenary of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia', *Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia*, Nairobi, 27 January 2022, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://bueger.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SPSG-report-final.pdf>.

²⁵ International Maritime Organization, 'The Djibouti Code of Conduct', *International Maritime Organization*, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/Content-and-Evolution-of-the-Djibouti-Code-of-Conduct.aspx>.

²⁶ Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa, *International Maritime Organization*, Yaoundé, 25 June 2013, viewed 30 January 2025, https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Security/Documents/code_of_conduct%20signed%20from%20ECOWAS%20site.pdf.

response to the increasing frequency of piracy, armed robbery, and other maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea. This framework aims to strengthen regional cooperation in addressing maritime security challenges in the region.

- The **Regional Maritime Security Architecture (RMSA)**,²⁷ implemented by the **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)**,²⁸ under the regional Maritime Security programme (MASE) (funded by the European Union (EU)), was established following the signing of two regional agreements, and is based on sharing and exchanging maritime information and joint operations at sea.
- The agreements were signed in 2018 by seven states in Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (Comoros, Djibouti, France (Reunion Island), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles). These have led to the creation of two regional centres, namely the **Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC)**²⁹ and the **Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)**.³⁰ These centres are designed to improve information-sharing and coordination of maritime security operations across the Indian Ocean region.

These frameworks not only foster cooperation and enhance the collective maritime security capabilities of African states, but they also focus on building resilience within the region. They achieve this through capacity-building efforts, sharing best practices, and conducting joint missions on matters of regional interest. Additionally, they promote inter-agency cooperation, which is crucial for improving Africa's Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

In this context, it is important to recognise the efforts and significant achievements of these mechanisms. One such accomplishment is the SAFE DOMAIN III³¹ exercise held in August 2024, which was initiated by the Multinational Maritime

²⁷ R. Mohabeer and K. S. de Estrada (2019), *Strengthening Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean: Introducing a State-of-the-Art Maritime Security Architecture in Service of the Blue Economy*, Indian Ocean Commission, Ebene, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/en/ioc-presentation/>.

²⁸ Indian Ocean Commission (n.d.), *Indian Ocean Commission*, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/en/ioc-presentation/>.

²⁹ S. Lavani (2022), 'Presentation of Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre', *RMIFC*, 22 November 2022, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/LAVAN-COMOROS-Presentation-of-RMIFC.pdf>.

³⁰ S. Gontier and N. Fleury (2023), 'Regional Coordination Operations Centre: Threats in the Red Sea', *RCOC*, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Extraordinary-Meeting-Regional-Threat-Update-RCOC-and-RMIFC.pdf>.

³¹ E. Lionel (2025), 'ECOWAS Strengthens Maritime Security with Operation Safe Domain III', *Military Africa*, 23 August 2025, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.military.africa/2024/08/ecowas-strengthens-maritime-security-with-operation-safe-domain-iii/>.

Coordination Centre (MMCC) in the ECOWAS area, and meticulously planned, executed, and fully funded by three Zone E states – Nigeria, Togo, and Benin. This initiative represents a remarkable step toward enhancing regional ownership of maritime security efforts.

Similarly, during the 2024 edition of the CUTLASS EXPRESS³² Indian Ocean exercise, organised by United States Africa Command,³³ the RMIFC and the RCOC played key roles in the preparation of the exercise scenarios. This demonstrates a shift both in narratives and stakeholder dynamics, as shown in the article published by Africom, positioning RCOC and RMIFC as key partners and contributors in the regional maritime response.³⁴

Furthermore, to reinforce cooperation and improve coordination among states and mechanisms, ongoing consultations aimed at fostering synergies and minimising the risk of duplicating efforts are actively taking place. A noteworthy development is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding³⁵ (MoU) in January 2024, between the RMIFC-RCOC and the DCOC/JA – formalising their cooperation and facilitating closer collaboration between the two regional centres and the DCOC/JA framework.

In addition, the RMSA, in partnership with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and the SAMSA centre, is in the process of updating the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. The updated plan should be presented at higher level underscoring the region's commitment to strengthening its environmental response capacity and enhancing maritime safety.

These initiatives are thus pivotal in encouraging regional cooperation and ownership in maritime security, ensuring that African states take a leading role

³² United States Africa Command (n.d.), *Cutlass Express*, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/exercises/cutlass-express>.

³³ United States Africa Command (n.d.), viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.africom.mil/>.

³⁴ Y. Levardi (2024), 'Maritime Collaboration: RCOC's Support to Cutlass Express 2024', *America's Navy*, 7 March 2024, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3699731/maritime-collaboration-rcocs-support-to-cutlass-express-2024/>.

³⁵ M. Ralephenya (2023), 'RE: Intention of DCoC/JA Signatory States to Collaborate with RCOC and RMIFC – Integration of MASE centres into DCOC ISN', *Djibouti Code of Conduct*, Mauritius, 13 November 2023, viewed 30 January 2023, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/DCoC-Letter-MASE-Centres-Integration-in-DCoC-ISN-13-11-2023.pdf>.

in addressing the security challenges they face and providing “African solutions to African problems”.³⁶

Frameworks like the DCoC, RMSA, and the Yaoundé Architecture are becoming essential regional instruments to foster both inter-state and international cooperation. They enable African states to unite and present a cohesive stance, empowering them to better assert their needs and demands for a more balanced cooperation with stakeholders. While these initiatives are promising, there remains a critical need for stronger leadership from the African Union Commission to facilitate coordinated action and fill the leadership vacuum in addressing maritime security challenges across the continent.

STRENGTHENING THE AU'S MARITIME STRATEGY

Given the fragmented nature of African maritime security, compounded by geopolitical tensions, power competition, and the escalating threat of transnational crimes, the task facing the AU is daunting. The convergence of these challenges creates a complex environment, where coordinated action is critical but difficult to achieve. The AU must navigate these competing interests and vulnerabilities to forge a unified approach to securing Africa's maritime domain. However, the question of how to bring back the AU in the maritime security dialogue and position as a ‘global actor’ remains.³⁷

The AU should fundamentally strengthen its organisational structure and secure independent, sustainable funding to function effectively. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), particularly the Peace and Security Council (PSC), should be further strengthened with the “establishment of a body of experts or a Task Force to coordinate, share knowledge and make recommendations on maritime security.”³⁸ The PSC as the “technical and operational arm of the AU,”³⁹ should lead through better resource mobilisation, capacity building, and “enhanced cooperation, including information sharing and lessons learned

³⁶ B. Mngomezulu (2019), ‘Revisiting the Notion of “African Solution to African Problems”’: Successes and Challenges’, *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 8(2), pp. 45–67.

³⁷ W. Okumu and A. Atta-Asamoah (eds) (n.d.), *The African Union at 20*.

³⁸ African Union (2023), ‘Communique of the 1174th meeting of the PSC, held on 18 September 2023, on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea’, *African Union*, 5 October 2023, viewed 1 February 2025, <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1174th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-18-september-2023-on-maritime-security-in-the-gulf-of-guinea>.

³⁹ African Union (2023), *The African Union Peace and Security Council Handbook 2023*, Amani Africa, Addis Ababa, 2023, <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AU-PSC-Handbook-2023.pdf>.

among different regions of the continent.”⁴⁰ By increasing technical expertise and human resources, the AU-PSC can coordinate better with regional bodies and ensure alignment with continental priorities.

Additionally, the PSC should take a leadership role in mapping existing maritime security and blue economy initiatives and stakeholders across the regions, with support from RECs and regional mechanisms. By identifying and coordinating efforts with various stakeholders, the AU can develop a unified approach to maritime security.

While sectoral strategies are crucial, there is a pressing need for an overarching continental security and defence strategy that connects and aligns the various existing frameworks. A more integrated approach, such as a Whole-of-Africa Maritime Security Strategy, is needed to streamline efforts and create coherence among the various regional and national maritime security frameworks. This strategy should focus on improving coordination, enhancing collaboration across sectors, and ensuring that all maritime, security, and Blue Economy efforts are aligned and implemented effectively across the continent.

A revision of the 2050 AIM Strategy is critical to reflect a paradigm shift from traditional security concerns to a more inclusive, sustainable approach that prioritises maritime governance and human security. A 2050 AIM Strategy 2.0 must ensure convergence of both “top-down” (policy-driven) and “bottom-up” (grassroots and community-driven) processes to create a cohesive strategy that is accepted by all member states, thus ensuring a unified approach to maritime security. It must also emphasise the principle of subsidiarity,⁴¹ recognising the vital role of regional organisations in addressing specific threats.

One of the greatest challenges facing the AU is inadequate financial resources for implementing its maritime security initiatives. The adoption of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2719⁴² in December 2023 provides a

⁴⁰ African Union (2023).

⁴¹ Amani Africa (2023), ‘Beyond Subsidiarity: Understanding the Roles of the AU and RECs/RMs in Peace and Security in Africa’, *Amani Africa: Special Report*, Report no. 16, August 2023, viewed 30 January 2025, https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Beyond-Subsidiarity.-Understanding-the-Roles-of-the-AU-and-RECs_RMs-in-Peace-and-Security-in-Africa-2.pdf.

⁴² United Nations Security Council (2023), *Security Council resolution 2719 (2023) on consideration of requests from the African Union Peace and Security Council to access UN assessed contributions for African Union-led peace support operations*, United Nations, New York, 21 December 2023, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4031070?v=pdf&ln=en>.

significant opportunity for the AU to secure predictable and sustainable funding for African peace operations, including those focused on maritime security. This resolution positions the AU as a leader in the African peace and security sector, enabling it to take a more active and influential role in shaping both continental and global maritime security initiatives.

The AU's growing presence in global forums like the G20 and BRICS+, urges the organisation and its member states to “strengthen our cohesion to amplify Africa’s voice, a united and powerful voice capable of making itself heard clearly on the world stage in the face of today’s complex challenges.”⁴³ It offers a unique opportunity to advocate for Africa’s maritime interests at the same time, on the world stage.

The AU’s participation as a full member in the G20 summit under Brazil’s presidency presented a valuable opportunity to amplify Africa’s voice in global economic and security discussions. The new South African presidency of the G20 (since December 2024) pledged to promote “solidarity, equality and sustainability”⁴⁴ and address the “challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality aligned with the AU’s Agenda 2063.”⁴⁵

This year, 2025, is a unique opportunity for the AU to collaborate with South Africa, host of the first G20 summit in Africa. However, both should focus on realistic, achievable goals, avoiding the overly ambitious frameworks of past presidencies. By prioritising practical outcomes, they can better advance Africa’s interests at international level.

The AU’s G20 membership can help foster greater internal cohesion and trust among African states and stakeholders. The G20 summits in Brazil (held in November 2024) and South Africa (to be held in 2025), will likely be driven by South-South cooperation, which can benefit the AU’s maritime security and blue economy agenda. Success in these summits could lead to positive spillover effects, enhancing collaboration across other sectors, such as peace and security.

⁴³ African Union (2023), *Annual Report of the activities of the African Union and its organs*, African Union: Cabinet of the Chairman, Addis Ababa, 2023, [https://portal.africa-union.org/DVD/Documents/DOC-AU-WD/EX%20CL%201505%20\(XLIV\)%20_E.pdf](https://portal.africa-union.org/DVD/Documents/DOC-AU-WD/EX%20CL%201505%20(XLIV)%20_E.pdf).

⁴⁴ H. Tshweu (2024), ‘South Africa Launches G20 Presidency, Pledges to Promote Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability’, *African Time*, 3 December 2024, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.atnews.co.za/south-africa-launches-g20-presidency-pledges-to-promote-solidarity-equality-and-sustainability/>.

⁴⁵ A. Vines (2025), ‘The African Union becomes a full member of the G20’, *Wilson Center*, 28 January 2025, viewed 30 January 2025, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/african-union-becomes-full-member-g20>.

Engaging with BRICS+ can significantly enhance the AU's maritime security and blue economy initiatives by fostering collaboration with emerging economies and aligning efforts on common priorities.

Equally important, the AU must deepen its engagement with RECs and regional mechanisms (RMs), which are pivotal in addressing maritime security challenges at the regional level, as demonstrated by frameworks like the RMSA and the Yaoundé Architecture: “RECs are best placed to respond to conflicts within their spheres of influence because they have what can be called proximity advantage.”⁴⁶ Organising annual ministerial conferences on maritime security, alongside regular workshops with key stakeholders, would provide a vital platform for member states and stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue, assess progress, and tackle implementation challenges related to charters and strategies.

Conclusion:

The AU's maritime security frameworks, such as the 2050 AIM Strategy and Lomé Charter, represent critical steps towards improving Africa's maritime security and harnessing its blue economy. However, their implementations have been impeded by political fragmentation, lack of resources, and ineffective coordination. By strengthening its organisational capacity, revising the 2050 AIM Strategy to adopt a more inclusive and integrated approach, and securing sustainable funding, the AU can play a more active and effective role in maritime security.

Additionally, through its participation in global platforms like the G20 and BRICS+, the AU can amplify Africa's voice in global maritime governance, ensuring that Africa's unique maritime security challenges are addressed in international discussions. As the AU continues to evolve as a continental body, its leadership in maritime security will be crucial, not only for safeguarding Africa's maritime resources but also for promoting sustainable economic growth, regional integration, and peace.

The AU's leadership must recognise that Africa's oceans are not merely borders but a vast resource for the development of all African nations. Similarly, AU's

⁴⁶ O. Etyang, T. Abdulkadir, C. Masah, and T. Mapiro (2024), 'Evaluation of the African Union Peace and Security Council: Lessons from 20 years of intervention and recommendations for the future', *Accord Policy and Practice Brief*, (65), August 2024, viewed 1 February 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/evaluation-african-union-peace-and-security-council-lessons-20-years-intervention-and-recommendations-future>.

member states have the responsibility to ensure ratification of Charters and strategies for effective implementation and that the institution remains agile and proactive to contribute sustainably to the wellbeing and prosperity of all African citizens.

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Title: 10 Years of Maritime Safety and Security Architecture in the Gulf of Guinea: Current Situation and Prospects

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Abstract:

The Gulf of Guinea, rich in maritime resources and strategic infrastructures, faces significant security challenges. Following UN Security Council Resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012), the states of ECOWAS, ECCAS, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) joined forces. This collaboration led to the creation of the Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) on Maritime Safety and Security, after the Yaoundé Summit in June 2013. Ten years after the launch of Yaoundé Architecture of the Gulf of Guinea, this paper takes stock of this original security structure, with regards to its missions, as well as of the legitimate ambitions placed on the Architecture by the beneficiaries. The paper aims to analyse the security and legal implications of Yaoundé Code of Conduct, to enable comparison with the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC). The conclusions drawn from this analysis could generate proposals to improve several areas, including structural aspects, such as information management, management of police operations at sea, training and drilling of marines and coast guards, as well as the legal and judicial fields.

Introduction:

The geographical and political Gulf of Guinea is a region where the issues, constraints and problems of maritime governance are fully illustrated, both in the legal and economic, and even geopolitical, aspects. Maritime security concerns are also prevalent. In this part of the world, the sea is a place of cooperation and belligerence, of encounters but also of covetousness and separation. It is a very rich area, but one in which wealth is slow to generate prosperous states.¹ In short, the Gulf of Guinea faces major maritime security challenges, notably piracy, drug trafficking and pollution, which compromise not only the security of the sea routes, but also the socio-economic development of the coastal

¹ A. Bassou (2016), 'Le Golfe de Guinée, zone de contrastes: Richesses et vulnérabilités', *OCP Policy Centre Policy Paper*, September 2016, p. 7, viewed 28 January 2025, <https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/OCPPC-PP1611.pdf>.

countries, making the region, according to some experts, “the most dangerous and insecure zone in the world for the maritime industry.”²

In this strategic space for international navigation, multiple initiatives have been put in place over the last two decades to strengthen maritime security. Regional frameworks, such as the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and various international agreements have emerged, seeking to coordinate the efforts of coastal states and drum up support from the international community. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, highlighting the need for a thorough assessment of the current maritime security architecture.

The establishment of the Yaoundé Architecture has been a complex and ongoing process, marked by significant advances but also by persistent challenges, and influenced by historical, geopolitical and socio-economic factors. To date, it seems imperative to continue to strengthen regional cooperation, invest in local capacities, and adopt an approach that includes environmental and community dimensions. This will not only protect the sea routes, but it will also ensure the sustainability of maritime resources and the socio-economic development of the region.

Aim and Scope:

Therefore, this article will be structured around a historical review of maritime security issues in the Gulf of Guinea, an assessment of the current situation and a review of the initiatives implemented. By examining these dynamics, this article aims to contribute to a better understanding of maritime security issues in the Gulf of Guinea, and to propose recommendations to ensure sustainable maritime governance.

Discussion:

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

The evolution of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is marked by complex dynamics, in which economic interests, political rivalries and criminal challenges intertwine, while sustainably shaping current issues.

² A. Iraq, F. Badr Abousof, and Y. M. Benkirane (2021), *Enjeux de la Piraterie en Afrique*, Dissertation, Ecole de Guerre Economique, Campus Rabat, December 2021, p. 10.

The resurgence of maritime threats in the 1990s

From the 1990s, piracy emerged as a serious threat in the Gulf of Guinea, and the region is now one of the most affected in the world, with an increasing number of attacks targeting commercial and fishing vessels. Thus,

...piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has its epicentre in the Niger Delta region in south-east Nigeria. This oil-rich region, bordered by impenetrable mangroves and home to smuggling networks of all kinds, is emblematic of the socio-economic challenges and difficulties facing the sub-region.³

Pirates often operate in armed groups, using fast boats to attack ships at sea.

In addition, the attacks are usually followed by hostage-taking of crew members or theft of goods from the ships. The goods or cargo are usually smuggled back with the complicity of customs officials or local police. Hostages are usually released on payment of a ransom. The waters off Nigeria, Ghana and Togo are particularly at risk, often due to the proximity of strategic ports and the resource-rich marine environment of the region.

As a result, the geographical position of the Gulf of Guinea at the centre of the Atlantic geopolitical basin is a factor of insecurity and vulnerability. This pivotal position places the sub-region at the crossroads of all kinds of trafficking: flows of illegal migrants encouraged by the exploitation of oil resources; relays of international drug trafficking from Latin America, Central Asia and the Middle East to the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), and the circulation of light weapons fuelled by socio-political instability in the sub-region or in Central Africa, in turn fuelling acts of piracy.

This phenomenon can be explained by several factors, one of which is endemic poverty and the development of migratory flows.

Crime seems to be directly correlated with the endemic poverty of West Africa's coastal populations, whose numbers are constantly on the increase due to the high birth rate and the continual migratory flows that push the inhabitants of the interior to immigrate towards the Atlantic coasts in the hope of finding a better situation there.⁴

³ M. Luntumbue (2011), 'Piraterie et insécurité dans le golfe de Guinée: défis et enjeux d'une gouvernance maritime régionale', *Note d'Analyse du GRIP*, Bruxelles, 30 September 2011, p. 6, viewed 28 January 2025, https://www.grip.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NA_2011-09-30_FR_M-LUNTUMBUE.pdf.

⁴ A. Bassou (2014), 'La Mer du Golfe de Guinée: Richesses, conflits et insécurité', *Paix et Sécurité Internationales: Journal of International Law and International Relations*, (2), 2014, p. 156.

Consolidating security efforts, 2010–2020

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea has become a regional and international priority due to an increase in threats such as piracy, illicit trafficking and illegal fishing. Coastal states have had to work in synergy and implement original initiatives to combat these phenomena. The most significant of these initiatives came out of a meeting on 24 and 25 June 2013, which brought together the heads of state and government of the Central and West African states, at a joint summit in Yaoundé, as well as representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the GGC, who pledged to strengthen cooperation to combat illegal activities at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. Three reference documents were adopted on this occasion: a declaration signed by 24 African heads of state, a code of conduct to combat maritime insecurity, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECOWAS, ECCAS and the GGC.⁵

Despite efforts, piracy and other forms of maritime crime continue to pose serious challenges. The rise of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is clearly a threat to the economies of the coastal countries, which depend on port activities for their exports or external supplies. In a country like Benin, the Port of Cotonou accounts for 90% of foreign trade. Growing insecurity, already responsible for a rise in insurance premiums, could result in a large number of ships deserting to the more secure ports. The fight against maritime piracy is therefore becoming a key issue in the sub-region.⁶

In addition, environmental threats such as pollution and climate change add a further layer of complexity to maritime security, requiring an integrated approach that combines security and sustainability. This has forced coastal states to step up their cooperation, despite the governance challenges, lack of resources and tensions between coastal states that remain in establishing effective and sustainable maritime security. The reason for this is the qualitative and quantitative shortcomings in the resources that can be mobilised locally to combat piracy. The embryonic maritime vocation of the countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea reduces them to an acute dependence on external actors for the defence of their vital interests in the sub-regional maritime space.

⁵ A. Tisseron (2023), 'Lutte Contre la Piraterie dans le Golfe de Guinée: L'Architecture de Yaoundé: Dix ans Après, au Milieu du Gué', (104), *IRSEM*, March 2023, p. 11, viewed 28 January 2025, <https://www.irsem.fr/media/etude-irsem-104-tisseron-golfe-de-guin.pdf>.

⁶ M. Luntumbue (n.d.), 'Piraterie et insécurité dans le golfe de Guinée: défis et enjeux d'une gouvernance maritime régionale', p. 2.

ASSESSMENT OF THE LAST 10 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GULF OF GUINEA MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY ARCHITECTURE

Over the last decade, the maritime security and safety architecture in the Gulf of Guinea has undergone significant changes, both in terms of challenges and responses.

Achievements and progress

The assessment of progress made in the implementation of maritime security policies in the Gulf of Guinea takes place in a context where maritime threats, such as maritime piracy and illicit trafficking, have required appropriate and effective responses.

The historic Yaoundé Summit (24 and 25 June 2013) on maritime security and safety in the Gulf of Guinea was the marker and reflection of the significant political will of the ECCAS and ECOWAS political leaders at the highest level, that of heads of state and government, to define a strategy for combat and safety, drawing on both states and regional and international cooperation, and endeavouring to combine civil-military responses relating to the governance of maritime areas and spaces, customs, national and regional legal and judicial frameworks, border security and multifaceted trafficking). Calling for support from international partners, the Yaoundé Declaration has initiated a positive process, but one that is proving complex to implement.

The Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC), established by the MoU among ECCAS, ECOWAS and the GGC, is the body responsible for achieving operational synergy in the fight against maritime piracy and armed robbery in the common maritime space of Central and West Africa. Together with the annual meeting of senior officials of ECCAS, ECOWAS and the GGC, it ensures the implementation of the common regional strategy to secure the Gulf of Guinea.

Given its role and function in the security architecture of the Gulf of Guinea (as set out at the Yaoundé Summit), the ICC has a major strategic role to play. The regional strategy is based on pooling the resources of the three communities involved in the process, through improved cooperation between the sub-regional maritime security centres of Central and West Africa. At a political level, the ICC is the concrete expression of the political will of the leaders of the Central and West African sub-regions – to take ownership of securing their common maritime space, in a context hitherto marked by a multiplicity of uncoordinated

interventions, as well as competitive and non-complementary initiatives by donors, whose political agenda and operational approach may differ from those of the countries directly concerned. In operational terms, the creation of the ICC fills a legal and institutional void, as it now becomes the link between West Africa and Central Africa, through the West Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre (CRESMAO) and the Central African Regional Maritime Safety Centre (CRESMAC), for which it will be responsible for coordinating joint actions, training and capacity building, as well as information management and data collection. In view of the above, the choice of Cameroon to host the ICC headquarters is both a diplomatic and operational opportunity that our country would do well to capitalise on.

Building on the momentum generated in Yaoundé, in 2014 the African Union (AU) adopted an integrated African strategy for seas and oceans by 2050, which aims to mobilise all African states under its aegis in an organisational and functional dynamic (although it is yet to be defined). This strategy is positioned both as a protector of the African marine and coastal environment, a promoter of a flourishing and sustainable blue/marine economy, and as a basis for building the capacity of the maritime sector in general, as well as raising awareness of coastal communities in particular. This mechanism is complemented by the African Union Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa, which was finally adopted at the AU Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development held in Lomé, Togo, on 15 October 2016.

Furthermore, the commitment of international partners, such as the EU and the US, has been crucial, but also strengthened with technical assistance programmes and maritime security missions set up to support local efforts, even if developments in the partnership between the EU and African countries are often at odds with the interests of the fisheries sector.⁷

Challenges and limitations

The corruption (often cited by certain researchers within maritime institutions) and the mismanagement of resources continue to undermine security efforts, thus hindering the implementation of the policies and laws needed for effective maritime security. This gives maritime criminals the opportunity to extend their activities in the Gulf of Guinea region. This remains a major challenge, despite the efforts of coastal states, regional organisations and the international

⁷ M. Cormier-Salem and T. Dahou (2009), 'The Politics of Maritime Spaces in Africa: Navigating between Local and Global', *Politique Africaine*, Vol. 4(116), p. 12.

community. In 2022, the Gulf of Guinea accounted for 70% of piracy incidents worldwide, illustrating the persistence of this threat. However, criminal networks continue to exploit gaps in maritime security, with an observed increase in illicit trafficking.

Similarly, the naval forces of coastal countries suffer from a lack of financial and logistical resources, which limits their ability to carry out effective counter operations. Less than 30% of maritime patrols are effectively coordinated between states. In addition, illegal activities such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the illegal transport and dumping of waste, continue to degrade the marine environment. The World Bank has estimated that marine pollution costs the local economy between US\$300 million and US\$1.5 billion a year. However, there is a growing awareness of the importance of integrating environmental issues into maritime safety strategies, although this remains an area to be developed.

Finally, the Yaoundé Architecture is faced with the imperative need for synergy of action between coastal states, international organisations and international cooperation partners. Better still, and in view of the institutionalisation of this architecture, several projects have been identified as priorities. The first is securing funding, a necessary condition for the proper functioning of an architecture that is currently dependent on external resources. The second is linked to the need, more than 10 years after the Yaoundé Summit in 2013, to question the relevance of the organisation adopted and to consider reforms that could enhance its effectiveness.⁸

Prospects for improvement

The governance system put in place by African states to curb threats in the Gulf of Guinea has changed the face of this maritime space. It has also benefitted from a return to stability in some countries. The Gulf of Guinea, which was once seen as a hotbed of crime, is now experiencing a lower rate of criminal activity.⁹

As part of an optimistic drive to make the Yaoundé Architecture more efficient, it is expedient to promote maritime diplomacy, by encouraging sustained and

⁸ A. Tisseron (2023), 'Lutte Contre la Piraterie dans le Golfe de Guinée: L'Architecture de Yaoundé: Dix ans Après, au Milieu du Gué', p. 59.

⁹ C. Pout (2022), 'Sûreté et Sécurité Maritimes Dans le Golfe de Guinée: Architecture De Yaoundé', *Ceides*, May 2022, viewed 28 January 2025, <https://www.ceides.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/SURETE-ET-SECURITE-MARITIMES-DANS-LE-GOLFE-DE-GUINEE-Architecture-de-Yaounde.pdf>.

ongoing dialogue between coastal states and international partners to address maritime security concerns and promote concerted solutions. Awareness-raising campaigns on maritime issues in the Gulf of Guinea could also be launched on a global scale to draw attention to and support for response to the challenges faced by the Architecture.

Strengthening cooperation also requires the establishment of a solid legal framework with the harmonisation of national legislation, namely encouraging states to revise their legislation on maritime security (in particular) and maritime governance (in general), to ensure the consistent application of laws at the regional level; the promotion of the ratification of international conventions, and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of initiatives.

Indeed, governance and sustainability for sound maritime governance in the Gulf of Guinea require an integrated approach that combines governance, protection of maritime resources and sustainability to lead to better security of maritime routes. To achieve this, it seems important to strengthen maritime governance by setting up solid regulatory institutions, such as national and regional agencies dedicated to maritime security, responsible for implementing the relevant policies and laws, and establishing systems of transparency for the management of maritime resources and funds allocated to maritime security. This requires both the training of government agency staff on maritime security and resource management issues and the establishment of accountability mechanisms for those involved in maritime management, to prevent abuses of various kinds.

Furthermore, for a sustainable approach to resource management, it is necessary to introduce regulations to protect ecosystems and create marine protected areas to preserve biodiversity and fishery resources, as well as to develop sustainable fishing policies and raise awareness among coastal communities. Moreover, international cooperation should not be overlooked. It is important to encourage collaboration between coastal states and with international organisations to support maritime security, but especially to establish information exchange systems on threats and sustainable practices.

Conclusion:

The maritime security and safety architecture of the Gulf of Guinea, although having recorded significant progress over the last decade, still faces considerable challenges. Persistent threats such as piracy, illicit trafficking and environmental

degradation underline the importance of an integrated and collaborative approach, highlighting the need for sub-regional cooperation and substantial support from the international community in combatting this rising crime. According to some analysts, the vulnerability of countries in the sub-region to maritime piracy is also due to the weakness of internal institutions, combined with the effect of fragmentation of sub-regional institutions, especially those responsible for maritime issues. Regional and international initiatives, although effective in certain areas, require enhanced coordination and policy harmonisation to ensure a coherent and effective response.

The past decade highlights successes, such as the creation of coherent regional institutional frameworks and the improvement of operational capacities of coastal states. However, major challenges remain, including lack of resources, corruption and the inefficiency of existing structures. To overcome these obstacles, it is essential to strengthen maritime governance, promote resource sustainability and actively involve local communities in the management of maritime issues.

In a forward-looking perspective, it seems crucial to consider proactive scenarios that integrate technological innovation, information sharing, and strengthening international cooperation to better govern the waters of the Gulf of Guinea. It is equally important to acknowledge with concern that, until now, international support for the efforts of Gulf of Guinea countries toward healthy, efficient, and productive maritime governance has not been without problems, as it ultimately turns out to be particularly and often almost exclusively focused on security issues, which could prove dangerous for the region in the long run.

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea can only be ensured through continued commitments and strategic partnerships among the states in the region and the international community. By adopting a holistic approach, it will be possible to effectively protect maritime routes while ensuring the sustainability of marine resources, thereby contributing to the stability and economic development of the region. Furthermore, by leveraging modern technologies, enhancing community engagement and fostering international partnerships, the region can better address current and future maritime challenges.

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Title: Regional Collaboration – Applying the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct for Coordinating Operations at Sea to Combat Maritime Crimes in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden

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Abstract:

Despite shared interests in securing sea lanes of communication and suppressing illicit activities at sea, the lack of effective coordination between regional states and international naval partners deployed to support these efforts in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden has been exacerbated by competing priorities, mistrust, and concerns over sovereignty. Drawing insights from the successful implementation of the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC/JA) – the leading mechanism for maritime security coordination in the region – and its role in fostering deeper cooperation and coordination between signatory states, this paper calls for improved collaboration, cooperation, coordination and communication among the regional states and international partners to achieve their common objectives, consistent with the spirit and provisions of the DCoC/JA. By examining the successes and challenges faced by regional states, this study highlights the critical importance of regional unity in addressing the complex and transnational nature of maritime crimes. It underscores the need for international naval partners to work closely with regional states, effectively utilising the provisions contained in the code of conduct and integrating their activities with national and regional strategies. This approach would help build trust and establish a stronger collective mandate for effective collaboration. The presentation also emphasises that effective regional cooperation must be built on strong foundations at the national level, ensuring that all maritime security stakeholders work together cohesively.

Introduction:

The code of conduct concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, also known as Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), was adopted on 29 January 2009 as a regional response to the prevailing threat of Somalia-based piracy.

By signing the code of conduct, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen, 20 of the 21 countries eligible to sign, agreed to cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

By building regional capacity, the DCoC is credited with making a significant contribution to containing the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia. By 2013, piracy attacks had dropped sharply due to regional and international efforts.

Lessons from successful collaboration against piracy, and a growing awareness of the importance of safeguarding the maritime sector, led to the signing of the Jeddah Amendment to the DCoC. By doing so, regional states aimed to build on this success and experience, to further enhance their capacity to prevent a resurgence of piracy and address other maritime security threats. Additionally, as the mandates of international navies ended, the need for increased local action became critical. With the lessons learnt from combatting piracy and the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) maritime security tabletop exercises on national contingency planning, the region charted a common goal by adopting the Jeddah Amendment to the DCoC (DCoC/JA) in January 2017.

The Jeddah Amendment¹ expanded the scope of the DCoC to include transnational organised crime in the maritime domain, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, terrorism against ships and marine installations, and the promotion of economic development.

The overriding theme of the DCoC/JA is security with a purpose – specifically, to create conditions necessary for stability and prosperity. Over the years, the code has evolved to become the leading mechanism for facilitating transnational communication, coordination, and cooperation in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, establishing a basis for technical cooperation between the signatory states and the IMO that is trusted, effective, and popular.²

¹ International Maritime Organization (2017), *Revised Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden Area (The Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct)*, International Maritime Organization, Jeddah, 10 to 12 January 2017, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://www.wcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Security/Documents/DCOC%20Jeddah%20Amendment%20English.pdf>.

² International Maritime Organization (n.d.), 'The Djibouti Code of Conduct', *International Maritime Organization*, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/Content-and-Evolution-of-the-Djibouti-Code-of-Conduct.aspx>.

In the last three years, the focus of the DCoC has been on developing a commonly agreed-upon, end-state and objectives for the full range of maritime security capabilities in the region. This includes addressing various topics, such as legislative frameworks, maritime domain awareness and information sharing, interdiction operations at sea, prosecution, and the planning, organisation, and budgeting required to operate and maintain the assets needed to ensure security at sea.

Through regular meetings, participating states agree on ways to strengthen cooperation based on the pillars of the code: information sharing, updating legislation, capacity building, and regional training. The focus has therefore been on operationalising the DCoC Information Sharing Network (ISN), addressing evolving maritime challenges and the security priorities of signatory states, and agreeing on concrete measures to be adopted by signatory states.

Aim and Scope:

The paper aims to argue that the DCoC/JA has established a strong foundation from which collaboration, cooperation, coordination and communication between the regional states can be further enhanced. The paper examines the key successes and challenges faced by regional states, before highlighting recent developments . It underscores the need for international naval partners to work closely with regional states, effectively utilising the provisions contained in the code of conduct and integrating their activities with national and regional strategies. The paper emphasises that effective regional cooperation must be built on strong foundations at the national level, ensuring that all maritime security stakeholders work together cohesively.

Discussion:

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The key to the success of the DCoC has been the establishment of a strong governance structure, comprising the Steering Committee, currently chaired by the Republic of South Africa; Working Group 1, which spearheads the work on information sharing; Working Group 2 on capacity building coordination; the Friends of the DCoC Forum, and a dedicated secretariat that ensures a vibrant calendar of activities throughout the year, sustaining momentum. Key achievements include:

- **Regional training:** The DCoC has facilitated training that is vital to enhancing the capability for maritime law enforcement across the region. So far, up to 100 training activities have been conducted under the auspices of the DCoC, benefitting 1 890 participants.
- **Updating national legislation:** The DCoC has also supported many of the regional states in reviewing their laws to include piracy as a crime that can be punished nationally.
- **Capacity building:** A number of maritime domain awareness (MDA) equipment projects have been completed in several countries, helping to address sea blindness.
- **Civil-military cooperation:** The implementation of the IMO model on the whole of government, to maritime security, has significantly enhanced civil/military cooperation across the region.
- **Coordination of capacity building:** The DCoC Capacity Building Coordination Matrix,³ which is hosted on the DCoC website, helps in mapping and tracking capacity-building activities and provides a clear overview of ongoing, planned, and completed capacity-building initiatives across the region.
- **Information sharing:** The DCoC ISN has been instrumental in facilitating smooth and effective communications, breaking down barriers of communication between states. Initially envisioned with a counter-piracy focus, the ISN's focus shifted following the signing of the DCoC/JA, toward the deterrence, detection, disruption, and prosecution of a wide range of maritime challenges. Participating states are now working to develop a robust ISN with strong foundations at the national level, including multi-agency National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISCs), linked to the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar, and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles. Many participating states have made significant progress in developing these centres to form part of the ISN and to promote information sharing and operations coordination at the national level.

³ Djibouti Code of Conduct (n.d.), 'Capacity Building', *Djibouti Code of Conduct*, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/capacity-building>; see also <https://matrix.dcoc.org/login> for matrix logon page.

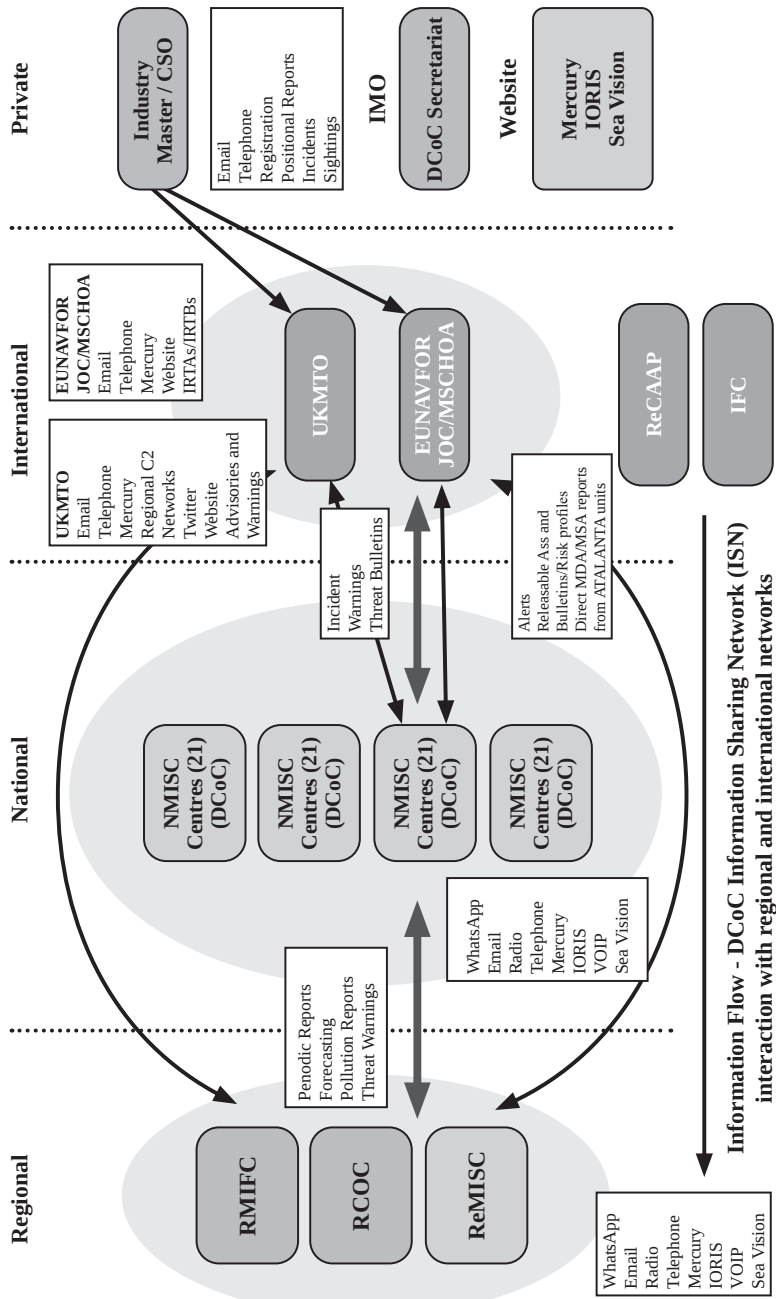


Figure 1: Information flow within the DCoC

- Sustaining the momentum:** In accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR), each of the DCoC forums – the Steering Committee, Working Group 1, and Working Group 2 – meets at least four times a year, culminating in an annual high-level meeting, where key decisions regarding the implementation of the code are made.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Recent developments in the DCoC have been shaped by emerging challenges and escalating threats to maritime security in the region. Recognising the evolving maritime challenges and changing security priorities, the high-level meeting held in Dubai in June 2022⁴ adopted Resolution 4, which addressed the changing nature of maritime threats and emphasised the need for dynamic response and international support. Pursuant to that resolution, regional states plan to establish Working Group 3, bringing together regional navies and coast guards to promote enhanced coordination of operations at sea. This initiative aims to strengthen joint maritime patrols, improve information sharing, and foster operational interoperability to effectively counter piracy and armed robbery against ships, smuggling, and other maritime crimes. Facilitating a naval focus in the implementation of the DCoC will significantly enhance its operational capabilities, providing the much-needed 'teeth'. While the DCoC has traditionally been led by maritime administrations, which has fostered strong cohesion among member states, the inclusion of naval forces will bring a more robust, action-oriented dimension. Navies are uniquely positioned to conduct joint patrols, respond to threats in real-time, and undertake coordinated operations at sea, offering a more direct and immediate response to maritime crimes. By promoting closer coordination between navies and coast guards, regional states can achieve greater interoperability and ensure that operational assets are deployed efficiently. This collaborative approach will empower the DCoC to address contemporary maritime security challenges more effectively, positioning regional navies as active players in maintaining the rule of law at sea and enhancing overall maritime governance.

One of the key purposes of developing the DCoC ISN is to support coordination in conducting operations at sea. This will foster stronger interagency collaboration at the national level, as navies, coast guards, maritime administrations and other civilian counterparts work together towards common national goals. The effective implementation of the IMO's 'whole of government' approach will ensure that all relevant national stakeholders – military, law enforcement, and civil agencies – are aligned in their efforts to secure the maritime domain. This integrated approach will not only improve maritime situational awareness but also optimise resource deployment, enabling regional states to conduct more

⁴ Djibouti Code of Conduct (2022), *DCoC High Level Regional Meeting on Implementation of the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct*, Djibouti Code of Conduct, Dubai, 28–30 June 2022, viewed 25 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/20220713-DCoC-HLM-Report-Final-Report.pdf>.

effective and coordinated maritime operations, thereby significantly enhancing the operational capability of the DCoC.

More progress was made through additional resolutions adopted at the Jeddah high-level meeting (22–24 November 2022).⁵ Two key resolutions were passed: Resolution 1 redefined the mission and vision of the ISN, providing clear guidance on the development of NMISCs, the type of data to be shared, and broader strategic goals; Resolution 2 was focused on responding to evolving maritime challenges. The most recent high-level meeting, held in Cape Town in October 2023, further strengthened coordination with the adoption of three additional resolutions :

- **Resolution #1**, on the operationalisation of the ISN, recognises the importance of the ISN and agrees to adopt a number of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to facilitate coordinated, timely, and effective information flow among participants. These SOPs aim to promote communication, coordination, and cooperation between civilian and military actors.
- **Resolution #2**, on the development of the DCoC Regional Maritime Security Strategy (RMSS) aims to guide the implementation of the DCoC/JA, and to further develop the maritime governance capacity and capability of DCoC signatory states, including promoting enhanced regional operational coordination, cooperation, and communication.
- Through **Resolution #3**, participating states agreed to upgrade the organisational structure of the DCoC and strengthen the role of Working Group 2 in coordinating capacity building, by establishing sub-working groups (sub-WGs) responsible for various thematic areas outlined in Article 2 of the DCoC. However, during subsequent National Focal Point (NFP) meetings, it was agreed to initially proceed with a pilot project focusing on the sub-working groups for IUU Fishing, chaired by Tanzania; Port and Ship Security and Protection of Coastal Installations, chaired by Ethiopia, and Threats to the Maritime Environment, chaired by Mauritius.

⁵ Djibouti Code of Conduct (2022), *DCoC High Level Regional Meeting on Implementation of the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct*, Djibouti Code of Conduct, Jeddah, 22–24 November 2022, viewed on 21 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-of-the-DCoC-High-Level-Meeting-Jeddah-22-24-November-2022-.pdf>.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Until recently, maritime security dialogue has generally been dominated by actors from outside the region, through forums such as Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE), Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Conferences, etc. Furthermore, the operations conducted at sea by international naval partners, such as CMF, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, and others, have typically involved minimal participation from regional navies. This 'absence' of regional navies in the maritime theatre has created a perceived vacuum. Without collaboration with coastal states, operations by international naval partners merely disrupt illicit activities without effectively deterring future criminal conduct. This is largely due to the practice of 'catch and release', without consideration for the full cycle⁶ required to achieve a legal finish.

Concerned with this dilemma, the DCoC has called for 'all hands on deck', hence the invitation for regional navies to play a more active role. The region already has success stories on which to build, such as the South African Navy-led tripartite agreement with Mozambique and Tanzania, which facilitated joint patrols and played a crucial role in preventing the spread of Somali-based piracy further south. Additionally, operations under the EU-funded Maritime Security in the Eastern African Region (MASE) programme, have demonstrated the effectiveness of regional cooperation in enhancing maritime security. These initiatives underscore the potential of regional navies to collaborate in addressing maritime threats and highlight the importance of integrating local expertise and resources to create a more robust and comprehensive maritime security framework.

Concerned with the deteriorating situation in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Western Indian Ocean – and exacerbated by geopolitical conflicts – the DCoC has been at the forefront of advocating for sustainable solutions to address these security challenges.⁷ The DCoC has called upon the international

⁶ I. Ralby (2024), "Legal Finish": Maritime Security is Too Often Lacking a Legal Start', *CIMSEC*, 8 October 2024, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://cimsec.org/legal-finish-in-maritime-security-is-too-often-lacking-a-legal-start/>.

⁷ Djibouti Code of Conduct (2024), *Press Release: Djibouti Code of Conduct – Call for Action on Attacks Against International Shipping in the Red Sea*, Djibouti Code of Conduct, January 2024, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Press-statement-Red-Sea-Threat-January-2024.pdf>.

community to join in these efforts to ensure the safety and security of navigation and the protection of lives at sea.⁸

NEXT HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

As the region prepares for the next high-level meeting in Dar es Salaam (28–30 November 2024), there is much to anticipate, especially regarding how the DCoC will reengineer itself to meet escalating threats in the maritime domain, including the crisis in the Red Sea region. The development of the regional DCoC maritime security strategy and its potential to strengthen cooperation will be an interesting development. It is now upon regional navies to determine whether they are prepared to take their rightful position and become more involved in contemporary maritime security.

It remains to be seen whether regional states will overcome sovereignty concerns and work more closely with international naval partners to achieve common goals. There are many challenges to overcome, and building trust will take time; however, progress thus far has been encouraging, and there is confidence that the momentum gained will drive further action to ensure that no country is left behind.

Conclusion and recommendations:

The DCoC has made significant strides in enhancing maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden since its inception in 2009. By fostering cooperation among signatory states and expanding its focus to include a broader range of maritime threats, the DCoC has positioned itself as a key mechanism for regional stability and security. The provisions contained in the Jeddah Amendment and subsequent resolutions reflect the commitment of member states to adapt to evolving maritime challenges, emphasising the need for effective collaboration among navies, coast guards, and other maritime stakeholders.

To build on this momentum and further strengthen maritime security in the region, the following recommendations are proposed:

⁸ Djibouti Code of Conduct (2024), *Press Statement: Urgent Appeal for Enhanced International Response Against Escalating Incidents of Vessel Attacks in the Red Sea Area and Resurgence of Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean*, Djibouti Code of Conduct, viewed 21 January 2025, <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/PRESS-STATEMENT-URGENT-APPEAL-FOR-ENHANCED-INTERNATIONAL-RESPONSE-AGAINST-ESCALATING-INCIDENTS-OF-VESSEL-ATTACKS-IN-THE-RED-SEA-AREA-.pdf>.

- **Encourage naval cooperation:** Regional navies should take a proactive role in maritime security collaboration, promoting joint patrols and coordinated responses to threats. Establishing formal mechanisms for collaboration through Working Group 3 will promote operational protocols and joint training exercises, enhancing interoperability and building trust among regional forces.
- **Develop a robust regional ISN:** Continued investment in developing the regional ISN, with fully operational NMISCs, is essential for addressing sea blindness and information sharing. Member states should prioritise the establishment and operationalisation of these centres to facilitate real-time data exchange and enhance the overall effectiveness of the DCoC ISN.
- **Strengthen legal frameworks:** Regional states should continue to review and update their national legislation to effectively address contemporary maritime security threats, ensuring that legal frameworks support cooperation with international naval partners. This includes adopting measures to combat IUU fishing, human trafficking, and other maritime crimes.
- **Focus on capacity building initiatives:** The DCoC should continue to focus on capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that training and resources are accessible to all member states. This will enhance the capabilities of maritime law enforcement agencies and improve the region's overall response to maritime security challenges.
- **Engage with the international community:** The DCoC should actively engage with international partners and organisations to secure additional resources and support for its initiatives.
- **Assess and adapt continually:** As maritime security challenges evolve, the DCoC must maintain a flexible and adaptive approach to its strategies. Regular assessments of regional security threats and the effectiveness of implemented measures will be crucial in ensuring that the DCoC remains relevant and impactful.

Without a doubt, the DCoC has established a strong foundation for regional maritime security. By fostering cooperation among its member states and actively involving likeminded international partners, the DCoC can effectively address current and emerging maritime threats, ultimately ensuring the safety and security of navigation in the region. The upcoming high-level meeting in Dar es Salaam presents a critical opportunity for stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to collaboration and develop actionable strategies to further enhance maritime security.

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Title: Challenges to Good Order at Sea in the South Atlantic with a Focus on the Roles of Navies

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Abstract:

This paper presents a pessimistic outlook on good order at sea in the South Atlantic. The available evidence indicates that illegal, unreported, and undocumented (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking on both shores of the South Atlantic, and armed robbery in South America have reached a point where they are now considered endemic. The absence of a regional power or coalition of countries to provide support to the maritime community has resulted in the dissolution of the potential for such a community to flourish. Furthermore, the competition between major powers has been intensifying.

Introduction:

The most recent data on maritime crimes in the South Atlantic region indicates a prevalence of illicit fishing, drug trafficking, and armed robbery. In its most recent report, published in 2022, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that the amount of cocaine trafficked has increased dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 90% of its transportation taking place by sea. The Maritime Information Cooperation and Awareness (MICA) Center's *2023 Annual Report* indicates that the maritime regions of the Americas and the Caribbean have the highest robbery rates globally, with approximately 100 incidents annually since 2019. Additionally, the maritime security agencies of South America have yet to identify a comprehensive response to the issue of IUU fishing, nor have they established a sufficient record of it. In contrast, the majority of maritime security reports concentrate on the maritime implications of the conflict in Ukraine, as well as the actions of the Houthis in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. These actions can be seen as a reaction to the intensification of confrontations between Israel, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran.

This scenario presents South Atlantic countries with incentives that directly oppose one another, giving rise to pertinent investigative concerns. In light of the notable increase in state and non-state threats, it is pertinent to inquire how navies have distributed their resources and adjusted their organisational

structures in reaction to this development. To what extent do rivalries and power dynamics in other regions and seas influence the foundations upon which South Atlantic countries' guidelines and policies in maritime security are based? How does the lack of clarity in assessing this new power configuration affect the region's ability to comprehend and formulate cooperative maritime strategies?

Aim and Scope:

This paper examines the South Atlantic Ocean, following the minimalist concept of good order at sea, which emerges from the convergence of maritime operations conducted by state and non-state actors under a predetermined set of standards.¹ Conversely, the law of the sea is implemented following the distribution of power among the nations that surround an ocean, and the various forms of governance that these governments establish to oversee the sea. This is due to the absence of an overarching authority responsible for coordinating the maritime operations network. The potential for maritime security to be disrupted and eroded also exists when more capable states lack the motivation or resources to maintain compliance with the relevant norms. Furthermore, interstate rivalry may also be a contributing factor, as it leaves all types of maritime criminal organisations unchallenged.

Therefore, the complex network of maritime criminality has been caused by several factors, including

- the intensifying competition between great powers,
 - the shortcomings of regional security initiatives in South America and West Africa, and
 - the absence of a reliable regional power capable of sponsoring a maritime security regime in the South Atlantic.
-

Discussion:

The principal challenges to the good order at sea in the South Atlantic Ocean are the transnational criminal networks and the inability of regional governments to oversee their maritime and border territories effectively. As a consequence of a lengthy history of governmental ineffectiveness and social underdevelopment,

¹ E. E. Duarte and G. H. de Moura (2019), 'Os Fins e os Meios Navais no Âmbito da Zona Econômica Exclusiva', *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa*, Vol. 6(2), pp. 39–61.

long-standing non-state threats have benefitted from the economic growth of the South Atlantic basin and its integration into the global value chain. Furthermore, globalisation has facilitated the emergence of novel and expanded forms of organised crime and the formation of political-criminal nexuses. Former drug cartels, insurgent organisations, and robbery gangs from South America and West Africa have evolved into more sophisticated criminal networks that have established a presence in Europe, North America, and Asia.

The MICA Center offers comprehensive and trustworthy reports on maritime crimes. Data analysis regarding maritime criminal activities in the South Atlantic has yielded inconclusive results. Notwithstanding the decline in piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, drug trafficking and illegal fishing have increased on both sides of the region. Furthermore, the prevalence of armed robbery in the Americas has remained high, indicating that these issues have become more pervasive and entrenched in more stable organisational and societal structures.

However, even the positive data from the Gulf of Guinea should be taken with a grain of salt. This was the location of the world's highest levels of piracy activity between 2012 and 2020; however, starting in 2021, this number has decreased by 50%. Despite this, there is no agreement over its reasons, although it is true that it was not just due to implementing counter-piracy measures. Moreover, most shipping businesses voluntarily ignore events to prevent unfavourable publicity and increase insurance premiums. In light of this, there is a risk that criminal organisations are converting their operations to other activities or areas.

The decline in piracy that began in 2021 was confirmed this year. In 2022, only eight acts of piracy were reported, including one act of kidnapping. In addition, some cases of 'pirated vessels' reported in 2022 are not the usual modus operandi of pirate groups in the Gulf of Guinea, as they involve cargo theft from the same supply ship off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire. The piracy threat was dormant until mid-December but by no means eradicated, with criminal groups likely focusing on other activities.²

Given that the rate of drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea remains consistently high, and given that it is common knowledge that robbery and drug trafficking are not activities that occur in the same areas, it is conceivable to contemplate the possibility of drug cartels cooptating this regional web of criminalities.

² P. Candier and E. Jaslin (eds) (2022), *Maritime Security Annual Report 2022*, MICA Center, p. 23.

In addition to the documented increase in drug trafficking in the region, this hypothesis may be corroborated by a discernible surge in the frequency of violent confrontations between rival criminal organisations. There is a possibility that this explanation also sheds light on the high rates of armed robbery in South America's ports and territorial waters. As a result of competition for routes and ports in Colombia and Brazil, a number of major cartel groups have been engaged in conflicts. Since 2010, the United States (US) Navy and Coast Guard have attempted to coordinate with Caribbean navies and coastal guards. However, the increasing incidence of armed robbery is also an indication that these efforts may be losing their effectiveness.

Thus, the most serious threat to South America comes from the region's extremely powerful drug cartels. Since 1970, they have maintained a monopoly on the manufacture of cocaine, which has resulted in the Caribbean Sea serving as the primary route and North America serving as the primary market. The US, along with Caribbean countries, the European Union (EU), and Mexico, have all been conducting effective anti-drug operations since 2010. As a result, maritime shipment routes and end destinations have seen significant changes. In recent years, the South Atlantic has emerged as the primary transshipment zone for the transportation of cocaine from South America to areas in Europe and Asia. The new waterways proved more cost-effective, and enabled more successful evasion of anti-narcotics operations and agencies. Local governments in Brazil, Argentina, and West Africa were found to be participating in the drug cartels' activities, which led to the discovery of a more readily available workforce. As a consequence of this, the South Atlantic region has become the most concentrated network of drug trafficking in the entire globe.

According to UNODC, the amount of cocaine produced in South America increased to around 1 900 tonnes in 2015 and has not dropped to lower levels since. However, this office only reports the cultivation of cocaine in Colombia; it does not indicate the expansion of production in Peru, Bolivia, or Argentina; therefore, the actual volume is probably considerably higher.

Furthermore, it is estimated that 90% of this cocaine is transported by ships and vessels across the Caribbean Sea and the South Atlantic Ocean. The UNODC, on the other hand, gives a tiny amount of information regarding the quantity of narcotics that are trafficked by vessels and those that are intercepted. Because of this, it is conceivable to evaluate the trafficking of cocaine from South America; nonetheless, it is only possible to provide a general estimate of the amount of cocaine that is transported across the South Atlantic.

Table 1: Reported cocaine seizures in tonnes – selected South American countries³

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Argentina	15 895	12 002	10 535	5 565	6 258	13 678
Brazil	48 847	79 174	104 582	91 234	97 977	93 643
Colombia	489 481	457 454	489 222	579 875	759 329	767 318
Uruguay	176	756	12 022	2 123	3 271	4 496

The data analysis indicates a notable increase in the number of cartels’ bases of operations situated in proximity to ports in Southern America and Venezuela. This trend has emerged as a significant concern since 2019, as evidenced by UNODC’s seizure figures in South America, particularly Brazil, Colombia, and Uruguay. However, the number of seizures on the African continent is insignificant in comparison. Notwithstanding the occurrence of notable individual seizures, an analysis of studies and reports from a range of sources and agencies reveals a consensus that drug trafficking in Africa is expanding unchecked.

Table 2: Reported cocaine seizures in tonnes – selected African countries⁴

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Angola	1	1				
Namibia		418		1	1	1
South Africa	210	132		7	5 287	950
Benin	46	49	1		3 558	217
Cabo Verde			11 074			5 913
Ghana	8	29		158	8	17
Mali	5	66	5	1	37	162
Nigeria		6	1	1		218
Senegal	1		8	132	2 706	336

A final observation regarding this maritime drug trafficking is that it encompasses not only the quantity of drugs, and the number of containers and vessels involved, but also the adaptability and technological sophistication of cartels. Drug cartels have employed the use of narco-sub, which have undergone a significant evolution from submersible fast boats to fully submergible vessels of considerable size and capability. The use of narco-sub remains primarily confined to the Pacific region, extending from Ecuador and Colombia to Mexico.⁵

³ United Nations (n.d.), ‘dataUNODC’, *UNDOC*, viewed 23 January 2025, <https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-drug-seizures>.

⁴ United Nations (n.d.).

⁵ J. Guerrero (2019), *Narcosubmarines: Outlaw Innovation and Maritime Interdiction in the War on Drugs*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, Singapore.

However, there has been an observed increase in the sophistication of these vessels. In addition, related vessels, shipyards, and naval engineers have been identified in the Caribbean and Europe. It is, therefore, possible that these and other highly sophisticated assets may become operational in the South Atlantic in the near future.

Assessing illicit fishing activities is challenging, as the available information is limited and not sufficiently provided by any national or international public agency. The Global Fishing Watch interactive map represents the most comprehensive attempt to produce a global fishing report. However, while this provides insight into the evolution of global fishing activities between 2012 and 2020, it offers only a general impression of the phenomenon without providing systematic statistical data.⁶

The illicit fishing practices can be identified in the exclusive economic zones' (EEZs') limits between Suriname and French Guiana, Angola and Namibia, and Argentina, and the Falklands Isles. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that the illicit fishing industry is sufficiently risk-averse to avoid areas with high levels of coast-guard activity. Furthermore, illicit fishing is inextricably linked with piracy and other maritime crimes. This is because transnational criminal organisations extend their reach to fishing communities after the deterioration of their way of life, exploiting them for labour in exchange for sanctuary. For example, studies conducted in Nigeria have indicated a causal correlation between the negative socio-economic impacts of illegal fishing and an increase in hiring by piracy and trafficking organisations in fishing communities.⁷

The discussion will now examine two factors contributing to the asymmetry of capabilities between transnational criminal organisations and South Atlantic states. On the international stage, the intensifying rivalry between the US, Europe, China, and Russia has led to heightened tensions in various parts of the world, and the erosion of regional security regimes. Domestically, the region's countries have historically demonstrated a lack of engagement with maritime affairs, which has been further exacerbated by the health, climate, and economic crises with which South America and Africa have been grappling.

⁶ Global Fishing Watch (2025), 'Map & Data', *Global Fishing Watch*, accessed 23 January 2025, <https://globalfishingwatch.org/map-and-data>.

⁷ I. Okafor-Yarwood (2020), 'The Cyclical Nature of Maritime Security Threats: Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing as a Threat to Human and National Security in the Gulf of Guinea', *African Security*, Vol. 13(2), pp. 116–146.

The competition between great powers has undermined the regional security regimes in South America and West Africa, failing to establish an effective international alternative. Great powers' pursuit of self-interest in their relations with South Atlantic countries has led to misperceptions and polarisation within the region. Consequently, countries in the South Atlantic with greater capabilities, such as Brazil, South Africa, and Nigeria, have not articulated a collective maritime security agenda.

The US spearheaded maritime security cooperation in the South Atlantic until the late 1990s, during its 'War on Drugs'. Despite the campaign's (sometimes questionable) results, it stalled once the George Bush Jr administration shifted its focus to the Persian Gulf. This proclivity persisted following Barack Obama's redeployment of naval and coast-guard assets to the Indo-Pacific and the Trump administration's redirected attention to the Baltic Sea, which was reoriented to the East Mediterranean in light of the ongoing conflicts in the Ukraine and Gaza. The 2022 US National Security Strategy maintained the focus on China and Russia, established in previous editions, rather than addressing the issue of maintaining good order at sea.

The most recent US maritime security initiatives in the South Atlantic targeted naval competitors. Colombia joined NATO as a 'Global Partner' in 2018 in response to Venezuela's tight relationship with Russia. Subsequently, this action was more effective at pressuring the Bolivarian regime than turning the Colombian Navy into a reference in providing good order at sea. In a related development, the US and Argentina signed a security aid deal in 2015 to balance the China-Argentina military deal and rally support against Venezuela months before. However, none of them addressed maritime security. Ultimately, the majority of US operations in the Gulf of Guinea are focused on combatting illicit activities that provide financial support to terrorist organisations without addressing the critical need to enhance coastal patrol capabilities. Therefore, the US plays a minor role in maintaining order in the South Atlantic, which represents a significant challenge in the context of great power competition.

There has been an increase in Chinese and Russian military activity in the South Atlantic region. Both countries are developing sophisticated military technologies in South America and Africa. Russia has extended financial and military assistance to Venezuela, providing bases and ports in exchange for the debut of two Blackjack nuclear-capable bombers, and a naval task force in the Western Hemisphere. Russian private military companies assisted the Maduro regime, and Russian defence authorities conducted an assessment of

Venezuelan infrastructure to facilitate larger deployments. Russia is Africa's primary arms exporter and has reestablished Soviet-era ties. It has concluded defence agreements with Cameroon, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, and has secured access to Guinea's airbases since 2015. Russian private military corporations operate in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mozambique, and Ghana, Gambia, and Niger are in the process of negotiating agreements. It is unlikely that Russia's South Atlantic power trajectory will undergo a significant shift.

China has everything it needs to influence South Atlantic nations. China has significant investments, infrastructure projects, and defence cooperation agreements in Africa, but its military ambitions in South America are restricted to a space station in Patagonia. Its strategy has been to create enterprises that invest in local economies before integrating them into broader goals. In 2000, China initiated defence and security cooperation with South Africa, and cemented the same with Namibia and Angola, which had been in place since their independence struggles. Chinese involvement in Africa precedes the Belt and Road Initiative, but this project made Africa the barometer of a Chinese-led global security governance structure. China has emerged as a prominent supplier of weaponry to Africa, and a key sponsor of the annual China-Africa Defense and Security Forums since 2019, which unfolded thematic summits in military education and medicine, among others. The 'Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative' is of a considerably more expansive scope. The formation of blue alliances is expected to facilitate the exploration of marine resources, the advancement of the maritime industry, the enhancement of maritime safety, and the reduction of sea crime. The programme aims to designate 12 ports as strategic maritime distribution centres (SMDCs), with five located in the South Atlantic region. These include Mar del Plata in Argentina, Salvador in Brazil, Libreville in Gabon, Tema in Ghana, and Dakar in Senegal. Ultimately, China's unofficial BRICS+ leadership protects its regional interests.

Consequently, the self-help logic of each great power project with South Atlantic countries has resulted in regional misperceptions and polarisation. The South Atlantic countries with more capabilities – Brazil, South Africa, and Nigeria – have not put forth a collective maritime security agenda.

The once-active and expanding Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have lost their force and relevance in South America. Polarisation among South American countries split these organisations, leaving them with limited significance today. Not surprisingly, the Zone for Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic (ZPCSA)

never had a chance to engage with these alliances and play a relevant role, even in South America.

Brazil's inconstant role in maritime security is the ultimate dividing force, which dates back to the three UN conferences on the 'Law of the Sea'. Brazil never reviewed its Cold War geopolitical perspective toward the South Atlantic. The Brazilian purpose of ZPCSA has been to block extra-regional powers, rather than build an actual maritime security regime, as explicitly stated in its most recent National Security Strategy. Moreover, most Brazilian security initiatives followed a historical trend of prioritising bilateral ties to guarantee predominance over its neighbours. Under the far-right populist government of Bolsonaro, Brazilian foreign policies became increasingly reactive and opposed liberal international norms and regional organisations, which shattered most Brazilian initiatives and soft power, and will take years to rebuild. Evidence of this is that Luis Inacio Lula da Silva's return to a third presidential term has been unable to concentrate national resources on a regional security agenda, much less one in conjunction with Africa.⁸

African maritime security cooperation advancements developed from subregional organisations and foreign donors' support. These are remarkable achievements; however, they face relevant challenges.

The starting point was the creation of the Gulf of Guinea Commission in 2001. It supported the conception of the Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre (MTISC) and the Regional Maritime University at Accra, Ghana, in 2014. During the same period, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) implemented the most ambitious maritime agenda in the South Atlantic, based on previous comprehensive security plans and legally binding agreements. SADC designed its maritime security strategy in 2011 to address piracy and illegal fishing. A far-reaching regional blue economy followed this plan four years later. The African Union's 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), adopted in January 2014, aimed to streamline all these initiatives. Two years later, the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development (also known as the Lomé Charter) was published under the auspices of the African Union (AU).

⁸ E. E. Duarte and K. M. Kenkel (2019), 'Contesting Perspectives on South Atlantic Maritime Security Governance: Brazil and South Africa', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 26(3), pp. 395–412.

The impressive track of the regionalisation of maritime security in Africa was nevertheless unable to overcome noteworthy limits. First, most agreements and projects were sound on paper only and failed to address West African countries' structural deficits in conducting effective good order at sea operations. Secondly, West African countries have been unable to implement the majority of maritime security agreements effectively. For example, Nigeria lacks functional legislation for the management and coordination of ocean governance in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has resulted in operational non-compliance with such agreements.⁹

The last general challenge to good order in the South Atlantic is sea blindness.¹⁰ African countries face multiple domestic crises, often preventing them from prioritising maritime security concerns. Consequently, their national and collective maritime security programmes are constantly menaced by a lack of long-term political will and investment. That is the case in South Africa, where the navy's ongoing condition of marginalisation and obsolescence constrains the increasing demand for coastal patrolling operations to attend to SADC's commitments.¹¹ Furthermore, the business-oriented approach of its Operation Phakisa project, seeking to unlock the economic potential of South Africa's oceans, is likely to result in limited progress without improving coastal populations' resilience against 'blue crimes'.

This pattern also plagues European donors in the Gulf of Guinea, as they favour capacity building in national security and the blue economy over developmental or human security aspects. Without whole-of-government solutions to address local populations' insecurity and poverty, inter-regional maritime security programmes will continue to have a limited impact.

Another factor contributing to the prevalence of sea blindness, particularly in South America, is the increasing reliance on naval forces for subsidiary functions on land. In Brazil and Colombia, the navies and their marines have been assigned to combat organised crime in riverine areas, ports, and coastal

⁹ C. Anoziea, T. Umahi, G. Onuoha, N. Nwafor, and O. J. Alozie (2019), 'Ocean Governance, Integrated Maritime Security and Its Impact in the Gulf of Guinea: A Lesson for Nigeria's Maritime Sector and Economy', *Africa Review*, Vol. 11(2), pp. 190–207.

¹⁰ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2017), 'Beyond Seablindness: A New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies', *International Affairs*, Vol. 93(6), pp. 1 293–1 311, p. 201.

¹¹ T. Neethling (2019), 'The South African Navy and Regional Maritime Security: The Dilemma of Political-Strategic Objectives and Financial Constraints', in *Navies and Maritime Policies in the South Atlantic*, É. Duarte and M. C. de Barros (eds), Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland, pp. 41–68.

facilities.¹² The increasing frequency of extreme weather events has resulted in a notable rise in the participation of naval forces in response to these incidents. For example, in response to the unprecedented rains and floods in southern Brazil in May of 2024, the navy deployed eight ships, including its flagship *Atlantico*, 11 helicopters, 70 vehicles, and 2 000 military personnel. Additionally, it established two mobile water treatment stations and distributed 200 tonnes of donations. Similarly, the Argentinean Navy has established specialised units for combatting forest fires and floods.

In consequence, the interrelationships between the international and regional political environments, on the one hand, and, the constraints and incentives facing governments, on the other, encompass a broader and more enduring spectrum of naval operations, influencing the continuous necessity for adaptations in organisational structures to accommodate unanticipated missions or to cultivate novel capabilities in response to non-state threats that have transcended their initial context. In this regard, while significant technological advancements and solutions are emerging to assist navies in fulfilling their roles, considerable political and organisational challenges appear to outstrip these developments.

Conclusion:

Recent reports highlight a surge in maritime crimes in the South Atlantic, including illicit fishing, drug trafficking, and armed robbery, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNODC notes a significant increase in cocaine trafficking via maritime routes, with 90% transported by sea. The MICA Center identifies the Americas and the Caribbean as having the highest robbery rates globally. Regional security agencies struggle to address illegal fishing and maritime threats, while geopolitical rivalries hinder cooperative strategies. The chapter emphasises the need for South Atlantic nations to reassess their good order at sea frameworks amidst rising transnational criminal networks and shifting global power dynamics.

¹² J. E. Dos Santos-Filho and A.A. Carreño (2021), 'Colombian Armed Forces transformation in the post-armed conflict: changes in the domestic employment and the international actuation', *Revista Conjuntura Austral*, Vol. 12(57), pp. 81–94.

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Title: Events in the Red Sea and Naval Responses: A Perspective from Africa [Opinion]

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Abstract:

This study presents a critical examination of the evolving maritime security paradigm in the Red Sea, with a particular focus on the strategic implications of non-state actor activities and subsequent naval responses between 2016 and 2024. Through rigorous analysis of primary data from maritime security operations, diplomatic communications, and field observations, the research reveals significant shifts in regional security dynamics. The findings indicate that while coordinated naval responses have achieved a reduction in successful maritime attacks, persistent structural challenges remain in technological integration, intelligence sharing, and capacity building among African coastal states. The study introduces a novel framework for understanding maritime security cooperation in contested waters, contributing to both theoretical discourse and practical policy formulation. These insights prove particularly relevant for developing nations seeking to enhance their maritime security capabilities while navigating complex geopolitical relationships.

Introduction:

The maritime domain of the Red Sea represents a complex intersection of global commerce, regional security dynamics, and emerging non-traditional threats. With annual trade volumes exceeding US\$880 billion and supporting approximately 12% of global maritime commerce, this vital corridor's security architecture demands rigorous scholarly attention.¹ The convergence of multiple security challenges – from non-state actor activities to regional power competition – has transformed the Red Sea into a laboratory for examining contemporary maritime security paradigms. Recent data indicates a significant shift in maritime security threats, with non-state actors demonstrating increasingly sophisticated capabilities. Between 2016 and 2024, documented maritime incidents in the Red Sea region increased by 165%, with attack methodologies evolving from primitive small-boat approaches to advanced drone operations and anti-ship

¹ International Maritime Organization, 'Global Maritime Trade Statistics 2023', *Maritime Security Quarterly*, Vol. 45(2), pp. 78–92.

ballistic missiles.² This escalation necessitates a fundamental reassessment of existing security frameworks and response mechanisms. This paper addresses a critical gap in current maritime security literature by examining the intricate relationships between regional capabilities, international cooperation mechanisms, and emerging security challenges. While previous studies have focused primarily on individual aspects of maritime security, this paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the interconnected nature of contemporary maritime threats and responses in the Red Sea context.

Aim and Scope:

This study aims to advance the understanding of maritime security dynamics in the Red Sea through four primary objectives:

- To analyse the evolution of maritime security threats through quantitative assessment of incident data and attack methodologies (2016–2024).
- To evaluate the effectiveness of multilateral naval cooperation frameworks through comparative analysis of response mechanisms and outcomes.
- To examine the capacity-building initiatives for African coastal states, with particular focus on technological integration and operational capabilities.
- To assess the impact of major power competition on regional maritime security architecture.

The research scope encompasses the geographical expanse from the Suez Canal to the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, with particular emphasis on the following:

- Naval Operations and Security Responses
- Regional Cooperation Frameworks
- Capacity-Building Initiatives
- Technological Integration Efforts
- Economic Implications of Maritime Security Threats

² African Maritime Security Database, 'Red Sea Incident Analysis 2016–2024', *Maritime Security Review*, Vol 12(4), 2024, pp. 156–170.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework draws from both traditional maritime security theory and contemporary concepts of hybrid warfare, allowing for a nuanced understanding of evolving threat landscapes. The research also employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach that integrates multiple analytical frameworks to ensure robust and reliable findings. At its core, the methodology relies on extensive statistical analysis of maritime incident data spanning from 2016 to 2024. To enhance analytical depth, the study incorporates comparative analysis of naval response mechanisms across different regional actors, evaluating their effectiveness through standardised metrics and outcome assessments. This comparative framework is supplemented by detailed assessment of technological integration efforts, examining both successful implementations and failed initiatives to identify key success factors and potential pitfalls. Furthermore, the methodology encompasses systematic evaluation of capacity-building initiatives, utilising performance metrics, training outcomes, and capability assessments to measure the effectiveness of various programmes implemented across the Red Sea region. This multi-layered methodological approach ensures comprehensive coverage of both operational and strategic dimensions of maritime security dynamics.

Discussion:

EVOLUTION OF MARITIME SECURITY THREATS

Recent data analysis reveals a significant transformation in the nature and sophistication of maritime security threats in the Red Sea region. Between 2016 and 2024, documented incidents demonstrate a clear progression from conventional maritime threats to hybrid warfare tactics. Statistical analysis of recorded incidents during this period reveals several critical trends, *inter alia* sophisticated attack methodologies increased by 165%, technologically enabled threats increased by 278%, the geographical scope of operations expanded by 47%, and multi-vector attack scenarios increased by 312%.³

REGIONAL RESPONSE MECHANISMS

Analysis of regional response mechanisms reveals a complex interplay between national capabilities and international cooperation frameworks. The effectiveness of these responses can be evaluated through three primary metrics:

³ Maritime Security Operations Center, 'Analysis of Maritime Incidents in the Red Sea Region 2016–2024', *African Maritime Security Review*, Vol. 15(3), pp. 225–241.

- Operational response capability:** Recent comprehensive analysis of regional maritime response capabilities reveals striking disparities in operational effectiveness among Red Sea littoral states. According to the Eastern Africa Maritime Security Institute's assessment, Egyptian naval forces have emerged as the regional leader in maritime security operations. This superior performance can be attributed to Egypt's sustained investment in naval capabilities, advanced training programmes, and sophisticated maritime domain awareness systems. In contrast, Djibouti demonstrates moderate effectiveness leveraging its strategic position and international military partnerships to enhance its maritime security capabilities despite resource constraints. Sudan's maritime response effectiveness is at most average reflecting significant operational challenges stemming from political instability, limited technological infrastructure, and resource constraints affecting their naval capabilities. Eritrea's intervention success rate is low, which underscores critical gaps in maritime security infrastructure, training deficiencies, and limited technological integration in their naval operations. These variations in operational effectiveness highlight the urgent need for targeted capacity-building initiatives and enhanced regional cooperation mechanisms to address these disparities and strengthen overall maritime security in the Red Sea region.⁴
- Intelligence integration:** The establishment of the Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre (RMISC) in 2022 represents a watershed moment in regional maritime intelligence coordination, fundamentally transforming the landscape of maritime threat detection and response capabilities in the Red Sea region. Post-implementation analysis demonstrates remarkable improvements across multiple operational parameters, particularly in early warning capabilities, through the integration of advanced surveillance systems and real-time data sharing protocols. This improvement stems from RMISC's innovative approach to intelligence fusion, combining satellite surveillance, radar tracking, and human intelligence into a comprehensive maritime domain awareness system. Significantly, the Centre's operations have attributable to streamlined communication channels, standardised reporting protocols, and enhanced coordination mechanisms among participating nations. This efficiency gain has proven particularly crucial in addressing time-sensitive threats, such as piracy attempts and unauthorised vessel movements. This marked improvement in preventive capabilities underscores the critical role of integrated intelligence sharing platforms in modern maritime security

⁴ Eastern Africa Maritime Security Institute, 'Regional Naval Response Capabilities Assessment', *Maritime Defense Quarterly*, Vol. 28(1), pp. 45–62.

architectures. These quantifiable improvements demonstrate RMISC's pivotal role in enhancing regional maritime security cooperation, though challenges remain in achieving full operational integration across all participating states. The Centre's success provides a compelling model for similar regional maritime security initiatives, particularly in other contested maritime domains.⁵ The technological transformation of maritime security operations in the Red Sea region has yielded unprecedented improvements in surveillance and threat detection capabilities. Recent investments in maritime domain awareness systems have revolutionised regional security architecture, with the implementation of advanced radar systems (ARS). This dramatic improvement enables comprehensive monitoring of previously vulnerable maritime zones and significantly enhances the region's ability to detect and track potential threats. In parallel with these technological advancements, comprehensive capacity building initiatives have demonstrated significant progress in developing regional maritime security capabilities, albeit with certain persistent challenges. The period from 2020 to 2024 saw intensive investment in human capital development. This systematic approach to capability enhancement has yielded impressive results, including improvement in tactical response capabilities and enhancement in technical proficiency among trained personnel. Operational readiness improvement reflects the comprehensive nature of these training programmes and their effectiveness in developing well-rounded maritime security professionals.

- **International cooperation frameworks:** Infrastructure development has also seen substantial financial commitment, encompassing advanced screening systems, automated access control, and integrated security management platforms. The evolution of international cooperation frameworks has been equally impressive, particularly in multilateral naval operations. Coordinated efforts have achieved a reduction in successful hostile maritime activities, while response times to maritime threats have improved. Perhaps most notably, successful interdiction operations have increased, demonstrating the effectiveness of coordinated multinational responses to maritime security challenges. Recent diplomatic initiatives have further strengthened the regional security architecture through the establishment of key institutions and frameworks. The Red Sea Security Forum (RSSF) has emerged as a crucial platform for strategic dialogue and policy coordination, while the Maritime Security Cooperation Agreement (MSCA) provides a comprehensive framework for operational cooperation. The Regional Capacity Building

⁵ Regional Maritime Information Coordination Centre, 'Impact Assessment Report: First Two Years of Operations', *Maritime Intelligence Review*, Vol. 17(3), pp. 178–195.

Initiative (RCBI) complements these efforts, by addressing capability gaps and promoting standardisation of maritime security practices across participating nations.⁶ These developments collectively represent a significant transformation in regional maritime security capabilities, though challenges remain in achieving full integration and standardisation across all participating states. The success of these initiatives provides valuable insights for similar regional security enhancement efforts globally, while highlighting the importance of sustained investment in both technological and human capital development.

Key findings and strategic implications

Comprehensive analysis of maritime security dynamics in the Red Sea has revealed critical findings that fundamentally reshape our understanding of regional security architecture and international cooperation frameworks. Of particular significance is the complex interplay between technological integration efforts and operational effectiveness, which demonstrates both remarkable achievements and persistent challenges in maritime security enhancement. The implementation of Maritime Domain Awareness Systems (MDAS) has yielded unprecedented improvements in surveillance and threat detection capabilities. This dramatic improvement stems from the integration of high-resolution radar systems with advanced signal processing capabilities, enabling the detection and tracking of smaller vessels and non-conventional threats that previously evaded traditional surveillance methods.

Particularly noteworthy is the integration of AI-powered analytics, which has delivered improvement in threat assessment accuracy. This enhancement results from sophisticated machine-learning algorithms that can rapidly process vast amounts of maritime traffic data, identifying suspicious patterns and potential threats with unprecedented precision. The system's ability to learn from historical incident data and adapt to evolving threat patterns has proven especially valuable in predicting and preventing potential security breaches. This dramatic increase in surveillance capability has been achieved through the strategic deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles, autonomous surface vessels, and networked sensor arrays, creating a comprehensive maritime domain awareness network that operates continuously across vast maritime spaces. This expanded coverage has effectively eliminated many of the blind

⁶ African Union Maritime Security Division, 'Capacity Building Programs Impact Assessment 2020-2024', *Maritime Security Policy Review*, Vol. 9(2), pp. 178–195.

spots that previously challenged maritime security operations in the region.⁷ These technological advancements represent a paradigm shift in maritime security operations, though their implementation has revealed important lessons about the need for sustained investment in training, maintenance, and system integration. The success of these systems depends heavily on the development of human capital and organisational structures capable of effectively utilising these advanced capabilities.

REGIONAL COOPERATION MECHANISMS

An in-depth analysis of regional cooperation mechanisms reveals a complex interplay between institutional achievements and operational challenges in maritime security coordination. The Joint Maritime Operations Centre (JMOC) stands as a testament to successful regional collaboration, achieving a remarkable increase in inter-state coordination effectiveness. This dramatic improvement stems from the implementation of integrated command structures, sophisticated communication networks, and streamlined operational protocols. The enhanced coordination capabilities have proven particularly crucial during complex multinational operations, enabling rapid response to emerging maritime security threats across the region's vast maritime domain. Furthermore, shared intelligence platforms have emerged as another vital component of regional cooperation, delivering a significant improvement in response times to maritime security incidents. This enhancement can be attributed to the seamless integration of national intelligence networks, enabling real-time information sharing and coordinated threat assessment across participating states. The platforms' success demonstrates the critical importance of integrated intelligence architecture in modern maritime security operations.

Combined training exercises have yielded an improvement in operational compatibility among regional naval forces. This substantial enhancement reflects the effectiveness of standardised training protocols and joint operational procedures in building cohesive multinational response capabilities. The success of these exercises underscores the importance of regular, structured interaction between regional maritime security forces in developing and maintaining effective cooperation mechanisms. In the realm of policy integration, significant progress has been achieved through the implementation of standardised operating procedures across regional navies. These procedures establish a common operational language and methodology, facilitating smoother multinational

⁷ Maritime Technology Assessment Group, 'Technology Integration in Maritime Security Operations', *Journal of Maritime Technology* Vol. 18(4), pp. 312–328.

operations and reducing the potential for procedural conflicts during joint missions. The development of common threat assessment matrices has further enhanced regional security cooperation by ensuring consistent evaluation and prioritisation of maritime threats across all participating nations. The establishment of unified command and control protocols represents perhaps the most significant policy achievement, creating a robust framework for coordinated response to maritime security challenges. These protocols define clear lines of authority, communication channels, and decision-making processes during multinational operations, though challenges remain in achieving full integration across all participating states.⁸ These developments collectively represent a significant maturation of regional maritime security cooperation, while highlighting areas requiring continued attention and refinement. The success of these initiatives provides valuable insights for similar regional security enhancement efforts globally, particularly in regions characterised by complex multinational maritime security challenges.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The economic dimensions of maritime security in the Red Sea region present a complex matrix of direct investments and indirect consequences that significantly impact regional commerce and development. Direct costs associated with maritime security infrastructure and operations represent a significant financial burden for regional states. Annual security infrastructure investment encompasses critical elements such as coastal radar systems, vessel tracking networks, and port security installations. This substantial investment reflects the growing recognition of maritime security as a fundamental prerequisite for regional economic stability. Furthermore, technology acquisition and maintenance demand large investments highlighting the significant ongoing financial commitment required to maintain effective maritime security capabilities.

The indirect economic effects of maritime security challenges prove even more substantial and far-reaching. Insurance premiums for vessels operating in the region have experienced dramatic increases, significantly impacting shipping costs and, consequently, consumer prices in regional markets. These diversions, implemented to mitigate security risks, result in extended transit times, increased fuel consumption, and higher operational costs for shipping companies. Most significantly, the cumulative effect of these security challenges has resulted in a reduction in regional maritime commerce, representing a substantial

⁸ Regional Maritime Security Cooperation Institute, 'Analysis of Maritime Security Cooperation Frameworks', *Maritime Policy Review*, Vol. 22(2), pp. 145–162.

economic setback for regional economies heavily dependent on maritime trade. This reduction in trade volume has particularly severe implications for port cities and coastal communities, whose economic vitality is intrinsically linked to maritime commercial activities.⁹ These economic impacts underscore the critical importance of developing cost-effective and sustainable maritime security solutions that balance security requirements with economic efficiency.

FUTURE STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

The evolution of maritime security threats in the Red Sea region has entered a critical phase, characterised by increasingly sophisticated hybrid warfare capabilities. The integration of cyber warfare capabilities into maritime operations represents perhaps the most significant transformation in the threat landscape. Adversaries have demonstrated increasingly sophisticated abilities to target vessel navigation systems, port management infrastructure, and maritime communication networks. This convergence of cyber and maritime domains has created vulnerabilities that transcend traditional security frameworks, requiring the development of integrated defence mechanisms that address both physical and digital threat vectors. The emergence of autonomous weapon systems in the maritime domain presents another critical challenge for regional security architecture. These systems, ranging from underwater autonomous vehicles to AI-enabled surface vessels, have fundamentally altered the nature of maritime threats. Their ability to operate with minimal human intervention, combined with advanced sensor capabilities and extended operational endurance, creates new challenges for detection, tracking, and neutralisation efforts. The proliferation of these systems among both state and non-state actors has accelerated the need for corresponding defensive capabilities and regulatory frameworks.

Electronic warfare capabilities have similarly evolved, with adversaries demonstrating increasingly sophisticated abilities to disrupt maritime communications, navigation systems, and surveillance networks. This enhancement in electronic warfare capabilities has particular significance in the confined waters of the Red Sea, where disruption of critical maritime systems can have immediate and severe consequences for commercial shipping and naval operations. In response to these emerging threats, maritime security forces require significant enhancement of their response capabilities. Advanced electronic countermeasure systems have become essential for protecting critical maritime infrastructure and vessel systems from sophisticated electronic attacks.

⁹ African Economic Research Institute, 'Economic Impact of Maritime Security Threats in the Red Sea Region', *Maritime Economics Quarterly* Vol. 31(3), pp. 267–284.

These systems must be capable of detecting, analysing, and neutralising a wide spectrum of electronic threats, while maintaining the integrity of friendly communications and navigation systems.

The development, of integrated cyber defence frameworks, represents another critical requirement, necessitating the creation of comprehensive security architectures that protect both shipboard systems and shore-based infrastructure. These frameworks must address vulnerabilities across the entire maritime domain, from individual vessel systems, to port management networks, and regional maritime coordination centres.¹⁰ Perhaps most significantly, the evolution of hybrid threats necessitates the development of multi-domain operation capabilities that enable coordinated response across maritime, air, cyber, and electromagnetic domains. This requirement for multi-domain integration presents significant challenges in terms of training, equipment acquisition, and operational coordination, particularly in a region characterised by varying levels of technological capability and operational experience.

CAPACITY-BUILDING PRIORITIES

Recent comprehensive research reveals critical gaps and opportunities in regional maritime security capacity-building initiatives, identifying a complex matrix of technical and operational training requirements essential for addressing evolving maritime security challenges in the Red Sea region. In the domain of technical training, the requirements reflect the increasingly sophisticated nature of maritime security operations. Advanced radar system operation emerges as a fundamental capability requirement, demanding sophisticated training programmes that encompass both theoretical understanding and practical operation of modern maritime surveillance systems. This training must address not only basic operational competencies, but also advanced capabilities such as signal processing, target discrimination, and integrated sensor management.

Cyber security operations have emerged as another critical training priority, reflecting the growing convergence of maritime and digital domains. Training requirements in this area extend beyond basic network security to encompass maritime-specific cyber security challenges, including vessel system protection, port infrastructure security, and defence against sophisticated cyberattacks targeting maritime operations. The complexity of these requirements necessitates the development of specialised training programmes that combine traditional

¹⁰ Strategic Maritime Security Institute, 'Emerging Maritime Security Paradigms', *International Journal of Maritime Security*, Vol. 25(1), pp 78–95.

maritime expertise with advanced cyber security capabilities. Electronic warfare countermeasures training has become increasingly crucial as maritime forces confront more sophisticated electronic threats. Training programmes must prepare personnel to operate and maintain advanced electronic warfare systems while developing the tactical expertise necessary for effective electronic countermeasures in maritime environments. Similarly, autonomous system management has emerged as a critical training requirement, reflecting the growing deployment of unmanned systems in maritime security operations.

In the operational domain, multi-domain operation coordination represents perhaps the most significant training challenge. Personnel must develop the capability to integrate maritime, air, and cyber operations effectively, requiring sophisticated training programmes that simulate complex multi-domain scenarios. Joint force integration training has become equally crucial, focusing on developing the interoperability and coordination capabilities necessary for effective multinational operations. Crisis response management training emerges as another critical requirement, emphasising the need for personnel to develop robust decision-making capabilities under high-pressure situations. This training must encompass both tactical response procedures and strategic considerations, preparing personnel to manage complex maritime security incidents effectively. Strategic planning and execution training rounds out the operational requirements, focusing on developing the analytical and planning capabilities necessary for effective maritime security operations.¹¹ These identified training requirements underscore the complex nature of modern maritime security operations, and the sophisticated capabilities required of maritime security personnel. The successful implementation of these training initiatives will require sustained investment in both infrastructure and instructor capabilities, along with the development of innovative training methodologies that effectively address these complex requirements.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from comprehensive analysis of regional maritime security dynamics, several critical policy recommendations emerge that address both immediate operational requirements and long-term strategic objectives. These recommendations are structured to ensure progressive enhancement of maritime security capabilities while fostering sustainable regional cooperation mechanisms. In the domain of technical infrastructure development, short-term priorities focus

¹¹ Maritime Security Training Assessment Board, 'Capacity Building Requirements Analysis', *Maritime Training Review*, Vol. 14(4), pp. 189–206.

on immediate capability enhancement through targeted investments in critical systems. The enhancement of coastal radar networks emerges as a primary requirement, necessitating the upgrade and expansion of existing surveillance infrastructure to ensure comprehensive coverage of maritime approaches and coastal waters. This enhancement must be coupled with the implementation of integrated command and control systems, enabling effective coordination of maritime security assets and rapid response to emerging threats. The deployment of advanced maritime patrol capabilities represents another critical short-term priority, requiring investment in both platforms and supporting infrastructure to ensure effective maritime domain awareness. Long-term technical initiatives focus on developing sophisticated capabilities that will shape future maritime security operations. The development of regional maritime security centres stands as a fundamental initiative, providing centralised facilities for coordination, training, and operational planning. These centres must be equipped with advanced capabilities for data analysis, threat assessment, and operational coordination.

Regional cooperation enhancement recommendations focus on developing robust institutional frameworks and operational mechanisms. The establishment of a Regional Maritime Security Secretariat emerges as a critical institutional requirement, providing a permanent structure for coordination, policy development, and strategic planning. This must be supported by the development of standardised operating procedures that ensure consistency and interoperability across regional maritime security forces. The implementation of joint training programmes represents another crucial element, fostering shared operational understanding and enhanced interoperability among regional forces. Operational integration recommendations address the practical mechanisms necessary for effective regional cooperation. The creation of joint maritime patrol protocols stands as a fundamental requirement, establishing clear procedures for multinational maritime security operations. The development of shared intelligence platforms represents another critical element, enabling effective information sharing and coordinated threat assessment across regional maritime security forces. The implementation of coordinated response mechanisms rounds out these recommendations, ensuring an effective multinational response to maritime security incidents. These policy recommendations reflect the complex nature of maritime security challenges in the Red Sea region, and the sophisticated responses required to address them effectively. Their successful implementation will require sustained commitment from regional stakeholders, substantial resource allocation, and effective coordination mechanisms. The recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing regional maritime security capabilities while fostering sustainable cooperation mechanisms among participating states.

Strategic implementation framework

The research identifies command and control integration as a cornerstone of successful maritime security implementation, with specific emphasis on three interconnected operational mechanisms. The establishment of the Multinational Coordination Centers (MNCCs) emerges as a pivotal development in enhancing regional maritime security cooperation. These centres serve as operational nuclei, facilitating real-time coordination among diverse national maritime forces and enabling synchronised response to emerging threats. The MNCCs have demonstrated particular effectiveness in managing complex multinational operations, providing centralised command structures that bridge operational and cultural differences among participating forces. Their success relies heavily on sophisticated integration of communications systems, shared operational pictures, and standardised decision-making protocols. The implementation of Integrated Communications Networks (ICN) completes the operational integration framework, providing the technical infrastructure necessary for effective multinational coordination. These networks enable secure, real-time information sharing among participating forces, facilitating rapid decision-making and coordinated response to maritime security threats. The ICN architecture incorporates redundant systems and multiple communication pathways, ensuring robust connectivity even in challenging operational environments.¹² However, there are still ongoing challenges in achieving full operational integration, particularly in areas of technical standardisation and procedural harmonisation across diverse national forces.

Technological capability development

The implementation timeline reflects a carefully structured approach to technological capability development:

- **Phase I (2024–2025):** focuses on establishing basic infrastructure foundations, including the development of core technological capabilities and essential support systems. This phase emphasises building fundamental technological competencies and establishing necessary manufacturing and maintenance capabilities.
- **Phase II (2025–2026):** advances to advanced systems integration, focusing on combining individual technological components into coherent, integrated systems. This phase emphasises developing sophisticated capabilities in

¹² Maritime Operations Research Institute, 'Operational Integration in Maritime Security', *Journal of Maritime Operations*, Vol. 20(3), pp. 234–251.

system integration, interoperability, and advanced technological applications. The period marks a critical transition from basic technological competency to advanced capability development.

- **Phase III (2026–2027):** culminates in achieving full operational capability, representing the maturation of indigenous technological capabilities across all critical domains. This phase focuses on optimising system performance, enhancing operational effectiveness, and achieving technological self-sufficiency in critical maritime security capabilities.¹³ This structured approach to indigenous technological development reflects a sophisticated understanding of both the strategic importance of technological self-reliance and the complex challenges involved in achieving it. The substantial financial commitments and phased implementation timeline demonstrate recognition of the long-term nature of technological capability development and the need for sustained investment in building indigenous technological expertise.

ECONOMIC – SECURITY NEXUS

Direct economic effects present immediate and quantifiable impacts on maritime commerce. Shipping costs have experienced significant escalation, primarily driven by increased insurance premiums, additional security requirements, and operational adjustments necessitated by evolving security threats. This cost escalation disproportionately affects smaller shipping operators and regional trade enterprises, potentially altering competitive dynamics in maritime commerce. These diversions, while necessary for risk mitigation, create significant operational inefficiencies and extend delivery times, impacting supply chain reliability across the region. Security compliance costs add an additional annual economic burden, encompassing investments in vessel hardening, crew training, and security equipment maintenance. The indirect economic impacts reveal deeper structural effects on regional commerce and development. Reduction in regional trade volume represents a significant contraction in maritime commerce, with particularly severe implications for port-dependent economies. This reduction reflects both deliberate risk-mitigation strategies by shipping operators and the cumulative effect of increased operational costs on trade viability.

Port utilisation has also experienced a decrease, signalling reduced maritime activity and its consequent impact on port revenues and operational efficiency. This reduction in port activity creates ripple effects throughout the maritime services sector, affecting everything from port services to maritime support

¹³ African Technology Development Institute, ‘Indigenous Maritime Security Technology Development’, *Maritime Technology Review*, Vol. 16(2), pp. 167–184.

industries. Perhaps most significantly, the employment sector has experienced substantial disruption, with approximately 15 000 jobs affected across the maritime industry and related support sectors.¹⁴ These economic impacts underscore the critical importance of developing cost-effective security solutions that balance risk mitigation with commercial viability.

Investment requirements

Strategic investment analysis reveals critical funding requirements necessary for establishing and maintaining robust maritime security infrastructure in the Red Sea region. The analysis delineates a comprehensive investment framework that addresses both foundational infrastructure development and ongoing operational support needs, with specific attention to long-term sustainability and operational effectiveness. Infrastructure development requirements demonstrate the substantial capital investment necessary for establishing effective maritime security capabilities. Port security enhancement emerges as the most significant investment requirement. This investment encompasses comprehensive upgrades to physical security infrastructure, including advanced access control systems, automated surveillance networks, and integrated security management platforms. The scale of this investment reflects the critical role of ports as potential vulnerability points in maritime security architecture and the sophisticated technological solutions required for their protection.

Surveillance systems represent the second major infrastructure investment priority. This investment targets the development and deployment of advanced surveillance capabilities, including coastal radar networks, satellite monitoring systems, and automated vessel tracking platforms. The substantial investment reflects the complex technical requirements of modern maritime surveillance and the need for comprehensive coverage across vast maritime domains. Training facilities demand a large investment, highlighting the critical importance of human capital development in maritime security operations. This investment encompasses the construction and equipping of specialised training centres, simulation facilities, and practical training infrastructure necessary for developing and maintaining professional maritime security capabilities. In the realm of operational support, personnel training emerges as a fundamental requirement. This allocation supports comprehensive training programmes, including technical certification courses, operational procedure training, and advanced specialist training for key personnel. The investment reflects recognition of the sophisticated

¹⁴ Strategic Investment Analysis Group, 'Maritime Security Investment Requirements', *Maritime Finance Review*, Vol. 19(1), pp. 123–140.

skills required for modern maritime security operations and the need for continuous professional development. Equipment maintenance requirements also demand increased investment, underscoring the significant ongoing costs associated with maintaining complex security systems and infrastructure. This investment ensures the reliable operation of critical security equipment, preventive maintenance programmes, and rapid repair capabilities essential for maintaining operational readiness.

Technology upgrades represent a substantial ongoing investment requirement, reflecting the dynamic nature of maritime security technology and the need for continuous system enhancement. This investment supports the regular updating of security systems, integration of new technologies, and enhancement of existing capabilities to address evolving security challenges.¹⁵ The analysis emphasises the interconnected nature of these investment requirements, highlighting how underinvestment in any area can compromise the effectiveness of the entire maritime security framework. The substantial financial commitments required underscore the need for sustained funding mechanisms and strategic resource allocation to ensure the long-term viability of maritime security operations.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

The research framework delineates specific priority areas that warrant intensive investigation and development to address evolving maritime security challenges. In the domain of AI applications, predictive threat analysis emerges as a primary research priority. This field demands investigation into advanced algorithmic approaches capable of processing vast quantities of maritime data to identify potential security threats before they materialise. Research must focus on developing AI systems that can effectively integrate multiple data streams – including vessel tracking information, historical incident data, and environmental conditions – to generate actionable intelligence about emerging maritime security threats. Autonomous system integration represents another critical research direction, requiring investigation into the effective deployment and coordination of unmanned maritime security assets. The research must address both technical challenges in autonomous system operation, and broader operational considerations, in integrating autonomous systems with traditional maritime security forces. Particular attention must be directed toward developing robust control algorithms that enable autonomous systems to operate effectively in complex maritime environments, while maintaining appropriate human oversight.

¹⁵ Maritime Economic Research Center, 'Economic Impact Analysis of Maritime Security Measures', *Maritime Economics Journal*, Vol. 27 (4), pp. 289–306.

Pattern recognition capabilities constitute the third major AI research priority, focusing on developing sophisticated algorithms capable of identifying subtle anomalies in maritime traffic patterns and vessel behaviour. This research direction requires investigation into advanced machine-learning techniques that can effectively process and analyse complex maritime operational patterns, distinguishing between normal variations and potentially suspicious activities. In the cyber security domain, advanced intrusion detection emerges as a critical research priority. This area demands investigation into sophisticated detection mechanisms capable of identifying and responding to cyber threats targeting maritime infrastructure and vessels. Research must focus on developing detection systems that can operate effectively in the unique technological environment of maritime operations, addressing both conventional cyber threats and maritime-specific attack vectors. Maritime cyber defence research must address the unique challenges of protecting maritime assets from cyberattacks. Future research must consider both technical security measures and operational protocols that enhance cyber resilience, while maintaining operational efficiency.

Secure communications protocols represent another vital research direction, focusing on developing robust encryption and authentication mechanisms specifically designed for maritime environments. In future, research must address the unique challenges of maintaining secure communications across vast maritime spaces, while ensuring interoperability among diverse maritime security forces.¹⁶ The identified research priorities reflect the increasing technological sophistication of maritime security operations and the need for continued innovation to address evolving security challenges. These research directions demand not only technical investigation but also careful consideration of operational implementation and human factors in technology adoption.

Summary:

The comprehensive analysis of maritime security dynamics in the Red Sea region yields significant insights that fundamentally reshape our understanding of regional security architecture requirements and future development trajectories. These findings present critical implications for policy development, resource allocation, and strategic planning in regional maritime security operations. Strategic implications emerging from this research underscore the multifaceted nature of effective maritime security operations. The analysis demonstrates conclusively that successful maritime security frameworks require sophisticated

¹⁶ Maritime Technology Research Institute, 'Future Technologies in Maritime Security', *Journal of Maritime Innovation*, Vol. 24(3), pp. 256–273.

integration of technological solutions, encompassing advanced surveillance systems, cyber security capabilities, and automated threat detection mechanisms. This technological integration must be supported by enhanced regional cooperation, reflecting the transnational nature of maritime security challenges and the necessity for coordinated response mechanisms.

The research further emphasises the critical importance of sustainable funding mechanisms in maintaining effective maritime security operations. Financial sustainability emerges as a fundamental prerequisite for long-term operational effectiveness, requiring careful balance between immediate operational requirements and long-term capability development. Comprehensive training programmes complete this strategic framework, ensuring that human capital development keeps pace with technological advancement and operational requirements.

Policy recommendations derived from this analysis emphasise several key priorities for regional maritime security enhancement. The development of indigenous technological capabilities emerges as a critical requirement, reducing dependence on external providers while ensuring security solutions are appropriately tailored to regional requirements. Enhancement of regional cooperation frameworks represents another crucial policy priority, necessitating the development of robust institutional mechanisms for multinational coordination and operation.

The implementation of standardised operating procedures across regional maritime security forces represents a fundamental policy requirement, ensuring operational compatibility and effective multinational response capabilities. The establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms completes these policy recommendations, providing the financial foundation necessary for long-term operational effectiveness.

Future considerations identified through this analysis highlight critical areas requiring continued attention and development. Advanced technology integration remains a primary concern, particularly as maritime security threats continue to evolve in sophistication and complexity. Enhanced regional cooperation will require ongoing attention to institutional development and operational coordination mechanisms, ensuring effective multinational response capabilities. Sustainable funding models represent another critical area for future development, requiring innovative approaches to resource allocation and financial management. Comprehensive training programmes must continue to evolve, addressing

both current operational requirements and emerging challenges in maritime security operations. These findings collectively emphasise the complex and interconnected nature of maritime security challenges in the Red Sea region, highlighting the need for integrated approaches that address both immediate operational requirements and long-term strategic objectives. The success of regional maritime security initiatives will depend critically on the effective implementation of these recommendations and careful attention to identified future development requirements.

Title: Role of the Indian Navy as a Preferred Maritime Security Partner in the Indian Ocean

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Abstract:

Various manifestations of India's naval power within the Indian Ocean in general – and the northwestern Indian Ocean in particular – have been in striking evidence since the first decade of the twenty-first century. India fully realises that the next two centuries will be centuries of the 'Sea' and 'Space', and over the course of these 200 years, India will either be both a maritime and space power, or she will not be any kind of power at all. India's ability to use the seas for her own purposes while dissuading / deterring / preventing others from using them in ways that are to its disadvantage constitutes her 'maritime' power', which is, of course, military-, political- and economic-power, exerted through the ability to use the sea. The 'military' component of India's maritime power, is embodied in the Indian Navy as 'naval' power, and while 'naval' power or 'sea' power will always be a subset of the country's 'maritime' power – which has several components that might appear to have little to do with the navy – naval power is, nevertheless, the 'enabling' instrument that permits other components of 'maritime' power to be exercised. It is also the 'preventive' instrument that is used to deny others the use of the seas in ways that are to India's disadvantage.

New Delhi seeks to leverage its maritime power to achieve the country's geoeconomic goals, as well as its non-geoeconomic ones. India recognises that outward leaning strategies are the only ones that can enable her to achieve these goals. Accordingly, as Professor Lexiong Ni has succinctly put it,

When a nation embarks upon a process of shifting from an 'inward-leaning economy' to an 'outward-leaning economy', the arena of national security concerns begins to move to the oceans. This is a phenomenon in history that occurs so frequently that it has almost become a rule rather than an exception.

India's maritime policy, which, like any policy defines the country's desired 'end-state', is encapsulated by the acronym SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). India truly believes that the Indian economy cannot crest a wave while the economies of its maritime neighbourhood wallow in a trough. This requires that the Indian Navy contribute in a substantive and substantial manner to regional security.

Introduction:

The Indian Ocean, with its growing geostrategic importance as a great maritime highway,¹ and as a region abundant in natural resources,² offers immense economic potential and several opportunities to its littoral countries for their growth and development. However, the Indian Ocean also presents a multitude of political, economic, environmental and security challenges, which the littorals must address. Historically, for millennia, the Indian Ocean has been a medium of peaceful commerce, and cultural exchange. Not only was the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) a region of peaceful trade, but it was also a region of prosperity. Several scientific innovations and discoveries of the pre-industrial revolution era are ascribed to the peoples of the IOR nations. However, with the advent of European naval power, and the consequent colonisation, the economic might and technological prowess of several IOR nations declined gradually. During the great wars, especially during World War II, much of the region was subjected to economic stress, as their resources were fed into the war effort. Even in the post-colonial era, as many nations gained independence, they were left with few resources to ensure their own security. This had an adverse impact on regional security, especially regional maritime security.

At the same time, due to a variety of geoeconomic and non-geoeconomic reasons, the IOR witnessed an increase in maritime security challenges. Many of these security challenges arose, not merely because of state-versus-state friction, but due to the rise of non-state actors, weak maritime governance, and the absence of robust response mechanisms to address emerging threats. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the IOR has variously been labelled as “insecure and unstable”,³ “a region that does not inspire confidence in the potential for peaceful

¹ The Indian Ocean is one of the most important routes for the movement of long-haul cargo. More than 80% of the world’s seaborne trade in oil passes through the Indian Ocean’s choke points. In addition to energy, vast quantities of bulk commodities and manufactured goods are moved by sea as part of the increasing intra- and extra regional trade. L. Cordner (2011), ‘Progressing Maritime Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean’, *Naval War College Review*, 64(4), Autumn, 73.

² The Indian Ocean region is rich in living and non-living resources such as fish and algae, oil and gas, as well as mineral deposits in the seabed. D. Michel, H. Fuller, and L. Dolan (2012), ‘Natural Resources in the Indian Ocean – Fisheries and Minerals’, in *Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security and Policy Challenges*, D. Michel and R. Stickler, eds., Stimson Center, Washington DC, 103–112.

³ S. Bateman and A. Bergin (2011), ‘New Challenges for Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean: An Australian Perspective’, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 7 (1), viewed 14 November 2024, <https://ro.uow.edu.au/lawpapers/516>.

governance”,⁴ “a disaggregated region notable for its lack of homogeneity”,⁵ and “a troubled and unstable region, apparently without any real unity, common identity or collective goal.”⁶

Aim and Scope:

India, which occupies a central position in the Indian Ocean, has recognised the necessity for a secure and prosperous Indian Ocean. This recognition is founded upon the belief that India’s own security and prosperity are linked to the security and prosperity of the region. India’s maritime policy, which is encapsulated in the acronym SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region – is a reflection and manifestation of this belief. The aim of this paper is to offer insights on India’s role as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean, with a specific focus upon the Indian Navy as a ‘Preferred Security Partner’ for the coastal states of the Indian Ocean. The paper will describe the broad contours of the Indian Ocean from an Indian perspective, and will develop this theme to demonstrate its application in the broader Indo-Pacific. It will also endeavour to draw a correlation between the Indian Navy’s recent operations and activities, with the strategy that it has enunciated in its capstone document titled, ‘Ensuring Secure Seas: India’s Maritime Security Strategy’. The main part of the paper, as its title suggests, examines the role of the Indian Navy as a significant contributor to regional maritime security.

Discussion:

INDIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

A prominent characteristic of the Indian Ocean is that it has a rich maritime tradition. Almost all people of the IOR littoral states enjoyed a glorious maritime past. The noted historian Auguste Toussaint observed, “The Atlantic had scarcely begun to be explored when a seafarers’ manual of the first century A.D. (the famous *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*) described with extraordinary precision the world of the Indian Ocean.”⁷ The Persian Gulf was the oldest open-water

⁴ J. Stavridis (2017), *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World’s Oceans*, Penguin Press, New York, 120.

⁵ L. Cordner (2010), ‘Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region’, *Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs*, 2 (1), 16.

⁶ C. Lebas (2013), ‘New Stakes in the Indian Ocean and French Policy’, *The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Newsletter IONSPHERE*, 2, July, 68.

⁷ A. Toussaint (1966), *History of the Indian Ocean* (Histoire de l’Ocean Indien), English

route of mankind,⁸ even as the first naval and oceanic tradition evolved in the lands washed by the Arabian Sea.⁹ Thus, it is evident that most IOR littorals have a deep-rooted connection with the Indian Ocean, which translates to a benign and accommodative outlook towards the peaceful use of the seas in present times.

India's insular geography, dominated by the mighty Himalayas, severely restricted her communication with the rest of the world for a long time. It was the sea that enabled her to maintain economic, social and cultural linkages with distant lands to the West and to the East. To the West, the cultural and commercial links between India and Africa go back at least 3 000 years, and these relations grew stronger with the discovery of the monsoon. The most prominent example of these relations is the Siddis of India, a people with a thousand-year history. Having descended primarily from the Bantu peoples of the Zanj coast in Southeast Africa, they established the longest-lived kingdoms in India, in Janjira and Sachin, both on the west coast. India's rich maritime tradition and her linkage with the Indian Ocean, conferred upon her an enviable economic status that was interrupted only by the advent of European naval power in the region. One consequence of this centuries-long peripeteia in India's maritime fortunes, was the erosion of her maritime prowess.

Following independence, when India turned to the sea once more, the regional maritime scenario had changed radically. For several decades, India's maritime focus remained on the Indian Ocean. This was quite natural because, as one of India's leading strategic thinkers, diplomat and historian, Kavalam Madhava Panikkar had observed, "[the] Indian Ocean is not just another ocean for India. For us it is the most vital sea. Our economic prosperity, wellbeing and security depend on this Ocean."¹⁰ Later in this paper, it will be demonstrated that there exists ample evidence to support this truism.

translation by J. Guicharnaud, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 2.

⁸ R. D. Kaplan (2011), *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, Random House, New York, 27.

⁹ K. M. Panikkar (1945), *India and the Indian Ocean*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 22–25.

¹⁰ K. M. Panikkar (1945), *India and the Indian Ocean*, 84.

MARITIME SECURITY PERSPECTIVES AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

The concept of maritime security, Christian Bueger argues, is not definitive, and its practical meaning will always vary across actors, time and space.¹¹ This is true, because maritime security encompasses a range of themes, from maritime safety and climate change, to piracy, and armed conflict. From another perspective, maritime security could be seen as freedom from threats arising either in – or from – the sea.¹² Although this is an obviously broad definition, its advantage lies in its expansiveness. It includes both traditional and non-traditional security challenges,¹³ as well as those that are largely due to natural and anthropogenic processes, such as climate change and natural disasters. Therefore, maritime security must be viewed in a ‘holistic’ sense, instead of focusing upon only a few types of threats and challenges. An indicative depiction of these threats is given in **Figure 1**.

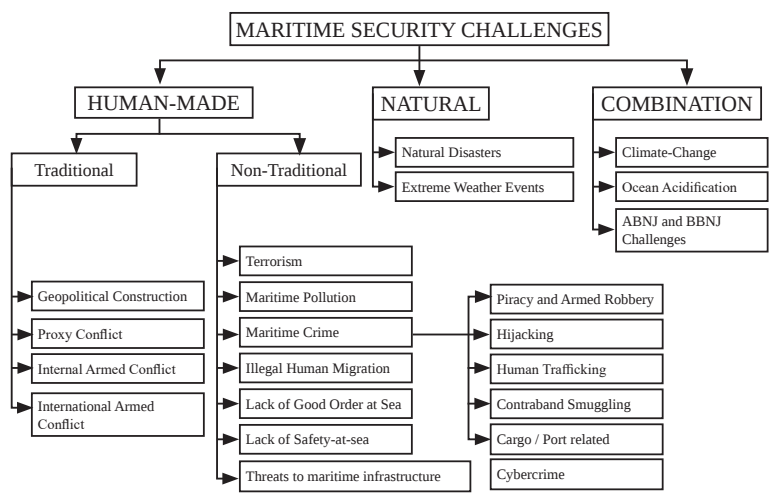


Figure 1: An indicative typology of maritime security challenges¹⁴

¹¹ C. Bueger (2015), ‘What is Maritime Security?’, *Marine Policy*, 53, 159–164.

¹² M. Singh (2008), ‘PM Inaugurates Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Seminar-2008’, *Former Prime Minister of India: Speeches*, 14 February 2008, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=633>.

¹³ The traditional sources of maritime security threats refer to states with organised military capability and resources, which harbour adversarial posture and inimical intent towards another state. Hostile actions by such states, in terms of scale, scope, and intensity of force that may be applied, would potentially be of a higher order. Traditional sources, therefore, pose a higher level of threat to a nation’s security interests. Non-traditional security threats in the maritime domain can usually be attributed to criminals and non-state actors. Although these are normally less violent than traditional security threats, they are much more pervasive.

¹⁴ P. Chauhan (2024), ‘Overview of India’s Maritime Geopolitics’, lecture at the National Maritime Foundation, 12 August.

To protect the maritime domain from threats described above – most of which are transnational in nature – sea power is increasingly being called upon to address non-traditional security challenges instead of merely addressing the traditional ones. It is apparent that unlike traditional security concerns that are usually centred on a single nation's (or a collective's) core interests, the non-traditional maritime security threats are of concern to almost all nations that wish to use the seas for promoting their materiel, economic and security interests. It is obvious, therefore, that regional cooperation is essential to mitigate non-traditional security threats. In 2021, the Prime Minister of India had called for a framework of mutual understanding and cooperation for the preservation and use of the oceans. He had stressed that no single country could make such a framework alone, and that it could only be realised through a common effort.¹⁵

MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN – A CONTEMPORARY SCAN

In the Indian Ocean, as in other maritime regions of the world, non-traditional security challenges, such as piracy and maritime terrorism, pose a grave threat to commerce and other lawful sea-based economic activities, such as fishing and the extraction of mineral resources from the sea. In addition, criminal activities on land, which typically include smuggling of weapons, contraband, and human beings, are also perpetrated through the medium of the sea. Table 1 provides a tabulation of maritime security-related incidents in the IOR, and is indicative of a generally worrisome trend in the increasing number of incidents.

¹⁵ M. Modi (2021), 'English Translation of Prime Minister's Remarks at the UNSC High-Level Open Debate on "Enhancing Maritime Security: A Case for International Cooperation" (9 August 2021)', Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs: Media Center, 10 August 2021, viewed 3 November 2024, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/34151/English_translation_of_Prime_Ministers_remarks_at_the_UNSC_HighLevel_Open_Debate_on_Enhancing_Maritime_Security_A_Case_For_International_Cooperation_A.

Table 1: Trend in Maritime Security Incidents in the Indian Ocean Region¹⁶

Category of Maritime Security Threat	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Jan to Jun)
Piracy and armed robbery ¹⁷	168	161	194	135
Contraband smuggling	757	811	958	554
IUU fishing	392	603	800	393
Irregular human migration	977	300	243	101
Maritime incidents ¹⁸	1 117	1 395	1 760	812
Maritime security threats (hybrid) ¹⁹	8	12	43	194
Marine pollution	8	18	32	No data
Cyber security threats	4	05	11	No data

It is important to draw two important conclusions from **Table 1**. The first is that every region must evolve for itself an appropriate framework for understanding maritime security threats. For example, the data demonstrates the importance of distinguishing minor incidents, such as ‘suspicious approach’, from a graver threat such as ‘hijack’. For this reason, the annual reports of the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) have classified ‘Piracy and Armed Robbery’ into 10 different sub-categories, so that any increase in the number of reported incidents must not automatically trigger an alarm. Instead, security experts and policymakers must be able to make a proper analysis, based on a disaggregated view of this incident category. The second conclusion from the data provided in Table 1 is the dramatic rise in what has been described as ‘maritime security threats (hybrid)’. Viewed in the context of the Gaza conflict, which erupted from the terrorist strike by Hamas on Israel in October 2023, these hybrid attacks on shipping passing through the Red Sea have had a deleterious impact on global shipping.²⁰

¹⁶ This table has been compiled by the author, using data provided in the annual reports of the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

¹⁷ Piracy and armed robbery are further classified into 10 different categories: (1) Hijack; (2) kidnap; (3) illegal boarding; (4) attack; (5) sea robbery; (6) sea theft; (7) attempted robbery; (8) attempted theft; (9) attempted boarding, and (10) suspicious approach.

¹⁸ Maritime incidents are further classified into three categories: (1) Incidents related to vessels, such as detention, collision, grounding, fire, flooding, etc., (2) incidents related to individuals, such as man overboard, missing persons, medical evacuation, search and rescue, and (3) incidents with legal connotations.

¹⁹ Maritime security threats of a hybrid nature refer to an action in the maritime domain by a state or a non-state actor, whose goal is to undermine or harm a target by combining overt and covert military and non-military means, conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, indiscriminate violence and coercion, as well as criminal disorder.

²⁰ T. Denamiel, M. Schleich, W. A. Reinsch, and W. Todman (2024), ‘The Global Economic Consequences of the Attacks on Red Sea Shipping Lanes’, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 22 January, viewed 10 December 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/global-economic-consequences-attacks-red-sea-shipping-lanes>.

It must also be appreciated how a single incident in the maritime domain can yield multiple effects. A case in point is the sinking of the MV *Rubymar* on 2 March 2024 off the coast of Mocha, Yemen, following a missile strike by Houthi forces. The ship, with approximately 22 000 metric tonnes of ammonium phosphate-sulphate fertiliser, 200 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, and 80 tonnes of marine diesel, left a 29-kilometre oil slick in the days following the incident.²¹ But, apart from the economic and materiel loss, there were other consequences. It was reported that the dragging of the MV *Rubymar*'s anchor damaged three undersea communication cables in the area.²²

INDIA'S MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

As mentioned earlier, India's security and economic wellbeing is deeply intertwined with the sea, and especially with the Indian Ocean. Therefore, preservation of good order and stability in the IOR is imperative for India. About 95% of India's trade by volume is transported by the sea route.²³ In the current geopolitical context of the threat to global shipping passing through the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb, it is notable that about 36% of India's seaborne trade (amounting to about US\$362 billion) passes through this critical sea route.²⁴ More than 99% of India's communication with the rest of the world is enabled by undersea communication cables. Her vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of about 2 000 000 m², and an extended continental shelf, endows India with enormous resource potential. About half of India's domestic production of crude oil and 70% of natural gas production is from offshore basins.²⁵ India is also the second-largest supplier of fish in the world, accounting for 8.92% of

²¹ International Maritime Organisation (2024), 'MV Rubymar – Call for Contributions of Oil Pollution Response Equipment to Support Operations Related to the Sinking of MV Rubymar in the Republic of Yemen', *International Maritime Organisation*, Circular Letter No. 4890, 25 June 2024, viewed 12 December 2024, <https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/MediaCentre/Documents/Circular%20Letter%20No.4890%20-%20Mv%20Rubymar%20-%20Call%20For%20Contributions%20Of%20Oil%20Pollution.pdf>.

²² O. Solon and M. Hatem (2024), '“Rubymar” Anchor Seen as Likely Cause of Severed Red Sea Cables', *G-Captain*, 6 March, viewed 12 December 2024, <https://gcaptain.com/rubymar-anchor-seen-as-likely-cause-of-severed-red-sea-cables/>.

²³ Government of India: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (2024), *Annual Report 2023–24*, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, New Delhi, 4, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://shipmin.gov.in/publication/annual-reports>.

²⁴ Government of India: Ministry of Trade and Commerce, 'Export Import Data Bank Version 7.1 – Tradestat', Ministry of Trade and Commerce, 21 January 2025, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/Default.asp>

²⁵ Government of India: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, *Annual Report 2023-24*, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, New Delhi, 2024, pp. 41-42, viewed on 18 January 2025, <https://mopng.gov.in/files/TableManagements/annual202324.pdf>

the global production.²⁶ It is a sector that employs about 30 million people.²⁷ Increasingly, the Indian Ocean is also gaining importance as a source of critical minerals, such as cobalt, nickel, copper and manganese, and it is estimated that about 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules (PMN), comprising copper, nickel, cobalt and manganese, are available in the exploration area in the Central Indian Ocean Basin allocated to India by the International Seabed Authority (ISA).²⁸ In India's quest to decarbonise its economy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels – India had pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 – the Indian Ocean is going to play a critical role in the longer term. This points towards the inextricable link between India's growth and security and the security of the Indian Ocean, and therefore, India's maritime security interests range from preserving territorial integrity against threats from the sea, to ensuring security in her coastal and offshore regions. Of equal importance to India, is the need to ensure that her seaborne trade and other economic activities at sea are unimpeded and free from threats.

Accordingly, the Indian Navy's strategy document identifies a set of five strategies, which deal with: Deterrence; Conflict; Shaping a Favourable and Positive Maritime Environment; Coastal and Offshore Security, and, Maritime Force and Capability Development.²⁹ Although these are strategies for specific outcomes, they are guided by the overarching policy of SAGAR, which maintains that it is untenable for India to ride a wave of prosperity while others wallow in a trough. This policy is afforded first-order specificity through the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), which was articulated at the 14th East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November 2019.³⁰ The IPOI consists of seven different but deeply

²⁶ Government of India: Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, Annual Report 2023-24, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, New Delhi, 2024, pg. 13, viewed on 18 January 2025. https://dof.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-07/Annual_Report_2023-24_English.pdf

²⁷ Government of India, Press Information Bureau, 'Year End Review 2024: Department of Fisheries' Press Information Bureau, 12 December 2024, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2083813>

²⁸ Government of India: Press Information Bureau, 'Deep Ocean Mission: Harnessing Blue Economy for New India', *Press Information Bureau*, 26 April 2022, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/apr/doc202242649701.pdf>

²⁹ Government of India: Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence (Navy) (2015), 'NSP 1.2: Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy', Directorate of Strategy, Concepts and Transformation, New Delhi, October.

³⁰ M. Modi (2019), 'Prime Minister's Speech at the East Asia Summit, 4 November 2019', Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs: Media Center, viewed 29 January 2025, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/32171/Prime_Ministers_Speech_at_the_East_Asia_Summit_04_November_2019.

inter-connected pillars or spokes, as depicted in **Figure 2**. What is remarkable about the IPOI is that it does not create any new structure, but identifies seven broad areas or lines of thrust that States collectively work upon if they are to achieve security and growth for all in the region.

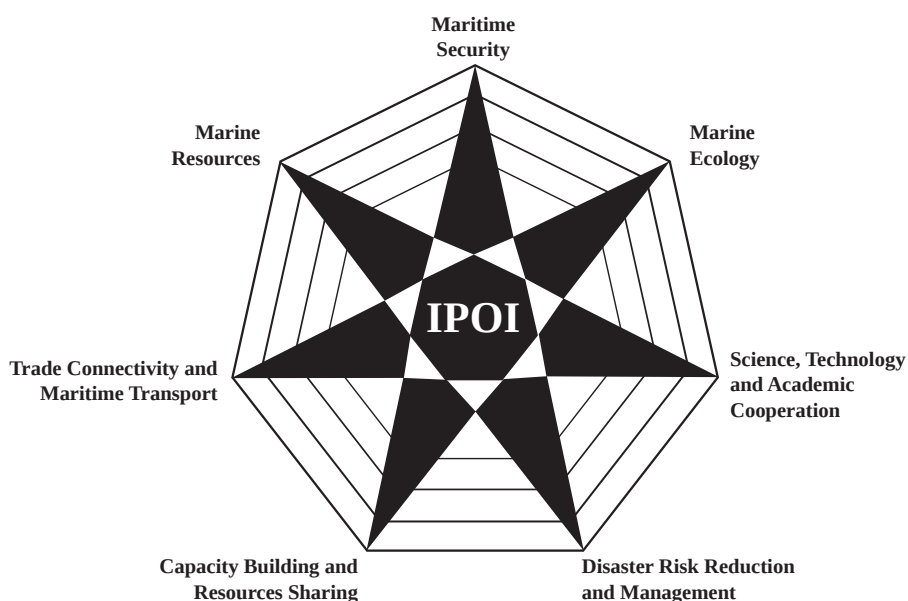


Figure 2: The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)³¹

ROLE OF THE INDIAN NAVY

Of the four roles of the Indian Navy³² – Military, Diplomatic, Constabulary, and Benign – the last three are relevant to the contemporary maritime security situation in the IOR. Although the ‘Military’ role is the *raison d’être* of all navies, they are increasingly tasked with performing non-military and low-intensity tasks, such as combatting piracy and maritime crime. This is because non-military roles are invariably less violent but there are exceptions, and they still generally have a serious economic and geopolitical impact, as the rise of piracy off Somalia in the last 15 years has shown. Military operations by the

³¹ Adapted from M. Fatima (2024), ‘Irregular Human Migration in the Eastern Indian Ocean: Security Implications and the Need for Regional Cooperation’, *National Maritime Foundation*, 2 September, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://maritimeindia.org/irregular-human-migration-in-the-eastern-indian-ocean-security-implications-and-the-need-for-regional-cooperation/>.

³² Government of India: Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence (Navy) (2015), *Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009*, updated online version, Maritime Doctrines and Concepts Centre (MDCC), Mumbai, 91–119.

Indian Navy can be categorised into those that are undertaken independently, and those that are taken in collaboration with others.

INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS

The Indian Navy has adopted the concept of ‘mission-based deployments’, in which ships are mission deployed in designated areas in the IOR.³³ Examples of this are the deployments by the Indian Navy to the Gulf of Aden (POGDEP) and to the Persian Gulf (GULFDEP). Since 2008, the Indian Navy has deployed more than 110 ships in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast for anti-piracy patrols, which have cumulatively escorted more than 3 440 merchant ships and over 25 000 seafarers. Against the backdrop of the security situation in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman in June 2019, the Indian Navy also commenced maritime security operations, code-named ‘Operation SANKALP’, to ensure the safe passage of Indian vessels.³⁴

In response to the effect of the Israel-Hamas conflict in the maritime domain, which saw a sudden and rapid increase in incidents of piracy in the Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy extended Operation SANKALP to the Gulf of Aden in mid-December 2023. This was in addition to its original anti-piracy deployment. This operation focused on three areas, namely the Gulf of Aden and adjoining areas, the Arabian Sea, and the coast of Somalia. In the first 100 days of this operation, the Indian Navy deployed over 5 000 personnel and 21 warships, and carried out 900 hours of flying, responding to 18 incidents, and conducting nearly 1 000 boarding operations. This surge in operations saved over 110 lives and resulted in the seizure of more than 3 000 kg of narcotics, in addition to the safe escort of about 1.5 million tonnes of critical commodities. Details of some of the important operations conducted by the Indian Navy are given in **Table 2**.

³³ S. Dutta (2018), ‘Indian Navy Informs Government About the Fleet’s Reoriented Mission Pattern’, *The New Indian Express*, 1 April, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/Apr/01/indian-navy-informs-government-about-the-fleets-reoriented-mission-pattern-1795404.html>. Also see, Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2024), ‘Maritime Security’, *Press Information Bureau*, 2 February, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2001842>.

³⁴ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2022), ‘Op SANKALP: 3rd Year of Indian Navy’s Maritime Security Operations’, *Press Information Bureau*, 19 June, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1835382>.

Table 2: Some recent maritime security operations carried out by the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean

Date	Type of Incident	Details of the Incident	Indian Navy's Response
23 December 2023	Drone attack	MV <i>Chem Pluto</i> was attacked by suspected drone on 23 December 2023.	Explosive Ordnance Disposal team inspected the vessel at Mumbai. ³⁵
05 January 2024	Piracy/ Hijack	MV <i>Lila Norfolk</i> was hijacked on 4 January 2024.	Intervention by INS <i>Chennai</i> , an MQ9B (Sea Guardian) UAV, a P8I maritime patrol aircraft. All 21 crew were rescued. ³⁶
26 January 2024	Anti-ship missile strike	MV <i>Marlin Luanda</i> , struck by a missile Southeast of Aden, was set ablaze.	Fire-fighting team from INS <i>Visakhapatnam</i> , along with French and US ships, provided assistance. ³⁷
29 January 2024	Piracy/ Hijack	Fishing vessels <i>Iman</i> and <i>Al Naemi</i> had been boarded by Somali pirates.	Intervention by INS <i>Sumitra</i> rescued the crew of the two fishing vessels. ³⁸
02 February 2024	Piracy/ Hijack	FV <i>Omari</i> boarded by seven pirates, who had taken the crew hostage.	INS <i>Sharda</i> foiled the hijack attempt of and rescued 11 Iranian and eight Pakistani crew. ³⁹

³⁵ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2023), 'Preliminary Assessment of Attack on MV Chem Pluto', *Press Information Bureau*, 25 December, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1990363>.

³⁶ K. Kaushik (2024), 'Indian Navy Rescues Bulk Carrier Crew After Arabian Sea Hijack Attempt', *Reuters*, 6 January, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india-sends-warship-after-hijacking-liberian-flagged-vessel-arabian-sea-2024-01-05/>

³⁷ Hindustan Times (2024), 'Houthi Attack: Marlin Luanda Captain Thanks Indian Navy for Helping Douse Fire', *Hindustan Times*, 28 January, viewed 25 January 2025, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/had-lost-hopes-but-captain-of-merchant-vessel-thanks-navy-for-swift-response-to-distress-call-101706378658790.html>.

³⁸ D. Sharma (2024), 'Warning Shots, Aerial Dominance: How Navy Rescued Vessels from Pirates', *NDTV*, 31 January, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/warning-shots-aerial-dominance-how-navy-rescued-vessels-from-pirates-4968445>.

³⁹ M. Negi (2024), 'Indian Navy Rescues Fishing Vessel with Pakistani Nationals from Pirate Attack', *India Today*, 2 February, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-navy-ins-sharda-somalian-pirates-iranian-fishing-vessel-fv-omari-2496886-2024-02-02>.

Date	Type of Incident	Details of the Incident	Indian Navy's Response
28 February 2024	Drug seizure	Dhow carrying 3 500 kg in contraband.	INS <i>Trishul</i> apprehended the dhow, in a coordinated operation with India's Narcotics Control Bureau. ⁴⁰
16 March 2024	Piracy/ Hijack	MV <i>Ruen</i> hijacked by Somali pirates on 14 December 2023.	Intervention by INS <i>Kolkata</i> and <i>Subhadra</i> , along with shore-based aircraft and marine commandos. All 35 pirates surrendered, and the crew rescued. ⁴¹
29 March 2024	Piracy/ Hijack	Iranian fishing vessel <i>Al-Kambar</i> , with 19 Pakistani crew was boarded by pirates.	INS <i>Sumedha</i> and INS <i>Trishul</i> rescued 19 crew members. ⁴²
24 to 25 November 2024	Drug seizure	Two fishing vessels carrying 500 kg crystal meth in the Arabian Sea.	INS <i>Sharda</i> intercepted the boats and seized the narcotics. ⁴³

BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION – INDIAN NAVY

The Indian Navy has several mechanisms of cooperation with other navies. These include deployments and exercises, reciprocal visits and port calls, institutionalised discussion forums and dialogue mechanisms (such as talks and meetings with the staff officers of friendly navies), information exchange, capacity building, hydrographic survey assistance, joint development of technologies, sale/transfer of hardware, etc. However, of these, only a few prominent examples that are relevant to the theme of this paper, will be discussed.

⁴⁰ P. Lama (2024), '3500 kg Drugs Seized in Indian Waters off Gujarat Coast', *Hindustan Times*, 28 February, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/3500-kg-drugs-seized-in-indian-waters-off-gujarat-coast-101709091892486.html>.

⁴¹ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2024), 'Anti-Piracy Operations Against Pirate Ship MV *Ruen* by Indian Navy', *Press Information Bureau*, 16 March, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2015285>.

⁴² R. Ranjan (2024), 'Indian Navy Rescues 23 Pakistani Nationals from Iranian Fishing Vessel Attacked by Pirates', *NDTV*, 30 March, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/indian-navy-rescues-23-pakistani-nationals-from-iranian-fishing-vessel-al-kambar-786-attacked-by-pirates-5337359>.

⁴³ M. Negi and S. Sharma (2024), 'Navy Seizes 500 kg of Crystal Meth from Fishing Boats in Arabian Sea', *India Today*, 29 November, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-navy-drug-seizure-crystal-meth-srilankan-navy-arabian-sea-fishing-boats-2642199-2024-11-29>.

Institutionalised exercises

The Indian Navy has institutionalised exercises with several like-minded partners. These include bilateral exercises with 19 countries, and about 25 exercises in multilateral format.⁴⁴ Some prominent examples of the latter are the MILAN series, which is hosted by India, Exercise MALABAR (Australia, India, Japan and the USA), the IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX), and Exercise IBSAMAR (Brazil, India, and South Africa). In addition, the Indian Navy participates in at least six joint exercises with international partners, in which the Indian Army and/or the Indian Air Force are also represented.⁴⁵ There are several advantages of such exercises. These enhance interoperability and foster trust among partners, while gaining useful operational experience in various environments. The ease with which the Indian Navy deploys to distant waters and coordinates its operations with foreign partners (such as in anti-piracy operations) is testimony to the value that is attached to such exercises.

Maritime partnership exercises

In addition to institutionalised exercises, opportunities also arise when Indian Naval ships are deployed overseas, or when friendly navies deploy to Indian waters. In such instances, short-duration exercises are undertaken, using the generic term ‘Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)’. Some recent examples of MPX by the Indian Navy are tabulated in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Some examples of MPX conducted by the Indian Navy⁴⁶

Date	Participating Units in the Maritime Partnership Exercise		Remarks
	Indian Navy	Friendly Navy	
15 September 2022	INS <i>Tarkash</i>	Nigerian Navy NNS <i>Kano</i> , NNS <i>Osun</i> , NNS <i>Sokoto</i> NNS <i>Nguru</i>	Gulf of Guinea

⁴⁴ H. Das (2024), *Building Partnerships: India and International Cooperation for Maritime Security*, Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 164–165.

⁴⁵ H. Das (2024), *Building Partnerships: India and International Cooperation for Maritime Security*.

⁴⁶ This data has been compiled by the author from the official ‘X’ channel of the Indian Navy, <https://x.com/indiannavy>

Date	Participating Units in the Maritime Partnership Exercise		Remarks
20 October 2023	INS <i>Sumedha</i>	Togolese navy ship <i>OTI</i>	Gulf of Guinea Subsequently, the Indian naval ship participated in the inaugural India-EU joint naval exercise.
June 2024	INS <i>Sunayana</i>	Mauritius CGS <i>Barracuda</i> and maritime patrol aircraft (Dornier)	Joint surveillance mission in Mauritian EEZ. INS <i>Sunayana</i> en route to Port Louis to participate in IDY 24.
22 to 25 September 2024	INS <i>Talwar</i>	Kenyan Navy KNS <i>Shujaa</i>	Joint EEZ surveillance off the Kenyan coast. Personnel engaged in professional interactions during the harbour phase at Mombasa.
5 to 6 October 2024	INS <i>Vikramaditya</i> INS <i>Visakhapatnam</i>	Italian Navy ITS <i>Cavour</i> ITS <i>Alpino</i>	Maiden exercise by carrier strike groups (CSG) from both navies in the Arabian Sea.

Navy-to-navy engagement

In addition to cooperation at the operational level, the Indian Navy also has institutionalised mechanisms to engage with like-minded partners at staff level. These mechanisms consist of ‘Staff Talks’,⁴⁷ ‘Executive Steering Group’ meetings,⁴⁸ and other forums for bilateral cooperation. These talks help plan and implement collaborative initiatives between the participating navies. The recent signing of an ‘Implementing Agreement’ between the Indian Navy and South African Navy to enhance submarine crew safety is an example of such advantages.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ An example of this mechanism is the Indian Navy – South African Navy Staff Talks. See: Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2024), ‘12th India – South Africa Navy Staff Talks’, *Press Information Bureau*, 29 August, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2049741>.

⁴⁸ An example of this mechanism is the Indian Navy – United States Navy Executive Steering Group (ESG). See: IANS (2018), ‘US 7th Fleet Expands Cooperation with Indian Navy’, *newsd*, 12 December, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://newsd.in/us-7th-fleet-expands-cooperation-with-indian-navy>.

⁴⁹ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2024), ‘Indian Navy and South African Navy Sign Implementing Agreement to Enhance Submarine Rescue Support Cooperation’, *Press Information Bureau*, 4 September, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2051795>.

Information exchange

One of the major thrust areas of naval cooperation is information exchange, which is itself a sub-set of the larger cooperative engagement in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). Towards this, the Indian Navy has adopted a multi-pronged approach. The first relates to bilateral agreements for exchange of information related to white shipping, which is essentially sharing data on merchant ships. It has been previously reported that the Indian Navy is mandated to conclude White Shipping Agreements with 36 countries and three multinational constructs, and good progress has been made on this.⁵⁰

The Indian Navy has signed technical agreements with several partners for exchange of white shipping information. At a multilateral level, the Indian Navy conducted a Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW) in 2023, aimed at fostering collaboration among maritime security stakeholders in the region.⁵¹ One of the important highlights of this event was the demonstration of the indigenously developed Network for Information Sharing – Information Fusion Centre (NISHAR-IFC) software. The capabilities of this software, which enables interoperability in combined operations and exercises, was demonstrated during the 12th edition of Exercise MILAN in February (2024),⁵² and the Eighth edition of Exercise IBSAMAR in October of 2024⁵³

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

Arguably, the Indian Navy's most significant initiative in information sharing has been the establishment of the IFC-IOR, which has emerged as a hub for information aggregation in the region. It has international liaison officers from 14 countries involved, and linkages with over 75 agencies and institutions. This initiative has not only galvanised regional cooperation in information sharing, but it has also had an enormous impact in quantifying – both objectively and with a regional perspective – the maritime security challenges in the IOR.

⁵⁰ Press Notes (2018), 'White Shipping – Information Exchange', *Indian Defence Industries*, 22 December, viewed 12 December 2024, <https://indiandefenceindustries.in/white-shipping-information-exchange>.

⁵¹ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2023), 'Maritime Information Sharing Workshop 2023', *Press Information Bureau*, 16 September, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1958025>.

⁵² A. Singh (2024), 'India Conducted Dual Aircraft Carrier Drills for the First Time', *The War Zone*, 18 March, viewed 12 December 2024, <https://www.twz.com/sea/india-conducted-dual-aircraft-carrier-drills-for-the-first-time>.

⁵³ Military Africa (2024), 'Exercise Ibsamar VIII Concludes', *Military Africa*, 21 October, viewed 12 December 2024, <https://www.military.africa/2024/10/exercise-ibsamar-viii-concludes>.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

Driven by the need to address regional vulnerabilities by capitalising upon regional strengths, the Indian Navy made a stupendous effort in launching the IONS as an institutionalised platform for cooperation and collaboration among the navies and maritime agencies of the IOR.⁵⁴ IONS has, since, matured into a robust and credible organisation, with 25 members and nine observers.⁵⁵ Building upon the capabilities of IONS, the Indian Navy hosted the first edition of the IONS Maritime Exercise off Goa in 2022.⁵⁶ This was followed by the second edition of IMEX, hosted by the Seychelles, with participation from 22 countries.⁵⁷

Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) and Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)

Adding to the positive impact of IONS on regional naval cooperation, the Indian Navy instituted yet another two forums in 2016 – the Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) and the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC).⁵⁸ These are biennial forums for fostering collaborative thinking, cooperation, and mutual understanding between India and key maritime nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The Indian Navy also supports non-naval maritime cooperation in the region. An example of this is a series of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) seminars on IUU fishing, which has traditionally been conducted adjunct to the GMS. While the Indian Navy has deftly steered Track 1 conversations towards maritime security, it remains fully cognisant of the immense value of Track 2 dialogue, which involves academic experts, think tanks and eminent members of the strategic community. Pursuing this line of effort, the Indian Navy conducts an annual international conference, the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD).

⁵⁴ P. Chauhan (2018), 'IONS Ver. 2.0 – A Time for Rejuvenation', *National Maritime Foundation*, 16 October 2018, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://maritimeindia.org/3988-2/>.

⁵⁵ *Indian Ocean Naval Symposium*, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://ions.global/ions-working-groups>.

⁵⁶ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2022), 'IONS Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX 22)', *Press Information Bureau*, 30 March, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1811590>.

⁵⁷ *Africa Press* (2023), 'Indian Ocean Sailors Symposium – Successful IONS-IMEX Exercise', *Africa Press*, 12 November, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://www.africa-press.net/seychelles/all-news/indian-ocean-sailors-symposium-successful-ions-imex-exercise>.

⁵⁸ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2022), 'Curtain Raiser: Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) 2022', *Press Information Bureau*, 29 October, viewed 29 January 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1804530>.

The last edition of this widely acclaimed event addressed the theme of Resource Geopolitics and Security in the Indo-Pacific.⁵⁹

Conclusion:

Maritime security, as a concept, has several connotations. At one end of the wide range of maritime security challenges lies the threat, or the use, of force by states whose interests conflict with each other. This challenge can be surmounted through diplomacy and deterrence, and if everything else fails, by the application of combat power. At the other end are challenges that arise due to criminal activities at sea, including threats attributable to non-State entities. These challenges are problematic in many ways. There is an absence of a clearly identifiable enemy, and an absence of conflict, thereby causing confusion about which rules of combat would apply. Because such threats often manifest beyond areas of national jurisdiction, an element of transnationality is introduced in such situations. It is such threats to maritime security that are most prevalent, and can only be addressed through collective and cooperative actions. In recognition of this conundrum, the Indian Navy seeks, through both individual and combined actions, to defeat such threats.

Clearly, there is much more to security cooperation than has been examined in this paper. Measures for capacity building, such as provisioning of military technology and hardware and assistance in creating security-related infrastructure constitute one of the cooperative solutions. Another is enhancement of capabilities, which implies training in the use of military hardware, education in operational art and tactics, assistance in preparing legal frameworks and doctrines, etc. This paper has focussed upon a few selected measures that has been adopted by the Indian Navy to enhance collective maritime competence in the IOR.⁶⁰ While the Indo-Pacific is India's strategic geography,⁶¹ the Indian Ocean is vital for India's security and growth. And in order to drive regional prosperity, it is crucial

⁵⁹ Express Defence (2024), 'Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2024: Focus on Resource-Geopolitics, Maritime Security', *Financial Express*, 1 October 2024, accessed 29 January 2025, <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-indo-pacific-regional-dialogue-2024-focus-on-resource-geopolitics-maritime-security-3627210>.

⁶⁰ Government of India: Press Information Bureau (2021), 'Aero India 2021: IOR Seminar Building Collective Maritime Competence Towards Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)', 4 February 2021, accessed 29 January 2029, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1695245>.

⁶¹ M. S. Bhonsale and D. Bansal (2024), 'India's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Strengthening Partnerships and Navigating Challenges', *Indo-Pacific Civil Society Forum*, Briefing Paper No. 5, October 2024, accessed 29 January 2025, <https://cuts-global.org/pdf/briefing-paper-5-Indias-indo-pacific-strategy-strengthening-partnerships-and-navigating-challenges.pdf>.

to ensure that the Indian Ocean remains secure, free, open and inclusive. This calls for cooperative and collaborative actions which would contribute towards enhancing ‘holistic’ maritime security.

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Title: The Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA):

Regulatory Matters and African Navies

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Abstract:

Africa Union 2050, Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), was adopted a decade ago. One of the strategic objectives of the 2050 AIM Strategy is the establishment of a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA). The CEMZA is envisaged to be a common African maritime space without barriers. The precise implications of this concept are still being unpacked from a legal perspective, particularly concerning the distribution of jurisdiction. Against this proposed common distribution of state jurisdiction over such an expansive maritime zone surrounding the continent, questions over its security from various transnational threats will inevitably arise. Such threats include piracy; transnational organised crime; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and environmental crimes. The role of African national naval capabilities extends beyond defence, and encompasses a constabulary role in achieving the CEMZA vision. The CEMZA, however, remains a concept on paper, until a special strategic task force prepares a technical file. This note outlines considerations to be taken into account by this task force, concerning African navies operating in the CEMZA.

Introduction:

Just over 50 years ago, the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was convened to negotiate and adopt a single comprehensive framework treaty that would govern all aspects related to the oceans. The resulting treaty, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), adopted in 1982,¹ is lauded as creating a 'constitution for the oceans'. UNCLOS addressed 'creeping jurisdiction' concerns, where coastal states asserted their sovereignty and jurisdiction further out into the ocean space, creating tensions between naval powers. It provided finality on the breadth of maritime zones and the rights and obligations of states within those zones, reducing these tensions.² Naval

¹ United Nations (1982), *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 10 December 1982.

² J. Mossop (2022), 'Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea', in *Routledge Handbook of Maritime Security*, ed. R. Bosilca, S. Ferreira, and B. J. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2022), 86.

powers negotiating the treaty would have seen the advantage of a single treaty that brought under one roof key rules concerning navigation for both military and merchant vessels, and resource exploitation of the oceans.³ As a framework treaty, UNCLOS provides the parameters within which states can respond to threats and sets ground rules for inter-state cooperation.⁴

Aim and Scope:

However, the regime established under UNCLOS fragments the ocean spaces into various maritime zones with differing distributions of state jurisdiction. Accordingly, the African maritime domain is not a unitary zone, but is fragmented across almost 40 national maritime domains, comprising the internal waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, and exclusive economic zone of the respective coastal states, exercising their national jurisdiction. The resurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia in the first decade of this century demonstrated that national management of the fragmented maritime domain is inadequate. In the face of changing and evolving transnational threats across the African maritime domain, a strategic change of policy was required to move towards common protection of coastal resources and the maintenance of good order at sea. This could be achieved by pooling resources and naval capacity in a legal environment with fewer jurisdictional hurdles.⁵ Establishing clear roles of jurisdiction is required in relation to illegal activities by non-state actors threatening the African maritime domain. Mossop frames the issue with the following question: “Under what circumstances can a state take steps against a vessel flagged to another state if the crew or passengers of a vessel are engaged in unlawful conduct?”⁶ This note briefly explores the strategy and concept adopted by the African Union and its application by African navies.

³ J. Mossop (2022), 'Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea', 86.

⁴ J. Mossop (2022), 94.

⁵ V. Surbun (2021), 'Africa's Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone Concept', *Institute for Security Studies, Africa Report* 32, February 2021, 8.

⁶ J. Mossop (2022), 'Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea', 92.

Discussion:

THE 2050 AIM STRATEGY AND THE CEMZA

In 2014, the African Union Assembly endorsed the adoption of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy).⁷ The 2050 AIM Strategy consists of “overarching, concerted and coherent long-term multi-layered plans of actions that will achieve the objective of the AU to enhance the maritime viability for a prosperous Africa.”⁸ One of the strategic objectives of the 2050 AIM Strategy is the establishment of a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA).⁹

Two paragraphs in the 2050 AIM Strategy are devoted to the CEMZA concept. Paragraph 29 provides brief procedural guidelines and highlights the desired outcomes:

Africa is to establish as appropriate and when permissible, a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA). This will require the establishment of a dedicated Strategic Special Task Force (S2TF) to prepare the technical file which will underpin the Solemn Declaration of the CEMZA. The technical file will include charts presenting the CEMZA limits. CEMZA is expected to grant Africa enormous cross-cutting geo-strategic, economic, political, social and security benefits, as it will engender collective efforts and reduce the risks of all transnational threats, environmental mismanagement, smuggling and arms trafficking.¹⁰

⁷ African Union (2014), 'Assembly/AU Dec.496(XXII): Decision on the Adoption and Implementation of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)', *Assembly of the Union Twenty-Second Ordinary Session*, Addis Ababa, 30–31 January 2014, section 6; African Union (2012), *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, African Union, Addis Ababa, accessed 10 January 2025, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/30929-doc-2050_aim_strategy_eng_0.pdf. The 2050 AIM Strategy is not a binding legal instrument.

⁸ African Union (2012), *2050 AIM Strategy*, par. 17, p. 11.

⁹ For a fuller treatment of this concept, see V. Surbun, 'Africa's Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone Concept'.

¹⁰ African Union (2012), *2050 AIM Strategy*, par 29

Paragraph 30 provides a further description of the concept and desired outcomes:

The CEMZA, being a common African maritime space without barriers is a concept which aims at 'Boosting intra-African Trade', eliminating or simplifying administrative procedures in intra-AU maritime transport, the aim being to make it more attractive, more efficient and more competitive, and do more to protect the environment. The CEMZA will contribute to the integration of the internal market for intra-AU maritime transport and services. The AU shall further set out guiding principles for the development of a common information sharing environment for the CEMZA. This should allow for the convergence of existing and future monitoring and tracking systems used for maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment, fisheries control, trade and economic interests, border control and other law enforcement and defence activities.¹¹

Annex B to 2050 AIM Strategy contains a definition of the CEMZA:

Without prejudice to maritime zones as established by the UNCLOS for individual nations, the [CEMZA] defines a common maritime zone of all AU Member States. It is to be a stable, secure and clean maritime zone in the view of developing and implementing common African maritime affairs policies for the management of African oceans, seas and inland waterways resources as well as for its multifaceted strategic benefits. The CEMZA will grant Africa enormous crosscutting geostrategic, economic, political, social and security benefits, as well as minimize the risks of all transnational threats including organized crime and terrorism in Africa.¹²

These paragraphs contain the full suite of provisions relating to this concept. At its core, the CEMZA concept of a "maritime space without borders" envisages a geographical region in which states exercise joint or concurrent powers.¹³ However, under UNCLOS, African states claim a territorial sea with a maximum breadth of 12 nautical miles, exercising full sovereignty over this zone¹⁴ and an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with a maximum breadth of 200 nautical miles, where the coastal state exercises sovereign rights over the living and non-

¹¹ African Union (2012), *2050 AIM Strategy*, par 30

¹² See *Appendix B to 2050 AIM Strategy: Definitions* (Accessed 10 January 2025), https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/30928-doc-annex_b_definitions_eng.doc.

¹³ V. Surbun (2021), 'Africa's Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone Concept', 2.

¹⁴ See *UNCLOS*, Articles 2–3.

living resources within this zone.¹⁵ Based on these paragraphs of the 2050 AIM Strategy, there is no indication that states should accordingly cede their sovereign rights over their respective maritime zones to create this common space.¹⁶ However, there is no precise delineation of the CEMZA limits or a description of the rights and obligations of member states therein – these must be set out in the technical file by the envisaged S2TF, which is yet to be established. It is also unclear whether ‘collective efforts’ are restricted to member states.¹⁷ The references to security in these paragraphs of the 2050 AIM Strategy, notably to “minimize the risks of all transnational threats including organized crime and terrorism” indicate that African navies will play a critical role across the CEMZA. The scope and nature of their role are discussed below, with some suggestions of what the S2TF should discuss in formulating the technical file.

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF NAVIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CEMZA

Traditional maritime strategy was documented extensively by 19th-century writer, Alfred Mahan.¹⁸ In 1890, he commented that:

[t]he necessity of a navy, in the restricted sense of the word, springs, therefore from the existence of a peaceful shipping, and disappears with it, except in the case of a nation which has aggressive tendencies, and keeps up a navy merely as a branch of the military establishment. As the United States has at present no aggressive purposes, and as its merchant service has disappeared, the dwindling of the armed fleet and general lack of interest in it are strictly logical consequences.¹⁹

Thus, the generation of wealth from maritime trade supported the maintenance of a powerful navy that was required to protect that trade,²⁰ resulting in the capability to control activity at sea.²¹ In this traditional role, with superiority at sea or ‘sea control’, a state could defend its territory, national possessions

¹⁵ See *UNCLOS*, Articles 55–58. The regime of the high seas under Articles 88 to 115 applies to this zone for all other purposes in terms of Article 58(2) of *UNCLOS*.

¹⁶ V. Surbun (2021), ‘Africa’s Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone Concept’, 2.

¹⁷ V. Surbun (2021), 2.

¹⁸ A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783*, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., London, 1890, 25–29.

¹⁹ A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power*, 26.

²⁰ I. Speller (2022), ‘Modern Maritime Strategy and Naval Warfare’, in *Routledge Handbook of Maritime Security*, ed. R. Bosilca, S. Ferreira, and B. J. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2022), 50.

²¹ I. Speller (2022), ‘Modern Maritime Strategy and Naval Warfare’.

abroad and sea-based trade and correspondingly threaten maritime rivals in such contested spaces.²²

In contrast to the traditional role of navies, alternative ‘post-modern’ ways of thinking about naval roles arose in the late twentieth century, wider than the traditional role. Admiral Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations in the US Navy, commented that “[w]here the old maritime strategy focused on sea control, the new one must recognise that the economic tide of all nations rises, not when the seas are controlled by one, but rather when they are made safe and free for all.”²³ Till comments that this required navies to “generate the capacity to participate in collective expeditionary operations against anything, potentially anywhere, that threatened stability and good order at sea and ashore upon which trade, and the conditions for trade depended.”²⁴ This latter post-modern responsibility of navies could overlap to some extent with civilian law enforcement agencies (namely coast guards).²⁵ The tasks of such coast guards, that operate within a state’s territorial waters and EEZ, are informed by the state’s role as either a coastal state, port state, or flag state.

Moving away from traditional roles, including combat operations at sea, naval roles then turn to constabulary operations to secure good order at sea, which extend beyond their domestic waters. Vrëy notes that African maritime threats are not naval in kind or bound to be resolved by navies of military capabilities alone.²⁶ However, he emphasises navies’ roles as constabulary agencies.²⁷ Bueger and Edmunds expand upon the details of these ‘softer’ constabulary

²² G. Till (2022), ‘Maritime Security: “Good Navies” and Realism Re-imagined’, in *Routledge Handbook of Maritime Security*, ed. R. Bosilca, S. Ferreira, and B. J. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2022), 40.

²³ G. Till (2022), ‘Maritime Security: “Good Navies” and Realism Re-imagined’, 44. Till comments, however (44), that navies have always performed these non-traditional security tasks to some degree.

²⁴ G. Till (2022), 44.

²⁵ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, Oxford University Press, New York, 124, summarise the spectrum of functions from documents such as the ‘EU coast guard functions’ and a US ‘Maritime Security Sector Reform Guide’. Their summation outlines the functions as: maritime safety, such as ensuring the compliance of vessels with national and international law; assistance to mariners in distress and ship casualties, search and rescue, accident, and disaster response; border control, including the prevention of irregular migration; customs activities; prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling; fisheries inspection and control to ensure compliance with regulations and prevent and address illicit fishing; environmental protection and response; general monitoring and surveillance and contributing to maritime domain awareness.

²⁶ F. Vrëy (2010), ‘African Maritime Security: A Time for Good Order at Sea’, *Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs*, 2(4), 122.

²⁷ F. Vrëy (2010), ‘African Maritime Security: A Time for Good Order at Sea’.

functions, which to some extent overlap with coast-guard functions, and include ensuring freedom of navigation, protection of sea lanes, enforcement of laws and regulations²⁸ and anti-piracy patrols.²⁹

Having considered the maritime security threats identified in the 2050 AIM Strategy, it becomes apparent that the appropriate naval operations in responding to such threats throughout the CEMZA are of a softer constabulary role. African navies engaging in the CEMZA would need to coordinate their activities, from patrolling and interdiction to information sharing and law enforcement. As discussed above, the CEMZA provisions are broad and conceptual, and African navies would require amplification of these provisions to fully understand and integrate their policies, rights and responsibilities. The appropriate reference point would be to lay these out fully in the envisaged technical file to be drafted by the S2TF. The drafters would have useful exemplars to draw from, for example, the framework contained in the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC).³⁰

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO CONSIDER IN THE TECHNICAL FILE

It is suggested that the envisaged S2TF consider and acknowledge *inter alia* the following in preparing the technical file, which would underscore naval operations in the CEMZA.

More broadly, the S2TF:

- must recognise that although the UNCLOS, referred to above as the “constitution for the oceans” provides a wide-ranging framework, it does not contain the totality of *international law* applicable to the ocean spaces;³¹ for example, Article 87(1) refers to “...conditions laid down by this Convention and by other rules of international law.” Mossop describes these rules as fragmented among different legal sources and could apply differently to states depending on whether they have acceded to or ratified the relevant treaty.³²

²⁸ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 125.

²⁹ C. Antrim (2016), 'Indian Ocean Security: Developments in Ocean Law, Trade and Resources', in *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*, ed. K. Krause and S. Bruns (London: Routledge, 2016), 96.

³⁰ See *Djibouti Code of Conduct*, 'Home Page', *Djibouti Code of Conduct* (Accessed 10 January 2025), <https://dcoc.org/>.

³¹ J. Mossop (2022), 'Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea', 88, 100. See also 81, where it is noted that since 1884, states have concluded over 100 international, multilateral, and bilateral treaties, conventions, and agreements with a maritime dimension.

³² J. Mossop (2022), 81.

- must consider that a strong reliance on naval forces in law enforcement in the CEMZA could result in what Bueger and Edmunds view as the potential for *militarisation* and an increase in strategic competition at sea.³³ He notes how some states have used counterpiracy operations off the coast of Somalia to establish or increase their geopolitical presence in the Western Indian Ocean region.³⁴ Vrëy and Blaine also caution African leaders to be mindful of the growing regional rivalries to establish foreign naval facilities in African waters.³⁵
- must recognise that some threats in the CEMZA could originate from *land-based sources*.³⁶ In considering the scope of counter-piracy enforcement powers, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851³⁷ authorised the exercise of enforcement powers on the mainland of Somalia.³⁸
- must consider established norms and *divisions of responsibility* between civil and military actors. Bueger and Edmunds caution that navies could be drawn into domestic law enforcement operations in ways that could disrupt these norms and divisions.³⁹

With these broader considerations, there are further, narrower technical matters for the S2TF to consider holistically.

- At the third International Conference on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea in 2024, it was concluded that addressing the challenges identified requires “a coordinated approach involving national strategic reforms, regional cooperation and the active engagement of both governmental and

³³ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 164.

³⁴ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), 163.

³⁵ F. Vrëy and M. Blaine (2024), 'Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean Attacks Expose Africa's Maritime Vulnerability', *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies*, 9 April 2024 (Accessed 10 January 2025), <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/red-sea-indian-ocean-attacks-africa-maritime-vulnerability/>.

³⁶ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 165. They also comment (123) that many democratic countries restrict the role of naval actors in domestic law enforcement due to their norms of civil-military relations and expectations of civilian control over the military.

³⁷ UN Security Council (2008), *Resolution 1851(2008)*, United Nations, New York, 16 December 2008 (Accessed 21 January 2025), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n08/655/01/pdf/n0865501.pdf>. For a fuller discussion on the implications and conditions of this resolution, see R. Geiß and A. Petrig, *Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80–84.

³⁸ UN Security Council (2008), *Resolution 1851(2008)*, par. 6.

³⁹ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 164.

non-governmental stakeholders.”⁴⁰ However, Bueger and Edmunds remark that states are *not unitary actors* and note that they each have different constitutional arrangements, governance forms, political systems resulting in them organising their maritime security responses in various ways, through several different state agencies.⁴¹ Accordingly, before state naval actors engage in operations in the CEMZA, support or *templates* should be developed in the technical file to assist states with intra-agency coordination and integration on a domestic level. Once such domestic coordination has taken place, the focus can shift to inter-state naval coordination in the CEMZA, to combat the identified maritime threats. The Indian Ocean Naval symposium can provide a forum on the eastern seaboard of the CEMZA, where information sharing and coordinating responses can take place.⁴² In addition to coordination between inter-state naval forces operating in the CEMZA, there is bound to be interaction with merchant vessels transiting the region.⁴³ The technical file would consider interactions between naval forces, seafarers and shipping carriers.⁴⁴

- In addition to stipulating the spatial limits of the CEMZA, the technical file should consider the appropriate forum for an overall agency that would coordinate operations in the CEMZA. At the 2021 Sea Power for Africa Symposium (SPAS 2021), it was resolved that a special maritime desk at the African Union’s headquarters be established to facilitate the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy, and to harmonise and synergise regional efforts.⁴⁵ Van Dyk discusses proposals for an African-wide maritime organisation that

⁴⁰ T. Mandrup, S. Tshehla, and R. Addo-Gyane (2024), 'Executive Summary: Final Communique', Maritime Security Conference on the Theme 'The Gulf of Guinea and the Red Sea as a Learning Curve for African Decision-Makers in Capacity Building', RDCC, SIGLA, and KAIPTC, 5–6 September 2024, par. 6 (Accessed 10 January 2025), <https://www.fak.dk/globalassets/fak/dokumenter/2024/-09---september-2024---marsec-conference---executive-summary-.pdf>.

⁴¹ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 121. They broadly categorise these various agencies into military (naval) actors, civil law enforcement (coast guards and maritime police), and agencies engaged in marine safety, port security, and environmental protection (122).

⁴² See *Indian Ocean Naval Symposium* (Accessed 10 January 2025), <https://www.ions.global/>.

⁴³ A suggested method of notification of activities of navies to merchant shipping could be by Notice to Mariners (NOTMAR), see US Department of Defense (2008), *Maritime Claims Reference Manual*, DOD 2005.1-M, par. 5.

⁴⁴ J. Kraska and R. Pedrozo (2013), *International Maritime Security Law*, Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden, 52.

⁴⁵ C. Ezekobe (2021), 'Communique', *Sea Power for Africa Symposium*, Abuja, 30 November–2 December 2021 (Accessed 10 January 2025), <https://www.seapowerforafrica.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/SPAS-21-COMMUNIQUE.pdf>.

would complement regional initiatives, providing overarching coordination and support, while working in tandem with regional organisations.⁴⁶ Antrim suggests the establishment of an Indian Ocean coast guard and naval forum, based on models in the northern Pacific and Atlantic oceans.⁴⁷ She considers the benefits of such a forum, which would “promote familiarity with local maritime activities, cultural practices and understanding of regional languages, facilitate cooperation, improve communications, collaborate in Maritime Domain Awareness, and promote shared missions among the armed forces to provide safety, security and cooperation in the region.”⁴⁸

- Whilst traditional military activities are considered by some states to be permitted within the EEZ in terms of Article 58(1) of UNCLOS, under the aegis of “internationally lawful uses of the sea”,⁴⁹ the S2TF should be mindful of any potential arguments from states that attempt to justify interference with warships from other states patrolling CEMZA, and responding to threats in their EEZ.⁵⁰ This interference could take the form of coastal states demanding pre-notification when warships enter their EEZ.⁵¹ In addition to notification, other states have gone further to contend that information collection by warships in the EEZ constitutes ‘marine scientific research’,⁵² which would require the permission of the coastal state in terms of Article 246(2) of UNCLOS. Accordingly, the technical file must specify what permissions and/or notifications to coastal states are required, if any, of states deploying their navies within the CEMZA.

⁴⁶ G. K. van Dyk (2024), 'Unlocking Africa's Maritime Potential: Does Africa Need an African-Wide Maritime Organization?', *Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa*, Research Brief 04/24, 2024, 3–4 (Accessed 21 January 2025), <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/milscience/sigla/Documents/Briefs/Briefs%202024/Brief4%202024%20African%20Maritime%20Organisation.pdf>.

⁴⁷ C. Antrim (2016), 'Indian Ocean Security: Developments in Ocean Law, Trade and Resources', 101.

⁴⁸ C. Antrim (2016).

⁴⁹ United Nations, *Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Official Records. Volume 17: Plenary Meetings, Summary Records and Verbatim Records, as well as Documents of the Conference, Resumed Eleventh Session and Final Part Eleventh Session and Conclusion*, United Nations, Montego Bay, 1973–1982, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.62/WS/37 and ADD. 1–2, 244 (Accessed 21 January 2025), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/81862?ln=en&v=pdf>.

⁵⁰ J. Kraska and R. Pedrozo (2013), *International Maritime Security Law*, 285.

⁵¹ J. Sperling (2022), 'Global Maritime Security Governance', in *Routledge Handbook of Maritime Security*, ed. R. Bosilca, S. Ferreira, and B. J. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2022), 77; J. Kraska and R. Pedrozo (2013), *International Maritime Security Law*, 238–239, note that in Africa, Kenya and Mauritius purport to regulate or prohibit foreign military activities in the EEZ.

⁵² J. Kraska and R. Pedrozo (2013), *International Maritime Security Law*, 285.

- SPAS 2021 recommended the adoption of ship rider agreements, wherein maritime law enforcement agents from one state board another state's vessel for interdiction operations.⁵³ This allows for capacity, expertise, and jurisdictional responsibility sharing between various navies and agencies.⁵⁴ This could be useful in the CEMZA, as Bueger and Edmunds comment that through such agreements, "larger states can lend capacity to smaller partners, while the latter retain jurisdictional authority in their own territorial waters and EEZs."⁵⁵ This could also partially ameliorate the concern by Vrey and Blaine – that African navies were conspicuously absent in multinational naval responses in the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean.⁵⁶
- SPAS 2021 further recommended developing and ratifying a framework agreement for the transfer and prosecution of pirates arrested during maritime law enforcement.⁵⁷ Such agreements were successfully concluded, with the Seychelles and Kenya providing the courts for prosecution.⁵⁸ Using existing framework agreements as templates, the S2TF could consider extending such transfer and prosecution agreements to other criminal and security threats identified in the CEMZA.
- The technical file must also acknowledge the principle of *due regard* that underscores UNCLOS. Article 58(3) provides that in the EEZ, states "shall have due regard to the rights and duties of the coastal State and shall comply with the laws and regulations of the Coastal state in accordance with the provisions of [UNCLOS] and other rules of international law." Based on this provision, the state exercising the military operation, and not the coastal state, must exercise this due regard obligation.⁵⁹
- It is not expected that the drafters of the technical file would be able to foresee every contingency, and disputes could arise in the exercise of naval operations in the CEMZA. Although the UNCLOS provides a *dispute*

⁵³ C. Ezekobe (2021), 'Communique'.

⁵⁴ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 163. For a fuller treatment of Ship Rider agreements in counter-piracy operations, see R. Geiß and A. Petrig, *Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea*, 85–95. They caution, however, that the use of Ship Riders could potentially constitute a circumvention of article 107 of UNCLOS.

⁵⁵ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, 163.

⁵⁶ F. Vřey and M. Blaine (2024), 'Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean Attacks Expose Africa's Maritime Vulnerability', *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies*.

⁵⁷ C Ezekobe (2021), 'Communique', par. i.

⁵⁸ R. Geiß and A. Petrig (2011), *Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 153–164 for a detailed treatment of the criminal prosecution of pirates and armed robbers at sea.

⁵⁹ J. Kraska and R. Pedrozo, *International Maritime Security Law*, p. 238.

resolution mechanism, Articles 297 and 298 of the UNCLOS exclude military activities from these compulsory dispute settlement processes.⁶⁰ The S2TF should consider adopting a compulsory dispute settlement mechanism to resolve any disputes relating to maritime security operations in the CEMZA.

Conclusion and prognosis:

As a response to maritime security threats, strategies are significant documents. Bueger and Edmunds comment on how they “aim to connect different maritime threats and risks and offer a comprehensive or holistic account of the challenges faced at sea.”⁶¹ They further outline how strategies “contain interpretations of the maritime environment; take stock of the current maritime security structures; outline threats, risks, and challenges; offer guidance for future actions; and clarify stakeholder roles and responsibilities.”⁶² The 2050 AIM Strategy contains these criteria and goes a step further with the creation of the CEMZA, which is an overlooked, innovative juridical framework with the potential to contribute to the continent’s aspirations in terms of maritime security. However, the decade-long delay in producing a comprehensive technical file formulated by the S2TF obstructs the pathway to implementing aspects of the envisioned CEMZA. A benefit of coordinated naval operations throughout the CEMZA in compliance with the prescripts contained in the envisaged technical file, is that if such operations are consistent, effective and accepted, then customary international law of the sea may develop.⁶³ This contrasts with regional-specific measures that might be developed on an ad-hoc basis to deal with a threat.

⁶⁰ UNCLOS Article 298(1)(b) provides that ‘disputes concerning military activities, including military activities by government vessels and aircraft engaged in non-commercial service, and disputes concerning law enforcement activities in regard to the exercise of sovereign rights or jurisdiction excluded from the jurisdiction of a court or tribunal under article 297, paragraph 2 or 3’.

⁶¹ C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), *Understanding Maritime Security*, p. 167.

⁶² C. Bueger and T. Edmunds (2024), p. 170.

⁶³ M. Fink (2018), *Maritime Interception and the Law of Naval Operations*, TMC Asser Press, The Hague, p. 4.

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Title: Egyptian Maritime Security: Sources of Threats and Types of Response

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Abstract:

With a unique bicoastal location, Egypt is responsible for ensuring the security of around 114 000 nautical square miles, divided between 74 000 square miles in the Mediterranean Sea and 40 000 square miles in the Red Sea. These extended coastal lines, neighbouring two distinct geopolitical regions, means that Egypt faces different sets of interests, as well as challenges along each coastal line.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, for example, multiple conflicts in the Middle East have been a source of threat to maritime security in the Eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, recent discoveries of huge natural gas reserves in the area, necessitates developing naval capacity capable of safeguarding Egypt's economic fortunes and preserve regional maritime security and stability. On the other hand, the southern Red Sea is the gate to the Suez Canal, and thus threats emanating from piracy, as well as protracted conflict in Yemen, are of concern to Egypt.

Against this backdrop, the Egyptian response to maritime security challenges was different along each coastline. For example, while regional arrangements played a major role in maintaining maritime security in the southern Red Sea, Egypt's response to challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean remains unilateral and is characterised by strengthening military and naval capabilities and extending claims to maritime space.

This paper aims at analysing the risks and threats faced by Egypt in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the southern Red Sea. It further investigates how these challenges, as well as the geopolitical structure of the two sub-regions, impact Egypt's naval strategy along the two coastal lines.

Introduction:

With a unique bicoastal location, Egypt is responsible for ensuring the security of around 114 000 nautical square miles, divided between 74 000 square miles in the Mediterranean Sea and 40 000 square miles in the Red Sea. These extended

coastal lines, neighbouring two distinct geopolitical regions, means that Egypt faces different sets of interests, as well as challenges along each coastal line. The geostrategic importance of both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea cannot be over-emphasised, especially with more than 90% of global trade transported by sea. For Egypt, securing freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal is an existential issue.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, for example, multiple conflicts in the Middle East have been a source of threat to maritime security in the Eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, recent discoveries of huge natural gas reserves in the area, necessitates developing naval capacity that is capable of safeguarding Egypt's economic fortunes and preserving regional maritime security and stability. On the other hand, the southern Red Sea is the gate to the Suez Canal, and thus threats emanating from piracy, as well as protracted conflict in Yemen, are of concern to Egypt.

Against this backdrop, the Egyptian response to maritime security challenges is different along each coastline. For example, while regional arrangements played a major role in maintaining maritime security in the southern Red Sea, Egypt's response to challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean remains unilateral and is characterised by strengthening military and naval capabilities and extending claims to maritime space.

Given the above-mentioned strategic importance of Egypt's bi-coasts, and the array of asymmetric and hybrid challenges in both the Mediterranean Basin and the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden, Egypt has to design and adopt strategies to achieve maritime security in these two regions.

Aim and Scope:

This paper aims at analysing the risks and threats Egypt faces in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the southern Red Sea. In the Eastern Mediterranean, for example, recent discoveries of huge natural gas reserves in the area, necessitates developing naval capacity capable of safeguarding Egypt's economic fortunes and preserving regional maritime security and stability. On the other hand, the Southern Red Sea is the gate to the Suez Canal, a vital artery for global trade, and an important source of income for Egypt. Threats emanating from piracy off the Somalian shores and Gulf of Aden, and risks of terrorist attacks, are all of concern to Egypt. While there are unique challenges associated with each

region, there are also common ones, such as political instability and protracted conflicts in neighbouring countries. Regional and international rivalry are also common features in both regions.

The paper is divided into two main parts; the first part discusses the strategic importance of the both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, as well as the nature of risks, threats and challenges in these two geostrategic regions. The second part investigates the different strategies that the Egyptian Navy has adopted to address these challenges and achieve maritime security.

Discussion:

BICOASTAL MARITIME SECURITY DILEMMAS

The geostrategic importance of both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea cannot be over-emphasised, especially with more than 90% of global trade transported by sea. For Egypt, securing freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal, is an existential issue. More than 9% of international trade passes through the Suez Canal, and many countries depend on trade through the Suez Canal for their exports and imports. Furthermore, around 10% of the world's oil, and 8% of liquefied natural gas, pass through this waterway. This heavy traffic generates about US\$9 billion annually – a significant contribution to Egypt's foreign currency revenues.

Statistics issued by the General Authority of Red Sea Ports reflect the importance of this waterway. According to the official statistics, the total number of cargo ships frequented through the Authority's ports during 2023 reached 937 ships,¹ whereas the total movement of goods through the Red Sea ports during the same year amounted to about 6 446 000 tonnes.² Furthermore, about 865 000 passengers travelled through the ports during the year 2023.³ Navigation in the Suez Canal is not limited to trade, as naval vessels of the different naval powers also transit in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea annually. It is estimated that about 40 American warships cross the Suez Canal annually.⁴

¹ General Authority for Red Sea Ports (2023), '2023 Statistics', viewed 10 February 2025, http://www.rspa.gov.eg/images/rspa_st/2023/%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%86%202023.pdf.

² General Authority for Red Sea Ports (2023).

³ General Authority for Red Sea Ports (2023).

⁴ D. H. Shinn (2020), 'The Red Sea: A Magnet for Outside Powers Vying for Its Control', *Africa Report*, 27 November 2020 (Accessed 10 February 2025), <https://www.theafricareport.com/52152/the-red-sea-a-magnet-for-outside-powers-vying-for-its-control/>.

The strategic importance of the Mediterranean Sea is no less than that of the Red Sea. The Eastern Mediterranean (EM) is now the new natural gas frontier. Countries in the region, including Egypt, have the potential to become important gas producers. The latest, most reliable estimates suggest that the EM contains more than US\$50 trillion worth of gas. The discoveries of EM gas began in 2000, when the first natural gas field in its waters was discovered off the Palestinian coast in Gaza. In 2009, the Tamar gas field was discovered 80 kilometres west of Haifa. In 2011, gas was discovered in the Aphrodite field in Cyprus, and in 2015, the Zohr field was discovered 200 km north of the Egyptian Port Said.⁵ These discoveries came with their challenges, as neighbouring states sought demarcation of their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) – a task proved to fraught with difficulties.

Given the above-mentioned strategic importance of Egypt's bi-coasts, and the array of asymmetric and hybrid challenges in both the Mediterranean Basin and the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden, Egypt has to design and adopt strategies to achieve maritime security in these two regions. In the following paper, the focus will be on three main threats, namely the protracted conflicts and political instability, piracy and maritime terrorism, and finally regional and international rivalry for influence. A few remarks worth mentioning here:

- **First**, this is not an exclusive list of maritime security threats; examples of other challenges include illicit trade, human trafficking, environmental hazards.
- **Second**, these challenges are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, for example, protracted conflict and political instability encourage regional and international rivalry and competition, which in turn deepen ongoing conflict.
- **Furthermore**, political instability undermines states' ability to address roots of threats and risks.

PROTRACTED CONFLICTS AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

The Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea regions are both characterised by political instability and protracted conflicts that put maritime security in danger. In the Eastern Mediterranean, for example, Syria has been plagued by political instability since the Arab Spring in March 2011. Similarly, Lebanon is suffering from a deep internal political crisis. The Israeli occupation of Palestine

⁵ M. N. El-Din (2019), 'Turkey's Ambition in Eastern Mediterranean Gas: Dimensions and Implications', *Arab Affairs* 180.)

د. محمد نور الدين، الطموح التركي في غاز شرق المتوسط: أبعاده وتداعياته، شؤون عربية، العدد

represents another crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean. These conflicts have undermined maritime security in the Eastern Mediterranean in a number of ways. First, it prevents states in the region from reaching collective arrangements to enhance maritime security; it also undermines their ability to optimise the use of their marine natural resources. Furthermore, these conflicts have strengthened regional rivalry in the region. The Russian naval base in Tartus (in Syria) is just one manifestation of this regional rivalry. Similarly, the instability in Libya since 2011 invited active naval presence off Libyan coasts by some countries, as well as deployment and joint exercises by others, which all risk further militarisation of the conflict.

In the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the ongoing conflict in Yemen and Saudi involvement, resulted in attacks by the Houthis against Saudi vessels.⁶ In 2019, the Houthis targeted ships in the southern Red Sea with remotely controlled water-borne improvised explosive devices (WBIEDs) and sea mines. The group also seized a number of vessels as reported in *The State of Maritime Piracy* in 2019.⁷

As a result of the Houthis' attacks, ships were and are still rerouted around Africa to avoid Red Sea passages, resulting in Egypt losing revenue from the Suez Canal. The Israeli war on Gaza is another case in point. Since the start of this war, Houthis' attacks have escalated, in solidarity with the Palestinians' cause (or as claimed by the group).

As a result, the number of merchant ship transits through the Bab-el-Mandeb has declined considerably due to Houthi attacks. By mid-December 2023, many container lines declared that most or all of their ships would be rerouted around the Cape of Good Hope. While that does not mean that all container traffic in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden has stopped, it has declined by about 50% compared to the previous year. Furthermore, most vessels that are still transiting the Bab-el-Mandeb are relatively small and trading mostly within the region.

TERRORIST ATTACKS AND PIRACY

Maritime terrorist attacks are another source of threat in both regions, and a matter of concern to Egyptian maritime security. One example is the incident that took place on 15 July 2015, when an Egyptian military boat was hit by a

⁶ L. Joubert (2020), *The State of Maritime Piracy 2019*, One Earth Future, Broomfield, CO, 7.

⁷ L. Joubert (2020), *The State of Maritime Piracy 2019*, 7.

Soviet-made anti-tank missile, launched by Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, a militant group active in Sinai. The group had become known for its terrorist activities in the maritime domain. In November 2014, the same group managed to take control of a military patrol boat in the Egyptian port of Damietta.⁸ Additionally, Egypt proximity to protracted conflict zones increases its vulnerability to terrorist attacks and threats. In the Red Sea, an attack on a fishing whaler southwest of Mogadishu was claimed by al-Shabaab.⁹

In addition to terrorism, piracy is one of the most serious threats to commercial shipping, particularly in the Gulf of Aden and the Southern Red Sea. Statistics shows that between 2010 and 2014, there were more than 350 attempted or successful piracy attacks on commercial vessels. Despite the decline in piracy activities in the Red Sea (as a result of international and regional efforts), these activities have resurged off the coast of Somalia in conjunction with the threats posed by the Houthis in the region.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RIVALRY

International competition is a common feature in the two regions. This poses a major challenge to Egypt's maritime security, particularly when this competition intervenes in ongoing conflicts in the region, and when the competing powers have agendas and interests that could endanger Egypt's national security.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, discovery of significant gas reserves makes it essential to demarcate EEZs; this raises tensions between littoral countries, and revives historical geopolitical rivals that risk driving an intense naval arms race. Unlike the Red Sea region where the competition is coming from regional and international actors outside the region, the competition in the Mediterranean Sea is taking place amongst states located in the region itself.¹⁰ Each littoral state aims to define the boundaries of its own EEZ. However, the demarcation of these zones requires direct negotiations between these countries, particularly those whose economic zones overlap. Tensions between these countries rendered negotiations impossible. As a result, some countries unilaterally demarcate their own exclusive economic zones without consultations with other neighbouring countries.¹¹ A case in point here is the agreement concluded between Turkey

⁸ M. Taufer (2015), 'The Evolution of Maritime Security in the Mediterranean Sea: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives', *Strategic Studies* 35(4), 45–60.

⁹ L. Joubert (2020), *The State of Maritime Piracy 2019*, 3.

¹⁰ This is divided between an internationally recognised Greek and an unrecognised Turkish one.

¹¹ M. N. El-Din (2019), 'Turkey's Ambition in Eastern Mediterranean Gas: Dimensions and Implications', *Arab Affairs*, 180.

and the Libyan Government of National Accord, led by Fayeze al-Sarraj in 2019. The agreement that demarcates the maritime EEZ of both Libya and Turkey is one of Egypt's concerns in this context.¹² Furthermore, the Libyan–Turkish agreement could only be understood in the context of other regional initiatives, namely, the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. This reflects the impact of regional rivalry in the Eastern Mediterranean.

However, there is more international competition over ports' acquisition and military presence in the Red Sea than in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is evident by the number of foreign military bases in the region, as well as long-term ports' lease contracts. Competition over ports acquisition. For example, Djibouti hosts military bases from the US, China, France, Japan and Italy, which makes Djibouti (as described by some), a "crowded field" for foreign military bases.¹³ Russia is one of the most recent newcomers to the region. In 2019, a military agreement was signed between Sudan and Russia, followed by another agreement in December 2020, which granted Russia access to the Sudanese harbour of Port Sudan. The agreement also permits the establishment of a logistical supply point and subsequently the development of infrastructure necessary for the maintenance of ships. This agreement is a manifestation of Russia's resurgent interest in the region. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, examples of Russia's naval engagement policy in the region have included port visits to Russian partners and regional powers, the participation by the Russian Federation Navy (RFN) in counterpiracy operations off the Horn of Africa, and exploration of marine-energy resources.¹⁴ The significance of this step could not be underestimated, as it is the first foreign military base in Sudan, and the first Russian naval base on the Red Sea, and in Africa.

Competition over commercial ports is no less intense than competition over naval and military bases. UAE companies operate a range of ports in various Red Sea littoral countries, such as in Berbera Port and Bosaso Port in Somalia.

¹² M. A. H. Lasheikh (2020), 'Turkish Military Intervention in Libya and Its Regional and International Repercussions', *Arab Affairs* 184. Translated from:
محمد عبد الحفيظ لشيخ، التدخل العسكري التركي في ليبيا وإنعكاساته إقليمياً ودولياً، شؤون عربية، العدد

¹³ A. Sola-Martin (2020), 'Red Sea Dynamics: Part 2, Ports, Military Bases and Treaties: Who's Who in the Red Sea', *The Africa Report*, 13 November 2020 (Accessed 10 February 2025), <https://www.theafricareport.com/49957/ports-military-bases-and-treaties-whos-who-in-the-red-sea/#:~:text=Berenice%20is%20Egypt%E2%80%99s%20biggest%20military%20base%20in%20the,Faisal%20Naval%20Base%20hosts%20the%20country%E2%80%99s%20Western%20Fleet>.

¹⁴ T. Kollakowski (2022), "'Great Regional Engagement' Rather than 'Great Sea Power'—Russia's New Supply Point on the Red Sea Coast", *Naval War College Review* 75(1), Winter, 83–84.

Additionally, Turkey has signed a 99-year contract to lease and develop Prince Osman Digna Sea Port on Suakin Island. For Turkey, the Turkish Maritime Strategy Document, issued in 2014, considers both the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden as the main links between Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The document emphasised the importance of the Horn of Africa countries bordering the Red Sea, and stressed the need to activate bilateral military relations with these countries, through exchanges of visits with naval forces, as well as enhancing the role of military attachés in this area.

EGYPT'S RESPONSE TO MARITIME SECURITY CHALLENGES

In order to address the above-mentioned maritime security threats, Egypt adopted a two-pronged strategy. The first prong of that strategy is to build its own sea power, by enhancing the capabilities of the Egyptian naval forces, while the second prong relies on active engagement in different bilateral and multilateral arrangements with other regional and international stakeholders, in order to address these challenges collectively.¹⁵

Over the past few years, Egypt managed to enhance its own naval military industrial capacities through different arms deals. As a result, Egypt has reinforced its capacities in both the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, by purchasing new frigates with advanced technical features, and modern armament systems capable of undertaking both offensive and defensive operations. These new frigates are considered a huge technological addition to the capabilities of the naval forces, as it enables the Egyptian naval force to secure borders, secure maritime navigation lines and protect natural resources in the sea. According to the Egyptian Minister of Defence, these deals “enhance Egypt’s capabilities in confronting terrorism within the borders and on Egyptian shores.” He stressed that Egypt’s combat capabilities, as well as its ability to carry out long-term missions at sea, have been enhanced due to these deals.¹⁶

The armament strategy also included supporting the Egyptian Navy with Mistral-class aircraft carriers, as well as adding newer-class submarines to the submarine fleet, which the Egyptian Minister of Defence considered “a new

¹⁵ Egyptian State Information Service (2023), 'Arming the Egyptian Army During the Era of President Sisi', State Information Service, 18 November 2023 (Accessed 10 February 2025), <https://beta.sis.gov.eg/en/media-center/files/arming-the-egyptian-army-during-the-era-of-president-sisi/>.

¹⁶ The Maritime Executive (2016), 'Egypt Receives First “Russian” Mistral Warship', The Maritime Executive, 3 June 2016 (Accessed 10 February 2025), <https://maritime-executive.com/article/egypt-receives-first-russian-mistral-warship>.

addition to the combat capabilities of Egypt's naval forces" and a guarantee for preserving "Egypt's economic capabilities in the Mediterranean and Red Seas." He also considered it "an unprecedented shift for the Egyptian naval forces, which contributes to improving its global ranking."

What distinguishes the Egyptian armament approach is Egypt's emphasis on knowledge transfer. In this context, Egypt invested heavily in developing its national marine industries. Alexandria Arsenal, for example, was equipped with state-of-the-art industrial technologies and was reopened in 2015. Linked to this, Egypt's deal with France was to purchase four Gowind Corvette-type frigates for the Egyptian navy. While the deal requires the French to build one of the contracted four frigates, the remaining three frigates were built in the Alexandria arsenal, which guaranteed the know-how and technology transfer.¹⁷

Expanding naval bases is also another form of Egyptian maritime strategy to deal with these challenges. In this regard, Egypt has established a number of new naval military bases, such as the 3rd of July base in Jarjoub Region, located on the northern-west coast of the Mediterranean, only 140 km from Libya. On the Red Sea, in addition to Safaga, Hurghada and Suez naval bases, the new Berenice Military Base was opened in January 2020. It is considered the largest on the Red Sea, and is militarily classified as 'atypical', because it includes a naval base, as well as an air base.

Egyptian naval presence was reinforced by the inauguration of new headquarters of Egypt's southern naval fleet command in Safaga on the country's Red Sea coast.¹⁸ The southern fleet was created to secure a complete control over the theatre of naval operations in the Red Sea area. According to the Commander of Chief of the Egyptian Navy, the southern fleet offers "a powerful shield against anyone who might venture to violate Egyptian territorial waters"; it is also "a crucial measure given the threats and challenges in the Region."¹⁹

In addition to strengthening the defensive and offensive capabilities of the Egyptian naval forces, Egypt strengthened its cooperation with other neighbouring countries on the Red and Mediterranean seas. However, the bilateral cooperation

¹⁷ Alexandria Shipyard (2023), 'Gowind', Alexandria Shipyard, viewed on 10 February 2025, <https://alexyard.com.eg/gowind-projectara/>.

¹⁸ Egypt acquired two Mistral Class Helicopter Carriers in 2015.

¹⁹ A. Eleiba (2017), 'Looking South: The Expansion of Egypt's Naval Operations', *Ahram Online*, 15 January 2017 (Accessed 10 February 2025), <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/255116/Egypt/Politics-/Looking-south-The-expansion-of-Egypt%E2%80%99s-naval-opera.aspx>.

approach seems more evident on the Red Sea. Egyptian–Somali relations witnessed a rapprochement that was strengthened by the signing of a defence agreement and military cooperation protocol (August 2024); the agreement entails capacity building and experience transfer in the field of counterterrorism. In February 2025, Egypt signed agreements with Eritrea that include cooperation in the field of counterterrorism, cooperation in the field of maritime security, as well as port development.

Moreover, one of the most important foundations of Egypt's strategy to enhance maritime security has been the preference for multilateral frameworks over unilateral frameworks, to counter maritime security threats. At the height of the intensification of the phenomenon of piracy off the coast of Somalia, Egypt declared its rejection of any unilateral action to tackle the problem and affirmed its support for multilateral frameworks and its readiness to participate in any multilateral mission authorised by the United Nations (UN) to protect freedom of navigation off the coast of Somalia. Egypt is also a member of the International Contact Group on Combating Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and chaired the Contact Group's Working Group 4, which was responsible for supporting diplomatic efforts and raising awareness about piracy.²⁰

Egypt is actively engaged in the Council of Arab and African Countries of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The regional gathering includes eight Arab and African countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, Yemen and Jordan. Although the Council's charter was signed in 2020, the idea dates back to 1972, with the first Conference of the Red Sea littoral states. The idea developed first with an economic focus to secure the littoral states' right to exploit mineral resources in the Red Sea's seabed. Egypt played a pivotal role in the establishment of the council, as she also hosted in the Conference of Arab and African States Bordering the Red Sea in December 2017, under the theme, 'Peace, Security and Prosperity in the Red Sea Region: Towards an Arab and African Regional Framework for Cooperation'. The 2017 meeting

²⁰ Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). On 14 January 2009 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1851, this ad hoc, voluntary international forum brought together countries, organisations, and industry groups interested in combating piracy. The participants seek to coordinate political, military, industrial, and non-governmental efforts to put an end to piracy off the coast of Somalia and ensure that pirates are brought to justice. Translated from:

في 14 يناير 2009 وفقا لتقارير مجلس الأمن الدولي رقم (CGPCS) تم إنشاء فريق الاتصال المعني بالقرصنة قبالة سواحل الصومال 1851. يجمع هذا المنتدى الدولي الطوعي المعخصص البلدان والمنظمات والمجوعات الصناعية المهتمة بمكافحة القرصنة. ويسعى المشاركون إلى تنسيق الجهود السياسية والعسكرية والصناعية وغير الحكومية لوضع حد للقرصنة قبالة سواحل الصومال وضمان تقديم القرصنة إلى العدالة

paved the way for the ministerial meeting in Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the establishment of the council.

Egypt contributed four warships to the coalition forces during Operation Decisive Storm. These ships were primarily involved in securing maritime routes and supporting naval operations in the Red Sea. The involvement of the Egyptian Navy helped ensure that the sea lanes remained open and free from potential threats posed by Houthis or other hostile forces.

On a broader scale, Egypt participates in the Combined Maritime Force (CMF), which represents a collaborative approach to addressing complex maritime challenges through international cooperation and coordination.²¹ Egypt joined the CMF in April 2021, and since then, has assumed command role for two of the CMF task forces, namely CTF 153 in December 2022, and CTF 154, in June 2024.²² According to CMF officials, Egypt “brings a wealth of operational experience in the region and maritime capabilities to CMF” and its membership of CMF will “improve mutual awareness and ability to operate in the central and northern Red Sea”.

Egypt also sought to engage in joint naval exercises, such as those conducted by Egypt with the British and American navies, in an Alexandria defender and Eagle defender respectively. Egypt also keeps its engagement with international organisations working in the field of maritime security. For example, Egypt will host the IMO Regional Presence Office (RPO) for the Middle East and North Africa.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, multilateral approaches have not disappeared either. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) was established in

²¹ CTF 150 conducts maritime security operations (MSO) outside the Arabian Gulf; CTF 151, leads regional counter-piracy efforts; CTF 152 enhances regional maritime cooperation focusing on illicit non-state actors in the Arabian Gulf, especially between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations; CTF 153 focuses on international maritime security efforts in the Red Sea, Bab-al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden; CTF 154 leads multinational maritime training at locations across the Middle East.

²² Combined Maritime Forces (2025), 'CTF 153: Red Sea Maritime Security', Combined Maritime Forces, viewed on 10 February 2025, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-153-red-sea-maritime-security/>; Combined Maritime Forces (2025), 'CTF 154: Maritime Security Training', Combined Maritime Forces, viewed on 10 February 2025, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-154-maritime-security-training/>; Combined Maritime Forces (2018), 'Commander of Egyptian Naval Force Confers with Combined Task Force 150 About Future Cooperation', Combined Maritime Forces, 17 October 2018, viewed on 10 February 2025, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/2018/10/17/commander-of-egyptian-naval-force-confers-with-combined-task-force-150-about-future-cooperation/>.

Cairo in 2019, and includes seven member states, namely Italy, Cyprus, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Egypt. The EMGF held its first meeting at the level of energy ministers. The Ministry of Petroleum issued a statement on this occasion, confirming that the aim of establishing the EMGF is to ensure respect for the rights of members regarding their natural resources, in accordance with the principles of international law, and to secure the energy needs of member states for the wellbeing of their people.²³

However, this grouping is also not without challenges. First, it is not inclusive, as it does not include all EM littoral countries, i.e., Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. Second, its membership is problematic, as it includes countries that are unable to be an active party, such as the Palestinian Authority, which does not have control over the Gaza Strip; in addition, it includes countries relatively far from the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Italy, or non-Mediterranean countries, such as Jordan.²⁴

Conclusion:

The paper analyses the maritime security challenges Egypt faces in the Eastern Mediterranean and the southern Red Sea. The paper is divided into two main parts: the strategic importance of these regions, and the Egyptian Navy's strategies to address the challenges.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, recent discoveries of natural gas reserves necessitate a robust naval capacity to safeguard economic interests and regional stability. The southern Red Sea, crucial for the Suez Canal, faces threats from piracy and terrorism, particularly from Somali pirates and Houthi rebels. Political instability and protracted conflicts in neighbouring countries exacerbate these threats, with regional and international rivalries further complicating the security landscape.

Three main sources of threats apply: political instability and conflicts, piracy and maritime terrorism, and regional and international rivalry. Political instability in Syria, Lebanon, and Libya, as well as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, undermine maritime security. Piracy and terrorism, particularly in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, pose significant risks to commercial shipping and naval operations. Regional and international rivalries, especially over natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, lead to tensions and potential conflicts.

²³ M. N. El-Din (2019), 'Turkey's Ambition in Eastern Mediterranean Gas: Dimensions and Implications', *Arab Affairs*, 180.

²⁴ M. N. El-Din (2019).

In response, Egypt has adopted a two-pronged strategy: enhancing its naval capabilities and engaging in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This includes acquiring advanced naval vessels, expanding naval bases, and participating in international maritime security initiatives. Egypt's approach emphasises knowledge transfer and building national marine industries to ensure long-term maritime security in its maritime domains in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

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Title: Implication of Over-Specification in Navy Projects: Lessons from the SA Navy

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Abstract:

Technical personnel responsible for compiling specifications for naval projects tend to over-specify requirements, which can lead to several significant challenges during the development and execution of a project. This over-specification usually leads the project team to focus on minute details or features that do not significantly contribute to the project goals, resulting in unnecessary functionality that adds complexity without significant value. Pursuing these complicated features can lead to an expansion of the project scope, where the project goes beyond its original goals, inflating deliverables and timelines.

In addition, over-specification can lead to a lack of user-centred design, where the final product (driven by technical specifications) may not align with actual needs, preferences, or usability considerations. This mismatch often results in solutions that are impractical or difficult to use in practice. As a result, the project may suffer from complexity overload, making solutions difficult to implement, maintain, or support, and prioritising compliance with detailed criteria at the expense of performance, efficiency, or scalability.

The overemphasis on detailed requirements by project officers can also lead to resistance to change, inhibiting innovation and flexibility and hindering iterative development processes that rely on feedback and continuous improvement. The rigidity that such detailed specifications bring can limit the project's ability to adapt and evolve. This can lead to solutions that are not only costly and cumbersome to manage, but also run the risk of becoming obsolete as they cannot be easily integrated with new technologies or methodologies.

To effectively overcome the above challenges, it is important to adopt best practices in good requirements' attributes, and ensure such practices are embedded in the navy's project management processes. More transparency when dealing with industry, in terms of sharing pre-bid information, can also assist in improving the quality of the requirements' specification. Performance-based specification also allows better innovation space, thereby increasing the pool of potential solutions.

A balance between specificity and flexibility is key to achieving optimal results on naval projects. By effectively managing requirements, fostering open communication, and adapting appropriately to changing circumstances, project teams can manage the complexity of over-specified requirements and achieve successful outcomes.

Introduction:

The concept of over-specifying requirements in defence projects is widely researched and well documented. Suggested solutions to the problem, however, can still improve, given that the matter continues to affect defence projects today. This paper focuses on how to address the issue of over-specifying requirements in naval projects, drawing lessons from the South African Navy's (SAN's) experience. This is achieved through analysing the impact of over-specifying projects on selected project parameters and discussing available solutions.

Defence projects are intrinsically complex compared to other engineering projects in non-military environments. Added complication comes when the requirements are poorly or incorrectly stated for defence projects. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the majority of problems experienced in the execution of such projects stems from incorrectly or inadequately specified requirements.¹ Over-specification in this case refers to a situation where performance, functional and/or non-functional requirements are exaggerated (usually at lower subsystem level), such that the complexity of the project is increased, whilst there is little or no gain in capability performance.

WHAT IS SPECIFICATION?

The specifications under discussion in this paper are those contained in the request for proposal (RFP) documents. These usually prescribe performance, functional and non-functional requirements. At this stage it becomes important to differentiate between the two important documents involved in this paper, namely the 'requirements' (within the SAN this document is usually called user requirement statement (URS)) and the 'specification' (this is the Technical Specification that forms part of the RFP documents). For the purposes of this paper, the 'requirement' is defined as the capability needed by the user to achieve

¹ J. F. Schank, M. V. Arena, K. N. Kamarck, G. T. Lee, J. Birkler, R. Murphy, and R. Lough (2014), *Keeping Major Naval Ship Acquisitions on Course: Key Considerations for Managing Australia's SEA 5000 Future Frigate Program*, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif., https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR767.html.

an objective through employing the system to be acquired or developed. The ‘specification’ is the expression of such capability in an appropriate language or notation.²

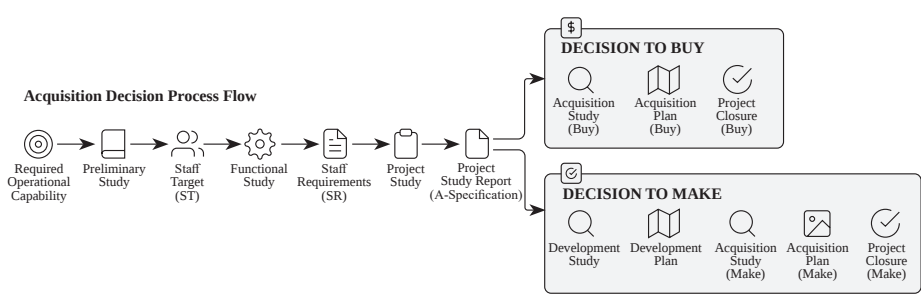


Figure 1: The defence acquisition process for the SA Navy (Source: DOD)

Figure 1 shows the acquisition process in the Department of Defence (DOD), which is applicable to the SA Navy projects. It all starts with the navy confirming the requirement of capability (ROC); then the preliminary study is done to determine how to fulfil the ROC. Once confirmed that the ROC will be fulfilled through acquisition, then the staff target (ST) is developed. The subsequent functional study is performed by the end-user to determine the operational requirements, i.e., staff requirement or URS. The ‘requirements’ (URS) are submitted to the Integrated Project Team (IPT) (which includes technical personnel from the Navy and Armscor), and the latter converts the URS into the technical specification through the project study process. The technical specification documents are included in the RFP documents that go out to industry for offers. The scope of this paper focuses on the **URS-Project Study (PS)-Project Study Report (PSR)** segment of Figure 1.

The end-user first stipulates the capabilities required to execute missions for the SAN. The IPT converts such requirements into technical specification of the required system to fulfil such missions. The process of converting the URS to a technical specification is critical, because if operational requirements are not correctly captured into technical specification, then sub-optimal systems may be acquired. It is during this activity that things tend to go wrong. It is common knowledge that the IPT tends to exaggerate the technical specification (i.e., over-specify), which can lead to several significant challenges during the development and execution of a project. This over-specification usually leads the project team to focus on minute details or features that do not significantly

² A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016), *Navy Specification Study Report 3*, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Australia.

contribute to the project goals, resulting in unnecessary functionality that adds complexity without significant value.³ Pursuing these complicated features can lead to an expansion of the project scope where the project goes beyond its original goals, inflating deliverables, and timelines.

The overemphasis on detailed requirements by the IPT can also lead to resistance to change, inhibiting innovation and flexibility and hindering iterative development processes that rely on feedback and continuous improvement. This can lead to solutions that are not only costly and cumbersome to manage but also run the risk of becoming obsolete as they cannot be easily integrated with new technologies or methodologies.

Aim and Scope:

In this paper, the impact of over-specifying requirements on selected project parameters is analysed. The cause-and-effect relationships of some attributes within the said parameters are discussed and impact on project costs, schedule, complexity, performance and useability, and risks is mapped out.

Discussion:

IMPACT OF OVER-SPECIFICATION

Over-specification of requirements can be linked to a number of problems in delivering the project. Projects have been known to fail due to over-specification. In order to understand this better, think of both the URS and the technical specification as products. The URS is a product generated by the end-user to be consumed by the IPT. The technical specification is the product generated by IPT (and other stakeholders) for consumption by prospective bidders. Products do fail.

Over-specification affects several aspects of project development and execution. For the purposes of this paper, we focus on the impact on project costs, schedule, risk profile, complexity, usability and performance.

³ US Department of Defense (2013), *Defense Acquisition Guidebook*, The Office of the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, 16 September, viewed on 29 January 2025, <https://www.dote.osd.mil/Portals/97/docs/TEMPGuide/DefenseAcquisitionGuidebook.pdf>.

Impact on project costs

One of the most notable impacts of over-specifying requirements is the potential cost increases. If requirements are too specific, this can necessitate the development of customised solutions or extensive changes to existing systems.⁴ This in turn leads to higher costs, both in terms of the time and resources required to meet these detailed specifications.

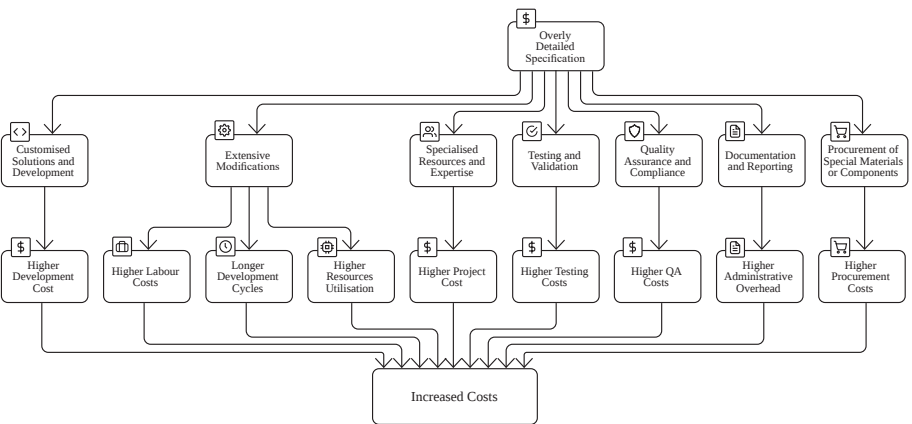


Figure 2: Impact of over-specification on project costs

Figure 2 shows the cause-and-effect relationships amongst some parameters that affect project cost as a result of over-specification. Overly specific requirements often require customised solutions to meet the intricate details described. Developing these customised solutions requires specialised expertise, additional design work, and unique configurations to meet the exact specifications. This customisation drives up development costs significantly.⁵

In cases where the requirements are too detailed, existing systems or solutions may need to be extensively modified to meet the specified criteria. This involves re-engineering, redesigning, or retrofitting components to meet specific requirements, resulting in higher labour costs, longer development cycles, and higher resource utilisation.⁶ Similarly meeting overly specific

⁴ B. W. Boehm (1981), *Software Engineering Economics*, 1st ed., Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

⁵ T. Tomiyama, P. Gu, Y. Jin, D. Lutters, C. Kind, and F. Kimura (2009), 'Design methodologies: Industrial and educational applications', *CIRP Annals*, Vol. 58 (2), pp. 543–565, pg. 550.

⁶ E. Murman, T. Allen, K. Bozdogan, J. Cutcher-Gershenfeld, H. McManus, D. Nightingale, E. Rebentisch, T. Shields, F. Stahl, M. Walton, J. Warmkessel, S. Weiss, and S. Widnall (2002), *Lean Enterprise Value: Insights from MIT's Lean Aerospace Initiative*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 212–213.

requirements may require specialised resources, tools, or skills beyond typical project needs. Hiring or deploying these specialised resources increases project costs as these professionals often command higher prices due to their unique skills and expertise.⁷

Similar cause-and-effect relations exist between testing and validation versus testing costs; documentation and reporting versus higher admin overhead, and procurement of special materials versus higher procurement costs. All these have an adverse impact on total project costs.

Impact on usability and performance

Rigidly worded specifications can severely limit the overall flexibility of the project. If specifications are too detailed, adapting to changing circumstances, new technologies, or evolving project requirements becomes difficult. This lack of flexibility can limit the project's ability to respond effectively to unforeseen challenges or opportunities, thereby reducing its usability and performance.⁸

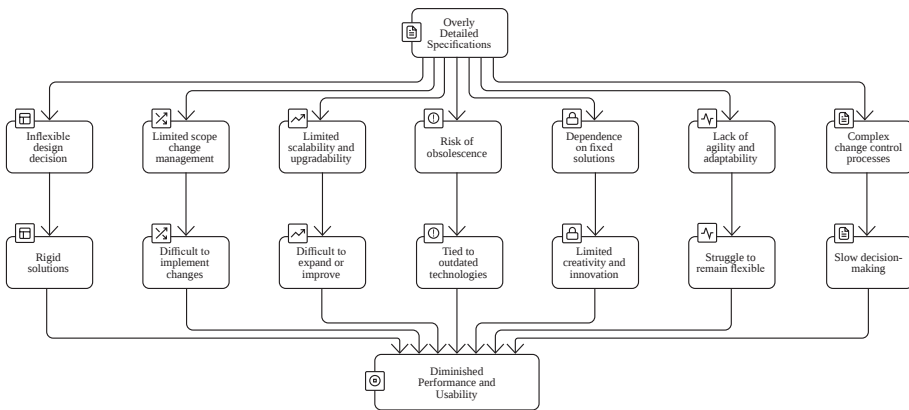


Figure 3: Impact of over-specification on usability and performance

Detailed and specific requirements can lock in design decisions early in the project life cycle, limiting the ability to adapt to changing circumstances or requirements. This lack of flexibility can lead to rigid solutions that are difficult to adapt to changing needs or new technologies. Furthermore, such overly specific requirements can hinder effective change management within the project.⁹

⁷ S. Eppinger and K. Ulrich (2015), *Product Design and Development*, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, pp. 349–351.

⁸ Q. W. Fleming and J. M. Koppelman (1998), *Earned Value Project Management*, Project Management Institute, Newtown Square, Pa., pp. 163–165.

⁹ J. M. Juran (1999), *Juran's Quality Handbook*, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill Professional, pp. 415–416.

Projects with over-specified requirements may lack scalability or upgradability, making it difficult to expand or improve the system to meet future requirements or seamlessly integrate new technologies. This lack of flexibility can affect the longevity of the project and its ability to evolve. Such projects may also be subjected to outdated technologies or methodologies, making it difficult to adapt to advances in the industry or changing operational requirements. This risk of obsolescence can limit the long-term viability and relevance of the project in the navy's operational context.¹⁰

The limited creativity and innovation that results from on fixed solutions, as a result of over-specified projects, will lead to diminished performance and usability. So will the slow decision-making that is caused by complex change control processes associated with such projects. **Figure 3** illustrates such cause-and-effect relationships.

Impact on project schedule

Overly detailed requirement specifications can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations among project stakeholders. These misunderstandings can lead to delays as adjustments, clarifications, or revisions are required to bring the project direction in line with the original specifications.¹¹ Such delays can impact the project timeline and overall efficiency.

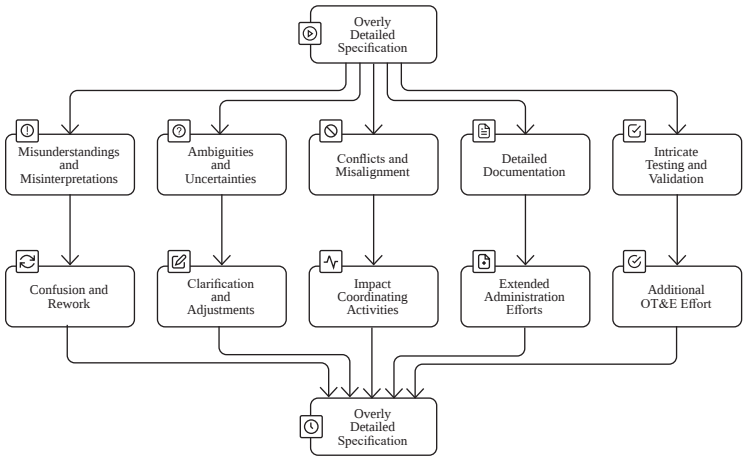


Figure 4: Impact of over-specification on project schedule

¹⁰ H. R. Kerzner (2013), *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling*, 11th ed., John Wiley, New York, pp. 592–594.

¹¹ R. B. Handfield and E. L. Nichols (2002), *Supply Chain Redesign: Transforming Supply Chains into Integrated Value Systems*, Financial Times Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J., pp. 188–190.

As project teams enter the implementation phase, they may encounter ambiguities or uncertainties within the over-specified requirements. To resolve these issues, additional time may be required for clarifications and adjustments, causing delays in progress, and potentially impacting the overall project schedule.¹² Overly specific requirements can sometimes lead to misalignment between various project stakeholders due to conflicts in priorities. Coordinating activities, resolving conflicts, and ensuring alignment between the different stakeholders can become more complex and time-consuming, leading to delays in project implementation.¹³ They also often require extensive documentation to capture all the nuances and subtleties of the specifications. Creating, reviewing, and maintaining this detailed documentation can add administrative overhead and prolong certain project activities, potentially leading to delays. Detailed requirements typically require thorough testing and validation to ensure compliance with all specified criteria. Delays in testing, in resolving issues uncovered during testing, or in ensuring full compliance can extend the testing phase of the project and thus delay the overall completion of the project.¹⁴ Refer to **Figure 4** for an illustration of such effects.

Impact on project complexity

Highly specific requirements may not integrate seamlessly with existing systems, technologies, or practices within the navy. Integrating new solutions that are too detailed can become more complex and time-consuming, requiring extensive customisation or workarounds to ensure compatibility and interoperability.¹⁵ In addition, over-specification can lead to a lack of user-centred design, where the final product driven by technical specifications may not align with actual needs, preferences, and/or usability considerations. This mismatch often results in solutions that are impractical or difficult to use in practice. As a result, the project may suffer from complexity overload, making solutions difficult to implement, maintain, or support and prioritising compliance with detailed criteria at the expense of performance, efficiency, and/or scalability.¹⁶

¹² B. Boehm and R. Turner (2004), 'Balancing agility and discipline: Evaluating and integrating agile and plan-driven methods', in *Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on Software Engineering*, January, pp. 718–719.

¹³ B. Boehm and R. Turner (2004), 'Balancing agility and discipline'.

¹⁴ F. P. Brooks (1995), *The Mythical Man-Month: Essays on Software Engineering*, anniversary ed., Addison-Wesley, Boston, pg. 141.

¹⁵ Project Management Institute (2017), *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, 6th ed., Project Management Institute, Newtown Square, Pa., pg. 115.

¹⁶ I. Sommerville (2016), *Software Engineering*, 10th ed., Pearson, Harlow, pp. 227–228.

Highly specific requirements may not align seamlessly with the navy's existing systems, technologies, or infrastructure. Integrating new solutions that do not fit well into the current environment can lead to compatibility issues, data inconsistencies, or functionality gaps, making integration more complex and time-consuming.¹⁷ Overly specific requirements can also overlook the need for interoperability with other systems or platforms within the navy's infrastructure. Ensuring that the new solution can effectively communicate and exchange data with existing systems requires careful planning, standardised interfaces, and compatibility checks to avoid integration issues and data silos.¹⁸ Furthermore, they can involve complicated data mapping and conversion processes to align data formats, structures, and semantics across different systems. Mapping data fields, ensuring data consistency, and transforming information to meet specific requirements can be labour-intensive and error-prone, which can lead to integration delays and data integrity issues.¹⁹ **Figure 5** gives more details.

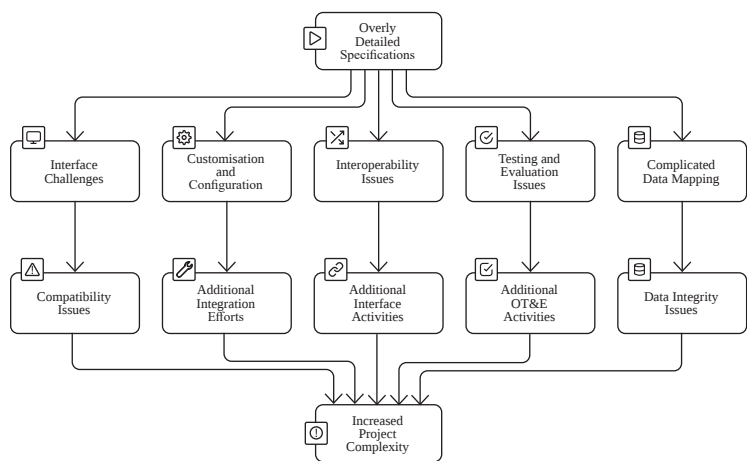


Figure 5: Impact of over-specification on project complexity

Impact on project risk

If requirements are over-specified, there is a risk of focusing too much on unimportant details that do not necessarily contribute significantly to the success of the project. This could lead to the project containing impractical or

¹⁷ A. P. Sage and W. B. Rouse (2011), *Handbook of Systems Engineering and Management*, 2nd ed., John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, N.J., pg. 342.

¹⁸ B. White and D. Biggs (2014), *Innovation in Systems Engineering and Management*, Springer, Cham, pp. 97–98.

¹⁹ B. White and D. Biggs (2014), *Innovation in Systems Engineering and Management*.

unnecessary functions that do not add any significant value but waste resources and time during development.²⁰

Detailed requirements can tempt the project team to focus excessively on minute details or features that do not contribute significantly to the project goals. This can lead to the inclusion of unnecessary functionalities or capabilities that increase complexity without adding significant value to the project, thereby diminishing the system value and increasing project risk.²¹ They also increase the likelihood of scope creep, where the project gradually expands beyond its original objectives due to the emphasis on detailed specifications. The continual addition of features and functions that are not essential to the main goals of the project can lead to an inflation of project deliverables and timelines, and hence adversely affecting the risk profile of the project.²²

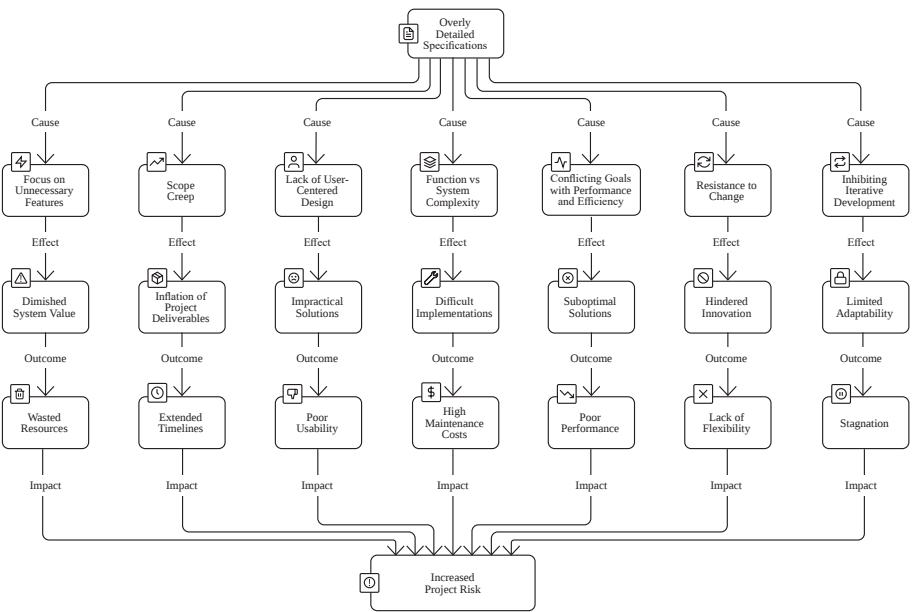


Figure 6: Impact of over-specification on project risks

Detailed requirements can lead to overly complex solutions that are difficult to implement, maintain, or support over time. The pursuit of complicated features or functions without considering the complexity of the overall system can lead to impractical solutions that are expensive to develop and cumbersome

²⁰ S. Eppinger and K. Ulrich (2015), *Product Design and Development*.

²¹ E. M. Murman, et al. (2002), *Lean Enterprise Value*.

²² H. R. Kerzner (2013), *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling*, pp. 487–488.

to manage. The rigidity created by overly detailed specifications can limit the project's ability to adapt, evolve, and incorporate lessons learnt throughout the development cycle.²³ All these negatively affect the risk profile of the project. Refer to **Figure 6** for further details.

SA NAVY EXPERIENCE

The experience of the SA Navy in managing projects with over-specification of requirements can be analysed through considering two of the SA Navy’s previous projects, namely Project JAPONICA (Strike Craft acquisition) and Project SITRON (Frigates/Corvettes acquisition). The two projects were undertaken in different political landscapes in the existence of the SA Navy, and hence the context is important in this case. Tables 1 and 2 give details of the two projects.

Table 1: The Strike Craft Project (JAPONICA)

Context at the time	• During the British colonial era, SA Navy enjoyed the opportunity to leverage the capabilities of the Royal Navy via the Simon’s Town Agreement of 1955. • As decolonisation forces gained momentum, the South Africa/ Britain relationship became strained, and the Simon’s Town Agreement was eventually cancelled in 1975. • SAN explored several options to acquire surface combat capabilities without success in the 1960s and ’70s, mainly due to UN-imposed sanctions on arms trade with South Africa. • The Type 12 and Type 15 post-WWII British-supplied frigates had all been lost, and the MOD felt under pressure to strengthen the SAN’s surface combat capability. • Parallel attempts to acquire two corvettes and two submarines from France in 1975 fell flat when the UN Security Council intervened.
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²³ J. K. Pinto and O. P. Kharbanda (1996), ‘How to fail in project management (without really trying)’, *Business Horizons*, Vol. 39 (4), February, pp. 45–53, pp. 49–50.

Project objectives	• Build three ships modelled around the ‘Reshef’ class of the Israeli Navy. Three ships built in Israel and the other three in South Africa. • Transfer knowledge and skills to the identified SA shipbuilding company. • Create shore facilities at Salisbury Island in Durban harbour: » Armscor coordinated project as Level 5 systems integrator with: » Main contractor in Israel to build and supply three ship platforms. » Main contractor in SA to build and supply three ship platforms. » Contractor to supply main guns (76 mm, 20 mm, 12.7 mm) and ammunition. » Contractor to supply communication equipment, electronic warfare, electronic countermeasures, and identification of friend or foe. » Contractor to supply missiles and the rest of the weapon system elements. • Project handled as ‘classified’ project.
Procurement process	• In 1974, the-then MOD started direct negotiations with his counterpart in Israel to build six strike crafts. Project Japonica was then born. • Main contract negotiated directly with prime contractor and signed August 1974 (two months after MOD briefed cabinet). • Project was implemented under strictly secret conditions given arms embargo challenges. • No formal procurement process was done, but direct contracting through G2G arrangement. • Armscor managed all contractors and sub-contractors directly.

Execution and challenges	• Early 1975, an IPT comprising members from Armscor and SAN departed for Israel. • First ship launched Feb 1977 and commissioned in August 1977. Second vessel departed for SA in December 1977, and third ship in April 1978. • The three locally built ships began late 1975. P1564 started service early 1979; P1565 mid-1979; P1566 early 1980. • There were some initial challenges during the building of the first ship, especially with SAN members having to verify activities against their requirements. • The subsequent builds became smoother as the different teams started to work well together. • In South Africa, the three ships built in Durban had their weapon systems integrated by Armscor team working closely with the individual sub-contractors. • The project was considered a success, and three more ships were subsequently built.
Lessons learnt	• Managing a foreign contract under embargo conditions was a hard thing to do, but the team had to adjust and be flexible in their approach. • Transfer of know-how was not as straightforward as initially thought. Several visits to the shipyard in Israel had to be done by local contractors in order to align execution processes. • Given that the ship was based on existing platform, there was simplicity in the specification development process. • The project established sound local shipbuilding and systems integration capabilities.

Table 2: The Corvette Project (SITRON)

Context at the time	• Project SITRON took place during the transition period; both DoD processes and organisation structure were undergoing some changes. • Although the strike crafts were there, they were not adequate to meet SAN requirements for surface combat capabilities. • There was still a requirement to replace the Type 12 and Type 15 frigates that were lost in the 1970s–’80s. • By 1985, all SAN’s old frigates had been decommissioned or were out of service, and the 400T strike-crafts became the primary surface capability, albeit insufficient to meet SAN mission requirements. • SAN explored several options to acquire surface combat capabilities without success in the 1960s and ’70s; mainly due to UN-imposed sanctions on arms trade with South Africa. • Democracy dawned in 1994, and the Defence Review was developed in 1997, i.e., DR1998. • Arms embargo lifted and international industry free to supply defence equipment to RSA.
Project objectives	• Acquire four corvettes (small frigates) and six helicopters. • Build hulls abroad and integrate locally developed combat system elements. • Transfer technology to local companies through NIP/DIP. • SITRON was a cardinal project (i.e., strategic project approved at MOD level).

- SITRON 1. 1993–1995 New naval staff requirement approved in 1993:
 - » Project feasibility study, including RFI concluded in 1993.
 - » In July 1994 (after elections), RFPs issued to five countries for ship platform supply.
 - » Project study report completed in November 1994, after RFP process.
 - » Proposed contracting model: Armscor as L5 and contract various suppliers at L4.
 - » Procurement submission tabled at Cabinet 3 May 1995. Cabinet turned it down and instructed that defence review had to be developed first.
 - » MOD deferred SITRON on 25 May 1995 pending finalisation of DR1998.
- Project SUVECS. Technology retention for local capabilities:
 - » Eighteen (18) companies participated in Project Suvecs 1995–2000.
 - » The above went on to participate in SITRON.
 - » Sixty percent (60%) of CS technology in SITRON was from RSA.
- SITRON 2. 1997–1999:
 - » DR1998 completed mid-1997.
 - » RFI process, September–December 1997.
 - » A packaged procurement approach of the five projects preferred over individual procurement.
 - » SITRON re-activated, but SITRON 1 procurement process nullified and superseded by SDPP approach.
 - » Some critical combat system components were to be sourced from abroad, e.g., sonar, surveillance radar, and surface to surface missile.
 - » Separate URS for combat system issued to preferred bidder in December 1998. It specified equipment and suppliers of sub-systems.
 - » Technical and contractual baselines reached, and contract signed in December 1999.
 - » Contracting model.
- L5 contracting for platform, combat suite and ILS with one foreign prime contractor.

The comparison between the two projects clearly shows that Project SITRON was over-specified compared to Project JAPONICA. Project SITRON’s higher level of complexity, broader scope, and numerous sophisticated systems and equipment reflect a higher degree of specification. In contrast, Project JAPONICA had more focused objectives and a relatively straightforward execution, despite the challenges faced.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

There are initiatives that can be put in place at process level in order to avoid sub-optimal requirements specification that exaggerates the functionalities required by the end-user. Such initiatives can be both preventative (i.e., pre-RFP) or corrective (i.e., post-RFP) and can be implemented at any section of the ROC–PSR value chain.

Attributes of good requirements’ specifications

The IPT can ensure that the integrity of the requirement specifications is verified by stress-testing them against the following attributes.

Table 3: Attributes of good requirement specifications.²⁴

Getting the right requirements:	• Correct, relevant: Is it what the end user needs? Is it supposed to be in the specification? • Complete: Have all the requirements been addressed? Have the needs of all users been considered? • Problem-oriented: Does it state <i>what</i> is needed as opposed to <i>how</i> it should be implemented? • Contextual: Is the situation and the environment for the use of the functions clearly stated? Are the essential external interfaces clearly identified? • Generic: Is what has been asked for too specific? Is the need restricted to narrow application?
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²⁴ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016), *Navy Specification Study Report 3*.

Stating the requirements correctly:	Unambiguous: Will all readers understand the same meaning of requirements? • Verifiable: How will the requirement be evaluated? How will the system be tested? • Readable: Is the specification written in a language understood and readable to all stakeholders and audiences? • Concise: Are the requirements simple and clear? Are there any duplications? • Coherent: Are similar requirements grouped together? If not, can related requirement be easily found?
Getting the specification right:	• Consistent: Are there conflicts between the related requirements? Is the terminology consistent? Is the same style and form of expression used throughout the specification document? • Balanced: Is the level consistent across all areas? Are variations in level justified? • Organised: Is the structure logical and easy to follow? Can readers navigate the specification easily? • Modifiable: Will the specification be easy to modify? • Traceable: Can each individual requirement be referred to easily? • Well-presented: Is the format appropriate? Does the use of language and grammar enhance the quality of the specification?
Allowing acceptable solutions:	• Feasible: Is it a realistic requirement? Is it cost-effective? • Level of detail: Is the specification too detailed? Is there enough detail to guide the designer? • Flexible: Will the specification allow all possible solutions?

Performance-based specification

Modern military contracts for acquisition and maintenance of equipment are moving towards performance-based contracting. Such contracts ensure that the risks and rewards are shared equitably between the contractor and the client (i.e., military). In order to source a performance-based contract, a performance-based specification has to be developed. Performance-based specification has the following attributes:²⁵

- They focus on the functions and performance required by the end user, while carefully analysing the non-functional requirements to ensure they do not limit possible solutions or increase project complexity.
- They allow the designer to address the real problems rather than the customer's perception of how the problems should be solved.
- They are non-prescriptive, thereby allowing the contractor the flexibility to choose amongst a number of suitable solutions.
- They encourage the use of existing military-off-the-shelf (MOTS) and commercially-off-the-shelf (COTS) technologies in implementing innovative solutions.
- They allow many issues around requirements to be resolved at contract negotiation stage, thereby allowing wider contractor participation.

More transparent communication with prospective bidders

Failure of specifications can be prevented or mitigated through more open communication between the IPT/end-user team and the industry. The more information that potential bidders have above the envisaged application of the system, the better quality of responses received from industry. There are various initiatives that could be implemented to improve open communication with the prospective bidders prior to contracting, including the following:

- Prospective bidders are often insulated from operational requirement information. They often have to respond to what the technical team has developed as the technical specification purporting to address the requirements of the end user. Having access to the mindset of the end-user would assist prospective bidders to understand the priorities of different functions and will reduce the possibility to misinterpret the specification.

²⁵ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016).

- Access to operational requirement information further assist the contractor in tender preparation by understanding not only what is needed but also why the user need such system and how it is likely to be used.
- Direct exposure to operational environment facilitates a flexible and collaborative rapport between designers and IPT/end-user team. This is because the designers have an appreciation of the operational value of the design parameters of the system. Even if changes are requested, designers are more receptive if they have an understanding of why such changes are important at an operational level.
- The navy should also consider the pre-RFP release of draft specification to prospective bidders. It will provide bidders with an early view of the draft specification and an opportunity to discuss specification requirements informally with the IPT and users. It also serves as an additional test for the quality of the specification.²⁶
- Sometimes the information given in the bidder's conference does not align with the information in the RFP. These conflicts can be further reduced if bidders are allowed insight of the thinking behind the development of the specifications contained in the RFP.

Other solutions

- Technical personnel involved in drafting the technical specification should be adequately skilled and experienced. It also helps to maintain a multi-disciplinary team with user representation.
- The team developing specification must be mindful of such things as 'creeping featurism' (introducing new features after baseline); 'requirements creep' (specify as you go), and 'gold plating' (specifying on top of specification).
- Use the relevant requirements' tracing tools where necessary ensure the same tool is used throughout the navy in order to facilitate efficient training of personnel.
- The requirements on which specifications are based are systematically, proactively and visibly validated, to ensure that the written requirements reflect the genuine operational needs.²⁷

²⁶ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016).

²⁷ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016).

- Navy provides a systematic process for the management of requirements including supporting justification, traceability and change control.²⁸
- Guidelines be developed relating to the development of specifications in electronic form with regard to the formatting, use of graphics, security classification techniques and configuration management.²⁹
- Prioritise essential features and avoid the inclusion of unnecessary functionalities that do not add significant value but increase complexity and cost.
- A balance between specificity and flexibility is key to achieving optimal results on navy projects. By effectively managing requirements, fostering open communication, and adapting appropriately to changing circumstances, project teams can manage the complexity of over-specified requirements and achieve successful outcomes.³⁰

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the above discussion provides insight into the detrimental effects of overly detailed requirements on the management of naval projects. It systematically outlines how overspecification can lead to increased costs, reduced flexibility, potential delays, and a variety of integration problems. It highlights that such detailed requirements can require bespoke solutions, specialist expertise, and extensive changes, all of which contribute to higher project costs and complexity. The paper also highlights the risks associated with impractical solutions, complexity overload, and the potential for obsolescence. It warns against the pursuit of intricate features at the expense of performance, efficiency, and scalability, which can result in suboptimal solutions in real-world operational contexts.

Furthermore, the paper discusses the administrative burdens of complex data mapping, dependency on third-party systems, and the exhaustive testing and validation required to ensure compliance with detailed specifications. The importance of maintaining a balance between specificity and flexibility to achieve optimal outcomes cannot be overstated. Furthermore, clear communication, regular reviews of requirements, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances

²⁸ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016).

²⁹ A. P. Gabb and D. E. Hendersen (2016).

³⁰ V. D. Ramdoo and G. Huzooree (2015), 'Strategies to reduce rework in software development on an organisation in Mauritius', *International Journal of Software Engineering & Applications (IJSEA)*, Vol. 6 (5), September, pp. 9–20.

as key strategies for managing the complexities associated with over-specified requirements are key to addressing such challenges.

The proposed solutions discussed above are practical and easy to implement. However, for any solution to be sustainably effective, they need to be institutionalised in the navy's project management environment.

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Title: Reconciling the Role of African Navies and Coast Guards: Practical, Ambitious or a Wicked Problem with a Focus on Kenya

Author: Brigadier (retired) Loonena Naisho (Navy)

Affiliation: Former Director General Kenya Coast Guard

Abstract:

The nexus between maritime security and the movement of goods is fundamental, ensuring both the safeguarding of maritime routes and the efficient transportation of products. This intricate interplay underscores a crucial set of issues that extends beyond logistics; it encapsulates narratives that shape our perception of the oceans and reflect a holistic understanding of oceans as facilitators of economic growth, trade, and sustainable development.

Maritime security threats have now extended beyond piracy, to include, human, arms trafficking and the dumping of toxic materials. Although these all pose a massive threat to maritime and human security, the most significant challenge facing Africa today is weak institutional and systemic capacity. Even if states subscribe to laws, limited maritime capacity means that individual states, and Africa as a continent, are severely constrained in realistically enforcing these laws and regulations. Based on the foregoing, what options are there for States in securing their maritime borders in view of their obligations nationally, regionally and internationally? What viable strategies exist or must be developed to assist? In trying to respond to the topic the paper will look at the general situation in the maritime domain, with a view that increasingly maritime security is no longer the sole prerogative of navies as more non-military agencies are now involved. The paper will endeavour to address whether the strategy to safeguard and prosper the blue economy using Kenya as a model is ambitious, practical or wicked.

Introduction:

A sovereign state is defined by space called 'territory', which is defined by boundaries that encompass land and/or water masses. The term 'state' can also be extra-territorial considering that some state territories are distant or can be a series of islands. This is a point that does not need to be belaboured at this symposium. However, the import here is that states have a legislative or political control over these spaces. History has painfully taught us that political, legislative and/or diplomatic control is not complete without threat for violence by a state. Writers like Alfred Mahan postulated that sea command is vital for commerce

to take place.¹ The realist approach stipulates the need of a coercive instrument that creates deterrence from infringement by other states and non-state actors.

Africa, as per the latest UN figures of 2024, has a growing population of just over 1.5 billion.² To sustain this growing population, Africa has to focus beyond land, and hence project her power beyond land. Africa's oceans and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) possess significant monetary potential in fisheries, oil and gas, maritime transport, tourism and marine biotechnology. Fisheries alone have an estimated value in billions of dollars annually.

Pursuant to these, states have created institutions that enforce the law, and others that project the intent to use violence if the boundaries or space to which they lay claim are threatened. In our particular domain is where the navies and/or coast guards come to the fore of the maritime space as instruments of the state or as a form of insurance. The hitherto land-centric focus synonymous with 'sea blindness' is today being progressively replaced by an inevitable and deliberate focus on the blue economy, to harness the immense potential.

Aim and Scope:

It is the aim of this paper to show the inevitability of Africa to possess maritime forces in the form of navies and coast guards. To justify this, the paper will look at what needs to be safeguarded in the form of the blue economy; the maritime threat scenario; the response to the threat and the subsequent structured response; the dichotomy between navies and coast guards; to spotlight Kenya as a case study, and to then conclude by looking at the way forward for Africa (in securing the maritime domain).

¹ A. T. Mahan (1890), *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783*, 12th ed., Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

² S. Sinha and M. Getachew (2024), 'As Africa's Population Crosses 1.5 Billion, the Demographic Window Is Opening; Getting the Dividend Requires More Time and Stronger Effort', *ECA*, 12 July, viewed 9 January 2025, <https://www.uneca.org/stories/%28blog%29-as-africa%E2%80%99s-population-crosses-1.5-billion%2C-the-demographic-window-is-opening-getting>.

Discussion:

THE VALUE OF BLUE ECONOMY TO AFRICA

For many African governments, there is a growing understanding of the inevitable symbiosis among maritime security, maritime governance and the maritime economy. The blue economy is the sustainable, inclusive and environmentally friendly output of these efforts.

Globally, the maritime domain is the lifeblood of the economy, and Africa is no exception. In many cases, it is central to both food security and food sovereignty. The expression “no shipping, no shopping” emphasises the impact that maritime commerce has on our way of life. Given the incredible volume of trade that occurs by sea, that expression is true for every country around the world – whether littoral or landlocked. The COVID-19 disruption of the sea supply lines in 2020 demonstrated its veracity and inevitability to world survival.

The African Union (AU) estimates that the blue economy currently generates nearly US\$300 billion for the continent, creating 49 million jobs in the process.³ On the other hand, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) costs Africa up to US\$11.49 billion annually.⁴ To secure this space, as an example, Africa’s maritime expenditure in 2023 was approximately a relatively paltry US\$5 billion for maritime forces (extrapolated at 10% from the US\$51.6 billion overall defence budget).⁵ The average military spending as a share of government expenditure is 7.2%.

³ World Bank (2022), *Blue Economy in Africa: A Synthesis*, World Bank Group, Washington, DC; see also World Bank (2022), ‘Blue Economy for Resilient Africa Program (BE4RAP)’, *World Bank Brief*, 15 November, viewed 8 December 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/environment/brief/blue-economy-for-resilient-africa-program>.

⁴ A. Kitimo (2024), “‘Incognito’ Fishing Vessels Deny Africa \$11bn in Annual Revenues”, *The East African*, 4 February, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business-tech/-incognito-fishing-vessels-deny-africa-11bn-in-revenues-4512898>; see also F. S. Paolo, D. Kroodsmas, J. Raynor, T. Hochberg, P. Davis, J. Cleary, L. Marsaglia, C. Thomas, and P. Halpin (2024), ‘Satellite Mapping Reveals Extensive Industrial Activity at Sea’, *Nature*, 625, pp. 85–91.

⁵ N. Tian (2024), ‘Military Spending in DRC and South Sudan Rose Fastest in the World: Society Ends Up Paying the Price’, *The Conversation*, 17 July, viewed 9 January 2025, <https://theconversation.com/military-spending-in-drc-and-south-sudan-rose-fastest-in-the-world-society-ends-up-paying-the-price-234317>.

The blue economy encompasses the sustainable use of all marine and freshwater environments for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of the ecosystem. Fisheries, sea transport play a critical role, contributing significantly to the global GDP and food security in the African region. From the foregoing it is very apparent that for the blue economy in Africa to prosper, and therefore sustain the security pillar, maritime governance and economy is a paramount.

THE AFRICA MARITIME DOMAIN THREAT SCENARIO

The nexus between ocean security and the seamless movement of goods is fundamental, ensuring both the safeguarding of maritime routes and the efficient transportation of products. This intricate interplay underscores a crucial set of issues that extend beyond logistics; it summarises narratives that shape our perception of the oceans and reflect a holistic understanding of oceans as facilitators of sustainable economic growth.

Maritime security threats have now extended to include, beyond piracy, human, arms trafficking and the dumping of toxic materials. The maritime smuggling of drugs, oil, antiquities, charcoal, ivory and other goods facilitates transnational criminal networks and funds terrorism. Weapons trafficking fuels conflicts around the globe and with more private armed activity at sea, when it comes to maritime security, the line between state and non-state action is blurring.

To put the East and Indian Ocean Island states into a regional perspective, the prevalence of the narcotics trade is worrying, particularly its importance in funding other criminal activities and the impact on the youth. In the north, migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean Sea has caught international attention and constitutes a serious challenge amongst other crimes.

In West and Central Africa, a diversity of challenges, from piracy and armed robbery at sea, to illicit oil and fuel activities, trafficking of all sorts, smuggling of various goods and various environmental crimes threaten the safety, security and sustainability of the maritime space. Recognising both new threats and threats that have not been addressed is extremely important. Oil and fuel theft, illegal dumping and discharge, and illegal ship-to-ship transfers are occurring daily without the permission of coastal states.

Although these all pose a massive threat to maritime and human security, it was noted that the most significant challenge facing Africa today is weak institutional and systemic capacity. Even if states subscribe to laws, limited

maritime capacity means that individual states and Africa as a continent, are severely constrained in enforcing these laws and regulations. However, African states' maritime security structures are often misaligned with the challenges posed, as most challenges are enforcement oriented, i.e., more a task of the coast guard than defence (navy).

Emanating from the last symposium in Pretoria, it was ably noted that Africa is not considered a major player on any discourse regarding the oceans. In one broad thematic area in the discussions was why African interests are often left out of ocean regions or geopolitical considerations. While this vacuum might be for various reasons, one clear reason was that this could be attributed to historical forces and a lack of a coherent homegrown maritime strategy. To buttress the view that Africa is a non-player in its own maritime scene is the fact that the threats witnessed in her space call for naval interventions from beyond African states.

The vulnerability of the African space due to lack of adequate capacity is exemplified by the most recent events in the Red Sea, where the core to communications between Africa and the rest of the world was threatened through breach of the submarine cable/s. Submarine cables transmit over 95% of telecommunications data and roughly US\$10 trillion per day. Cutting one group of such cables could black out a third of the world's Internet.⁶

Dr Ian Ralby, in his diverse write up, posits that life as we know it today depends heavily on the maritime environment, and thus, maritime security is an integral (albeit often invisible) safeguard to our modern way of life.⁷ An array of maritime threats poses serious challenges to fundamental aspects of our interconnected global community. Based on the foregoing, what options are there for states in securing their maritime borders in view of their obligations nationally, regionally and internationally?

⁶ C. Bueger, T. Liebetrau, and J. Franken (2022), *Security Threat to Undersea Communications Cables and Infrastructure – Consequences for the EU*, European Parliament, Brussels, June.

⁷ I. Ralby (2017), 'From Sea Blindness to Wealth Blindness', *Medium*, 8 February, viewed 8 January 2025, <https://medium.com/natural-security-forum/from-sea-blindness-to-wealth-blindness-2251dd804bf5>.

AFRICAN RESPONSE TO THREATS IN THE MARITIME SPACE

I posit that Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is key to achieving any coordinated action at sea. You cannot mitigate what you do not know. There is a definite link between internal (national) and external (thus regional and international) initiatives in securing the littoral boundaries and addressing maritime threats, hence securing the maritime routes and space.

Maritime security is not the sole prerogative of navies or coast guards – though they play a major, indispensable role – as more non-military agencies are now involved. A national, regional and international coordinated border security approach that incorporates most entities is therefore vital in mitigating maritime threats.

Over the past five years, Africa has significantly increased its investment in maritime security to address various challenges, including piracy, illegal fishing and smuggling. This spending has been part of broader efforts under the Africa Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy). Significant funding has been directed towards capacity building, legal reforms and combined operations that bring onboard navies and coast guards.

It is a fact that there are many frameworks (although not binding) that seek to bring together parties and states in the Western Indian Ocean and the Eastern Atlantic Ocean, to collaborate to combat illicit maritime activities. In the north, the Gulf of Aden, are multinational naval forces that protect maritime traffic as they transit a volatile region designated by the shipping industry a high-risk area (HRA). This unstable state translated to high-ship operation costs and high insurance premiums for Africa.

In the Western Indian Ocean, we have agreements and initiatives such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC/JA), for which most countries in region are signatories. On the opposite coast, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct covers the African Atlantic region. Both of these are IMO assisted, and seek to ensure freedom of navigation and deal with emerging threats and illicit maritime activities. The focus here is on building capacity in training and information sharing, by bringing the various stakeholders on a shared forum. Additionally, regional collaborations, such as joint naval exercises and coordinated patrols, have been crucial components of these efforts. The focus on maritime security is critical for protecting Africa's maritime resources, ensuring safe passage for its trade and enhancing economic growth through the blue economy.

OPERATIONAL MEASURES – WHY NAVIES AND/OR COAST GUARDS?

The need for navies and/or coast guards in Africa is determined by specific geopolitical, economic and security needs. Africa has more navies than coast guards. A scan of a clear dynamic report shows that incidents increased in the Gulf of Guinea in the first nine months of 2023, from 21, compared to 14 for the same period in 2022. Seventeen were classified as armed robberies and four as piracy, with a mounting concern for crew, as 54 were taken hostage, 14 kidnapped, and two were injured.⁸

Central and West Africa, like the Western Indian Ocean navies and coast guards, have limited patrol capacity. About 40% of the region's annual catch is IUU.⁹ Even if the entire current mixed inventory of platforms was deployed, there still would not be enough vessels to provide for a sustained patrol. The variety of equipment suppliers poses additional challenges of interoperability and sustainability of fleet vessels, the majority of which are over 25 years' old. Nonetheless, maintaining the availability of these vessels is vital. At the beginning of 2014, the Nigerian government announced a 60% drop in crude-oil theft (from 100 000 to about 40 000 barrels a day) due to, among other things, the deployment of newly acquired patrol boats.¹⁰ Sustaining such modest success requires significant bolstering of patrol inventory with more offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) and coastal patrol boats.

While commemorating Day of the Seafarer on 25 June in 2024, the global maritime community, led by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, lamented the grave threats faced by seafarers near the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea.¹¹ This certainly puts pressure on states (as observed earlier) to bolster their patrol inventory and activity.

⁸ International Chamber of Commerce (2023), 'Rise in Maritime Incidents and Piracy Reveals Latest IMB Report', *International Chamber of Commerce: Global Response*, 11 October, viewed 9 January 2025, <https://iccwbo.org/news-publications/news/rise-in-maritime-incidents-and-piracy-reveals-latest-imb-report/>.

⁹ A. O. Adeniyi (2015), 'Combating Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea', *Africa Security Brief*, 30, 28 February, viewed 8 January 2025, <https://africacenter.org/publication/combating-piracy-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/>.

¹⁰ A. O. Adeniyi (2015).

¹¹ *The Maritime Executive* (2024), 'On Day of the Seafarer, IMO Emphasizes Safety and Security', *The Maritime Executive*, 24 June, viewed 8 January 2025, <https://maritime-executive.com/article/on-day-of-the-seafarer-imo-emphasizes-safety-and-security#:~:text=Guterres%20also%20called%20for%20an,of%20dozens%20since%20last%20fall.>

Africa has 38 independent littoral states, of which only five – Cape Verde, Liberia, Kenya, São Tome and Principe, Mauritius, and the Seychelles – have maritime forces that identify themselves as coast guards rather than navies. This is despite the fact, as Vogel points out, Africa's maritime security challenges most often comprise threats requiring the technical skills and collaborative relationships with civilian organisations typical of coast guards.

Mitigating these threats is vitally important to Africa. IUU fishing is a major drawback to Africa's economic development and worsens its food security challenges; this problem – emanating primarily from European, Asian and African commercial vessels – is estimated to cost Africa more than US\$11 billion per year.¹² Piracy on the other hand makes badly needed trade and investment in Africa riskier and more expensive. Various UNODC reports indicate the continent is becoming an increasingly active drug trafficking hub, thus giving international criminal syndicates a foothold within certain African governments, with severe socio-economic impacts at the national and international level. The drugs arrive in Africa in cargo ships, are landed in small boats and fishing vessels, and subsequently shipped abroad.

It is evident that Africa's maritime security capacity to meet these emerging challenges is an escalating priority, with more serious implications for the continent and global security, than is commonly recognised. From the foregoing, the relevance of navies and/or coast guards to safeguard this vital space (with a value of about US\$300 billion¹³) is vindicated mainly by the following issues. IUU fishing is a chronic problem for Africa. Secondly, vital offshore installations, which drive the trade of Africa and are critical for economic stability, need protection, including sea lanes for shipping. Cross-border maritime crimes, particularly those along the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, bring up the cruciality of a maritime force. The practical way to reign national sovereignty on territorial waters and protection of the EEZ, is by having a capable maritime force. Lastly, invocation and ratification of the Copenhagen Declaration principles by African States will enable navies or coast guards to be agents of regional stability through joint patrols and peacekeeping endeavours.

Despite the given parameters, building and maintaining a navy is capital intensive. Many African countries face budgetary constraints and may struggle to allocate sufficient resources to develop or sustain a maritime force. Though

¹² A. Knobel (2024), *Illegal Fishing: Beneficial Ownership Transparency to Address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing*, EU Global Facility, 5 June.

¹³ World Bank (2022), *Blue Economy in Africa*.

it might appear ambitious, many African countries can benefit from having a navy and/or coast guard, particularly those with extensive coastlines, significant maritime resources, or security challenges. However, the decision to invest in maritime forces should be balanced with other national priorities and the available resources. Additionally leveraging on contemporary technology in the two agencies would assist immensely.

NAVY VS COAST GUARD

An observed challenge in most developing coastal states is the low institutional capacity for maritime security. This is characterised by overlapping mandates of agencies with a role in maritime security. In most cases, maritime security challenges, which are increasingly becoming a central component of the threat matrix, are structurally misaligned with the challenges posed. This can mainly be attributed to the use of navies on law enforcement with inherent structural impediments, unlike a situation where a coast guard would play the role.

Though navies and coast guards operate in the same domain, they are fundamentally different, although they play complementary roles. Navies are international operators primarily concerned with national defence. Coast guards, on the other hand, function more as maritime police, preventing crime and promoting public safety. The two entities, though operating in the same domain, largely differ in (amongst others), skill sets, training doctrine, mission, coordination and on aspects of information sharing. Acquiring the two capabilities can prove expensive in initial cost and sustainability, as they are technical and capital intensive. To appreciate the distinction of the two maritime entities in Africa, let us borrow the dimensions of Vogel,¹⁴ who ideally illustrated the differences, using the following subheadings:

- **Mission:** Navies, particularly what we refer to as ‘blue water navies’, in a traditional sense, are important instruments for implementing foreign policy. In the African context, foreign policy as a ‘naval’ function, is also demonstrated by deploying ships abroad on training, diplomatic and exercise-related port visits. Unfortunately, operational limitations prevent most African navies from executing international sea missions or blue water missions. On a similar note, most African navies are engaged, to a larger extent, in missions that are ‘coast guard’ in nature and relate to law enforcement, e.g., environmental protection and maritime safety obligations

¹⁴ A. Vogel (2009), ‘Navies Versus Coast Guards: Defining the Roles of Africa’s Maritime Security Forces’, *African Security Brief*, 2, December, pp. 1–6.

that occur mainly within a nation's territorial waters (within 12 nm) and their EEZ. The Senegalese Navy as an example, was criticised for its lack of response to the sinking of the MV *Joola* in 2002 (where as many as 1 800 lives were lost). In October 2019, the Kenyan Navy and its newly formed Coast Guard were harshly castigated for not promptly responding to a vehicle that fell off a ferry and sunk in Mombasa, leading to fatalities.

- **Operation platforms:** The deliberate design of sea platforms is premised on the intended missions for a maritime security force. Navies, which sail international waters, are trained to perform war functions and carry troops and equipment. Amphibious landing ships will carry personnel and equipment for beach assaults and support logistics, while surface combatants (such as corvettes, offshore patrol vessels, and frigates) provide strike capabilities. Given its law enforcement, environmental protection, and safety roles, a coast guard fleet must be capable of performing search and rescue (SAR) activities and patrolling coastal waters, lakes and rivers. Coast guard fleets do not include vessels as big as the larger naval platforms. A large lack of an inherent maritime culture, and donor-designed and -supplied platforms, confine African maritime security forces to a mismatch of vessels to mission, hence additional challenges of interoperability and sustainability of fleet vessels.
- **Doctrine:** Harmony of operators for a maritime force is vital and is greatly dependent on training that is determined by doctrine. The training adopted will draw the distinction between naval and coast guard roles. Conventionally, a navy will train its sailors primarily in the skills needed to perform foreign policy missions and defend the nation, whereas coast guard training will prioritise such things as fisheries' management, law enforcement and SAR.
- **Institutional reporting chain:** Military traditions from the onset, particularly on chain of command, are strong and somewhat rigid. A navy being military, reports to a ministry or department of defence. Coast guards, being quasi civilian, typically function as paramilitary arms of civilian institutions, because of their diverse responsibilities related to issues like safety and regulation of commerce. When there is no cohesive mandate, many coast guard duties will be divided between a variety of services. The bi-navy nature in most African maritime security forces, means that because they report to ministries of defence, institutionally they are all effectively 'navies'. This perspective is typical of the strong institutional impulse by Africa's navies to maintain distinctly military structures and identities. Because these organisations conceptualise themselves to be purely military, they naturally gravitate to the 'navy' mission sets.

- **Partnerships:** The bond cultivated from the onset as brothers in combat, a navy maintains its most active partnerships with other military services, thus army, air force and/or marines. On the flipside, most of a coast guard's collaborations are with civilian organisations. These partnerships include departments of fisheries, maritime police forces, port authorities, environmental protection agencies, beach management units (for Kenya), and international maritime regulatory bodies. A unique win for the coast guard is a legal finish due to its partnership with the judiciary. When it comes to funding, quasi-civilian coast guards (due to an unhindered partnership and its socio-economic nature) tends to attract a variety of donors. The issue of partnerships is a key characteristic of the challenges that African maritime security forces face. They are uniformed and identify themselves as military organisations, but to perform their missions successfully, they must rely on relationships with civilian organisations. Partnerships that exist in Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya have proven to be an important mechanism for effectively utilising scarce financial resources and maintaining skills important to the security challenges. Pooling resources prevents duplications of effort and maximises the efficiency of lean budgets and legal finish.

THE CASE OF KENYA

Introduction

Kenya, as a gateway to several landlocked countries in Eastern Africa and the Greater Horn of Africa, demonstrates the inevitability of maritime management, security capabilities that can be developed, and the importance of maritime governance. Landlocked countries need and have an inherent right to access the sea; therefore, the efficiency with which littoral states can ensure maritime security remains important. Kenya has emerged as a distinctive player, serving as a critical conduit or gateway for numerous landlocked countries, through its strategic port of Mombasa. Kenya's unique role also underscores the potential ramifications if its maritime domain is not adequately protected. Recognising this interconnectedness, the Kenyan government has made a strategic decision to securitise maritime issues, acknowledging the cascading effects on the security and economic stability of the countries reliant on access to the sea. Kenya has also aligned itself with regional and international frameworks for regional cooperation in maritime security.

Kenya has had a navy, a purveyor of the Royal East African Navy, since 1964, but still found it imperative and practical to establish a multi-agency Coast Guard in 2018. The Coast Guard closely partners and owes a lot to the Navy

for its nurturing and growth. Members in the Kenya Coast Guard are drawn from agencies representing the functional areas, to give the establishment the requisite impact.

Threats

Emerging maritime security and safety threats facing our country are transnational in nature, and have become more sophisticated and complex, compounded by an interconnected world and advancement in technology. These threats are manifested through trafficking in illegal goods, pollution, trafficking in narcotic drugs, trafficking in prohibited plants and psychotropic substances, terrorism, trafficking of illegal arms, disaster, armed robbery at sea, and piracy.

Kenya's maritime domain in the past faced many challenges that included ease of entry through non-designated points due to porosity of maritime borders, overlapping institutional mandates, and poor coordination amongst border agencies. Subsequently, the intended focus is on unity by elimination of silo mentality, avoiding duplication, and elimination of mistrust between agencies that operate along maritime borders entry/exit points. This calls for focused and well thought-out strategies and programmes, to deal with these and emerging threats. These observed attributes formed part of the basis to establish the coast guard.

Strategy

Maritime security and safety are paramount for the nation to harness and exploit the potential of the blue economy initiative, and to support Kenya's development vision. Kenya's share of the blue economy to the GDP is 2.5% and the sector contributes an estimated Kshs.178.8 billion (US\$1.4 billion) to the economy annually. Kenya's national commitment towards maritime security and safety in its coastal and inland waters to enhance harnessing the potential of the blue economy has been demonstrated by the creation of the Coast Guard to bolster the navy.

Kenya Navy vs Coast Guard

Navies and coast guards play fundamentally different, though complementary, roles. The Kenya Navy that was inaugurated in 1964 is primarily concerned with national defence and has had – since inception – conducted coast-guard duties on a secondary basis. The Kenya Navy, like many African navies, has been preoccupied with the secondary roles, despite the challenges in form

and structure. The focus on the blue economy brought to realisation the law enforcement gap, particularly within the territorial waters.

Conceptualisation of the Coast Guard, which dates to 2007, was a task given to a multi-agency team under the stewardship of the Navy. The team was tasked with carrying out a comprehensive study with the objective of proffering a model, legal framework and structure to be adopted.¹⁵ The committee's findings were able to depict that though the two entities operate in the same domain, they largely differ in (amongst others), skill sets, training doctrine, mission, coordination, and on aspects of information sharing. In manning, the new agency, the Navy and the National Police comprise the bigger proportion of the human strength of the Coast Guard (amongst other specialised functional entities). For strategic control and policy direction, the agency was put under the Interior Ministry for ease of inter-agency coordination.

Kenya Coast Guard Service

The Kenya Coast Guard Service (KCGS) was established under an Act of Parliament (KCGS Act, No. 11 of 2018). The Service was operationalised through the multi-agency *Technical Implementation Committee Report* in 2018, and its functions are aligned to the constitution. Kenya is one of few littoral states to have two maritime entities. Its conceptualisation was informed by benchmarking visits to various countries to study diverse models of a coast guard. It is a security service mandated to enforce maritime laws and regulations applicable in Kenya's territorial waters, explicitly stipulated in the KCGS Act.

Concept of the coast guard

Seized to the fact that Kenya's maritime domain has many state and non-state stakeholders involved in various activities, including exploitation of marine living and non-living resources; maritime commercial activities; defence and security; conservation and management of the marine resources, and enforcement of customs, immigration, shipping and sanitary laws. It was observed that individual state agencies have limited resources and capacity to fully enforce the relevant laws applicable in the maritime domain.

The Concept of the KCGS is that of a multi-agency approach; to pool limited resources and capacity, create synergy, enhance interoperability in maritime law enforcement, and to respond to maritime emergencies. No single agency

¹⁵ P. Koinange (2018), *Report on the Kenya Coast Guard Service Bill 2017*, Republic of Kenya National Assembly, Nairobi, April.

within the country, prior to the establishment of the Coast Guard, has had a wide, all-encompassing mandate. The legal framework that drives enforcement in the multi-agency Coast Guard is domiciled in diverse legal statutes, hence this arrangement allows for prompt coordination and eventually attainment of legal finish.

The Coast Guard guiding the legal framework (KCGS Act No. 11 of 2018), in addition allows the appropriate national body to deploy, when necessary, the disciplined and uniformed component of the Coast Guard to support the Kenya Defence Forces in times of war.

Challenges and success

Despite its work ethic and multi-cultural challenges, the agency in a short span has been able to have effective presence in the coastal region and Kenya's three inland water bodies and lakes. It is gradually building its stature in form and structure. It has established a supportive network nationally through beach management units and other maritime related institutions. The Djibouti Code of Conduct-Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA), through support from the IMO, has given the KCGS a regional and continental network. Under this framework, information sharing and capacity building has been enhanced within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), particularly with the establishment of a national information sharing network.

Summary:

BUILDING THE AFRICAN MARITIME DOMAIN AS A WAY FORWARD

The investment in African maritime security forces, as stipulated earlier, is low, hence it is not aligned to meet the security threats they face in the extensive coastline. The training doctrine (mostly from partners) does not effectively prepare the forces to meet their task. African countries – insofar as their navies or coast guards are concerned – do not have to reinvent the wheel; numerous countries with well-developed maritime institutions can or are already onboard with regard to strengthening the African maritime domain. Skills sets held by some of the powerful maritime states' coast guards would be quite appropriate to address the African maritime security challenges. However, capacity building from partners should be focused on specifics of maritime security threat, coordinated amongst partners to bridge the disconnect between training and mission mismatch. In training and provision of equipment, the recipient state must be responsive to their requirements in specific maritime security challenges.

Africa is confronted with a variety of maritime security challenges, many of which require ‘coast guard’ operations. These challenges are growing and, if left unchecked, could cripple Africa’s development progress and stability. Too often, Africa’s maritime security forces are not optimally positioned to meet these challenges. A disconnect between how these organisations identify themselves and the missions they face indicates that African states need to better align their national maritime security plans, partnerships and assets. International partners, meanwhile, must calibrate their support accordingly.

Despite the apparent lack of a maritime culture, African states have to develop an MDA to enable states plan how to address their maritime security challenges. An effective MDA will ensure proper discernment of threats, and hence appropriate follow-up actions, using appropriate platforms regardless of the two force types.

Greater intragovernmental partnership and coordination are needed to achieve successful ‘coast guard’ solutions, especially given the military identity of African maritime security forces. A number of countries have recently initiated the process of connecting the variety of agencies responsible for maritime security operations under a single coordinating body as seen in Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya.

Conclusion:

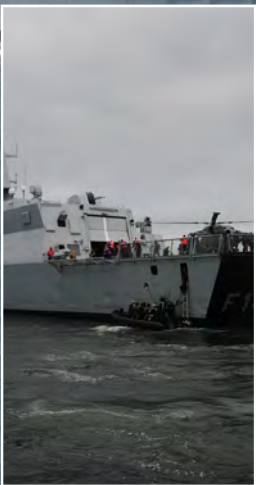
Despite the abundance of laws at the national level, designed to combat illicit trafficking, and an apparent impetus to stop specific types of crime, governments remain only marginally successful in preventing the global flow of illegal trade. Governments need to enhance investments in maritime security. Governments in Africa have been late to realise how their absence in the maritime domain not only costs them untold revenue but also undermines security on land, as criminal activities on the sea begin and end onshore. To the extent that the global economy relies on increasingly interdependent shipping and energy supply networks, the maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea constitute a collective challenge to all stakeholders in the region and internationally. Herein too lies the role and success of MDA, where cooperation and collaboration between security agencies and law enforcement organisations that possess the capacity and power to support the rule of law is therefore the best solution to countering transnational crime at sea. In broad terms, maritime security is therefore a global task that requires effective maritime security governance at national and regional levels where the key tool is MDA with effective action capability in form of well-funded navies and/or coast guards.

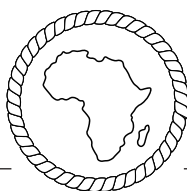
The eventual result is that if African states align their maritime security capacities to their challenges, then trawlers will have someone they can radio the next time they are faced with armed robbery at sea. In the process, Africa's 47 000 kilometres of coastline can again be a source of prosperity rather than one of vulnerability, and thus navies and coast guards in Africa occupy their practical space, other than looking **wicked** and **ambitious** from a misinformed 'sea blind' and 'wealth blind' perspective. As far as the maritime domain 'property or estate' is concerned, Africa is grossly under insured and needs focused **practical** investment in coast guards, navies or a combination of the two.

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OPENING ADDRESS OF THE CLOSED SESSION
OF THE SEA POWER FOR 5TH AFRICA
SYMPOSIUM 2024 BY THE CHIEF OF THE SA
NAVY, VICE ADMIRAL MONDE LOBESE

The following transcription retains the speaker's original wording to reflect the speech as delivered.

I would like to welcome all of you to this closed session. Some of you may have wondered why we decided to host this session in the first place. When we envisaged hosting this Sea Power for Africa Symposium, I instructed my planning team to plan for this session so that we, as the Naval leadership of Mother Africa, can engage each other in open and honest discussion.

Our continent has to a large extent had a very indifferent relationship with the oceans that surround us. For Africans, it has always been the soil that nurtures and nourishes us. We would contest amongst each other for land, be it for grazing or growing crops. Many wars were fought for our land, whereas Naval battles between African countries using ships are not known to us. The people of our continent has for many long years developed a sea-blindness towards the oceans.

It is also unfortunate that as a continent, Africa was conquered and colonised by those countries who possessed superior sea power. For many years thereafter the seas surrounding our continent were seen as something that must be travelled on, and not something to occupy. Most of the colonial economies were structured to export raw material from the hinterland of Africa, through our harbours, and off to foreign lands. The expensive goods manufactured from our raw materials were then imported at vastly inflated prices. This whole economic structure was designed to keep Africa poor and backward.

Although in some instances African countries have been independent for 50, 60 or 70 years, our relationship to the seas have not changed much during this period. Unfortunately, the rest of the world have moved on and have left Africa behind. It is unfortunate that our maritime economies are still very small compared to other countries from Asia, Europe and the Americas. We are still largely dependent on foreign ships, crewed by non-Africans, who import and export our goods and products to and from our harbours.

We have also suffered due to centuries of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing that have decimated our fish stocks around our continent. The South African coastline is the third longest in Africa. Just around our coastline the estimated loss of revenue lost to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing is estimated at over R6 bn per year. If one looks at this figure for the entire continent, I shudder to think how high it must be. Can you imagine what the benefit could have been for the continent if this is halved, or even just reduced by 10%? Ladies and gentlemen, that is one of the things for which we must seriously discuss and come up with working solutions.

The scourge of illegal trafficking of drugs, arms and ammunition and even human trafficking have also taken its toll on our societies. There are regular reports of very large amounts of drugs found in African harbours. This poison is infecting our societies and costs large amount of money to combat and destroys the lives of millions of our people. The scourge of piracy off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea have been discussed many times in forums such as these.

Ladies and gentlemen, you know all these things. I do not have to repeat the maritime security challenges that we as a continent are faced with. It is also unfortunate that the Sea Power for Africa Symposium cannot be held more regularly. I am looking towards the countries represented in this room with me, and I am asking if one you can take up the mantle to host this Symposium next year. I am fully aware that there are several regional Symposia of this nature being held in various regions of the continent. However, the Sea Power for Africa Symposium is the only forum that attempts to address all the Maritime Security Challenges of the entire continent. I plead with you to maintain the momentum that we have developed here, and to steer this ship towards a safe port.

I said this in my opening address, and I will repeat it here again. We can only achieve a safe maritime environment SISONKE. We have to work together. For too long have our focus been on jumping on aircraft and visiting countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas. For too long have we endeavoured to conduct

maritime exercises with these countries who do not live on our continent. Let us change course ladies and gentlemen and ask ourselves whether we are working for or against Mother Africa.

Let us look towards the youth and ask ourselves whether we must rather send our young sailors and officers to courses in Africa, or to countries beyond Africa. Should we not develop and support our own African Defence Industries so that we can purchase equipment and resources that are built in Africa, for African conditions. I must say that I am so sorry that my forebears decided to procure ships and submarines in Europe, because 20 years later it has become virtually impossible to provide through life support to these vessels. We are the leadership of our respective Navies now. Let us change the course of our continent's navies.

As Chief of the South African Navy, one of my many goals is to improve the Maritime Domain Awareness around our coast. Although this is very expensive, it is absolutely vital to view what is taking place in your own EEZ. I urge all of you here to also invest in this capability, and then to share the information with each other. It is only when we have visibility of the ships that sail in our waters that will we be in a position to exert control on identified ships of interest.

I would like to suggest to you that we promulgate a declaration of intent from this SPAS 24. These are practical solutions to most of the challenges that our continent are facing on the maritime security front. In no specific order of importance, I suggest the following points:

Firstly, we must enhance the Cooperation and Collaboration between African Navies. Two very practical ways in which this can be done are to plan and execute Joint Maritime Patrols between our ships, as well as conducting Joint Maritime Exercises very regularly between African Navies.

Secondly, we must expand the information sharing of our Maritime Domain Awareness Centres. Fortunately, the technological advancement makes this quite easy and requires little effort from our navies.

Thirdly we must establish a technical work group for the formulation of the Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA) as soon as possible.

Fourthly we must urgently lobby for the establishment of a Maritime Subcommittee within the African Union.

In the fifth place, we must relook the Yaounde and Djibouti Codes of Conduct and ensure that Naval Personnel are appointed to lead them.

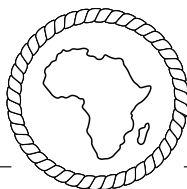
In the sixth place, we must establish a team that will urgently formulate an AFRICAN MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY, which must be presented to the Regional Maritime Committee and be brought to the next SPAS for adoption.

Lastly, we must raise our displeasure in the United Nations General Assembly, that only 60 countries signed the Copenhagen Declaration against transnational organised crime.

We must develop a road map of how these 7 points must be implemented.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I digress into tactical matters and suggested solutions, let me stop here. I say again, I am only hosting the Sea Power for Africa Symposium. I do not want to dictate to you what should be done. As Africans, we must work together to develop African solutions for African problems. None of us here can fight the mammoth elephant called “Maritime Insecurity” alone. However, our ancestors learned long ago that the only way to hunt an elephant is to employ the entire tribe, working together. And once the elephant is killed, the whole tribe eats together, one bite at a time.

I thank you.



5TH SEA POWER FOR AFRICA SYMPOSIUM DECLARATION OF INTENT

We, the Chiefs of the African Navies, assembled at the 5th Sea Power for Africa Symposium (SPAS), held from 15 to 17 October 2024 in Cape Town South Africa, hereby agree as follows:

- a) Enhance the Cooperation and Collaboration amongst African Navies including but not limited to, capacity building, training, maintenance and operations.
- b) Explore practical ways to plan and execute Joint Maritime Patrols as well as conducting Joint Maritime Exercises regularly amongst African Navies.
- c) Reinforce information sharing amongst our Maritime Domain Awareness Centres (MDACs).
- d) Establish a technical working group for the conceptualisation of the Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA) as contained in the AIMS 2050.
- e) Lobby for the establishment of a Maritime Sub-Committee within the African Union.
- f) Reaffirm our belief in the Djibouti Code of Conduct and advise member states on the need to appoint qualified Naval Personnel to lead its implementation.
- g) Establish a team that will formulate an implementation plan for the AIMS 2050, which must be presented to the Chiefs and Heads of African Navies (CHANS) as per AIMS 2050.
- h) Intimate the African Union on the need for the United Nation to impress on other States, not yet signatories, to the Copenhagen Declaration

and the High Seas Treaty to sign and ratify these treaties to enhance Maritime Security.

- i) Encourage African states to adopt and ratify the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lome Charter).
 - j) Encourage African Navies to prioritise the engagement of African Defence Industries in their Naval Acquisitions.
 - k) To convene SPAS every 2 years on a rotational basis with the 6th SPAS to be held in Nigeria in May 2026.
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5TH SEA POWER FOR AFRICA SYMPOSIUM DECLARATION OF INTENT

Signed at Cape Town on 17 October 2024, by:

(K. NOURREDINE)

CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF OF THE ALGERIAN NAVY: MAJOR GENERAL

(VALENTIM ALBERTO ANTÓNIO)

CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF OF THE ANGOLAN NAVY: ADMIRAL

(V. BIBONIMANA)

CHIEF OF THE BURUNDI NAVY: BRIGADIER GENERAL

(J. MENDOUA)

DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF OF THE CAMEROON NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

(R. NGANONGO)

CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE CONGOLESE NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

(MOUHAMED ADEL FAWZI)

CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE EGYPTIAN NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

(T. NGOMO)

CHIEF OF THE EQUATORIAL GUINEA NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

(I.A. YAKUBU)

CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF OF THE GHANAIAAN NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

(M.S. SHEMOTE)

COMMANDER KENYA NAVY: BRIGADIER GENERAL

(F.B. KAKHUTA-BANDA)

MALAWI MARITIME FORCE COMMANDER: MAJOR GENERAL

(S.R. GONTEB)

DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE NAMIBIAN NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL
(JUNIOR GRADE)

(E.I. OGALLA)

CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF OF THE NIGERIAN NAVY: VICE ADMIRAL

(A. SENE)

CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF OF SENEGALESE NAVY: REAR ADMIRAL

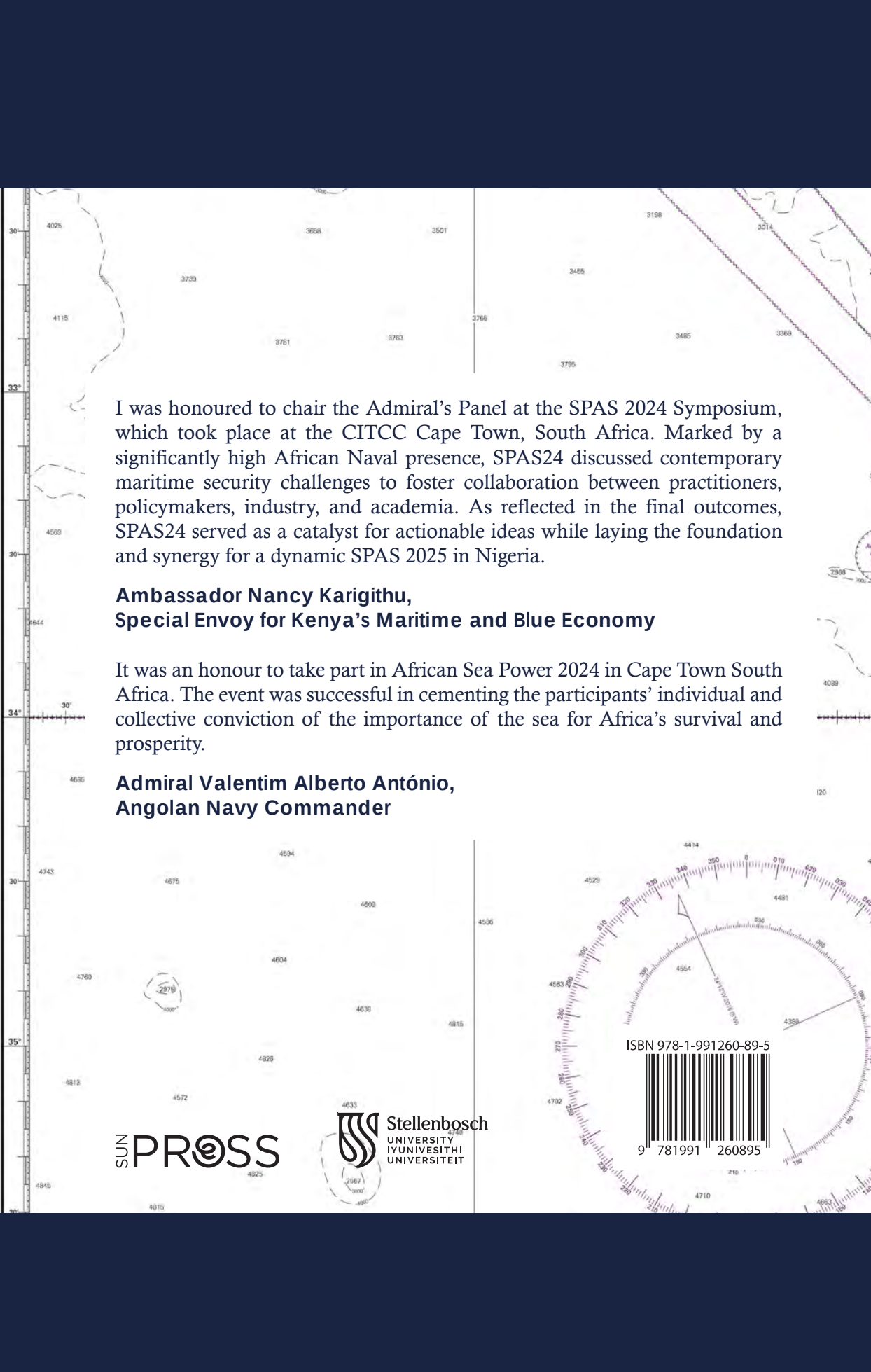
(M. LOBESE)

CHIEF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY: VICE ADMIRAL

(A. BABATE)

CHIEF OF THE TOGOLESE NAVY: CAPTAIN (NAVY)





I was honoured to chair the Admiral's Panel at the SPAS 2024 Symposium, which took place at the CITCC Cape Town, South Africa. Marked by a significantly high African Naval presence, SPAS24 discussed contemporary maritime security challenges to foster collaboration between practitioners, policymakers, industry, and academia. As reflected in the final outcomes, SPAS24 served as a catalyst for actionable ideas while laying the foundation and synergy for a dynamic SPAS 2025 in Nigeria.

**Ambassador Nancy Karigithu,
Special Envoy for Kenya's Maritime and Blue Economy**

It was an honour to take part in African Sea Power 2024 in Cape Town South Africa. The event was successful in cementing the participants' individual and collective conviction of the importance of the sea for Africa's survival and prosperity.

**Admiral Valentim Alberto António,
Angolan Navy Commander**

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