

Maritime Border Security Perspectives In The National Security Interests Of India

By Dr Prabhakaran Paleri

Dr. Paleri is former director general of Indian Coast Guard.

“National security is beyond mere physical security; it is about the wholesome well-being of the people of a nation. It is a grave matter; therefore, has to be seen seriously. Border security is one among the 16 elements of national security; ocean is one of the eight terrains where the game of national security is played (Paleri, 2022)”

Introduction

The quote above talks about national security. What it doesn't show up is about the interdependency of the elements and terrains with each other and also mutually together. The efforts to maximise one may reduce the effectiveness of another. Therefore, special care is required for wholesome maximisation of results. The governments have to understand this aspect in governance by national security (GBNS). This paper is about border security (Paleri, 2002) one of the elements of national security in the maritime terrain with a few recommendations for India for the attention of the authorities.

Borders separate nations from each other. Most of the national borders are under consensus of the nations that share them. Some are under disputes that may lead to conflicts. Technically, the disputes can be resolved through bilateral or multilateral mechanisms, or following the principles of international law. In such cases there will be mutual consent of the parties that will be binding on each other permanently. It needs effective geostrategy under win-win conditions. Border issues are complex. It can impact national security. Besides territorial sovereignty, they may involve a variety of other concerns specific to the nation in relation to its national security.

The maritime border further complicates the issue. First, it is not linear like the land border. It is more an area than a line. That is one of the reasons why the semantics involved in maritime borders confusingly rest on the term coastal security. It is a term used very loosely. Coastal security is a misnomer in national security decision making. It is more a media term of usage convenience than a decision problem that is diagnostic compatible. It is a landclasped format in decision making on the run. Humans exhibit landclasp syndrome (Paleri, 2014). It is difficult to wean them out of it. Such usage deflects national security strategy for integrating maritime terrain in national security governance. Coastline is internal to the nation. The sovereign rights of a nation extend beyond the coast. There are more on coast in terms of coastal administration. One of them is interfacial marine environment (Paleri, 2009) at the land ocean interface. Coastline is a fractal. Besides it changes shape and dimensions constantly, every minute. It is further aggravated by sea level rise and reclamation anywhere in the ocean (Paleri, 2009). Humans should

understand the sea will take away the land they reclaim from it. International law advocates baseline establishment according to tide levels and other parameters to standardise area measurements internal towards land and external towards sea in interfacial administration. Besides, a coast is also four dimensional with sea, land, air and outer space for integration in ocean governance. It is highly dynamic but is not a border of the geoentity. It lies deep inside the territory of a coastland or island nation. That is the key factor why it is not the border. It is similar to a Rann spanning inwards from the border over land. Only it is not land but (territorial sea) water over solid land. That makes a sea coast not a border under maritime law.

Managing the coastal interface and territorial sea of India is within the purview of the nine coastal states and four union territories (UT). Two of the UTs are island territories. It is a centre-state affair in a kind of cooperative federalism for India. There are no coastal issues for a landlocked country, but they too have maritime concerns in national security governance. There are 44 landlocked countries in the world (Paleri, 2009). The interesting part is that they too are maritime nations as the ocean belongs to all being global commons. Ocean is also a serious driver of change for every nation. Landlocked and geographically disadvantaged countries have ocean rights under international law. Some of the landlocked countries are members of International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the specialised agency for maritime affairs related to commercial shipping, and parties to international law and treaties associated with the ocean for this reason.

Another issue related to the ocean is that nations have specific rights even beyond the territorial sea for law enforcement, environmental management and resource exploitation in the high seas. They also have international obligations such as maritime search and rescue operations in assigned areas. Ocean as a global commons exists in the high seas with due considerations to the rights of other countries under international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 is clear on the subject. The Convention is poised for changes in future based on the experiences of the nations since it became effective. Discussions are on in this regard.

Borders of India

India has land borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. There are border disputes with Pakistan and China. The longest border is with Bangladesh (4,096km), whereas the shortest is with Sri Lanka (0.1 km wide) that links the 48 km stretch between Rameswaram (India) and Thalaimannar (Sri Lanka) through Ram Sethu. Ram Sethu divides the historic waters of Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar as an interface. Sri Lanka will become an island nation if the land border with India gets totally inundated. There are possibilities under the rising sea levels in the near future. A railroad bridge over Ram Sethu or a tunnel under sea to avoid surface disturbances could buttress the friendship between the fine people of the two countries. There were many proposals on it earlier but did not gain attention of the governments. Instead, there was a proposal to breach the interface on the Indian side by making a canal that would have been economically, geostrategically and environmentally suicidal if executed. Better wisdom prevailed over the executives who cancelled it under various protests and a serious accident in which a dredger exploded while engaged in dredging.

India shares maritime borders with Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In addition, India shares the legal continental shelf (LCS) maritime border with Sultanate of Oman.

India has serious land and maritime border issues with Pakistan and land border issues with China. It has minor land issues with Nepal and Myanmar. India can expect potential border security threats across disputed borders leading to armed conflicts unless the problems are resolved. The maritime border

concerns are only with Pakistan that has the potential to aggravate by the presence of China when, as reports say, Pakistan gifts the country the two Sindh islands, Budhoo and Bundal, across Karachi especially since the Indo-Pak maritime border is under dispute.

India and the Ocean

India is a coastland (Paleri, 2014) with many islands close to the mainland as well as in the ocean. It has vast territorial sea area. Virtually the maritime border, therefore, should be the perimeters of the territorial sea that extend seawards from the baselines on mainland as well as islands. For administrative convenience and also for explanation, the maritime border becomes an area unlike a line over land in maritime border security decision problems. It is a choice for the government based on its policy of governance by national security. India's relationship with ocean thereby becomes important. The country has heavy responsibilities in the ocean by its geolocation and being a leading and responsible geoentity.

The maritime security aspects in national security governance should accommodate all these and more for the overall integration of national security based on terrain specificity. It is a major task for the government of a country like India. It can be done by the concept of maximisation of ocean property.

Ocean property

The ocean property (Paleri, 2002) regime facilitates modeling maritime security across the maritime terrain. Ocean property is the graduated all-encompassing expression of ocean wealth and utility (use) value as a geoproperty of the nation. It is not about economics alone. It is an idea that comprises four elements. They are:

1. Ocean resources. Ocean resources primarily include living and non-living resources.
2. Ocean advantage. Ocean advantage is the utility value of the ocean. Examples are transportation, trade, industry, energy, depth, military use, peacekeeping operations, geolocation, logistics movement, reach, etc.
3. Ocean environment. Ocean environment includes interfacial environment, coastal zones, marine environment external to the interfacial environment, climate, etc.
4. Ocean islands. These are the islands a nation has in the ocean whether nearshore or offshore. There are nations that possess ocean islands far distant from the mainland in different ocean divisions.

The idea of ocean property will advocate maritime security in a more objective and convenient manner for modeling maritime security strategy. The challenge is to maximise the ocean property that a nation owns by carefully mapping and scientifically modeling the strategy for governing them to the best advantage. The quantum of ocean property of nations varies. Success is in its maximisation. This is applicable to landlocked countries also.

Contrasting views of land and ocean borders

The difference between borders over land and ocean has been explained. But the interesting aspect is in the perception of their governance when it is about border security. For land, it is about the breach of the border, especially inwards that matters. Whereas for the ocean it is the breach within the terrain as the ocean expands to the entire world where the nations will have interests within and over to the land as if the ocean is a different entity. The latter appreciation is relevant in the usage of the term coastal security. The maritime zones for a nation in the context of global commons keep changing according to national interests.

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India Has An Upper Hand Over China In Jostle For Foothold In Sri Lanka. But It Can Slip Away

By Dr Seshadri Chari

Author is a Secretary General of the Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS). Dr Chari writes on foreign policy, strategy, and security affairs.

No nation can probably showcase India-China competition in South Asia more eloquently than Sri Lanka. After an unresolved military standoff in the north, the two countries are fiercely engaged in an economic and diplomatic contest in the south. Even as New Delhi and Beijing are aggressively rivalling to consolidate their respective grip on the region, it is the smaller countries that are having to bend over backwards to rebalance their relationship with the two Asian giants. Colombo's woes are multiplied in the wake of a dismal financial crisis and pressure being exerted by United Nations agencies on over a decade-old human rights issue arising out of its fight against the dreaded Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

With two members of the Rajapaksa family firmly in the saddle in Colombo as President and Prime Minister, the third one, Basil Rajapaksa, inducted as finance minister in July 2021, was in New Delhi in December to brief India on the situation in Colombo. He was assured of a currency swap to meet the balance of payments issue and politely asked to speed up the Trincomalee Tank Farm project in the north, once the stronghold of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). While India reaffirmed its 'neighbourhood first' policy, Colombo assured New Delhi of giving priority to India in its developmental projects, especially in the sensitive north, closer to Tamil Nadu in many ways besides geographic proximity.

As though to wash out Basil's India visit, China's envoy to Sri Lanka, Qi Zhenhong, elaborately publicised his visit to the highly sensitive Tamil-majority Jaffna Peninsula — just a stone's throw from across the Indian shores. Accompanied by Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) officials, he went up to Adam's Bridge, popularly and reverentially referred to as 'Ram setu' in India, put out video footage of his 'pilgrimage' to the Nallur Kandaswamy temple (attired in traditional 'veshti'), and spent time in the iconic Jaffna Public Library (burned down in 1981 and later restored with Indian assistance). In just one visit, he has probably sent out a message loud and clear to New Delhi of Beijing's close military, naval, social and cultural camaraderie with the island nation, especially its troubled north.

Sri Lanka-China engagement Colombo has been an important destination in Beijing's strategic inroads not only into the Indian Ocean but the entire Indo-Pacific and India's extended neighbourhood. In fact, China's closer engagement with Colombo could be traced from the time since its disproportionate arming of the Sri Lankan Army during the latter's 'fight to finish' war on LTTE terror. New Delhi took a principled stance that the conflict should be settled through talks and refused to supply military hardware to be used against its own citizens. China supplied Jian-7 fighter jets, anti-aircraft guns, Type-85 Heavy Machine Guns (HMG) and Type-80 Light Machine Guns (LMG), Type-56 rifles, 152 mm howitzer, 81 mm mortar shells, and RPG-7 rockets. Besides, Beijing also provided \$1.2 billion and \$821 million in 2009 and 2010, respectively, to meet the post-war expenses.

The wartime leader General Sarath Fonseka justified the Chinese assistance, saying there was no other option and that it was cheaper. "India had told us they were not in a position to sell or send offensive weapons or even equipment like radars and basic communication equipment to meet our requirements.

So, we had no other option... It was readily available and comparatively cheaper — almost half the price compared to Russia. I think, we had no other option,” he was reported to have said.

Though India was Sri Lanka’s largest trading partner and donor, it was China’s national currency, the Yuan (Renminbi) that was allowed by Sri Lanka’s Central Bank in June 2011 to be used in international transactions. Economic engagements were steppingstones for a larger strategic partnership, much to the discomfort of India. The regime changes in Colombo allowed New Delhi to do course correction but did not deter Beijing from increasing its defence cooperation with Colombo.

In October 2020, then-head of the Chinese foreign policy department Yang Jiechi visited Colombo, making it the first high-profile Chinese official’s visit to any country in South Asia since the Covid-19 pandemic. His visit signalled the priority that Beijing accords to Colombo, besides reiterating the significance of political, economic and military cooperation, and the growing military dimension of China-Sri Lanka ties. The visit was followed by Gen Wei Fenghe, Defence Minister and a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (credited with the successful implementation of China-Pakistan defence cooperation) in April 2021.

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Drones Used By Farmers Could Be Spying

China-made commercial drones might contain back doors and malware that transmit flight and video data to the government in China, an official said yesterday. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the senior official said that Chinese drones, widely used by farmers for crop dusting, pose a significant cybersecurity threat to users and the government.

Beijing has unrestricted access to private user data held by Chinese corporations, which are obligated to cooperate with the country’s national intelligence efforts under China’s National Intelligence Law, the official said.

In Taipei, government agencies have taken steps to remove Chinese-manufactured devices and software from official use as President Tsai Ing-wen has made cybersecurity a priority in her national security policy, the source said.

Security protocols were tightened to no longer allow middle and high-ranking officials to use Chinese-made electronics for work or personal use, they said. The official spoke on the matter following a statement by the National Communications Commission (NCC) on Thursday that said Xiaomi Corp’s Mi 10T 5G smartphones have built-in censorship capabilities and can transmit user data to servers in Beijing.

The commission said that its Telecommunications Technology Centre in October last year tested a model sold in Taiwan, after the Lithuanian National Cyber Security Center on Sep. 21 last year discovered the device’s censorship capabilities.

The official yesterday said that while Xiaomi disavowed security issues with its products by saying that the features did not appear in models sold in Taiwan and Europe, the claims were not supported by the NCC’s independent analysis, and its report raised troubling implications about Chinese electronics. The ban on devices applies to government employees only and not private citizens, the source said, adding that the government could only advise the public against buying products with compromised security features.

[**Courtesy: The Taipei Times**](#)

India Needs To Shed Its Defensive Policies And Proactively Counter China

By Dr Srikanth Kondapalli

Author is a professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Barring a remote possibility of resuming active military hostilities in the border areas, India's relations with China are headed towards continued armed stalemate in the new year of Tiger, in all likelihood setting back bilateral relations by several years if not decades.

There were a few encouraging signs though recently to improve bilateral relations. Certain reports indicated the partial lifting of the ban on investments from China as a pragmatic gesture. The ban was imposed on investments from "neighbouring countries" a year ago. People's Bank of China's investment increase in Housing Development Finance Corporation, Bajaj Financials and start-ups had rattled the Indian government earlier.

India also went ahead, as a lone Quad member to do so, signalling not to boycott the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics. This decision came during the 18th Russia-India-China trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers in late November 2021.

The Indian Space Research Organisation signed an agreement with an Indian subsidiary of Chinese mobile phone company Oppo for extending Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) facilities for position, navigation and timing services in far-away regions in the oceans for messages on safety. This has not gone down well in several quarters in India that banned over 200 Chinese apps a year ago.

Another signalling from India is its continuing participation in the multilateral fora in which China has been a member such as attending the summit meetings of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, Russia-India-China trilaterals or COP26 on climate change issues. While India maintained contacts with China at these multilateral initiatives, a subtle toning down in relations is visible, with the Indian leaders conveying indirectly through these institutions China's perfidy on not observing written agreements but also wilfully violating the sovereignty of nations in the name of building infrastructure projects. Moreover, there is a new-found Indian standing up in these institutions to protect Indian national interests.

Even though India laid out such a pragmatic policy, it made clear that China's militarism is not acceptable. For instance, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had laid the bottom line in India's approach towards China in the aftermath of the tragic killing of 20 Indian soldiers at Galwan on 15 June night in 2020. He stated that restoring peace and tranquillity on the borders is a prerequisite for improving bilateral relations. As 13 rounds of Corps Commanders meetings and 23 rounds of WMCC meetings have not ushered in "disengagement and de-escalation" in the border areas, it is expected that bilateral relations are expected to further nose-dive in 2022.

First Post

China Backs Cambodia's Much Criticized Diplomatic Bid In Myanmar

China has expressed support for Cambodia's divisive diplomatic initiative on Myanmar. Days after Prime Minister Hun Sen made his controversial visit to the Myanmar capital Naypyitaw, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China supports the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' efforts

to resolve issues related to its neighbouring country in accordance with the “ASEAN way,” and to successfully implement the bloc’s Five-Point Consensus. Myanmar and Cambodia are members of ASEAN.

He said, “China appreciates Myanmar’s readiness to create favourable conditions for ASEAN’s special envoy to fulfil his duty and works toward effective alignment between Myanmar’s five-point roadmap and ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus. China will fully support Cambodia, the rotating chair of ASEAN, in playing an active role and making [an] important contribution to properly managing the differences among parties of Myanmar through political dialogue and restoring stability and achieving development at an early date.”

Faced with record low foreign direct investment, Myanmar’s military regime is pushing China to restart several stalled infrastructure projects, including railways, ports and power projects, and to accelerate bilateral cooperation over the coming months.

In December, the junta’s Ministry of Information and Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations claimed that normalcy is returning to Myanmar. The junta ministers said in a statement that the implementation of several joint projects with China is a major priority, following the disruptions caused by the pandemic and recent social unrest.

However, Beijing remains wary about resuming full cooperation with Myanmar after the widespread anti-China protests that followed the regime’s Feb. 1 coup, and subsequent attacks on Chinese-owned factories in Yangon. With Hun Sen breaking the international isolation of conflict-ridden Myanmar, China is looking for ways to restart its projects including the Kyaukphyu deep seaport and Special Economic Zone in Rakhine State. During his two-day visit on Friday and Saturday last week, Hun Sen met with coup leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and other leaders of the military junta for talks aimed at resolving the country’s tangle of political, economic and humanitarian crises.

Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, who accompanied Hun Sen on the trip, said talks between Hun Sen and Snr-Gen Min Aung Hlaing achieved “a very good, positive result with a progressive step forward” on the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus agreed to by ASEAN. Hun Sen’s trip to Myanmar provoked a storm of criticism both in Myanmar and abroad, however, for bestowing legitimacy on an illegitimate regime.

Sokhonn, who also serves as ASEAN’s Special Envoy to Myanmar, defended the trip, saying: “If there is anyone who opposes progressing these negotiations and the agreements like this, it is only those people who love war, those people who do not want to see Myanmar return to stability and peace.”

Since taking over ASEAN’s rotating chairmanship late last year, Cambodia’s government has made clear its intention to adopt a policy of pragmatic engagement with the regime in Myanmar. Last year, ASEAN, whose rotating chair was then held by Brunei, made a collective decision to exclude the junta leader from the bloc’s summit meetings for failing to implement the five-point consensus.

Coup leader Snr-Gen Min Aung Hlaing also promised that Prak Sokhonn would be permitted to meet all parties involved in the country’s political turmoil, including the armed ethnic minority groups. Both leaders also promised to push for a meeting aimed at coordinating deliveries of humanitarian aid.

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Nation Is Indebted To: Thounaojam Iboyaima Father Of Social Work

Multi-faceted personality, Thounaojam Iboyaima fondly called the Father of Social Workers, was born on November 2, 1916, to late Thounaojam Chouyaima and late Thounaojam ongbi Rajkumari Sanajaobi, Iboyaima at Singjamei Thongam Leikai in Manipur.

He did his early schooling at Naorem Leikai LP School where he studied till Class Two. After this, he shifted to Ucha Primary School where he studied till Class Four and thereafter, he dropped out of school due to health problems.



Thereafter Iboyaima turned to carpentry to supplement his family income. This however did not snap his ties with academics. He was a founder member of Singjamei Girls; School and Singjamei Boys School (later called Chongtham Iboyaima HS) and Manipur College. Thounaojam Iboyaima was the chief advisor of All Manipur United Clubs Organisation (AMUCO) and president of Irabot Foundation, Manipur. In 1958, the late Iboyaima joined politics and was elected president of All India Socialist Party in 1962.

He plunged into the Statehood demand movement and was jailed for seven months in 1960 and another two months in 1961 for launching a hunger strike. He was again jailed for 2 months at Hazaribagh jail in Bihar for taking part in a hunger marchers rally in 1965. Iboyaima retired from active politics in 1972 and became a social activist. During his lifetime, Iboyaima dedicated himself to fostering communal harmony and towards this end travelled across the State interacting with different communities.

As president of Irabot Foundation, Manipur, he championed the cause of making Manipur a self-reliant State. He was highly respected personality due to his principled stand on complicated social issues, where his only approach always was the well-being of poor and needy people.

Thounaojam Iboyaima was awarded NIM Award by Educational Guide Centre, Volunteer Award by International Volunteers Day State Celebration Committee and Dr. Iboyaima Cultural Harmony Award 2014 Lifetime Award by The Cultural Forum Manipur. All Manipur Ethnical Socio-Cultural Organisation declared him father of Social Worker in 1999.

In, 2002 Integrated Manipuri Association, Bangladesh gave him the title Manipuri Bandhu. Thounaojam Iboyaima was the chief advisor of All Manipur United Clubs Organisation and Irabot Foundation Manipur.

People in Manipur remember him as a man though frail in health but strong like a rock when it came to work and stand for poor and needy. Also, he is admired for his contribution towards education. A great soul who lived to serve humanity selflessly.

Write to us at:

bulletin@finsindia.org

Office: 4, Belle View, Lakhamsi Nappu

Road, Dadar (East), MUMBAI - 400014

Phone 022 24127274

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