



Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges

3-4 September, 2019, Maldives



Indian Ocean Conference 2019



Indian Ocean
Conference 2019

“Securing the Indian
Ocean Region:
Traditional and
Non-Traditional
Challenges”

FOSIM
The Institute for Strategic Studies & International Studies

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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The 4th Indian Ocean Conference – IOC 2019 was organised by India Foundation in association with the Foreign Service Institute (FOSIM), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore on 3-4 September 2019 in Maldives. The theme of IOC 2019 was “Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges”.

The traditional and non-traditional security challenges facing the Indian Ocean Region remain unabated. Geopolitics and Trade continue to be contentious and the spectre of terrorism looms large over several countries of the region. Issues such as rising sea water levels, hazardous levels of pollution of the seas leading to depletion of marine livestock, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing elude consensus in international deliberation. Many of these challenges pose serious and immediate problems for the region. These challenges require concerted and sustained partnership efforts across the region and beyond.

Discussions at the 4th IOC were focused on developing effective regional institutional mechanisms for implementation of prevailing norms and rules. In continuation with the past, this edition of the Conference too provided an opportunity for stakeholders of the Indian Ocean Region to deliberate on building an institutional framework for managing the threats to regional peace and human security through the strengthening of multilateral cooperation based on mutual respect, equality and international law.

The three broad themes of the conference were:

MARINE ECOLOGY: Climate Change, Global Warming and consequent Rise of Sea Levels, Pollution, Sustainable harnessing of Oceanic Resources

TERRORISM: Rising Spectre of Terrorism in Indian Ocean Region, Marine Terrorism

NAVIGATIONAL SECURITY: Freedom of Navigation, UNCLOS and its effective implementation, Natural and Man-made hazards to Navigation, Piracy

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#IOC2019



DAY 1 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRE-CONFERENCE SYMPOSIA

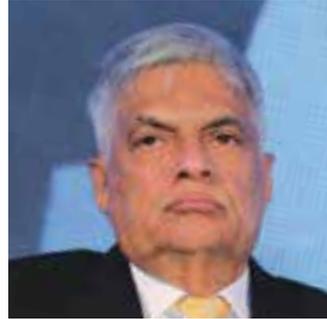
- **SYMPOSIUM 1:**
NAVIGATIONAL SECURITY
- **SYMPOSIUM 2:**
TERRORISM
- **SYMPOSIUM 3:**
NAVIGATIONAL SECURITY
- **SYMPOSIUM 4:**
AMBASSADORS' PANEL

- INAUGURAL SESSION**
- KEYNOTE SESSION 1**
- SESSION I -
MINISTERS' PANEL**
- CULTURAL EVENING**

INAUGURAL SESSION



H.E. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
President, Maldives



H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe
Prime Minister, Sri Lanka



S. Jaishankar
External Affairs Minister, India



Vivian Balakrishnan
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Singapore



Abdulla Shahid
Foreign Minister, Maldives





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The significance of critical straits of Indian Ocean, from Malacca in the East to Hormuz in the West attracts the attention of the world to ensure their access to waterways and their continuous freedom of navigation. It is more vital than ever to regularly convene forums such as this so that together we effectively resolve our common concerns. At the heart of our concerns should be ensuring the security and prosperity of our people.

H.E. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
President, Maldives

”



The global dynamics are shifting, and the rise of new powers is creating an asymmetric bipolar world with US and China leading these tensions. With the increasing competition amongst many players, maritime players need to realize the risk associated with destabilizing the maritime order as there is binding economic order that necessitates a greater degree of restraint and cooperation.

H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe
Prime Minister, Sri Lanka





“

The waters are changing as we speak and the Indo-Pacific is not tomorrow's forecast but actually yesterday's reality. The Indo-Pacific means different to different powers, but undeniably a priority for all of them. For India, it is the next logical step after Act East and breakout from the confines of South Asia.

S. Jaishankar
External Affairs Minister, India

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Indian Ocean is a collection of geographically and very culturally diverse states. However, we all share a common strategic imperative, a common conviction in the factors that promote growth and a common recognition of the conditions which we need to thrive.

Vivian Balakrishnan
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore

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Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming the nerve center of global trade and commerce. Therefore, maintaining stability and peace in the Indian Ocean Region has never been more important.

Abdulla Shahid
Foreign Minister, Maldives

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KEYNOTE SESSION I



S. Jaishankar
External Affairs Minister, India



Abdulla Shahid
Foreign Minister, Maldives



SESSION I - MINISTERS' PANEL



Macsuzy Mondon
Designated Minister,
Seychelles



Nandcoomar Bodha
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Regional Integration and
International Trade, Mauritius



Tandi Dorji
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Royal Government of Bhutan



Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Nepal



Ahmad Ali Al Sayegh
Minister for Economic
Cooperation in the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs, UAE



**Joaquim Jose Gusmao dos
Reis Martines**
Minister of Agriculture and
Fisheries, Timor Leste



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A prosperous Indian Ocean Region is reliant on peace and stability as they are essential catalysts for sustainable development. The safety and security of our waters is therefore a priority for all governments.

Macsuzy Mondon
Designated Minister,
Seychelles

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The shores of Indian Ocean are going to become geopolitically a challenge but at the same time an opportunity to build a bridge of cooperation, understanding and prosperity between Asia and Africa.

Nandcoomar Bodha
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration
and International Trade, Mauritius

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As one of the key lifelines for trade, growth and prosperity of the region and beyond, the security of the Indian Ocean is important to the entire world and here only collective efforts can bring about the desired impact.

Tandi Dorji
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Royal Government of Bhutan

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“

Indian Ocean is the source of nourishment to a greater number of human beings, animals and plants. It is also the bedrock for the development of greater civilizations, cultures and dynamic commercial and economic activities.

Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal

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Indian Ocean is more than just a conduit for commerce, it is a symbol of humanity, a grand network of cross-ocean communal ties populated by great people and we must revive the sense of its own identity using our distinctive histories and diverse cultures.

Ahmad Ali Al Sayegh
Minister for Economic Cooperation in the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UAE

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Engaging partners across all levels from individuals to national governments will be the only mechanism in ensuring cooperation and responsibility, as well as sovereign state in accordance with UNCLOS.

Joaquim Jose Gusmao
dos Reis Martines
Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries,
Timor Leste

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INAUGURAL DINNER & CULTURAL EVENING



INAUGURAL DINNER & CULTURAL EVENING



DAY 2 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

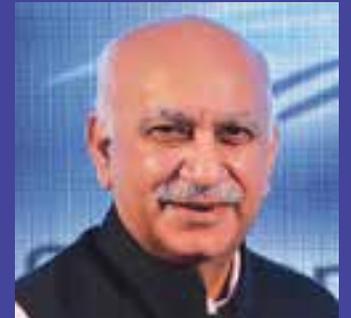
KEYNOTE SESSION II

- SESSION II
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- SESSION IV
- SESSION V
- SESSION VI
- SESSION VII





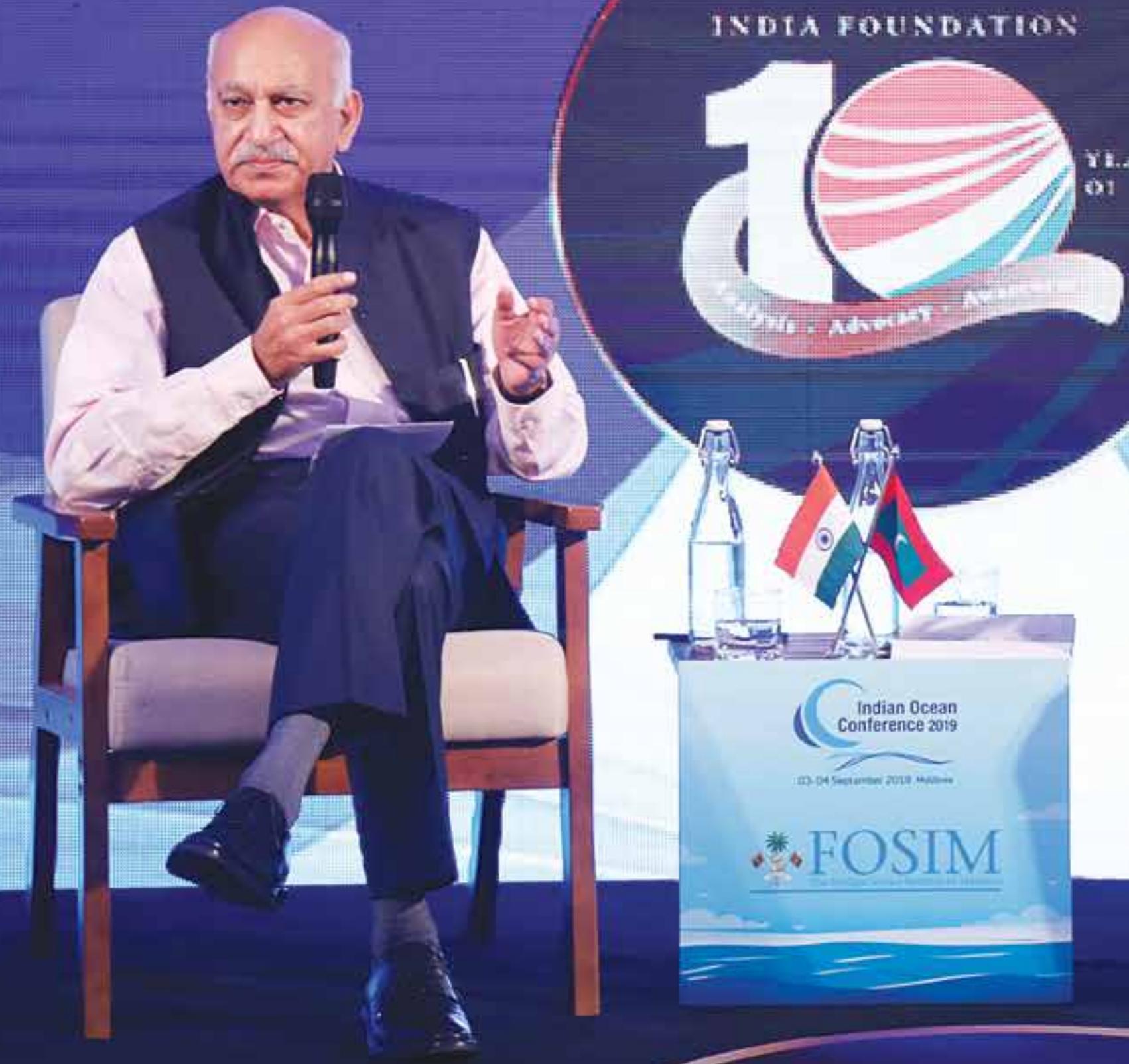
KEYNOTE SESSION II



M J Akbar
Member of Parliament, India



Mohamed Nasheed
Speaker, Peoples' Majlis, Maldives



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The place for India in the ocean exists in the ancient scriptures as well. India was seen not just as the land South of the Himalayas, but also very specifically as the land North of the ocean.

M J Akbar
Member of Parliament, India

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At least for the last one thousand years, new powers established their grip on the world markets by expanding their footprints in the Indian Ocean. For Maldives, the traditional and non-traditional challenges include land grabbing, Islamic radicalism, climate change and industrial fishing.

Mohamed Nasheed
Speaker, Peoples' Majlis, Maldives

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SESSION II



Chair: Ram Madhav

National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party;
Member, Board of Governors, India Foundation



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi

Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oman



Shahriar Alam

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh



Chhiv Yiseang

Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Kingdom of Cambodia



“

Maritime security is built upon two distinct foundations - law and operational security, where the latter comprises practical resources that maintain the peace at sea. It is founded on a collective collaborative approach and rule of law.

Sayyid Badr Bin Hamad Albusaidi
Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oman

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As all the littoral States collectively strive to grow, we need to ensure that the Indian Ocean Region and the adjoining regional bays prosper based on mutual trust and respect with an understanding of equality of interest.

Shahriar Alam
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

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Strategic trust is the most important capital for peace and development. Frequent and frank dialogue amongst the key stakeholders is critical for trust-building.

Chhiv Yiseang
Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Kingdom of Cambodia

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SESSION III



Chair: Ram Madhav

National General Secretary,
Bharatiya Janata Party; Member,
Board of Governors, India Foundation



Kyaw Myo

Deputy Minister of the
Ministry of Transport and
Communications, Myanmar



Toshiko Abe

State Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Japan



Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special
Advisor to the Foreign Minister on Inter-
Institutional Relations, Indonesia



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Due to strategic location and economic vitality, the Indian Ocean has become a lifeline for the livelihood of the people not only of the region but also of the whole world.

Kyaw Myo
Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Transport and
Communications, Myanmar

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Indian Ocean Region faces challenges in broad areas including economy and security. Japan's focus is on a rule-based free and open maritime order which is the cornerstone for stability and the prosperity of the region and beyond.

Toshiko Abe
State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan

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Indonesia believes in power of dialogue with the main aim of trust building and to create dialogue for cooperation. IORA members should continue efforts to further intensify cooperation for a safe and secure Indian Ocean.

Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special
Advisor to the Foreign Minister on Inter-Institutional
Relations, Indonesia

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SESSION IV



Chair: Shakti Sinha
Director, Nehru Memorial
Museum and Library, India



Harry Harris
US Ambassador to South Korea
and Former Commander, US
Pacific Command, USA



Yuri Materiy
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Ambassador to the Democratic
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and
The Maldives Republic, Russia



Wei Hongtian
Ambassador of Department of
Boundary and Ocean Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China

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The U.S. commitment to the Indo-Pacific is unequivocal, and we are not alone. U.S. commitment to the rule of law, peace and prosperity are shared by the vast majority of the countries in the region and this will form the basis of our shared ability to meet the challenges of the future.

Harry Harris
US Ambassador to South Korea and Former
Commander, US Pacific Command, USA

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The prospects for dynamic development of Indian Ocean Region depend directly on how we can deal consistently and effectively with numerous challenges and threats.

Yuri Materiy
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador
to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
and The Maldives Republic, Russia

”

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China proposes justified and reasonable, harmonious and ordered opening up of the Indian Ocean promoting participation of all regional states, based on negotiations and consensus, to contribute for the security and stability of the Indian Ocean Region.

Wei Hongtian
Ambassador of Department of Boundary and
Ocean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China

”



SESSION V



Chair: Shakti Sinha
Director, Nehru Memorial
Museum and Library, India



Pornpimol Kanchanalak
Adviser to Foreign Minister,
Kingdom of Thailand



M Shahidul Islam
Secretary General, BIMSTEC
Secretariat, Bangladesh



Richard Maude
Deputy Secretary, Indo-Pacific
Group, Department of Foreign
Affairs and Trade, Australia



Nguyen Van Thao
Assistant to Deputy Prime
Minister, Director General of the
Department of Economic Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam





“

Thailand as the current chair of ASEAN has tried to evolve a new Indo-Pacific outlook that stresses on the principle of non-confrontation while shifting towards constructive cooperation.

Pornpimol Kanchanalak
Adviser to Foreign Minister, Kingdom of Thailand

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“

Rule based order must be established in the Bay of Bengal and there is a need to improve maritime infrastructure by the BIMSTEC member states while sharing the burden of infrastructure development for common prosperity through better connectivity and accessibility.

M Shahidul Islam
Secretary General, BIMSTEC Secretariat, Bangladesh

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Geo-economics has become a very prominent part of the Indian Ocean Region. The usage of this term means the use of trade, investment and infrastructure not just to deliver connectivity and promote economic growth, but also to build influence and secure national economic and political gains.

Richard Maude
Deputy Secretary, Indo-Pacific Group, Department
of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia

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There are various territorial and maritime disputes in the Indian Ocean Region that may erupt into armed conflict if they are not properly managed and resolved. These challenges have also been accompanied by rising concern over the non-traditional security challenges.

Nguyen Van Thao
Assistant to Deputy Prime Minister,
Director General of the Department of Economic
Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam

”



SESSION VI



Chair: Shekhar Sinha

Former Commander-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, Indian Navy and Member, Board of Trustees, India Foundation



Ratsimandao Tahirimiakadaza

Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madagascar



Michael Kiboino

Director, Oceans and Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya



Abdallah Mirghane

Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet, Comoros



Conference 2019



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We share PM Modi's vision for of Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR). We need to strengthen constructive mechanisms of cooperation to tackle the challenges and coordinate every initiative along the Indian Ocean Region.

Ratsimandao Tahirimiakadaza
Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Madagascar

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Conference 2019



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In Kenya, the Indian Ocean is the single most important and indispensable resource for its blue economy strategy. This potential of the blue economy cannot be realized in an environment of security threats.

Michael Kiboino
Director, Oceans and Security,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya

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The continuous economic development of African countries depends on international trade and vital maritime transports. Maritime security is a major challenge for the poor coastal and island countries in the African and Indian Ocean Region that have large zones of maritime jurisdiction.

Abdallah Mirghane
Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet, Comoros



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SESSION VII



Chair: Shekhar Sinha

Former Commander-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, Indian Navy and Member, Board of Trustees, India Foundation



Edward Ahlgren
OBE, Royal Navy, UK



Abdulla Shamaal
Chief of Defence Force, Maldives



Mahesh Singh
Flag Officer Karwar/ Karnataka, Indian Navy





“

Sea is the life, blood and artery of commerce, trade and economy. Nowhere is it more true than the Indian Ocean which sits at the crossroads of international trade, that is a critical link between the world's economic powerhouses of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions.

Edward Ahlgren
OBE, Royal Navy, UK

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Given the fluidity with which threat vectors move across international borders, our systems must be designed to facilitate easy flow of information and intelligence facilities and capabilities.

Abdulla Shamaal
Chief of Defence Force, Maldives

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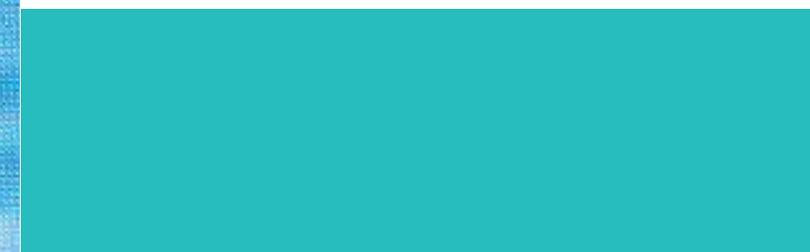


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The Indian Ocean Region is the only connection between the economic prosperity of the West and the aspirations of it in the East. In an increasingly globalized world, it is imperative for the two to meet and amalgamate together for lasting peace.

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Mahesh Singh
Flag Officer Karwar/ Karnataka, Indian Navy



INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE 2019 REPORT

The 4th Indian Ocean Conference – IOC 2019 was organised by India Foundation in association with the Foreign Service Institute of Maldives (FOSIM), and S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore on September 3-4, 2019 in Maldives. The theme for this edition of the Conference was “Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges”.

The Conference was addressed by speakers from 36 countries including Ministers from 17 countries, and Officials from 15 countries and was attended by Delegates from over 40 countries.





In his remarks Dr Baru stated that the pre-eminent challenge in the region is the synergy required between navigational security and the blue economy. This will necessitate strong cooperation between the different nations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). While most leading economies are located in the IOR, many have long held inward looking policies that have prevented a strong framework. With the IOR historically being the sea of commerce and trade, we see a resurgence in that today in terms of energy and commercial goods movement. Oil moving from the Gulf region to the Eastern economies and India and goods flowing from the latter to the West are indicative of this new dimension. There is a need, therefore, to secure such trade movement and build on it to aid in prosperity and growth of the region. The SAGAR policy of the Narendra

Modi Government is one such example of a policy that emphasises securing the 'blue economy'.

Vice Admiral (Retd.) Anup Singh stated the importance of sea borne trade, not just for IOR nations but India in particular that depends on it for 40% of its GDP. This ocean is seen as extremely closed, with choke-points in the West and East that restrict free movement. This raises the risk of attacks and or blockages that would be disastrous for the global economy. Attacks near the Persian Gulf and even on the West Coast of India highlight the penetration of piracy in the IOR and the urgency required in combating it to preserve sovereignty and peace in the region. To remedy this, a mix of maritime cooperation and investment in small island nations such as Maldives, the Seychelles and Mauritius is seen as vital. He highlighted Indian involvement

with such littoral states as well as deployment of warships in critical choke-points to provide security. Linkages between the multilateral organisations of the region is also seen as critical in ensuring peace and stability.

Mr Midland premised his speech on the growing digitalisation of the world and its impacts on security, particularly in the maritime sector. Such digital services such as social media and technology are presenting both opportunities and challenges, becoming vital assets for state and non-state actors. A multi-polar digital world has emerged in the last few years, between the USA and China and their respective tech companies that span the globe. Social media is seen as a tool, therefore, to "shape, advance and manipulate" billions across the world. Hence, the world needs new international guidelines to police and regulate such tools,

especially with relation to maritime security.

From the US Navy, Brigadier Vowell offered a peak into American policy for the region. In an extremely complex region, regional cooperation is extremely necessary and vital for shared prosperity. The US has great concerns about China and Iran that threaten the region at both ends and threatens peace and security. He reiterated the need for a "free and open" Indo-Pacific that is free of coercion and competition and is guided by respected international norms and laws. A major obstacle to such cooperation is militarisation in the IOR, dubious territorial claims and debt diplomacy that is plunging many nations in the region into crisis. One way a free and open ocean can be brought about is open and transparent communication between all nations and respect for international norms.



Addressing the Inaugural Session of the Conference, H.E Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of Maldives spoke of the importance of navigational security to the security and well being of Maldives. He assured the global community that Maldives will implement measures internally to increase its Maritime Domain Awareness whilst partnering with neighboring militaries for joint patrols and exercises such as the ones that they presently conduct with Sri Lanka and India, in the form of the DOSTI Trilateral Exercises, to safeguard their waters from trespassing and other illegal activities. He then spoke of preserving the integrity and diversity of marine ecology as another crucial priority area for the collective security of the region. Particularly alarming for the Maldives has been the steep decline in the Indian Ocean's fish stocks, that are essential to the Maldives as a source of dietary sustenance and economic enterprise, with tuna based

products comprising the bulk of their exports. He concluded by thanking the member nations of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for their support in ensuring the approval to Maldives' as an IORA member nation and reiterated the commitment of his Government to engage proactively on every single one of the substantial policy issues relevant to the Indian Ocean.

H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister, Sri Lanka commenced his address by paying a tribute to Late Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, the former Minister of External Affairs, India, who was one of the key developers of this forum. His Excellency highlighted that the world is becoming increasingly uncertain and facing a triad of critical threats. Amongst these, one of the most critical is the possibility of the downturn of the global economy since the financial crisis. The global dynamics are shifting and the rise of new powers is creating an asymmetric



bipolar world with US and China leading these tensions. Several multilateral bodies established to resolve such issues are also facing severe strains. These tensions are also changing the security dynamics of Indo-Pacific. Asia is increasingly gaining prominence in global economic power and the Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming the hub of economic activities. Thus, the heightened maritime security threats are inevitable. Indian Ocean has become a theatre for tripolar geo-strategic competition for space between India-China on the one hand and China-US on the other. These are being manifested not only in the naval presence but also on securing strategically important trade routes. With the increasing competition amongst many players, it is vital for maritime players to realize the risk associated with destabilizing the maritime order as there are binding economic order that necessitate greater degree of restraint and cooperation. His Excellency

stated that Sri Lanka stands in favor of regional arrangement that incorporates the interests of all key stakeholders. After detailing the traditional and non-traditional threats, he concluded by the need to strengthen IORA in order to make substantial progress. The Indian Ocean regionalism is being hampered by conflicting national interests, lack of will and absence of result oriented report. Multilateral approach including the suggestions and remarks made in the forum should be given serious consideration in order to create a strong regional architecture step-by-step.

Recalling the first edition of the Conference in 2016 Dr Vivian Balakrishnan said that, then there were already signs of fraying of the existing international order. The collective commitment to international security and multilateralism had started to waiver and to add to this the ongoing evolution of the 4th Industrial revolution and the changes



it has demanded of our own citizens. All this has led to the emergence of populism, nationalism and Anti-Globalisation. The military tensions, major disruptions to trade and supply chains and deep uncertainty associated with the future of multilateral institutions has changed the course of geopolitics. He also spoke of the geo-strategic changes and challenges being posed by the grave situation of climate change with rising sea levels, bleached corals and warming temperatures. He reaffirmed Singapore's commitment to working closely with partners to realise the economic potential within. He then concluded by saying that we all want an India Ocean built on peace, security and stability. It has remained committed to facilitating dialogue, building trust and strengthening multilateral institutions and will be able to generate responses to the challenges of climate change and anti-globalisation cohesively, collectively and

forge an independent collective future.

Delivering the Conference KeyNote Address of the 4th edition of this Conference, Dr S Jaishankar referred to the Indo-Pacific to be among the more recent additions to the global strategic lexicon. Every major power in the world today has its own perspective of the Indo-Pacific and thus it is important to enhance the strategic clarity and not be confused by narratives of others. To begin with Indo-Pacific must be perceived as the further extrapolation of the Act-East – Look East policy. The transition from the one to the other was itself indicative of India's deepening security stakes in the East.

He also reaffirmed that India will no longer be limited in the pursuit of its interest to its immediate neighbourhood. And, the same is being reflected in the forging of security



relationships in the Pacific that parallel growing economic engagement. He conceptually justified India's expanding interest in the region by highlighting that India's core-interests lie in the Indian Ocean and thus a presence beyond also contributes to ensuring a peaceful periphery. And since maritime activity has such a profound impact on overall equation India's participation goes some way in contributing to a stable balance of power in Asia.

Talking about the SAGAR vision, he drew attention to the fact that, SAGAR drives a more active and outcome oriented Indian approach that enhances this influence by delivering on partnerships. The Sagarmala initiative and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor are examples. A development whose implications are still not apparent is the revival of ports on India's seaboard that were extinguished during the colonial period. But to take full advantage of its location

it is vital that connectivity to maritime facilities expand beyond India's borders.

He concluded by saying that, "India's vision is consultative, democratic and equitable but must find clearer expressions through its own narratives and concepts. The world will surely absorb changes in terminology just as it has come to terms with power shifts and their implications and as part of that the debate on the Indo-Pacific and its relationship with Indian Ocean will go on".

Taking the stage to address the Conference Keynote Session, Foreign Minister of Maldives, Mr Abdulla Shahid spoke of the geo- strategic significance of the Indian Ocean Region and the need to protect and uphold the rule of law. The Ocean is home to 2 Billion people and currently the centre of gravity of world politics. Major trade routes pass through the waters



of the Indian Ocean and it also carries the majority of the global commercial fleets.

Talking about the significance and dependence of Maldives on the Ocean, he spoke of the island nation's geographical location right at the centre of the Ocean, equidistant between Indonesia on the East and Somalia on the West. The Indian Ocean is a source of sustenance, security and identity to Maldives and its ability to be resilient and prosperous is dependent on the stability of the ocean. Any change, be it geological, geo-political or geo-economical will have a magnifying impact on the Maldives. He then elaborated on the Foreign Policy vision of President Ibrahim Mohammad Solih's Government which seeks to cultivate healthy and mutually beneficial partnerships with all its neighbours and security in the Indian Ocean.

In the Maldives, addressing Climate Change and

developing national resilience go hand in hand. For a small island developing state like Maldives, climate change is one of the worst challenges. The Maldives is engaging with other member nations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to find meaningful solutions to this global problem. In furtherance of the same, he called upon the world to declare war on Single Use Plastic. Today, there is a strong alignment of political will in the greater coordination and cooperation amongst nations in the Indian Ocean Region to work together in a more collaborative to ensure that they are able to build their national resilience, contribute meaningfully and sustainably in maintaining strategic stability in the Indian Ocean Region. Maldives is thus working towards the safety, stability and security of the Indo-Pacific Region and towards ensuring Freedom of Navigation, Maritime Security and



addressing the hindrances to that freedom including piracy and organised crime.

The Honourable Designated Minister from Seychelles Ms. Macsuzy Mondon began her address by emphasising on the importance of the blue economy for the states surrounding the IOR. She outlined the importance of peace and stability in the IOR for its surrounding states. With opportunities come threats, such as piracy, trafficking and terrorism that destabilise the region. Thanking India and the USA in particular for lending support to Seychelles, Seychelles calls for a global effort to stabilise the IOR. This would be in the form of multilateral agreements and continued vigilance. International norms and laws governing such activities in the IOR are therefore vital to unlocking the potential of the ocean. It is the duty of IOR nations to ensure the security of the ocean for all.



Honourable Minister from Mauritius Mr Nandcomar Bodha reiterated the significant challenge posed by piracy in the IOR. With the crucial trade passing through the IOR, it is vital to protect the region against challenges such as trafficking, piracy, smuggling, terrorism (etc.). For vulnerable island states such as Mauritius, the need for a larger regional force to fight such threats is necessary. Through forums such as the Indian Ocean Commission and the Indian Ocean Conference, such dialogue can lead to enhanced safety. With climate change being a significant threat to all nations across the globe, as well as marine pollution, agreements such as the Paris Climate Accords and greater International regulations are needed. A maritime security strategy based on information coordination, containing finances of terrorist organisations, fighting propaganda on the internet and assessing the preparedness of states against terrorism is vital. Mr Bodha



concluded his speech by reiterating the importance of the IOR in being a bridge between Asia and Africa and the need to protect it.

The Honourable Minister from Bhutan, Mr. Tandi Dorji, began his address by highlighting the cordial and fruitful relationship that Bhutan and the Maldives share. While Bhutan is landlocked, what happens in the IOR does have a significant impact on the nation due to the interconnectedness of the world today. While states are facing the problem of rising sea levels, low lying areas of Bhutan are threatened with melting glaciers. The effects of climate change are seen in Bhutan and the need for a concerted global effort is highlighted. While Bhutan remains carbon neutral with 70% forest cover, this remains but “a few drops in the ocean” when it comes to making an impact on climate change. To protect trade in

the IOR and sustain the benefits of a blue economy, dialogue and collaboration is needed, with such conferences being a necessary first step.

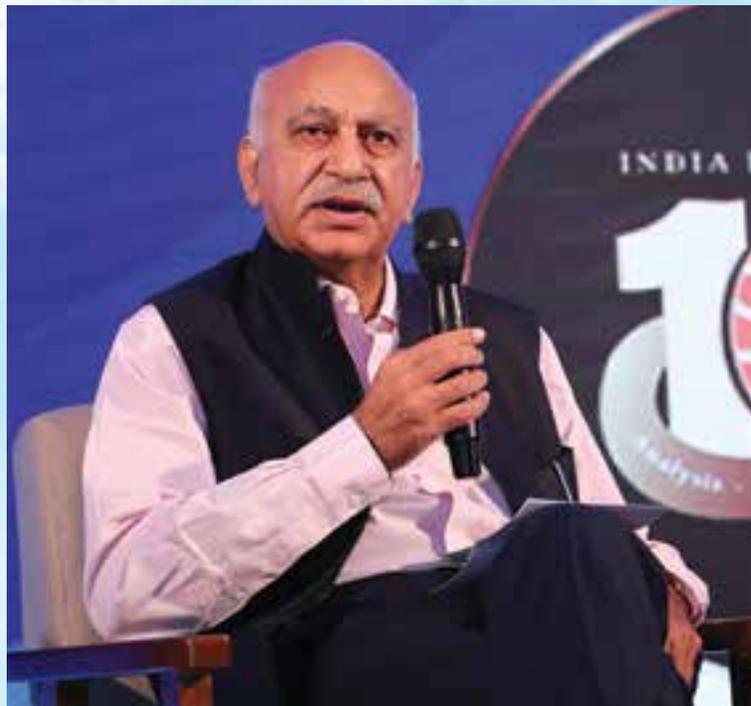
In his address, the Minister from Nepal, Mr Pradeep Kumar Gyawali spoke of the vitality of the ocean in each and every nation’s development, biodiversity preservation and resource utilisation including that of Nepal. The ocean is key to unlocking growth and prosperity for all nations, especially through large oil and natural gas deposits. Climate change is something that also affects Nepal, even though it is landlocked. Further security challenges such as smuggling and trafficking, a multilateral approach is required to tackle such issues. Most of Nepal’s trade passes through the sea and with the creation of Nepali flag bearing ships in the IOR, Nepal also has increasing stake in the matters of the

ocean. Such architecture should lead to shared benefits for all nations with the need for strong international laws to back them up. Climate change is another issue that needs to be addressed in relation to the Indian Ocean. With proposed construction of roads and waterways between Nepal and the Indian Ocean improving connectivity, Nepal hopes to have greater involvement in matters pertaining to the IOR. For landlocked countries, the need to remove this geographical handicap and ensure equal growth through regional cooperation is necessary.

The Hon’ble Minister from UAE Mr Ahmad Ali Al Sayegh spoke of the strategic importance of the ocean to trade and the UAE having long been a hub between Asia, Africa and Europe as well as a gateway to Middle East. Freedom of navigation and regional cooperation is key to the growth of the ocean, continuing cultural exchanges and continuous trade

movement. With the advent of climate change threatening all nations, there is a need to support global dialogues that catalyse climate action. Hosting the World Ocean Summit in 2019 and being the HQ of UNRENA, Abu Dhabi, UAE has shown its commitment to protecting the planet. With legislation in place to protect marine biodiversity and the sustainable development of the blue economy. The threat of piracy still looms large, threatening free navigation and the security of the region. The UAE has led great efforts in combined maritime security and investments in infrastructure such as ports that facilitate greater trade. A strong focus on vital issues such as maritime safety and security, cultural cultural exchanges and blue economy is needed with the help of several countries to continue building bridges and securing the region.

The Honourable Minister from Timor Leste Mr Martin said that being a small island nation, Timor Leste is nevertheless



committed to ensuring sustainability, development and peace for all its citizens. Timor Leste has been a part of the Small Island Developing States since 1992 and a member of the Coral Triangle initiative since 2007. Timor Leste hopes to engage all partners to great joint cooperation and responsibility in the region, committing itself to the sustainable development of the blue economy in accordance with international law. Through partnership and support, there is a need to address unregulated fishing and developing sea based tourism in the region, especially in tourism. The Minister reiterated the 7 sustainable development goals that Timor Leste is committed to, namely an anti-pollution campaign, an ocean policy, extending knowledge of fishing grounds, mapping coastlines, implementing sustainable tourism guidelines and ratifying treaties to prevent the wildlife trade.

Mr. Akbar began his talk by diving straight into the history of the ocean. Mentioning Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, Mr. Akbar stated that the former was chosen due to his past as a naval commander in the IOR and one of the Viceroy's duties was to ensure India becomes Britain's "successor state" when it came to the Indian Ocean. India's subsequent 'non-alignment' policy, he states, was a failure as it prevented India from asserting itself, as well as the fact that the Indo-China war was not prevented by the adoption of the policy by both nations. A new policy of 'multi-alignment' is much better suited. The speaker dives again into history, stating that while Europeans feel they discovered India, India was already very aware of its role in the world. With climate change, increasing militarisation and globalisation, it is imperative to ensure the safety of the IOR. Ending by stating the importance of the Indo-pacific theatre during WW2, Mr. Akbar reiterated the

importance of the ocean to global affairs, then and now.

Mr. Nasheed referenced the history of the IOR, stating the interest of Chinese and later European forces of establishing control over the ocean and their specific interest in surveying the islands of Maldives. While India has maintained a peaceful and strong relationship with the Maldives, he referenced the issue of land grabs and authoritarian rule in the region as a grave threat. Explicitly stating "I am specifically referring to China," he outlined land grabs and debt diplomacy that the Chinese have used to gain control of the Maldives. He hopes for more transparent and mutually beneficial investment in the Maldives from all nations in the region, comparing China to the East India Company. He then moved on to discuss the rise of radical islam that threatens the maldives and wider region. With mentions of infiltration by such groups into Maldivian authorities, he reminded of the

audience of President Solih's commission and its importance in investigating such radicalisation. He then raised the issue of unsustainable fishing in the region as well as coral bleaching, both which are affecting the region and the Maldives adversely.

The Honourable Minister from Oman focussed his remarks specifically on maritime security in the region, built on the foundations of law and operational security. With piracy being a significant issue in the region, the Minister called for a collaborative effort in policing the sea. Cooperation entails the coordination of naval operations, information sharing and joint training. He mentioned the Omani port of Duqm as located at a geostrategic point with the hopes of making it a trade hub. He emphasised that the port is open for all, in line with Oman's policy of inclusiveness. With trust building and respect for maritime law, he hopes that states will prioritise



long term peace and stability as opposed to short term gain.

The Honourable Minister from Bangladesh, Shahriar Alam, stated that Bangladesh, a booming economy, has kept a strong interest and effort in maintaining peace and security in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. With peace and stability in the region, all can take part in prosperous growth. This should be on the basis of mutual and shared respect and responsibility for the ocean. He highlighted the notable efforts of BIMSTEC and others in being effective tools. He called for greater economic integration and coastal shipping agreements to enhance regional connectivity. With “zero-tolerance” to illicit activities in the ocean, He hoped for further strategic partnerships and a security architecture to address the issue. Highlighting the importance of sustainable fishing and the threat of climate change, he called for greater conservation efforts from all nations in the region. He ended

his address by stating that the “choice is ours” in protecting and enhancing the Indian Ocean Region.

The Honourable Minister from Cambodia Mr Chhiv Yisenag stressed on the importance of mutually beneficial framework where the interests of both large and small nations are respected. With frequent dialogue, an inclusive rules based multilateral system can be achieved. With mounting pressures of security and independence, sovereignty of nations should not be taken for granted. He outlined the importance of ASEAN in being a forum and “security shell” for its member nations to expand connections. He also stressed the importance of RCEP as being the key economic pillar of the region. He listed several threats facing the region and stressed for solutions through consensus building and inclusiveness.

The Honourable Minister from Myanmar, Kyaw Myo, stressed

the importance of cooperation through bilateral and multilateral settings to address regional issues. With the ever increasing importance of the region and Myanmar’s strategic location, Myanmar hopes for a greater role on the part of all states in the region. Regional agreements such as BIMSTEC and ASEAN in place can aid with the process of regional cooperation. He also mentioned the growing threat of climate change that is adversely affecting cyclone strength in the Bay of Bengal, greatly affecting Myanmar. Hoping for the development of “institutionalised cross regional setting” for intergration to tackle marine pollution and terrorism in the region. He stated that Myanmar hopes for peace and harmony in the region and hopes to play a larger role in the future.

Presenting the Japanese perspective, Toshiko Abe, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan, reflected on the strategic

importance due to the important sea line of communications. The Indian Ocean region is also the theatre of economic activity for many players. Hence, it faces challenges of both economic and security nature. In context of the Indian Ocean, the Japanese focus is essentially on three factors, namely, the maritime order, combating piracy and combating terrorism. She focused on the importance of a rule-based free and open order for stability and prosperity. Pointing out several initiatives and contribution of Japan in this regard, she discussed measures such as assistance in capacity-building, goodwill exercises and other multilateral efforts. She also highlighted the emerging prominence of natural disasters as a form of a security threat. She concluded by stating that the issues in the Indian Ocean region are of a complex nature. No single actor can alone solve these issues. It is imperative for like-minded partners and stakeholders to cooperate and



constantly encourage each other to take on the challenges in the Indian Ocean region.

In his address Mr Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro hoped for greater confidence and soft cooperation through dialogue between nations in the region. In a growing economy, ASEAN can play a major role in bringing regional cooperation. The East Asia Summit can further bring economic and maritime cooperation, promoting connectivity and sustainability. With the sustainable development of the blue economy, Indonesia hopes for mutually beneficial growth and prosperity in the region. With PM Modi and President Widodo agreeing to bring more maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia sees opportunity for greater cooperation in the region. IORA is another example of a multilateral forum that can enhance regional connectivity and growth. Mentioning the Indonesian policy to reduce marine debris by 70% by 2025, he showed



Indonesia's commitment to a cleaner ocean and hoped for greater responsibility on the part of all nations in addressing both traditional and non traditional challenges.

In his address Amb Harry Harris regarded Indian and Pacific Oceans as the two determinants of the future of the earth. The trade routes within these regions are the central artery of the global economy. Strategically all the maritime choke points are pointing towards Indian Ocean. Four of the six biggest economies are located in the region. The demand for food, energy, housing and freedoms will be higher and thus, the future of the globe will be dependent on the choices made in the Indo-Pacific. He stated that the United States will always be an Indo-Pacific nation. The US is geographically in the region; their citizenry is from the region; and their soldiers, sailors, marines and others are buried across the region. Hence, the future of US is inextricably linked to the region. Amb Harris mentioned



the US contribution and the robust manifestation of US to the economic momentum in the region. He highlighted the focus of Trump administration on creation strong reciprocal bilateral trade relations that contribute in development through job creations and not debt creation. He advocated for a free and open Indo-Pacific, with states to be strong independent and be satellites to none in economic, security and governance terms. He also raised concerns over China's commitment in the region. Ambassador Harris concluded by restating the US vision of Indo - Pacific based on building deep strong relations based on trust, reciprocal benefits, security, mutually beneficial economic gains and respect for the rule of law as built with India, South Korea, Japan, Australia, etc.

Amb Yuri Materiy highlighted the Russian interest in the IOR as mentioned in the Maritime Doctrine of 2020. Characterizing Indian Ocean as a regional priority, he focused on the

need for transparent dialogues. He regarded the Shanghai Cooperation Operation as a potential multilateral dialogue form for concerns in the Indian Ocean with the recent additions in its memberships. He called for collective action with the central leadership of UN to curb terrorism, piracy and other maritime crime. He also questioned the substance value of "Indo-Pacific", while focusing on "Asia-Pacific" as reflective of a constructive partnership and cooperation.

Amb Wei Hongtian commenced his address by stating the Chinese ambitions to be a strong maritime country based on four principles, namely, peaceful, cooperative, open and win-win development; settlement of maritime dispute through friendly dialogue and negotiation; commitment to maritime cooperation and rules; upholding unobstructed passage and security of international shipping lines. He argued that China is not a littoral state in the Indian Ocean, but has key interests



and concerns over peace and security of the region. China has historical and cultural linkages with countries in the region established along the Maritime Sea Route. He regarded Indian Ocean shipping lanes as the maritime lifeline for China and highlighted the immense importance of maritime trade for Chinese economy. Amb Hongtian mentioned the Chinese contribution in anti-piracy and other humanitarian operations in the region. Describing terrorism as a common enemy of mankind, he stated China also to be a victim of terrorism. On behalf of China, he proposed a justified reasonable openness of Indian Ocean Region with participation of all based on negotiations. He regarded BRI to be one such forum for a pragmatic cooperation. He concluded his remarks with the hope to build a cooperative, peaceful, inclusive, sustainable and prosperous Indian Ocean Region with joint efforts.

Describing old challenges as common knowledge, Pornpimol

Kanchanalak, Adviser to Foreign Minister, Kingdom of Thailand, summarized new challenges to be rooted in the differences between the new great powers and the old international paradigm. She highlighted the need to make new adjustments with the changing times. Instead of approaching the issues in different tangents, she advocated the need calibrate coordinated response to avoid brinkmanship and miscalculations. She focused on the new Indo-Pacific outlook forwarded by Thailand as the current chair of ASEAN - to move away from confrontation towards constructive cooperation and working together to find some, if not all the solutions with an open mind.

M Shahidul Islam, Secretary General, BIMSTEC Secretariat, focused his address majorly on the issues in Bay of Bengal and the littoral and adjacent states of BIMSTEC. Bay of Bengal hosts key transit route between the Indian and the

Pacific Ocean, thus becomes crucial in terms of security and strategic concerns of the larger Indian Ocean Region. He highlighted that not only is Bay of Bengal one of the fastest growing economies in the world, there is also an increased sense of traditional and non-traditional security threats. He advocated for peaceful and progressive development, backed by sustained efforts, cooperation, comprehensive approach, participation and collaboration amongst the member state. Recognizing the need for a rule-based order supported by maritime infrastructures, he appreciated the awareness amongst the BIMSTEC states to work closely in developing common perceptions and approach towards them.

Richard Maude, Deputy Secretary, Indo-Pacific Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia focused his address on the changing strategic dynamics in the region, response of region particularly on the regional architecture

and contribution of Australia in the region. He highlighted the manifestation of the changing dynamics through creation of multipolarity in the region; flash points in border disputes; and gaining prominence of 'geo-economics', where trade, investment and infrastructure are being used not only for connectivity, but also to build influence in order to secure political and economic gains. He also brought in the increasing use of hard and soft power to build influence in the region. He mentioned the Indian Ocean region becoming an unstable regional order due to high levels of uncertainty and decreasing political independence. He also highlighted IORA being largely absent from the regional and global stage as it is avoiding the contentious issues. He concluded with mentioning the Australian vision for the region that advocated for sovereign independent states open to cooperation with the rights of all being respected. He argued



in favor of building culture of cooperation premised on strong rules and defined norms and principles.

Discussing the great strategic importance of the Indian Ocean, Nguyen Van Thao, Assistant to Deputy Prime Minister, Director General of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam, attributed this importance to connectivity, oil shipment, shipping lanes etc. as factors critical to international trade, navigation and energy security. It is for reasons like this that the territorial and maritime conflicts located in the region are very dangerous as they can become an armed conflict if they remain unresolved. In order to address these issues, it is vital to work together and develop the same set of rules and standards. Only with a common framework, is the fight against these issues durable and sustainable development can be fostered. He advocated that UNCLOS, constitution of the oceans should

be made the foundation for maritime conduct and activities. He characterized the trans-border challenges to require cooperation and collective responses. He concluded his address by bringing into focus the recent activities in the South China Sea and urged the members of Indian Ocean region to stand firm on the rule of law in the oceans and for compliance with UNCLOS and international law.

Detailing the maritime challenges faced by Madagascar and several policy initiatives taken by the country in this regard, Ratsimandao Tahirimiakadaza, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madagascar, highlighted the effort required build maritime oriented development policy. In his address he reiterated the commitment of Madagascar to contribute in the ongoing international effort to promote a secure and prosperous Indian Ocean region. He pointed out the factors reflecting the vital interests for Madagascar in the region such

as its geographical positioning being the fourth largest island nation and 80% of its trade takes place through the seas. He discussed the integrated maritime strategy of Madagascar that allows for sustainable exploitation without making its maritime space subject to external power rivalry. Supporting the vision of SAGAR forwarded by the India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he advocated for peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region. In his concluding remarks, he stated that not all the islands have enough capacity to deliver and thus, mechanism of coordination is necessary. Since the threats are interconnected, the responses to such threats must also be interconnected and coordinated.

Discussing the perspective and experiences from Western Indian Ocean, Michael Kiboino, Director, Oceans and Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya highlighted the increasing and deliberate prioritization of blue economy as the next

frontier of economic growth and development in Africa. Indian Ocean is the single most important and indispensable resource for the blue economy strategy, the potential of which cannot be realized with the threats looming in the region. He narrowed down three major concerns in realizing the potential of Indian Ocean for Kenya. These were: land based root causes of threats contained in passive conflicts and state fragility; the extra regional dynamics with destabilizing effect in an existing fragile region; and climate change which is defining new security and developmental challenges. While advocating for a robust institutional framework for managing regional threat to peace and human security, he highlighted that it is not the lack of institutional mechanisms but the need to have stronger implementation will that is necessary. He called for strengthening multilateral cooperation based on mutual respect and equality in accordance with international law and



formulating principles and rules of engagement.

Abdallah Mirghane, Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet, Comoros, in his address stressed on the importance of including the coastal and island states in any dialogue on the Indian Ocean. He highlighted that the economic development of African states is highly dependent on international trade and thus, maritime transport and security are of vital importance. These are a major challenge for poor coastal and island states. The African maritime area is infested with degradation of ocean health, transnational organized crime such as piracy, terrorism, trafficking, etc. Also, these small states do not have the requisite capacity to check container shipments. Protecting territorial waters and economic zones is of immense importance for the small countries. He reflected on the need for not only

strong legal framework, but also strong enforcement capacity. He stated that the problem to an effective cooperation is rooted in lack of capacity and political will. He concluded by emphasising that maritime security must include element of international peace, security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. A safe and secure Indian Ocean is important for both social and economic development.

Edward Ahlgren, OBE, Royal Navy, UK, stated that Indian Ocean sits at the cross-roads of international trade which is a critical link between the world's power house of Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific Region. Indian Ocean is more than a simple transit corridor. Indian Ocean is contested, congested, and complicated. He concluded by focusing on the need for technological developments to promote security,

governance, prosperity and sustainability that we leverage are also available to our adversaries.

Acknowledging that strategic and security environment is highly volatile and ambiguous, Abdulla Shamaal, Chief of Defence Force, Maldives, stated that with complex and interlinked threats & challenges that creates uncertainty for Statesmen and Practitioners, the main cause of this volatility is intense socio-economic as well as military competition among near-peer competitors namely Dominant States, Resurgent Powers, Rising Powers or Revisionist Powers. He focused on the need for a natural convergence of interests on the part of major regional and international players that fit into India Look East/Act East policy as well as China's economic network of Belt & Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Route.

Mahesh Singh, Flag Officer Karwar/ Karnataka, Indian Navy, commenced his address by pointing out that global security environment has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Today, the threats are more dynamic, unpredictable, diverse, networked, and constantly evolving. Indian Ocean is the only connection between the economic prosperity of the West and the aspirations of the East. The statistics of types and numbers of ships that travel through vital shipping lanes of Indian Ocean Region indicate that they sustain economic activity and enable prosperity across the world. He concluded by stating that today the security of the Indian Ocean Region faces challenges largely from Non-State Actors and in some cases from State Sponsored Non-State Actors.



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Sayyid Badr meets Maldives minister
03/09/2019 • Oman Observer

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al-Bukhaiti, Secretary-General of the Forum of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, in Male on Tuesday. They met 2019 themed "Securing the Indian Ocean region: Traditional and meeting, they discussed regional cooperation opportunities in common interest. They also stressed the importance of cooperation development and sustain peace and stability. The Secretary General of Maldives in hosting the fourth edition of the conference, were succeed in achieving coordination, cooperation and integration.

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EAM Jaishankar at Indian Ocean Conference 2019 Says 'Indo-Pacific Logical Step for India After Act East'
World | ANI | Sep 03, 2019 11:55 PM IST

Male, September 3: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said that Indo-Pacific is the logical step after Act East for India. "The Indo-Pacific is not tomorrow's forecast, but yesterday's reality. The Indo-Pacific naturally means different things to different powers, but it is undeniably a priority for all of them. For India, it is the logical step after Act East and a break out from the confines of South Asia," Jaishankar said during his address at the Indian Ocean Conference here. **EAM S Jaishankar Hosts Dinner for**

SWARAJYA
Delhi News | Business | Health | Sports

IOC 2019: Bringing Back Indian Ocean In Strategic Consciousness
By Anupama Bhatnagar - Sep 2, 2019 08:21 AM

After so many years, the importance of the Indian Ocean region has started to be realised and stressed.

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Global energy needs expected to roughly double by 2030: Sri Lankan PM

ANI

COLOMBO GAZETTE
www.colombogazette.com

Ranil likely to have talks with Indian FM in Maldives
August 31, 2019 - 11:44

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is likely to have talks with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in the Maldives.

Jaishankar is stated to participate in the fourth Indian Ocean Conference 2019, which will take place in the Maldives from September 3 to 4.

Wickremesinghe will also be attending the event together with Foreign Ministers from a few other countries.

Maldives' President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Foreign Ministers of Singapore, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal and Bhutan are expected to be at the conference, the ANI news service had reported.

The Himalayan
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Foreign minister stresses preserving ecological balance in Himalayas to address climate crisis
Nepal | September 03, 2019 09:00 AM IST

KATHMANDU, Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradyumna Kumar Gyawali addressed the "Fourth Indian Ocean Conference" held in the Maldives on Tuesday under the theme of "Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges".

Addressing the conference, Minister Gyawali stated that Nepal was in favour of peace, security and stability of international law in relation to the use of seas. He stressed the need for an architecture based on inclusiveness, partnership and collaboration among all countries, utilization of resources and sharing of the benefits by all states, including landlocked countries like Nepal.

The Nation
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Maldives to host Indian Ocean Conference 2019 in September

The Maldives had announced a high-level conference on Tuesday. The Maldives had announced a high-level conference on Tuesday. The Maldives had announced a high-level conference on Tuesday.

The fourth edition of the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) 2019 is set to be held in Maldives from September 3-4 at Fuvahmulah Island Resort.

The conference is organized by India Foundation in association with the Foreign Service Institute of Maldives and a Regional School of International Studies in Singapore.

This year's theme for IOC 2019 is "Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges".

The conference will be attended by representatives from 20 countries worldwide, including President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih of Maldives, and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka.

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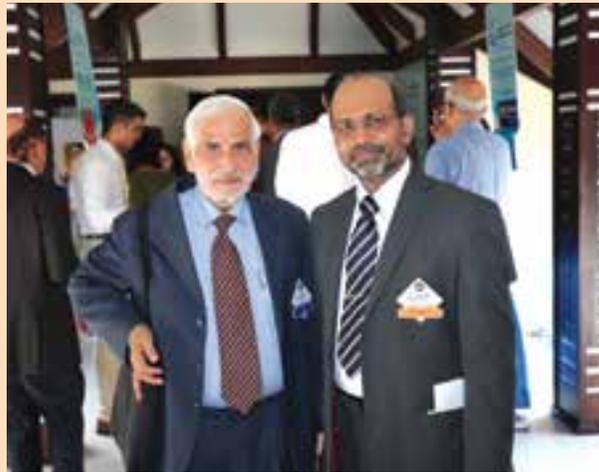
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