

Sea control for medium and small navies history essay



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1. Naval Power is but a part of overall national military power, and a Navy is but a part of maritime power of the state. However, naval power is flexible to an extra ordinary degree and operates in medium quite free of restrictions placed on land and air power[1]. This free medium could become a restriction in certain circumstances, where it could be a boon to one navy, it could be a curse to another.

2. Command of the Sea could be the dream of all navies of the past but in present day, sea control along with power projection would be the ultimate a navy could achieve. With modern technology and advancement of force multipliers like Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft, AWACS, In-flight Refueling and submarines available with adversaries, sea control is becoming immensely difficult. Even the small navies could possess few of these above mentioned aircrafts or submarines, which could give them sea denial capabilities. A case in point was the Falklands War of 1982 when the British Nuclear powered submarine HMS CONQUERER sank Argentine cruiser GENERAL BELGRANO on second May. This resulted in containment of the remaining Argentine surface forces, including a carrier, which played no further part in the campaign, thereby reducing a major challenge to British Sea Control. However, the loss of HMS SHEFFIELD to missile attack demonstrated the powerful ' SeaDenial' capabilities still possessed by Argentine Maritime Air Forces[2].

3. In describing the ways by which Navies could contribute to achieving national objectives, Admiral Turner wrote that there were two basic missions for a navy, sea control and projection of power ashore. Sea control is defined as relative ability to use the sea for one's own purpose in specified areas and

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for specified periods of time and, where necessary, to deny its use to the enemy. As sea control by itself meant nothing unless its establishment led to some effect, the second mission for the US Navy was projection of power ashore or the application of maritime power from the sea to influence events on land directly. Power projection missions ranged from peacetime function of deterrence to combative function of nuclear strikes. The mission for US Navy in the 1980's was dominated by an emphasis on achieving sea control of the sea. Up to the end of the cold war the threat of the soviet Navy with a strong sea denial ensured that sea control remained clearly a more important mission for the US Navy.

4. The end of the cold war and with it the demise of the single massive threat from the East resulted in shift in focus to new dangers, chief among which is the aggression by regional powers. The role of US forces, in the changed strategic environment, is to be able to rapidly project power to protect vital US interests and defend friends and allies. The US Navy has announced a fundamental shift away from open ocean war fighting on the sea towards joint operations conducted from the sea and that the pre occupation of its Navy in the future will be land control and not sea control. The ability to influence events on land implies that sea control and power projection will cohabit in a different relationship, the fight for control of the sea would be relegated to a secondary concern of US maritime strategy.

5. Pre World War II Britain was the sea power, which could exercise sea control in a theater of their interest. It had a fleet built up around this role with the British 'cruisers' being central to sea control. Post World War II this role has been taken up by the US Navy, which has been uncomfortable with <https://assignbuster.com/sea-control-for-medium-and-small-navies-history-essay/>

the acceptance of this role, forced on it since 1945 by the collapse of the Royal Navy. One proof of this is the fact that US Navy has never built ships for this role, although they came close with Admiral Zumwalt's sea control ship of 1970's. There is no functional US Navy equivalent of the pre-war Royal Navy Cruiser[3]. The US Navy has tried to use the aircraft carriers for the role but it has never been the same.

6. It would be difficult for any other nation to exercise sea control, basically because today control of the sea needs immense resources backed by an economically strong nation, which can support its navy. Sea denial has become immensely effective with minimal resources which even smaller navies can afford and hence, the establishment of sea controls even more difficult

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem

1. There are regional powers with regional navies like India, Indonesia, Thailand, Brazil, Argentina etc. Their interest in the oceans is constantly on the increase. These navies fall in the category of Medium Powers. They aspire to influence the region in which they exist and protect their interest. They and some smaller navies are acquiring naval hardware to increase their clout. Some out of these, at least the Medium Powers, aspire to have sea control capabilities in furtherance of their national interests. But is sea control viable for medium and small navies?

Justification of study

2. There are Medium Powers and some small power navies who want to be a 'Blue Water' force. Some of these medium powers claim to have 'blue water' capabilities and desire to exercise sea control in their areas of interests when need arises. But the sophistication of new weapons and modern means of communications have made sea control virtually impossible. A very small navy with the required equipment can put up a strong sea denial measure.

3. The advent of economic powers, fear of sanctions, ratification of UNCLOS III, the wherewithal required in the present circumstances to enforce sea control, the shrinking of defence and naval budgets of nations, the formation of alliances and nuclear deterrence has posed a few challenges to exercising sea control.

Scope

4. An answer to the statement of the problem lies in firstly examining the maritime interests of small and medium power nations and the perceived threats to the security of their interests. And in what ways can these navies expect to provide protection from these threats. This thesis will examine whether sea control is the primary mission of small and medium power navies in the Indian Ocean Region and if it is, then is sea control viable for these navies in today's International scenario? What are the hurdles in the way of sea control and what are the alternatives to sea control?

5. A considerable amount of literature exists on ranking Navies by their power and capability in to small and medium sized Navy[4]. For the purpose

of this thesis, for those nations which maintain a Navy with the capacity to operate primarily within their national EEZ limits but with some abilities to operate beyond the EEZ for the limited duration, will be considered to be small and medium sized Navy and included all Navies in the region.

6. This paper will discuss the medium and small navies with reference to Indian Ocean region.

Operational Definitions

7. Some of the terms used in the dissertation are defined below for better understanding.

(a) Command of the Sea. The ability to use the sea is its entirety for once own purpose at any time and to deny the use of ships to the enemy.

(b) Deterrence. A possible aggressor is deterred if he fails to attack because he assesses that the cost of any aggressive action will outweigh any benefits. Deterrence in a form of coercion it can be generally no specific aggressor or act of aggression is identified, or directed a specific government to deter specific actions. Deterrence can be enacted through nuclear or conventional forces.

(c) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The zone of sea around a state over which it has exclusive rights under international law to exploit economic resources.

(d) Maritime Power Projection. Sea control ensures freedom of action above and below the surface of the sea. The projection of maritime power is the application of maritime power from the sea to influence events on land directly. It exploits sea control to achieve access to the coast and deliver power ashore in the form of amphibious force, organic aircraft's, and attack weapon and Special Forces. Maritime power projection is a concept that has broad application both during hostilities and for crisis management. In a crisis power projection capability is an important contribution to naval diplomacy providing the principal sea borne instrument for coercion and reassurance. The sailing of power projection forces demonstrate political resolve without a specific statement of commitment. They can poise at sea for long period providing clear evidence of intent and purpose. A maritime power projection force can provide the main or the lead elements for an intervention operation, or a non-combatant evacuation operation, and provide a mobile base for humanitarian or peace support operation. Maritime power projection forces form part of the maritime component of a national expeditionary capability. During hostile maritime power projection forces can used the sea to provide Access to territory that is less accessible by land and air and to apply maneuver from the sea[5].

(e) Medium Power Navy It is the Navy that does not have the global reach of super powers and therefore lies between 'self sufficiency' and 'insufficiency' which in toady's parlance comes under category of regional powers. It belongs to a country having necessary economic, industrial, technological and force levels to safeguard national interests but without the capacity to intervene unilaterally beyond their regional boundaries. Medium powers

must have the ability to use the sea to benefit their economy, absorb technology and ensure security. The navies of India, Argentina, Indonesia and Iran are typical examples of the medium power navies.

(f) Small Power Navy It is the navy, which has a reach, till the EEZ. It can possibly deny the sea in these areas to intruders and other navies with a considerable amount of success. Singapore navy could be considered as a small power navy.

Method of Data Collection

8. The data for dissertation has been collected from various books, periodicals and magazines and other Defence Books like Jane's fighting ships. Certain inputs have been taken from guest lectures the Defence Services Staff College has been having from imminent defence analysts and authors.

Organisation of the Dissertation

9. To analyze the statement of the problem and subject under consideration, it is proposed to study the subject in the following manner: -

(a) Sea Control. The size and role of navy, a nation wants to have, would depend upon various factors like :-

Geographical Location

Vital Interests and Threats to These Vital Interests

Dependence on Sea

Energy

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Missions for Small and Medium Power Navies

(b) Viability of Sea Control. Is sea control viable for small and medium navies considering the following :-

Economic considerations and shrinking budgets

The emergence of economic powers which are playing a greater role than military

Naval hardware available with Medium and Small Navies

The Laws of the Sea being one of the biggest hindrances

The difficulty in imposing Sea Control

(c) Alternative to Sea Control. There are various alternatives a Nation has to achieve its goals and protect its interests, like :-

Adherence to International Law

Engagement of the powerful nation

Formation of alliances to ensure ' security'

Use of International Courts and Tribunals to settle disputes

Use of World Opinion and Sanctions against an erring nation

Having a minimum nuclear deterrence

Having a navy with strong Sea Denial capabilities

(d) Conclusion

CHAPTER III

SEA CONTROL

Sea Control

1. Sea control is defined as the conditions in which one has freedom of action to use the sea for one's own purpose in specified areas and for specified period of time and, where necessary, to deny its use to the enemy[6]. There is likely to be a requirement for sea control across the spectrum of conflict. At the lower end of the spectrum maritime forces may be used to ensure freedom of navigation by deterrent presence in area where illegal acts or constraints are being threatened to merchant shipping. At the highest end it may necessary to use a huge array of maritime power to eliminate its enemy's ability to challenge sea control over large areas of ocean. The need of sea control is not dependent upon the existence of a substantial threat. If there is any risk to freedom of action, sea control is necessary. If the risk is small the capabilities that will be needed can be correspondingly modest.

Early achievement and retention of the necessary level of sea control will, almost without exception, be a component of any major maritime or expeditionary campaign or operation. However, there can be no absolute guarantee of protection from attack at sea unless command of the sea has been achieved. Sea control must be related to expectable risk. For operations to take place, a working level of sea control must be achieved to provide sufficient freedom of action with in an acceptable level of risk .

If sea control remains in dispute in a certain area, each side will be forced to operate in the face of considerable risk. However, sea control is unlikely to be an end in itself. Rather sea control is necessary to allow use of the sea for further purposes.

3. Sea control comprises control of the surface and sub-surface environment and of the air space above the area of control. The control of air space is only one of degree. The minimum requirement of successful operation is a favorable air situation. Air superiority will be a requirement for sea control where a robust challenge from the air is possible. Air supremacy is a necessary pre condition of command of sea. The geographical extent of sea control may vary from local control around single unit of domination of very large sea areas. In many cases, such as the protection of ports and anchorage's and for amphibious operations, it must be achieved and maintained up to the shoreline. Indeed maritime forces will often need to maintain air superiority across the shoreline and distance in shore. Because of confinement and congestion, attaining sea control of littoral regions is a more complex task.

Resources Required

4. As per VADM RB Suri , for sea control the Navy needs a task force comprising of one sea control ship, 4-6 frigates/destroyers , One AEW Aircraft and two MR/ASW aircraft in direct support. Weapon and sensors on board should be able to ensure sea control over all area of 200 Kms centered on task force. The task force will also have 2 - 3 SSN submarines to act as anti-submarines screen, if threat from nuclear submarines are to be encountered.

Two such forces would be required to operate simultaneously in case of <https://assignbuster.com/sea-control-for-medium-and-small-navies-history-essay/>

Indian, one Bay of Bengal and the other in Arabian sea. These forces would need backups in addition he also proposes three SSBNs with IRBMs .

Submarine force levels recommended are to be twelve.

5. Details of the resources required along with cost for sea control are given below in a tabulated form[7]: –

Requirement of Resources: Force Structure Options

(All prices in crores at 97 level)

Type of Force

Units

Resource Requirements

Remarks

Sea control Task Force (including SLOC's)

Sea Control Ships 2

Air element 1

Destroyer/Frigates 18

Support Ships 6

4000

1500

11000

1500

(one air element

available from

existing forces)

6 available

Resources shown

For 12

2 available.

Requirement shown

For 4

Strategic Forces

SSBNs 3

4500

Sea Denial Element

SSNs/SSKs 12

9600

Coastal Forces

Corvettes 8

2400

Missile Boats

8

1600

Harbour Defence

SDBs 8

MCMVs 16

ASW Helos 10

800

2000

700

Type of Force

Units

Resource Requirements

Remarks

Defence of Islands

LST(L)/LPD 1 LST(M) 8

Maintenance Reserve

33%

Force Modernisation

Total Requirement

1000

50500

14000

3000

67, 500

1LST(L)

available

(excluding SCS

and SSBNs)

6. Can India afford a force structure as mentioned above with astronomical costs? Certainly not in the near future . This holds good for most small and medium power Navy .

Geographical Location

7. Depending whether a nation is bounded by sea and how much sea bounded the need arises for the size and type of the Navy it needs to have. Britain, France and Japan are surrounded totally by sea and have a very rich

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traditional maritime history. Their majority of the needs are met from the sea. Hence they need to protect their interest from sea which was done by their respective Navies. No doubt all these nations emerged as great maritime powers during various periods of history. Today, despite the emergence of USA as super power, these powers have not been obliterated. They are medium power Navies sufficient to safeguard the interest of their nations. Sea control or sea denial capability of their navies depends upon the above mentioned needs and interest.

8. The scenario in the Indian Ocean today is quite stable. But unlikely to remain so. The maritime boundaries have mostly been defined except in South Asia where both the India - Pakistan and India - Bangladesh borders are yet to be defined . The India - Bangladesh one is difficult to settle owing to geography because Bangladesh has a concave coast and is likely to be boxed in completely by India and Myanmar unless both India and Myanmar make major concessions to Bangladesh which is possible only by strong political governments in both countries . The India - Pak borders can quite easily be settled if the Sir Creek dispute is resolved . Sir Creek was the former boundary between the state of Sind and the state of Kutch . The boundary was drawn with a thick green pen (like the McMohan line) along the NE border . The Creek has now shifted its banks and runs along a new alignment . The Indian stand is that we should now take the middle of the channel and Pakistan's case is that the maritime boundary should start from the Southern bank of the Creek. The difference is about one mile. Since the EEZ is 200 miles deep this involves a loss or gain of 200 square miles . This problem could also be resolved by two strong political government at Delhi

and Islamabad . The resolutions of maritime boundaries is important because India is a multi-ethnic state and many of the inhabitants of the islands may have ethnic similarities with the people of neighboring countries.

9. Just two areas dominate the Geo-strategic scenario in the Indian Ocean. South East Asia and the Gulf . South East Asia, for the reason that their economies are growing at phenomenal rates, and these countries are referred to as the new Asian tigers. Their phenomenal growth should not blind us to the geopolitical reality , which is that this area is still dwarfed by the two Asian giants – China and India .

Table – Relative GNP's (\$ billion)[8]

China – 600

Combined South East Asia – 500

India – 450

10. Thus, we see that geopolitical situation in the Indian Ocean region is such that India needs to be a credible naval power and would desire to have a blue water navy with sea control capability.

Sea Denial

Sea Denial is exercised when one party denies another the ability to control a maritime area without either wishing or being able to control that area himself. Sea denial is not a distinct concept from sea control as denial of the enemy's freedom of action is an aspect of sea control. However the concept is only applicable when full sea control is not exercised by choice or our of

necessity. At the operational and tactical level assume of sea denial may be used as part of the outer defence of the force or area, or as away of containing enemy forces. At the strategic level sea denial can be used a guerre de course of sustained attack upon a nations shipping to prevent reinforcement and to shape national morale and the ability to wage war.

CHAPTER IV

VITAL INTERESTS

Vital Interests

1. The strategic concept of a navy is a description of how, when and where the military service expects to protect the nation against threats, and the first step in defining the strategic concept is in examining what interests are considered vital to a small or medium power navy?[9]The core of a state's national interests, to maintain its existence, as expressed in the United Nation's Charter is Territorial integrity and political independence. However, in a period of unparalleled economic growth where power and status are being increasingly determined by economic success, a nation's vital interests can be expanded to include economic success. Maritime strategy of small and medium power is therefore guided by maritime implications of the three basic vital interests, territorial integrity, political independence and economic success.

Dependence on the sea

2. Mahan argued that military sea power grew out of the economic uses of the sea and the importance of those uses to the state[10]. Mahan's theory can now be

extended to include both the wealth crossing the sea and the wealth from the sea. In 1986, sea borne trade accounted for over 80 percent of international trade by Volume and by weight it was 3. 362 million tons, some eight times the amount carried in 1946. In 1994 it showed a record figure of 4. 46 billion tons[11]. The growth of sea borne trade in recent years is dramatically reflected by the increased container traffic. The container traffic in the period 1980-92 in Hong Kong, the top world container port, increased fivefold while Singapore in number two slot recorded an eight fold increase in the same period[12]. The growth of maritime trade signifies that medium and small power countries are more dependent on sea borne trade. For example Singapore's trade is 323% of its GDP annually, Australia's is worth 27% India's is worth 22%, Malaysia's is worth 121%, the Philippines' 41% and Indonesia's 35%[13]. Oil is by far the largest item of sea borne trade between countries. While oil producing states are specially dependent on sea borne trade, some of the developing economies with rapid increase in consumption of petroleum products are more dependent on oil. India is a particular example, in 1998 she imported 37% of her oil requirement and by 1993 her imports had risen to 56%[14]. It is predicted that import of crude oil by sea to Asia will rise from 55% to 67% in 2000[15].

Foreign Trade and Its Protection

If we take 1994 as the datum year, India's GNP in dollar terms comes to 290 billion. the exports and imports totaled 50 billion which came to 16% of the GNP - this calculation shows how much of the country's wealth every year transits the seas. The protection of foreign trades as being one of the

primary duties of the navy is and old concept . Many Navies treat this as <https://assignbuster.com/sea-control-for-medium-and-small-navies-history-essay/>

their bread and butter . Perhaps not many are aware that in the 1971 war the value of Pakistan I ships and cargo that were captured amounted to Rs 200 crores at 1971 prices and looking back at that war after 25 years, it seems to be the only profit we made, despite the overall victory.

4. The total value of India's foreign trade is quite small compare to the percentage it occupies in countries like China and Korea where it is around 40 - 44%. India's GNP is growing at the rate of 6 - 7 %. By any modest extrapolation the present value of foreign trade which amounts to 150, 000 crores will grow to 200, 000 crores by the year 2000. In Naval jargon this roll which is called the protection of SLOCS or sea lanes of communications , requires an investment that is proportionate to the wealth being protected . It is enough that we protect our merchant marine - for that today only 299 ships . They carry about 20 -25 % of all the cargo that comes in and goes out . The remaining 75% is carried by foreign cargo carriers . During war , much of the foreign shipping will not be available to us. Those ships that agree to visit zones of war will charge enormously high rates of insurance and cargo carrying charges, where the loss in a months war could be hundreds of crores[16].

Energy

5. We looked at the overall effects of trade vulnerability earlier, but there is a need to focus on war CIA calls single commodity vulnerability. The CIA very kindly published a hand book annually listing such single commodity vulnerability and does not see any particular vulnerability for India on account of energy imports. We need to look at this aspect a little more closely.

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6. In the late eighties we appeared to be moving towards some self sufficiency in oil because domestic consumption was not rising, where as for off shore oil production was . since 1990, Bombay High , our only world class oil field has steadily declined in productivity until with the injection of new recovery technology, we have regained the same level of production as earlier but domestic oil consumption has been steadily rising and if economic is further liberlised our; consumption is expected to rise. In any case, the growth of consumption will not be less than production. Thus the gap between production and imports has been widening steadily until with liberlisation it may go out of control . The key figure is by the year 2000 we may be importing 1. 5 million barrels or 11 million tons per year

7. The growing concerns over the dwindling land based resources are placing more demands on the use of the seas as a source of food, energy and raw materials. Fish is a major source of the world's supply of animal protein and for developing nations it is the only supplement the developing nations it is the only supplement to rice or maize. It is assessed that by the year 2000. four fifths of the world population will be living in underdeveloped countries and 75% of them will be within 300 miles of the sea[17]. The seabed of the ocean is also depository of minerals. India is one example of a country that has been allocated a site of 150, 000 square kilometers in the Central Indian Ocean for deep-sea mining as a pioneer investor. With technological developments making seabed mining possible and the fact that the seas have extensive areas for mining not under the sovereign rights of any coastal state, exploitation of seabed resources will be of potential concern to many countries.

Sovereignty

8. The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the sea has established the extent of territorial sea to 12 nautical miles and of the Exclusive Economic Zone to 200 miles and within the maritime responsibilities of nations has vastly expanded. Along with the added responsibilities the law has also provided room for boundary disputes. Territorial integration at sea has economical, legal, diplomatic, and military dimension to it. Given the economical potential of the sea it would be in order to state that offshore sovereignty is as much a concern to medium and small powers as is maintaining territorial integrity.

Threats to Vital Interests

Medium and small power nations are not self sufficient in key strategic and economic commodities and are dependent on their vital imports. Sea borne trade is the lifeline for these nations needs to be protected. Although there are no significant military threats to the economic use of the sea, there exists a possibility that non-

military threats such as piracy may end in requirement of military intervention. In 1994 there were 100 piracy incidents reported world over, a 15% increase over 1994's tally, of which 60 were in Asia and Pacific region[18]. Societies are increasingly vulnerable to the threats from drug and arms smugglers as well as illegal immigrants. The smuggling of plastic explosives used in the devastating blasts in Bombay, India in 1993 is a case to the point There is a growing concern for the protection of trade in small and medium power countries, being demonstrated by the building of national flag shipping fleet and the capability for their protection by some of these <https://assignbuster.com/sea-control-for-medium-and-small-navies-history-essay/>

countries. In 1994, Indian ships carried 25% of India's imports and exports and it was planned to raise the capability to 50%[19]. The number of vessels under the national flag of Indonesia rose from 1122 in 1980-81 to 1884 in 1991-92 and the corresponding increase for some other nations in the same period are, Malaysia 489 ships in 1991-92 from 196 in 1980-81, the Philippines 1420 ships in 1991-92 from 620 in 1980-81. While increased labour costs in developing economies have steered those countries away from increasing vessels under own flag, these countries too feel the need for protection of sea borne trade as an essential element of their security. The growing concern for maintainin