

Security Governance of the Indian Ocean: Challenges and Way Forward

Li Kekun & Lou Chunhao

The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean in the world, with the Middle Eastern and East African coasts to the west, the Strait of Malacca to the east, and Australia to the south. It is a marine bridge connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Because of its geographical importance, busy shipping channels, abundant resources, and close correlation with global geopolitical stability and economic prosperity, it has been called “the center stage for the 21st century.”¹ Especially in recent years, with initiatives such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the United States’ Free and Open Indo-Pacific, India’s Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), and Japan and India’s Asia-Africa Growth Corridor put forward, the geopolitical and geo-economic value of the Indian Ocean has been further enhanced. In stark contrast to the increasing geopolitical importance, the traditional and non-traditional security threats facing the Indian Ocean region are intertwined, and the competition and even conflicts among countries still exist. Many developing countries are lagging behind in their governance capabilities. Non-traditional security threats such as maritime terrorism, transnational maritime crimes and natural disasters are still lingering. Under such circumstances, the United Nations, and countries in and outside of the region who have significant national interests here, have gradually increased their attention and investment in the security governance

Li Kekun is on a research team at the School of International Studies, Shanxi University; **Lou Chunhao** is Deputy Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR).

¹ Robert D. Kaplan, “Center Stage for the Twenty-First Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean,” *Foreign Affairs*, No.2, March/April 2009, p.13.

of the Indian Ocean, and established a multi-level, multi-domain and multi-actor governance system. However, the existing governance mechanisms also need to be improved, especially in the context of the current accelerating evolution of power structure, the growing uncertainty of geopolitical relations, and the increasingly complex and variable security risks. It is necessary to evaluate the security risks and the existing security governance mechanisms of the Indian Ocean, and explore a framework and path for further improvement of the Indian Ocean security governance.

Assessment of Security Risks in the Indian Ocean

Preventing and controlling security risks is the objective of security governance and provides important traction for the development of relevant security governance mechanisms. According to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Indian Ocean region faces many risks, including the instability of the Gulf petroleum exporting states, an India-Pakistani conflict, conflict and tensions between India and China, struggles for influence between the United States and China, the risk of piracy, the risk of terrorism, the struggle for the future of Islam and to reshape the balance between religious and secular rule, endemic transnational and maritime disputes and potential conflicts, and offshore resource disputes.² The 2017 Conflict Barometer of the Heidelberg International Conflict Institute in Germany shows that South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, which all neighbor the Indian Ocean, are conflict-intensive areas.³ A report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute called the Indian Ocean “a sea of troubles.”⁴ In fact, accurate assessment of the security situation in the Indian Ocean is complex and difficult, for the following reasons: first, the

2 Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan, *The Indian Ocean Region: A Strategic Net Assessment*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, August, 2014, pp.6-7, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/indian-ocean-region>.

3 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, University of Heidelberg, *Conflict Barometer 2017*, <https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/bisherige-ausgaben/?lang=en>.

4 Sam Bateman and Anthony Bergin, *Our Western Front: Australia and the Indian Ocean*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, March 2010, p.24.

Indian Ocean countries have different political systems, level of economic development, ethnicities and religions, and geopolitical relations, which leads to different security situation in different subregions; second, the regional security situation is constantly changing, both in a positive direction (such as the improvement in the piracy problem in Somali waters), and in a negative direction (such as US-Iran relations); third, the security risks are usually long-term and unpredictable. For instance, the risks brought about by climate change and demographic changes are long-term ones, and the factors behind the escalation of geopolitical contradictions into real conflicts among countries are often complicated. On the surface, no security incident with substantial global impact has happened in the Indian Ocean region in recent years. However, from the perspective of “bottom-line thinking,” which is highlighted in security governance, it is necessary to give full attention to the existing or potential security risks in the Indian Ocean region.

Accelerating adjustment of regional power structure

The traditional geopolitical competition once eased following the end of the Cold War. Cooperation among major powers on non-traditional security issues such as fighting against terrorism and combating climate change was strengthened. Their geopolitical competition has mainly focused on geopolitical fault zones in the Western Pacific and the Eurasian inland, while the competition in the Indian Ocean region is less intense. However, the situation is changing. The most important variable is the adjustment of the regional power structure and the concomitant increasing overlapping of interests and security interactions of countries in the region. Ashley Tellis, a senior researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pointed out when he spoke of the future trend of the Indian Ocean, “The biggest change is the rise of India. For any sea area, only when a country in the region ascend into the ranks of world powers can the geopolitical importance of the area be improved.”⁵ At present, the United States is still

5 On December 30, 2012, Ashley Tellis made this statement at a symposium of the Tsinghua-Carnegie Global Policy Center, when conducting research on the Indian Ocean in China.

the strongest military force in the Indian Ocean region. India, with its overall positive rising momentum, continuously strengthening comprehensive national power and unique geopolitical advantages, has also witnessed greater influence and voice on security affairs of the Indian Ocean. “Global governance structure depends on the international balance of power and reform of the global governance system hinges on a change in the balance.”⁶ The structural adjustment of the Indian Ocean, triggered mainly by the rise of emerging powers, is bound to lead to accelerated changes in the structure of regional security order and governance.

On one hand, major powers have increased their strategic investment in the Indian Ocean, and there is competition over various institutional arrangements or initiatives. The geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean has attracted relevant major powers’ strategic input in the region, and the fragmentation and sub-regionalization of existing governance mechanisms have provided space for countries to build their own favorable governance mechanisms. The United States has worked hard to promote the US-Japan-India-Australia quadrilateral consultation, strengthening the countries’ consensus on the “rules-based order of the Indo-Pacific” and cooperation in defense and security. The US has also come up with the Bay of Bengal Initiative to promote its maritime situational awareness and enhance its response capabilities to threats in the Bay of Bengal through defense cooperation with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. India has successively proposed the Monsoon plan and the SAGAR initiative to promote an “Indian Ocean Community.” For Japan, it proposed the concept of Free and Open Indo-Pacific early in 2016, and has pushed for the construction of an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor with India. Australia’s 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper clearly replaced “Asia-Pacific” with “Indo-Pacific,” emphasizing India’s location value as the hub of the Indo-Pacific. China continues to steadily advance the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and create a “blue economic channel” in

6 “Xi Jinping: Strengthening Cooperation to Push for Reform of Global Governance, and Advance the Noble Cause for Peace and Development of Mankind,” *Xinhua*, September 28, 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-09/28/c_1119641652.htm.

the direction of the Indian Ocean,⁷ and advocates a peaceful, cooperative and harmonious concept of maritime security. The arrangements by major powers regarding the system, mechanisms and rules of the Indian Ocean security governance provide the possibility for cooperation and synergy. For example, there is room for cooperation in regional connectivity between China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and Japan and India's Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. In fact, the three countries have made progress in strengthening third-party market cooperation. However, the Trump administration, in its unilateral pursuit of "America First," has labeled China as a "strategic competitor" while politicizing and securitizing development issues. Moreover, through the US-Japan-India-Australia quadrilateral consultation and the Bay of Bengal Initiative, it has tried to bring other countries into its security strategic agenda, which will undoubtedly exacerbate geopolitical competition.

On the other hand, competition among major powers has a negative spillover effect on Indian Ocean countries, as the rising risks of geopolitical competition among major countries, which play a dominant role in regional security affairs, will affect other small and medium-sized countries. Although most of Indian Ocean countries are unwilling to take sides between the major powers, some, especially those with important geopolitical locations, may be forced to get involved in major-power geopolitical competition, thus bringing negative impacts on their domestic political stability, the sustainability of economic development, and the independence of foreign policy. For example, while China is promoting the development-oriented 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in the Indian Ocean region, some countries have discredited the Chinese initiative as creating "debt traps" and "infringing on state sovereignty." Chinese projects have even become victims of domestic politics in a few countries, which is not conducive to their political stability, economic development and social security. The UK-based *Financial Times* for instance attributed the political turmoil in Sri Lanka at

7 National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), "Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative," *Xinhua*, June 20, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-06/20/c_1121176798.htm.

the end of 2018 to “China’s increasing role.”⁸

Security risks spilling over from land to sea

On one hand, it is difficult to “cool down” the hotspots and stop interstate contradictions from spilling over to the sea. The Middle East and South Asia are the two relatively turbulent regions around the Indian Ocean. The multifaceted contradictions in terms of geopolitics, national sovereignty and religion are intertwined in the two regions, which are listed by the US National Intelligence Council as “the two regions most likely to trigger broader instability.”⁹ At present, two pairs of complicated security contradictions that are difficult to be eliminated in the Middle East are gradually forming: the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the contradiction between the Sunni and the Shiite, represented by Saudi Arabia and Iran respectively. The United States and Russia have increased their strategic involvement in the Middle East, and have fought fiercely over the Syrian issue and the Iranian nuclear issue, worsening the regional security situation. In South Asia, the disputes between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, terrorism, and religion are deeply rooted. The two countries have fallen into the zero-sum thinking of “the existence of the other side is a threat to mine,” which has a negative impact on bilateral relations and regional cooperation.

The above-mentioned security contradictions have structural and long-term characteristics and are transmitted to the field of maritime security. The India-Pakistan security confrontation is mainly concentrated on the land, but India maintains high vigilance toward Pakistani maritime forces, especially its submarine forces and the Gwadar port. India believes, as shown in its 2015 Maritime Security Strategy, that the terrorist attacks in Mumbai on November 2008 had “extensive links to Pakistani agencies and handlers,” and that “there has been a steady rise in non-traditional threats, in occurrence and scale, with the lines at times getting blurred with traditional challenges. This is especially the

8 The Editorial Board, “Sri Lanka Turmoil Points to China’s Increasing Role,” *Financial Times*, November 15, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/ccfb4d06-e807-11e8-8a85-04b8afea6ea3>.

9 US National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, 2012, p.viii.

case where non-traditional threats receive cooperation, support and sponsorship from traditional entities.”¹⁰ The situation in the Middle East has also, from time to time, sparked global concerns about the region’s supply of energy and security of sea lanes, especially the relations between the United States and Iran which are closely related to the security of the Strait of Hormuz.¹¹

On the other hand, many countries around the Indian Ocean are lagging behind in their governance capacity, and there is a risk of them becoming “failed states.” These countries are faced with difficulties in modernizing their governance capacity, and challenges such as domestic political turmoil, rising religious extremism, and lagging government management and control. The contradiction between the continuous growth of population and the supply of social resources is increasing and the domestic security situation is not optimistic. According to the CSIS report *The Indian Ocean Region: A Strategic Net Assessment*, “The region is filled with countries with very young populations, and with the exception of a few Gulf and Southeast Asia states, these present major challenges in terms of education, job creation, and infrastructure.” It also lists South Asia in the High Risk category and Egypt Red Sea horn in the Very High/Critical Risk category.¹²

Because of the lack of governance capacity, security risks will surely spill over to neighboring countries and even international waters, spurring a variety of violent organizations, including terrorism, drug trafficking and arms smuggling gangs. Issues such as piracy and transnational crimes are serious in the relevant regions, largely because of the failure of governance on land. According to *The Indian Ocean Region: Security, Stability and Sustainability in the 21st Century*, of the total “global population of concern” to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of almost 34 million people, more than 50% live in Indian Ocean states. The world’s three largest

10 Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, 2015, pp.37-38 & 155, https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Maritime_Security_Strategy_Document_25Jan16.pdf.

11 Associated Press, “Amid US Sanctions, Iran Threatens Again to Close Key Strait,” December 4, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1449395/amid-us-sanctions-iran-threatens-again-to-close-key-strait>.

12 Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan, *The Indian Ocean Region: A Strategic Net Assessment*, pp.xiv & 14.

source countries of refugees are Indian Ocean states that rank highly on the failed state index — Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.¹³ Moreover, the Middle East and South Asia are suffering from the high occurrence of land-based terrorist activities in the Indian Ocean region. “The high-risk area of land-based terrorist activities is adjacent to the sea area of frequent pirates. These sea areas are likely to become the area of rampant maritime terrorist activities.”¹⁴

Non-traditional security threats not to be underestimated

On one hand, issues such as maritime terrorism, piracy and organized crime in the Indian Ocean region have been “hardly eliminated for a long time,” which makes it more difficult for the international community to manage. “The greater Indian Ocean region encompasses the entire arc of Islam, from the Sahara Desert to the Indonesian archipelago,” including “the tinderboxes of Somalia, Yemen, Iran, and Pakistan — constituting a network of dynamic trade as well as a network of global terrorism, piracy, and drug smuggling.”¹⁵ The vast waters of the Indian Ocean provide natural shelter for organized criminal groups to traffic drugs, humans and weapons, which increases the difficulty for governments to fight against criminal organizations. The sustained trafficking of illicit narcotics, weapons, and people within, and via, the Indian Ocean will persist for the medium-to- long-term due to the numerous sources of high-volume supply for the commodities, the chronic insecurity and/or corrupt officials in key Indian Ocean countries, and the massive array of sea transportation available.¹⁶ In terms of international waterway security threats, as the routes for international navigation are relatively fixed and difficult to replace, scattered organizations and individuals

13 Australia India Institute Task Force on Indian Ocean Security, *The Indian Ocean Region: Security, Stability and Sustainability in the 21st Century*, 2013, <http://www.aiidelhi.com/source/public/img/publication/IndianOceanSecurityTaskforceWeb.pdf>.

14 China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) research group on security of sea lanes, *Sea Lane Security and International Cooperation*, Current Affairs Press, 2005, p.193.

15 Robert D Kaplan, “Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean,” p.13.

16 David Michel, et al., *Indian Ocean Rising: Maritime Security and Policy Challenges*, The Stimson Center, July 2012, p.26, <https://www.stimson.org/content/indian-ocean-rising-maritime-security-and-policy-challenges>.

can engage in violent sabotage activities such as piracy by virtue of their familiarity with the waters. On the piracy issue, the anti-piracy actions of the international community have effectively curbed piracy in the Somali waters, but as long as the governance situation on the land is not effectively improved, the piracy problem could make a comeback. In terms of maritime terrorism, the Indian Ocean region, where there are many religious factions and the problem of religious extremism and terrorism is serious, provides space for smuggling weapons and even launching attacks. The most typical case is the terrorist attack in Mumbai, India at the end of 2008.

On the other hand, the security risks caused by climate change and natural disasters cannot be underestimated. The Indian Ocean region suffers frequently from natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. The Bholia cyclone in 1970 caused huge losses to the Ganges Delta. The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and the subsequent tsunami heavily hit many Indian Ocean countries. “The devastating humanitarian and economic impact of natural disasters in the Indian Ocean countries will only worsen with time,” said Mr. Tadateru Konoe, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). In 2013, about 15 natural disasters in the Union of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zanzibar caused over US\$250 million in damages.¹⁷ According to India’s 2015 Maritime Security Strategy, “climate change has, thus, started impacting human and maritime security, with potentially major effects in the future ... While the magnitude of change and consequences may remain largely speculative, their impact may be suddenly experienced, across dispersed areas.”¹⁸ The risks brought by climate change or natural disasters include but are not limited to: the rise in sea level threatening the survival of Indian Ocean island countries and aggravating the problem of “climate refugees”; sudden major natural

17 “Indian Ocean’s Growing Vulnerability to Natural Disasters Calls for More Investment in Preparedness,” The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, September 26, 2017, <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/press-release/indian-oceans-growing-vulnerability-natural-disasters-calls-investment-preparedness>.

18 Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy, p.432.

disasters hitting the economic development and public security of coastal countries; environmental pollution leading to the exhaustion of fisheries resources, which leads to an increase in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, further jeopardizing the marine ecosystem, and resulting in law enforcement conflicts which may even escalate into diplomatic events.

Diverse Channels and Different Levels of Indian Ocean Security Governance

The governance entities of Indian Ocean security include the United Nations, sovereign states, and non-governmental organizations. The differences in governance entities also determine the membership composition, operational model, and efficiency of governance mechanisms. At present, there are some security governance mechanisms in the Indian Ocean region, including both substantive bilateral and multilateral platforms, and “soft mechanisms” such as initiatives and rules, most of which were created after the end of the Cold War. Especially since the beginning of the 21st century, the Indian Ocean security governance has accelerated and evolved, showing multi-level, multi-field and multi-actor characteristics. These mechanisms are not completely fragmented and do not operate separately. In fact, the different mechanisms overlap to varying extents and even cooperate in terms of participating countries, regions and fields involved, as well as governance objectives and measures.

Governance mechanisms under the UN framework

In response to the threat of piracy in the Somali waters, the UN Security Council adopted resolutions 1816, 1838, 1844 and 1851, calling on the international community to coordinate their actions to combat Somali pirates. The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was created on January 14, 2009, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1851. The Contact Group’s four working groups are: the Capacity Building Working Group, the Virtual Legal Forum, the Maritime

Counter Piracy and Mitigation Operations Working Group and the Working Group on Disrupting Pirate Networks Ashore.¹⁹ Since its establishment, nearly 80 countries and relevant international organizations have participated in the group, and it has become an important collaborative platform for the international community to combat Somali pirates. In July 2018, the 21st plenary session of the group was held in Nairobi, Kenya, emphasizing “a medium to long term pro-active approach with an enlarged mandate to address crimes and threats directly related to piracy.”²⁰

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is an important institution involved in the non-traditional security governance of the Indian Ocean. From 2010 to 2012, it was responsible for the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.²¹ The UNODC established the Counter Piracy Program in 2009, which has since been upgraded to the Global Maritime Crime Project (GMCP), with four sub-projects, namely the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, the Horn of Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, and Detention and Transfer. The project provides support for capacity building and information exchanges for countries to improve their capabilities in combating maritime threats such as drug smuggling and maritime terrorism, and establishes a regional coordination mechanism for maritime crimes.²² In 2015, the GMCP promoted the establishment of the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC) as a coordination platform for maritime law enforcement agencies of Indian Ocean littoral states, which includes the Southern Route Partnership, the Indian Ocean Prosecutor Network, the Regional Capacity Building Working Group, and the Law Enforcement Task Force.²³ As of 2017, 22

19 “Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, Fact Sheet,” US Department of State, January 20, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2017/266864.htm>.

20 “Twenty-first Plenary Session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, Final Communique,” July 13, 2018, <http://www.lessonsfrompiracy.net/files/2018/07/Communique-of-the-CGPCS-21st-Plenary-Session.pdf>.

21 “Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia,” <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/APF00>.

22 “UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme,” <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/piracy/index.html>.

23 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Maritime Crime Programme Annual Report 2017*, January 2018, pp.10-13; “Maritime Crime Programme-Indian Ocean,” <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/piracy/Indian-Ocean.html>.

littoral countries have participated in the forum.

In addition to the relatively active governance mechanisms mentioned above, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 2992 in 1972, announcing the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to build the Indian Ocean “Zone of Peace.” The committee is one of the nine ad hoc committees of the UN and publishes the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean every two years. Two-thirds of the UN member states, including China and Russia, supported the establishment of a zone of peace, but the United States, the United Kingdom and France objected to it, which has led to the very limited role of the ad hoc committee.²⁴

Major power-dominated governance mechanisms

The United States-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) is an important naval cooperation platform in the Indian Ocean, which is commanded by the Commander of the US Fifth Fleet. There are currently 33 member nations (China and India do not participate) and three task forces, namely CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism, established in 2002), CTF 151 (counter piracy, established in 2009) and CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation, established in 2004), of which CTF 151 is an important military force against piracy in Somali waters.²⁵ In 2008, the CMF launched the Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE) conference to provide a platform for sharing anti-piracy information and collaboration. The meeting is held regularly in Bahrain and hosted by the CMF, NATO and the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) in rotation. So far, representatives from 33 countries including China, and some international organizations and enterprises have participated in the conference. Besides, the United States has also promoted NATO to launch Operation Ocean Shield in August 2009, to carry out anti-

24 *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean*, July 10, 2017, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1293638/files/A_72_29-EN.pdf.

25 “Combined Maritime Forces,” US Naval Forces Central Command, <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/Combined-Maritime-Forces>.

piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. The operation was suspended in December 2016, mainly because of NATO's input in the Mediterranean to deal with the refugee crisis. Since it put forward the Indo-Pacific strategy in 2017, the US has paid more attention to building a network of Indian Ocean security partnerships and strengthening maritime situational awareness, holding the first "2+2" dialogue with India and advancing the Bay of Bengal Initiative.²⁶

The EU NAVFOR officially launched Operation Atlanta in December 2008, for combating piracy and armed robbery, monitoring fisheries in Somali waters, providing regional marine capacity building, and offering protection to organizations such as the World Food Program to create a favorable maritime security environment. Participants of the EU NAVFOR are mainly EU member states, but also include non-EU countries such as Norway and New Zealand. Its activities range from the South Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros.²⁷ On July 30, 2018, the EU Council decided to extend Operation Atlanta to December 2020. In addition, the EU established the Maritime Security Centre — Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) information center in 2008,²⁸ adopted the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa in 2011,²⁹ and established in 2012 the Program to Promote Regional Maritime Security (MASE), actively participating in security governance of the Indian Ocean, especially the Horn of Africa. Regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Indian Ocean Commission, and the East African Community have participated in the MASE project.

India is an important founding member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

26 "US Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," US Department of State, August 4, 2018, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/08/284927.htm>.

27 "Mission," EU NAVFOR Somalia, <https://eunavfor.eu/mission>.

28 "The Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa," <https://eunavfor.eu/the-maritime-security-centre-horn-of-africa>.

29 "Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa: 3124th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting," Brussels, November 14, 2011, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf.

It also enhances its influence on Indian Ocean security affairs through bilateral or small multilateral mechanisms. In March 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi put forward the SAGAR initiative, showing that “India is no longer hesitant about taking a larger responsibility for securing the Indian Ocean and promoting regional mechanisms for collective security and economic integration.”³⁰ At the third Indian Ocean Conference in August 2018, Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj further elaborated on the connotations and measures of SAGAR, namely developing hinterland linkages and regional connectivity, linking South Asia to South East Asia and to the Persian Gulf, and playing an active and constructive role in strengthening regional maritime security.³¹ The Modi government also injected more security elements into the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) by leading the Counter-Terrorism & Transnational Crime team, and holding the first two meetings of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs in March 2017 and March 2018. At the second meeting, India proposed strengthening data and information sharing as well as maritime security cooperation through the Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum to address common security threats.³² While enhancing its situational awareness of the waters, India has also strengthened its security influence on Indian Ocean island countries through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms with countries such as Seychelles, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, such as the India-Sri Lanka-Maldives Trilateral Maritime Security Cooperation Initiative, the India-Maldives Naval Staff Dialogue, the India-Sri Lanka Defense Dialogue, and the India-Seychelles

30 C. Raja Mohan, “Modi and the Indian Ocean: Restoring India’s Sphere of Influence,” June 18, 2015, <https://amti.csis.org/modi-and-the-indian-ocean-restoring-indias-sphere-of-influence>.

31 “Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the 3rd Indian Ocean Conference,” August 27, 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30327/Remarks+by+External+Affairs+Minister+at+the+3rd+Indian+Ocean+Conference+Vietnam+August+27+2018>.

32 “First Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs,” March 21, 2017, http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/28193/First_meeting_of_the_BIMSTEC_National_Security_Chiefs_March_21_2017; “The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs,” March 29, 2018, <https://bimstec.org/?event=the-second-meeting-of-the-bimstec-national-security-chiefs>.

Coastal Surveillance Radar System Network. In addition, with the support of the UK government, Seychelles established the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution and Intelligence Coordination Center (RAPPICC) in February 2013 to strengthen regional anti-piracy capacity building. At the end of 2013, the center was upgraded to the Regional Fusion and Law Enforcement Center for Safety and Security at Sea (REFLECS3), which expanded its mandate from anti-piracy to combating human smuggling, drug trafficking and environmental pollution. The center has three working groups: the Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU), the Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre (MTISC) and the Local Capacity Building Coordination Group (LCBCG).³³

Regional intergovernmental governance mechanisms

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was established in 2008 with the initiative from India. It currently has 36 member states and nine observer countries, and aims to “increase maritime cooperation among the navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum, which includes humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, anti-piracy, combating maritime crimes, marine survey, search and rescue, etc.” The symposium is the most participated maritime security cooperation mechanism in the Indian Ocean region, with reference to the Western Pacific Naval Symposium.³⁴ In April 2018, the 6th IONS was held in Tehran, Iran.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a relatively active and successful regional cooperation platform in the Indian Ocean region. It was formerly the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation established in March 1997, which was officially renamed the Indian Ocean Rim Association in 2013. It has 22 member states and nine dialogue partners. At the 11th Council of Ministers meeting in November 2011, maritime safety was listed

33 “Regional Fusion & Law Enforcement Center for Safety & Security at Sea,” <http://www.rappicc.sc/aboutus.html>; “REFLECS3 - Fighting Transnational Organized Crime,” March 20, 2014, <http://www.oceanuslive.org/main/viewnews.aspx?uid=00000845>.

34 See the official websites of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the 2018 Iran IONS, <http://www.ions.global>, <https://www.ionsirannavy.ir>.

as one of the top priority areas, indicating that the mechanism has gradually expanded from the initial focus of development issues to the security field. In March 2017, the IORA held its first summit under the theme of “Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Indian Ocean,” and adopted the Jakarta Concord, the IORA Action Plan for 2017-2021 and the Declaration on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. In October the same year, the 17th IORA Council of Ministers meeting was held, and three working groups on maritime security, the blue economy and women’s economic empowerment were newly established. One of the IORA’s flagship projects is the Indian Ocean Dialogue, which focuses on six major issues such as the political situation in the Indian Ocean region, maritime security challenges, and disaster relief and management. In August 2018, the fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue was held in Durban, South Africa.

The Indian Ocean Commission was established in 1984 with the objective of promoting sub-regional marine development cooperation. It currently has five member states and the European Union, China and the Organization of La Francophonie as observers. In recent years, the Indian Ocean Commission has actively participated in the mechanisms and initiatives of the United Nations and the European Union to maintain regional maritime security, and its role in regional security affairs has become increasingly apparent. Member states of the BIMSTEC and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are also paying increasingly greater attention to maritime security, but it remains at a low level. In addition, the Sri Lankan Navy held the first Galle Dialogue: International Maritime Conference in 2010 to provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss and deliberate ocean-related issues, specifically enhancing cooperation on maritime security and sharing of knowledge and information.³⁵ Participants of the dialogue are mainly the navies of various countries. The dialogue has so far failed to produce effective policy influence. In October 2018, the 9th Galle Dialogue was held in Colombo.

35 See the official website of the Galle Dialogue, <http://galledialogue.lk>.



On March 7, 2017, the inaugural Leaders' Summit of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), entitled "Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Indian Ocean," was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. (*Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia*)

Governance mechanisms promoted by non-state actors

In January 2009, the International Maritime Organization invited some Indian Ocean countries to hold a high-level meeting on combating piracy in Djibouti. The meeting adopted the Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (Djibouti Code of Conduct), providing a cooperation framework for capacity building, information sharing, supporting legislation, and maritime situational awareness of regional countries. A high-level meeting of signatories to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in January 2017 adopted a revised Code of Conduct, which is known as the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct 2017. In the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, the Djibouti Code of Conduct is conducive to combating piracy and armed robbery against ships, with its influence also covering human trafficking, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea.³⁶ In October 1997, the International Maritime

36 International Maritime Organization, "Djibouti Code of Conduct," <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/PIU/Pages/DCoC.aspx>.

Organization initiated the first preparatory meeting on the developing of flag and port state capabilities in the Indian Ocean rim, and adopted a draft Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control. The memorandum came into force in 1999 with the aim of strengthening the management of foreign vessels in the ports and checking whether they comply with the requirements of the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Organization. As of March 2018, 20 countries have become parties to the memorandum.³⁷

In addition, since 2016, the India Foundation has held the Indian Ocean Conference every year as an important Track II dialogue platform for exploring security issues of the Indian Ocean. Thanks to the support of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the conference has become an important venue for relevant parties to release policy signals. In August 2018, the India Foundation, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies within Singapore's Nanyang Technological University jointly organized the third Indian Ocean Conference under the theme of "Building Regional Architectures." Among the high-level officials attending the conference were Indian Minister of External Affairs and the United States' Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

Challenges of Existing Governance Mechanisms

It can be seen from above that the security governance in the Indian Ocean region is not completely lacking. On the contrary, the region has multi-level, multi-actor and multi-issue security governance arrangements. As the geopolitical strategic value of the Indian Ocean continues to rise, the initiatives and arrangements for the region's security governance are expected to further increase. From the perspective of actual results, the operational

37 See the official website of the Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control, <http://www.iomou.org/historymain.htm>.

effects of the various mechanisms are different. Some mechanisms, especially those on anti-piracy, have played an active role in improving regional security situation, mainly because of the common interests of the international community in maintaining safe and unobstructed international trade channels. In addition, there are cross-cooperation in existing security mechanisms, with many countries and international organizations participating in multiple governance mechanisms at the same time. However, the effects of those comprehensive governance mechanisms involving multiple issues are less satisfactory than expected. Some mechanisms involving hidden geopolitical agenda have even interfered with regional security governance. It is believed by some scholars that the existing governance system is fragmented, with few formal institutions and mostly informal arrangements, and that the performance of relevant mechanisms and organizations is below expectation, with their legitimacy being questioned. Moreover, the issues covered by current governance mechanisms are limited, and in some areas, the level of institutionalization is low with insufficient institutional supply.³⁸ Specifically, the Indian Ocean security governance faces the following difficulties.

Interference by geopolitical competition

Geopolitical competition not only aggravates the risks in the Indian Ocean region, but also interferes with the operation and efficiency of regional governance mechanisms. Taking the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium as an example. Subject to the principle of “geographical exclusion,” China, the United States and Japan, all countries outside the Indian Ocean region yet with significant security interests in the region, were not able to become observers to the symposium for a long time. It was not until 2014, when the symposium was held in Australia, were China and Japan accepted as observers. The US was rejected because of Iran’s opposition. Pakistan, also an important country in the region, did not

38 Liu Siwei, “Indian Ocean Security Governance: Institutional Evolution and Reconstruction,” *Journal of International Security Studies*, No.5, 2017, pp.89-90.

officially become a member of the symposium until the same year. Another example is BIMSTEC, which initially focused on regional development issues and has begun to emphasize security issues in recent years, with its first military exercise held in June 2018.³⁹ Although this change is due to India's increasing attention paid to the Bay of Bengal, some scholars believe that "India's need to look at the Bay of Bengal as a key theater in which to contain an increasingly capable and assertive China ... BIMSTEC has assumed an even greater importance as a central vehicle for projecting India's intent and capabilities in the Bay of Bengal region."⁴⁰

The United States placed the Indian Ocean under the Indo-Pacific framework of "ongoing geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order," and listed the Bay of Bengal, Southeast Asia and the Pacific island countries as the three major regions for security cooperation. In August 2018, when addressing the third Indian Ocean Conference, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs Alice Wells further elaborated on the Bay of Bengal Initiative, emphasizing deeper participation in mechanisms such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and proposing regional interconnectivity, security cooperation, and a free, open and rules-based global order as the three major drivers of the United States' Indian Ocean policy.⁴¹ Obviously, under the framework of Indo-Pacific, the US will only enhance its layout of Indian Ocean security governance. The political turbulence in Sri Lanka at the end of 2018 was listed by the US as a topic of the US-Japan-India-Australia quadrilateral consultation. Robert Blake, former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, even said that "... countries across Asia increasingly want to maintain

39 Dinakar Peri, "India to Host First BIMSTEC War Games in September," *The Hindu*, June 11, 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-host-first-bimstec-war-games-in-september/article24137708.ece>.

40 Constanino Xavier, *Bridging the Bay of Bengal: Toward a Stronger BIMSTEC*, Carnegie India, February 22, 2018, p.12.

41 Alice G. Wells, "Remarks at the Third Indian Ocean Conference," US Department of State, August 28, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rmks/2018/285557.htm>.

good relations with the United States, Japan, India and others to counter-balance China's growing economic and military influence." "(Sri Lankan) President Sirisena's and Prime Minister Rajapaksa's recent actions have raised serious questions in Washington, New Delhi, Tokyo and elsewhere, about their commitment to democracy and good governance ... Sri Lanka should expect more intensive (US) congressional review of its recent actions, which could impact Sri Lanka's access to financing."⁴² Obviously, the geo-game thinking of the United States has restricted China's participation in regional security governance, and it has also caused the predicament of "taking sides" for countries in the region.

Failure to achieve coordination of land and sea

Besides tsunamis and environmental pollution, most maritime security challenges originate from the land: interstate conflicts spill over to the sea, exacerbating the security vulnerability of important sea lanes and straits, especially in the Middle East; the lagging state governance capacity is not able to address problems such as lack of education and employment opportunities, rising crime rates and extremism due to economic and social under-development, not to mention preventing these problems from spilling over to the sea; the backward and extensive productivity aggravate offshore environmental pollution, and exacerbate IUU fishing. However, the existing governance mechanisms in the Indian Ocean region mainly focus on the sea and fail to effectively respond to risk sources on the land.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association is a comprehensive regional governance mechanism covering issues ranging from maritime security, trade and investment facilitation, fisheries management, disaster risk management, to tourism and cultural exchanges, science and technology, blue economy, and women's economic empowerment. China, the United States, Japan and France are dialogue partners of the organization. The US

42 Robert Blake, "The Rajapaksas, the SLPP and the Unfolding Indo-Pacific Great Game," *Daily Mirror*, December 7, 2018, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/The-Rajapaksas-the-SLPP-and-the-unfolding-Indo-Pacific-Great-Game-159456.html>.

gives priority to the IORA when it elaborates on its Indian Ocean policy.⁴³ The Indian Ministry of External Affairs sets up the Indian Ocean Region Division to be responsible for affairs related to important island countries such as the Maldives and Seychelles, and the IORA. However, judging from the current situation, although the IORA has expanded its focus from development issues to security, society and various other fields, the transition process will not happen overnight, which involves its relations with existing mechanisms such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. The Modi government's SAGAR initiative emphasizes "developing hinterland linkages and regional connectivity" and strengthening the connectivity of ports, railways, highways, and the energy sector with neighboring countries in South Asia, and has the awareness of coordination of land and sea,⁴⁴ but there is no public material available to assess the policy investment of the Indian government to promote this initiative.

Implementation efficiency yet to be improved

On one hand, the development of some governance mechanisms is relatively slow. The countries in the Indian Ocean region have great differences in various aspects. The disparity in geopolitical environment of each sub-region leads to their difference in priority order of security issues to be addressed and maritime affairs to be followed, which in turn makes it difficult for regional countries to achieve synergy in security governance. Furthermore, most countries in the region are developing countries, many of which are still the least developed countries as recognized by the United Nations, and lack sufficient resources and capabilities to participate in regional security affairs. For this reason, compared with the security governance mechanisms led by countries in the region, the anti-piracy mechanisms in Somali waters led by the United States and Europe are relatively successful.

43 Alice G. Wells, "U.S. Policy in the Indian Ocean Region," US Department of State, August 20, 2018, <https://fpc.state.gov/08/285237.htm>; Thomas L. Vajda, "Remarks at the 18th Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers Meeting," US Department of State, November 2, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rmks/2018/287094.htm>.

44 "Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the 3rd Indian Ocean Conference," August 27, 2018.

For instance, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium was established in 2008, but not until 2014 was its Charter of Business finalized. The BIMSTEC, established in 1997, is an important cooperation platform for the Bay of Bengal region. However, its secretariat was not established until 2014. So far, only four summits have been held, and many plans and initiatives have not been effectively implemented. The Indian Ocean Rim Association has gradually become an important security governance platform in the region, but the first summit was held in 2017, 20 years after its establishment.

On the other hand, the lack of a dominant governance mechanism makes it difficult to form an effective security governance network. The relations between the various mechanisms are not smooth, and there are deficiencies in the division and coordination of tasks, the integration of resources, and the construction of an institutionalized network. First, there is a lack of regional governance mechanisms in which all major powers with important interests in the Indian Ocean region are involved. The demands of various parties are different, and it is difficult for an effective coordination among major powers to take shape. Second, there are multiple parallel governance mechanisms even on a single issue. For example, there are many anti-piracy arrangements in Somali waters, but their coordination needs to be improved. Third, there is a lack of a relatively mature and highly cooperative security governance mechanism. The IORA and the BIMSTEC are both latecomers to regional security governance, and the IONS has also underperformed due to geopolitical interference.

Absence and misplacement of governance

At present, the global ocean governance is undergoing profound changes, characterized by the diversification of governance entities (more and more non-state actors are involved), diversification of objects (an increase in emerging governance problems), and complicated governance measures (from emphasis on traditional military and security approaches to application of legal rules). If relevant mechanisms cannot adapt to the situation in a timely and effective manner, it will lead to the absence and misplacement

of governance. The security governance mechanisms in the Western Pacific and the Atlantic are relatively mature, if not perfect, including the US-led alliance system, the ASEAN-centered dialogue mechanisms, and multilateral and even Track II dialogues such as the Shangri-La Dialogue, the Xiangshan Forum, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, which are comprehensive in coverage of areas, the subjects involved, and the measures of governance.

Compared with the Western Pacific and the Atlantic, the problem of absence and misplacement of governance in terms of issues, subjects and measures in Indian Ocean security governance still exists. First, it fails to effectively cover governance issues. For example, in the context of the US Indo-Pacific strategy, the geopolitical game of major powers in the Indian Ocean has become more intense, but there is no effective and inclusive communication platform. The US-Japan-India-Australia quadrilateral consultation is highly exclusive. Besides, while all countries in the region believe that overfishing and environmental degradation is not conducive to the sustainable development of fisheries, so far no regional and comprehensive sustainable development mechanism for fisheries has been set up. As pointed out by David Michel from the Stimson Center, “the majority of institutions, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, only operate at a sub-regional level or focus on specific species,” which poses challenges to cooperation on the region’s existing security architecture.⁴⁵ Second, the measures of governance need to be innovated and enriched. Take anti-piracy as an example. The Djibouti Code of Conduct is a comparatively successful governance mechanism that emphasizes the means of legal rules. However, most mechanisms still emphasize military and security leverages, and do not pay enough attention to economic and legal tools. There has even been a case where supporting judicial mechanisms were absent after pirates were arrested. The 2014 Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 incident further indicates that it is necessary for countries in the region to promote the integration and capacity enhancement of maritime situational awareness system. Third, the diversification of governance entities needs to be further

45 Eleanor Albert, “Competition in the Indian Ocean,” Council on Foreign Relations, May 19, 2016, <https://www.cfr.org/background/competition-indian-ocean>.

promoted. As the subjects with security interests in the Indian Ocean become more diversified, the role of external countries, international non-governmental organizations, and enterprises in regional security affairs is increasingly prominent, which calls for a more open, transparent and inclusive regional security governance mechanism. There is room for the existing mechanisms to improve their inclusiveness.

Thoughts on Improving Security Governance of the Indian Ocean

As the power and interest structure in the Indian Ocean region is expected to continue profound adjustment in the future, regional security governance mechanisms are set to undergo further evolution. The international community should, based on existing security mechanisms, build a kind of governance that is more open, inclusive, pragmatic and sustainable, by taking into account the security concerns of all parties, coordinating the relationships between land and maritime governance, between development and security governance, and between inventory governance and incremental governance.

Governance goal: a peaceful, cooperative and win-win Indian Ocean

In view of the importance of the Indian Ocean to global geopolitical stability and economic development, the goal of Indian Ocean security governance should be to improve the overall level of regional security governance, effectively respond to and resolve various potential security risks, and turn the Indian Ocean into a sea of peace and win-win cooperation.

First, to ensure the overall security stability in the Indian Ocean, the objectives should include, but not be limited to, effectively managing strategic competition among major powers, promoting the de-escalation of regional hotspots, ensuring the stability of oil and gas production and export in the Middle East, and maintaining the safety and smoothness of international trade routes. In this regard, the United States, India, Japan, China and other countries with significant security interests in the Indian

Ocean should play a leading role.

Second, cooperation should be enhanced among all parties on Indian Ocean security issues. Compared with the Western Pacific, major powers do not have conflicts of core interests like territorial sovereignty in the Indian Ocean, and the US security alliance system is relatively loose in the region. Countries have more common ground for cooperation on Indian Ocean security issues, especially in tackling non-traditional security threats. In addition, the integration level in Indian Ocean sub-regions and the state governance capabilities in most countries, which are dragging down the overall efficiency of regional security governance, need to be improved. The international community should advance cooperation for better governance.

Third, strengthened Indian Ocean security governance benefits all parties. The interests and security concerns of the parties in the Indian Ocean are not the same, but the overall improvement of regional security governance is in the interests of all. The Indian Ocean countries are the most direct parties to the regional security situation and the most direct beneficiaries of any improvement in regional security governance. External countries with significant interests in the region can also benefit by participating in regional security governance.

Governance principles: coordination and gradual manner

First, we must take into account the reasonable security concerns of all parties. China's rising influence in the Indian Ocean region has caused strategic suspicions from other major powers. Retired US Navy Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt compared China-US competition to the US-Soviet scramble in the Indian Ocean during the Cold War.⁴⁶ Australian scholar David Brewster even claimed that there is a Sino-Indian Cold War in the Indian Ocean region.⁴⁷ At the same time, the rising security vulnerability of

46 Michael McDevitt, *Great Power Competition in the Indian Ocean: The Past as Prologue*, Center for Naval Analyses, March 2018, p.5.

47 David Brewster, *Between Giants: The Sino-Indian Cold War in the Indian Ocean*, French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), December 2018.

its overseas interests in the Indian Ocean region calls for China to strengthen its security capabilities there. This contradiction is mainly due to the differences in relevant countries' security concerns and the lack of strategic mutual trust. Therefore, Indian Ocean security governance needs to take into account factors such as memory of history, strategic perception, practical interests and existing mechanisms, and respect the reasonable security concerns of all parties. "Contests must not turn into conflict; differences must not be allowed to become disputes."⁴⁸

Second, relations between the land and the sea should be well handled. The security governance of the Indian Ocean should not be limited to the sea, but should adhere to the principle of coordination and interaction between the land and the sea. Improved land governance in the Indian Ocean region would have a positive spillover effect on maritime security governance. On one hand, economic development and state governance capabilities of Indian Ocean countries should be enhanced, while the "risk sources" on land should be managed. On the other hand, governance on maritime security threats, especially non-traditional threats, should be simultaneously promoted to avoid maritime risks spilling over to the land, as in the case where a serious maritime terrorist attack could dramatically worsen interstate relations.

Furthermore, we should coordinate security and development. The two are means and purpose to each other and cannot be decoupled. The experience of existing security governance mechanisms in the Indian Ocean shows that it is difficult to address both symptoms and root causes by only dealing with security issues, and this is also a positive and important driving force for the transformation of the IORA and the BIMSTEC. Therefore, to address security challenges through development, we should actively promote the integration process of each sub-region, strengthen regional connectivity, seek for greater synergy among different development initiatives, and

48 "Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue," Indian Ministry of External Affairs, June 1, 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>.

enhance cooperation in marine economy and sea area management.

Last but not least, we must carefully manage the relationship between inventory and incremental governance. The evolution of the Indian Ocean's security governance should proceed in a gradual manner. Inventory and incremental governance should be promoted simultaneously. On the basis of fully affirming the achievements of existing security governance mechanisms, incremental governance should be advanced in the aspects of the diversity of governance entities (such as incorporating more non-state actors), the richness of governance issues (such as enhancing maritime law enforcement cooperation), the integration of governance mechanisms (such as promoting a dominant governance mechanism), and the innovation of governance measures (such as deliberating on governance rules).

Governance measures: achieving innovative development in a multi-pronged approach

First, a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept must be advocated. All parties should strengthen exchanges on security risks and governance in the Indian Ocean through regional mechanisms such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, overcome the negative impact of geopolitical competition, and seek common security interests in the region through concrete measures. Most countries in the Indian Ocean region have common experiences and memories of anti-colonization and fighting for peace. China and India, as Oriental civilizations with a long history and the world's largest developing countries, should play an important role in advocating and leading the formation of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept in the Indian Ocean region. As the former National Security Adviser of India Shiv Shankar Menon pointed out, "... the major powers, (such as India, the United States, China and Japan), all of whom have a shared interest in keeping these sea lanes working ... China and other states can

choose to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.”⁴⁹

Second, efforts should be made to strengthen the supply of maritime security public goods. It is necessary for the international community to strengthen support for Indian Ocean security governance mechanisms under the UN framework, including providing funding, manpower and equipment support to the UNODC, offering assistance in capacity building of maritime security to key Indian Ocean countries and enhancing the ability of relevant countries and international organizations to promote maritime security. Moreover, relevant countries should deepen cooperation in marine economy, marine science and technology, and coastal zone management and exploration, especially in the areas of sustainable development of fisheries and combating the impacts of climate change. They should advance exchanges among navies and coast guards and carry out joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises and military medical cooperation. And they should also support the International Maritime Organization, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and other institutions in their specific areas of security governance, and facilitate coordination and cooperation with other regional security governance mechanisms.

Third, we should promote the integration and innovation of existing mechanisms. The actors and areas involved in the security governance of the Indian Ocean are varied and complicated, so it has been difficult to form a unified and region-wide security governance mechanism, resulting in the fragmentation of mechanisms. In the future, the international community can focus on developing mechanisms that are highly representative, highly accepted, and cover a wide range of areas, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association, to improve their leading role in regional security governance, and promote their coordination, synergy and cooperation with other mechanisms, thus to effectively mobilize and coordinate policy resources from all parties and improve the effectiveness of Indian Ocean security governance. 🧩

49 Shiv Shankar Menon, “Maritime Imperatives of Indian Foreign Policy,” *Maritime Affairs*, Vol.5, No.2, 2009, p.20.