
RESOLUTION

Annual General Body Meeting



April 15 & 16, 2017
Forum for Awareness of National Security
Gurugram

Resolution-5

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has always been in the news. It extends from Suez Canal in the west to the strait of Malacca in the east. It is situated such that IOR is central not only to India's vital geo-strategic importance, economic prosperity, energy and her freedom, but for Western, Southern and East Asian countries for their maritime interests. About 80% of world trade passes through this region. More than 70% of China's energy requirement (Oil) goes through IOR. Such is the case for India's Energy requirement also. According to some estimates, the region has almost half the world's energy and other natural resources. The spiralling demand for energy from the 'energy demand heartland' of Asia has made the geo-strategic environment of IOR volatile.

After her independence in the year 1949, China has been trying to become more assertive in IOR, which she wants to control not only for her energy requirements, but also rich resources, like vast expanse of hydrocarbons, minerals and many other valuable resources. China has been single minded trying to develop and strengthen her naval power in addition to Air and Land forces.

She believes in the maxim that the Nation, who controls Indian Ocean, controls the West Asia as stated by US geostrategist and historian Admiral Alfred Thayer Maha. China Naval power and assets re disproportionate to her defence needs. Obviously she nurses ambitions of becoming a super power.

Why IOR is so important for India and the rest of the world ?

India has 7,500 kms of coastline bordering Pakistan, China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Srilanka and is surrounded by Oceans and Seas on three sides of International boundaries. Addressing the valedictory function of the International Fleet Review, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "India's 1200 islands and territories and its huge Exclusive Economic Zone of 2.4 million sqkms, magnifies the economic significance of the Indian Ocean. For us, it also serves as a strategic bridge with the nations in our immediate and extended maritime neighbourhood. last year in the month of March in Mauritius, I had spelt out our vision for the India Ocean. The Indian Ocean Region is one of my

foremost Policy priorities. Our approach is evident in our vision of ‘Sagar’, which means ocean and our stand for security and growth for all in the region.”

India is seriously interested in maintaining the India Ocean Region as a very peaceful and conflict free zone from superpower for navigation, which is evident from its initiative with various regional groupings like Indian Ocean Rim Associations (IORA). As a part of Look East Policy, India has started cooperation among littoral states.

No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her unless her shores are protected. Most of the conflicts since the end of the Cold War have also taken place in or around the Indian Ocean region. As a result almost all the world’s major powers have deployed substantial military forces in the Indian Ocean region.

India is actively engaged with China to foster closer economic and cultural ties, while working on resolving border issues. India should be watchful of China’s trade imbalance as also of the Chinese development in IOR and militarisation of ‘String of Pearls’.

Today there is a requirement for balance of power in IOR because of the reasons mentioned earlier. All major powers of the world, concerned with the security of the Region and growing Naval and intentions of China have started their presence and concern in the region.

It is important for India to create a secure maritime environment through a strong and effective military especially naval capability. Indian Navy today is a blue water navy with a sizable force projection capabilities but that is not enough. Much more needsto be done to enhance our capabilities without further delay.

Resolution

1. Modernise and strengthen our Naval Capability on war footing. We have slept over it for a long time.
2. Trade imbalance with China must be corrected on priority.
3. India must aggressively pursue its LOOK EAST POLICY. Improve her diplomatic relations with Littoral states of the region.
4. Collective efforts with major powers of the world must be made to contain Chinese aggressive posture in IOR.
5. Preserve the freedom of navigation at all cost.