



Integrated Maritime Security

Governing the Ghost Protocol

Prabhakaran Paleri

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Governing the Ghost Protocol

Dedicated to the memory of

Vice Admiral Mihir Kumar (Mikki) Roy, PVSM, AVSM (Retd.)

Miss you, sir; you encouraged me to think differently.

Preface

The title of this book is a macro level statement. This is a composite and continuing work examining the land centred national security governance and its relation with the ocean. People have taken the ocean as a realm of mystery and perils since the very beginning. There were many catchphrases and statements of the “he-who-rules-the-ocean-will-rule-the-world” kind about the ocean and ocean governance. They were seemingly true according to the respective periods. That is, provided anybody could rule the ocean. It was the ocean that always ruled the world. It is next to impossible for any geopolitical entity to rule the ocean especially in modern times. Every geopolitical entity can exercise its right over it. Hegemonic ambitions and colonialism over the sea have become things of the past. An entity will have to tame the ocean appropriate to its rights. Taming the ocean for relative benefits is what the governments can attempt. The theme of this book revolves around it—taming the ocean. It is (more than) the chronicle of *sagar manthan*¹ and the symbolism concealed in it, yet in another form. It is new; it is different as a concept. It is also difficult to implement right away unless the government is daring to break the method inertia of governance associated with it. For these reasons the idea may not find immediate acceptance. But the findings, it is expected, may carve a niche in strategic appreciation not only in national governance but also in governing any human system where wellbeing, not the doled out welfare or selective political anointment, is the end objective. It is expected to pick up in the natural way as the art and science of national governance evolves.

The examination of the concept of national security clearly indicates that the idea is practised in a fragmented manner all over the world taking the physical security of a nation as the prime requirement

1 See annexure.

for any government to meet in national governance. It becomes the leading objective and reinforces the view that national security means the physical security of a nation against external and internal threats. This is far from truth. Since the late 18th century scholars have identified national security as a much broader concept, but in a world troubled by war, violence and crime, the governance got focused on survival against physical threats. The concept of national security lap dissolved in military affairs and internal problems of security in the name of national security. The practice is continuing.

This book examines the evolution of the wholesome concept of national security and its definition, and showcases governance aimed at maximising national security through the identified interactive elements of it. Governance of human system is naturally land centred and thereby the terrain specific national security external to land gets isolated, though may receive selective attention of governments. This is largely visible in governing the ocean. The governments can overcome this situation and the ocean can be governed more effectively by integrating maritime security with national security. The study confirms it.

Like any other task, national governance too gravitates through familiar and beaten tracks in any political system. Altering the course of governance has to be done carefully and slowly. It is like wheeling over a fully laden ultra large crude carrying tanker in restricted water, though there is room to manoeuvre. There is massive inertia, hence no quick remedy in governance. Altering course of governance takes time.

The idea of integrated maritime security originated from my professional experience, previous research studies, and discussions and interactions with various veterans and scholars on the subject. Standing atop the bridge of a ship in absolute command watching the restlessly manic and endless sea, one gets into an orgasmic spin of superhuman spirit with the awareness of unlimited accountability towards the safety of the ship and the lives on board. It would have happened to many commanders and masters who were fortunate to encounter the perils of the sea very early in life. Yes, fortunate. It is an experience that defies explanation. The spin continues for the rest of one's life even after "finishing with main engines."

Whether the situation is close quarter or open quarter, one has to love the sea to “feel” the dread of it before taming it.

Every researcher and practitioner will have his or her own perspectives. This study carries my perspective of the ocean and the concept of national security, not maritime security, as an exclusive idea in isolation. For this, I respect the research findings of many scholars on the subject. Their findings not only enlightened me but also encouraged me to delve deeper. I practiced it at every turn of my career. The idea of this book is to present the findings and suggestions to the executors and researchers for application and further research. Being a new concept, the ideas may find reiterated in various chapters in different forms for familiarity and reinforcement while reading through.

The study is not specific to any country. But there are references to many countries for driving the point home. The study takes into consideration every geopolitical entity, each one different from the other and governed differently. The idea suggested here is national governance with the sole objective of maximisation of national security, as the way it is defined here, by integrating the terrain specific maritime security for better yield from the ocean. To that extent integrated maritime security is the absolute assimilation of the terrain specific aspects of the ocean related to a geopolitical entity with its national security elements for maximising the benefits to the people by governance.

The book is global in scope. It is about bringing the ocean over land for governing it. The findings are applicable to any entity, including the landlocked and geographically disadvantaged, provided it can understand and appreciate its part of the ocean. It will be useful even to prevent the damages when the ocean comes over to lunch uninvited if and when the sea level rises. When it happens, the low lying nations do not actually sink or drown; they get choked by the ocean riding them commandingly. This is what a tsunami does, though temporarily. Sea level rise is much worse.

This book goes along with the design of my previous research on national security, a concept I believed was much larger than the idea of national security that has been practiced all around the world. It was a revelation. Building further on the research, one reaches a state of sanguine confidence that the world doesn't have to struggle so much

to achieve wellbeing or do all that to safeguard whatever it wants to safeguard. An alteration of course, perhaps, is all what is necessary which anyway will happen when the decks are open. This book may throw some wild cards when it happens.

I have been encouraged by the United Service Institution of India (USI) and its Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) for examining the topic. It is an honour. The Institution with an outstanding reputation of more than 140 years became one of my mentors in strategic research when it awarded me a project a decade ago. The research had found great application subsequently. This time the subject is new and very futuristic. I am grateful to its visionary director Lt Gen P. K. Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd.), the sensuously acute and dedicated research head at the CS3 Maj Gen Y. K. Gera (Retd.) and all the veterans of the Institute for the faith they bestowed in me.

I am sure the findings of this research will be useful to those in governance who dare to experiment with the new. If they do, they could gain headway in governance relative to others engaged in similar tasks around the world.

Being a sailor most of my life, I feel comfortable with nautical terms of expression even in normal dialogues. I have taken extreme care in avoiding such terms in this study. Still I have dabbled in some. I couldn't help it. Please disregard, if you find them uncanny. The same goes for mathematical expressions. I have been careful to steer clear of them. The reader may skip through the limited parts where I was compelled to highlight some.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION—THE CURIOUS CASE OF MARITIME SECURITY

It is impossible for humans¹ to appreciate existential security beyond the territorial realm of land; it is not because they are ignorant about the importance of the ocean...

The much talked about “maritime security” is a curious case, a kind of ghost protocol; GP for short. Giving shape to a ghost protocol is a difficult task. But, it is part of governance. Individuals and governments who attempt to manage maritime security often perform it irresolutely. The outcomes fall short of expectations in the miasma of lapses and consequences while chasing the objectives.

They are often unaware that ghost protocols are to be shaped and prepared before handling.

There are many ghost protocols in a social system under governance. Maritime security is a high-flier among them. This study examines the idea of maritime security and its governance for maximising national security. In the process, both the concepts and their associated aspects need to be understood by reductionist analysis for clarity of differentiation which is the prime requirement for integration of the whole system for better results. Reductionism reflects the perspectives of causality. It is a complex process, especially when it is about social systems that have been practiced for a very long time. The problem will be about acceptance.

When “Terra” is “Firma”

For humans, the world is over land, the *terra firma*. They live and multiply on it. They have been more interested with the vital aspects of the solid terrain and the associated geoproperty rights² over it than the surrounding ocean water. They feel secure over land. As on date, if anyone wants to own a piece of land, he or she will have to acquire it from someone or a government. People fought and brawled over land individually and in groups in every which way they could. Authors wrote stories of human saga and conflicts with the land all over the world. Today, there is no land on the planet that doesn't belong to someone or some group including governments as private or public property. No one can walk into a piece of land and occupy it legally today. There is also land that is claimed by more than one country. They remain under dispute or informally declared as “no-man's land.”³ A small piece of land at the South Pole still remains “unsold” or not permanently occupied. It is the only piece of land available for all.⁴ It is precariously placed in the list of the global commons surrounded by frozen ocean waters. It is the remaining piece of the original and the last known supercontinent, the mother of all the occupied land territories today—Pangaea. The rest of the world broke away in pieces from Pangaea to settle elsewhere in the ocean as decided by the spin of the Earth and the momentum of the drifting pieces. They were all bought or occupied. They still carry the pangs to rejoin.

To that extent the populated world of today is still wandering like dump barges broken loose in the ocean.

Humans remain precariously perched over the various pieces of floating landmass. They cannot live elsewhere. They are aware of it. They can slip into the water if they walk out of the gunwale of their land-barge, and die. So, they feel. They know gravity is stronger than buoyancy. Their minds play with them, scaring them subconsciously. They consider, the ocean is separate from their land. They do not know that the water too is drifting along with the land as part of Earth's crust, part of their land. What they know is that water can kill them; only land can protect them.

Humans feel secure when *terra* is *firma*—the land over which they stand is solid. This feeling is clear and present in everything they do, including governance.

Human affinity with the land from the very beginning is understandable. There are quick takes on why people cling on to land so vehemently. First, being humans, they feel physically secure with life only over land where they can breathe effortlessly. Humans cannot breathe underwater. Though not a new or clever discovery of this study, it is as simple as that. Second, humans are psychologically insecure to the hilt when their complex neural systems get unleashed on the security aspects of the future. Security is identified, among others, with the life supporting land. Everyone pines for a piece of land with a house on it. In a high-rise apartment, the land becomes the floor space in virtual reality. People even plant trees and grass on their skyscraping terraces and interiors; they miss the piece of real land which is their security blanket. With all these fixations over land, it is natural for humans to clasp it virtually or otherwise, and forget everything else including the ocean. Humans are preoccupied with land and the associated *terra tactus*. Their thinking is land based. They need to touch land to feel comfortable.

They clasp the land for survival. They cling on to it for dear life. It is a primordial instinct by default for continued existence of life created to survive over land alone. Humans are endowed with advanced brains relative to other life forms. Their survival tool is supposed to be the brain, not jaws, claws and size. The craze for land drives people fanatically. They can't think of anything else without land under their feet and dissolved in their mind. Every religious and political system has its vehement dogma on land, and the possession and use of it. Not so passionately about the ocean. In contrast, the ocean remained free and unoccupied. One can sail into even the territorial sea of a country easily and get away with it, but not across the land border. Why is it so?

The Landclasp Syndrome

The landclasp syndrome reflects in every human activity on the planet but is much more amplified in national governance. The syndrome is robust and pervasive. In contrast, ocean remains secondary. It is evident in the maritime disputes that prevail all over. The disputes, on the first hand, were caused by the landclasp syndrome. The parties involved did not realise the disputes at sea were that serious until the law of the sea demarcated the points for assessing ocean rights that also covers ocean bed and beneath—the land underwater

legally called the subsoil. This makes the ocean a part of the land for argument. The disputes at sea between nations remained unresolved or did not project the necessary urgency as in the case of issues over land. The landclasp syndrome was inimical to appreciating the ocean and everything associated with it. The people and the governments were hooked on to land. A breach over land is much more serious even today than a breach on the ocean water from the public point of view.

There is no need for humans to unclasp the land and dive into the ocean. Hugging the land is a natural choice. It is more comfortable and natural. The hold over land is essential. It is impossible to get rid of this feeling anyway unless humans develop gills and learn to breathe underwater as comfortably as over land. Hence the idea of maritime security has to be within this clasp over land. Every issue of maritime security, therefore, has to be resolved over land. Nations have admitted it openly. Though, ultimately, it is the ocean that will decide the destiny of land and people over it—an irony of sorts.

To understand the landclasp syndrome of humans, it is necessary to examine human bondage to land in matters related to security for which the stage was set much before human life originated over land. It is also essential to understand why ocean, in spite of being a very dominating terrain of the planet, is secondary to humans in their immediate existence.

All these... from a strategic perception of security.

World in Distant Past

There are clear evidences of the past, one of them in the distribution of fossils, at least as far as the time when the land masses were cloistered in a more or less human embryonic shape at one point as a supercontinent with the expansive ocean around it. The single supercontinent lay cosseted there in time between the late Paleozoic era (541-252.2 Ma) and the beginning of the Mesozoic era (252.2-66 Ma). The supercontinent was called Pangaea. Between the periods, the Pangaeian existence was dated around 300 million years ago. Scholars believe there would have been various other supercontinents even before that. That is not a concern for this study.

The study is concerned about governing the human system. Human life originated many millennia after the Pangaeian breakup about 200

million years ago. Pangaeon break up is important to understand the ocean distribution. The ocean that surrounded the supercontinent of Pangaea is called Panthalassa or Panthalassic Ocean. An interesting fact is that the ocean has no name today. Whereas, the world has named the ocean that existed many millennia into the past. The ocean has changed in shape, size, volume, temperature and salinity. But it is still single and surrounds all the continents as a continuum. In some cases it is called the World Ocean with various geographical divisions under different names.

The period of existence of a supercontinent was comparatively short in relation to the life of the planet, which is estimated to be around four billion years. All these studies will be quite trivial when the planet finally succumbs one day to become a cosmic speck, or whatever it is going to be, at the end of its life. A researcher interested in ocean strategy is not concerned about such a long period of study. More than that, it is the human beings survival instinct that is important for such research. The centre of gravity of the survival instinct was laid over land in the past. There are reasons to believe that it is not likely to change considering humans are designed for land. That is the fact that has to be established. Whatever may be the influence the ocean has on sustaining life on land in addition to the waterworld of the ocean itself, the humans will always be concerned about their existence primarily over land. They will view the ocean from the land and not on the reverse. If that is so, human wellbeing will ever remain a land based concept. Any other terrain based security, therefore, has to be part of it and not external or exclusive to it.

The name Pangaea was coined in 1927 in a symposium discussing continental drift. The findings about the supercontinent were postulated by Alfred Wegener (1880-1930) in his book *Die Entstehung der Continente und Ozeane*.⁵ The perception that the ocean was different from the land originated from this finding among other thought processes. The human tendency to look at land as a separate entity different from ocean can be seen in visualising the supercontinent exclusive of the ocean. In reality, the ocean was part of the single supercontinent on the Earth's crust. It is the geological plates that moved floating on Earth's molten interior, not the ocean. They moved carrying the "single" ocean. The ocean thereby becomes part of the

land that drifts but, being fluid, takes different spatial shapes. This process is still continuing.

Land is a solid, fluid, gaseous and plasmic combination. It also means ocean is part of land and not different from it.

World Today

The world we know today lies in the centre of the study of any scholar. Everything about the world related to the past and present emanates outwardly from the world today as appreciated by the individual scholar. The world today is important for the study of national security governance from this sense. The supercontinent of yesterday lie staggered with the ocean still surrounding the widely separated land masses that thrust above it like gargoyles. The land masses comprise various geopolitical entities with people of varying ethnicity, belief systems and concerns. The common concern for all is security that they are yet to define seriously.

The world today is heavily populated with human beings who live in large complex groups and use communication thankfully better than any other live forms for individual and group expression. The population is estimated to be 7.1 billion with a density of 43.6 people per square kilometer over land (2013). This is not a precise measurement but a statistical approximation that keep changing (normally increasing in spite of every calamity) in time. Humans belong to the prime life system that is not yet endangered probably being at the top of the life system pyramid. They generally follow the family group system which in course of time has thinned down to molecular family system at the lower level. Family group system collectively cares for security at the bottom level of the human society. Starting with the family, the group living extends to nations and in special cases collectively to global society. The global society concept in human system is not a reality but an elusive desire in some quarters if not an illusory concept.⁶ The concept lacks universal acceptance for obvious reasons. The idea is a hard sell.

All these are governed by belief systems stored in human brain mostly interactive with primordial instincts of survival. The resulting behaviour at times becomes extremely intricate. It is from this point one has to understand the complexity of governance of a human system. The entire system of governance today is naturally land-centric. The

pace at which human belief system changes is very much slower than the changes in human ingenuity. This causes a lag in human adaption to ingenuity. The change in belief system is not visible on the go but the change brought out by ingenuity is instant. For this reason “change” for humans is innovation using the skills which is only temporary transformation, not a change in human perception of security for this study. Hence the study of human security remains affirmed in the law of invariance—nothing changes since the change is not noticeable at the moment of change.⁷

Under the law of invariance, however vital the ocean may be for human security, the governing mindset will still remain primordial and land based.

World in Distant Future

Examining how the world is going to be millions of years from now may not be a subject of interest in the study of maritime security, right? Wrong. The most vital aspect in the study of maritime security is the changes taking place in the ocean and about the ocean within the application of the law of invariance. The changes in the ocean also cause changes in the outlook of land and the humans who inhabit it. To understand the changes, one has to appreciate that it exists, though not visible immediately. One of the testimonies that the world will change in distant future lies in the geological confirmation that the formation of supercontinents is a cyclical process. Earth's crust gets reconfigured constantly. Scholars believe from the available evidences that there were other supercontinents much before Pangaea. It also means that the land masses of the present will come closer to become another supercontinent one day in the process of cyclical contraction and separation. If that is so, the cyclical process that is on at this moment will keep changing the profile of the world continuously. Anything that has to happen to the planet such as climate change or even an ice age will overlap within the process of this cyclical contraction and expansion. The changes are not commonly observable since the world is creeping slower than the growth of a finger nail.⁸ They can be made visible for human perception only by visualising the future, millions of years from now. It will be amazing, even as a fun study, as the forecasters put it, to observe the world entirely different from now in its new shape similar, though not exactly, to the old Pangaea.