



## Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean

For Greater German Engagement in the Ocean of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Keypoints

- The globally most significant maritime choke points, namely the Gulf of Aden, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca, are situated in the Indian Ocean.
- The security challenges in the region – ranging from failing states to rivalry between major powers – pose ongoing threats to maritime security and free passage through maritime choke points.
- Germany's prosperity depends on unrestricted international sea trade and unimpeded access to raw material markets. Ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean is therefore in Germany's fundamental interest.
- Berlin must engage in the region, and do so much more strongly than in the past. To make a sustained contribution to improving maritime security in the region, Germany will have to maintain a continuous presence there, establish close bilateral partnerships with key states, engage in security, economic and scientific collaborations as well as being involved in regional and international organisations.

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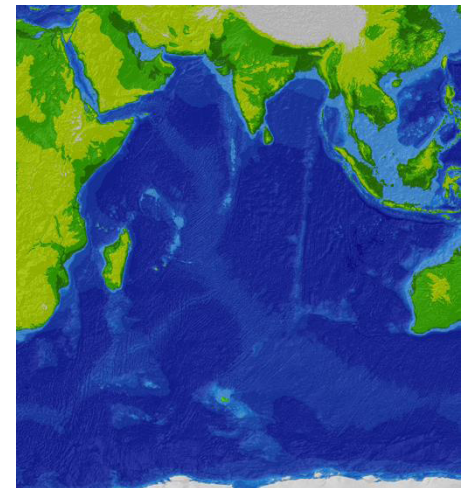
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1. The Indian Ocean Region

With an area of some 75.8 million km<sup>2</sup>, the Indian Ocean is the world’s third largest ocean. It is linked to the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Antarctic Ocean and covers approximately 14.7 per cent of the surface of the earth. In the west, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) extends from the Suez Canal in the north to the Cape of Good Hope in the South. In the north, two vast bays dominate the region (the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal), while it borders the Antarctic in the south. In the east, the Indian Ocean borders the Southeast Asian coast and the western Indonesian Archipelago, and in the southeast the western Australian coast. While the Mediterranean was of preeminent significance in the Middle Ages and the Atlantic dominated in the modern era, the Indian Ocean is considered the most important ocean of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its importance derives from its narrow access routes and its role as the transit ocean for global trade. The region contains the most significant maritime choke points worldwide, namely the Gulf of Aden, the Bab-el-Mandeb, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait and the Lombok Strait. The continuous expansion of global trade and shipping make these maritime choke points of the Indian Ocean ever more important as the volume of traffic through them increases. Some 30 per cent of world trade already passes through the Strait of Malacca each year, while some 20 per cent of worldwide oil exports have to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. The significance of the Indian Ocean will increase further because of rising demand for raw materials and the associated increase in shipping. This will not only affect Western states but above all also China and India, the most populous countries and among the leading economies of the future. It will ultimately result in more and more countries looking to secure their interests in the Indian Ocean, thereby boosting the region’s geostrategic relevance. Kaplan (2009: 17) believes that this will produce major changes in international politics: “In other words, more than just a geographic feature, the Indian Ocean is also an idea. It combines the centrality of Islam with global energy politics and the rise of India and China to reveal a multilayered, multipolar world.”

**Fig. 1: Topographic-bathymetric map of the Indian Ocean**



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2. Key Players in the Indian Ocean

2.1 India

India has diverse economic maritime interests in the Indian Ocean and is naturally in line to adopt the leadership role in the IOR. The country has over 7,516 km of coastline and 13 major ports. 90 per cent of India’s exports are transported by sea. Energy imports to India are predominantly shipped from the Persian Gulf and Africa. 10 to 15 per cent of the population in coastal regions are engaged in fishing. In terms of security policy, India’s interests involve the protection of coastal areas as well as securing trading routes.

In the long term, India aspires to a naval presence in the entire Indian Ocean by maintaining a blue-water navy to be able to defend Indian interests in the region (Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence 2007). India has two aircraft carriers.

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It is thought that the country will commission a submarine carrying nuclear warheads by the end of the year. Currently, India operates a station on Madagascar to monitor shipping in the south-western sector of the Indian Ocean. In addition, the Indian Navy uses the Port of Muscat, Oman, for counter-piracy operations. These included Operation Island Watch, which took place in 2010. In response to Chinese investments in ports in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, India has further funded a deep-water port in Sittwe, Myanmar (The Times of India 2011). India is actively engaged in promoting the expansion of maritime agreements and institutions at bilateral and multilateral level. These include agreements between India and the island states of the Seychelles, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Mauritius. In addition, India hosts the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, which focuses on security threats in the Indian Ocean, as well as the biennial "Milan" get-togethers to foster cooperation in the area of maritime security. Joint military exercises with the USA, named Exercise Malabar, support New Delhi with capacity building. They are also intended to establish India as a counterbalance to Chinese expansionist endeavours in the Indian Ocean.

## 2.2 Malaysia

Since 2004, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have been engaged in trilateral cooperation under Operation MALSINDO.

Geographically, Malaysia is situated on the strategically important Strait of Malacca. Security threats in this area emanate mainly from piracy, but there is also a risk of attacks by Islamist terror groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah. Historically, multilateral military cooperation between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia was limited. Since 2004, however, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have been engaged in trilateral cooperation under Operation MALSINDO, also referred to as the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP) and Malacca Strait Security Initiative (MSSI) (Massey, 2008). However, patrols from each of the three states only cover their own territorial waters. Historic animosities between the three countries preclude stronger trilateral cooperation. In view of the size of the Strait of Malacca, the capability of the Malaysian Navy is limited. Due to the high economic significance of the strait, it can be assumed that all three states will continue with the trilateral engagement.

## 2.3 Australia

Potential threat scenarios for Australia include interstate conflict between India and China, maritime terrorism and, very significantly, non-traditional security threats.

The general view among Australian defence circles is that the Indian Ocean will grow in strategic importance for the country over the next few decades (Bateman & Bergin 2011). Australia has maritime sovereignty over the largest area of all the countries bordering the Indian Ocean, and it also has one of the most capable navies in the region. Its maritime interests involve strategically important island territories, sea routes, curbing illegal immigration as well as large oil and gas reserves off the northwest Australian coast. Potential threat scenarios include an interstate conflict between India and China, maritime terrorism and, very significantly, non-traditional security threats such as transnational criminal activities, illegal fishing and natural disasters. It is likely that Australia will rely mostly on bilateral initiatives where the security architecture in the Indian Ocean is concerned. There has been a rapprochement recently between Canberra and New Delhi in the area of maritime security. Bilateral cooperation with further parties is therefore likely to follow (Cronin & Baruah 2014).

Trilateral talks between Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Australia about maritime issues could well complement the picture sometime in the future. Australia is also active in multilateral institutions, having chaired the Indian Ocean Rim Association from 2013 and 2015. Multilateral institutions are particularly relevant to Australia where addressing non-traditional security threats is concerned.

## 2.4 Indonesia

During his election campaign, the new Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, promised to strengthen Indonesia's maritime security, expand regional diplomacy and improve the capabilities of the Indonesian Navy (Shekhar & Liow 2014). This makes him the first democratically elected president to be intent on developing a maritime doctrine for Indonesia. Indonesia's current maritime capabilities lag behind those of Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. As Indonesia extends eastwards from the Indian Ocean and a large proportion of Indonesian goods is traded with South and East Asia, the primary strategic interest used to be focused on the Pacific. Lately, however, there have been indications of Indonesia taking an increasing interest in the Indian Ocean. This was also reflected in a statement made by the Indonesian President while speaking at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore in 2012: "There is every likelihood that in the twenty-first century the Indian Ocean will grow in geostrategic importance. We must make sure that the Indian Ocean does not become an area of new strategic contest and rivalry. Indeed, now is the time to cultivate the seeds for long-term cooperation, based on common interests in that part of the world" (Shekhar & Liow 2014). Indonesia is one of the main players in the ASEAN alliance of states. In view of the country's limited maritime capabilities, one can assume that Indonesia will also continue to rely on multilateral institutions to secure its geostrategic interests in the area of maritime security. One key institution in this context is the Indian Ocean Rim Association, which Indonesia is chairing until 2017. At the same time, Indonesia takes a negative stance towards the deployment of foreign naval forces in Indonesian waters, on a mission to combat piracy for instance, due to negative experiences in the past.

Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, intends to develop a maritime doctrine for Indonesia.

## 2.5 China

With China being the second largest oil consumer, its economy depends on sea routes in the Indian Ocean, through which over 70 per cent of all its oil imports pass. Due to political instability and poor infrastructure in Central Asia, sea routes will remain the main delivery channels for energy imports for the foreseeable future. The geopolitical "String of Pearls" hypothesis states that China intends to establish a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean by building civilian maritime infrastructure along the region's periphery. Initial major projects, such as the deep-water port in Gwadar, Pakistan, as well as a Chinese-financed port in Hambantota, Sri Lanka, could be interpreted as the first steps towards a permanent Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Further major Chinese projects are under construction in Port Sudan and Bagamoyo, Tanzania. The Chinese government denies that any of these ports constructed with funding from Beijing have any military relevance, as China's primary interest is to keep transport routes open for itself and the energy suppliers. The situation as a whole will, however, ultimately produce a scenario of "energy geo-politics", where the USA and its allies as well as the emerging IOR states such as India and external actors such as China will enter into a contest for control over the sea routes.

China intends to establish a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean by building civilian maritime infrastructure along the region's periphery.

## 2.6 USA

The United States has been active in the region since the 1950s and has gradually expanded both its maritime presence and its cooperation with the IOR states. In the military installations on Diego Garcia, the last remaining British territory in the Indian Ocean, the USA has a base in the south of the IOR. In addition, it maintains bases on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain), in Djibouti, the Philippines and Thailand. There are also bilateral agreements on the use of ports

and bases with Somalia, Kenya, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia. The region is of fundamental importance to the security and the economy of the USA, a view that has been reflected in the Quadrennial Defense Review for years.

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The USA considers itself the guarantor of international and maritime security in the region and is stepping up efforts to enter into partnerships in the IOR – for instance with India and Japan – to counterbalance the influence of China, which is becoming increasingly active in the region. Due to budget cuts, there is some question over how long the USA will be able to maintain its presence in the IOR at the current level. In the course of the counter-terror and counter-piracy operations, the USA is already focusing increasingly on creating and leading coalitions to scale back its own engagement. And since the feared supremacy battle for the leading role in the area of maritime security between China on the one side and the USA and India on the other has not yet materialised, the USA has been active mainly as a moderator and mediator in regional collaborations. Even joint exercises with China, for instance as part of the Pakistani AMAN naval exercises, are therefore no longer a rarity.

### 3. Security Landscape in the IOR

All the maritime choke points mentioned above lie at security hotspots in the Indian Ocean. Two of the world's most fragile states, Somalia and Yemen, are located in the west, directly on the approach to the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Aden and Bab-el-Mandeb. The instability in these countries is having an impact on the maritime realm, particularly as both Somalia and Yemen are currently facing civil war, terrorism and transnationally operating organised crime. The activities of Somali pirates in the period from 2007 to 2012, which disrupted global sea trade, and the attack on the USS Cole in the Gulf of Aden represent just two cases in point. Further east, the competition between the USA and Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Iran on the other has been endangering access to the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. Both the tanker war during the first Gulf War of 1980-1988 and the seizure of a Danish container ship operating under charter from a German shipping company by the navy of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in April 2015 illustrate the tense situation as well as the vulnerability of the sea routes in the Persian Gulf. Due to its location, its rivalry with India, its nuclear arsenal and its ethnic composition, Pakistan is deemed to be one of those fragile states whose collapse would have far-reaching and threatening security implications. At the most easterly edge of the IOR lies the Strait of Malacca; it is the most important sea link between Asia, Africa and Europe, and it has also seen the majority of all pirate attacks since 2013.

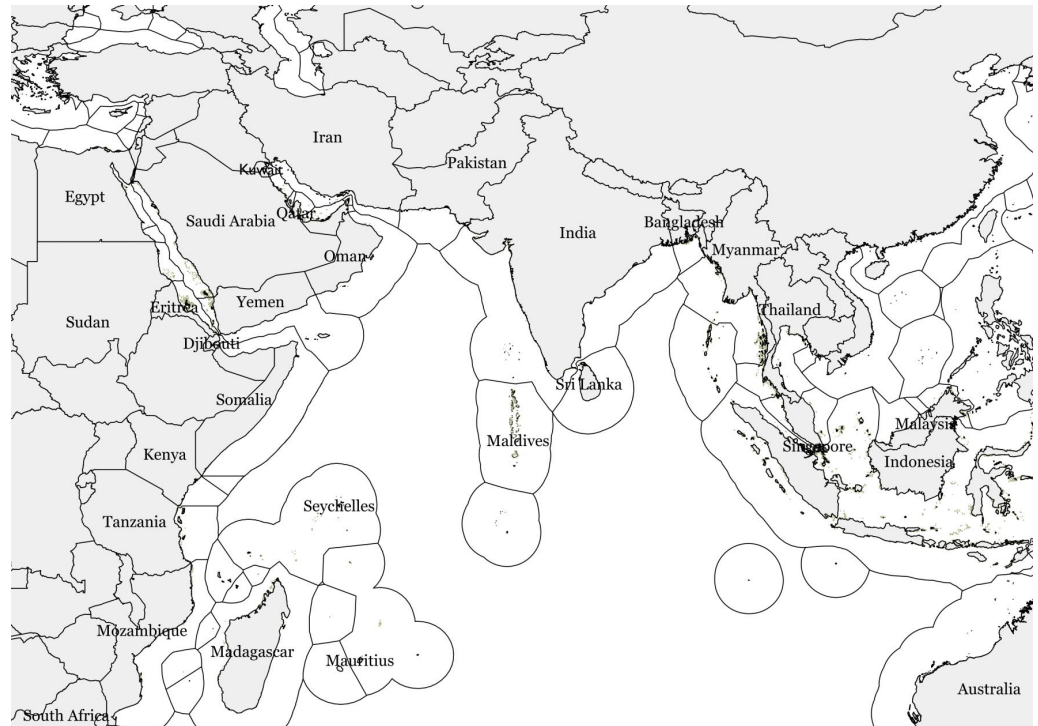
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In this unstable scenario, it is in Germany's interest to make a contribution to securing the sea links in order to minimise the vulnerability of open sea routes and thereby threats to access to raw material sources and sales markets, which Germany depends on.

#### 3.1 Potential for Interstate Conflicts

There are numerous territorial conflicts and border disputes between various IOR countries, which also impact on maritime security. Added to this are international rivalries between external actors and states in the region. Particularly in areas close to the straits, disputes about Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) are resulting in interstate conflicts, which are impeding more intensive cooperation. There are also conflicts of interests between IOR countries with respect to accusations of illegal fishing in EEZs and the resulting overfishing in the region.





Map made with Natural Earth and Claus S., N. De Hauwere, B. Vanhoorne, F. Souza Dias, F. Hernandez, and J. Mees (Flanders Marine Institute) (2015). *MarineRegions.org*. Accessed at <http://www.marineregions.org> on 2015-06-08

The IOR is also increasingly developing into an arena of antagonism between the USA, India and China with respect to spheres of geopolitical influence and control over transshipment ports, sea links and natural resources.

Unrestricted sea trade in the Persian Gulf is also coming under repeated threat from escalations of other conflicts, such as those between the USA and Iran and between Saudi-Arabia and Iran. Because of their inferiority in terms of conventional hardware, the Iranian navies in particular (both the Iranian Navy and the navy of the Revolutionary Guard) have specialised in asymmetrical naval warfare with very small boats, which represent a threat to both warships and civilian vessels. The IOR is also increasingly developing into an arena of antagonism between the USA, India and China with respect to spheres of geopolitical influence and control over transshipment ports, sea links and natural resources. The region's significance for major powers and economies can also be gauged by the military presences. The USA as well as Russia, the UK, France and China have ships stationed in the region or regularly carry out exercises in collaboration with bordering countries. There have also been signs over recent years of the countries in the region investing more heavily in their navies in order to enhance their power projection capabilities.

### 3.2 Piracy and Maritime Terrorism

Particularly in and close to the Strait of Malacca, over one hundred attacks on ships of all sizes are recorded every year.

The IOR is the global piracy hotspot. Between 2007 and 2012, activities by Somali pirates off the Horn of Africa and in the Gulf of Aden seriously disrupted international sea trade. In the east of the IOR as well, particularly in and close to the maritime pinch point of the Strait of Malacca, over one hundred attacks on ships of all sizes are recorded every year. And pirate attacks have also been on the increase over recent years along the coast of Bangladesh. International, regional and national security initiatives, such as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and the associated Combined Task Forces (CTF) with regional remits (CTF 150 operating in the Gulf of Aden, CTF 151 combating piracy and CTF 152 operating in the Persian Gulf), NATO operation Ocean Shield and EU operation ATALANTA (to protect the ships of the World Food Programme), have resulted in a serious reduction in piracy around the Horn of Africa, with only few attacks taking place in 2014 and 2015.

Scenarios of maritime terrorism cannot be discounted either.

However, the number of pirate attacks in the Strait of Malacca has increased greatly in the same period, which makes the eastern IOR currently the most dangerous piracy hotspot in the world. Due to the fragility of numerous IOR states, one also has to assume that the phenomenon of piracy will grow further and may even extend into other sub-regions (such as Bangladesh). Even presently secure regions may develop into piracy hotspots again once the international operations have come to an end. Scenarios of maritime terrorism cannot be discounted either. As terrorist raids and attacks on ships are rare, albeit not totally unheard-of, such activities happening in the Indian Ocean cannot be dismissed out of hand. There are economically significant infrastructures in the maritime environment as well as on land. A terrorist attack on an international transshipment port in the IOR would result in incalculable damage to an export-oriented economy such as Germany's. The most notorious examples of maritime terrorism include the following:

- In 1985, the cruise ship Achille Lauro was hijacked by terrorists from the Palestine Liberation Front.
- In 2000, the US destroyer USS Cole was badly damaged by a suicide attack in Aden harbour, which left 17 of the crew dead.
- In 2002, the oil tanker Limburg suffered a terrorist attack off Yemen. While the ship was waiting offshore to take on a further load of oil from the terminal, it was rammed on the starboard side by a dinghy that had been loaded with explosive. The explosion caused oil to spill into the Gulf and the incident disrupted international shipping in the area for several weeks.
- Critical infrastructures such as ports and oil production facilities are potential targets, as illustrated by the 2004 attacks on the Al Basrah and Khor al Amaya oil terminals.

Sea-based installations, such as offshore wind farms, can also become targets for ship-borne attacks. Even if ships are not used directly as weapons, just knowing that a sizable vessel is in the hands of actors intent on doing harm can cause sustained damage to international trade. Important maritime choke points (such as the Suez Canal) can become targets for terrorist attacks.

A ship being blown up, sunk or beached in a strategically chosen location could potentially result in months of disruption to maritime shipping and energy supplies.

### 3.3 Trade in Drugs, Weapons and People and Humanitarian Threat Scenarios

Due to the lack of political stability, the IOR encompasses large drug growing areas. Opium from Afghanistan in particular is supplied around the world across land and sea routes. As the classic land routes to Europe are becoming less lucrative because of stricter border controls, smugglers are using a new southern route. The drugs are shipped from Pakistan across the Indian Ocean by sea to East Africa, from where they are transported overland to North Africa and on to the EU across the Mediterranean (particularly via Italy). In addition to the Afghan drugs production, there is the "Golden Triangle" comprising Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, where opium poppies are grown in large quantities and processed into heroin before being shipped to neighbouring countries by sea. Small arms are smuggled by similar routes. Criminal organisations with international networks in particular but also terrorist groups use the drugs trade to fund their activities. Human trafficking has been added to the picture, developing into a further, highly lucrative business model rivalling the drugs trade (Potgeiter 2012: 11).

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Ecological risks in the region harbour further conflict potential, as the IOR states show poor ecological sensitivity. Marine and coastal pollution is a wide-spread phenomenon, endangering people's health and safety. In addition, long stretches of the coast are at risk of flooding, which could have far-reaching security implications if large streams of migrants were to push inland (as happened after cyclone Nargis in 2008) following a rise in sea level. The affected states are inconsistent in prioritising measures to improve environmental protection and disaster control; their efforts are negligible compared to those taken by other industrialised countries, and there is a need for further international prevention initiatives.

#### 4. Existing Maritime Security Architecture in the Indian Ocean

There are a variety of bilateral, regional and international agreements and institutions in place involving the states bordering the Indian Ocean and external actors. Most of these relate implicitly or explicitly to the protection of vital economic interests of the respective parties.

##### 4.1 Bilateral Cooperation Agreements

However, due to the fundamentally opposing interests of central actors in the region, there is in effect no institutional bilateral cooperation.

At a bilateral level, there are agreements between states bordering the Indian Ocean and between these states and external actors. However, due to the fundamentally opposing interests of central actors in the region, there is in effect no genuine institutional bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan or between Iran and Saudi-Arabia. China is making efforts to enforce its maritime interests particularly through bilateral economic cooperation projects. Some important, mostly bilateral agreements and arrangements are described in the overview below:

- The USA has made agreements with a number of bordering states granting it access to ports and use of military bases. There are US bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and on Diego Garcia. There are also agreements in place on access to ports with Australia, Djibouti, India, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Thailand and Yemen (Sakhuja n. d.).
- The USA and India conduct regular military exercises named Exercise Malabar (Singh n.d.). These exercises have occasionally involved other external actors, including Japan, Singapore and Australia in 2007 as well as just Japan in 2009 (Cassatt 2009), 2011 (Dikshit 2011) and 2014 (Indian Navy 2014).
- China is intent on concluding bilateral agreements aimed at reducing the dependence of the country's energy supplies on the Strait of Malacca and the situation in the South China Sea. As part of this strategy, the People's Republic is constructing a pipeline with access to a deep sea port at Kyaukpyu, Myanmar (Kong 2010). China has also financed a commercial port in Hambantota, Sri Lanka (Wijedasa 2014) and operates a deep sea port in Gwadar, Pakistan (The Nation 2013). These efforts can also be seen as part of a wider strategic initiative to create a "Maritime Silk Road" (Tiezzi 2014).
- A trilateral cooperation agreement between India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka, which has been in place for some time, was expanded in December 2013 to include the Seychelles and Mauritius (Sen 2014). There are plans to expand this agreement further by including the countries bordering the Bay of Bengal



(Dikshit 2014). Similarly, a bilateral maritime cooperation agreement was concluded between India and the Seychelles in March 2015 (India Today 2015). Amongst other things, this agreement envisages better cooperation in the fight against maritime crime, human trafficking as well as drugs and weapons smuggling.

- Apart from a presence on Diego Garcia, the UK has a small number of soldiers stationed in Singapore and Malaysia as part of the Five Power Defence Arrangements between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore (UK Parliament 2013). The aim of the agreement is to protect the Malaysian Peninsula against external threats.
- The Indra Project involves joint exercises between the Russian Pacific Fleet and the Indian Navy, most recently in April 2014 in the Sea of Japan (Aneja 2014).
- Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand cooperate in combating piracy in the Strait of Malacca. Joint exercises and coordinated patrols have also involved external actors including Japan, for which free passage through the Strait of Malacca is of great economic importance (Raj 2009).

#### 4.2 Regional Institutions

There are various regional institutions relating to the maritime security architecture in the IOR. Lately, there have been signs of increasing efforts to expand existing forums and institutions and to establish new cooperation initiatives. Most of the institutions established by states bordering the Indian Ocean involve external actors as well. These include in particular the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), but also the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, the biennial Milan event as well as the ReCAAP forum (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia). More recently, China in particular has made efforts to intensify its involvement with ASEAN, particularly with respect to maritime issues. However, China's primary interest and that of maritime ASEAN forums tend to focus on the South China Sea rather than the Indian Ocean.

- IORA (previously the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Corporation – IOR-ARC) comprises 20 African and Asian states bordering the Indian Ocean plus Australia. The dialogue partners of the organisation comprise China, the USA, France, the UK, Egypt and Japan. IORA aims at establishing a multilateral basis to improve cooperation between the member states. Work focuses on the areas of maritime security, the fostering of trade, the fishing industry, disaster management as well as scientific exchange and tourism.
- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) now has 35 members and first convened in New Delhi in 2008. It is an annual forum for the discussion of maritime problem areas and for the establishment and fostering of transnational cooperation mechanisms relating to the security threats in the Indian Ocean. A further objective is the development of interoperable doctrines and processes in the area of disaster and humanitarian aid.
- India has been hosting the biennial "Milan" get-togethers since the early 1990s (Sakhuja, n.d.). These serve to foster cooperation between countries bordering the Indian Ocean with respect to issues of maritime security. The get-together in 2014 further included the Philippines and Cambodia as external actors for the first time.

Lately, there have been signs of increasing efforts to expand existing forums and institutions and to establish new cooperation initiatives.

- ReCAAP has 20 member states and focuses on information exchange and capacity building to prevent piracy and armed attacks on ships in Asia. Besides local actors, the contracting parties include the USA, the UK, Denmark, Japan, South Korea and the Netherlands.
- The Djibouti Code of Conduct is an agreement between African states and states of the Arabian Peninsula. It provides guidelines for cooperation in various spheres of action relating to the fight against piracy.
- The ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) include maritime problem areas on their agendas. Further events, at which maritime issues are discussed explicitly, are the ASEAN Maritime Forum and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, attended by representatives from the ASEAN member states as well as from Australia, New Zealand, China, India, South Korea, Japan and Russia (Bernama 2014). These forums focus predominantly on the Pacific and the South China Sea in particular. China is further promoting maritime initiatives to intensify its links with ASEAN, including the establishment of a China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Center, a China-ASEAN Maritime Emergency Helpline as well as a China-ASEAN Ocean College (Parameswaran, 2015). These initiatives are in line with the “ASEAN-China Maritime Cooperation”, which State Councillor Yang Jiechi announced in March 2015.
- In March 2015, the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) announced that a Joint Maritime Security Force would be set up and that they would enhance naval cooperation. A joint naval exercise took place in the United Arab Emirates that very month (Trenwith 2015).

Talks on issues of maritime security and piracy have also taken place during meetings of the interior ministers of the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Multilateral initiatives set up by external actors are mainly aimed at combating piracy off the Horn of Africa as well as supporting East African states in setting up effective maritime structures. These include the following among others:

- Operation ATALANTA/European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU-NAVFOR-ATALANTA). This is a joint operation involving European naval forces set up in 2008, which initially focused on protecting ships of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and of the UN World Food Programme heading for Somalia. The mission was subsequently expanded to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden as well as off the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa. The mission is currently scheduled to end in December 2016.
- The European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor). The mission’s activities are intended to assist Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and the Seychelles in improving their capabilities to deal with maritime crime. It involves 117 international experts working in the countries, with a central focus on Somalia. The mission mandate is currently scheduled to end in December 2016.
- The purpose of the European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) is to advise the Somali Ministry of Defence and to assist with the training of Somali soldiers, with the primary objective of strengthening the Somali armed forces in their efforts to curb the activities of the Al-Shabaab militias (European Union 2014). The mandate of this mission is also currently scheduled to terminate in December 2016.

In the area of maritime security, there have been signs over recent years of a general trend for the states bordering the Indian ocean to move away from classic power projection and balance-of-power scenarios and towards an, albeit tentative, multilateralism.

- The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). This was set up in January 2009 by UN Security Council Resolution 1851 as a forum for the debate on fighting piracy attended by representatives from states, organisations and industry. Over 80 member states and various international organisations have been involved in the Contact Group, including the European Union, the African Union, the League of Arab States as well as the International Maritime Organization, NATO and a number of UN agencies. Central topics of discussion relate to capacity building and coordination, the configuration of a legal framework for piracy prevention, cooperation with shipping companies to strengthen awareness of maritime security risks, and the disruption of cash flows linked to piracy.

In the area of maritime security, there have been signs over recent years of a general trend for the IOR states to move away from classic power projection and balance-of-power scenarios and towards an, albeit tentative, multilateralism. Despite the realisation that individual states are not capable of ensuring maritime security in the IOR on their own, classic patterns of behaviour of foreign politics take over as soon as there is an impression that cooperation could potentially result in a loss of influence and power. For this reason, the integration of regional institutions and forums must be promoted to strengthen maritime security through trust-building measures and cooperative governance.

## 5. German Contributions

### 5.1 Past German Involvement

Contrary to the involvement of the USA, France and the UK, Germany has so far only been engaged sporadically and with a strong focus on counter-piracy.

Germany has been involved in the west of the region through the “*Deutsche Verbindungs- und Unterstützungsgruppe Djibouti*” (German Coordination and Support Group Djibouti, DVUG), from as far back as 2002. Initially established in connection with operation Enduring Freedom, it has become involved in supporting the EUNAVFOR operation ATALANTA since 2008. The main tasks of the base in Djibouti include the provision of support to German warships coming into port and to naval aviation units stationed in Djibouti, handling the transportation of personnel from and to Germany, and receiving and processing pirates captured by German ships. Contrary to the involvement of the USA, France and the UK (the two latter having overseas territories and historic links to the IOR), Germany has so far only been engaged sporadically and with a strong focus on counter-piracy.

Germany is also increasing its involvement in deep-sea exploration and currently has a licence for exploring an area south of the Island of Rodrigues. Under the auspices of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) and in collaboration with scientists from other institutions, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) is exploring the potential for mining massive sulphide deposits. The elements they contain are essential for sophisticated applications in the area of renewable energies and for the manufacture of high-tech devices. Deep-sea natural resources therefore have the potential to make an important contribution to satisfying Germany’s demand for raw materials. Germany is currently seeking further licences to explore and develop maritime natural resources.

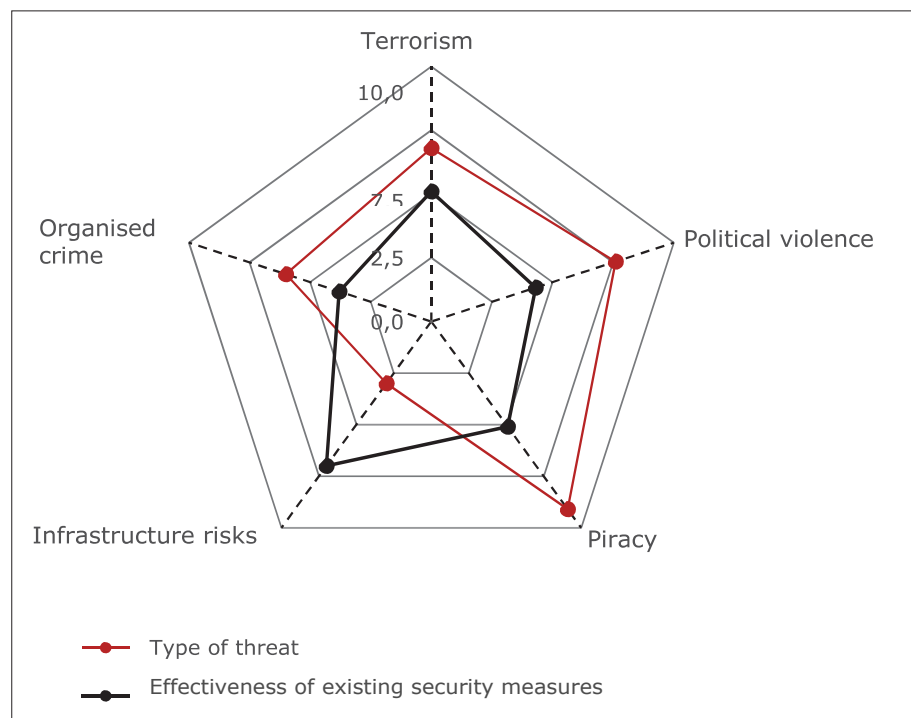
### 5.2 German Interests and Threat Spectra

Due to its export-driven economy, its dependence on unrestricted sea trade and its focus on the exploration of new natural resources in the deep sea, it is in Germany’s fundamental interest to further the stability of the IOR states through political

contributions. An examination of the threat scenarios in the entire Indian Ocean Region points to the potential fields of activity for German foreign politics. An indicator and event-based analysis<sup>1</sup> of the capabilities of the IOR states illustrates that the existing security measures implemented in the region by IOR state and international actors are inadequate. This applies to the areas of counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, the fight against organised crime and the curbing of political violence. The only area where adequate protection measures are in evidence is the protection of critical infrastructure (see Fig. 3).

German security interests in the Indian Ocean comprise crisis and conflict prevention, security cooperation to secure unrestricted sea trade, securing economic interests, providing support for “state building” as well as comprehensive humanitarian aid and reconstruction measures in the event of natural or other disasters. It is also of great interest to Germany that international law is upheld and that international agreements are expanded and deepened. Possibilities of a stronger German engagement in the IOR are outlined below.

**Fig. 3:**  
Threat spectrum and existing security measures in the Indian Ocean



Source: Own diagram

### 5.3 Recommendations for Action

As a general rule, Germany must focus on exerting influence on developments in the IOR by political means. While military engagement should not be excluded, this should be understood as being complementary within the context of a comprehensive foreign policy approach, serving mainly to enhance the capability of exerting influence through trust-building measures with selected key states. In the following section, the main fields of activity are described in hierarchical order (from fundamental maritime diplomacy to concrete bilateral cooperation), followed by recommendations for action for the enhancement of existing security measures and contributions at regional and international level (see Fig. 4, page 13).

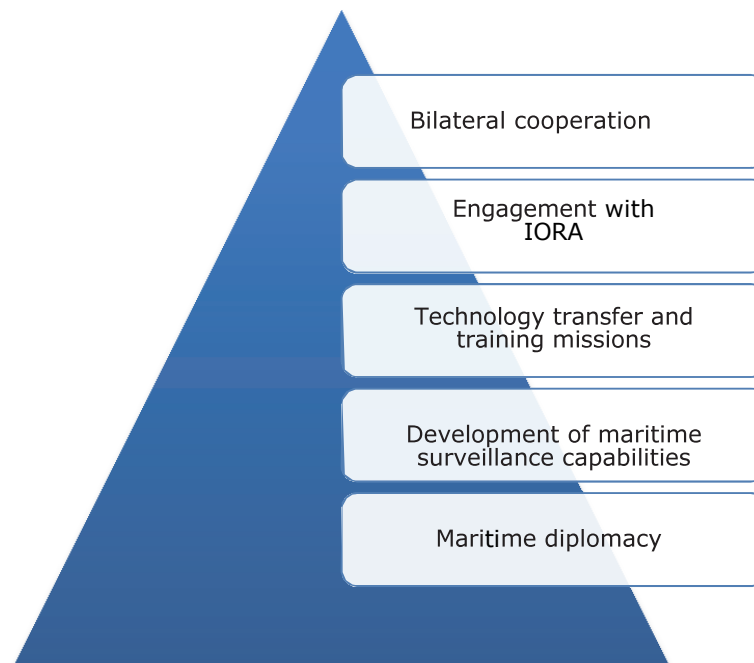
As a rule, Germany must focus on exerting influence on developments in the IOR by political means.

5.3.1 Maritime Diplomacy

German initiatives and trust-building measures in the area of maritime diplomacy form the basis for more intensive bilateral collaborations, economic cooperation projects as well as the establishment of maritime security structures. They include measures such as visits to ports of cooperation partners and key states. Such visits and exchange programs can be seen as trust-building measures in our dealings with current and future partners in the region and can provide a basis for closer bilateral cooperation. Participation in symposia on maritime issues will offer opportunities for networking. Besides technological competences, Germany can also offer expertise in the area of counter-piracy in this context. Potential measures could involve cooperative training events and joint exercises. These could provide the basis for closer bilateral cooperation in other maritime areas as well.

Besides technological competences, Germany can also offer expertise in the area of counter-piracy.

Fig. 4: Spheres of Action for German Foreign Policy Activities in the IOR



Source: Own diagram

5.3.2 Support with the Development of a Maritime Surveillance System

Maritime monitoring and surveillance systems play a central role in combating piracy, the drugs trade and people trafficking, as well as in the early detection of natural disasters and in increasing the capability to respond to maritime emergencies. Germany should therefore collaborate with regional and international partners in supporting the development of such systems in the IOR, drawing on experiences from existing systems in the Baltic and in the Mediterranean. This can be achieved through technology transfer in the area of maritime surveillance, collaborations with the private sector, joint research initiatives and standardisation measures. Transregional networking with existing surveillance systems in neighbouring regions (Pacific, Mediterranean) should also be encouraged.



### *5.3.3 Technology Transfer, Training Missions, Deep-Sea Exploration and Natural Resource Mining*

As a modern industrialised nation, Germany has a technological edge that can be put to good use for future partnerships in the IOR.

As a modern industrialised nation, Germany has a technological edge that can be put to good use for future partnerships in the IOR to add value, increase influence and provide profits. These capabilities can be deployed in the humanitarian sphere, for instance, in joint exercises, partner programs and training collaborations in the area of disaster management, which would fundamentally act as trust-building measures. In the business realm, on the other hand, collaborations with key states in areas of industry where Germany has key competences can result in an enhanced ability to exert influence through joint projects. As Germany has a strong interest in advancing deep-sea exploration and mining of natural resources, it should seek closer involvement with the IMB regarding the codification of international rules in deep-sea mining. This will need to go hand in hand with the acquisition of new licences, the establishment of state-funded scientific collaborations with research institutions in the IOR countries as well as the strengthening of regional and bilateral economic collaborations in the area of deep-sea mining. The ultimate objective is to set up cooperation programs to establish processes for environmentally friendly exploration and mining of natural resources.

### *5.3.4 Engagement with IORA*

Members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association include most of the states bordering the Indian Ocean. Additionally, the organisation includes Japan, China, the USA, Egypt, France and the UK as dialogue partners. Germany could also seek dialogue partner status. The organisation regularly organises workshops on technological, economic and political maritime topics. Participating in IORA symposia could provide opportunities for establishing contacts with maritime institutions of potential key partners.

### *5.3.5 Bilateral Cooperation*

Maintaining German interests in the region will require an institutional presence. An active presence may also provide new opportunities for bilateral cooperation with key states. A presence in the Indian Ocean can be achieved through an extension of the mandates of ATALANTA and of the DVUG or by setting up a permanent mission in a partner state. Identifying potential key partner states, comparable to Djibouti in connection with the DVUG / ATALANTA missions, will be essential for enhancing Germany's influence in the maritime sphere. The countries that are the most likely candidates as preferred cooperation partners in this context are Oman (Arabian Peninsula), India (Indian Subcontinent) and Malaysia (Strait of Malacca) due to their geopolitical positions close to maritime pinch points, their governmental stability and their influence in the region. Germany could advise the states bordering the Strait of Malacca on counter-piracy measures based on the expertise gained off the Horn of Africa during mission ATALANTA. In addition, joint exercises with other key states could serve as trust-building measures and as starting points for deepening cooperation on other maritime issues. Joint maritime exercises with key partner states could also serve to further standardisation within the operational collaboration.

Germany should enter into discussions with key partner states on topics relating to Germany's economic interests in the Indian Ocean either in connection with military consultancy and cooperation or independently. Relevant topics include in particular

Germany should seek closer cooperation in the region with the UK and France.

technology transfer as well as the acquisition of licences for exploiting maritime resources. Germany also has expertise in other areas that might be relevant to potential key partners. Obvious projects may involve joint research programs to explore the deep sea as well as projects in the area of environmental protection and disaster control. Aside from potential key partner states in the IOR, Germany should also seek closer cooperation with the UK and France, both of which have over-seas territories in the region.

#### *Existing Security Measures*

- Evaluation of the form Germany's future involvement in EUCAP-Nestor/ ATALANTA should take if the mandates are extended beyond December 2016.
- Further material and logistical support for IOR states with the development of maritime competences to combat piracy and crime, including the relevant training.
- Intensification of coordination and cooperation with EU states on maritime security in the IOR as described in the EUMSS.

#### *Involvement in International Organisations*

- Germany should seek to be admitted to the Indian Ocean Rim Association as a dialogue partner. The IORA is most advanced in terms of organisation. France and the UK are already involved as dialogue partners. The remit of the organisation covers maritime security, disaster management and scientific exchange. Germany could make a contribution by becoming involved in IORA workshops and conferences alongside other European dialogue partners, exerting a positive influence on the maritime security architecture in the Indian Ocean and thereby promoting international trade in the region and indirectly serving its own security and economic interests.
- If current cooperation initiatives between the GCC states result in institutionalised cooperation mechanisms, Germany should take part in military exercises at a bilateral level or at least participate in an advisory role. Free passage through the Strait of Hormuz is essential to Germany's economic interests.
- Germany should furthermore continue to support existing informal forums for debate on maritime security in the IOR, in which diplomats, representatives from the military and security experts develop future measures, and establish new forums in collaboration with the IOR states, where appropriate.
- Development of follow-up documents based on the EUMSS on joint EU strategy, measures and support programs in the IOR.

## 6. In Conclusion

The IOR is one of the economically most important regions of the 21st century as well as one of the most hazardous ones in terms of security. To Germany as an export-oriented industrialised nation and an economic stakeholder, secure sea routes and free access to raw material sources as well as markets are of fundamental interest. It is therefore essential to further intensify German involvement in existing security initiatives, to deepen existing international,

To Germany as an export-oriented industrialised nation, secure sea routes are of fundamental interest.

regional and bilateral collaborations, and to initiate new multilateral collaborations to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean. In view of the geographic expanse of the area to be protected and the limited resources of individual nation states, Germany must act in the spirit of cooperative multilateralism while aiming to secure its own political and economic interests in specific areas.

The Maritime Great Game, which experts had expected to take place in the Indian Ocean, has so far not materialised. Instead, the multilateral measures relating to the fight against piracy and terrorism, to disaster control following the 2004 tsunami and to the demarcation of EEZ boundaries have shown that cooperative courses of action are possible and that this is currently the approach preferred by all the actors in the region. Due to the dependence on open sea routes, the existing economic interdependence as well as common interests, the Indian Ocean Region has therefore not yet developed into a stage on which hegemonic antagonism is played out as people feared, but is moving tentatively in the direction of cooperative negotiations. That said, the numerous arms programs, and particularly the massive enhancement of naval capabilities, illustrate the fragility of the current trend towards sustainable cooperation. In this scenario, it is important for Germany to engage more strongly in the IOR than it has done in the past – both within existing missions and through the establishment of new initiatives – in order to secure its interests.

1| *The indicator analysis was conducted on the basis of six World Bank indicators (political violence, rule of law, accountability, government effectiveness, control of corruption and regulatory quality) for the period from 2004 to 2014, determining the average for the states in the region. In addition, event data for the period from 2012 to 2015 was collected to allow the individual threat spectra to be evaluated in relation to the indicator data.*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CGPCS	Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia
CMF	Combined Maritime Forces
CTF	Combined Task Force
DVUG	Deutsche Verbindungs- und Unterstützungsgruppe Djibouti
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EUTM	European Union Training Mission in Somalia
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IOR	Indischer Ozean Region
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
MSSI	Malacca Straits Security Initiative
MSSP	Malacca Straits Sea Patrol
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia

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- Coverphoto: USS Jason Dunham transits north in the Suez Canal by Andrew Schneider/Official U.S. Navy Imagery (Creative Commons 2.0)
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- Fig. 3: Threat spectrum and existing security measures in the Indian Ocean (own source)
- Fig. 4: Spheres of Action for German Foreign Policy Activities in the IOR

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