

# Critical Book Review: Maritime Security: The Unlawful Dimension

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## 1. Introduction

Dr Prabhakaran Paleri concluded his tenure as the Director General of the Indian Coast Guard in 2006. Currently, he holds the esteemed position of professor and advisor at the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, while also serving as a non-official part-time director at the Cochin Shipyard. In addition, the individual has demonstrated authorship of various publications, including books, papers, and articles, about strategic and management topics. Furthermore, they have engaged in scholarly endeavours as a visiting research scholar domestically and internationally, including in India.

Maritime security has been a prominent topic over the past decade, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the USA. While there were existing traditional and non-traditional maritime security concerns, the attack prompted governments to take concerted action.

Despite the extensive literature available on the topic for over ten years, most of it has been subpar, lacking in-depth knowledge. Only a limited number of works have made valuable contributions to our comprehension of the issues at hand. This Book falls into the latter category, as it effectively incorporates the crucial legal aspect of maritime security issues, a facet frequently overlooked in other written works.

The study of maritime security has increasingly focused on the complexities of the ocean, which has served as a battleground since ancient times. However, there has been a significant shift in this concept in recent years. In the future, maritime security must be viewed as an integral part of national security rather than an independent concept.

The publication, released in 2010, offers a comprehensive exploration of the concept of a maritime security framework. Within this framework, maritime security is understood to encompass multiple dimensions. One dimension that is of significance pertains to the establishment of the "Rule of Law" in maritime domains. This academic publication critically analyses the perceived "unlawful" activities that law enforcement entities may encounter in maritime environments. The subsequent themes are discussed: The subject of this discourse pertains to illicit activities conducted within maritime domains. Specifically, it encompasses criminal acts such as piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, poaching, environmental crimes, terrorism, espionage, and an examination of the prospective trajectory of unlawful endeavours at sea.

## 2. Summary

Paleri, in the Book's introduction, explores the concept of "unlawful" concerning the sea and ships. He then proceeds to delve into various aspects of this subject in the following ten chapters. These chapters cover piracy, poaching, smuggling, trafficking, environmental breaches, maritime terrorism, spying, espionage, and other maritime crimes. He supports his analysis with real-life examples and emphasizes the distinctions between terrorism and other sea crimes. The historical relevance of studying these issues is highlighted, drawing attention to references in "Vestiges of Old Madras" by Col. Love regarding unlawful activities during the era of East Indiamen in Madras.

One significant chapter, "Breaching the environmental stasis," focuses on ocean currents that govern the marine environment. He discusses the potential dangers posed by the indiscriminate exchange of water during ballast water pumping, affecting the food chain and sea organisms. The author emphasizes the regulations the International Maritime Organization set forth regarding ballast water treatment, as outlined in the Globalist initiative, and the gradual elimination of ballast water exchange. The author aptly addresses this crucial aspect of maritime security, underscoring the degradation of the Mediterranean Sea into an underwater desert.

His work also serves to increase awareness regarding the emergence of maritime terrorism as a significant threat to civilian and naval vessels. While acknowledging the current lack of severity of the problem, the author emphasizes its potential to escalate significantly. This is evident in the chapter titled "Chilling Wait."

The chapter dedicated to espionage offers valuable case studies, such as the Japanese encounter with a Korean vessel and the intriguing event surrounding the USNS 'Impeccable' in the South China Sea in March 2009.

Including appendices in the Book provides readers with supplementary information, enhancing its value as a valuable resource for maritime universities and institutions. One distinguishing feature of this work is its capacity to accommodate non-expert readers and individuals with specialized knowledge. The author's impressive credentials lend this source authority within the marine community; furthermore, how the information is presented guarantees that individuals without nautical expertise can readily comprehend and value the discussed topics.

### **3. Analysis of Content**

Maritime security, a crucial field of study within defence studies, has garnered significant attention and relevance in India due to the escalating threat of piracy. During a recent distressing incident, a group of 79 Indian sailors were subjected to captivity by Somalian pirates in March. This event prompted Parliament to express apprehension regarding the well-being of the sailors and the growing issue of piracy at large. Reports suggest that the Government of India is contemplating implementing exceptional legislation to address the issue at hand effectively. Currently, sea piracy falls under the jurisdiction of Admiralty Law and the Indian Penal Code.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulates and oversees ship safety and security through the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. Nevertheless, this system fails to sufficiently mitigate the risks encountered in maritime environments, primarily concentrating on regulating and overseeing Flag and Port State controls. To address the issue of piracy effectively, every nation must incorporate Sections 101 to 107 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) into their domestic legal framework. This can be achieved by enacting proposed legislation that designates piracy as an independent criminal offence."

### **4. Style and Writing Quality**

The author of "Maritime Security and the Unlawful Dimension" exhibits a commendable style and writing quality throughout the Book. Paleri's writing is engaging and accessible, making complex maritime security concepts understandable to readers. The author's expertise in the subject matter is evident as they navigate various dimensions of unlawful activities at sea.

His approach to the subject is thorough and meticulous. The Book comprehensively analyses smuggling, environmental crimes, trafficking, piracy, poaching, terrorism, espionage, and other marine crimes. Real-life examples are skillfully incorporated, adding depth and relevance to the discussions. By presenting these case studies, the author brings the subject matter to life, making it relatable and captivating for readers.

One notable aspect of the author's writing is the balance between academic rigour and practical applicability. While the Book caters to scholars and professionals in maritime security, it is also accessible to a lay audience. He succeeds in presenting complex ideas clearly and concisely, ensuring that readers from various backgrounds can grasp the content without sacrificing depth and accuracy.

Additionally, the book benefits from including information-rich appendices, enhancing its value as a comprehensive resource. This attention to detail showcases the author's commitment to providing a well-rounded and informative reading experience.

His style and writing quality in "Maritime Security and the Unlawful Dimension" make it an engaging and authoritative work. The combination of expertise, clear explanations, real-life examples, and practical applicability sets it apart as a valuable resource for academic study and practical implementation in maritime security.

### **5. Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### **Strengths:**

"Maritime Security and the Unlawful Dimension" presents several notable strengths contributing to its value as a comprehensive resource. Firstly, the Book thoroughly examines various unlawful activities at sea, covering topics such as piracy, smuggling, environmental crimes, and terrorism. The author's use of real-life examples strengthens the discussions and enhances the Book's practical relevance. Additionally, including the historical context and references provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The author's expertise in the field is evident, as they skillfully navigate complex concepts and present them in an accessible manner, catering to scholars and non-specialist readers. The Book also benefits from information-rich appendices that supplement the content and make it a valuable reference for further exploration.

#### **Weaknesses:**

While "Maritime Security and the Unlawful Dimension" offers comprehensive coverage, a potential weakness lies in its limited focus on particular dimensions of maritime security. The Book could have explored emerging issues and future trends in-depth, providing a forward-looking perspective. Additionally, while the real-life examples effectively illustrate the concepts discussed, some readers might have benefited from additional analysis and critical evaluation of these case

studies. Furthermore, the Book predominantly focuses on unlawful activities at sea, potentially leaving gaps in the broader understanding of maritime security as a comprehensive concept. Expanding the scope to include discussions on legal frameworks, international cooperation, and the role of technology could have enhanced the Book's completeness.

Overall, the strengths of "Maritime Security and the Unlawful Dimension" lie in its comprehensive coverage, practical relevance through real-life examples, accessible writing style, and the author's expertise. However, addressing the weaknesses by broadening the scope and providing more critical analysis would further enhance its value as a definitive resource in maritime security.

## **6. Conclusion**

This Book is precious for a wide range of individuals and organizations involved in maritime security. It can benefit scholars, policymakers, the military and the corporate sector, intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, seafarers, students and the media studying national security strategy.

Scholars will appreciate the Book's detailed analysis and research, contributing to the existing knowledge in maritime security. Policymakers can draw practical guidance and recommendations to shape effective strategies and policies. Military, intelligence, and enforcement agencies can gain valuable insights for operational planning and countermeasures. The corporate sector can enhance its understanding of the challenges and risks associated with maritime security. Seafarers can benefit from insights into criminal activities and threats at sea. The media can rely on it as a reliable resource for accurate reporting. Lastly, students studying national security strategy can utilize it as an essential reference, fostering deeper comprehension of maritime security complexities.