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ABSTRACT

Maritime security holds a prime responsibility of a Nation when it comes to the national security under the national strategy. The maritime security plays a vital role especially in an island nation like Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka lies in the world's busiest Sea Line of Communication (SLOC), and a considerable portion of the world's trade is happened along this SLOC. Providing the security for the SLOC is hence a prime responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government, as well as the security forces of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Air Force is carrying out maritime surveillance duties as a primary role of the Air Force with the support of other organizations such as Sri Lanka Navy, Coast Guard, Sri Lanka Police, Ministry of Fisheries and government intelligence services. Main aim of the maritime surveillance of SLAF is to detect, identify and notify about the illegal activities happened in and around its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which the government is responsible in accordance to the United Nations Convention on Law of Seas (UNCLOS). This study has focused mainly on the maritime surveillance capability of the SLAF and the outcome of the operations carried out by SLAF, identifying the gap between the operations and desired outcome. This paper is developed with the use of statistical, experimental and other numerical data, and the correlations and interactions between them. It uses the deductive approach to test the theory and correlations of variables through research question. Target population of this study was the pilots of the SLAF who are involved in the maritime surveillance role and sample was scientifically drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Tool to measure variables was a questionnaire which was answered by the responders personally and manually. Internal consistency reliability test was satisfied with fairly high value of Cronbach's Alpha. Aircraft and crew, communication, ground intelligence and other agencies positively correlated with the respond behavior. Indirect and direct relationships of independent variables with maritime surveillance capability were significant.

Key Words: Maritime Surveillance, Sea Lines of Communication, Exclusive Economic Zone