

RESTRICTED

ABSTRACT

As an island nation Sri Lanka claims to a sea area which is rich of natural resources. There are, however, challenges in harvesting these resources due to many non-traditional threats which can cause great loss for economies of countries and thus it is required to monitor for and identify such threats and take actions to prevent them from happening. In such a context, utilizing air power for monitoring and identifying non-traditional threats is critical since air power inherently owns several attributes including height, speed, flexibility and mobility which could be leveraged for effective maritime surveillance. The main objective of this research is to Study how SLAF can incorporate enhanced surveillance to improve its capacity and capability to counter non-traditional threats in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sri Lanka especially focused on illegal unreported and unregulated fishing. The research is conducted as a qualitative study where opinions of experts in the area are collected through five face-to-face interviews and two focus groups. The data collected are analysed using thematic analysis. The results of the research revealed that there are three major factors namely, regulatory framework, platforms and capacity building is critical for enhancing maritime surveillance to counter non-traditional threats. Based on these results of this research, it is recommended that SLAF should upgrade the existing fleet or to acquire new air assets including sensors dedicated for maritime surveillance. Further to formulate a joint doctrine with Sri Lanka Navy to counter these evolving non-traditional threats in the EEZ.

Key words: Non-traditional maritime threats, EEZ, Maritime surveillance, IUU Fishing, Joint Doctrine