



## INTEGRATING AIR ASSETS FOR AUGMENTING SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES OF THE SRI LANKA COAST GUARD

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### ABSTRACT

*Law enforcement at sea is of prime importance for an Island nation. At present Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG) satisfies its aerial demands through Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) under various limitations causing a gap between the demand and supply of aerial surveillance requirements. Hence this exploratory qualitative study has followed a deductive approach, interpretivism philosophy, and grounded theory strategy to realize the objectives of determining the present status of the SLCG surveillance mechanism, determining how the air assets could be effectively integrated into the SLCG surveillance mechanism, and to study the impact of integrating air assets into the SLCG surveillance mechanism. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis resulted in strengths as already enacted act, experienced crew, and intention of authorities to integrate air assets into SLCG. Weaknesses were found to be a lack of naval assets, manpower, and the absence of air assets. Opportunities are the possible training opportunities, collaboration with the Sri Lanka Navy and SLAF, obtaining air assets through mutual cooperation, and leeway of integrating into a common maritime policy. Changing dynamics of non-traditional security threats, and geo-political implications due to inadequate presence and inadequate budget were identified as threats in SWOT analysis. Based on the outcome of the SWOT analysis, researchers came up with five recommendations such as formulating a framework for integrating air assets into SLCG, formulating a doctrine and Standard Operating Procedure for maritime-air operations of SLCG, developing a dialogue with SLAF for mutual cooperation and secondment of air and ground crew required for SLCG air operations, pursue diplomatic means for obtaining air assets and related training and finally conducting joint and multinational training and operations with local and international stakeholders. Therefore, strengthening SLCG capabilities and capacities by integrating air assets through a feasible framework in meeting its future operational demand is essential.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Coast Guard, Air Force, SWOT, Law enforcement, Transnational Organized Crimes*

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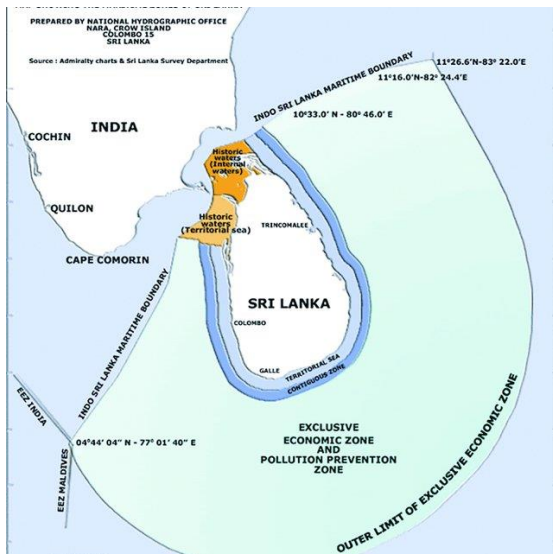
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*“Safety and security don’t just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.”*

-Nelson Mandela- (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2022)

Maritime security is an essential requirement for an island nation. Sri Lanka is straddling at the approximate center of the Indian Ocean, thus vulnerable to traditional and non-traditional security challenges arising from the region (Bueger, 2015), (Chatterjee, 2014). Hence, maintenance of law and order at sea is of prime importance, which is a responsibility shared by coast guards and the Navy through their constabulary roles. Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG) is a government establishment for multi-mission services to ensure the security of coastal areas, maritime zones (Fig. 1), territorial waters, and high seas (Department of Coast Guard Act, 2009). It is the law enforcement authority at sea.



**Figure 1: Maritime Zones of Sri Lanka**  
Source: (Giri, 2018)

The operational domain of the coast guard is not restricted to the maritime domain, but it expands across the aerial domain too (Gray, 2001). As an entity with numerous duties and functions pertinent to preventing the illegal activities defined by the government in Coast Guard Act, SLCG requires an effective mechanism to monitor the area of

responsibility it is assigned with.

Territorial waters and Contiguous Zone (CZ) extend 12 nautical miles (NM) and 24 NM from baseline respectively. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) expands up to 200 NM from the baseline of Sri Lanka except towards North, North West, and West. Further, there is a claim to expand Sri Lanka EEZ up to 350 NM (Wanasinghe and Wijethunga, 2021). Present EEZ accounts for approximately 6-7 times bigger than the land area. In addition, Sri Lanka is located at the center of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and one of the world's busiest Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC) lies 3-4 NM below Sri Lanka joining East and West. This area and beyond are to be covered by the SLCG to perform its duties effectively. The use of only surface vessels for surveillance of this area is not feasible due to the inherent technical limitations such as speed, range, and detection capabilities of naval vessels.

Coast Guards of regional and global counterparts have already established their aviation to supplement the naval fleet in enhancing their surveillance capabilities (Carlo and Paul, 2015). As the security dynamics at sea are becoming more complex, SLCG would require sound sensors to collect information from the area concerned, thus requiring aerial inputs for effective and efficient operations.

The problem identified is that the capacity of the SLCG is presently limited to surface operations as far as their assets are concerned. The area assigned to perform its duties overwhelms its present capacity, thus demanding more assets. The responsibility of assuring security, safety, and stewardship at sea demands the support of the air assets to supplement the output of surface assets (Brown, Potoski, and Slyke, 2008).

Therefore, without the inputs of air assets for surveillance of a vast sea area, there could be a gap between the expected outcome and the actual outcome, which is the gap identified by the researchers to motivate this study. This gap is evident in the reported crimes at sea despite the efforts by

SLCG. Hence, the paper focuses on identifying the present capabilities and capacities of SLCG for surveillance and studying how the integration of air assets could contribute to capacity building. The objectives of this paper are as follows.

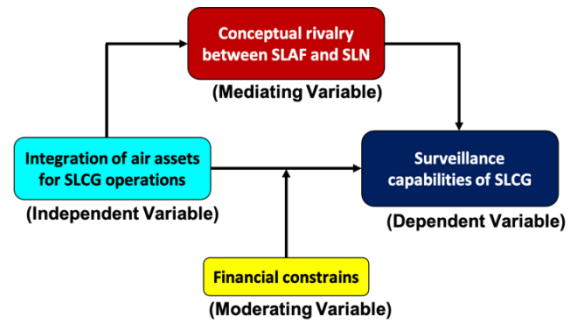
- To determine the present status of the SLCG surveillance mechanism.
- To determine how the air assets could be effectively integrated into the SLCG surveillance mechanism.
- To study the impact of integrating air assets into the SLCG surveillance mechanism.

The research questions are such that how the present SLCG operates its surveillance mechanism, how the air assets could be integrated into the SLCG surveillance mechanism to enhance its effectiveness, and what would be the impact of integrating air assets into the SLCG surveillance mechanism. Since the literature regarding coast guard operations pertinent to Sri Lanka is limited, this research outcome would be significant for SLCG and SLAF in particular and to the government authorities seeking effective law and order implementation at sea in general.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A deductive approach was espoused to find means to the observed phenomenon. During this exploratory qualitative study, researchers have employed interpretivism as the philosophy, whereas encompassing grounded theory strategy is the strategy. The time horizon was cross-sectional and the collection of primary data was conducted by interviewing nine respondents from SLCG and Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) selected through purposive sampling. Secondary data was collected through literature and government publications pertinent to coast guard operations. The technique was data collection and analysis. Further, a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted by translating the data collected from the respondents thematically, with a perspective of integrating air assets into SLCG.

The conceptual framework has been developed, based on the theoretical framework, and in line with the three research objectives.



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**  
Source: Authors (2022)

## BACKGROUND

### Contemporary situation

SLCG is a relatively young service with a service of approximately 12 years. Cabinet paper was approved for the establishment of SLCG on 07 March 2007 and Coast Guard Act No.41 of 2009 was enacted on 09 July 2009. SLCG commenced its duties on 04 March 2010 under the Ministry of Defence (SLCG, 2010). SLCG has a separate fleet of vessels, establishments for training and operations, specialized equipment...etc.

SLCG is headquartered in Mirissa and functions under four regions such as Southern, Eastern, Northern, and Western. SLCG bases, stations, sub-stations, life-saving posts, fishing monitoring points, and special duty points are scattered along the entire coast of Sri Lanka (SLCG, 2010). However, the limited resources and personnel assigned to discharge the duties of SLCG have delimited the operations to the areas with high-intensity of marine activities. By referring to the distribution of SLCG establishments it is evident that the surveillance capability is highly limited. A number of security threats such as illegal immigration, Illegal unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, smuggling of drugs...etc. are emanating from North Western, Northern, and North Eastern waters (Wanasinghe, 2016). These areas are not sufficiently covered by SLCG establishments distributed as indicated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: SLCG Establishments**  
Source: (SLCG, 2010)

Since there are different security threats originating from different sea regions of Sri Lanka such as IUU fishing mainly from North Western and Northern seas, smuggling via Western, North Western, and Southern sea routes, oil spills from Eastern, Southern and Western seas...etc. (Bandaroff, 2021), (García Ruiz, South and Brisman, 2022), (Kulathunga, 2018), it is required to have all-around surveillance on a regular basis. For a developing country like Sri Lanka, it is difficult to employ a system covering all aspects of around-the-clock surveillance. On the other hand, failure to detect the illegal activities described above does incur serious damage in terms of security, socio-economic affairs and the environment. Air operations are costly affairs, which demand a substantial budget. It is not the capital cost that put the operators in trouble, but the operational (recurrent) cost (Lee *et al.*, 2001). Base maintenance facilities, specialised equipment, tools, highly specialized technical staff and a higher level of training are some basic prerequisites of safe and efficient air operations. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka can develop a framework to integrate air assets into SLCG, in the same manner, they have integrated naval assets. As the system has been functioning successfully so far it could be adapted for integrating air assets into SLCG. SLAF could facilitate the ground support and operate the air assets of the SLCG for air operations in a similar manner that SLN does for naval operations.

In addition, the fleet of SLCG is limited to four Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) and 27 Fast Attack Crafts.

**Requirement of augmenting surveillance capability and capacity of SLCG**

Considering the sea area of Sri Lankan waters, it is obvious that SLCG is nowhere near meeting the surveillance demand essential for law enforcement duties. Timely identification of crimes at sea is extremely important for preventing or mitigating the adverse outcome of it. Illegal activities such as oil spills, sea dumping, piracy, and maritime terrorism can cause out of proportion adverse impact on national security architecture if not detected and addressed on time (García Ruiz, South and Brisman, 2022). Naval disasters such as the New Diamond incident in 2020 and the X-press Pearl incident in 2021 are clear examples for out of proportion harm due to late detection and incapacitation in handling by local agencies (Wanasinghe and Wijethunga, 2021).

**SWOT ANALYSIS ON INTEGRATING AIR ASSETS FOR AUGMENTING SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES OF SLGC**

The scope of the SWOT analysis was limited to the discussion of facets pertinent to the integration of air assets. The interview data was thematically compiled to conduct the SWOT analysis.

**Strengths**

The SWOT analysis exposed the following strengths of SLCG for integrating air assets for its surveillance operations.

1) *Already enacted act to provide the establishment of SLCG, to specify the functions, and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto:* Act of SLCG is enacted on 09 July 2009. There are two closures covering the employment of air assets for discharging SLCG duties. The powers of the SLCG include;

*‘Stop, enter, board, inspect and search any place, structure, vessel or aircraft and to arrest and detain any vessel or aircraft ‘*

*‘Examine and seize or dispose of any fish or any article, device, goods, vessel, aircraft or any other item relating to any offence which has been committed or it has reasonable grounds to believe that such offence has been committed (Department of Coast Guard Act, 2009)*

Enforce these two closures of the SLCG Act, it requires air assets. Further, a breach of law and order at sea by an aircraft could only be pursued by another appropriate aircraft. Apart from these specific closures other closures covering the duties of SLCG would be greatly supplemented by the employment of aerial capabilities due to the very characteristics of height, reach and speed of air assets.

2) *Established organizational structure with a space for further expansion:* SLGC has a well-systematized organizational structure to address its operational and functional scope. However, at present, there is no dedicated place in the organization structure for air operations. Nevertheless, it could accommodate air operations to present organizational structure. As the SLGC conducts naval operations in line with the SLN, air operations could be conducted in line with the SLAF modus operandi.

3) *Interoperability with other stakeholders:* The breakdown of SLGC naval assets is as follows.

**Table 1: Naval assets of SLCG**

Vessel Type	Quantity
OPVs	04
Fast Attack Craft	27

Source: SLCG (2022)

All these assets have interoperability with air, naval, and ground assets. At present SLCG closely operates with the following stakeholders for realizing its operational objectives:

- Lanka Police
- Sri Lanka Customs
- SLN
- Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEEPA)
- Coastal Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department (CCCRMD)
- National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA)
- Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR)

In addition, SLCG at times works with SLAF where air assistance is mission critical. It is known that SLCG has already implanted the required equipment for interoperability. Further, human capital also plays a key role in the joint operational environment. Effective integration is a result of continuous training and working with clear objectives and guidelines.

4) *Experienced crew:* SLGC has employed an experienced crew in naval affairs and operations. They are provided with specialized training locally and internationally for performing their duties in different situations. Controlling oil spillages, arresting armed violators such as pirates/terrorists, and comprehending unarmed violators such as illegal fishermen demand different specializations (Wang *et al.*, 2014). In addition, vessels such as SLCG Ship (SLCGS) Suraksha, SLCGS Samaraksha, SLCGS Smudraraksha etc., have limited firefighting capabilities. SLCG has training centres and qualified instructors for conducting this specialized training.

5) *The intention of relevant authorities to integrate air assets into SLCG operations:* Authorities of SLCG have identified the importance of inducting air assets into their operations, which could exponentially enhance their surveillance capabilities. SLN has shown an increasing determination for inducting an aviation arm for its operational requirements. Whenever operational

requirement demands air support, SLAF is usually called upon as of now.

### **Weaknesses**

The SWOT analysis enunciated the following weaknesses of SLCG for the integration of air assets for its surveillance operations.

1) *Lack of adequate naval assets and equipment:* At present SLCG is allocated a very limited number of vessels for surveillance as listed in Table 1. Hence it has to seek support from stakeholders such as SLN and SLAF for fulfilling their surveillance demands. The absence of adequate coastal RADARs, the limited operational range of SLCG vessels and the limitations of shipborne RADARs had narrowed down the SLCG surveillance capability and capacity. The SLAF and SLN assets in such nature have certain limitations, which do not fully cater the expected input by SLCG, being designed to meet military operational demands rather than enforcing law and order.

2) *Lack of adequate manpower:* Lack of qualified manpower in highly specialized undertakings is not a novel notion for specialised organisations, which SLCG is not immune to. It takes time and effort in training personnel to undertake specialized tasks such as coast guard operations. The high-risk factor has become a key concern in the majority of SLCG operations.

3) *Absence of air assets:* For surveillance of large swaths or seas, aerial platforms are best suited considering the overall outcome of the effort. The primary air power characteristics of height, speed and reach of aircraft enable the operators to screen larger areas in a shorter period with a lesser effort. Modern technologies such as advanced RADARs, sophisticated sensor pods, and synthetic imaging systems have significantly enhanced surveillance capability and capacity. These systems undermine the limitations imposed by weather and lighting conditions. Further, the assets are to be dedicatedly available for the surveillance requirement of SLCG, to reduce delays. Hence, it is understood that without

suitable air assets for surveillance, covering the sea area of responsibility that falls under SLCG seems to be way beyond its capacity.

4) *The conceptual rivalry between SLN and SLAF in maritime-air operations:* When it comes to maritime-air operations SLAF and SLN become the primary agencies in the Sri Lankan context. SLAF has been operating over Sri Lankan seas as the sole air operator to date. SLN used to seek the assistance of SLAF for satisfying its aerial requirements. Nevertheless, scarcity of air assets and exponential operational costs have created a condition where SLAF is obliged to give precedence to its independent maritime-air demands, over SLN requirements at times. Hence SLN has been contemplating on establishing a naval aviation to address their maritime-air operational demands to reduce dependence on SLAF.

Inducting air assets is a lengthy and complex process. It entails numerous prerequisites and operational support measures to commence air operations. Apart from the capital cost of aircraft, it requires proper base maintenance facilities, an effective forward logistical supply system, adequately trained and certified crew for maintenance and flying, various test equipment and workshop facilities, aerodrome facilities, and numerous correspondence for regularizing operations. Most importantly these measures decide the safety of flight operations. As SLAF has adequate supportive measures and expertise, forming up naval aviation for SLN would almost certainly duplicate efforts and cost at the national level, without yielding expected outcomes. Therefore, SLAF has been advocating otherwise to avoid operational complexities and the divide of budgets for a similar national purpose. Undoubtedly, the necessity of SLN and SLAF for tailoring the maritime security fabric is equally important as two blades of a pair of scissors for cutting (Lambeth, 2008). Nevertheless, obtaining aircraft for SLCG is a totally different discussion since law enforcement and defence are two distinctive functions of national security.

5) *Lack of mutual collaboration:* Irrespective of the resources, capabilities, and capacities, no

country is in a position to satisfy its law enforcement requirements at sea alone. Thus, multilateral collaborations are required. At present SLCG has bilateral/multilateral agreements with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Japan, Australia, and Indian counterparts. Nevertheless, as far as IOR is concerned, many Transnational Organized Crimes (TOC) has links to Golden Crest and Golden Triangle, which utilize Sri Lanka as a transit hub. Thus, more strong relationships with regional and global counterparts are required. Preventing crimes across Indo-Lanka International Maritime Boundry Line (IMBL) requires strong mutual cooperation with India. Information and intelligence sharing is a much-needed activity for the effective mitigation of crimes emanating from IOR.

### **Opportunities**

The SWOT analysis resulted following opportunities for SLCG to integrate air assets for its surveillance operations.

1) *Increased training opportunities:* Being a law enforcement agency SLCG receives a greater number of specialized training from foreign counterparts. Many crimes emanating from the marine domain undermine and threaten the realization of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Therefore UNODC funds many such training programs across the globe (UNODC, 2022). The scope of these training programs spans almost all specializations required for SLCG duties. It is a matter of effective employment of diplomatic tools for obtaining adequate training opportunities for SLCG.

2) *Collaboration with SLN and SLAF for capacity building:* SLCG has a close collaboration with SLN. The situations at sea demanding more manpower, specialization, and naval assets are being addressed by the support of the SLN frequently. Almost all major maintenance of SLCG vessels, manpower, and technical and equipment support for SLCG operations are met by employing SLN assets and men. SLAF also could similarly facilitate SLCG

as SLN provides its services to attain SLCG operational demands with proper collaboration, provided that the SLGC is equipped with air assets. Further, existing assets in SLN and SLAF could be utilised as practicable to meet the operational success of SLCG.

3) *Possibility of obtaining air assets through mutual cooperation:* Mutual cooperation between interested parties is commonplace in coast guard operations (Khurana, 2007). The mutual effort by Sri Lankan and Australian authorities for curtailing illegal migrants from former to latter is such a program, where the latter provided many assets and training to the former for conducting operations effectively (Jayasuriya, 2014). Furthermore, air diplomacy could be utilized for yielding better results. SLCG was donated with a number of ships such as SLCGS Suraksha from India, SLCGS Smaraksh, and Samudraraksha from Japan for coast guard duties as a result of an effective diplomatic projection of requirements of capacity/capability enhancement. In the same manner, SLCG can seek air assets through diplomatic means. For the operation of air assets, pilots and technical crew from SLAF could be seconded. Major maintenance requirements could be outsourced to SLAF workshops in the same manner SLCG operates and maintains its fleet of vessels.

4) *Enable integration into a common maritime policy:* The total sea area of 169,000 square miles of IOR is shared by 38 littoral states (Senarathne, 2016). Due to the enormity of IOR, all these littoral countries are tussling in realizing their national maritime interests alone. Hence, there are numerous bilateral and multilateral cooperations formulated to meet such objectives collaboratively (Bateman, 2005), (Wijetunge and Wanasinghe, 2021). As argued by Senarathne (2016), a common maritime policy would be a better option, consisting of all interested actors. Appropriate naval and air assets are essential in translating paperwork into action (Dabova, 2013). Hence, to contribute to a common framework and to negotiate through diplomatic means, Sri Lanka should be in a reasonable state of affairs in terms of

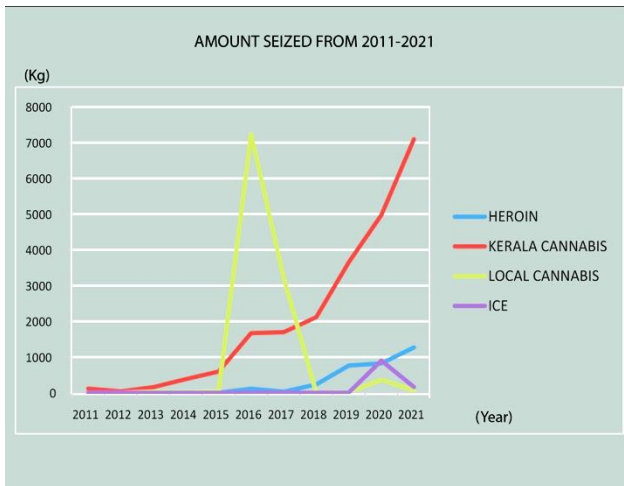
air and naval assets with interoperability (Wanasinghe and Wijethunga, 2021).

**Threats**

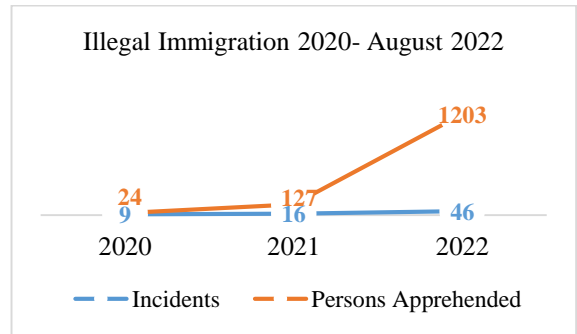
The SWOT analysis revealed the following threats to SLCG in the absence of air assets for its surveillance operations.

1) *Changing dynamics of non-traditional security threats:* There is a number of non-traditional security threats to the peace, law, and order of Sri Lanka springing from the marine environment (Wanasinghe and Abewardana, 2021). Most of these threats could be categorized as TOCs due to the collusion of multinational stakeholders. Some of the most prominent threats are as follows;

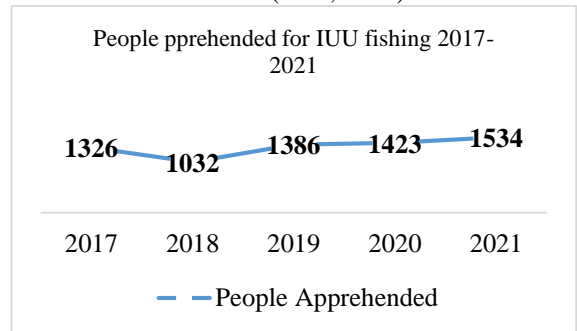
- Armed robbery at sea
- Piracy
- Maritime terrorism
- Smuggling of drugs, humans, contraband...etc
- Illegal immigration
- Marine pollution
- IUU fishing



**Figure 4: Seizure of drugs by SLN 2011-2021**  
Source: (SLN, 2022)



**Figure 5: Illegal Immigration in Sri Lankan Waters 2020-August 2022**  
Source: (SLN, 2022)



**Figure 6: People apprehended for IUU fishing 2017-2021**  
Source: (SLN, 2022)

Out of these threats, armed robbery, piracy, and maritime terrorism threaten the peace and safe operation at sea, which has a very serious socio-economic and security impact on Sri Lanka. Smuggling and illegal immigration also cause complex social issues leading to economic consequences. IUU fishing and different ways of marine pollution such as sea dumping and oil spillages usually result in long-lasting environmental impacts on marine ecosystems in addition to the economic impact. Continuous monitoring of these crimes at sea is not an easy task. It needs more assets, more effort, and sophisticated technology (MDSL, 2020).

2) *Geo-political implications due to inadequate presence:* IOR is a region, which entails complex criminal activities due to various reasons such as heterogeneity of demographic variables in littoral countries, the vastness of the sea area, hub location between crime-prone regions, and lack of capabilities and capacities of regional states



(Wanasinghe, 2016). Only a few countries such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia...etc are having a strong fleet of naval and air assets for addressing crimes at sea. Nevertheless, some extra-regional actors such as the United States, China, and Japan are operating in the region to ensure their national interests pertinent to IOR (Wijetunge and Wanasinghe, 2021). If Sri Lanka cannot attend to the matters relating to security, law, and order at its seas, these players would be more than happy to intercede causing gratuitous geo-political implications for Sri Lanka. There is no guarantee that the only intention of these players is to enforce law and order for the regional betterment. Hence, the absence of adequate naval and air assets for surveillance, monitoring, and investigation could permit the meddling of foreign players.

3) *Inadequacy of budget allocation:* As a developing state, Sri Lanka is not in a position to spend a substantial amount of money on costly affairs such as naval and air operations of SLCG. Nonetheless, the security, socio-economic and geo-political concerns could be undermined due to unattended criminal matters in Sri Lankan waters. Today criminal organizations are more complex, strong, sophisticated, networked, and dynamic. Without a sufficient amount of assets, manpower, and suitable equipment, it is very difficult to counter them, which eventually incurs higher financial losses for the government. It should be understood that the financial commitment to security-related matters is not expenses but investments. An unsafe environment at sea could emasculate the entire security architecture of an island nation.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcome of the SWOT analysis researchers deduced the following recommendations.

#### Formulating a framework for integrating air assets to SLCG.

A workable framework is required for integrating air assets for SLCG. Air operations cannot be done in isolation. All agencies operating in a particular air

space are to abide by laws, regulations, and procedures enacted by state and non-state aviation organizations and cooperate for ensuring safe and efficient flying operations. Hence, SLCG should cooperate with other agencies conducting air operations in Sri Lankan skies such as SLAF, the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). There would be a load of correspondence for obtaining the required certification and clearance for air operations, thus requiring a sound framework to fit its air operations under the present context. Further, SLCG is required to coordinate with agencies operating in the marine domain such as SLN, and Maritime Rescue Coordinating Center (MRCC) for effective collaboration. Collaboration with ground agencies could be done through SLCG headquarters. Considering the air, land, and marine domains researchers have developed a primary framework for SLCG air operations as follows.

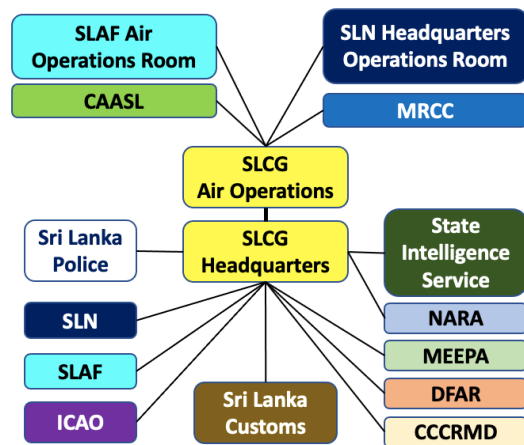


Figure 7: Primary Framework for SLCG air operations  
Source: Authors (2022)

#### Formulate a doctrine and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for maritime-air operations of SLCG.

Maritime-air operations are complex and diversified in nature. Unlike under ordinary circumstances, time-bound situations such as armed robbery, piracy, terrorism, oil spillage, marine fire, etc. demand quick and accurate responses. Hence, a well-thought-out doctrine and relevant SOPs are to be in place. SLAF

and SLN are well conversant with operations of similar nature. Hence SLCG could exploit the experience and professional expertise of SLAF and SLN in developing a doctrine and SOPs for its maritime-air operations.

**Develop a dialogue with SLAF for mutual cooperation and secondment of air and ground crew required for air operations.**

In the same manner, the naval operational experience is obtained through SLN for SLCG naval operations, SLCG could make necessary arrangements through an all-encompassing dialogue with SLAF for its air operations. SLCG could form an agreement for the secondment of pilots, engineers, technical crew, logisticians, and other crew for the operation of its air fleet. Further, the agreement shall cover the required technical expertise and support from workshops, usage of aerodrome facilities, and base maintenance facilities of SLAF.

**Pursue diplomatic means for obtaining air assets and related training.**

Diplomatic means are to be employed for obtaining air assets for the air operations of SLCG. It could be obtained as donations, for a concessionary rate, or through credit lines. Obtaining aircraft is to be followed by obtaining the required training and competency to operate them in similar means. During this process, being a developing state with a small economy, Sri Lanka is finding difficulties to meet its law enforcement requirements. Nevertheless, the importance of the same could not be negated. Hence, maximum effort is to be put forward in establishing an air arm for SLCG through diplomatic means to manage the exponential cost factor.

**Conducting joint and multinational training and operations with local and international stakeholders.**

It is unlike to obtain all the required assets sufficient for satisfying SLCG air operations, thus requiring effective collaboration with local and international stakeholders for capacity building. Conducting

operations in joint and multinational nature, demands a greater level of interoperability and training. Without frequent and task-oriented training it is not feasible to perform joint operations under difficult and dynamic conditions.

**4. CONCLUSION**

Law enforcement at sea is of prime importance for an island nation like Sri Lanka. Due to the vastness of Sri Lankan seas, it requires a strong and full-scale coast guard service around the island to realize the national security objectives pertinent to law and order at sea. Crimes emanating from the maritime domain are multifaceted. There is a high probability for such crimes to fall into the category of TOC due to the involvement of multinational stakeholders. Hence, it is comprehended that counter-crime tasks engulf the capacity of a single entity or a single state for that matter. Modern-day, access to technology is relatively easy and most criminals are well-gearred for incorporating sophistication into their activities. SLCG is a very young organization, which is still in the developing stage. To mature, it requires a number of capabilities and capacities such as air constituent. At present, it patronizes SLAF assistance for its surveillance requirements. Nonetheless, SLAF has its role to play, thus giving primacy to its operational demands over the assistance of other agencies. Therefore, at times SLCG would not be able to enjoy SLAF aerial surveillance inputs, which could be a mission-critical facet. Hence, a long-term solution is required such as inducting air assets for SLCG in meeting its growing surveillance demands. Yet, it lacks adequate Professional expertise, tech-savvy manpower, and ground-based facilities, which are essential for safe and efficient air operations. Hence, SLCG could espouse a similar methodology for managing and operating its air assets through SLAF as it does with SLN. A primary framework is proposed by the researchers for incorporating air operations in collaboration with other local and foreign agencies. It is understood that states are best benefited by going into mutual cooperation than operating in isolation especially countering TOC in the maritime domain. Still, it requires a fair contribution from all stakeholders to make the

common endeavour a success. In absence of their own capabilities, other counterparts would have leeway for pursuing their veiled interests, without even getting noticed. Therefore, strengthening SLCG capabilities and capacities by integrating air assets in meeting its future operational demand is essential.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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