

Achieving Resilience through Digitalization, Sustainability and Sectoral Transformation – What are the Long Term Strategic Options and Reforms for Sri Lanka Armed Forces

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Abstract

The emergence of intricate superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has assumed significant economic and political importance within the Indo-Pacific framework. Sri Lanka finds itself situated at the heart of this complex situation. The emergence of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as a significant geopolitical battleground has engendered competition among key global powers, hence exerting profound implications on both the region itself and the international community as a whole. The establishment of the regional security framework relies on the active involvement of India and the United States, with significant contributions from Japan, France, and the United Kingdom. Additionally, the capacity of New Delhi to garner agreement for a multipolar global order and the preservation of unrestricted maritime passage will face scrutiny. Moreover, considering its favourable diplomatic ties with the majority of governments in the Indo-Pacific region, China's stance will have a direct impact on the security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific. Periodic circumstances in Sri Lanka's history have warranted strategic realignment of its instruments of national power to suit changing global and regional power dynamics. Recent global events and regional incidents have pushed Sri Lanka to look inward and among others rethink its Economic, Foreign and Military Grand Strategies. The paper touches upon unconventional/asymmetric warfare, cyber warfare and the use of Intelligence and clandestine operations as an alternative to ensuring national security and a war strategy for numerically inferior smaller states. Clausewitz asserts that the defensive mode of warfare possesses inherent strength surpassing that of the offensive. In order to overcome this formidable defensive strength, Clausewitz contends that an army's most effective weapon is the advantage of superior numerical strength. Based on this theoretical framework, it may be argued that a significant number of countries globally face economic constraints that prevent them from maintaining numerically superior military forces. In his book "Spec Ops," William H. McRaven postulates that smaller forces might attain a position of relative supremacy within limited timeframes. The paper does not establish a connection between the concept of relative supremacy and the instruments of power related to Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, Trade, and Economy. The concept is often emphasised in the military sphere as a feasible path of action.

Keywords: *Relative Strength, Unconventional / Asymmetric Warfare, Numerically Inferior*