

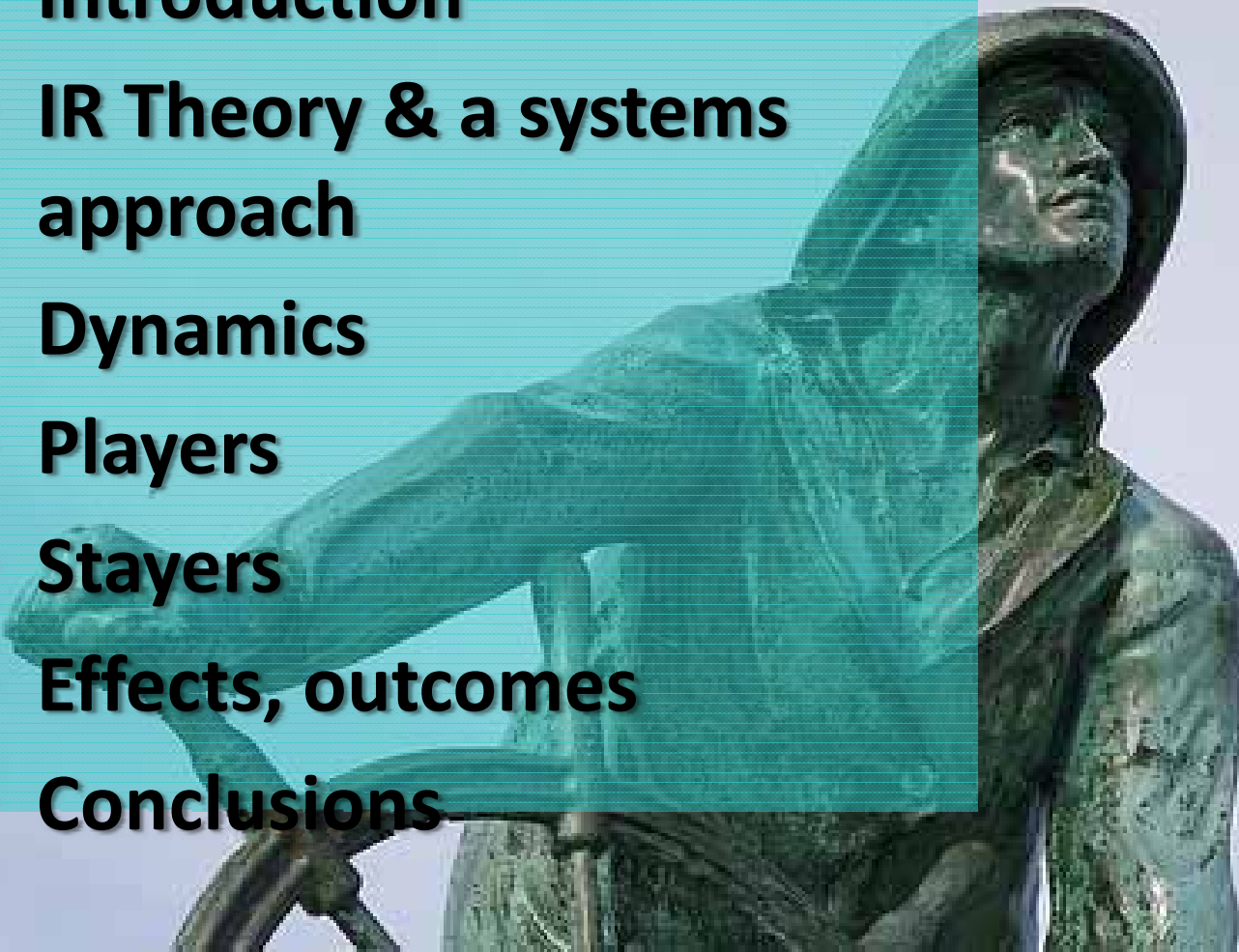
Energy security and the Indian Ocean:

**Stakeholders' geostrategies
within the dynamics of the
Indian Ocean**

'Africa and the geopolitics of India's energy security'
SAIIA, Johannesburg, 05 Oct 2010 &
Cape Town 06 October 2010

Agenda

- Background & Introduction
- IR Theory & a systems approach
- Dynamics
- Players
- Stayers
- Effects, outcomes
- Conclusions



Background:

Geopolitics & geostrategy

- ‘**Geopolitics**’ defined as “the analysis of the interaction two frameworks – that between geographical settings and perspectives; and political processes” (SB Cohen, 2010)
- ‘**Geostrategy**’, in turn, is defined as “the branch of *geopolitics* that deals with strategy; ie
 - geopolitical and strategic factors that together characterize a certain geographic area;
 - or a political strategy based on geopolitics” (Mirriam-Webster dictionary)



Introduction: International Relations – Theoretical foundation and a Systems Approach

- Theoretical foundation in IR. In many ways, the dynamics of the Indian Ocean is reflected through Realism. Realism beats a path for the state...
- A systems approach is simply “a more formalized version of clear thinking about complicated problems ... divide a large problem into sections, concentrate our attention separately and singly on each section in turn ... explain it to ourselves ... rebuild it piece-by-piece ... reconstruct phenomenon mentally in a form in which we feel we can understand it”
- Following assumptions:
 - More than sum of its parts. Structure that consists of components and transactions between and among those parts
 - Various influences and constraints; these are dynamic and reciprocal
 - Examination contributes to politics at global level
 - Complex, yet characterised by coherence and orderliness in midst of (apparent) randomness and diversity
 - Acts as a bridge between other social sciences, eg political geography

Introduction: Select historical development

- The International Hydrographic Organization's (IHO) publication *Limits of Oceans and Seas* defines the limits of the Indian Ocean as [Slide 6](#)
- By late 1960s, the Indian Ocean (IO) was a relative backwater
- The 1970s changed this picture with a range of developments that propelled the IO on to the front stage of international affairs.
- The destructive wars between Eritrea and Ethiopia off the Red Sea, Great Power rivalry during the latter stages of the Cold War, Indo-Pak confrontations, the ramifications of the failed Somalian state and the deteriorating levels of insecurity in Yemen off the Gulf of Aden followed in the next decades.
- These actions were the catalysts that may be seen as a continuation of the prevailing pattern of potential instabilities, which in turn ensures that the IO region regains its important focal point in world affairs; now given added criticality as a medium for maritime energy trade routes to burgeoning economies in the East

SAIIA

African Perspectives. Global Insights

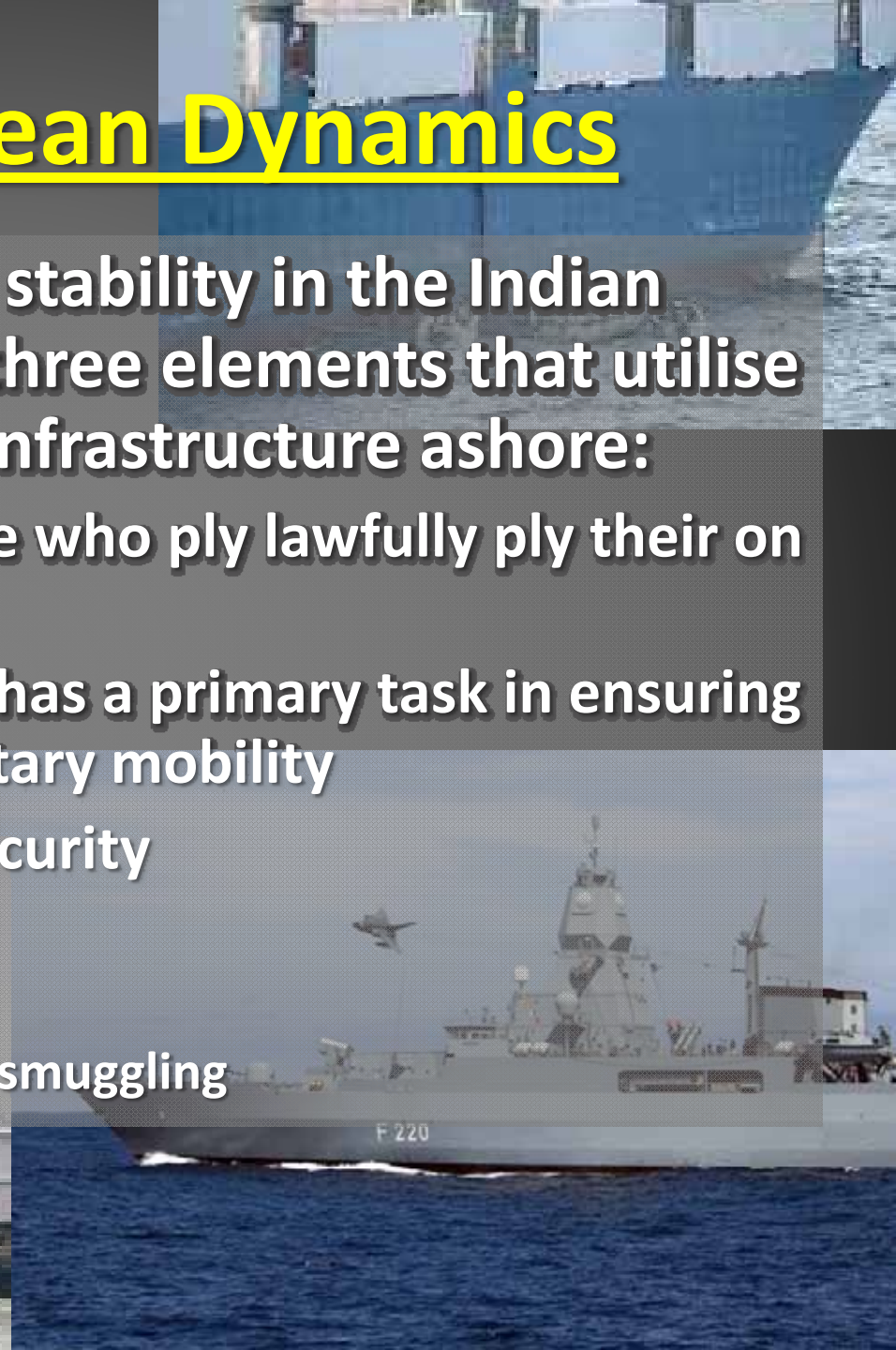


Maritime Trade

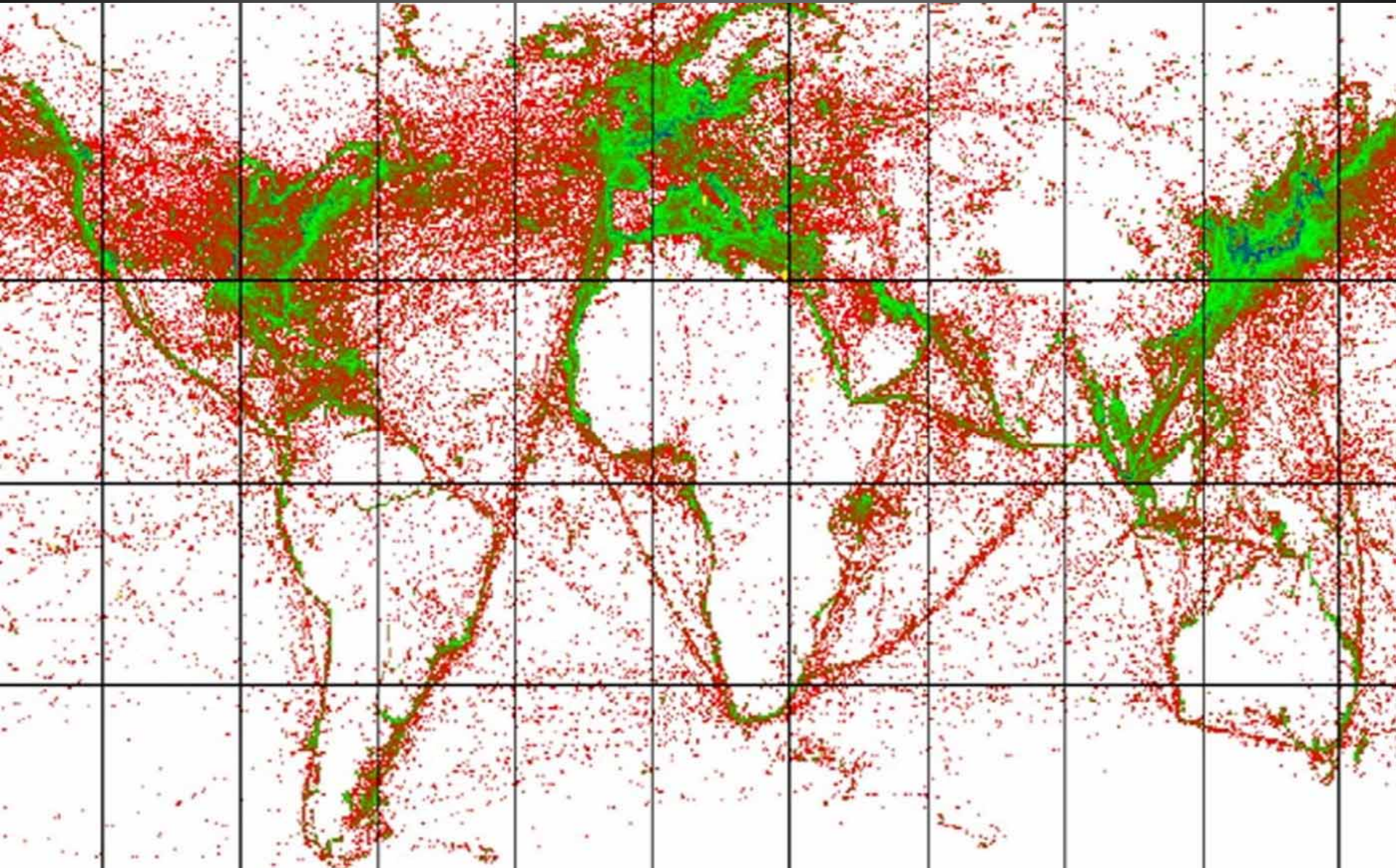


Indian Ocean Dynamics

- Degree of security and stability in the Indian Ocean determined by three elements that utilise appropriate maritime infrastructure ashore:
 - Merchant marine, those who ply lawfully ply their on the seas
 - Military marine, which has a primary task in ensuring strategic trade and military mobility
 - Forces of maritime insecurity
 - Maritime terrorism
 - Piracy
 - Contraband and human smuggling



Indian Ocean – Principal sea lines



THE INDIAN OCEAN



Indian Ocean Dynamics

- Maritime trade, especially energy trade, critical component for major powers, including the '**demand heartland**' being India, China & Japan (PK Ghosh).
- The Indian Ocean has number of choke points, eg Straits of Hormuz, Straits of Malacca, Lombok and the Sunda Straits. Any disruption in traffic flow through these points can have disastrous consequences.
- Maritime (in)security
- Insecure, failed and failing states in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden
- Security vacuum – filled by major powers and infrequently by forces of maritime insecurity
- Good potential for major power rivalry to increase – vie to ensure maritime energy security in same ocean area
- Effects on African littoral & island states
- Benefits of defence (naval) diplomacy

IO Threats - Generalised

- As a generalised observation, none of IOR states has a direct (Sri Lanka appears to have negated the LTTE Tamil Tigers threat), imminent maritime threat projected on their sovereign territory, yet all view actual and potential conflict arising in the maritime domain in an operations-other-than-war scenario. These threats, which have been described as a situation akin to “anarchy at sea” arise from a variety of sources
- These include: unsecured or ungoverned seas as havens for transnational threats that provide relatively inexpensive and inconspicuous movement, including illegal use of high seas by transnational crime syndicates, commercial opportunists, increasing incidences of organised piracy that plagues and endangers maritime traffic, human traffickers, polluters,
- Also “...the continued existence of territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts in the region with long historical roots”, terrorism -, that continues to thrive in the region and world-wide, despite ongoing counter-terrorism actions; while a further factor “.... is the confrontational posture adopted by regional states to resolve conflicting ocean interests and how naval power is used to assert rights over the disputed areas.” “

Regional and Extra-Regional Stakeholders

- Scenario development sees movement from unipolar (USA) to tripolar world (North Americas, Europe, Asia [Asian trading bloc made up of China, India, Japan, the Asian tigers, Australia and New Zealand]) or multipolar world. Much diversity and competition initially only geographic blocs, but may be start to politico-security co-operation
- At the outset it needs to be stated that all the powers to be highlighted, are involved in some form of anti-piracy or World Food Programme vessel protection or general maritime security operation in the areas of maritime insecurity off Yemen, Somalia, the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa. There are a number of these, either under regional or single-state auspices, but also some independent operations in this area



China



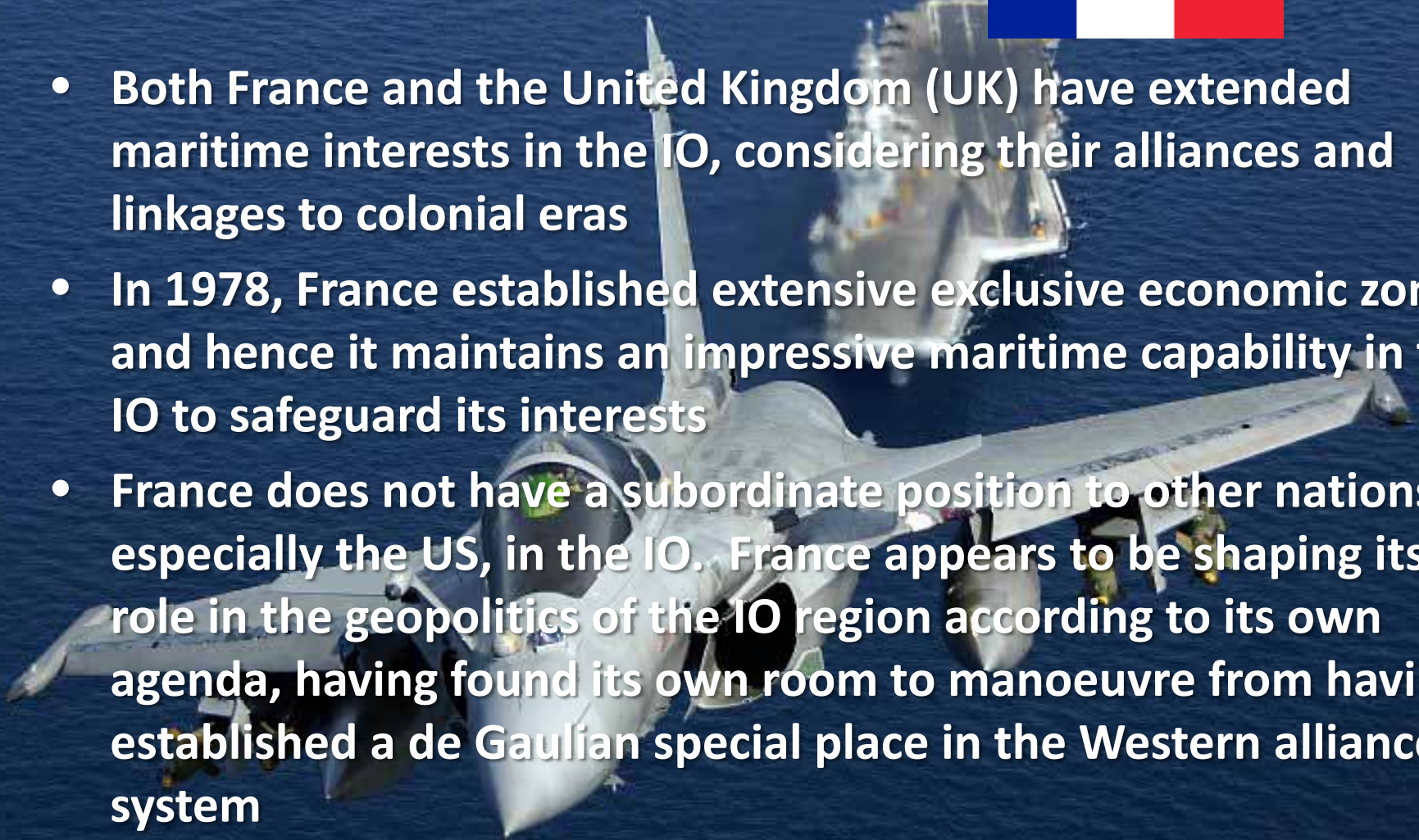
- The IO has featured in China's strategic thinking for centuries
- In order to consolidate and safeguard its energy sealanes, and well aware of the value of maritime choke points, China has commenced a 'string of pearls' strategy
- Strategically , one observation is that it may appear as though China is engaged in encircling India, in part to secure its extended and vulnerable energy trade route, but also to assert itself in terms of dominance. These events, together with rapid growth of a greatly expanded Chinese fleet, are worthy of continued observation
- The Sep 10 World Politics Review's '*The future of maritime security*' notes that "Although China has tried to allay concerns by assuring the world its development will be peaceful, China's rapid naval military modernisation effort, combined with its increasingly aggressive approach to regional maritime issues, have significantly eroded years of work by its diplomatic corps"



France



- Both France and the United Kingdom (UK) have extended maritime interests in the IO, considering their alliances and linkages to colonial eras
- In 1978, France established extensive exclusive economic zones and hence it maintains an impressive maritime capability in the IO to safeguard its interests
- France does not have a subordinate position to other nations, especially the US, in the IO. France appears to be shaping its role in the geopolitics of the IO region according to its own agenda, having found its own room to manoeuvre from having established a de Gaulian special place in the Western alliance system
- The French maritime forces are deployed in the IO on a continuous basis



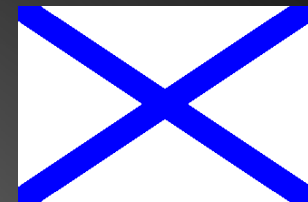
India



- The largest democracy in the world, India's huge, growing population continues to provide it with seemingly daunting social, economic and environmental challenges
- On the African front, India hopes to be able to go some way to challenging China for the best contracts and deals.
- In response to China's gains, India's navy aims to modernize its own fleet, has expanded defence contacts and exchanges with a host of strategic Indian Ocean countries
- But China also maintains solid relationships with many of these countries — ties that, in most cases, bind far tighter and offer much more than what India can muster.



Russia



- Russia has observed the maritime developments in the region with great interest. It is concerned about the apparent stealthy increase in maritime reach of these competing forces, and sees an inexorable permanency of these forces in the IO. The Russian leadership believe that their influence in international affairs is based on a number of important points.
- These include historic positions and the need to reclaim those, its perceived position in the hierarchy of world affairs, its vast geographical size – all of which need to be correlated by a navy with world reach. Its deployments – not only in the IO – demonstrate its resurgence in securing its global interests. In this respect, the Russian navy seems to be carving out for itself a significant role in the Indian Ocean – once frequented by Soviet maritime forces.

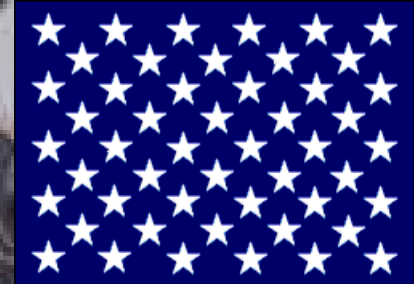
United Kingdom



- One of Britain's stalwart naval formations, the East Indies Station, had guarded British interests in the Indian Ocean region until its abolition in the late 1950s.¹ In doing so, it considers the enduring nature of naval power and presence and argues that, despite the east of Suez 'withdrawal' announced in 1968, Britain retained a naval commitment to the region that remains unbroken to the present day. Royal Navy deployments are primed towards expeditionary operations that are readily operationalised.
- In addition to its commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements in Southeast Asia since 1971, the UK maintains a robust forward presence through deployments of Royal Navy warships and submarines. The UK has been conducting joint naval exercises with several IO littoral powers. It has also conducted maritime operations in the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Sea in the 1991 Gulf War, the 'war on terror' and the 2003 war in Iraq and beyond.
- Two days before Christmas 2009, the influential shipping paper *Lloyd's List* noted that the UK's foreign secretary has warned the shipping industry that it must rely on its own devices to defend itself against Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean, after admitting that navies cannot provide the high level of support currently on offer in the Gulf of Aden.



United States



- With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989, the US remained the world's only superpower for a period
- Some authors posit that the USA's predominance is based on two critical aspects. In the first place, it possesses the capability to project military power in the region. Secondly, it has a well-defined strategy to pursue its policy of pre-eminence
- In Jun 10, the USN published 2010 Naval Operations Concept (NOC), the operational fulfillment of the Co-operative Maritime Strategy (2007). Provides a liberal internationalist frame for dealing with rise of other (Chinese) naval power; frame suggests that naval competition could be a positive sum rather than a zero sum outcome where US could actually benefit from such expansions. This stands in contrast to traditional and in some ways, accepted theories, about the role and impact of naval power in great power rivalry
- Presently, the US has facilities in Oman, the UAE, Bahrain, Yemen, Djibouti, Changi in Singapore, in northern Australia; with recent additions being Reaper and Predator UAVs being based in Seychelles and Mauritius respectively, incorporating satellite information. These serve as 'lily pads' to respond to crises in the IO. The US is also augmenting regional capabilities through technology transfers. Diego Garcia remains the hub of US naval involvement in the IO

African Littoral & Island States – Indian Ocean

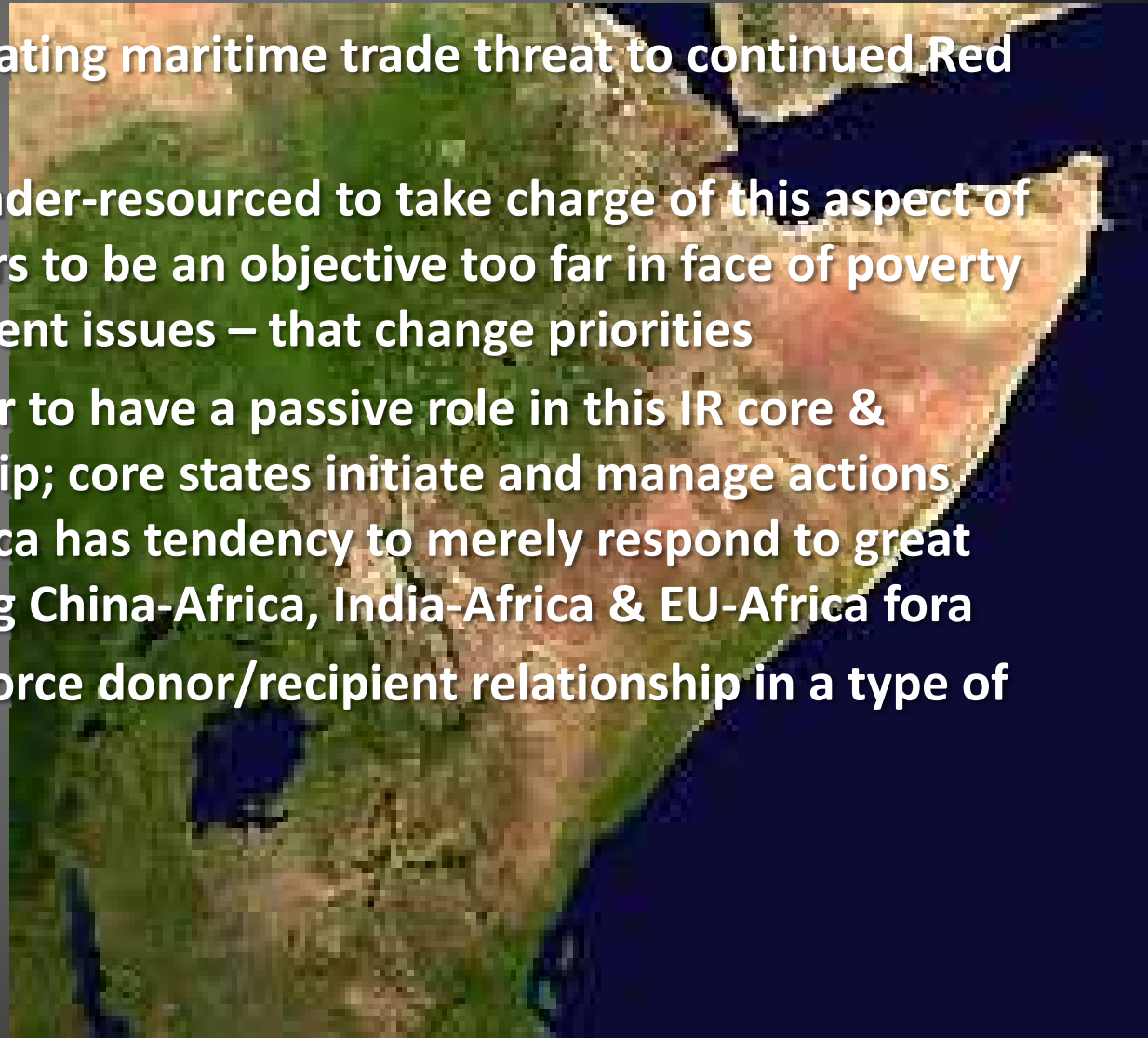


- **East African littoral states: Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa**
- **Western IO island states: Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, Comores (Mayotte is French). Others belong to France, UK, India, and Africa littoral or IO island states**
- **Two major African Regional Economic Communities: East African Community and Southern African Development Community**
- **Failed and failing / vulnerable states include: Somalia, Red Sea's Yemen, Sudan. Rise of terrorism and non-state actors in region**



Effects & Outcomes

- Significant and escalating maritime trade threat to continued Red Sea/Suez traffic
- African states too under-resourced to take charge of this aspect of their destiny; appears to be an objective too far in face of poverty and underdevelopment issues – that change priorities
- African states appear to have a passive role in this IR core & periphery relationship; core states initiate and manage actions and diplomacy ; Africa has tendency to merely respond to great powers' initiatives eg China-Africa, India-Africa & EU-Africa fora
- May be said to reinforce donor/recipient relationship in a type of neo-colonial model



Conclusions (1)

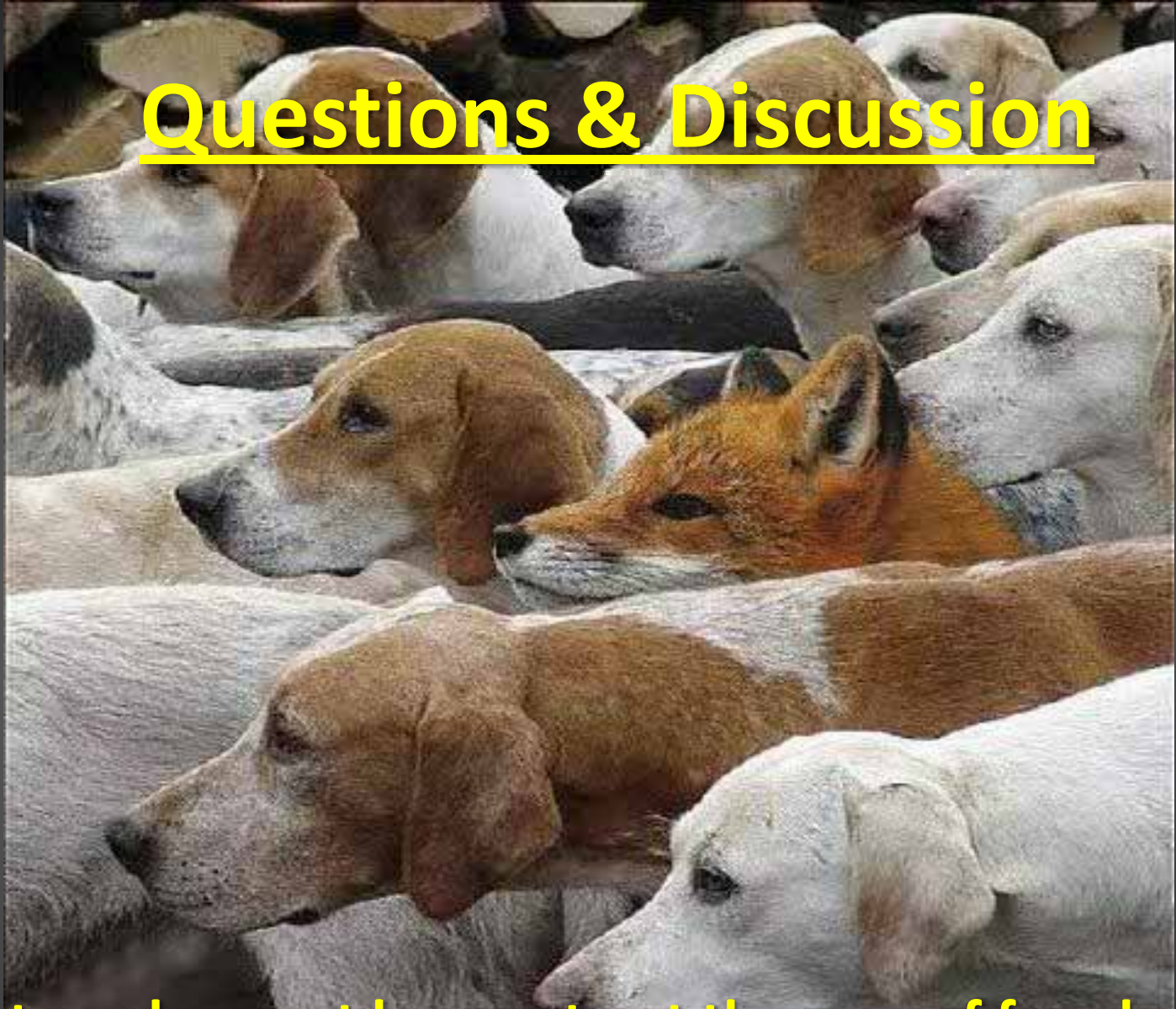
- Age-old security issue in IO arena has been outside influences: Whatever they may have done to 'solve' regional security problems, invariably seem to create new ones or aggravate existing ones
- Resurgence of the regional power blocs alignment in exchange for some reward (trade, influence, infrastructure) – often antagonistic at REC level
- Often viewed as intolerable (often sovereignty-eroding) presence of major powers on African soil
- Yet, credence to argument that it resembles a(n) increasingly sensitive balance of power game in the IO

Conclusions (2)

- Conflict, though, is not inevitable. It's natural for rising powers to extend their reach and rub up against each other.
- An article in the March-April 2009 issue of *Foreign Affairs* by Robert Kaplan, a prominent American writer and strategic thinker, suggested that the U.S., far and away still the world's preeminent military power, could be the chief "balancer" and "honest broker" in the Indian Ocean



Questions & Discussion



"History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid" - Gen Dwight Eisenhower