

**Seminar on 30 Jun 2022 at 1730 Hrs**  
**Australia United Kingdom and the United State (AUKUS):**  
**A New Perspective based on the**  
**Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) Framework**

**Background**

The global power play has decisively shifted to the tropical littoral waters of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the South China Sea (SCS). The ongoing global order is seeing a massive churn in international relations. The rapid rise of China and the relative decline in the American hegemony has given rise to enhanced contestation and confrontation, largely on economic and political matters that have led to brinkmanship on the military front as well. The pandemic has brought a new set of alignment among nations and also among adversaries. Navies are being openly deployed for joint exercises to re-enforce alliances and proclaim military dominance. The naval deployments have started to see a massive shift towards submarine operations. Even in India, there is a decisive mandate for enhancing our submarine fleet both on the strategic as well as conventional platforms. The entire Southeast Asia is seeing a significant push towards submarine acquisition. Submarine operations is a completely different paradigm in naval operations and brings in, a whole new dimension to the naval engagement for self and the adversary. A very complex naval theatre seems to be emerging in the Indo-Pacific for naval operations to be conducted in future, and it does requires far better situational awareness. The **AUKUS** is the latest development that will have far reaching ramifications on multiple fronts.

The political volatility in the IOR and the SCS, also brings in the non-state actors almost working in cohort with the maritime forces. The disruptive edge these non-state actors enjoy over the conventional maritime forces, further increases the asymmetry of their deployment. The increasing piracy and maritime terrorism incidents in the IOR and the SCS is a manifestation of the deep rooted nexus between the nations and these subversive elements. Thus, the conventional means of operational deployment of the maritime forces need to be relooked at, while we plan our strategic objectives in the future. The AUKUS is one of the unique and strategic partnership with significant military focus on the underwater domain. The nuclear submarine deal and the AI based cyber security aspects will bring new alignments and probably reshape old partnerships. The geopolitical and geostrategic realignment needs to be understood in a strategic maritime context.

The Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), received significant traction globally post the 9/11 incident, and in the IOR, the 26/11 was a similar trigger to build MDA infrastructure. However, it is important to note that the MDA so devised remained a security driven formulation with minimal penetration into the other stakeholders, resulting in constrained budgetary allocations only from the defence spending. The most critical fall out of this security driven formulation was that the underwater component of the MDA that may be referred as Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) remained far neglected and could not be main streamed into the Science & Technology (S&T) developments. Acoustic capacity and capability building for effective UDA, is inescapable to effectively manage the emerging maritime concerns in the emerging global order, particularly in the tropical littoral waters of the Indo-Pacific Strategic Space. More focussed UDA is required with collective participation from all the stakeholder, beyond the security establishment. India has to position itself in the new global order and focus on the policy and technology interventions to deal with such new developments.

## **Proposal**

The Maritime Research Centre (MRC), Pune and the M/S NirDhwani Technology Pvt Ltd (NDT) in collaboration with The Bridge Tank, proposes to host a webinar titled “Australia, United Kingdom and United States (AUKUS): A New Perspective based on the Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) Framework” on 30 Jun 2022 at 1730 hrs. The event is planned to bring together the defence industry, maritime strategists, policy makers and others, to be able to reach out and build policy priority for the UDA framework both at the national and regional level. The interactions will strengthen the User-Industry-Academic partnership and encourage joint acoustic capacity and capability building at the national and regional level.

The broad strategic relevance of the high level dialogue entails that the participants get exposed to the policy issues, technological means, innovative tools and measures, geopolitics, organizational aspects both nationally and globally, regional and global frameworks, and more. The GAP analysis in terms of policy and means and measures will be discussed. A detailed dialogue resolution will be prepared and submitted to the authorities and agencies within and outside the government for further action. The MRC will continue to engage with these agencies and authorities to facilitate effective realization of the SAGAR vision through an effective UDA framework.

## **Detailed Programme**

The detailed program for the event will be as follows:

- 1730 hrs- The Geopolitical Context in the New Global Order.  
Amb Y K Sinha, Former High Commissioner to UK & Sri Lanka.
- 1750 hrs- UDA Framework in the New Global Order.  
Dr(Cdr) Arnab Das, Founder & Director MRC, Pune.
- 1810 hrs- Strategic Security Perspective in the Indo-Pacific Region.  
Vice Admiral A R Karve (Retd), PVSM, AVSM, ASW Specialist, Indian Navy.
- 1830 hrs- Regional Security Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific Region,  
Mr. Vishal Thapar, Group Editorial Head (Defence & Security), BW Businessworld.
- 1850 hrs- Geo-strategic Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region.  
Ambassador Serge Degallaix, Former Diplomat France.
- 1910 hrs- The Indo-Pacific and the Strategic Challenges.  
Mr. Franck G Wisner II, Former United States Secretary of State.
- 1930 hrs- Closing Remarks and the Way Ahead.  
Mr. Joel Ruet, President The Bridge Tank, Paris
- 1950 hrs- Vote of Thanks – Ms. Nishtha Vishwakarma,  
MRC Communication and Advocacy Fellow.

## **Convener**

Dr.(Cdr) Arnab Das, Founder & Director MRC, Pune.

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