



MAKING WAVES

The Fortnightly e-News Brief of the National Maritime Foundation

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Could Tensions in the South China Sea Spark a War?

- Abraham M. Denmark

In the South China Sea, China's ambitious "nine-dash line" claim of sovereignty has been disputed by several other claimants, relations have in recent weeks turned remarkably chillier. Vietnam and the Philippines are facing the brunt of Beijing's ire, and the potential for crisis and conflict is significant. Positions are hardening, willingness to compromise is low, and the fact that the Philippines is an ally of the United States raises the potential for a disastrous crisis and potential conflict between the U.S. and China.

The clash between China and Vietnam has attracted more attention in recent days. Just a few days after President Obama's visit to the region, a Chinese mobile oil rig took position in a carefully selected site that, while closer to the Vietnam mainland than China's Hainan Island, is just fourteen nautical miles from Chinese-occupied island, a part of the Paracel Island group that is claimed by both China and Vietnam. China sent a large flotilla of ships to escort the derrick; a group that included several armed naval vessels. After Hanoi expressed outrage at this action and violence against Chinese nationals across Vietnam, Beijing expanded the escort flotilla to over 100 ships. Most recently, Chinese ships interdicted, rammed, and sunk a Vietnamese fishing vessel that was challenging the derrick. Vietnam claims that four ships were attacked in all, and now there are reportedly 113 ships standing off against sixty Vietnamese vessels.

Similar incidents have played out in recent months between China and the Philippines. After China took effective control over the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, Beijing seemed to set its sights on the Second Thomas Shoal—a small land formation about 105 nautical miles from the Philippines but is claimed by both countries. To buttress its claim, the Philippines in 1999 intentionally beached the hospital ship Sierra Madre on the reef and has maintained a small crew on the beached craft ever since (see an exceptional piece about the sailors on the ship and the broader dispute by the New York Times here). Most recently, the Philippines arrested a group of Chinese fishermen found 70 miles from the Philippines near Half Moon Shoal with a ship filled with endangered (and valuable) turtles.

To an outsider, all this hyperbole and saber rattling about small rocks, oil derricks, fishermen, and turtles must seem like much ado about nothing. Yet it is deadly serious—these seemingly trivial issues are used as avatars for deadly serious questions about history, power, ambition, and national sovereignty. An examination

of how countries see these issues and how they have behaved in the past provides a window for how they are likely to act in the future. It's not a comforting thought.

The common denominator in all of the South China Sea's existing disputes is China. Beijing serves as the primary catalyst for tension and crisis in these disputes. Its declaration of a nine-dash line claim of sovereignty that covers almost the entire Sea is stunning in its ambition and audaciousness: in April, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific Daniel Russel described the claim as lacking any "apparent basis under international law regarding the scope of the claim itself." That's because China has justified its claim by asserting its historical control over those waters, yet the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)—which sets standards for defining territorial waters, exclusive economic zones, and the land features that generate them—does not allow for claims based on history. Moreover, while various Chinese dynasties have at various times controlled various islands within the South China Sea, China has never controlled all of them at the same time.

China's behavior in the South China Sea has changed significantly in recent years. The South China Sea was not a major issue for Beijing for the first few decades after Chairman Mao established the People's Republic in 1949. It wasn't until Deng Xiaoping took the reins of power in the 1970s that it became a significant issue in China's foreign affairs, and Deng set a path for restraint and non-confrontation. Seeing China as relatively weak and in need of a peaceful external environment to allow China's economy to develop, Deng pursued a policy to shelve disputes in order to pursue joint development of resources.

As China's economy has grown more prosperous and powerful, its calculations have changed. The growth of its economy has far outpaced indigenous development of natural resources, and China's economy has grown ever more hungry for new sources of food and energy—a hunger that the South China Sea can potentially help to address. At the same time, China's economic, political, and military power has grown exponentially and now towers above the other claimants. Their economies are fundamentally tied to China, which leaves them vulnerable to economic coercion from Beijing, while their political influence and military power now pale in comparison to China's.

Many of China's elites have recognized this change in the distribution of power and believe China should act more assertively in the pursuit of its interests in the South China Sea. Led by large state-owned corporate interests such as CNOOC and SINOPEC and abetted by hawks in the PLA, China's leaders have apparently been convinced that Beijing should abandon Deng's precedent of restraint and conciliation and instead seek to change the status quo in China's favor.

China's strategy toward the goal of strengthening control over the South China Sea has been fairly remarkable for its ingenuity. While certainly assertive, China's leaders have insisted on a strategy that is restrained and defensive on its face. Beijing always couches its actions as reactions to perceived attacks and incidents from the

other claimants. Yet China's behavior is always to escalate the situation and use its overwhelming power to enhance its claims and strengthen its position.

This approach, which can be called Reactive Assertiveness, is used by Beijing to describe China as fundamentally defensive and its adversaries as the ones causing trouble. With all apparent genuineness, Beijing paints the claims and actions as impinging on China's national sovereignty—an equivalent to a foreign military force establishing a beachhead in Florida. As one Chinese scholar told me, "This is our territory and we have every right to use any means necessary, including the use of force, to evict them."

Yet China does not want a war. The tactics at use—fishing vessels and coast guard ships, harassment and ramming without firing a shot—are designed to stay below the level of tension that would rise to the level of an outright conflict. Beijing even attempts to paint its own hostile actions as defensive and the fault of the other party. A day after Chinese ships intentionally rammed and sank a Vietnamese fishing vessel, a Foreign Ministry spokesman urged Vietnam to "immediately stop all disruptive and damage activities" and the Vice Foreign Minister said that no country should doubt China's determination and will to safeguard the peace and stability of the South China Sea. The message from Beijing is clear: the other claimants should wholly accede to all Chinese claims, and any violence that result from their resistance is wholly their responsibility.

Leaders in the Philippines and Vietnam see themselves as walking a strategic tightrope. On one hand, China's economic importance, geographic proximity, and overwhelming military power demand that they maintain a positive relationship with Beijing. Yet their claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea are felt just as strongly and genuinely as they are felt in Beijing, and they feel an obligation to their country to defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

One topic that is raised regularly in both countries is, a bit incongruously, Crimea. Elites in both Manila and Vietnam see much of themselves in Ukraine—a small nation embroiled in a serious territorial dispute with their (relatively) economically vital and militarily dominant neighbor. Russia's intervention and subsequent annexation of Crimea seemed to demonstrate to leaders in Southeast Asia that economic dependence and military weakness is a geopolitical liability, and that territorial integrity and national sovereignty are not inviolate in the twenty-first century.

These countries fear that Russia has set the stage for China to use force to take control over disputed territories. As a reaction, they are seeking to diversify their economies in order to reduce their dependence on China while also building their own military power somewhat reduce China's military advantage. Vietnam has in recent years purchased 6 Kilo-class submarines from Russia, maritime patrol aircraft from Canada, and Sigma Corvettes from the Netherlands. The Philippines has likewise announced plans to increase its defense spending and to purchase three

decommissioned Hamilton-class cutters from the U.S. Coast Guard, along with twelve new FA-50 fighters from Korea. Both also seek to buttress their defense cooperation with the United States—Hanoi's engagement with Washington has increased noticeably in recent years, and Manila recently signed an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with Washington to strengthen defense cooperation and expand the American military presence in the Philippines.

Vietnam and the Philippines will not stand idly by as China gradually erodes their hold on what they believe to be their territory. Yet they also do not want a war with China—their strategy appears to be focused on resisting China's efforts to erode their claims while buying time to build their power, reduce their dependence on China, and hope the international community will intervene. Manila has brought its dispute with China to the International Court of Justice for arbitration, a decision from which is expected near the end of 2015. Moreover, both have turned to ASEAN to bring added geopolitical weight to negotiations with Beijing to develop a legally binding maritime code of conduct in the South China Sea—an agreement that would not affect the disputes themselves, but would considerably reduce tensions.

The future of these disputes is not promising for long-term peace and stability. Neither side has demonstrated any interest in backing down or compromising, and the potential for future escalation is high. China's approach to these disputes is particularly problematic. Its refusal to compromise, its continued reliance on escalation, and its commitment to change the status quo (no matter how gradually) is a recipe for persistent tension. Most troubling is the confidence with which China approaches escalation. Beijing appears to see escalation as a tool that can be used with absolute control and predictability. China's strategists and policy makers are fairly new to major power geopolitics, and have not learned the lessons their American and Russian counterparts learned during the Cold War: that escalation is a dangerous tool, that an adversary can respond in very unpredictable ways, and that tension can quickly spiral out of control.

One problem on the near horizon is how China will react to the arrest of Chinese fishermen by the Philippines. Beijing will certainly react, and will again seek to punish Manila and strengthen China's claims in the process. One option would be to arrest Philippine fishermen operating in waters claimed by China. Another more likely and more provocative response would be to evict the Philippine forces currently on the grounded Sierra Madre on the Second Thomas Reef. China has already harassed routine efforts by the Philippines to resupply those sailors, and may seek to tighten the blockade on the ship in order to force the sailors to withdraw. The potential for shots to be fired or another ship to be rammed and sunk would be high, and lives may be lost.

Without serious engagement, China is unlikely to back down. Beijing has painted this issues as directly related to its territorial integrity and national sovereignty, and its recent public marking of the 100th anniversary of the May 4 movement—in which the existing government was overthrown by a popular uprising that judged Beijing as

weak in the face of foreign exploitation—strongly suggests that China’s leaders are sensitive to linkages between perceived weakness abroad and instability at home. With the growth of China’s economy likely to slow dramatically in coming years, Beijing appears to see incidents like these as useful in stirring nationalist sentiments at home to buttress the popular legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.

Should China use force against the Philippines, no matter how much Beijing may try to describe the act as defensive or reactive, the United States would probably be drawn into the crisis—certainly in a diplomatic sense, and potentially in a military sense as well. The United States will be unlikely to back down in such a situation, as the credibility of America’s willingness to intervene overseas has already come into question after decisions to not intervene in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine or Assad’s crossing the chemical weapons “redline” in Syria. While Washington would certainly attempt to de-escalate any crisis and prevent the use of force, it will also be sure to demonstrate will and resolve in order to both deter hostilities and reassure its allies.

While the United States is not a party to these disputes per se, it has a major interest in seeing them resolved peacefully. A conflict in the South China Sea would be disastrous for regional trade and for U.S.-China relations—both of which are of singular importance to the United States. The United States could enhance deterrence for Beijing by raising the costs to China for additional incidents—potential initiatives include further strengthening military cooperation with the other claimants in the South China Sea, building their military capabilities, and enhancing mechanisms for multinational training and exercises. Additionally, Washington should work as an honest broker among all parties to identify opportunities for de-escalation and to develop a roadmap to the peaceful resolution of disputes. The upcoming Strategic and Economic Dialogue is an important opportunity for Beijing and Washington to speak directly about these issues and the dangers they post, and to find a way to prevent a crisis.

China and other claimants in the South China Sea are on a collision course, and it is incumbent on the United States to demonstrate leadership by forestalling a future crisis that could throw the entire region into conflict. Unless the claimants are able to turn away from aggression and see de-escalation as a useful tool of strategy, it is only a matter of time until Beijing miscalculates and escalates over a redline that leads to crisis and raises the potential for conflict. A mix of countries with incompatible, apparently nonnegotiable interests willing to use force and unwilling to acknowledge any way out than the absolute capitulation of the other side is a highly dangerous mix—this is how wars start.

Source: [India Strategic Studies](#), 2nd June, 2014

India's Opportunity in Iran Port

As the Modi government defines its foreign policy priorities, one of the issues that need urgent attention is the finalisation of India's investment in the development of Chabahar Port in Iran. This is particularly important because the window of opportunity available to India to have a presence in Chabahar may be closing rapidly. India and Iran had agreed to cooperate on the development of this Iranian port way back in 2003 when Iran's president Mohammad Khatami had visited India but nothing much has been achieved in these 11 years.

It appears the previous government was close to approving US \$100 million investment in the development of the port but could not take the decision. The new government could pick up the threads and quickly seal the deal.

The strategic importance of Chabahar Port for India cannot be overstated. Located in the Sistan-Baluchistan province of Iran on the Makran coast and just outside the Persian Gulf, Chabahar is a natural gateway for India to Afghanistan and Central Asia. In the last 10 years, the Iranians have invested considerable sums of money in the development of Chabahar city. A 600km-long highway linking Chabahar to Zahidan in the north is operational. Zahidan is only about 240km from Milak on the Iran-Afghanistan border. Across Milak is Zaranj in Afghanistan where India has built the Zaranj-Delaram highway. Thus, there is already excellent road connectivity between Chabahar and Afghanistan via Zahidan. The Iranians have also started the construction of a railway line from Chabahar to Zahidan where it will connect with the Iranian rail network and to Central Asia and CIS.

The Iranians are constructing a vast petro-chemical complex at Chabahar which will receive its gas feedstock through a pipeline from Iranshahr which is only about 200km from Chabahar and is an important point on the proposed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. A gas pipeline from South Pars gas field to Iranshahr has already been built.

The Iranian government has set up a Free Trade Zone at Chabahar to attract investors. It is understood that some CIS countries and Afghanistan have already been given land in the Free Trade Zone. The Iranians are keen to attract Indian investors in the Free Trade Zone.

Chabahar Port has good growth potential. It is functional and is already handling 2 million tonnes (MT) of cargo every year. On completion of the three proposed phases of development, the port will have the capacity to handle 82MT of cargo per year by 2020. The port traffic will be generated through imports, exports and transit of goods. Chabahar Port is much safer than Gwadar Port in Pakistan's troubled Baluchistan province, 76km from Chabahar. It will certainly take away Afghanistan's transit trade through Pakistan. A recent report in the Pakistani newspaper Dawn highlighted that Afghan transit trade dropped by 54 per cent in the financial year 2012-13 partly due to development of Chabahar Port. The Iranians are counting on

the rejuvenation of economic activities in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US and foreign troops from the land-locked nation for further development of Chabahar.

The Chinese are entering Chabahar in a big way. They have begun work on a heavy oil refinery there. A Chinese dredger is functional at Chabahar Port for land reclamation activities. A market selling Chinese goods has also been opened in Chabahar. It is reported that a Chinese company has interest in the development of the Chabahar petro-chemical complex.

Chabahar offers great strategic opportunity for India not only to enter Iran but also to reach Afghanistan and Central Asia. Apprehensions about the commercial potential of Chabahar are overstated because the Iranians are already investing in Chabahar and many other nations are also showing interest. In fact, the US \$100 million investment that India is planning appears to be on the conservative side and should be increased. Indian companies will have good opportunity to supply equipment for the construction of the railway line to Zahidan. Since Chabahar lies only about 1,000km from Kandla port in Gujarat, a direct shipping line should be considered to bypass Dubai, give boost to direct India-Iran trade and enhance transit trade to Afghanistan and CIS.

A number of Indian official delegations and private companies have visited Chabahar but no worthwhile investment has been made or business deal concluded. This has disappointed the Iranian officials and businessmen. They think India is not serious. The local Baluchi population is friendly towards India and many speak fluent Urdu. Some traders regularly visit India to source Indian goods but they face problems transferring money and also in the absence of a direct shipping link. Indian Basmati rice, imitation jewellery and foodstuff, etc. are in good demand in that part of the world.

India will continue to face problems with regard to transit of goods to Afghanistan through Pakistan. The use of the Chabahar route can resolve access problems.

India's involvement in Chabahar Port will also strengthen India-Iran ties which are increasingly becoming strategic in content. The lingering bitterness in Iran about India's vote against Iran at the IAEA on the nuclear issue in 2005 will also lessen. India has stood by Iran through difficult times as it continued to import Iranian oil even at the time of sanctions and despite the closing down of payment channels. This is often not appreciated either in Iran or in India. Indian oil import from Iran averaged over 200,000 barrels per day in 2013. Two-way trade was over US \$16 billion. India needs to build an independent relation with Iran without affecting ties with Saudi Arabia, GCC or the US. Our diplomacy should be aimed at deepening strategic partnerships with GCC as well as Iran considering that relations with one do not contradict ties with the other.

The likelihood of a rapprochement between Iran and the West will increase Iran's importance. Chabahar will certainly gain from this rapprochement. If India does not

enter Chabahar now, it may be too late and more expensive to do so later. Increased Indian presence in Chabahar now will pay rich dividends later. India should adopt a long-term strategic vision and not a narrow commercial approach towards the development of Chabahar Port and investment in Chabahar Free Zone.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 3rd June, 2014

Vietnam's Role in Japan's Southeast Asia Strategy

- Clint Richards

The Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore saw Japan and the U.S. square off against China in asserting their interpretations of recent events in the South China Sea and East China Sea. China's recent territorial conflicts with Vietnam and the Philippines, and the Japanese government's attempt to normalize its security role in the region, were the main examples used by the opposing sides to showcase the threat to security posed by their opponent. As the dust begins to settle from the atmospherics over the weekend, Vietnam appears to be the country most interested in aligning with Japan, and willing to increase the scope of their security partnership. Japan is showing itself to be a willing partner, albeit with some important caveats.

Vietnam's Vice Defense Minister Nguyen Chi Vinh said that his country expects to receive coast guard ships from Japan early next year, also stating that Japan had agreed to train and share information with Vietnam's Coast Guard. He took pains to single out Japan's support for Vietnam's current conflict with China, and urged other countries in the region to do the same. For his part, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the Diet last Wednesday that Japan would be unable to "immediately provide decommissioned patrol ships to Vietnam as its own coastguard was stretched by surveillance activities," according to Reuters. Abe was clearly referring to the ongoing deployment of a large part of the Japanese Coast Guard around the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. As a side note, this statement before the Diet was intended to underscore Abe's current push to reinterpret Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, which would then create a larger role for the Maritime Self-Defense Forces concerning the disputed islands.

Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and his Vietnamese counterpart Gen. Phung Quang Thanh agreed to increase their countries' defense cooperation. The Japan Times reported that Onodera told Thanh "that Japan supports Vietnam's handling of its recent standoff with China, that the use of force to change the status quo should not be tolerated and that the issue should be resolved through dialogue." However, the Vietnamese defense minister said the dispute with China over its maritime boundary should be handled peacefully, and in accordance with international law. Both Japan and Vietnam have made constant reference to the use of international law; China is unwilling to take the issue before international arbitration and regards the issue as a historical matter.

However, while Japan and Vietnam appear to be cozying up to each other militarily, the Japanese government announced that it is suspending new loans to Vietnam following a bribery scandal between a Japanese consulting firm and Vietnam's railroad authority. The Jiji Press reported that this is the second time Japan has suspended loans to Vietnam because of a payoff scandal, and that fresh loans for Vietnam Railway's projects will be suspended until next month at the earliest, when the two countries will conduct a panel meeting. The article also stated that Vietnam is the largest recipient of official development assistance from Japan, which at 148.5 billion yen in fiscal 2012 made Japan by far Vietnam's biggest aid donor.

Japan has made its opinion regarding Chinese assertions in the region clear. Following Lieutenant General Wang Guanzhong's closing statements at the Shangri-La Dialogue concerning the U.S. and Japan, the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said in Tokyo, "we believe the Chinese senior official made claims based on mistake of facts and defamed our country," according to an AFP report. He also said that the Japanese delegation at the conference immediately made "strong protest" against Wang's remarks.

However, Japan appears to have some reservations about partnering too closely with Vietnam. Certainly, Vietnam's ongoing spat with China over the deployment of an oil rig in disputed waters makes it one of China's most belligerent neighbors, and as such a natural ally for Japan, which seeks partners in its efforts to limit what it sees as Chinese aggression in the region. Some of Japan's trepidation is strictly logistical, and perhaps being played up for domestic consumption. It cannot supply additional coastguard ships to Vietnam if its own territorial waters are being threatened by China. The suspension of aid for Vietnam Railways comes at a crucial time for Vietnam however. As Vietnam's largest development assistance donor, this is a key avenue for Japan to exert control over Vietnamese behavior. This, combined with the delayed timeline for the delivery of coastguard ships, may be Japan's way of emphasizing the importance of their relationship, and telling Vietnam to slow the ratcheting of tension with China if possible.

Because, while the eruption of conflict between Vietnam and China might be good for Abe's agenda of changing Article 9, Japan currently lacks the bandwidth to effectively support Vietnam in a meaningful way. Abe's current agenda reflects this fact. His final (and largest) set of economic reforms are due to be implemented this month, while any plans to change Japan's military posture would happen by year's end at the earliest (and that estimate looks overly optimistic at the moment). Japan's immediate attention is focused on improving its economy. While Japanese officials may make inflammatory speeches at international conferences, and move to strengthen security ties in the region, fixing the precarious state of Japan's economy appears to be their first priority.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 4th June, 2014

China's Nine Dash Line and the Law of the Sea

- John Kemp

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Territorial disputes over tiny islands and reefs in the South China Sea are poisoning relations between China and its neighbors in Southeast Asia. "In recent months, China has undertaken destabilizing, unilateral actions asserting its claims in the South China Sea," U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told an audience in Singapore last month." China has restricted access to Scarborough Reef, put pressure on the long-standing Philippine presence at the Second Thomas Shoal, begun land reclamation activities at multiple locations, and moved an oil rig into disputed waters near the Paracel Islands," Hagel complained at the Shangri-La Dialogue.

The defense secretary's speech drew an angry response from China, which rebuked him for making "harsh, provocative" comments - signaling a further deterioration in the already strained relationship between the two countries. According to Hagel, the United States takes no position on territorial disputes in the South China Sea that pit China against Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. But Washington will oppose any attempt to use "intimidation, coercion or the threat of force to assert those claims". It will also oppose any attempt to restrict overflight and freedom of navigation. Washington says it wants to uphold a "rules-based order" in which disputes are settled through diplomacy, well-established norms and international law.

However, all that is threatened by long-standing disputes over the ownership of two hundred or so tiny islands, islets, shoals and cays, reefs and rocks scattered across the area. The various outcrops cover just a few square kilometers in total. Many are only just above the waterline even at low tide. But with them come claims to regulate navigation, fish, and drill for oil and gas over much more extensive areas. In 1974, China and South Vietnam fought a short war over one island group. In recent years, there have been frequent and worsening low-level clashes in the South China Sea, severely straining relations between China and the other littoral states.

The area is strategically vital. Hagel called the South China Sea "the beating heart of Asia-Pacific and a crossroads of the global economy". The South China Sea contains the world's most important shipping lanes and sits astride supply routes essential to South Korea and Japan as well as China. More than half of the world's merchant shipping tonnage passes through the Straits of Malacca, Sunda and Lombok each year with nearly all of it continuing on through the South China Sea.

The South China Sea contains rich fishing grounds that have been customarily exploited by all the coastal states. Almost a third of the world's crude oil trade and half of its liquefied natural gas pass through the sea en route to China, Japan and South Korea. There are several large sedimentary basins, though estimates of the amount of recoverable oil and gas they contain vary widely. The U.S. Energy Information Administration puts proven and probable reserves in the area at 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, which is small but significant ("South China Sea", February 2013).

However, there could be another 5-22 billion barrels of oil and 70-290 trillion cubic feet of gas waiting to be discovered, according to the U.S. Geological Survey ("Assessment of undiscovered oil and gas resources of Southeast Asia", 2010). China's oil companies and government agencies have published even higher estimates of the oil and gas likely to be found in the region.

China claims sovereignty over all the islands, rocks and reefs in the four main groups, while Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei each claim some of them. Much of the dispute revolves around the "Nine Dash Line", which appears on China's official maps and encompasses almost the entire South China Sea. The Nine Dash Line made its first appearance in official atlases issued in 1948, though the territorial claims on which it rests go back much further. It has been subject to only minor modifications since then. The number of dashes - which roughly indicate the boundary - has varied between nine and 11 at various times and currently stands at 10 after a new dash was added east of Taiwan in 2013.

China has included the Nine Dash Line on illustrative maps used in disputes with the other coastal states, and it is now used in passports issued by the People's Republic. But the exact status of the line remains "ambiguous", according to Euan Graham at Britain's Royal United Services Institute ("China's new map: just another dash?" September 2013). The latest edition of the official atlas designates the line as a national boundary and uses identical shading to the lines on China's land borders. Exactly what China is claiming, however, remains somewhat mysterious, even to experts.

According to one leading Chinese maritime expert, the line indicates the island groups over which China claims sovereignty, rather than laying claim to the sea area itself. It is a sort of envelope around the islands China considers to be part of its sovereign territory. Gao Zhiguo, China's judge on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, explains that the Nine Dash Line "has become synonymous with a claim of sovereignty over the island groups that always belonged to China and with an additional Chinese claim of historical rights of fishing, navigation, and other maritime activities (including the exploration and exploitation of resources, mineral or otherwise) on the islands and in the adjacent waters".

Writing in the *American Journal of International Law*, Gao suggests the line may have "a residual function as potential maritime delimitation boundaries". It was, Gao suggests, an early attempt to define China's continental shelf ("The Nine Dash Line in the South China Sea: History, Status and Implications", 2013).

Nonetheless, China accepts that any rights to fishing, oil and gas extraction, exclusive economic zones, and power to restrict navigation in the neighboring sea stemming from ownership of the islands are governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The convention, which was opened for signature in 1982 and entered into force in 1994, sets out detailed rules defining territorial seas, navigation rights, exclusive economic zones, and the extent of the continental shelf and delimiting maritime boundaries. It also contains a range of binding procedures for settling disputes.

China and all the states around the shores of the South China Sea have signed UNCLOS and are bound by its provisions. Some commentators have expressed hope that UNCLOS could be used to settle disputes between China and its neighbors peaceably. "Many hope that international law will impose a resolution," according to Elizabeth Economy and Michael Levi at the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations. "This would, however, be a strong departure from historical precedent," they note skeptically ("By all means necessary: how China's resource quest is changing the world", 2014).

In 2009, Vietnam and Malaysia submitted a joint claim to the continental shelf under UNCLOS. In 2013, the Philippines requested binding arbitration in its territorial dispute with China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. China has refused to accept arbitration.

There are several problems with trying to rely on UNCLOS. First, the dispute settlement provisions of UNCLOS may not apply in this case. On signing the convention, as well as on ratification, and afterwards, countries can opt out of the binding dispute settlement processes relating to certain sea boundary disputes (Article 298). China exercised that opt-out in relation to maritime boundaries in 2006. More controversially, on ratifying the treaty in 1996, China declared that it "reaffirms its sovereignty over all its archipelagos and islands as listed in article 2 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the territorial sea and the contiguous zone".

Second, UNCLOS deals with issues of maritime law and rights in the seas around the islands. It cannot settle disputes about who owns the islands themselves. Third, unlike the later Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, signed in 1994, UNCLOS lacks an effective enforcement mechanism.

Finally, it is hard to see how attempts to resolve the disputes purely through commercial and legal means can succeed if they do not recognize the broader strategic realities, as Economy and Levi point out.

The solution must be political and diplomatic, a position all sides seem to recognize. "Attempts to resolve tensions that focus purely on commerce and law and ignore broader strategic realities may not result in stable outcomes," according to Economy and Levi.

China's Gao reaches a similar conclusion: "China relies heavily on its long and overwhelming history to justify its title to territorial sovereignty and maritime jurisdiction in the South China Sea, other claimant states repeatedly stress the imperative of their rights under UNCLOS. Nonetheless the solution perhaps lies

somewhere in the middle." The compromise solution is shared exploitation of the resources. "Pending a solution acceptable to the littoral states concerned, the parties would do well to shelve the disputes and work toward a temporary solution involving joint development," Gao wrote. UNCLOS itself encourages the use of practical, provisional arrangements in the case of disputes. There are precedents for shared development of resources. In 2008, China and Japan agreed to develop jointly the Chunxiao gas fields in a disputed area of the East China Sea, though that pact has since been derailed by the rising tensions between the two countries.

A more hopeful example is the archipelago of Svalbard/Spitsbergen in the Arctic. The 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty recognized Norway's sovereignty, but granted all signatories equal access to hunting and fishing rights on the islands and in their territorial waters, as well as the exploitation of minerals found on the islands. Something similar would be desirable in the South China Sea. Sovereignty over the islands could be split or put to one side, while the coastal states agree to joint development of fishing, oil and gas resources.

If the solution is fairly clear, the harder question is how to get there. In that respect, the U.S. position and Hagel's speech have done more harm than good. The U.S. position (no stance on sovereignty, but an insistence on legal processes to resolve the dispute) is particularly unhelpful since there is no real legal answer. The defense secretary was speaking to a domestic audience and regional allies, trying to reassure them that Washington will stand up to what some see as bullying by China. But singling out China for blame was unhelpful if the United States wants to play a constructive role in resolving the dispute.

In the end, Washington will have to use its influence with all the regional states, including its allies, to push them towards a diplomatic and political compromise. Coastal states must set aside the ownership question and focus on how jointly to exploit the resources and regulate shipping in the area peaceably, in accordance with their other international commitments.

Source: [Maritime Executive](#) 6th June, 2014

Full-Spectrum Anti-Submarine Warfare

- James R. Holmes

Captain Toti is a seasoned maritime strategist who recounts the U.S. Navy's search for "full-spectrum" anti-submarine warfare over the past decade. His essay is noteworthy in several respects. One, he tries to shatter American seafarers' assumptions about — and, at times, complacency toward — ASW, dating from the Cold War. For mariners of a certain vintage, hunting enemy boats is something we do in the open ocean. Detecting, tracking, and targeting the godless foe demands ever more discriminating acoustic sensors operated by savvy sonar techs. In this

default view, Western navies should resume old practices using new hardware in order to compete with the likes of China and Russia.

Not so, says the author. He grants that subs command a virtually insuperable advantage in cat-and-mouse games on the open sea. This will remain true until and unless new technology renders the oceans transparent. He seems to counsel despair.

Except that, two, all is not lost. The classics of strategic theory are conspicuously absent from the piece, but they hover nearby. Clausewitz, Corbett, and Mahan are smiling, wherever they are. Toti tries to retrieve the submarine from the rather abstract place it occupies in maritime strategic thought. It's a black box, or tube, that appears out of nowhere before disappearing again. The jokes American submariners tell are revealing. Old salts wisecrack, for example, that subs are built to submerge while surface ships are *made* to submerge — once! You get the idea. The sub emerges from the trackless depths to smite helpless “skimmers” in their surface vessels. Then it vanishes. Abandon all hope.

Well, maybe. But depicting sea combat as intrinsically one-sided takes interaction, and indeed the human factor, out of it — always a perilous thing to do. Toti points out that sub crews are human, and that fellow humans riding the surface or flitting around the skies can do things to mold their behavior. Surface commanders can choose favorable battlegrounds, blunting submariners' advantages. Or they can deceive, exploiting the severe limits on subs' capacity to find, track, and assail surface shipping. Broadcasting false signals, for instance, can mislead sub skippers into taking station somewhere on the nautical chart where they can do little harm. It could prompt them to waste finite resources chasing false targets.

By shifting its outlook on undersea combat, then, the U.S. Navy can restore that competitive dimension of war at sea. Its surface fleet can grapple on more equal terms with subsurface antagonists, much as Clausewitz's metaphorical wrestlers grapple constantly for strategic advantage, trying to one-up each other. (A certain Mao Zedong was another eloquent spokesman on behalf of the human factor in international competition.) Sea monsters — Captain Nemo's *Nautilus* comes to mind — will lose some of their terror, and some of the tactical edge granted them by their murky operating environment which leads to point three. Toti implies, without quite saying it, that full-spectrum ASW is a throwback to the age of sail. Corbett and Mahan both point out — Corbett more eloquently, as usual — that the high seas is an exceedingly difficult combat environment. That's a vast amount of sea space to monitor, while the biggest ship is tiny by contrast. (That's doubly true when you include the three-dimensional water column underneath where submarines prowl.) Sail-driven fleets or individual raiders could easily lose themselves once beyond sight of land, and turn that uncertainty to advantage. They could pop up most anywhere to make mayhem.

Ergo, the best place to find an adversary in days of yore was at the origin of his voyage, at its destination (if you knew it), or at focal points such as straits where

shipping had to converge, nozzle-like, to pass from one expanse into another. Like sailing vessels, submarines must obey geography. Indeed, like land armies, they either have to cope with terrain when operating in the shallows, or run aground and become tactically worthless. Knowing such basic facts about the surroundings, and taking advantage of them, can help surface navies do battle against subs with better prospects of success.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 7th June, 2014

Maritime Concerns and the Future of Sino-Japanese Relations

-Koda Yoji

Over the last few years, China's moves to build up its navy and exert a stronger maritime presence have heightened stability concerns in the Asia-Pacific region. Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea, which run contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other international norms, and intensified friction with Japan over the Senkaku Islands have become top regional issues.

China is attempting to alter the current balance of power in the region by applying an "anti-access and area denial" (A2/AD) strategy designed to exclude American military influence around Chinese territorial waters and in the western Pacific Ocean. The United States has reacted by rebalancing its diplomatic and defensive strategies toward the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, Japan and China's differing official stances and strong national sentiments have had a negative impact and served to block potential avenues for improving the chilled relations between the two countries.

China's actions in the waters off the Senkaku Islands and the growing instances of Chinese air force and navy vessels advancing into the western Pacific through the Ryūkyū (Nansei) Islands have become critical issues for Japan's regional security. Given the tensions, a simple misunderstanding could potentially lead to an altercation between vessels of the Chinese navy and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. There is an urgent need to establish measures to prevent such unexpected situations from arising between Japan and China, but we see no signs of progress in this respect. In this article I will use the experience I gained while serving in the Maritime SDF and from involvement in Japan-China relations as a retired officer to look at regional security issues relating to the current state of Sino-Japanese relations and directions for their improvement.

Relations between Japan and China hit a low point when Japan "nationalized" three of Senkaku Islands in September 2012 by purchasing them from their private owner, a move that inflamed nationalist sentiment in China and triggered widespread anti-Japanese protests there. Official Chinese vessels began entering the waters around the Senkakus in 2008, and the Chinese government initiated regular patrols near the

islands after a Chinese fishing boat rammed a Japan Coast Guard ship in autumn 2010. Tensions between Japan and China were further heightened in December 2010 when, for the first time, a Chinese Air Force plane entered airspace above the islands. In July 2013, the Chinese government established the Maritime Police Bureau as a unified organ for maritime law enforcement. The new bureau, which also uses the name “China Coast Guard” in English, brings together four previously separate maritime law enforcement organizations: China Marine Surveillance (under the State Oceanic Administration, Ministry of Land and Resources), China Coast Guard (Ministry of Public Security), Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture), and the Anti-Smuggling Bureau (General Administration of Customs).(*2) From the time of nationalization of the islands through April 2014, official Chinese vessels made 50 incursions into territorial waters around the Senkakus.

The Japanese Coast Guard has been dispatching patrol vessels on regular rounds in response to the presence of Chinese ships in waters around the islands. While the Japanese Coast Guard keeps an eye on the activities of Chinese vessels, it is a law enforcement body and can only take action in civil incidents. Under the Japan Coast Guard Act, the role of the Coast Guard is to “ensure maritime safety”; its mission does not extend to defending territorial waters. It is not authorized to use force against foreign government vessels engaged in illegal activities and can only issue warnings or request ships to leave the area. Coast Guard patrol vessels ensure maritime safety and security in the vicinity of the Senkakus and minimally assert Japanese control of the islands by inhibiting incursions and limiting the duration Chinese ships stay in surrounding waters.

Japan and China’s dispute over the Senkaku Islands emerged suddenly in the latter half of the 1960s. After that, tensions increased slowly until 2008, when the situation rapidly deteriorated. Japan’s move to nationalize the islands further strained relations and brought the dispute over the islands to a peak. But since around the middle of 2013, the situation has been holding more or less steady at the level of mutual eyeballing between the patrol vessels dispatched by the two nations to the waters around the Senkakus. This may be seen as a sign that the Japanese and Chinese governments have been taking steps to prevent the situation from deteriorating further and thereby keep things quiet between them as a precondition for the improvement of bilateral relations. Mutual efforts have been made to cool off public opinion, and China in particular has taken actions to quell extreme nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment.

As evidence of this posture, the Maritime SDF and the Chinese navy have not deployed vessels in the vicinity of the islands but have limited themselves to providing of support for maritime surveillance and the like and stationing ships on remote standby in readiness for unexpected situations. The measured nature of this response may be seen as indicating that the Chinese have adopted a sensible, pragmatic mind-set: They are also concerned about the current state of Sino-Japanese relations and, in line with hopes of seeking improvement in the bilateral relationship, do not wish to see the situation regarding the Senkakus get any worse.

This is a welcome sign, but Japan still needs to keep its guard up and be ready for developments involving the use of both hard and soft power.

While the situation in the Senkakus shows signs of quieting down, tension is building in the waters around the Ryūkyū Islands. Much of the Japanese media coverage of the Chinese navy's and air force's increased movement from the East China Sea into the western Pacific has lumped these moves together with the issue of the Senkakus, and this has led to a tendency to mistake them for saber rattling over the Senkakus. While it is true that these activities can be seen as "saber rattling" in the broad sense of the term, that is not their main purpose. In fact, the Chinese are conducting them mainly as part of a purely military agenda, namely, the aforesaid A2/AD strategy, which is strongly focused on countering the capabilities of Japan's SDF and the US military. The table below shows the number of instances Chinese navy units have passed through the Ryūkyū Islands since 2008.

In October 2013, the Chinese navy's three main fleets (the North Sea Fleet, the East Sea Fleet, and the South Sea Fleet) participated in "Maneuver 5," a set of high-level exercises in waters south of the Ryūkyū Islands. For the Chinese navy, the maneuvers served to

- (1) Rehearse techniques to avoid being blocked by Japan and the United States when passing through the "first island chain"
- (2) Bolster China's currently low level of anti-aircraft and anti-submarine capabilities
- (3) Establish various A2/AD tactics
- (4) Institute specific regions of activity for the three main fleets, and
- (5) Provide a consolidated practice arena for the army, air force, and second artillery corps (a strategic missile force).

While the Chinese have the right to carry out exercises in international waters, their lack of transparency in outlining the boundaries of the maneuvers ignored the 1972 International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and had dangerous implications as it unilaterally imposed China's own military standards on surrounding countries.

In response to this Chinese move, Japan deployed observation units to waters and air space near the maneuvers, citing its right under international agreements to do so. There is, however, a considerable difference between patrol vessels facing off near the Senkaku Islands, and Maritime SDF and the Chinese navy operating in close proximity with limited mutual understanding of each other's activities. Over time, the latter has a greater risk of causing an unexpected situation and pushes security issues in the region to the brink. Chinese vessels have instigated potentially dangerous situations in the past, such as training fire-control radar on a Japanese

frigate and blocking the path of US surveillance vessels. The focus remains on the Senkakus, but the lack of preventative measures or systems for crisis avoidance makes the developments around the Ryūkyūs potentially more volatile.

The front-line issues of the Senkakus and of the Ryūkyūs and the western Pacific involve fundamental concerns of sovereignty and security for both China and Japan. This means it will be difficult to resolve them over the short term. Building mutual trust is a key element in the process of finding solutions. But official exchanges between Japan's Self-Defense Forces and the Chinese military have been halted, and the only channels still open are the few exchanges between retired officers from the two countries. I know from my own experience with such exchanges that they help make up for the absence of official interactions, but they are quite roundabout. One impression I have formed from my contacts is that the Chinese, while keeping up their hard line on the Senkakus, are starting to look for a way out of the confrontation, having come to sense that the current course leads to a dead end, that staying on this course will hurt China's national interests and could give rise to unexpected situations. As realistic steps to address these concerns, Japan and China urgently need to take trust-building measures and establish a crisis management system.

Japan and China should look to the 1972 US-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement, a pioneering pact that built trust between the main adversaries in the Cold War. The establishment by Japan and Russia of the 1993 Agreement Concerning the Prevention of Incidents at Sea also served to improve bilateral relations and led to the development of a crisis management system. Japan and China need to forge a similar agreement. In order to achieve this, the two countries' leaders will need show the same resolve as the US and Soviet leaders did during the Cold War. The key to success in this endeavor will be to keep the trust-building process distinct from the emotionally charged issues between the two countries. Both the leaders and the people of Japan and China must display the courage and magnanimity to view the issue of the Senkakus Islands separately from other matters; only in this way can we hope for a success story in the bilateral relationship.

Source: Nippon, 10th June, 2014

Chinese Take Away: String of Pearls

- C. Raja Mohan

The latest American assessment of Beijing's military power underlines the growing reach of the PLA navy in the Indian Ocean and the prospect of China acquiring naval facilities in the littoral. That China is seeking a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean through a "string of pearls", or a network of bases, has been debated for a while.

India, however, has been divided in its assessment. Some have dismissed the notion of Chinese bases in the Indian Ocean as fanciful. Others argue that China's rising naval profile is a serious long-term threat to the littoral that India must start addressing now. Many were content to assume that Beijing would remain preoccupied in the Pacific Ocean for a long time and would not threaten Delhi in the Indian Ocean.

There is a widespread sense today that the world has underestimated the pace of China's military modernization, the intensity of its naval build up and the consequences for the Indian Ocean. It is quite clear China has a two-ocean strategy. Although the immediate threats to China are in the Pacific, Beijing is keen to overcome its geographic limitations in the Indian Ocean. More broadly, China's rising maritime profile in our maritime neighbourhood fits in with the historic ebb and flow of foreign naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Like many great powers in the past — Portugal, Netherlands, France, Great Britain and the US — China too will establish military bases in the Indian Ocean. The question is not "if" but "when". Since the dawn of the modern maritime age, bases have been essential to the projection of military power, control of critical choke points, and securing the sea lines of communication.

Amidst the rise of modern capitalism, emergence of global markets and advances in seafaring, all trading states recognised the importance of powerful navies in establishing access to far-flung resources, bringing them to production centers and shipping them out to globally dispersed consumers. In the colonial age, naval bases in the Indian Ocean were critical for the maintenance of European empires in the east. For post war superpowers America and Russia, military presence in the Indian Ocean was part of their global contestation for primacy. The end of the Cold War has not necessarily obviated the need for bases in the Indian Ocean.

The US has retained its bases in Diego Garcia, strengthened its central command focused on the Gulf and set up a new military command for Africa. France, which had a historic naval presence in the Indian Ocean, has recently acquired a military base inside the Gulf.

As a rising great power with significant and growing economic interests in the Indian Ocean, China has every incentive to establish a permanent military presence in the Indian Ocean. Instead of debating China's intentions, India must focus on how to cope with the inevitability of Chinese power projection into the Indian Ocean.

Since the deconstruction of empires and the flowering of nationalism, bases have been politically toxic in much of the developing world. Major powers have learnt that large permanent military bases generate uncontrollable political backlash in the host country. Instead of seeking big new foreign military bases, the US has learnt to rotate its forces through friendly host countries, pre-position military equipment and ensure the capacity to arrive in the theatre of conflict on short notice. The US and

other powers recognise that managing base politics is easier in smaller states than in larger ones.

The major powers have also learnt to avoid the term “bases” and talk instead about “facilities” that are less controversial. That has made it easier for China to proclaim political opposition to all foreign military bases while seeking access to naval facilities far from its shores.

As it builds blue water navy to secure its interests in the Indian Ocean, China needs friendly places around the littoral. India’s naval and intelligence establishments are acutely aware of China’s determined quest for naval facilities all across the Indian Ocean littoral. The UPA government, however, was unwilling or unable to respond to the implications of China’s growing naval presence in the Indian Ocean. When he lands on the deck of India’s new aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya later this week, Modi should ask the naval leadership what Delhi’s options in coping with China’s maritime challenge in the Indian Ocean are.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 11th June, 2014

Vietnam and South China Sea- Rigged

Vietnam and China share a long history of enmity and of managing to patch things up when they go wrong. But their latest dispute is not running true to form.

Vietnam was taken aback in early May when China parked an oil rig on its doorstep. The behemoth, which cost \$1 billion, lies 17 nautical miles (32 km) from the Paracel islands, which China seized from the American-backed South Vietnamese regime in 1974, and about 150 nautical miles from the Vietnamese coast. Vietnam’s leaders say the rig is inside their 200-mile exclusive economic zone as defined by international law. They wanted to settle the dispute quickly through negotiations. But China is said to have rebuffed requests for a summit and talks between lower-ranking officials went nowhere.

Now, the prospect of a quiet resolution looks increasingly remote. As the two countries’ boats circle each other near the rig, diplomats from both sides are circulating complaints to the UN. It is an unusual move for China, which normally eschews international bodies in its disputes with other countries. The South China Morning Post, a newspaper based in Hong_Kong, reported on June 9th that China had temporarily banned its state-owned firms from bidding on new_contracts in Vietnam. That followed two days of anti-Chinese riots in mid-May, in which four Chinese workers were killed, and the sinking, in late May, of a wooden Vietnamese fishing boat that collided with a Chinese adversary.

The dust-up is among the worst since 1979, when Vietnam gave China a bloody nose in a brief border war. The prime minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, said on May 21st that Vietnam may, like the Philippines, challenge China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea in an international court.

That could win Mr Dung domestic praise, but it is also risky. Vietnam's manufacturing sector depends heavily on imported Chinese raw materials. The ruling Communist Party of Vietnam also has a strong pro-China faction that regards their country's improving ties with the United States with deep suspicion.

The betting is that China will remove its rig by mid-August, as planned. But the thornier issue of who owns what in the South China Sea—which the Vietnamese call the East Sea—is unlikely to be settled so soon. Meanwhile, Vietnam is bracing for short-term economic pain. HSBC, a bank, reports that manufacturing growth fell slightly from April to May. Foreign investment is helping to prop the economy up; Mr Dung is trying to assure foreigners that his country is still a good place to invest. But deadly riots and a stand-off with China are hardly great advertisements.

Source: [Economist](#), 14th June, 2014



ONGC Videsh to Continue Exploration in Vietnam Oil Block

In a move that will strengthen Vietnam's case in its dispute with China over the South China Sea, India's state-owned ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) plans to continue exploration in its oil block there.

The field is the South China Sea hydrocarbon block No.128 and OVL's inclination for renewal is being seen as India's attempt to assert its presence in the region. OVL had earlier agreed to continue exploring the block for two years after China had put it up for global bidding. This extension ends in June.

It also comes at a time when the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, which has come to power, has promised to reboot the country's foreign policy. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi is expected to visit India on 8 June to meet Prime Minister Modi. "We want to extend our presence there. While we are willing to extend our stay there, it also depends on the other party as well. Let us see whether we get a one year or two years' extension," an OVL executive said, requesting anonymity.

This comes in the backdrop of a Vietnamese fishing boat sinking near the controversial Chinese oil rig around the Paracel Islands on Tuesday. China, which disputes sovereignty over the waters with Vietnam, had earlier objected to the presence of an Indian vessel surveying the area.

Another OVL executive, who also didn't want to be identified, confirmed India's intentions. "We have an unfinished work programme in the block. The government of Vietnam is sharing additional information and data, based on which we will decide where one well has to be drilled," the second executive said. "The commercial reason behind our decision is that if we exit without drilling the well, we will have to pay. Also, the unsaid reason is one of strategic nature."

OVL is the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd (ONGC) and has a presence in Vietnam through 45% and 100% stakes in blocks 06.1 and 128, respectively. OVL has invested around \$46 million in block 128. "It was quite clear that the earlier decision was a strategic one. As China was creating a lot of fuss, to have moved out of the block would have created the impression that India was caving in," said Alka Acharya, director of New Delhi-based Institute of Chinese Studies and editor of *China Report*. "It needs to be seen how the new government takes this forward."

Source: [Mint](#), 3rd June, 2014

Jaitley to Review Operational Preparedness of INS Viraat

Defence Minister Arun Jaitley will visit aircraft carrier INS Viraat in Mumbai and reviewed the operational preparedness of the Western Naval Command, which witnessed two major submarine mishaps in the last one year. During his visit to the Western Command, the Defence Minister will also commission two fast-attack craft ICGS Achook and ICGS Agrim, of the Indian Coast Guard, Navy officials said.

After taking charge, Jaitley has been busy with briefings by Defence Ministry officials and the chiefs of armed forces and is reviewing the functioning and performance of various departments. In his first visit as Defence Minister, Jaitley will visit INS Viraat in Mumbai harbour and then move to review the functioning and operational preparedness of the Western Naval Command. INS Viraat was till recently the only aircraft carrier in the Indian Navy and the force is working towards keeping it operational for a few more years to meet its requirements.

The Defence Minister has been invited by the armed forces to visit far flung bases to show solidarity with the troops and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is believed to have been invited to visit Siachen glacier by the Army and largest warship aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya by the Navy.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 4th June, 2014

Seychelles Conducts Oil Spill Exercise

A major exercise in implementing the national contingency plan for anti-pollution, search and rescue, and firefighting was held in the waters off Mahé on 4 June. This complex exercise was carried out by a range of different agencies including the Seychelles Coast Guard, Air Force, Fire Fighting Services and Port Authority. The EUNAVFOR Atlanta Flagship Brandenburg also took part in the exercise; EUCAP Nestor experts provided support for the planning, preparations as well as its execution.

The Seychelles Maritime Safety Authority and the Ministry of Environment and Energy were also involved. The scenario started in the morning of 4th June with a mock distress call to the Coast Guard from a Seychelles flagged vessel that had collided with a ferry just off Glacis. The collision caused an oil leak and a fire on board the vessel. A number of crewmembers abandoned the ship as it started to sink. The Coast Guard immediately sent two speedboats and Patrol Vessel Topaz to the sinking ship, and asked the Seychelles Air Force to send an aircraft to the area. The Seychelles Port Authority sent a tug with floating booms to contain the oil spill, and the Fire and Rescue Service intervened to put out the fire.

The EUNAVFOR Flagship Brandenburg, which happened to be in the area, also headed towards the collision. Together, the Seychelles Coast Guard vessels, Air

Force and the Brandenburg found and rescued the crewmembers and worked to prevent the ship from sinking. "Being able to fight the oil spills is extremely important for the Seychelles," said the Commanding Officer of the Seychelles Coast Guard, Lt Col Dine. "Our tourism industry, an integral part of our Blue Economy, must be protected from pollution." "Today's exercise went very well," said Fredrik Wesslau, acting Head of the EUCAP Nestor (Seychelles) Country Office. "This was a complex and difficult exercise involving numerous agencies. In such scenarios, it is essential that everything is well coordinated and everyone knows exactly what they should be doing." "Once again, the Seychelles has demonstrated its solid capacity to deal with threats to maritime safety," said Wesslau. "EUCAP Nestor will take the lessons learnt from the exercise to find ways to further improve this capacity."

The lessons learnt will also be incorporated into the on-going Basic Training Program for the Coast Guard. The environmental protection module of the six-month program will start later in June for the benefit of trainees from the Coast Guard, Marine Police Investigation Unit, and Air Force. EUCAP Nestor is a civilian EU mission, under the Common Security and Defence Policy, which assists countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean in strengthening their capacity to ensure maritime security and in particular to fight piracy.

Source: [Marine Link](#), 4th June, 2014

Indian Navy Embarks on 'Green Initiatives'

Indian Navy chief R.K.Dhowan laid down "green initiatives" or a list of measures to ensure all its ships, submarines and aircraft consumed minimum energy resources, a statement said. "The admiral has directed that all future plans for augmentation and acquisition of assets/infrastructure projects would incorporate concepts of energy efficiency from the ab initio stages," said the statement from the Navy Chief's office.

According to an official, sustainable green technologies/norms are being adopted to include green fuels, and alternative energy and power. "On the infrastructure and community living projects, the key result areas (KRAs) include green buildings, waste recycling and management, water conservation and harvesting, renewable/alternative energy and power, environmental remediation etc. with an aim to achieve a zero carbon foot print," the official said.

Exhaustive guidelines in form of a "energy conservation roadmap" have also been drawn up to implement the "green initiatives" and all formations have been directed by naval headquarters to closely monitor the progress, the statement added. "The Indian Navy is confident that these steps would go a long way to add the much needed green footprint to its blue water capabilities," the statement said.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 4th June, 2014

Navy Gets Three Fast Attack Craft

Adding strength to the Eastern Naval Command's mandate of maritime safety and security of the offshore development areas (ODAs) and coastal security, three fast attack craft were commissioned by Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Eastern Naval Command Vice Admiral Anil Chopra.

The three Immediate Support Vessels (ISVs) – T-35, T-36 and T-37 – constituting the 83 Squadron are lightly-armed surface craft capable of operating at high seas as well as in coastal waters. They are capable of day and night surveillance and can carry out rapid insertions/ extractions of MARCOS for ship/ offshore interventions and operations in ODAs.

Equipped with advanced navigational and communication sensors and equipment, the ISVs are capable of speeds up to 40 Knots and an operational radius of 500 nautical miles. Designed with fibre-glass reinforced hulls for patrolling in the ODAs, each ship is armed with heavy and light machine guns and also carries an inflatable Gemini boat for search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol. The ISVs are commanded by an officer of the rank of Lieutenant and have a crew of six sailors.

These craft have been designed and built by Abu Dhabi Ship Builders (ADSB) and Rodman, 78, Spain, as part of a project that is a joint collaboration between Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd, ADSB and the Indian Navy. The three are part of the nine ISVs to be deployed with the ENC out 23 being acquired by the Indian Navy, Naval Officer-in-charge Andhra Pradesh Capt Satish Uniyal said.

Source: [Hindu](#), 5th June, 2014

Government Plans Subsea Optic Fibre Link between Indian Mainland and Andaman Nicobar

The government plans to establish a nearly 1,200-km direct subsea optic fibre cable link between the Indian mainland and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (A&NI) to beef up telecom connectivity in the strategically located archipelago, says a confidential Planning Commission note seen by ET.

Building a dedicated subsea optic fibre link between Chennai and Port Blair is seen "as the best approach" to strengthen telecom connectivity to the A&NI in the light of "strategic, defence and internal security interests," say the minutes of an internal Planning Commission meeting attended by top officials of the telecom department, defence ministry and Telecom Consultants India (TCIL).

Source: [ET](#), 5th June, 2014

Navy to Induct State-of-the-Art Choppers

The Indian Navy plans to induct state-of-the-art helicopters attached to its warships across the nation as part of its substantial modernization programme, a senior naval official said. "We are building a modern air arm to add our capacity at sea. The Navy is looking at inducting state-of-the-art helicopters with latest standards, variants and weapons. The MRH (Multirole helicopter), NUH (Naval Utility Helicopter) are some of these of the programmes in the rotary wing ambit," Rear Admiral Devender M Sudan, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air) said. After reviewing the passing out parade of nine naval and four Coast Guard helicopter pilots at the INS Rajali Naval Base here, he observed that the Navy was focusing on choppers. "Besides the long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft like the TU (Tu 142), and the newly inducted P-8I, that extend our reach, it is the ship's integral helicopters, which act as force multipliers, for the surface platforms at sea," he said.

The pilots underwent 22 weeks training at the Helicopter Training School (INAS 561), from which 599 pilots for the Indian Navy and Coast Guard have graduated so far. The school was also adjudged the "Best Naval Air Squadron" among 13 others of the Indian Navy during 2012-13. The Helicopter Training School is located in INS Rajali Naval Base camp, the largest such facility in the Indian Navy.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 5th June, 2014

US and Caribbean Nations Begin Military Exercises

Members of 11 Caribbean partner nations joined the U.S. and Canadian militaries in Antigua to kick off Phase I of Tradewinds 2014. The exercise, hosted in Antigua and Barbuda, is designed to enhance defence force abilities in maritime security and disaster response training, American Forces Press Service reported.

The Caribbean partner nations, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, deployed maritime, national police, and coast guard units to take part in multiple training events.

"Tradewinds is all about ensuring interoperability among Caribbean forces and advancing cooperation and coordination in various security and disaster-related scenarios," said Lt. Cmdr. Auden Nicholas, commanding officer of the Antigua Barbuda Defence Force's Coast Guard, and Antiguan co-director for Tradewinds 2014.

The U.S. military plays an important maritime security role in the region and worked closely with Nicholas and his staff in setting up the Tradewinds exercise.

Source: [RTT News](#), 5th June, 2014

PLA Makes Debut at RIMPAC 2014 with Four Warships

The People's Liberation Army Navy will send four warships to Hawaii to participate for the first time in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, also known as RIMPAC, held by the United States Navy every two years, according to the Hong Kong-based Ta Kung Pao on Jun. 5.

The official website of the US Pacific Fleet reported the four Chinese ships deployed for RIMPAC 2014 are the Haikou, a Type 052C guided-missile destroyer; the Yueyang, a Type 054A guided-missile frigate; the Qiandaohu, a Type 903 replenishment ship and the Peace Ark, a Type 920 hospital ship. RIMPAC 2014 is the 24th exercise in the series to take place since 1971. It is also the first time PLA Navy warships will have taken part in the exercises with the US and its allies in the region.

The Royal Norwegian Navy will also be participating for the first time despite not being a Pacific country. A total of 47 ships, six submarines, more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel have been mobilized by 23 nations for the exercises, according to the official website of the United States Navy. Huang Dong, a military analyst from Macau, said the Haikou and Yueyang are the most advanced surface combat vessels in the PLA Navy.

During the exercises, the Chinese navy will coordinate with others to fight a common hostile force in a region surrounded by four islands. The Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force will also deploy the JDS Kirishima, a guided-missile destroyer; the JDS Ise, a helicopter destroyer, and three P-3C anti-submarine aircraft for the exercise.

The Chinese and Japanese warships will not train together during the exercises due to the ongoing territorial dispute between the two countries in the East China Sea.

Source: [Want China Times](#), 5th June, 2014

Australia's Maritime Capabilities to be Boosted

The Minister for Defence David Johnston has announced the first set of key initiatives in the Abbott Government's long-term strategic naval plan.

The plan announced that the Government is moving decisively to tackle Labor's Defence mess and to ensure that Australia does not face major capability gaps as a result of Labor's defence cuts and failure to take crucial decisions, including on maritime capability. As a result of the plan, Australian Navy will be properly equipped in the years ahead and Australian industry will have the long-term strategic direction that has been lacking for the last six years. Further steps in strategic naval plan will

developed as part of the White Paper process. They are moving now to address the most urgent capability shortfalls created by Labor.

Replenishment vessels are essential to support sustained naval deployments. Navy's current replenishment ship HMAS SUCCESS is in urgent need of replacement. HMAS SIRIUS only provides limited replenishment capability. In light of the urgent need to forestall a capability gap in this crucial area; the current low productivity of shipbuilders involved in the AWD program; and value for money considerations, the Government has given First Pass approval for Defence to conduct a limited competitive tender process between Navantia of Spain and Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering (DSME) of South Korea for the construction of two replacement replenishment vessels based on existing designs. "Navy is in urgent need of large support vessels that we assess are beyond the capacity of Australia to produce competitively at this stage. In this instance it would not serve anyone if we were to provide a challenge to industry that was beyond its capabilities." "Competition between these two experienced shipbuilders is the best way to ensure delivery of capable, cost effective vessels in the time frame required," Senator Johnston said.

The Government has committed \$78.2 million to bring forward preliminary engineering and design work necessary to keep open the option of building the future frigate in Australia. In parallel, the Government is reviewing Australia's shipbuilding requirements, capabilities and capacities in order to inform a long-term strategic naval plan that provides the ADF with leading-edge capabilities and Australian taxpayers with value for money. There will be preliminary design work to ensure Australia maintains the necessary capabilities to retain the option of building the future frigate in Australia. This work will focus on continued production of the current AWD hull, suitably adapted and utilizing capabilities from the cutting-edge Australian companies such as CEA Technologies Australia and SAAB Australia Combat Management Systems. Further decisions on the future frigate will be taken in the context of the 2015 Defence White Paper. The Government has brought forward an open competition with Australian industry to construct more than 20 replacement Pacific Patrol Boats. This important project will boost the maritime security, resource and fishery protection capabilities of partner countries in the region and generate additional work for yards around Australia. "These will be steel hulled vessels designed to support fisheries, Exclusive Economic Zone enforcement and other maritime security missions," Senator Johnston said. As part of its 2015 Defence White Paper the Government will announce further steps in its Naval Capability Plan. This plan will provide for an enterprise level shipbuilding plan that will bring together navy capability requirements, available resources, and recommendations around Australian industry requirements.

“The decisions move us in the right direction towards a strategically focused and productive naval industry in Australia, but this is just the first step to fix the problems we have inherited from Labor, and more work needs to be done.”

Source: [Marine Link](#), 6th June, 2014

Cochin Shipyard Launches Ninth FPV for Indian Coast Guard

Cochin Shipyard launched the ninth of the 20 Fast Patrol Vessels being built for Indian Coast Guard. The vessel was launched by Smt Hema Subramaniam, wife of Cmde K Subramaniam, CMD, and CSL in a simple ceremony at Cochin Shipyard, the shipbuilder said in a press release. The launching ceremony was attended by Cmde K Subramaniam, CMD, CSL, Capt R S Sundar, Director (Operations), CSL, Shri D Paul Ranjan, Director (Finance), CSL and Shri Sunny Thomas, Director (Technical), CSL and other senior officials. On the occasion Cmde K Subramaniam, CMD laid the Keel of BY – 510 the tenth FPV. The launch of the vessel comes on the heels of the delivery of the sixth vessel CGS AGRIM which was handed over to the Coast Guard on, 30 May 2014. In 2013-14, CSL delivered five fast patrol vessels to Indian Coast Guard and two high end Platform Supply Vessels to Norwegian owners. The last six months of 2013-14 have been an extremely busy period for the shipyard with seven deliveries being made, virtually one ship every month. In 2014-15, CSL plans to deliver the remaining FPVs to Coast Guard. During the year the IAC phase two construction will also gain momentum.

State-owned Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) is the largest shipbuilding and maintenance facility in India. It is part of a line of maritime-related facilities in the port-city of Kochi, in the state of Kerala, India. The shipyard specializes in building Platform Supply Vessels and double-hulled oil tankers. The Company is now building the first indigenous aircraft carrier for the Indian Navy.

Source: [Port News](#), 6th June, 2014

Vice Admiral Anil Chopra Takes Over as Western Naval Commander

Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, the second senior most officer of the Indian Navy, took over as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command (WNC), at a ceremonial parade held at INS Shikra, Mumbai. He took over the charge a month and a half after the former Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha took voluntary retirement on April 21. Prior to his tenure in the east, Vice Admiral Chopra was the director general Indian Coast Guard, taking charge a few days after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks in November 2008.

Under his helm, the Coast Guard saw an exponential increase in both its force levels, and operational deployments. Earlier, he had been the fleet commander of the Navy's Sword Arm - the Western Fleet in 2008. He got commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1975. The admiral was posted to Rome, Italy, in the mid-eighties, in connection with the induction of combat systems for the Navy's frontline units. He has also spent a year in Washington DC, as a senior fellow at the United States Atlantic Council.

Source: [TOI](#), 6th June, 2014

Japanese Military Ship Visits Vietnam for US-Led Exercise

The JS Kunisaki, a landing ship from the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), arrived at Tien Sa Port in the central province of Danang as part of the Pacific Partnership 2014 – a US-led disaster relief exercise in Southeast Asia. During the nine-day stay, 400 crew members from Japan, the United States and Australia will engage in professional exchange and military medical training activities.

They will also take part in humanitarian missions as well as culture and sports exchange programs. The JS Kunisaki was the first Japanese military ship to participate in the Pacific Partnership. It departed a US naval base in Yokosuka on May 29 with 10 Australian and 130 US troops aboard. The JS Kunisaki is scheduled to leave Danang on June 15 and head for Sihanoukville in Cambodia from June 19 to 28, and Tacloban in the Philippines from July 4 to 14.

At the invitation of the host nations, the Pacific Partnership 2014 will conduct tailored medical, dental, veterinary and engineering civic action programs designed to strengthen partnerships and ensure the international community is better prepared to deliver foreign humanitarian aid in times of natural disaster or crisis.

To date, Pacific Partnership missions have provided real-world medical care to approximately 250,000 patients, veterinary services to more than 37,000 animals and accomplished more than 170 engineering projects and enabled critical infrastructure development in 14 countries in the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

Source: [Thanhnie News. Com](#), 6th June, 2014

NATO Extends Ocean Shield Operations to 2016

NATO has taken the decision to extend its Ocean Shield counter-piracy operation until the end of 2016, it was announced by NATO Defence Ministers on 4 June. Despite the reduction in pirate attacks in the Horn of Africa, the operation will continue due to the root causes of piracy remaining unchanged in Somalia.

Ocean Shield has seen NATO vessels work with US-led and EU maritime forces to patrol the waters off the Horn of Africa since 2009 as part of international efforts to fight maritime piracy and to help build the capacity of regional navies. Ocean Shield helps to protect one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Some 90 per cent of all global trade is carried by sea, with about half of that passing through the Indian Ocean. In 2013, the World Bank estimated that piracy costs the world economy \$18 billion per year.

Ships from Spain, Italy and Turkey are currently part of the NATO fleet which operates roughly from the Arabian Gulf to the north, the Seychelles in the south, the Gulf of Aden to the west and the Maldives in the east, covering an area greater than 2 million square miles. A number of activities are conducted under the operation. NATO vessels verify the activity of shipping off Somalia, separating out legitimate maritime traffic from suspected pirate vessels. Commercial ships that are transiting the area are in many cases escorted to ensure their safe passage. NATO ships can actively pursue suspected pirate ships to prevent attacks, and boarding teams can board a suspect ship to determine if pirates are on board. As a means of last resort, NATO vessels can use force to stop pirates. Any detained pirates are transferred as soon as possible to national law enforcement agencies.

Piracy in the region has been steadily falling throughout the operation, but an assessment by NATO shows that pirates continue to possess the intent and capacity to attack ships, and the operation continues to detect pirate attack attempts.

Source: [Shepherd](#), 6th June, 2014

China Expanding Operational Deployments in Indian Ocean: Pentagon

China is steadily spreading its wings in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) with its rapidly-growing Navy being equipped with advanced nuclear submarines, destroyers and frigates as well as training for long-range deployments. This is the assessment of Pentagon, in its latest report submitted to the US Congress, on China's expanding military might that ranges from long-range missiles, armed drones and stealth fighters to potent nuclear, space and cyber warfare capabilities. While a "neutral" India does not want to be dragged into the ongoing geopolitical jostling between the US and China, especially in the new 'Great Game' unfolding in the crucial Asia-Pacific region, it cannot afford to ignore the warnings about its own strategic backyard of IOR.

The Pentagon report notes the People's Liberation Army Navy "continues to expand its operational and deployment areas further into the Pacific and Indian Oceans" but is somewhat hemmed in as of now by its limited logistical and intelligence support, especially in the IOR. "China desires to expand its access to logistics in IOR and will likely establish several access points in this area in the next 10 years. These arrangements will take the form of agreements for refuelling, replenishment, crew

rest and low-level maintenance," it says. India has tried to belatedly counter China's moves to assiduously forge maritime links with eastern Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Cambodia, among others, over the last decade. India realizes China is mainly trying to ensure protection of its sea lanes for critical energy needs, but it cannot allow the so-called Chinese "string of pearls" to choke it by strategic encirclement, say officials here. China enjoys huge military superiority along the 4,057-km Line of Actual Control but India still has the upper hand with its blue-water Navy in the IOR. "But while the Eastern Naval Command at Vizag is being strengthened with additional warships, aircraft and drones, the crucially-located Andaman and Nicobar Command also needs immediate attention," said a senior officer.

The Pentagon report, on its part, says, "The PLA Navy's goal over the coming decades is to become a stronger regional force that is able to project power across the greater Asia-Pacific region for long-term, high-intensity operations." India has reasons to worry. It, for instance, has just one nuclear-powered submarine, leased from Russia without long-range missiles, and 13 ageing diesel-electric submarines. China, in turn, has five nuclear and 51 conventional submarines. It will induct up to five JIN-class SSBNs (nuclear-powered submarines armed with long-range nuclear missiles) with the new 7,400-km range JL-2 missiles before proceeding to its next-generation submarines over the next decade. "This will give PLA Navy its first credible sea-based nuclear deterrent," says the report. Similarly, after inducting its first aircraft carrier Liaoning in September 2012, China is moving to "build multiple carriers" over the next decade. "The PLA Navy has made long-distance deployments a routine part of its annual training cycle," it says.

Source: [TOI](#), 7th June, 2014

Iran Flotilla Heading for Southern Indian Ocean

Iran's naval forces will, for the first time, set sail for the southern waters of the Indian Ocean, says the country's Navy commander. "The 30th fleet [of the Iranian Navy] comprising the Islamic Republic destroyer together with Alvand and Bushehr warships are moving toward the equator en route to the southern Indian Ocean," Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said.

The Iranian commander further highlighted the full preparedness of the country's Armed Forces to defend the nation against any potential threat. Earlier in April, Sayyari had said that the country's Navy would also sail to the Atlantic Ocean in the future. In recent years, Iran's Navy has been increasing its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

In line with international efforts to combat piracy, the Iranian Navy has also been conducting anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden since November 2008 to safeguard the vessels involved in maritime trade, especially the ships and oil tankers owned or leased by Iran.

Source: [Press TV](#), 7th June, 2014

Chinese Navy Increases Activities in Waters around Guam

A report released last month by the Congressional Research Service [CRS] states that "China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has increased activities in waters around Guam." According to the report, the increased naval activity is believed to be spurred by Beijing's suspicions that Guam's military build up may be directed at China.

The CRS report is entitled "Guam: U.S. Defence Deployments." It discusses major developments and policy issues related to the defence build up on Guam. CRS works exclusively for the U.S. Congress providing policy analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate. The report was written by Asian Security Affairs Specialist Shirley A. Kan. It was released on April 29th.

"China's Sino-centric civilian and military commentators have suspected the defence build up on Guam" is aimed at China and as a result, writes Kan, China "has been building up its submarine force (both nuclear-powered and diesel-electric)." In addition she notes that "China is believed to have deployed missiles that could target forces on or near Guam." China, Kan writes, views the Mariana Archipelago as the "Second Island Chain" that is part of a U.S. lead "encirclement" which China needs to break out of. The "First Island Chain" would be Japan, through Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands to Taiwan and down through the Philippines, all allied with the U.S.

Kan also recount's testimony given by then PACOM Commander Admiral Timothy Keating in March 2008 when he told the Senate Armed Services Committee that during his first visit to China in May 2007 "the PLA Navy proposed - in seriousness or in jest - that as it acquires aircraft carriers, it would take the Pacific west of Hawaii while the U.S. Navy would cover east of Hawaii." The report also raises concerns that "Guam's higher military profile" could make it a potential target for missile attacks from China, as well as North Korea. In addition it could "increase its [Guam's] potential as a strategic target for terrorists" states the report.

Source: [Pacific News Centre](#), 7th June, 2014

PLA to Deploy Its Largest Supply Ship to South China Sea

The People's Liberation Army Navy is set to deploy at least one of its Type 903A comprehensive supply ships to the disputed South China Sea to strengthen its force projection capability in the area, reports China's nationalistic Global Times tabloid.

China recently launched its fifth and largest Type 903A supply ship, the Fuchi, on May 31 in Guangzhou in southern China's Guangdong province. With the capability to carry 11,000 tonnes of cargo, the 23,000-tonne Type 903A can provide fuel and rations to Chinese warships operating in the open sea. It can fuel two warships simultaneously during the operation, while it can also carry two Z-8 helicopters, which can be used to airdrop supplies to other vessels.

Two Type 903A supply ships — the Weishanhu and Qiandaohu — are currently stationed in the Gulf of Aden as part of the Chinese escort mission in the region. Meanwhile, two Type 903As have been assigned to the PLA's East Sea Fleet, the Global Times said, adding that as the Fuchi was launched from Guangzhou and it is thus likely that the vessel will begin its service with the South Sea Fleet.

Combined with Type 052D guided-missile destroyers, the deployment of Fuchi to the region will make the South Sea Fleet a more dangerous threat to the Vietnamese and Philippine navies. Both Vietnam and the Philippines are engaged in territorial disputes with China over the contested region.

Meanwhile, the Global Times said that if China commissions more Type 903A ships, the PLA Navy would be capable of penetrating the Second Island Chain — composed of the Bonin Islands, Marianas Islands and Caroline Islands; from the Kuril Islands through to New Guinea.

Source: [Want China Times](#), 8th June, 2014

Kenya Upbeat on Ocean Deal with Somalia

Kenya is optimistic of reaching a deal with Somalia over the exploration of resources around a disputed section of their shared Indian Ocean off-shore border territory. In its preliminary prospectus for the planned Sh132 billion Eurobond, the government said the two countries were in discussions to amicably resolve the matter.

Kenya and Somalia signed a memorandum of understanding in 2009 that the border would run east along the line of latitude, but Somalia, which has lacked an effective central government since 1991, then rejected the agreement in parliament. “Kenya and Somalia are in discussion with regards to their respective submissions to the UN Commission on the Limits Continental Shelf,” the document said in part.

In 2012, the Somali government accused Kenya of awarding offshore oil and gas exploration blocks illegally to multinationals Total and Eni, claiming that the concessions lie in waters claimed by Somalia. Kenya denied the accusation that ownership of the blocks was contested and said there was no need to hold up exploration. Both countries have since submitted separate submissions to the UN agency seeking to claim additional territory on the shared Indian Ocean border.

According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, all countries that border the ocean are allowed to use the 200 nautical miles into the ocean for exclusive economic purposes without interference from other countries. Kenya formally laid claim to an additional 103,320 square kilometres of seabed off its coastline, beating an April 13, 2013 deadline that was set for the submissions.

Failure to beat the deadline would have left all exploration and exploitation rights over the territory in the hands of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). Failure to secure such rights would also mean that firms eyeing investments in such zones would have to go through strenuous and expensive processes to secure permission from the ISA.

Kenya and Somalia harbour ambitions of striking oil and gas off-shore and analysts say they would immensely benefit from privileged provisions of the UN convention. The provisions exempt developing countries that are net importers of mineral resources produced from its continental shelf from financing the exploration of non-living resources beyond the 200 nautical mile limit.

Kenya and Somalia are net importers of oil and gas and qualify for the exemption. Kenya is also in talks with Tanzania over the demarcation of their shared Indian Ocean territory as the scramble for off-shore resources intensifies. Tanzania made a late claim in 2012 for its share of the Indian Ocean territory, delaying the commencement of proceeding to decide the demarcation of the extra seabed claimed by Kenya and Somalia.

Source: [Midnimo](#), 8th June, 2014

BALTOPS 2014 Multinational Naval Exercise Begins

Maritime forces from 12 nations and NATO have started the 42nd annual multinational naval exercise, Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) 2014, in the Baltic Sea, which aims to boost peace and maritime security in the region amid tensions with Russia over Ukraine. The exercise is also intended to enhance coordination and cooperation among Baltic Sea countries, while improving their maritime safety and security through increased interoperability and cooperation. BALTOPS 2014 commander rear admiral Richard Snyder said: "BALTOPS is an evolving exercise. Over the years, I have seen it grow in size and complexity to provide realistic training

in a dynamic environment. "Here, we send a signal to our nations and to the world that we can come together and operate as a team."

As part of the exercise, sailors from participating nations will be able to familiarize themselves with other countries' military operating processes and practices, mine-clearance missions, anti-submarine warfare and surface-to-air defence, counter piracy, small-boat operations and other maritime safety and security missions. In addition to 1,300 US service members, countries including the UK, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Sweden will participate.

The UK Royal Navy's HMS Montrose and the US Navy's amphibious command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), as well as the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79), are taking part.

BALTOPS 2014 is scheduled to last until 21 June.

Source: [Naval Technology](#), 9th June, 2014

USS Ross Moved to Spain as Part of NATO Plan

The US Navy's Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) has been forward deployed to Rota, Spain, from its Norfolk homeport, as part of a NATO ballistic missile defence plan to boost security in the European region.

At the Rota port, USS Ross and the already positioned USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) will be joined by two additional ballistic missile defence (BMD)-capable destroyers, USS Porter (DDG 78) from Norfolk and USS Carney (DDG 64) from Mayport, Florida, during the next 18 months.

US Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said that the latest deployment boosts relationships between the US and Spain. "Permanently forward deploying four ships in Rota will enable us to be in the right place, not just at the right time, but all the time," Mabus said. The deployments also form part of the US plan to lay land and sea-based radars and interceptors in several European regions over the next ten years.

As part of the mission, all the deployed vessels will carry out a range of tasks, such as NATO missile defence, the full range of maritime security operations, bilateral and multilateral training exercises, and NATO operations and deployments. In addition, positioning the vessels out of the country will enable the US Navy to maintain a continuous presence in the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic Ocean. Source: [Naval Technology](#), 9th June, 2014

Putin Urges Openness in Arctic Economic Activities

Russia's President Vladimir Putin stressed the need for the utmost transparency in implementing economic activities in the Arctic region, reports official news agency. He made his views known during a recent round table meeting in St. Petersburg dedicated to the safe and efficient development of the Arctic.

Citing Ria Novosti news agency, Arctic-info reports President Putin as explaining that the utmost transparency in particular requires continuous dialogue with civic society institutes, environmental protection organizations, of course, with those who are pursuing noble goals, rather than speculating on environmental issues.

The President added that Russia advocates the development of international cooperation in the Arctic, including on environmental issues. Russia, almost a third of the territory of which is districts of the Far North, has a special responsibility for the Arctic, and for maintaining ecological stability there. Plans for the development of the Russian Arctic in the coming decades contain a number of large investment projects related to the creation of new industrial facilities and transport corridors, as well as the revival of the Northern Sea Route.

Source: [Marine Link](#), 9th June, 2014

South China Sea, Strait of Malacca see Rise in Piracy

Pirates have recently targeted large commercial ships sailing on both sides of the Malaysian Peninsula, but local small boat operators say their vessels are also vulnerable to crime.

Most cases reported to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) involve tankers and cargo ships. Many others – attacks on fishing boats, leisure boats and the like – go unreported, said Robert Hernandez, 53, a commercial diver based in Kajang, in Selangor state. "When it comes to piracy, you usually hear of big ships facing such threats. Such operations are not without risk for the marauding parties. Do you know how difficult it is to board a moving ship, which can be travelling at speeds of 20 to 30 knots?" Fernandez, who also services and tunes outboard motors, told Khabar Southeast Asia.

In April, one of his customers was accosted by three parang-wielding pirates, who raided his boat five miles off Bagan Lalang, on the Strait of Malacca. "They took his watch, hand-phone and wallet. Luckily they did not ask him to abandon his boat or he'd be in real trouble," Fernandez said.

As of May 2nd, the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre, based in Kuala Lumpur, had recorded 72 acts of piracy worldwide in 2014. At least two dozen of these occurred in

waters off Malaysia, in the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. In the latest case, pirates released an Indonesia-bound Thai oil tanker and freed its 14 crew members after hijacking the ship and stealing its cargo, the IMB announced June 2nd, according to AFP.

Despite the uptick, the Strait of Malacca is generally safe for seafarers compared with decades ago, said Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Centre. "This was not the scenario in the late 1990s and early 2000s where reports easily numbered over 100 cases a year. This is due to the increase in patrols from the maritime enforcement and defence authorities between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. In some years, there were zero reports of piracy cases in the Strait," Choong said.

Community protects itself In Tanjung Piandang, a small fishing village in Perak, local fishermen keep their community safe through 24-hour watch parties at the local pier. Years ago they had to deal with a spate of thefts of fishing nets, outboard motors, propellers and, in one case, a boat belonging to one fisherman, locals said. "Since we set up these watches in 2000, cases have become rare," Jaafar Yusof a member of the Kerian District Fishermen's Association, told Khabar.

Source: [Khabar South Asia](#), 10th June, 2014

Indian Navy's INSV Mhadei Returns to Goa after Completing 17,000 Nautical Miles

Indian Navy's sail training boat INSV Mhadei entered Goa on 8 June, 2014, and berthed alongside at INS Mandovi boat pool on completion of a 17000 nautical mile long voyage from Goa to Rio de Janeiro and back. The boat and her crew were received by Adm (Retd) Arun Prakash.

The Mhadei had departed from Goa for Cape Town in November last year to take part in the 2014 edition of the prestigious and historic trans-Atlantic race called "Cape2Rio". The boat was skippered by Cdr Dilip Donde and sailed by a crew of three that included Cdr MVV Satish (trainee skipper), Cdr TGS Bedi and Lt Cdr Shweta Kapur. After covering a distance of almost 5000 nautical miles in a little over a month, the boat arrived at Cape Town just in time to get ready for the race.

In addition to taking part in the grueling race, the Navy undertook the long voyage with the additional aim of training more crew including women officers. At Rio de Janeiro, Cdr Dilip Donde handed over the boat to Cdr MVV Satish who began the return voyage with Cdr TGS Bedi and Lt Vartika Joshi.

In the voyage from Goa to Rio de Janeiro and back, the Indian Navy not only managed to take part in the Cape2Rio Race, but also train three women officers in

the art of long distance ocean sailing, which is a first for the Indian Navy. With the arrival of the Mhadei in Goa, the Indian Navy has achieved all that it had set out to with this voyage.

Source: [Naval Today](#), 10th June, 2014

Myanmar Navy Personnel on Visit to India

A delegation of Myanmar Navy officials led by Commodore Htay Naing arrived at Indian Navy's Southern Command located here for a four-day visit.

Comde Naing, who heads Myanmar Navy's Danyawaddy Regional Command at Sittwe, called on Rear Admiral M.S. Pawar, Chief of Staff of the Southern Naval Command, Indian Navy's training command.

Officials said Indian Navy regularly trained Myanmar naval personnel and that the delegation would get to know up-close the training programmes at Indian Navy's training facilities.

The five-member visiting team will also travel to the Indian Naval Academy (INA) at Ezhimala to familiarize themselves with the fledgling institution. The visit gains significance in the light of Indian Navy's proposed move to open the gates of the prestigious academy to trainees from friendly foreign nations by the end of the year.

Source: [Hindu](#), 10th June, 2014

UN Asked to Weigh in on South China Sea

A Chinese envoy on 9th June sent a note to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, presenting documents making clear Vietnam's provocation and China's stance regarding the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea.

In the note, Wang Min, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, also asked Ban to circulate the documents, as UN General Assembly documents, among all UN member states. The documents included an article, released by the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Sunday and titled "The Operation of the HYSY 981 Drilling Rig: Vietnam's Provocation and China's Position", as well as annexed material that proves the Xisha Islands are part of Chinese territory. The first note was sent to Ban on May 22.

He noted that the actions of the Vietnamese side, which illegally and forcefully disrupted the Chinese operation, were serious infringements upon China's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction, grave threats to the safety of Chinese personnel and the HYSY 981 drilling rig, and gross violations of the relevant

international laws, including the Charter of the United Nations, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf. "Such actions also undermined the freedom and safety of navigation in these waters, and damaged peace and stability in the region," Wang added.

The Chinese envoy stressed that Xisha Islands are an inherent part of China's territory, over which there is no dispute. Wang quoted the documents as saying that, prior to 1974, none of the successive Vietnamese governments had ever challenged China's sovereignty over the Xisha Islands. "Vietnam had officially recognized the Xisha Islands as part of China's territory since ancient times," he said. "This position was reflected in its government statements and notes as well as its newspapers, maps and textbooks."

But now, Wang noted, the Vietnamese government goes back on its word by making territorial claims over China's Xisha Islands, which is a gross violation of the principles of international law, including the principle of estoppel, and the basic norms governing international relations. Wang iterated that China urges Vietnam to bear in mind the overall interests of the bilateral relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea, respect China's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction, immediately stop all forms of disruptions of the Chinese operation and withdraw all vessels and personnel from the site, so as to ease the tension and restore tranquility at sea as early as possible.

"China will continue its effort to communicate with Vietnam with a view to properly addressing the current situation", he added.

Source: [China Daily Asia](#), 10th June, 2014

Dutch Firm to Help PLA Map Sea Floor in Search for Flight MH370

Netherlands-based Fugro Survey will help a Chinese military vessel survey the ocean bed as part of the next stage of the quest to find the Malaysia Airlines plane that vanished three months ago.

The announcement came after Australian and Malaysian officials met in Canberra to discuss funding and assets for the unprecedented mission, after a huge air and sea search failed to find any sign of the aircraft. Months of searching has failed to turn up any trace of the Boeing 777, which disappeared on March 8 carrying 239 people after taking off from Kuala Lumpur bound for Beijing.

The next phase of the search, which will be handed over from the military to the private sector, is expected to start in August and take up to a year, covering 60,000

sq km of ocean at a cost of at least A\$60 million (HK\$435 million). The search is already the most expensive in aviation history. "The bathymetric survey will provide a map of the underwater search zone, charting the contours, depths and composition of the sea floor in water depths up to 6,000 meters," the Joint Agency Coordination Centre said.

Fugro's state-of-the-art vessel MV Fugro Equator, which is equipped with a deep water multi beam echo sounder system, will work with Chinese PLA Navy ship Zhu Kezhen. The two vessels are expected to take about three months to complete the mapping ahead of the underwater search by an as-yet undetermined contractor.

Malaysia's costs for the search mission have so far been about one-tenth of the US\$84 million Australia expects to spend on the search for the plane. The remaining A\$60 million has been allocated to the underwater operation in the southern Indian Ocean where the plane is believed to have crashed. Malaysian Deputy Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Bakri said the "costs will be shared 50-50 between Malaysia and Australia".

Source: [South China Morning Post](#), 10th June, 2014

Seabird Phase II: Nation's Naval Might Get a Fillip

The green signal by environment minister Prakash Javadekar for Phase II of Seabird, the Indian Navy's ambitious infrastructure project, heralds the countdown for the base to become a symbol of the nation's military might in a few years.

The expansion will be under Project Seabird Phase II-A, IIB which will entail construction of a host of facilities expected to cost about US\$ 2 billion and completed during 2020. In these phases of construction, facilities to berth India's key aircraft carriers and construction of a wide range of new facilities by augmenting existing facilities will be taken up. Under Phase II, the Naval station will get an airbase, armament depot, dockyard complex and missile silos, apart from additional jetties, berthing and anchorage facilities in addition to base around 30 major warships including INS Vikramaditya, Scorpene submarines and a number of surface ships, almost on a par with US Navy's mammoth Norfolk naval base in Virginia. The base, expected to harbour about 60 major warships by 2020, will become Asia's largest naval base, say Indian Navy sources.

Source: [TOI](#), 10th June, 2014

PM to Inaugurate Indian Navy Facility in Goa

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the Indian Navy's Shore-Based Test Facility at INS Hansa on June 14, a naval spokesman said.

The Indian Navy's public relations officer said that the Prime Minister would inaugurate the facility at INS Hansa on June 14 at 14.45 hours and he would be accompanied by other dignitaries.

Source: [PTI](#), 10th June, 2014

USS Vella Gulf Conducts Exercises with Turkish Navy

The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf (CG 72) participated in a bilateral underway engagement with the Turkish navy corvette TCG Bykada (F 512) in the Black Sea, June 10. The engagement provided U.S. Navy assets an opportunity to work with Turkey to improve maritime capabilities and interoperability in a number of maritime mission areas.

Vella Gulf and Bykada shared tactics and techniques in countering air, surface, and asymmetrical threats. The two ships also communicated via bridge-to-bridge communications in order to simulate hailing a ship before beginning preparations for boarding. Vella Gulf, home ported in Norfolk, Virginia, is deployed in a multi-mission role in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to contribute to regional maritime security, conduct bilateral and multilateral training missions, and to support NATO operations and deployments throughout the region. U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full range of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation missions in concert with coalition, joint, interagency, and other partners in order to advance security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Source: [America's Navy](#), 10th June, 2014

Arctic Shield 2014

As the nation's lead federal agency for ensuring maritime safety and security in the Arctic, the Coast Guard will perform its statutory missions to ensure the Arctic remains a safe, secure and environmentally protected region. The extreme environment and limited infrastructure create unique logistical challenges when conducting operations in the Arctic. To overcome these challenges, Coast Guard personnel are working closely with international, federal, state, local and tribal partners and industry to ensure the protection of our nation's Arctic interests.

Arctic Shield operations will focus on increased maritime activity around the Seward Peninsula, Bering Strait and the Northern Alaska Continental Shelf.

The Coast Guard is committed to having a presence in the Arctic and kicked off Arctic Shield 2014 with government and tribal engagements in January 2014.

The objectives for Arctic Shield 2014 are to –

1. Seasonally perform select Coast Guard missions and activities in the Arctic.
2. Advance Arctic maritime domain awareness through operations, intelligence and partnerships.
3. Improve preparedness and response capabilities.
4. Test capabilities and refine Arctic resource requirements.

As part of Arctic Shield 2014, the Coast Guard will deploy cutters, aircraft, and personnel to the region to engage in operations encompassing a variety of Coast Guard missions. The Coast Guard will leverage its partnerships and combine efforts to ensure the safety of the maritime community. Operating in the Arctic will also give the Coast Guard an opportunity to exercise its capabilities to ensure the right resources are for our maritime operations.

Source: [US Coast Guard](#), 10th June, 2014

China's Arctic Ambitions Fuel Yuan Diplomacy

China's hunger for energy resources was not lost on Vietnam recently as the two countries exchanged angry diplomatic messages and ships traded water cannon blasts over the presence of a new Chinese oil rig inside Vietnam's exclusive economic zone.

The incident illustrates the level of China's aggressiveness and confidence. As China consolidates control over oil and fishing reserves in the South China Sea, it is not difficult to imagine China using the same strategies in Arctic waters. In a report released in March by the Center for a New American Security, China's maritime strategy was dubbed "tailored coercion." The method described a pattern of "dialing up and dialing down coercive diplomacy" or "forceful persuasion," and blending it with positive engagement, such as trade and investment. The strategy spans legal, economic and military realms.

Yet China is not a littoral state of the Arctic. However, Russia has been working on promoting joint development projects with China in the Arctic, said Dustin Kuan-Hsiung Wang, an Arctic specialist at National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei.

China has also been in discussions with Russia to allow Beijing to invest in Arctic resource development. China also needs Russia's navigation experience in Arctic

waters as the ice begins to clear for cargo transport. China only has one icebreaker, the MV Snow Dragon, and is expecting delivery of its second icebreaker from Aker Arctic Technology of Finland in 2016.

Beijing is expected to begin an indigenous build program for icebreakers in the near future, said Dean Cheng, a China military specialist at the Heritage Foundation. China's approach to the Arctic "will parallel their approach to the East and South China Seas — establish a constant, large-scale presence, and then argue that, by dint of their very existence, they have a right to be at the table in any administrative effort."

Since China is not a littoral member of the Arctic Council, such as Russia and Canada, it has taken the position that the council's refusal to give it full membership is unfair and exclusionary, Cheng said. China is only an "observer member" of the council.

According to Chinese media reports, Beijing has been pushing the Arctic Council to declare new shipping lanes along the Arctic rim as "international territory" and the "shared heritage of humankind." "The Chinese are arrogating to themselves the right to speak on behalf of non-Arctic states ... just how much China can legitimately speak on behalf of other states, of course, is open to question," he said.

China is also employing "yuan-diplomacy" by offering to purchase large tracts of land in Iceland and Norway "supposedly to build resorts," Cheng said. The move reminds Cheng of China's past record of purchases, including the buying the Ukrainian aircraft carrier, the Varyag, officially for conversion into a casino in Macau. The Varyag was refurbished and was commissioned as the Liaoning, China's first aircraft carrier, in 2012. "Meanwhile, they are mining iron ore in Greenland, and have provided Iceland with money in the wake of the Icelandic economic meltdown," Cheng said. China also has an Arctic research station, the Yellow River Station, at Ny-Alesund in Norway's Svalbard archipelago.

Source: [Defense News](#), 10th June, 2014

Piracy, Armed Robbery Hinder Nigeria Maritime Industry Growth

A former Head of State, Ernest Shonekan, said sea piracy and armed robbery were responsible for the underdevelopment of the nation's maritime industry. Mr. Shonekan, who said this at the opening of the 13th Maritime Seminar for Judges in Abuja, added that the unwholesome activities were giving the nation bad name in the international community.

The former head of state, said that the negative activities in the industry were affecting the nation's economy. "Nigeria needs to collaborate with other African countries like Sao Tome and Principe, Benin Republic, Congo, Angola, Mozambique

and the land-locked countries to tackle critical issues in the maritime industry,” he said.

The former head of state said the nations should also be able to adopt common policies. Mr. Shonekan said about 90 per cent of trading activities in many countries was carried out on the sea, adding that with increasing global population, the volume of trade carried out on the seas was increasing. “Apart from global trade, more oil and gas exploration and production activities are done on the seas now than before. “Bigger vessels are being deployed to cope with the need to move raw materials and finished goods across the seas,” Mr. Shonekan said. He said that globalisation, technology, and Internet had revolutionised economic activities across the world, pointing out that this had resulted to higher volume of trade among countries. Mr. Shonekan said this had also resulted to complexities of trade among countries and trading partners across the world.

There is a need for legal interpretation of many provisions of the Admiralty Law. He said Nigeria was the leading oil producer in Africa, adding that 90 per cent of the nation’s foreign earnings was from the oil and gas sector.

He urged key operators and other stakeholders in the industry to brace up and update themselves on the new ideas, information and technologies that were emerging. The former head of state, however, urged stakeholders to also adapt to the changes, while legal aspects were handled by the judicial system. The theme of the seminar, jointly organised by the Nigerian Shippers’ Council, NSC, and the National Judicial Institute, NJI, is “sustainable development in the maritime sector”.

Source: [Premium Times](#), 10th June, 2014

China, Namibia Hold Joint Naval Drills

Chinese and Namibian warships conducted joint naval drills off Namibia's coastal town Walvis Bay. Yancheng and Luoyang, the two missile frigates and a helicopter from the 16th Escort Task Force of the Chinese navy, participated in the joint exercise with a Namibian navy ship, Xinhua reported. In spite of strong wind from the Atlantic Ocean, the two navies practiced fleet formation and communication smoothly after dispatching officers to each other's ships.

At around 4 p.m., the joint exercise concluded as a success when the Chinese helicopter landed safely on the deck of Yancheng. Li Pengcheng, Commander of the Chinese fleet, praised performances by Chinese and Namibian navies. He also expressed his belief that the first-ever joint naval operation would play an active role in enhancing understanding and friendship between the two armed forces.

The Chinese fleet, which consists of two missile frigates and a supply ship, was on

its eight-country African tour after completing escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia. The missions had seen them escorting over 5,500 ships from various nations in dangerous waters infested with pirates. The warships will dock at the Port of Walvis Bay Wednesday and begin their three-day friendly visit to the south western African country.

Source: [Nerve.in](#), 11th June, 2014

India, Afghan Agree on Iran Port Development

In a hugely significant development, India and Afghanistan have agreed on the draft of a tripartite agreement for the development of the strategically located Chabahar port in Iran. It's expected that the long-awaited pact will now be signed at an early date.

The draft agreement is now with Iran — Chabahar is located in the country's Sistan-Baluchistan province on the Makran coast — for its approval. Speaking to this newspaper, the Afghan ambassador to India Shaida M. Abdali said: "Afghanistan and India have agreed on a common draft which is now being circulated among all three countries. We're hopeful that it will be finalised soon."

India has been eyeing the development of Chabahar that's located just 72 km west of Pakistan's Chinese-built Gwadar port for long. Chabahar promises to give India an alternative route to land-locked Afghanistan, enabling it to completely by-pass immediate neighbour Pakistan.

The port is of tremendous economic significance too. For, Chabahar will serve as India's gateway to the resource and energy-rich but land-locked countries of central Asia. Moreover, the port is seen as the most cost-effective way for India to access the central Asian markets. At present, Indian trade with central Asia is a paltry 500 million dollars due to connectivity problems in segments of the route in Iran.

The idea to develop this port jointly was first mooted in 2003 during a visit by then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami to India. It's taken over a decade though for the proposal to reach the stage of a draft agreement. However, in this decade, the Iranians have been at diligently at work, developing Chabahar city and designating it a free trade and industrial zone. They have also constructed a road linking the port city to Zahidan in the north that's about 240 km from Milak that's close to the Iran-Afghanistan border.

India, with its eye on enabling road connectivity from the port to Afghanistan, has helped the Afghans build the Zaranj-Delaram highway.

Source: [Asian Age](#), 12th June, 2014

India, China to Hold Joint Military Exercise In November

Indian and Chinese armies will hold their fourth joint military exercise in India in November. This was stated by Joint Secretary in-charge of China in the External Affairs Ministry Gautam Bambawale.

The third joint exercise between the two armies code named "Hand In Hand" had taken place in November last year in China's Chengdu city after a gap of five years. A 150-strong Indian army contingent had participated in the 10-day long exercise. The first exercise was held in China's Kunming city in 2007 followed by the second round at Belgaum in Karnataka in 2008. The next round was called off by India following denial of visa to a top General, heading troops in Jammu and Kashmir.

In his address at Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, Bambawale said the intensity of defence exchanges between the two countries has grown this year. In this context, he referred to visits here of Deputy Chief of General Staff of People's Liberation Army Lt General Wang Guanzhong in February and Deputy Chief of General Staff (Operations) Lt General Qi Jianguo in April.

Talking about trade relations, he said they form an important part of "our strategic and cooperative partnership". He, however, identified trade deficit in favour of China as an issue for the government and said one of the measures to address it was to increase Chinese investment in India. The trade deficit has risen to around US\$ 40 billion in 2013.

The official described as "difficult" and "sensitive" boundary issue but said efforts by both the countries resulted in peace and tranquillity on the border. "Both sides have also recognised that peace and tranquillity on the border is an important guarantor for development and continued growth of our bilateral relations.

Source: [Financial Express](#), 12th June, 2014

Security in the Indian Ocean Discussed in Maputo

Forty representatives from 12 African countries began a two-day meeting in the Mozambican capital Maputo to discuss safety initiatives and programs of energy sources, particularly the protection of infrastructure of oil and gas in the Indian Ocean.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mozambican Minister of Defence Agostinho Mondlane said that this meeting is of particular importance, taking into consideration the need to protect oil and gas infrastructures in the Indian Ocean and fighting piracy. The participants will analyze the major achievements in the efforts to combat maritime piracy and other maritime security issues in Africa.

During the two-day meeting the participants will also be trained in the drafting and preparation of programming exercises table on safety in production and transport of energy in Africa.

The countries participating in the seminar are South Africa, Angola, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania. Representatives of the African Union, the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), are also taking part in the meeting.

Source: [Shanghai Daily](#), 12th June, 2014

Indian Scientist Elected to UN Entity on Ocean Affairs

Indian scientist Rasik Ravindra has been unanimously elected as member of the UN's body focussed on oceans and law of the sea.

Ravindra, India's candidate for member of the Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS), was elected during the 24th Meeting of States Parties of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea here on Thursday. He secured support of all the 111 members present and voting. His term in the CLCS will be till June 15, 2017.

The election, in which there were seven contenders, was to fill the vacancy in the CLCS following the resignation of Indian scientist Rajan Sivaramakrishnan in February this year. Ravindra is one of India's highly qualified scientists and has extensive experience in different spheres of geosciences. He has served as Director of National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) from 2006-2012 and has been a professional geologist with the Geological Survey of India from 1971 to 2005. He has extensive experience spanning over four decades in different spheres of geosciences including geological investigations in the terrains of Antarctica, Bhutan and India.

As NCAOR's director, he had been responsible for conducting the marine geophysical surveys and analysing the results for establishing the outer limits of the continental shelf of India. He also spearheaded the climate change research in the polar regions of Arctic and Antarctic. He also has wide international exposure and has held high positions in various forum involving negotiations in technical, policy and scientific matters.

The Commission consists of 21 members, who are experts in the field of geology, geophysics or hydrography, and are elected for a five year term by States Parties to the Convention from among their nationals. It is the UN body with the power to grant new seabed territory to nations.

The purpose of the commission is to facilitate the implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 13th June, 2014

Narendra Modi to Dedicate INS Vikramaditya to the Nation on June 14

In what promises to be a grand show of national prowess, Prime Minister Narendra Modi plans to sail on the Russian made INS Vikramaditya, formidable aircraft carrier and the largest warship of the Indian Navy, off the coast of Goa on June 14.

The Prime Minister will dedicate the warship, India's second aircraft carrier after INS Viraat, to the nation on Saturday. This will be Modi's maiden visit to the defence establishment. Defence Minister Arun Jaitley and senior Russian officials are also scheduled to be present on the occasion.

The INS Vikramaditya is considered a feather in cap for Indo-Russian defence partnership. The Modi-led BJP government has already signalled that it will deepen traditional and special partnership with Russia. The Indian Navy is expected to showcase various operations and activities of its ships and aircraft out at sea during Modi's visit.

The aircraft carrier has an overall length of about 284 metres and a maximum beam of about 60 metres, stretching as much as three football fields put together. Standing about 20 storeys tall from keel to the highest point, the ship has a total of 22 decks. It can carry over 1,600 personnel on board. With a complete stock of provisions including nearly a lakh eggs, 20,000 litres of milk and 16 tonnes of rice per month, the aircraft carrier is capable of sustaining herself at sea for about 45 days.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 13th June, 2014

Japan and Sri Lanka Enhance Maritime Cooperation

In a little noticed diplomatic trip, the Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Admiral Katsutosi Kawano visited Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, Admiral Kawano met with President Mahinda Rajapaksa to discuss the enhancement of bilateral cooperation on security issues, including maritime security. Admiral Kawano's trip follows a flurry of official and track-II bilateral activity between the two countries in early June 2014.

According to the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defense, Admiral Kawano noted that the "Japanese Navy would like to learn from Sri Lanka's experiences with antiterrorism

operations.” The Sri Lankan MoD report also states that Admiral Kawano expressed an interest in Sri Lanka’s ports. Sri Lanka sits at a strategically important location in the Indian Ocean and 15 Japanese navy ships have visited Colombo in the past 18 months. While Japan already enjoys relatively developed interoperability and port access from India, its interest in Sri Lanka reflects Japan’s enduring interest in ensuring the freedom of navigation in the vital sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean. As a net importer of energy, Japan is highly reliant on the free passage of goods originating in the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz through the Arabian Sea, ultimately entering the South China Sea and the Pacific via the Strait of Malacca.

President Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2013. Current progress in bilateral relations largely seems to have grown out of that meeting. On June 3, Sri Lankan public sector officials received a 215 million yen grant as part of the Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resources Development Scholarship Programme (JDS). Sri Lanka and Japan are also trying to set up an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) of the sort Japan enjoys with several other Asian nations. On June 7, a group of senior Sri Lankan business leaders visited Japan to promote trade and investment as well.

Under current constitutional limits, Japan cannot deploy its Self-Defense Forces for combat operations in remote waters. The current Liberal Democratic Party government under nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is attempting to reinterpret the constitution such that Japan would be able to take greater responsibility in collective self-defence, but the prospect of entirely revising Article 9 of Japan’s constitution remains remote. In addition to Japan, China has grown considerably close to Sri Lanka since Mahinda Rajapaksa’s rise to power and sees Sri Lanka as an important strategic outpost in the Indian Ocean.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 13th June, 2014

Maritime Security Cooperation Key to Indo-US Ties

US Consul General, Chennai, Jennifer McIntyre, has termed maritime security operation as a key component of defence and strategic cooperation between India and the United States.

“Our defence relationship today encompasses military-to-military dialogues, exercises, defence sales, professional military education exchanges and practical cooperation,” she said while delivering the keynote address at the Maritime Trade And Security Conference, ‘Sea Change: Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region’.

Ms. McIntyre said the stretch of sea from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific was one of the most vibrant trade and energy routes, linking world economies and driving development and prosperity. However, India's increasing economic bonds with its neighbours in Southeast Asia notwithstanding, the region remained the least economically connected. "Improved linkages and infrastructure investments between the economies of South Asia and Southeast Asia will be a critical component to integrating regional markets; accelerating economic development; and strengthening regional stability," she said.

Maritime connectivity, she reckoned, was essential for India's peace and prosperity as it was for the US. "We both gain from greater commercial interactions with and between the countries in the Asia-Pacific region." To this end, the US was working within Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as part of its ongoing rebalance towards Asia, to promote energy cooperation, private sector investments, educational exchange, and to reduce barriers to trade and investment, to improve connectivity and to support sustainable growth.

Source: [Hindu](#), 13th June, 2014

Modi's Day at Sea On Board India's Biggest Warship INS Vikramaditya

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14th June landed at the Dabolim Airport in Goa where he will go onboard INS Vikramaditya. After landing, the Prime Minister hopped into the cockpit of the MiG29 K fighter jet, onboard aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.

Dressed in his trademark kurta churidar and a blue waist coat, a smiling Modi waved his Naval cap from the cockpit during his several minute long stint in the pilot's seat of one of India's most advanced fighter jet. Modi later interacted with the naval personnel onboard the INS Vikramaditya, which is anchored off Goa.

Modi is expected to witness 'Air Power Demonstration' by a whole range of naval aircraft along with high speed manoeuvres by Western Fleet ships that include INS Viraat, Delhi class destroyers, Talwar class frigates among others.

Modi, who is on his first military outing, will also witness take-off and 'arrestor wire landing operations' and high speed low level operations of MiG29 K fighters on INS Vikramaditya's deck.

Modi was welcomed by a host of dignitaries including Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, state party president Vinay Tendulkar, a host of senior cabinet ministers and officials. He was also greeted with a ceremonial guard of honour by Indian Navy personnel. "The Prime Minister would be embarking on the 'carrier at sea' by helicopter and is likely to witness a host of exercises by the frontline warships and aircraft of the Navy," a Defence Ministry spokesperson told.

During his stay on the 44,500-tonne Vikramaditya, acquired from Russia for over Rs.15,000 crore, Modi would witness 'air power demonstration' by various naval aircraft, including MiG 29K, Sea Harriers, P 8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Anti-Submarine Warfare aircraft, TU 142M and IL-38SD maritime surveillance planes along with Kamov and Sea King helicopters. He will also witness high-speed manoeuvres by the Navy's Western Fleet ships including aircraft carrier INS Viraat, Delhi-class destroyers and Talwar-class frigates.

The Prime minister shall also witness the take-off and 'arrestor wire landing operations' and high-speed low-level operations of MiG29 K integral fighters planes onboard the flight deck of Vikramaditya, officials said.

Modi is also scheduled to interact with the crew onboard and address officers and sailors of the Navy. He is also scheduled to inaugurate the Shore-based Test Facility meant for practising carrier-based take-off and landing operations.

Source: [India Today](#), 14th June, 2014



Paradip Port Offers Hybrid Cargo Terminals to Investors

Paradip port proposes to permit private parties to set up hybrid cargo terminals — captive-cum-common user facility — as part of its expansion plans. Paradip will be the first government port to offer this facility though some private ports have already started doing this. SS Mishra, Chairman of Paradip Port Trust, said the hybrid terminals will be one of the many new ideas being worked out by the port to attract private investments. “This will provide private investors the flexibility to ensure optimum utilization of the port capacity,” Mishra said at a roadshow held by the port in Mumbai recently.

Investors can fix the ratio of captive and third party cargo at 60:40 or 70:30 but there should be a minimum guaranteed throughput, he explained to a gathering of potential investors and port users.

However, the Odisha-based port will have to get the Centre’s permission before offering its innovative concept to investors. The hybrid concept does not exist in the current policy. It is a new concept which could give more flexibility to terminal operators. The Government will have to take the decision, said A Janardhana Rao, Managing Director, Indian Ports Association.

There is also the issue of tariff regulation. Tariffs at the government ports are regulated by the Tariff Authority for Major Ports and its guideline does not cover the proposed hybrid terminals. There is separate policy for captive port policy under which port-based industries are given land/waterfront facilities to set up terminals for handling their own cargo.

Source: [Hindu](#), 8th June, 2014

India’ Biggest Port FDI Deal Faces PIL Hurdle

The biggest single foreign direct investment (FDI) in an Indian port project by Singapore’s PSA International Ltd faces public interest litigation (PIL) scare which could potentially hurt the much-delayed capacity expansion project of union government-owned Jawaharlal Nehru (JN) port near Mumbai if the Mumbai high court admits the PIL and stays the project. In May, PSA International signed a so-called concession agreement with JN port, to build a Rs. 7,915 crore container loading facility at the port that handles more than half of the container cargo shipped through India’s ports. The project involves FDI of about Rs. 3,100 crore.

A concession agreement sets out the terms and conditions of a port contract and puts the project in motion. PSA emerged the highest bidder for the project by quoting the highest revenue share bid of 35.79%. Port contracts at Union government-controlled ports are decided on the basis of revenue share—the bidder willing to share the most from its annual revenue with the government-owned port gets the contract, typically for 30 years, according to the port privatization policy of the government.

PSA's failure to sign an agreement on winning the same project in an earlier auction led the Union government owned port to re-tender the mega project, raising the project cost by about Rs.1,200 crore and delaying its implementation by at least three years.

The PIL contends that PSA should have been blacklisted and barred from participating in the re-tender for non-adherence to tender conditions, the JN port spokesman said. In October 2012, JN port withdrew the letter of award given to a consortium led by PSA after the group failed to sign a concession agreement a year after it was awarded the project in September 2011 in a public auction. The consortium of PSA and local firm ABG Ports Ltd was awarded the project after it quoted a record high revenue share then of 50.828% in a public tender. The winning bidder has to sign the concession agreement within 30 days of accepting the letter of award for the project, according to tender conditions.

JN port subsequently encashed the bid security of Rs.67 crore submitted by PSA for the Rs.6,700 crore project that was designed to load 4.8 million standard containers a year. The new project, the fifth at JN port, is the key to its capacity expansion plans as it will double the container loading capacity of the port.

The new terminal will be designed to load 4.8 million standard containers a year, making it India's biggest single container terminal by capacity and size having a quay length of 2 km with a water depth of 16.5 metres, capable of handling large container ships. In the year to March, JN port loaded 4.16 million standard containers, operating at more than its designed capacity of 3.6 million standard containers a year. JN port currently has three container loading terminals while a fourth one is under construction by Dubai's DP World Ltd.

The port, one of the 13 owned by the union government, is expected to handle 11 million standard containers by 2016 and 23 million standard containers by 2020, according to a 10-year plan for ports unveiled by the shipping ministry in 2011.

Source: [Mint](#), 9th June, 2014



Adapting Sri Lanka's Coasts and Ocean Resources to a Changing Climate on World Environment Day (June 5th) And World Oceans Day (June 8th)

The impact of climate change on sea level rise and oceanic environment is crucial for Sri Lanka in several respects. Being an Island, sea level rise will pose many challenges to coastal communities, their livelihoods, and coastal ecosystems. Changes in the oceanic environment will threaten fisheries resources in terms of the availability and quality of fish catch. Many livelihoods are dependent on these resources and they also make a significant contribution to Sri Lanka's GDP. So, changes in the sea level as well as the oceanic environment should be priority policy areas for Sri Lanka.

The impact of climate change on sea level rise and the oceanic environment is well established. Governments around the world are starting to develop adaptation and mitigation plans and policies to mainstream climate change considerations into broader development plans. Sri Lanka already has a national climate change policy and a national climate change adaptation strategy. However, the country is yet to have a national adaptation action plan. It seems that Sri Lanka's climate change policy is oriented more towards adaptation than mitigation. Despite some preparatory measures being taken, a question that remains is whether we are ready for the future challenges of sea level rise and changing oceanic environments.

Over the period 1901 to 2010, the global mean sea level rose by 0.19 mm and will continue to rise during the 21st century. With this rise, coastal systems and low-lying areas will experience adverse impacts such as submergence, coastal flooding, and coastal erosion. In many regions, changing precipitation and melting of snow/ice are altering hydrological systems, affecting water resources of the ocean in terms of quantity and quality. There is evidence that many marine species have shifted their geographic ranges, seasonal activities, migration patterns, and relative abundance and species interactions in response to climatic changes.

Ocean acidification poses substantial risks to marine ecosystems, especially polar ecosystems and coral reefs, associated with impacts on the physiology, behavior, and population dynamics of individual species from phytoplankton to animals. The progressive expansion of oxygen minimum zones and anoxic "dead zones" is projected to further constrain fish habitats in Asia. Global marine species redistribution and marine biodiversity reduction in sensitive regions will challenge the sustained provision of fisheries productivity and other ecosystem services for many developing countries in Asia. These changes have complicated the mitigation and adaptation policies and strategies in response to coastal and ocean related climate change impacts.

All these will have adverse effects on the livelihoods of the coastal communities of Sri Lanka and will determine the future of the coastal vegetation and ocean resources. So, appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures are needed to minimize the impacts. There are many policies and strategies that can be adopted by countries depending on the specific types of impacts they face. While adaptation is more individual country-focused, effective mitigation will not be achieved if individual countries only advance their own interests independently.

Sri Lanka launched its climate change policy in January 2012. It has identified sea level rise as a key impact of climate change. The policy proposes incorporating adaptation measures into coastal resource management to minimize the impacts. The national climate change adaptation strategy, introduced in December 2010, recognizes the importance of sea level rise and changes in the oceanic environment under the areas of fisheries, urban development, and human settlements.

Even though the population growth rates have slowed down over the years, Sri Lanka is gradually becoming urbanized. By 2025, Sri Lanka will have an urbanization level of 18% where the majority of the coastal areas will be heavily urbanized. The majority of Sri Lanka's economic development activities are concentrated in western, southern and northern and eastern regions of the country with new sea ports, airports, and highways. Therefore, coastal areas of the country play an important role in the economic development and urbanization of the country.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Coast Conservation Department, Urban Development Authority, and Ministry of Disaster Management are jointly developing coastal area development and resource management plans to address the adverse impacts of sea level rise. Urbanization plans are taking into account the possible sea level rises in demarcating boundaries for human settlements, as well as rehabilitating storm water discharges and salt water intrusion pathways. There are coastal communities that are working together with government institutions and other stakeholders to develop community-based adaptation programmes. Early warning systems are being established and coastal communities have been given many hours of training on how to respond to short term and sudden sea level rises. All these actions suggest that there are certain strategies in place to counter the possible sea level rises in the future due to climate change.

Attention towards managing ocean resources however seems to be limited, particularly, managing the country's fish stock. Possible changes in fish catch due to changes in the oceanic environment, as well as the impacts of changes in the sea water flows and possible adjustments in fishing times, areas and fishing effort may need more adaptation interventions. Sri Lanka's coastal fisheries are managed as a common property. While operation licenses are required and the boats have to be registered, quota systems are not in place to prevent over fishing. While thorough research is required to identify the changes in the fish catch and quality due to

climate change impacts, regulatory mechanisms such as quota systems are needed to prevent overfishing and deterioration of the fish stock in the future.

Sri Lanka is an attractive tourist destination for its scenic beaches, beach recreation sites, corals and ornamental sea fish. Climate change will impact the existence of these natural endowments, resulting in significant impacts on the tourism industry. Countries have developed many mechanisms to protect these ocean resources from climate change impacts. Declaration of protected areas and identification of climate resilient varieties of coral and ornamental sea fish are two widely discussed strategies. There are four main marine protected areas in Sri Lanka and they are located at Ruumasssala, Kalpitiya, Hikkaduwa and Pigeon Islands. The biggest marine protected area is located at Kalpitiya and it is 30600 ha. However, more research is required to identify potentially vulnerable areas with coral and ornamental sea fish and they should be protected.

Sri Lanka is not fully ready to tackle the potential impacts of climate change on coastal and ocean environments. More consideration and research is needed to better manage ocean resources such as fish, corals and ornamental sea fish. Sri Lanka must take these into consideration when the national adaptation action plan is formulated. Moreover, planning for the future and investing in mitigation is essential. By implementing well-designed adaptation and mitigation policies and strategies, Sri Lanka will be better placed to face the impacts of sea level rise and a changing oceanic environment.

Source: [Island](#), 5th June, 2014

Illegal Fishing a Problem in Indian Ocean

A murky practice known as Illegal, Unlicensed, Unregulated (IUU) fishing is costing Indian Ocean countries billions of dollars in lost revenue. Estimates of the cost of IUU fishing suggest that it may account for as much as one-fifth of the total global catch, valued between US\$10bn and US\$23.5bn per year.

According to an independent UK-based Global Ocean Commission, this illegal practice makes it difficult to manage fishery quota, harms local fishermen who have to head deeper for their daily catch, and is also linked to other crimes such as trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans.

A report published in 2013 by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea stated that with the decline in pirate activity, criminal networks were 'reverting to prior, familiar patterns of illicit behaviour, including armed protection of fishing activities and illegal fishing'.

Piero Mannini, senior fishery officer (Near-East and North Africa) at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Near East Regional Commission for Fisheries said

that the organisation conducted the first regional review of IUU fishing in 2009. The FAO's Secretary of the Regional Commission for Fisheries will also follow up on the problems of IUU fishing 'later this year, or in the course of 2015'.

A number of non-governmental organisations, international bodies, and fisheries agencies monitor the problem created by IUU, which according to the Oceans Beyond Piracy Secure Fisheries project, was an 'increased concern in the (Indian Ocean) region'. Robert Mazurek, director of the project said, According to Mazurek, Oman last year formally ratified the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), a key international treaty in keeping illegally caught fish from entering the market, the formal ratification of which made Oman the first Arab state to become party to the treaty.

The FAO adopted the PSMA in 2009, a pact that requires countries that have ratified it to deny landing and services to vessels that have been involved in IUU fishing.

Glen Forbes, founder of maritime monitoring platform OCEANUS Live, said that a key aspect in the problem in identifying those responsible for IUU fishing was that they come under so many different flag states, along with changing ownership. "China clearly has a major impact, but Thai, Taiwanese, Indonesian, Spanish and Japanese fishing vessels are some of the major offenders," he said.

"The Indian Ocean IUU problem is so big that it is a difficult region to monitor in any meaningful manner, and West Africa is no less an area of concern. However, the nations stated may be considered the most prolific, but IUU activity throughout the Indian Ocean right up through the Sea of Oman is prevalent but almost accepted though being largely ignored."

Forbes added, "Another issue is the fact that some IUU fishing vessels conduct nefarious deals with Somali states to get the right to fish in the waters, although the licences are invalid. Some dhows that have claimed to have been hijacked and then released by pirates have occasionally been suspected of having not paid the (Somali) security team who then turn on them before disembarking."

The current international focus on piracy in the region has meant that many organisations 'have basically accepted that any fishing activity as normal pattern of life', he added.

"Despite the fact that EU Navfor (counter-piracy mission), for example, monitors fishing activity as part of its mandate, it is mainly based on activity off Somalia. The NATO Shipping Centre has a 'Dhow Identification' project, but is based on suspicious activity reports relating to piracy. Without an effectively maintained database of fishing vessels in the region, it is extremely difficult to identify IUU from legitimate vessels. Remember, they will travel some distance for their catch."

Source: [Muscat Daily](#), 9th June, 2014