



MAKING WAVES

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China's Maritime Confrontation With Indonesia Is Not New

A recent incident needs to be put into proper perspective.

Prashanth Parameswaran

On Sunday, an incident involving a Chinese fishing boat in what Indonesia said was its waters has led to a diplomatic row between the two countries. While the development has sparked some sensationalist commentary, this is hardly the first time that the two sides have been embroiled in such a crisis. Indeed, the recent incident should be read in the context of old tensions that have long simmered leading to growing confrontations amid new developments.

While details remain murky, Indonesian accounts suggest that a Chinese coast guard rammed one of the country's fishing boats, the Kway Fey 10078, to free it from Indonesian authorities after it had been seized for illegal fishing near the Natuna Islands. In response, Indonesia summoned Chinese embassy officials to express its discontent and vowed that the detained fishermen will be prosecuted under Indonesian law. Beijing, for its part, has demanded that Jakarta release the fishermen.

For close observers of Indonesian foreign policy, the incident is an escalation of ongoing tensions that have been simmering between the two sides, rather than an entirely new phenomenon. Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic state, has long been miffed at illegal fishing by its Asian neighbors including China, a practice which it considers a violation of its sovereignty as well as a pilfering of its maritime resources (See: "Explaining Indonesia's 'Sink the Vessels' Policy Under Jokowi"). And though Indonesia is not a claimant in the South China Sea, the resource-rich Natunas in particular has been a sore point for Jakarta because China's notorious nine-dash line overlaps with its surrounding waters (See: "Natuna is Indonesian, Not Chinese: Jokowi Adviser").

Developments on both sides over the past few years have laid the groundwork for potential escalation, resulting in incidents similar – though not exactly identical – to that of the Kway Fey 10078. On the one hand, as I’ve emphasized previously, China has expanded naval exercises and patrols in the southernmost parts of its nine-dash line closer to Indonesia in recent years, resulting in direct confrontations with Indonesian vessels. For example, in 2010, when an Indonesian patrol boat captured a Chinese vessel illegally fishing within Jakarta’s 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Beijing dispatched a maritime law enforcement (MLE) vessel, which allegedly pointed a machine gun at the Indonesian boat and compelled it to release the Chinese vessel. Similarly, in March 2013, when Indonesian officials boarded a Chinese vessel for the same reason and attempted to transport the nine fishermen ashore for legal proceedings, the captain was forced to release them following harassment by Chinese MLE vessels.

To be sure, the Kway Fey 10078 incident may have some key differences relative to previous ones: most notably, how close Chinese vessels got into Indonesian waters (on or inside Indonesia’s 12-nautical mile territorial sea during the later stages of the incident, not just within its 200-mile EEZ, according to the Indonesian foreign ministry’s account) as well as the fact that the vessel escorted by the Indonesian authorities was directly rammed. But the point here is that this is merely an escalation of previous instances of provocative behaviour by Beijing rather than a notable first.

And though this is the first high-profile development of its kind under the administration of president Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, who came to power in 2014, trouble had long been brewing. Yes, Jokowi has been reluctant to depart from Indonesia’s traditional approach to the South China Sea, which stresses a careful balance between protecting its own territorial integrity as a non-claimant state while also helping informally facilitate confidence-building measures between those more directly involved (See: “No, Indonesia’s South China Sea Approach Has Not Changed”). He has also sought a constructive relationship with Beijing, Indonesia’s second largest trading partner, its fastest-growing market for foreign tourists, and a growing investor. But his administration’s tough line on issues of sovereignty – including the Natunas – the

growing focus on the maritime domain, and its controversial war on illegal fishing, were bound to eventually rub up against Beijing's growing naval presence close to Indonesian waters (See: "Indonesia's Maritime Ambition: Can Jokowi Realize It?").

Indeed, to a certain extent, it had already begun to do so. As I reported last May, after much deliberation, the Jokowi administration finally sunk the first Chinese vessel in its war on illegal fishing after detaining several of them for months. By finally doing so, the Jokowi government had signalled that the strident tone it adopted on sovereignty and territorial integrity extended even to its most important economic partners (See: "Indonesia Sinks First Vessel From China Under Jokowi"). And in response, China had expressed grave concern and sought clarification from Indonesia.

The fact that this incident is not without precedent does not mean that it should just be brushed aside. Indeed, Jakarta's rhetoric thus far suggests that it is taking it very seriously. Indonesia's fisheries minister Susi Pudjiastuti told reporters after meeting Chinese embassy officials that Jakarta may take the issue to an international tribunal, a rather curious proposition that nonetheless signifies the gravity of the situation, given the upcoming verdict on the Philippines' South China Sea case against Beijing (See: "Does the Philippines' South China Sea Case Against China Really Matter?"). Meanwhile, Indonesia's deputy navy chief Arie Henrycus Sembiring told a news conference that the navy would send bigger vessels to back up its patrol boats, a move that could potentially escalate the situation as well. The key question, of course, is whether Jakarta follows through on these moves and if they lead to a broader shift in its approach to the South China Sea or towards Beijing more generally.

In the past, the two countries have at times been able to eventually resolve these situations diplomatically following initial saber-rattling. But China has since become more assertive in the maritime domain, and Indonesia more vocal in asserting its own rights. And while mutual interest in preserving a critical relationship nonetheless ought to lead to cooler heads prevailing, the seriousness of the current situation makes it more difficult to find a face-saving solution compared to some of the other previous incidents.

Irrespective of the outcome itself, there is little question that the incident will feed into a narrative of growing confrontations in Asian waters.

Source: [Diplomat](#), March 22, 2016.

RI (Republic of Indonesia) rebuffs China's claims to Natuna waters

Tama Salim, Nani Afrida and Ina Parlina

Jakarta has questioned Beijing's suggestion that disputed waters near Indonesia's Natuna Islands constitute part of China's traditional fishing grounds.

Edy Yusuf, the Foreign Ministry's director for East Asia and the Pacific region, explained on Tuesday that the closest thing to China's claim in internal law was traditional fishing rights, which, according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), require two countries to sign a treaty over a designated area. China and Indonesia have no such treaty.

Instead, Edy indicated that China's assertion of historic rights over the fishing grounds might fall within Beijing's contested Nine-Dash-Line territorial definition.

"[Beijing] would definitely avoid using that line of reasoning, as it would constitute an overlap of authority with Indonesia — that's why they're using the term 'traditional fishing grounds'," he told The Jakarta Post.

"What happened was that [China] committed an illegal fishing act in Indonesia's EEZ [exclusive economic zone]."

Jakarta accused Beijing of obstructing law enforcement when large Chinese coast guard vessels intercepted Indonesian patrol boats towing the 2,000-gross-ton Kway Fey 10078, a Chinese fishing boat caught operating illegally near the Natuna Islands.

The Kway Fey, which was being towed to the nearest naval base by patrol vessel KP Hiu 011, was rammed by an armed Chinese coast guard boat at the border of Indonesian waters, sustaining operational damage.

Beijing later reiterated its stance on the Natuna Islands in a meeting with Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi, conceding Indonesia's full sovereignty over the region.

However, it also requested that eight of its citizens — crew members of the Kway Fey — be released from detention.

The request hinges on the assumption that the Kway Fey was operating in China's "traditional fishing grounds" when it was captured, a claim not recognized by the international community.

International law expert Hikmahanto Juwana said Retno had brought up the South China Sea issue to remind Beijing that Indonesia could at any time give up its role as the region's honest broker if its Chinese counterparts plan to dishonor efforts to resolve conflicting national claims.

Hikmahanto, one of two experts brought in to be briefed on the Natuna situation, corroborated earlier Edy's deduction that the "traditional fishing grounds" in question might fall within China's claimed sovereign territory. "That might just be the case," he said.

"We don't claim there is an overlap, but for them, 'traditional fishing grounds' means they weren't fishing in Indonesia's EEZ region," Hikmahanto added, calling it an attempt on the part of Beijing to blur the issue.

Indonesia does not recognize the Nine-Dash-Line because China has neglected to clarify the concept since the era of former foreign minister Ali Alatas, the University of Indonesia scholar claimed.

Jakarta, which makes no claim to the South China Sea, has long lubricated peace talks among disputing claimant states.

Navy chief of staff Adm. Ade Supandi said that five navy vessels were currently on guard in Natuna waters; however, he downplayed the tension, insisting that defense duties did not extend to fisheries violations.

“This is a matter for the fisheries sector,” he said.

Previously, the commander of the Navy’s Western Fleet (Armabar), Rear Admiral Achmad Taufiqqorrochman, whose ships oversee the Natuna region, said the incident would be settled first and foremost within the fisheries sector.

Source- [Jakarta Post](#), March 23, 2016.

Philippines vs China in South China Sea: Tough talking could box China in

Merriden Varrall

The International Court in The Hague is due to soon rule on the case of the Philippines vs the People’s Republic of China in the South China Sea. The general sense in Australia is that the ruling is likely to be in favour of the Philippines, and that China will react negatively — perhaps rejecting and ignoring the ruling, or perhaps going so far as to declare an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea.

In preparation for the anticipated negative reaction from China, Australia and South East Asian countries are making movements and noises to demonstrate to China that

'bad behaviour' will not be tolerated. However, by doing so, we run the risk of further entrenching China's view that global political dynamics are, as always, PRC vs the world, and that the only way to maintain dignity is to make a bold show that it will not tolerate this perceived bullying.

In early 2013, the Philippines filed a case against China's claims in the South China Sea in the International Court in The Hague. In this case, the Philippines argues that China's claims in the South China Sea must align with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), invalidating China's nine-dash line; classifying features occupied by China not as islands but as rocks, low tide elevations, or submerged banks; and allowing the Philippines to operate freely inside its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (a clear timeline of this phase of proceedings can be found here). In November 2015, the court ruled that it had jurisdiction over the case, and would release a finding before June 2016. China has declared that the judgment of jurisdiction in 2015 is null and void, and that future judgments would have no effect. How China will react when the ruling is released is therefore a subject of considerable and heated speculation.

The general sense in Australia is that the ruling will come down against China, and thus preparations are being made to respond to the anticipated negative reaction. Australian policymakers are analysing a broad range of potential scenarios, from China simply ignoring the ruling (which is not so simple at all, really, as UNCLOS is legally binding on all members, and China is a member); to China declaring an ADIZ in the South China Sea. A South China Sea ADIZ has been a vague possibility since China declared one in the East China Sea in 2013, eliciting strong responses from Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. China repeatedly states that it reserves the right to do so. In the lead-up to the ruling, Australia and South-East Asian nations are seeking to demonstrate to China their collective determination not to allow China to dominate the region.

This tough talk is all very well, but we must also ask ourselves about what we want to see achieved in the long run. What unintended negative consequences could such behaviour generate, and how can these be ameliorated?

From the outside, China's behaviour in the South China Sea in past years looks like a pretty clear-cut case of a rising power seeking to dislocate the status quo power and expand its own influence in the region. This is not untrue, as such. However, particular domestic imperatives are at the heart of Chinese foreign policy and behaviour. How China sees the region and its own role within it, and why it wants to increase its own power, need to be understood in order to better negotiate these geo-political shifts. Indeed, if it's not too esoteric, the question of what 'power' means to China, and what it wants to do with it, is worth a pause for consideration – but perhaps not just now.

As I have written about in more detail elsewhere, China's recent actions in the South China Sea and possible future actions reflect a strongly held sense in China that history is destiny. According to this view, Chinese actions in the South China Sea reflect the gradual resumption of its rightful and respected place in the world, or in this case, in the region, after the painfully remembered 'Century of Humiliation' beginning with the Opium Wars in the mid-1800s.

China's attitude towards the other claimants in the South China Sea also reflects a narrative of filial piety and familial obligation. In this view, China's role in the region is that of a regional father figure and benevolent overseer of a peaceful region, in which its neighbours (should) willingly pay due respect. And, if China's neighbours do not show the proper deference, this is seen to justify taking stronger measures to ensure that this familial order is respected. This is not to say that China does not have material interests in the South China Sea, but these are not the full picture of China's motivations.

In the current environment within China, which we can over-simplify as beset with economic challenges, environmental challenges, and political tightening, the Communist Party is leaning heavily on the latter of its two pillars of legitimacy: material wellbeing and national identity. If the social contract between the people and the state wobbles, in which politics can carry on largely unexamined as long as people's daily life continues to improve, the fires of national identity must be stoked. When material wellbeing is not assured, the Party must be seen to be protecting China's dignity in the international system, ensuring it gets the respect it deserves. Faced with domestic

challenges, the Party absolutely cannot be seen to be weak in dealing with the outside world.

In this context, tough talk by Australia and other regional actors demonstrating to China that challenges to the current order will not be tolerated could run the risk of narrowing Chinese foreign-policy decision-makers' options. According to the narrative of humiliation so strong in China, it is almost inevitable that other countries will try to keep China down. It is not logical to expect that a country that sees the situation in this way will accept the remonstrations of its perceived oppressors, see the error of its ways, and toe the line. Even if China appears to pull back and behave according to our standards in the short term, it is likely there will be implications be for its sense of persecution and isolation in the longer term.

Ultimately, tough talk must be complemented with skillful behind-the-scenes diplomacy. We must not only warn China of the consequences of bad behaviour, but also engage with Chinese decision-makers so that their options for responding to The Hague's findings are not narrowed to declaring an ADIZ by a perceived necessity to prove the Party is up to the challenge of demonstrating China's greatness to the world.

Source: [Interpreter](#), 23 March, 2016.

'Maritime colonialism' with Chinese characteristics

Rene L. Pattiradjawane

The geopolitical environment in the South China Sea is transforming into a new stage of contestation not only among claimants of sovereignty over disputed territories but also among major powers. China's ambition to control the South China Sea as its historic right has been challenged by the US "freedom of navigation" operations, while Japan, India and Russia also seek to enhance their influence in Southeast Asia.

For the ASEAN countries, territorial disputes and maritime security have always been resolved on the basis of norms and rules of international law, starting with the Cambodian conflict to overlapping sovereignty claims between Indonesia and Malaysia on the islands of Sipadan and Ligitan.

Today, we witness China capitalizing on the South China Sea as a springboard for global domination. For Indonesia and its neighbors, balancing national and regional interests in the face of China's rise has to do with not only future interdependence between their economies, but also traditional and non-traditional security issues among Southeast Asian countries and between the major powers.

Indonesia and most other ASEAN countries see China's position on the South China Sea issue as reflecting an attitude of stubbornly hiding behind historical rights that undermine international law, apart from reflecting a quarrel between Washington and Beijing. China's unilateral acts in the South China Sea are blamed for an escalating arms race among Asian nations and for massive environmental impacts following the building of artificial islands in the Spratly Islands.

Yet we cannot expect Beijing to follow other countries in conflict resolution.

Declaring the South China Sea as a non-military area, [...] should be in line with President Xi Jinping's [...] statements ...

One can identify two reasons behind Beijing's assertive behavior in the region. First, China is practicing "maritime colonialism" by rejecting calls to reduce tensions in the South China Sea, in a bid to dominate the world's busiest sea lane of communication. Second, China is improving its physical security to block external threats and interference.

China's actions resemble Western colonialism in projecting domination, spreading adversity and rapacity, including attempts to steer language, capital, patronage, trade, education and cultural influence, combining military, political and cultural forces.

Deploying warships and surface-to-air missiles in the South China Sea reflects China's position as conqueror of the sea, undermining the Declaration of the Code of Conduct that ASEAN and China agreed on, to pursue resolutions and reduce tensions in the area.

When Europeans came to Asia to expand trade and, later on, to colonize the region, no colonial power of the 15th century incorporated the South China Sea as their domain. Even the expansionist Japanese never sought to control the South China Sea and the features within it, as most of the islands are uninhabited and some have never sustained life.

The Chinese strategy in the area involves delaying tactics that escalate involvement of non-claimants, including external powers.

A dispute between Washington and Beijing is playing out, the region of the South China Sea is penetrated by the great powers, and we are also seeing the establishment of a new world economic order, such as the 57-member Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, with strong backing of Western countries. Japan's new security posture in response to changes in the strategic environment on the Korean Peninsula, the rise of China, Russia and India, and the escalating tension in the East and South China Sea, are prompting Japan to seek stronger strategic cooperation.

For Indonesia and ASEAN, the dynamic engagement of the US, Japan, China, India and Russia in the region raises the need for equilibrium, not only among the major powers, but also between them and Southeast Asia. Yet we must understand that Beijing's efforts to maximize influence do not make China an enemy looking for open conflict in the South China Sea.

Indonesia and ASEAN must redouble efforts in confidence-building, not only by persuading China to work sincerely toward the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, but also by convincing other great powers to restrain from disruptive activities.

One idea for Indonesia and ASEAN is to work on declaring the territories that are subject to overlapping sovereignty claims as non-military areas in accordance with ASEAN's doctrine of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). Declaring the South China Sea as a non-military area, with acknowledgement of "innocent passage" of foreign ships, should be in line with President Xi Jinping's and other Chinese leaders' continuous statements that China will not militarize the South China Sea.

We cannot rely on repeated pledges not to militarize the area without concrete political gestures toward practical peaceful resolution.

Source: [Jakarta Post](#), March 23 2016.

China just ran into a problem with its only friend in the South China Sea

Jeremy Benderomar

China has just had a run-in with its only friend in the South China Sea, and that could complicate matters for Beijing as it continues to try to take a more aggressive stance in the region.

On March 19, an official Indonesian vessel detained a Chinese fishing trawler that was operating in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the coast of the Natuna islands.

The islands are on the periphery of the South China Sea, and their EEZ abuts China's self-declared Nine-Dash Line, which Beijing uses to mark its claims in the region.

In the past, Indonesia has not had any issues with China's increasingly aggressive actions in the region. However, after Jakarta seized the Chinese trawler, things got awkward quickly for the two nations.

While towing the Chinese vessel towards the Natuna islands, a Chinese coast guard ship rammed the Indonesian vessel in an attempt to free the Chinese boat, Bloomberg reports.

This led to Jakarta issuing a protest to Beijing over a violation of the "sovereignty of Indonesia's territorial waters." Indonesia also managed to take the eight crew members of the Chinese vessel into custody.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has said that she emphasized the good will between Indonesia and China while filing the protest.

However, Marsudi also said "I stress that Indonesia is not a party to the South China Sea dispute, so we are asking for a clarification about the incident."

In response, a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a press briefing that the entire incident between Indonesia and China occurred in "traditional Chinese fishing grounds."

Despite the efforts at conciliatory language by Marsudi, tensions are likely to continue to escalate between Indonesia and China following this incident. According to the Associated Press, Jakarta has signaled that it will press ahead with prosecuting the Chinese fishermen over Beijing's demands that they be released.

And Arif Havas Oegroseno, the Indonesian official in charge of maritime security, has called out China's claims to having a traditional history of fishing in the region.

"It's very fake, ambiguous, in terms of since when, since what year does it become historical, traditional?" the Associated Press reported.

This escalation in tensions puts Indonesia in a difficult position. It has a minimal role in the South China Sea, and until now has wanted to keep solid relations with China.

Bloomberg notes that China is Indonesia's largest single trading partner and a major funding of infrastructure in the country.

However, Indonesia has vowed to take a strong line on its territorial integrity - especially in the maritime sphere. And the grounds off the Natuna islands is home to a third of Indonesia's gas reserves, according to Bloomberg.

Indonesia's current diplomatic tensions with China put it in a similar position to much of the rest of the region. Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Taiwan all also protest China's claims in the region and have attempted to push back on Beijing's territorial claims.

Source: [Business Insider](#), March 23, 2016.

European Union calls halt on militarization, threat of force in South China Sea

Caleb Velasquez

The European Union (EU) made a declaration through the Union's High Representative urging all claimant countries in South China Sea "to resolve disputes through peaceful means, to clarify the basis of their claims, and to pursue them in accordance with international law including UNCLOS and its arbitration procedures." The Declaration was released March 11.

The European Union also called to stop the militarization, use or threat of force, and unilateral actions in South China Sea.

"The EU is concerned about the deployment of missiles on islands in the South China Sea. The temporary or permanent deployment of military forces or equipment on disputed maritime features which affects regional security and may threaten freedom of navigation and overflight is a major concern," the Union's High Representative added.

“The EU encourages further engagement in confidence building measures which seek to build trust and security in the region. The EU fully supports regional ASEAN-led processes and is looking forward to a swift conclusion of the talks on a ‘Code of Conduct’ which will further support a rules-based regional and international order,” it added.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) today welcomed EU’s declaration. “The Philippines has long advocated a peaceful, rules-based resolution to the disputes in the South China Sea,” DFA said in a press release.

“The Philippines supports the EU’s continued engagement in the region through the ASEAN-led processes and welcomes its offer to share best practices on maritime security,” DFA added.

Source: [Update.Ph](#), March 28, 2016.

China coast guard vessels escort fishing boat flotilla into Malaysian waters

Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia’s maritime authority said Tuesday Chinese coast guard vessels escorted about 100 Chinese fishing trawlers into Malaysia’s territorial waters near Luconia Shoals in the South China Sea last week.

The shoals are known locally as Beting Patinggi Ali.

“It is unprecedented. This is the first time,” Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) Director-General Adm. Ahmad Puzi Abdul Kahar told reporters of the huge fleet of fishing boats his agency encountered last Thursday. “That is why we are taking a cautious approach.”

For the first time, the agency gave more details of the incident that was first disclosed by Shahidan Kassim, minister in charge of national security, last Thursday.

Puzi showed a map indicating the Chinese boats were within Malaysia's exclusive economic zone and they were discovered conducting their activities from Thursday through Sunday with the number of boats ranging from 40 to 100.

The boats were spread out within 1,931-sq.-km (745.5-sq.-mile) area.

He said the fishing boats did not bear any flags or registration numbers but they noticed one Chinese coast guard vessel escorting them while another was anchored near Luconia Shoal.

The cluster of shoals and reefs that make up Luconia is located about 84 nautical miles off the coast of Miri town in Sarawak state on the island of Borneo.

MMEA tried to communicate with the foreign vessels but received no response. However, they tailed them as they moved westward. As of Tuesday, the "uninvited guests," as Puzi termed them, were no longer seen.

Puzi said they could not attempt to board any of the boats to inspect them due to rough seas.

The agency, however, took photographic evidence.

"We will leave it to the Foreign Ministry to take the appropriate actions," he said.

"We want to send them a message that they are in our territorial waters," he added.

Deputy Foreign Minister Reezal Merican said they are looking into the matter.

"Let's have all the facts on the plate then we will take action," he told reporters in a separate event.

China claims over 90 percent of the South China Sea, parts of which are also claimed by Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman told Parliament last Thursday that the ownership of Luconia Shoals was never in dispute.

“I would like to stress that Malaysia do not hold Beting Patinggi Ali as a disputed territory with multiple claims between Malaysia and other countries,” he said.

The alleged intrusion came after Indonesia intercepted a Chinese fishing boat last week off the Natuna Island in the southernmost region of the South China Sea, an incident which sparked a diplomatic spat.

In the past there have been incidents of Chinese navy boats and fishing vessels encroaching into Malaysian waters in the South China Sea but Malaysia has thus far preferred to keep a low profile approach via quiet diplomatic protest notes to its major trading partner.

Source: [Japan Times](#), March 30, 2016.

Interview: Adm. Tomohisa Takei, Chief of Staff, Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force

Christopher P. Cavas

Mindful of the past, Japan straddles the lanes of armed deterrence, staunchly supporting the US while striving to avoid an aggressive stance. But in an increasingly dangerous neighborhood, where China challenges Japan in the Senkaku Islands, North Korea is constantly rattling nerves and a resurgent Russia remains a question mark, the Japanese military is clearly on a heightened state of alert.

Japan continues to steadily modernize its naval and military forces. The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is fielding two new 24,000-ton helicopter-carrying destroyers and building up its Aegis ballistic missile defense fleet. Soryu-class submarines with advanced propulsion are being delivered annually, and new Kawasaki P-1 aircraft are replacing older US-built P-3C Orions in the maritime surveillance role.

Takei spoke with Defense News in February at his headquarters in Tokyo. He spoke both in English and through a translator.

How do you characterize your relationship with the American Navy?

The relationship between the US Navy — especially the Seventh Fleet — and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force is a core for the Japan-US alliance and also the core of the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The good relationship between the US Navy and JMSDF could become a basis for the further maritime relationship, for example US-Japan-Australia, US-Japan-India, US-Japan-South Korea as well.

So I would like to keep and enhance the relationship with the US Navy. In April last year, the Japan-US agreement for defense cooperation was revised, improving our peacetime cooperation and enhancing our deterrence capability. The cooperation with the US military, including the US Marine Corps and especially the US Navy — which is the core of the US-Japan alliance — is very indispensable for Japan to ensure peace and stability in this region. This close cooperation between the JMSDF and the US Navy is created by interaction over the last 60 years.

China has become far more assertive and aggressive in recent actions, creating air identification zones and artificial islands in what was international waters, especially in the South China Sea. How do you view China's actions?

First of all, the relationship between Japan and China is a very important concern for Japan's national security. China is one of the major regional powers and they have a responsibility to ensure peace and stability in this region. China's great sea power is able

to contribute ensuring maritime security and China is already playing an important role in the Gulf of Aden and also conducting important activities in the Mediterranean Sea.

But on the other hand China is increasing its military powers and also enhancing its activities at sea and air space such as in East China Sea and South China Sea and rapidly expanding its activities, which is becoming a serious concern for neighboring countries. So the relationship with China is important not only for Japan but for maritime security in this region. It is important for Japan to continue to promote defense exchanges with China, try to increase Chinese military transparency and also increase engagement to avoid and prevent unplanned encounters.

Do you regularly visit China? Does Chinese Navy commander Admiral Wu Shengli come here?

In the last five years we haven't had any defense exchange with China.

Have you met Admiral Wu?

Yes, I did. When I was director general N3/N5 in this building. I met him twice in Tokyo and in Beijing in defense exchanges in 2008 and 2009. From then on there are no high-level officer exchanges.

Have you tried? Has he tried?

These issues are based on each government's political decisions, so we cannot decide this matter.

China has greatly expanded its Coast Guard, and the Japanese Coast Guard regularly encounters Chinese counterparts in the seas around the Senkakus. This white hull confrontation in many cases replaces gray hull naval encounters. What is your relationship with the Japan Coast Guard?

The Japan Coast Guard is in charge of the patrolling the territorial waters of Japan. The role of the JMSDF is to support the Coast Guard if they cannot respond to contingencies. The JMSDF and the Coast Guard cooperate with each other and communicate everything. The current head of the Japan Coast Guard is a former classmate of mine, and we have a hotline.

Your neighbor to the north is Russia. Have the Russians been very provocative in their actions toward you? What is your relationship?

Russia's war-fighting capabilities in the Far East, including the Navy's, have been significantly reduced compared to its peak. But they still have large-scale war-fighting capabilities including nuclear capabilities. And in recent years they have reformed their armed forces, including enhancing joint operational capabilities. Along with these reforms Russia is conducting large-scale exercises to enhance joint operational capabilities and mobilizing capabilities of its forces. Also their jet bomber are flying with close range of our country and they are enhancing all of their military activities. So we need to be cautious about Russia and these kind of activities.

But at the same time Russia has a great influence on the security of Japan and it's an important partner, so it is necessary for Japan to continue defense exchange acts. For example, Japan and Russia's Navy is conducting a search and rescue exercise, or SAREX. This is an important exercise for Japan and Russia to maintain good communications with each other.

Is North Korea the biggest threat to stability and peace in this region?

It is a very good question. North Korea [rejects] United Nations Security Council resolutions and continues conducting nuclear tests and developing missiles. This is a serious threat to North and East Asian countries. North Korea is likely involved in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This situation is becoming a serious threat for not only this region but also around the world.

In order to respond to the threat, such as the missile launches from North Korea, Japan is conducting close cooperation with the US military. [During] the recent North Korean nuclear test, we were prepared to deploy an Aegis ballistic missile defense (BMD) destroyer. We will improve and enhance information exchange with the Republic of Korea so that we can take more effective measures.

You are continuing to expand your Aegis BMD fleet?

Yes. We have six Aegis destroyers and have requested two more with Aegis Baseline 9. In five years we will have eight BMD-capable Aegis destroyers.

Is Aegis Ashore something that interests you?

A land-based BMD system is one of Japan's challenges. But at this moment the JMSDF is going to concentrate on increasing the number of Aegis destroyers.

You continue to increase the power of the JMSDF. Your new helicopter-carrying destroyers Izumo and Kaga are very impressive ships. Is there another generation beyond that?

The Kaga or Izumo-class destroyers, because of their size and shape, attract attention to their ability to carry the aircraft. But the real operational concept of these ships are different. It is based on joint operations and designed for activities such as HADR [humanitarian and disaster relief] in peacetime and war fighting in contingencies. The ships are equipped with very good medical facilities. Two years ago the Ise, which is a little bit smaller than Kaga, was deployed to provide HADR when a massive typhoon struck the Philippines. I believe that Kaga will make an important role in the near future. I believe that you think that Japan is increasing its military power, but that I this indicates that the JMSDF has adapted to the maritime security environment around Japan and in this region.

We can say the same thing as to our aircraft. Our P-3C maritime patrol aircraft is now engaging in anti-piracy operations around the Gulf of Aden and its activities are highly valued by other countries for their high level of performance. The P-1 is the successor to the P-3C, and I believe it will also create an important role in maritime security in this region and also around the world.

So you don't see a real aircraft carrier in Japan's future?

No.

You mentioned the anti-piracy patrols, where Japan has been sustaining escort forces in the western Indian Ocean. Has that been an opportunity for you to test out new concepts or just give your sailors and your ships and your organization more experience and sustained out-of-area operations. Or is it all been just in stride?

The Indo-Pacific region is quite important for Japan's peace and security. Since Sept. 11, 2001, we deployed replenishment ships and destroyers — we did that for nine years. [More recently] Japan deployed anti-piracy forces in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. That is a symbol of the Japanese government's direction to contribute to the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Have you learned much from these operations, supporting ships several thousand miles away and routinely replacing them, or has it been something you could do all along?

From its foundation, the JMSDF has inherited the tradition of the Imperial Japanese Navies. Being a blue-water navy is one of the traditions of the Imperial Japanese Navy. I believe that this is one of the DNA of Japan's Imperial Navy.

As you know the US Navy has been carrying out freedom of navigation (FON) passages in the South China Sea and elsewhere. There have been calls from some quarters for nations to join in these operations, but that has not yet happened. Will Japan join with the US in FON demonstrations?

The Japanese government supports the US Navy's freedom of navigation operations but Japan has no plan to participate. However, the South China Sea and the western Pacific must be open and stable. It is in the national interest of Japan. The Japanese government intends to keep the current presence around the oceans — to have joint maritime exercises with coastal countries and use the South China Sea as a transit. More than ever that is one of the Japanese government's directions for us.

Source: [Defense News](#), March 30, 2016.

Pentagon Concerned by Chinese Anti-Ship Missile Firing

Cruise missile test firing spotted on South China Sea's Woody Island

Bill Gertz

China has deployed anti-ship cruise missiles on a disputed South China Sea island and the missiles are raising new concerns in the Pentagon over Beijing's growing militarization of the vital strategic waterway.

Defense officials confirmed that China's military recently test-fired a YJ-62 anti-ship cruise missile from Woody Island, in the Paracels located in the northern part of the South China Sea.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Peter Cook declined to confirm the cruise missile deployment but said reports of the test firing has increased worries about Chinese military activities.

"I can't get into intelligence matters from here," Cook said of the cruise deployments.

"But obviously, as we have been talking about for some time, anything, any steps by any of the players in that part of the world, China or otherwise, to militarize those features

that are in dispute, those islands in dispute, would be a concern to us,” he told reporters at the Pentagon.

President Obama and Southeast Asian leaders during the recent summit meeting in California voiced support for freedom of navigation and overflight and “unimpeded lawful commerce, as well as non- militarization and self-restraint in the conduct of activities in that part of the world,” Cook said.

“This is something that we’ve stressed repeatedly with the Chinese, particularly the question militarization,” he added. “And it is a concern for us, and something clearly at the top of our agenda as we engage with the Chinese.”

Cook said militarization is raising tensions and decreasing stability in a waterway the Pentagon has said hosts \$5.3 trillion in annual trade, including \$1.2 trillion in U.S. trade.

Officials identified the offensive missiles as YJ-62 anti-ship cruise missiles.

A test-firing of the cruise missile on Woody Island was disclosed March 21 on a Chinese military enthusiasts’ website called Dingsheng.

The posting included a photo of a YJ-62 being launched from a missile encampment on Woody Island, which China calls Yongxing Island.

The posting stated that the missile was fired by a People’s Liberation Army South Sea Fleet shore-based missile unit. It also included an aerial photo of the island with diagrams showing the launch location.

The deployment of Chinese anti-ship missiles on Woody Island follows reports last month that China has deployed advanced air defense missiles on Woody Island and represents a further militarization of disputed islands in the sea.

The HQ-9 surface-to-air missiles were photographed in commercial satellite imagery along the beach on Woody Island.

Rick Fisher, an expert on the Chinese military, said the YJ-62 is a land-based version of the missile deployed on China's Type 052C guided missile destroyers, ships that are known to be equipped with advanced electronics similar to U.S. Aegis battle-management equipped warships.

"It is likely that the PLA Navy deployed the YJ-62 to Woody Island at about the same time that HQ-9 anti-aircraft missile were seen on the island, perhaps some time in 2015," Fisher said.

The deployment of the anti-ship missiles, with a range of 248.5 miles, "now completes a template for the three new bases in the Spratly Island group," Fisher said.

"They too will soon be equipped with combat aircraft, anti-aircraft missiles, and long range anti-ship missiles," he said. "These islands will also eventually be linked by underwater, surface and airborne surveillance sensors creating a 'fence' to keep out U.S. and allied military forces."

Fisher said that at the current rate of militarization in the sea, China could deploy the equivalent of a new navy fleet by 2020.

"The Obama administration has some good ideas about organizing greater maritime security cooperation and developing some new weapon systems to deter China, but it has also been too slow to recognize and is simply not moving fast enough to meet an accelerating Chinese challenge," Fisher said.

"America is now falling behind in a vital arms race with China and this points to real danger," he added. "China usually attacks when its opponents are weak and distracted."

U.S. intelligence officials have stated that China was expected to increase the militarization of the disputed islands in the sea in response to the resumption of U.S. Navy freedom of navigation operations after a hiatus of nearly five years.

Navy warships passed within 12 nautical miles of Chinese-claimed islands in October and January, and further operations are expected.

The cruise missile deployments also contradict statements by Chinese President Xi Jinping made during a summit with President Obama in September.

At the meeting, Xi, who arrives in Washington this week for a nuclear security summit, pledged not to militarize the newly created South China Sea islands.

The Pentagon has said China in recent months has produced some 3,200 acres of land by dredging the sea floor and building up new islands.

Source: [Washington Free Beacon](#), March 30,2016.

Maritime Business and Human Rights Issues Clarified

On Wednesday, the independent maritime human rights charity Human Rights at Sea delivered the first in a series of new publications specifically focused on the implementation of the 2011 United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the maritime environment.

The document titled: An Introduction & Commentary to the 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business Human Rights & their Implementation in the Maritime Environment covers the background to the subject, the emerging need in the maritime environment, examples and case studies, as well as suggested self-help guidance for all maritime business enterprises and their senior management.

The report cites examples from the Thai and U.K. fishing industry, the Sewol ferry tragedy and labor rights violations on cruise ships. As examples of how companies are moving forward with human rights issues, the report cites Maersk's sustainability ambitions.

Human Rights at Sea proposes a series of questions that businesses should consider when integrating human rights into their business model.

The benefits to business for paying attention to human rights are many, states the report:

- Improved reputation risk management
- Attracting investment
- Greater engagement with rights-holders such as workers, communities and suppliers
- Reduced costs arising from fewer adverse human rights impacts
- Attractiveness to Generation Y recruits
- Greater worker retention
- Better supply chain risk management

Reviewed by the team at the London-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, as well as the U.N. Global Compact (U.K.) and drafted alongside CLT environmental law, the new publication demonstrates the increasing need for the implementation of the U.N. Guiding Principles in the maritime environment for all maritime business enterprises as a matter of course, not as a matter of exception.

The Foreword has been written by Phil Bloomer, Executive Director of the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, who says: "This Human Rights at Sea publication is a welcome and important contribution to raise awareness about human rights responsibilities of businesses among a sector that has been largely absent from most discussions around the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights."

The charity's CEO, David Hammond, commented: "We are very grateful for all expert input by key stakeholders contributing to yet another one of our expanding core publications. Unfortunately, to date, the subject matter has not received the kind of engagement with that one would expect from businesses operating ethically and socially responsibly within the maritime supply chain. We therefore aim to drive change and we hope that leadership on this matter will start to be shown more widely by the shipping and fisheries industries. Meantime, our charity will continue to deliver relevant supporting guidance and free publications concerning human rights at sea that are well researched, objective and independently produced."

The document is available [here](#).

Human Rights at Sea is a registered charity based in England. Its aim is to explicitly raise awareness, implementation and accountability of human rights provisions throughout the maritime environment, especially where they are currently absent, ignored or being abused.

Source: [Maritime Executive](#), March 30, 2016.

South China Sea History Lesson: Parallels from the Paracels?

Euan Graham

Oceans of ink have been spilled on the South China Sea in recent years. I've added a bucket or two along the way. So it's always helpful to gain a fresh angle on a familiar problem. Satisfying, too, if you can get there by re-tracing history.

Toshi Yoshihara of the US Naval War College has written a campaign appraisal of the small-scale sea battle between China and South Vietnam, in 1974, for control of the Paracel islands.

Unfortunately there isn't space here to recount the details. It's a tidy piece of scholarship, exploiting the recent bloom in Chinese-language materials, shedding new light on Beijing's motives for, and conduct of, the operation. China's takeover of the Paracels is usually skirted over as a footnote by Western writers. Direct sources are hard to access (as often in history, the loser's side of the story stays untold). And South Vietnam was itself soon overrun in the much bigger drama of 1975.

Beijing's resort to a 'mix of conventional and irregular forces to meet its operational objectives' was, in part, a necessity forced on China by the shoestring resources then available. To Chinese observers, according to Yoshihara, 'the battle for the Paracels represents yet another example of how an enterprising and determined weaker side can beat the strong'. Yet, had either the weather or Vietnamese tactics been different on the day, the outcome could have turned. A 'false lesson thus lurks for the Chinese', Yoshira concludes.

Yoshihara notes the remarkable progression from the 'feeble force structure' of China's South Sea Fleet in the 1970s to what is now perhaps the best equipped in the PLA-Navy (PLA-N). Ballistic missile and nuclear attack submarines are currently based in Hainan 'about which Chinese leaders in 1974 could have only dreamed'.

Given China's transformation from brown to blue water navy, Yoshihara's key contention is therefore worth reflecting on:

Beijing's combined employment of military and civilian vessels in 1974 suggests a durable operational preference for hybrid warfare that is evident today in territorial disputes involving China.

That insight evokes a Chinese maritime way of war that embraces the legacy of People's War, under Mao, which 'helped hone the kinds of doctrine, personnel, command-and-control, and administrative structures well suited to combining conventional and irregular means'. Yoshihara speculates further that 'Such creative uses of civilian and

militia personnel date back centuries; there may be more continuity to current Chinese strategy in offshore disputes than is commonly acknowledged’.

He therefore sees clear parallels between Beijing’s *modus operandi* in the Paracels, circa 1974, and the 2012 Scarborough Shoal incident:

Chinese fishing boats triggered both crises by engaging in activities that, at least in the eyes of rival claimants, were illicit or provocative. Militia-crewed boats in 1974 and paramilitary ships in 2012 acted as China’s first line of defense, helping to probe the intentions and capabilities of their opponents while asserting Beijing’s claims. The noncombatant vessels enjoyed the protection of the PLA-N even as they served as the eyes and ears of the Chinese navy.

Another enduring lesson from 1974 was China’s strict insistence that its forces refrain from firing the first shot. That was ‘obligingly’ done by South Vietnam’s navy, allowing China to present its takeover as ‘the counter-attack in self-defence’. Yoshihara discerns that, in 2012, the Philippines at least did not repeat South Vietnam’s error in opening fire. Nonetheless, it was the arrest of Chinese fishermen at Scarborough Shoal by a Philippine Navy warship that provided the trigger for China’s maritime law enforcement (MLE) vessels to move in and gain effective control over the disputed feature.

On this point Yoshihara observes:

The civilian character of the Chinese vessels constrained their rivals’ navies. The South Vietnamese and Philippine navies were apparently loath to fire directly on lightly armed or unarmed civilian vessels, lest they risk major escalation or diplomatic fallout.

He argues naval modernisation has not altered China’s long-held preference for assigning maritime civilian assets to the frontline tasks of sovereignty enforcement and rights protection in the South and East China Seas. This has successfully managed the risks from Beijing’s strategically assertive approach. If anything, the much-more

powerful PLA-N of 2016 has less cause to joust directly with rival maritime sovereignty claimants, unless they take the bait by firing first on China's MLE vessels and aircraft.

Yoshihara's essay is also timely. China's multi-tiered 'cabbage strategy', composed of outlying fishing vessels, backed up by nearby maritime law enforcement and naval forces on, or over, the horizon is prompting alarm in Indonesia and Malaysia, that find themselves on the receiving end of what resembles a maritime insurgency.

Yoshihara, I should clarify, does not go that far. Mao's revolutionary maxim only called for the guerilla to swim, figuratively, like a fish in the sea. The South China Sea has no population and not much terra firma — although China is working on that.

To my mind, other 'revolutionary' warfare parallels can be argued. These could include: the strategic objective of contesting for control and legitimacy; the salience of psychological and morale factors; the relative quality of control over maritime 'territory'; and the blending of irregular and conventional military tactics. Time, moreover, is most often on the insurgents' side.

The insurgency parallel may not be welcome in the US, as counter-insurgency is not something that the West generally does well. Nor does it fit naturally within the maritime doctrinal toolkit. There may be something in the comparison for Southeast Asians, however. Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines have a great deal of combined experience in both insurgency and counter-insurgency; experience that far outweighs their naval and maritime strategic traditions. There could be indirect lessons to draw from, especially on the breadth and depth of effort required to counter China's challenge.

As for contemporary China, perhaps a 'hybrid' approach in the South China Sea, with People's War characteristics, is peculiarly suited to President Xi Jinping, given his personal attachment to revivalist political narratives, to China's maritime strategy, and his own brand of command and control.

I don't claim special insight into China's inner political workings, but it stands to reason that a multi-agency, multi-vector approach is one way to ensure Party supremacy in the coordination and setting of strategy on maritime 'core concerns'. The PLA remains fundamentally a Party army, subordinate to Party control. Yet, in terms of managing his own position, I would be surprised if Xi didn't see some tactical value in the 'cabbage strategy' as a check and balance on the military's autonomy in the maritime domain.

Whatever the truth of that, Toshi Yoshihara's essay reminds us that history can be a good guide to the future.

Source: [Interpreter](#), March 31, 2016.



India enhancing naval capacity to counter China influence

Maqbool Malik

Islamabad - India is heavily investing on building its naval capacity to increase maritime operations in western Indian Ocean with explicit goals to watch growing Chinese maritime presence.

This comes after China took over Pakistan's deep sea Gwadar port and set up its naval base at Djibouti.

Japan and the United States are also cooperating with India to cherish the goal, diplomatic sources told The Nation.

Chinese naval presence in the region assumed greater significance after its launching of multi billion dollars China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as part of One Belt, One Road project to connect its south western region with Gwadar port.

Gwadar port enjoys greater strategic significance as it lies outside the mouth of Strait of Hormuz which caters for 60 percent of world's hydrocarbon trade.

In contrast, India is pursuing connectivity plans parallel to the one by China.

Indian plans include access to central Asia through Iranian Chabahar port which is called North South Trade corridor.

“Indian Navy is undergoing phenomenal upgrade with the help of some other friendly countries,” a senior Pakistani diplomat said, adding New Delhi has already launched CPEC stonewalling efforts.

New Delhi made explicit its concern about CPEC earlier this month at Raisina Dialogue hosted by Indian Ministry of External Affairs which deliberated at length Chinese One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project with special reference to China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

At the Dialogue, inaugurated by Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the Indian government signaled New Delhi's concerns about Beijing's approach toward connectivity and the region more broadly.

In his presentation Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar even raised concerns regarding the criteria of newly established Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) in funding some projects under China's OBOR project.

He said this is a crucial reason why India, which is one of the founding members of the new bank, pushed for a provision in the charter of AIIB (that is expected to fund some OBOR projects) that requires project financing in disputed territory to have the agreement of the disputants.

In addition, he said there clearly are also concerns about the way China is pursuing OBOR, the motivations behind it, and particularly the kind of influence that Beijing might be seeking through it.

The foreign secretary elaborated on this at the Raisina Dialogue and also had a message for China, which has sought global multi-polarity:

"The key issue is whether we will build our connectivity through consultative processes or more unilateral decisions.

Our preference is for the former... But we cannot be impervious to the reality that others may see connectivity as an exercise in hard-wiring that influences choices".

He warned this should be discouraged, because particularly in the absence of agreed security architecture in Asia, it could give rise to unnecessary competitiveness.

Connectivity should diffuse national rivalries, not add to regional tensions.

Without naming China Pakistan Economic Corridor he said India is unlikely to give a formal endorsement of OBOR as a whole.

Source: [Nation](#), March 21, 2016.

Australia beefing up military as it looks at China

A stronger Australian navy will please US naval commanders, who want more firepower to offset the Chinese build-up in the South China Sea.

The United States has long pushed its allies not to rely so much on America's huge military forces and spend more on their own defence. Now, a conservative government in Australia wary of the military rise of China is planning an extensive arms build-up.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull this month committed to raising defence spending in five years to the equivalent of 2 per cent of the economy in perpetuity, a big increase that could influence the balance of power in the Pacific Ocean, experts say.

The decision is an example of how China's economic and military rise is forcing allies that have long relied on US defence spending to guarantee their own security to re-evaluate.

Chinese nuclear and diesel submarines have been tracked in the Eastern Indian Ocean in the past two years, according to James Brown, a military analyst at the University of Sydney. The more frequent operation of Chinese warships in waters close to Australia is a factor behind the plan to increase defence spending, which had fallen to its lowest level relative to the economy since the eve of the second world war, he said.

“The Chinese navy is getting more sophisticated and operating further from home,” Brown said in an interview. “Everyone is looking to increase their influence in the region.”

Australia plans to double the size of its submarine fleet, build nine frigates to hunt submarines, and buy eight spy planes and 72 F-35A fighter aircraft. There will be new anti-ship missiles and transport aircraft.

US Navy admiral accuses Beijing of ‘might makes right’ attitude over South China Sea
The ships and submarines will be equipped with weapons and other systems similar to those used by the US and Japanese navies, which should improve their ability to fight and operate together.

A stronger Australian navy will please US naval commanders, who want more firepower to offset the Chinese build-up in the South China Sea, where China’s decision to construct bases on disputed islands has raised fears of an inadvertent clash.

The US Seventh Fleet commander, Vice-Admiral Joseph Aucoin, last month publicly urged the Australian government to conduct naval patrols within 12 nautical miles of the occupied islands – a test of international sovereignty that the Chinese government would likely regard as provocative.

Australia’s new defence minister, Marise Payne, was non-committal toward the suggestion.

Like America’s other main allies in the Pacific, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, Australia has the delicate task of balancing its vital trade relationship with China with the military threat. China already has the largest navy and air force in Asia. As China grows, analysts expect it to seek greater influence in the region.

If war ever broke out, the Royal Australian Navy would be used to protect the huge ships that transport the country's minerals north. Missiles would defend the gas platforms in Northern Australia that provide energy for factories across Asia.

Australia will upgrade military runways and expand naval ports, in part to make it easier for US military aircraft and ships to visit. China has missiles that can strike American aircraft and ships at their bases in Japan, the headquarters of the US Seventh Fleet. Analysts say the United States wants to spread its forces across the region to avoid a Pearl Harbour-like attack, when the Japanese launched a surprise assault in 1941 to knock out the US Pacific Fleet.

“If you are concentrated like that you can create an incentive for them [the enemy] to hit you fast, early and very heavily,” said Ross Babbage, a former defence adviser to the Australian government, in an interview.

In many ways the island continent of Australia is the perfect military base. It separates the strategically important Indian and Pacific Oceans; it has the equipment, supplies and skilled workforce needed by forces operating a long way from home; and it has extensive areas of empty land and ocean that can be used for training.

The policy is likely to be good news for American arms manufacturers. Australia was the seventh-largest foreign buyer of US military equipment in 2013-14, according to the Defence Security Cooperation Agency, which oversees US foreign arms sales.

The White House is likely to be pleased, too. President Barack Obama recently complained, in an interview with the Atlantic magazine, that allies sometimes relied too much on the United States. “Free riders aggravate me,” he said.

Richard Armitage, the deputy secretary of state in George W. Bush's administration, has previously criticised liberal and conservative Australian governments for “free riding” on American defence spending. In an email, he praised the Turnbull government's plan,

especially for its navy, although he acknowledged that it may be up to future leaders to execute it.

“This will allow for much better defence of Australia and a much higher degree of cooperation with the United States, should the government of the day in Canberra so decide,” Armitage said.

Source: [South China Morning Post](#), March 21, 2016.

Indian Navy Updates Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009

Gurpreet S Khurana

On 12th February 2016, the Indian Navy released the Indian Maritime Doctrine 2015. It is an online version of the Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009, updated as on 2015. It may be recalled that the first ever edition of Indian Maritime Doctrine was published in April 2004, and the same was revised in August 2009.

The Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009 was updated to conform to the new maritime strategy document titled ‘Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy’ promulgated in October 2015. The new strategy supersedes the ‘Freedom of use the Seas - Indian Maritime Military Strategy’ (2007), which was the first-ever Indian maritime strategy document in the public domain.

This write-up aims to disseminate to the strategic and academic communities in India and abroad the specific need for updating the Indian Maritime Doctrine, 2009 and the salient amendments.

At the outset, it is necessary to comprehend the distinction between ‘doctrine’ and ‘strategy’. A ‘Military Doctrine’ flows from concepts, and shapes the development and

employment of military power. It is a collation of principles that guide the actions of a force in the way it organises, trains, fights and sustains itself in pursuit of national objectives; and places all its members and stakeholders on a common conceptual platform. On the other hand, a 'Military Strategy' is an overarching plan that articulates the 'ways' and 'means' of how a military force will be employed to meet the desired 'ends'. The doctrine, therefore, provides the conceptual framework to devise the strategy. Hence, the Indian Maritime Doctrine and Strategy documents together provide a holistic perspective of the Indian Navy towards development of maritime-military power and its employment to meet the national objectives.

It is clear from the above that the Doctrine is a 'superior' document, and the Strategy must necessarily draw from it. The 'shelf life' of a doctrine is relatively long. In the interim, however, a fundamental change may occur in a national stake, concept or objective. Such a change involves a doctrinal shift, and must be addressed at the first available opportunity. Such a need and opportunity arose during the compilation of the new strategy 'Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy' (2015), when it became necessary to update the base-document, viz. Indian Maritime Doctrine, 2009.

The 2009 document is thus updated at various places for new developments relevant to India. The new document also bears some changes with regard to nomenclature, and naval missions and tasks. However, three salient amendments to Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009 may be considered as the most pronounced reflections of the doctrinal changes in India's maritime-military thinking.

The foremost of these is the enlargement of India's areas of maritime interest south-eastwards and westwards. The South-East Indian Ocean, including sea routes to the Pacific Ocean and littoral regions; the Mediterranean Sea and its littoral region; and the West Coast of Africa and its littoral region are added as new 'secondary' areas of interest. (The original 2009 document had referred only to the littoral regions of Australia and Africa as 'secondary' areas).

The second amendment pertains to the reconfiguration of 'primary' and 'secondary' areas of interest and inter-se prioritization between the two. The South-West Indian

Ocean and Red Sea, which was earlier considered as 'secondary' areas, are now encompassed within the 'primary area'. Also, in the sequence of various 'primary' areas, the 'Persian Gulf and its littoral' now precedes the 'choke-points of the Indian Ocean', indicating that it is considered more crucial for India's interests. The rationale is clear – the Gulf is a major source of India's hydrocarbon imports and home to about seven million expatriate Indians. Additionally, while the Gulf of Oman, the Gulf of Aden and the Andaman Sea are contiguous to the seas (Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal) that have continued to be 'primary' areas of interest, these water bodies have been specifically named as 'primary' areas. Further, the original document had stated that other areas of national interest may be classified as 'secondary' areas based on considerations of 'Indian diaspora' and 'overseas investments'. The updated version adds "political relations" as another consideration.

The third major amendment relates to altered emphasis on maritime chokepoints of the Indian Ocean. In lieu of the two mid-ocean choke-points – the Six-degree Channel and the Eight/ Nine-degree Channel – the updated document attaches greater salience to the international straits that circumscribe the Indian Ocean at its extremities, such as Hormuz Strait, Bab-el-Mandeb, Sunda Strait and Lombok Strait. This serves to highlight the Ocean's geo-strategic 'exclusivity' for India. Significantly, Ombai-Wetar Straits located in the far south-eastern Indian Ocean is a new addition to the choke-points constituting India's 'primary' area of interest.

It is also notable that the Doctrine's updated online version 2015 conforms to the Indian Navy's new doctrinal hierarchy. The designation of Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009 was 'Indian Navy Book of Reference' (INBR)-8, which has been now been amended to 'Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.1'. The word "strategic" indicates that the document refers to the 'military-strategic' level (other levels are 'operational' and 'tactical'). Its first numeral indicates that it pertains to the function of 'naval operations' (other functions are 'technical', 'personnel', 'logistics', etc.). Its second numeral denotes the hierarchy within the function. Hence, NSP 1.1 refers to the apex document of naval operations at the military-strategic level. In a similar manner, 'Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime

Security Strategy' has been designated INSP 1.2, which refers to the second-highest document of naval operations the military-strategic level.

Source: National Maritime Foundation, March 22, 2016.

Japan's capacity building strategy at work in the Philippines

Tom Holcombe

An upcoming visit to the Philippines by a Japanese submarine and two destroyers underscores a deepening bilateral security relationship.

China's increasing activities in the South China Sea have made the Philippines a natural recipient of Japan's 'capacity building assistance'. Manila is not the only recipient, just the most prominent one.

There has been a convergence in the strategic threat perceptions of the two countries. Japan has stressed its interest in the freedom of navigation and 'open and stable seas', underscoring its dependence on sea lines of communication that run through Southeast Asia. Tokyo supports Manila's legal case against Beijing's asserted 'nine-dash line' and is an observer in that case. With Chinese land reclamation activities at its doorstep in the Spratly Islands, the Philippines are increasingly embracing like-minded partners, such as Japan and the US. To this end, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III welcomed Tokyo's new security legislation.

Japan's drive to develop relationships with Southeast Asian countries predates Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's return to power in late 2012. It was under the Democratic Party of Japan that Tokyo and Manila established a strategic partnership in 2011. However, the Japanese-Filipino security relationship has flourished with Abe's push to bring Japan's security weight more in line with its economic strength. This is evident in

bilateral defense co-operation, diplomatic policy initiatives, and joint training and exercises, as detailed below.

Bilateral defense cooperation

In April 2014 Japan established three principles that if satisfied would allow for the transfer of defence equipment and technology, marking a shift from what was in effect a prohibition on military sales. In late February this year Tokyo and Manila signed a defence equipment transfer agreement. This made the Philippines the first Southeast Asian country to have such an agreement with Japan. The agreement promotes the joint production and development of defence equipment and technology, and establishes a legal framework providing for this.

According to media reports, the first transfer under the new agreement may be at least five retired Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) TC-90 aircraft that the Japanese government plans to lease to the Philippine Navy. The aircraft could be used for visual monitoring over the Spratly Islands. Discussions on such a lease may take place during a possible visit to the Philippines by Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani in April.

Diplomatic policy initiatives

In February 2015 Japan revised its Overseas Development Assistance policy in line with its National Defense Guidelines. A key area of its development cooperation is promoting international peace and stability. This includes ensuring the safety of sea lines of communication. Securing maritime safety is one element of assistance for Southeast Asian countries.

Consistent with this revised policy, but predating it, is Tokyo's loan agreement to Manila of over ¥18 billion (\$200 million) for the 'Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project for the Philippine Coast Guard'. An additional loan agreement devised in 2011 and signed in 2015 provides for the provision of 10 patrol vessels to Manila.

Late last year the Japan International Cooperation Agency (which coordinates ODA), the Japanese Coast Guard, the Nippon Foundation and the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies jointly launched the Maritime Safety and Security Policy program. The program is aimed at enhancing the skills of coast guard personnel from Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines.

Joint training and exercises

JMSDF destroyers returning from the Gulf of Aden have participated in bilateral and multilateral exercises with Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines. The JMSDF and the Philippine Navy conducted bilateral exercises in May and June last year. The exercises focused on responding to unplanned encounters at sea, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and maritime safety.

In late 2014 Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force personnel participated as observers in the US-Filipino joint exercise PHILBEX15. That same month a JMSDF destroyer participated in a trilateral exercise with the US and the Philippines navies in a number of live fire, communications and close-in maneuvering drills.

These recent activities are demonstrative of Japan's 'capacity building assistance' to Southeast Asia, and to the Philippines in particular. This policy was identified in Japan's National Defense Guidelines released in late 2013 which noted:

As capacity building assistance is effective in stabilising the security environment and strengthening bilateral defense cooperation, Japan will promote it in full coordination with diplomatic policy initiatives, including the Official Development Assistance (ODA), and aligning it with joint training and exercises and international peacekeeping activities. Japan will also strengthen cooperation with relevant countries which actively provide such support, thereby expanding the range of countries receiving support as well as its scope.

'Capacity building assistance' has allowed Japan to present itself as a relevant power in the region with strategic interests that it will act to promote. In response, China is sensitive to what it sees as a challenge to its sovereignty and security interests. Any strategic maneuvering by Japan or country seeking 'capacity building assistance' from Japan will risk disapproval from China. Indeed, China has already criticised Manila's intent to lease the five TC-90 aircraft from Tokyo, and the upcoming visit to the Philippines by the Japanese submarine and two destroyers.

Japan's support can assist Southeast Asian countries in placing greater emphasis on maritime capabilities and surveillance. This is particularly true of the Philippines, which has historically concentrated on internal security issues.

The effectiveness of Japan's policy, in terms of the Philippines taking a greater role in managing its own security, goes beyond the Japanese contribution per se. The reference to 'cooperation with relevant countries' in the statement of policy quoted above recognises that Japan alone cannot be the sole effective provider of 'capacity building assistance' to, for instance, the Philippines. The effectiveness of Japan's contribution is complemented by other countries giving support. The Philippines has also received diplomatic and/or military support from the US, Australia and India. This patchwork of assistance to the Philippines and Southeast Asia more broadly can complement Japan's security objectives and reinforce its strategic position in the region and, by extension, that of the US.

Source: [Interpreter](#), March 22, 2016.

US 7th Fleet, Indo-Asia-Pacific Navies Increase Multilateral Cooperation

CHANGI, Singapore (NNS) -- Maritime leaders from U.S. 7th Fleet, Republic of Singapore Navy, Royal Malaysian Navy, Philippine Navy and Indonesian Navy met for a professional exchange of ideas to discuss operational topics aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19), March 19-20.

The multilateral meetings were designed for the participating Indo-Asia-Pacific navies to share knowledge and discuss lessons learned within the region.

During a 7th Fleet-hosted Southeast Asian Fleet Commander's Roundtable, senior navy leaders from the five nations had professional dialogues on various maritime issues such as multilateral exercises, freedom of navigation operations and maritime law, rules and norms. They also discussed ways to increase theater security cooperation through multilateral military interactions.

"From a 7th Fleet point of view, I really want to train together, I really believe in multilateralism," said Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, commander of U.S. 7th Fleet. "I think it's very important for us to operate very closely in exercises with navies in this region. That will only make us stronger, and will enable us to help with security, not only for man-made issues, but for natural disasters as well."

"Friendships are not forged at the really higher level, friendships are really forged at the individual level," said Rear Adm. Lew Chuen Hong, Republic of Singapore Navy fleet commander, at a reception aboard Blue Ridge March 20 after the two days of meetings had concluded.

Blue Ridge and its embarked 7th Fleet staff arrived in Singapore for a port visit March 13 to strengthen multilateral relationships in the region.

The U.S. 7th Fleet conducts forward-deployed naval operations in support of U.S. national interests in the Indo-Asia Pacific area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest numbered fleet, 7th Fleet interacts with 35 other maritime nations to build maritime partnerships that foster maritime security, promote stability and prevent conflict.

Source: [America's Navy](#), March 22, 2016.

Can't become superpower if you neglect Navy: Parrikar

He said during the keel-laying ceremony of a sailing vessel being built in Goa for the 1st circumnavigation of the globe by Indian Navy's women crew.

A nation which neglects its navy cannot become a superpower, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said on Sunday.

"A nation which neglects sea power doesn't really become a superpower and India needs to achieve this superpower status for which we need this kind of spirit in our people to really become a Blue Navy," Parrikar said during the keel-laying ceremony of a sailing vessel being built in Goa for the first circumnavigation of the globe by Indian Navy's women crew.

Once built, the yet-to-be-named sailing vessel will be manned by an all-women crew which will undertake circumnavigation of the globe.

"This is a first women's team and though I do not differentiate between men and women, still I think something (which) is first, you have to appreciate their courage," Parrikar said.

Before embarking on the circumnavigation a year from now, the all-women team will be training 2,000 km off the Indian coast near Mauritius.

Regarded as one of the best beach tourism destinations in the world, Mauritius also inspired a quip from Parrikar, who called it a "nice place" to go for training.

"You selected a nice place. You can go to Mauritius. I hope you will allow them to enjoy Mauritius," Parrikar said, wishing the team well and urging them to complete the circumnavigation in record time.

Source: [Business Standard](#), March 27, 2016.

Middle East Naval Commanders Conference Kicks Off In Doha

Qatari Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Ghanem Shaheen Al Ghanem attended the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference (MENC) which kicked off Wednesday, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported.

MENC was being held on the sidelines of the Doha International Maritime Exhibition DIMDEX 2016 at Qatar National Convention Centre.

The conference is attended by a group of naval local and international commanders and experts from Qatar, the US, India, Pakistan, Turkey, France, Canada and Italy to explore a range of topics related to the maritime domain and maritime theater of operations in the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian and Red Sea.

Keynote speakers tackled issue of the maritime environment and current and futuristic maritime requirements and challenges.

They also discussed oil installations in the seas, particularly the Arabian Gulf and ways of providing security and safety of maritime Maritime transportation lines either in the Arab Gulf or the Red Sea.

During the conference, Brig (Sea) Tariq Al-Obaidli presented Qatar's working paper entitled "The current maritime challenges and maritime future requirements."

His presentation tackled challenges facing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea and the maritime requirements of the GCC countries to confront these challenges in ordered to work out long-term united maritime strategic plans for the GCC states and the surrounding states.

Source: [Bernama](#), March 31, 2016.

US Navy's New Information System Cost Soars by Over \$1.66Bln

The US Navy's automated Information System (IS) project has quadrupled in cost, rising 477 percent on its official budget, and will take well over a decade to deploy, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report said.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — By contrast, the US Army's Information System program was \$368 million, or only 19 percent over budget, and is only three months behind schedule, the GAO said.

"The Navy's IS program will cost an extra \$1.66 billion, an increase of 477 percent over its original cost and take a total time of 13 years and nine month to implement," the report, which was released on Wednesday, stated.

The Air Force's program costs \$129 million, or 9 percent over budget, and six months behind schedule, the GAO added.

The US Department of Defense "did not demonstrate that it had an internal control to ensure that MAIS [major automated information system] programs not in compliance with reporting requirements were restricted from obligating funds on major contracts as required by law," the report noted.

Until the programs fully implement best practices for requirements management, the actual management of development efforts will likely be impaired, the GAO argued. The GAO has stated it continues to believe that improved transparency is needed, the report concluded.

Source: Military.com, March 31, 2016.



(Indian) Coast Guard ship commissioned

ICGS *Arnavesh*, a fast patrol vessel (FPV) of the Indian Coast Guard, was commissioned here on Monday by Vice-Admiral HCS Bisht, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command.

The 50-metre-long, 300-tonne vessel is the 16th vessel among 20 in this category being built by Cochin Shipyard. The vessel, propelled by triple Rolls Royce Kamewa water jets, can achieve maximum speed of 33 knots, carrying a crew of five officers and 34 men onboard. It is fitted with modern navigational and communication equipment, including night vision capabilities. Its main armament comprises 40/60 Bofors guns.

Vice-Admiral Bisht said the role of Coast Guard has now become very critical and crucial. It plays a very active role in coastal security, especially when it comes to terrorism from the sea.

Vice-Admiral Bisht also spoke highly of the role of Cochin Shipyard and the indigenous capability that the country has achieved in shipbuilding. “Today, CSL is not only building FPVs and other class of vessels but is also on the verge of delivering the first indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant,” he said.

Inspector-General of Coast Guard SP Sharma said that the FPV would primarily focus on surveillance at sea, coastal patrol, anti-smuggling operation, anti-piracy and search and rescue operations.

The Indian Coast Guard has 120 ships, 63 aircraft and 10,000 men, spread across its 42 Coast Guard stations, 5 Coast Guard air stations and 10 air enclaves.

A number of 125 ships of different types are under construction at different shipyards and the plan is to have at least 150 ships and 100 aircraft under operation across the length of the Indian coast by 2019.

Source: [Hindu](#), March 21, 2016.

Wärtsilä Nacos Platinum System selected for all three Maersk line new building projects

Wärtsilä has been contracted to supply the Wärtsilä Nacos Platinum integrated navigation, automation, and propulsion control systems for 27 new container vessels being built for Denmark based Maersk Line A/S. The contracts with Wärtsilä were signed in July and October 2015, and January 2016.

The vessels are under construction at yards in China and South Korea. With these orders, the latest 47 new buildings in the Maersk line fleet will all be fitted with the Wärtsilä Nacos Platinum system, thus emphasising its market application success. Wärtsilä will also provide a power management system and control consoles, as well as external communication facilities. The Wärtsilä equipment is scheduled for delivery to the yards commencing in April 2016.

The integrated Wärtsilä Nacos Platinum system covers the control systems for navigation, automation, power and propulsion. By integrating all these functions into a single system, the vessel can be navigated, controlled, and monitored from various onboard positions. The truly multi-functional operator stations enable unequalled flexibility and convenience.

The increasing levels of automation and ship wide connectivity of essential sources of information continue to present opportunities for further operational expenditure reductions. Enhanced data has the potential to underpin these cost savings and become the bedrock of future competitive advantage.

"The broad scope of solutions to be provided by Wärtsilä represents further evidence of the company's extensive portfolio to the global shipping industry. Wärtsilä's capability to offer owners and operators fully integrated navigation and automation control systems underlines the company's position as the market leader for such systems - especially for high specification container vessels," says Stephan Kuhn, Vice President, Electrical & Automation, Wärtsilä Marine Solutions.

"We are looking at a global service and support network as one parameter when systems are selected," says Jørgen Hansen, Maersk Line Ship Management. "Furthermore, with the ongoing and growing need for data availability, both internally as well as externally, Maersk Line finds the Wärtsilä Nacos Platinum an attractive solution. We also foresee many synergies across the 3 projects, not only in the design phase but also later when the vessels enter service, since operations with further innovation and developments are simpler and faster with one single supplier responsible for the whole system, rather than with several."

Wärtsilä has more than 50 years of experience in providing integrated navigation, automation, communications, and propulsion control systems for all types of ships. The company's Electrical & Automation capabilities feature unique sector competences and a broad scope of offerings, including dynamic positioning technology, power supply and conversion, safety and security, entertainment systems as well as sensor, sonar and underwater communications technology for the marine, naval and offshore markets.

Source: [Stockhouse](#), March 21, 2016.

Cuba, US Sign Memorandum on Maritime Navigation

Aiswarya Lakshmi

Representatives of Cuba and the United States signed in Havana a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in areas of hydrography and geodesy to improve the safety of maritime navigation.

Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis, the Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, and Col. Candido Alfredo Regalado Gomez, Chief of Cuba's National Office of Hydrography and Geodesy (ONHG), have signed the MoU.

“NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) has a strong interest in both improving navigational safety and in protecting the marine environment in the heavily travelled and vibrant waters between our two countries in the Straits of Florida,” said Russell Callender, Ph.D., assistant NOAA administrator for the National Ocean Service. “We welcome this agreement and the progress it represents.”

“Improved navigation services are important for commercial mariners and individual boaters alike,” said Ambassador DeLaurentis, “and it is particularly important as authorized trade and authorized travel increase between the two countries.”

The MOU calls for cooperation in the areas of hydrography, oceanography, geodesy and related services of mutual interest. One of the major focuses will be to improve maritime navigation safety including efforts to ensure the accuracy of both electronic and paper charts, eliminate charting overlaps and fill in gaps in navigational chart coverage.

“This MOU will allow us to fill gaps in essential navigational data, working on a practical level with our Cuban counterparts,” said Kathryn Ries, deputy director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey. “The U.S. works with hydrographic offices of all nations that have waters adjacent to the United States and our territories, and this agreement improves the exchange of charting information with Cuba as well.”

Source: [Maritime Professional](#), March 22, 2016.

VesselBot: Smarter chartering

Athens: Earlier this month Greek Cypriot startup company VesselBot was chosen among 1,700 companies around the globe to participate at PortXL, a Dutch accelerator based at the port of Rotterdam.

PortXL is the first accelerator program for tech startups in port related industries. It was initiated by the Port of Rotterdam with support from the likes of Van Oord, Vopak, Boskalis and Damen.

This week VesselBot will present its progress to an audience of over 1,000 people. Vesselbot is a SaaS enabled marketplace that provides commercial shipping participants, charterers and vessel owners, strategic, operating, and financial efficiencies, by enabling them to identify the best possible counterparty, utilising the least company resources, at a significantly lower cost than the traditional way the market operates today.

“Think of the benefits brought to their respective markets by disruptive technologies introduced in the logistics sector for example by Flexport or Transfix and the benefits reaped by market participants; couldn’t the shipping industry benefit as well by utilising such tools, solutions, technologies?” muses VesselBot’s ceo Constantine Komodromos. Komodromos says shipping is “miles behind” similar industries such as aviation when it comes to technological development.

“Smart shipping in all senses is a must, and I think that despite the cultural shift required for it, there will be change in the market towards smart shipping; it may take some time but I would expect that this would occur pretty quickly especially if big players start adopting a different standpoint in the market towards this direction,” Komodromos contends.

Komodromos suggests that today’s chartering process is “quite inefficient” with data too fragmented. VesselBot’s artificial intelligence is a solution, he says.

“The automations offered through our platform, like online bidding and negotiation of the transportation cost, as well as the charter party terms enable users to become far more efficient and effective in concluding their business transactions,” concludes Komodromos.

Source: [Splash24/7](#), March 28TH, 2016.

Hyundai Merchant Heading for Bankruptcy ?

Aiswarya Lakshmi

A bankruptcy of Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) would become the biggest ever in the shipping sector, and the creditors seem on the way to taking over control with the shipping group.

Without further government support, bankruptcy is growing closer for Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) after the company's bondholders rejected the company's proposed debt rescheduling plan, says Alphaliner.

"The potential bankruptcy of the financially troubled South Korean carrier would be the largest-ever in container shipping. Based on the total vessel container capacity operated by the respective insolvent carriers, a failure of HMM would dwarf all previous bankruptcies in this sector," said Alphaliner, noting that the company's survival seems to depend on a government bail-out.

The negotiations for charter rate reductions from shipowners over the past month have also failed.

Meanwhile, Hyundai Motor Group will not take over Hyundai's troubled shipping affiliate HMM, whose creditors recently rejected a debt rescheduling.

The government, says a source, recently suggested that Hyundai Glovis, a logistics affiliate of Hyundai Motor, should manage the nearly bankrupt shipping company. The government reportedly considers both Hyundai Motor Chairman Chung Mong-koo and Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jung-eun as part of the Hyundai family oners and thus responsible for HMM.

Recentl, the nation's second-largest shipping company said in a regulatory filing that "it filed for co-management with its creditors" to tide over its liquidity crunch through a self-rescue plan.

The state-run Korea Development Bank and other creditors are to decide whether to approve the proposal by March 29. If approved, the company's maturing debts will be rolled over and part of them will be rescheduled.

HMM has decided to sell its stake in the Busan-based Hyundai Pusan New-Port Terminal Co. in an attempt to return to liquidity.

The Korean Minister of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) Kim Young-suk earlier this week advised the company not to merge with its compatriot Hanjin Shipping as he told The Korean Economic Daily that the merger "would be a huge loss for the Korean shipping industry if we lose one of them that has maintained its hard-won membership."

The company has 4.7 trillion won in total debt and 1.8 trillion won was borrowed from creditor banks. HMM has to repay the debt of 120 billion won by April 7.

Source: [Maritime Professional](#), March 28, 2016.



Arctic Still Threatened by Oil Drilling, Atlantic Coast Spared

Tim Donaghy

President Obama reversed course on a plan to allow oil drilling off the Atlantic coast — but laid plans for new drilling in the Arctic and the Gulf of Mexico.

Yesterday, the Department of the Interior reversed course on a plan to allow oil drilling off the Atlantic coast — but laid plans for new drilling in the Arctic and the Gulf of Mexico. The removal of the Atlantic from consideration is a huge victory for coastal communities from Virginia to Georgia, who stood firm against big oil companies eager to drill off their shores.

But it wasn't all good news.

Expanding oil leasing in the Arctic and the Gulf is flatly incompatible with the strong climate commitments that President Obama made in Paris last year, and with the joint pledge to fight climate change that he made with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau just last week. But the game isn't over yet.

This plan is now open for public comment, and as Atlantic coast communities have shown, activism gets results. The administration will release a final version later this year, so there is still a chance for President Obama to show true climate leadership by keeping federally-owned fossil fuels in the ground.

The Five-Year Plan That Could Last a Century

The draft Five-Year Program released yesterday will, when finalized, govern oil and gas leasing in federal offshore areas from 2017 to 2022.

As currently proposed, the program would expand oil leasing in the Arctic and the Gulf of Mexico, even as it protects the Atlantic coast from future drilling. Because oil companies must constantly be searching for new oil reserves, companies like Exxon, Shell, and BP are already sizing up these new drilling opportunities.

Here's how it would work.

Should the 13 lease sales currently scheduled in the proposal go forward, oil companies will bid on offshore parcels and conduct exploratory drilling on the most promising ones. If oil or gas is discovered, the companies will begin to construct permanent infrastructure — drilling platforms, pipelines, refineries — to bring those fossil fuels to market. All this infrastructure comes at a steep cost, one that companies will want to make back by selling oil for decades to come.

This means that if President Obama allows these lease sales to go forward, he risks “locking in” investments that will make it harder for us to transition away from oil towards clean energy.

We already know that we need to leave about one-third of the world's known oil reserves in the ground in order to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius. In Paris, world leaders pledged to work toward an even more ambitious target of 1.5 degrees, which would allow for even less oil extraction.

We already have more oil than we can safely burn. Searching for new oil reserves is a counter-productive move that would undermine President Obama's commitments on climate change.

What's more, the impacts of this policy will live on well after his administration ends. While this Five-Year Plan ends in 2022, any leases sold could lead to decades of oil extraction, and the carbon released by burning that oil will stay in the atmosphere for up to a century. With this decision, the president risks locking us into fossil fuel infrastructure that will compromise climate action for decades.

Act on Climate, Save the Arctic

Just last week, President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau released a wide-ranging statement pledging joint action to protect the Arctic and address climate change. In doing so, they committed to imposing a “climate test” on oil and gas development in the Arctic, and only authorizing such activities that are consistent with “national and global climate and environmental goals.”

The Interior Department reiterated that pledge yesterday when it released the proposed program. Applying a “climate test” to decisions about offshore oil extraction is a significant step for President Obama. Taken together with his rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline and his recent moratorium on new coal leases, this is further evidence that the president is gradually aligning U.S. energy policy with his climate pledges.

Despite all of this, the U.S. Arctic Ocean is still included in the proposed program.

By any rational assessment, no Arctic oil projects could ever pass such a climate test. A recent study found that 100 percent of Arctic oil is “unburnable” in a world where we want to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius. Any oil found in the Arctic wouldn’t come on the market until the 2030s, by which time the transition to clean energy would be well under way. Given the lack of infrastructure in the Arctic, the short drilling season, the harsh offshore conditions, and the glut of existing oil reserves, any Arctic oil would only be consumed in a scenario where global temperature increase has soared to 3, 4 or 5 degrees Celsius — climate catastrophe.

A plan with Arctic oil drilling is a plan for climate disaster — and that’s even before considering the impossibility of cleaning up an oil spill in the Arctic Ocean.

There Is Still Time to Act

Although the president’s rhetoric is encouraging, there are already three lease sales currently scheduled for Alaskan waters and ten for the Gulf of Mexico between now and 2022. It is a significant first step to apply a “climate test” to the U.S. and Canadian

Arctic, but that test should also be applied in the Gulf of Mexico and to all federal fossil fuels.

More significantly, the clock is ticking on President Obama's time in office and no one knows who our next president will be. Rather than leaving the door open on whether or not offshore oil and gas stays in the ground, President Obama must act now to end new oil and gas leasing in the Arctic and in the Gulf of Mexico.

Source: [GreenPeace](#), March 16, 2016.

Not a Fish Tale: Humans Are Ingesting Plastic Thanks to Ocean Pollution

Dahr Jamail

Humans generate more than 300 million tons of plastic annually -- an amount equal to the combined body weight of the entire global adult human population -- and nearly half of the plastic is only used one time before it is tossed away to eventually find its way to the oceans. So it should come as little surprise that by 2050, it is a virtual certainty that every seabird on the planet will have plastic in its stomach.

Recent estimates indicate that upwards of 8 million tons of plastic are added to the planet's oceans every year, the equivalent of a dump truck full of plastic every minute. That is enough plastic to have led one scientist to estimate that people who consume average amounts of seafood are ingesting approximately 11,000 particles of plastic every year.

The earth's oceans will have more plastic than fish by 2050, according to a January report published by the World Economic Forum.

Experts with whom Truthout spoke on the topic confirmed that these trends are likely to continue. Biological oceanographer Dr. Debora Iglesias-Rodriguez, with the National

Oceanography Centre at Britain's University of Southampton, is very concerned about public indifference to the urgency of the situation.

"Marine pollution is a big issue," Iglesias-Rodriguez told Truthout. "There is this idea that oceans have unlimited inertia, but nanoparticles of plastic getting into marine animals and the food chain are affecting fish fertility rates, and this affects food security and coastal populations. Pollution is having a huge impact on the oceans and is urgent and needs to be dealt with."

"Unexpected Results"

In the North Pacific Ocean, there exists what has become known as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," a phenomenon scientists know as the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre.

Miriam Goldstein, a researcher at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, warned Truthout that by adding massive amounts of plastic into the oceans, humans are causing large-scale change to the oceans' entire ecological system.

Goldstein is the lead author of a study that revealed just how deeply into the oceanic ecosystem plastic has already embedded itself.

"We found eggs on the pieces of plastic, and these were sea skater [insect] eggs," Goldstein said. "Sea skaters naturally occur in the gyre and are known to lay their eggs on floating objects. So we found that the amount of eggs being laid had increased with the amount of plastic."

The North Pacific Subtropical Gyre's eastern section, located between Hawai'i and California, is estimated to be about twice the size of Texas. According to Goldstein, this vast "garbage patch" contains an "alarming amount" of plastic garbage, the majority of which is comprised of very small-size pieces.

Goldstein's study shows how the immense amount of plastic is creating consequences for animals across the marine food web.

Another Scripps study shows that nearly 10 percent of the fish collected during a trip to the gyre had plastic waste in their stomachs.

Published in Marine Ecology Progress Series, the aforementioned study (authored by Peter Davison and Rebecca Asch) estimates that fish at intermediate ocean depths in the North Pacific Ocean could be ingesting plastic at the staggering rate of 12,000 to 24,000 tons per year.

Yet plastic will not likely be going away anytime soon. The use of plastic bags around the world has increased by 20 times in the last 50 years. One-third of all plastic packaging then escapes collection systems, and a large percentage of that plastic eventually ends up in the oceans, according to the World Economic Forum report.

Only 5 percent of plastics are effectively recycled, and the production of plastics is expected to increase by at least 1.12 billion tons by 2050.

"Our work shows there could be potential effects to the ocean ecosystem that we can't expect or predict," Goldstein said. "There are five subtropical gyres, one in each ocean basin, and they are natural currents. They are vast areas of the oceans; together they comprise the majority of the area of the oceans. So altering them on a large scale could have unexpected results on all kinds of things."

Ocean 3.0?

The amount of plastic floating in the Pacific Gyre has increased 100-fold in the past four decades. Meanwhile, phytoplankton counts are dropping, overfishing is causing dramatic decreases in fish populations, decreasing ocean salinity is intensifying weather extremes, and warming oceans are speeding up melting in Greenland, the Arctic and in Antarctica.

One warning of humanity's increasingly deleterious impact on the oceans comes from prominent marine biologist Jeremy Jackson of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. In an article published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Jackson emphasizes that, without profound and prompt changes in human behavior, we will cause a "mass extinction in the oceans with unknown ecological and evolutionary consequences."

The statement might sound extreme, until one considers the extent to which we impact the oceans, whether we realize it or not. As science journalist Alanna Mitchell has written about the oceans: "Every tear you cry ... ends up back in the ocean system. Every third molecule of carbon dioxide you exhale is absorbed into the ocean. Every second breath you take comes from the oxygen produced by plankton."

Dr. Wallace J. Nichols, a research associate at the California Academy of Sciences, told Truthout he finds plastic on every beach he visits across the globe, and added, "Probably every sea turtle on the planet interacts with plastic at some point in its life."

Not only is Nichols intimately familiar with the pollution crisis plastic poses to the oceans, but also he is well acquainted with the oceanic destruction already underway due to anthropogenic climate disruption (ACD).

He describes sea turtles as a "poster species" for the impacts of ACD: He said their eggs "are literally cooking on beaches now because the temperatures have moved out of the tolerable range."

"You often see the polar bear used as the poster species for climate change, but I think sea turtles are just as good of a poster species because they are everywhere and they are already being impacted as the ocean warms," Nichols added.

In addition to ACD and plastic, he notes that we are introducing too much pollution into the oceans, and taking too much out of them by way of overfishing.

"We're putting too much in, in all forms of pollution; we're taking too much out by fishing, overfishing and bycatch; and we're destroying the edge of the ocean, the places where there is the most biodiversity, reefs, mangroves, seagrass etc.," he said. "Those are the three big buckets.... Almost every threat to the ocean falls into one of those. We need to put less in, take less out and protect the edges by making some of them off limits to human activity."

Nichols is deeply concerned by the pace at which negative changes are occurring across the oceans. He said that every time scientists have attempted to predict future scenarios, the pace seems to only quicken.

According to Nichols, despite scientists' ongoing attempts to adjust their models to keep up with the quickening of feedback loops and other issues, we are still unable to keep pace with the dramatic changes.

He believes "the clock in many ways has already run out," due to the fact that we are still increasing our use of fossil fuels, while continuing to generate so much plastic and pollution. Nichols says he is frustrated by the fact that despite there being more conversation about these issues now than ever before, that dialogue is still not translating into societal change or evolution.

Truthout asked Nichols if he sees the future becoming worse for the oceans.

"We're living in it now, from a climate change/fisheries/pollution/habitat destruction point of view, our nightmare is here; it's the world we live in," he said. "You see it everywhere now, the collapsing fisheries, the changes in the Arctic and the hardships communities that live there are having to face, the frequency and intensity of storms -- everything we imagined 40 years ago when the environmental movement was born, we're dealing with those now."

Nichols concluded by describing three possible oceans. Ocean 1.0 is the pristine natural ocean, while Ocean 2.0 is the ocean we have now, which is a result of having, as he described it, lived under "the petroleum product regime."

"Ocean 3.0 is the future ocean, and it can either be a dead ocean, or we can really come up with some very innovative solutions that right now people aren't even talking about," he said.

To Nichols, a positive vision of Ocean 3.0 would entail new ways of getting food from the ocean that don't involve long lines and bottom trawling, both extremely destructive ways to fish commercially.

It would involve a whole new way of thinking about our packaging and a zero-waste approach to consumer goods, which, he believes, is all possible -- if we can muster the political and personal motivation.

"We could have a healthy ocean in 50 years if we make some bold moves," he said. Those moves would need to include "a cleaner, more responsible set of actions for how we get energy from the ocean and how we use them as a source of food."

Without those actions happening en masse, Nichols fears we are headed for the "dead ocean" version of our future.

"The dire predictions -- they are already here in many, many ways," he said.

Source: [Truth-out](#), March 21, 2016.

Protecting our marine life (Indonesia)

Kamal Siddiqi

Some months back, the Jakarta Post reported that in her first year of leadership, Indonesia's Marine Affairs and Fisheries Minister (KKP) Susi Pudjiastuti ordered the sinking of 106 foreign boats that were fishing illegally in Indonesian waters.

The minister said that the sinking of the illegal boats was proof that the government was serious about eradicating illegal fishing and boosting the country's sea security. She also said that lack of law enforcement in fisheries was one of Indonesia's problems for investors, adding that she was committed to cracking down on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF). Analysts say IUUF is a global crime, not merely illegal fishing and is similar to slavery, human trafficking, animal smuggling and drugs. Pakistan is also a victim.

While we have remained silent Indonesia also plans to tighten punishments for illegal fishing. Data show that the illegal fishing boats that were sunk in the first year of the operation were from the Philippines (34), Vietnam (33), Thailand (21), Malaysia (6), Papua New Guinea (2) and China (1). Recently, the US and Indonesia have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Cooperation. Under it, the US will provide substantial assistance and training to support conservation of marine biodiversity, procure technologies to ensure the shared maritime security interests of both countries, and help promote sustainable development in the marine sector.

President Barack Obama and President JokoWidodo affirmed the urgent need to combat, prevent, deter, and eliminate IUUF in Indonesia's waters. This is aligned with Widodo's policy of ordering the destruction of neighboring countries' fishing boats operating illegally in Indonesia's waters, including the sinking of 38 poachers' vessels to commemorate Indonesia's 70th Independence Day. Despite protests from the foreign ministry that the policy could hurt Indonesia's relations with neighboring countries, Widodo was unmoved. This is a lesson for us to learn.

Indonesia has the world's second-largest fishery industry, and the country's coastal and marine ecosystem has been in decline for decades. For instance, 65% of Indonesian reefs are now considered threatened from overfishing. Climate change is exacerbating the situation, as warmer and more acidic seawater is expected to reduce Indonesian fish catches by an average of 20% and up to 50% in some fishing areas. We are in similar waters.

Now let us look at Pakistan. Aside from the Pakistan Navy, we have two independent entities that are supposed to guard our coasts. One is the Pakistan Coast Guard and the other is the Maritime Security Agency (MSA). With both agencies charged with almost the same thing, it is difficult to pin blame or responsibility. We are told that the country incurs revenue losses of billions of rupees every year due to the illegal fishing activities of Indians, who deliberately violate Pakistan's sea limits.

An MSA official told a workshop held recently that illegal fishing activities of Indian vessels was a key threat to fisheries resources. The official observed that they are not inadvertent crossers as widely believed here. Most Indian boats are fitted with the global positioning system (GPS), which shows that fishermen are well aware of their locations. Second, they are often caught fishing 100 nautical miles inside our waters.

Around 600 Indian vessels enter Pakistani waters for fishing illegally every month while the revenue loss of four-month of illegal Indian fishing had been estimated to be around Rs8 billion. Recently, MSA had also confiscated an Iranian boat with illegal oil and fine quality drugs.

So far so good. But the problem is that it is not the Indians and the Iranians that are the real problem. Taiwan-registered fish factories are operating for several years in our waters and have not been apprehended. These factories, some of whom are also registered in the Philippines, come into our waters and use illegal nets to scrape away the rich sea life from our seas. Much of what is harvested is thrown away while a large portion is processed and packed on these factories to be transported to different markets. None of the money earned by these ships ends up in Pakistan. At least none of

the legal earnings. When are we going to target them instead of focusing on the smaller fish?

Source: [Express Tribune](#), March 28, 2016.

Dominica explores new strategies to deal with maritime oil spills

ROSEAU, Dominica (CMC) — A three-day National Workshop on Contingency Planning began here on Tuesday with a senior International Maritime Organisation (IMO) consultant praising the island for seeking to develop strategies to deal with oil spills.

“I’m glad that Dominica gets it and that’s one of the reasons why we are here today, its to help preserve the marine environment, to be prepared in case there’s ever an oil spill incident,” the consultant, Paul Lattanzi, told the workshop, which is also being facilitated by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean.

He said most of the work to be covered during the workshop applies across all different kinds of incidents, not just oil spills, but it can help prepare for incidents such as hurricanes.

“We have two goals for our activities for this week and the first is to raise awareness and preparedness for an oil spill, and that’s a big part of what we’re doing here today,” Lattanzi said, adding “you are encouraged ... [to talk about] about what would we do in the case of a major oil spill, “What you want to do is remove confusion in the wake of an incident and it’s always good to know what each other’s plans are, what the responsibilities are in the case of a major incident,” Lattanzi noted.

The second goal of the workshop is to develop the contingency plan for Dominica for a major environmental disaster, particularly one involving oil.

“This plan is going to ...be reviewed probably by most all of you and your agencies and you can add to and contribute to that plan, and then once we add the plan, we hope to have exercises in the future that we try out that plan and exercise it,” Lattanzi added.

The workshop targets senior government officials from national authorities with responsibility for implementation and enforcement of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

The workshop was told that, while Dominica is not among oil-producing countries, there was still a need to develop a contingency plan.

Elliott Taylor, who is also an IMO consultant and a facilitator, worked on the responses to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska and Deep Water Horizon’s Spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

“Of course we would never see something like that here. You don’t have oil exploration production here, but you do have other risks, most of them not too challenging because they’re mostly going to be light oils, but you do have a lot of vessel traffic in the region and sometimes spills happen from other sources outside of what you may be thinking and that’s what we really want to be aware of and be prepared to deal with,” Taylor stated.

In addition, the participants will be introduced to a tool which has been developed to help gauge preparedness to deal with or manage an oil spill.

“That tool is something that really is being used throughout, not just the Caribbean but worldwide, in terms of really defining and benchmarking where your preparedness is; are you just starting, are you somewhere intermediate or are you very accomplished in terms of your preparedness,” Taylor said.

Source: [Jamaica Observer](#), March 31, 2016.