



MAKING WAVES

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Nigeria and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

Piracy and Security News

On Monday, March 14, 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari visited Malabo, the capital of the oil rich Central African Republic of Equatorial Guinea for talks with President ObiangNguemaMbasogo on “further measures to protect the people and resources of the Niger Delta and Gulf of Guinea”. Equatorial Guinea, the former Spanish colony, one of sub-Sahara’s biggest oil producers, has been governed by President Mbasogo since 1979, making him Africa’s longest serving leader. The outcome of the visit, first of its kind since President Buhari came to power, saw the two countries sign an agreement on the establishment of a combined Maritime Policing and Security Patrol Committee. The conclusion and signing of the agreement are expected to enhance security in the Gulf of Guinea and help in curbing maritime crimes such as piracy, crude oil theft, sabotage of oil rigs and arms smuggling. Piracy and Security News.

The outcome of the visit is the crux of this short piece. It will seem we are back on a familiar path. Another Gulf of Guinea agreement! While it is not in doubt that, as Buhari pointed out on being conferred a national honour for his “personal integrity and exemplary leadership”, “there had never been a time in history for greater neighbourliness, for security and economic stability than now”, and that it is absolutely necessary to bring everyone on board in the fight against maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, achieving a remarkable degree of success with such agreements without a better understanding of the nature of the scourge is doubtful. We have had these agreements over time yet, the Gulf of Guinea remains the epicentre of maritime criminality in Africa. Most of Buhari’s official trips since he assumed the mantle of leadership have resulted in quick gains for the country, this, unfortunately, may not be so. Oil theft, and petro-piracy in the Nigerian waters and wider Gulf of Guinea maritime space present a completely different challenge. What exactly is the nature of the scourge

the region is grabbing with? What can we do differently this time to reverse the trend? But first, what have we done so far?

The Gulf of Guinea is a 6.000 km coastline from Senegal to Angola, covering entire islands on the coastline, two geopolitical and economic regions: the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States, both of which are affiliates of the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the African Union. Several forms of illegal activities at sea exist in the region, including illegal, unreported unregulated fishing, illegal arms trade and goods counterfeiting. Petro-piracy has however, remained a dominant form of criminality in the region, and hence, the focus of this piece. The GoG is the leading sub-Saharan African oil producing region and home of the continent's main oil-producing countries: Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Nigeria not only is the largest oil producer in the region, the country has struggled to meet the domestic energy needs of her citizens as a result of moribund refineries and oil transport infrastructure; hence, heavy reliance on export of oil and importation of refined petroleum produce to meet local consumption. The resultant import-export industry, according to the Petroleum Revenue Special Task Force headed by NuhuRibadu on fuel subsidy, has become institutionalised by petrol subsidy programme of the Federal Government, costing the country several billions of dollars yearly and encouraging illicit activities. Nigerian maritime space, therefore, witnesses significant oil and gas related activities which have become easy targets for pirates and oil thieves.

Several figures on the volume of Nigeria's crude oil stolen every day exist. I don't want to delve into the controversy, but at 300,000 barrels per day, as noted by former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, the impact is the obvious. At \$120 per barrel in 2014, the loss of 300,000 barrels daily to oil thieves is certainly a crime of monumental proportion. At the Chatham House, London during an interview with Christina Katsouris, Associate Fellow, Africa Programme, sometime last year, I was made to understand that oil theft represents a criminal enterprise managed by Nigeria's oil mafia. Empirical investigation on the subject has gone on to not only reinforce her position but also highlight the existence of piracy infrastructure or a value-chain. What

that means is that piracy in the GoG is cut from a different cloth; it's a business enterprise, an organised economic crime, which should be understood for what it is to develop the right policy mix geared towards reversing the trend. This is the direction President Buhari's administration should be looking as bilateral and multilateral agreements are consolidated.

Where are we coming from? In the last years, successive Nigerian governments have undertaken some policy measures towards addressing the scourge of oil theft and petro-piracy. A task force on national strategic infrastructure was set up. A special security outfit and militarisation of the Niger Delta region soon followed. There have been increased enforcement measures against the maritime trade in stolen oil which involved the Nigerian Navy being saddled with the task of registering vessels in Nigerian waters, destroying markets for illegal oil, introduction of the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, enforcement and public education efforts against artisanal refining etc. The late President Musa Yar' Adua also put in place an amnesty programme, what Micheal Watts of the African Studies Centre, University of California, Berkeley would describe as an attempt at buying the Niger Delta peace. How much of that has Nigeria bought? And has there been significant reduction in crude theft and petro-piracy since the peace-buying initiative? Whereas the wave of instability has waned, crude theft and petro-piracy have been on the increase. If you make armed struggle impossible, you make full blown crude theft inevitable. It appears we have all come to this realisation.

At the regional level, there are for instance, agreements on fisheries between Senegal and her neighbours; Operation Prosperity, involving Nigeria, Niger, Togo and Benin under Zone E of the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy launched in 2008; and the trans-regional rapprochement between ECCAS and ECOWAS that led to the Yaoundé Summit in February 2014. These national and regional initiatives have been accompanied by strategic global interventions and measures such as the US' African Command, the EU's Critical Maritime Routes in the Gulf of Guinea, G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group among others. China has also been involved in this regard, with

the country donating \$100,000 to the West and Central African Maritime Security Trust Fund of the IMO in 2013.

Despite these and several other measures, the scourge continues to ravage the region. According to the International Maritime Bureau, between January and June 2015, of the 199 actual (boarded and hijacked) attacks across global piracy hot spots, the Gulf of Guinea had the second highest (15 cases) after Indonesia (51). Of the 15 cases, Nigeria recorded seven. This certainly does not take cognisance of oil theft activities within Nigerian waters and the Niger Delta creeks.

Source: [Punch](#), 18 Apr 2016

Sri Lankan Navy to safeguard Maldives, Straits of Malacca and Singapore

ANI Press

The Sri Lankan Navy will initiate a broader maritime security program to provide safeguard in the region from Maldives to Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

Captain AkramAlavi said the program was initiated based on a proposal forwarded by Prime Minister RanilWickremesinghe, reports Lanka page.

The Navy will deploy several vessels to strengthen the security in the region to prevent illegal activities taking place through sea along the busiest straits used for international navigation.

The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are the main seaway connecting the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and together are the shortest route for tankers trading between the Middle East and far East Asian countries.

Captain Alavi said three ships belonging to the Navy will undergo training in Maldives and Indonesia at present.

SLNS Samudra has currently commenced the relevant training in Indonesia, he said.

The program of the Sri Lankan Navy is scheduled to conclude in 2020.

Source: [ANI](#), 18 April 2016

Security Council deplores maritime tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea

IBNS Press

The United Nations Security Council has deplored the recent maritime tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea that resulted in up to 500 deaths when an overcrowded boat capsized en route from Libya to Europe, emphasizing the need for better coordination of efforts to deal with the smuggling of migrants.

In a press statement, the members of the Council expressed grave concern at the proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, including off the coast of Libya.

The members of the Security Council expressed their concern at the implications for regional stability posed by transnational organized crime and illicit activities such as human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants and condemned and deplored the said acts which undermine further the process of stabilization of Libya and endanger the lives of people, the statement said.

Extending its deepest condolences to all those affected by the tragedy, the Council underlined the need bring the perpetrators of the acts to justice.

The Council also called for the full implementation of resolution 2240 (2015), which is intended to disrupt the organized criminal enterprises engaged in migrant smuggling and prevent the loss of life.

Expressing its strong support to countries in the region affected by the smuggling of migrants, the Council emphasized the need to improve coordination of efforts in order to strengthen an effective multilateral response to this common challenge, and in order to protect vulnerable migrants from being victimized by human traffickers.

The Council also urged all Member States, including countries of origin, destination and transit, to cooperate with one another and with relevant international and regional organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in addressing illicit migration flows, and dismantling smuggling networks in the region.

In addition, the Council reemphasized that migrants, including asylum-seekers and regardless of their migration status, should be treated with humanity and dignity and that their rights should be fully respected.

In this regard, the Council urged all States to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.

Earlier this week, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as many as 500 people had lost their lives when an overcrowded boat carrying refugees and migrants sank in the Mediterranean Sea at an unknown location between Libya and Italy.

The 41 survivors of the incident which could be one of the worst involving refugees and migrants in the past 12 months include 37 men, 3 women and a 3-year-old child who were rescued by a merchant ship and taken to Kalamata, in the Peloponnese peninsula of Greece, on 16 April, UNHCR said.

Those rescued include 23 Somalis, 11 Ethiopians, 6 Egyptians and a Sudanese.

The survivors told UNHCR staff that they had been part of a group of between 100 and 200 people who departed last week from a locality near Tobruk in Libya on a 30-metre-long boat.

Source: Newkerala.com, 24 April 2016

China to build up atoll in contested South China Sea

Minnie Chan

China will start reclamation at the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea later this year and may add an airstrip to extend its air force's reach over the contested waters, a military source and mainland maritime experts say.

A source close to the PLA Navy said Beijing would ramp up work to establish a new outpost 230km off the coast of the Philippines as the US and Manila drew their militaries closer together.

An upcoming ruling on territorial claims by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, widely expected to go against China, would also accelerate the plan, the source said.

Manila wants the court to declare that Beijing's claims must comply with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the decision could come next month or in June.

"Beijing will take action to carry out land reclamation at Huangyan Island within this year," said the source, who requested anonymity, referring to the shoal.

"China should regain the initiative to do so because Washington is trying to contain Beijing by establishing a permanent military presence in the region."

The US and the Philippines began joint patrols in the South China Sea in March, US - defence chief Ash Carter revealed during his latest visit to the region. US forces will also have access to at least eight military bases in the Philippines, with two air bases in Pampanga, 330km from Scarborough Shoal.

The atoll is a potential flashpoint in the disputed South China Sea and is claimed by Beijing, Manila and Taipei. Chinese coastguard ships took control of the area after a tense stand-off with Philippine vessels in 2012.

With a new outpost in the shoal, Beijing could “further perfect” its air coverage across the South China Sea, the source said.

The PLA can already land planes at Woody Island, and two additional airstrips are believed to be under construction at Mischief and Fiery Cross reefs.

Subi Reef could also support a landing strip. Last month, the head of US naval operations, Admiral John Richardson, said Chinese activity had been observed around the shoal.

“If China finishes land reclamation at Scarborough Shoal, it can install radar and other facilities for 24-hour monitoring of the US Basa air force base on Pampanga,” Macau-based military expert Antony Wong Dong said.

US defence officials have confirmed China deployed two J-11 fighter jets and bolstered its advanced surface-to-air missile system on Woody Island. Four of the eight HQ-9 launchers were operational, according to US Fox News.

Professor JinYongmin, director of the Ocean Strategy Studies Centre at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said an airstrip at Scarborough Shoal would extend China’s air force reach in the South China Sea by at least 1,000km and close a gap in coverage off Luzon, a gateway to the Pacific. Beijing had been placed under “extreme duress” by the intensified US-Philippine cooperation and impending ruling by The Hague, Jin said.

Another driving factor was Manila’s outpost at Thitu Island in the Spratly chain, Professor Wang Hanling, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said. It is home to an unpaved landing strip, which the Philippines has said it will repair, although the work allows for the facility to be upgraded.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in February that Beijing halted reclamation work in the Spratlys last August, but other countries continued with their projects.

Source: [CNBC](#), 25 April 2016

South Korea raises maritime security in response to illegal Chinese fishing

Elizabeth Shim

South Korea is increasing the number of coast guard ships on duty as more Chinese fishing boats trespass into Seoul's maritime zone.

Chinese boats have been fishing illegally in South Korean waters for some time, and the number of Chinese boats fishing in or near the South's waters has skyrocketed in recent years.

Last October, 300 Chinese fishing vessels crossed south of the Northern Limit Line that demarcates South Korean fishing interests.

An average of 40-50 Chinese ships trespass into South Korean waters daily, according to South Korea Coast Guard estimates from 2015.

The South's Incheon maritime police said starting Wednesday a 500-ton class patrol vessel would be dispatched near Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea.

Yeonpyeong was the target of North Korean shelling in 2010.

Yonhap reported the number of Chinese vessels now range between 180 and 240 at any given time around the NLL. Of that number, about 75 percent, or between 130 and 190 boats, are active near the shore of Yeonpyeong's northern coasts, the coast guard said.

The decision to deploy the patrol boat comes a month after the coast guard dispatched another boat that can carry its special forces.

Chinese fishing activities are having an impact on South Korea fisheries, Incheon coast guard said.

Spring is crab season, but the supply is expected to be 30 percent less than 2015 because of Chinese activities, the coast guard said.

In 2016, South Korea coast guard seized 13 boats of Chinese origin.

Intrusive Chinese boats have been cited as one of the reasons for the delay in the Korea Coast Guard's response to the Sewol ferry sinking in April 2014. As more maritime patrol was reallocated to Korean coastal areas facing the Yellow Sea, less manpower was available to rescue passengers on the sinking ship.

Source: [UPI](#), 26 April 2016



Delivery of US Navy's first Zumwalt-class destroyer delayed

Online Editorial Press

The delivery of the US Navy's General Dynamics-built first Zumwalt-class (DDG-1000) guided missile destroyer has reportedly been delayed.

According to the US Defense Department's annual 'Selected Acquisition Report' on the \$22.4bn programme, the Navy has estimated that delivery of the first vessel will be by mid 2016, reported Bloomberg.

USS Zumwalt was originally scheduled to be delivered in September 2013, but was later expected to be handed over to the navy in November last year.

“The delays are due to overall effects of shipyard production and test challenges”

The DDG-1000 is also not expected to be declared with an initial combat capability until 2019. Bloomberg News cited a report sent to Congress last month as saying that the delays "are due to overall effects of shipyard production and test challenges".

Meanwhile, Navy spokeswoman captain Thurraya Kent, in an e-mail to the news agency said: "The DDG-1000 will begin acceptance trials later this month, and the ship is on track for commissioning on 15 October 2016."

Named in honour of late Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, the destroyers are being built at General Dynamics' Bath Iron Works unit in Bath, Maine, while Raytheon provides the vessel's combat electronics.

Capable of carrying a crew of 142, the 610ft-long Zumwalt multi-mission surface combatants have a displacement capacity of more than 15,000t when fully loaded, and are designed for littoral operations and land attack.

Featuring new technologies such as the Advanced Gun System from BAE Systems, the destroyer will use electricity generated by gas turbines to power all of its systems, including its weapons.

Source: NavalTechnology.com, 18 Apr 2016

US, Korean Navies Complete 32nd SALVEX Korea 2016

Micah P. Blechner

U.S. Navy and Republic of Korea navy diving and salvage experts wrapped up two weeks of advanced training during Salvage Exercise (SALVEX) Korea 2016, April 21.

Building on 30 years of partnership since SALVEX Korea began in 1985, U.S. and ROK navy personnel conducted a series of advanced combined salvage operations, both in port and at sea.

Sailors assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1, embarked on rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard (T-ARS 50), sharpened skills with Korean navy counterparts embarked on their diving and salvage ship ROKS Tong Yeong (ATS 31).

The training focused on combined diving operations, wet-bell diving through moon pools, and for the first time this year, underwater demolition operations. For the capstone event, Safeguard and Tong Yeong teamed up in a demolition operation clearing waterborne obstacles. This complex and successful evolution exemplified the merits of diving and salvage interoperability between the U.S. and ROK navies.

"We are now more familiar with each other's equipment and capabilities; making it easier for us to work together in the future if a real world contingency operation were to happen," said Lt. Mark Snyder, MDSU 1 officer in charge.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Carlton Maughan was extremely impressed with the teamwork from his ROK navy diver counterparts.

"Their professionalism and experience were evident and it was a pleasure to work alongside the ROK navy divers," said Maughan. "The ROK navy divers were extremely cognizant of making sure their operators were ready and prepared for the diving environment, which is something we can work on to better improve our capabilities and efficiency when diving in cold water."

Lt. John Money, an operational planner for Commander, Task Force 73, said SALVEX is one of the premiere diving and salvage exercises in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

"This exercise allows the U.S. Navy to advance our diving/salvage skills while enhancing theater security cooperation and maritime interoperability with regional navies."

SALVEX Korea 2016 is part of Exercise Foal Eagle -- an umbrella of regularly scheduled, annual exercises that are the culmination of many months of planning and based on realistic training scenarios. The naval portion of the Foal Eagle exercises take place in international waters around South Korea and features a full spectrum of maritime operations.

MDSU-1 provides combat-ready, expeditionary, rapidly deployable mobile, diving and salvage capabilities to conduct harbor clearance, salvage, underwater search and recovery, and underwater emergency repairs in any environment.

CTF 73 is U.S. 7th Fleet's theater security cooperation agent for South and Southeast Asia.

Military Sealift Command operates approximately 110 noncombatant, merchant mariner-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships at sea, conduct specialized

missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces.

Source: Navy.mil, 21 Apr 2016

Women officers granted permanent commission by Indian Navy

Indian Awaaj Press

Breaking gender barrier, seven women officers have been granted permanent commission by Indian Navy. A Statement issued by the Navy said, the women officers belong to the batch of Short Service Commission officers, who joined in 2008-09. It added that the Navy is also finalizing a policy for women officers to serve on select warships that have appropriate facilities for women.

Navy is the last of the three wings of the armed forces in the country to allow permanent commission for women. While the Army and Air Force allow permanent commission for them, the Navy had limited women officers only to short service commission of 14 years.

Source: IndianAwaaj, 21st April 2016

Women to serve on select Indian naval warships soon

OneIndia Defence Bureau

Taking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Naari Shakti mission a notch higher, the Indian Navy has granted Permanent Commission to seven women officers.

The Navy also announced that a policy is being formulated for women officers to serve on select warships that have appropriate facilities for women.

Indian Navy's decision follows a move by Indian Air Force (IAF) last year to permit in combat flying roles.

The IAF's women pilots are set to be commissioned on flying roles June this year. Four pilots are already undergoing training at Air Force Academy in Hyderabad.

The Indian Army has already granted Permanent Commission to women officers in select few branches.

More opportunities for women in uniform

The Navy's decision will throw open more opportunities to young women who always wanted to undertake challenging missions like their male counterparts.

Navy now says seven women officers from the batch of Short Service Commission (SSC) officers of the Education Branch and Naval Constructor cadre, who joined in 2008-09, would now be granted Permanent Commission.

"Several progressive and first-time initiatives have been taken by the Indian Navy in the last few months towards empowering women officers. Navy recognizes the importance of providing equal opportunities to women officers," says a Navy Spokesperson.

Navy says additional avenues for employment of women officers have also been opened up.

Naval air arm too opens its doors for women

Starting in 2017, women officers can choose to join as Pilots of Maritime Reconnaissance planes including P8I, Dornier and the like. Women can also join the Naval Armament Inspectorate cadre.

"A total of eight branches and cadres would be opened for women officers in the Navy now," says the spokesperson.

As reported by OneIndia earlier, a crew of six naval women officers is currently undergoing rigorous training for the first, all-women, circumnavigation of the world mission next year. The team would be sailing on the homegrown vessel, Mhadei II.

"The Navy's decision to throw open more avenues is really inspiring. This is the beginning of a new era in Indian Navy that's sure to propel the dreams of thousands of women aspirants. We would have loved to get the same opportunity, but we are proud that we are serving the Indian Navy now in different roles," says a naval woman officer, who had participated during the 2016 R-Day Parade.

"I would love to see my daughter taking up this opportunity," she tells OneIndia.

Source: [OneIndia](#), 21 April 2016

Austal wins \$US9.9m US Navy contract

The West Australian Press

Austal has won a contract potentially worth \$US9.9 million as part of its \$US3.5 billion Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program with the US Navy.

The contract is for procurement and engineering efforts in support of scope changes on fiscal 2015 and fiscal 2016 ships.

Austal said the modification would incorporate additional accommodations to increase crew size on the LCS Independence-variant ships.

Under the contract, Austal will provide supplies, services, labour and materials, which includes program management and subcontracting management.

Work is expected to be completed by August 2019.

Austal has delivered three Independence-variant LCS to the U.S. Navy; two as subcontractor (LCS 2 and LCS 4) and one as prime contractor (LCS 6) under a separate 10 vessel, US\$3.5 billion contract awarded by the US Navy in 2010.

The program grew to 13 vessels when the US Navy funded an additional ship, LCS 26, to Austal in April 2016.

Austal has seven LCS under construction at its US shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, with Montgomery (LCS 8) scheduled for delivery later in the year.

Austal is also building ten 103-metre Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessels under a \$1.6 billion contract from the US Navy, with six already delivered.

USNS Carson City (EPF 7) is preparing for trials and is scheduled to be delivered later this year, while the two remaining vessels are under construction at Austal's US shipyard.

Austal is also procuring long-lead materials for EPF 11 under an additional contract from the US Navy.

Austal shares were up four cents, or 2.61 per cent, to \$1.57 at the close.

Source: [The West Australian](#), 26 April 2016.

US Navy Orders \$800Mln Prototype Systems for Electromagnetic War – Pentagon

Sputnik Press

The US Navy has awarded contracts worth \$800 million to 12 major high tech defense contractors to develop new systems to integrate the different functions needed to wage and defend against electromagnetic war, the Department of Defense said in a press release.

The US contactors will seek to integrate radio frequencies used in electronic warfare, radar, communications and information operations into a common set of multi-function electronics software and hardware systems designed to be modular and scalable across platforms, the Pentagon explained on Monday.

The new radio frequency systems will function in combat and command, control, communications, computers and in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems, the release explained.

The contracts were awarded to Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems, EOIR Technologies, SI2 Technologies, S2 Corporation, Sea Corporation, Rockwell Collins, Physical Optics, and TiComGeomanics, the Pentagon stated.

Source: [Sputnik International](#), 26 April 2016

Australia Makes Major Shipbuilding Announcements for Navy

Nigel Pittaway

Australia is tipped to announce the winner of a competitive evaluation process (CEP) to design the country's future submarine.

However, the timing of the announcement that frigates, offshore patrol vessels (OPV), patrol boats and possibly submarines will be manufactured in shipyards in South Australia and Western Australia is regarded by political observers as a strategy to shore up marginal seats prior to a federal election due this year.

The government will deliver its budget on May 3, and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is expected to call a federal election shortly thereafter, with most observers predicting a July 2 poll date. If an election is called, the government will enter a caretaker period, which means no major acquisition decisions can be made until the next administration is sworn in.

On April 18, Defence Minister Marise Payne, a member of the Liberal Party who resides in the Senate chamber, announced that proposals from BAE Systems, Fincantieri and Navantia had been shortlisted for the country's Sea 5000 program to build nine new frigates for the Royal Australian Navy.

The projects vying for the \$35 billion (US \$27 billion) project are: BAE Systems' Global Combat Ship, based on the Type 26 frigate; Fincantieri's anti-submarine warfare FREMM (Fregata Europea Multi-Missione); and a redesigned version of Navantia's Álvaro de Bazán (F100) class vessel.

It's expected the ships will be built in Adelaide, South Australia, and first steel will be cut in 2020. Australia has mandated that the winning design is fitted with phased array radar systems being developed by Australia's CEA Technologies.

The shortlist marks First Pass approval, the first major milestone in Australia's two-gate project acquisition process. Payne said the program was on track for Second Pass approval in 2018.

DCNS of France, with an ASW-optimized version of the French Navy FREMM (Frégate européenne multi-mission), and TKMS, with a version of the F125 frigate currently under construction for the German Navy (MEKO A-400 RAN), have been eliminated from the CEP.

Details of the frigate program formed part of a larger announcement made by Payne, which provided details of the Turnbull administration's \$89 billion continuous naval surface vessel shipbuilding strategy previously announced last August.

Australia is also seeking to build twelve OPVs. Payne revealed that Damen of the Netherlands, together with two German ship designers, Fassmer and Lürssen, have been shortlisted for the project. The three companies will now refine their respective proposals in conjunction with the commonwealth, with a view to constructing the vessels in Australian shipyards.

The \$3 billion OPV program, known as Project Sea 1180, has also gained First Pass approval, and construction is due to begin in Adelaide in 2018, before being transferred to Western Australia in 2020, when construction of the first of the Sea 5000 frigates gets underway in South Australia.

Payne also announced that Australian shipbuilder Austal has been selected to build and maintain up to 21 steel-hulled vessels for the government's Pacific Patrol Boat initiative, which will be gifted to South Pacific nations to replace older vessels

Combined First and Second Pass Approval for the \$500 million program will see the vessels built at Austal's facility at Henderson in Western Australia. The company, under a sustainment contract further valued at around \$400 million, intends to support the Pacific Patrol Boats — including deep maintenance — from Cairns in northern Queensland.

“These three projects will ensure Australia retains a sovereign capability to build and sustain its naval vessels. Together they represent close to \$40 billion worth of investment in Australia's future naval capabilities and our shipbuilding industry,” Payne said. “They will directly secure more than 2,500 jobs for decades to come. They will also generate thousands of additional jobs with suppliers.”

Australian shipbuilders have been facing a so-called valley of death between the completion of current projects, such as the three air warfare destroyers — being consolidated at defense shipbuilding organization ASC's facility in Adelaide — and future programs.

The Turnbull administration has been criticized for its decision to award a \$1-2 billion contract to build two large underway replenishment vessels to Spanish shipbuilder Navantia, despite announcing a limited tender in 2014 because Australian yards were unable to build the ships in the time frame desired by the Royal Australian Navy.

This latest plan has again drawn criticism from the opposition Labor Party, which has accused the Turnbull government of trying to shore up seats in South Australia.

“So rushed was this announcement that neither Mr. Turnbull or Senator Payne could answer basic questions such as how many offshore patrol vessels would be built in Adelaide,” the Shadow Minister for Defence Stephen Conroy and Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence David Feeney said in a joint statement April 18. “Nor would they confirm there is a contractual requirement for the offshore patrol vessel build to shift to Western Australia in 2020.”

The plan has also been criticized by some government members because of its focus on South Australian and Western Australian shipyards, to the detriment of yards in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

“I expressed my anger and disappointment at the process of the announcement, as it was not acceptable, and this was acknowledged by Minister Payne,” Warren Entsch, a member of Parliament for Leichardt in north Queensland, said after the local Cairns-based consortium led by TeeKay Shipping (Australia) was eliminated from the Pacific Patrol Boat program.

“I still have concerns with elements of the process but I have a better understanding from the information presented to me as to why the Cairns consortium’s bid may not have been considered as price-competitive. I have undertaken not to share this information until the contract is finalized in several weeks’ time, after which I will certainly be making further comment,” he said.

The \$50 billion future submarine, to be delivered by Project Sea 1000, is shaping up to be an even bigger challenge for the Turnbull government. Recent media reports that the Japanese contender has been effectively eliminated because of increased levels of risk are threatening to trigger a diplomatic incident between the two countries.

Up to 12 large conventional submarines will be acquired under the program. In February 2015, the Australian government selected France’s DCNS, TKMS of Germany and the government of Japan to participate in a CEP.

Each contender is required to submit three strategies for construction, including full completion in their home shipyards, a hybrid build, where initial boats are built in the

home yard and the remainder in Australia, and a complete build in an Australian shipyard.

DCNS is proposing a conventionally powered derivative of its nuclear Barracuda submarine; TKMS is bidding a scaled up development of its HDW Type 216.

The Japanese government, in partnership with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Shipbuilding, is dealing directly with the Australian Defence Department's Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) with a design based on the Japanese Navy's Soryu-class boat.

The Japanese bid has been criticised in Australian media for alleged design shortcomings, which, together with the perception of an increased risk to Australia's regional interests resulting from a close defense relationship with Tokyo, has brought an unprecedented response from the Japanese Embassy in Canberra.

In a paper that systematically refuted the alleged technical deficiencies, embassy Counsellor Masanori Kegoya pointed to the strengthening ties between the two countries.“

Very recently an argument has emerged in Australia suggesting that although Japan's bid has emphasised its strategic advantages, there is an inordinate risk that deepening defence and security co-operation with Japan would narrow Australia's strategic flexibility and pose strategic risk to Australia,” Kegoya said April 19.

“As has been the case for many years now, Japan and Australia have been deepening our security and defence co-operation based on our past 2+2 discussions and agreements. The recent Defence White Paper of the Australian Government also endorsed the strengthening of security and defence co-operation between Japan and Australia.

“Our participation in the CEP for the Future Submarine program is just one part of a much wider and more diverse story.”

Source: [Defense News](#), 26 April 2016

Japan Destroyer Visits Former US Naval Base in the Philippines

Prashanth Parameswaran

A Japanese warship docked at a former U.S. naval base in the Philippines near disputed South China Sea waters Tuesday in another sign of deepening defense relations between the two countries.

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship Ise, a Hyuga-class helicopter destroyer, docked at the Alava Pier in Subic Bay Freeport Zone at about 9 a.m. local time for a goodwill visit that will last until April 29. The warship carried four helicopters and 360 crew members.

This is the second time in just over three weeks that Japanese vessels have visited Subic, a former U.S. naval base that lies around 125 miles from Scarborough Shoal, which China wrested from the Philippines back in 2012.

“We want to deepen the relationship with the Philippines,” the ship’s captain, Masaki Takada, told reporters while they were being given a tour of the Ise, according to Agence France-Presse. Takada said the visit was also an opportunity for the crew to rest and for the vessel to be replenished.

During its stay, Philippine and Japanese personnel will engage in several defense interactions. Japanese naval personnel will visit the Naval Education and Training Command in San Antonio, Zambales, while Philippine Navy personnel will go on a shipboard tour inside the Japanese vessel.

This is the third time this year that JMSDF vessels have visited the Philippines. Manila received Minesweeper Division 51 on March 2 and the submarine Oyashio along with two destroyers earlier this month. The Oyashio was the first Japanese submarine to visit the Philippines in 15 years.

As I indicated in a previous piece, port calls are part of a broader Japanese effort to increase its presence in the South China Sea in 2016.

This is the Ise's second visit to the Philippines, with the first coming during international disaster relief efforts in 2013 as part of Operation Sankai following Typhoon Haiyan, the deadliest typhoon ever recorded in Philippine history that killed over 6,300 people.

Source: [The diplomat](#), 27 April 2016



India's Answer To China-Pakistan Tie-Up Is Chabahar Port In Iran

Deepshikha Ghosh

India and Iran agreed to fast-track the Chabahar port project that will open up access to central Asia, as Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj held talks during her first visit to the country on Sunday.

The two countries decided in 2003 to develop Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman, near Iran's border with Pakistan.

The port in southeast Iran will allow India to bypass Pakistan to transport goods to Afghanistan and central Asia using a sea-land route.

Pakistan does not allow India to send goods through its territory to Afghanistan and has only recently begun to allow a trickle of Afghan exports to cross through to India.

The Chabahar project moved slowly because of the sanctions over Iran's nuclear programmes, which have now been removed.

The two countries maintained a close relationship despite the US-led trade restrictions that halved their oil trade to 220,000 barrels per day in 2014.

India wants to develop the port as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar port, which was built with Chinese assistance and is 72 km from Chabahar.

In February, the government cleared a 150 million dollar line of credit and the formation Chabahar is the first foreign port that India is directly involved in developing; it has the capacity to handle 2.5 million tons a year. of a company in Iran to handle the project.

Sushma Swaraj, on a four-day tour of Iran and Russia, yesterday met Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and said in a statement that he had spoken of Chabahar as a defining partnership which has the potential of connecting the entire region.

Chabahar is the first foreign port that India is directly involved in developing; it has the capacity to handle 2.5 million tons a year.

Chabahar is officially designated as a Free Trade and Industrial Zone by Iranian government. Due to its free trade zone status, the city has increased in significance in international trade.

Source: [NDTV](#), 18 April 2016

India-Bangladesh Coastal Shipping: Opportunities and Challenges

G Padamja

On 16 March 2016, Bangladesh Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan launched the coastal shipping service between Bangladesh and India at a ceremony at New Mooring Container Terminal of Chittagong Port. The Minister said coastal shipping was being implemented within a year of the coastal shipping agreement having been concluded during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June 2015. He said, "The goods transported from the Indian ports to Chittagong could be delivered to the north-eastern region of India through roads". He went on to add that road communication between Chittagong and Agartala would also be established by constructing a bridge over the Feni River in the border area. Shajahan Khan also said, "...the idea of sub-regional grouping between Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan is getting shape through this coastal shipping." Thus, the Minister spoke of bilateral cooperation; sub-regional cooperation; and better connectivity facilitating movement between two places of India through Bangladesh. Later, on 23 March 2016, the container vessel MV *Harbour 1* left

Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and reached Krishnapatnam Port on India's east coast on 28 March 2016. This historic journey has begun a new chapter of economic cooperation.

Commencement of coastal shipping between India and Bangladesh is not an isolated development, but part of larger blueprint of bilateral cooperation. This paper examines the positive developments which have facilitated coastal shipping; the areas identified for cooperation under the maritime agenda; and last, the opportunities and challenges in coastal shipping.

The Context

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June 2015 was preceded by the historic passage of the 100th Constitution Amendment Bill in the Indian Parliament to give effect to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement and its 2011 Protocol. The instruments of ratification were exchanged between the two governments during the visit. Spelling its significance, India's Foreign Secretary Jaishankar said, '.....what it has done is, it has really created a climate of confidence, of goodwill, of trust where a lot of other initiatives which could have happened, should have happened, can now happen....there is an enormous sense today of optimism and confidence about the entire relationship.' Earlier in 2014, the dispute over the maritime boundary was resolved. With both the land and maritime boundary settled, two major irritants in the bilateral relations were resolved and an enormous agenda of shared interest was opened. All this was built on the 'Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development' of 2011, concluded by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

During Modi's visit, 22 Agreements/MoUs were concluded. One of these was on coastal shipping. An elaborate 65 point Joint Declaration titled, 'NotunProjonma-NayiDisha, New Generation-New Direction', was also spelt out. These documents discussed cooperation on security related issues; Coordinated Border Management Plan; expediting agreements on sharing of river waters; cooperation in the power sector, renewable energy and nuclear energy; sub regional cooperation under BBIN

(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India , Nepal) framework; sustainable and mutually beneficial economic cooperation and narrowing the trade balance; opening new avenues and multiple modes of connectivity; India's second Line of Credit worth US \$2 billion; maritime cooperation; people-to-people interaction; coordination in regional groupings, multilateral organisations and the United Nations. For India, this expanded agenda was part of its Act East policy which sought to impact India's northeast and the areas beyond it.

The confidence that these positive developments will sustain, come from the fact that Modi's visit was welcomed across the broad political spectrum in Bangladesh. The balance of trade being in India's favour has always been an emotive issue. However, this was now being approached with objectivity by both the academia and the politicians in Bangladesh. There is a consensus that tariff lines are few, and the problem arises with non tariff barriers. The setting up of Special Economic Zone for India to facilitate Indian investment in Bangladesh, which should then lead to exports, is looked upon as a positive measure to address this issue of trade gap.

The Maritime Agenda of Cooperation

In June 2015, India and Bangladesh concluded six agreements/MoUs to cooperate in the maritime sphere. They are:

- Agreement on Coastal Shipping between India and Bangladesh. This agreement seeks to promote two-way trade between India and Bangladesh through ports. Shipping cargo between these two countries is presently routed through Colombo/Singapore/Klang ports. Shifting to coastal shipping will reduce the shipping time between the two countries; also, congestion with regard to commercial traffic at 'land ports', which are also called border stations for import and export, located at land boundaries and inland water (river) boundaries should also reduce.
- Protocol Inland Waterways Transit and Trade (PIWTT) (Renewal). This Protocol was first signed in 1972. It outlines mutually beneficial arrangements for use of waterways of

both countries for commerce between them and for passage of goods between two places in one country and to third countries through the territory of the other under mutually agreed terms. This protocol has five years validity with automatic renewal.

- MoU between India and Bangladesh on Use of Chittagong and Mongla Ports for movement of goods to and from India. Accordingly, Bangladesh will allow use of Chittagong and Mongla Ports for the movement of goods to and from India by using Chittagong/Mongla to Agartala, Chittagong/Mongla to Dawki, and Chittagong/Mongla to Sutarkandi routes. The movement of goods to and from Chittagong and Mongla Ports may be by waterways, rail, road or multimodal transport.
- MoU between India and Bangladesh on blue economy and maritime cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. This envisages cooperation on blue economy and maritime sphere for capacity building, training and joint research collaborations, and setting up of a Joint Working Group to further cooperation in this area.
- MoU between the coast guards of India and Bangladesh. Consequent to the settling of maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh, this MoU seeks cooperation between both the coast guards to ensure jointly marine security and prevent crimes at sea.
- MoU between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India, and University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, for joint research on oceanography in Bay of Bengal. This will facilitate joint study, project research and cooperation for training and capacity building in Oceanography.

Thus, with the maritime boundary being settled, both India and Bangladesh want to use the seas and rivers for development on land. The cooperation among the coast guards will ensure that coastal shipping and other activities carry on securely.

India and Bangladesh have instituted a Bilateral Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) for operation of inland vessels on the river protocol routes between river ports of Haldia, Kolkata, Pandu, Karimganj and Silghat in India and Narayanganj, Khulna, Mongla, Sirajganj and Ashuganj in Bangladesh. This has facilitated the movement of EXIM trade as well as cargo bound for the north eastern states of India. During the current financial year, India for the first time is using the Indo-Bangladesh river protocol to transport food grains via Ashuganj to Tripura. However, the quantum of cargo has not picked up because of low draft in the upper reaches of rivers of Bangladesh and also because of certain non-trade barriers.

It is important to note that both the countries have agreed on the need for dredging of the Bangladesh-India inland water protocol routes with assured Least Available Depth (LAD) with international funding to utilise their full potential and enhance navigability of the routes.

Even before Modi's visit, Bangladesh had allowed transshipment of 25,000 metric tonnes of food grains to Tripura across Bangladesh territory on humanitarian cause. Also, Bangladesh had allowed heavy equipment shipment for OTPC Palatana Power Project via Bangladesh Ashuganj Port. For India, positive bilateral cooperation is facilitating economic development of its northeast states.⁹ The Joint Working Group on blue economy needs to come out with time bound projects benefitting both countries, as it is already being given prominent place in their development narratives.

Opportunities and Challenges

The growth in bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has led to congestion on the road at Indo-Bangladesh border and at the Land Custom Stations/integrated Check Posts. It has been observed that the traffic congestion at "Petrapole" and "Benapole" on the Bangladesh side has emerged as one of the biggest impediments to the movement of EXIM cargo. Due to such congestion, the exporters/importers on both sides have been facing delays and undue increase in the transportation costs. One measure to address this was by transporting commercial cargo through coastal shipping.

However, coastal shipping could not take place between India and Bangladesh ports as it was not profitable for large vessels to operate between these ports; River Sea Vessel class of Vessels were not available in Bangladesh; and, foreign going vessels of higher technical and manning standards were not cost effective for coastal voyage between the two countries. As a result, sea connectivity meant that goods had to be first sent to Singapore and Colombo ports and from there it would be sent in smaller vessels to Indian and Bangladesh ports. This took 30-40 days adding to both time and costs of EXIM trade.

Discussions on coastal shipping have been taking place since 2012, and a broad understanding was finally reached on 24 June 2014 in Dhaka. The agreement on coastal shipping was finally concluded on 6 June 2015 during Modi's visit to Bangladesh. 11 The cooperation in coastal shipping between the two countries is based on the principles of national sovereignty, mutual benefits as per national laws and international conventions.

On 15 November 2015, India and Bangladesh signed the standard operating procedure (SOP) to operationalize the 'Agreement on Coastal Shipping' signed between the two countries in June 2015. Its implementation will result in huge saving of logistics cost for EXIM transport between the two countries and will enhance bilateral trade. The SOP contains provisions which stipulate that India and Bangladesh shall render same treatment to the other country's vessels as it would have done to its national vessels used in international sea transportation. The two sides have also agreed upon the use of vessels of River Sea Vessel (RSV) category for Indo-Bangladesh coastal shipping.

On 23 March 2016, coastal shipping commenced when the container vessel M V Harbour 1 left Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and reached Krishnapatnam Port on India's east coast on 28 March 2016. The Coastal Shipping Agreement has enabled the direct regular movement of ships between India and Bangladesh taking six to 10 days.

Since transit time will come down, goods will reach faster reducing the cost too. Competitive freight rates will benefit all. These increased activities will lead to development of ports of both the countries, the hinterlands, shipping industry and also facilitate movements of goods to India's northeast states through Bangladesh ports.

However, if the maritime domain has brought both the countries together, the same has the capacity to drive fissures if certain irritants are not addressed as a priority. Sheikh Hasina requested Modi for immediate conclusion of the Interim Agreement on Sharing of the Water of Teesta as agreed upon by both governments in January 2011. The Article 2 of the Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development of 2011 spells out the commitment of Bangladesh and India to address the issue of water resources management of common rivers including water sharing in a holistic manner through common basin management.

During his visit, Prime Minister Modi said, "The rivers should nurture our relationship, not become a source of discord. Water sharing is above all a human issue. It affects life and livelihood on both sides of the border.....I am confident that with the support of state governments in India, we can reach a fair solution on Teesta and Feni Rivers....."

Conclusion

Prime Minister Modi handed over to Prime Minister Hasina a memento of INS Vikrant which played an important role in the Liberation war of 1971. The maritime domain has always played a critical role to bring the countries together. Coastal shipping has the potential to redefine the relations not just with movement of cargo but passengers too in future. Similarly, cooperation on blue economy will lead to sustainable development and utilisation of the ocean resources benefitting both India and Bangladesh. However, all this is but part of the larger picture of bilateral cooperation. Unless differences regarding river Teesta are addressed and the special economic zone for Indian investments starts delivering the whole edifice can weaken.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 19 April 2016

Global investors get a peek into Narendra Modi's ambitious maritime development plans

P.Manoj

The ports sector, through which 90% of India's external trade by volume and 72% by value are transported, has largely been neglected.

In a few years from now, if India achieves even 10% of what was showcased at a gala maritime summit organized by the government in Mumbai last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shipping minister Nitin Gadkari could lay claim to being the architects of a resurgent sector.

The sector, through which 90% of India's external trade by volume and 72% by value are transported, has largely been neglected by successive governments. No Indian port ranks among the global top 20. If former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee was instrumental in steering India's highway development programme to where it is today, Modi is striving to do the same with its maritime sector, straddling a vast coastline of 7,500km. To be sure, the seeds of an ambitious maritime development programme christened Sagarmala were sown by Vajpayee in 2003.

I hadn't ever come across a government holding a global maritime summit on such a large scale with 4,500 delegates from 40 countries in attendance. The partner country for the summit was South Korea, a maritime superpower.

Modi himself flagged off the summit with a speech which gave the impression that he means business.

The summit was held a fortnight after state-owned entities in India's port and shipping sectors reported their best performances in many years in the year ended March, particularly after the global meltdown of 2008 that had a devastating impact on shipping. In 2015-16, India's 12 state-owned ports handled a record quantity of cargo which grew more than 4% in the last two years despite a global slowdown. Kandla port reached the 100 million tonnes (mt) mark in cargo-handling, the first among the 12

ports to achieve this feat. Port efficiency parameters at the dozen ports have shown improvement in 2015-16 by registering the fastest average turnaround time for ships; operating profit margins that were declining have increased while the combined operating profit of the 12 ports rose by Rs.670 crore in 2015-16.

Jawaharlal Nehru port, India's busiest container gateway, posted a net profit of over Rs.1,000 crore, again a first for a state-owned port. Shipping Corp. of India Ltd, Dredging Corp. of India Ltd and Cochin Shipyard Ltd are set to post higher profits than previous years.

"This is just the beginning," Modi told the delegates. "We want to do more. We are enhancing our own capacities of execution and implementation. The national perspective plan of the Sagarmalaprogramme has been released today. In the last two years, major ports (a term used to refer to state-owned ports) have awarded 56 new projects involving an investment of more than Rs.25,000 crore. This will create an additional port capacity of 317 mt per annum. Our vision is to increase port capacity from 1,400 mt to 3,000 mt by 2025. We want to mobilize an investment of Rs.1 trillion in the port sector to enable this growth. Five new ports are planned to meet the increasing demand of the export-import trade which will rise in proportion with the fast-growing Indian economy. New ports are also being developed by several coastal states of India," the prime minister said. "Since my government took over, among other things, we have laid emphasis on building futuristic infrastructure. This includes building next-generation infrastructure in many sectors. Port, shipping and maritime infrastructure is prominent among them. It is my government's endeavour to revive and restore India's position of eminence in the global maritime sector."

The prime minister emphasized the maritime development programmes were designed to provide employment opportunities to the youth (four million direct and six million indirect jobs) and to empower coastal communities living in 72 districts that make up 18% of India's population.

During the two-day summit, business agreements for 141 projects were signed entailing an investment of Rs.82,905 crore, or \$12.8 billion.

While Modi touched upon the larger picture in his speech, the investor community was a trifle disappointed by the absence of any reference to two key issues facing major ports. The first pertains to the introduction of market-driven pricing of port services at major ports by winding down the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP), the rate regulator for the 12 ports, an issue that has agitated the investment community for long.

The second issue is the government's position on long-pending structural reforms of major ports by transforming them into corporate entities from the current trustee set-up.

Both these are intrinsically linked to the success of the maritime development programme.

That aside, Modi invited investors to India with his concluding remarks: "This is the right time to come to India; it is even better to come through the sea route; the Indian ship is well-equipped for a long haul; don't miss it; missing it means missing a pleasant journey and a great destination. Once you are here, I assure you that I will personally hold your hands to see that your berthing is safe, secure and satisfactory".

Source: [Live Mint](#), 22 April 2016

South Korea ready for investment in Iran shipping industry

International Shipping News Press

Head of South Korea Maritime Institute Sang Gui Kim on Saturday voiced his country's readiness for investment in Iran's ports and shipping industry.

Sang Gui Kim told reporters on the sidelines of Iran-South Korea Economic Conference in Isfahan.

Sang Gui Kim said that Iran boasts of high capabilities in the oil and gas sectors and South Korea can cooperate with Iran on building ships, maintenance and repair of naval fleet and preparing ports for operation.

Developmental projects, dam construction, control of water resources and health sectors can serve as other areas of cooperation between the states, he said.

Kim hoped that the volume of South Korea's investment in such areas would hit 10 billion dollars in the next five years.

Removal of sanctions brought good achievements for both nations, he said.

He announced that South Korean cabinet members will visit Tehran in the coming months.

Kim hailed holding the two-day Iran-South Korea Economic Assembly Conference, saying that organizing such events will pave the way for presence of South Korean statesmen in Iran in a bid to boost communications.

Iran-South Korea trade stood at 6.1 billion dollars in 2015.

Source: [IRNA](#), 25 April 2016

Krishnapatnam Port launches rail service with CONCOR

Port News Press

Krishnapatnam Port today said it has launched a direct bi-weekly rail connectivity service between ICD Bengaluru and the port in association with state- owned Container Corporation or CONCOR.

It will run a shuttle service to Maersk Salalah catering to the demand from business houses in and around Bangalore, Krishnapatnam Port Company Ltd (KPCL) said in a statement.

“The initiative has been strategically put in place to enable shippers and consignees in and around Bengaluru to avail a safer, reliable and time-efficient alternative to road movement,” it said.

The service has scheduled an export from ICD (inland container depot) Bengaluru on every Tuesday and Friday and an import departure from Krishnapatnam on every Wednesday and Saturday.

The newly launched service will reduce the transportation time to 48 hours for both import and export transits post discharge of the vessel and will benefit heavy cargoes which otherwise face regulatory issues due to the weight restrictions via road transport.

The connectivity has carried a total of 106 TEU and 117 TEU of exports and imports respectively to and from Bengaluru.

It said apart from time efficiency, the move is expected to help the customers to save on each container and also eliminate the chances of pilferage which has been a major issue in case of road transits.

Anil Yendluri, CEO – KPCL said, “Our new rail service has been strategically allocated to not just cater to the intense demand but also address the needs of our customers with efficient facilities which will enable them to leverage our association for the better.”

The port with a transit storage area of 6800 acres has the country’s largest waterfront area of 161 sq km, and a depth of 20.5 metres.

Source: [PTI](#), 27 April 2016

Port of Baku to introduce new technological solutions from Singapore

Port News Press

“Baku International Sea Trade Port” CJSC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on technical cooperation in Singapore with SMRT International Pte Ltd and Ectivise Solutions Pte Ltd to enhance the operational effectiveness of the new Port of Baku in Azerbaijan. The MoU was signed by Director-General of the Port of Baku TalehZiyadov, Chief Executive Officer of Ectivise Solutions Arthur Cheong and Managing Director of SMRT International Goh EngKiat.

The two Singapore-based companies will advise and support the Port of Baku in its efforts to introduce new technologies and innovative solutions in the Port and Free Trade Zone operations, including a Group Rapid Transit (GRT) System, Integrated Operation Control Centre (OCC), Auto Warehousing Storage and Retrieval System and other security systems. As a result of this cooperation Port of Baku will be the first in the region to introduce driverless transportation – smart cars.

“Today’s MoU will enable the Port of Baku to achieve its set goal of becoming an exemplary and the most technologically advanced port in the Caspian region much quicker,” stated Ziyadov. “We value the support of our Singaporean partners in our mission to bring technological solutions that are environmentally friendly and sustainable to users and clients of the Port of Baku,” he noted.

SMRT International Pte Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SMRT Corporation Ltd, which is the premier multi-modal public transport operator in Singapore. It is engaged in the business of operations and maintenance (O&M), engineering, consultancy and project management services overseas. Ectivise Solutions is an expert in large-scale network planning and a pioneer in ICT integrated infrastructure solutions such as Passive Optical Networks (PON) and Integrated Optical Backbone Architecture (IOBA).

The Government of Azerbaijan is currently building a new state-of-the-art port complex near the Alyat town of Baku that includes a large area dedicated to a Free Trade Zone (FTZ), which envisages the development of a transport and logistics industry, pharmaceutical cluster, common-use oil supply base facilities, and manufacturing, packaging, labeling and consolidation areas. This is a part of a larger strategy by the country's president, IlhamAliyev, to strengthen Azerbaijan's non-oil economy and diversify it away from hydrocarbons. Located at the strategic crossroads of Europe and Asia and near sizeable markets like China, Turkey, Iran and Russia, the new Port of Baku is poised to become the leading trade and logistics hub of Eurasia.

Specialists from SMRT International Pte Ltd and Ectivise Solutions Pte Ltd have also visited Port of Baku, and acquainted themselves with its terminal at Alyat and Free Trade Zone to be created around it.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#), 27 April 2016

Indian Marine Leisure Industry Gets a Boost

Vijay Sakhuja

The recent Maritime India Summit 2016 in Mumbai was the first ever large scale global maritime event hosted by India. It was also an opportune moment for the Indian Prime Minister to announce his vision of a 'maritime India' built around robust infrastructure to complement the hinterland development plans. The thrust of his speech was on 'leveraging the long coastline and natural maritime advantages' and invigorating the ocean economy through the Sagarmala project, which focuses on port-led development integrated with special economic zones, smart cities, industrial parks, logistics hubs and transport corridors. The Summit also served as a platform for investors to explore business opportunities in various maritime sectors.

One of the focus areas among these was the development of coastal and marine tourism along the 7,500 kilometers long coastline, which is dotted with pristine beaches, tranquil waterfronts and picturesque island territories. These are home to mangrove forests, nesting sites for sea turtles, sea grass beds, coral reefs and the adjacent waters are home to a variety of fish and mammals.

The renewed focus on marine tourism comes after decades of neglect by various governments; and Indian policy makers never envisioned marine tourism as an important part of the engine for the growth of national economy. The 1982 national policy on tourism did not succeed due to the closed nature of the Indian economy and restrictive licensing policy which denounced private and foreign participations. But the 2002 National Tourism Policy acknowledged tourism as an engine of economic growth and envisioned the sector as an economic multiplier under the framework of ‘Government-led, private-sector driven and community-welfare oriented’ and stressed the need to develop tourism in an environmentally sustainable environment manner.

Marine tourism industry has developed well along India’s west coast – particularly around Goa along the Konkan belt, and in Kerala along the Malabar Coast. Goa – referred to as ‘Pearl of the Orient’ – is a tourist paradise, and has received 895 international charter flights in 2015. Similarly, Kerala, which is promoted as ‘God’s own country’, attracts international tourists for its beaches, picturesque backwaters, canals, and lagoons, which are home to abundant marine life.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are an excellent tourism destination, but have been selectively opened for tourism due to environmental and security concerns. The islands are closer popular tourist destinations such as Phuket in Thailand and Langkawi in Malaysia, but have remained closed to international cruise liners. Likewise, the Lakshadweep Islands offer the finest underwater marine life for scuba divers, but have remained insulated to tourism primarily due to security and controlled development reasons.

The Indian government initiative to boost marine tourism is laudable, and a number of agencies are engaged in promoting coastal and marine tourism through projects such as cruise shipping and lighthouse tourism. Cruise tourism is a neglected and overlooked industry, and Indian ports have not been a popular cruise destination among the cruise line industry. Significantly, most cruise liners bypass India, either to Southeast Asia or the Middle East; and in 2014, the sea arrivals constituted about 0.4 per cent of country's total foreign arrivals. The Indian government is conscious of infrastructure inadequacies and has a vision and plan for promotion of cruise tourism and increase sea arrivals to 1.2 million tourists by 2030-31. Cruise terminals are under development at Goa, Cochin, Mumbai and Chennai and these can potentially boost the domestic hospitality industry that is also developing infrastructure and services to support port city excursions and domestic tourism.

Another innovative marine tourism initiative by the government is lighthouse tourism. There are nearly 190 lighthouses along the Indian coast and the surrounding areas offer opportunities for development of hotels, resorts, viewing galleries, adventure sports, thematic restaurant and allied tourism facilities. The Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships have identified 78 lighthouses, and adjacent areas around 8 lighthouses are being developed for tourism.

There are at least three more marine tourism segments which merit attention. The first is marinas. The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) marina at Bolgatty Island in Kochi is of international standard, and can berth around 30 yachts. A number of foreign luxury yachts sailing through the Indian Ocean call at Kochi. Interestingly, it is the world's only marina with a golf course. Two new marinas are under development in Mumbai and Kolkata. Although the ownership and use of luxury yachts in India is not quite popular, and only about 500 registered leisure boats are berthed in existing port facilities, setting up marinas can be a major growth industry for building yachts, encourage ownership of luxury boats, revenue for ports and create jobs.

The second segment is water sports which is a major attraction for marine leisure and entertainment industry in India. Several facilities have sprung up along India's coast line and offer sailing, windsurfing, boating, water scooter rides, parasailing and jet skiing and their popularity is fast catching up. Most of the sea front tourist resorts and hotels too have now begun to offer these facilities. The National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) at Goa offers training in Lifesaving Techniques and Powerboat Handling that is essential for running water sports facilities in India.

Third, India is also endowed with 14,500 kilometres of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks and lakes of which 5600 kilometres is navigable by mechanized vessels. The government plans to develop 101 new waterways as national waterways and these have the potential of becoming tourism hubs. The Goa government has invited investments to develop its 250-kilometre inland waterways for connectivity, as also to attract tourism.

While marine tourism and recreation business is expected to be a growth industry in India and the government is committed to provide necessary policy and fiscal support and encouragement, many such infrastructure projects come under Coastal Regulation Zones. Given the fragile nature of the marine environment and the delicate marine biodiversity, any tourism and recreation development projects would have to be subjected to stringent environmental laws and regulations.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 28 April 2016

Ocean currents push phytoplankton—and pollution—around the globe faster than thought

Catherine Zandonella

The billions of single-celled marine organisms known as phytoplankton can drift from one region of the world's oceans to almost any other place on the globe in less than a decade, Princeton University researchers have found.

Unfortunately, the same principle can apply to plastic debris, radioactive particles and virtually any other human-made flotsam and jetsam that litter our seas, the researchers found. Pollution can thus become a problem far from where it originated within just a few years.

The finding that objects can move around the globe in just 10 years suggests that ocean biodiversity may be more resilient to climate change than previously thought, according to a study published this week in the journal *Nature Communications*. Phytoplankton form the basis of the marine food chain, and their rapid spread could enable them to quickly repopulate areas where warming seas or ocean acidification have decimated them.

"Our study shows that the ocean is quite efficient in moving things around," said Bror Fredrik Jonson, an associate research scholar in Princeton's Department of Geosciences, who conducted the study with co-author James R. Watson, a former Princeton postdoctoral researcher who is now a researcher at Stockholm University.

"This comes as a surprise to a lot of people, and in fact we spent about two years confirming this work to make sure we got it right," Jonson said.

One of the strengths of the model is its approach of following phytoplankton wherever they go throughout the world rather than focusing on their behavior in one region, Jonson said. Because most marine organisms are mobile, this particle-tracking approach can yield new insights compared to the approach of studying one area of ocean.

The resulting model works for objects that have no ability to control their movement such as phytoplankton, bacteria and human-made debris. Organisms that can control their movement even a small amount -- such as zooplankton, which can control their vertical position in water -- are not accounted for in the model. Nor does the model apply to objects such as boats that protrude above the water and can be pushed by surface winds.

The team applied a computer algorithm to calculate the fastest route an object can travel via ocean currents between various points on the globe. Most previous studies looked only at movement of phytoplankton within regions. The resulting database, Jonson said, is analogous to a mileage chart one would find on a roadmap or atlas showing the distance between two cities, except that Jonson and Watson are indicating the speed of travel between different points.

The researchers confirmed that the travel times calculated by their model were similar to the time it took real objects accidentally dumped into the ocean to be carried by currents. For instance, 29,000 rubber ducks and other plastic bath toys toppled off a Chinese freighter in 1992 and have since been tracked as a method of understanding ocean currents. A similar utility has stemmed from the "Great Shoe Spill of 1990" when more than 60,000 Nike athletic shoes plunged into the ocean near Alaska and have been riding the currents off the Pacific Northwest ever since. The researchers' model also matched the amount of time it took radioactive particles to reach the West Coast of the United States from Japan's Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant, which released large amounts of radioactive materials into the Pacific Ocean following heavy damage from a tsunami in March 2011. The actual travel time of the materials was 3.6 years; the model calculated it would take 3.5 years.

To create the model, Jonson and Watson obtained surface-current data from a database of modeled global surface currents developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and housed at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. Into this virtual world they released thousands of particles that represented phytoplankton and then ran simulations multiple times, comparing past and present runs for accuracy and making tweaks to improve the model. They eventually tracked more than 50 billion positions of particles, which is just a fraction of the actual number of phytoplankton in the ocean.

Because phytoplankton mainly reproduce asexually -- meaning that one organism alone can produce offspring -- only one individual needs to reach a new area to colonize it. This fact led the team to look at the shortest time it takes to get around the world rather than the average time. "The rule for our phytoplankton was 'drive at fast as possible,'" Jonson said.

To cut down the computing resources needed to track the particles, the researchers calculated the fastest way to get from one place to another using a shortcut commonly employed by smartphone apps and in-car navigation systems. The method, called "Dijkstra's algorithm" after the late Dutch computer scientist Edsger Dijkstra who developed it in the 1950s, calculates how to get from A to C if you know the route from A to B and B to C.

"Dijkstra's algorithm is a way of optimizing for the shortest path between two positions when you have a network of possible locations, and we used it to find pathways when there was no direct link from one region to another," Watson said.

Although each step in the pathway from one region to another may be unlikely, the fact that a single phytoplankton organism, which lives only a few weeks, can give rise to millions of offspring means that even unlikely paths will have some followers.

Professor of Marine Sciences PerJonson at the University of Gothenburg Center for Sea and Society in Sweden said that the analysis offers a new perspective on global connectivity. "This is the first attempt to identify time scales of connectivity and possible dispersal barriers for plankton across all oceans," said Jonson, who had no role in the research and is not related to study author BrorJonson. "The general message is that all parts of the ocean surface are connected on surprisingly short time scales.

"This implies that regional declines in plankton fitness due to climate change may be buffered by relatively rapid immigration coupled with community sorting or evolutionary change," Jonson continued. "The authors also offer a practical and predictive tool for a range of studies regarding global ocean dispersal, including the spread of contaminants and marine litter."

Source: [Princeton University](#), 19 April 2016

Geo-politics of South Pacific Islands and India's Strategic Interest

Balaji Chandramohan

As the geo-political region of the Asia-Pacific is witnessing competition among established players such as the USA and China, the South Pacific Islands have begun to receive more attention. This is especially so in the context of India's maritime, economic, and diplomatic interests and aspirations. Despite the tyranny of distance from Eurasia the South Pacific Islands received much attention during both the World Wars. Subsequently, this attention became somewhat limited during the Cold War since Europe, North Asia, South-East Asia and Latin America became the new sphere of competition between the Super Powers (the USA and the Soviet Union). However, the new maritime competition between the USA and China in the Asia Pacific has led to the South Pacific Islands beginning to regain attention. This has been especially so with the announcement of the US Rebalanceto the Asia Pacific, the interest shown by China, and (interestingly) the expanding reach of the Russian Far Eastern Fleet—all complicating the existing status quoin the region.The geopolitical stock of the South Pacific Islands

has increased for other reasons too. It is now understood that the region will face increased maritime traffic once the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) is finalized. The geo-strategic location of the Islands –connecting Australasia to the Latin American sub-continent –is another important factor. The South Pacific Islands begin in the South-West Pacific, and stretch till the South-East Pacific, and they are divided regionally into Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia from West to East. Geo-political competition is very much evident among the Melanesian countries (Vanuatu Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea); the Micronesian islands (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Palau—as well as the three US territories—Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and Wake Island); and the Polynesian countries (Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Niue, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia).

India's maritime interest in the region stems from the fact that it is an expanding regional power, with ambitions to spread its diplomatic, military and economic reach beyond its immediate neighbourhood. In an effort to strengthen its existing place in the multilateral regional and global institutions such as the United Nations, India is renewing its Act East Policy by including the South Pacific Islands in its policy, thus extending its range and scope.

India has stated explicitly that its intention is to have the South Pacific Islands only within its overall maritime reach (mainly because India is understood as not being a predominant Pacific power in terms of geography); nevertheless, it is true that India's strategic orientation is focused on the distant islands. This was emphasized in the state visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Fiji in November 2014, soon after his visit to Australia. The impetus to take the New Delhi's reach to the Pacific Islands countries was visible during this visit, since apart from the diplomatic and cultural overtones, the military dimensions of the visit could not be ignored. The visit attracted worldwide attention since it was considered as being a significant step in India's expanding geo-political horizon to the South Pacific Islands. The high point of the visit was the first India-Pacific Islands leaders' summit meeting held in Suva in

November 2014 which was followed by the Second India-Pacific Islands Forum held in Jaipur in August 2015.

India's current strategic interest in the South Pacific islands should compensate for the lack of it during much part of the 20th century. India's attention to the South Pacific islands region was dismal for most part of the last century as 'Independent India' failed to identify its own geographic and cultural confluence and outreach with the South Pacific. The cultural and maritime ties between the South Pacific and India go back to trade links between the Cholas kings in Tamil Nadu and the Polynesians. This has been much discussed by the famous Indian Historian V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar in the book titled "The Origin and Spread of the Tamils".

South Pacific Islands in India's Strategic Horizon

India's politico-military interest in the South Pacific islands is an extension of New Delhi's trajectory towards becoming a maritime power in the wider Asia Pacific region, which can court the island atoll countries for its effective maritime outreach, supplemented diplomatically by its Look East and Act East Policy.

Earlier, India's expanding maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific region included Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia within the ambit of its Act East Policy relating to Southeast Asia. Its current expanded maritime thinking towards the Asia Pacific region will no doubt include the Pacific Islands as and when its Eastern Fleet extends the range and scope of its operations beyond the Straits of Malacca to the South-West Pacific.

India's expanding naval presence is in keeping with the view that there is a need for the security of its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) for its economic prosperity for the wellbeing of its growing population. India also feels anxious due to China's expanding presence in the Asia Pacific region. Other powers in the South Pacific Islands (such as the USA) have military commitments in other parts of the world. It is also doubtful whether Australia and other countries like Indonesia are in a position to

challenge China's expanding strategic profile in the South Pacific. India, therefore, may need to enhance its economic, military, and diplomatic outreach to these countries. Fiji seems an obvious choice to function as a spring board for such this purpose. Whereas China's maritime strategy is based on the Three Island Chain concept (through which, Beijing hopes to challenge the United States maritime supremacy in the Asia-Pacific including in the South Pacific Islands), India's maritime strategy is based on expanding its 'blue water' presence, first in the Indian Ocean and then extending it to the South-West Pacific. What India may like to do is to expand its naval capabilities, or to have some sort of an understanding with the South-West Pacific countries to have its naval presence in this region, maybe in one of the islands of Fiji, or in any of the South Pacific countries which would be comfortable with such an idea.

If India wishes to expand its military presence in the Island Nations, this could be achieved as countries which have military presence in the South Pacific Islands—such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand and France (which has a South Pacific Fleet in French Polynesia)—will be happy to have Indian military presence as an effective counter-weight to Beijing's ever expanding military profile in the South Pacific. The defence and security orientation of the Pacific Island countries is inward looking; they lack any robust maritime capabilities of their own. It is this fact that has helped China to silently expand its maritime capabilities, while the USA was distracted by its military commitments in Europe and Asia.

Operationally, a greater Indian military presence in the South Pacific islands could include significant intelligence-sharing between India and those countries in the region that have a permanent maritime military presence, such as USA, Chile, New Zealand, Australia and France. Also, since Fiji is reviewing its national security and defense policy framework, which is likely to be articulated in a Defence White Paper. The Indian military establishment will be keen to be a factor in such a policy framework, in various ways, including enhanced naval cooperation, besides institutionalizing Track 2 and Track 1.5 dialogues. The fresh prospects of greater strategic co-operation between India and Fiji come at a time when, after the September 2014 elections, the Fijian military is

moving towards becoming more professional under civilian control. The military force of Fiji is could effectively boost its combat capabilities in cooperation with Indian military forces, which would also bolster the former's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Interestingly, during the second India-Pacific Islands meeting held at Jaipur in 2015, it was decided that India will have certain civilian monitoring stations in the Island nations. Though this was not explicitly stated, these stations could be used by Indianaval forces, if required.

India's Soft Power in the South Pacific Islands

India's presence in the South Pacific Islands through its Look East Policy should be a variation of its hard as well as its soft power. If the hard power impetus is provided by the geo-strategic importance of South Pacific Islands, the soft power initiative could complement India's projection of its image as a Great Power.India's Look East policy has not fully extended through the Malaccan Straits as yet.

In the next five years, it is envisioned that India's Look East and Act East outreach will expand diplomatically in the South Pacific, particularly in Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand. Each of these countries has important political and cultural ties with India. Fiji's domestic demographic contains a population in which nearly 40 percent are identified as "persons of Indian origin." For their part, Australia, and New Zealand have sizable and long-established Indian expatriate communities. These communities wield significant economic and political influence in each country, and provide an open conduit for information exchanges between the South-western Pacific neighbors and the Indian homeland.India's competitor and rival in the Asia-Pacific region is China which has been quite active diplomatically in the South Pacific. After Fiji was expelled from the Pacific Islands Forum, China encouraged it to be an active participant in the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and even provided funds for the establishment of its secretariat. Moreover, and Beijing has expanded its trade relations with the Polynesian countries such as Samoa and Tonga.Diplomatically, India has shown interest in the affairs of the

South Pacific by participating in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) annually beginning 2002. India also has begun to provide foreign aid to the islands in the South Pacific by offering soft loans for development projects. Along with aid programs from traditional donor states such as the USA, Australia, and New Zealand, the Pacific Islands have received help from western charities and non-governmental agencies. This is seen as a soft power counter to rising Chinese presence in the South Pacific.

At present, India has no military presence in the Pacific. However, this may change in the next five years as India starts increasing the Eastern Command's operational capabilities. Given its expanding commercial engagement with Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, it would seem like a natural evolution for its navy to participate in maritime patrols along the sea lanes involved.

Secondly, India should push itself forward on the strategic and politico-military levels if it has to play a major role in international affairs. Narendra Modi has made several references to this issue at meetings with leaders in various countries, including with the countries in the South Pacific Islands.

Further, a Special Adaptation Fund of US\$ one million to provide technical assistance and training for capacity building to the Cook Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Niue, Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea was also announced. A hike in Grant-in-Aid from US\$ 125,000 to US\$ 200,000 annually to each island for community projects selected by them was announced, and a trade office of the Pacific Island nations in New Delhi was also launched. Indian diplomatic presence in all of the South Pacific Islands is also warranted because of the Indian navy's expanded reach in times of calamities such as the recent cyclones in Fiji.

Indian Diplomatic Missions are present only in two countries of the South Pacific Islands—in Fiji and Papua New Guinea—apart from New Zealand and Australia in the entire South Pacific. To enhance India's presence in the South Pacific, New Delhi could

consider establishing diplomatic missions in Cook Islands and Samoa, which are as significant as Fiji in terms of geo-strategic orientation. Also, the existing diplomatic outposts could have defence representation.

Conclusion

As a growing power in the Asia Pacific, India's interests in the South Pacific Island states are manifold. It can safely be said that the Pacific Islands Nations are India's far flank, and this interest has been included in India's Extended Look East Policy. This policy and the fact that India's graduation as an important power in the Pacific Islands will be welcomed by powers such as Chile, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, augurs well for the future.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 27 April 2016

Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), 69th session 18-22 April 2016 (closing remarks)

International Shipping News

This is another exceptionally busy as well as momentous session of the Committee and your hard work and, in particular, the decisions made over these past five days should, therefore, be recognized with immense appreciation. In the interest of time, I will only mention a few matters.

A lot of focus has been on the Committee's work on further technical and operational measures for enhancing energy efficiency of international shipping. Through the approval of the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI on the establishment of a fuel consumption data collection system you have sent the message once again that IMO is the appropriate international body to address the impact of GHG emissions from international shipping.

In your negotiations, you have clearly demonstrated:

- a firm determination to serve the best interests of the environment;
- a clear demonstration of willingness to preserve the unity of the membership;
- a preparedness to negotiate in good faith;
- a readiness to compromise; and
- a commitment to build consensus.

These attributes fill me with pride as I close this first session of the MEPC as Secretary-General of the Organization. Especially, as today is designated by the UN as Earth Day, and further today the signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is taking place in New York.

I am looking forward to the next session adopting the mandatory fuel consumption data collection system, which will be a milestone towards more important work envisaged at the second and third steps in the agreed three-phase approach.

I welcome the successful completion of all the tasks assigned to the Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on Facilitation of Transfer of Technology for Ships through resolution MEPC.229(65). I am very pleased that many of the recommendations have already been incorporated in the Organization's activities. I have no doubt that the implementation of the fuel consumption data collection system would also benefit from these recommendations. The Secretariat, on its part, will spare no effort to address any specific needs of LDCs and SIDs with regard to implementation of ship energy efficiency requirements.

I listened attentively to the constructive debate on how the Organization could best support the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. I am eagerly expecting further constructive discussions at the session in October on how best to progress this matter.

Moving to ballast water management, I am pleased to observe the approval of the draft amendments to regulation B-3 of the Convention to reflect the objectives of resolution A.1088(28), the good progress made in the revision of the Guidelines for approval of

ballast water management systems (G8) as well as the intersessional work arrangements to expedite the remaining work.

MEPC has responded to the concerns raised by the shipping industry. I therefore reiterate my personal request to Member Governments to accelerate the national ratification process in their countries without any further delay. A mere 0.21% of the world's gross merchant shipping tonnage is needed – we are almost there!

Distinguished delegates,

In concluding, I thank you all and, in particular, the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Mr. Arsenio Dominguez of Panama and Mr. Hideaki Saito of Japan. Together, they have been a splendid team, working closely together and performing to the highest standards expected from the Organization.

To you, Arsenio, I wish to express my special thanks for steering the Committee through yet another very demanding session. Once again, you kept things moving and – most importantly – made sure everybody stayed on board. The decisions reached at this session, within the very short time available, on so many diverse and often complex issues also owes much to the straightforward manner and the enviable cheerfulness with which you guide the delegates, both in the meeting room and behind the scenes.

To you, Hideaki, I also wish to express my sincere thanks for your commitment, strong leadership and valuable contributions particularly in the Working Group. I also thank the chairmen of the various groups convened during this session to support the Committee's work, namely, Ms. Mäkinen of Finland, Mr. Wiley of Canada, Mr. Yoshida of Japan and Mr. Steinbock of Germany.

Last but not least I wish to pay a special tribute to all the dedicated staff of the Marine Environment Division for their truly excellent and highly professional work. All this is only possible through strong team work and leadership, which the Division's Director, Stefan Micallef, has delivered with commendable commitment, supported by all the staff in the Division under the additional guidance of Ms. Heike Deggim. I also thank all

the staff of the Conference Division, as well as the interpreters, ably led by the Division's Director, Mrs. Olga O'Neil, all of them often work very long hours and, together with many officers from other Divisions, serve your meetings tirelessly and with high quality support services.

Distinguished delegates,

Before I close my statement, I wish to say farewell to some among us, who are about to leave and we thank them wholeheartedly for their valuable contributions to the work of the Committee and IMO.

I wish to mention, in particular, Mr. Marten Koopmans of EMSA, a stalwart friend and supporter of the Organization, who made an invaluable contribution to shipping and IMO.

Our farewells and good wishes are also extended to two senior directors of the Organization, who will be retiring later this year, Mrs. Olga O'Neil, Director of Conference Division and Mr. Jo Espinoza-Ferrey, Director of Administrative Division.

The Marine Environment Division will itself see two staff members retire soon. They are: Mr. DanduPughiuc, Senior Deputy Director of Sub-Division for Implementation and Mr. James Paw, Technical Officer of the same Sub-Division.

Captain Pughiuc, joined the Marine Environment Division in 2000, and has made significant contributions to the Organization's work and objectives. He played an instrumental role in supporting the Organization's efforts in development and adoption of the Ballast Water Management Convention and supporting the implementation of various marine environmental conventions by overseeing a number of technical cooperation and capacity building activities that the Organization initiated over the years.

James has done sterling work for technical assistance activities of the Marine Environment Division since he joined IMO in 1994. I wish to particularly commend his great contribution in the successful implementation of the Internet-based UN Atlas of the Oceans and the GEF/World Bank/IMO Project on Regional Marine Electric Highway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

Dandu and James, I thank you for your unfailing commitments and services to the Organization, and wish you well for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

It now remains for me to wish you all a nice weekend – and to those who have to travel home a safe journey.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#), 27 April 2016