



MAKING WAVES

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Taiwanese legislators demand tough action against Japan after fishing boat crew detained

-Kyodo

Legislators belonging to Taiwan's Nationalist Party on Thursday demanded that the government take tougher action against Japan, including the use of military force, after a Taiwanese fishing boat and its crew were detained by the Japanese coast guard last month for fishing in the nation's waters.

Legislator Liao Kuo-tung told a legislative committee that the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou, belonging to his own party, was "too weak" in handling the matter.

"When it [Taiwan] gives an inch, it [Japan] will take a mile," he said. "We must take stronger action. Only by using military means can we make Japan bow its head."

The Dong Sheng Ji No. 16 was found by Japan's Coast Guard in waters near Okinotori, the southernmost point of Japanese territory, on April 24. It was boarded and its crew members detained.

The boat and its crew were released a few days later following negotiations that led to payment of a 6 million yen (HK\$438,000) fine.

Another KMT lawmaker, Kung Wen-chi, said sending official vessels to protect Taiwanese fishermen in the area was not an act of provocation, but a proper measure aimed at pressuring Japan to come to the negotiating table.

"We are not afraid of Japan," he said. "If you want peace, you should prepare for war."

Legislators of the soon-to-be ruling Democratic Progressive Party advised caution.

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DPP legislator Kuan Bi-ling criticised the Ma administration for poorly handling the matter.

"I hope to see negotiations not confrontations," she said. "I am totally against using this incident to instigate nationalist ideologies."

Another DPP legislator, Chen Ming-wen, said sending official vessels to adjacent waters, not to mention taking military action, was not a rational move.

Chen said the administration should resolve the issue through diplomatic means. It must also help the Taiwanese fishermen reclaim the 6 million yen paid, he said.

Since Japan declared its 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone around Okinotori in 1996, only three Taiwanese fishing boats, including the Dong Sheng Ji No. 16, have been detained by the Japanese authorities.

While the owners of the ships detained in 2005 and last month paid out of their own pockets, Taiwan's representative office in Japan paid on behalf of the owner of another ship detained in 2012.

Tsai Ming-yao, secretary general of the Association for East Asian Relations, told the same committee that in addition to continuing negotiations with Japan, government agencies would continue to remind Taiwanese fishermen of the risks they run when fishing in that area.

Taiwan could also seek the assistance of a third country, such as the United States, to help resolve the issue.

Tsai, however, emphasized that Taiwan would not seek help from mainland China.

Ma, who will step down May 20 after ending his second term in office, said last week that Japan's self-declared economic exclusion zone violates the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and proposed that Taiwan and Japan consider seeking international arbitration.

Tsai, however, said on Thursday that because Taiwan was not a member of the United Nations, it would be very difficult to bring about.

Hsu Yung-ming, a legislator from the New Power Party, a DPP ally, said Ma himself has been inconsistent in his position on Okinotori.

While Japan named Okinotori an island in 1931 and declared its exclusion zone in 1996, Hsu said the Taiwan government did and said nothing .

Ma called Okinotori an island in 2014, but changed his mind last month and instructed all government agencies to refer to it as "rocks" instead.

"I wonder whether it is the personal opinion of President Ma or the official position of the Taiwan government," Hsu said.

If Taiwan and Japan continue to have differences over the status of Okinotori, Hsu said he did not know how they could work out a fisheries pact as the Ma administration has instructed government agencies.

Source: [South China Morning Post](#), 5 May 2016

Vietnamese fishing boats accused of encroaching in Taiwan waters

- Kuo Chu-chen and Lilian Wu

Taipei, May 9 (CNA) Skippers of several Taiwanese fishing boats have urged the government to crack down on Vietnamese fishing boats they said Monday were operating in Taiwan's exclusive economic zone off the Pratas Islands in the South China Sea.

Several fishing boats registered in Pingtung County said they saw Vietnamese fishing vessels operating in waters east and northeast of the Pratas Islands on Sunday at a latitude of roughly 21 degrees north and a longitude of about 119 degrees east.

Another Vietnamese ship was spotted well south of the Pratas Islands, according to the fishermen.

The Liuchiu Fishermen's Association notified the Coast Guard Administration and the Fisheries Agency of the situation.

The CGA said it would make the waters a priority area to protect but will not send ships there for the time being because large patrol vessels are now in waters between Taiwan and the Philippines and near Japan-controlled Okinotori atoll in the West Pacific.

Taiwanese fishermen are already in a difficult situation, complained Tsai Pao-hsing (蔡寶興), secretary-general of the Liuchiu Fishermen's Association.

He said they face seizure if operating in waters off the Okinotori atoll and cannot operate in the overlapping sections of Taiwan and the Philippines' exclusive economic zones, and worried that the situation will only get worse if Taiwan's own economic zone is being encroached upon.

The Pratas Islands, also known as the Dongsha Islands, are controlled by Taiwan but also claimed by China. The main island is one of the biggest in the South China Sea and has been designated as a national park by Taiwan's government.

A Taiwanese fishing boat, the "Tung Sheng Chi No. 16," was seized on April 25 by the Japan Coast Guard while operating in waters some 150 nautical miles from Okinotori.

The boat and its crew were released on April 26 only after the owner of the boat paid 6 million Japanese yen (US\$54,442) as a security deposit demanded by Japanese authorities, pending legal procedures.

Japan claims a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone around the tiny atoll, but Taiwan argues that Okinotori is a reef rather than an island -- as Japan defines it -- and is therefore not entitled to anything more than a 500-meter "security zone."

Source: [Focus Taiwan](#), 9 May 2016

ADMM Plus Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise 2016 Underway in Brunei

-Courtesy Story Press

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM-Plus) Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism Exercise began May 3 with an opening ceremony at the Multi National Coordination Center in Brunei.

The exercise aims to enhance cooperation between ADMM-Plus nations in maritime security and counterterrorism, while promoting information sharing in responding to relevant and contemporary training scenarios.

"ADMM-Plus continues the trend of increased multilateral cooperation among navies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific," said Cmdr. Lex Walker, deputy commodore, Destroyer Squadron 7. "Working together at sea under realistic training scenarios enhances maritime cooperation and prepares our navies to work together during times of crisis."

The harbor phase of ADDM plus 2016 includes communications exercises, visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) skills exchanges, flight deck familiarization and a welcome reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG-63) will participate in the sea phase of the exercise while assigned to a maritime task group. The sea-phase will feature a maritime security and counter terrorism scenario. Both scenarios include cross-deck helicopter operations, VBSS training, divisional tactics, and communication drills.

“We are looking forward to getting out to sea and training together with sailors from other regional navies,” said Cmdr. Harry Marsh, commanding officer, USS Stethem. “Our crew will be able to see first-hand how other navies operate and we can learn from them while sharing our own operational tactics and procedures.”

The exercise concludes with arrival of participating ships in Singapore along with a land storming counter terrorism exercise. The semi-annual exercise involves navies and armed forces personnel from 18 ADMM-Plus countries, including the 10 ASEAN Member States of Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the eight Plus countries of Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the United States.

U.S. military units participating include USS Stethem, a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol craft, U.S. Army Pacific chemical, biological, radiological and explosives (CBRE) teams, and staff from the U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Task Force 73 and Destroyer Squadron 7.

Source: [Defence Media Activity](#), 10 May 2016

Nigeria: Navy Averts Pirate Attack On Three Merchant Vessels

- Kingsley Omonobi

Abuja — The Nigerian Navy said on Tuesday that its personnel averted pirates attack on 3 merchant vessels, namely MV MOXON, MT AFRICAN BEAUTY and MT MADONA in the maritime environment of the Niger Delta.

A statement by the Director of Naval Information, Commodore Christian Ezekobe noted that "The vessels were attacked around Brass waterways in Bayelsa State on 3rd and 4th May 2016".

"The criminals made spirited effort to seize the vessels but the timely response of the Special Protective Team deployed by the Nigerian Navy successfully dislodged the pirates who fled to evade arrest".

In a related development, the Navy said "a naval patrol team deployed by NNS PATHFINDER on 4th May 2016 discovered and destroyed 2 active illegal crude oil refineries located at NAFCON creek".

"The refineries had 7 storage tanks containing about 10,000 litres of stolen crude oil and 20,000 litres of illegally refined AGO".

"This is even as the patrol team destroyed a warehouse used by the criminals to hide illegally refined products".

"The massive warehouse located at Ikpokiri community in Rivers State had GP tanks containing suspected illegally refined AGO".

"Consequently, the new tactics of using warehouses by the crude oil thieves has been noted seriously".

"Therefore, the Nigerian Navy is warning owners of warehouses in the Niger Delta area to avoid the temptation of leasing out their properties to the criminals".

"The Service will not be held responsible for damages done to the properties in the course of the current clampdown on crude oil theft, vandalism and piracy in the area."

Source: [All Africa](#), 10 May 2016

Joint Maritime Security Cooperation in Force Soon

-Associated Press

The joint security control cooperation in maritime areas between Malaysia, Philippine and Indonesia will be implemented as soon as possible, says Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Johari Baharum.

He said the implementation of the cooperation was vital following the increase in kidnapping threats by militants in the areas.

"It will be implemented as soon as it receives the nod from the top leaders of the three countries.

"There shouldn't be any problems as the countries involved had agreed in principle to implement it as soon as possible," he told reporters yesterday.

Commenting further, the deputy minister said the security control cooperation would be implemented using the Melaka Strait joint patrol model.

"(We believe) the joint patrol will be able to reduce maritime issues in the waters of the three countries," he said.

Mohd Johari was met after opening the 15th Pacific Area Cataloguing Seminar (PACS) here yesterday.

The 15th PACS, organised by the Defence Ministry, was participated by some of the regional countries in Asia Pacific including Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Poland, Czech Republic, Australia, France, German and Belgium.

Also present were Defence Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Mohamad Radzi and Director of Malaysian Armed Forces Cataloguing Authority (MAFCA) Lt Col AbdWahabEnok. — Bernama

Source: [The Borne Post](#), 11 May 2016

Pakistan arrests 10 Indian fishermen

-Press Trust of India

Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency today arrested 10 Indian fishermen and seized two boats for allegedly fishing illegally in the country's territorial waters.

A spokesperson for the agency said that the fishermen were repeatedly warned to leave Pakistan's territorial waters.

"They were violating Pakistan's territorial waters by fishing illegally in our area in the open sea," he said.

The spokesperson added the fishermen were arrested from near Sir Creek, along the maritime border between Sindh and Gujarat.

He said that police have registered cases against the Indian fishermen under the foreign and fisheries acts of the law.

Pakistan and India frequently arrest fishermen as there is no clear demarcation of the maritime border in Arabian sea and these fishermen don't have boats equipped with the technology to know their precise location.

Last month, Pakistan had arrested 59 Indian fishermen and seized 10 boats while earlier in February they had arrested 20 Indian fishermen.

Although both countries have frequently released these fishermen from jails as goodwill gestures but according to official figures still more than 300 Indian fishermen are currently languishing in Karachi prisons.

Source: [Mumbai Mirror](#), 11 May 2016

US patrols in South China Sea Warrant Defensive Measures: China

-Press TV

China says frequent US Navy patrols in the South China Sea are forcing Beijing to boost its defense capabilities in the area amid rising tensions in the disputed waters.

The Chinese Defense Ministry said in a Wednesday statement that it deployed two navy fighter jets, one early warning aircraft, and three ships to warn off the destroyer USS William P. Lawrence.

“The provocative actions by American military ships and planes lay bare the US designs to seek gain by creating chaos in the region and again testify to the total correctness and utter necessity of China’s construction of defensive facilities on relevant islands,” the statement said.

“China will increase the scope of sea and air patrols based on need, boost all categories of military capacity building, resolutely defend national sovereignty and security, and resolutely safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea,” it added.

The American warship was traveling within 12 nautical miles of Fiery Cross Reef on the South China Sea's Spratly Islands on Tuesday.

It was the third time in less than a year that Washington had sent its warships to the sea in a move repeatedly condemned by China as “the real militarization” of the region.

US Defense Department spokesman Bill Urban said the voyage was made to “challenge excessive maritime claims of some claimants in the South China Sea,” in a less-than-tacit reference to China.

The South China Sea has become a source of tension between China, the US, and some other regional countries, who are seeking control of trade routes and mineral deposits there.

China has on different occasions asserted its sovereignty over the sea, parts of which are also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Washington has accused Beijing of attempting to take advantage of the situation and gradually asserting control over the region.

China, however, rejects the allegations and says the US is interfering in regional affairs, deliberately stirring tensions in the South China Sea.

Source: [Press TV](#), 11 May 2016



U.S. Military Tests the Sea Hunter, a 40-metre Self-Driving Ship that's the Biggest in the World

-National Post Staff

The Pentagon took the Sea Hunter, a new vessel that promises to be the future of robotic warfare, out for a spin on Monday, showing off the self-driving ship off the coast of San Diego.

The 40-metre-long boat is the world's largest unmanned surface vessel and was developed to hunt submarines and underwater mines.

The U.S. military's research wing, the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, designed, developed and built the ship in a program that cost more than \$150 million. The so-called drone ship will one day be able to travel thousands of kilometers across the sea for months at a time — all without a single crew member on board.

“This is the first time we've ever had a totally robotic, trans-oceanic-capable ship,” Deputy U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Work said in an interview with Reuters.

The military will continue to test the vessel off the coast of California for the next two years. For now, the Sea Hunter will have crew on hand, but the Pentagon aims to run the boat entirely without humans in a couple years.

The ship uses GPS, sonar and radar to maneuver and has been able to reach speeds of 50 km/h in recent tests.

The project is part of the Pentagon's plan to introduce unmanned drones on a large scale, supplementing its aircrafts and other drones though the Sea Hunter itself is a cause for concern among the International Transport Workers' Federation.

“For our military operations we want to make sure we have unmanned vessels like this to supplement the human mission so that we're not putting people unduly in harm's

way,” a spokesman for DARPA, Jared Adams, told the American defence website Stars and Stripes.

The commercial sector also has its eye on unmanned ships as a way to cut down on operating costs. According to DARPA, the vessel can be produced for \$25 million.

Source: [National Post](#), 3 May 2016

U.S. 7th Fleet Commander, Staff grow relationship with PLA(N)

-Gabrielle Blake

During a PLA(N)-hosted roundtable held at Shanghai Naval Garrison Headquarters, both staffs discussed a wide range of maritime topics such as: freedom of navigation, command and control, and concerns about tensions in the South China Sea. The engagements focused on building trust and cooperation between both navies.

“It gives us the ability to meet our counterparts, to make relationships, and I think that’s so important,” said U.S. 7th Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, who attended the roundtable.

Rear Adm. Wang Hai, deputy commander of the PLA(N), said the “navy to navy” relationship is an important aspect of “nation-to-nation relations,” while speaking during a reception aboard the USS Blue Ridge, May 7. “Through these engagements our U.S. colleagues have already got a better understanding of China and both our Sailors have made new friends,” Wang said.

Wang said both navies need to work together to promote the friendship between both peoples and militaries. “I believe our friendship will remain for a very long time,” he said.

Additionally during the port visit, Aucoin conducted an office call with Wang, and toured the PLA(N) Lanzhou destroyer CNS Xi'an (DDG 153).

Aucoin trumpeted the opportunity to grow the relationship between 7th Fleet and the PLA(N) during the port visit. "It will help us to work together closely and instill more trust, which I think is important in this time and age," he said.

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

Source: [Defense Media Activity](#), 5 May 2016

Sri Lanka Navy exports 9 Patrol Craft for the first time in the history

-Ministry of Defense

Winning one of the biggest defence contracts in the naval history, Sri Lanka Navy sold 9 small patrol craft, indigenously built by the Inshore Patrol Craft Project of the Navy established at Welisara, to the Nigerian Government today (06) at its' premises. The deal is a milestone in the annals of the Sri Lanka Navy as this is the very first transaction, where the Navy involved internationally to earn foreign exchange to the country. The Nigerian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka His Excellency Mr. S.U. Ahmed along with the dignitaries of the High Commission, the Director General Operation of the Sri Lanka Navy, Rear Admiral Dharmendra Wettewa and the Director General Engineering, Rear Admiral NilanthaPremasiri attended this historic occasion which saw the official handover of 06 Arrow Boats and 03 Inshore Patrol Craft worth of approx. USD 4.2 million, said by the Navy media.

The Sri Lanka Navy is the pioneer in the sphere of Arrow-class patrol boats and Wave Rider Craft where the concept which was developed through SLN's Assymetric Naval Warfare experience. Moreover the foreign navies and the sister services avidly seek the assistance of the Sri Lanka Navy in asymmetric warfare exercises/ training due to her world-wide fame achieved through the victories in sea battles through these Arrow-class patrol boats and Wave Riders. As a result, today the Navy is privileged to deal in this USD 4.2 million contract with the Nigerian Navy. The first prototypes of these arrow boats were developed in 1994 by the Navy Special Boat Squadron and have indigenously produced approximately 120 craft thus far.

Navy media also stated that, the Navy will continue to engage in this assignment ahead as it would boost the economic stabilization of the country through export earnings. The earnings of this USD 4.2 million will be utilized for the upgrading of the Inshore Patrol Craft Project of the Navy at Welisara and it is expected to lift the standards of the work station through advanced research and technical know-how in view of delivering quality output according to the international standards.

Source: [Ministry of Defence](#), 7 May 2016

South China Sea Coast guard code still stuck in choppy waters

-Liu Zhen Teddy Ng

Coastguard vessels in South China Sea need code of conduct amid increasing risk of clashes in contested waters, say analysts

Red tape and conflicting sovereignty interests are hindering -efforts to set up a coastguard code of conduct in the South China Sea, despite the rising risk of -confrontation, observers said.

They said part of the problem was that coastguards often fell under various government agencies, especially in China where the authorities are still centralising maritime law enforcement, making it difficult for Beijing to commit to a code.

Tensions in the disputed waters have risen over China's competing territorial claims with Southeast Asian neighbours and close encounters between Chinese and US military vessels. But Asia-Pacific naval chiefs -approved a code of conduct two years ago to defuse unexpected encounters between navy vessels and aircraft.

New concerns have surfaced as coastguards have stepped up patrols of the sea, but the clashes have yet to escalate to the level of a military confrontation.

Tang Siew Mun, head of the Asian Studies Centre at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, said the absence of a code for coastguards was troubling.

“The existing Code for -Unplanned Encounters at Sea, which counts all the South China Sea claimant states as signatories, applies only to navy vessels and does not cover coastguards, fishing fleets and other enforcement agencies,” Tang said. “This gap is worrisome as skirmishes between coastguard ships and fishing fleets have been on the rise in the South China Sea, and would most likely be the flashpoint that sets the [area] a blaze.”

As part of Beijing's attempts to position itself as a maritime power, Chinese law enforcement vessels have stepped up patrols in both the South and East China seas. China has 205 coastguard vessels, of which 95 have a displacement of more than 1,000 tonnes and some are refurbished navy vessels, according to a report by the US Office of Naval Intelligence last year. Japan has 78 coast guard vessels, Vietnam 55, Indonesia eight, the Philippines four, and Malaysia two.

Incidents involving coastguard vessels have become more common. In March, Indonesia said a Chinese coastguard ship rammed a Chinese fishing boat detained by

Indonesian maritime authorities at a base on the Natuna Islands, forcing Jakarta to release the fishing vessel.

“A useful step towards the regional code for unplanned encounters at sea would be to establish a direct hotline among coastguard regional commanders to manage misunderstandings in a timely manner,” Tang said.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China have agreed to consider a proposal to establish a code that will include coastguards.

Beijing ordered the People’s Liberation Army Navy and the coastguard to moderate their behaviour after a string of incidents in 2013 and 2014, according to a report published by the Lowy Institute for International Policy last month. Those incidents included the near collision of the USS Cowpens and a PLA warship in the South China Sea, and the ramming of Vietnamese coastguard ships near a Chinese oil rig by Chinese coastguard forces.

But the report said Beijing had moved more slowly on confidence-building measures, including the coastguard code, with Asean nations than it had with Japan and the United States.

“China is less concerned about a coastguard clash in the South China Sea with Southeast Asian nations because Southeast Asian coastguards are weaker. China generally believes that this type of incident is less likely to escalate to a big clash,” Ashley Townshend, co-author of the report and also a research fellow at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, said.

Townshend said setting up a code for coastguards was more difficult than simply adopting the existing one for Asian navies because coastguards fell under different government agencies.

China's coastguard was formed in 2013, when Beijing started to centralise maritime law enforcement powers scattered among various agencies under the administrative control of the State Oceanic Administration and operational control of the Ministry of Public Security.

Townshend said the reforms were ongoing and multiple government bodies had overlapping responsibilities for the new China Coast Guard, making it harder for Beijing to commit to a code.

Another problem was sovereignty given that such a code might mean subjecting coastguard forces regulated by domestic laws to international rules established with other countries.

“It's not necessarily the case that the Philippines, Vietnam and China will agree that around the Spratly Islands they should have their coastguards' behaviour regulated, as they each have competing claims to these waters and may view a coastguard code as undermining the bigger question of maritime jurisdiction and -sovereignty,” he said.

Wang Hanling, a maritime affairs expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the Chinese coastguard had already worked with neighbouring nations on rescue operations.

“The Chinese coastguard in the South China Sea is conducting its duties in China's jurisdictional waters, and there is no need to have a similar code to the navy,” Wang said.

Michael Vatikiotis, Asia director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a private diplomacy organisation that held a maritime confidence-building programme on the South China Sea in March, said the imminent ruling on rival claims by an international court in The Hague added uncertainty for Beijing.

“It’s an extremely sensitive period ahead of the ruling. It’s difficult for the Chinese navy and the coastguard to engage in the issue because they may not be ready to commit to ... an agreement,” Vatikiotis said.

JinYongming, director of the Shanghai Academy of Social -Sciences’ Ocean Strategy Studies Centre, said China should reach an agreement with Asean on a -notification mechanism for -coastguards.

Source:[South China Morning Post](#), 8 May 2016

Chinese Navy conducting massive combat drills in West Philippine Sea

-Joel Dizon

The Chinese People’s Liberation Army-Navy (PLA Navy) will be conducting a massive combat drills in West Philippine Sea. According to official report from China Military Online, guided-missile destroyer Hefei, multi-role frigates Sanya, and supply ship Honghu sailed from a naval port in Sanya, Hainan Province last week.

The said warships “will join forces in a certain water of the South China with submarines of the Nanhai Fleet Sea (South Sea Fleet) to stage a training exercise involving subjects of breaking through enemy blockage in a joint operation of surface ships and submarines, reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance,” the Chinese military said.

According to the report, the said drills will mark the beginning of the annual confrontation training exercises in the high sea and combat-readiness patrol.

Guided-missile destroyers Lanzhou and Guangzhou, multi-role frigate Yulin are also set to join the said combat drills. Lanzhou is currently participating in the on-going ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting–Plus (ADMM-Plus) Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise.

Mentioned six Chinese warships will be divided into three combat groups to hold training exercise in the West Philippine Sea, the east Indian Ocean and the west Pacific Ocean. The Chinese military said all warships participating in the training exercise are all new type main battle ships of the Chinese navy.

The aviation units of PLA Navy South Sea Fleet, garrison troops in the Paracel and Spratly Islands and some units of the PLAN's Beihai Fleet will also be involved in the exercise.

“The training exercise aims to test the combat capability of new main battle ships, submarines and the naval aviation force, enhance the integrated training of the command and information systems of the ship formation at sea,” deputy commander of PLA Navy South Sea Fleet Rear Admiral Zhou Xuming told PLA Daily.

Source: Update.ph, 8 April 2016

Requiem for the Sea Harrier: Indian Navy to bid adieu on May 11

-Admiral Arun Prakash

The Indian Navy (IN) will bid farewell to its carrier-borne jump-jet the Sea Harrier on May 11 in Goa. It will be a nostalgic moment for those who were associated with this very distinctive fighter aircraft.

When the navy's elegant, first-generation Sea Hawk fighter grew old and weary in the late 1970s, having proved its mettle in the 1971 war for Bangladesh, a search was mounted for a suitable replacement. Since most of the contemporary fighters were either unsuitable or unavailable, the future of naval aviation, and of our sole carrier INS Vikrant, looked bleak. Coincidentally, the Royal Navy (RN) was in a similar plight, having lost its aircraft-carriers and surrendered its aircraft to the Royal Air Force (RAF).

It was the Harrier which miraculously came to the rescue of Britain's as well as our own naval air arms. Cold War psychosis had led the RAF to believe that runways in Central Europe would be rapidly destroyed by early Warsaw Pact strikes, and it keenly sought a fighter with the attributes of a helicopter, capable of operating from jungle hideouts.

Using the revolutionary Pegasus engine, with its four swivelling exhaust nozzles, the Hawker Aircraft Co produced the Kestrel, which showed that vertical/short take-off and landing (V/STOL) operations were a practical proposition. By the early 1970s, the experimental Kestrel mutated into the Harrier ground-attack fighter, acquired by the RAF and US Marine Corps, and eventually into the Sea Harrier version for the RN.

The IN lost no time in placing an order for the Sea Harrier; initially for a batch of eight aircraft, followed by two more, bringing the total to 28, including four trainers. Vikrant and our naval aviation had earned a reprieve.

In early 1982, an IN team of pilots and maintenance personnel belonging to IN Air Squadron 300 (nom de guerre 'White Tigers') arrived in the UK to commence training. As the Squadron Commander designate, I vividly remember my first day in the RAF Harrier Conversion Unit. Addressing the mixed audience of Indian, Spanish and British student-pilots, an instructor announced: "Gentlemen, only astronauts and Harrier pilots fly on jet-thrust. But never forget that the cold, clammy hand of the Harrier, for ever, rests between your legs. One mistake and you'll go – Ouch!" We soon learnt the reason for these earthy words of warning.

Conventional aircraft fly on the aerodynamic 'lift' generated by air that flows at high speed, over the wings. This lift also enables the pilot to control the aircraft. The Harrier's wings, on the other hand, when it slows down for a vertical-landing, rapidly lose lift; and once below about 100 knots, it is as airworthy as a 'brick'. Since the aircraft is now totally dependent on thrust to stay airborne, and since its flying controls are also powered by the exhaust, even small mistakes in the 'jet-borne' phase can lead to disaster.

However, once we mastered the Harrier's versatile 'vectored thrust', it was easy to become a fan of the amazing 'Jump Jet'. You could take off and land at any speed from zero to 160 knots. While others 'landed and then stopped', Harrier pilots had the luxury of 'first stopping and then landing'! In the Falklands War, the British claimed a kill ratio of 21:1 for the Harrier, against Argentine Mirages and Skyhawks.

The 'White Tigers' spent 1983 in taking delivery and re-equipping the squadron with new Sea Harriers at the RN Air Station, Yeovilton. While the pilots learnt to exploit the Sea Harrier's weapons and sensors, our technicians gained experience in maintaining and repairing the complex machine. By mid-December 1983, we were ready to ferry the first batch of three Sea Harriers from Yeovilton to INS Hansa in Goa. Our 5,400 mile ferry flight, via Malta, Luxor and Dubai, took three days, and we were delighted to be welcomed home, on December 16, by the IN's sole surviving Sea Hawk.

Five days later, when we landed on INS Vikrant, two unpleasant surprises awaited us. Since the ship was not (yet) equipped with a ski-jump, we would exit from the deck at just 40 feet, or less, above the sea. High ambient temperatures, in Indian operating conditions, led to loss of engine thrust, which meant that one had to return to the ship with less fuel – and therefore land very quickly.

Minor teething problems apart, induction of the Sea Harrier brought with it not just a significant enhancement of defensive and offensive capabilities but also a quantum jump in technology for the IN. Its advanced avionics, navigation and weapon aiming computers and complex engine were all representative of third generation state-of-the-art.

At that juncture, the main threat to our carrier task force emanated from Pakistan Navy's maritime patrol aircraft as well as PAF Mirage fighters, armed with anti-ship missiles. The fleet's defences were limited and it had to be deployed with due caution.

With its multi-mode Blue Fox radar and a weapon suite that included air-air and anti-ship guided missiles, the Sea Harrier ensured protection of the fleet against airborne and surface threats. Its radar and electronic-warfare suite also became the fleet's 'eyes in

the sky'. The arrival of the Sea Harrier enhanced the self-confidence of our men at sea and expanded the Fleet Commanders' options.

An event of note needs brief mention before I conclude this elegy. In 1985, eager to show off the navy's new acquisition, NHQ mooted Sea Harrier participation in the Republic Day fly-past. Considered an IAF preserve, the defence ministry refused to permit us entry into this event, but eventually allowed a brief display before the Beating Retreat ceremony. On January 29, a Vic of three Sea Harriers made a high-speed pass down Rajpath, and after executing a 'bomb-burst' over Vijay Chowk, the Leader looped back to hover in front of the assembled dignitaries.

On May 11, 2016, a lone Sea Harrier will lead a formation of MiG-29K supersonic jets; its replacement in the 'White Tiger' squadron. The MiGs are a generation ahead and will enable the IN to look every other navy and air force in the eye. But the unique 'Jump Jet' made an extraordinary contribution to our maritime capability for 33 years and its passing will leave many of us with heavy hearts.

Source: [The American Bazaar](#), 9 May 2016

China's navy has launched annual war drills in the South China Sea with one of its most advanced warships

-Associated Press

China's navy has launched annual war drills in the South China Sea with one of its most advanced warships, the missile destroyer Hefei.

The exercises include simulations for breaking an enemy blockade and reconnaissance drills with submarine forces. Five other guided-missile destroyers, a frigate and a supply ship of the South Sea Fleet based in Sanya on Hainan Island, home to a major naval and air force base, are taking part.

According to the official Xinhua News Agency, the ships will be joined by forces based in the Spratly and Paracel islands, where China has embarked on massive island-building to expand and reinforce the reefs it controls in the disputed region.

Also last week, China sent famed singer of patriotic anthems Song Zuying on a tour of its man-made islands in the Spratlys to entertain troops and underscore confidence in asserting its claim in the contested area.

Among the songs performed: "Ode to the South Sea Defenders," whose lyrics speak of "troops of stout men with guns in their hands who battle the wind and fight the waves to guard the nation's door."

Photos of the performances also offered a rare glimpse of the extensive work China has been carrying out at Fiery Cross Reef, showing lighthouses, harbors and buildings. In the background of some can be seen one of the navy's massive Type 071 amphibious dock ships, capable of carrying four helicopters and as many as 800 troops.

Rivals in Joint Exercises

Beijing has also sent the Lanzhou missile-guided destroyer that took part in Beijing's South China Sea drills for a multinational exercise that started last week off the waters of Brunei and Singapore. It joined the navies of the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, along with those of the U.S., India and six other dialogue partners for a maritime security and counterterrorism exercise.

Several ASEAN members, including Vietnam and the Philippines, have claims in the South China Sea.

The drills include a land-storming exercise. The U.S. is participating with a P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft, the destroyer USS Stethem and Army units.

"Our crew will be able to see firsthand how other navies operate and we can learn from them while sharing our own operational tactics and procedures," said Cmdr. Harry Marsh, commanding officer of the Stethem.

Port Visit Denial a 'Minor Hurdle'

The commander of the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet says the cancellation of a planned port visit to Hong Kong by an American aircraft carrier is just a "minor hurdle" in relations between the two militaries.

In this Oct. 19, 2012 file photo, Chinese navy vessels take part in a drill in the waters off Zhoushan in east China's Zhejiang province. China's navy has launched annual war drills in the South China Sea with one of its most advanced warships. (AP Photo/File)
CHINA OUTFILE - In this Oct. 19, 2012 file photo, Chinese navy vessels take part in a drill in the waters off Zhoushan in east China's Zhejiang province. China's navy has launched annual war drills in the South China Sea with one of its most advanced warships.

Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin spoke Friday in China's financial hub of Shanghai after the docking of the USS Blue Ridge, the fleet's command ship, whose visit he said indicated the durability of the China-U.S. military-to-military relationship.

The U.S. State Department said last month that China recently denied a request for the USS John C. Stennis to visit Hong Kong, in an apparent sign of mounting tension in the disputed South China Sea. China hasn't explained the reason for the cancellation, but previous cancellations have been linked to tensions over Taiwan or other political and military disputes.

Aucoin said he didn't know why the visit was denied, although Defense Secretary Ash Carter and his Philippine counterpart had visited the carrier in the South China Sea two weeks earlier, irking Beijing. The reason "would probably be a good question for the government of China," he said.

"But the very fact that we're on this pier, that our two navies, our two countries, don't let that minor hurdle get in the way of our relationships. Our, the relationship between our two countries is much too important for a port visit to get in the way of that," Aucoin told reporters.

U.S. Worry: 'A Miscalculation'

The U.S. Coast Guard commander said the Chinese coast guard is on the front line provoking the U.S. Navy. "We are seeing Chinese fishing trawlers provoking the United States Navy, carrying out sovereign acts, but just over the horizon is the PLA," said Rear Adm. Paul Zukunft, referring to the People's Liberation Army.

"So our biggest concern is about a miscalculation. But their coast guard has not been transparent in terms of what their intent is," he said at a discussion at the Council on Foreign Relations.

He said the U.S. was working with its Chinese counterparts on a code of conduct for armed planned encounters at sea "so they won't take these actions against our Navy and other forces as well."

"Our sense is that China does not want to be a global hegemon, but they clearly want to be recognized as the regional leader in this area," he said.

Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, said at the same forum that the Navy's freedom of navigation operations — sailing warships close to Chinese man-made islands — are working. Their aim is to advocate for an international set of rules that ensures the free flow of goods and services in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, he said.

"They don't extend beyond that. There's just a pure advocacy for that system. So we design those very carefully. It's a policy decision that is made, interwoven with those other elements of power. So I think both aircraft, ships are ready to execute those as they fit into the plan," he said.

China has criticized Washington, saying it is trying to provoke conflict with such maneuvers. But Beijing also says it won't impede free navigation.

Last Word

The case brought by the Philippines is nothing but a political farce under the cloak of law. ... It is a grave threat to regional peace and stability." — Ouyang Yujing, the head of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, referring to the case filed at the U.N. Court of Arbitration.

Source: [Daily Journal](#), 9 May 2016

Indian Navy warships on a four-day visit to Dubai

-Shoshana Kedem

Indian Navy warships have arrived in Dubai for a four-day visit to boost maritime cooperation between the south Asian country and the UAE.

The guided-missile destroyer INS Delhi, Talwar-class frigate INS Tarkash and fleet tanker Deepak arrived at Rashid Port on Saturday and will be berthed until May 10.

“The ships are part of the Indian Navy’s Western Naval Command based at Mumbai and are on a month-long deployment to the Gulf to enhance bilateral ties with friendly regional navies,” a navy statement read.

“During the visit, the naval ships will have professional interactions with the defence forces aimed at enhancing co-operation and sharing the nuances of naval operations including disaster management and combating maritime threats of terrorism and piracy.”

The largest navy in the Indian Ocean holds regular naval exercises with Gulf states, providing them with training and support, the statement added.

Since 2008, the role of Indian naval forces in combating piracy off the coast of Somalia has further strengthened bilateral ties with navies in the region, it said.

The port call comes ahead of a visit by India's Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, to the UAE from May 18-19.

Maritime cooperation between the two countries has grown steadily in recent years with the last visit by Indian Navy ships to the UAE in September 2015.

Source: [7Days](#), 9 May 2016

World's first self-landing drone to take part in Royal Navy operation

-BT Press

Engineers will show off the world's first self-landing drone during a military exercise in October.

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) will attempt to land on a moving ship using vision technology during the Royal Navy's Unmanned Warrior exercise off Scotland.

The Autoland technology, which was developed by Roke Manor Research with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), uses cameras and modelling to self-land without the need for human assistance or more technology.

While other UAV landing systems must rely on a signal from a ship's beacon to identify the landing site or easy-to-jam GPS, Autoland intelligently identifies obstacles on the ship's superstructure to land safely.

A team of three Roke engineers will be at sea for three weeks, testing the technology in a variety of sea states and weather conditions during day and night.

Rebecca Robinson, engineer on the project said: “Landing on a moving platform is the most hazardous part of operating UAVs at sea. If it goes wrong, recovery is both complex and costly. It’s also one of the main reasons UAVs are not yet widely adopted into naval operations

“While Autoland is technically advanced, it is also extremely simple to use, allowing UAVs to become a safe and reliable part of search, rescue and reconnaissance operations at sea.”

The event, part of the twice-yearly multinational Joint Warrior exercise staged off western Scotland, is thought to be the largest unmanned systems event of its kind, with more than 50 vehicles, sensors and systems operating in a number of themed activities.

Fleet Robotics Officer Commander Peter Pipkin said: “Unmanned Warrior is about seeking innovative ways to operate on the leading edge of technology; it’s not about removing humans from the decision chain or replacing every bit of our current capabilities with unmanned systems.

“If it’s unmanned and it can operate in the maritime environment then we are working hard to find a way of incorporating it into the programme.”

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, said: “Unmanned maritime systems will change how we operate, but they’re just the start. Our pursuit of new technologies and ideas – from big data to 3D-printing – will ensure we remain one of the most capable and successful navies in the world.”

Source: BT.com, 10 May 2016

Indian Navy chief in Mumbai on farewell visit

-Press Trust of India

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R K Dhowan, accompanied by wife Minu Dhowan, president Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA), visited Mumbai on May 11 and 12 on their farewell visit.

Admiral Dhowan is scheduled to retire on May 31 after completing over 41 years of distinguished service.

The Western Fleet, also known as Sword Arm of the Indian Navy, would bid the Admiral adieu at sea with a ceremonial steam past.

Admiral Dhowan and his wife would have their farewell interactions with officers, sailors, civilians and ladies of Western Naval Command at several functions organised specially for bidding them adieu, an official release said.

During Admiral Dhowan's tenure as the Chief of Naval Staff, which began on April 17, 2014, the Navy remained at the forefront of numerous activities to safeguard national interests, provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and promote maritime diplomacy.

Operation Rahat, which saw the Indian Navy evacuate more than 3,000 people of several nationalities from strife-torn Yemen, was planned and executed under Admiral Dhowan's watch as the Naval Chief.

Other significant achievements during his illustrious tenure were the Combined Commander's Conference (CCC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on board INS Vikramaditya in December last year, and the International Fleet Review (IFR) held at Visakhapatnam in February this year with participation from 50 maritime nations, 99 ships including 24 foreign warships and 4,000 sailors.

Frontline warships INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, INS Kamorta and INS Kadmatt and Naval establishments INS Sardar Patel and INS Vajrakosh were commissioned during the Admiral's tenure.

Source: [Times of India](#), 10 May 2016

India's Shipyards Win Infrastructure Status

-World Maritime News Staff

India's shipbuilding industry has received an infrastructure status as the country's Ministry of Finance has placed the shipyards on its Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure in an effort to support indigenous vessels program.

With this move, the country's shipyards will be eligible to receive long-term financing at lower rates, with private shipyards, L&T Shipbuilding, Reliance Defence and Engineering Shipyard and ABG Shipyard, seeing the biggest gain, according to The Times of India.

"The new list incorporates the following change to the notification dated 13th October, 2014: Under the category of "Transport" a new sub-sector – "Shipyards" is added," the ministry confirmed.

The transport category now consist of roads, bridges, ports, shipyards, inland waterways, airport, railway track, tunnels, viaducts, and urban public transport.

This is India's latest step toward the indigenous vessels plan, as the country's government introduced a number of indirect tax incentives for the country's shipbuilding industry in November 2015.

The indirect tax incentives available to the shipbuilding industry now include exemption from basic customs duty and additional duty of customs (CVD) on all raw material and parts for manufacturing of vessels, subject to the condition that such manufacturing takes place in a custom bounded warehouse, as well as exemption from central excise duty on steel procured domestically for manufacturing of vessels in a custom bounded warehouse.

Source: [World Maritime News](#), 4 May 2016

Facilitating trade in Indian ports

-Port News Press

The Indian port sector plays a vital role in sustaining growth in the country's trade and commerce. It also has an important role in fulfilling India's dream of achieving greater global engagement and integration with its trading partners. Much of India's port-led development initiative is expected to revolve around growth in maritime trade, given its share in terms of both volume and value in the country's overall trade statistics. Recognising the important role port-led development can play in India, the Central government has undertaken several initiatives such as development of new ports, modernisation and mechanisation of the existing ones, and reduction of logistics costs through the implementation of increased waterways transport. These are also in line with the vision of initiatives such as 'Make in India'.

Case studies

A recent study by the Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) titled 'Bridging Infrastructural Deficits at Select Trade Ports in India' observed that seaports displayed specific patterns of issues based on differences in geography, infrastructural capacity, operational aspects, contractual arrangements, and so on. Such issues, though unique to certain ports, form important case studies for the Indian port sector as a whole. For instance, the Haldia Dock Complex in Haldia, West Bengal, being a riverine port, faces the natural challenge of heavy siltation and inadequate dredging capacities. Consistent reduction in draft over the years and widening differences in average drafts recorded during summers and winters highlight the importance of regular dredging, especially in the case of riverine ports. The issue of semi-mechanisation and manual handling of critical processes having a cascading effect on overall operational efficiency is evident at another eastern port – the Paradip Port in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha. The process of unloading from ships to evacuation through rakes entails the use of outdated equipment – cranes and grabs with low-evacuation capacity – and is impeded with operational glitches such as the process of manual loading of cargo on rakes. The Paradip example highlights the importance of

complete mechanisation of processes to ensure seamless operations and thereby lower down vessel turnaround time.

Congestion at the approach roads is a common problem observed at quite a few Indian ports. However, this problem gets exemplified at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Maharashtra, the most important port serving northern India. The study findings report heavy congestion en route to the port as well as inside the port, leaving trucks stranded for days – with queues extending to as long as 12 km – thereby leading to inordinate delays and increased transaction costs.

Apart from infrastructural and operational issues, some of the ports provide insights into certain regulatory and policy aspects that deserve attention. For example, the royalty/revenue share issue at the V.O. Chidambaranar Port (VOCPT) – between the private terminal operator (PSA-Sical Terminals Ltd.) and the port trust (VOCPT) – can be seen as a classic example providing incisive details as the country takes forward its port privatisation programme in the years to come. The prolonged tryst between the terminal operator and the port authorities over royalty coupled with contractual ambiguities – in one of the earliest ventures since the Indian port sector opened the gates to private operators – has continually marred infrastructural utilisation, restructuring and modernisation as well as operational improvements at the terminal.

Underutilisation of physical infrastructure in particular though is extremely prevalent at another private terminal – the Vallarpadam International Container Transhipment Terminal – at the Cochin Port. The terminal, operated under the public-private partnership arrangement, displays a far from par capacity utilisation of merely 30 per cent. Seen as a major initiative towards bringing back transhipment cargo to the country and a key driver as far as overall revival of the port was concerned, the terminal has been far from achieving both the objectives over the years. The major issue faced at the port, however, is its tariff structure. The tariff determined for the port by the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) was reported to be almost three times that of other major ports, which renders the port uncompetitive with respect to its southern competitors such as VOCPT and Chennai Port. Under-utilisation and lower volumes of

cargo handled are the major reasons cited behind such inflated tariff, which again leads to further reductions in cargo traffic handled, forming a vicious circle with serious implications on the growth prospects of the port.

Bolstering Prospective Ventures

As India eyes a resurgence in port-led activities in the country, these issues, though specific to certain ports, indicate the need for the Central government to undertake measures to facilitate trade through Indian ports, either in terms of building and maintaining infrastructure for handling desired capacities or undertaking relevant policy and regulatory reforms. In terms of infrastructure, it is important to maintain draft to serve bigger vessels, ensure mechanisation of ports through introduction of new equipment and procedures, build new facilities, upgrade existing facilities and automate systems/procedures. In terms of policy and regulatory reforms, it is important to streamline tariff determination by TAMP along with a provision for periodic revisions, ensure transparent and effective contractual arrangements in PPPs, implement strengthened communication platforms for seamless information flow among stakeholders, strengthen system integration, ensure paperless clearance of procedures and transactions, develop user information portals, and so on. Apart from reviving the ports currently operational, these measures, if duly incorporated, promise to sufficiently bolster prospective ventures as the country moves towards an optimistic maritime trade regime.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 5 May 2016

South Africa: Operation Phakisa Reignites Ocean Economy

-Tshwane

Government's Operation Phakisa: Oceans Economy initiative has yielded more results with the launch of two tugboats built for Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA).

"Operation Phakisa is reigniting growth in the ocean economy and has been a catalyst for Transnet's fast-tracking of investments into our ports," Chair of Transnet SOC Limited Linda Mabaso said on Friday, in Durban.

The two tugs - named Qunu and Cormorant - form part of TNPA's R1.4 billion contract awarded to Durban ship builder, Southern African Shipyards.

According to the Ports Authority, this is the largest single contract TNPA has ever given to a South African company for the building of harbour craft and will see a total of nine new tugs built for the South African port landlord over three and a half years.

Mabaso said the tug building contract was a concrete demonstration of the local ship building expertise that Operation Phakisa aimed to leverage as part of its focus on the oceans economy.

"South Africa's location and the expertise demonstrated by projects like this are key to us increasing our share of the global marine manufacturing market, including ship-building and repair, rig repair and refurbishment or boat-building," Mabaso said.

Source: [All Africa](#), 6 May 2016

Japan eyes development of Iranian port

-Port News Press

A new report says Japan seeks to play a part in the development of the southeastern Iranian port of Chabahar.

Tokyo hopes to team up with India in the development of the regional logistics hub in southeastern Iran, according to the Nikkei Asian Review citing its sources.

The report said Tokyo wants to be part of a project on the construction of a site, which is set to include a port and an industrial complex in Chabahar.

It said Tokyo is keen to build stronger ties with Tehran and that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hopes to reach a deal on the port during a planned visit to the Iranian capital later this year.

In April, the Indian government announced plans to invest some \$20 billion to build fertilizer and petrochemical plants at Chabahar.

The Japanese government hopes to start drawing up specific plans for Chabahar development by the end of this year through the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Tokyo will decide on details such as the necessary infrastructure and a list of companies it will invite to tender for the project. The investment will use official development assistance, the report added.

It said Japan hopes to develop the area into a trading center for resource-rich Central Asian countries such as Turkmenistan, the world's fourth largest producer of natural gas. It also hopes that Chabahar will serve as a logistics pivot for Iran and Afghanistan.

Late in April, local Iranian media reports said China also wanted to have a stake in Chabahar, with the official IRNA news agency saying a technical team of Chinese

experts visited Chabahar in Iran's province of Sistan-Baluchestan for the launch of a Chinese industrial town project there.

Chabahar is located in the Gulf of Oman on the border with Pakistan. It is the closest and best access point of Iran to the Indian Ocean and Iran has devised serious plans to turn it into a transit hub for immediate access to markets in the northern part of the Indian Ocean and Central Asia.

In May 2014, India and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop the port once the international sanctions against Iran were lifted. Both sides agreed as per the MoU to allow India to lease two docks at the port for a period of 10 years, a move that was meant to cut India's crude oil and urea transportation costs by around 30 percent.

Source: [Press TV](#), 8 May 2016

Shippers' Council 14th Seminar and International Integration

-Martins UbaNwamadi

One quality of a good leader is the ability to see something no one else is able to see. In human history, achievements are products of dreams and ideas.

When in December 1995, Nigerian Shippers' Council engaged in a thematic discussion to start the Maritime Seminar for Judges, little did they realise that they were trying to unbundle the future of maritime laws that has been hindering and creating bottlenecks in trade facilitation.

The intention was also to help in resolving and untying some legal issues that are of international dimension while enriching the maritime laws.

Moreso, at this era of globalization and e-commerce the importer, exporter, oil and gas merchant, ship charterer, terminal operator, big players in insurance industry must not only be responsive but also start appreciating issues bordering on international maritime laws and conventions.

The Maritime Seminar for Judges is therefore designed to address the intellectual needs of the industry or better still a window to provide intellectual analyses on the numerous international conventions and regulations affecting the maritime industry.

Over a period of time, it has been pointed out that international politics and its associated maritime laws are often skewed against third world countries hence the seminar has equally offered perspectives on how to redress the imbalance by championing the domestication of favourable laws, manpower training, as well as bringing the bench and the bar together to examine emerging laws and offer solutions.

This attribute is in line with the goals of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of United Nations which has its cardinal objective of facilitating global co-operation on regulations and practices affecting international shipping.

But one critical question stakeholders and key operators in the industry often ask is, how has the series impacted positively in the maritime sector?

Hassan Bello, the present Executive Secretary/CEO has been part of the engagement since he joined the Council in 1997. It is not out of place if we call him the curator of the Maritime Seminar for Judges.

According to him, the seminar has evolved with time as a result of the synergy between the Nigerian Shippers' Council, the National Judicial Institute (NJI), the Maritime Law Association as well as the support of the Federal Ministry of Transport which have tremendously helped to shape intellectual discussions on maritime laws and conventions.

Bello explained that the maritime subsector of the nation's economy has greatly benefited from the seminar series as a result of reduction in the length of time within which maritime claims are resolved thus saving importers and exporters time and money especially in matters involving arrest and detention of ships in admiralty claims.

Furthermore, domesticating international maritime laws is a serious responsibility which provides every maritime stakeholder a code of conduct so as not to fall into unlawful practices. It accelerates international trade as, Nigeria being a member of World Trade Organization, such laws help to guide our international business environment.

In fact the ability of our importers and exporters to understand the rudiments of international trade and equally the ability of our legal system to domesticate major outstanding conventions into our national laws will go a long way to not only accelerate our aspiration to be a maritime nation but will confer on us a status of a nation that obeys rules and conventions.

Giving more insight into what The Maritime Seminar for Judges has done on our national psyche, Justice Ibrahim Auta who has been the Chairman of the Seminar Planning Committee for about four years said that the goals and objectives of the seminar have been largely achieved.

Justice Auta emphasized that the continuing education of the Nigerian Bench and the bar for understanding of principles of admiralty law, so that judges will be equipped to determine issues before them have been achieved through this window.

Secondly, the seminar has offered Judges and Lawyers the opportunity to appreciate and recognize the commercial and international nature of admiralty law, and also its import to the national economy thereby establishing and strengthening the nexus between the judiciary and the maritime commercial interest.

Thirdly and most importantly, the seminar provides a robust platform for the promotion of uniformity of international laws and conventions amongst others.

But what does the seminar portend for the future as stakeholders request that the organizers endow a chair in some universities on maritime law so as to encourage and attract pupil lawyers to this lucrative sector of the law.

The protagonists of this opinion further canvass that the global village syndrome and the new attraction to World Trade Centers have their legal issues to unknot hence we require well grounded lawyers in this area. They also suggest that the bi-ennial seminar should be yearly. The two year gap gives room for intellectual inertia.

The group is also canvassing the opinion that the Planning Committee should market the seminar to international corporate organizations operating in Nigeria especially Oil Exploration Companies, Ship Owners, Airlines, Insurance Companies, Banks and Telecommunication companies to partner with the council in executing the seminar.

Giving a peep into the 14th Maritime Seminar for Judges Barrister Vongtau, Director Legal Services Nigerian Shippers' Council stated that we must begin to domesticate those international conventions and rules which will govern international interactions either now or in the future.

Today's norms and considerations are no longer those that prevailed in the past and with ultra-fast technologies, maritime laws can be domesticated within a very short period of time. One aspect of the reforms going on in the judiciary is the growing use of information and communication technology that is evolving. This has created conducive environment for judges and lawyers to research easily thereby creating room for knowledge, information and ideas. If we want to match the speed at which the maritime world is developing, we need to quickly adapt and change to global concepts.

Vongtau said that the 2016 Maritime Seminar for Judges promises to be more engaging and intellectually driven given that already many countries like Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Britain, and some ECOWAS countries, have all indicated interest to participate in the summit.

Given the assurance from the Planning Committee of the Seminar, it is therefore germane to state here that the Maritime Seminar for judges has become a critical instrument in achieving IMO's goals.

We salute their dexterity and commitment to unbundle Nigeria's Maritime Laws. The seminar has attracted an effective rhetorical comparison and index on how, through maritime laws, international trade disputes are settled with less strain. But most importantly for bringing members of the Bench and members of the Bar into one room to rub minds on critical maritime issues affecting our national economy.

Source: [Leadership News](#), 9 May 2016

Navy, Tracen Technologies Unveil 2 Mobile Apps to Assist Mandatory Sailor Training

-Scott Nicholas

The U.S. Navy has released two new mobile applications that work to deliver “anytime, anywhere” access to resources for mandatory sailor training on records management and privacy and personally identifiable information awareness.

Tracen Technologies helped build the apps with the Navy under the branch's Sea Warrior program in an effort to aid users in completing required Navy general military training, the service branch said April 19.

“The mobile apps are an extension of our training to offer alternate methods to our workforce,” said Rear Adm. Mike White, commander of Naval Education and Training Command.

“We want the resources readily available and at your fingertips,” he added.

The Navy said the apps are available for free on Google Play and the App Store for active duty, reserve service members and civil service employees who require training.

They are required to complete PII training by Aug 31 and RM training by Dec. 31.

Source: [Executive Gov](#), 10 May 2016

Australia, Thailand host Indo-Pacific Regional Peacekeeping Exercise

-Joseph R. Fonseca

Australia and Thailand are co-hosting a peacekeeping exercise involving over 100 participants from the Indo-Pacific region from 9-20 May 2016 in Bangsaen, Thailand.

Commander Australian Defence College, Major General Simone Wilkie, who is in Thailand to open PIRAP JABIRU 2016, said the exercise is a fantastic opportunity to bring together representatives from 22 Indo-Pacific militaries, police forces, and non-governmental organisations to consider the current issues facing peacekeepers and to identify strategies to meet the future challenges.

“The true value of the PIRAP JABIRU series is that it enables participants to develop a much deeper understanding of contemporary multi-dimensional UN Missions and most importantly how we can work together to achieve optimal results,” MAJGEN Wilkie said.

MAJGEN Wilkie also said that Exercise PIRAP JABIRU 2016 provides the Australian Defence Force and international attendees with the opportunity to consider the evolving nature of peace operations and help to maintain successful regional collaboration in the future.

“Today’s missions are concerned with ensuring stability, promoting good governance and human rights, providing humanitarian assistance and assisting in the disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration of former combatants.

“Participants will be tested by realistic scenario-based problems that reflect contemporary UN operations including how to protect vulnerable populations such as women and children, understanding peacekeepers’ rights and obligations under

international and domestic law and how to maintain logistics support in often austere environments. Participants will work together to develop comprehensive approaches to these problems,” she said.

The PIRAP JABIRU biennial series, which commenced in 1998, reflects Australia’s close bilateral ties with Thailand, including a strong history of peacekeeping cooperation.

“Thailand is a very important security partner for Australia. We share similar approaches to regional security and a history of cooperation, including in recent operations in Timor-Leste, the Gulf of Aden and operations in Sudan and South Sudan,” MAJGEN Wilkie said.

This year marks the 69th anniversary of Australia’s first contribution to UN peacekeeping missions, including in; Korea, Lebanon, Cyprus, Cambodia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, Sudan and South Sudan.

Source: [Maritime Professional](#), 9 May 2016

China's Jewel in the Heart of the Indian Ocean

-Wade Shapard

At sunset, I had an unimpeded view of a crimson-tinted sea from the rooftop bar of the Kingsbury Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This hotel, which sits right between the Port of Colombo to the north and the Galle Face Green to the south, is 100 meters from the beach — you can hear the waves crashing against the sand nine stories below. This seaside position could be assumed to be immutable, but it isn’t. In just a few years the Kingsbury will no longer be on the coast. The hotel isn’t going anywhere, but the coastline is.

At the junction of where the Indian Ocean makes landfall with the western coast of Colombo will soon be a new city of towering skyscrapers, luxury hotels, shopping malls,

a marina, and even a Formula One track. This new urban conurbation is called Colombo Port City. It is a US\$1.4 billion endeavor that is fully backed by Chinese foreign direct investment. The project consists of reclaiming 233 hectares of land from the sea, pulling the beach far out from the foot of the Kingsbury Hotel. This is a project that will not only indelibly alter Colombo's coastline but also Sri Lanka's economic position and geopolitical relations with countries from East to West.

The origin of the Colombo Port City project seems mythical. The story goes that while inspecting the land reclamation progress for the expansion of Colombo's port, then-president Mahinda Rajapaksa looked out over the newly accumulated sediment and had an epiphany: why not just keep reclaiming land down the coast to build a new city district? However, the reality may have been a little more pragmatic, as the site of the impending port city was silting up naturally to the south of the new container terminal anyway.

Construction on Colombo Port City initially began in March 2011, but due to various reasons it was put on hold. The project was then re-launched in September 2014 with a grandiose commencement ceremony that featured both Mahinda Rajapaksa and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Although Colombo Port City was conceived by Sri Lanka and was at first developed by a local company, it is now an almost 100 percent Chinese undertaking. The financial backing for the project comes via foreign direct investment from China Harbor Engineering Corporation, a subsidy of the World Bank-blacklisted China Communications Construction, a Chinese state-owned enterprise. This is the largest single example of FDI in Sri Lanka ever. Whereas many of China's other investments in Sri Lanka come in the form of loans, China intends to directly reap the spoils from Colombo Port City. In the initial conception of the project, China and Sri Lanka would have equal rights to the port city, but due to concerns over sovereignty and appeals from India, this was eventually changed into a 99-year lease over a portion of the newly fabricated land.

“In a sense you can say that this is Chinese diplomacy, China’s way of trying to engage with all of these countries by providing infrastructure financing and developing some of these key ports along the Silk Route, the One Belt One Road initiative,” said Dushni Weerakoon, a researcher at Colombo’s Institute of Policy Studies.

Once built, Colombo Port City will essentially become a quasi extra-territorial zone that will have some of its own favorable laws and regulations regarding trade and investment. It will become a place where traders from around the world can come, invest, and do business, right in the heart of the Indian Ocean theatre.

How will this benefit Sri Lanka?

“Investment,” Deshal de Mel, a senior economist at Hayleys Plc in Colombo replied without hesitation. “I mean, you’re creating a new investment in development, in finance, and a number of things, which will create jobs.”

It’s the position of Sri Lanka that makes it of interest to the Chinese. Hovering at the tip of the Indian subcontinent on the busiest shipping lane in the world, right between East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, Sri Lanka has always been a clutch trading hub. This is why Colombo Port City is be one of the most prominent financial and commercial centers on what has been dubbed the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the sea-based portion of China’s Belt and Road, pan-Eurasia investment strategy.

I watched the land reclamation process from temple tower that rises over the impending port city. The process is surprisingly straightforward: a crescent-shaped, stone partitioning wall was built out from the coast along the desired parameters of the port city which gradually traps sediment that will eventually become solid land. A row of backhoes were lined up in front of two white corrugated steel laborer dormitories that had red Chinese characters painted upon them.

China has done this before. Land has been being reclaimed in China since at least the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), when river and coastal sediments were corralled to make more land for farming, salt production, and aquaculture. Today, up to 700 square

kilometers of land is being reclaimed up and down the coast of mainland China each year, and entirely new cities and ports are being built upon this new land. Making land makes money — up to a hundredfold profit, according to Liu Hongbin, a professor at the Ocean University of China — and increases the reach of potential urban expansion.

However, the Colombo Port City project has not been without controversy. Amid geopolitical and sovereignty concerns, the project has been called an “environmental time bomb” that could do widespread damage the coastal belt.

Geopolitically speaking, India has not been particularly enamored with China moving into what it perceives as its backyard with Belt and Road infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Pakistan — essentially surrounding the country in a “String of Pearls.” The apprehension is that these apparently commercial projects could serve other, potentially militaristic, purposes as well — these fears were in no way assuaged when Chinese submarines and a warship called into the Chinese-operated Colombo South Port in 2014.

“They felt that the particularities of the most controversial project was the Port City project,” Deshal de Mel explained. “So there China would be, a Chinese company would be getting land that is reclaimed from the sea and equal rights to part of it and so on. So that was controversial in India and they felt that there was a risk that China is going to have naval interests and a security presence there and how that would affect India’s own geopolitical position.”

However, the reasons for the Rajapaska regime’s proclivity for finding Chinese partners for his infrastructure and investment projects wasn’t exactly due to a personal preference but as a reaction to political and economic pressure from the West. Between the 2006 and 2009, the EU and U.S. shut down most economic concessions and sources of aid to Sri Lanka to demonstrate their disapproval of alleged abuses that transpired during the final stages of the country’s decades long civil war. Dubbed war crimes, the Sri Lankan government was called up before the UN Human Rights council and in 2009, when the EU’s GSP-Plus trade concessions to Sri Lanka came up for renewal, an ultimatum in the form of a full list of human rights related demands was issued. Sri

Lanka declined to engage and the concessions were therefore discontinued. On the same grounds, the United States also cut back on many sources of aid.

“Then China came in and filled that diplomatic vacuum,” Weerakoon said.

While the West tried to exert political and economic pressure on Sri Lanka to force the country to atone for alleged humanitarian abuses, what they actually did was push the country into a closer alliance with China. As sources of Western funding dwindled, China made up the difference and then some, pumping the country with over \$4.8 billion in soft loans destined for infrastructural development.

“China has a hands off approach,” Weerakoon explained. “It will give you money and let you do what you want to do. They won’t lecture you on humans rights.”

In the years that followed, Sri Lanka basically became an outpost for Chinese development. In addition to the proposed Port City, Chinese-backed highways, ports, airports, convention centers, and even stadiums began proliferating over the country. Although the details of many of these projects were extremely murky and, allegedly, extremely corrupt. Notable examples of potential misuses of funds were the Colombo-Katunayake Expressway which cost at least US\$11.5 million per kilometer, at that time one of the most expensive highways ever built, as well as a large boulder that apparently cost US\$42 million to remove from Colombo Harbor.

Eventually, this blatant misuse of power triggered a strong opposition within the country, and during Sri Lanka’s 2015 presidential elections a formidable political opponent rose up to challenge Rajapaksa’s omnipotent-seeming rule. Maithripala Sirisena ran on a platform of national rejuvenation, accusing the incumbent of unabashed corruption and for trashing the country’s relations with India and the West. During his campaign, the Port City project became a symbol of Rajapaksa’s scandalous rule, with opposition stating clearly that if they won the project would be scrapped.

It was an effective strategy and the challenging party unexpectedly won. One of the first things that the new president did upon taking office in early 2015, besides putting down

an alleged coup by the losing candidate, was setting to work “realigning” Sri Lanka’s international relations. As a starting point, he pulled the plug on many big Chinese-backed projects. Construction on the Hambantota deep sea port was stalled, flights to Hambantota International Airport by Sri Lanka’s flagship carrier were canceled, and the development of Colombo Port City was shut down. Officially, the new government said that these projects were being put on hold until they had the opportunity to investigate the real nature of the deals and to conduct the relevant impact assessments.

“So our government’s relations with China sort of lapsed,” Weerakoon said of the inevitable knee-jerk reaction from this realignment.

Needless to say, China was not pleased, and expressly stated that failure to continue the Port City project in particular could have drastic ramifications on broader Chinese investment and aid coming to the country.

During this period the new Sri Lankan government was hoping for two things: to have the UN go easier on the war crimes issue as well as to get back the Western incentives and aid the country previously lost. These two moves have largely proved successful. In September 2015, the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a new report of their investigations into Sri Lanka’s alleged war crimes which many human rights advocates felt left something to be desired. The *New York Times* summed up this sentiment, deeming that the report was “arresting for the disconnect between the seriousness of the abuses it documents and the mildness of its recommendations.” While the EU has recently stated that they are now open to reinstating Sri Lanka’s GSP-Plus trade concessions and the United States began upping their incentives and aid once again.

All the while, Sri Lanka kept China on the back burner. But now that relations are improving with the West, Sri Lanka has begun looking back East to mend their recently ruptured relationship with China as well. In practice, this meant starting their previous big infrastructure projects back up again. Construction restarted on phase two of the Hambantota deep sea port, highways continued being built, and the Colombo Port City project is back online.

“They are going back because they’ve woken up to the realities of geopolitics,” Weerakoon stated. “Because the Americans or the Indians they don’t have that kind of financing to offer... the sources of capital are from China.”

Sri Lanka’s central position between the East and West is one of its prime advantages, but it is also the source of some of its largest challenges. Being geopolitically located between India, China, Japan, the EU, and the United States means continuously tiptoeing through a proverbial hen house without ruffling any feathers.

“It’s up to the Sri Lankan government to make sure that they don’t play the two [sides] against each other and to try to balance their interests and make the best of the economic and political options that they have,” de Mel concluded.

As I sat waiting in Colombo’s Bandaranaike International Airport waiting for my flight to depart, my gaze fell upon a television screen that had a promotional video for Colombo Port City running on a continuous loop. The government’s abrupt change in position was clearly not something that they intended to hide. The next time I stand on the rooftop of the Kingsbury Hotel the view will more than likely be very much changed.

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 9 May 2016

U.S. Sails Warship Near Island in South China Sea, Challenging Chinese Claims

-Jane Perlez

An American warship sailed on Tuesday within 12 miles of an artificial island built by China in the South China Sea, an operation intended to show that the United States opposes China’s efforts to restrict navigation in the strategic waterway, the Pentagon said.

The warship, the William P. Lawrence, a guided missile destroyer, ventured into the vicinity of Fiery Cross Reef, a 700-acre artificial island China constructed in the last 18 months on top of two small rocks.

The operation on Tuesday, known as a freedom-of-navigation patrol, came as tensions between the United States and China escalated ahead of a United Nations arbitration ruling on whether Beijing has the right to claim 12-mile territorial waters and 200-mile exclusive economic zones around reefs and atolls in the South China Sea.

The ruling, in a case brought by the Philippines, an American ally, is expected in the coming weeks.

China has built a military-capable runway and dredged a deepwater port on Fiery Cross Reef, one of seven specks in the Spratly archipelago close to the Philippines that it has enlarged. China contends that other countries must request transit rights for their ships around its claims in the South China Sea, the Pentagon said.

To emphasize its rights to Fiery Cross Reef, the vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, Gen. Fan Changlong, recently visited there, and the Chinese Army sent a performance group to entertain military personnel and the construction workers who built the island.

Cmdr. Bill Urban, a spokesman for the Pentagon, said in a statement that the William P. Lawrence "exercised right of innocent passage" as it transited within 12 miles of Fiery Cross Reef. That means the vessel was not conducting military operations.

In response, China said the American destroyer had sailed through Chinese waters illegally. The ship was tracked and warned, said a spokesman at the Foreign Ministry, Lu Kang.

“This action by the U.S. side threatened China’s sovereignty and security interests, endangered the staff and facilities on the reef, and damaged regional peace and stability,” Mr. Lu said at a regular news briefing.

Later, the Chinese Ministry of Defense said that three Chinese aircraft and three warships had “expelled” the American vessel from China’s waters.

“It once again demonstrates that China’s installation of defensive facilities on the Nansha Islands is totally reasonable and very necessary indeed,” the ministry spokesman, Yang Yujun, said in a statement. Nansha Islands is the name Beijing uses for the Spratlys.

The United States operation was carried out to demonstrate the right of freedom of navigation, the Pentagon said. Taiwan and Vietnam also claim Fiery Cross Reef, and like China, require prior notice for navigation within the 12-mile zone, the statement said. The Philippines, also a claimant to Fiery Cross Reef, makes no such demands, the Pentagon said.

As an indication of the mounting tensions, China’s military said that it was conducting exercises in the South China Sea this week with warships, submarines, aircraft and troops from the garrisons in the Spratly archipelago and the Paracel Islands.

The United States Navy conducted a freedom-of-navigation operation in January around the Paracel Islands, and another in October around Subi Reef, in the Spratly archipelago. None of the countries that make claims to the disputed rocks and atolls were notified of the freedom-of-navigation operation on Tuesday, the Pentagon said.

The Pentagon said it did not make judgments on the territorial rights to the disputed islands.

Source: [NY Times](#), 10 May 2016

Revival of China's Colombo Port City Project: Implications for India

-Prakash Gopal

Two high profile visits originated out of Sri Lanka in the first week of April: that of the Sri Lankan Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Chief Marshal Kolitha Gunatilleke to India between 03 – 08 April and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to China between 06-09 April. Arguably, the latter had a greater impact on the diplomatic and maritime ties between India and Sri Lanka. While the agenda of the CDS' visit to India included discussions with the Defence Minister, Service Chiefs and the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, the Sri Lankan PM's visit to China was singularly focused on reviving the Colombo Port City Project (CPC), which had been put on hold by the newly elected Wickremesinghe government in March 2015. The revival of this project has also resuscitated India's apprehensions on China's strategic intent in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the increasing inclination of regional countries to gravitate towards Beijing despite nagging questions of intent and outcome.

Approved by the administration of the former President Mahindra Rajapaksa, the CPC is a USD 1.4 billion project, spread over 575 acres, to be executed as a joint venture between the Sri Lankan government and a Chinese state-owned company. The project involved reclaiming land the size of Monaco and its development into a port city astride one of the busiest International Shipping Lanes (ISL) in the region. Since its inception, the project has raised a number of concerns on the issues of strategic interest, sovereignty, environment and alleged corruption. With the original deal stipulating that China would acquire 20 acres of land outright on a freehold basis, serious questions were raised on the perceived violation of sovereignty, especially when the Civil Aviation authority in Sri Lanka warned that China would have exclusive control of the airspace over those 20 acres of land. Opposition to the project in its entirety formed the basis of Mathripala Sirisena's 2015 election campaign, which eventually led to trouncing of Rajapaksa and the appointment of Sirisena as President. Realising probably the legal intricacies involved in outright scrapping of the project, as promised in the election manifesto, the new government instead chose to put the project on hold, much to the

chagrin of China. Slightly over an year later, the commitments made in the run up to the elections have been set aside and the project has received the green signal, with minor alterations to the original contract.

In his statement to the press, PM Wickremesinghe chose to dispel India's apprehensions and said "There is no question of security problem. The Indian security issues have been addressed by us. There will be further discussions with India on this." He further discounted the possibility of maritime jostling in the Indian Ocean between India and China, stating that China's naval presence in the region was mandated by ongoing anti-piracy operations.

Notwithstanding the assurances of the Sri Lankan PM, the recommencement of the CPC would indeed be a setback for Indian diplomatic efforts to counter China's overtures in the region. While the development of Colombo as a Port-driven megapolis is strategically prudent for the Sri Lankan economy, the large Chinese stake in the project coupled with the prospect of it being operated by a Chinese entity, ostensibly under a Sri Lankan regulator, promises to be a major irritant in India-Sri Lanka relations, besides significantly altering the strategic maritime contours in India's immediate neighbourhood.

The Indian government understands well the importance of maritime growth and security to the overall economic well-being of the country. With the launch of Project Sagarmala and the conduct of the maiden Maritime India Summit at Mumbai from 14-16 April 2016, India's maritime vision is slowly translating into tangible actions. Together with developing India's organic maritime capacity, it may also be the right time to evolve a concept of how India could assist in realizing the maritime growth potential of regional countries, in a manner that is mutually beneficial, both from the financial as well as the strategic perspective. Pushing for an India-led development of the Kankesanthurai port in Jaffna – something that India has been involved in earlier – may be the ideal start point. With multiple suitors lined up to gain a strategic foothold in the region, the Indian government would need to closely monitor the manner in which Indian companies complete projects in other countries. Timely delivery with top-class

quality would have to be the basic minimum, to ensure that countries do not look for extra-regional alternatives. Moreover, India's sustained naval engagement with Sri Lanka and other littorals, needs to be progressively and continuously upgraded to provide increasing value to other navies as well as to prevent extra-regional navies from occupying the space that India cannot or will not fill.

While India may not be able to match the scale of funding that China can today afford, certain advantages such as geographical proximity, shared history and ideals as well as a benign, non-aggressive posture could offset the advantage that hard cash in copious amounts may accrue. While the recommencement of the CPC project is undeniably a political setback, it is also an opportunity for India to recalibrate its response to the economic needs of regional countries and to take stock of its ability to prevent the power of hard cash from prevailing over regional security concerns.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 11 May 2016