



MAKING WAVES

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Editorial Team

*Captain (Dr.) Gurpreet S Khurana
Commander Dinesh Yadav
Ms. Preeti Yadav*

Address

*National Maritime Foundation
Varuna Complex, NH- 8
Airport Road
New Delhi-110 010, India*

Email:maritimeindia@gmail.com

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Indian, US defence officials hold first Maritime Security Dialogue

-Elizabeth Roche

India and the US on Monday launched their first maritime security dialogue with discussions centering on strategic maritime security issues and maritime challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, a US embassy statement said.

The start of the dialogue was one of the agreements reached between the two countries during the visit to India in April by US defence secretary Ashton Carter, and it comes against the backdrop of increased Indian naval engagement in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, the US “pivot” or “rebalance” towards Asia and America looking at India to step up its role in the region.

The two countries have on at least two occasions put out a joint strategic vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, calling for the freedom of navigation and unimpeded movement of ships through the global commons or high seas, in an oblique reference to China putting embargos on the movement of ships and airplanes through the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

According to the US embassy statement, “among the issues discussed were Asia-Pacific maritime challenges, naval cooperation and multilateral engagement”. The Indian side did not give out any details.

The US delegation included assistant secretary of defence for Asian and Pacific security affairs David Shear, deputy assistant secretary of state for south and central Asian affairs Manpreet Anand and vice admiral Joseph P. Aucoin, commander, US Seventh Fleet, the largest of the forward deployed fleets of the US Navy and headquartered in Yokosuka, Japan.

The Seventh Fleet's area of operation encompasses 36 maritime countries, including China, Russia and India, besides five US defence treaty allies—the Philippines, Australia, South Korea, Japan and Thailand.

The India-US dialogue comes as India and the US are warily eyeing the rise of China as are the Asian giant's smaller South East Asian neighbours such as the Philippines and Vietnam who are locked in maritime disputes with China.

China building artificial islands in the waters of the South China Sea is also upsetting its smaller neighbours.

A US department of defence report over the weekend said China was expected to add substantial military infrastructure, including communications and surveillance systems, to artificial islands in the South China Sea this year.

It said the planned addition will give China long-term “civil-military bases” in the contested waters and estimated that China's reclamation work had added more than 3,200 acres (1,300 hectares) on seven features it occupied in the Spratly Islands in the space of two years.

India has been wary of increased Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean that it considers its backyard as well as reports of Chinese bases coming up in countries like Djibouti. Indian naval ships have in recent months increased their port calls along the Gulf and coast of Africa as well as in South-East Asia.

The US's rebalancing towards Asia, announced in 2011, means assigning higher priority and political, economic and security resources to the Asia-Pacific region because of its dynamism and the increased assertiveness of a rising China, watched warily by many countries in the region.

The rebalancing includes the strengthening of relationships with allies such as Australia and partners like India and Indonesia, a more extensive and structured relationship with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean), drawing these countries

into the US's economic sphere of influence with pacts such as the Trans-Pacific partnership, as well as maintaining a stable relationship with China.

Source: [Live Mint](#), 17 May 2016

Buhari seeks Collaboration on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

-Vanguard Press

President Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday called for greater international collaboration between the Nigerian Navy and other stakeholders in tackling maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea.

He made the call at an International Maritime Conference organised to mark the 60th anniversary of the Nigerian Navy in Lagos.

Buhari, represented by the Minister for Defence, Mansur Mohammad Dan-Ali, said the challenges of maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea had gone beyond what Nigeria alone could deal with.

“The Nigerian Navy at 60 and since inception has applied only the most optimal policies and strategies to resolve maritime challenges in our maritime areas. “They have remained constant in ensuring sea control and arrest of illegal bunkers, smugglers, pipeline vandals and other miscreants in the fight against illegalities in the nation’s maritime domain and beyond. “But the situation has gone beyond our capability to handle. It, therefore, calls for greater international collaboration between the Nigerian Navy and other international maritime stakeholders,” Buhari said.

He called for an appraisal of multinational approaches to enhancing collaboration for effective maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. In his remark, the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ibok Ibas, said that maritime crimes and threats in the Gulf of Guinea called for serious concern as it affected economic lifeline of member states.

“These maritime threats have become transnational and have gone beyond the capability of one nation to contain. “Therefore, this conference would provide a platform to collectively offer the way forward that will address the myriads of challenges and enhance maritime policing, ” he said.

In his address, Gov. Akinwunmi Ambode of Lagos State, represented by his Deputy, Dr Idiat Adebule, said international waterways were the main corridor through which commerce had nurtured relations among countries.

Ambode said sea piracy accounted for 30 per cent of attacks in African regional waters between 2003 and 2011, affecting commercial shipping and trade activities of countries.

He said that the economic benefits which abound in maritime trade for African nations and investors could only be fully realised with the safety and security of the offshore boundaries.

“Unless we collectively tackle the challenges, it will continue to affect the fortunes of merchant vessels and fishing tourists negatively, with consequent impact on commerce and trade development for countries in Africa and around the world,” Ambode said.

Also speaking, Gov. Emmanuel Udom of Akwa Ibom, commended the Navy for doing a lot to check the activities of pirates in the coastal areas, especially in Akwa Ibom.

“Our administration will continue to support and ensure strong partnership with the Navy in their quest to combat maritime crimes and ensure safety on our coastal areas,” Udom said.

He said that the state would donate two Gulf Boats to the Navy to enhance its sea patrol in keeping the waters safe.

The conference, with the theme ‘Enhancing Collaboration for Effective Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea’, attracted military service chiefs, security experts, captains of industry and members of the diplomatic corps.

Source: [Vanguard](#), 24 May 2016

Vietnam May Request F-16s, P-3 Orions from US

-Wendell Minnick

With the lifting of the US arms embargo to Vietnam, a US defense industry source indicates Hanoi is seeking to improve its air defense and maritime security capabilities with the procurement of F-16 fighter aircraft from the US Pentagon's excess defense articles (EDA) program and refurbished P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft, armed with torpedoes.

The source also said Vietnam could seek US-made UAVs for maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

Torpedoes were banned under the embargo, but now the Vietnamese want the same P-3 program the US sold to Taiwan, the source said. On the F-16 EDA, they want the same deal the Obama administration gave Indonesia.

Defense News has also acquired an unclassified defense industry briefing prepared by the US Pacific Command. According to the report, "Socialist Republic of Vietnam – Country Security Cooperation Plan," the US Embassy in Hanoi "possesses a robust security cooperating program operating in accordance with US policy goals and interests to promote integration and access focused on key areas within the Vietnamese security architecture."

These include achieving air and maritime domain awareness, providing maritime security against traditional and nontraditional security threats, delivering all-hazards response and support to civil authorities, participating in regional contingency response and international peacekeeping operations, and addressing the impact of Vietnam War legacy issues on civil society.

“The SCO [Security Cooperation Organization] is manned and capable of providing in-country support and coordination for programs to expand US defense article procurement ... and assist Vietnam in developing and sustaining professional armed forces,” the report said.

According to the report, Vietnam’s strategic outlook involves the survival of the Communist Party by maintaining sovereignty and independence, achieving freedom of maneuver, and ensuring sovereignty over its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and unfettered access to natural resources and the global economic market.

China has been testing Vietnam’s EEZ claims with incursions by maritime patrol vessels, aggressive commercial fishing vessels and the stationing of an oil drilling test platform in 2014, dubbed the Haiyang Shiyou 981 standoff.

Vietnam’s goals, according to the report, are to enhance its presence in the South China Sea with upgrades for submarine warfare, maritime air-ground interdiction, anti-surface warfare (ASUW), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), maritime domain awareness (MDA), early warning, and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR).

In the past, Vietnam has procured defense articles from sources within the former Soviet Union and former East Bloc nations, but it has “begun reaching out to the European Union, Israel, and others.”

On radar issues, the Vietnamese are procuring a high-frequency surface wave radar from the US for \$30 million, according to the report. This is part of their overall effort to improve early warning and ISR.

The report breaks down each service requirement.

For the Army, it must transition from a territorial defense structure, retain a central role as defender of national sovereignty and improve capacity to respond to natural disasters.

The Air Force must improve early warning and airborne ISR, enhance maritime interdiction, develop anti-access/area-denial capabilities, and revamp pilot training.

The Navy must improve MDA, electronic countermeasures/electronic counter-countermeasures, electronic intelligence, expand maritime law enforcement capabilities, develop a naval aviation arm, and enhance ASW and ASUW.

The US Embassy's primary cooperation vision is to promote the United States as a "reliable partner to address complex, forward looking security issues." It also hopes to establish military relationships outside the traditional theater support command that include defense sales, cross-servicing, voyage repairs, and science and technology cooperation.

The report said that priorities include the "establishment" of sustainable lines of effort (LOE) and "synchronize" operations, actions and activities (OAA); instill a programmatic, regularized approach to security cooperation; and focus on nontraditional security approaches and humanitarian activities.

According to Carl Thayer, emeritus professor at the Australian Defence Force Academy, big-ticket sales may be a long way off: "Vietnam does not have the defense budget for that. It is fully committed to integrating six advanced Kilo-class submarines into its fleet," and all maintenance, repair and logistics network and workforce are geared to work with Soviet/Russian technology.

Another hurdle for Vietnam is that Hanoi will continue to face the same restrictions that all other countries face when trying to procure US arms, Thayer said, including human rights issues and the authoritarian nature of the government in power.

Source: [Defense News](#), 25 May 2016

Italian navy saves 550 refugees as smugglers' trawler capsizes in Med

-Patrick Kinsley

More than 500 people narrowly escaped drowning on Wednesday after their smugglers' boat capsized in the southern Mediterranean, a series of dramatic photographs have revealed.

As Italian naval ships approached to rescue the stricken asylum-seekers, their boat – a repurposed trawler – tipped over, throwing those on deck into the water.

At least five people drowned when the boat capsized “due to overcrowding and instability caused by the high number of people on board”, the Italian navy said in a statement.

But the sailors managed to save about 550 lives, in a mission that migration experts described as miraculous.

Boats of this size are usually crammed with around 600 people, which suggests that the majority of those stuck below decks were largely saved.

“It is a miracle,” said Flavio di Giacomo, a spokesman for the International Organization for Migration (IOM). “You would expect them to save the people on the deck. But if they’ve saved 500 people, that means they’ve saved even the people who were inside. And that is very impressive.”

Survivors of previous disasters have described how it is virtually impossible for people to escape if they are below deck when their vessel sinks.

Ibrahim Mbalo, a Gambian who was one of just 28 survivors when a shipwreck claimed the lives of around 800 people last April, has described how passengers pull each other down when the water rushes below decks, since many cannot swim and need something to hold onto in order to stay buoyant.

“Someone grabbed my trousers because they couldn’t swim, so I had to remove my trousers [to get free],” said Mballo. “I was underwater for three or four minutes.”

The boat is the latest of at least 38 smuggling vessels to be rescued in the southern Mediterranean since the start of the week. More than 6,000 lives have been saved since Monday, 11,000 since the start of the month, and 39,000 since the start of the year, according to the IOM.

This puts the rate of arrivals to Italy at roughly the same level as last year, when 39,000 had arrived by 26 May, and 47,000 by the end of the month. While the fragile EU-Turkey deportation deal has – for now – drastically reduced migration numbers to Greece, this has not yet sparked an increase in people trying to reach Europe via Libya and Italy.

The nationalities of this week’s arrivals is not yet known, but since January Syrians have not constituted a meaningful proportion of those reaching Italian shores. The majority of people travelling to Italy are from sub-Saharan Africa – with wars and poverty in Nigeria and Somalia, and repressive regimes in Gambia and Eritrea, proving the biggest “push factors” along this route.

Syrians were the largest national group along the Libya-Italy route in 2014, flying straight into the Libyan capital of Tripoli, or making their way from Egypt and Sudan before taking the boats to Italy. But migration experts say it will take time, planning and money for Syrians to return to the Libyan route in large numbers.

“Libya is also perceived as more dangerous than it was in 2014,” said di Giacomo.

Survivors from Wednesday’s wreck have yet to be interviewed, but it is suspected that their boat is one known to have set out from the Egyptian coast eight days ago.

At the moment, Egypt is proving to be marginally more popular as a departure point than usual. Egyptian smugglers typically account for 10-15% of those who later arrive in Italy – but typically they arrive later in the summer, whereas this year they have been more active during the spring.

This is partly because refugees from countries such as Eritrea and Somalia say they are more aware of the dangers of Libya, where asylum seekers are often kidnapped or get caught up in the civil war.

“We are talking to migrants, and people coming from east Africa seem to know that Libya is now very dangerous,” said di Giacomo. “So if they can, they are trying to come through Egypt.”

Egyptian smugglers exclusively use repurposed fishing boats, whereas Libyan smugglers are increasingly reliant on huge inflatable dinghies.

This may partly be the result of Operation Sophia, the EU’s anti-smuggling mission. Operation Sophia has had negligible impact on migration levels, but its constituent navies are destroying smugglers’ fishing boats once they are abandoned in the high seas, potentially creating a shortage on the Libyan coast.

“But there might be other reasons,” said Di Giacomo. “It is much more complicated for fishing boats to depart – whereas the rubber boats you can inflate on the beach. This give you much more flexibility, and allow you to change the date of departure and the departure points much more easily.”

After being rescued in the southern Mediterranean, people are taken to Italy and then usually told to leave within seven days. In order to stop their onward movement through Europe, Austria, Italy’s northern neighbour, recently changed its laws so that people can no longer apply for asylum at the border.

Other European politicians, including David Cameron, have suggested sending asylum seekers straight back to Libya – even though it is a war zone where many refugees are subject to what amounts to modern-day slavery.

Source: [The Guardian](#), 25 May 2016

Malaysian Navy detains three fishermen in South China Sea

-Reuters

A Malaysian naval patrol detained three Philippine fishermen for encroaching in territorial waters in the disputed Spratlys this month, the Philippine military said on Tuesday (May 24), in what may be the first such incident involving Southeast Asian neighbours.

Malaysia and the Philippines have overlapping exclusive economic zones in the disputed South China Sea, which is believed to have rich deposits of oil and gas and is almost entirely claimed by China.

But Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also claim the sea, through which about \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year.

On May 9, the Philippine vessel was about 18 miles (29 km) southwest of Commodore Reef, one of nine Philippine-held territories in the South China Sea, when a Malaysian patrol boat intercepted it for encroaching in territorial waters.

When the vessel tried to flee, the patrol boat gave chase, and briefly detained the fishermen. Hours later they were turned over to Philippine troops stationed on Commodore Reef, a Philippine navy spokeswoman said.

"The Western Command is saddened by the incident involving our fellow Filipinos," Captain Cherryl Tindog said in a statement, adding that the fishermen received medical treatment. "They are in stable condition, except for some bruises."

The statement gave no reason for the time elapsed since the event.

The fishermen complained of having been punched and kicked during questioning by the Malaysian Navy after being apprehended, Tindog added.

"We were treated like criminals," Nelson Plamiano, one of the fishermen, told broadcaster GMA 7.

The Malaysian Navy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Philippine military directed questions on diplomacy and policy issues to the Philippine foreign ministry, which did not respond to queries from Reuters.

Political analysts say the incident was the first reported to involve the Malaysian navy and Philippine fishermen since a 2012 escalation of tension in the South China Sea, when China harassed Philippine and Vietnamese fishermen in the Spratlys.

Malaysia's handling of the Philippine fishermen was a violation of an informal code of conduct signed in Cambodia in 2002, said Jay Batongbacal, an expert in maritime law from the University of the Philippines.

"Our Department of Foreign Affairs should talk to Malaysia about this incident, because hitting our fishermen was not part of any agreement," he added.

Source: [CNN Philippines](#), 25 May 2016

US and Japanese warships keep close watch on Chinese navy combat drill

-Liu Zhen

A Chinese naval strike group conducted a 48-hour non-stop combat drill in the western part of the Pacific Ocean under the close surveillance of US and Japanese warships, Chinese state media reported on Tuesday.

The drill, conducted on Sunday and Monday, involved some of the People's Liberation Army Navy's most advanced warships.

A US destroyer, a Japanese destroyer along with two anti-submarine helicopters followed and monitored the drill from a visible distance, the website of the PLA Daily reported.

The warships were also involved in an exercise in the South China Sea earlier in the month, marking a rise in regional military tensions between China and the United States.

The vessels were from the PLA Navy's South Sea Fleet and had left a naval base in Sanya, Hainan province, earlier this month.

The strike group conducted an attack and defence exercise off Subi Reef, and the ships also patrolled Chinese-controlled Johnson South Reef, Fiery Cross Reef, Cuarteron Reef, Mischief Reef, the Gaven Reefs and Hughes Reef in the Spratly Islands on May 8 to 9.

The next day, the guided-missile destroyer USS William P. Lawrence travelled within 12 nautical miles of Chinese-occupied Fiery Cross Reef in a freedom of navigation operation.

"The types of exercises show the PLA has prepared for the worst," Ni Lexiong, a Shanghai-based expert on naval strategies, said.

In the most recent drill, the Chinese destroyers Lanzhou and Hefei, frigate Sanya and a team of bombers practised strikes against the destroyer Guangzhou and the frigate Yulin. A submarine acted as a third-party threat to both sides. Supply ships and early warning aircraft were also involved in the exercise, according to reports.

Both sides opened fire to test their artillery, an earlier PLA Daily report said.

The presence of US and Japanese warships complicated this week's exercise as both sides had to stay alert for foreign vessels and aircraft while conducting the exercise, the Hefei's captain, Zhao Yanquan was quoted as saying.

As part of the South Sea Fleet's annual comprehensive open sea drills, the strike group will move on to do exercises in the Eastern Indian Ocean, where the Chinese navy has not been very active.

Ni said the PLA had to demonstrate its maritime power to other countries as part of China's broader "One Belt, One Road" -initiative.

Military presence is in itself economically valuable," Ni said. "It does not necessarily have to be a war. The confirmed military advantage could translate into money, into business projects, and into support in international disputes."

The report of the drill comes amid rising tensions between China and the US over the disputed South China Sea. Despite this, the Chinese navy will take part in the US-led Rim of the Pacific Exercise, the world's largest naval drill, off Hawaii in June and July.

Last week, two Chinese J-11 fighter jets intercepted a US EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft.

The Pentagon said the interception was unsafe, but Beijing rejected the claim, saying the Chinese operation was professional and in line with the law.

Source: [South China Morning Post](#), 25 May 2016

Maritime security looms over G7 Summit in Japan

-J Berkshire Miller

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is hosting his counterparts at the G7 Leaders Summit in Ise-Shima. The summit is to address a number of issues such as a unified approach to spur global economic growth and joint approaches to mitigate military escalation in Ukraine and Syria. But, arguably the most important area of discussion at the summit will focus on increasingly tense maritime disputes in East Asia.

During last month's G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Hiroshima, all sides agreed on a maritime security communique that prioritised the issue, and stressed the importance of a rules-based order underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (PDF).

The communique specifically pointed the finger towards Chinese actions in the East and South China Seas, noting "strong opposition to any intimidating, coercive or provocative and unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions."

The G7 grouping also targeted China by condemning its land reclamation in the South China Sea and the development of "outposts for military purposes".

China's Activities

This emphasis on maritime security is appropriate and necessary considering the significant developments over the past year, which continue to erode freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Specifically, China has been looking to coercively alter the status quo in both the East and South China Seas through a range of pressure tactics.

In the East China Sea, Beijing unilaterally declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in 2013 and continues to engage in a sustained strategy of challenging Japan's effective control of the disputed Senkaku islands.

The fact that this G7 summit is hosted in Japan, the only Asian country in the grouping, underscores the importance of not downplaying the destabilising actions in the maritime domain.

China has also been bolstering the size and capabilities of its coastguard and has started to arm its vessels sailing near the disputed waters.

In the South China Sea, the situation has been devolving more acutely. Over the past two years, China has been ramping up its land reclamation and infrastructure building projects in the region.

On Fiery Cross Reef, west of the Spratly Islands, China has expeditiously worked to reclaim nearly 3 million square metres through dredging activities. Beijing is also

building an airstrip, deep harbour and an array of military equipment aimed at maintaining and projecting effective control in the region.

China has also been conducting similar activities on our man-made islands, including Subi Reef and Mischief Reef, in an unprecedented cycle of escalation.

Other claimant states in the region, including Vietnam and the Philippines, have also engaged in land reclamation activities - but the scope and speed of these initiatives is not comparable with China's efforts.

The US Push

The timing is critical for the G7 leaders to make a unified statement that the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific cannot be held hostage by Beijing's attempts at maritime suzerainty.

The fact that this G7 summit is hosted by Japan, the only Asian country in the grouping, underscores the importance of not downplaying the destabilising actions in the maritime domain.

Additionally, the importance of a strong message on maritime security is paramount considering this summer's looming decision by the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) regarding a case submitted by the Philippines against China over jurisdiction rights in the South China Sea.

In response to China's ramping up of activities before the PCA decision, the US continues to push forward on its Freedom of Navigations Operations in the disputed waters - much to the anger of Beijing, which has the most expansive claim in the area.

Washington has also made other moves to counter China's expansive claims, such as a key base deal to rotate US marines in the Philippines and a lifting of the decades-old arms embargo with Vietnam.

Potential outcomes

Despite this, there is little sign that Beijing will halt its expeditious pace of land reclamation in the area and indeed looks to be solidifying its presence through a sustained build-up of infrastructure on key reclaimed features such as Mischief and Fiery Cross Reefs.

The G7 summit provides a perfect opportunity to underscore the importance of transparency and freedom of navigation in Asia's seas.

At Ise-Shima, the leaders should publicly call for a transparent and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and call for tangible steps for a robust Code of Conduct (PDF).

The summit also provides a venue for unilateral and bilateral statements of support for ASEAN states and a pledge to increase non-lethal assistance and capacity building for their coastguards - often the frontline responders in these waters.

Finally, and most importantly, leaders need to make a clear statement that Asia's prosperity and security are inextricably linked to the freedom of navigation and trade in its seas.

Source: [Aljazeera News](#), 26 May 2016



Kalvari: Indian Navy's Scorpene class submarine's sea trials a big boost to Make in India

-Huma Siddiqui

In recent years, the Indian Navy has been focusing on developing indigenous platforms, systems, sensors and weapons as part of the nation's modernisation and expansion of its maritime forces. Towards this, Kalvari, which is the first of the Scorpene class submarines, being built at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Mumbai (MDL), went to sea for the first time early this month. This underwater war machine is being built in Mumbai in collaboration with French companies.

Defence analysts said the commissioning of Kalvari will be a re-affirmation of India's capability to build submarines and a major boost for the 'Make in India' programme of the government. With 30% indigenous components on board, the 'Made India' submarine is part of the ongoing project for the construction of six Scorpene class submarines.

Kalvari sailed out under her own propulsion for the first sea trial, off the Mumbai coast and during the sortie, completed a number of preliminary tests on the propulsion system, auxiliary equipment and systems, navigation aids, communication equipment and steering gear. During the next few months, the submarine will undergo a barrage of sea trials, including surface trials, diving trials, weapon trials, noise trials etc. These trials would test the submarine to the extremes of its intended operating envelop. Thereafter she would be commissioned into the Indian Navy as INS Kalvari later this year.

The state-of-art features of the Scorpene include superior stealth and the ability to launch a crippling attack on the enemy using precision guided weapons. The attack can be launched with torpedoes, as well as tube launched anti-ship missiles, whilst

underwater or on surface. The stealth features give it invulnerability, unmatched by many submarines.

At some point the Scorpene submarines would be fitted with the air independent propulsion (AIP) technology being developed by the Maharashtra-based Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL). This AIP enables a submarine stay underwater for longer periods without having to constantly surface to charge its batteries; the last of the six boats being built in the country may benefit from the system. It converts methanol-like substances to produce hydrogen, which is the fuel that runs the cell in producing electricity. While diesel engines need oxygen to function, these cells are air independent. The system also emits less noise, increasing its stealth—the most critical feature of a submarine. With this system, a conventional submarine that needs to surface every three to four days for replenishing its oxygen supply, can stay underwater for up to two weeks.

Indian Navy officials informed that Kalvari is designed to operate in all theatres including the tropics. All means and communications are provided to ensure interoperability with other components of a naval task force. It can undertake multifarious types of missions typically undertaken by any modern submarine, that is, anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance etc. They are built from special steel, capable of withstanding high yield stress and having high tensile strength, thereby allowing them to withstand high hydrostatic force and enabling them to dive deeper to further enhance stealth.

Kalvari is being built according to the principle of modular construction, which involves dividing the submarine into a number of sections and building them in parallel. The equipment is mounted onto cradles and then embarked into the sections. The complexity of the task increases exponentially as it involves laying of around 60 km of cabling and 11 km of piping in extremely congested and limited space inside the submarine. The array of weapons and complex sensors fitted on board the Scorpene are managed by a high technology combat management system, which integrates various diverse systems fitted onboard into one system.

Kalvari is the dreaded Tiger Shark, a deadly deep sea predator. As is the tradition, ships and submarines of the Navy, are brought alive after decommissioning. The first Kalvari, which was also the first Indian submarine, was commissioned into the Indian Navy in December 1967. She was decommissioned on 31 May 1996 after almost 30 years of yeoman service to the nation. The commissioning of Yard 11875 (Kalvari), will not only mark a generational shift in technology, insofar as submarine construction in

India is concerned, but also for submarine operations by the Indian Navy.

Source: [The Financial Express](#), 16 May 2016

Indian naval ships reach Bahrain; Joint Exercise likely

-Press Trust of India

Indian naval ships Delhi, Tarkash and Deepak today reached Bahrain on a four-day visit during which they are likely to do a joint exercise.

During the visit, the Indian crew will interact with the Royal Bahrain Naval Force (RBNF) on issues pertaining to maritime operations, including means of combating maritime terrorism and piracy.

In addition, calls on senior government and military authorities, sports and cultural interactions and sharing of best practices, aimed at enhancing cooperation as well as strengthening understanding between the two navies, are also planned.

The visiting Indian navy ships are also likely to conduct exercises with the RBNF, a naval statement said.

The current visit by Indian ships will facilitate sharing of best practices, enhance maritime cooperation and evolve a shared understanding of the maritime security challenges, between the two navies, it said.

Over 350,000 Indian nationals, comprising nearly a third of Bahrain's total population, is an important facet of strong bilateral relationship.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), 16 May 2016

Indian Navy Projects Affected By VVIP Chopper Scam

-Defense World Press

The VVIP chopper scam involving Italian firm AgustaWestland has put a dent on the future projects of the Indian Navy.

More than a dozen under-construction warships, including the upcoming sea-borne aircraft carrier and the Scorpene Submarines, were built according to specifications of certain types of weaponry or radars. And several European systems are produced by Finmeccanica, the mother company of AgustaWestland.

India's Ministry of Defence is currently looking at this matter to find a way to continue supply of the required systems for the Navy projects.

Speaking in Parliament on May 6, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar was categorical that he was not going to blacklist Finmeccanica. The Army, Navy and IAF have several equipment that have parts produced by Finmeccanica and all contracts already signed have been put on hold. However, the company cannot bid for future contracts, Parrikar had said, Tribune India reported Monday.

The MoD has asked the Navy to look at other alternatives but again this could take years to fructify, according to the report.

As of now, the subsidiaries of Finmeccanica – Selex, Whitehead Alenia Sistemi Subacquel (WASS) and Otomelara are responsible to supply high-powered radar for the under-construction aircraft carrier, Vikrant; a heavyweight torpedo for the first of the six Scorpene submarines and 127 mm ship-deck guns for the four of the Visakhapatnam-class guided missile destroyers, respectively.

Four of the Kamorta-class corvettes need short-range surface-to-air missiles (SRSAM) from the supplier MBDA which also has a link to Finmeccanica. Two such ships are still under construction.

Source: Defenseworld.net, 17 May 2016

Indian Navy's indigenous fighter successfully completes flight tests

-Rahul Bedi

India's Aeronautical Development Agency has made key progress in the development of the long-delayed naval version of the locally designed Light Combat Aircraft (Navy) or LCA(N), after two prototypes successfully undertook 33 sorties from the Indian Navy's (IN's) shore-based testing facility (SBTF) at INS Hansa in the southwestern state of Goa.

Between 27 March and 25 April two prototypes (NP1 & 2) carrying two Russian Vympel R-73 (AA-11 'Archer') air-to-air missiles each had validated 'ski-jump' trials from the SBTF, which replicates an aircraft carrier deck, according to IN sources.

They said both prototypes - designed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) with stronger landing gear than the standard LCA to absorb the additional forces - took flight after rolling 200 m at the facility.

Source: Defense News, 17 May 2016

Meet the US Navy's Robotic Lifeguard Named 'Emily'

-Richard Sisk

The U.S. Navy funded research on the development of a fast-swimming "robot lifeguard" that saved Syrian refugees from drowning but has no immediate plans to acquire the EMILY system for the military.

"That's my mission in life, to win them over," Tony Mulligan, the inventor of the system and CEO and president of Arizona-based Hydronalix Inc., said Tuesday of his hopes to see EMILYs aboard U.S. Navy ships. "Other navies and coast guards around the world are using it."

The four-foot, 25-pound EMILYs, for Emergency Integrated Lifesaving Lanyard, were on display at the Navy booth this week at the Navy League's Sea Air Space exposition at National Harbor, and several of them were also zipping about in the Potomac outside the exhibition halls.

Fernando Boiteux, an assistant chief and 30-year veteran of the Los Angeles Fire Department, described EMILY as a "self-propelled life jacket" as he guided two of the maritime robots across a river inlet Monday with a hand-held remote.

Boiteux said his department began experimenting with EMILYs in 2012 and now has four of them that they use off the beach for rescues. He said they were especially useful when rip tides take a group of swimmers away from shore, since the robots can get to them much quicker than a human swimmer.

Boiteux had no estimate for how many people may have been saved by EMILYs operating off the Los Angeles-area beaches, but guessed that it was "quite a few." The same systems used by a Texas A&M research team in coordination with the Greek coast guard also recently helped save an estimated 300 refugees who were in the water off the Greek island of Lesbos.

The Navy's Office of Naval Research, and the Navy's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs began working with Mulligan in 2001 on the concept for a self-propelled flotation device and funded research on its development.

Mulligan said the finished product was 98% made in the U.S., including the composite hull made on the Tohono O'odham Indian reservation in Arizona. He said the

EMILY goes for about \$10,000 in the U.S. but the costs can balloon for overseas sales because of taxes.

The bright orange and yellow cylindrical devices are powered by an electric motor that shoots out a water jet stream for propulsion, operating much like a mini-jet ski. EMILYs are made of Kevlar and aircraft-grade composites and "can be thrown off a helicopter or bridge and then driven by remote control to whoever needs to be rescued," Mulligan said in a phone interview.

The latest versions of the devices are equipped with two-way communication radios, a video camera with live feed to smart phones and lighting for night rescues. The motors have also been upgraded to push through strong currents.

About eight people can grab on to EMILY at a time, and they can be reeled back to shore or a rescue boat by a 200-foot line that EMILY can carry to the rescue area.

Hydranalix has sold EMILYs to navies, coast guards and search-and-rescue units in South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Britain, France, Mongolia, Brazil, Mexico, Greece and the Hong Kong harbor police.

Source: Military.com, 17 may 2016

New U.S. Navy Transport Osprey to Reach Insane 280 MPH, Increased Range

-Anders Hagstorm

The US Navy has begun development on its own variant of the V-22 Osprey that will have an increased range of more than 1,000 miles and a top speed of 280 mph, Scout Warrior reports.

The new CMV-22B Osprey variant is set to fully replace the C-2 Greyhound as the Navy's primary transport aircraft for forward-stationed warships by 2021.

The Osprey provides far greater flexibility than the C-2 due to its tilt-rotor design, meaning it can both take off and land vertically but still maintain airplane level speeds of more than 220 mph. Whereas the C-2, which has been in service since the 1960's, requires a traditional catapult to lift off from carriers.

Bell-Boeing, the company contracted to develop the new Osprey, is investigating a number of methods of increasing the aircraft's range, primarily an increased fuel supply, Navy spokesman Ensign Marc Rockwellpate told Scout Warrior.

In addition to its primary function as a supply transport, the Navy's Osprey will be able to fill a slew of other roles, including that of a tanker aircraft capable of performing aerial refueling missions, and offensive roles such as a troop and weapons transportation in a combat radius of more than 450 miles.

Bell-Boeing is still investigating other capabilities for the aircraft, including its armament, Rockwellpate said.

While the Marine Corps is already developing its MV-22B Osprey to be fitted with rockets and other weapons systems, offensive armament is less necessary for the Navy's variant due to its transport role.

According to Rockwellpate, in order to decrease the risk of operating from forward bases in high threat environments, which the Navy's Osprey will occasionally be required to do, the CMV-22B will keep the MV-22B's flares, chaff, and missile warning system.

The first default V-22 Ospreys are set to arrive to the Navy in 2018.

Source: [The Daily Caller](#), 25 May 2016

Indian Navy Commissions New Fast Attack Craft

-Franz-Stefan Gady

Today, the Indian Navy commissioned an improved variant of the lightly armed Car Nicobar-class high-speed offshore patrol vessel, the INS Tarmugli, at ceremony held at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, according to statement provided by the Indian Ministry of Defense.

“INS Tarmugli is being based in Visakhapatnam under the Naval Officer-in-Charge (Andhra Pradesh) and would be deployed for coastal patrol and surveillance operations along the East Coast of India,” the statement reads.

The 320-ton Tarmugli is the first out of four improved Car Nicobar-class high-speed offshore patrol vessels—dubbed Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (WJFAC) by the IN—ordered under a March 2013 contract awarded to Kolkata-based shipbuilder Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE). Construction of the vessel began in July 2013. The craft was launched in June 2015, along with two other ships of the class.

The Tarmugli boasts improved maneuverability and speed in order to facilitate the interdiction of fast-moving naval targets. “Built for extended coastal and offshore surveillance and patrol the warship is fitted with advanced MTU engines, water jet propulsion and the latest communication equipment,” according to the Indian defense ministry.

“The propulsion system consists of three Hamilton waterjets driven by three MTU 4000 series engines through ZF gearboxes. MTU’s MCS-5 machinery control system is also installed. Top speed is approximately 35 knots, while range is about 2,000 nautical miles at 12-14 knots,” IHS Jane’s Defense Weekly explains.

The Car Nicobar-class ships are designed to be cost-effective platforms for patrolling India’s Exclusive Economic Zone and intercepting suspicious vessels. Ships of the class have also been deployed in anti-piracy operations. “The ship is capable of operating in shallow waters at high speeds and is equipped with enhanced fire power,” the ministry notes.

However, the Tarmugli remains a lightly armed vessel in comparison to other warships of the Indian Navy. “The ships armament consists of a 30 mm CRN 91 gun manufactured by Ordnance Factory Medak. An electronic day-night fire control system namely Stabilized Optronic Pedestal (SOP) manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) controls the gun,” the statement reads. “The ship is also equipped with two 12.7 mm heavy machine guns (HMG) and multiple medium machine guns, besides shoulder-launched Igla surface-to-air missiles to combat aerial threats.”

The Tarmugli is manned by a crew of four officers and 41 sailors. The ships of the Car Nicobar-class, named after an island in the Andaman group, are the first water-jet propelled vessels in the Indian Navy. So far the Indian Navy is operating 11 vessels of the class and is expecting to commission three more ships in the near future. Production of the vessels was sped-up after the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 25 May 2016

Green Ports: Going beyond Renewable Energy Generation

-Kapil Narula

Maritime India Summit (MIS) 2016 which is an endeavour of the Government of India to promote growth of the maritime sector in the country was held in Mumbai from 14-16 April 2016. Various initiatives such as port modernization, new port development, inland waterways, hinterland connectivity & multimodal logistics, international & coastal shipping, ship building, ship repair & ship recycling, port led industrialisation, cruise shipping & lighthouse tourism and green initiatives in ports are being showcased to attract investors and to explore the potential business opportunities in the maritime sector.

While promoting the maritime sector, the ministry of shipping also launched 'Project Green Ports' in January 2016 and integrated twelve 'Green Ports Initiatives' with the existing 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan'. The Green Port Initiatives include aspects such as preparation and planning for monitoring environmental pollution, acquiring pollution monitoring equipment, acquiring dust suppression system, setting up of sewage/waste water treatment plants/ garbage disposal plant, setting up projects for energy generation from renewable energy sources, completion of shortfalls of Oil Spill Response (OSR) facilities (Tier-1), prohibition of disposal of almost all kind of garbage at sea and improving the quality of harbour wastes.

As a part of the above drive, green initiatives in ports are also being encouraged as a sunrise segment in MIS 2016 in order to ensure environmentally benign operations and sustainable development of ports. 135 MW of solar power projects across eight major ports and 50 MW of wind energy projects across three major ports are planned to be installed by 2020. The shipping ministry has also introduced an incentive scheme to promote the use of green energy at major ports and will share up to 50% of the total cost for waste water treatment projects and to promote the use of bio-diesel. As a part of 2

these incentives, each port will be given a financial grant up to Rs 25 crore (US\$ 4 Million) for undertaking these projects. Certain measures for monitoring pollution of marine environment and issue of anti-fouling certificate to Indian ships above 400 Gross Tons (GT) has also been proposed. While it is a good start, green port initiatives needs to move beyond the physical generation of RE in port premises and the principles of environmental sustainability have to be enshrined in the planning, development and operation of ports.

Green ports have a small ecological footprint. Such ports are sustainable and balance the economic, environmental and social dimensions of development. The design and construction of these ports promote low energy operations, maximize resource efficiency, increase productivity and activities undertaken at these ports have minimal environmental impact. Green ports extend the above concepts to all port users including maritime transport and multimodal transportation which are used for hinterland connectivity. These ports are a key component of 'Blue Economy' and are commercially attractive for shipping due to the environmental benefits they create, balancing the investments and cash flows. Green ports pay emphasis on spatial planning including its surrounding areas, are highly networked and use integrated information and decision support systems for planning and execution of the logistics chain. These ports maintain stringent environmental standards for limiting water, land and air pollution and are adaptive as they include climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Activities undertaken at green ports can be divided into two categories: those undertaken by ships berthing in the ports and those undertaken by port administration for providing port services. Both of these are driven by green policies and incentives and green technologies become enablers for green ports. Major actors in green ports include ship owners, ship operators, marine fuel suppliers, shipyards, port terminal operators, classification societies and contractors providing utility services in the ports

A green port utilizes renewable energy and has net zero energy buildings. However, every port jurisdiction may not be endowed with renewable energy sources such as solar irradiation and wind energy. Additionally there may be constraints on the area available

for installation of solar panels and issues of intermittency of renewable energy. Hence Indian green ports must look beyond physically setting up RE facilities inside the port areas and could be mandated to buy 'virtual green energy' in the form of 'Renewable Energy Certificates' (RECs), as a fixed share of the total consumption of electricity. Additionally Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) must be made with RE generators for a 3 contracted amount of power using the provisions of 'Open Access' of electricity, which enables any consumer to procure power from any producer of energy across India, irrespective of the place of generation or consumption. This electricity can be then extended to the ships while they are berthed in a port. This will lower emissions of SO_x, NO_x and Particulate Matter (PM) when ships are berthed alongside and would improve the air quality inside the port while building a green image.

Port administrators need to involve various stakeholders in discussion and should reach necessary agreements regarding the provisioning of port services by establishing the demand for energy services and by building the necessary, logistics chains and infrastructure for delivery of these services. Port design and planning also plays a very important role in ensuring port efficiency and there should be optimal use of space by building multi user and networked terminals. Transport planning for smooth movement of ships when entering and leaving the port will minimize the turnaround time and will lead to improvement in port productivity while lowering the environmental impact while the ship is in the port premises. Waste minimization as well as treatment of water (including ballast water) is to be specially emphasized and habitat management needs to be addressed so as to cause minimal impact to marine organisms.

Port governance and port management plays an important role in ensuring green ports and incentives such as reduction in port charges for environment friendly ships, as extended by other ports in the world such as Rotterdam and Hamburg will go a long way to promote green ports in India. San Diego, Singapore, Gothenburg, Vancouver and Hong Kong and examples of ports which are adopting green initiatives on similar lines.

Green Ports play an important role in the growth of India's maritime sector. This concept therefore needs to move from the fringes to the centre of port operations and

needs to be integrated in the planning process to ensure sustainable development of the Indian maritime sector.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 16 May 2016

Cam Ranh International Port Visits in Strategic Context

-Zachary Abuza

On 2 May, the French amphibious assault ship FS Tonnerre arrived in the Cam Ranh International Port (CRIP) for a four day visit. It was the third international visit to the newly established CRIP, nee Cam Ranh Bay, following the mid-March visit of a Singaporean naval vessel and a mid-April visit by two Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force ships. These three visits reflect Vietnam's strategic interests, most importantly, the development of an omni-directional foreign policy. While much attention will be paid to President Obama's visit to Vietnam this month, it is important to note both how far bilateral relations have come, but also how much they are only a piece of Vietnam's overall strategic framework.

The decision to give Cam Ranh the moniker "International Port" was a strategic one. Hanoi has long been called on to open up the port to foreign vessels transiting the region, but wanted to make sure that it was not aimed at any one country. Thus the port, which is one of the finest deep-water ports in the entire region and is full of new construction after the inauguration such as a new berthing area, pier, quay wall, and was opened up to all on a "commercial basis." This is in line, if not a creative work around, with Hanoi's "3 Nos" foreign policy (no alliances, no foreign military bases, and no policies that could be construed as being directed against any one state). The argument that any one foreign country could try to gain exclusive access to the port is nonsensical.

Indeed, in bilateral defense talks held at the end of March 2016, Vice Minister of Defense Nguyen Chi Vinh said that Vietnam had actively invited Chinese vessels to visit

Vietnamese ports, including CRIP. Even though it was an unpopular move domestically, it signals the leadership's intention that CRIP not be directed against any one country.

While it is clear that Vietnam-U.S. defense cooperation has deepened considerably over the last few years and will continue to do so, both sides seem to be content on the pace with which the relationship is moving for various reasons.

Vietnam clearly has a strategic interest in a more robust U.S. presence in the region, and has actively championed the right of U.S. Naval vessels to conduct freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs), including past features that Vietnam itself claims and occupies. Vietnam also looks to the United States as the only thing between China and the declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).

However, although Hanoi is keen to further deepen ties with the United States, there remain many real impediments, including history, the continued legacy of Agent Orange, and the enormous costs associated with the cleanup of Bien Hoa, and criticism over human rights. Indeed, this year, Hanoi responded to the U.S. State Department's annual human rights report, calling it "biased," something it has not done and downplayed in the past few years. Furthermore, despite its embrace of the Trans Pacific Partnership, Hanoi is cautious about growing too close to the United States in the security realm, for fear of provoking a harsh reaction from China, hence its intention of displaying CRIP as a neutral, open-to-all port.

From 22-24 May, President Barack Obama will visit Vietnam, reciprocating the historic July 2015 visit to the United States by Vietnam Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong. While many hope that President Obama will fully lift the arms embargo, others argue that Vietnam simply has too many human rights abuses to merit a full lifting. Indeed, his Secretary of Defense recently endorsed lifting the embargo in a Congressional hearing with Senator John McCain, a long proponent of ending the embargo. In early May, right before Obama's visit, Vietnam hosted a defense symposium to which top U.S. arm corporations, such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin,

were invited. This will be more of a symbolic gesture, but in diplomacy, especially in such a historically fraught relationship, symbols matter.

But even still, limits exist. There are longstanding concerns about selling advanced technology to Vietnam for fear that it will be shared with Russia. Again, human right issues also interfere with the decision. Nevertheless, this is not to say that Vietnam's purchase of U.S. weapons is impossible.

The one area that does seem ripe for sales is maritime aviation capabilities, something that the U.S. does have a stark comparative advantage in. Vietnam has expressed an interest in a stripped down P-3 Orion. In April 2016, a group of Vietnamese naval officers visited U.S. Patrol Squadron 47 in Hawaii and notably toured a P-3C in order to better understand its capability. Vietnam has also seen the P-3 in action in January 2016 during a joint HADR exercise between Vietnam and Japan. Boeing has suggested that one of its Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) suites would fit Vietnam's needs.

Despite the regular presence of U.S. Naval vessels, which spend some 700 ship days a year in the South China Sea, and the recent visit by the USS Stennis to the Philippines, and the recent refusal of port access in Hong Kong by China, to date no U.S. vessel has called on CRIP.

Furthermore, Vietnamese rules stipulate that foreign naval vessels, including those of the U.S., can only call on Vietnamese ports once a year. Nevertheless, U.S. logistical ships have visited the port before for repair and maintenance service. In June 2012 USNS Richard E. Byrd, a Military Sealift Command supply ship, stopped at Cam Ranh's repair facilities, and then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta gave a speech on board the moored ship, promising a stronger relationship between the two nations. The U.S. Navy has used their port call annually since 2009, albeit not at Cam Ranh Bay. Furthermore, when reporting the inauguration of CRIP, Vietnamese official media mentioned the possibility of U.S. aircraft carriers calling on the port by mentioning that CRIP can "accommodate military and civilian ships like aircraft carriers of up to 110,000 DWT

(deadweight tonnage).” Hence, it is likely that a U.S. Navy ship will call on Cam Ranh Bay in the near future.

In addition, the U.S. government has awarded Vietnam \$40.1 million in FY2015-16 as part of its Maritime Security Initiative in order to “bolster its maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) and command and control within Vietnam’s maritime agencies.” The funding will also support the purchase of maritime defense equipment and support training and bilateral HADR exercises to improve interoperability.

The visit by the Singaporean naval vessel should have come as no surprise. ASEAN – for all of its faults and limitations – remains the cornerstone of Vietnamese foreign policy. It works assiduously to counter China’s aggressive moves to divide the grouping, especially ahead of the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s expected ruling. Vietnam and Singapore have pledged to deepen ties and have suggested future bi and multi-lateral defense exercises.

Soon after, Vietnamese naval vessels and special forces soldiers participated in a regional counter-terrorism and anti-piracy exercise with Singapore, Brunei, Thailand and Indonesia. Interestingly, Vietnam sent HQ-381, a BPS-500 type missile corvette instead of its Gepard frigates. The HQ-318 was the first missile corvette built domestically in Vietnam in 1999, and it underwent capability upgrades in 2014. Vietnam has also increased its participation in multilateral exercises, including sending Hospital Ship 561 to the 2016 Komodo naval exercises in Indonesia in April 2016. Vietnam has extended maritime cooperation to entirely new partners as well, including a five day on-shore multilateral course by the Royal Navy’s Maritime Warfare School on EEZ enforcement.

The visit by the French ship capped a week of the re-emergence of France as a player in Asian security, with the agreement in principle to supply Australia with 12 Barracuda submarines; beating out the Japanese Soryu-class. But the presence of one of France’s largest vessels at CRIP also suggests the potential for defense deals with Vietnam, which

has hinted that it wants to reduce its dependence on Russia for its advanced weaponry. Vietnam has already purchased military lift planes from the French-led Airbus consortium. SIPRI, in its arm transfer database, shows that Vietnam has taken delivery of Exocet anti-ship and MICA anti-air missiles from France for its Dutch SIGMA-9814 corvettes; yet, as the negotiation for the corvettes seems to have been suspended, the fate of these missiles is uncertain. Reuters also reported that the Vietnamese military is currently in talk with Dassault on the Rafale multirole fighter as a possible replace for its antiquated but numerous MiG-21s. However, the Rafale's high cost makes this procurement less likely.

But it is the relationship with Japan that portends the greatest potential. There have now been six high level strategic dialogues, and Japanese ships have made some nine port calls, the majority of which happened in the last five years. There are routine high level engagements. Although Japan has not sold any weapons to Vietnam, in 2014 it pledged to transfer six maritime patrol craft; the last were delivered in November 2015.

The potential for deeper ties is clearly there. A meeting between the respective foreign Ministers in early May 2016 led to calls for deepened defense relations as well as the provision of more maritime patrol craft. As Japan experiences the loss of the Soryu class vessels sale to Australia, Tokyo still needs a major arms sale to break into the world of the global arms industry. But while Japanese equipment is expensive and technology transfer is unlikely, the defense relationship, including recent HADR operations, is growing so quickly that it might become a natural byproduct.

Both countries have called for a rules-based system in the South China Sea. Both would like each other to step up their respective operations in the South China Sea. Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc recently called on Shinzo Abe's government to make "effective efforts" in the South China Sea, but there are limits. Vietnam is unlikely to be overly confrontational towards China. And while many have called for Japan to join U.S. FONOPs, that is unlikely, simply as China has the ability to escalate its operations in the contested waters around the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands. Intercepts of Chinese planes in Japan's southwest quadrant alone already account for over 50 percent of overall

intercepts of foreign aircraft. In 2015, there were 571 intercepts of Chinese planes, a 23 percent increase from 2014, taxing the Japanese military.

Despite these improvements and deepening cooperation with new defense partners, it is the bilateral defense relationship with Russia that remains the strongest. Newly elected Minister of National Defense Ngo Xuan Lich made his first overseas trip to Russia, where he reiterated that Vietnam will continue to rely on Russia for much of its weaponry and advanced training. Newly elected Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc will also make Russia his first foreign destination in mid-May, ahead of President Obama's visit.

Vietnam's third Gepard class frigate was recently floated in a Russian shipyard, with the fourth to be launched soon and delivered by September. There are reports that Vietnam will order another two, a total of six, while it has increased production of Molniya class missile ships under license from Russia. Five out of six Kilo submarines that Vietnam ordered from Russia have been delivered, and Russia is helping Vietnam construct the submarine base at Cam Ranh as part of the deal. Vietnam's recent announcement that it was moving the Ministry of National Defense's Ba Son Shipyard to a new location, increasing its production capabilities to 2,000 dead weight tons, also suggests increased domestic production under further Russian license.

When Vietnam purportedly "invited" Russia back to Cam Ranh, it should not be taken as meaning a reopening of their Cold War era naval base, which closed in 1991, but simply as a commercial user of CRIP facilities. Nonetheless, in 1993 Moscow and Hanoi signed a 25 year agreement that allowed Russia to continue using a facility in Cam Ranh Bay for limited signals intelligence gathering. More recently Russia has deployed aerial refueling tankers from CRIP to support bombers that have flown "provocatively" near US airspace in Guam. U.S. calls on Vietnam to restrict such operations have fallen on deaf ears. Furthermore, in 2014, the procedure for Russian ships calling on Cam Ranh Bay was simplified: they only have to notify Vietnamese authority before doing so.

While there have been occasional reports that Vietnam wants to diversify its sources of advanced weaponry, the reality is Russian equipment is tried and true, very cost effective, and the Vietnamese have long trained on it. Most importantly, the Russians transfer a lot of technology to Vietnam, which produces an array of missiles and ships under license. Vietnam's relationship with India, also gives it access to the advanced Brahmos anti-ship missiles developed with Russia. This is an enduring strategic defense relationship.

Yet, small diplomatic rifts between Vietnam and Russia have emerged, in particular over Moscow's support for Beijing over the South China Sea and Permanent Court of Arbitration's forthcoming ruling. In April 2016, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commented in an interview that claimants in the South China Sea dispute should resolve the matter among themselves and not attempt to internationalize the issue. Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately rebutted Lavrov by announcing that the dispute should be "settled by all countries concerned," not simply through bilateral negotiation. Notably, Lich's visit to Russia occurred only two weeks after this incident. It should be closely watched whether this diplomatic rift will negatively affect Moscow-Hanoi defense relationship in any way.

In sum, since the 12th Party Congress in January 2016, and the early election of key state leaders to their posts ahead of President Obama's visit, Vietnam has continued with their defense policy: a cautious attempt to bolster defense relations with regional and extra-regional states, the gradual diversification of its arms suppliers, and partaking in joint exercises. While it has brought a lot of new equipment online, giving the country unprecedented power projection capabilities, it is yet to be seen whether they have developed a corresponding doctrine. While no one should underestimate Vietnam's will and capability to act in self-defense, that robust strategic culture has faltered at the hands of China's maritime-militia and Coast Guard sovereignty enforcement operations and island construction. However, as Vietnam's capability improve, it remains cautious about provoking a harsh reaction from Beijing. Yet, at the end of the day, Hanoi's primary concern continues to be regime survival. The government responded quickly

when environmental protests went national, and the regime seems very concerned regarding its ability to control its very wired and socially active population.

Source: [CIMSEC](#), 23 May 2016

Mumbai Port Trust to revamp international cruise terminal

-Manthank Mehta

The city's tourism industry is set to get a shot in the arm as the Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) has decided to overhaul the international cruise terminal as part of its port land development project.

The development project proposes to commercially exploit 400 hectares of the 710-hectare MbPT land. A land development committee under Rani Jadhav, set up by the ministry of shipping and ports, has recommended converting the waterfront into a vibrant zone with a world-class promenade, a marina, a floating restaurant and a Ferris Wheel on the lines of the London Eye along the 28-km coastline.

"We will take baby steps in the land development project. To begin with, we will revamp the international cruise terminal. Also, one berth in the terminal will be reserved only for passenger cruises," said Sanjay Bhatia, MbPT chairman. He added that the development plan will be finalized within 10 months. "We hope to execute the plan in two-four years." After the terminal revamp, the MbPT will focus on setting up a marina outside Victoria and Princess Docks or inside Princess Dock.

MbPT has a policy of giving priority to cargo ships over passenger cruises as the former bring in more revenue. "Cruise operators have to book a berth at Ballard Pier Extension six months in advance. Now, they will be given approval for berthing even one day in advance," he said.

Currently, 30-50 cruises arrive at MbPT in a year; the number is expected to rise by over four times after the new policy is implemented.

Bhatia, who gave a presentation on the port land redevelopment at a conference organized by the IMC in association with Apli Mumbai on Monday, said, "We will set up a department of port land development to oversee the work. MbPT, which will be special planning authority, will appoint a project management and implementation committee to ensure smooth execution."

MbPT also seeks to strengthen its legal department to terminate expired leases.

"We need to integrate port land development with that of the city via physical connections. The development of fisheries, tourism, wellness and recreation are interlinked and can be simultaneously achieved through the development of port land," said MeeraSanyal, IMC chairperson, urban development committee.

Source: [Times of India](#), 24 May 2016

Port Columbus closer to becoming 'John Glenn Columbus International Airport'

-Tom Knox

Port Columbus International Airport is closer to having a new name.

The city's main airport would become John Glenn Columbus International Airport under a proposal that cleared an Ohio House of Representatives committee Tuesday. It could be voted on by the House of Representatives Wednesday.

The proposal is in Senate Bill 159, a transportation bill that would approve several new specialty license plates, including ones declaring 'I Stand with Israel.' It cleared the Ohio Senate last fall, but the section approving the airport name change was added in the House committee.

In a letter to House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger the airport's leadership said Glenn's accomplishments are "certainly worthy of recognition by renaming the airport to John Glenn Columbus International Airport."

Glenn, 94, is one of Ohio's most storied residents. He fought in World War II and the Korean War and later became a test pilot before becoming an astronaut and the first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. He later became a U.S. senator, representing Ohio from 1974 to 1999, and participated in a Space Shuttle mission at age 77, making him the oldest person to fly in space.

Ohio State University in November named one of its most-traveled roads on campus after Glenn and his wife, Annie.

Source: [Columbus Business First](#), 25 May 2016

The Ocean Economy in 2030: The Ocean as a Sustainable Source of Economic Growth

-International Shipping News

The last few years have seen a spectacular increase in attention devoted to the need to protect the world's ocean and seas. At the same time, interest has been growing in the huge potential offered by the future development of ocean-based industries. Striking the right balance means greatly enhancing efforts to address the challenges of sustainable use of the ocean.

The OECD is already contributing at international policy levels to specific aspects of ocean-related issues – such as fisheries, shipbuilding, marine biodiversity and biotechnology. This report is the first endeavour by the OECD to consider the global oceanic activities with an economic and foresight perspective, with a view to supporting

national and international efforts towards a more sustainable development of the ocean economy in the future.

The Ocean Economy in 2030 analyses the economic perspective of the ocean economy while meeting the goals of a more sustainable development, and provides policy recommendations to support such national and international efforts. The many economic activities that make use of the ocean possess great potential for boosting economic growth, employment and innovation. Together, ocean-based industries play a key role in the world economy.

Calculations on the basis of the OECD's Ocean Economy Database estimate the ocean economy's output in 2010 (the base year for the calculations) at USD 1.5 trillion in value added, or approximately 2.5% of world gross value added (GVA). This is roughly equivalent to the size of the Canadian economy that same year.

The report puts forward a number of recommendations to enhance the sustainable development of the ocean economy:

- foster greater international co-operation in maritime science and technology as a means to stimulate innovation and strengthen the sustainable development of the ocean economy
- strengthen integrated ocean management
- improve the statistical and methodological base at national and international level for measuring the scale and performance of ocean-based industries and their contribution to the overall economy
- build more capacity for ocean industry foresight.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#), 26 May 2016

U.S. National Maritime Day: The Tipping Point

-Marex

The Merchant Marines predate both the U.S. Coast Guard (1790) and the U.S. Navy (1797), but as the industry celebrates National Maritime Day in 2016, all is not well.

Participating in the Navy League's annual Sea-Air-Space exposition this month, Paul "Chip" Jaenichen, Maritime Administrator for the U.S. Maritime Administration, described the U.S. sealift fleet as being "at a tipping point" and the U.S. maritime presence as "at the lowest level in our history."

Jaenichen said there are only 79 U.S.-flagged ships remaining in international trade, a 25 percent drop over the last three years. "We are moving less than two percent of our nearly 1.4 billion tons of U.S. imports and exports annually on U.S.-flagged ships. And most of our commodities coming to the United States are carried on foreign vessels with allegiance to other foreign countries.

"The Maritime Administration currently estimates that we have barely enough – and I emphasize, barely enough – qualified mariners to crew existing fleets of government sealift and also U.S.-flagged commercial sealift vessels, to provide both the surge and the sustainment of our armed forces if we go longer than four to six months."

Jaenichen said that nearly 80 years of inattention and neglect dating back to 1936 has led the Maritime Administration to begin development of a new National Maritime Strategy. The strategy is currently in draft form.

From the U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Paul Thomas, assistant commandant for prevention policy, paid tribute to the Merchant Marine, saying: “The Coast Guard is responsible for the safety and security of our nation’s ports and waterways – but we do not do that alone; we depend on mariners’ cooperation and support. Their hard work is vital to our economy and the strength of our nation.”

He also mentioned the El Faro tragedy: “Our dedication to ensuring mariner safety is unwavering – the Coast Guard is diligently investigating the El Faro incident in hopes that the findings will bring tangible outcomes that will allow us to minimize these incidents in the future. Today, tomorrow, and every day, I thank mariners for the work they do, I greatly appreciate their professionalism and dedication to our nation,” he said.

“The mariners’ role in driving the U.S. – and global – economies has far-reaching impacts. Each and every day, merchant mariners make unrivaled contributions to our nation and our nation’s economy. According to the American Association of Port Authorities, 23.1 million jobs are supported by U.S. coastal seaports. In addition, marine cargo transportation generated \$4.6 trillion work of economic activity and contributed 26 percent to the U.S. gross domestic product in 2015. Those numbers speak for themselves,” said Thomas.

President’s Proclamation

President Barack Obama released the following proclamation to commemorate National Maritime Day 2016:

Since America's founding, proud mariners have selflessly dedicated themselves to protecting and advancing our interests -- here at home and around the world. The patriots of the United States Merchant Marine have long served as our Nation's "fourth arm of defense," safeguarding the ideals that have guided our country for more than two centuries. They facilitate the transport and trade of American goods, and they put their

lives on the line in times of war. On National Maritime Day, we honor our Merchant Mariners and celebrate their irreplaceable role in shaping our Nation's narrative.

Whether in still or raging waters, Merchant Mariners are fundamental to guaranteeing the delivery of essential goods to far-reaching corners of our globe. These seafarers have bravely faced threats at home and abroad -- including combatants and pirates, disease outbreaks and natural disasters -- and they consistently heed the call to serve their fellow Americans. In World War II, their ships carried troops and much-needed support to the battlefield, thousands making the ultimate sacrifice. They were among the first to see battle, and many were among the last to return home to our shores.

Carrying forward a legacy that spans generations, the United States Merchant Marine is vital to our Nation's economic security as well. Their transportation of vital cargo has impacts far beyond America's borders, generating trillions of dollars of economic activity each year. And when our entrepreneurs decide to embark on new ventures across oceans, mariners stand by and protect their pursuit of the American dream through tireless work to cultivate safe and open waterways. On this day, and every day, let us express our sincere gratitude to these courageous men and women for all they do for our Nation, and let us reaffirm our commitment to support them as they continue to uphold their proud tradition of service.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 20, 1933, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day," and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2016, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on this day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

Source: [Maritime Executive](#), 22 May 2016

U.S. deepens military ties with former foe Vietnam

-David Larter

When it comes to the hotly contested South China Sea region, the U.S. is seeking allies in unexpected places, even among erstwhile enemies.

With President Obama's landmark announcement of the lifting of a half-century ban on lethal weapons sales to Vietnam, the stage is set for even deeper ties with America's one-time adversary — and more port visits for sailors.

The Navy brass have long sought to improve ties with Vietnam because of its location in the South China Sea — the communist nation shares a border with China and the Gulf of Tonkin is created by its northeastern coastline and China's Hainan Island. In fact, the deepening military-to-military ties were the impetus for lifting the ban completely, Obama said.

“One of the things that has happened through this comprehensive partnership is a dialogue between the U.S. and Vietnamese military that we hadn't seen in a very long time,” Obama said Monday in a press conference in Hanoi. “And we already have U.S. vessels that have come here to port, we expect that there will be deepening cooperation between our militaries, often times around, 'How do we respond to humanitarian disasters in this region?’”

Obama said more port visits are likely in the future as the countries work together on humanitarian assistance missions, but the U.S. was going to tread lightly.

“There may be occasions in which that means more U.S. vessels might visit but I want to emphasize that we will do so only at the invitation and with the full cooperation of the Vietnamese government, fully respecting their sovereignty and their sensitivities,” he said.

During a visit to Washington in February, U.S. Pacific Command head Adm. Harry Harris put his support behind lifting a weapons ban and for getting more ships for port visits.

“We do port visits in Vietnam and I advocate for more. I believe that we will be able to do more this year,” Harris said in a March hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Harris said he saw an opportunity to grow the relationship with Vietnam and that he thinks the Vietnamese people would be receptive.

“I believe that we should improve our relationship with Vietnam,” Harris said. “I think it's a great strategic opportunity for us and I think the Vietnamese people would welcome the opportunity to work closer with us as their security partner of choice.”

The Navy conducted four port visits in Vietnam in 2015, a U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman said. The destroyer Fitzgerald and the littoral combat ship Fort Worth, along with the expeditionary fast transport ship Millinocket and the hospital ship Mercy, all made visits to Da Nang, Vietnam, last year Lt. Cmdr. Matt Knight said in an email.

These deepening ties will lead to more port visits in the future, the head of the Pacific Fleet said.

“I just finished a visit to Vietnam and they are very receptive,” Adm. Scott Swift said in a May 6 interview, referring to a March trip. “As Adm. Harris said, we are looking forward to increasing that spectrum of engagement.”

PACFLT would not comment on upcoming port visits for this year, but said there is much on the horizon for navy-to-navy relations with Vietnam.

“We do not disclose specific information on upcoming port visits this far out,” Knight said. “However, the U.S. Navy is planning on conducting the Naval Engagement Activity and Pacific Partnership visits to Vietnam again this year.”

“Additionally, Admiral Swift traveled to Vietnam this year, we participated in the 6th annual Navy-to-Navy Talks, and they have been invited to observe the Rim of the Pacific exercise.”

Cam Ranh Bay

One of the features that excites Navy planners is more access to port facilities in Vietnam’s Cam Ranh Bay, widely held as one of the finest deep-water ports in Southeast Asia. A new international port that opened in March will yield opportunities for more engagement with Vietnam, Swift told Navy Times.

The bay, which has a relatively narrow inlet that leads to the South China Sea, can be easily defended. The U.S. used it during the Vietnam War until about 1972 and the Soviet Union had a large base there for decades before Russia left in 2002.

But while Russia has officially departed, it still has a cozy relationship with Vietnam’s communist leaders, which makes the U.S. uncomfortable. Vietnam is building their submarine fleet with six Kilo-class diesel electric boats that it bought from Russia in 2009. It is patrolling the South China Sea with its new boats.

“Cam Ranh Bay is a crucial port in the region that strategic planners have missed since the day we left,” said Jerry Hendrix a retired Navy captain and expert at the Center for a New American Security.

Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in 2012 that “access for United States naval ships into this facility is a key component,” of U.S. - Vietnam relations.

'Times change'

The increasingly close relationship between the once bitter foes is being eyed warily in Beijing, as China reinforces its claims to nearly all of the South China Sea.

Vietnam and China's competing claims there have led to bloodshed in the past. In 1974, a conflict between South Vietnam and China led to a shootout in the Paracel Islands, located between Vietnam and China's Hainan Island. That dispute continues.

Obama said the move to lift the U.S. ban on arms sales was not aimed at China but was to finally normalize relations with Vietnam after one of the most divisive conflicts in U.S. history.

"The decision to lift the ban has nothing to do with China or any other considerations," Obama said. "It was based on our desire to complete what has been a lengthy process of normalization with Vietnam."

The U.S. and Vietnam share regional maritime security concerns, Obama said, alluding to China's aggressive pursuit of claims in the South China Sea.

"Now there is a genuine mutual concern with respect to maritime issues and I've made no secret of that," he said. "It is important for us to maintain the freedom of navigation and the governance of international norms and rules and law that have helped to create prosperity and promoted commerce and peace and security in this region."

Michael O'Hanlon, an influential foreign policy expert at Brookings Institution, said that advancing relationships with countries in the region is an appropriate response to China's actions, which include building man-made islands on rocks and reefs to further their claims to nearly all of the fish and minerals in the South China Sea.

"Being able to gradually ratchet up our pressure and our partnerships in the region is the optimal kind of proportionate response mechanism when China asserts itself," O'Hanlon said. "We don't need to fight, but we make it clear we aren't leaving. And the endgame will be a more militarized region in which, yes, China has more assets than

before, but the United States does too, and even more to the point, the United States leads a coalition of like-minded states all of which are pushing back against Chinese territorial claims.”

Navy experts agreed that deeper cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam was important given the tenuous security in the region.

“I think it’s a good idea, times change and we’ve got to adjust with the times,” said retired Adm. Robert Natter, a decorated Vietnam War veteran and former U.S. 7th Fleet commander. “We have more in common with Vietnam today than separates us, at least on a strategic level.

“The reality is the geography would indicate that a closer relationship would be appropriate. Especially with the actions of the Chinese in the South China Sea.”

Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and defense analyst, said China is likely to be anxious about recent U.S. moves in the region, including dispatching more rotational forces to the Philippines and now closer ties with Vietnam.

“Now you’ve got both sides of the South China Sea bracketed by increased U.S. military involvement on the ground in the region,” Clark said.

Source: [The Navy Times](#), 23 May 2016

Sri Lanka Navy Hands Over 34 Fishermen to the Indian Coast Guard

-The Quint Press

The Sri Lankan Navy handed over the thirty-four fishermen to the Indian Coast Guard near the International Maritime Boundary Line on Tuesday. They were released by Sri Lankan courts on 14 May after being detained by the island nation’s Navy last month.

State Fisheries Minister D Jayakumar, District Collector S Pazhanisamy and other officials received the fishermen from Pudukottai and Ramanathapuram Districts, who were arrested in batches on different dates last month.

Speaking to reporters, the released fishermen appealed to the government for taking necessary steps to also secure the release of the 93 boats seized by the Lankan Navy, as their livelihood depended on them.

Source: [The Quint](#), 24 May 2016

India and Iran sign 'historic' Chabahar Port Deal

-BBC

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that India will build and operate a key Iranian port after his talks with President Hassan Rouhani.

India would invest \$500m (£344m) to develop the strategically important Chabahar port, close to Iran's border with Pakistan, he said.

The port would open a transit route to Afghanistan and Central Asia for Indian goods and products, avoiding the land route through Pakistan.

Modi began his Iran visit on Sunday.

Delhi also wants to bring gas from Central Asia to the port and then transport it to India.

"The bilateral agreement to develop the Chabahar port and related infrastructure, and availability of about \$500m from India for this purpose, is an important milestone. This major effort would boost economic growth in the region," Modi said.

Rouhani has welcomed India's investment.

"Considering all the credit lines that are going to come from India into the Chabahar port, it can very well turn into a very big symbol of cooperation between the two great countries of Iran and India," Rouhani said.

Iranian newspapers have highlighted the strategic and economic importance of Modi's visit.

"India wants to challenge China's power in central and South Asia through Chabahar port," Iran newspaper says.

Noting that China is "trying to control the pulse of regional trade by making extensive investments in the Pakistani port of Gwadar," the paper says that India is "now positioned against its strong competitor by investing in the port."

Referring to India's "immense need for energy," the paper goes on to say that Iran is "capable of fulfilling" this need.

E'temad newspaper adds that Modi's visit and the signing of agreements on joint projects, energy and connectivity "will ring danger bells in Islamabad, China and Riyadh."

The business daily, Ta'adol, welcomes cooperation with India but also reminds its readers of "setbacks" that Iran has faced due to India.

"We should raise our complaints ... and ask them [India] to be more honest in their trade with Iran, and to fulfil their obligations more seriously," the paper says.

India's Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the port would boost India's trade ties with Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian nations and Russia.

"The distance between Kandla (in the western Indian state of Maharashtra) and the Chabahar port is less than the distance between Delhi and Mumbai, and so what this agreement does is to enable us quick movement of goods first to Iran and then onwards

to Afghanistan and Russia through a new rail and road link," he told the PTI news agency.

Correspondents say that the deal will also help India counter the growing influence of China, which has invested in Pakistan's Gwadar port, in the region.

Meanwhile, the two nations also signed agreements to cooperate in aerospace, biotechnology, nanotechnology and counter-terrorism.

India and Iran share centuries-old cultural and linguistic ties, but their relations have suffered several setbacks in recent years.

Iran was unhappy when India supported an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution condemning Tehran's nuclear programme in 2009. India also reduced its oil imports from Iran in the following years.

Indian companies now see the country as a great investment destination after international sanctions were lifted against Iran last year.

Source: [Dhaka Tribune](#), 24 May 2016

Indian warships visit Iran's Bandar Abbas

-Tehran Times Press

The visit came on the heels of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Tehran on May 22-23. Following is the text of the report released by the Indian embassy in Tehran: Indian Naval Ships Ganga and Trikand are visiting Bandar Abbas from 24-27 May 16, in consonance with India's strong bilateral relationship and steadily growing maritime interaction with Iran. INS Ganga, an indigenous guided missile frigate of the Indian Navy has been in active service for about three decades and is presently commanded by Captain Amol M Sabnis, VSM. A potent Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) platform, the ship is also capable of operating Seaking ASW helicopters. INS Trikand, on the other hand, is a modern stealth frigate with cutting edge weaponry, sophisticated sensors and

is capable of carrying a KM 31 Airborne Early Warning helicopter. The ship is commanded by Captain Arjun Dev Nair.

During the visit, the crew of IN ships will undertake professional interactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN), pertaining to nuances of maritime operations, including means of combating maritime terrorism and piracy. In addition, calls on senior Government and military authorities, sporting and cultural interactions and sharing of best practices, aimed at enhancing cooperation, strengthening ties and mutual understanding between the two navies, are also planned. The visiting IN ships are also likely to conduct exercises with the IRIN ships.

Relations between India and Iran have spanned centuries marked by meaningful interactions including in the fields of commerce, energy and education. Having shared a border till 1947, the two countries share commonality in language, culture and traditions. The centuries old association has been further strengthened by regular cultural and commercial interactions as well as bilateral meetings and high-level visits between both the countries. The Iranian President Mohammad Khatami was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day function in India in 2003. More recently, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi visited Iran from 22 to 23 May 16. Hon'ble Prime Minister's visit has provided a fresh impetus to bilateral relations with the conclusion of a number of agreements and understandings.

IN ships last visited Iran in August 2015 wherein Beas and Betwa berthed at Bandar Abbas. The current visit by IN ships will further strengthen bilateral relations and enhance maritime cooperation. It will facilitate a common understanding of the maritime security challenges in the region and contribute to security and stability of the Indian Ocean Region.

Source: [Tehran Times](#), 25 May 2016

US backs India-Iran Chabahar port deal as it outflanks China-Pakistan Gwadar project

-Uttara Chaudhary

Washington broadly supports India and Afghanistan signing a deal with Iran for a transport corridor opening up a new route to Afghanistan via the Iranian port of Chabahar, as it outflanks the \$46-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project with Gwadar as its focal point.

Analysts say Washington is acutely aware that China's plans to develop Pakistan's southern coastal fishing town of Gwadar into an economic hub, potentially redraws the region's geopolitical map. It gives China a new trade link from its relatively undeveloped west to key Arabian Sea shipping routes at the mouth of the oil-rich Persian Gulf — giving it potentially strategic as well as economic leverage.

"The massive Gwadar project reveals China's regional power play. There is no comparison in scale and intent between China's role in Gwadar and India's in Chabahar, but the Americans are pleased that India is pushing back against the Chinese expansionist mindset," said author and South Asia expert Adam V Larkey.

"The transport corridor will open up a much-needed independent route to Afghanistan via Iran's Chabahar port circumventing Pakistan. This is significant for India and Afghanistan, whose economic stability in turn, is important to the United States. There are fissures in Pakistan's relations with the US and Afghanistan, while its ties with old friend China remain rock solid," added Larkey.

The Gwadar project is about more than simple trade — its backers hope that once finished, it will bolster Pakistan's economy and potentially give China's navy access to the Indian Ocean. The plan would also strengthen both China and Pakistan's positions versus India, and hedge against US influence in Asia.

India's Chabahar investment has been pending for years, in part owing to US sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, many of which were lifted earlier this year. New Delhi will invest \$200 million to develop two terminals and five berths at Chabahar.

Gwadar is being built as a commercial port and not as a naval facility for China's navy — at least for the time being, but it could potentially be developed as one in the future. Situated on a barren, hammerhead-shaped peninsula in the south of insurgency-ridden Balochistan — and just north-east of the strategically important Straits of Hormuz — Pakistan's generals and China's politicians predict the development of Gwadar will be a game-changer.

It would give China a firm and reliable long-term beachhead in the Indian Ocean and close to the Persian Gulf, "effectively making it a two-ocean power," said Claude Rakisits, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

Some US senators were caught off guard by the announcement of the Chabahar port deal, but the Obama administration has batted for India.

"For India to be able to contribute to the economic development of Afghanistan, it needs access that it does not readily have across its land boundary. And India is seeking to deepen its energy relationship with the Central Asian countries and looking for routes that would facilitate that," assistant secretary of state for South Asia Nisha Desai Biswal told the Senate foreign relations committee on Tuesday.

Biswal assured the senators that the Obama administration has been "very clear with the Indians what our security concerns have been and we would continue to engage them on those issues".

Source: [F. World](#), 26 May 2016