



MAKING WAVES

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Chinese Spy Ship Entered Japan Waters: Tokyo

API

A Chinese spy ship entered Japan's territorial waters on Wednesday, Tokyo officials said, less than a week after another of the rival's naval vessels sailed near islands at the centre of a sovereignty dispute. Concerns over China's rising military presence in Asian waters have sparked concerns in Japan, which administers islands in the East China Sea also claimed by Beijing and where tensions between the two powers have festered. US warns Beijing of 'self-isolation' in South China Sea

A Japanese navy P-3C surveillance aircraft spotted the 6,096-ton Dongdiao-class "information gathering" Chinese vessel around 3:30 am (1830 GMT Tuesday) in territorial waters near Kuchinoerabu island in southern Japan, Hiroshige Seko, a government spokesman, told reporters.

Territorial waters are a 12-nautical-mile band, though Japan did not immediately say by how much the Chinese ship breached them. The area is part of a Japanese island chain that divides the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and is not subject to the territorial dispute. The Chinese ship sailed southeast and exited Japanese waters around 5 am heading into the Pacific, Seko told a regular press briefing.

Wednesday's reported incursion came less than a week after another Chinese naval ship sailed close to the disputed islands, though did not enter what Japan sees as territorial waters. China wants 'cooperation, not confrontation' with Japan. Japan said last week that a Jiangkai class Chinese frigate sailed into "contiguous waters" surrounding the contested East China Sea islands last Thursday. Contiguous waters are a 12-nautical-mile band that extends beyond territorial waters. Under international rules, they are not the preserve of any single country, although the resident power has certain limited rights. It

marked the first time a Chinese navy ship had approached so close to the disputed islets and an angry Japan summoned Beijing's ambassador to protest.

China does not recognise Japan's claim to the islands — known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China — and says its ships have the right to sail freely in Chinese territorial waters. International laws allow ships of all states to exercise the right of “innocent passage” through the territorial sea. A Chinese nuclear submarine entered Japanese waters in 2004. Chinese jets in ‘unsafe’ intercept of US spy plane: Pentagon

Relations between Japan and China deteriorated in 2012 when Tokyo “nationalised” some of the disputed uninhabited islets. The countries have taken steps to mend fences but relations remain tense. The response from Japan this time was more muted, however, with the government conveying its “concerns about the Chinese military’s activities in general”, Seko said. “The government will continue to take thorough measures to patrol the air space and waters surrounding our nation,” he added.

Japan has expressed concern over Chinese land reclamation and expansion of military facilities in the South China Sea, where Beijing has disputes with countries including Vietnam and the Philippines.

Source: [The Express Tribune](#), 15 June 2016

China and Indonesia in Maritime Clash

Ben Bland

A series of violent fisheries clashes with China is adding to domestic pressure on Indonesia's government to take a tougher stance towards Beijing, with which it routinely claims to have no maritime disputes. The Indonesian navy said it had fired warning shots on Friday at Chinese fishing boats operating in the Natuna Sea, in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone, the third such confrontation reported this year.

The latest clash comes at a testing time for the region, with Southeast Asian nations deeply divided over how to respond to Beijing's assertive approach. Tensions are set to rise further in the coming weeks, when an international court in The Hague is expected to rule on a case brought against China's maritime claims by the Philippines. Susi Pudjiastuti, Indonesia's fisheries minister, said on Twitter that shots were fired "according to procedure" as the navy defended Indonesia's sovereignty.

China's foreign ministry said that one boat had been damaged and one sailor shot and injured during the altercation, which it said occurred in "traditional Chinese fishing grounds". Beijing and Jakarta have tried to play down their maritime differences over the past two decades but the recent run of incidents and hardening rhetoric from China are undermining that stance.

China's foreign ministry said the latest incident occurred in waters "where China and Indonesia have overlapping claims for maritime rights and interests", suggesting its ambitions in the gas-rich Natuna Sea stretch beyond mere "fishing grounds". "This is the first time in a long time that China is openly declaring that there are overlapping maritime claims," said Evan Laksmana, a foreign policy researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, an influential think-tank in Jakarta. "If China is enforcing its maritime claims, it becomes harder for Indonesia to maintain its neutrality."

China's "nine-dash line" claim to almost the entire South China Sea cuts through Indonesia's exclusive economic zone in the Natuna Sea, although Beijing has accepted that Jakarta has sovereignty over the Natuna islands themselves. Jakarta has long maintained that this does not amount to a territorial dispute because China has never formally clarified its nine-dash line claim under international law. But the spike in fisheries clashes, which have occurred ever closer to Indonesia's territorial waters, has angered some within the Indonesian government. They are privately calling for President Joko Widodo to abandon the country's neutrality on regional maritime disputes and lend more support to neighbours such as Vietnam and the Philippines, which have stood up to China more forcefully. "Quite a few people in the foreign

ministry are worried that our neutral position is eroding our strategic capital in [the] region and our ability to be a leader in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations,” said MrLaksmana. But he added that “any fundamental shift would have to come directly from MrWidodo”, who has largely side-stepped foreign policy to focus on boosting the economy and has shown a reluctance to upset China.

Aaron Connelly, a Southeast Asia researcher at the Lowy Institute, a think-tank in Sydney, said that while Chinese fishing boats and their coastguard escorts were encroaching deeper into Indonesia’s exclusive economic zone, it was not clear how far this was driven by strategic as opposed to commercial objectives.

“Chinese fishing fleets, whether directed by the state or not, are going further and further south because they have overfished the waters near Hainan,” he said. “It may also be strategically driven because Indonesia has stepped up fisheries enforcement in the Natuna Sea and China may want to send a message that it won’t be pushed around.”

Source: [Financial Times](#), 20 June 2016

Commentary: U.S. Publicity Campaign against China on South China Sea Ill-intentioned

FeiLiena and HaoWeiwei

The South China Sea proves to be a tranquil sea with inherent freedom of navigation, but some countries, with ulterior motives, have launched publicity campaigns to deliberately play up the South China Sea issue in support of their hegemonist military moves.

Let's first take a look at an example. In February, Western media started to hype up China's missile deployment in South China Sea's Xisha area. On Feb. 16, the U.S. Fox News network reported that China deployed HQ-9 anti-aircraft missiles on Xisha'sYongxing Island. On Feb 17, U.S. secretary of state, White House spokesman and

commander of the Pacific Command all criticized China for what they called "militarization" in the South China Sea.

On the same day, the Japanese government also expressed "grave concern" over China's action. Afterwards, the U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies released a set of satellite photos, claiming China was setting up high frequency radar facilities on the South China Sea, echoing the so-called "China threat" claim.

In Western media's reports on the South China Sea issue, China has often been described as a restless empire "bullying" smaller countries, "militarizing" in the South China Sea, sabotaging "freedom of navigation", challenging international law, and seeking hegemony in the Asia Pacific region. The farce, led by the U.S. and supported by its allies, was intentioned to make China the scapegoat for the tense situation in the South China Sea region.

Uncle Sam and its friends are good at staging biased media publicity campaigns, confusing different concepts and applying double standards. They often choose to ignore the fact that the Philippines and other countries have illegally occupied Chinese islands in the South China Sea and deployed radar facilities, planes, artillery pieces and missiles there. Yet, they tag "militarization" on China for doing lawful construction work on its own islands.

When asked whether sending large U.S. naval ships and military planes to the region means militarization at a press briefing, U.S. State Department spokesperson Mark Toner gave a funny answer by saying the practice was "basically freedom of navigation."

Western media publicity campaigns' prejudice against China on the South China Sea issue originates from their presumption of guilt on China -- Everything China does in the South China Sea must have been wrong. This logic reminds people of the so-called "power's original sin". Concluding from their own history of expansion, Western countries take it for granted that once China becomes powerful, it will surely dominate.

According to ZhengYongnian, director of East Asian Institute of the National University of Singapore, the U.S. has misjudged China's intention and role in the Asia Pacific region on the basis of its own history of expansion and power politics rather than China's diplomatic performance in the region.

The increasingly obvious trend is that the U.S. has been mobilizing political, economic, military and diplomatic resources to "come back to the Asia Pacific", and to contain China. Among the U.S. manoeuvres, staging a biased publicity campaign on the South China Sea issue is a clever trick with low input and substantial returns.

By employing the South China Sea issue, U.S. politicians intended to humiliate and attack China and force China to make some "difficult choices" to concede. However, their wishful thinking of using publicity campaigns to press China to compromise and concede on fundamental issues such as territorial integrity is nothing but a pipe dream.

A straight foot is not afraid of a crooked shoe. Time will reveal China's goodwill and endeavor to promote peaceful development of the Asia Pacific region. Meanwhile, some countries' ulterior motive will also be brought to light in time.

Source: [Xinhua](#), 17 June 2016

Chinese Unfathomable Maritime Strategy: What India Should Do?

Dr.Bawa Singh

The two Asian giants China and India have been locking horns in the Indian Ocean (IO) for creating their supremacy through their maritime strategies. Geostrategist and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan once said, "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia.

Brewster (2014), quoted a well-known Indian maritime strategist K.M. Panikkar, who described the Indian Ocean, as a "truly Indian." But on the other hand, Captain Zhao Yi, working with Institute of Strategy, is of the strong opinion that IO cannot be an Indian

backyard. When these two statements juxtaposed, clearly makes the Indian Ocean a place where two Asian giants, China, and India wanted to have supremacy by outmaneuvering each other.

Unfathomable Maritime Strategy: String of Pearls to OBOR

Holmes & Yoshihara (2005) noted that the current maritime strategy of China has been influenced by Mahan. Martinson (2016), has argued that the Chinese maritime strategy has not been influenced by Sir Julian Corbett and A.T. Mahan, rather it is a civilian concept. Although prima facie, it is civilian in nature but practically it could be for both purposes civilian and strategic, hence it is unfathomable.

The String of Pearls was a Chinese geostrategic maneuver, primarily focusing on the network of commercial facilities and building strong strategic infrastructure. Recently upgraded military facility in the Hainan Island, an upgraded airstrip on Woody Island, container shipping facility in Chittagong (Bangladesh), a deep water port in Sittwe (Myanmar) and a navy base in Gwadar (Pakistan) and Hambantota in Sri Lanka are some of the important pearls. Pehrson (2006), has argued that it is not only a naval strategy which is restricted to constructing ports and airfield but it is more than that i.e., regional strategy comprehensively covering diplomatic ties, and force modernization.

One Belt and One Road (OBOR), a strategic initiative under the incumbent Chinese President Xi Jinping, launched in 2013 with two main projects. The first one comprised of the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt and the second one is Maritime Silk Road. The idea behind both projects is to develop better connectivity and infrastructure for trade and promote the bilateral development of key investment projects between China and the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.

According to Zhang Gaoli, the Vice Premier of China, the main objectives of this project are: enhancing policy coordination across the Asian continent; trade liberalization; financial integration; and connectivity including people to people links. It means a very comprehensive strategy, however, China is hesitant to call it a strategy and now it is being called as OBOR Initiative. As far as South Asia is concerned, under the OBOR

Initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor have already been translated into reality. These projects (China's maritime and overland Silk Road) have created the unfathomable Chinese maritime supremacy over India in the Indian Ocean.

Indian Maritime Strategy

In the 21st century, India has been emerging as a potential economic power and on account of that, it has maritime interests in the Indian Ocean. These include sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, safety and security of Indian citizens living across the countries, safety and security of sea lanes of communications, shipping, trade, energy supply, are some of the important maritime interests which are needed to protect against the maritime threats. Since IO has also been becoming a battlefield for the great game among the external and regional powers, thus, peace, stability and security in India's maritime zones, maritime neighbourhood and other areas of maritime interest become paramount importance in Indian strategic calculus (Indian Maritime Doctrine 2009:65).

In October 26, 2015, the Indian Navy had released its latest maritime strategy, titled "Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy," along with a "net maritime security provider." which is revised and updated version of the previous strategy, 'Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy (2007)'. It has been argued that the previous maritime strategy had not taken into account the changing geopolitical environment and its strategic implications for India's maritime interests. The updated maritime strategy 2015, would bridge up this gap by complementing the evolving security dynamics in the Indian Ocean.

India has also launched the 'Mausam' and 'Sagarmala,' projects. The project 'Mausam' is under the Ministry of Culture, focuses on extending the India's cultural links with maritime neighbours as well as to explore maritime routes that link India to different parts of the Indian Ocean littorals. On the other hand, the project 'Sagarmala', aims at the provision and efficient operation of port infrastructure. Though this project is about

the infrastructure creation in Indian ports, but for the given of geopolitical contested nature of Indian Ocean, this project could be expanded into a regional undertaking.

Strategic Slipup: India Missing Sea Opportunities

India is being considered as a major sea power. In order to seek Indian maritime cooperation, the littoral states have been extending opportunities to India to create the maritime infrastructure such as ports and signal posts, maritime strategic cooperation etc. to ensure their sovereignty, unity and integrity. But Indian maritime strategy seems to be very half-hearted and lethargic. The Hambantota project was offered to India in which India did not show any interest and ultimately it was taken over by China. In 2011, Vietnam has offered the NhaTrang port as a military base near the South China Sea, but this opportunity has also been missed. It has also been argued that India has been going very slow in taking up Agalega Islands as a naval and air bases which were leased by Mauritius. India has remained cold shouldered to Mozambique's proposal to make a naval base on its northern coast. India's reticence in owning up the opportunities and defense of the distant neighbours shows India is still not in a position to be a great potential power. Maritime regional cooperation is also going at snail's speed. During the visit to Japan. PM Modi agreed to heighten the bilateral relationship to a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership,' but despite two years passing on, no substantial progress in this respect has been made. An agreement on joint weapons development, finalization of the sale of the US-2 amphibious maritime surveillance aircraft are going very slow despite getting full assurance for the transfer of the technology. The other handicaps of the maritime strategy included delaying in Indian Navy's procurements, half of its submarines with advanced lifespans, critical shortage of anti-submarine helicopters.

What India Should Do?

At the last, it can be concluded that though India is making a lot of efforts to catch up with competitor China's uncontrollable sea supremacy, but its maritime strategy has been facing serious challenges. India has not been moving with the time to put its promise into reality. Despite a lot of opportunities have been offered to develop and use

the ports but half-heartedly approach have been disappointing the neighbours and littoral states. Moreover, Indian Navy which could become a major anchor and lynchpin in the maritime strategy, being handicapped by its procurement process, old age and shortage of weapons etc. Thus, it is highly recommended that in order to compete with Chinese maritime policy and keep the Indian Ocean as the Indian Ocean, India has to extend deep maritime cooperation with its neighbours, littoral states, extra and regional powers and has to exploit the maritime cooperation opportunities offered by the other countries. Moreover, the important part is Indian Navy, which must be strengthened by adding requisite manpower, officials, and indigenization of weapon inventory to sail in the same boat with China.

Source: [Modern Diplomacy](#), 17 June 2016

India, Thailand to Firm up Maritime Security Cooperation

PTI

India and Thailand are set to firm up cooperation to combat terrorism, and boost maritime security, defence ties and trade during Thai Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha's maiden visit to India, officials said on Wednesday.

The Thai premier will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his three-day visit beginning tomorrow. The two countries will issue a joint statement later, expressing their expectations to increase maritime security, double trade in five years, push the India-Myanmar-Thai road project, cooperate in civil aviation, fight cybercrime and promote people-to-people cooperation, said Maj-General WerachonSukondhapatipak, a deputy Thai government spokesman.

Werachon said talks with India will focus on issues such as trade, support for Thai agricultural products and cooperation on education and tourism. He said Gen Prayuth has said to put all items high on agenda. A high-level delegation will discuss boosting

cultural exchanges between the two nations. India and Thailand will also look for joint projects in solar energy, space applications and space technology sectors.

“Thailand is an extremely important partner and the two sides attach a lot of importance to this visit,” India’s Ambassador to Thailand Bhagwant Bishnoi told PTI. Noting that India’s ‘Act East’ and Thailand’s ‘Look West’ policies were complementary to each other, Bishnoi said India was looking forward to signing several agreements, MoUs on narcotics, cultural exchange with Thailand during the visit.

A Thailand-India Free Trade Agreement will be discussed. “We are looking forward to a substantial joint statement which would talk of other agreements in the pipeline,” Bishnoi said, and added that Thailand is also keen on India’s ‘Make in India’ programme. He said India appreciated the fact that Thailand was “very sensitive” to India’s security concerns and ensured that Thai territory was not used by forces inimical to India. The Thai delegation will discuss cultural links by travelling to Bodh Gaya for prayers.

The Indian Ambassador here said an agreement will be signed by Nagaland and Thailand’s Chiang Mai universities to conduct Thai and Indian courses respectively. India courses have been important to Thailand and centres at Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Silpakorn universities have had Sanskrit and Tamil classes for 61 years, Bishnoi said.

The two countries are expected to sign three agreements after Prayuth-Modi talks: an action plan for cultural exchange, academic cooperation between Chiang Mai University and Nagaland University and cooperation between Kasikornbank and Axis Bank.

The joint statement will pave way for closer Thai-India diplomatic relations to mark their 70th anniversary next year, Werachon added. Prayut will be accompanied by Thai foreign minister, Agriculture Minister, Industries minister, IT minister and Deputy Minister of Commerce.

The total trade between the two countries stands at USD 8.5 billion. In 2015, Thai exports to India were USD 5.30 billion while Thai imports from India were USD 2.63 billion. At least 1.1 million Indian tourists visited Thailand last year.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 17 June 2016

S-E Asia Must Unite, Strengthen Measures to Rid Waters of Piracy, Terrorism

Manoraj Rajathurai

Maritime security is not to be ignored by any nation. Many livelihoods depend on it being effective. It is the responsibility of all, preferably working in tandem. This is where it is comforting to read about South-east Asian countries in joint operations against maritime threats in this part of the world (“Close cooperation key in fight against growing storm of terror in region: Eng Hen”; June 6).

After all, to ensure the safe passage of vessels, there is a need to stop piracy and terrorism from growing. Much has been done, of course, by stakeholders in the Malacca Straits, but there is no resting on our laurels.

More can be done to show zero tolerance against those who would break the law and jeopardise shipping in this much-used waterway that separates the Malay Peninsula from Sumatra. It is here where standards can be set that the rest of the world can draw on in the fight against pirates — who remain a problem— and, by extension, against terrorists. Cutting off their lifeline can starve them of operating with impunity. By working together and with other nations, the region has the ability to rid itself of piracy and terrorism.

The region’s navies and air forces have an integral part to play and must be equipped with the means to keep our waterways clear and safe. It is a formidable task, but one that must succeed if the region is to continue to grow, and to attract the foreign interest and investment vital to its existence.

Source: [Today Online](#), 25 June 2016

Coastal Security Meet: Home Minister Approves Central Marine Force

Express News Service

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday approved Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's proposal to set up a Central Marine Police Force to protect sea, coasts, ports and vital institutions along 7,516-km national coastline. Fadnavis had mooted the proposal at the coastal security meeting on Thursday in Mumbai. The detailed structure, operations and modalities of the force will be worked out in the coming weeks. Fadnavis, in the meeting, also suggested that all landing points and non-major ports should be brought under tech-based e-surveillance. The decision to have a central command for Marine Police elicited support from all ministers and officials from across states and Union territories participating in the marathon meeting.

Singh was in Mumbai to chair the meeting of the ministers, chief secretaries, and director general of police (DGPs) of coastal states and union territories. The central theme of the meeting was to evolve a better mechanism for effective coordination amongst navy, Coast Guard, police and the home department.

Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi said, "Fadnavis suggested that marine policing being a specialised job, a Central Marine Police Force be created. The proposal has been endorsed by the union home minister."

While addressing the meeting, Singh emphasised on challenges in maritime terrorism and its far-reaching economic implications to the nation. The Centre is preparing to take the coastal security to the third phase and more reforms will be executed in the next five years, Singh said.

A decision to set up National Marine Police Training Institute in Dwarka (Gujarat) and State Marine Police Training Centers in the Police Training Academies of state and union territories was also approved in the meeting.

Expeditious implementation of coastal security scheme, institutional set up in states and union territories to review coastal security, constitution of state maritime boards, security of non-major ports and single point moorings, coastal mapping, security of islands, distribution of biometric identity cards and card readers, colour-coding of boats, monitoring of fish landing point and crossing of International Maritime Boundary Line by fishermen were some of the aspects which were discussed at length at the meeting, said Mehrishi.

The union home minister also discussed on safeguarding 1,328 islands dotted across India from security threats.

Source: [Express News Service](#), 17 June 2016

Govt Must Follow up on Trilateral MoU to Tackle Piracy: Lawmaker

Marguerite AfraSapiie

Indonesia must immediately follow up on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on strengthening joint maritime defense with Malaysia and the Philippines to tackle piracy and kidnapping in regional waters, a lawmaker says. A member of the House of Representatives' Commission I, which oversees defense and foreign affairs, Maj. Gen. (ret) Supiadin Aries Saputra, said the government should quickly develop concrete technical concepts and strategies for the cooperation, as well as draft a joint declaration on maritime defense cooperation within the framework. "[For example] every Indonesian ship leaving for the Philippines could be guarded by the Filipino Coast Guard. It would work both ways," Supiadin said on Monday in Jakarta.

Securing regional waters between the neighboring countries was of great importance, Supiadin asserted, especially as the kidnapping of sailors often happened in southern Philippines waters around Tawi-tawi, Basilan and Sulu islands.

The military commanders of the three countries should meet to discuss long-term security measures, including joint patrols, Supiadin said, adding that in the meantime,

the government should communicate closely with the Philippines to ensure the safety of seven Indonesians held captive by two groups.

Source: [The Jakarta Post](#), 27 June 2016

South China Sea Tension: US 3rd Fleet Destroyers Relentlessly Sail Along Disputed Waters

Jennifer Ong

Amid tensions along the South China Sea, the U.S. 3rd Fleet Pacific Surface Action Group has made its way into the disputed waters. The group has been nearby for the past three months, participating in a host of exercises with various allies in an effort to help maintain peace and stability in the region.

From the beginning, China has made it clear that it doesn't appreciate U.S. presence along the South China Sea. The U.S. Department of Defense and President Barack Obama have longed maintained it will continue with its freedom of navigation exercise in the area with respect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea or UNCLOS. In response, China claimed that freedom of navigation does not extend to military vessels. Since the tensions started brewing this year, there have also been some incidents between the Chinese military and U.S. Navy.

Today, guided-missile destroyers USS Spruance (DDG 111), USS Momsen (DDG 92), and USS Decatur (DDG 73), with embarked Destroyer Squadron (CDS) 31 staff. It left Southern California back in April. Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, commander of the U.S. 3rd Fleet said, "This Surface Action Group continues to operate effectively throughout the Pacific and across the spectrum of missions they have been assigned."

The group has been quite busy the past three months. For starters, Momsen and Decatur have been involved in a number of bilateral exercises with Japan, South Korea and France. Meanwhile, Spruance had taken part in the Oceania Maritime Security

Initiative (OMSI) in the South China Sea. Among the initiative's goals is increase the Coast Guard's maritime domain awareness.

The U.S. Navy says it will continue to maintain a presence in the Indo Asia-Pacific region in order to "help preserve peace and security and to further partnership with friends and allies."

Source: [Morning News USA](#), 28 June 2016

Three Southeast Asian Nations to Designate Shipping Corridor in Piracy Battle

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on Monday agreed to designate a transit corridor for commercial vessels crossing a maritime zone hit by a spate of hijackings by Islamist militants in the southern Philippines.

Nearly 20 Indonesian and Malaysian tugboat crew have been kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf militants this year, with Jakarta airing fears that the problem could reach levels seen off the coast of Somalia.

Alarmed at the frequency of attacks, port authorities in some areas of Indonesia, particularly Kalimantan on the island of Borneo, have stopped issuing permits to ships taking coal to the southern Philippines.

Indonesia is the world's largest thermal coal exporter and supplies 70 percent of the Philippines' coal imports. "The ministers have agreed in principle to explore the following measures, including a transit corridor within the maritime areas of common concern, which will serve as designated sea lanes for mariners," the defence ministers of the three nations said in a joint statement after a meeting in Manila.

Analysts say \$40-billion worth of cargo passes through the Sulu and Celebes seas each year, including supertankers from the Indian Ocean that cannot use the crowded

Malacca Strait. The three countries also agreed to step up air and sea patrols and escorts for commercial ships in the common maritime areas to fend off potential hijacks, kidnaps and robbery.

Philippine Defence Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said the leaders agreed to share the best practices evolved by Indonesia and Malaysia during a joint effort to patrol the busy Malacca Strait waterway against pirates, as a model for three-way cooperation with the Philippines. It was the second meeting of officials of the three countries to tackle growing regional security challenges, after their foreign ministers met in Jakarta last month.

In 2002, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, which share maritime borders, signed a pact to stiffen security against growing cross-border attacks by Abu Sayyaf militants. But they have not set up coordinated naval patrols, with navies operating in their own territorial waters. Kidnappings over the last 15 years have made the Abu Sayyaf militants notorious, with extorted ransoms running into millions of dollars.

The seamen kidnapped this year were freed, with police and military officials saying at the time it was unclear if a ransom had been paid. The Philippines rarely publicizes such payments, but few believe captives are released without them.

There was no immediate comment from the Abu Sayyaf rebels. Piracy near Somalia's coast has subsided after shipping firms hired private security details and international warships patrolled the waters

Source: [Asiaone](#), 20 June 2016

The South China Sea Adjudication and the Future fo International Arbitration

Praksah Gopal

The India International Centre at Delhi – considered the hub of cultural and intellectual activity in the capital city, was witness to a unique event on the afternoon of 17 May 16. Organised by the Chinese Embassy in Delhi, the ‘public lecture’ saw six speakers articulate their views on the South China Sea (SCS) maritime disputes. Five of the six speakers were from think-tanks – either based in China or funded by Chinese entities, and one speaker was a scholar from the Chinese Navy. As could be imagined, espousal of the Chinese perspective dominated the proceedings. It is understood that a number of such ‘lectures’ are being conducted, with the aim of shaping views and opinions on this contentious dispute, before the impending adjudication by a tribunal hearing the Philippines’ submission against Chinese claims in the SCS. While China’s stance was unambiguously reiterated at the event, it left a significant question mark on the impending award, its immediate impact on the dispute and indeed the long term ramifications on an international system underpinned by norms of conduct between nation-states.

This paper aims to highlight salient aspects of the arbitration initiated by Philippines against China, and seeks to examine the possible outcomes of the proceedings of the tribunal. The paper will attempts to predict the Chinese reaction to the impending award, in the larger context of the international legal system and its primary reliance on voluntary compliance by states. The effect of the impending ruling on the overall dispute in the SCS, the claimant states and the US, as well as its impact on the international arbitration system, will also be briefly examined.

On 22nd January 2013, the Philippines initiated arbitration proceedings against China under provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in response to the latter’s claims in the SCS. Philippines sought the court’s adjudication on three distinct aspects, viz. the effect of UNCLOS on China’s claims represented by the nine-dash line, the proper nature of features claimed by China with the associated entitlements of territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and thirdly, on

the issue of Chinese activities violating sovereign rights and freedoms of Philippines in the SCS. The Chinese Government refused to accept jurisdiction of the arbitration proceedings and issued a public statement titled “Position Paper of the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of Philippines”, in which it argued that the primary dispute was that of sovereignty of maritime features in the SCS, over which the tribunal had no jurisdiction.

The tribunal constituted at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague, held three hearings in July 2015 to determine jurisdiction and admissibility of Philippines’ submission. In its award on 20 October 2015, the tribunal ruled that it had jurisdiction with respect to seven out of fifteen submissions by the Philippines. It also concluded that seven other submissions would need to be considered in conjunction with the merits and sought clarification on the 15th submission from the Philippines. The tribunal concluded its merit phase hearings in November 2015 and is expected to issue its award in June/July 2016.

In admitting only seven out of the fifteen Philippine submissions, the tribunal has limited the outcome of this arbitration to determine the precise nature of certain disputed features in the SCS and the associated entitlements of territorial waters and EEZ, where and if applicable. For instance, in submission no. 4, which the tribunal has admitted, Philippines claims that Mischief Reef, Second Thomas Shoal and Subi Reef are Low Tide Elevations which do not generate territorial seas or an EEZ. However, the tribunal has reserved consideration of its jurisdiction on submission no. 5 in which Philippines has claimed that Mischief Reef and Second Thomas Shoal are part of its EEZ. The tribunal has therefore avoided considering issues pertaining to claims of sovereignty and restricted itself to examining those directly concerned with entitlements under the provisions of UNCLOS.

It is perceived that on most, if not all of the seven submissions, the tribunal’s award will go in favour of the Philippines. This prospect has led to some speculation on the effect of such a ruling on China, especially as it is expected to dilute the basic premise of its

territorial claims within the nine-dash line. Chinese claims hinge on entitlements of territorial seas and EEZ around maritime features in the SCS and the implicit sovereign rights to extract and exploit the natural resources of the seabed therein. If the tribunal rules that most of these features do not merit such entitlements, it promises to undermine the Chinese legal position and claims therein.

Arguably, there are a number of other factors that add to the complexities of the SCS situation. Primary among them is the involvement of the US and the Freedom of Navigation (FON) patrols conducted by the USN in the South China Sea. There is no doubt that the US has vital strategic interests that define its posture in the SCS. However, as a country that has not yet ratified the UNCLOS, a fact which the Chinese do not fail to highlight at every opportunity, the US position may be viewed by many as grandstanding sans the moral authority. While the US may argue that FON operations are conducted by the USN all over the world (including in the Indian EEZ to counter what the US perceives as ‘excessive maritime claims’), China has been vociferous in denouncing the presence of US military assets in the SCS and in highlighting that US actions in the region serve only to escalate tensions without contributing to the resolution of the dispute, which in China’s perspective, can only be achieved through bilateral engagement with each of the claimant states.

The FON operations in the SCS have also served to underscore the differences in interpretation of the extent to which coastal states may exercise sovereign control over maritime zones. While there is a general consensus on unbridled freedom to commercial shipping outside of territorial waters, there are stark differences in understanding the extent of freedom enjoyed by foreign naval vessels in the EEZ of a coastal state. Countries on the ‘liberal’ side of this argument, such as the US, argue that nothing in the UNCLOS permits coastal states to challenge transit of naval vessels through the EEZ. The ‘realist’ argument, adopted by many other countries including India, demands that foreign naval vessels intimate the coastal state of their intentions, whilst transiting through its EEZ. The UNCLOS is envisaged as a package deal – Article 309 states that no state may make reservations or exceptions to the convention. However countries such as India and China have made use of Article 310, which allows states to make

declarations while signing, ratifying or acceding to the convention, to announce such restrictions on military vessels in their EEZ. Much like the 17th century debate between Grotius' Mare Liberum and Seldon's Mare Clausum, countries have adopted varying interpretations of the UNCLOS to suit their national interests and in consonance with the abilities of their maritime forces to operate in distant waters. Even if issues of sovereignty in the SCS were to be resolved, it is unlikely that the differences in determining the extent to which sovereign control can be imposed on the global commons, will be removed or even reduced by any significant measure.

Another intriguing facet in the SCS, is the Taiwanese occupation of Taiping or Itu Aba Island – the largest island feature in the Spratly group. As an island, Taiping generates entitlements of territorial seas, EEZ and continental shelf. All shoals, reefs and other features that are being examined by the tribunal in the Philippines case, fall within the EEZ that Taiping Island may generate. In its Position Paper, China accuses Philippines of 'dissecting the Nansha (Spratly) Islands' by excluding features occupied by the Philippines, from the current arbitration. It is particularly scathing in its criticism of the Philippine reticence in recognizing Taiping island, which it states is 'currently controlled by the Taiwan authorities of China', as a maritime feature controlled by China. This, China argues, is a grave violation of the One-China policy. The ambiguous political status of Taiwan, together with the maritime entitlements commanded by Taiping Island, promise to further murky the dispute over sovereignty of these islands.

While China has refused to take cognizance of the tribunal, its proceedings and its subsequent ruling, the outright rejection of an unfavourable ruling by a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), promises to have serious ramifications for the future of a rules-based global order. Such a situation, however, is not without precedent. In the Nicaragua vs US case adjudicated by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1986, the court found the US in violation of customary international law and ordered it to pay reparations to the government of Nicaragua. The US had earlier unsuccessfully contested the jurisdiction of the court to deal with the matter and subsequently did not participate in the merits phase. The US refused to comply with the court's order and resisted international pressure to pay reparations to

Nicaragua. Five years later, in 1991, Nicaragua, under the administration of President Chamorro, voluntarily withdrew its claim from the ICJ. It was a glaring instance of subversion of international norms by a country that vociferously advocated compliance, but refused to do so itself when such norms were in conflict with its *raison d'état*.

Legal systems, both domestic and international, aim to protect rights of aggrieved individuals and entities including nation states. In the absence of statutory enforcement mechanisms, international order relies upon voluntary compliance – an aspect where it would be expected for global powers to lead by example. The US – which incidentally is the world's most prolific litigator at the ICJ, and China, have a pivotal role in determining the future of such a global order, as was envisioned in the UN Charter. In the current geopolitical situation, however, it would be rather optimistic to expect major powers to uphold the primacy of international law over considerations of *realpolitik*, especially as these countries are often able to 'coax' smaller nations into compliance through financial, political, diplomatic and indeed military means. Moreover, the current structure of the UNSC, allows permanent members to stall a collective response to con-compliance with the award of an international court of law. Smaller, less influential nations are therefore likely to find themselves increasingly on the receiving end of a system that was evolved primarily to protect their rights. The Chinese today are quick to quote the American con-compliance in the Nicaragua case, when confronted by the likelihood of their non-adherence to the international system. This finger-pointing that accompanies the selective disdain for a rules based international order, would need to stop if the system is to be salvaged from what appears to be the inevitable. For that to happen it is imperative that China and the US start playing by the rules.

Notwithstanding the likely Chinese indifference to the tribunal's award and the expected dent to the international arbitration system, it is anticipated that an award in favour of the Philippine submission may encourage other claimant states in the SCS to seek arbitration as well. Favourable outcomes may not directly translate into tangible change in the situation on ground. They would, however, serve to delegitimize Chinese claims and possibly put China under pressure to tone down the rhetoric associated with its claims. Whether China would do so, remains a matter of speculation.

While the situation in SCS is unlikely to change for the better in any dramatic fashion due to the outcome of this arbitration, there is keen interest in the nature, tone and tenor of the impending award. It is likely to set a precedent for resolution of maritime disputes in other parts of the world, by first determining entitlements generated by disputed features before the adjudication on sovereignty issues, possibly by the ICJ. What is also certain is that the award, notwithstanding its nature, will intensify the debate between Mare Liberum and Mare Clausum, and underscore the increasing conflict between international law and foreign policy imperatives of states.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 20 June 2016



US, Thailand Conclude Annual Military Exercise

Prashanth Parameswaran

From June 16 to 23, the United States and Thailand conducted the 22nd iteration of their annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training Exercise (CARAT). As I have written previously, CARAT is part of a series of bilateral naval exercises conducted by the U.S. Navy with partners and now involves nine countries in South and Southeast Asia – Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Timor-Leste

On June 16, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Royal Thai Armed Forces began the 22nd iteration of the Thailand leg of the exercises. CARAT Thailand consisted of eight days of shore-based and at-sea events through June 23 designed to address maritime security concerns as well as to build relationships and enhance interoperability between the two sides.

U.S. assets participating in CARAT Thailand 2016 include the Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63), the Safeguard-class salvage ship USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52), USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1), and a P-3C Orion.

According to a press release on the exercise by Task Force 73 – a U.S. Navy task force of the Seventh Fleet which coordinates exercises for Southeast Asia – this year, the two navies participated in a wide range of interactions including an air defense exercise, deck-landing qualifications, a gunnery exercise, anti-submarine warfare training, complex surface warfare maneuvering tactics, and a communications drill using the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), a set of protocols for the safety of naval vessels meeting at sea negotiated in 2014 at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium

The press release noted that U.S. Marines from 3rd Marine Division embarked on the amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) to conduct an amphibious landing with their Thai counterparts. In addition to the amphibious landing, the Marines conducted training and shared tactics on security operations and jungle warfare.

Meanwhile, this year's harbor phase featured a diving exercise, an engineering project, explosive ordnance live-fire training, visit, board, search, and seizure training, and medical and aviation training symposia, along with five community service events and eight band performances. The exercise concluded June 23 with closing ceremonies held at the Royal Thai Navy Base in Sattahip

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 23 June 2016

China Deploys Ships to Help Vietnam Find Missing Coastguard Plane

China sent ships on Friday in response to a request from Vietnam to help find a coastguard plane that crashed with nine personnel aboard while looking for a missing fighter jet and pilot, Vietnam's defense ministry said. The CASA turboprop plane went down on Thursday in the Gulf of Tonkin, between Vietnam's northern coastline and China's Hainan Island, where the rescue team had found some debris and personal items, the ministry said in a statement.

The Airbus-made plane was searching for a Sukhoi SU-30 MK2 fighter jet and a missing pilot that went off radar on Tuesday. One of the two fighter pilots was rescued from the sea the following day. Thousands of Vietnamese coastguard, border guard, navy, air force and fishermen have been searching for the aircraft and the second pilot.

China sent one rescue and two coastguard boats to help search for the CASA plane in response to Vietnam's request for assistance and to allow its vessels to enter the Chinese side of a maritime boundary agreed between the two countries. The coastguard plane went down in bad weather and low visibility. Vietnam has suffered a series of accidents in the past two years with its aging helicopters, but plane crashes have been rare. It is

currently overseeing its biggest military buildup in four decades and wants to upgrade its air and sea defenses, including plans to purchase fighter jets, a strategy experts say is aimed at building a deterrent against China's military rise. The Communist parties that rule China and Vietnam are historically close, but tensions are high over territorial disputes between them in the South China Sea.

Vietnam has stepped up efforts to strengthen its coastguard, with help from Japan, which has its own maritime squabbles with China, and the United States, which has repeatedly locked horns with Beijing and insists it has stake in ensuring freedom of navigation and flight in the South China Sea.

Source: [Reuters](#), 17 June 2016

US Aircraft Carriers Start Drills off the Philippines

AFP

Two US aircraft carriers have started exercises in the Philippine Sea, US defence officials said on Sunday. The US Pacific Command said the USS John C. Stennis and USS Ronald Reagan – among the world's largest warships – began conducting air defence drills, sea surveillance, and long range strikes on Saturday.

The command said the operations marked America's continued presence in the Asia-Pacific as China expands its maritime strength and engages in massive island building activities in disputed waters. US must manage its pivot to Asia in a way that doesn't isolate China. "No other navy can concentrate this much combat power on one sea ... It was truly impressive," said US Rear Admiral Marcus Hitchcock, carrier strike group commander. US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter visited the Stennis in April as it sailed off the Philippines near the disputed area where China has expanded islets and reefs into islands capable of supporting airfields and other installations.

The Philippines has been improving its defence ties with the US, its long-time treaty ally and former colonial ruler, to help boost the ability of one of Asia's weakest armed

forces. The US exercises synchronised the activities of over 12,000 sailors, 140 aircraft, six combatants and the two carriers, said Hitchcock. The command said the drills were meant to promote freedom of navigation and overflight in the region's airspace and waters. "[This] has been a great opportunity for us to train on how we would operate multiple carrier strike groups in a contested environment," said US Rear Admiral John Alexander, another carrier strike group commander.

The US Navy said it has been conducting dual carrier strike group operations for several years in the Philippine Sea, the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where China has a separate dispute with Japan over small islands.

Philippine defence department spokesman Peter Galvez said the exercises showed that the US was "resolute" in fulfilling its often repeated "ironclad commitment" to defend the Philippines. Philippines mulls submarines as Japan seeks inclusion in military drills in disputed South China Sea "We welcome the strong cooperation and partnership we have with our friends and allies ... in light of [the dispute] where our legitimate rights have been overstepped," he said.

The Philippines is awaiting a ruling from an international arbitration tribunal against China's claims to most of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the strategic waterway, through which pass some of the world's most active shipping lanes.

Source: [South China Morning Post](#), 19 June 2016

Anti-Collision Devices to be required in more Japanese Ships

Japan's Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Ministry intends to expand the range of ships that must be equipped with automatic identification system (AIS) devices to prevent collisions, according to sources. AIS devices transmit a vessel's location, sailing course and other information. Currently, ships with a displacement of 500 tons or

more that sail in Japan must have AIS devices. The ministry will consider lowering this to ships of at least 100 tons or 300 tons.

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea obliges passenger ships and all other 300-ton or more ships sailing overseas to be equipped with AIS. Japan's AIS requirement for ships of at least 500 tons is stipulated in the Ship Safety Law. There are about 1,500 ships of 500 tons or more that are equipped with AIS.

In Japan, among about 520,000 boats that are less than 20 tons, which are not required to have the system, only about 1,000 have the devices. Of the about 5,600 ships that are over 20 tons and less than 500 tons, only about 30 percent are equipped with AIS. Many marine accidents are caused by the crew's failure to carefully watch what is front of them. If a ship is equipped with AIS, crew can see information about other ships' locations and sailing courses on their monitors.

Marine traffic control officials of the Japan Coast Guard, which receives information in the same way, can give warnings to both ships if there is a risk of a collision. AIS is highly effective for preventing the collision of ships. However, if multiple ships simultaneously send out radio waves in a narrow sea area, their AIS devices may not receive information due to crossed lines.

Therefore, the ministry will conduct computer simulation experiments with the JCG and discuss what the minimum tonnage should be. The minimum tonnage will be set at either 100 tons or 300 tons. The ministry plans to decide on the tonnage by the end of this fiscal year, and aims to implement the new requirement after a moratorium period of several years. Even if the range of obligation is expanded, challenges remain. Simplified AIS devices are available for about ¥100,000 (\$960 U.S.), but some standard types cost ¥2 million or more.

Currently there is no system to subsidize purchasing costs, which is one reason why AIS devices have not become widespread. And even when fishing boats are equipped with AIS, crew members sometimes turn off the devices so other fishermen do not know the

location of their fishing spots. A ministry official said, "We'll consider how to widely popularize [AIS devices]."

Source: [Bowling Green Daily News](#), 20 June 2016

China's Coast Guard Finishes 1st Overseas Visit

XuYaqi

Boat 21115 of China's maritime police finished its first visit to a foreign maritime law enforcement agency on Saturday, June 18, 2016. The Chinese police vessel was received by South Korea's Coast Guard and its branch in Cheju during its 5-day journey.

Hu Xuedong, the Staff Officer of China's Coast Guard, said the visit provides a cooperative platform for maritime police from the two sides. It can help maintain the security of the Yellow Sea, across which China and the Korean Peninsula can see each other. Hu also said the visit enables Chinese soldiers to improve their law enforcement capacity and learn to work with their counterparts in other countries.

Source: [CRI English](#), 18 June 2016

USS Coronado Heads to Western Pacific on First Deployment

Debbie L. Sklr

The littoral combat ship USS Coronado is scheduled to depart from San Diego on Wednesday for an exercise then deploy to the western Pacific Ocean, the Navy announced Monday. The deployment is the first for the Coronado, a futuristic, trimaran vessel that was commissioned two years ago. Coronado and its crew of about 70 sailors will participate in the multi-nation Rim of the Pacific exercise, known as RIMPAC. "This ship will play a critical role in the fleet and in our nation's defense," said Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, U.S. Third Fleet commander. "RIMPAC provides a good opportunity for our

partner navies to work with the ship and see how it can contribute to collective regional security.”

Littoral combat ships are fast, agile vessels designed for operating in coastal waters. There are two variants, the trimaran Independence type like the Coronado, and the single-hull Freedom type, like the San Diego-based USS Fort Worth. The latter type has been plagued by mechanical breakdowns. Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23, based at Naval Air Station North Island, will deploy with the ship with the MQ-8 Fire Scout drone helicopter.

Source: [Times of San Diego](#), 20 June 2016

Do Joint Exercises with Friendly Foreign Countries: Parrikar

Press Trust of India

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar today directed the armed forces to carry out joint exercises with friendly foreign countries specially, in South East Asia, in tune with India's 'Act East Policy'. He also asked them to optimise resources and enhance cost effectiveness even as he exhorted them to exploit joint capabilities for predominant role in the volatile region around the country.

Parrikar reviewed key security issues facing the nation and important strategic, operational, administrative and logistics aspects pertaining to tri-services were also deliberated upon. "To keep in tune with the India's Act East Policy, Parrikar urged the Armed Forces for conduct of joint exercises involving more than one Service with our friendly foreign countries specially, in South East Asia," a defence ministry statement said. He stressed on the need for jointness of the three services to optimise resources and enhance cost effectiveness, so that maximum funds can be made available for modernisation of the armed forces, it said.

Parrikar while addressing the two-day Annual Unified Commanders' Conference here, said by virtue of India's dominant geographical location, the country is poised for a

predominant role in the volatile region around us. The minister said, hence, there is a requirement to exploit this advantage by developing joint capabilities. In order to achieve self-reliance, he emphasised on 'Make in India' initiative and indigenisation of defence production. He commended the armed forces for their devotion to duty and the stellar role played by them in safeguarding the country's unity and integrity. The minister also paid homage to all valiant soldiers, sailors and air warriors for their supreme sacrifice in honour of the nation.

Earlier, opening remarks were given by the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha covering tri-services issues. Army chief Gen Dalbir Singh Suhag and Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba addressed the conclave highlighting the major issues pertaining to their respective Services. '

A report covering major achievements on key tri-services issue was presented by Officiating Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee Air Marshal A S Bhonsle. During the day-long conference, key security issues facing the nation and important strategic, operational, logistical, administrative aspects pertaining to tri-services were deliberated upon. The function was attended by Minister of State for Defence Rao Inderjit Singh, Deputy National Security Advisor Arvind Gupta, among others.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 23 June 2016

Two Carrier Strike Groups Double Down in Western Pacific

Commander, Task Force 70

The USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) strike groups commenced dual carrier flight operations in the Philippine Sea June 18.

The ships and aircraft assigned to both strike groups began coordinated operations in international waters demonstrating the United States unique capability to operate multiple carrier strike groups in close proximity.

While at sea, the strike groups conducted air defense drills, sea surveillance, replenishments at sea, defensive air combat training, long range strikes, coordinated maneuvers and other exercises.

"This is a great opportunity for us to train in a high end scenario." said Rear Adm. John D. Alexander commander, Battle Force 7th Fleet and commander of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 5. "We must take advantage of these opportunities to practice warfighting techniques that are required to prevail in modern naval operations."

As a Pacific nation and a Pacific leader, the United States has a national interest in maintaining security and prosperity, peaceful resolution of disputes, unimpeded lawful commerce, and adherence to freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the shared domains of the Indo-Asia-Pacific. For more than 70 years, the U.S. Navy has been a persistent and stabilizing presence conducting operations throughout the region on a daily basis.

"Rear Adm. Alexander and I first flew together as a crew in an A-6 carrier-based aircraft in July 1988," said Rear Adm. Marcus A. Hitchcock, commander of CSG 3. "Today, we continue that long history as our two Carrier Strike Groups maneuver together in the Philippine Sea. No other Navy can concentrate this much combat power on one sea or synchronize the activities of over 12,000 Sailors, 140 aircraft, six combatants and two carriers. It was truly impressive, and it is an important operational capability."

U.S. Navy aircraft carriers have conducted dual carrier strike group operations in the Western Pacific including the South China Sea, East China Sea and Philippine Sea for several years. These operations typically occur when strike groups deployed to the 7th Fleet area of operations from the West Coast of the United States are joined with the forward deployed carrier strike group from Japan.

In Sept. 2014, USS George Washington (CVN 73) and USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) strike groups conducted combined operations in the Western Pacific and in Sept. 2012 they operated in the South China Sea and East China Sea. In 2009, George Washington and

USS Nimitz (CVN 68) operated together in the Western Pacific, and in 2001, USS Constellation (CV 64) and Carl Vinson operated together in the South China Sea.

“Working with Rear Adm. Hitchcock and Carrier Strike Group Three, during their deployment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, has been a great opportunity for us to train on how we would operate multiple carrier strike groups in a contested environment,” said Alexander. “The U.S. Navy has flown, sailed and operated throughout the Western Pacific in accordance with international law for decades, and will continue to do so.”

CSG 3 consists of the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53) and guided-missile destroyers of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 21, USS Stockdale (DDG 106), USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) and USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110), and the aircraft of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9. CSG 3 began operating in the Western Pacific Feb. 4.

CSG 5 consisting of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), guided-missile cruisers USS Shiloh (CG 67) and USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) and guided-missile destroyers from Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), USS McCampbell (DDG 85), USS Benfold (DDG 65), and the aircraft of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, is forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan and routinely, patrols the Western Pacific. CSG 5 commenced its summer patrol of the Indo-Asia Pacific, June 4.

Source: [Commander US 7th Fleet](#), 18 June 2016

India Warships Visit Russia as Part of South China Sea Deployment

PrashanthParameswaran

The Indian naval ships INS Sahyadri, INS Shakti, and INS Kirch, part of the Eastern Fleet, arrived in Vladivostok on June 27 as part of a deployment to the South China Sea. Indian warships are in Russia this week as part of a four day visit

India and Russia already have a strong defense relationship as part of their broader strategic partnership, with both sides engaging not just in exercises and exchanges but more advanced areas like joint research, development, and production of defense technologies and systems. As an Indian government press release on the warships visit noted, varying degrees of progress on projects such as the BrahMos missile system, joint design and development of Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft, licensed production of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, and the induction of the aircraft carrier Vikramditya into the Indian Navy are some tangible examples of this.

This cooperation extends into the naval realm as well. The two countries already engage annually in the INDRA NAVY maritime exercise in addition to visits by high-level delegations, training teams, and ships.

According to an Indian government press release, the current visit by the warships – the first by Indian ships to Russia since July 2014 – is aimed at further enhancing maritime cooperation between the two navies. The press release publicized the visit as “a demonstration of India’s commitment to longstanding India-Russia strategic partnership and Indian Navy’s increasing footprint and operational reach.”

During the voyage, which Russian Eastern Military District spokesman Igor Maiborodov called “an unofficial visit” according to Sputnik, the Indian Navy ships will have professional interactions with the Russian Navy to enhance cooperation. There will also be calls on Russian Pacific Fleet command and local authorities and a range of sporting and cultural interactions.

The Indian Navy ships were expected to conduct exercises with the Russian Navy aimed at enhancing interoperability in communications as well as in search and rescue procedures after they depart from Vladivostok.

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 28 June 2016

Bangladesh, India Launch Transshipment Operations

PTI

India and Bangladesh on Thursday launched transshipment operations at the Ashuganj port to boost trade and facilitate seamless movement of goods in the landlocked region, with a cargo vessel unloading the maiden consignment to be transported to Tripura through Bangladeshi territory.

Bangladesh's Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan launched the operation at Ashuganj port in central Bangladesh, where 1,000 tonnes of iron and steel sheets were unloaded to be trans- shipped to Tripura through Bangladesh territory in trucks. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman, Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Bangladeshi lawmakers and senior officials witnessed the inaugural ceremony.

Transiting goods

Under a revised protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade as part of a bilateral agreement signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka in June last year, India and Bangladesh agreed to let each other use their territories for transiting goods to a third country.

The deal would enable Bangladesh to use Indian territory to transport goods to Nepal and Bhutan while on the other hand India would access Myanmar by crossing through Bangladesh.

Under the arrangement, vessels carrying Indian cargos would unload at Ashuganj port, from where Bangladeshi trucks will carry the goods to Tripura to be delivered at the Akhaura checkpoint, the second largest trading point between India and Bangladesh after the Benapole-Petrapole post with West Bengal.

India had long been seeking transit and transshipment facility to carry goods to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, from West Bengal through a shortened route via Bangladesh. At present, trucks from Kolkata travel around 1,600 km to reach Agartala. The distance through Bangladesh would be only 500 km, according to experts.

According to analysts, it costs India \$67 to transport per tonne of goods from Kolkata to Agartala and Indian trucks take 30 days to reach there through the rugged terrains. The transshipment facility – combining riverine and land routes – would now enable India to deliver goods in an estimated 10-day time and reduce transport cost by nearly 50 per cent.

Source: [Business Line](#), 16 June 2016

Ocean Shipping Alternative Fuels Studied

PerterBuxbaum

Methanol and Ethanol good potential alternatives for reducing both the emissions and carbon footprint of ship operations. So concludes a recently-released report prepared for the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). EMSA commissioned a study to gain more information about the benefits and challenges associated with these fuels and to evaluate their potential for the shipping industry.

Methanol has been investigated as a marine fuel in a few research projects, two of which involved pilot test installations on ships. The Swedish EffShip project identified methanol as a promising marine fuel after studying alternatives and carrying out laboratory testing on a diesel concept engine. This led to further testing and development within the SPIRETH project, which led to the world's first methanol conversion of main engines on a passenger ferry, the Stena Germanica, in 2015.

Waterfront Shipping has commissioned seven new chemical tankers with dual fuel methanol engines to be delivered in 2016. New research projects underway or recently

started include the EU Horizon 2020 project LeanShips, which includes a work package to test a marine methanol engine in a laboratory. Ethanol has not been studied for use on ships, but it has been used in truck diesel engines for years.

Methanol is the simplest of alcohols and can be produced from many different feedstocks, with the majority produced from natural gas. Ethanol is mainly produced from biomass, with the majority on the world market produced from corn and sugar cane. Both methanol and ethanol have about half of the energy density of conventional fossil fuels, which means that more fuel storage space will be required on board a vessel as compared to conventional fuels.

The flashpoints of both substances are both below the minimum for maritime fuels specified in the International Maritime Organizations (IMO) Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS). That means that they must be evaluated for the fire safety equivalence to conventional fuels, the report noted.

Guidelines are currently being drafted for the use of methanol and ethanol fuels on ships, for future incorporation in a newly-adopted international code for ships using non-conventional fuels. “This,” the report noted, “will facilitate the use of these fuels on board ships.” Earlier projects both carried out risk assessments and were approved for installation, “demonstrating,” the report concluded, “that safety considerations are not a barrier to the use of methanol fuel systems on ships.”

Methanol and ethanol both have environmental advantages compared to conventional fuels: they are clean-burning, contain no sulfur, and can be produced from renewable feedstocks. Emissions are low compared to conventional fuel oils.

Both methanol and ethanol dissolve readily in water, are biodegradable, and do not bioaccumulate, meaning they pose less of a threat than fossil fuels when discharged into the maritime environment. They are also not considered to be toxic to ocean life.

Since the recent oil price declines, and until early 2015, methanol was more expensive than fossil fuels, but in late 2015 the price of methanol began to move down. “Cheap

natural gas, a primary feedstock for producing methanol, contributes to lower production costs,” the report noted, “and thus methanol may be economically attractive again compared to conventional fuel alternatives.”Ethanol prices have generally been higher conventional fuels.

Investment costs for methanol and ethanol retrofit and newbuild activity are estimated to be below the costs of investments for liquefied natural gas solutions. “The payback time analysis carried out for this study indicate that methanol is competitive with other fuels and emissions compliance strategies,” the report concluded, “but this depends on the fuel price differentials. Based on historic price differentials, methanol will have shorter payback times than both LNG and ethanol solutions for meeting sulfur emission control area requirements. With the current low oil prices at the end of 2015, the conventional fuel oil alternatives have shorter payback times.”

Source: [Global Trade](#), 15 June 2016

Shreyas and SCI Join Forces to Strengthen Indian Coastal Shipping

Shreyas Shipping and Logistics, part of the Transworld group, has entered into a vessel sharing arrangement (VSA) with the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) on two services connecting the East and West coasts of India, as well as Jebel Ali in the UAE. Shreyas is partnering with SCI in the Smile service that will now provide a revised rotation of Mundra, Pipavav, Cochin, Tuticorin, Chennai, Katupalli, Krishnapatnam, Pipavav, Mundra and Jebel Ali. The port of Krishnapatnam and Pipavav have been added to the service, which is being maintained by four container vessels, with capacities of between 1650 teu and 4400 teu. Three of these ships will be provided by SCI and one by Shreyas.

Similarly, the PIX II service will be operated jointly on a fixed day weekly basis, connecting the ports of Mundra, Kattupalli, Vizag, Kakinda, Tuticorin, Cochin and Jebel Ali, with the option of also calling at Colombo port. This service has been enhanced with

the addition of Kakinda to the rotation and will be operated by four vessels of around 1650 teu each. Three of these will be Shreyas ships, and one provided by SCI.

According to Captain V. K. Singh, chief executive officer, Shreyas Shipping, “This arrangement brings multiple benefits to our customers and the Indian coast shipping business at large. Additional tonnage has been deployed on this trade lane, providing improved frequency and reduced transit times between ports pairs.” Shreyas points out that it now covers all the main ports on the Indian coast. Furthermore it can transport cargo from Jebel Ali as far as Yangon, and vice versa.

Source: [The Maritime Standard](#), 15 June 2016

Ghana to Implement SOLAS on July 1 for Safety in Shipping Industry

The International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) mandatory amendment of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) would be implemented in Ghana on July 1. Mrs Naa Densua Aryeetey, Head of Shipper Services and Trade Facilitation at the Ghana Shippers Authority (GSA), who announced it said the Convention is making it compulsory for shippers to weigh, certify and declare the weight of stuffed containers prior to their being loaded on board a vessel.

The main purpose of the SOLAS convention is to ensure the safety of the ship and workers, both on board and ashore, the safety of the cargo and the overall safety at sea.

Speaking at the fifth maritime seminar for journalists in Accra on Wednesday, Mrs Aryeetey said SOLAS convention covers about 99 per cent of all merchant ships globally that travel long distances. She said the 1974 maritime laws were amended and approved since 2010 and 2014 to protect lives on the sea that was recording many accidents and ship wrecks due to under-declaration of proper weights of loaded containers.

The Ghana Shippers Authority (GSA) in collaboration with the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) organised the seminar for media practitioners to help provide them with valuable knowledge on the maritime sector especially in the area of recent developments, which affects the operations of the maritime sector nationally and globally. The seminar, which was attended by both editors and reporters, was on the theme: “Current Developments in the Maritime Industry-Ghana’s Readiness.”

The journalists were taken through topics like “the International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) Requirement for container weight verification-Is Ghana Ready”, “Understanding the ECOWAS Common External Tariff” and the “Ghana National Single Window-How Far?” Mrs Aryeety said the GSA has been collaborating with the appropriate authorities like the Ghana Standards Authority, the Shippers and Exporters groups, and the Freight forwarders, to make the necessary preparations, including workshops and seminars as a means of educating and building capacities of stakeholders to kick start the SOLAS. She said the Ghana Standard Authority have been mandated to ensure that all lifting equipment, terminal operating machines, weigh bridges, among other things, were properly calibrated to conform with international standards to enable the easy take-off of SOLAS.

She said it is therefore, necessary for the media, as critical partners to be trained on the introduction of SOLAS so they could effectively educate shippers and other stakeholders on the new convention. Mrs Aryeety said on June 20, SOLAS would be introduced on a pilot base in the country to see the readiness of shippers in operating under the SOLAS before it would finally be implemented in July.

Mr Aminu Uthman Oluwatoni, Project Manager of West Blue Consult, spoke on the Ghana National Single Window, a concept developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in 2005 to harmonise and standardise international trade procedures and associated information flows between trade and government. He said the concept had also come to help facilitate trade faster for traders and businesses. “This would help improve import, export, transit procedures and documentation as they help facilitate trade” he said.

MrFiifiFiaviKwetey, Minister of Transport said government is determined to ensure that beyond the provision of appropriate infrastructure and legal framework in the Maritime Transport Sector, the issues of proliferation of charges at the ports and its attendant increase in the cost of doing business are fully addressed, to ensure competitiveness of shippers and service provisions alike.

Source: [GNA](#), 17 June 2016

Cyprus Implementing New Shipping Strategy

Sam Chambers

Cyprus is implementing a new shipping strategy. The minister of transport, communications and works MariosDemetriades said yesterday more incentives would be rolled out to develop the island as a shipping cluster. “As part of our efforts to enhance Cyprus’ competitiveness, we have procured a study for the shipping industry in cooperation with the private sector,” he told the 5th Mare Forum Cyprus 2016.

The study proposes measures that would strengthen the Cyprus merchant fleet and shipping cluster. The outcome and recommendations of the study have been taken into consideration and the implementation of those measures has already begun. “Additional measures that are already taking place include the recent engagement of a private firm for the promotion of shipping, the strengthening of regional offices and incentives for business development,” the minister added.

Demetriades stressed that the discovery of hydrocarbons places new challenges to the shipping industry of Cyprus. “We are confident that Cyprus has the potential to develop into an important energy center in the Mediterranean offering services in the area. Such services include transportation ashore, operation of specialised ships and equipment and the supply of specialised support services” he said.Many Greek owners are eyeing Cyprus a place to relocate their businesses.

Source: [Splash 24/7](#), 17 June 2016

Shipping Regulator Warns Ocean Lines on Container Weights

Erica E Phillips

The top U.S. maritime industry regulator jumped into a controversy looming over the shipping world on Thursday, warning ocean carriers that they should accept container-weight measures offered at cargo terminals or face potential scrutiny for “anticompetitive behavior.” Federal Maritime Commission Chairman Mario Cordero’s statement comes as the shipping industry is bracing for rules that go into effect on July 1 requiring exporters to verify the weight of their shipments before the containers can be loaded on vessels.

The international requirement is aimed at making vessels safer by making container stacks less likely to tip over or cause ships to break apart at sea. But unresolved details, including how the weights are verified and the information provided to shipping lines, have observers worried about major bottlenecks and delays at seaports.

Mr. Cordero said the “obvious solution” was right at hand: ocean carriers should use the weights taken at terminal gates by port terminal operators—a measure that is already performed for dock safety and ship stowage purposes—to satisfy the United Nations International Maritime Organization requirement. “Using the weight taken at the terminal gate is a simple and efficient solution for assuring the continued smooth flow of export cargoes,” Mr. Cordero said.

The requirement, an amendment to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, or SOLAS, has generated a storm in the shipping world, as carriers, shippers and port operators argued over who should bear the cost and risks of implementation. Some carriers sought to break the impasse last month by laying out an agreement with six major ports to work toward a common solution. The Ocean Carrier Equipment Management Association, or OCEMA, filed the agreement with the FMC for approval.

Mr. Cordero said such agreements only further complicate the issue and would be closely studied by the commission. “Why anyone would add procedures, requirements

and costs to doing business is not only puzzling, it raises the specter of anticompetitive behavior and necessitating Commission action,” he said.

John Butler, president of the World Shipping Council, which represents ocean carriers, said in a statement that fulfilling the requirement would be more complicated than the regulator suggests. “Marine terminals are not the only solution, and not all marine terminals are offering these services,” Mr. Butler said. “I think that the Chairman is trying to help, but to the extent his statement suggests there is only one path to [verified gross mass] compliance, that is incorrect.”

Jonathan Gold, vice president for supply chain and customs for the National Retail Federation, said U.S. retailers that source from dozens of countries “are still concerned. They’re not hearing enough information just on the basics of how it’s going to be done.” “Less than two dozen of the IMO member nations are putting forth guidance and the regulations are all different depending on which country they’re coming from” despite an announcement in May from the IMO urging leniency in enforcement of the rule in the first three months, he said. “It’s all over the board.”

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#), 16 June 2016

COSCO Shipping Bulk Sets Sail

Zhong Nan

COSCO Shipping Bulk Co was officially launched in Guangzhou on Thursday, forming the world's largest bulk vessel fleet in terms of both ship numbers and deadweight tonnage. The new company was formed by the merger of COSCO Bulk Carrier Co and China Shipping Bulk Carrier Co.

With a total of 382 self-operated and controlled bulk vessels and a capacity of 34.58 million deadweight tons, COSCO Shipping Bulk will be able to ship iron ore, coal, grain and other commodities to more than 1,000 ports in some 100 countries and regions. Its

annual freight volume will exceed 340 million metric tons. It now has 18,500 employees, including 13,000 mariners. The average ship age in its fleet is eight years.

Sun Jiakang, deputy general manager of COSCO Shipping, said as many countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiative need natural resources and commodities to support their ongoing urbanization and industrialization, the new company is keen to build more partnerships with both governments and businesses along these trading routes. COSCO Shipping Bulk also signed cooperative agreements with six domestic companies, including China Agri-Industries Holdings Ltd, China Resources Power Holdings Co Ltd and Hunan Valin Steel Co Ltd on Thursday. They will work together to further expand client networks and to develop overseas businesses, especially in emerging markets. To improve local services, COSCO Shipping Bulk will work with representatives employed by its mother company, COSCO Shipping, to take care of sales, customs clearance and business promotion, in particular along the Belt and Road Initiative routes.

Because global bulk shipping operators continue to confront overcapacity, low carriage rates and weak market demand, the new company will deploy more resources into more than 40 of its non-shipping subsidiaries. It will seek to dig more growth from real estate, property and hotel management, road logistics, ship financing and insurance businesses. "The establishment of the new company is a flexible way to achieve business scale and synergies, particularly in the sectors of commodity shipping and other service businesses, in order to better compete with other established global rivals," Sun said at the inaugural meeting in Guangzhou.

"This move is also part of ongoing restructuring of State-owned enterprises," said Dong Liwan, a shipbuilding industry professor at Shanghai Maritime University. He said COSCO Shipping's new step will transform its businesses into a more diversified operation model that can take full advantage of the opportunities likely to come from surging demand for infrastructure development and natural resource trade in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America, as well as the in the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

Source: [China Daily](#), 17 June 2016

First Nepal-bound Cargo from India's Vizag Port Flagged off

Post Report

A Nepal-bound cargo container was flagged off from India's Visakhapatnam Port for the first time on Friday. Chief Secretary Somlal Subedi, who led a seven-member Nepali team to Visakhapatnam, and Chairman of Visakhapatnam Port Trust Chairman MT Krishna Babu jointly flagged off the container, according to The Hindu newspaper.

Rabi Sainju, joint secretary at the Commerce Ministry, said the cargo, however, was just a "symbolic move". A member of the Nepali team, requesting anonymity, said the event was held to just give a message to the private sector that the port is ready to open. "We are yet to complete some technical and procedural aspects to bring the route into full operation," the official told the Post. Nepal is dependent on Kolkata's Haldia port for its entire third country trade through the sea.

India had agreed in principle to allow Nepal to use the Visakhapatnam port in 2009. However, it was only during Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's New Delhi visit in February the two countries signed a letter of exchange, allowing Nepal to use the port.

To support the movement of goods between Nepal and the port, the two countries also signed a separate Letter of Exchange on rail transport, enabling Nepal to transport goods through Indian railway.

Nepali importers have been complaining that they have to face prolonged traffic jams at the Kolkata port, so the opening of the Visakhapatnam port is expected to offer them an alternative.

According to Sainju, the government plans to put the Visakhapatnam port on the agenda of the Commerce Secretary-level Inter-governmental Committee (IGC) meeting scheduled to be held in New Delhi on June 28-29.

During an interaction with visiting Nepali officials, Babu said Visakhapatnam would be the ideal gateway port for exim cargo from Nepal and the port authority would provide all the facilities, according to the newspaper report.

Pointing out that Visakhapatnam had to wait for many years to be designated as the second gateway port for Nepal, Babu said the port had several advantages to the Kolkata-Haldia port. Although Nepal is at a longer distance from here, but its location, facilities, efficiency and quicker turnaround time make this port a natural choice, he said. “Visakhapatnam would offer competitive rates and the cargo would be moved in and out in a quicker time,” he said.

Subedi said termed the launch of the exim cargo from Visakhapatnam a “milestone”, stating this would help strengthen trade relations between the countries. A deeper draft of 17 metres on the outer harbour of Visakhapatnam compared to just 7 metres at the Kolkata port would make it easy to handle bigger vessels with a distinct cost advantage, said Sushil Mulchandani, chief operating officer of the port. He explained to the Nepali delegation that it would be beneficial for Nepal to use the cargo terminal in Visakhapatnam than the one in Kolkata.

The Nepal delegation interacted with the stakeholders, Concor, shipping liners, CFS handling agents and other agencies, according to the report. The officials wanted them to examine the areas of constraints such as freight charges, deployment of rakes, intermediaries and the logistics since better business would happen if the constraints were removed.

Source: [Kathmandu Post](#), 26 June 2016

Andhra Pradesh Port Policy 2015: Centre’s Vision and State’s Need

G. Padmaja

At the Maritime India Summit held in Mumbai on 14 April 2016, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the Sagarmala National Perspective Plan; spelt out his government’s vision and rationale for ‘port-led development model’ which is central to the Sagarmala vision; and stated, “...This will be done in collaboration with the coastal states.” Sagarmala is the national program aimed at accelerating economic development

in the country by harnessing the potential of India's coastline and river networks. The press release of the Ministry of Shipping of 14 April 2016 states, "...The Sagarmala program has taken shape using the government's core philosophy of cooperative federalism."

Thus, the port policies of the coastal states of India will play an important role in the success of the Sagarmala Project. Interestingly, the AP (Andhra Pradesh) Port Policy 2015 of the state Government states, "The coastline is the strength of Andhra Pradesh and 9 out of 13 districts of the state are coastal districts. The state has adopted a port led development strategy aligned with the development principles of the Sagarmala Project".

In the above context, this issue brief spells out the salient features of the AP Port Policy and the manner in which it incorporates the vision of Sagarmala. It then briefly discusses the agreements concluded by Andhra Pradesh at the Maritime India Summit 2016. The AP Port Policy is guided by the state's needs and the centre's vision of Sagarmala. Thus, it incorporates both the manufactured led development and the port-led development path for economic growth, which are not exclusive to each other, and benefit both in terms of modernisation of ports and port connectivity. The port policy brings out that the state's and the centre's development narrative converge with regard to leveraging maritime assets for economic growth, which till now, have been underutilised in the country.

AP Port Policy 2015

Among the coastal states of India, Andhra Pradesh has the second longest coastline of 974 km. It is strategically located on the east coast of India facing the Bay of Bengal; and beyond it, the maritime rimland of the Asia Pacific, to which the world's economic and political power is shifting to. The state has one major port - Visakhapatnam, and has so far declared 14 other locations as non-major ports. The Government of India plans to establish a major port at Dugarajapatnam. The port policy however, shall only apply to all the existing and future ports in the state defined as non-major ports. The development of these ports is sought to be done through primarily private investment.

As per the port policy, all the existing and future ports in the state have been divided in four categories. They are:

- Ports earmarked for future development. The development of these ports will be done keeping in view the traffic potential and sustainability of the existing ports;
- Ports under PPP concessions awarded to private investors. These are Gangavaram Port, Kakinada Deep Water Port ,Krishnapatnam Port and Machilipatnam Port;
- Ports under concessions awarded to private investors for development as captive ports, eg ports of Kakinada SEZ, Rawa, Meghavaram, and Nakkapalli;
- Ports under state, as the owner-operator. Currently this comprises the Kakinada Anchorage Port. Development of ports is capital intensive, sometimes with long gestation period. Private investors will not invest unless growth in traffic volumes of ships to ports is ensured. The AP Port Policy asserts that the states ports have the potential to attract large volumes of traffic.

Opportunities

First, the state of AP has taken many initiatives to boost manufacturing sector, in which it lags behind. The development of these industries is expected to create large demand for shipping and logistics relating to raw materials and manufactured goods. AP has also proposed creation of special economic zones for specific commodities, such as the Petroleum and Petro Chemical Investment Region, which will need specific port infrastructure to meet its needs.

Second, providing impetus to the state is the Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC). This proposed corridor is part of the East Coast Economic Corridor, the nation's first coastal corridor, aligned to the Golden Quadrilateral, the national roads network. Almost eleven districts of AP covering 80 per cent of state's area fall in the influence zone of VCIC. They are expected to become home to industrial nodes giving thrust to domestic and export manufacturing. This is expected to create demand for both inbound and out-bound logistics through port networks.

Third, the ports of AP also seek to attract customers from the states of northern and central India. These states are also likely to see a boost of industrial activity following development of industrial corridors. The prospects for APs ports arise because many ports normally accessed on the west coast are facing congestion.

Fourth, the state also has the advantage of connectivity backbone along the coastline in the form of the south-eastern leg of the golden quadrilateral road network (NH 5) and the Calcutta Chennai railway route, which is already operated as an electrified double link trunk route. Fifth, the AP port policy spells out, “the states coastline is naturally suited for tighter integration with East Asia and South East Asian economies in terms of 4 participating in global manufacturing chains.” It adds, “the state government seeks to leverage its locational advantage and pursue a port-led economic development strategy that could also result in the state emerging as the node integrating India into the global manufacturing chain.”

Sixth, port led development is central to the Sagarmala vision. Its focus is logistics-intensive industries, where transportation either represents a high proportion of costs or timely logistics is a critical success factor. Its four components are: port modernisation (ports having efficient and modern infrastructure); port connectivity, which taps into coastal and inland waterways projects also; port led industrialisation; and coastal community development, in which population in the coastal regions will be employed in the industries, which come up after requisite skills are imparted to them. As regards port-led industrialisation, it is sought to be delivered through the coastal economic zones (CEZs), which will be the focal point for development along India’s coastline. Fourteen CEZs have been identified, and of these two are in Andhra Pradesh. They are:

- The VCIC Central Andhra Pradesh Coastal Economic Zone. It covers the district of Chittoor and Nellore. The port which will cater to these areas is Krishnapatnam Port. The possible industries suggested are ‘Electronics’- related. The likely benefits in terms of sample projects are up-gradation of road connecting Krishnapatnam port to Nellore city, and road to Krishnapatnam Port from Naidupeta.

• The VCIC North Andhra Pradesh Coastal Economic Zone. The potential districts likely to benefit are Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam. The Ports being targeted are Vizag and Kakinda. The possible industries are petrochemicals, cement apparel, food processing. The sample projects are Machilipatnam /Vodarevu Port, Oil jetty at Vizag, road from Machilipatnam to NH-SH-46. As observed, these CEZs are planned to align with industrial corridors.^{6 5} The above manufacturing activity and port-led industrialisation proposals will ensure that traffic volumes of ships to AP ports grow. The industrial activity will also give a boost to coastal shipping and waterway transport, and the port policy proposes to focus on these too. It proposes to incorporate supply chain perspective in planning; promote integrated development of ports along with industries and inland infrastructure connectivity; and create a multimodal line and evacuation strategy that precedes port development. To look into all dimensions of functioning of the non major ports and to ensure transparency, a maritime board will be formed.

Challenges

To implement its vision, the state needs to plan for optimal use of its port land; upgrade its ports to attract traffic from hinterland too; make necessary logistics and linkages to make it the choice for evacuation of cargo; and ensure deep draft ports to cater to larger ships which are in demand as they cut transportation costs by 30 per cent to 40 per cent.

A dynamic political leadership and official machinery which understands the potential of the maritime assets to transform the economic landscape of the state is of utmost importance. They should constantly interact with the other states, the centre, maritime stakeholders; and investors to tap opportunities, address grievances and receive suggestions. The state's new discourse of economic development based on its ports and rivers needs to be internalised by the academia too. The educational institutions need to make suitable changes in their syllabus, imparting new skills to ensure that the employment opportunities which will be generated will remain within the state. Most

important, the coastal communities have to be taken into confidence before projects are implemented.

Maritime India Summit

Two important agreements were concluded by the Andhra Pradesh government at the Maritime India Summit held in Mumbai in April 2016. Over 42 countries, 5000 delegates and numerous maritime stakeholders had participated in this summit. One is a MOU (memorandum of understanding) between the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) and the Government of AP for setting up a Dredging and Dredge Repair complex at Antarvedi in East Godavari district. Once constructed, the dredging harbour will be the first of its kind in the country and the third in the world. The Rs 180 billion dredging harbour-cum-training centre is also expected to take care of the maintenance of the dredgers that are into the job of de-silting the ports for maintenance of depths for ships. This harbour can also become a centre to facilitate dredgers from entire South Asia. The setting of this harbour is expected to improve connectivity between East and West Godavari in the form of rail cum road bridge.

The state government would provide 200 acres for the proposed harbour. The second agreement relates to the development of inland waterway transport. The state government signed an MOU with the Inland Waterways Authority of India for the development of National Waterway 4 with an outlay of Rs 300 billion. It will play a big role in reviving the economic activity along the waterway by facilitating transportation of cargo and developing tourism sector. With about 888 km of the 1,095- km waterway in Andhra Pradesh, its development is seen to play a major role in the transport of cargo from East and West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore districts. The waterway is seen as having the potential to transport 11 million tonnes of cargo every year, and be especially useful to the agriculture sector in moving produce. The state expects inland waterway transport to become growth engine of AP.

Conclusion

The AP Port policy brings out the numerous inputs the state has considered in formulating the policy. These are not just the states needs but the capacity to anticipate the development trends in the hinterland and the opportunities it offers; the ability to see merit in centre's Sagarmala vision; and opportunities in foreign policy initiatives like Act East Policy. The state has to now focus on implementing them. It's important to note that, earlier on 23 March 2016, the container vessel MV Harbour 1 left Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and reached Krishnapatnam Port in Andhra Pradesh on India's east coast on 28 March 2016 and thereby commenced coastal shipping between the two countries. Andhra Pradesh is standing on the threshold of historic change. An analysis of the AP port policy brings out that the coastal state is keen to leverage its unutilised maritime assets of ports and rivers and develop coastal shipping and inland waterways transport. These will play a major role in the success of its manufactured led and port-led path for economic development. Once these projects are implemented, the state's economic and social landscape is bound to change.

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



Southeast Asian Countries Retract Statement Expressing Concerns on South China Sea

Rozanna Latiff

Southeast Asian countries withdrew a statement that expressed the region's deep concerns over tension in the South China Sea, where China is involved in protracted territorial disputes with some of its neighbors.

The strongly-worded statement by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), released by the Malaysian foreign ministry, did not name China directly but warned against raising tension in the waters, where Beijing has been building artificial islands and increasing its military presence. "We expressed our serious concerns over recent and ongoing developments, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and which may have the potential to undermine peace, security and stability in the South China Sea," said the statement, which was issued following a meeting in the Chinese city of Kunming between foreign ministers from ASEAN and China.

But just hours later, a Malaysian ministry spokeswoman recalled the statement, saying "urgent amendments" needed to be made and an updated version would be distributed. However, no updated joint statement was later issued and the spokeswoman said countries would now issue individual statements.

China lays historical claim to most of the South China Sea, with its "Nine Dash line" stretching deep into the maritime heart of Southeast Asia, covering hundreds of disputed islands and reefs, rich fishing grounds and oil and gas deposits. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims over the region, through which trillions of dollars in ship-borne trade passes every year. China said the media was hyping up the issue, and that the original statement was not an official ASEAN document. "This meeting was a closed-door meeting and from the

beginning there was no preparation to make a joint statement," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang at a regular briefing.

Ian Storey, an analyst at Singapore's ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, said the retraction of the initial statement showed the lack of unity between ASEAN members on the South China Sea disputes. "The initial statement repeated ASEAN's existing concerns over China's artificial island building and the militarization of the dispute, but also countered China's position that the dispute should be settled by the parties directly concerned and that it is not an issue between ASEAN and China. "Perhaps this proved too much for some of the member states and the statement was withdrawn."

The ASEAN-China meeting was held ahead of a ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on a case brought by the Philippines contesting Beijing's claims in the South China Sea. China has refused to recognize the case and says all disputes should be resolved through bilateral talks.

The case has become the center of an international diplomatic arm wrestle, with the United States and its allies insisting on international law being obeyed and China saying it has widespread support for its position, including from some ASEAN members.

Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement on the Kunming meeting, made no reference to the earlier ASEAN statement but echoed its concerns over increased military build-up in the South China Sea, "especially the large-scale accretion and embellishment and construction of the reefs, the militarization of the artificial islands and actions of sovereignty claims that are not based on international law". Singapore and Indonesia, meanwhile, took a softer tone, calling on ASEAN and China to "continue working together to maintain the peace and stability of the South China Sea".

An Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman said the initial statement was a "media guideline" which had been prepared for a planned press conference for the conclusion of the meeting. "However, because of the meeting dynamics where the meeting extended a few hours past schedule, the press conference was canceled and a number of ASEAN FMs had to leave immediately," Armanatha Nasir told Reuters by text message.

Source: [Reuters](#), 15 June 2016

Together Towards Cleaner Oceans

Aiswarya Lakshmi

Discussions are focusing on information exchange between key players involved in the protection of the marine environment – in the context of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which establishes rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources.

IMO's Stefan Micallef, Director of the Marine Environment Division, took part in a panel on the environmental, social and economic dimensions of marine debris, plastics and microplastics. He provided an overview of the progress made in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution in this field, including an overview of IMO's work to address this issue.

This includes IMO's MARPOL convention for the prevention of pollution from ships, which bans the disposal of plastics into the sea from ships and generally prohibits the discharge of all garbage into the sea, except in certain very specific circumstances, and the London Convention/Protocol, which in effect bans the dumping of plastics at sea.

The Organization is also a co-lead for sea-based litter in the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and manages the GESAMP group of scientific experts, which studies the impact of microplastics in the marine environment.

In addition to this week's meeting, Stefan Micallef and Fredrik Haag will represent IMO at the annual face to face meeting of UN-Oceans, where recent progress of joint activities, and the 2016-2017 work programme is being discussed.

Source: [Maritime Professional](#), 15 June 2016

With Military Deals, France Asserts Its Presence in the Asia-Pacific

Bruno Tertrais

France has always claimed to be a power in the Asia-Pacific, but some recent strategic developments have given additional credence to that claim. In April, France won a landmark contract to sell 12 attack submarines to Australia, after securing a deal with India for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets last year. The Australia submarine contract, worth some \$39 billion, is viewed in Paris as heralding a new beginning for France-Australia ties, which until the late 1990s were marred by disputes over French nuclear tests in Polynesia. Australia had been mulling Japanese and German bids.

The Asia-Pacific market is not a new one for the French defense industry, which, since the 1980s, has sold major equipment to India, Pakistan, Malaysia, South Korea and Taiwan, among others. But the market is growing. From 2010 to 2015, defense deals with the region made up 23.5 percent of the total amount of orders abroad. Although Canberra's choice of French submarines was primarily based on technical and operational criteria, its decision took place in the context of a growing bilateral relationship, based in particular on common interests in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean, and the existence of partnerships on both sides with Japan and India. Expect maritime cooperation between France and Australia in both the South Pacific and Indian Ocean to be taken to a new level.

These growing ties with Australia reflect France's outreach to the Asia-Pacific more broadly. That builds on the White Papers on National Defense and Security published in 2008 and 2013, which acknowledged and asserted French interests in the region, much more than the previous 1994 White Paper did. The Defense Ministry followed up with its own documents explaining French policy in the region.

It isn't hard to see what's behind French interests in the Asia-Pacific. A number of French overseas territories with various statuses are located in the region. Along with France's other possessions in the Western Atlantic, they give France the second-largest maritime domain in the world. These include Mayotte and La Reunion Island in the Southern Indian Ocean, where France has stationed, among other assets, 1,900

personnel and five ships; New Caledonia, with 1,800 personnel and four ships; Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and Clipperton in the Southern Pacific Ocean, with 1,000 personnel and three ships among them; as well as a number of other possessions forming the French Southern and Antarctic Lands. If current French claims are upheld for the extension of its sovereign rights over continental shelves, based on the implementation of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), France's maritime domain would become the world's largest.

France is already part of the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group (QUAD), along with the United States, Australia and New Zealand, which seeks to coordinate maritime security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. It is also a member of the France/Australia/New-Zealand (FRANZ) agreement to coordinate regional relief operations, notably after cyclones and other natural disasters. The biennial Croix du Sud, or Southern Cross, humanitarian relief exercises that Paris organizes are open to all of its Pacific and Southeast Asian partners.

It would be a stretch to say that France, like the United States, is pivoting to Asia, as its strategic focus will continue to be on Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

France has also inherited two nominal collective defense commitments from the Cold War—one for the defense of South Korea, from 1953, and another, less well-known but still legally in existence, as a party to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Pact of 1954. Finally, like China, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom, France's twin status as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ties it to the region, in particular given North Korea's nuclear program and ongoing provocations.

Since the 2000s, after having flirted with lifting its arms embargo to China under the presidency of Jacques Chirac, France has taken a more favorable stance to Western-minded Asia-Pacific countries and diversified its security relationships in the region. In 2006, it became the first European country to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, a peace treaty struck by the founding members of ASEAN. Most

recently, just last month, France signed a defense cooperation agreement with the Philippines.

In addition to its long-established strategic partnerships with Japan, China and India, France has extended those relationships this decade to Indonesia, Australia, Singapore and Vietnam, while Malaysia remains a close partner. France would like to join ASEAN's expanded defense ministers' meeting, known as ADMM-Plus, which is made up of the bloc's defense ministers along with those of a handful of outside partners, including India, Russia, Australia and the United States. But ASEAN members have refrained from accepting France into a club that includes only countries in the Asia-Pacific, with the exception of Russia and the United States.

While counterterrorism is another plank for France's bilateral cooperation in the region, maritime security issues generally are on the forefront, including piracy and drug-trafficking. Paris supports the uniform implementation of UNCLOS and is keen not only to protect its territorial waters, for instance in fish-rich areas, but also to assert the right of innocent passage, including in the increasingly tense South China Sea. In a speech to the June 2016 Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who has attended the annual dialogue every year since he came into office in 2012, insisted that France would be "sailing its ships and flying its planes wherever international law will allow, and wherever operational needs request that we do so." Le Drian also invited European nations to undertake "regular and visible" patrols in the area. Paris would like the European Union to coordinate such patrols in order to symbolically ensure a constant European presence in the disputed waters.

It would be a stretch to say that France, like the United States, is pivoting to Asia, as its strategic focus will continue to be on Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Paris does not have the capability to rapidly deploy large forces beyond the vital Strait of Malacca, and even with the recent defense deals, France will never be a dominant military player in the Asia-Pacific. In addition, the results of an independence referendum set to be held in New Caledonia in 2018 could change the nature of France's presence in the Pacific—though probably not its military presence. But it would equally be a mistake to believe

that France's current security priorities in Europe detract it from nurturing its other interests around the world.

Source: [World Politics Review](#), 15 June 2016

U.S., India, Japan Begin to Shape New Order on Asia's High Seas

Gordon Fairclough

From the waters of the Philippine Sea this week emerged a partial outline of Washington's vision for a new Asian maritime-security order that unites democratic powers to contend with a more-assertive and well-armed China. A U.S. Navy aircraft-carrier strike group along with warships from India and Japan jointly practiced anti-submarine warfare and air-defense and search-and-rescue drills in one of the largest and most complex exercises held by the three countries.

The maneuvers were being tracked by a Chinese surveillance vessel, a U.S. Navy officer aboard the carrier USS John C. Stennis said on Wednesday. Last week, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said Beijing hoped the training "will be conducive to regional peace, security and stability."

Washington and Tokyo have long cooperated closely on defense. And the U.S. has been working to deepen strategic ties with India and to encourage New Delhi to play a more active role, not just in the Indian Ocean but also in the Pacific, as China's rise shifts the regional balance of power. "Americans are looking for those who can share the burden," said C. Raja Mohan, director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's India center. A strengthened three-way partnership among the U.S., Japan and India is "an important strategic shift."

India, which is proud of its tradition as a nonaligned state, is unlikely to agree to any formal military alliance. But the countries already have a trilateral ministerial dialogue process that began last year.

Cementing those relationships has been an important U.S. objective as it grapples with what American officials have called China's growing "militarization" of the South China Sea, where Beijing is embroiled in territorial disputes with its neighbors and is building up artificial islands and reefs with runways capable of handling military aircraft. The U.S. has sent warships and planes through a series of operations to challenge Chinese claims, saying its aim is to ensure freedom of navigation in waters that carry one-third of global trade.

Some smaller nations have felt threatened by Beijing's activities, but haven't always been able to agree on how to respond. This week, discord among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—a 10-member bloc comprising countries of disparate economic stature and cultures—surfaced when, under pressure from Beijing, the group failed to agree on a statement of concern about rising tensions in the South China Sea. The episode exposed Asean's limited ability to manage regional security issues and China's success in frustrating the bloc's efforts to find a common voice.

During a visit to the U.S. last week, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that "the absence of an agreed security architecture creates uncertainty" in Asia and that a strong partnership between India and the U.S. would help ensure freedom of navigation and the security of sea lanes.

India sent two stealth frigates, a guided-missile corvette and a fleet-support ship to join the multiday Malabar exercises, part of an annual series of U.S.-India maneuvers that have grown increasingly sophisticated and wide-ranging. Japan has been a regular participant since 2014. Before the drills, which officially started last week, Indian vessels made port calls in Vietnam and the Philippines, countries that have disputes with China in the South China Sea.

India's defense minister, Manohan Parrikar, speaking at a regional security meeting in Singapore earlier this month, said: "All countries in the region need to recognize that our shared prosperity...will be put at risk by aggressive behavior or actions by any one of us." India, the world's largest democracy and its second-most-populous country, is wary of China's increasing naval presence in the Indian Ocean, as well as its growing

influence among New Delhi's neighbors in South Asia, where Beijing is funding infrastructure projects.

The two countries share a long, disputed land border, over which they fought a war in 1962. Wariness of China has helped accelerate the transformation of India's relationship with the U.S. from one of strained suspicion during the Cold War to one of increasing warmth. Washington and New Delhi have agreed to cooperate on logistics—with a deal allowing the countries' armed forces to use each other's bases for replenishment and repair—as well as defense production.

Mr. Modi has declared plans to spend billions of dollars upgrading India's navy. Still, it will be some time before India has the strength to routinely project meaningful power outside the Indian Ocean region. India's relations with Japan have also strengthened. The two nations have declared a “strategic partnership” and agreed to deepen security cooperation. They have also agreed to tighten cooperation on economic matters.

During a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to New Delhi in December, the two sides said India and Japan would work together on infrastructure projects in South Asia, a move aimed at blunting inroads by China.

While the U.S., India and Japan pursue closer ties, they are nonetheless wary of increasing tensions in the region. Beijing in the past has reacted negatively when it feels countries are joining together to contain it.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#), 15 June 2016

Wet wipes damaging marine environment as pollution rockets by 400%

WMN lynbarton

Conservationists are warning that wet wipes are posing a danger to the Westcountry's marine environment after the number found polluting beaches rockets by 400% in a

decade. According to the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), millions of wet wipes are flushed down the toilet every year instead of being popped in the bin.

Many of the wipes contain plastic which never breaks down, causing a major hazard for marine animals.

On one beach clean in Devon, the MCS found 31 wet wipes washed up on a 100 metre stretch of beach. Any Cummins, of the campaign group Surfers Against Sewage, said they were an increasing problem for the region. "Any of this sanitary related debris is a common sight all over the UK and the beautiful beaches of Devon and Cornwall has not escaped this," he said.

The MCS says that part of the problem with wet wipes is that the labelling is confusing and many people just flush without thinking twice. The charity is calling on retailers and manufacturers to clearly label their wet wipe products with a 'DON'T FLUSH' message on their packaging. Dr Laura Foster, head of pollution at the MCS, said: "Our sewerage systems weren't built to cope with wet wipes. "When flushed they don't disintegrate like toilet paper, and they typically contain plastic so once they reach the sea, they last for a very long time. "They can cause blockages in our sewers, and then, everything else that has been flushed down the loo can either back up into people's homes, or overflow into rivers and seas."

The MCS Wet Wipes Turn Nasty When You Flush Them campaign highlights the monster issue that flushing unflushables is becoming and urges the public to get behind the charity's call for better wet wipe labelling.

The average cost to sorting out a wet wipe blockage is around £66. Water companies say there are over 366,000 sewer blockages throughout the UK every year, of which between 50% and 80% are caused by fats, oils and grease, wipes, sanitary waste and other unflushable items.

Those figures have resulted in about £88 million being spent annually on sorting out the blockages – costs that will be paid for through higher customer bills.

In 2015, during the MCS Great British Beach Clean, volunteers found nearly 4,000 wet wipes around the UK coastline – that's roughly 50 for every kilometre cleaned – a 30% rise on the previous year and a 400% rise in a decade.

Wet wipes also pose a massive threat to marine life as they contain plastic which never goes away. "This source of microplastic is easy to prevent and we want any product which is being designed to be washed or flushed down the drain to be free from plastics," says Dr Foster. "Retailers have already recognised the issue of microplastics in face scrubs- designing a product that is guaranteed to pollute the environment isn't smart. "We want to see them changing the labeling so consumers get rid of wipes in the right way and help stop tiny bits of plastic getting into our seas."

Source: [The Herald](#), 16 June 2016

How Protected are our Fisheries

Shepstone & Wylie Attorneys

South Africa's marine environment, which extends along more than 3000 km of coastline, is rich in biodiversity with over 10 000 recorded marine plant and animal species. Many of these species form the basis of our fisheries, including hake, anchovy, tuna, snoek, rock lobster and abalone which are commercially exploited along our west coast, and squid, linefish and a wide range of intertidal resources on our east coast which provide an important food source and livelihood for many coastal communities. Our fisheries also support a number of recreational and tourism activities, such as recreational fishing, scuba diving, whale watching and shark-diving. Aquaculture (fish farming) is an emerging fishery.

According to government, the fisheries sector is estimated to be worth R6 billion per annum, directly employing about 27 000 people and contributing nearly 1% to our GDP. The sector is however facing a number of environmental threats, most notably

overexploitation, substantial by-catches, poaching, marine pollution, habitat destruction and increasing water temperatures as a result of climate change.

In response, South Africa is signatory to a number of international agreements and has a number of domestic laws in place that regulate the utilisation and conservation of our marine living resources.

- The Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998 (MLRA) regulates the utilisation of marine living resources in South Africa through the management and allocation of fishing rights, prescribed fishing methods, protection of marine species and enforcement against illegal marine activities.
- The National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 is a key regulatory tool for providing protection and conservation of ecologically viable areas representative of South Africa's biological diversity. Currently 22 off shore marine protected areas are in the process of being declared under this Act which is critically important for the conservation of our fisheries.
- Our fisheries are also protected under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004, which makes provision for the identification and special protection of threatened marine ecosystems and species and the control of marine alien and invasive species.
- The National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 (NEMICMA) is one of our newer pieces of legislation and was promulgated to establish a system of integrated coastal and estuarine management in South Africa. Together with the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), NEMICMA plays an important role in protecting our fisheries and their respective habitats by imposing a duty on all persons to avoid causing adverse effects on the coastal environment and by requiring an EIA and environmental authorisation prior to commencing certain listed marine-based activities.

The promotion of our ocean economy is the first programme being rolled out under Operation Phakisa, an initiative launched by government in 2014 to bring about rapid economic transformation. It is estimated that the development of the nine identified sectors of South Africa's ocean economy could generate an estimated GDP contribution of 129 to 177 billion rand by 2033 and over 600 000 jobs. One of Operation Phakisa's critical focus areas is the development of an overarching, integrated ocean governance framework for the sustainable growth of the ocean economy, which has already brought about the release of the Marine Spatial Planning Bill and Aquaculture Bill for comment earlier this year, with more changes to the regulatory framework expected in the near future.

Source: [Lexology](#), 23 June 2016

Boom time: Boyan Slat launches prototype to clean up ocean debris

Peter Cluskey

A revolutionary new maritime “vacuum cleaner” which could suck more than 20 billion tonnes of plastic waste out of the world's oceans – solving one of our most intractable environmental problems – has started sea trials off the Dutch coast. Invented three years ago by a then 19-year-old engineering student, the 100-metre-long prototype was towed 23km into the North Sea last Thursday, where its performance in storm conditions will be monitored over the next six months using a system of remote-controlled sensors – before it's moved to the Japanese island of Tsushima for a second phase of tests.

Ultimately, the aim is to use the new Ocean Clean-up boom – it doesn't have a catchier title yet – to tackle the greatest concentration of sea-borne plastic debris on the planet in what's known as “the Pacific trash vortex”, a system of rotating currents discovered in the North Pacific in the late 1980s. The vortex is roughly between 135-155 degrees west and 35-42 degrees north, and is best described as a toxic mix of plastics, chemical sludge

and other debris that has devastated marine ecosystems over an area conservatively estimated at twice the size of the continental United States.

Floating booms

The trials were preceded by three years of computer modelling. If they are successful, it's expected that the final design of the clean-up unit, comprising 100km of interlinked floating booms and processing platforms – 1,000 times the size of the prototype – will be deployed in the heart of the vortex, somewhere between California and Hawaii, by 2020.

There are many aspects of this Dutch piece of innovation that are remarkable, but the key to its design is its system of floating booms similar to those used the world over by salvage companies from the Netherlands – including in Bantry Bay after the Betelgeuse tanker disaster of 1979 – to contain and remove large oil slicks.

In this case, the vulcanised rubber booms have a different function though: they act as funnels that are angled so that they passively harness the ocean currents to channel – effectively float – the debris into its large V-shaped collection units, no matter how rough the weather.

What's technologically unique about this capture system is that while plastics and debris are collected, sea-life is totally unaffected. Because there are no nets and the speed of the filtering is very slow, fish – and even, believe it or not, plankton – pass by unhindered. At the same time, while the plastics are being removed, sea water processors will be located where the platform is anchored to the sea bed – and these will generate electricity, enough at least, along with solar units on the surface, to provide power when the sea-going tenders arrive periodically to empty its multiple collection units.

Because of the unforgiving ocean in which it will be operating, and because it will be relatively light, the boom will be capable of being anchored at depths of up to 4.5km, which is almost twice as deep as has been possible in the past with other floating structures.

That's why the current North Sea tests are so important to its ability to function virtually endlessly in the most hostile of environments. "The main objective is to make sure we can build something that can survive at sea for years, if not decades," says 21-year-old Boyan Slat, the engineering student at world-renowned Delft University of Technology who first came up with this design when he was 19 – and has postponed finishing his degree until he can bring it to fruition.

"We want to test the efficiency of the system, understand its behaviour, and see what damage it suffers from abrasion or fatigue. The North Sea can be a pretty violent place. If it can stay whole here, it can stay whole anywhere."

Perhaps most remarkably in funding terms, while the final unit – the booms plus collection pods – is expected to cost only about €300,000 to build, the team behind it estimate that by recycling the plastic it collects, it can generate about €500 million a year, making it a potentially profitable environmental solution.

Even up to now, in the design and development phase, given what it is capable of achieving, the costs have been pretty modest.

When Slat – then an unknown student in the Netherlands – first went public with his design in 2014, he decided to set up the Ocean Clean-up Foundation and see what he could raise through crowd funding. To his amazement, almost 40,000 people were impressed enough to donate a total of €2 million over just two months.

Since then, the Dutch government has become involved. It has seen the results of tests carried out at the Maritime Research Institute of the Netherlands at Wageningen University, which specialises in environmental science and has been highly impressed, contributing a reported €500,000 so far.

That's been matched by Dutch dredging and marine contractors, Royal Boskalis Westminster, who bring global industry expertise to the table and whose chief executive, Peter Berdowski, has described the project as "very inspiring". Another backer, who remains anonymous, is said to have signed a cheque for €1.5 million.

All this has turned Slat overnight into not just an entrepreneur and an innovator but also into a new Dutch icon and a role model for his peers to such an extent that he's to join prime minister Mark Rutte as part of a trade and climate mission to Indonesia in November.

Political influence

Inventions with the potential to benefit the global environment on such a scale and so cheaply are rare and internationally very cool. "I am certain we can use our political influence with other governments, businesses and international institutions to fund this on an even bigger and more ambitious scale," says Dutch environment minister Sharon Dijksma. "We are used to fronting public-private partnerships like this. When we're convinced, that's not a problem. When this project is a success, philanthropists all over the world will be standing in line asking to join us."

She's probably right. One idea already being floated is that the clean-up boom could be used across the mouths of major rivers where they meet the ocean to catch some of the 800 metric tonnes of plastic that pours into the Pacific and Indian oceans every year – before it reaches deeper waters.

This is something that's likely to be discussed by the Dutch delegation with the Indonesian government. It's already been noted by officials in The Hague that the Indonesian archipelago has the world's second-highest concentration of shoreline debris, after Sicily.

Is a complete clean-up really possible? It seems so, but it will take time. Slat and his team believe that with the system working flat-out, collecting half the plastic in the North Pacific should take about a decade – not at all bad considering how long it's taken to build up there. "One of the problems with environmental work in these waters is that there isn't any real imagery of this garbage because it's spread over millions of square kilometres and can't be seen on satellite photographs," says Slat. "By collecting it in our units, however, people will be able to get some impression of just how large-scale this is.

I hope it will bring home the importance of recycling, in every home – and reducing our consumption of plastic packaging.

Source: [Irish Times](#), 27 June 2016

Cambodia would not back upcoming decision on South China Sea: PM Hun Sen

IANS

Ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) leader and Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen on Tuesday said the CPP would not back an upcoming decision over South China Sea, deeming it "the worst political collusion in the framework of international politics."

In 2013, the Philippines unilaterally filed compulsory arbitration against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague with respect to the two sides' disputes in the South China Sea, Xinhua News Agency reported. "The CPP does not support, and more so is against, any declaration by ASEAN to support decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in relation to the South China Sea disputes, which some countries outside the region have wire-pulled and pressured ASEAN members even before the court reaches a decision," Hun Sen said in a speech during the CPP's 65th founding anniversary in Phnom Penh. "The CPP foresees this issue, and views it the worst political collusion in the framework of international politics, the result of which would lead to division among ASEAN members themselves and between ASEAN and China," he said.

The prime minister warned that efforts of some countries outside the region to mobilize forces against China would bring negative impacts on ASEAN and peace in the region.

Source: [First Post](#), 28 June 2016