



MAKING WAVES

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Indonesian Govt to finalize joint maritime security cooperation

-Marguerite Afra Sapiie

Indonesia will finalize on Thursday the concrete form of a joint security cooperation to ensure the safety of Indonesian export barges crossing the regional waters with the Philippines, an official says.

Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said Manila had given the green light to Indonesian Military (TNI) vessels guarding Indonesian barges until they reached Philippine waters, from where an Armed Forces of the Philippines vessel would escort them to their destination and back into Indonesian waters. "There is no problem with the Philippines; we can enter its territory after reporting how many vessels and the number of personnel guarding them," Ryamizard said on Monday.

Once in the Philippine's territory, the Philippine armed forces would become the head of the operation, and Indonesia would follow their commands, Ryamizard said, making assurances that the two parties had reached full understanding and there would not be any problems.

The minister is scheduled to meet his Philippine counterpart Delfin Lorenzana to further discuss the mechanism of the security operation ahead of its implementation on Thursday in Kuala Lumpur, where Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammudin Hussein will join them for a trilateral meeting aimed at stepping up security in the regional waters.

Ryamizard asserted that during the meeting, the three countries would finalize the mechanism of the joint Navy exercises that will precede the implementation of the joint sea patrols, as a follow-up of the trilateral maritime security agreement signed in May.

The implementation of joint patrols will be accelerated, following the abduction of three Indonesian sailors in Malaysia's Sabah waters in early July, less than a month after the

kidnapping of seven Indonesian ship crew members by Philippine militant groups in southern Philippine waters.

Source: [The Jakarta Post](#), 18 July 2016

Dryad Maritime report finds increase in crew kidnapping in Gulf of Guinea

Marine crimes are increasing in the Gulf of Guinea and Sulu Sea with crew kidnap being the main threat, according to a report by Dryad Maritime. The threats in those areas remains a concern despite decreases in maritime piracy in other regions such as South East Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Dryad Maritime reported that a total of 34 incidents of maritime crime and piracy were recorded across South East Asia during the second quarter of this year, bringing the total for the first half of 2016 to 49.

Compared with the first six months of the last year, the new rate is a 66% reduction reported during the same period of this year. "We are very mindful of the fact that the situation at sea can change rapidly." Dryad Maritime chief operating officer Ian Millen said: "In the Indian Ocean, we are witnessing a period of de-escalation as ship owners are placing less reliance on armed security in favour of information-based risk mitigation.

"Whilst the welcome containment of Somali piracy has come about as a result of a comprehensive, joined-up approach, including naval forces and embarked armed guards, we are very mindful of the fact that the situation at sea can change rapidly.

"In short, avoiding complacency and remaining vigilant is as important today as it was in years gone by, as any material change in the risk/reward ratio for Somali pirates could result in further hijacks of those that fail to prepare well or are reckless in straying too close to Somali shores."

The company also noted that the Gulf of Guinea is now considered to be the most dangerous region in the world for seafarers and was designated a pirate danger area by them in April this year.

In April, the region witnessed 14 attacks occurring off the Niger Delta, resulting in the kidnap of ten crew members from three vessels. Other conflicts occurring in areas such as Libya, Syria and Yemen have also become a threat to mariners.

Source: Ship-technology.com, 29 July 2016

US to work with Sri Lanka Navy for maritime security and stability

Amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18) conducts operations in preparation for an underway replenishment. New Orleans is part of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and is on a regularly scheduled deployment in support of global maritime security. Boxer ARG is operating in the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Daniel Barker/Released). The United States (US) says it will look to work with the Sri Lanka Navy for maritime security and stability.

The USS New Orleans (LPD 18) with embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will arrive in Sri Lanka for a port visit on July 24. The ship and embarked MEU will be in Sri Lanka to increase bilateral ties with the Sri Lankan Navy and provide US support and training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

“The 21st century is in many ways the Indo-Pacific century, and Sri Lanka is well-positioned to take advantage of its strategic location,” said US Ambassador Atul Keshap. “The United States looks forward to working with the Sri Lanka Navy as a key force for maritime security and stability.”

Approximately 200 sailors from the Sri Lanka Navy will participate in the two-day humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training, led by members of 13thMEU and experts from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

“We look forward to exchanging best practices with our Sri Lankan partners,” said Major John Arnold, commander of the 13th MEU forces on the USS New Orleans. “Opportunities to exchange expertise on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief help us understand how to best integrate with our regional partners during crisis response.”

Along with members of the US Embassy, the Sailors and Marines will also take time out of their shore leave to visit local health clinics and schools in Colombo and provide free health screenings. In addition, the ship will donate more than 600 books to a school library.

The USS New Orleans is operating in the U.S. Pacific Command area of operations as part of a seven-month deployment to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Its crew and embarked Marines are also looking forward to experiencing Sri Lanka's vibrant culture and engaging with its people during their visit.

This is the second U.S. Navy ship to visit Sri Lanka in the past four months, following the visit of the U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge in March.

Source: [Colombo Gazette](#), 22 July 2016

Maritime security – EU naval mission sails in troubled waters

-Tim Compston

This is certainly an opportune moment to take stock of what is actually happening in the seas between Libya and Italy with regards to the trafficking of migrants and the attempts being made to interdict such activity in what, given recent news reports, are undoubtedly difficult and tragic circumstances. Despite criticism from some quarters that it hasn't done enough on the people smuggling front, especially with regards to tackling the traffickers in coastal waters, the mandate of the EU Naval Force Operation – EUNAVFOR MED (Operation Sophia) – has just been extended for another year. Of course, as we will see, having a volatile situation in Libya certainly hasn't helped matters.

So how big is the people smuggling problem at the moment? According to figures provided by the UK MOD the number of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Italy since the start of January this year amounts to over 25,000 with many of those originating in Sub-Saharan Africa, including 18 percent from Nigeria. Although this is still relatively small fry compared to the 180,000 who made their way to

Greece, all the signs show that trafficking activity is likely to pick-up pace as we enter the summer period when conditions at sea are more favourable.

A naval view

Speaking in defence of the EU operation in the Central Mediterranean, Lieutenant Rino Gentile from the Italian Navy, who is based at the headquarters of EUNAVFOR MED – Operation Sophia, is quick to stress that all activities associated with this critical mission have to be conducted in accordance with international law and under the authority of UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 2240.

Asked whether the priority of the operation to date has been to save lives or to stop the people smugglers themselves, Lieutenant Gentile responds that first and foremost it is about contributing to the disruption of the smugglers’ business model by denying them freedom of movement and, crucially, ‘neutralising their vessels and ‘enabling’ assets’. When it comes to saving lives, Lieutenant Gentile says that although Operation Sophia is not a search and rescue mission per se, all assets are still bound by law to respond to Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) situations: “The rescue of persons at sea is also part of the DNA for any mariner. We have and will continue to respond to these events under the co-ordination of the relevant Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC). Indeed, from the start of the mission until May 23rd we have rescued over 13,800 migrants.”

This was, Lieutenant Gentile explains, during 84 rescue events coordinated by the relevant Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. An additional 31,096 migrants he confirms have been rescued by other actors in the area with the contribution of EUNAVFOR MED assets.

Mission phases

Lieutenant Gentile adds that, in practical terms, the operation is actually designed to run in four distinct phases: “The first consists of the deployment of forces to build a comprehensive understanding of smuggling activity and methods [this phase is now complete].” Phase two, which is active, is where smugglers’ vessels can be searched and

diverted on the high seas. This, he says, could eventually be expanded into relevant territorial waters if there is a suitable UNSCR plus the consent of the state concerned: “The third phase, subject to the necessary legal framework, would see EU naval forces taking measures against vessels – and the associated assets – related to smuggling inside the coastal state’s territory itself.” According to Lieutenant Gentile, the last, and fourth, phase is basically when things are brought to a conclusion with the withdrawal of forces and completion of the operation.

Measuring success

With regards to the impact which Operation Sophia has had on the modus operandi of the people smugglers, Lieutenant Gentile contrasts what was common practice around phase one of the operation with phase two: “During the mission’s first phase we witnessed that migrants’ boats were escorted by the traffickers until well inside international waters. Now [with phase two] it is not like that anymore, the smugglers and traffickers remain far away as they fear being apprehended.” Lieutenant Gentile believes that, especially in the second phase where naval units are authorised to board, search, seize and, if necessary, divert suspicious vessels on the high seas, Operation Sophia represents an effective deterrent: “Smugglers and traffickers have limited their operations to Libyan territorial waters and are not coming anymore onto the high seas to recover migrant boats as happened in the past,” he concludes.

Drilling down to some more specific metrics regarding the positive impact of Operation Sophia as of May 23rd 2016, the course taken by EUNAVFOR MED has resulted in 69 suspected smugglers and traffickers being prosecuted by the Italian authorities. Beyond this, Gentile says that the mission has prevented 119 boats – 91 rubber, 24 wooden, and three fishing vessels – from being re-used by the smugglers.

In terms of whether there has been a surge in activity in the central Mediterranean as people move away from other routes, Gentile says that, at the moment, this does not appear to be the case but with the closure of the Balkan route and the arrival of the summer he expects that numbers will rise again: “We have lots of different figures but I can say that at least 150,000 will arrive: “They [migrants] may choose the most dangerous route going South to Sudan and then coming North – because Egypt will not

allow them to cross the country – or they can take the sea from Syria and Lebanon directly to Italy or Greece as was the case in 2013 when they used big mother ships or merchant vessels.”

Additional tasking

So where do things go from here? Well with Operation Sophia’s mandate being extended for another year, Lieutenant Gentile tells me that the European Council has added two further supporting tasks, specifically: “Capacity building and training of, and information sharing with, the Libyan Coastguard and Navy, based on a request by the legitimate Libyan authorities.” The other supporting task, which Lieutenant Gentile flags up, is to contribute to information sharing as well as the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya on the basis of a new UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution).

In closing, Lieutenant Gentile is keen to underline the international nature of the mission thus far: “At the moment 24 EU member states are participating with 1,500 people part of the international staff working in the Operations Headquarters in Rome, the staff embarked on-board the flagship [the aircraft carrier Cavour] in support of the Force Commander, all the naval and air assets’ crews – they represent the real heart and mind of the operation.”

Federica Mogherini on board the aircraft carrier Cavour in Lampedusa, while visiting EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia | Credit: European External Action Service

House of Lords report

Of course the EU NAVFOR MED mission is certainly not without its critics and a recent report by the House of Lords has created significant waves in this regard. Speaking during the launch of the report back in May, Lord Tugendhat, Chairman of the House of Lords EU External Affairs Sub-Committee, explained why such an inquiry was necessary in the first place: “Everything to do with immigration is extremely topical, there is a lot of publicity attached to what is happening in the Mediterranean. Operation Sophia itself has been going for a year. It was coming up to the decision as to whether it

is going to be renewed or not and this seemed to be a good moment in which to review what has happened [and to make an input into the decision that has to be taken].”

Lord Tugendhat did acknowledge that the mission is saving many lives: “That is a very important consideration but what it [Operation Sophia] is not doing is stopping or interrupting the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean and nor has it been able to get to grips with the business model of the people who are actually organising the trafficking.”

For Lord Tugendhat the biggest dilemma which Operation Sophia continues to face is the lack of any sort of stable government in Libya: “That [Libya] is a point of departure for the migrants. Where you have a stable government, as for instance in Morocco, there is very little movement of people across the Mediterranean but in Libya there is no stable government and therefore it is an open area for the people organising the smuggling.”

Looking at the limitations of Operation Sophia, Lord Tugendhat said that there are really two principal issues muddying the waters: “One is that it [the mission] is unable to arrest the key organisers of the smuggling because they don’t go on the rubber dinghies and wooden boats and so forth. It is unable also to undertake serious intelligence gathering. It can’t of course go ashore in Libya, it can’t indeed go inshore, and therefore it is operating, if not with one arm behind its back, with one and a half arms behind its back.”

Despite the disappointments as he sees them, Lord Tugendhat pointed out that the House of Lords report still, in fact, recommends that the mandate of operation Sophia should be renewed in the hope that a stable government may emerge in Libya, one with which the member states in the European Union could work: “That remains to be seen but we should be ready for it. We also must remember – and we point this out – that the movement of people across the Mediterranean is part of the mass migration of people from poorer countries to richer countries and that is going to require a much more thought out coordinated policy response. It is something which is of deep concern to people all over the European Union and we point the way towards trying to persuade people to take that seriously,” he concluded.

British contribution

In terms of the UK's input into Operation Sophia and the wider effort in the Mediterranean an MOD (Ministry Of Defence) spokesperson confirmed to SecurityNewsDesk that, since May 2015, Royal Navy assets and Border Force Vessels have rescued almost 18,000 people as well as intercepting suspected people smugglers. The UK, he reports, is also involved in Frontex search and rescue missions in the area with the Home Office having chartered a civilian vessel – VOS Grace – for this purpose which is deployed with detachments of Border Force officers and Royal Marines.

Returning to Operation Sophia itself the MOD spokesperson says that the UK currently contributes HMS Enterprise – a multi-role survey vessel – for this purpose. Although, as the MOD spokesperson acknowledges, Operation Sophia is not a search and rescue mission, with the primary purpose of the mission being to seize smugglers' vessels, he says that naval assets like HMS Enterprise will still continue to respond to boats in distress.

At a diplomatic level the MOD spokesperson flags up the fact that the UK has been very supportive of the mission and, he point outs, was actually instrumental in securing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) supporting the second phase of the EU Naval Force Operation in the Mediterranean.

Change in Libya

Considering the current situation in Libya, with its 1,700 kilometres of coastline, which is impacting so directly on people smuggling activity across the Central Mediterranean route, the MOD spokesperson sees a glimmer of hope amidst all the recent turmoil: “At this stage what is needed is a Government in Libya with whom we can work so we can cooperate with the Libyan Coastguard, in Libyan waters, to turn back the boats and the smugglers there too. There is now a new Prime Minister and a Government that we have recognised as the sole legitimate authority in Libya. These are still early days but we must do what we can to make this work.”

The big picture

Ultimately, the situation which the EU Naval Force finds itself in is far from ideal with many of the factors impacting on the success, or otherwise, of the EU's anti-people smuggling mission firmly outside its control. The hope has to be that should some semblance of order return to Libya then there will be more scope for EU naval assets – including those from the UK – to clamp down on the people trafficking operations at source, allowing the naval mission to finally extend its focus to the coastal as well as the international waters off Libya.

Source: [Security News Desk](#), 27 July 2016

China and Freedom of Navigation in South China Sea: The Context of International Tribunal's Verdict

-Gurpreet S Khurana

On 12 July 2016, the Tribunal constituted at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS) issued its decision in the arbitration instituted by the Philippines against China. It relates to the various legal issues in the South China Sea (SCS) inter alia pertaining to China's historic rights and 'nine-dash line', the status of features and lawfulness of Chinese actions.

Within hours of the release of PCA Tribunal's decision, India released a government press release, stating that "India supports freedom of navigation and over-flight, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS. India believes that States should resolve disputes through peaceful means without threat or use of force and exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability..."

However, Beijing has stated that China would not accept the Tribunal's verdict. Furthermore, tensions have rekindled in the SCS with reports indicating that China intends "closing off a part of SCS for military exercises." The issue of Freedom of Navigation (FON) is of immense relevance not merely for the SCS littorals, but for all

countries that have stakes in peace and tranquillity in the SCS; and yet bears a significant potential to flare-up into a maritime conflict.

This issue brief aims to examine China's approach to FON in context of international law, including the verdict of the PCA Tribunal. In this writing, the term 'FON' refers to the broader concept of 'navigational freedoms', including the freedom of over-flight. Furthermore, this brief attempts to identify the de jure ramifications – even if not de facto, considering China's rejection of the verdict – of the PCA Tribunal's decision on China with regard to FON in the area.

FON is a fundamental tenet of customary international law that was propounded in 1609 by the Dutch lawyer Hugo Grotius, who called it *Mare Liberum* (Freedom of the Seas). The legal tenet is codified in the UNCLOS, a process that involved over two decades of intense labour of the international maritime lawmakers at three brainstorming Conferences. The Third Conference itself (UNCLOS III) spanned nine years, which led to the signing of Convention in 1982, and its subsequent entry into force in 1994. The Peoples' Republic of China was among the first signatories to the Convention on 10 December 1982 (along with India), and ratified it on 07 June 1996. The key question is whether China – despite the foregoing – is impeding freedom of navigation in the SCS? For a comprehensive answer, the issue would need to be examined separately for the three legal regimes/ areas wherein international law applies differently: China's Territorial Sea, its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the other areas within the 'nine dash line'.

Territorial Seas

In a State's 12-nautical mile (NM) Territorial Sea, the right of 'Innocent Passage' provided for in UNCLOS Article 17 applies to both commercial and military vessels. As regards commercial shipping, there is no evidence whatsoever of China denying this right to such ships flying the flag of any nationality. Notably, China is a manufacturing-based and export-led economy, which imports nearly 80 per cent of its oil and natural gas via the sea. Therefore, China has tremendous stakes in unimpeded maritime commerce, and does not stand to gain by deliberately impeding the FON of merchant ships.

For foreign warships, however, the ‘yardstick’ of ‘Innocent Passage’ differs. During the UNCLOS negotiations, most developing countries wanted restrictions on of foreign warships crossing their Territorial Seas. Many of these States proposed that foreign warships must obtain ‘authorization’ for this from the coastal State. Eventually, however, the proposed amendment was not incorporated in UNCLOS; nonetheless, the States were permitted to take measures to safeguard their security interests. Consequently, and in accordance with UNCLOS Article 3105, like many other States, China made a declaration in June 1996 while ratifying UNCLOS, seeking ‘prior permission’ for all foreign warships intending to exercise the right of Innocent Passage across its Territorial Seas. (The declaration was based upon Article 6 of China’s national law of 1992.7). It is pertinent to state that about 40 other States – including many developed countries in Europe – made similar declarations seeking ‘prior permission’ for Innocent Passage. (Notably, India seeks only ‘prior notification’. However, the United States does not recognize the right of either ‘prior permission’ or ‘prior notification’).

It may be recalled that during the Cold War, in 1983, the Soviet Union promulgated rules for warship navigation in its Territorial Seas, which permitted Innocent Passage only in limited areas of Soviet Territorial Seas in the Baltic Sea, the Sea of Okhotsk and Sea of Japan. This led to a vigorous protest from the United States. Later in 1986 and 1988, the United States Navy conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) in the Soviet Territorial Sea in the Black Sea. In contrast, therefore, China’s stand on navigation of foreign warships through Territorial Seas of ‘undisputed’ Chinese territory is clearly legitimate.

However, the passage of foreign warships within 12-NM of the disputed SCS islands/features – which are occupied and claimed by China – has been highly contentious. Since the United States seeks to prevent any norm-building in favour of China’s territorial claims, it has been undertaking FON operations (FONOPS) in the 12-NM zone of these islands. Notably, since the launch of the US “Freedom of Navigation Programme” in 1979, the United States has conducted such operations at numerous occasions all around the globe; sometimes even against its closest allies.

From the perspective of China – that is in de facto control of the islands/features – its objection to the US warships cruising within 12-NM of these islands/ features without ‘prior permission’ is as much valid as the US FONOPS to uphold its right of military mobility across the global commons. Hence, until such time that the issue of sovereignty over these islands is settled, the legitimacy of China’s stand on FON in these waters cannot be questioned.

Exclusive Economic Zone

Alike in its Territorial Sea, China has never impeded FON of commercial vessels in its EEZ. However, like many other States, China has been objecting to foreign military activities in its EEZ. It may be recalled that in April 2001, China scrambled its J-8 fighters against the US EP-3 surveillance aircraft operating about 60 NM off China’s Hainan Island, leading to a mid-air collision.

Unfortunately, the UNCLOS does not contain any specific provision, either permitting or prohibiting such activities. According to Articles 58(1) and 87 of UNCLOS, the EEZ is part of ‘International Waters’ wherein all foreign warships may exercise High Seas FON, with certain exceptions that relate to economic/ resource-related uses of the EEZ, such as Marine Scientific Research, which may be conducted only if permitted by the coastal State. Therefore, if a foreign military conducts hydrographic surveys in China’s EEZ, it may be justified as being among the High Seas Freedoms since it may be necessary, for example, for safe navigation of warships. However, if a foreign military conducts intelligence collection in the EEZ – as China interprets the objective of US military activities in its EEZ – it may be objectionable, at least in terms of the spirit of UNCLOS, whose Article 88 says that “The high seas shall be reserved for peaceful purposes.” Of course, some may consider ‘intelligence collection’ as a normal peacetime activity of a State to bolster its military preparedness to maintain peace. But this only serves to reinforce the prevailing void in UNCLOS, rather than legally deny China the right of ensuring its own security.

Other Areas within ‘Nine-Dash Line’

China has never explicitly articulated its stand on the legal status of the sea areas within the ‘nine-dash line’, which lie beyond its 12-NM Territorial Sea and the 200-NM EEZ. However, by laying ‘historic’ claim to all SCS features (islands, rocks or reefs), and referring to all these as islands entitled to EEZ and Legal Continental Shelf (LCS), it has implicitly claimed sovereign jurisdiction over the entire sea area enclosed within the nine dash line. Based on such assumed sovereign rights – though disputed by other claimant States – China has been curtailing FON in these areas, particularly for warships. For example, in the days leading to the International Tribunal’s verdict on the China-Philippines Arbitration, Beijing declared a ‘no sail zone’ in the SCS during a major naval exercise in the area from 4 to 11 July 2016. The ‘prohibited zone’ was a sizable 38,000 sq mile area lying between Vietnam and the Philippines. It encompasses the Paracel Islands, but not the arterial International Shipping Lane (ISL) of the SCS. During such exercises in the past too, China has been imposing such restrictions on navigation in the SCS. While some analysts have referred to such restrictions on FON as violation of maritime law, given the susceptibility of prevailing international law to divergent interpretations, China cannot be denied the right to interpret law in a manner that best suits its security interests.

However, the above scenario prevailed prior to 12 July 2016. The verdict of the PCA Tribunal has changed all that. The Tribunal has dismissed China’s claim to ‘historic rights’ within the ‘nine-dash line’, indicating that such claim was incompatible with UNCLOS, and has asserted that no feature claimed by it in the SCS is capable of generating an EEZ. At least from the standpoint of international law, therefore, Beijing’s claim to sovereign jurisdiction over these areas is decisively annulled. Henceforth, China will need to concede to unimpeded FON in the SCS, both for commercial shipping and warships. For example, if it needs to conduct a naval exercise in the area, declaring a ‘no sail/ prohibited zone’ would no longer be legally tenable. Instead, China could, at best, merely promulgate a mere ‘advisory’ for the safety of ships and civil aircraft intending to transit through the exercise area.

China could possibly react to the adverse verdict of the International Tribunal by declaring an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the SCS. A resort to this would not be constructive since it would further heighten anxieties in the area. Nonetheless,

China's declaration of ADIZ would be tenable from the legal standpoint. The promulgation of such Security zones is not prohibited by international law. However, for interpreting it as 'not prohibited, and hence permitted', promulgating such a zone must adhere to the spirit of law, essentially in terms of its need for maintain peace or for self-defence, and that it is not obverse to the overarching principle of freedom of navigation and over-flight.

Concluding Remarks

It is amply clear from the foregoing that the contentions over freedom of navigation and over-flight in the SCS are more of result of the geopolitical 'mistrust' between China and the other States, aggravated by the voids and ambiguities of international law, rather than any objective failing on part of China and the other States involved to observe the prevailing tenets of international law.

The geopolitical relationships constitute an aspect that China and the other countries involved need to resolve amongst themselves, and the rest of the international community can do little about it. Further, there is hardly a case for convening the fourth UN Conference on the Law of the Sea to renegotiate the UNCLOS, which is a result of painstaking efforts of the international community during a period that was geopolitically less complex than it is today.

Nonetheless, it is encouraging that the lingering maritime-disputes in the Asia-Pacific are being arbitrated upon by international tribunals. Over the years, the decisions of international tribunals on cases such as the India-Bangladesh (July 2014) and the more recent one between China and Philippines on the SCS would be valuable to fill the legal voids, and would firm up over time to add to the prevailing tenets of international law.

China's adherence to PCA Tribunal's decision would not only contribute to peace and prosperity in the region, but would also best serve its own national interest, at least in the longer term. However, it remains to be seen how long Beijing will take to assimilate the 'new normal' into its policymaking.

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

Maritime security: NIMASA chief seeks agencies' support

-Emeka Ugwanyion

The Director-General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Dakuku Peterside, has called stakeholders to redouble their efforts in ensuring adequate security for the maritime sector.

Peterside, who made the call when he hosted the Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Ferguson Bobai, at the agency's head office in Lagos, decried the rise in piracy and called for strategic initiatives and synergy among stakeholders to arrest the trend.

He said: "The operations report available to us is nothing to cheer about. While there is a drop in the number of vessels calling on our ports, there seem to be a comparative increase in piracy activities. This means that operationally, both NIMASA and the Nigerian Navy must step up our game in order to guarantee continuous prosperity of Nigeria's economy."

While commending the Nigerian Navy for the considerable reduction of criminal activities in Nigeria's territorial waters in the last three months, Peterside challenged stakeholders to do more to eliminate the scourge.

He acknowledged the existing partnership with the Nigerian Navy, which he said has been mutually beneficial, saying that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two agencies is being reviewed to make it more effective and beneficial to the entire maritime industry.

"I am confident that the strategies being put in place by the Nigerian Navy, including the launch of the FALCON EYE and partnerships with relevant stakeholders will go a long way in addressing the security challenges in our waterways" he said, and pledged the

Agency's continuous collaboration with the Nigerian Navy in the task of promoting a friendly environment for maritime activities in Nigeria.

Responding, Rear Admiral Bobai said he was in NIMASA on a familiarisation visit after taking over the Western Naval Command. He called for greater cooperation between the two agencies for the interest of Nigeria.

He assured of the Navy's readiness to partner with NIMASA, saying: "Our doors are open for a sustained partnership with your agency. There should be no obstacles to our collaboration which should guarantee the unhindered movement of vessels doing legitimate business in Nigerian waters."

Source: [The Nation](#), 25 July 2016

Japan reinforces maritime security ties with Sri Lanka to counter China

-Munza Mushtaq

Amid China's growing assertiveness, Japan has been increasing its focus on Sri Lanka by playing a proactive role in helping develop the island's maritime capabilities. In June, the Japanese Government granted 1.8 billion Japanese Yen to Sri Lanka to implement the Maritime Safety Capability Improvement project.

Japan-Lanka

The project, which aims to contribute toward the improvement of maritime safety capability of the Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG), also allows Sri Lanka to procure two patrol vessels to ensure safe navigation of vessels, anti-piracy and transnational crime countermeasures and prevention of destruction of marine environment and resources. The agreement, which was signed in Colombo, also made way for Japan to provide training for Sri Lanka's coast guard personnel.

The project deal was signed just a month after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe underscored the "importance of maintaining the freedom of the high seas and maritime

order based on the rule of law” at a meeting with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on the sidelines of the G7 summit held in Nagoya, Japan.

Abe’s declaration comes amid China’s increasing maritime initiatives in the South Asian region, including in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which have sparked concern among countries such as Japan and India. Both Japan and China are among Sri Lanka’s main foreign funders, and Colombo, over the years, has tried to strike a balance between the two countries.

While Japan is showing more interest in enhancing maritime cooperation with Sri Lanka, over 55 port calls have been made since 2009 by Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) and the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) ships.

The Sri Lanka-Japan Dialogue on Maritime Security, Safety and Oceanic Issues kicked off in Colombo in January this year. During the meeting, Japanese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Kenichi Suganuma, said securing freedom of navigation and safety of sea routes is a major concern for Japan adding they wish to see the establishment of an open, stable ocean where rule of law dominates.

Maritime expert Rohan Masakorala said that while Sri Lanka enjoys good relationship with Japan and China, efforts must be made to maintain this cordial relationship and discourage disputes in the Indian Ocean.

“Issues will come from time to time as all are looking for resources to sustain demand, but it is important that all must work toward diplomatic solutions. A legal framework that is practical to all must be found to manage oceans and resources,” Masakorala, the immediate past Secretary General of the Asian Shippers’ Council, told Asia Times.

Citing as to why Japan finds Sri Lanka increasingly important in the region, he said in the backdrop of Asia’s growing inter regional trade, a strategic maritime location such as Sri Lanka is vital for strong nations to ensure trade and security.

He said Sri Lanka must take cue from countries like Singapore and learn to play the balancing act well. “As a small country, Sri Lanka must not only balance Japan and China but all regional and global powers like how Singapore has done, it is one of the

best examples of how we should fit in to the global economy and politics,” said Masakorala who is also the CEO of the Shippers’ Academy in Colombo. China’s Belt and Road initiative can benefit not just China but even Sri Lanka due to its strategic location in the region.

Masakorala said: “China’s One Belt One Road is of course their grand plan to link trade with continents, including emerging Africa, and to access new markets both by sea and land as its population grows and the demand for energy and trade increases.

“In this sense, Sri Lanka is important as a strategic maritime mode for supply chain security, and in the future it will be a good low-cost distribution and a transshipment location for shipping and logistics as it sits between Dubai and Singapore and will serve as a gateway to Asia and probably Hong Kong to India.”

Source: [Asia Times](#), 31 July 2016



India Constructs Special Dock to Build High-Capacity Aircraft Carriers

India is constructing a special dock for high-capacity aircraft carriers at the existing premises of Cochin Shipyard Limited. According to official sources, the new dry dock will cost an estimated \$270 million.

"The objective is to augment the shipbuilding/ship repair capacity essentially required to tap the market potential by building specialized and technologically advanced large vessels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels, higher-capacity domestic aircraft carriers, jackup rigs, drill ships, large dredgers and larger vessels, as well as by repairing offshore platforms," read an official statement.

Indian Navy Captain Gurpreet S. Khurana, Executive Director of the National Maritime Foundation told Sputnik, "Notwithstanding the Russian offer to India to jointly develop a 100,000 metric ton nuclear aircraft carrier, in my view, India is unlikely to plan for such a large carrier in the foreseeable future. In my considered opinion, we would be building a 60,000-70,000 ton aircraft carrier."

India is planning to produce its domestic aircraft carrier Vishal, which is being designed to be between 60,000 and 70,000 tons. Current shipyards were considered based on their capacity for handling the construction of such a large carrier. Meanwhile, India's first domestically-made aircraft carrier has been under construction at Cochin shipyard since 2009. Currently, India operates two conventional aircraft carriers; INS Vikramaditya & INS Viraat. The INS Viraat will be decommissioned from the Navy soon.

"India needs three carriers because at any given time one carrier is being refit or undergoing repair; at least two carriers should be available to resolve issues during unforeseen emergencies...this dry dock is very important strategically, especially during a warlike situation, when our naval ships may need immediate urgent repair," says Khurana.

Project 23000E, one of the prospective new aircraft carriers proposed by the Krylov State Research Institute.

India is also targeting the repair of offshore platforms and larger vessels. Captain Khurana stated that this would create lot of economic dividends for India and that the shipbuilding industry would get a boost. Cochin is very close to the international shipping lane, which passes south of Sri Lanka. Cochin has tremendous potential for servicing foreign ships, which may also seek to get repaired and refitted at the proposed dock.

Captain Khurana explains another strategic value of the proposed dry dock. "We also may be building some LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) carriers. LNG also has strategic needs. We have no LNG carrier and the energy demand of the country is growing like anything. So it is always good for strategic reasons, in case there will be war tomorrow, to have our own LNG carrier rather than using foreign ships for carrying strategic cargo."

India imports 14.6 million tons of LNG per year. India's demand for LNG is reportedly growing at rate of more than 40% annually. The Indian government is pushing hard to get a maximum amount of cheaper LNG available in the global market.

Source: [Sputnik](#), 22 July 2016

Mauritius concludes maritime exercise

-Beth Maundrill

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has completed a maritime security tabletop exercise held in Mauritius over the 26-27 July.

The exercise looked at the need for an integrated national approach to implementation of maritime security measures. These included the IMO's Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention and International Ship and Port Facility (ISPS) Code.

'The aims are to simulate typical security related scenarios in order to provide opportunity for the various government agencies with maritime security responsibilities to raise awareness of their roles and capacities with a view to develop appropriate response plans and procedures,' said an IMO spokesperson. The exercise was hoped to identify areas of improvement, including future areas of assistance from IMO and other development partners.

This is the sixth in a series of exercises, which have been held in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden since late 2015. While implementation of ISPS and SOLAS is positive in the region there is always areas for improvement according to the spokesperson.

'Implementation generally is good but even in a country like Mauritius that has a lot of expertise and human capacity, continued training on implementation of the security measure is needed; for example, if people move jobs or positions there is often a need for training.'

A variety of participants, 24 in total, took part in the exercise including: the port, the port authority, coast guard, maritime police, Ministry of Ocean Economy, Ministry of Fisheries, Prime Minister's Office, customs and the Ministry of Environment.

'It is important that maritime security is not seen in isolation but as part of a broader picture. Good maritime security acts as an enabler for sustainable maritime transport which is essential for economic development,' explained the spokesperson.

The next exercise in this series, which have been funded by the UK, is set to be held in Tanzania in the coming months according to the IMO. The IMO has completed similar exercises in Djibouti, Maldives, Mozambique, Kenya and the Seychelles. The exercise involved a range of security and related scenarios involving policy decisions, crisis/emergency management and response.

Source: [Shephard Media](#), 28 July, 2016

Indonesia's Defence White Paper 2015: A Boost for 'Global Maritime Fulcrum'

-Premesha Saha

The latest version of Indonesia's Defence White Paper (DWP) was released in end April 2016. By that time, the Indonesian President Jokowi had completed over a year in office. The DWP says that given Indonesia's geo-strategic location, it must have a proper defence strategy. The need for Indonesia to bolster its maritime security to support the 'Global Maritime Fulcrum' (GMF) vision by 'managing its natural resources, border region and defence capabilities' also finds mention in the DWP.

The White Paper recognises the GMF and the attainment of the Minimum Essential Forces (MEF) target as official government policies. In this context, the essay aims to analyse the DWP and its relevance for the GMF vision.

National Defence Policy

The evolving strategic dynamics of the 'Asia Pacific' region and the presence of traditional as well as non-traditional security threats in this region are the driving factors behind Indonesia's defence strategy drawn up in the DWP. Besides, Indonesia still has some unresolved border disputes. Seeing the complex web of threats that can impact Indonesia's state sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety, the threats has been classified into hybrid threats, military threats and non-military threats. Indonesia's national defence policy indicates a continuation of past trends. National defence is based on a 'Total Defence System'. This means that the citizens will be equally responsible for national security along with the defence forces. Further, it lays out the country's defence policy combining military and non-military elements. For dealing with military threats, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) will be the main component, supported by a Reserve Component and Component Support. The non-military threats will be handled by Ministries outside the defence establishment based on the type and nature of the threat, supported by other elements of national power like the TNI and local governments. Finally, the TNI will continue to deal with the hybrid threat, assisted

by a Reserve Component and a Support Component along with other non-defence ministries and institutions.

The key to national defence lies in building a strong defence force with deterrent capability. As an archipelagic and maritime country, Indonesia should have a bargaining position in maintaining its sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety. Given the sensitive situation around the Natuna islands, the development of defence forces in these areas is necessary.

Indonesia's national defence policy is also aimed at maintaining its territorial sovereignty, securing its marine resources, upholding its identity as an archipelagic country, and showcasing Indonesia as a maritime power. 'The attainment of the MEF targets through the induction of drones and satellite technology' has been outlined as a means to shape the GMF. Additionally 'defence industrial development' has also been pointed out as a tool for the attainment of the GMF vision. The national defence policy will be implemented based on the Long Term Development Plan 2005-2025 (RPJP Nasional).

Context of the GMF

The GMF is an all-encompassing national vision which includes country's defence upgradation, maritime security, economic development, food security and revival of the maritime identity. Surprisingly, the DWP does not lay down a clear strategy for the realisation of the maritime security component of the GMF. The induction of drones and satellite technology stated in the DWP will not be adequate to give shape to the GMF. The second phase of the MEF has already commenced, but the DWP does not indicate the plan to progress it further.

According to Indonesian scholars, the English version of 2015 DWP fails to capture the true essence of Jokowi's GMF vision. As pointed out by Ristian Supriyanto, the Indonesian version merely mentions the terms 'Poros Maritim Dunia'(GMF) and 'maritime' more than 17 and 24 times respectively, but draws no connection with Indonesia's strategy for achieving maritime security. The DWP states that Indonesia's defence expenditure will not exceed one per cent of its GDP in the next ten years. It

stresses that Indonesia's defence modernisation is unlikely to lead to an arms race, and aims to achieve the goal of establishing Indonesia as a maritime power as outlined in the GMF. However, there is a distinction between being a merely 'maritime nation' and 'maritime power'. The DWP offers little in the way of strategizing as to how this transition is to be made.

The DWP acknowledges that the strategic policies of China, the US and the instability in the South China Sea will increasingly dominate Indonesia's strategic environment. However, it provides only a sketchy description as to how Indonesia's defence policy is crafted in response to that environment. Despite the GMF's central notion of Indonesia as an 'Indo-Pacific' power, the DWP still retains the old 'Asia-Pacific' geographical construct.

The DWP covers very comprehensively the wide spectrum of threats confronting the archipelagic nation. However, the continued reliance on 'Total Defence System' may be appropriate for internal security, but has limited applicability in achieving security in the global commons.

Another very important aspect which has been omitted in the DWP is the role of various maritime agencies in realizing the GMF vision. There has been abundant mention of the role of ministries and institutions in dealing with non-military and hybrid threats. But the DWP does not indicate how the newly modified Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) fits into the organisational hierarchy. There is an implied overlap between the functions of TNI-AL, BAKAMLA, and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, with no clear mechanism for coordination outlined among the three.

Even though some aspects of the GMF like diplomacy and naval development have been addressed, the DWP gives no indication as to how Indonesia will secure its sea borne economic activity. The DWP has very little to offer in the context of the GMF. It is a clear example of the disjunct that exists between the aspirations of the national policy makers and in the strategy laid out by the defence strategists.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), 15 July, 2016

Massive search operations to continue 24/7 for missing IAF plane; 17 ships deployed

- C Shiva kumar

The massive search operation that had been launched by Indian Airforce, Indian Navy and Indian Coastguard is said to go 24/7. The AN-32 aircraft that departed from Tambaram at 0830 hours, Chennai. The last contact with the aircraft was 16 minutes after take-off, defence sources said.

It was carrying service personnel to the strategic islands near the Malacca Straits, where India has a military base. Indian Coast Guard was the first to launch the search and rescue operation of the missing Indian Air Force aircraft said that the incident happened between 9.14am and 9.23 am. "The plane is still missing. All efforts are being done to trace the plane and the service personnel travelling on board," Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar told PTI in the evening.

The 29 people on board the Air Force's workhorse for a long period included six crew members, two of them pilots and one navigator. Besides, there were 11 personnel from the IAF including an officer, two from the Army, one from the Coast Guard and 9 from the navy which included some from its armament depot. Defence sources said the plane was at about 23,000 feet when the last contact was established.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 22 July 2016

China, Russia Plan Naval Drills in South China Sea

-Jeremy Page

China and Russia will hold joint naval exercises in the South China Sea in September, the Chinese Defense Ministry said, amid heightened regional tension following an international tribunal's rejection of Beijing's maritime claims there.

China's defense-ministry spokesman, Senior Col. Yang Yujun, gave few details at a monthly news conference on Thursday but said the drills were "routine" and not directed at any other countries.

However, they are the first joint exercises in the South China Sea between China and Russia, which have been strengthening defense ties in recent years in part due to a shared interest in countering pressure over their military activities from the U.S. and its allies.

The joint drills will be the first scheduled by any countries in the South China Sea since the tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled overwhelmingly against China on July 12 in a case brought by the Philippines over Beijing's maritime claims.

"This is a routine exercise between the two armed forces, aimed at strengthening the developing China-Russia strategic cooperative partnership," Col. Yang said. "The exercise is not directed against third parties." Russian media reported the Chinese announcement but there was no immediate confirmation from the Russian defense ministry.

Elissa Slotkin, the acting U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, said Thursday that "[Russian President Vladimir] Putin is pushing the boundaries on what Russian foreign policy is going to be about in the next decade."

Ms. Slotkin, speaking at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado, said, "There is this disgruntled feeling about how the end of the Cold War went for them. And I think Putin is playing on that with the public, his public."

Moscow and Beijing were once rivals for leadership of the Communist world, and fought a brief border conflict in 1969. Suspicions between them endure, especially over Beijing's growing influence in Central Asia, and a much-vaunted energy partnership has largely stalled. But they have often found common cause in blocking initiatives from the U.S. and its allies on the U.N. Security Council, where they are both among the five veto-wielding permanent members. In the past few years, they have also forged closer

defense ties as both have come under pressure from the U.S. and its allies over their military activities around their own borders.

In 2014, Russia and China held joint naval exercises in the East China Sea for the first time, a few months after a flare-up in a territorial dispute between Beijing and Tokyo over a cluster of islands.

In May last year, China and Russia held drills in European waters for the first time—in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea—in what many Western officials saw as a show of solidarity following Moscow’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. Those were followed by more drills in the Sea of Japan in August.

The U.S. and some of its allies have urged China to abide by the tribunal’s ruling on the South China Sea and accused Beijing of trying to assert its claims by force, including by building seven fortified artificial islands in disputed waters. China calls the ruling invalid, claiming the tribunal had no jurisdiction in the case. It counts Russia among dozens of countries that it says have backed its position. Moscow has been more circumspect in its public position, however, saying that claimants should seek a diplomatic settlement based on international law.

Russia also has close defense ties with Vietnam, another country whose claims overlap with Beijing’s in the South China Sea. Hanoi, however, has been seeking improved relations with the U.S. in response to concerns about Chinese assertiveness. During a visit there in May, President Barack Obama agreed to lift a decades-old ban on American arms sales to Vietnam.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#), 29 July 2016

India orders four maritime spy planes from Boeing, bolsters navy

-Sanjeev Miglani

India signed a contract on Wednesday to buy four maritime spy planes from Boeing Co for about \$1 billion, defence and industry sources said, aiming to bolster the navy as it tries to check China's presence in the Indian Ocean.

India has already deployed eight of the long-range P-8I aircraft to track submarine movements in the Indian Ocean and on Wednesday exercised an option for four more, two defence ministry officials and an industry source told Reuters. "It's a follow-on order, it was signed today," a defence ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to make announcements on procurements. A second defence official confirmed the value of the contract at about \$1 billion and said the aircraft were expected to enter service over the next three years.

Amrita Dhindsa, a spokeswoman for Boeing defence, space, and security in India, said she was not in a position to say anything on the contract and referred all questions to the defence ministry. But she said the P81 was an aircraft used for not only for long-range patrol but was also equipped with Harpoon missiles for anti-submarine warfare.

India has been building up its naval surveillance capabilities since China's navy expanded its reach and sent submarines, including a nuclear-powered boat that docked in Sri Lanka, across the Indian Ocean.

The deal, signed during a visit by the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Frank Kendall, marks a further tightening of India's ties with the United States, which has emerged as a top arms supplier in recent years for India's largely Soviet-equipped military. A U.S. embassy spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Boeing last year completed the delivery of the last of the aircraft under the previous order worth \$2.1 billion, an industry source said. The Indian navy has deployed some of its P8-I aircraft to the remote Andaman and Nicobar islands near the Malacca Straits and two other routes into the Indian Ocean for military and commercial shipping.

Source: [Reuters](#), 27 Jul, 2016

India and US to enhance cooperation in maritime sector

The Union Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who held wide-ranging discussions with the representatives of Harbor Department of the City of Long Beach, offered investment opportunities in building and developing new ports, construction of new berths/terminals in existing ports, coastal economic zones, dredging, ship building, ship repairing, ship recycling, development of inland waterways and coastal and cruise shipping.

India and the United States have agreed to deepen the scope of cooperation in the maritime sector with the American ports evincing keen interest in comprehensive port-led development, especially the ambitious Sagarmala programme. 150 projects under this programme have the potential of mobilizing US\$50-60bn of infrastructure investment and another US\$100bn of investment for promoting industrial growth.

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Gadkari went round the Port of Long Beach and explored joint venture opportunities with India's flagship container handling Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) to promote transfer of technology and enhance bilateral commerce. The Port of Long Beach was set up in 1911.

The Shipping Minister outlined the regulatory assistance which the Narendra Modi government has offered to the maritime sector, including grant of infrastructure status to shipyards, supportive domestic eligibility criteria for Indian shipyards for assured ship repair orders, service tax exemption on ship repair service for foreign going vessels,

setting up of ship repairing business immediately without any approval from Director Generals.

Besides, Gadkari said, the government has agreed to provide maritime clusters for ancillary industrial support and design centres, as well as financial assistance to meet the challenge of lack of competitive advantage due to heavy subsidies provided by major shipbuilding countries to their shipbuilding industry. Gadkari also highlighted the vision of Sagarmala envisaging reduction of logistics cost for EXIM and domestic trade with minimal infrastructure investment aimed at creating four million new direct jobs and another six million indirect jobs.

He told the US maritime sector that thematic studies and action plans have been developed across sector for implementation, prominent elements of which include coastal shipping revolution, coastal industrial Greenfield plants, reduced time to export container by five days and reducing cost to export by US\$50 per container.

Gadkari was briefed about the higher container traffic at the Port of Long Beach fuelled by rising imports. More than 2,000 vessels call at the Port of Long Beach each year, moving USD180bn in cargo – that's almost half abn dollars worth of international commerce every day. Port of Long Beach was once again recognized as the Best North American Seaport at the Asian Freight, Logistics and Supply Chain Awards, hosted this week in Shanghai by the shipping trade publication Asia Cargo.

Gadkari was told that through a new incentive, the Port is increasing the benefits for tenants who replace their old, inefficient electrical equipment with new technology – and boost the overall sustainability, resilience and competitiveness of the Port in the process.

He was informed that under the Energy Island Initiative, with a view to accelerating energy efficiency, a comprehensive programme for transitioning to renewable power sources and self-generation systems has been introduced by focusing on clean energy generation, conservation and power projects. The Port is seeking to become a sustainable energy network, integrated with the grid, yet capable of supporting cargo operations during outages and emergencies, Gadkari was told.

Source: [India Infoline News Service](#), 19 July 2016

Vietnam Maritime transport slides into crisis

The record low freight for both inland waterways transport and international routes has caused a crisis among shipping firms, big and small, state-owned and privately run.

According to Trinh Quoc Dat, chair of the Diem Dien Shipping Association in Thai Binh province, the association's members still maintain 300 ships with tonnage of 2,000-5,000 tons. The cargo for transport is mostly coal, cement and fertilizer from the north to the south, and steel and rice from the south to the north. "The demand is low and the freight is also low, just VND70,000-80,000 per ton for the HCMC – Hai Phong City route," he complained. "However, we still have to run our ships, despite the loss. If we leave the ship ashore, the loss would be even higher."

Dat said ship owners were now meeting difficulties also because of the underground fee. It officially costs VND3-4 million only for a trip from Hai Phong to HCMC, but in fact, ship owners have to pay VND30 million, counting the 'under-the-table fee'. The record low freight for both inland waterways transport and international routes has caused a crisis among shipping firms, big and small, state-owned and privately run.

Not only are privately run small shipping firms meeting difficulties, but large conglomerates have also been undergoing a slump in recent years. Vosco, which once led the sea shipping industry, for example, reported a loss of VND297 billion in 2015, which was partially attributed to the sharp fall in freight.

The BDI (Baltic Dry Index) in the year fell from over 1,000 points in the third quarter to 491 points in December 2015, which was just equal to 4 percent of the peak (11,793 points). Since shipping firms have few orders in the international market, they tend to bring their ships to the domestic market. This has led to the oversupply, which has caused a drop in fees for goods handling and shipping.

Analysts think the situation will not be better in 2016. The BDI dropped further to a low of 290 points in February. A representative of Vosco said that since there were too few

transactions and the ship chartering fee is on a sharp decrease, the firm has to reconsider its business strategy or it would incur heavier losses.

Nosco also reported a post-tax loss of VND95 billion in the first quarter of the year, raising the accumulative loss to over VND3 trillion. Meanwhile, VST reported the gross loss of VND816.8 billion by the end of the first quarter.

According to Vinamarine, the Vietnamese fleet can undertake 100 percent of the inland sea shipping volume, but can only hold 10-12 percent of the imports/exports shipping market share. It is estimated that Vietnam's import/export companies have to pay \$300 million in fees and charges every year to foreign ship owners because of the poor capacity of the Vietnamese fleet.

Source: Vietnamnet, 20 July 2016

Keep Calm and Carry On: Brexit's Effect

-Vandeventer Black LLP

Keep calm and carry on. That very British of phrases was recently used several times in a IHS Maritime expert panel on the topic of Brexit and its effects on international trade and shipping. Brexit—the decision by Britons through popular vote to leave the European Union—was met with concern and disbelief by many observers around the world and had the effect of sending shockwaves through financial markets in the immediate aftermath. Most experts agree that the effects of the decision are not exactly apparent and are mostly subject to speculation at this point. What is definitely known is that the actual process of Brexit will be lengthy, possibly taking years to sort out a new normal with the UK as a non-EU country. Short term economic and political effects have already been felt, a steep drop in financial markets before a measured rebound as well as the resignation of British Prime Minister David Cameron. Outside of the financial and political worlds, the international shipping sector will also likely be impacted.

In Virginia, trade through the Port generates a total of \$60 billion in revenue for the Commonwealth. In 2015, transatlantic trade accounted for just over twenty percent of

Virginia's imports/exports. The United Kingdom is still one of America's top trading partners—ranking highly as a partner with the Port of Virginia in both exports and imports. Therefore, to Virginians, it is important to start thinking about what this change in landscape might mean to international trade and shipping. Some experts say that, from a larger economic perspective, Brexit's effects will be less pronounced beyond Europe. While US export flows may be affected by Brexit, other current trends are likely to have a continued and more pronounced impact. For example, today's strong Dollar, which increases the price of American products to foreign buyers, continues to stifle American exports. Likewise, the absence of free trade agreements between Europe and the US and between the US and the UK has further stymied potential export growth, perhaps to the point where Brexit could not make the current shipping situation any worse.

Brexit will invariably have some legal and regulatory implications to the current shipping industry. Most notably, the possible addition of UK-specific customs laws may cause delays and add an extra layer of complexity for Virginia shippers. Also, uncertainties could arise in how disputes will be resolved if and when UK-based tribunals are no longer bound to EU rules governing jurisdiction and applicable law. It is thus prudent when conducting international business to have clear, exclusive law/jurisdiction clauses and to utilize alternative dispute resolution when possible.

Closely monitoring developments and calmly adapting to changes as they come will be the best strategy going forward into this changing international landscape.

Source: [Lexology](#), 19 July, 2016

Coalition Formed to Promote LG as a Marine Fuel

Leading marine industry players have formed a coalition, known as SEA/LNG, to accelerate the widespread adoption of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a marine fuel. The coalition aims to help break down the barriers hindering the global development of LNG in marine applications, thereby improving the environmental performance of the

shipping industry. Offshore support vessel owners were among the 'first movers' in adopting LNG-fuelled vessels.

The partners in the coalition include Wärtsilä, Carnival Corporation, DNV-GL, ENGIE, ENN Group, GE Marine, GTT, Lloyds Register, Mitsubishi, NYK Line, Port of Rotterdam, Qatargas, Shell Downstream and Tote. Each member organization commits mutually agreed human resources, data analysis, and knowledge sharing in support of the SEA/LNG initiatives and activities.

"This is a strong coalition combining the expertise of major fleet owners, classification societies, port facilities, and energy experts. Wärtsilä contributes its vast experience and know-how in gas driven propulsion systems and the entire gas value chain. By working together, we plan to overcome the challenges and speed the general acceptance of LNG. Having been a pioneer in the use of LNG as a marine fuel, and a developer of major technologies facilitating the adoption of LNG fuel, it is natural that Wärtsilä supports wholeheartedly the aims of the SEA/LNG coalition," said Timo Koponen, Vice President, Flow & Gas Solutions, Wärtsilä Marine Solutions.

The main areas of focus for the coalition include supporting the development of LNG bunkering in major ports, educating stakeholders as to the risks and opportunities in the use of LNG fuel, and developing globally consistent regulations for cleaner shipping fuels.

Source: [Offshore Shipping Online](#), 15 July 2015

Shipping Ministry policy on location of greenfield ports soon

-Megha Manchanda

As new ports face viability issues, the Centre plans to firm up a policy guideline on the location of new ports. The policy would be useful to resolve issues such as those that developed the Centre decided to set up a major port in Enayam, near Colachel, in Tamil Nadu. The Kerala government had opposed the decision as the new port would be

within 35 km radius of the Vizhinjam port, which was developed by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ).

The transshipment container terminal at Vizhinjam would be developed under design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) mode in four phases by APSEZ. The agreement granting concession for 40 years to the Adani Group was signed on August 17, 2015 between Adani Vizhinjam Port Pvt Limited and Government of Kerala for the development of this green-field project.

Earlier this month, the Cabinet approved setting up a major port at Enayam, near Colachel in Tamil Nadu. This would be the country's 13th major port. A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be formed for development of Colachel port with initial equity investment from the three existing major ports in Tamil Nadu -- V O Chidambaranar Port Trust, Chennai Port Trust, and Kamarajar Port Limited.

Ministry of Shipping is preparing a concept paper on the subject that would be presented in the Maritime States Development Council, likely to take place in the next 2-3 months. Opinions and suggestions of the states would be sought during that meeting to decide the future course of action, an official told Business Standard.

The concept paper is expected in a month's time, the official said adding, at present there is no such guideline on minimum distance between two ports. Industry experts feel that any such policy would only streamline port and port lead development in the country.

Maritime states should come forward in the formulation of this policy. Though bringing them on board is a challenge but at least they should make an attempt, Vishwas Udgirkar, Senior Director, Deloitte India said. There are 12 major ports in India -- Kandla, Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore, V O Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) and together they handle approximately 61 per cent of the country's total cargo traffic.

The aggregate capacity at major ports increased from 871.52 million tonnes per annum as on March 31, 2015 to 965.36 million tonnes in 2015-16. To meet the future growth in cargo traffic, a roadmap has been prepared to increase the capacity of major and minor

ports from 1500 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) in 2015 to more than 3000 MMTPA by 2025.

According to data available on the website of Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, ports handled 12.5 million containers in the first five months of 2016, as compared with 13.4 million in 2015.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 22 July 2016

With eye on China, India doubles down on container hub ports

Indian conglomerate Adani Group has started building the country's first transshipment port, conceived 25 years ago, and the government will construct another \$4-billion facility nearby to create a shipping hub rivalling Chinese facilities in the region.

The government will grant Gautam Adani 16 billion rupees (\$240 million) in so-called "viability gap" funding to help the new port at Vizhinjam+ in Kerala win business from established hubs elsewhere in Asia.

Once Vizhinjam is operational, the central government will start building the port of Enayam in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, said a senior shipping ministry official. Enayam alone will save more than \$200 million in costs for Indian companies every year, he said.

India's 7,500-km (4,700-mile) coastline juts into one of the world's main shipping routes and Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to capitalise on that proximity by developing ports that can shift freight on to huge vessels capable of carrying up to 18,000 20-foot containers.

By bringing onshore cargo handling now done at entrepots in Sri Lanka, Dubai and Singapore, Modi's government expects cargo traffic at its ports to jump by two-thirds by 2021 as India ramps up exports of goods including cars and other machinery.

The lack of an Indian domestic trans-shipment port forces inbound and outbound containers to take a detour to one of those regional hubs before heading to their final destination.

New Delhi expects the new ports to save Indian companies hundreds of millions of dollars in transport costs, as well as ease concerns over the growing strategic clout in South Asia of rival China, which has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Sri Lankan ports at Colombo and Hambantota.

Adani wants the Vizhinjam port, which an arm of his Adani Group is building at a cost of around \$1 billion, to be operational in 2018. The port lies hard by the Gulf-to-Malacca shipping lane that carries almost a third of world sea freight.

"The port can attract a large share of the container trans-shipment traffic destined for, or originating from, India which is now being diverted primarily through Colombo, Singapore and Dubai," said an Adani Group executive who declined to be named.

But officials acknowledge that it would be difficult for the new ports to win international clients unless they offered discounts.

"A major part of trans-shipment is happening at nearby ports. We can win some of that business," said AS Suresh Babu, who heads a government agency set up by Kerala to facilitate the construction of Vizhinjam.

"There's a viability issue in the first few years. Already the Chinese are operating there. So unless you give some discount you can't attract these ships. So that's why the government of India has approved the viability gap funding."

Chinese threat

India is worried about China's expanding reach in the region through port investments in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives. China is also developing Pakistan's Gwadar seaport+ as part of a \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

China had also wanted to partner with an Indian company to build the Vizhinjam port, but its proposal was rejected by the government on grounds of national security.

India has not banned Chinese firms from investing in its ports, but takes a cautious approach as most ports are also used for "strategic purposes", said the shipping ministry source.

That is a euphemism for dual-use port facilities that could also be used by naval vessels. The docking of a Chinese nuclear submarine at Colombo's commercial port in 2014 shocked India's security establishment and has added urgency to New Delhi's push to strengthen its port infrastructure. Vizhinjam port will have dedicated berths for India's navy and coastguard, according to a government note seen by Reuters.

India is also seeking to extend its commercial and strategic reach as it tries to catch up with China, pledging up to \$500 million to develop the Iranian port of Chabahar+ to give it trade access to Iran, Afghanistan and the hinterlands of Central Asia, now largely blocked by Pakistan.

"We want Indian ports to compete with the best ports in the world in various parameters like turnaround time, efficiency, last-mile connectivity, infrastructure etc," India's shipping ministry said in a statement to Reuters.

But analysts remain sceptical that India can complete the trans-shipment ports, given that it has taken a quarter of a century to get the Vizhinjam port plan this far after legal disputes and lack of security clearance from the federal government delayed previous attempts to build it.

"Very few days or weeks pass without news of a new hub port proposal in southern India," said Andy Lane, a partner at maritime and port consultant CTI Consultancy.

He added that, as Colombo was a "low cost and highly efficient" port, container shipping lines were unlikely to easily consider a switch to India.

Source: [The Times of India](#), 28 July, 2016

Maersk hit by anti-competition allegations at JN port

-P. Manoj

India's anti-trust regulator, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), has been asked to probe complaints that Danish shipping giant AP Moller-Maersk Group A/S is using its dominant position at Jawaharlal Nehru port (JNP) to dictate prices by limiting competition in the container freight station (CFS) market.

A CFS is a facility licensed by the customs department to help decongest a port by shifting containerized cargo and carrying out customs-related activities outside the port area. Due to customs procedures and space constraints at ports, customs clearance happens at CFS.

The Indian Competition Review, a policy advisory society, complained against the Maersk Group to the CCI. The CCI said that it would not comment on individual complaints. "These are private proceedings under regulation 47 of the CCI Act. So when the final order is out only then you get to know," a spokesperson for CCI said.

The government is taking a keen interest in the matter because it involves extra transaction costs and lack of ease of doing business, two key issues hurting India's trade competitiveness and image overseas which are being tackled through various steps at JN port, which handles about half the cargo containers shipped by the sea route every year.

It takes 378 hours and \$695 to clear an import container landing at J.N. port, according to the World Bank Doing Business Report 2016. The time and costs relates to customs, port and border handling, documentation preparation, CFS and other logistics activities. Of this, clearance from the port takes just 36 hours with a handling cost of \$60, a spokesman for J.N. port said.

The Maersk Group runs Maersk Line, the world's largest container shipping company, which calls at J.N. port, India's biggest container gateway. The Group's container terminal operating unit APM Terminals Management BV is one of the world's top five container terminal operators.

APM Terminals has a 74% stake in Gateway Terminals India Pvt. Ltd (GTI), the biggest of the four container terminals operating at J.N. port. GTI handled 1.86 million twenty foot equivalent units, or TEUs, in the year ended March 2016, or about 42% of the 4.49 million TEUs loaded by all the four terminals at India's top container port.

A TEU is the standard size of a container and a common measure of capacity in the container business. Maersk runs two of the 33 CFSs that service J.N. port. The 33 CFSs handles close to 1.2 to 1.5 million TEUs a year.

The rates charged by these CFSs with the exception of DBC Port Logistics Ltd are not regulated by the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP), the rate regulator for the union government-owned ports such as J.N. port.

The DBC CFS is owned by J.N. port but given to a private firm on a long-term operation contract and hence regulated by TAMP.

The Maersk Group does so by bundling services with some CFSs—either operated by the group or those with which it has tie-ups, forcing shipping lines to use these CFSs even if they are priced higher, the Indian Competition Review alleged in its complaint submitted to the CCI.

“Vessels wanting a berth at GTI are being coerced by APM Terminals Mumbai, which operates GTI, to obtain its CFS services or services by its select partners operating at JN Port. Vessels wanting to berth at GTI in future... are also coerced by APM Terminals Mumbai to obtain CFS service by one of the two Maersk CFS or two more with which the firm has tie ups,” the policy advisory firm has claimed in its complaint.

Since shipping lines are coerced into selecting either Maersk or particular CFSs, there is an adverse impact on competition between rest of the players offering CFS services, even when their services are competitively priced, it said.

“At this point, we are not aware of the exact details of the complaint filed by the Indian Competition Review. We have offered to present a factual situation of our India operations to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and address any questions they may have,” a spokesperson for APM Terminals Mumbai, which runs GTI, said.

“We have been operating in this market for a decade and have not only helped grow the market but have also played an instrumental role in enhancing India’s trade competitiveness. We are confident that we comply with all applicable Indian laws, rules and regulations,” the spokesperson said.

J.N. port declined to comment as CFS activities are outside its control. “It’s a quid pro quo arrangement practiced by Maersk at J.N. port,” said an executive at the Mumbai office of a shipping agency firm that represents a Korean container line.

“It is a fact lines are being forced to go to a particular CFS run by Maersk,” he said asking not to be named. “Maersk is taking away the business of other CFSs by saying I’ll give you a window (berth) at GTI provided you give me so much volumes at my own CFS at J.N. Port. If you do not give me so much volumes, then I will not give you the window,” said the top executive at one of the CFSs. He did not want to be named for fear of retribution.

“If you ask the lines they will not tell you officially; but the fact is they have been pressurised to share volumes with Maersk CFS. Many lines have openly told us they are forced, unless they agree to this, the window will not be confirmed,” said an executive with another CFS operating in J.N. port. The Container Freight Station Association of India (CFSAI), a trade lobby, declined to comment.

Source: [Live Mint](#), 29 July 2016



A plastic smog is smothering our Oceans

Every single time I go for a surf or a swim in the ocean in Southern California, I find plastic floating in the sea. I usually grab the plastic bag, wrapper or fragment and stuff it in my wetsuit or swim trunks to remove it from the water. My experience is indicative of the global plastic pollution epidemic. We are simply using too much wasteful plastic and a significant amount is getting into the ocean, where it is harming marine life.

Every year, an estimated 5-13 million tons of plastic enter our oceans. Here in the U.S., about 100 billion plastic bags are used annually. That's around 360 bags a year for each person in this country. Every day, more than 500 million plastic straws are discarded.

For every 167 disposable water bottles the average American uses, only 38 are recycled. Less than 5% of plastic bags are recycled. Recent studies predict that unless action is taken, by 2050, there will be more plastic by weight than fish in our oceans.

Plastic poses a major threat to our marine environment, ecosystems and marine life. It's now being found in seafood that can eventually land on our plates. A major problem with plastic is that it doesn't biodegrade. It photodegrades and breaks into smaller pieces, meaning that virtually every piece of plastic ever produced still exists today in some form. It's estimated that there are over 5.25 trillion particles of plastic spread throughout the oceans, resulting in a plastic smog.

Beach cleanup volunteers frequently cite plastic as one of the main forms of pollution picked up on beaches across coastlines. Unless removed, the plastic debris often ends up in the ocean. Cleaning beaches reduces ocean-bound plastic, raises awareness and provides important data about some of the most commonly littered items. However, beach cleanups alone will not solve the problem.

What can we do to turn the tide of plastic pollution? Over the last decade, many major cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., New York, San Diego and local communities across the country have implemented plastic bag bans or fees to help

reduce our plastic footprint. Plastic bag bans are an effective way to decrease plastic bag use by addressing the problem where it starts, with the creation and consumption of plastic. As consumers, if we decline to use plastic bags and instead opt for reusable options, then decreased market demand can change the quantity of plastic generated and ultimately reduce a major source of pollution affecting our oceans and marine ecosystems.

Big plastic companies are aware of this and have poured millions of dollars into fighting against bag bans. For example, in California, while the first state-wide bag ban was signed into law by Governor Brown in 2014, the plastic industry is pushing hard to reverse this sensible law. It's now up to California citizens to vote 'Yes on Prop 67' to support the bag ban in November and reduce plastic pollution, clean up our oceans and beaches and protect marine wildlife.

Reducing our plastic footprint is not just for coastal communities. Since all of our waterways are connected, everyone has a stake in reducing the plastic smog that is choking our ocean. Here are three simple ways to reduce your footprint:

The good news is that we can change the current trajectory of marine plastic pollution by supporting sensible policies like Proposition 67 and simply choosing reusable items to reduce our plastic consumption. It's up to us to change the tide and make a positive difference in the health of our ocean, waves and beaches for future generations.

Source: [The Huffington Post](#), 27July, 2016

MPCB scientists to be trained by NIO to gauge climate change

Scientists and technicians of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board will be trained by Goa-based National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) on handling specialised instruments which are required to gauge climatic change in the area of their operation.

“The advanced hand-on training course for MPCB officials has been organised between August 1 and 12, wherein they will be trained to handle instruments like auto analyser,

fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, mercury analyser and gas chromatography,” NIO spokesman told PTI.

“Climate change is a reality now and South Asia, with its 12,000 km long stretch of coastline, has been identified to receive maximum brunt from such changes,” he said.

The change in climate will impact a large population residing in the coastal zone of South Asia, in terms of sea level rise, less frequent yet intense storms, anomalous precipitation, and warmer ocean temperatures, he said.

“In addition, rising atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are causing the oceans to absorb more of the gas and become more acidic,” the spokesman further said.

“This rising acidity will have significant impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems. The coastal pollution and its impacts have resulted in a number of environmental issues, including the enrichment of water with organic matter leading to eutrophication, pollution by chemicals such as oil, and plastics emanating from land-based activities,” he said.

Over 80 per cent of all marine pollution originates from land-based sources which are primarily industrial, agricultural and urban, he pointed out.

“Microplastics are one of the major pollutants in the marine and coastal environment of South Asia and India, including extremely toxic organic pollutants (like POPs). Poor practices of solid waste management, lack of infrastructure, inadequate capacity to quantify such pollutants, failure to identify its source, and a lack of awareness among the public at large about the consequences of their actions aggravate substantially the situation,” he said.

“In fact, there is an urgent need to strengthen the evidence base with respect to measurement of pollutions. High-tech instrumentation is globally now being used to identify the source of the pollutants, and its impact in biogeochemical cycle of the coastal ocean. Hence, one must be aware of advanced methodology and recent technology,” the spokesman added.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 29 July, 2016

Oil pollution a threat to Haddock

Haddock is an important fish species that has its most important spawning ground in and around Norway's northern Lofoten archipelago, where oil production is being planned. However, research now reveals that the roe and larvae of haddock are more susceptible to oil pollution than previously thought.

Since the mid-seventies, and to this day, the debate for and against oil production along the Lofoten coastline have been a hot topic. PhD student and researcher Elin Sørhus at the Institute of Marine Research([link is external](#)) and Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Synthesis (CEES) at UiO is now presenting research that is very relevant to the debate. It reveals that even small and transient oil spills affect haddock larvae to such a degree that they struggle to reach adulthood. "We wanted to see the effect acute oil spills had on haddock roe and larvae. We have discovered that haddock roe exposed to relatively low concentrations of oil for 24 hours develop serious injuries. And the injuries linger even though they get to develop in clean water afterwards," says Sørhus.

Sørhus defended this spring her PhD. Her paper revealed that oil spills have a dramatic effect on haddock roe. To underline her argument Sørhus shows a picture of a haddock larvae that was exposed to oil pollution for 24 hours, before hatching from roe. The roe was then kept in clean water for 12 days before hatching. The picture taken three days after hatching reveals a larva with a heart so deformed that one ventricle had completely stopped working.

Longer oil exposure also resulted in extreme changes to the cranium and the jaw, together with a quite underdeveloped heart. "Larva with such severe injuries will never grow up," concludes Sørhus. Cold Water Species are more vulnerable Elin Sørhus has a lot of photos picturing different deformed haddock larva. She has completed a long range of experiments at the water laboratory at the Institute of Marine Research at Austevoll, outside the city of Bergen.

Her experiments have been conducted in big water tanks containing 50 litres of saltwater and with up to 6000 eggs in each tank. The tanks have been supplied with a varying quantity of raw oil. The oil has additionally been broken down into lesser

components to imitate the conditions of a real oil spill originating from an offshore platform. Sørhus has then examined what happens when the tanks are exposed to low, increased and pulsating doses of added oil.

"The conclusion is that roe from haddock, a marine cold water species, has a dramatic response to oil pollution and among a varying list of injuries can develop a very deformed cranium at the larval stage. The response is more dramatic than previously detected in both freshwater and saltwater fish comfortable at slightly greater temperatures."

She believes that it is very probable that this dramatic response is not exclusive of the haddock, but of other cold water species as well. Cardiac Edema and Cranial Injuries Laboratory experiments involving zebrafish have previously shown that oil pollution causes the larvae to develop cardiac edema. Elin Sørhus is currently presenting a well-founded theory concerning why oil pollution is damaging haddock larvae more than zebrafish larvae and other fish species.

"A substantial difference between haddock and cod -- for example -- is that the haddock have a sticky outer eggshell. Consequently, drops of oil have a tendency to get stuck onto the eggshell itself. In all practicality this means that the oil damages the egg even after the exposure. If we imagine a scenario where an oil spill hits the eggs right after eggs are spawned but withdraws quickly, the oil could nevertheless damage the eggs substantially regardless of the short exposure.

"A small and short lived oil spill in the middle of the haddock`s spawning period could be a fatal blow," says Sørhus. She points out that the consequences of course are dependent on how great an oil spill we are talking about and to what degree the population would be exposed. But what we are observing is that the haddock larvae can develop cardiac edema and other injuries even after dosages as minuscule as 0.7 micrograms of polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) per litre. PAH is a class of chemical compounds that are a natural part of raw oil, Sørhus explains.

Concerned over the long-term effects Elin Sørhus has investigated the short term effects of oil pollution on haddock roe and larva, but there are indications that the long-term

effects also are very serious. She points out what happened after the Exxon Valdez tragedy, where an oil tanker caused a major oil spill along the coast of Alaska in 1989.

Herring larvae close to the oil spill showed proof of injuries and a high mortality, but the local stock of herring was relatively stable in the beginning. However, three or four years later the stock collapsed completely, probably as a result of the delayed damage caused by very low levels of oil pollution.

"We have to consider the possibility that something similar can transpire when it comes to our stock of haddock, especially with the knowledge that the haddock larvae is particularly vulnerable to oil pollution. "It is possible to imagine that even smaller oil spills than I have in my research can lead to small heart damages. This could give rise to a haddock population that survives the larva stage, but have small deficiencies that could make the individuals swim slower. This could make them easy prey for other species and make them less effective in capturing food themselves. Long-term effects like these are totally reasonable compared with the results of my research," says Sørhus.

"The results of my research provides arguments, direct or indirect, for Norwegian politicians to think hard about the consequences and see the big picture when they are discussing oil production outside the Lofoten archipelago. Such oil production will take place in some of the haddock`s important spawning grounds and the haddock is an economically important species of fish."

Have detected the mechanism behind the injuries Elin Sørhus has also conducted thorough studies of the genetics and the molecular biology behind the haddock larvae's injuries."The muscle cells in the heart have a lot of small channels of ions, pores and pumps in inner and outer cell membranes. They control both the transport of ions inside the cell itself and to the outside, all in complicated processes necessary to make the muscle able to contract," explains Sørhus.

Studies show that PAH components in oil has the ability to block these channels and pumps inside the cardiac muscle cells and disturb the transportation of ions that make the heart beat. Furthermore, this blockade empties the intracellular storage of calcium

and this has some severe consequences. Calcium is in fact an important signal-molecule that actually ties together an outer stimulus to an inner regulation of genes.

Consequently, an emptied storage of calcium will have serious implications for both the regulation of genes and heart function. "It looks like the misshaped jaws we see developing in haddock larvae is caused by the same mechanics. The PAH causes the jaw muscle to lose its ability to retract and henceforth the whole head can't develop normally," Sørhus explains.

Elin Sørhus's research project is conducted at CEES in Oslo and The Institute of Marine Research in Bergen. It was financed by Vista([link is external](#)), a science funding program led by Statoil and The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters([link is external](#)) Vista funds basic research with relevance to the Norwegian petroleum industry.

Source: [Science Daily](#), 28 July 2016

Opinion: Reconsidering our stance on plastic marine pollution

The current government has made a commendable effort in convincing the European Union (EU) and other international observers that it will impose some order over illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) practices in the Thai fishing industry. The fact remains, however, that bureaucrats from Brussels to Bangkok have little to no control over the commercial forces that are turning our seas and oceans into vast repositories for the signature refuse of modern 'civilization': plastic debris.

This week's edition provides a sobering overview of the ever-worsening calamity that is a primary symptom of our collective inability to control our actions – to act in a moderate, sustainable fashion to respect and maintain the environment that supports us all.

It is sad that in a country that announces Buddhism as the state religion, the real teachings of the Buddha, which comprise an almost perfect prescription for

sustainability, are almost never applied by state-sanctioned clergy to environmental issues.

In stark contrast, these same clergymen (woman need not apply) also support, promote and financially benefit from clearly non-Buddhist, non-scientific and superstitious beliefs in a way that differs little from 'playbook capitalism' when it comes to teaching younger generations about the need to protect the environment.

Our temples should be kept as uncluttered as an enlightened mind. Instead they more often serve as collection points for mountains of plastic and foam rubbish, catering to temple fairs and other such profit-driven, non-spiritual affairs. All of these efforts are foolishly wasted on animistic idolatry and so-called 'merit-making' that has nothing whatsoever to do with real Buddhist teachings and, in fact, only reinforces the substrate of consumer-driven attachment that is the driving force that is laying such waste to the environment, both terrestrial and marine.

There is considerable debate in the international scientific community as to whether or not it is correct and/or appropriate to refer to the current geological era as 'the anthropocene', defined as 'the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment'. It is amazing that so many calories can be burned debating such issues, while so few are expended on actual measures that could help bring obvious environmental problems under control.

Source: [Phuket Gazette](#) , 24July, 2016

Ghana to submit counter defense in maritime border dispute

-Norvan Acquah

Ghana will soon be submitting its counter-memorial (detailed defence) to that of Cote d'Ivoire at the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in Hamburg.

This is according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Petroleum Commission, Theophilus Ahwireng.

According to him, the detailed defence will be Ghana's response to Cote d'Ivoire's defence of case on the boundary dispute between the two countries regarding oilfields and the adjoining seabed.

Speaking to Citi Business News the Chief Executive Officer of the Petroleum Commission Ghana, Theophilus Ahwireng said Ghana was on track and was confident Ghana will win the case against its west coast neighbour, Cote d'Ivoire.

"Ghana will in the next few weeks submit its counter memorial to that which Ivory Coast submitted and I'm very confident that Ghana will win this one," he stated.

Mr. Ahwireng further indicated, "I believe that we are on track as Ghana wants to resolve this matter in the appropriate manner. That is why we submitted the matter to the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea and since then we have gone through the processes involved,

"Ghana first submitted her memorial and the initial hearing was done and we were given the mandate to go ahead with drills but with some restrictions and we have complied. Ivory Coast has also submitted its counter memorial a couple of months ago after Ghana submitted its initial memorial." The Petroleum Commission boss added.

Cote d'Ivoire had earlier called for the suspension of activities on Ghana's oil fields, by disputing the maritime boundary until the final determination of their disagreement over the boundary.

Background

Ghana went to the ITLOS in September 2014, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), seeking a declaration that it has not encroached on Cote d'Ivoire's territorial waters. It filed its suit based on Article 287 Annex VII of the 1982 UNCLOS.

Cote d'Ivoire in February 2015 filed for preliminary measures and urged the tribunal to suspend all activities on the disputed area until the definitive determination of the case, dubbed: "Dispute Concerning Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in the Atlantic Ocean." "Case 23" was filed by Ghana after 10 failed

negotiations. But the Special Chamber of the ITLOS on April 25, 2015 declined to suspend production activities in the disputed area.

The Chamber at the time explained that in its view, “the suspension of ongoing activities conducted by Ghana in respect of which drilling has already taken place would entail the risk of considerable financial loss to Ghana, and its concessionaires and could also pose a serious danger to the marine environment resulting, in particular, from the deterioration of equipment.”

Timelines

Cote d’Ivoire had up to April 4, 2016, to file its counter-memorial (detailed defence) as to why it should be declared the owner of disputed oilfields and adjoining seabed. Ghana also had up to July 4, 2016, to submit a reply to Cote d’Ivoire’s counter-memorial, while Cote d’Ivoire is expected to file a rejoinder on October 4, 2016. Meanwhile the oral hearing of the maritime border dispute between the two countries is expected to commence in February 2017.

Source: [Citifmonline](#), 18 July 2016

South China Sea: China says ‘will never accept settlement plans by third party’

Continuing aggressive stand on maritime sovereignty in the South China Sea, China has said it will never accept any kind of dispute settlement by the third party and will never accept the settlement plans or ideas imposed upon Beijing.

Speaking on the occasion of the 89th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Liberation Army on Thursday, Major General Wang Xiao jun – the Military, Naval and Air attache at the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi, said, “China firmly defends its territory sovereignty and maritime rights and interests. As for the so called for the arbitration of south china sea award brought unilaterally by former government of one country, China states time and again its stand of non-acceptance, non-participation, and

non-exclusion. China will never accept any kind of dispute settlement by the third party and will never accept the settlement plans or ideas imposed upon China.”

“China will continue to talk directly with relative parties and try the best to search the South China Sea dispute peacefully on the basis of respect, historical facts and international law. China respects and supports the freedom and limitation of over flight in the south china sea according to international law and would like to cooperate with any other coastal countries and international society to ensure the streamline in that area of sea,” he added.

China has refused to accept the South China Sea arbitration award issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Hague and reaffirmed its territorial sovereignty, maritime rights and interests.

The ruling had favoured petitioner Philippines saying the country’s sovereignty had been breached by China.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 29 July 2016

Meeting China’s ocean challenge

As China’s military and economic presence in Myanmar grew following the military crackdown in 1988, concerns arose in India about the possibility of Chinese military bases and surveillance facilities in Myanmar’s Cocos Island, bordering the Andaman Islands. A Chinese military analyst responded to these concerns by arrogantly asserting: “The Indian Ocean is not India’s ocean”!

India had never asserted that it had territorial claims in the Indian Ocean. One of its most remarkable diplomatic achievements has been that it has settled its maritime boundaries with all its eastern neighbours. This was done not only with bilateral agreements with Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Bangladesh, but also tripartite agreements to determine tri-junctions, with Myanmar and Thailand, Indonesia and Thailand, and Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The Chinese approach

Unlike India, which settled maritime boundary issues in accordance with international Law, China saw vast benefit, as early as 1947, in augmenting its access to oil and fishery resources by expanding its maritime frontiers, especially in the South China Sea. It claimed that its maritime frontiers historically lay on a “nine dashed line” across the South China Sea. As China grew militarily stronger, it enforced its maritime boundary claims converting rocks into islands, while utilising its naval power coercively.

A typical case of Chinese bullying was its use of force to fulfil its claims on the Scarborough Shoal, located 500 miles away from its shores and barely 100 miles from the Philippines. Worse still, Beijing sought to exercise sovereignty over the entire South China Sea by issuing threats to passing naval vessels and seeking to enforce an ‘Air Defence Identification. Zone’ requiring foreign aircraft to identify themselves even when on international waters. Blinded by arrogance at its growing military power, China has sought to challenge Japanese sovereignty in the East China Sea by air space violations and its navy adopting provocative postures.

This was and remains a real flashpoint, as the US-Japanese Security Treaty contains an American guarantee to protect Japanese sovereignty over the disputed Senkaku Islands. Chinese actions have forced the Americans to respond, with submarines and aircraft carriers challenging Chinese claims in both the South China and East China Seas. China resorted to 570 air space violations across the Senkaku Islands in 2015.

Multiple disputes

China today has maritime disputes with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. It was the Philippines that called China’s bluff and challenged its claims at the International Arbitration Tribunal, set up under the UN Convention of the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). Even as China argued why India could not be admitted into the NSG, the International Tribunal, whose verdict is binding, delivered China a resounding admonition. The tribunal categorically held that that there was no legal basis for any Chinese “historic rights” within its unilaterally imposed “nine dashed line”.

It rejected China's claims on several rocks and barren islets to expand its maritime frontiers, as they were not islands as defined in UNCLOS. This meant that China had no legal basis to claim sovereignty or fishing rights across the Spratly Islands, including the contentious Scarborough Shoal and Mischief Reef, where China had sought to construct an artificial island.

While rejecting the verdict, China adopted a belligerent posture, with its navy resorting to a show of force. Predictably, the US and Australia welcomed the verdict and called on China to comply, even though the US is not a signatory to UNCLOS and settles its maritime disputes bilaterally. China has, however, clearly shown itself up to be a regional bully, with its pretensions of being a benign power, shattered.

It is clear that despite this victory on the rejection of China's claims on its maritime boundaries, its affected neighbours have been restrained in their reactions. Nobody wishes to face the wrath of the wounded dragon. Even the Philippines pledged itself to a peaceful resolution of the dispute.

Moreover, even though five of the ten members of Asean face belligerent Chinese maritime boundary claims, others such as Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia have made it clear that they are too dependent on China to offend it on this issue. The call across the Asean states, even by the Philippines and Vietnam, was for "restraint" in responding to the judgment.

Between the lines

China, in turn, has come out with a White Paper, which indicates some flexibility in its approach. China did not reassert its "historic rights" over the whole area of the nine-dashed line. The language used in the Chinese text appears to suggest that the tribunal's judgment that the Spratly Islands are "rocks incapable of sustaining human habitation" has not been directly contradicted by China. There are suggestions in the paper that China could move towards modifying some of its claims in negotiations with parties such as Vietnam.

Just a few days prior to the tribunal judgment, the Chinese government mouthpiece, Global Times, made a distinctly positive reference to Vietnam stating: "China and

Vietnam will have more common ground to address their bilateral territorial disputes, which will transform the landscape in the region.”

Global Times suggested: “Hanoi’s strategic purpose is to defend what it holds and legalise oil drilling in the waters it occupies. It won’t provoke China if there is no major threat.” China earlier objected to oil drilling in these waters.

India should study these developments carefully. They signal the Chinese approach of splitting territorial claimants. Around 50 per cent of India’s global trade traverses the South China Sea. New Delhi has a vital interest in seeing that China does not have a legal basis to interrupt its freedom of navigation and over-flight rights in the South China Sea. Its statement after the tribunal verdict speaks of “self-restraint”, but also clearly reflects its concerns by urging all parties to respect the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the tribunal verdict.

China is using its national power to establish hegemony along its immediate sea-lanes, even as it steps up presence across the Indian Ocean. Managing this assertiveness will require imaginative diplomacy in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. This would involve steps to establish a viable and stable balance of power in the entire Indo-Pacific region, working with partners such as the US, Japan, Australia, Vietnam and others, while keeping open the channels of dialogue with Beijing.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 27 July 2016

India, Russia Make Conscious Efforts to Increase Defense Ties

In what is being seen as a prudent move by India and Russia the two countries are inching closer to signing a stalled 4 billion dollar project for joint development of their 5th generation fighter aircraft and upgrades for the Su-30MKI Super Sukhoi with advanced avionics and weapons.

Additionally, most of the contentious issues between the two countries have been resolved or will be between Russian Helicopters and India's Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) regarding joint development of Kamov-226T light helicopters. Only a few days ago, Indian Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proudly announced

that the Kamov-226T would be the first defense project completed under “Make in India.”

India has also agreed to lease one Akula-class submarine which will be known as INS Chakra after induction into the Indian Navy. Russia has offered its latest nuclear aircraft carrier Storm to India. Grounded Mi-17-1V helicopters will also be overhauled upgraded with the latest avionics, as negotiations are underway between India and Kazan Helicopters.

Apart from this, an agreement for the S-400 air defense missile system could be signed very soon. All these developments have happened within the last fortnight. This could be a defining moment in India-Russia relations as these deals are worth than any other deal struck by India with western countries.

Recently, media reported that India was leaning towards the US for its defense requirements. However, facts indicate otherwise. In March of this year Indian Minister of Defense Manohar Parrikar said, "During the last three years, 67 defense contracts have been signed with vendors from foreign countries, out of which 18 contracts are from Russia, 17 from the US, 13 from Israel, 6 from France and 13 are with others."

"One of the few major contracts signed by India during the last two years is with Rosobornexport for the Smerch Rocket Launcher System. It may not be as big a contract as the ones for Apache and Chinook in terms of the financial value, but it is significant all the same. It only establishes that while Russia may not be the major exporter of arms to India any more, it continues to be a serious player in India's defense market," Amit Cowshish, former financial adviser to Ministry of Defense, said.

Notable is that India has not been interested in doing business with countries that are reluctant to participate in the “Make in India” program, evidenced by the fact that expenditure on capital acquisition from foreign vendors as a percentage of such expenditure of the total expenditure on capital acquisition keeps falling year wise. India spent 53% of its total capital expenditure on foreign acquisition in 2013-14, falling to 36% in 2015-16 and is expected to further drop in the current financial year.

Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar asserted that India wants to double its defense exports as soon as possible. Thus, India will lean towards those countries that would agree to either set up bases in India or are willing for meaningful transfer of technology.

"When it was decided to manufacture BrahMos Missile together [with Russia], it was decided that both the armed forces would acquire some of these missiles and then sell them to a third party. But, what we have seen is that while India started inducting BrahMos in its armed forces, Russia has not started doing so," Rumel Dahiya, Deputy Director General of India's topmost defense think tank Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis said.

"The second aspect of this is, there are many countries keen to acquire BrahMos. I think both India and Russia should work together, proactively; to now start identifying whom to sell. I think BrahMos will be very a fine model for joint development of weapon systems and then selling it to third countries as well. This could become a model for other weapon systems which we can jointly develop and Russia can help us greatly with the 'Make in India' project. If Russia comes early then of course we will have a head start ahead of all others. They can become a great partner in India's capacity building," Rumel Dahiya added.

Amit Cowshis says, "China and Pakistan have limited potential as export markets. As an important player in contemporary international politics it is anxious to regain its past glory and it will not serve Russia's interest to pull out all the stops to align with China, which will benefit more from such an alignment, or with Pakistan, which has a dubious record of spawning extremism all over."

Meanwhile, at a recently held exhibition in Russia, India expressed interest in leasing two Akula-class submarines. In the Indian Navy's future projects, Russia is expected to have a crucial role in partnering with Indian Defense companies to build six submarines.

Naval Captain (Dr.) Gurpreet Khurana, Executive Director of the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), said, "The Indian Navy would be much inclined to engage with the

highly professional Russian Navy, much beyond the largely symbolic India-Russia biennial 'Indra' series of combined naval exercises. Furthermore, Russia could potentially play a crucial role in maritime security and safety in the Indian Ocean region. This would augur well for the 'inclusive' approach to regional 'net security' and stability involving all stakeholders, a mantra which India and the other regional countries have collectively adopted in regional multilateral institutions like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)."

A Defense Ministry official said on condition of anonymity, "India's new found closeness with the United States is only a perception. The reality is, India was under immense pressure from the US to take a stand against Russia in favor of Ukraine. But, India resisted all such pressure and firmly backed Russia. Also, it is a fact that the US helped India lose out in obtaining a Nuclear Supplier's Group waiver in 2008, but if you go through the records, it is only Russia that has benefited from this waiver, very much to the contention of the United States. India's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime will also benefit Russia the most."

Experts are of the view that Russian-origin submarines, armored vehicles, missiles, submarines, aircraft, helicopters, aircraft carrier, and other assorted systems constitute the backbone of India's military capability. Going by past experience, these will remain in service for the next several decades. Moreover, of late, Russia has made a conscious effort to regain the confidence of Indian armed forces by providing prompt servicing of equipment. Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar praised this effort of Russia in Parliament recently. Therefore, Russian support in ensuring operational serviceability of the equipment, including repair, refit and upgrades would also be of crucial importance for many more years to come.

Source: [Sputnik](#), 27 July 2016

Modi's four-state tour a sign of resurgent interest in continent

-Kudrat Virk

Earlier in July, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's globetrotting foreign policy brought him to African shores for the second time in as many years. This, for a five-day whirlwind tour of Mozambique, SA, Tanzania and Kenya.

Much of the commentary on his two-day stop in SA focused on India's success in securing SA's support for New Delhi's controversial campaign to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Delhi, unlike the rest of the 48-member group, is not a signatory to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and was thwarted in its initial bid for membership earlier in the year.

The main aims of Modi's four-country visit were more wide-ranging, though, covering the gamut from economic to defence and security co-operation. Over the past decade Africa — once a close brother, then a distant cousin — has seen a resurgence in Indian interest.

But this has not attracted as much attention as the much larger, and expanding, Chinese footprint on the continent. The July 2016 visit was to a large extent a charm offensive aimed at boosting India's profile in Africa. A total of 19 agreements were signed, and the Indian prime minister promoted his "made in India" initiative, while paying homage to the shared African and Asian struggle against colonialism.

Modi's first African foray, in March 2015, was to the islands of Mauritius and Seychelles, and formed part of a three-country Indian Ocean tour that included Sri Lanka. His more recent visit took in four Indian Ocean Rim countries on Africa's east coast, all with Indian diaspora communities.

Modi's second sojourn thus was as much a part of India's strengthening diplomacy in the Indian Ocean region, as it was an exercise to enhance its ties with trade partners. SA, Kenya and Tanzania are among India's top-five export destinations on the continent. Mozambique, Modi's first stop, hosts nearly a quarter of Indian investments in Africa. It is also strategically located on the Indian Ocean. The Mozambique Channel, with

Madagascar to its east, is a key "choke point" — 98% of SA's maritime traffic is estimated to pass through this waterway.

For both India and Africa, the Indian Ocean's sea lanes have immense importance. Since 2000, India-Africa trade has increased exponentially to an estimated \$72bn in 2015, although it is still dwarfed by China's \$220bn trade. Together, the two emerging Asian economies are thought to account for more than a quarter of Africa's external trade, much of it seaborne.

With major gas discoveries off Africa's east coast, Indian Ocean trade routes connecting the continent with India (and China) could gain greater significance. Mozambique has been seen as a key source for India to diversify its dependence on liquefied natural gas imports, as well as a means — along with Tanzania — to increase its food security. Modi's stops in Dar es Salaam and Maputo included agreements aimed at increasing agricultural co-operation and boosting exports of pulses to India.

The emergence of piracy off the Horn of Africa has underscored security concerns in the western Indian Ocean region, which lacks the regional architecture to tackle such threats. The maritime region is also an arena of strategic competition between New Delhi and Beijing. Chinese investments in port-development in Indian Ocean coastal countries including Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique have tended to rouse India's suspicions of a "string of pearls" strategy to encircle it. India's maritime security strategy includes the East African coastal region, as well as the Cape of Good Hope and its littoral, as areas of primary interest. Maritime and defence and security co-operation formed part of the bilateral conversation at all four stops during Modi's July visit.

But what of the nature of this burgeoning trade between India and Africa? Oil, gas and commodities dominate India's imports from Africa and are crucial to meeting its growing energy and food demands. Indian exports to Africa consist mainly of manufactured products. This has contributed to anxiety about a new "scramble for Africa". Yet, India's present-day encounter with Africa has many facets.

The Indian commercial presence in Africa extends beyond extractive industries to the information and communications, manufacturing, as well as pharmaceutical sectors. It

is also diverse and includes state-owned enterprises, private corporate giants, as well as medium-sized businesses.

Companies such as Tata and Ranbaxy have been here since the 1970s, while others — Bharti Airtel, for instance — are newer entrants. By one estimate, there are more than 150 Indian companies operating in SA alone. Beyond commerce, India is an emerging provider of development assistance. Its Pan-African e-Network Project aims to connect medical and education centres in India with counterparts in 53 African countries.

That said, the pattern of India-Africa trade is a concern; one that received relatively less attention in the hoopla surrounding Modi's July visit. The issue was raised in SA ahead of his arrival in the country, which is keen to increase its value-added exports to India, as well as to the other Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and SA) nations. In 2013-14, the five-member grouping undertook a joint study on ways to increase such exports in intra-Brics trade. The issue continues to be discussed at the ministerial level, and by the Brics contact group for economic and trade issues. But it has remained thorny and politically sensitive. SA has, in addition, run a persistent trade deficit with India. In 2015, this amounted to R13bn, with total trade of R95bn.

India has emphasized capacity development in its outreach to Africa in an effort to distinguish itself from China; as well as to counteract the negative imagery of exploitation. Modi has identified India as a partner in the building of African capacities and institutions. The rhetoric is not meaningless. Education and skills development have been the focus of several Indian initiatives in Africa since the first India-Africa Summit in 2008. New Delhi has also progressively increased scholarships for Africans to study in India. In 2015, at the third India-Africa Summit, it committed to extending 50,000 such scholarships.

Each stop on his July visit witnessed Modi courting the local Indian community. The tour featured a strong emphasis on the historical, cultural, and emotional ties that bind contemporary India to Africa. This was particularly evident in SA, where Modi expressed his penchant for symbolism by retracing Mahatma Gandhi's fateful train journey from Durban to Pietermaritzburg.

But all of this stands in contrast to recent incidents of violence against African students and migrants in India that, in the eyes of many, have exposed latent racism and prejudice in parts of Indian society. If the relationship with Africa is seriously "beyond strategic considerations", then India needs to invest as much effort pushing for better understanding of Africa in India as it is in promoting India in Africa.

Source: [Business Day Live](#), 27 July 2016