



MAKING WAVES

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Acknowledgement: 'Making Waves' is a compilation of maritime news and news analyses drawn from national and international online sources. Drawn directly from original sources, minor editorial amendments are made by specialists on maritime affairs. It is intended for academic research, and not for commercial use. NMF expresses its gratitude to all sources of information, which are cited in this publication.



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Ships more at risk after first Somali Pirate attack in Yemen

Merchant vessels sailing through busy shipping lanes between Somalia and Yemen may be underestimating the risk of piracy and terrorism following two attempted attacks last month, maritime officials say. More than 40 percent of the world's seaborne oil supplies pass through the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea, a major shipping lane also used to move exports and commodities such as food between Asia and Europe. The European Union's counter-piracy naval force (EU Navfor) confirmed on Nov. 4 that six armed men attacked chemical tanker CPO Korea 330 nautical miles (610 km) east of Somalia on Oct. 22, the first reported attack on a major vessel off the country for two and a half years.

The last reported attack was in February 2014 and involved a container ship which came under fire from gunmen in waters near Somalia, EU Navfor said. On Oct. 25, assailants opened fire on a gas tanker off Yemen. The tanker's owner said the gunmen had a "substantial number of explosives" and one maritime source told Reuters it may have been an attempted suicide attack. "Recent incidents off Somalia, the Bab al-Mandab and wider Indian Ocean indicate an increased threat level to shipping from piracy and maritime terrorism," said Gerry Northwood at British maritime security firm MAST. Northwood, a former Royal Navy captain, said that after a period of relative calm some shipping firms were underestimating the threat and using poorly trained and equipped security teams, "more used to calm waters than the genuine risk of attack". In the first incident, EU Navfor said suspected pirates in a high-speed boat exchanged fire with guards aboard the tanker, which escaped without casualties after accelerating, altering course and using fire hoses to thwart the attack. "This attack shows that pirates still have the intent to attack ships for ransom and cause misery to seafarers and their families," EU Navfor Operation Commander Rob Magowan said.

"Fragile and Reversible"

Attacks in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean escalated in 2008 and by 2011 more than 700 hostages and 30 vessels were being held by Somali gangs who demanded millions of dollars in ransoms.

Since then, the deployment of armed security guards on ships with a mandate to respond robustly combined with pre-emptive strikes by naval forces and more protective measures on vessels helped cut attacks to just two in 2014 and zero last year. Besides the EU naval force, the United States, South Korea, Iran and other nations all deployed ships in the wake of the surge in piracy to halt a business that was costing the world economy billions of dollars a year at its peak. A report by the United Nations last month, however, said progress on combating piracy remained "fragile and reversible".

The report said political instability in the central region of Somalia, together with the finite mandate of the international naval force, "has the potential to become a security vacuum that could trigger a resurgence of piracy". The world's biggest container shipping line, Maersk, said it was closely following the situation, adding that piracy "was a challenge we have to address".

Major Damage

A week-old ceasefire between the Somali regions of Galmudug and Puntland, both areas where pirate gangs used to operate, broke down on Sunday and fighting over their disputed border has killed at least 29 people. "There have been reports of pirate groups being organized and equipped in Mudug and in the area in the Horn of Africa east of Bosasso in Puntland," the UN report said. Maritime security sources also said some fighters from Somali Islamist militant group al Shabaab were looking to get more involved in seaborne piracy. EU Navfor's Magowan said it was coordinating efforts with counter-piracy partners to ensure "pirates do not once again terrorize the waters off the Somali coast".

In a special note on its website, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) also warned mariners sailing through the Red Sea, Bab-al Mandab and Gulf of Aden to operate "under a heightened state of alert". "Increasing tensions in the region escalate the potential for direct or collateral damage to vessels," the ONI said. A suicide bombing by al Qaeda, which has a powerful regional arm in Yemen, killed 17 sailors on the U.S. warship Cole in Aden's port in 2000. Two years later, al Qaeda hit a French tanker in the Gulf of Aden, south of the Bab al-Mandab. "There seems to be fresh ambition to inflict major damage on a ship that we have not seen since 2002," one maritime source said.

Source: www.reuters.com, 08 November 2016

Maritime Security in the South China Sea common strategic concern for India and Japan

-Madhuchanda Ghosh

As India and Japan deepen their economic and strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, the deteriorating maritime security environment in the South China Sea impinges on the economic and strategic interests of both states in the region. The South China Sea issue has started to figure prominently in the security dialogue between New Delhi and Tokyo because the economies of both states are heavily based on sea-based transport. Sixty percent of Japan's energy supplies passes through the South China Sea. More than half of India's overseas trade flows through the shipping lanes of the South China Sea, which is one of the underlying factors behind the Indian Navy prioritizing the issue of ensuring a stable maritime security environment in the South China Sea region. For Japan and India this maritime region does not simply signify unresolved territorial issues among the littoral states but it raises the spectre of direct military confrontation with the potential to destabilize one of the most important international maritime routes and an economically dynamic region. Strategically, the South China Sea region is of global importance due to two factors: first, it is a critical international trade route through which trillions of dollars of global trade flow; second, the region is rich in hydrocarbons and natural gas.

India and Japan's common concern over the rapidly deteriorating maritime security environment in the South China Sea region is reflected in the joint statements issued by the two states. For instance, in the annual Indo-Japanese Defence Ministerial Meeting on July 14, 2016, the Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar and his Japanese counterpart, Gen Nakatani, in a joint statement on the July 2016 South China Sea ruling, called on the parties involved in the territorial disputes to "show utmost respect" for the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is significant to note that during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India in December 2015, the joint statement issued by the two premiers in a similar vein voiced concern over the developments in the

South China Sea region and appealed to all parties to “avoid unilateral actions ... that could lead to tensions in the region.” India and Japan have also agreed to deepen bilateral maritime security cooperation by initiating Maritime Strategic Dialogue and conducting the India-U.S.-Japan trilateral maritime Malabar Exercise every year.

One of the factors that has contributed to the strategic apprehensions of both Japan and India is the growing military assertiveness of China in the South China Sea region. Beijing has begun to fly bomber and fighter aircraft near disputed islands in the South China Sea. Beijing seems to be testing the bounds of international maritime laws in the region, including some it has explicitly agreed to abide by. For instance, Beijing consented to settle territorial disputes in the South China Sea amicably and in conformity with international law, such as the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, in recent years China’s frequent standoffs with its littoral neighbors indicate its changing maritime strategy. The People’s Liberation Army Navy’s expanding maritime operations in the South China Sea, China’s deployment of missiles in the Spratly islands, and its expanding military assertiveness all indicate Beijing’s intent to go all-out in its efforts at territorial reclamation.

In this context, it can be noted that India’s settling of its maritime dispute with Bangladesh in August 2014 has sent a message to states engaged in maritime disputes, including China, that disputes can be settled amicably. India accepted the arbitration between it and Bangladesh two years ago, even though the verdict went in favor of its smaller neighbor. When Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) rendered its judgment on the India-Bangladesh maritime boundary dispute in the Bay of Bengal in July 2014, India welcomed the tribunal’s verdict, though it lost maritime area larger than the state of West Bengal. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia Abraham Denmark referring to the verdict, called on China to follow India’s example of resolving its maritime boundary dispute with Bangladesh by accepting the tribunal’s ruling.

India and Japan, together with other stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific, need to explore mechanisms for engaging with China through a regional multilateral framework so that China can become a responsible stakeholder that will not try to change the status quo of the region by force. Current multilateral mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region such as the ARF, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) and the ASEAN Maritime

Forum could provide a conducive platform for evolving a comprehensive and sustainable security mechanism in the region. In this context, the adoption of a Code of Conduct (CoC) in the South China Sea on the basis of consensus, as emphasized by the ASEAN, would contribute significantly to the maritime security and stability of the region as a whole. Both India and Japan need to support the formulation of the CoC which could play a significant role in settling the unresolved territorial issues, which, if not tackled wisely, could transform the region from a zone of economic dynamism to a theatre of armed combat.

Both India and Japan have reasons to support freedom of navigation in the Asia-Pacific region, including the South China Sea, and jointly work towards preserving and bolstering regional maritime security and maintaining the regional balance of power. The forthcoming visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan and his meeting with Prime Minister Abe is very likely to produce a joint statement that will take a stronger position on the emerging challenges in the maritime security environment of the South China Sea.

Source: www.the-japan-news.com, 09 November 2016

Duterte to seek greater Maritime Security cooperation with Malaysia

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said today he would seek greater cooperation in maritime security and fighting criminality at sea during his visit to Malaysia. Duterte is scheduled to meet Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak during the two-day official visit, his first to Kuala Lumpur since taking office on June 30 this year. "The focus of my visit shall be to strengthen the Philippines' partnership with Malaysia for security and stability," he said in a statement before departing from Manila. "Foremost on my agenda is maritime security and the fight against piracy at sea," he added. Duterte noted that as maritime nations, the Philippines and Malaysia must ensure that their "waterways are secured and that criminal and terrorist elements do not use our seas to undertake their illegal activities." He said he would also push for more cooperation in combating the illegal drugs trade and seek Malaysia's continued support for Manila's efforts to forge peace with Muslim rebels in the southern Philippines.

Before traveling to Kuala Lumpur, Duterte will make a brief stop in Bangkok to pay respects to late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who he described as "a true friend of the Philippines." "He will be remembered for his dedicated efforts to foster goodwill and friendship between our nations and peoples," he said. "For all he has done to bridge peoples to a greater understanding, he truly deserves a special place in history."

Source: www.malaysiakini.com, 09 November 2016

Security Council Unanimously adopts resolution 2316 (2016), renewing Authorization for International Naval Forces to Combat Piracy off Somali Coast

The Security Council today renewed for another year its authorization for international naval forces to join in fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia, stressing that while the threat of such crime had declined, it still remained a matter of grave concern. Unanimously adopting resolution 2316 (2016) and again affirming the primary responsibility of Somali authorities in the effort, the Security Council renewed the call upon States and regional organizations that were able to do so to cooperate with those authorities and each other in deploying naval vessels and military aircraft, by providing logistical support, and by seizing and disposing of boats, arms and related equipment reasonably suspected to be used in piracy and armed robbery in the area.

Acknowledging a steady decline in attacks since 2011, the Council commended the contributions of the European Union's Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Operation Ocean Shield, the Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 151, the African Union and the Southern Africa Development Community, as well as individual States for naval counter-piracy missions and protecting ships transiting through the region. Noting with concern the continuing gap in domestic capacity and legal frameworks for the detention and prosecution of suspected pirates and those who profited from the crimes, the Council recognized the continued need for national legislative action and international capacity-building assistance in that regard. In the preambular section of the text, the Security Council also expressed serious concern over reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in

Somalia's exclusive economic zone and, noting a complex relationship between such activity and piracy, recognized that it accounted for millions in lost revenue for the country and could contribute to destabilization of coastal communities. The Council reaffirmed that the authorizations renewed in the resolution applied only with respect to the situation in Somalia and did not affect rights, obligations and responsibilities of Member States under international law, including the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Following the adoption, Mohamed Rabi A. Yusuf, representative of Somalia, thanked the Security Council for its valuable support to his country in all areas, including addressing piracy, and asked for continued support from the international community. He noted the recognition of the Secretary-General's report that a lack of economic opportunity in the country was one of the triggers of piracy. Welcoming today's adoption and assuring the Council his Government's full cooperation with its provisions, he expressed appreciation of the acknowledgement that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing resulted in loss of revenue and could lead to destabilisation along the coast. The meeting started at 3:05 p.m. and adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Resolution

The full text of resolution 2316 (2016) reads as follows:

“The Security Council, “Recalling its previous resolutions concerning the situation in Somalia, especially resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008), 1844 (2008), 1846 (2008), 1851 (2008), 1897 (2009), 1918 (2010), 1950 (2010), 1976 (2011), 2015 (2011), 2020 (2011), 2077 (2012) 2125 (2013), 2184 (2014), and 2246 (2015) as well as the Statement of its President (S/PRST/2010/16) of 25 August 2010 and (S/PRST/2012/24) of 19 November 2012, “Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/843), as requested by resolution 2246 (2015), on the implementation of that resolution and on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, “Reaffirming its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and unity of Somalia, including Somalia's sovereign rights in accordance with international law, with respect to offshore natural resources, including fisheries,

“Noting that the joint counter-piracy efforts of States, regions, organizations, the maritime industry, the private sector, think tanks and civil society have resulted in a steady decline

in pirate attacks as well as hijackings since 2011, and continuing to be gravely concerned by the ongoing threat that resurgent piracy and armed robbery at sea poses to the prompt, safe and effective delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia and the region, to the safety of seafarers and other persons, to international navigation and the safety of commercial maritime routes, and to other ships, including fishing vessels operating in conformity with international law,

“Further reaffirming that international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (“The Convention”), sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the ocean, including countering piracy and armed robbery at sea,

“Recognizing the need to investigate and prosecute not only suspects captured at sea, but also anyone who incites or intentionally facilitates piracy operations, including key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy who plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from such attacks, and reiterating its concern over persons suspected of piracy having been released without facing justice, reaffirming that the failure to prosecute persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia undermines anti-piracy efforts,

“Noting with concern that the continuing limited capacity and domestic legislation to facilitate the custody and prosecution of suspected pirates after their capture has hindered more robust international action against pirates off the coast of Somalia, which has led to pirates being released without facing justice, regardless of whether there is sufficient evidence to support prosecution, and reiterating that, consistent with the provisions of The Convention concerning the repression of piracy, the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (“SUA Convention”) provides for parties to create criminal offences, establish jurisdiction, and accept delivery of persons responsible for, or suspected of seizing, or exercising control over, a ship by force or threat thereof, or any other form of intimidation,

“Underlining the primary responsibility of the Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, noting the several requests from Somali authorities for international assistance to counter piracy off its coast, including the

letter of 24 October 2016, from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Somalia to the United Nations expressing the appreciation of Somali authorities to the Security Council for its assistance, expressing their willingness to consider working with other States and regional organizations to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, asking member states and international organizations to support the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in its Exclusive Economic Zone, and requesting that the provisions of resolution 2246 (2015) be renewed for an additional twelve months,

“Welcoming the participation of the Federal Government of Somalia and regional partners in the 19th plenary session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), hosted by the Seychelles in Victoria, Seychelles, May 31-June 3, 2016,

“Recognizing the work of the CGPCS and the Law Enforcement Task Force to facilitate the prosecution of suspected pirates, and of the Working Group on Capacity Building of the CGPCS to coordinate judicial, penal, and maritime capacity-building efforts to enable regional states to better tackle piracy,

“Welcoming the financing provided by the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Combating Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (the Trust Fund) to strengthen regional ability to prosecute suspected pirates and imprison those convicted in accordance with applicable international human rights law, noting with appreciation the assistance provided by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Maritime Crime Programme, and being determined to continue efforts to ensure that pirates are held accountable,

“Commending the efforts of the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Operation Ocean Shield, Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 151, the counter-piracy activities of the African Union onshore in Somalia and the naval activities of the Southern Africa Development Community, and other States acting in a national capacity in cooperation with Somali authorities and each other to suppress piracy and to protect ships transiting through the waters off the coast of Somalia, and welcoming the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction Initiative (SHADE) and the efforts of individual countries, including China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Japan, Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation, which have deployed naval counter-piracy missions in the region,

“Noting the efforts of flag States for taking measures to permit vessels sailing under their flag transiting the High-Risk Area (HRA) to embark vessel protection detachments and privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP), and to allow charters that favour arrangements that make use of such measures, while urging States to regulate such activities in accordance with applicable international law,

“Noting that HRA boundaries are set and defined by the insurance and maritime industry, and have been redefined in December 2015,

“Welcoming the capacity-building efforts in the region made by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) funded Djibouti Code of Conduct, the Trust Fund and the European Union’s activities under the EU Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor), which is working with the Federal Government of Somalia to strengthen its criminal justice system, and recognizing the need for all engaged international and regional organizations to coordinate and cooperate fully,

“Supporting the development of a coastal police force, noting with appreciation the efforts made by the IMO and the shipping industry to develop and update guidance, best management practices, and recommendations to assist ships to prevent and suppress piracy attacks off the coast of Somalia, including in the Gulf of Aden, and in relevant parts of the Indian Ocean that are still within the High Risk Area and recognizing the work of the IMO and the CGPCS in this regard, noting the efforts of the International Organization for Standardization, which has developed industry standards of training and certification for Private Maritime Security Companies when providing PCASP on board ships in high-risk areas, and further welcoming the European Union’s EUCAP Nestor, which is working to develop the maritime security capacities of Somalia,

“Underlining the importance of continuing to enhance the collection, preservation, and transmission to competent authorities of evidence of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, and welcoming the ongoing work of the IMO, INTERPOL, and industry groups to develop guidance to seafarers on preservation of crime scenes following

acts of piracy, and noting the importance of enabling seafarers to give evidence in criminal proceedings to prosecute acts of piracy,

“Further recognizing that pirate networks continue to rely on kidnapping and hostage-taking to help generate funding to purchase weapons, gain recruits, and continue their operational activities, thereby jeopardizing the safety and security of civilians and restricting the flow of commerce, and welcoming international efforts to coordinate the work of investigators and prosecutors, inter alia, through the Law Enforcement Task Force and collect and share information to disrupt the pirate enterprise, as exemplified by INTERPOL’s Global Database on Maritime Piracy, and taking note of the ongoing efforts of the Regional Fusion and Law Enforcement Centre for Safety and Security at Sea, hosted by Seychelles to combat piracy and transnational organized crime,

“Reaffirming international condemnation of acts of kidnapping and hostage-taking, including offences contained within the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, strongly condemning the continuing practice of hostage-taking by pirates operating off the coast of Somalia, expressing serious concern at the inhumane conditions hostages face in captivity, recognizing the adverse impact on their families, calling for the immediate release of all hostages, and noting the importance of cooperation between Member States on the issue of hostage-taking and the prosecution of suspected pirates for taking hostages,

“Commending Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Seychelles, for their efforts to prosecute suspected pirates in their national courts, and noting with appreciation the assistance provided by the UNODC Maritime Crime Programme, the Trust Fund, and other international organizations and donors, in coordination with the CGPCS, to support Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, Somalia, and other States in the region with their efforts to prosecute, or incarcerate in a third State after prosecution elsewhere, pirates, including facilitators and financiers ashore, consistent with applicable international human rights law, and emphasizing the need for States and international organizations to further enhance international efforts in this regard,

“Welcoming the readiness of the national and regional administrations of Somalia to cooperate with each other and with States who have prosecuted suspected pirates with a

view to enabling convicted pirates to be repatriated back to Somalia under suitable prisoner transfer arrangements, consistent with applicable international law, including international human rights law, and acknowledging the return from Seychelles to Somalia of convicted prisoners willing and eligible to serve their sentences in Somalia,

“Welcoming the work of the Maritime Security Coordination Committee (MSCC), as an important mechanism of information sharing, and encouraging the Somali national and regional administrations to take increasing responsibility for counter-piracy initiatives,

“Expressing serious concern over reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in Somalia’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and noting the complex relationship between IUU fishing and piracy, recognizing that IUU fishing accounts for millions of dollars in lost revenue for Somalia each year, and can contribute to destabilization among coastal communities,

“Noting Somalia’s accession to the FAO’s Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, recognizing the projects supported by FAO and UNODC aimed at enhancing the Somalia’s capacity to combat such activities, and stressing the need for States and international organizations to further intensify their support to the Federal Government of Somalia, at its request, in enhancing Somalia’s capacity to combat such activities,

“Recognizing the ongoing efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia towards the development of a legal regime for the distribution of fishing licenses, and encouraging further efforts in this regard, with the support of the international community,

“Recalling the reports of the Secretary General which illustrate the seriousness of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and provide useful guidance for the investigation and prosecution of pirates, including on specialized anti-piracy courts,

“Stressing the need for States to consider possible methods to assist the seafarers who are victims of pirates, and welcoming in this regard the efforts of the “Hostage Support Programme” and the Piracy Survivor Family Fund launched at the 2014 CGPCS to provide support to hostages during their release and return home, as well as to their families throughout the hostage situation,

“Recognizing the progress made by the CGPCS and UNODC in the use of public information tools to raise awareness of the dangers of piracy and highlight the best practices to eradicate this criminal phenomenon,

“Noting efforts by UNODC and UNDP and the funding provided by the Trust Fund, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other donors to develop regional judicial and law enforcement capacity to investigate, arrest, and prosecute suspected pirates and to incarcerate convicted pirates consistent with applicable international human rights law,

“Bearing in mind the Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, noting the operations of information-sharing centres in Yemen, Kenya, and Tanzania, recognizing the efforts of signatory States to develop the appropriate regulatory and legislative frameworks to combat piracy, enhance their capacity to patrol the waters of the region, interdict suspect vessels, and prosecute suspected pirates,

“Emphasizing that peace and stability within Somalia, the strengthening of State institutions, economic and social development, and respect for human rights and the rule of law are necessary to create the conditions for a durable eradication of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, and further emphasizing that Somalia’s long-term security rests with the effective development by Somali authorities of the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force,

“Welcoming the Padang Communique and Maritime Cooperation Declaration adopted by the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) at its 15th Council of Ministers meeting, which call upon members to support and strengthen cooperation to address maritime challenges including piracy and illegal trafficking of drugs, and welcoming Somalia’s October 2016 signing of the IORA charter to formally become a member State, thereby strengthening Somalia’s cooperation with its neighbours on maritime safety and security,

“Recognizing that the ongoing instability in Somalia and the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off its coast are inextricably linked, and stressing the need to continue the comprehensive response by the international community to repress piracy and armed robbery at sea and tackle its underlying causes,

“Determining that the incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, as well as the activity of pirate groups in Somalia, are an important factor exacerbating the situation in Somalia, which continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,

“Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

“1. Reiterates that it condemns and deplores all acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia;

“2. While noting improvements in Somalia, recognizes that piracy exacerbates instability in Somalia by introducing large amounts of illicit cash that fuels additional crime and corruption;

“3. Stresses the need for a comprehensive response to prevent and suppress piracy and tackle its underlying causes by the international community;

“4. Underlines the primary responsibility of the Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, welcomes the draft coast guard law which the Somali authorities, with the support of the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor have submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval by Parliament and urges the Somali authorities, to continue their work to pass a comprehensive set of anti-piracy and maritime laws without further delay and establish security forces with clear roles and jurisdictions to enforce these laws and to continue to develop, with international support as appropriate, the capacity of Somali courts to investigate and prosecute persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery, including key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy who plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from such attacks;

“5. Recognizes the need to continue investigating and prosecuting those who plan, organize, or illicitly finance or profit from pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia, including key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy, urges States, working in conjunction with relevant international organizations, to adopt legislation to facilitate prosecution of suspected pirates off the coast of Somalia;

“6. Calls upon the Somali authorities to interdict, and upon interdiction to have mechanisms in place to safely return effects seized by pirates, investigate and prosecute pirates and to patrol the waters off the coast of Somalia to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea;

“7. Calls upon the Somali authorities to make all efforts to bring to justice those who are using Somali territory to plan, facilitate, or undertake criminal acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, and calls upon Member States to assist Somalia, at the request of Somali authorities and with notification to the Secretary-General, to strengthen maritime capacity in Somalia, including regional authorities and, stresses that any measures undertaken pursuant to this paragraph shall be consistent with applicable international law, in particular international human rights law;

“8. Calls upon States to cooperate also, as appropriate, on the issue of hostage taking, and the prosecution of suspected pirates for taking hostages;

“9. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all seafarers held hostage by Somali pirates, and further calls upon the Somali authorities and all relevant stakeholders to redouble their efforts to secure their safe and immediate release;

“10. Welcomes the initiative of the Seychelles authorities to establish a court for piracy and maritime crime and further welcomes the successful prosecution of piracy cases by this body;

“11. Recognizes the need for States, international and regional organizations, and other appropriate partners to exchange evidence and information for anti-piracy law enforcement purposes with a view to ensuring effective prosecution of suspected, and imprisonment of convicted, pirates and with a view to the arrest and prosecution of key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy who plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance and profit from piracy operations, and keeps under review the possibility of applying targeted sanctions against individuals or entities that plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from piracy operations if they meet the listing criteria set out in paragraph 43 of resolution [2093 \(2013\)](#), and calls upon all States to cooperate fully with the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, including on information-sharing regarding possible violations of the arms embargo or charcoal ban;

“12. Renews its call upon States and regional organizations that are able to do so to take part in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, in particular, consistent with this resolution and international law, by deploying naval vessels, arms, and military aircraft, by providing basing and logistical support for counter-piracy forces, and by seizing and disposing of boats, vessels, arms, and other related equipment used in the commission of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, or for which there are reasonable grounds for suspecting such use;

“13. Highlights the importance of coordination among States and international organizations in order to deter acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, commends the work of the CGPCS to facilitate such coordination in cooperation with the IMO, flag States, and Somali authorities, and urges continued support of these efforts;

“14. Encourages Member States to continue to cooperate with Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea, notes the primary role of Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, and decides that, for a further period of twelve months from the date of this resolution to renew the authorizations as set out in paragraph 14 of resolution 2246 (2015) granted to States and regional organizations cooperating with Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, for which advance notification has been provided by Somali authorities to the Secretary-General;

“15. Affirms that the authorizations renewed in this resolution apply only with respect to the situation in Somalia and shall not affect the rights, obligations, or responsibilities of Member States under international law, including any rights or obligations under The Convention, with respect to any other situation, and underscores in particular that this resolution shall not be considered as establishing customary international law; and affirms further that such authorizations have been renewed based on the receipt of the 24 October 2016 letter conveying the consent of Somali authorities;

“16. Decides that the arms embargo on Somalia imposed by paragraph 5 of resolution 733 (1992) and further elaborated upon by paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 1425 (2002) and modified by paragraphs 33 to 38 of resolution 2093 does not

apply to supplies of weapons and military equipment or the provision of assistance destined for the sole use of Member States, international, regional, and subregional organizations undertaking measures in accordance with paragraph 14 above;

“17. Requests that cooperating States take appropriate steps to ensure that the activities they undertake pursuant to the authorizations in paragraph 14 do not have the practical effect of denying or impairing the right of innocent passage to the ships of any third State;

“18. Calls upon all States, and in particular flag, port, and coastal States, States of the nationality of victims and perpetrators of piracy and armed robbery, and other States with relevant jurisdiction under international law and national legislation, to cooperate in determining jurisdiction and in the investigation and prosecution of all persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia, including key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy who plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from such attack, consistent with applicable international law including international human rights law, to ensure that all pirates handed over to judicial authorities are subject to a judicial process, and to render assistance by, among other actions, providing disposition and logistics assistance with respect to persons under their jurisdiction and control, such as victims, witnesses, and persons detained as a result of operations conducted under this resolution;

“19. Calls upon all States to criminalize piracy under their domestic law and to favourably consider the prosecution of suspected, and imprisonment of those convicted, pirates apprehended off the coast of Somalia, and their facilitators and financiers ashore, consistent with applicable international law, including international human rights law, and decides to keep these matters under review, including, as appropriate, the establishment of specialized anti-piracy courts in Somalia with substantial international participation and/or support as set forth in resolution [2015 \(2011\)](#), and encourages the CGPCS to continue its discussions in this regard;

“20. Welcomes, in this context, the UNODC Maritime Crime Programme’s continued work with authorities in Somalia and in neighbouring States to ensure that individuals suspected of piracy are prosecuted and those convicted are imprisoned in a manner consistent with international law, including international human rights law;

“21. Encourages the Federal Government of Somalia to accede to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, as part of its efforts to target money laundering and financial support structures on which piracy networks survive;

“22. Urges all States to take appropriate actions under their existing domestic law to prevent the illicit financing of acts of piracy and the laundering of its proceeds;

“23. Urges States, in cooperation with INTERPOL and Europol, to further investigate international criminal networks involved in piracy off the coast of Somalia, including those responsible for illicit financing and facilitation;

“24. Urges all States to ensure that counter-piracy activities, particularly land-based activities, take into consideration the need to protect women and children from exploitation, including sexual exploitation;

“25. Urges all States to share information with INTERPOL for use in the global piracy database, through appropriate channels;

“26. Commends the contributions of the Trust Fund and the IMO-funded Djibouti Code of Conduct and urges both state and non-State actors affected by piracy, most notably the international shipping community, to contribute to them;

“27. Urges States parties to The Convention and the SUA Convention to implement fully their relevant obligations under these conventions and customary international law and to cooperate with the UNODC, IMO, and other States and international organizations to build judicial capacity for the successful prosecution of persons suspected of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia;

“28. Acknowledges the recommendations and guidance provided by the IMO on preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery at sea; and urges States, in collaboration with the shipping and insurance industries and the IMO, to continue to develop and implement avoidance, evasion, and defensive best practices and advisories to take when under attack or when sailing in the waters off the coast of Somalia, and further urges States to make their citizens and vessels available for forensic investigation as

appropriate at the first suitable port of call immediately following an act or attempted act of piracy or armed robbery at sea or release from captivity;

“29. Encourages flag States and port States to further consider the development of safety and security measures on board vessels, including, where applicable, developing regulations for the use of PCASP on board ships, aimed at preventing and suppressing piracy off the coast of Somalia, through a consultative process, including through the IMO and ISO;

“30. Invites the IMO to continue its contributions to the prevention and suppression of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, in coordination, in particular, with the UNODC, the World Food Program (WFP), the shipping industry, and all other parties concerned, and recognizes the IMO’s role concerning privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in high-risk areas;

“31. Notes the importance of securing the safe delivery of WFP assistance by sea, and welcomes the ongoing work by the WFP, EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta, and flag States with regard to Vessel Protection Detachments on WFP vessels;

“32. Requests States and regional organizations cooperating with Somali authorities to inform the Security Council and the Secretary-General in nine months of the progress of actions undertaken in the exercise of the authorizations provided in paragraph 14 above and further requests all States contributing through the CGPCS to the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia, including Somalia and other States in the region, to report by the same deadline on their efforts to establish jurisdiction and cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of piracy;

“33. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council within eleven months of the adoption of this resolution on the implementation of this resolution and on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia;

“34. Expresses its intention to review the situation and consider, as appropriate, renewing the authorizations provided in paragraph 14 above for additional periods upon the request of Somali authority;

“35. Decides to remain seized of the matter.”

Source: www.un.org, 09 November 2016

NATO starts Maritime Security Operation in Mediterranean Sea

NATO on Wednesday kicked off a new standing maritime security operation in the Mediterranean Sea, Operation Sea Guardian. According to a press release, three NATO ships from Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey and two submarines from Greece and Spain will conduct the first patrols in the central Mediterranean under the operation. Maritime patrol aircraft from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey will provide air support to the patrols. These first patrols will run through Nov. 17. Operation Sea Guardian has three core missions: maritime situational awareness, counter-terrorism and capacity building.

Upon decision by the Allies, Operation Sea Guardian could perform additional tasks, including upholding freedom of navigation, conducting interdiction tasks, and protection of critical infrastructure. It will help maintain an accurate picture of daily activity in the Mediterranean to help identify possible security concerns, NATO said in the press release. Sea Guardian comes under the command of Headquarters Allied Maritime Command, Northwood, United Kingdom. At the Warsaw Summit in July, NATO Allies agreed to launch a new maritime security operation in the Mediterranean in response to the evolving security environment.

Source: www.globaltimes.cn, 10 November 2016

Pakistan to respond forcefully if War imposed: Naval Chief

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah on Wednesday said that if war was imposed, Pakistan would respond forcefully and in a befitting manner. A Pakistan Navy spokesman said that the Command and Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy was held at the Naval Headquarters. During the conference, the PN chief was briefed

about Pakistan Navy's ongoing and future projects. The meeting reviewed the security of Gwadar Port and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The spokesman said that while addressing the conference, the PN chief directed the officers to maintain high standards of professional preparedness. "If war was imposed on us, we will respond with full force. Achieving high professional standard is our objective," he added. He also called for conducting joint exercise with law enforcement agencies to ensure maritime security at the sea belt.

He urged the field commanders to maintain the highest state of preparedness and constant vigil in the Area of Responsibility (AoR) to hit back with all might to crush any nefarious designs of the enemy. He took stock of the prevalent security environment and reiterated the PN's unflinching resolve and stalwart determination to safeguard maritime frontiers of Pakistan against all threats. The conference reviewed matters related to operational preparedness, prevailing security situation and developmental plans of the Pakistan Navy. According to a press release, Chief of the Naval Staff was given detailed briefings on various ongoing and future projects and plans of Pakistan Navy.

Besides assessing the war preparedness of Pakistan Navy, the participants of the conference reviewed the priorities pertaining to the security of Gwadar Port and sea lines of communication linked to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The naval chief highlighted that game changing development of CPEC with Gwadar Port as its pivot and enabler warrants vigilant and impregnable safeguards all along our coast, especially off Gwadar against both conventional and asymmetric threats. Admiral Zakaullah underlined the need for conducting coastal security exercises regularly in coordination with other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and organizations to acquire the highest degree of professionalism and inter-operability. He also expressed satisfaction over the operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy in the face of prevalent maritime challenges and lauded the morale and motivation of troops at all levels. The Command and Staff Conference is the apex decision making body of Pakistan Navy in which all Principal Staff Officers and field commanders undertake strategic review of Pakistan Navy's policies and plans at least once in each quarter.

Source: www.thenews.com.pk, 10 November 2016

PH, Malaysia pledge joint efforts in Maritime Security

-Antonio L. Colina

DAVAO CITY (MindaNews/11 November) – The Philippines and Malaysia have agreed to strengthen joint efforts in dealing with criminality and terrorism along the two countries' maritime border, President Rodrigo R. Duterte said Friday. In his arrival speech at the F. Bangoy International Airport from his two-day state visits in Malaysia and Thailand, Duterte said Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak committed to work with the Philippines on maritime security. He said his state visit to Malaysia aimed to strengthen Philippine-Malaysian partnership for a safe and secure, stable region, as maritime nations and as members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

He said both he and Razak view cooperation as a key to ensure that sea lanes would not be used for illegal or criminal activities. "With Malaysia, we committed to explore all available options to ensure greater collaboration and joint coordinated pursuit – interdiction and arrest of criminals and terrorists plying the waterways between our countries," he said. Duterte said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana will meet with senior officials of Malaysia and Indonesia to discuss the framework for a trilateral arrangement on immediate measures to address security issues in maritime areas of common interest.

He reiterated the country's stance to address criminality "on land, at sea and between borders." He said the Philippines is ready to work with Malaysia and even urged Malaysian business leaders to invest in the country. "My message to business leaders is clear – the Philippines is open for business and we will provide an environment that is conducive for industries to thrive," he said.

The president added that Malaysia has renewed its commitment to support the peace process in Mindanao. "They have committed to sustain the effort in the just and lasting peace in Mindanao. As we proceed with the implementation phase of the peace process, Malaysia will continue to play an important role. The Philippines is ready to work with Malaysia and all partners interested in securing for generations of the Mindanawons, and the Filipinos, to future free from fear and conflict," he said. (Antonio L. Colina IV/MindaNews)

Source: www.mindanews.com, 11 November 2016



Indonesia and Australia discuss joint Naval Patrols in the South China Sea

-By Peter Symonds

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop yesterday confirmed that Australia and Indonesia are considering joint naval patrols in the South China Sea. Her comments followed a four-day visit to Indonesia last week, during which she met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and senior Indonesian ministers. Speaking to Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio, Bishop sought to portray the mooted patrols as a routine part of the Australian navy's operations. "This is a regular part of what our navy does," she said. "This is part of our engagement in the region and this is in accordance with Australia's right of freedom of navigation, including in the South China Sea."

Such military exercises would be anything but routine, however. Indonesian naval vessels have already been involved in clashes with Chinese fishing trawlers allegedly fishing illegally inside the 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Natuna Islands in the South China Sea. Sharp diplomatic exchanges between Jakarta and Beijing resulted. While China does not dispute Indonesian sovereignty over the Natunas, its extensive maritime claims in the South China Sea intersect with the EEZ around the island group. Joint Australian-Indonesian naval exercises in the area risk an incident involving Chinese fishing boats that could draw in the Chinese coast guard or navy.

Following a clash in June, President Widodo travelled to the Natunas to underscore Indonesia's determination to assert its maritime claims. The Indonesian armed forces have been expanding its presence on the Natunas and last month staged its largest-ever air force exercise in the area, involving more than 2,000 personnel with fighter jets. An Indonesian defence ministry spokesman told the media that no agreement had been reached to conduct joint naval patrols with Australia. However, the issue was clearly discussed at the annual "2+2" talks involving Bishop and Australian Defence Minister Marise Payne with their Indonesian counterparts last Thursday. Their joint communiqué emphasised "the importance of maritime security." It noted that the two countries were

“natural maritime partners” and would take “practical steps to deepen and broaden bilateral maritime engagement.” The Indonesian and Australian navies have already carried out joint patrols in the Timor Sea, between the two countries.

The communiqué underlined “the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea.” It emphasised the “importance of non-militarisation” and backed Indonesia’s push for a code of conduct between the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China in the South China Sea. These diplomatic code-words are in line with the Obama administration’s aggressive intervention over the past six years in longstanding territorial disputes between China and its South East Asian neighbours. Washington has repeatedly criticised China’s “militarisation” of its atolls and “expansionism” in the South China Sea. The US navy last month conducted a fourth “freedom of navigation operation” that provocatively challenged Chinese maritime claims in the area.

The Australian government has been under intense pressure from Washington to authorise its own “freedom of navigation” incursion into Chinese-claimed territory—a move that Canberra has so far resisted amid deep divisions in the Australian political establishment. Sections of the ruling elite are fearful of the economic impact of a deterioration of relations with China, Australia’s biggest trading partner. The communiqué referred to the need to resolve disputes in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In July, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague ruled in favour of a US-backed Philippine challenge under UNCLOS to Chinese maritime claims. The subsequent tilt by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte toward Beijing has blunted Washington’s ability to exploit the PCA ruling to ramp up the pressure on Beijing over the South China Sea. After discussions with Bishop, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said last Wednesday she would seek clarification from the Philippines—in other words, to add to US pressure on Duterte to fall back into line. Duterte has called for an end to joint US-Philippine military exercises and the removal of US troops from the southern island of Mindanao.

In her remarks, yesterday, Bishop suggested that the proposal for joint patrols came from Indonesia. Whether that is the case or not, closer defence ties and strategic collaboration between Australia and Indonesia, along with joint operations in the South China Sea, are

fully in line with US efforts to build a web of alliances and strategic partnerships as part of its “pivot to Asia” directed against China.

A report appraising the US-Australian alliance published last month by the US Studies Centre at Sydney University included among its recommendations that Canberra “midwife closer US-Indonesia ties.” Written by Richard Fontaine, a visiting fellow and prominent figure in the US foreign policy establishment, the report suggested that closer ties should be forged also with other countries, including India, to boost maritime surveillance and operations in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean.

Bishop clearly had a brief—not only to strengthen Indonesian-Australian military ties but to draw Indonesia more fully into the US “pivot” against China. Echoing the reaction in Canberra and Washington to the proposal for joint Australian-Indonesian naval patrols, analyst Euan Graham from the Sydney-based Lowy Institute told the *Financial Times*: “This is a very significant development. It sends a message to Beijing that not all South East Asian countries are kowtowing to it over the South China Sea.”

The communiqué from last week’s talks in Bali also underscored closer Indonesian-Australian collaboration in regional forums such as ASEAN summits and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which also took place last week in Bali. IORA was formed in 1997, comprising countries from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. It is assuming growing significance as the Indian Ocean becomes the focus of rising geo-political rivalry. Closer Indonesian-Australian ties are underscored by the planned trip by President Widodo to Australia next week, during which he is slated to address the Australian parliament.

Source: www.wsws.org, 02 November 2016

INS Vishal, India's next Aircraft Carrier, will be Nuclear-Powered: Report

-Aditya Bhat

INS Vishal, Indian Navy's second indigenously built aircraft carrier, is going to be a one with nuclear propulsion and will be comparable to any of the world's most advanced naval carriers. Indian Naval planners and designers have reportedly opted for a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier featuring the latest US launch system, electro-magnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) technology, and it will have the capacity to carry 55 aircraft, Business Standard reported on Monday, quoting anonymous naval planners. But given several advanced technologies, the report predicts a delay of several years, as it would take India years to assimilate it and introduce it in the carrier. The delay could push INS Vishal entering service to 2030. It was earlier set to be inducted in the 2020s.

The report, however, has not provided any confirmed news on if the construction of the new warship has begun in state-owned shipyards. The supercarrier is said to be 65,000 tonne. This would be the second of the Vikrant-class aircraft being built in India. INS Vishal might be the first Indian carrier to feature catapult-assisted take-off, but with arrested recovery (CATOBAR). CATOBAR feature cancels the possibility of India joining hands with Russia to built the carrier. India's last carrier, INS Vikramaditya was bought from Russia.

However, the Diplomat noted that it would be a complex system and help greatly in reducing maintenance cost. Moreover, this also will allow it to carry heavier weapons payload and it will also allow the navy to have more sorties from the carrier. The report also predicts the possibility of INS Vishal not featuring MiG-29K Fulcrum fighter jets as it features CATOBAR system. This gives possibility for Dassault Rafale naval version and McDonnell Douglas F/A 18 Hornets. India is also testing naval version of the Tejas LCA.

Source: www.ibtimes.co.in, 09 November 2016

Hindustan Shipyard to Supply Six Vessels to Indian Navy by year end

India's Hindusthan Shipyard (HSL) will be supplying about six vessels to Indian Navy by the end of current calendar year. The HSL flagged off the third of the 25-tonne bollard pull tugs, this week. The tug will be commissioned at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Designed and built at the shipyard for the Indian Navy, the tug Buland is the 178th vessel built by the shipyard. It can cruise at 12 knots. The first two in the series of three such tugs were built in a record time of ten months and supplied to the Navy in January for the International Fleet Review (IFR).

“Two 50-tonne bollard pull tugs will be delivered to Kandla Port Trust by this month-end. With these, HSL will be completing delivery of six vessels in a single calendar year. This will be a record achievement in the Indian shipbuilding industry.” HSL Chairman and Managing Director Rear Admiral (Retd) LV Sarat Babu was quoted as saying by The BusinessLine reported Wednesday. Besides this, the ship repair division of HSL delivered eight ships during the current calendar year. The fourth of the five inshore patrol vessels (IPVs) being built for the Indian Coast Guard, Rani Gaidinliu was commissioned in October 19 at the Coast Guard Jetty.

IPV is a high-speed vessel built of light steel and is equipped with water jet propulsion system. These vessels are powered by MTU engines with advanced machinery control system with a speed reaching 34 knots. The last IPV of the series, ICGS Rani Rashmoni is in an advanced stage of construction and will be delivered by May 2017.

Source: www.defenseworld.net, 09 November 2016

U.N. Calls for another Year of Counter-Piracy Naval Operations off Somalia

The United Nations is calling for another year of international naval operations to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia more than three years since the last commercial vessel was hijacked in the region. The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday unanimously adopted a resolution renewing for another year its authorization for international naval forces to join in fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia, stressing that while the threat of

such crime had declined, it still remained a matter of grave concern. According to EU NAVFOR, by January 2011 there were 736 seafarers and 32 vessels were being held for ransom by Somali pirates, but the number has now dropped to zero hostages and zero vessels held due to naval patrols and the use of armed security teams on board ships.

With the adoption of resolution 2316 (2016), the Security Council renewed the call to nations and regional organizations to cooperate in deploying naval vessels and military aircraft, by providing logistical support, and by seizing and disposing of boats, arms and related equipment reasonably suspected to be used in piracy and armed robbery in the area. Acknowledging a steady decline in attacks since 2011, the Council commended the contributions of the European Union's Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Operation Ocean Shield, the Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 151, the African Union and the Southern Africa Development Community, as well as individual States for naval counter-piracy missions and protecting ships transiting through the region.

The Council also recognized the continued need for national legislative action, noting the continuing gap in domestic capacity and legal framework for the detention and prosecution of suspected pirates and those who profited from the crimes. It also expressed serious concern over reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in Somalia's exclusive economic zone and, noting a complex relationship between such activity and piracy, recognized that it accounted for millions in lost revenue for the country and could contribute to destabilization of coastal communities. The call from the UN comes after Somali pirates carried out their first attack on a commercial vessel in two and half years. The attack occurred Oct. 22 when a group of six armed pirates chased UK-flagged chemical tanker approximately 330 nautical miles off the east coast of Somali. The attack was ultimately deterred by the ship's embarked security team.

Source: gcaptain.com, 10 November 2016

(LEAD) Navy plans Anti-Submarine exercise amid growing N. Korea threats

SEOUL, Nov. 10 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's Navy said Thursday it will conduct an exercise in the East Sea to better counter possible missile attacks by North Korean submarines. The exercise, which will run from Friday through Tuesday, will involve 10 warships, such as the 7,600-ton Aegis-equipped Sejong the Great destroyer, submarines, P-3 maritime patrol aircraft and fighter jets. It said officials from the U.S. Undersea Warfighting Development Center (UWDC) plan to assess the Korean Navy's capabilities when it comes to operations against submarines, warships and aircraft sent by the communist North.

In 2015, Washington agreed to support Seoul's efforts to bolster its capabilities to detect, trace and attack North Korean submarines in the event of any signs of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the statement said. Starting in 2017, the two countries' naval forces plan to conduct a joint assessment on the Korean Navy's anti-submarine capabilities, it said. Earlier in the day, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Um Hyun-seong said in a seminar in Seoul that South Korea is beefing up its fleet forces to respond to North Korea's growing nuclear, missile and submarine-launched ballistic missile threats. This year alone, Pyongyang has conducted two underground nuclear tests and fired off some two dozen ballistic missiles. Such developments have escalated global fears that the North is approaching its stated goal of developing a nuclear-tipped long-range ballistic missile that can hit parts of the U.S. mainland.

Meanwhile, Air Force Chief of Staff Jeong Kyeong-doo flew in a RF-16 reconnaissance jet near the border with North Korea. After the flight, he called on airmen to stay on high alert, and respond swiftly and resolutely to any provocative acts by the communist country.

Source: english.yonhapnews.co.kr, 10 November 2016

Navy conducts a major operational exercise in the Arabian Sea

-Manjeet Singh Negi

Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy concluded a major operational exercise, conducted in the Arabian Sea. The nine-day Exercise Paschim Leher (XPL) tested the combat readiness of the Command at sea, including mobilisation and operational synchronisation. A large number of ships, submarines and aircraft participated in the exercise. Various manoeuvres and deployments were exercised, in a networked environment, with a number of support units ashore also participating. The exercise also saw participation of Indian Air Force, with a number of aircraft, and included units of the Indian Coast Guard. The scale of the exercise has been enhanced this year, and the exercise itself has been renamed as Exercise Paschim Leher. Proactive operations as well as defensive operations were exercised, including various contingencies off the coasts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka.

Source: indiatoday.intoday.in, 11 November 2016

New Low in Sea Trade Growth

Seaborne shipments passed 10 billion tons for the first time ever in 2015, up 2.1 percent from 9.8 billion tons the year before, the UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2016 says, the slowest pace of growth in the industry since 2009 and that future growth looks uncertain. Shipping carried more than 80 percent of the world's goods by volume in 2015, and its slow growth reflects sluggish global trade. Shipping of oil recorded its best performance since 2008, thanks to low oil prices, ample supply and stable demand. But shipping's overall growth was dragged down by the limited growth of dry bulk commodity trade, in particular coal and iron ore, and by the poor performance of container shipping, which carries about 95 percent of the world's manufactured goods. Despite this slow growth, the industry's carrying capacity continued to grow, jumping 3.5 percent to 1.8 billion deadweight tons in 2015 and pushing freight rates down to record lows.

“With global trade growing at its slowest pace since the financial crisis, the immediate outlook for the shipping industry remains uncertain and subject to downside risks,” UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi said. “The push for ever larger ships is at the root of the industry's problems,” he added. “There's just not enough cargo right now to fill the newly acquired, bigger vessels.” Falling demand from China, low commodity prices, over supply of ships and geopolitical uncertainties in some oil and gas producing countries all add to the current downside risks affecting shipping. Shipping companies have sought to reduce their operating costs by building and buying ever larger ships. But this may prove costly for developing countries, where transport costs are already higher than in other regions, says Kituyi. With larger ships, total system costs go up, and smaller trading nations are increasingly confronted with oligopolistic liner markets. Developing countries account for ever larger shares of international shipping. By volume, they accounted for 60 percent of the goods loaded onto ships in 2015. In the same year, their share of goods unloaded was 62 percent, up from 41 percent in 2006.

With the exception of a few Asian countries such as China, most developing country ports lack the infrastructure for bigger ships. So, unless they spend heavily on upgrading their

ports, developing countries face fewer port calls, less competitive markets and higher shipping costs. As a result of population growth and the potential maritime trade and business opportunities that may be generated by new transport infrastructure projects such as the extension of the Panama Canal and Suez Canal, the long-term prospects for shipping remain positive, the report says. It urges developing countries to identify possible comparative advantages in sectors such as shipbuilding, registration and staffing. “With all the bad news in the media about the state of the shipping industry, we forget that seaborne trade continues to grow, offering job and growth opportunities for developing countries,” says Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics.

Developing countries can also cut their costs by keeping their ports competitive. “Many industries and businesses in developing countries could be much more competitive if their ports were more efficient,” Sirimanne says, adding that delays in African ports add roughly 10 percent to the cost of imported goods and even more to exports. The UNCTAD port training program currently works with some 200 ports in 29 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, helping them to improve performance through management training, research projects and keeping up to date with the latest port legislation.

Source: www.maritime-executive.com, 06 November 2016

NGO approves of new online tuna traceability system in Maldives

NGO Future of Fish has reviewed a new online traceability system in the Maldives to monitor the country’s pole-and-line tuna fisheries. The NGO said the new Fisheries Information System (FIS) will help Maldivian fisheries landing catch to the Indian Ocean archipelago meet EU regulation to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), by fulfilling all the latest international traceability requirements with regards to catch and vessel reporting. FIS, which took four years to develop, was introduced in August of this year and is monitoring catch logbooks, fish purchase information, fishing vessel license information and catch certificates. Regulation modules incorporated into FIS include catch statistics, licensing, catch certification, fish purchase and transfer.

Its data is also sufficient for the reporting requirements of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), which is responsible for managing tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. “The FIS is using both catch documentation and catch information to verify [Maldivian tuna] exports,” said Keith Flett, strategy director with Future of Fish. “It is one of the bigger steps forward that a government has taken to verify that the catch has actually been reported to the government at the point of export. All while trying to meet EU and IUU task force laws.” “The FIS was welcomed by Mohamed Shainee, minister of fisheries for the Maldives who also said it could be “rolled out to a much broader geography”. “Through our key role at the IOTC, we are actively encouraging fishery improvements beyond our own borders,” he said, “to safeguard the long-term futures of many more coastal communities in the Indian Ocean and beyond.”

Maldivian one-by-one tuna fisheries came under greater scrutiny following the EU regulation implemented in Jan. 1, 2010, to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU. Together with the Marine Stewardship Council certification of the skipjack tuna pole-and-line fishery in 2012, new demands were placed on fisheries’ data capture. Additional support for the program came from the International Pole & Line Foundation and its members.

Source: www.undercurrentnews.com, 08 November 2016

Korean Cumulative Ship Orders Fall 86% in Q3

-Jun Min-hee

The Korean shipbuilding industry’s cumulative orders and order receipts fell by over 80% year on year in the third quarter of this year. Its order backlog dropped to its lowest level in 13 years, narrowing the gap with the Japanese shipbuilding industry. According to a report by the Export-Import Bank of Korea on the Korean shipbuilding and shipping industries in the third quarter of 2016, cumulative orders for Korea's shipbuilding industry plunged 86.7% year on year to 1.25 million CGT in the third quarter of 2016. Orders received fell 87.2 percent to US\$2.69 billion. The report said that three vessel types -- oil tankers, product carriers, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels accounted for more than 90 percent of the total but it is not quite meaningful as they were an unusually decreased

number of orders that was significantly lower than the previous year. Worldwide orders and the monetary value of the orders also dropped sharply. Cumulative worldwide orders in the third quarter were 86.6 million CGT, down 72 percent compared to the same period of last year, while the amount of orders slid by 63.1 percent to US\$26.08 billion in the same period. "This slump is blamed on a drop-in demand for eco-ships caused by low oil prices, a shipping industry downturn due to an oversupply of bottoms and shipowners' concerns and wait-and-see attitudes about changes in fuels for ships amid tightening environmental regulations," the report said. By ship type, most ship types except for cruise lines suffered a severe demand downturn. Cruise ship orders hit a record high, accounting for 26 percent or one fourth of the total orders even though its proportion stood at one percent to eight percent in the new shipbuilding market in the past.

On the other hand, according to British shipbuilding and marine analysis agency Clarkson, the Korean shipbuilding industry chalked up 10 new orders in October. Global shipbuilding orders in October totaled 880,000 CGT (30 vessels), up by 210,000 CGT from 670,000 CGT in September. Italy, which landed orders to build three cruise ships, won the largest number of orders with 350,000 CGT, followed by Korea with 10 vessels (290,000 CGT). Korea's Samsung Heavy Industries and Hyundai Heavy Industries won orders for six and four ships, respectively. China booked orders for 150,000 CGT (11 ships) and Japan recorded a 30,000 CGT order (one ship). Korea's order backlog was the lowest in 13 years. As of the end of October, the order backlog of Korea was 21.53 million CGT, which dropped to the lowest level in 13 years and two months since the end of August 2003 (20.77 million CGT). China had 33.44 million CGT and 202.8 million CGT in order backlogs, respectively. The gap between Korea's and Japan's order backlogs narrowed down to 1.24 million CGT at the end of October from 1.43 million CGT at the end of September. Amid the global recession, the worldwide order backlog in late October reached 91.35 million CGT, the lowest level in 11 years and 10 months since the end of December 2004 (88.74 million CGT).

Source: astrogoread.astro.com.my, 10 November 2016

Cosco Corp's Q3 loss widens on shipping industry woes

TROUBLES plaguing the marine and shipping industry have hurt the performance of Cosco Corporation (Singapore) in its fiscal third quarter. The shipbuilder reported a 30 per cent drop in sales to S\$662.3 million for the three months ended Sept 30, 2016, from S\$950 million the year before. Its net loss attributable to shareholders widened a further 25 per cent to S\$102.3 million, from a net loss of S\$82.1 million the year before. Its loss per share was 4.57 Singapore cents, up from 3.67 Singapore cents in the year-ago period. Cosco Corp's shares were down 0.5 cents at 26.5 Singapore cents at the close of trade on Friday.

Source: www.businesstimes.com.sg, 11 November 2016



Combatting Marine Plastic debris

-Arif Havas oegroseno & Casper Klynge

Marine plastic debris has moved up high on the international environmental agenda and for good reason. In January 2016, a World Economic Forum report concluded that with the current trajectory, there would be more plastic than fish measured by weight in the world's oceans by 2050. A previous study by APEC estimated that marine pollution cost member economies US\$1.3 billion. Moreover, 95 percent of the value of plastic packaging material, worth \$80-120 billion annually, is lost to the global economy. The marine debris challenges are also present in Indonesia. Studies indicate that Indonesia may be the second-biggest contributor to marine plastic debris worldwide, with an estimated 1.3 million tons annually originating from the archipelago.

However, more detailed studies and analyses are still to be conducted in order to understand the magnitude of the problem. The longevity of plastic molecules means that plastic waste travels far beyond borders and into our common high seas. For example, plastic bottles degenerate over a span of more than 400 years, gradually turning into micro plastic partly entering into fish and ultimately on the dining table. The plastic pollution challenge thus has global implications and must be addressed. Today, Jakarta will host the Indonesia Marine Plastic Debris Summit organized by the Office of the Coordinating Maritime Affairs Minister together with the World Bank and Denmark. At the Summit, people from around the world and Indonesia will discuss how to address the marine plastic challenges in Indonesia. The discussions will be based on hotspot assessments from 15 urban centers in Indonesia supported by Denmark and will feed into a national action plan to be presented and used at the World's Ocean Summit in Bali in February 2017. Indonesia is strongly committed to this agenda and has identified the challenge at an early stage. With this week's summit and the resulting action plan, Indonesia is leading by example.

Indonesia has already been actively participating in global and regional fora aimed at raising awareness and engagement on the ocean plastic challenge and catalyzing action at the national level; most recently the Our Oceans Summit in Washington DC and the APEC High Level Meeting on Marine Litter in Tokyo, both in September 2016. With Indonesia located at the crossroad of one of the busiest maritime routes in the world and with 10 coastal neighboring countries, Indonesia's marine environment is also affected by the plastic pollution of other countries in the region. Indonesia's leadership in this area is thus important. As a maritime nation, plastic pollution is likely to have an adverse impact on Indonesia's tourism, shipping and fisheries industries unless a comprehensive response is implemented in the near term.

Therefore, Indonesia and Denmark are joining forces to create innovative partnerships and share experiences on how to turn plastic from waste into value. Solutions must be concerted and fast, that is clear. But what are the best solutions? As an estimated 80 percent of marine plastic comes from land-based sources, the best solution would naturally be to stop leakage in the first place. Besides prioritizing the ocean plastic challenge as part of the global policy agenda, the Ocean Conservancy recommends in its report 'Stemming the Tide: Land-based Strategies for a Plastic-Free Ocean' that governments at all levels set and achieve ambitious waste-management targets and create on-the-ground wins as proofs of concept for integrated waste-management approaches that can be replicated at larger scale with international funding and technology transfer.

Often when waste management is prioritized, tremendous results can be achieved. In South Korea, waste disposal dropped by 40 percent and recycling rates increased by 60 percent over the 1990s. Based on experience from Denmark, where 95 percent of waste today is recycled or incinerated for energy purposes, Indonesia and Denmark are working together on two waste-to-energy demonstration projects in Cilacap and Semarang that can serve as proof of concept and be replicated at larger scale. With the participation of companies with proven waste-to-energy experience at this week's summit, it is our mutual hope and expectation that an exchange of ideas and experience will lead to a more concrete and sustainable approach to waste management and marine environment. Because only through concerted and concrete action will marine plastic debris pollution be effectively combatted nationally, regionally and globally.

Source: www.thejakartapost.com, 02 November 2016

US promotes Blue Economy, ocean preservation in Bunaken

The US government has committed to contributing further to the conservation of Indonesia's ocean environment and promoting sustainable fishing. Speaking at an event at Bunaken National Marine Park, US chargé d'affaires Brian McFeeters said marine parks such as Bunaken were incredibly valuable to local livelihoods. "By engaging in the protection and management of the area, economic development and environmental protection can be balanced," he said in a statement released by the US Embassy on Thursday. Consul general Heather Variava, marine scientists and professors from Manado's Sam Ratulangi University participated in the follow-up event to the 2016 Our Ocean conference, which was held in Washington DC in September. The promotion of the Blue Economy and sustainable fishing were a major focus of the conference.

In the follow-up event, all participants had the opportunity to view the rich marine diversity of Bunaken and learn about Indonesia's efforts to preserve its ocean environment. "Environmental sustainability will ensure economic stability, benefiting all Indonesians," Variava said. The Our Ocean conference announced over 136 new initiatives on marine conservation and protection, worth more than US\$5.24 billion. The initiatives are focused on key ocean issues, including marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution and climate-related impacts on the ocean. Bunaken National Marine Park is located in the Coral Triangle, North Sulawesi. It provides a habitat for 390 species of coral, along with another marine species. Indonesia will host the Our Ocean conference in 2018. (ebf)

Source: www.thejakartapost.com, 03 November 2016

Ministers announce Canada's Oceans Protection Plan in Eastern Canada

Every day, Canadians across the country rely on transportation to get to work, bring their children to school, and ship their products to market. The Government of Canada is committed to protecting the country's marine environment by ensuring goods are imported and exported in a safe and responsible way. Today, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced a \$1.5 billion national Oceans Protection Plan. The Plan improves marine safety and responsible shipping, protects Canada's marine environment, and creates stronger partnerships with Indigenous and coastal communities. The plan meets or exceeds international standards and is supported by commitments to Indigenous co-management, environmental protections, and science-based standards.

As part of the Oceans Protection Plan, the following initiatives were announced:

- The re-opening of the Maritime Rescue Sub-centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. This rescue centre provides regional capacity to facilitate effective operational coordination and response to all-hazard marine incidents.
- The construction of two new Canadian Coast Guard lifeboat stations in Newfoundland and Labrador areas to improve search and rescue.
- The refurbishment of the Canadian Coast Guard St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador, lifeboat station.
- The building of two new radars in Atlantic Canada – one to be installed in the Strait of Belle Isle area, and the second one in Chedabucto, Nova Scotia.
- Increased domestic and international scientific collaboration on oil spill response through investments for Fisheries and Oceans Canada's world-leading Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

- Continued investment in response planning for the Strait of Canso, Nova Scotia, and the Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, including bringing together baseline biology, ecology, social, cultural, and economic data.
- Improved timely availability of science-based expertise during incidents by placing additional emergency and enforcement officers in Atlantic Canada.
- Increased marine safety information for mariners and improving hydrography, charting, and e-navigation products, including for the Strait of Canso, Nova Scotia, and Saint John, New Brunswick.
- Investment in research to support new and refined oceanographic oil spill trajectory models, including for the Strait of Canso, Nova Scotia, and the Port of Saint John, New Brunswick.
- Learning how to better protect marine mammals from shipping-related threats.
- The launch of a comprehensive plan to address abandoned, derelict and wrecked vessels, including making vessel owners responsible and liable for vessel clean-up.

Moving forward, Canada will be better equipped, better regulated, and better prepared to protect marine environment and coastal communities, achieving a world-leading marine safety system. These new measures will contribute to Canadians and to growing the middle-class.

"Through the Oceans Protection Plan, Canada's world-leading marine safety system will respond better, quicker and more effectively to marine spills and incidents along all of our coasts and major waterways, including in Atlantic Canada. In addition, preventative measures will help ensure marine spills and incidents do not happen in the first place. Most importantly, this work will be done in strong partnership with Indigenous and coastal communities, valuing their traditional knowledge and expertise in preserving our coasts and their pristine beauty for generations to come."

"Under Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, we are taking decisive steps to address the needs and protection of Canada's three coasts such as following through on our Government's commitment to re-open the Canadian Coast Guard Maritime Rescue Sub-centre. Canada's Oceans Protection Plan will strengthen Canada's Coast Guard to better serve Atlantic Canadians, while investing in better science to inform our decision making and getting the right regulations in place to protect our precious coastlines and waterways for future generations."

"Today's announcement demonstrates that the Government of Canada is taking action to ensure a clean environment and a strong economy go hand-in-hand. The Oceans Protection Plan will support good jobs for middle-class Atlantic Canadians, help us better fulfil our environmental protection responsibilities to Canadians, advance our science, and keep our waters and wildlife safe for generations to come."

Source: news.gc.ca, 07 November 2016

Adidas is selling running shoes made out of plastic waste in a bid to reduce Marine Pollution

Eco-friendly adidas shoes made from plastic ocean waste are to go on sale this month. The sports retailer has teamed up with Parley for the Oceans – an environmental group that raises awareness of marine pollution – to design prototype shoes made from plastic floating in the sea. Now 7,000 pairs of the UltraBOOST Uncaged Parley are set to hit adidas's stores and websites as part of the company's effort to raise awareness of environmental pollution.

The shoes feature a knitted upper part – created with 95% recycled materials from Parley Ocean Plastic collected from coastal areas around the Maldives and 5% recycled polyester in a design that's inspired by ocean waves. The laces, heel cap base material, heel webbing, heel lining and the sock liner cover are also made from recycled items. "This represents another step on the journey of adidas and Parley for the Oceans," says adidas executive Eric Liedtke.

“But we won’t stop there. We will make one million pairs of shoes using Parley Ocean Plastic in 2017 – and our ultimate ambition is to eliminate virgin plastic from our supply chain.” As well as the Parley trainers, the sportswear giant is using recycled ocean waste to make limited-edition football kits for Bayern Munich and Real Madrid. “We have not only managed to make footwear from recycled ocean plastic, but have also created the first jersey coming 100% out of the ocean,” Liedtke adds.

As part of its 2017 targets, adidas aims to recycle 11 million bottles – collected from coastal areas – into elite performance sportswear. According to Ocean Crusader, there are 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic debris in the ocean and four billion plastic microfibres per square kilometre are scattered across the deep sea. Priced at £139.95, the shoes will be available from adidas stores and websites in mid-November.

Source: www.irisht Examiner.com, 07 November 2016

Addressing Plastification of the Oceans

An EU funded project has demonstrated that maritime waste including used fishing nets can be transformed into high quality plastic raw materials at a competitive price. The RETRAWL project headed up by Denmark based Plastix – a Danish cleantech company transforming discarded fishing nets and trawls into valuable green raw materials, sought to create an innovative plastic recycling model to address the problem of marine debris and the plastification of the oceans.

In addition, the project partners set out to exploit the technology to other European and global markets with an initial focus on Spain, and to investigate and implement a closed loop, or an almost closed loop, business model for the maritime industry. The project showed that Plastix' recyclates from discarded nets, trawls and ropes, out favoured similar virgin plastics when it came to carbon footprint.

In addition, it also demonstrated that the development and build of a large scale innovative recycling technology plant can be done at a cost competitive unit treatment price. The partners in the project want to see its business model broadened to a circular business model for the whole maritime industry. Plastix works with NGOs, the fishing

industry and ports to collect discarded fishing gear and provides a certification programme designed for suppliers and producers.

The organisations' technology and processes aim to solve the significant waste stream problem, contribute to a more circular blue and green economy by reducing landfilling, marine pollution, CO₂ emissions and protecting valuable resources.

Source: www.worldfishing.net, 09 November 2016

International Ocean Governance: EU's contribution for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed Oceans

The global ocean economy is estimated at €1.3 trillion. Climate change, poverty and food security are some of the global challenges that can be effectively addressed, if oceans are better protected and sustainably managed. The Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy adopted a Joint Communication today, proposing actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans. As a strong global actor, the European Union sets out an agenda for better ocean governance based on a cross-sectoral, rules-based international approach.

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, said: "*With this Joint Communication, we confirm our engagement to be at the frontline in the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for the benefit of EU citizens and the whole world. Our oceans are threatened by crime, piracy and armed robbery. Attempts to assert territorial or maritime claims are affecting regional stability and the global economy. We need to use all the tools we have to shape ocean governance and make it more part of the European Union's external action. This is also a concrete example of how the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy delivers in practice*".

Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth and Investment noted: "The oceans offer great potential for boosting growth, jobs and innovation, while at the same time they are at the centre of some of the most pressing global challenges, such as climate

change, marine litter and growing global population. This communication takes forward the EU's strong role as a champion for sustainable development, a global actor in the ocean governance framework and a user of ocean resources."

Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said: "Oceans make up 70% of the planet. The world has come to realise that oceans need better care. Only strong international cooperation can do that. The EU is taking the lead to create a stronger system of ocean governance around the globe. We are announcing an agenda for improving the way oceans are managed, reducing human pressure *on our oceans*, and investing in science. This will ensure that marine resources are used sustainably, for healthy marine eco-systems and a thriving ocean economy". Today's proposal sets out 14 sets of actions in 3 priority areas: 1) Improving the international ocean governance framework; 2) Reducing human pressure on the oceans and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy 3) Strengthening international ocean research and data.

1. Improving international ocean governance framework

Existing ocean rules need to be further developed and better enforced, for example to address areas beyond national jurisdiction or implement internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, such as creating the 10% target for Marine Protected Areas by 2020. The EU will cooperate with international partners to ensure implementation and will host in October 2017 the "Our Oceans" conference to build on these commitments. By 2018 the Commission will also produce guidance on the exploration and exploitation of natural resources in areas under national jurisdiction.

On the basis of its Maritime Security Strategy, the European Union will work with partner countries to reduce maritime security threats and risks, such as piracy, trafficking in human beings, arms and narcotics, while taking full advantage of the capacity of the new European Border and Coastguard Agency, the EU Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). Moreover, the EU is strongly engaged with its Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. EUNAVFOR Atalanta is active in countering piracy in front of the coast of Somalia, while EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia is working towards disrupting

smugglers and traffickers' networks and has saved more than 28.000 lives up to date in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

2. Reducing human pressure on the oceans and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy:

With the Paris Agreement, having entered into force, the Commission will work to strengthen ocean-related action to implement national and international commitments, starting at Oceans Day at COP22 in Marrakech on 12 November 2016. As oceans absorb 25% of CO₂ generated, they are important climate regulators. If no action is taken to limit ocean warming and acidification, oceans risk deregulating the climate.

Combatting illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU) is a priority for the EU. At least 15% of catches worldwide, worth €8-19 billion a year, are illegal. As a leader in the fight against IUU fishing, the EU will promote multilateral action and strengthen the role of Interpol in fighting IUU fishing. The Commission will launch a pilot project to monitor illegal fishing worldwide using satellite communications. Marine litter is another major threat to oceans. Under the "Circular Economy Action Plan", the EU will propose by 2017 a strategy on plastics, which will contribute to reducing marine litter by at least 30% by 2020. The Commission will work towards international guidelines on Maritime Spatial Planning by 2025 and help expand Marine Protected Areas worldwide with funding under Horizon 2020 and LIFE programmes.

3. Strengthening international ocean research and data:

An estimated 90% of the oceans' seabed remains uncharted. Less than 3% is used for economic activity. More understanding and sound scientific knowledge is essential to sustainably manage ocean resources and reduce human pressure. The EU's Blue Data Network, the European Marine Observation and Data Network, provides data from over 100 marine research bodies and is accessible to all. The Commission will propose how to develop this database into a worldwide marine data network. The proposed actions will now be discussed with the EU Member States in the Council and the European Parliament.

Background

Today's initiative is an integral part of the EU's response to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 'to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources'. It is based on the political mandate given to Commissioner Vella by President Juncker 'to engage in shaping international ocean governance in the UN, in other multilateral fora and bilaterally with key global partners'.

The EU's role in promoting safety and security, global maritime growth and global governance through bilateral, regional and multilateral partnerships is underpinned by the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy. The Global Strategy, presented by High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini in June 2016, calls for more joined-up internal and external policies. Today's Joint Communication aims at linking internal and external security dimensions of good ocean governance. It takes account of existing strategies notably the EU Maritime Security Strategy and regional strategies such as the Gulf of Guinea and the Indian Ocean, including the integrated arctic policy. These efforts are aimed at resulting in better shared international responsibility for our oceans.

Source: europa.eu, 10 November 2016



India-Myanmar Relations: A Fine Balance – Analysis

-Jivanta Schoettli

On a recent four-day visit to India, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the eighth BIMSTEC Summit (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and the first BRICS (grouping of Brazil Russia India South Africa)-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit, both of which took place in the Indian State of Goa. In addition, she was accorded a State visit as State Counsellor, a post she assumed on 30 March 2016 following the landslide victory of her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), in November 2015. Aung San Suu Kyi's trip highlighted the geo-strategic importance of this relationship, connecting India to its near neighbourhood and beyond, to Southeast Asia. In their joint statement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and State Counsellor Aung Sang Suu Kyi pronounced a shared interest in Myanmar's democratisation, economic and social development and strongly condemned the common scourge of terrorism.

Sandwiched between China and India, Myanmar has to pursue a delicate balancing act. In August 2016, Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi chose China as the destination for her first official trip to a major power. This followed a visit she had already made to Beijing in June 2015, then as opposition leader, which was widely interpreted as attempting to repair relations that had been faltering since the installation of a nominally civilian government in 2011. Both visits aimed at overcoming the past when China had supported the military junta responsible for detaining her for more than fifteen years (both in prison and under house arrest). To calibrate Aung San Suu Kyi's overtures to China, President U Htin Kyaw was sent to India on his first overseas trip in August 2016, also to prepare the ground for the State Counsellor's recent visit to India.

In addition to long land boundaries with both India and China, Myanmar boasts a 1,930-km coastline along the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. As a result, both India and China have been vying for connectivity projects and deepening economic relations. Thus, for example China would like to build a rail and road network linking the province of Yunnan with the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar. Meanwhile India has already been

working on the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project to connect Kolkata port to Sittwe port in Myanmar. An inland waterway would link Sittwe to Paletwa on the river Kaladan and Myanmar's westernmost town and from there a road to the border would reach Lawngtlai district in the Indian state of Mizoram. Progress has been slow but most recently India Ports Global Private Limited, a joint venture between Kandla Port Trust and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, has joined forces with the Inland Waterways Authority of India to take the project forward.

India and China are also both involved in a connectivity project with Myanmar, through the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) Economic Corridor (EC) seeking to link Kolkata with Kunming, capital of Yunnan and passing through Mandalay in Myanmar and Dhaka in Bangladesh. These ambitious plans reflect in part the geo-strategic ambitions of both major players, India and China. The former hopes to give its landlocked north-eastern states access to the sea, via Kolkata port, and the latter seeks to reduce reliance on the Straits of Malacca as a trade route. Both the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar have explicitly supported the BCIM initiative, which is technically part and parcel of China's larger Belt and Road projects and vision. In some parts the BCIM-EC infrastructure already exists and needs upgrading to develop all-weather facilities. However, other sections of the route require heavy investments and are complicated by sensitivities in areas that are insurgency-prone (for instance in the northernmost Kachin state of Myanmar) or where developing connectivity is seen as a strategic risk, for example in terms of enabling Chinese access to India's Northeast.

One of the three MOUs signed on Aung San Suu Kyi's recent visit to India included cooperation in the power sector, a key area where India and Myanmar have taken some very preliminary steps. China has already acquired a strong presence and influence in Myanmar's power sector, although the current NLD government is keen to better leverage its position and resources. For example, it is estimated that Myanmar's hydroelectric sector has a potential of 100 GW, of which currently only 3 GW has been developed. Hydropower is the government's hope for clean energy and for addressing its severe electricity shortfall. This is crucial to sustain the country's economic revival and to deliver the transformative change promised by the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi in the election campaign. Dams and hydro projects had become a sensitive issue with public opinion and

government members unhappy over the degree of Chinese involvement and investments. As a result, projects approved by previous governments have been put under review.

Aside from the economy, Aung San Suu Kyi clearly stated that the government's number one priority will be peace talks between the country's military and armed ethnic groups and to bring about national peace and reconciliation following decades of ethnic conflict. India has expressed its support for the 21st century Panglong peace process, named after Aung San Suu Kyi's father's efforts to reach an accord with ethnic minorities for a federal state. It has appreciated Myanmar's cooperation and control over insurgent groups that have been active both in India and Myanmar, such as the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplan, which proclaims the creation of a separatist state; launched attacks on civilians and security forces and was labelled a terrorist organisation by the Indian government on 6 November 2015. India therefore clearly shares an interest in border security and stability and stands to gain from Myanmar's peace process.

However, the peace process has been internationally criticised for its criteria of inclusion and the procedures which have been used to exclude potential parties. India too has been blamed for not being more vocal on the issue of attacks on, and representation of, the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, a number of whom live in India as refugees. In fact the recent joint statement is significant for recognising the bilateral importance of the peace process, with India hoping that, 'as a diverse and pluralistic society Myanmar will be able to find equitable solutions peacefully through consultations among all stakeholders'.

Conclusion

Although it was her first official visit to India, Aung San Suu Kyi was welcomed by Narendra Modi to her 'second home', alluding to the time spent in New Delhi as a student in the 1960s, when her mother was ambassador. For her part, Nobel Laureate Suu Kyi conveyed Myanmar's admiration for India as "the greatest democracy in the world".

Democracy is rarely invoked by the Indian state as the basis for diplomacy and integration with other countries. However, India is tapping a common heritage of diversity and plurality in the case of Myanmar-India relations and identifying issues where shared values are projected. Thus, the recent terror attacks in Uri (India) and Rakhine State (Myanmar) were mentioned together in their statement and the Prime Minister and State

Counsellor chose to define and condemn terrorism emotively as a 'violation of human rights' and the destruction of 'innocent lives'. Democratisation and development are both key to Myanmar's transition from military to civilian government. Achieving a fine balance between them is going to be the country's central domestic challenge as it is going to be, for India in the honing of its foreign policy towards Myanmar.

Source: www.eurasiareview.com, 02 November 2016

India hints at anti-Beijing stand over South China Sea dispute – Report

Nandini Krishnamoorthy

India is reported to have hinted at an anti-China stand on the South China Sea issue in retaliation for Beijing blocking Delhi's bid to enter the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG). While India has so far remained neutral on the issue, it is now said to have attempted to squeeze Beijing by making its stand clear on China's historical claims in the hotly contested waters, the Times of India cited top sources in Delhi as saying. Last month, India proposed to Singapore a joint statement dismissing China's claims and urging the Asian giant to abide by the 12 July UN tribunal ruling. The Permanent Court of Arbitration rejected China's unilateral claims in favour of the Philippines.

Singapore, however, is thought to have rejected Delhi's proposal, when its Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited India in October. Singapore is not a claimant in the territorial dispute and has avoided taking sides with any parties that include Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei which have overlapping claims in the waters against China. But India, taking a side "indicates a resolve to articulate forcefully China's non-compliance with international law even as Beijing throws cold water on India's NSG bid", the newspaper said.

After being snubbed by Singapore, India is now reportedly seeking the support of Japan to issue a joint statement during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tokyo next week. Japan is reported to have encouraged India to speak its mind on the South China Sea dispute.

Japan is not directly involved in the South China Sea but has locked horns with China for challenging its sovereignty over the uninhabited East China Sea, where Beijing calls a group of islets as Diaoyu while Tokyo refers to them as Senkaku. Japan, along with the US, has constantly raised concerns over China's growing assertiveness in the seas. China stymied India's NSG entry citing Delhi's refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is mandatory to become a member of the elite nuclear club. India defends its move saying its track record of non-proliferation is good enough for it to gain NSG entry. President Xi Jinping's administration has also thwarted India's attempt to get the UN slap sanctions on Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar, leaving the Indian government peeved with the communist country.

Earlier in September, Tokyo announced that it would reduce the price of US-2i aircraft to revive the negotiations for its purchase by Delhi. This evoked a strong reaction from China which said it would be "disgraceful" if it was aimed at putting pressure on the country over the South China Sea dispute.

Source: www.ibtimes.co.uk, 07 November 2016

Australia says US under Trump must stay strong in Asia

Australia said Wednesday it was crucial for Washington to stay focused on Asia if Donald Trump wins the presidential election, with Canberra keen to see more US involvement in the region, not less. Mr Trump later won the elections beating his rival Hillary Clinton. Under President Barack Obama, the United States has pursued a foreign policy "pivot" towards the Asia-Pacific, including stationing marines in Australia, against the background of Beijing's increasing assertiveness.

With tensions, high over China's claims in the South China Sea and fears Trump could be a negative for the region's trade prospects, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said it was critical that the US remain fully engaged. "Countries in our region are looking for more US leadership and not less in the Asia-Pacific," she told Sky News in the first Australian reaction to a potential Trump win over former secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

The billionaire populist has claimed a string of swing states for the Republicans and appears poised for a shock victory, jolting world markets and stunning Clinton supporters. As parliament sat on Wednesday, Bishop and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull closely watched results flow through on their mobile phones. Bishop said Canberra wanted to continue working closely with any new administration and meet soon "to ensure it focuses on our region and the importance of US leadership and a US presence in the Asia-Pacific".

"We have particular areas of interest that must align and we will do what we can to ensure the new US administration is focused on our region because that is in our national interest," she said. "The United States is our largest foreign direct investor, our second largest trading partner, so it's important for the Australian government to be ready to work with whomever becomes the next president of the United States and at this stage it would appear to be Donald Trump." The bombastic Trump, who has little or no foreign policy experience, has threatened to tear up free trade deals and seal the US border.

He has also expressed a willingness to work with any country that shares his goals of stability, prosperity and security. Anti-immigration politician Pauline Hanson, whose One Nation party rode a populist wave in July to win four Senate seats in Australia, congratulated him on Twitter. "Mr President my door will always be open. Congrats on behalf of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party of OZ," she said.

Source: www.nation.co.ke, 09 November 2016

What to expect from PM Modi's visit to Japan: Civilian nuclear deal, Maritime Security

-Prakash Katoch

During the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinjo Abe to India in December 2015, a joint statement on 'India and Japan Vision 2025: Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World' was issued. This vision encompassed a deep, broad-based and action-oriented partnership, acknowledging congruence of political, economic and strategic interests and capability of

responding to global and regional challenges. Among the takeaways, was signing the MoU for Japan's High Speed Railways (HSR) technologies (the Shinkansen system) for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route. Trilateral dialogues between Japan-India-US have been ongoing and inaugural dialogue between Japan-India-Australia has also taken place. These mechanisms could contribute to regional efforts to evolve an open, inclusive and stable economic, political and security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region. Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani visited India in July 2016 after the Malabar 2016 exercise held in Western Pacific in which Indian, Japanese and US Navies participated.

A major preceding occurrence was ruling by Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) on the Philippines versus China case; ruling in favour of Philippines, negating China's so called historical claims in South China Sea (SCS) and censuring China for her illegal activities in the SCS. Both Defence Minister Parrikar and General Nakatani urged all parties to show utmost respect for UNCLOS, reaffirming the importance of respecting international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS, need for peaceful settlement of all disputes without any threat or use of force, and of ensuring freedom and safety of navigation and over-flight as well as unimpeded lawful commerce in international waters.

India and Japan have been holding exchanges and talks at military-to-military level, and information exchanges on maritime data, both countries being prominent maritime states in the Indo-Pacific. There has been agreement on technology transfer and protection of military information, a framework for collaboration in field of defence in high-tech areas is being looked at. India identifies Japan as privileged partner in the 'Make in India' program and an important strategic partner in its 'Act East Policy'. The India-Japan Civilian Nuclear Deal is one of the crucial elements of cooperation in the Indo-Japanese relationship. A MoU exists between Indian Coast Guard and Japan Coast Guard for Establishment of a Collaborative Relationship to Combat Crimes at Sea and Develop Regional Cooperation. There is no doubt that China's growing assertiveness in East China Sea (ECS), particularly China's use of civilian boat militias to challenge Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands has created added tension in the region. Interestingly, when a Chinese panelist at a recent international seminar at New Delhi was questioned about China using civilian boat-militia storming Senkaku Islands, he denied government involvement, adding, "maybe Chinese fishermen want more fish".

But as far as Japanese Foreign Ministry encouraging India more to speak up more on SCS disputes, our MEA spokesman has already clearly and categorically stated that India respects the UNCLOS judgment and calls for greater openness of the international seas and trading routes and no single nation can hold hegemony over it. This not only includes South China Sea but entire Indo-Pacific region.

One major issue during Prime Minister Modi's third summit with PM Abe would be the India-Japan Civilian Nuclear Deal, under discussion since 2008. Though Japanese media indicates the agreement could be signed during the forthcoming summit, Japanese officials have been non-committal about it beyond saying that the agreement is being looked at from the legal angle. Whether this will be concluded before PM Modi's visit is not confirmed.

However, during the visit of PM Abe to India in December 2015, the initial agreement had noted the need to complete "necessary internal procedures". The implication of this is that even after India and Japan sign the civil-nuclear agreement, for it to come into effect it must be approved by the Japanese Parliament (Diet). Japan's Diet has always been sensitive to anything connected with nuclear, understandably being the only country having been subjected to nuclear attack, that too twice – at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Interestingly in 1994, then Japanese Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata had stated in the Diet that Japan has the knowhow to make the nuclear bomb. His government fell after one week. Another major takeaway from Modi's visit is likely to be a deal worth some Rs 10,000 crores for Japan to supply India with 12 x US-2i amphibious aircraft. This is featuring both in Indian and Japanese media. India plans to equip the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard with six each of these aircraft. Japan has reportedly agreed to reduce the price, earlier pegged at \$1.6 billion (Rs 10,720 crore) for the 12 aircraft, to clinch the deal and expand its strategic partnership with India.

The four turbo-prop US-2i is capable of short take-offs from land or water. Meant for search and rescue, it can also transport 30 combat troops. Interestingly, Japan had proposed in mid 1990s positioning 2 x US-2i amphibious aircraft in Andaman & Nicobar for search and rescue at sea. The Japanese proposal was free of cost with both the amphibious aircraft to under joint control of India and Japan, and to be operated jointly

by both countries. Ironically, India did not respond and two decades later we are buying the same aircraft. Peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific is vital to both India and Japan. But while Japan seeks more focus on maritime security cooperation in its bilateral and multilateral engagements including with India, at the same time it must also push the India-Japan-Civil-Nuclear Deal past the Diet and bring it to early implementation. There is also plenty scope and mutual gain for both countries to bond in areas like nuclear engineering, cyberspace, space, power generation, 3D printing with robotics and other technological collaboration for coping with emerging threats.

Source: www.firstpost.com, 09 November 2016

New Presidency is a chance to close the gap on Arctic awareness

-Nils Andreassen

THE ELECTION OF Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency comes at a time of unparalleled change, challenge and opportunity in the Arctic. In the same year that the Arctic Council celebrates its 20th anniversary and its continued commitment to environmental protection, sustainable development and international cooperation, it is worth emphasizing the continued resolve of the eight Arctic nations to these core principles. The legacy work and fundamental underpinning of the Arctic Council does not change with a transition in domestic leadership. The council is a robust mechanism for addressing Arctic issues and it is extremely capable of cooperating with, and informing, an incoming U.S. administration.

Alaska's priorities haven't changed. Well-articulated in its Arctic Policy, the state remains committed to responsible development, safety and security, inclusive decision-making processes and community resilience. These aren't inconsistent with those advanced by President-elect Trump, and the state may be in a very strong position to work with the incoming administration to see those goals met. The state understands the reality of the Arctic, is most closely linked to the public interest and can represent these issues to federal agencies and a new administration.

Alaska has also put in place added levels of international cooperation that transcend national politics, namely, by rejoining the Northern Forum. This puts Alaska in a good position to advance its priorities among other states, territories and regional governments. Such cooperation can take place outside of the politics of D.C. and may see greater attention and investment in the years to come. Similarly, Alaska's mayors have committed to hosting an Arctic Mayors' Roundtable next May, which could result in a unique and transformative cooperation between local governments across the Arctic.

As with the Arctic Council and the State of Alaska, the past 20 years have meant that a significant network of experienced, informed and interested civil society leaders has emerged in the Arctic. Some have spoken of hybrid governance but really it is these individuals – Indigenous and civic leaders, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and trade associations – who often have the most to say about what happens in the Arctic, and many directly inform the nation's policies. Civil society will keep up the pressure on all Arctic states for investment, safety, consultation and cooperation in the region.

It remains to be seen how a Trump presidency will prioritize the Arctic, change current policy or make different decisions. Really, it will be the region's responsibility to inform, educate and advance priorities that are consistent with its desired outcomes. An incoming administration means that the opportunity and demand for exactly this kind of information will be very great. New federal officials will be looking for experts, advisers and regional leaders who can help in making decisions for this administration.

After eight years of an Obama administration, there are new people in office and in positions of power who respond to a different portion of the electorate. It means that the opportunity to educate has never been greater. It has been 20 years since the formation of the Arctic Council, and yet 66 percent of Alaskans haven't heard of it and half of those didn't know the U.S. holds the chairmanship from 2015 to 2017. This gap in awareness is even larger in the rest of the U.S. Let's close that gap during the next four years. Let's ensure that throughout this and future presidencies, the Arctic remains great in its approach to its people, its cultures, its environment and its economy.

Source: www.newsdeeply.com, 10 November 2016