



# MAKING WAVES

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### **Defence Minister Jaitley discusses Security cooperation with his Mauritian counterpart**

India and Mauritius on Saturday held talks on expanding bilateral defence and Security cooperation to effectively deal with the threat of terrorism. Ways to explore defence ties figured during talks between Defence Minister Arun Jaitley and his Mauritian counterpart Anerood Jugnauth. Ties between India and Mauritius are on an upswing in a range of areas including trade, defence and Security. India has close defence relations with Mauritius, particularly in the area of Maritime Security. The Indian Navy has been closely engaged with the National Coast Guard of Mauritius to protect common interests in the Indian Ocean region.

Source: [www.newsnation.in](http://www.newsnation.in), 18 March 2017

### **Plan to curb terror, boost Maritime Security likely at NSA Summit**

-Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury

NEW DELHI: India will push for a joint action plan to counter terrorism, de-radicalise potential recruits, and enhance Maritime Security in the Bay of Bengal region when it hosts on Tuesday the first meeting of the national Security advisers (NSA) to the seven BIMSTEC countries.

The BIMSTEC is a crucial regional platform in India's strategy for ending cross-border extremism as the SAARC, the South Asian grouping, has failed to achieve its Security goals because of Pakistan's ambivalence in approving the counter-terror convention. At their meeting in Goa last October, the seven BIMSTEC leaders had decided to hold annual NSA meets and India as lead country for BIMSTEC Security matters decided to host the inaugural session, officials told ET. NSA Ajit Doval will be joined by his counterparts from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan: They will seek to establish a concrete action plan to contain terror in the region and emphasise on greater synergy in intelligence sharing among the seven countries, officials hinted.

The meeting of BIMSTEC senior officials in Kathmandu last month had decided to convene the NSA conference at the earliest, and this meeting will give leaders the perfect opportunity to deal holistically with Security issues. A key objective behind this exercise is to create a common Security space among BIMSTEC nations which face similar traditional and non-traditional Security threats. Topics on the meeting agenda include drug-trafficking and crossborder crime, besides the issue of protecting the Bay of Bengal zone.

This meet of Security chiefs will provide inputs for the fourth BIMSTEC summit in the last quarter of 2017 in Nepal, coinciding with the 20th year of formation of the grouping. The Security chiefs will also discuss the present status of the proposed BIMSTEC counter-terror convention as well as the BIMSTEC Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty mechanism, hinted persons familiar with the development. “There is unanimity among members of BIMSTEC that safeguarding the region is imperative for economic growth and this exercise of the NSA meet would contribute toward that objective,” an official said. India has effective bilateral counter-terror cooperation with all members of BIMSTEC. An international de-radicalisation meet led by India is also in pipeline this year. The BIMSTEC declaration in Goa last October had stressed: “We reiterate our strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stress that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever.”

Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com), 21 March 2017

### **Emerging challenges in Indian Ocean pose serious threat to Pakistan’s Security, Interest**

Emerging challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) pose a serious threat to Pakistan’s Security and interests, and a comprehensive strategy is required for addressing them. This was the conclusion of a roundtable on Maritime Security hosted by Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies (CPGS) in collaboration with German Foundation Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). The deliberations at the roundtable would feed into a daylong national conference being organised by CPGS and KAS on ‘Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean: Challenges and Prospects for Pakistan’ on Monday (March 27).



The roundtable had concluded that challenges to peace in IOR are mainly emanating from its nuclearisation and power projection by states maintaining a presence in the area and emerging alliances in the region. Additionally, challenges like terrorism, piracy and environmental concerns are further complicating the scenario. Pakistan's participation in China's One-Belt One Road initiative, meanwhile, adds to the urgency for developing a strategy for dealing with the threats to peace. Pakistan has already taken several steps, including the raising of a special Maritime force Task Force – 88 (TF-88) for the protection of Gwadar Port and its sea lanes. But, CPGS believes a bigger effort is required.

CPGS President Senator Sehar Kamran said: "Pakistan's stakes in the Maritime arena are extremely high, which are directly impacted by multifaceted threats and challenges—both traditional and non-traditional threats—but more importantly, the emerging Indo-US strategic partnership, an increased Chinese interest and presence in the region, Indo-Iran and Indo-Gulf cooperation, Indian ambitions and the nuclearisation of the ocean." The national conference is, therefore, being held to deliberate on the complex milieu and intertwined interests and strategic concerns and propose the future course of action and responses.

Source: [www.defenceweb.co.za](http://www.defenceweb.co.za), 25 March 2017

### **Ivory Coast boosts Port Security over attack threat**

Ivory Coast has ordered increased Security at its two main Ports after receiving information indicating a threat of "probable terrorist attacks" on its national territory, according to a transport ministry document seen by Reuters on Sunday. The decision comes amid a regional Maritime exercise – known as Obangame Express – sponsored by the U.S. military's Africa Command and little more than a year after al Qaeda militants attacked an Ivory Coast beach resort.

The document, dated March 24 and verified as authentic by a senior Ivorian Maritime Security official, did not give further detail on the specific nature of the threat but it increased Security under the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code to level two, indicating a higher than normal threat level requiring tightened Security both in Ports and on ships. "Security level two will apply for an undetermined duration, beginning from Friday March 24," the document stated. The measures apply

to the Ports of Abidjan and San Pedro, both important hubs for West African imports and exports, notably of cocoa. Ivory Coast is the world's biggest cocoa producer.

Ivory Coast's head of Maritime Security was not immediately reachable for comment. Government spokesman Bruno Kone said he was not aware of the increased Security measures. Nearly 20 African nations are participating in the Obangame Express training exercises, most of which are to take place offshore of Ivory Coast's commercial capital Abidjan.

In addition to its U.S. military sponsor, other international participants include Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Turkey, France, Denmark, Canada, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Ivory Coast has been a staunch ally of the West in the fight against the growing threat of Islamist militancy in West Africa and its arid Sahel region, making it a declared target for reprisals by groups including al Qaeda.

Militants from al Qaeda's North African branch stormed the Ivorian beach resort town of Grand Bassam on March 13 last year, gunning down swimmers and sunbathers in an attack that killed 19 people.

Source:[indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com), 26 March 2017

### **Pakistan detains more than 100 Indian fishermen near international Maritime boundary**

-Vasudevan Sridharan

Pakistan has detained more than 100 Indian fishermen for reportedly fishing in waters controlled by Islamabad. All the fishermen arrested by Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency (MSA) are set to be produced in court. Pakistani authorities also seized 18 boats for allegedly crossing the Maritime boundary, off the Jakhau coast in Gujarat's Kutch district.

This is not the first-time fishermen from one of the sides have been arrested by the other. Every year dozens of Indian and Pakistani fishermen are arrested by each other's Security forces for violating the border with most of them ending up in prisons.

The strained diplomatic relations between the troubled neighbours do not help in securing their early release. "We have learnt that more than 100 fishermen who were on board around 18 fishing boats were apprehended by the PMSA near the international Maritime boundary line off Jakhau coast," National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) secretary Manish Lodhari was quoted as saying. "The fishermen who escaped have informed us about this."

On Friday, 24 March, the Indian Coast Guard arrested nine Pakistani nationals for fishing in Indian waters. Indian authorities are trying to contact Pakistani officials in order to ascertain the exact number of people arrested. It is said to be one of the biggest arrests made by Pakistan's MSA in recent months. "In March, so far, the PMSA has separately held over 225 fishermen along with nearly three dozen boats," added Lodhari. In January 2017, Pakistan had released more than 200 fishermen as a symbolic gesture to improve bilateral relations.

Source: [www.ibtimes.co.uk](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk), 27 March 2017

### **In fighting Somali piracy, don't get the next steps wrong**

On 13 March, the Aris 13 was hijacked off the coast of Somalia, leading analysts to ask whether the incident heralded a fresh wave of Somali piracy. Yet the risk of a resurgence to the levels seen between 2008 and 2011 is unlikely. The Comoros-flagged Aris was carrying fuel and sailing only 18 km away from the Somali shore when it was hijacked, and its eight Sri Lankan crew members kidnapped. The proximity of the vessel and its journey along the Somali coastline made it a particularly easy prey for would-be pirates. It was sailing at a slow enough speed to attract prolonged attention from the shore, and to allow for easier boarding when attacked.

The Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) – part of the Security forces of the semi-autonomous region of Somalia – intervened on 16 March to prevent a resupply of the Aris by a ship suspected of being part of the pirates' operation, and originating from shore. This show of force led to a gun battle that helped trigger the release of the ship, which then proceeded to the Puntland Port of Bassaso. The safe release of an unharmed, though likely traumatised, crew and their ship was the fundamental

objective. It is also encouraging that this occurred, according to the Sri Lankan government, without a ransom payment.

The intricacies of the negotiation must urgently be clarified in case other groups are encouraged to commit acts of piracy, and to help ensure that quick and effective local responses are available. It is also unclear what happened to the pirates. This means that while the safety of the crew of Aris is now assured, the same cannot be said for safety of the narrative of counter-piracy success. This narrative and assumptions about the Security of merchant vessels have been punctured by the attack, and are now 'taking on water'.

In the short term, this might shift attention to strengthening deterrent measures, such as hiring guards or increasing patrols. But it is absolutely crucial to also reflect on greater concerns. What is ultimately at stake is more than an immediate renewed piracy risk, but also prospects for achieving actual, long-term and holistic African Maritime development and Security.

The hijacking of a merchant vessel, for the first time since the Greek-flagged Smyrni in May 2012, is certainly noteworthy. From 2008 to 2011, hijackings off the coast of Somalia occurred relatively easily. The combined counter-piracy efforts of various actors, an unwillingness among Somali communities to host pirates, as well as good adherence to Best Management Practices (BMP4) clearly produced a decline in reported incidents, a reduction in risk and a seeming cessation of criminal activities.

The Institute for Security Studies has long stressed, however, that the dearth of reports of piracy incidents targeting merchant shipping should not be taken to indicate that Maritime Security has been restored, on the whole, to the Somali littoral or the broader African Maritime domain. It is crucial to point out that while the Aris was the first large commercial or merchant vessel to be hijacked in four years, there have meanwhile been other hijackings – especially smaller, usually of local vessels.

According to Oceans Beyond Piracy's (OBP) Piracy Hostage Ticker, 17 crew members of the Iranian-flagged Siraj (taken on 26 March 2015) remain hostage in Somalia. Moreover, continual warnings of a residual piracy risk are based on reports of suspicious vessels and approaches, as well as attempted attacks – with 11 occurring in 2016, according to OBP. (It is widely suspected that many more still go unreported.) The crew of the Siraj had been captured while allegedly fishing illegally in Somali waters. Even if this allegation proves true, it does not justify their kidnapping or any

trauma endured during their imprisonment. Justice should have been allowed to take its proper course in the case of any wrongdoing by the crew of the Siraj, as Somali pirates also have rights. But this case points to another, equally important concern, namely the issue of illegal fishing, which is both a grievance and motivation for piracy.

Simply put, the threat of piracy drove away many illegal fishing vessels from Somali waters and around the Horn of Africa. Fishing stocks recovered, even thrived, as the risk of being captured by pirates – who would bear an especial hatred towards illegal fishing – was so great. Subsequently, various counter-piracy policies and practices, especially international naval patrols, deterred and drove away pirates, reducing the risk of an encounter with a pirate group. Somali vessels were often viewed with greater suspicion and hostility, since pirates use similar vessels and, it is often claimed, are typically aggrieved former fishermen. This has, in part, allowed illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels to return to Somali waters; creeping back in to take advantage of the abundant, ‘guarded’ fishing grounds – given they bear little resemblance to a piracy vessel if properly flagged. It is important to reiterate that solving the problem of piracy is correct. The expenditure, and practice, of counter-piracy is extremely valuable and useful – as are improvements in capability and infrastructure. The key issue is to ensure that problems are not narrowly approached, and that the infrastructure can and needs to be adapted and expanded.

There are lessons to be learnt from the example of recent revisions to the Djibouti Code of Conduct; a key sub-regional agreement signed in 2009, by which 22 Indian Ocean states agreed to share information and cooperate to fight piracy and armed robbery at sea. This was expanded at a high-level meeting of signatories in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in January 2017. It now covers other Maritime crimes beyond piracy, including human trafficking and IUU fishing. This expansion in cooperation is a positive step. It is hoped to have clear and significant Maritime Security results: a reduction in crimes and an increase in cooperative sub-regional actions, such as information-sharing and patrols. This also aligns with African perspectives that stress how piracy is part of a broader Maritime insecurity problem that hinders the creation of blue economies, which in turn hampers African development. Africa, led by the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities, has been seeking to enhance its common responses to Maritime insecurity and threats by implementing integrated Maritime strategies. These include the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS), adopted by the AU in 2014, and are designed to overcome common problems given both the transnational nature of most Maritime crimes and the combined lack of African Maritime capacity. The AU, in particular, must revive its 2050 AIMS implementation,

coordinate a common African position; and provide guidance for member states towards achieving long-term goals. When one takes courage to dive beyond the surface of the piracy morass, the need for sustainable 'Security solutions' becomes starkly apparent.

Addressing this means building up African Maritime capacity. But first, there is a need to thoroughly explore the full scope of Africa's Maritime challenges; and without surfacing too quickly and assuming piracy is either back, or the only thing worth focusing on and fighting. Doing so would risk perpetuating a blindness to seeing the best ways of overcoming the piracy menace and overarching obstacles facing Maritime Security.

Source: [www.defenceweb.co.za](http://www.defenceweb.co.za), 28 March 2017

## **Integrating Maritime Security Operations in The Mediterranean**

- Evmorfia-Chrysovalantou Seiti

### *Introduction*

The European Union represents the latest stage of the larger European integration that began at the end of the World War II, initially by six Western European countries to promote peace, Security and economic development. Undoubtedly, European countries managed to overcome their dark past and the cruelty of World War II; today, the European Union has 28 member states, including former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Member states have pooled sovereignty in certain policy areas and harmonized laws on a wide range of economic, social, and political issues. These developments prove that European countries realize that the things that unite them are more than the things that divide them, and only through strengthening cooperation and promoting dialogue can they establish the peace and Security in European continent and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

The EU project can be characterized as successful and a cornerstone of European stability and prosperity. The European Union, beyond other areas of cooperation, has developed common foreign and Security policies. From 2003 until the present date, the European Union has executed around thirty civilian and military operations on three continents. Their aim was to deal effectively with crises in those regions. Significant examples include peace-building after the tsunami disaster in Indonesia,

operations for protecting refugees in Mali and the Central African Republic, and combating piracy in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Despite this, a paradox exists. Under the existence of this ambitious policy and after more than thirty operations through the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), political interest in national capitals in acting through the EU's CSDP has been declining.<sup>2</sup> It is important to point out that the reasons member states should have high political interest in acting through the CSDP are more compelling than those that limit shared interest.

Additionally, some European policymakers and analysts have characterized the European integration project as a bicycle, which must keep going forward to avoid falling over. Imbalance can cause a number of problems, such as the Greek debt crisis, the migration and refugee crisis, the June 23, 2016, United Kingdom referendum on EU membership, a resurgent Russia, and heightened terrorism. These are some of the factors that caused the increase of unemployment in many EU countries, economic and political pressures, and the rise of political parties with "Eurosceptic" ideas.<sup>3</sup> In one of the toughest periods of its history, some members of the European Union are creating dividing lines instead of trying to provide a common and effective response. Also, the voices and opinions on the future of European Union and the vision of European integration remain divided between those who are supporting the European project (and believe that it will be continue to exist despite the serious challenges it is facing) and, from the other side, those who believe that those challenges would bring the collapse of the European project.

This article will focus on the current challenges in the Mediterranean, and how those challenges can be a pillar of integration for the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union.

### *The European Union and the Mediterranean*

Why the Mediterranean? The Mediterranean region is characterized by crises and revolutionary changes that affect the Middle East, North Africa, and Southern Europe, as well as trans-Atlantic stakes in these regions. In the meantime, the strategic environment in the Mediterranean is increasingly shaped by forces emanating from outside the region, more specifically from the Levant and the Eurasian and African hinterlands, the Black Sea, and from the Atlantic Basin. As a result, these shifts in the



strategic environment have brought the progressive globalization of Mediterranean Security.<sup>4</sup>

The Mediterranean Sea is connected with the Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. Traditionally, it was a sea passage for internal European trade and imports from Africa and Asia. A powerful coalition and multilateral body such as the EU should adapt to the new challenges and threats, which are a result from the systemic context. The EU's aim is to ensure stability and to avoid any kind of activities that could damage Maritime Security or bring danger to the life of individuals.

Although the European Union is not the only interested party, the involvement of external actors is inevitable. This work will analyze the external actors present in the Mediterranean and the schemes of cooperation for preventing a spillover effect, which can not only impact the European continent but global affairs.

### *The Main Challenges in the Mediterranean*

#### *Maritime Terrorism*

After September 11, 2001, NATO initiated Operation Active Endeavor. This operation has achieved a high degree of visibility and contributed to "good governance" in the Mediterranean Sea and the straits of Gibraltar.<sup>5</sup> Despite this progress, there have been setbacks, including the 2014 hijacking of an Egyptian Navy patrol craft, which took place along the Mediterranean coast 40 miles north of the SeaPort of Damietta, and again when 21 Egyptian Christians were kidnapped in two separate incidents in the coastal city of Sirte.<sup>6</sup> Both criminal activities were posed by militant groups that have declared allegiance to Islamic State, raising the concern for terrorist activities in Mediterranean Sea, which could cause damage to international shipping and Port infrastructure.<sup>7</sup>

Expanding their activities at sea, terrorists could attack unguarded cruise ships plying Mediterranean waters. Only one attack like this would be enough to spread images of western tourists being murdered and provide the powerful publicity desired. At equal risk are vessels and Ports from which terrorists would gain publicity and financial gain. For instance, hijacking a cruise ship provides only one potential scenario. Ungoverned coastal areas of Libya would make a good launch pad for terrorists, although the



incidents in Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia can show that much of the Maghreb could provide a point of origin for attackers.<sup>8</sup>

### *Irregular Migration*

Concurrent conflicts and turbulence from sub-Saharan Africa to Pakistan are generating waves of economic and political migrants desperate to reach the relative prosperity of southern Europe.<sup>9</sup> The range of their mobility is striking. Almost 2 million refugees have fled to or through Turkey since the start of the war in Syria, and many more have crossed to Jordan and Lebanon. Over one million Christians have fled Iraq, and over half of a million more have fled from Syria. The annual number of migrants registered as having been arrested and dePorted in the EU; the figure is somewhere around 500,000. However, there are only estimates of the total number of irregular migrants that reached European Maritime borders. The number ranges from 4,000,000 up to 8,000,000.<sup>10</sup> Tens of thousands of migrants have crossed the Mediterranean by sea in recent years, 6,000 to Italy alone. Over 3,000 died in the Mediterranean in 2014, comprising the vast majority of the estimated 4,000 migration deaths worldwide in the same period. The Mediterranean region is in the grips of a human Security crisis, a crisis affecting the Security and the welfare of individuals, unprecedented since the end of World War II.<sup>11</sup>

### *Piracy*

The International Maritime Organization's 2011 annual rePort on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships identified 10 different regions prone to Maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships of the world:

- East Africa
- Indian Ocean
- West Africa
- Arabian Sea
- Malacca Strait
- South China Sea

- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Mediterranean Sea
- North Atlantic
- Regions that are classified “Others”

Regarding “others,” in these regions, the occurrence of the two crimes are at a very low rate or even rare. Moreover, incidents such as the 2009 hijacking of “M/V Arctic Sea” in the Baltic prove that even the most secure Maritime spaces in the world can be affected by Maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships.<sup>12</sup>

The Mediterranean Sea doesn’t currently sustain a realistic threat in terms of modern-day piracy as we now know it. Unlike the Indian Ocean, it is enclosed and very well policed, surveyed, and trafficked. The entire area is also within easy rapid reach of sophisticated military and naval resources. However, more clandestine (and arguably more damaging) operations are perfectly feasible. It is no secret that obvious targets include Port facilities, berthed vessels, outlying transPort structures, and logistical hubs.

Other challenges arise from the Atlantic approaches to the Mediterranean, where new trafficking routes from Latin America to West Africa are bringing drugs, arms, and money onward through the Maghreb to Europe. Drawn to West Africa’s penetrable borders and anemic state and Security institutions, new distribution routes have been created by drug traffickers, resulting in an inflow of cocaine into the region.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Cooperation with External Actors*

##### *EU-NATO Joint Declaration*

A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy was adopted on June 2016. On November 14, 2016, ministers agreed on a new level of ambition in Security and defense. 16 days later, on November 30, 2016, the European Commission adopted the European Defense Action Plan. This plan “comprises a European Defense Fund and other actions to help member states boost research and spend more efficiently on joint defense capabilities, thus fostering a competitive and innovative defense industrial base and contributing to enhance

On December 6, 2016, the Council of the European Union and Foreign Ministers of NATO adopted a common set of proposals for EU-NATO cooperation. This follows from the Joint Declaration signed by EU leaders and the NATO Secretary General on July 2016. They agreed on a set of actions, including 42 concrete proposals for implementation in seven areas of cooperation: “Countering hybrid threats, operational cooperation including Maritime issues; cyber Security and defence, defence capabilities, parallel and coordinated exercises and defence, defence industry and research and Security capacity-building.”<sup>15</sup> Facing common challenges, the cooperation between European Union and NATO is more important than ever.

In particular, in December of 2016, the European Union and NATO agreed to enhance the cooperation and coordination between Operation Sea Guardian, a flexible Maritime operation created by NATO that can perform a wide range of Maritime Security tasks,<sup>16</sup> and EU NAVFOR MED Sophia, which started on June 22, 2015 and will be operational until July 27, 2017 and was formed to disrupt the business of human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean and prevent loss of life at sea.<sup>17</sup> The EU and NATO agreed to enhance the cooperation of these operations through information sharing, logistical support, and practical interaction.

Moreover, they agreed to build upon synergies between the EU operation and NATO in the Aegean. In support of the above goals, the EU and NATO will continue to make full use of the mechanism of Shared Awareness and Deconfliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED). SHADE MED is a forum where stakeholders, nations, or organizations that are affected by migratory phenomenon in the Mediterranean can meet, de-conflict, and coordinate their Maritime Security operations. This can be achieved by sharing situational awareness as well as assessing the evolution of trends and best practices.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, seminars will be held in the early part of 2017 to build on experiences from the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean and on interactions in the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup>

### *Integrating Mediterranean Maritime Security*

And finally, why can Maritime Security in the Mediterranean be an integration pillar for the Common Security and Defense Policy? First, continued fiscal austerity could possibly impact the already limited defense expenditures in Southern Europe and give rise to new Security concerns. Having an integrated approach can prevent and efficiently manage the existing threats in the Mediterranean which became even more challenging and complicated after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The percentage of

refugees and migrants who are trying to reach Europe by crossing Mediterranean has skyrocketed.<sup>20</sup> Also, the incidents of terrorist activities in Mediterranean coasts, the threat of piracy attacks, as well as the fact that the Mediterranean has become a route of trafficking, drugs, arms, people, and money.

Another important factor which should increase efforts for further cooperation within the CSDP is the circulation of foreign fighters from Europe and elsewhere to the battlefields of the Levant and back. This phenomenon is not new, although the sheer size and widespread nature of the problem has given it a totally new dimension. Terrorist attacks and counterterrorism operations in France, Belgium, Denmark and Germany, highlight the nature of the threat.<sup>21</sup> Terrorists could find a number of other ways to use the sea to carry out threats, such as using explosives to damage vessels, passengers and crews, or surrounding areas. They could also use vessels to transport explosives and other chemical, biological, or nuclear materials, including fissile material to use ashore.

Related to the external actors in the region, European Union member states should enhance their cooperation within the CSDP due to the declining interest of the United States in maintaining a strong presence in the Mediterranean due to competing priorities elsewhere. Washington has always put pressure on Europe to do more for its own Security, and will likely increase this pressure in the future.<sup>22</sup>

From the other side, in June 2013, Russia announced that it would permanently maintain about a dozen warships in the Mediterranean for its national Security. After a period of weakness and instability during the 1990s, the Federation is reappearing on the international scene as a major Security player, claiming the status of a great power. The Russian Federation is affirming its global role and its activities in the Mediterranean as a part of a wider strategy shaped by a flowing interplay of internal and external influences. Russia has many 'cards to play' and it is playing some of them expertly.<sup>23</sup>

Russia, as the other actors in the region, is seeking some combination of economic and Security gains in the Mediterranean while also trying to build or rebuild economic and Security ties. According to General Philip Breedlove, then NATO's top commander: "Tartus may also be part of a Russian effort to establish an anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) bubble over Syria, designed to prevent NATO forces from taking offensive action against Russia and its allies in the region." These ambitions are illustrated by the Russia's new Maritime Strategy, the Maritime Doctrine of Russian Federation

2020. This strategy includes the Mediterranean Sea, claiming that the aim of the Russian Federation is to re-establish a Russian Navy presence there.<sup>24</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Based on these developments the European Union, a global Maritime player, cannot remain uninvolved, and especially when its own interests and the peace and Security of its citizens are affected directly by the situation in Mediterranean basin. The above examples show that this threat cannot be tackled effectively when each member state is acting individually and there is a lack of compromise. Cooperation under the CSDP is linked to military deployment, and the CSDP creates fertile ground for cooperation and dialogue between the EU member states and cooperation with external actors.

The European Union as a Security and defense actor cannot remain a distant viewer when Security challenges in the Mediterranean are more rapidly emerging. Those threats do not concern only the countries of the “front line” but all the EU member states. Maritime Security in the Mediterranean region can be an integration pillar for the Common Security and Defense Policy as recent events prove, although many more challenges are still yet to come.

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Source: [cimsec.org](http://cimsec.org), 28 March 2017



### **Goa Shipyard nominated to build two stealth frigates for the Indian navy**

-Vivek Raghuvanshi

India's private shipyards are unhappy with a Ministry of Defense decision to nominate state-owned shipyard Goa Shipyard to build two Russian Krivak-class stealth frigates over two private sector competitors, Larsen & Toubro and Reliance Defence and Engineering. During a meeting with Russian defense officials last week, MoD has cleared a \$4.48 billion program to acquire four Krivak-class stealth frigates under which two will be built by Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation and the remaining two by Goa Shipyard, a senior MoD official said. "A formal contract is expected to be awarded within the next four months", the official said, adding that USC will deliver the frigates in the next four years but Goa Shipyard will take eight years to deliver. "The private-sector shipyards have already brought it to the notice to MoD informally their unhappiness on giving GSL the contract to build the two Krivak class frigates on nomination basis," an executive of the industry lobby group Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry said, requesting anonymity to speak candidly. "They (private shipyards) want greater orders to push the private sector," the FICCI executive noted.

Anil Jai Singh, retired Indian Navy Commodore and defense analyst, said, "This decision (to nominate GSL for two Krivak class frigates) has indeed surprised me." GSL is a very capable yard but has never built anything of the size and sophistication of the Krivaks, Singh said. "It seems that the MoD continues to live in the A K Anthony (former Defense Minister) era with nominations more the rule than the exception," says Sujeet Samaddar, retired Indian Navy commodore and defense analyst. "The private shipyards must be allowed to compete. But having said that, unless the private sector shipyards deliver on their existing orders of simple ships, there can be very little ground to trust them to deliver complicated warships."

Samaddar, however, does not doubt the capability of Goa Shipyard and said, "GSL has made more than 16 anti-submarine-warfare corvettes in the past and on paper they can build it." The Indian navy has been negotiating with Russia for over three years to acquire the Krivak frigates. "The Krivaks (Indian navy's Talwar class) are very sophisticated frigates and combine high stealth with lethal kinetic capability," Singh added. "This is a longstanding requirement of the Indian navy and will possibly cover the gap created by the decommissioning of Godavari & Rajput-class warships that would fall due in the next three to four years," Samaddar said.

By 2027, the Indian navy aims to have 198 ships against the current fleet strength of 137 warships. With a shortage of 61 warships, the service is currently building 48 warships at various Indian shipyards.

An Indian navy official said, "Because of their lack of experience in building major warships, the private sector is way behind in warship building but needs greater exposure to orders."

However, Singh is critical of the decision to nominate state-owned shipyards at the cost of growth of the private sector shipyards. "Private shipyards are hardly being given any orders despite the state-owned shipyards creaking under the load of their order book leading to cost and time overruns in almost all projects. Of the four major private shipyards in the country, two are bankrupt."

Source: [www.defensenews.com](http://www.defensenews.com), 15 March 2017

### **Mazagon Docks, DCNS keen on making 3 more Scorpene-class subs**

-Amrita Nair-Ghaswalla

Mazagon Docks Ltd along with French shipbuilder DCNS, its technology partner for the Scorpene submarines, has approached the Indian Navy with a repeat order for three Scorpene-class submarines, despite the data leak scandal that had threatened to derail the project last August. Like the first six Scorpene-class submarines, the three new submarines would also be manufactured at the Mumbai site, and would be equipped with a new anaerobic propulsion system (AIP) developed by the DRDO. Six Scorpene submarines were ordered in 2005, and are being built at the state-owned Mazagon Docks (MDL) in Mumbai, with technical assistance and transfer of technology as well as equipment

from DCNS. INS Kalvari, the first Scorpene class stealth submarine built under Project 75, is currently undergoing extensive sea trials, while INS Khanderi, the second indigenous Scorpene-class submarine was recently launched at MDL.

The Scorpene submarine is one of the newer submarines of the Indian Navy, and has the capability of launching an anti-ship missile from below the surface of water which is expected to give the Navy a boost. Sensitive data related to the Scorpene was leaked in the Australian media last year. A committee was set up to look into the matter.

In early March, the Indian Navy conducted the maiden firing of an SM39 anti-ship missile from INS Kalvari. The missile successfully hit a surface target at extended ranges during the trial firing, and was hailed as a significant milestone, not only for the Kalvari submarine, but also in enhancing the Indian Navy's sub-surface warfare capability. Sources in the know pointed out that all six Scorpene being built in India are to be equipped with anti-ship missiles, which can help neutralise surface threats at extended ranges. Sources pointed out that a repeat order for three new submarines would also help the Indian shipyard maintain the know-how and skills it has acquired through the manufacture of the first two Scorpene. "At a seminar in November 2016, former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar had expressed a need for 24 submarines to be built for the Navy, including the six P-75 Scorpene submarines currently on order. "Given the extensive submarine building programme in other countries, the Minister was keen to strengthen the fleet. It makes eminent sense to continue to build on the first order," said an official, requesting anonymity, adding that it was also an option under the P-75 programme.

Transfer of technology from DCNS also involves changing "the shells of the Scorpene by making them thicker with steel", and the Indian counterparts have been educated on the same, as also integrating it with missiles and weapon systems.

Recently, the Indian Navy detailed a timeline for the induction of six Scorpene submarines, with the first two set to be commissioned end-2017.

Source: [www.thehindubusinessline.com](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com), 19 March 2017



## **Nigerian Navy flags off joint Maritime Security exercise with U.S., Cameroon, 27 other countries**

-Samuel Ogundipe

The Nigerian Navy will on Thursday flag off a multinational Maritime operation exercise christened 'Obangame Express'. A statement signed by Suleman Dahun on behalf of the Chief of Naval Staff noted that the exercise is sponsored by the U.S. Africa Command and is aimed at improving regional cooperation, Maritime domain awareness, information-sharing practices and tactical interdiction expertise. The exercise will also "enhance the collective capabilities of the Gulf of Guinea and West African nations to counter sea-based illicit activity," Mr. Dahun, a Navy captain, said.

The Navy said 'Obangame Express' will be conducted in phases within the territorial waters of the participating nations. The Nigerian phase of exercise is scheduled for March 24-28. Nigerian Navy Ship OKPABANA, Nigerian Navy Ship CENTENARY, Nigerian Navy Ship SAGBAMA and one helicopter will be participating in the Exercise along with a French Navy ship, JACOBET. The French ship will sail into the Nigerian waters from Cameroon, the Navy said. The ships will perform several exercises as will be presented by the exercise scenario. Thirty nations are scheduled to participate in this year's exercise. They are Angola, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau.

Others are: Liberia, Nigeria, Norway, Mauritania, Portugal, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, South Africa, Togo, Turkey, the Netherlands, and the United State. Regional organisations including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) are also scheduled to take part in the exercise. Participants at the drill will create realistic scenarios that reflect past piracy incidents whereby a hijacked vessel will transit from one territory to another, the statement said. Maritime Operations Centres (MOCs) during the exercise will be challenged to recognise these illicit acts appropriately and share with other MOCs.

Additionally, the game will test the ability of all the participating Maritime forces to patrol their respective economic zones and detect and prosecute illegal activity accordingly, the statement said.

Source: [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com), 22 March 2017

## Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Commissions Second Helicopter Carrier

-Franz-Stefan Gady

The Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) commissioned its second *Izumo*-class helicopter carrier JS *Kaga* at the Japan Marine United shipyard in Yokohama, on March 22. The commissioning ceremony was attended by a host of dignitaries including Japan's Vice Defense Minister Takayuki Kobayashi, who openly addressed ongoing China-Japan tensions in the East China Sea and Beijing's military buildup in the South China Sea in his remarks. "China is attempting to make changes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea with bases and through acts that exert pressure and are steadily altering the status quo, raising Security concerns among the international community," Kobayashi said, according to *The Japan Times*.

The 248-meter long *Kaga* displaces around 27,000 tons and—along with its sister ship *Izumo* (docked right next to the *Kaga* during the March 22 commissioning ceremony)—will be the biggest surface warship operated by the Japanese Navy since the end of World War II. The JMSDF officially classified the warships' as helicopter destroyers in order to downplay the carriers' offensive capabilities.

Officially, the *Kaga*'s primary role will be to conduct surveillance and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions. However, the carrier with its OQQ-22 bow-mounted sonar and fleet of torpedo-armed helicopters will boast excellent anti-submarine warfare capabilities. "The ship is designed to accommodate up to 14 helicopters (seven Mitsubishi-built SH-60K ASW helicopters and seven Agusta Westland MCM-101 mine countermeasure helicopters), five of which can simultaneously take off and land, given the *Izumo*'s large flight deck and five landing spots," I explained elsewhere.

Furthermore I noted:

While repeatedly denied by Japanese officials and with no official plans to acquire the aircraft in the future, the JMSDF could launch the F-35B is the U.S. Marine Corps variant of the supersonic fifth-generation F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, capable of vertical or short takeoffs and vertical landings without requiring a catapult launcher [from the carrier] (...)

The JMSDF will more likely deploy a number of V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft — a hybrid between a conventional helicopter and turboprop plane with both vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) and short takeoff and landing (STOL) capability — from the carrier. Japan has placed an order with the United States for a total of 17 V-22s and is expected to receive the first batch of aircraft in 2017.

The carrier is armed with two Raytheon RIM-116 Rolling Airframe Missile SeaRAM launchers and two Phalanx close-in weapon systems to defend against aerial threats.

Whereas the *JS Izumo* is part of the JMSDF's Escort Flotilla 1 based in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture (also home to the U.S. Navy's supercarrier *USS Ronald Reagan*) the *JS Kaga* will deploy with the Escort Flotilla 4, based in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture. The *JS Kaga's* total construction costs are estimated at around 120 billion yen (\$1.1 billion).

Source: [thediplomat.com](http://thediplomat.com), 23 March 2017

### **Indian Navy to de-induct long-range Patrol Aircraft TU 142M after 29 years of service**

The Indian Navy is preparing for de-induction of TU 142M long-range Maritime patrol aircraft after its 29 years of service, it was officially announced here on Sunday. The aircraft would be formally de-inducted by Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba at a special ceremony scheduled to be held on March 29 at INS Rajali, India's premiere Naval Air Station in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu. The role of TU 142M will now be taken on by the newly inducted P-8I aircraft, which has proven all its systems and has been fully integrated into the operational grid of the Indian Navy, according to an Indian Navy statement.

Commander Yogender Mair, the last Commanding Officer of the squadron with the TU 142M aircraft, will hand over the reins to Commander V. Ranganathan, who will be the first Squadron Commanding Officer with the P-8I. "To commemorate the stellar service of the TU 142M, a TU Static Display Aircraft would also be inaugurated by the Chief of Naval Staff at INS Rajali," the Indian Navy said in its statement. The TU142M long-range Maritime patrol aircraft was inducted into the Indian Navy at Dabolim in Goa from the erstwhile USSR in 1988

The aircraft subsequently shifted base permanently to INS Rajali in 1992 and became the most formidable LRMR ASW aircraft of the Indian Navy. The aircraft saw action during operation 'Cactus' in the Maldives and participated in operational missions off Sri Lanka to provide airborne surveillance.

TU 142M aircraft with its four powerful engines, contra rotating, slender fuselage and swept back wings is the fastest turboprop aircraft in the world and has been difficult to intercept by fighters, the Navy said. "With its enhanced endurance, speed, long-range weapons and sensors, the aircraft transformed the aspects of Maritime reconnaissance and airborne ASW for the Indian Navy and was one of the most formidable platforms around the world," the statement added. The aircraft has had a distinguished service with over 30,000 hours of accident-free flying

During its service life, the aircraft has undergone several modifications and retro fittings to keep up with evolving technology and changing requirements of Indian Navy. Despite being in its twilight year, the aircraft performed exceptionally well during the Naval Exercise TROPEX held in March 2017, the Navy said. The ceremony also coincides with Silver Jubilee of INS Rajali, home to the TU 142M aircraft for nearly three decades.

Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com), 26 March 2017

### **Maritime Security set for huge boost with Rs 8,000 crore plan for 32 new helicopters made on home soil**

Providing a major boost to the capabilities of the Navy and Coast Guard, Narendra Modi has cleared a proposal worth about Rs 8,000 crore for acquiring 32 made in India ALH Dhruv helicopters to be built by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The plans for coastal and Maritime Security were cleared in a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security headed by the Prime Minister, Defence Ministry sources told Mail Today.

Of the 32 choppers to be built by the HAL, 16 each would be shared by the two services, they said. 'The project will be under the make in India programme being spearheaded by the Prime Minister himself and state-owned HAL would not only provide the helicopters but also develop the infrastructure for operations of these helicopters in both the services,' the sources said.

Incidentally, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) clearance for the project had also come in 2014 when Arun Jaitley was given the charge of Defence Ministry for the first time and the final approval has also come at a time when he is holding the office after Manohar Parrikar's departure to Goa.

At the moment, the Indian Navy has deployed its fleet of the ALH Dhruv helicopters in Kochi at its base INS Garuda but has now plans HAL to develop base for operations of 32 choppers of deploying the fresh fleet at different bases across the coast line. The Coast Guard has these twin-engine helicopters at its different bases for carrying out search and rescue and coastal surveillance missions. 'The Navy is also planning to equip the choppers with some low frequency SONARs which would be developed by the force with the help of an advanced DRDO laboratory,' the sources said.

After the signing of the contract, the forces are scheduled to get their first machine in the year 2020 and the last helicopter is scheduled to be provided to them by 2022, the sources said. The ALH is being employed for a variety of missions including advanced search and rescue, special heli-borne, armed patrol, VVIP ferrying and transport operations by the Navy. The 16 helicopters being provided to the Navy would help it in meeting some of the operational gaps created due to the lack of new helicopters as projects have either been retracted or are stuck at different levels. The Navy requires over 145 multirole helicopters (MRHs) with antisubmarine warfare capabilities, without which its warships are virtually defenceless against enemy submarines, and 110 twin-engine naval light utility helicopters (NUHs) to replace obsolete single engine Chetaks. India is one of the largest importers of arms and military platforms globally. The government has been focusing significantly on promoting defence indigenisation by taking a slew of reform initiatives including liberalising FDI in defence sector

Source: [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), 27 March 2017

## **China can deploy warplanes on artificial islands any time -think tank**

- David Brunnstrom

China appears to have largely completed major construction of military infrastructure on artificial islands it has built in the South China Sea and can now deploy combat planes and other military hardware there at any time, a U.S. think tank said on Monday. The Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), part of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the work on Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief Reefs in the Spratly Islands included naval, air, radar and defensive facilities. The think tank cited satellite images taken this month, which its director, Greg Poling, said showed new radar antennas on Fiery Cross and Subi. "So, look for deployments in the near future," he said. China has denied U.S. charges that it is militarizing the South China Sea, although last week Premier Li Keqiang said defense equipment had been placed on islands in the disputed waterway to maintain "freedom of navigation."

AMTI said China's three air bases in the Spratlys and another on Woody Island in the Paracel chain further north would allow its military aircraft to operate over nearly the entire South China Sea, a key global trade route that Beijing claims most of. Several neighboring states have competing claims in the sea, which is widely seen as a potential regional flashpoint.

The think tank said advanced surveillance and early-warning radar facilities at Fiery Cross, Subi, and Cuarteron Reefs, as well as Woody Island, and smaller facilities elsewhere gave it similar radar coverage. It said China had installed HQ-9 surface-to-air missiles at Woody Island more than a year ago, and had deployed anti-ship cruise missiles there on at least one occasion.

It had also constructed hardened shelters with retractable roofs for mobile missile launchers at Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief and enough hangars at Fiery Cross for 24 combat aircraft and three larger planes, including bombers.

U.S. officials told Reuters last month that China had finished building almost two dozen structures on Subi, Mischief and Fiery Cross that appeared designed to house long-range surface-to-air missiles.

In his Senate confirmation hearing in January, new U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson angered China by saying it should be denied access to islands it had built up in the South China Sea.

He subsequently softened his language, saying that in the event of an unspecified "contingency," the United States and its allies "must be capable of limiting China's access to and use of" those islands to pose a threat.

In recent years, the United States has conducted a series of what it calls freedom-of-navigation operations in the South China Sea, raising tensions with Beijing. (RePorting by David Brunnstrom; editing by Matt Spetalnick and Richard Chang)

Source: [news.trust.org](http://news.trust.org), 27 March 2017

### **Indian Navy receives locally developed submarine sonar suite, inertial navigation system**

Indian defence minister Arun Jaitley handed over three indigenously developed systems to the Indian Navy (IN) on 24 March, India's Press Information Bureau (PIB) said. Developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the naval systems presented to IN Chief of Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba include the USHUS-II integrated submarine sonar suite, directing gear for shipborne sonar arrays, and a ring laser gyroscope (RLG)-based shipborne inertial navigation system.

According to the PIB the USHUS-II is a "highly evolved compendium of multiple sensors". The constituent sonars in the suite include a passive sonar, active sonar, intercept sonar, obstacle avoidance sonar, and underwater telephony.

Source: [www.scoop.it](http://www.scoop.it), 28 March 2017

### **MoU on developing Puducherry as satellite Port inked**

The Chennai Port Trust (CPT) has signed a memorandum of understanding with Puducherry government on Wednesday to develop Puducherry Port as a satellite Port. The MoU was signed by CPT chairman P Raveendran and Puducherry chief secretary Manoj Parida in the presence of Union Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari and Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy at New Delhi. Raveendran said as per the MoU, CPT would assist Puducherry Port to handle export cargo through sea mode to Chennai Port for shipping to overseas destinations through mainline and feeder services.

Similarly, import cargo destined to Puducherry hinterland extending to locations like Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Tiruchy in the South, Salem, Namakkal and Villupuram in the West will be unloaded at Chennai Port and moved in coastal vessels to Puducherry Port, thus reducing logistics cost and easing road congestion.

While CPT would assist Puducherry Port in marketing, tariff fixation and other technical functions as and when needed, the latter on its part would dredge and maintain Port facilities to enable handling of vessels of draft 3.5 mt. The move comes after Kamrajar Port, which was planning to acquire Puducherry Port, dropped it a couple of years ago,

A PIB release quoting Gadkari said the MoU would facilitate handling of EXIM cargo – to and from Puducherry hinterland through Chennai Port. Around 5 lakhs to 10 lakh tonnes of cargo is expected to be handled. Once this arrangement becomes operational, road congestion would be reduced substantially with over 300 trucks going off road, bringing down pollution levels significantly.

**Source:** [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com), 16 March 2017



## **Chabahar Port is an unlikely litmus test for the US in Iran**

More than a dozen years ago, India began to explore the possibility of expanding and upgrading the Iranian Port of Chabahar. This was motivated by a variety of aims, including the possible establishment of a gateway to the vast mineral resources of Afghanistan and the creation of a suitable facility to handle higher-volume Iranian natural gas exports to India. A 120-mile road – an offshoot of the main road which links Kandahar to Herat – was built from Delaram, in the Nimruz province of Afghanistan, to Zaranj, on the northern Iranian border, in anticipation of an expansion of Chabahar. That road was designed to meet Iran's new connecting road from Zaranj down to Chabahar. India paid a very high cost to complete it, both in terms of dollars spent and men killed by the Taliban: more than 100 construction workers paid with their lives. Besides the road, India also signed a bilateral agreement with Iran to create a rail link from Chabahar to Zahedan, on the Iranian border with Afghanistan.

Last year, Afghanistan, Iran and India signed an agreement to transform Chabahar into a sprawling, modernized Port facility. Now, Chabahar serves as an unlikely litmus test. Despite their optimism and expressed desire to see this project come to fruition, the three countries find themselves at odds with the often vocal and aggressive posturing of US President Donald Trump when it comes to Iran in general. As a result of this attitude from the White House and persistent bureaucratic inertia, the timetable for any upgrades to Chabahar's facilities had seemed to be slipping. In mid-February, however, the Afghan Consul General in India, Mohammed Aman Amin, told a group of reporters assembled at a training session for Afghan customs personnel, in Nagpur, India, that the Port was expected to open for business this month.

Will it, then, open as Amin indicated, with ships initiating services to and from Afghanistan? That remains to be seen. While his overt optimism does warrant scrutiny, the wheels are turning – just not as fast as the participating parties want them to be. “India has engaged in a very delicate balancing act as it has attempted to maintain good relations with Iran,” says Sumit Ganguly, Professor of Political Science at Indiana University at Bloomington, who points out that the US administrations of George W Bush and Barack Obama also presented India with challenges. “Chabahar is seen by India as a way to checkmate the Chinese.” He adds: “The Trump Administration may discover that any unilateral actions undertaken here to squeeze India over its growing ties with Iran may end up being more than counterproductive. They could easily backfire.”

US Army General John Nicholson, who commands US combat operations in Afghanistan, told a US Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on February 9 that he welcomes the Chabahar project and that it will offer Afghanistan a viable and economic alternative to shipping all its goods via Pakistan. Gen Nicholson's statement does not appear to fit neatly with President Trump's current game plan, but other US generals have expressed viewpoints recently which do not always concur with the commander-in-chief's. "Iranian-Indian-Afghan cooperation over the Chabahar Port presents great economic potential. With over US\$2 billion development aid executed since 2002, and another US\$1 billion pledged in 2016, India's significant investments in Afghan infrastructure, engineering, training, and humanitarian issues will help develop Afghan human capital and long-term stability," said Gen Nicholson.

His testimony also included comments regarding increased Russian support over the past year for the Taliban, which will continue its attempts to block any efforts by India to expand its presence in Afghanistan. This news of Russia's role might serve to temper President Trump's inclination to speak against the Chabahar project. "India has lots of anxiety about Russia's recent moves with the Taliban. In addition, Gen Nicholson wants India to ramp up its support for Afghan Security forces. The dispatch of four attack helicopters to Kabul by India recently was largely symbolic in nature," says Ganguly.

More importantly, President Trump may need to show increased sensitivity in his dealings with India anyway after two shooting incidents in the US in the past few weeks involving hate crimes aimed at US citizens of Indian and Sikh descent. US officials were already reconsidering the plan by defense contractors Boeing and Lockheed Martin to open an F-16 fighter production line in India, as a way of stemming the outflow of US jobs. In response, India could, among other things – according to Ganguly – turn to the Eurofighter consortium or the Swedes, for example, as suppliers of its aircraft. Having the South Asia desk at the US State Department sit vacant pending the appointment of a new Assistant or Under Secretary of State only adds to the uncertainty and confusion in New Delhi. "We have not seen a policy paper (from President Trump's foreign policy team). And the only thing we have seen is Gen Nicholson's recent testimony," says Ganguly.

That said, Ganguly notes that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is already "tired of Pakistan's support for any number of terrorist groups" and that attitude dovetails with the Trump administration's avid support for stronger counter-terrorism measures across the board both in this region and elsewhere.

Japan is caught between a rock and a hard place too. It is seen as an investor in and perhaps construction services provider for much of the infrastructure at Chabahar. Ships of 100,000 tons can access the Port now, but improvements will allow ships more than twice that size to use it. India has stepped up and is poised to contribute a substantial investment – over US\$500 million – both in the form of a US\$150 million line of credit for Port facility improvements to enable two new intermodal terminals to be built, and an estimated US\$400 million worth of railway hardware.

Japan has much bigger concerns, however, with North Korea and China, concerns that may make it reluctant to proceed with any work in Iran absent a nod from Washington DC.

### *Other developments*

Meanwhile, just down the coast from Chabahar, China and Pakistan are eagerly linking the upgraded Port of Gwadar in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan to a rail line running all the way from Central Asia across the western part of Pakistan, as part of the grand China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

India's planned investment in the extensive Chabahar project is dwarfed by the estimated US\$46 billion China is spending on CPEC, and Gwadar is more than a thorn in India's side. Its role in supporting an increase in China's naval presence in the Indian Ocean is what has spurred Japanese willingness to help transform Chabahar into a deepwater hub.

Other rail and road projects in Iran and Afghanistan are worth noting. China is already upgrading the rail link between Tehran and Mashhad, with a projected completion date of 2019. India is pursuing a Chabahar-Faraj-Bam railway, and perhaps even a 360-mile Chabahar-Hajigak railway, allowing for direct access to Afghan mines. China has railway projects underway in Turkey, and a regular service to Tehran by Chinese trains travelling 6,000 miles from Zhejiang Province to Tehran via Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan began last February. Iranian and Chinese companies are working on other new rail construction projects in Iran, too.

In Afghanistan, China signed a US\$204 million contract to begin construction on a 178 km Dar-e-Suf to Yakawlang road connecting the country's central provinces. The project will be paid for by the Asian Development Bank. A second 550 km road is planned by ADB from Dar-e-Suf to Kandahar province.

Chabahar thus serves as a significant test case going forward. The US needs to demonstrate considerable patience and flexibility in Chabahar – with India in particular. Trusting Gen Nicholson’s instincts here may turn out to be the optimal way for Washington to proceed. Speaking out – again – about an increase in hate crimes in the US might be in order, too.

Source: [www.atimes.com](http://www.atimes.com), 16 march 2017

## **5 Ways India’s Going to Be Affected When CPEC Changes World Trade**

- Haider Talat

The much-vaunted USD 54 billion economic corridor in Pakistan that connects the Xinjiang region in western China with the southern Pakistan Port of Gwadar is gradually rolling off operations, with the Chinese cargo being loaded onto the merchant vessels docked at the Port. With a whopping USD 11 billion investment in rail and road infrastructure and USD 33 billion in energy and power generation projects – largely financed by Chinese state-owned institutions – this project is being seen as one of the biggest investments made by China. It’s a project that could usher in a new era of economic development in Pakistan.

CPEC runs through the entire length of Pakistan – through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the southern state of Balochistan. It reduces the distance for Chinese goods bound for the US, Europe, Africa and the entire western world by a substantial 2,000 miles and vice versa by providing an alternate to the ‘Strait of Malacca’ route, through which most Chinese trade currently takes place.

### *1. India’s Sovereignty*

India has continuously opposed the project since it passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmiri territory of Gilgit-Baltistan – a claim opposed by Pakistan. The 1,300-km corridor is also perceived to be an alternative economic road link for the Kashmir Valley lying on the Indian side of the border. Most key players in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, including CM Mehbooba Mufti, have expressed optimism about the project. There have been calls by local business and political leaders to declare Kashmir on both sides of the LoC a ‘Special Economic Zone’.

However, a well-connected Gilgit-Baltistan that attracts industrial development and foreign investment, if CPEC proves a success, will further consolidate the region's perception as internationally recognised Pakistani territory, diminishing India's claim over the 73,000 sqkm piece of land which home to more than 1.8 million people.

## *2. Chinese Control Over Trade Via Sea*

Major US Ports on the East Coast depend on the Panama Canal to trade with China. Once CPEC becomes fully functional, China will be in a position to offer a 'shorter and more economical' trade route (avoiding travel through the entire Western Hemisphere) to most North and Latin American enterprises. This will give China the power to dictate the terms by which the international movement of goods will take place between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.

Located a mere 600 km from the Strait of Hormuz, Gwadar places China in close proximity to the Iran-controlled water channel, which supplies 35% of the world's oil requirements. The 54-km wide Strait has been often used as a strategic weapon of self-defense by the Shi'ite nation, through a threat to choke international oil supplies. This means that the world will look to China to intermeditate in the face of any future confrontation between Iran and the Jewish state of Israel or the possible threat of a seizure of the canal.

India, with over 60% of its oil supplies passing through the Strait (mainly from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq), will be no exception.

## *3. Chinese String of Pearls*

China has been increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean with the 'String of Pearls' ambition: A term coined by the Americans and often used by Indian defence analysts to refer to a Chinese game-plan of encircling India through a network of airfields and Ports. With an existing presence in Chittagong Port (Bangladesh), Hambantota Port (Sri Lanka), Port Sudan (Sudan), Maldives, Somalia and Seychelles, a control of Gwadar Port establishes complete dominance of the Indian ocean by the Communist nation.

Though Pakistan has denied any current Chinese military presence in the country, China has often hinted at deploying its marine corps at the strategically important Port. The possibility of China stationing its troops in the region to secure its investment

in case of a possible terror attack in militancy-infected Balochistan cannot be ruled out.

#### *4. Emergence of Pakistan as an Outsourcing Destination*

Often referred to as the ‘Marshall Plan’ of China – named after a historic US plan to provide financial aid to western Europe in the aftermath of World War 2, which helped Europe rebuild itself – CPEC is poised to speed up Pakistan’s economic progress.

Development of commercial towns adjoining the corridor and better rail and road connectivity enabling the movement of a skilled workforce from the hinterlands to the urban centres can help Pakistan emerge as a key destination for contract-manufacturing-outsourcing for the WEestern economies. This is more probable at a time when India is becoming costlier and Bangladesh has performed poorly on quality and regulatory standards.

With the logistics of cost and transit time coming down, Pakistani exPorts, especially from the MSMEs, will also gain an international market, posing serious competition to Indian OEMs and handicraft manufacturers that rely largely on overseas consumers.

Pakistani exPorts, mainly in the textile and construction material industry, compete directly with those of India in the US and UAE – two of the top three trading partners of both countries. With the supply of raw material from China becoming easier, Pakistan will be suitably placed to become a regional market leader in these sectors – mainly at the cost of Indian exPort volumes.

#### *5. Stronger OBOR and Chinese Dominance in Trade Leadership*

China’s one-belt-one-road (OBOR) project that focuses on the trade connectivity between China and the rest of Eurasia through a network of Ports, roads and railways has been often seen as China’s plan to dominate the region politically. CPEC is one giant step in the same direction.

The recent US withdrawal from the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) has already left the member countries of Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam looking to China for global leadership in trade. An uncertain EU after Britain’s withdrawal and a weakened NAFTA, the

renegotiation of which seems certain in the Trump regime, will only help establish China's superiority across the globe.

A China that is more accepted and integrated with the rest of the global economy will have a better say in the UN and with individual nations, which may prove to be bad news for an India aspiring to acquire a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Source: [www.thequint.com](http://www.thequint.com), 23 March 2017

### **Danish investors establish Maritime Investment Fund for purchasing of modern merchant ships**

The Danish pension funds PensionDanmark, Danica and the investment group Navigare Capital Partners have created a new fund for investments in the purchase of a diversified fleet of sea-going vessels, including bulk carriers, container carriers and tankers for transport of oil, oil products and chemical goods. The new Maritime Investment Fund will have acquired modern merchant ships, which will be chartered to the Danish freight operators. The capital of the fund will be established with 300 million USD. The investments in ships represent a new active business in PensionDanmark's Portfolio beyond its exposure in carriers.

"We have deemed a broad Portfolio of vessels interesting. We also believe that the timing is right, as ship asset prices are fairly low. We are also aware that this is an asset type whose value largely depends on developments in freight rates and global trade. As such, we understand that the market value of the Portfolio can fluctuate on the short term. But viewed on the longer perspective and across a business cycle, we believe that we can achieve a solid return on this investment", commented the CEO of Danish pension funds PensionDanmark, Torben Moger Pedersen. The business model was developed at Maersk Broker, but it remains unclear how much the broker, owned by the Maersk family, has invested in the venture.

Danica Pension manages a capital of 327 billion DKK (44 billion EUR), the capital managed by PensionDanmark at the end of last year was 26.4 billion EUR. Navigare Capital, which partners are several companies with experience in the shipping industry, will participate in the fund's capital on a par with institutional investors.

Source: [www.Maritimeherald.com](http://www.Maritimeherald.com), 24 March 2017



## **Singapore Competition Commission approves merger between shipping companies**

The Competition Commission of Singapore (CCS) has approved a joint venture between Japanese shipping companies Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha, Mitsui OSK Lines, and Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha. The three companies will combine their container liner shipping businesses and container terminal services businesses outside Japan. Only the container liner shipping merger will affect Singapore, the CCS said.

After a public consultation and feedback from vessel operating common carriers, non-vessel operating common carriers, and beneficial cargo owners, the CCS concluded that the merger will not infringe Singapore's Competition Act. The companies' combined market shares are not high enough to raise competition concerns in any of the relevant markets, it said, and barriers to entry are not prohibitively high because new entrants do not need their own vessels but could charter slots on other vessels. Overcapacity in the industry means that container lines are able to include Singapore as a Port of call without incurring substantial cost, it said.

Although it is unlikely that customers can supply their own container liner shipping services, a significant number of customers including freight forwarders and beneficial cargo owners do have bargaining power through their procurement processes, the CCS said. The information available does not suggest that the companies are closer competitors to each other than against other players, it said, and the merger is unlikely to increase anti-competitive coordination given the large number of liners and low market concentration. The companies also provide logistics services, bulk shipping, car transport, and liquid transport, through subsidiaries but they will continue to conduct these services separately and independently from each other and the joint venture, the CCS said.

Source: [www.out-law.com](http://www.out-law.com), 27 March 2017

## **Cochin Port's outer harbour project to be ready by 2020: CPT Chairman**

If all goes well, the ambitious outer harbour project of Cochin Port Trust (CPT) worth Rs 3,050 crore will be ready by June 2020, says A V Ramana, chairman (in-charge), CPT.



According to him, the Indian Navy will give Rs 1,050 crore for the project. Ramana says that the central government may provide funding under Sagar Mala project for outer harbour. Once outer harbour is in place, the dredging cost of Cochin Port – Rs 120 crore a year now – will drop to Rs 60 crore.

Sagar Mala project is a strategic and customer-oriented initiative of the central government to modernise India's Ports so that Port-led development can be augmented and coastlines developed to contribute towards India's growth. "Funding outer harbour project under Sagar Mala is just a proposal. If this is through, we will not have to worry about the financial side of the project," says Ramana. Indian Institute of Technology-Madras will submit the sedimentation status of the sea rePort for the outer harbour project by June 2017. Then, a committee will be appointed to study the financial viability of the project. Cochin Port will, then, approach both state and the central governments for licence. It will take about one year. "The viability rePort is expected by December 2017. We expect to get clearance by the Ministry of Environment and Forests by June 2018. Then, the project will be awarded by an open tender. The Port expects to complete the project by June 2020," says Ramana.

Cochin Port was formed naturally due to the great floods of Periyar in 1341 AD, which choked the Muziris Port, one of the greatest Ports in ancient world. The Port was officially established in 1936 and is a major Port since 1964.

Over the years, however, the burden of pension and other liabilities and dredging costs have choked the Port and it started rePorting losses. "Cochin Port Trust has 1918 employees and 7,349 pensioners. The salaries and wages come to Rs 11.64 crore a month, pension is Rs 14.69 crore and gratuity is Rs 1.43 crore. The dredging cost is Rs 120 crore a year. In 2016-17 (till February), the operating income was Rs 448.46 crore and expenses were Rs 329.96 crore. We have made an operating surplus of Rs 118.50 crore till now," says Ramana. The Port has many positives such as completion of expansion of BPCL Kochi Refinery and increased off-take from Petronet LNG terminal.

Source: [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com), 27 March 2017

## **Pakistan's Gwadar Port startup to benefit shipping industry, says diplomat**

Shipments from Pakistan's deepsea Port of Gwadar in Baluchistan province have started and as both inbound and outbound trade picks up in the medium term, will provide a filip to the shipping industry by creating more demand for container boxes and ships, a senior diplomat said. "The first few shipments [for exPort] have already left the country and work is carrying on very vigorously to carry forward the project," Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore Nasrullah Khan said in an address to the Institute of South Asian Studies, a regional think tank.

The startup of Gwadar Port is significant because it is pivotal to the proposed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor or CPEC, under which more than \$55 billion worth of economic projects will be undertaken, encompassing power generation, roads, railways, Ports and manufacturing industries. It is at Gwadar that the "Maritime silk and land silk roads will meet," Khan said. "As trade picks up, naturally more ships will be required to trade and this will boost shipbuilding activity" and boost earnings of shipping companies, he added.

The global container shipping industry is currently grappling with challenging economic conditions, with many shipyards in China and South Korea struggling to survive, and any new major shipping route could provide an avenue for more trade and shipbuilding. The container freight sector is also under pressure.

The World Container Index assessed by Drewry Maritime Research, a composite of container freight rates on eight major routes to or from the US, Europe and Asia, fell almost 3% week on week to \$1350.61/40 feet container as of March 23, the year-to-date average is \$1,610/40 feet container, which is below the five-year average of \$1,693/40 feet container. Gwadar is located on the Arabian Sea, more than 530 km from the Port city of Karachi and 120 km from Pakistan's border with Iran. "On one hand Gwadar provides an outlet to China for shipping out its goods and on the other it helps vitalize the entire economy of Pakistan," Khan said. The 2,000 km CPEC significantly reduces distances for China to ship its goods worldwide. The route through Gwadar offers China its shortest trading route to the Middle East, Africa and to most countries in the West.

Shipping analysts say that while this will boost volumes for exPort from China and Pakistan, for shorter routes it will also translate into lower-ton mile demand and a

quicker turnaround of ships for their next voyage, adding to the overall supply of tonnage and thus capping gains for owners. Ton-mile demand is calculated by multiplying the volume of cargo moved in metric tons by distance traveled in miles. It indicates the average distance a ship covers to deliver every ton of cargo. Covering a longer distance implies diminished availability of ships even if the total size of fleet remains the same, or conversely it offsets the increase in supply of tonnage.

There have also been grave concerns over Security of the Gwadar and CPEC project due to the looming threat of terrorism and regular such attacks in Pakistan. Local politicians in Pakistan have raised questions over the level of benefits that will accrue to Pakistan in what is largely a China-centric project, but Khan is unfazed and optimistic. “The project is a game changer in every way; political, economic and regional. We are not going to be deterred and it is being implemented vigorously,” he said. “Whenever a huge economic development plan is implemented, there is always controversy but we have literally crossed the hump,” he said, adding that the economic effects of the CPEC corridor and trade via Gwadar Port have all been discussed with the chief ministers of the four provinces of Pakistan. “Everyone has been assured and reassured that they will be treated even-handedly,” he said.

Khan said countries other than China and Pakistan can also benefit from trade through CPEC and Gwadar. It is a project of great regional connectivity and many countries will be interested, he said. “State policies are relative and can be evolved while infrastructure on the ground is an absolute fact,” Khan said, adding South Asia as a region was deficit in infrastructure.

Once the CPEC project is complete, there will be scope for countries such as Singapore to invest in Pakistan and export finished goods to other parts of the world, Khan said. He cited the example of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India or TAPI gas pipeline as a landmark project and an example of regional connectivity on which work has started.

“Very good progress has been made on that score,” he noted

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 29 March 2017



## MARINE ENVIRONMENT



### **Greenpeace slams 'jaw-dropping' inaction on marine pollution from soft drinks firms**

A new Greenpeace UK report has condemned the "woeful lack of action" by the soft drinks industry to prevent ocean plastic pollution, as figures show the world's top six brands use a combined average of just 6.6% recycled plastic in their bottles. Greenpeace UK conducted a comprehensive study of the plastic footprints and policies of Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Suntory, Danone, Dr Pepper Snapple and Nestlé, five of which sell a combined total of more than two million tonnes of plastic bottles each year.

The largest brand, Coca-Cola, apparently refused to disclose the size of its plastic footprint, making the actual total figure significantly higher. None of the companies surveyed have commitments to reduce the amount of single-use plastic bottles they use, while four of the six brands do not consider the impact of plastic bottles on oceans in their product design. "Our lives are awash with throwaway plastic," Greenpeace UK senior oceans campaigner Louise Edge said. "12 million tonnes of the stuff is ending up in our oceans every year, where it harms marine life, spreads toxic chemicals and can take centuries to break down. "We know that plastic bottles are a huge ocean-polluter and in the UK alone we dump 16 million of them in our environment every day. So, it's not good enough for the biggest soft drinks companies in the world to pump out millions of tonnes of throwaway bottles and then blame everyone but themselves for their environmental impact. "The results of this report are jaw-dropping. It's clear that if we're going to protect our oceans we need to end the age of throwaway plastic."

#### *Taking action*

Greenpeace UK found that a third of the investigated companies currently have no global targets to increase their use of recycled content in plastic bottles, and none are aiming for 100% recycled content within what the campaign group believes to be an "ambitious" timeframe.

Most are instead focusing their efforts on developing bioplastics or ‘lightweighting’ – making polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles to reduce costs, plastics-use and carbon emissions. Greenpeace claims that these methods fail to tackle the problem of ocean plastics, as they still pose an ingestion and choking threat to marine life. Greenpeace’s questioning found that, over the past 10 years, the soft drinks industry has been consistently decreasing their use of refillable bottles. Meanwhile, two-thirds of the brands surveyed have a global policy opposing the introduction of deposit return schemes on drinks containers. Greenpeace is calling on these companies to take “drastic action” to phase out single-use plastic, embrace re-usable packaging and ensure the remainder is made from 100% recycled content. The soft drinks industry is also being urged to disclose the types and amount of plastics it uses, re-uses and recycles.

### *Sea-change in attitudes*

With the Ellen MacArthur Foundation warning that there could be more plastic in our oceans than fish by 2050, governments and businesses are gradually realising the need to establish policies which prevent hazardous materials, such as plastic microbeads, from entering the marine environment.

Conservationists have warned that microbeads – tiny plastic particles – can affect fish growth and persist in the guts of mussels and fish that mistake them for food. The UK recently took the decision to tackle microbeads in cosmetics, which will be banned from sale in the UK by the end of 2017.

The private sector’s attempts to combat rising plastic ocean waste has ramped up in recent months, with initiatives ranging from basic cutbacks to innovative new products. Computer firm Dell, for example, last month achieved a new first for the technology industry, after converting waste plastic found on beaches and in waterways into new packaging for one of its laptop products.

London retailer Selfridges, meanwhile, has stopped the sale of single-use plastic water bottles in its shops, while designer clothing company G-Star RAW joined forces with marine pollution campaign group the Plastic Soup Foundation in an effort to prevent microfibres from entering into oceans.

Elsewhere, global sportswear manufacturer Adidas looks set to push around 7,000 pairs of trainers made from 95% ocean plastic into the market. And the Procter &

Gamble Company (P&G) announced earlier this year that it will be mass-producing the world's first recyclable shampoo bottle made from up to 25% post-consumer recycled (PCR) beach plastic.

Source: [www.edie.net](http://www.edie.net), 16 March 2017

### **‘Steps will be taken to minimise damage to marine life, ecology at Port Qasim’**

Participants of a consultative workshop were informed that the best possible mitigation measures would be adopted to minimise damage to environment and to conserve marine life and ecology of the surrounding sea area to the maximum possible extent as a new Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import facility is being built at Port Qasim in Karachi. The consultative workshop was organised the other day as part of the regulatory requirements for doing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the new LNG import terminal as envisaged under the Sindh Environmental Protection Act-2014. Keeping in view the cause of environmental protection and conservation of marine ecology, participants of the workshop expressed their concerns over the LNG import facility at Port Qasim in Karachi, which is going to be third such terminal of the country at the same site.

Pakistan GasPort (PGP) is building the new LNG import facility as an extension to its similar under-construction LNG terminal at the same site of Port Qasim. The 600-700 mmfd RLNG (Regasified LNG) handling and storage project will be completed by next year. The first phase of the project will be made operational by June this year.

Saleemuz Zaman of the Global Environmental Management Services, the environmental consultant of the project, informed the participants at the outset of the moot that the workshop was being organised with concerned stakeholders to meet one of the requirements laid down by ‘Review of Initial Environmental Examination and Environment Impact Assessment Regulations-2014’ of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency.

Zaman said that workshop was being organised to duly invite and record suggestions of the stakeholders for upkeep of environment of the surrounding area on land and sea as part of the planning to conduct EIA of the project to duly fulfil the requirements of

the provincial environmental law. He said representatives of academia, non-governmental organisations, public entities and regulatory bodies had been invited to the workshop so that concerns and reservations expressed by them would be duly made part of mitigation measures to be taken in light of the EIA study of the project.

He said that the proponent of the project had expressed full resolve to adopt the best possible mitigation measures to minimise the impact on environment of surrounding areas despite the fact that LNG was considered to be the safest fuel all over the world whose storage, transportation, and consumption had only minimal effects on environment.

Nasir Pervez of the PGP in his presentation about the project said that the new terminal as an extension to the first under-construction import terminal would be having an expected annual capacity of 3.5 million tons while it could cater to 750 mmscfd (million standard cubic feet per day) peak gas rate. The proposed terminal will be built at the Mazhar point of Port Qasim having an approximate area of 15 acres, including its sea channel.

The LNG terminal project having a total capacity of 2 billion cubic feet per day when fully completed is likely to reduce gas deficit in the country by 30 percent while fuel so imported in the country would be utilised for running new power plants having a total capacity to generate 3,600 megawatts of electricity. Participants of the workshop said that any new import facility being built at commercial harbours of the country should not cause an increase in marine pollution in the surrounding sea area as it would not be helpful for the continuity of Pakistani seafood exports to the developed countries.

Representatives of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, National Institute of Oceanography, National Forum for Environment and Health and of other concerned organisations called for replanting mangroves, doing baseline studies to monitor the levels of air and marine pollution in the area, and for establishing a centre for monitoring marine pollution in the Port Qasim as new fuel import facilities are being built there.

Officials of the Port Qasim Authority said the port authority was very much cognizant of the issue of the marine and air pollution in its area, and, for mitigating the situation, a sustained monitoring and evaluation project was being carried out to constantly keep under observation any significant damage to environment or ecology of the area. They said that Port Qasim was considered as the best place in the country for doing



mangrove plantation, and for this cause the PQA had been getting support from the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The PQA officials assured the participants that international consultants had carried out proper security risk assessment of the port area for the upcoming LNG import terminal projects as all the concerned law-enforcement and security agencies were now fully part of the comprehensive security plan being put in place for Port Qasim, especially for coal and LNG imports.

Source: [www.thenews.com.pk](http://www.thenews.com.pk), 19 March 2017

### **Fishermen say water pollution killing marine life**

PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH protected marine zones which would form a Barbados Marine Management Area (BMMA) along Barbados' west coast are leaving a bad taste in the mouths of fishermen. PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH protected marine zones which would form a Barbados Marine Management Area (BMMA) along Barbados' west coast are leaving a bad taste in the mouths of fishermen.

Members of the fisherfolk community were involved in a heated meeting with officials from the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) last week, the second in as many weeks in which officials sought to explain details of the proposed BMMA. The special zones would see two areas along Barbados' west coast come under special protection, and prevent fishing or entertainment activity in a further attempt to protect the west coast's fragile coral reefs. One management area would stretch from the mouth of the area near the Bridgetown Port southward to Accra Beach, Christ Church, and the other from Paynes Bay, northward to Weston, St James, inclusive of the Folkestone Park and Reserve Marine Reserve.

Source: [www.nationnews.com](http://www.nationnews.com), 19 March 2017



## **Mysterious 'Plastic Plankton' Art Exhibit Reveals Extent of Ocean Pollution**

-Tia Ghose

A series of eerie, stunning images reveals the extent of plastic polluting the world's oceans — by transforming the trash bits into images that look like teensy, ethereal sea creatures. bits of ocean flotsam — such as stroller wheels, toy horses, burnt plastic flowers and six-pack rings — have been transformed into plankton-like sea creatures. Barker's art exhibit will soon be published in the book "Beyond Drifting: Imperfectly Known Animals" (Overlap, forthcoming May 2017) Barker originally came up with the idea for the project at a scientific conference in Berlin. She met a researcher from Cobh, Ireland, who told her the long-lost story of marine biologist John Vaughan Thompson, who had made many of his observations in the same region. "He made these pioneering discoveries about plankton," yet his history and life has remained mostly obscure, Barker told Live Science.

At the same conference, she'd heard a talk about plankton that had begun to ingest plastic drifting in the ocean. (A huge swath of the Pacific Ocean — an area the size of Texas — is filled with plastic, and within this region plastic islands have even begun forming. Other research has shown that the oceans are filled with 250,000 tons of trash.) She decided to recreate the observations of Thompson, but focus on the newer "inhabitants" of the ocean. "My idea was to revisit the areas where he'd collected plankton, but I'd collect plastic," Barker said. "He was collecting natural objects, and now in place of the natural objects are the man-made debris."

### *Fantastic creatures*

So, Barker returned to Cobh and gathered debris from the seashore, then carefully composed photographs to make the plastic specimens look like slides of plankton from the 1800s. The resulting images resemble slides of fantastical microscopic plankton. The photographs were "done in dim light, which enables them to move and make these sort of creations, almost sort of swimming as if they're plankton in the ocean."

She also created a cabinet full of specimens and a naturalist's notebook from the time meant to represent Thompson's research memoirs published in 1830s, called "Imperfectly Known Animals." The series of work "Beyond Drifting: Imperfectly Known Animals" will be on exhibit at the FORMAT Photography Festival from March 24 to April 23, and at the Prix Pictet Award at The Victoria & Albert Museum, London,

award ceremony on May 4 (with public viewing available from May 5 through May 28), and at the Sirius Arts Center, in Cobh, May 27 to July 2.

Barker's other work has also focused on plastic debris, including a series called "WHERE...have I been," which shows the plastic debris from balloons that burst high in the Earth's atmosphere, before settling down to Earth, causing problems for marine life. Another of her series is called "Soup," which shows the soup of plastic debris suspended in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch

Source: [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com), 20 March 2017

### **Study: Alaska's beaches are littered with washed up garbage from around the globe**

-Kristin Musulin

#### *Dive Brief:*

- A recent study published by the Marine Pollution Bulletin analyzed debris collected along 28 beaches in five of Alaska's national parks in 2015, as reported by Alaska Dispatch News. The parks are Wrangell-St. Elias, Kenai Fjords, Katmai, Bering Land Bridge and Cape Krusenstern National Monument.
- The analysis found that polystyrene foam was the most common form of washed up trash by volume, yet it only accounted for 13.3% of the debris. 60% of beach debris was plastic, while 14.6% was rope and netting. Nonferrous metal items made up 1.7% of the collected debris. Pieces of iron and wood debris were not collected for the study.
- Researchers were also able to determine the sources of some washed up trash. One researcher noted it is likely that debris from Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami is still washing up on the coast of Alaska. Some debris also traced back to Thailand, China, Korea, Russia, Singapore, Argentina and South Africa.

#### *Dive Insight:*

In the summer of 2015, Gulf of Alaska Keeper started a \$1.3 million cleanup project to remove debris along Alaska's coastline, much of which was attributed to the 2011

Japan earthquake and tsunami. However, this new research indicating that a large portion of debris comes from a number of other countries — mostly in Asia — supports industry theories that countries in the Asia Pacific region need more support to tackle marine pollution.

Nonprofit organization Ocean Conservancy recently released a report, titled "The Next Wave: Investment Strategies for Plastic Free Seas," which detailed a goal to halve the amount of plastic waste entering the oceans annually in the next eight years. The report notes that rapidly developing economies and limited land space in Asia Pacific are contributing to the marine pollution crisis, and many organizations including the Asian Institute of Technology have joined to develop solutions.

At the 2016 Our Ocean conference, hosted by former Secretary of State John Kerry, dozens of other countries also committed to change through monetary investments in ocean cleanup projects. Panama, Germany and Lebanon were among the countries that made multi-million dollar commitments to marine protection, and now it is up to those countries' leaders to follow through on promises and work toward trash free waters.

Source: [www.wastedive.com](http://www.wastedive.com), 23 March 2017

### **In Senegal, UN General Assembly President calls for sustainable management of marine resources**

Visiting a traditional fishing community in Senegal, the President of the United Nations General Assembly has called on the countries in the region to prioritize conserving and sustainably managing their marine resources. "I learned a lot today about how ocean issues like acidification, rising temperatures, overfishing and marine pollution affect the daily lives of fishermen," said Assembly President Peter Thomson.

Mr. Thomson is currently in Senegal as part of his visit to several African countries to build momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which specifically deals with the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources. "Understanding and acting upon the perspectives and expectations of artisanal fishers is an important component of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) that will be covered in The Ocean

Conference this June,” added the UN official. Being held from 5 to 9 June at the UN Headquarters, in New York, the Conference aims to reverse the decline in the health of oceans for the benefit of the people and the planet

Involving all relevant stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental and civil society organizations as well as the academia and scientific communities, the Conference will also contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and provide input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Also, while in Senegal, the Assembly President met with the country’s Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy and discussed the country’s response to challenges facing oceans such as overfishing, marine pollution, acidification and ocean warming.

Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), 28 March 2017



### **Here's who will benefit from the Beijing-Seoul fallout**

-Huileng Tan

Geopolitical tensions in East Asia have escalated in the last year as China uses its considerable soft power to push its neighbors when it feels national interests are threatened. Well, those countries are coming to the conclusion that enough is enough, and they're heading to places like Southeast and South Asia to turn their fortunes around, according to analysts. "South Korean multinationals may decide to diversify their manufacturing supply chain and also production facilities to other Asian locations, in order to reduce their vulnerability to future Chinese economic measures," said Rajiv Biswas, IHS Markit's Asia Pacific chief economist.

Currently, South Korea's decision to allow the U.S. to deploy an advanced missile defence system on the peninsula has culminated in a series of retaliatory measures from Beijing, including closing Lotte stores in China, limiting South Korean pop cultural imports and curbing tour groups to its neighbor. South Korean firms have already started investing in the fast-growing Southeast Asia region as its spat with Beijing simmered for a few years.

In Vietnam, South Korea has invested heavily in establishing electronics production facilities, and that trend is likely to accelerate following the recent Chinese economic measures against the country, said IHS' Biswas.

Since 2014, the country's share of outbound direct investment (ODI) into countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has exceeded investment into China and that's likely to accelerate as Korean firms aim to reduce their dependency on their influential neighbor, Natixis' senior economist Trinh Nguyen wrote in a report released last week. "China will continue to be an important market for South Korea. That said, dependency comes at a great cost," she added.

According to IHS, South Korean exports to Vietnam soared in the first two months of 2017, jumping 40 percent from a year ago, reflecting strong linkages between the

electronics supply chain between the two countries. India is another potential market where South Korean presence will grow, according to Biswas. South Korea's foray beyond the shadow of China will follow in the footsteps of Taiwan and Japan, both of whom have incurred Beijing's ire.

Like South Korea, Taiwan's ODI into emerging Southeast Asian nations has more than doubled from 2011 to 2015. Now, some 15 percent of all Taiwanese ODI goes to Southeast Asia, up from 6 percent in 2006 to 2010, while 51 percent of the territory's ODI went to China—down from 84 percent in 2010, according to calculations by Singapore's DBS Bank released late last year.

Meanwhile, foreign direct investment of Japanese multinationals has veered toward Southeast and South Asia following anti-Japanese protests in China in 2012 due to territorial disputes, IHS' Biswas told CNBC.

### *Changing tracks on tourism*

Even the tourism industry in South Korea is changing its itinerary as the country aims to lure non-Chinese visitors. In January, the Korea Tourism Organization said it is aiming to draw 3.6 million tourists from Southeast Asia this year, drawing on the popularity of its pop cultural exports, Yonhap news agency reported. According to the organization, it welcomed over 2 million tourists from the ASEAN countries last year. Taiwan has already walked the same path as it sought to attract visitors from Southeast Asia after Beijing started limiting group tours to the island after Tsai Ing-wen from the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party won the presidential election last year. Tourist numbers to Taiwan rose to a record 10.7 million in 2016 even despite a sharp fall in mainland tourist arrivals. That was due in part to strong growth from the Southeast Asian markets.

Meanwhile, Thailand is eyeing the possibility of more Chinese tourists, who may now travel further amid the curbs.

On Tuesday, Ronnarong Chewinsiriamnuai, president of the Thai-Chinese Tourism Alliance Association, said the Chinese-Korean tensions could boost tourist arrivals to the Land of Smiles, Reuters reported. "That's an opportunity for Thailand to see its tourism active again as more Chinese visitors are coming," Ronnarong said.

Source: [www.cnbc.com](http://www.cnbc.com), 15 March 2017

## **Russia Steps Up Efforts to Win Friends Across Southeast Asia**

-David Tweed

The highest ranking Russian military official to visit Thailand in a decade will wrap up four days of talks Friday as Moscow further deepens ties with Southeast Asia. After stopping first in Laos, Colonel General Oleg Salyukov, the commander-in-chief of Russian land forces, was scheduled to meet senior Thai military officials including Defense Forces Chief General Surapong Suwana-adth. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is expected to visit Thailand later this year to mark the 120th anniversary of bilateral relations. "Russia is trying to play a balancing game by recognizing that Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific are very much driven by geopolitical fluidity," said Alexey Muraviev, a Russia strategic and defense affairs specialist at Curtin University in Perth.

Since hosting the first ever meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations defense ministers in Moscow last April, Russia has worked to diversify its economic, diplomatic and security ties throughout the region. That includes longtime U.S. allies in the region like Thailand and the Philippines, as well as Vietnam, Laos and Indonesia, according to an appraisal of its 2016 diplomatic outcomes.

In January, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he'd consider joint naval exercises with Russia, months after deciding to reduce military drills with the U.S., the Philippine's long-term treaty ally. Russia is also in competition with Saab AB, Airbus Group and Lockheed Martin Corp. to sell fighter jets to Indonesia.

### *Cooling Relations*

Russian efforts to strengthen its links with Bangkok come as Thai relations with Washington have cooled since the 2014 military coup, with the U.S. stemming military aid to its longstanding ally in line with its "coup clause" that cuts foreign assistance to countries that overthrow democratically elected governments.

In addition to signing a military cooperation agreement with Russia in St. Petersburg last May, Thai leader Prayuth Chan-Ocha and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev agreed to try to increase bilateral trade to \$10 billion a year. Commerce between the two countries was valued at \$3.98 billion in 2014, according to the Russian embassy in Bangkok. Last year two Russian Sukhoi Superjet 100 LR planes

were commissioned into the Royal Thai Air Force, mainly for the use of the royal family and other VIPs, with Russia also planning to deliver four military transport Mi-17V-5 helicopters to Thailand later this year. “The Russian defense industry has managed to get a small symbolic defense niche in a market dominated by U.S. defense companies,” said Muraviev. “The Russian helicopters are not a game changer but it is a first step.”

Source: [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com), 17 March 2017

## **The US and China Make Nice- Geopolitical**

-Jacob L. Shapiro

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited China over the weekend, meeting with China’s foreign minister on Saturday and President Xi Jinping on Sunday. By all accounts, the trip went well. Media in both countries pointed out that a spirit of cooperation emanated from the meetings. For those who follow U.S.-China relations, this is a marked difference from just a few months ago, when everyone was focused on the potential for a trade war and World War III in the South China Sea. Two things must be addressed because of this change in tone. First, a little cold water needs to be thrown on the budding spirit of cooperation that has emerged between the two countries. Second, points of contention remain and will define the U.S.-China relationship no matter the optics. The two countries aren’t going to war, but they aren’t going to be best friends, either.

The U.S.-China relationship has always been a dizzying array of diplomatic protocol. When then-President Richard Nixon went to China in 1972, it took months of diplomatic legwork and interpretation of Chinese moves to realize that China was open to changing the nature of the relationship, and to come up with a diplomatic framework whereby China could consent to forge stronger ties. The thaw in relations was jump-started when the U.S. table tennis team was invited to China in 1972. The solidification of the relationship involved a complex word game where the U.S. recognized that there was only one China but still maintained an alliance with Taiwan.

China continues to carry out foreign relations this way, a characteristic of its authoritarian style of government. The Chinese government must present itself with a certain degree of strength to the Chinese people. One of the ways China does this is by controlling the messaging around Chinese relationships with important foreign



countries. The Chinese slogan for current U.S.-China relations is a “new model of great power relations.” Chinese officials began using this phrase publicly in 2010, and now it is repeated often by Xi and trumpeted in Chinese media.

This is relevant to Tillerson’s visit because Tillerson seemed to accept the framework of a “new model of great power relations” in his remarks after meeting with China’s foreign minister. In describing the U.S.-China relationship over the past 40 years, Tillerson said, “it has been a very positive relationship built on non-confrontation, no conflict, mutual respect, and always searching for win-win solutions.” If that sounds slightly awkward in English, that’s because it is. Tillerson essentially paraphrased how Xi and other Chinese officials describe China’s “new model of great power relations.”

Some have suggested that Tillerson’s statement amounted to a massive strategic blunder. Either Tillerson was ill-prepared and didn’t know what he was saying, or President Donald Trump’s administration has wilted like a flower after coming out of the gate strong on China relations. Neither of these is an accurate assessment of what Tillerson was doing, and both fail to understand that in the current context of U.S.-China relations, these words are relatively meaningless. They presage no shift in the balance of power, nor do they indicate incompetence or weakness on the part of the new U.S. administration. They line up perfectly with the trajectory of U.S.-China relations since Trump came to power.

The U.S. and China do not see eye to eye in three areas: Chinese territorial claims in the South and East China seas, how to deal with North Korea, and the parameters of the U.S.-China trade relationship. The last one is the most important to both sides. While both countries are dependent on each other, their relationship is heavily weighted in the U.S.’ favor. China needs the U.S. more than the U.S. needs China, and many of China’s current moves, particularly regarding North Korea, attempt to develop as much leverage with the U.S. as possible. These were the same issues the administration of former President Barack Obama faced with China, the only difference being that the Trump administration means to push even harder on the trade issue than its predecessor.

In conversations shielded from cameras and onlookers, the U.S. likely was far more frank and direct. But the U.S. cannot push China on these issues without giving it something in return. U.S. power is greater than Chinese power, but it is not omnipotent. From a pragmatic point of view, cooperating is more effective than

antagonizing, especially in the context of an increasingly uncertain situation in North Korea, which was the focal point of Tillerson's visit to Asia in general.

Xi's priorities are, first, making sure China is not frozen out of the U.S. market, and second, maintaining an environment of strength and stability in China ahead of this year's 19th Party Congress. For Tillerson, his statement has little consequence and does not commit the U.S. to anything. This is the price of doing business with China, and as costs go, this is a cheap one for the U.S. But for Xi, Tillerson's words are invaluable because at a domestic level they allow him to claim that he has made China much stronger.

The importance of maintaining stability in China was underscored on March 20 by two key reports that dealt with the most critical dynamic in China: the relationship between the government in Beijing and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The South China Morning Post reported that five PLA army corps will be disbanded, which could affect 200,000 PLA personnel. Two of the corps to be disbanded warrant special attention: the 47th army corps, which was commanded by Guo Boxiong from 1992-94, and the 16th army corps, where Xu Caihou served as political commissar in 1990. Both figures were felled by Xi's anti-corruption campaign and were singled out in January for having participated in "political conspiracies." An unrelated report from Chinese news agency Xinhua noted that the Central Military Commission dispatched inspectors to review discipline at the PLA's lower levels.

The PLA's inner workings are opaque, and without any corroborating evidence of the South China Morning Post report, relatively little can be said for certain. There have been whispers of dissatisfaction within the PLA and anomalous reports about the central government being surprised by veterans' protests last October. But those reports have not been confirmed. The Chinese government's reporting of internal disciplinary moves in the PLA may be a signal that it feels sufficiently confident that the situation is under control. Even so, Xi's reorganization of the PLA is part of his attempt to consolidate political control, and that means his top priority is maintaining stability and making the government in Beijing look good.

This is where the focus must be directed when trying to understand what is happening between the U.S. and China. The new U.S. administration needs to show that it knows what it's doing and can get things from China that previous administrations couldn't. China cannot resist certain U.S. demands, but it needs to get the best deal it can without undercutting the legitimacy of the government in

Beijing. The rest of this year should be, at least on the surface, relatively rosy in terms of U.S.-China relations. But disagreements on key issues will remain and will get more serious further on in the Trump administration.

Two powerful countries are trying to figure out how to deal with each other. The important things to keep in mind are the three areas where the two sides have serious disagreements, the domestic political constraints that both countries' leaders face, and the insignificance of the personalities involved. There's no new model for great power relations here, no matter how many times Xi asserts there is and no matter what any U.S. official says. It's the same model for U.S.-China relations with a new set of drapes.

Source: [geopoliticalfutures.com](http://geopoliticalfutures.com), 21 March 2017

### **Vietnam seeks South Korean support in South China Sea**

Vietnam's Prime Minister sought support for the nation's stance in the South China Sea when he met South Korea's foreign minister in Hanoi on Monday. Vietnam is the country most openly at odds with China over the waterway since the Philippines pulled back from confrontation under President Rodrigo Duterte. "The Prime Minister proposed that South Korea continue its support over the position of Vietnam and Southeast Asia on the South China Sea issue and to help the country improve its law enforcement at the sea", the government said in a statement on its website after the meeting between Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and South Korea's Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se.

The statement did not say whether South Korea backed Vietnam's position on the South China Sea. Yun did affirm his country's willingness to promote ties despite instability in South Korea after the ousting of President Park Geun-hye over a graft scandal. South Korea is Vietnam's biggest foreign investor thanks to companies like Samsung.

South Korea and China are currently in dispute over deployment of the U.S. anti-missile defence system. South Korea on Monday has complained to the World Trade Organization about Chinese retaliation against its companies over the deployment.

Last week, Vietnam demanded China stop sending cruise ships to the area in response to one of Beijing's latest moves to bolster its claims to the strategic waterway. China

claims 90 percent of the potentially energy-rich South China Sea. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan lay claim to parts of the route, through which about US\$5 trillion of trade passes each year.

Source: [www.channelnewsasia.com](http://www.channelnewsasia.com), 21 March 2017

### **Philippines 'politically important nation for Japan'**

-Carmela Fonbuena

A Japanese minister highlighted the significance of close ties between Manila and Tokyo in maintaining peace in the region. "The Philippines is a politically important nation for Japan as it is located in the sea line of communication to Japan [and] we are faced with many security-related issues in Asia Pacific, including those in the South China Sea," Japan State Minister for Defense Kenji Wakamiya said on Monday, March 27. "Our cooperation with the Philippines for regional security and stability is now even more significant," he added. Wakamiya led the formal turnover of TC-90 patrol planes to the Philippine Navy on Monday in a ceremony held at the Naval Air Group headquarters in Sangley, Cavite.

The secondhand planes will boost the Philippine Navy's capability to patrol its waters as China continues to aggressively assert dominance in the West Philippine Sea. The TC-90s are faster and have longer range than their counterpart in the Philippine Navy's current inventory, the Islander aircraft.

Wakamiya noted the "great friendship" of the two countries through Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. (READ: Abe trip to Davao shows PH, Japan 'more than brothers')

"Since President Duterte took office, there have been 3 bilateral summit meetings and our countries are in great friendship. I myself have met with Secretary Lorenzana just now and had a productive meeting on the future prospects of our defense cooperation," Wakamiya said. The Philippines and Japan have also begun discussions on the possibility of Japan supplying spare parts for the UH1H choppers of the Philippine Air Force

Source: [www.rappler.com](http://www.rappler.com), 27 March 2017

## **The Pivot to the Arctic: Implications for the Gulf Cooperation Council**

Arctic resources are taking shape. Countries circling the shrinking Arctic ice mass are seeing potential strategic and economic opportunities. Security factors are also in play. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are concerned about what will happen next in what can be termed a “pivot to the north policy.”

Due to climate change, experts predict that as early as 2040 a significant part of the Arctic Ocean will melt, which will facilitate the extraction of natural resources from the sea bottom and reduce global transportation costs. This trend is reshuffling Washington’s strategic priorities and global policies, especially with President Donald Trump in the Oval Office. For the GCC states, the question becomes one of strategic priorities in the North versus the South. The Suez Canal is currently one of the key global choke points, but its significance is bound to decrease as Arctic passageways build volume. Geopolitically, the Arctic’s future will impact GCC interests.

Nations across the world are hurrying to stake claims to the Arctic’s resources, which could amount to 13 percent of the world’s undiscovered oil and 30 percent of its untapped natural gas. There are emerging fisheries and hidden minerals. Cruise liners filled with tourists are sailing the Arctic’s frigid waters in increasing numbers. Cargo traffic along the Northern Sea Route, one of two shortcuts across the top of the Earth in summer, is on the rise.

The U.S., which assumed the two-year rotating chairmanship of the eight-nation Arctic Council in 2015, has not ignored the Arctic, but critics maintain that the U.S. is lagging behind the other seven council members (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden). This is a circumpolar strategic mistake.

### *Security Dimensions*

The melting Arctic also is creating a new front of security concerns. Russian president Vladimir Putin said expanding Russia’s military presence in the Arctic was a top priority for Moscow. Earlier this year, Russia began rehabilitating a Soviet-era base on the New Siberian Islands and it has pledged to restore a number of Arctic military air bases that fell into neglect after the USSR’s collapse in 1991.

Although Putin said he does not envision a conflict between Russia and the U.S., which have both called for keeping the Arctic a peaceful zone, he added, “Experts know quite

well that it takes U.S. missiles 15 to 16 minutes to reach Moscow from the Barents Sea,” which is a part of the Arctic Ocean near Russia’s shore.

Given its investment to the tune of tens of billions of dollars in its northern infrastructure, Russia is the dominant actor in the Arctic region, according to many observers. Russia wants the Northern Sea Route, where traffic jumped from four vessels in 2010 to 71 in 2013, to eventually rival the Suez Canal as a passage between Europe and Asia. The Northern Sea Route from Europe to Asia takes only 35 days, compared to a 48-day journey between the continents via the Suez Canal.

At the first stage, this will open the Arctic region for all-year navigation. This gives Russia, the country with the longest maritime Arctic border, a tremendous advantage in providing shipping and collecting passage and customs fees from international shipping as the Arctic becomes suitable for navigation without a need for ice-breaker fleets.

China is also seeking to be part of any Arctic opening. In March 2010, Chinese Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo said: “The Arctic belongs to all the people around the world, as no nation has sovereignty over it ... China must plan an indispensable role in Arctic exploration as we have one-fifth of the world’s population.” Eighty-eight to 95 percent of resources in the Arctic fall within one of the five Arctic Ocean coastal states’ Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and China is unlikely to challenge the provision within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that creates the EEZs. This, coupled with Chinese companies’ lack of Arctic expertise, suggests that China will partner with Arctic nations in resource extraction rather than act alone. Noting the above challenges, a U.S. strategy in the Arctic under the Trump administration should embrace the following reinforcing components.

In light of growing discrepancies between American and Canadian interests in the Arctic zone and competing claims with Denmark, the U.S. would be well advised to pursue a policy of engagement with Norway because their national interests align in the region. Russia is adopting a confrontational posture vis-à-vis Western countries of the Arctic basin.

The legal component, the UNCLOS, finds support from all the uniformed services and especially the U.S. Navy. American military leaders have always discriminated when it comes to treaties, traditionally resisting those (like the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court) that might put U.S. servicemen and women at risk. But

they support UNCLOS because it will enable, rather than complicate, their mission. But, as the United States was the driving force behind UNCLOS' negotiation, it should be no surprise that the treaty offers, as Stewart Patrick memorably put it in a commentary for the Atlantic, "everything the U.S. military wants, and nothing that it fears."

The treaty's primary value to the U.S. military is that it clearly sets out maritime states' rights, duties and jurisdictions. The treaty defines the limits of a country's "territorial sea," establishes rules for transit through "international straits" and defines "EEZs in a way compatible with freedom of navigation and over-flight." It further establishes the "sovereign inviolability" of naval ships calling on foreign ports, providing critical protection for U.S. vessels. More generally, the treaty allows states to exempt their militaries from its mandatory dispute resolution provisions, allowing the U.S. to retain complete military freedom of action. At the same time, the treaty does not interfere with critical U.S.-led programs like the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Nor does it subject any U.S. military personnel to the jurisdiction of any international court.

Some have argued that UNCLOS has already become "customary international law," and thus Washington has little to gain from formal accession. But custom and practice are far more malleable and subject to interpretation. Other states may soon push the Law of the Sea into new, antithetical directions if the U.S. does not ratify the treaty. China, a party to UNCLOS, rejects U.S. interpretations of the treaty's freedom of navigation provisions, and continues to assert claims to control over virtually the entire South China Sea. But it is hardly alone as Brazil, Malaysia, Peru and India have also resisted freedom of navigation within their EEZs, in contravention of their obligations.

As it has for years, the U.S. Navy regularly conducts Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) to challenge excessive claims of territorial exclusivity. But as a non-party to the treaty, Washington lacks any legal standing to bring its complaints to an international dispute resolution body. More broadly, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officials complain that non-membership complicates everyday bilateral and multilateral cooperation with scores of international partners.

If these security benefits were not enough, the U.S. business community is unified in its support for the treaty for two reasons. First, UNCLOS would protect U.S. rights to sole commercial exploitation to all resources on and under its extended continental shelf (that is, beyond 320km/200 miles). This area, which is estimated to be twice the



size of California, is rich in oil, gas and other exploitable resources. Second, accession to the treaty would allow the U.S. to sponsor its own national companies to engage in deep sea-bed mining.

The Trump administration should focus its efforts on creating a formidable polar fleet, with new basing and maintenance facilities to meet the challenges of international competition in the Arctic. The Council on the Arctic Future, if formed, would combine federal and public-private partnerships (PPPs) to formulate and monitor a cohesive and multipronged strategy on the Arctic, so the U.S. in this new race for the last frontier would not find itself in the position of being the last to know. Although Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is likely to support a strong collaboration with Russia on Arctic affairs in energy extraction, there is a long-term security concern.

### *GCC Stakes in Arctic Activity*

Egypt, as the owner of the Suez Canal, serves an important role in GCC food security, counterterrorism efforts and supply chain economics. Several Arab Gulf states have made major investments in the Egyptian economy, particularly with respect to the Suez Canal. When West-East or East-West sea traffic passes through the Arctic Ocean, the Indian Ocean's supply chain environment, which includes the Suez Canal, could shift and impact shipping routes in the waterways abutting the Arabian Peninsula. The Arab Gulf states, which see supply chain logistics as part of their transformational economic policies, will lose income and revenue as a result of the shift in shipping away from this region. In addition, the GCC members are well-versed in EEZ politics, not only in the Persian Gulf but throughout the world.

Yet there is more to the equation, which is not all negative from the GCC's perspective. GCC members have opportunities for their sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) to invest in the Arctic region. Forward-leaning SWFs such as the UAE's Mubadala already transact with Russia and Norway. The Qatar Investment Authority is investing in Rosneft and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF). It serves the GCC's interests to make investments in these Arctic countries, which have contributed both resources and guidance to the GCC states across a number of spheres from finance to security.

The Trump administration's view on the Arctic is pro-energy, meaning it will favor exploiting the region further. Despite the fact that the GCC states are moving into the arena of carbon capture and renewables, the Trump administration's stance is worrying to GCC officials, who see climate change as a security threat and also view



such developments in the Arctic as a threat to their strong position in global energy markets. Climate change appears to be accelerating and causing irrevocable damage. The consequences will be long-term and may include decreased economic activity, agricultural disruption and population dislocations across the planet.

Such increases in global consumption of energy resources will have geopolitical implications for the GCC and beyond. Resource scarcity is occurring on a global basis, especially with regard to water accessibility. Many of the woes of the Middle East and North Africa, as exemplified by Syria, are partial outcomes of the negative impact of climate change on water security. If Middle Eastern states fail to address these issues meaningfully, further political fallout across the Arab world is a likely result that GCC officials cannot afford to ignore.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's knowledge of Arctic energy issues, specifically Russia's interest in boosting exploration and production, will influence the White House and the Kremlin's relationship. The GCC has a role to play in this dimension of U.S.-Russia relations, underscored by Qatar's investment in the Russian oil market. Washington's new "transactional" foreign policy will likely permit the Arab Gulf states to work with Russia and other circumpolar countries, perhaps with U.S. support. Ultimately, the monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula have stakes in the melting of the Arctic ice cap. The GCC is recognizing the importance of circumpolar affairs.

Source: [www.newsdeeply.com](http://www.newsdeeply.com), 27 March 2017

### **Japan eyeing Maritime Security cooperation with PHL, defense minister says**

Japan is seeking cooperation on maritime security with the Philippines, Defense Minister Kenjia Wakamiya said on Monday. Wakamiya made the remark during a press conference following the transfer of TC90 training aircraft at Sangley Point in Cavite. "The Philippines and Japan both suffer from natural disasters and we like to continue our cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations," Wakamiya said through an interpreter. "Other than that, maritime security is another area that we like to seek our cooperation in the future, as the Philippines is located in a very crucial point of our sealines to Japan," he added. "From that point, maritime security is a very important area that we seek our cooperation between our two countries," Wkamiya said.

Wakamiya said both countries are dependent on the supply of resources and energy which needs maritime transport. "Therefore, stronger relationship with the Philippines is important as the country is located in the important point of sealanes," Wakamiya said. "The Philippines comprises many islands and the country faces an urgent need to improve its capacities to responding to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as maritime domain awareness missions," he added.

Wakamiya said this was the reason Japanese defense ministry put much importance in building defense cooperation with the Philippines. He said the TC90s would contribute to enhancing the country's maritime domain awareness. "The transfer will serve the peace and stability of Asia Pacific region and it is wonderful to see these lovely aircraft by Japan Maritime Self Defense Force now in the hands of our closest friends in the Philippines and I hope they will be used with good care by the Philippine Navy," he said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said there had been no discussion on joint patrols between the Philippines and Japan. "We do not have the mechanism yet for maybe joint patrol with the Japanese naval forces here in West Phil Sea but for freedom of navigation I think anybody can pass through, innocent passage is allowed by international law, freedom of navigation is respected for all countries passing by our territory," Lorenzana said. Wakamiya said freedom of navigation and safe sealanes were important for the peace and stability of the region.

Source: [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com), 28 March 2017