



# MAKING WAVES

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## MARITIME FORCES



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## MARINE ENVIRONMENT



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### **India, US working together on regional, maritime security**

The US is working with India on a range of issues including regional and maritime security, the Pentagon said on Thursday. “Our goal is to ensure that we are working together on an array of issues with respect to regional security,” chief Pentagon spokesperson Dana White told reporters at her weekly news conference. India, she said, plays a very important role. “Therefore the more we can have a conversation not only about Afghanistan and the future of Afghanistan but also how can we work together on maritime security?” she said. “There’s a great deal that we can learn from each other and so the Secretary (of Defence) looks forward to that conversation,” White said, responding to the first two-plus-two dialogue between India and the US next month.

Source: [/www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com), 02 March 2018

### **Navy, Coast Guard work towards maritime security**

The Indian Navy along with the Coast Guard have increased measures to enhance the country’s maritime and coastal security at a time when Chinese activities have apparently increased over the South China Sea. Since the 26/11 Mumbai attacks in 2008, inputs from various intelligence agencies indicated the continued likelihood of such attacks. At present, however, there is no specific input pertaining to an increased threat to the country from sea routes, stated the minister of state (MoS), Defence, Dr Subhash Bhamre recently. The MoS, Defence, Dr Bhamre further pointed out that Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and State Marine Police, as three-tiered cover, along with the other agencies such as the Port Trusts and Customs are patrolling the maritime zones of India, islands and adjacent seas using ships and aircrafts to detect and check infiltration through the sea routes.

A report presented by Dr Bhamre stated that the increased security measures include capacity augmentation of maritime security agencies for surveillance and patrolling the nation’s maritime zones, enhanced technical surveillance of coastal and offshore areas; establishment of mechanisms for inter-agency coordination, increased

regulation of activities in the maritime zones including integration of the fishing and coastal communities. Adding to this, state-wise Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) for coordination among various agencies on coastal security issues have been formulated. Coastal Security Exercises are being conducted regularly by the Navy and Coast Guard to assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and to address gaps. Commenting on whether the reportedly increased activities of China in the South China Sea is the reason behind the increased naval exercises that are being conducted by the Navy such as the 'Paschim Lehar', a senior naval officer said, "The recent naval exercises are routine ones that are done regularly and not particularly because of China's activities. "We always need to be prepared in case of any attempt of invasion. Our deployments are always mission based. "We always have our ships in areas such as the Malacca Strait and other vital regions so that we instantly come to know if any threat enters the Indian Ocean. "We have sonar detections in most of the major ports." The report submitted by Dr Bhamre further stated that electronic surveillance mechanism has been augmented by provisioning of an electronic cum radar chain known as Coastal Surveillance Network (CSN) which comprises chain of static sensors having radar, Automatic Identification System (AIS), Long Range Identification and Trackers (LRIT), day and night cameras, communication systems.

These measures assist in developing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through interconnecting 51 Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard stations. Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS) radars in ports also facilitate surveillance in port areas.

Source: [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com), 07 March 2018

### **Maritime security, nuclear deal to top agenda of Macron's India talks**

Maritime security and nuclear cooperation will be the staple items on the table when French President Emmanuel Macron holds discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to India this weekend. While the "Quad" comprising India, Japan, Australia and the US is pitched as the new political counterpoint to China in the India-Pacific space, India and France have found much to be close about in the Indian Ocean. The two countries have realised that the way forward is closer bilateral cooperation, rather than "rushing" into a multilateral format, significant at a time when pluri-laterals or mini-laterals find favour. India and France are also hoping to get an agreement between NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited) and EDF (of France) on six nuclear reactors that could lead to greater indigenisation of



components and services for the reactors. "We have shared concerns in the Indian Ocean. We are more ambitious, more pragmatic and more coherent," a source said. This is a new element in the France-India bilateral relationship, which will require much closer work. During Macron's visit, both countries are expected to sign agreements that will allow India logistics access to French military bases in the Indian Ocean. By itself, this could become a force multiplier for India, especially since New Delhi, despite clear interests in the Indian Ocean, has been a laggard in securing its interests. France remains the largest resident power in the Indian Ocean with the largest amount of real estate, including about 11 million sq km of exclusive economic zone particularly in the Mozambique channel with over 10 islands as part of French overseas territories. For France's military bases in Djibouti, Abu Dhabi and Reunion Islands, India regards it as an attractive strategic partner here. Speaking to journalists, French ambassador Alexander Ziegler had said, "We are looking for structured and operational cooperation in defence and security in the Indian Ocean region." He attributed the bilateral nature of the relationship to the high level of trust between France and India. At some point, the two countries might open this cooperation in a broader format, inviting perhaps Australia, with whom France enjoys a similar relationship, given French assets in the South Pacific. With India and UAE deepening their own defence and security relationship, Abu Dhabi could also become a future partner.

Carnegie India, in a recent report on India-France cooperation in the Indian Ocean, said India should support France's full membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) while France could help India enter the Indian Ocean Commission. But the report, by Darshana Baruah and C Raja Mohan also sounds a cautionary note. "For France, the concern is not only about New Delhi's foreign policy and partnership with Western powers and its grand strategy and ideology, but also the nature of daily decision-making in New Delhi, which France, like so many of India's interlocutors on defence policy, finds frustrating. The well-known complexity of civil-military relations in India, where the dominance of the civilian bureaucracy is total, has been a major obstacle to the reform and rejuvenation of India's defence engagement," it said.

Source: [timesofindia.indiatimes.com](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com), 06 March 2018

## **Maritime security, counter-terror on agenda of Macron-Modi Saturday meet**

India and France are expected to hold extensive deliberations to further deepen the already close bilateral defence cooperation including co-development of major military platforms during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit. Sources said Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her French counterpart Florence Parly are also likely to have detailed discussions on specific projects including on the Scorpene submarine programme for the Indian Navy. Defence cooperation is also likely to figure prominently during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Macron tomorrow. The sources said a key point of discussion is likely to be the Scorpene submarine programme as the French side has been exploring additional orders for French defence major Naval Group (formerly DCNC). India's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd is currently building six Scorpene class submarines under Project 75 in partnership with French Naval Group. India has also started the process to acquire another six submarines under project P-75 (I). Four foreign ship-builders have emerged as the main contenders for the project to build six advanced stealth submarines at a cost of around Rs 600 billion under the strategic partnership model. The sources said Parly has also communicated to the Indian defence minister that the Naval Group has responded favourably to the Request For Information (RFI) (under Strategic Partnership Model) for the new P-75(I) programme.

Naval Group, Russia's Rosoboronexport Rubin Design Bureau, Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Sweden's Saab group have responded to the government's request for proposal (RFI) for the project. The project P-75 (I) will be a follow-on for Project 75. A total of six submarines are to be built under the Project-75 (I) programme. The project is seen as critical to counter the rapid expansion of China's submarine fleet. The Navy has been pressing the government for clearing the project. Under the SP model, select private firms will be engaged to build military platforms like submarines and fighter jets in India in partnership with foreign entities. Parly is also likely to push for a follow up order of additional Rafale fighter jets after delivery of 36 jets under a Rs 580 billion deal finalised in 2016. The two ministers are also likely to deliberate on a range of other possible co-development initiatives, the sources said.

Source: [www.business-standard.com](http://www.business-standard.com), 09 March 2018

## **Indian Navy Fully Capable of Ensuring Maritime Security, Says Admiral Sunil Lanba**

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Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lamba on Monday said that India is keeping a close watch on the movements of Chinese vessels in the Indian Ocean. In an interview to Zee media group, Lamba said that the navy is fully capable of keeping of ensuring its maritime security. He added that China has deployed several vessels and submarines in Indian Oceans since 2008 but India is ready for any challenge.

Here are the excerpts of the interview

### *On Indian ocean*

Indian Ocean is the only ocean named after a country. India has a great maritime heritage. It was the first country 5000 years ago to have built a dock in Lothal. The first navigation charts were printed in India. We have a great maritime tradition. Chinese ships are in the Indian ocean since 2008, they have a lot of ships and submarines deployed in Indian ocean. We keep a close eye and monitor what all that is happening. Last year onwards we started with new deployment pattern which is a mission-based deployment. We are aware of what all is happening and this is done on a continuous basis. We monitor all movements and Indian Navy is fully capable of ensuring its maritime security.

### *On Act East Policy Cooperation*

We have been cooperating with all eastern neighbours after the act east policy initiated in 2014. We along with Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia, conduct coordinated patrol on our maritime borders. We have regular staff talks on a navy to navy level. We are helping them with training large number of their personnel. There are couple of countries whom we have helped in enhancing capability and capacity. We have supplied them the equipments, set up facility in their country, and will continue doing it as we work with them shoulder to shoulder. We are always the first responders when it comes to delivering humanitarian aids in the event of natural calamity in the Indian ocean and neighbouring regions. The Indian ocean naval symposium has a sub-group called hard which is headed by the Indian navy.

### *On Malabar exercise*

Malabar exercise started in 1993 and it was a bilateral exercise between US Navy and Indian Navy. Earlier, normally 2 ships each participated from both ends. Over the years, from 1993 till now, the scope and size of the exercise has gone up. Japan has become the permanent member of Malabar exercise and in the last exercise, we had our aircraft carrier 'Vikramaditya' and an aircraft carrier from u.s. Navy and helicopter destroyer from the Japanese defence maritime forces also participated. So it has gone up in scale, size and duration. We learn from each other the best practices, different procedures used, during the exercise.

We also deal with the inter-operability issue when we have to operate with each other in the sea. We are gaining from each other's expertise and knowledge. Japan maritime self defence forces and Indian navy are similar in strength and assets, so we learn together. No country should have a problem participating in our exercises as they are not targeted at anybody. They are meant to learn and gain from each other's expertise. We are like-minded democratic countries and we all uphold international good order and rule-based system in the world.

Source: [www.india.com](http://www.india.com), 05 March 2018

### **Cyber Security at Sea: The Real Threats**

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-David Rider

The maritime cyber security landscape is a confusing place. On the one hand, you have commercial providers suggesting the risks of everything from a hostile attack on ship's systems which allows the vessel to be remotely controlled by pirates and direct it to a port of their choice, or causing a catastrophic navigation errors, a phishing attack or ransomware on the Master's PC. While on the other, you have sensible people who point out that this notion is nonsense due to the number of fail safes and manual overrides and controls in place. Then there are calmer voices still, who point out that the most likely threat is actually to the servers inside your head office, or a man in the middle attack on your company's bank accounts.

### *Recognizing the threats*

So what are the real, documented, current threats to the shipping industry from cyber criminals? Here, we hope to offer some genuine guidance without scaremongering. We're not trying to sell you anything. We're just trying to make sure you know what the risk of simply doing nothing is. Much has been made of the threat to vessels on the water from hackers. However, there is only limited available credible evidence to support claims of hacks at sea. Rather, the real threats on the water come from a lack of crew training and awareness and a culture which turns a blind eye to crew using their own devices at work (Bring Your Own Device, or BYOD) and plugging them into ship systems to charge them, thereby possibly releasing a malware they may have been inadvertently carrying onto the vessel.

### *Maritime cyber security survey results*

In 2017, I.H.S. Fairplay conducted a maritime cyber security survey, to which 284 people responded. 34 percent of them said that their company had experienced a cyber attack in the previous 12 months. Of those attacks, the majority were ransomware and phishing incidents; exactly the same sort of incidents affecting companies everywhere, and not at all specific to the maritime world. The good news is that only 30 percent of those responding to the survey had no appointed information security manager or department, meaning that the majority of companies have a resource able to respond and mitigate any attack.

However, the survey did reveal that there are still a lot of employees who have not received cyber awareness training of any kind, which means the shipping industry must try harder, for its own security.

Additionally, only 66 percent of those questioned said that their company had an IT security policy, which is a serious cause for concern; IT security cannot be approached on an ad hoc, incident by incident basis. It's the security equivalent of plugging holes in a hull with cardboard. To underline that, 47 percent of those questioned believed that their organization's biggest cyber vulnerability was the staff. Hardly a glowing endorsement but, if you don't train your staff to be aware of threats, it's not surprising.

### *Mitigating the risk – train your staff*

Imagine you're in charge of a company. You trust your staff to do everything. Except, it seems, ensure your bank accounts aren't handed over to cyber criminals or that your network is exposed to ransomware or malicious attack. It would seem to be a rather

curious way to run a company. The key to mitigating cyber crime is training. Yes, you can put posters up; send company memoranda out; promote industry guidelines. But how many of your staff take those in? A robust workplace IT security policy is the first step, but that can only work when also supported by a training course where employees can see the risks through demonstrations, simulations and good teaching. There are very simple changes that any company can make to ensure better security in the workplace. From enforcing a zero tolerance on BYOD, which is often disliked by the crew, to separating crew and administrative or operational networks, blanking unused USB ports and requiring monitors be turned away from public view to prevent “shoulder surfing” and a rule that all computers go into secure sleep mode when left unattended. For staff dealing with accounts, additional rules may be required to ensure the risks of phishing and social engineering (whale attack) are reduced. You don’t think your company is at risk? In November 2016, Europe’s largest manufacturer of wires and electrical cables, Leoni AG, lost £34 million in a whale attack, when cyber criminals tricked finance staff into transferring money to the wrong bank account. £34 million. Lost... That should be read out to every board of directors. And similar attacks take place every week. In the last six months, the shipping industry has seen several incidents in the sector, ranging from a data breach at Clarksons through to the damage done to Maersk by the WannaCry NotPetya variant sabotage/ransomware incident, which the company believes cost it as much as \$300 million.

These are some of the reasons for the creation of the Maritime Cyber Alliance, a project created by CSO Alliance in partnership with Airbus Defence & Space. The aim is simple: connect maritime and oil and gas chief information security officers via a secure, private platform, allow verified cyber intrusions to be reported anonymously and provide members with threat alerts and tools to analyze malware and prevent attacks as well as offering workshops to promote best practice in the industry and listen to concerns. February saw the Alliance participate in four workshops across the U.K., in Aberdeen for the offshore industry; Edinburgh for the ports community and Glasgow for ship management. Guest speakers included Kewal Rai, Policy Adviser for Cyber Security with the Department of Transport, Sergeant David Sanderson from Hampshire Police, Vic Start, Thomas de Menthiere and Jean Baptsiste Lopez of Airbus, among others. Among the concerns raised by attendees were questions on mitigation of attacks, the impact of E.U.’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the U.K. and how Airbus was delivering its solutions to users of the site. The Alliance is already gathering detailed cyber crime incident reports from industry. We’ve seen an examples from shipowners who lost two days’ hire due to malware contamination via a USB stick, invoice fraud in the port, superyacht and ship broker

sectors. The latter saw a ship broker's systems compromised by criminals who altered payment details to steal £500,000. Luckily, in that case, the company's quick reaction, a court order and a rapid forensic investigation ensured they recovered the missing funds. We are starting to see multiple attempts of invoice fraud using privileged information, which means a vendor's company accounts have been compromised. The timely sharing and analysis of information will grow with the increased cyber crime report data flow via the Cyber Alliance's crime reporting servers, based in Iceland in order to ensure anonymity. The solution, of course, is to ensure your company requires multiple sign-offs for any payments over a certain amount and pick up the phone to verify and vendor bank account changes. The risk of getting it wrong could bankrupt you. There's clearly a need for industry to take the lead on protection and, hopefully, the Maritime Cyber Alliance will enable that. Further workshops, which are all free to attend, are planned for the coming months.

### *Regulatory compliance*

The next major hurdle facing companies around the globe comes in the shape of the GDPR, which comes in to force in May 2018. It will affect companies in every sector, but the maritime industry in particular, given its global reach. In essence, the GDPR is the first data protection measure to affect the entire world. If your company holds or processes the personal data of E.U. citizens, people working for E.U. entities or trading with the E.U., then you're affected and will need to ensure that you're compliant with the new regulations. Failure to do so will result in huge fines. GDPR's definition of "personal data" is far broader than previous regulations, meaning that any information which can be used to identify an individual falls under it. The new regulation introduces Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs), which means that companies will be required to conduct PIAs wherever privacy breach risks are high in order to minimize risk to data subjects. Many companies may have to hire data protection officers in order to ensure compliance, while those companies dealing with EU crews will also want to take note of their liabilities in this regard. The good news is that GDPR will also bring in common data breach protection notification requirements, so companies will be forced to report any breach of their systems within 72 hours, thus ensuring industry awareness and a better response time to potential vulnerabilities. This, in itself, may require staff training and is yet another aspect of GDPR companies need to be aware of. For companies doing business in the E.U., which covers a vast swathe of the maritime industry, the NIS Directive covering network and information security also comes in to force in May 2018. In the U.K., the government has announced that organizations working in critical services like energy,



transport, water and health can be fined up to £17 million as a “last resort” if they fail to demonstrate that their cyber security systems are equipped against attacks. The NIS Directive requires organizations to have the right staff in place and the proper software to mitigate cyber attack and intrusion. Private and public companies in each sector will be evaluated by regulators who will vet everything from infrastructure and issue fines for firms who fail. “Network and information systems give critical support to everyday activities, so it is absolutely vital that they are as secure as possible,” said Ciaran Martin, U.K. National Cyber Security Centre CEO, in a statement. Ultimately, the new regulations will be of benefit to everyone, but ensuring your company meets the right standards will be crucial. The days where maritime cyber security amounted to just making sure you turned the office PC off are long gone. Today, cyber security demands board room level attention as well as vigilance from all employees, be they in head office or out on the water.

Source: [www.maritime-executive.com](http://www.maritime-executive.com), 10 March 2018





### **US, Iraq, Kuwait naval forces stage Persian Gulf drill**

US Navy and Coast Guard units joined Iraqi Navy and Kuwait Naval Force and Coast Guard vessels for a trilateral exercise (TRILAT) in the Persian Gulf. The exercise concluded on February 22 and was the third of its kind executed since March 2017. The exercise was led by Task Force (TF 55) and is part of a scheduled theater security cooperation engagement plan and an opportunity for the three partner nations to identify and address regional threats in support of stability and freedom of navigation in the US 5th Fleet area of operations. “The TRILAT demonstrated a high degree of tactical interoperability and close relations among the US, Kuwait and Iraq,” said Lt. j.g. Tim Caucutt, TF 55 force protection officer. “Through a series of high-speed exercises, participating nations sharpened their collective warfighting skills and ability to keep the Arabian Gulf open for commerce.” Coastal patrol ships USS Tempest (PC 2), USS Hurricane (PC 3), USS Firebolt (PC 10), Island-class patrol boat USCGC Baranof (WPB 1318), Iraqi offshore support vessel Al Basra (401) and Kuwait Subahiclass patrol boat Naif (P312) participated in the exercise, focusing on search-and-rescue operations, maritime infrastructure protection operations and high value unit protection operations. “We learn a lot from these exercises,” said Iraqi Navy 1st Lt. Ahmad Gabar, second mate of Al Basra. “We enjoy the opportunity to practice search-and-rescue and other operations we don’t get to do every day.”<sup>2</sup> “Any opportunity to work with other nations is a great benefit to the crew,” said Lt. Cmdr. Richard Mayer, Hurricane’s commanding officer. “When we learn to work together at sea, improve our interoperability and expose the crew to other nations and cultures through exercises like this one, we ensure that all participants are read to meet any future challenge together.”

12 March 2018

### **JMSDF Commissions its First 25DD-class Asahi ASW Destroyer**

NBC Nagasaki reports that the latest 25DD class anti-submarine destroyer, the JS Asahi, was officially delivered to the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries’ Nagasaki shipyard. Yutaka Murakawa, the JMSDF chief

of staff, led the commissioning ceremony in front of the ship's 220 crew members and other JMSDF officials.

“In order to safeguard the property and lives of the Japanese people, and to further protect the seas, territories, and airspace of Japan, you must effectively carry out the responsibilities asked of you,” said chief of staff Murakawa to the assembled crew. “We hope that from today, working towards a common cause, you will diligently fulfil your duty to serve this ship with honor.” The Nikkei further reported that chief of staff Murakawa specifically cited North Korea and China in stating that “it is no exaggeration to state that Japan’s security environment has become the most severe yet.” The ship is scheduled to be deployed to the JMSDF base at Sasebo. Following the delivery ceremony, approximately six months of equipment tests and crew exercises are scheduled before the ship achieves full operational status. The Asahi is the first destroyer in four years to be built at Mitsubishi’s Nagasaki shipyard. After recently incurring a 250 billion yen loss on the construction of a luxury ocean liner, the destroyer contract was seen as a reversal of fortune for the struggling shipyard. Based on the anti-air warfare Akizuki-class destroyer (19DD), the Asahi is 151 meters long and 18.3 meters wide, for a total displacement of 5 100 tons. The class has a draft of 5.4 meters. The NBC Nagasaki report further explains that the Asahi is the first JMSDF destroyer to feature a “hybrid” COGLAG (combined gas and electric turbine) drive system, along with advanced anti-torpedo defenses and is further the first JMSDF destroyer equipped with a periscope-detecting radar system. Navy Recognition has previously covered the initial launch of the Asahi and reported on the variety of weapons systems and sensors the class is equipped with.

Source: Navy Recognition, 11 March 2018

### **Canadian Navy Vessels Visit Nigeria, Plans To Participate In Joint Maritime Exercise**

The Commander, Royal Canadian Navy, Vice Adm. Ron Llyod, who led the Canadian Naval team, told journalists that the visit was aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries’ navies. The Canadian Naval Ships, HMCS Summerside and HMCS Kingston, on Friday berthed in Lagos to foster the existing bilateral relationships and boost capacity of military personnel in Nigeria. The Commander, Royal Canadian Navy, Vice Adm. Ron Llyod, who led the Canadian Naval team, told journalists that the visit was aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries’ navies. The News Agency of Nigeria reports that the Canadian Navy Ships will also participate in the maritime exercise with the Nigerian Navy, United Kingdom

and United States Navy coming up later in the year. Llyod said: “We have two Canadian ships that will be operating in the maritime exercise; so we are very grateful for the Nigerian Navy’s hospitality.” Llyod said that he and the entire crew were very delighted to make this call to Nigeria.

He said: “We have 75 crew members in the two ships.” Receiving the ship and its crew, Rear-Adm. Sylvanus Abbah, the Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, said that the visit showed the existing cordial bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Canada. Abbah said he was delighted that the Canadian Navy came to Nigeria, adding that the country’s navy would also return the visit. He said that the visit displayed one of the flag showing roles of navies worldwide, adding that friendly navies exchange visits like this. Abbah said that the visit would further cement the existing relationship between Nigeria and Canada.

Source: theeagleonline

### **UK submarine arrives in the Arctic for joint exercise with USN**

A UK Royal Navy nuclear-powered attack submarine is heading under the Arctic ice pack for the first time in more than a decade as part of a joint exercise with two US Navy submarines. ‘Ice Exercise 2018’ (‘ICEX’), which started on 7 March, aims to test operational readiness in the Arctic, increase experience in the region, advance understanding of the Arctic environment, and continue to develop relationships with other services, allies, and partner organisations. The RN last sent an attack submarine under the Arctic ice in 2007, but the exercise was cut short when an accident on the Trafalgar-class boat HMS Tireless led to the deaths of two sailors. In 2016 the RN announced it wanted to return its submarines to this strategic region and it began sending personnel on exchange to USN boats to regain experience of under-ice operations. The five-week-long exercise in the Arctic Ocean began with the construction of temporary Ice Camp Skate following the arrival of the USN’s Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) and Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Hartford (SSN 768), and the RN’s Trafalgar-class submarine HMS Trenchant (S91) on 7 March. Drills will include multiple arctic transits, a North Pole surfacing, scientific data collection, and other training evolutions during their time in the region. “With every ‘ICEX’ we are able to build upon our existing experience and continue to learn the best way to operate in this unique and harsh environment,” Rear Admiral James Pitts, commander of the USN’s Undersea Warfare Development Center, said in a statement. “We are constantly testing new tactics, techniques, and procedures under the ice and this exercise allows us to do so on a larger scale and alongside our UK, joint, and academic partners.”

Source: Janes 360, 10 March 2018

## **Navy Starts Under-Ice Submarine Exercise off Alaska's Coast**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The U.S. Navy has begun five weeks of submarine training and testing off Alaska's north coast that will include breaching the massive underwater vessels through Arctic sea ice. The exercises, which also include the collection of scientific data, are dubbed Ice Exercise 2018, or ICEX18, and are scheduled every other year. Rear Adm. James Pitts, commander of the Undersea Warfare Development Center, said in an announcement that the Navy builds experience with every ICEX. "We are constantly testing new tactics, techniques and procedures under the ice and this exercise allows us to do so on a larger scale and alongside our U.K., joint and academic partners," he said.

This 2016 photo shows a submarine after breaking through ice in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska's north coast. The U.S. Navy has kicked off biennial submarine testing and training under sea ice off Alaska's north coast-- the exercises are dubbed Ice Exercise 2018, or ICEX18, and will include maneuvers by three submarines under Arctic ice, including a British vessel, over five weeks. Two U.S. and one British submarine will participate. The cost is estimated at \$8.3 million, said Navy spokesman Corey Barker, but final figures for travel, contracts and other expenses will not be known until after the exercise. The Navy will set up a temporary camp on ice in the Beaufort Sea about 150 to 175 miles (242 to 282 kilometers) miles north of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Barker said gear for the camp started coming in over the weekend by air drop. The camp will have portable tents that can house and support more than 50 people and will serve as a temporary command center for under-ice navigation, torpedo exercises and research. The Navy named the camp Ice Camp Skate in honor of the USS Skate, the first submarine to surface through open-water surrounded by ice in 1958 and the first submarine to surface through ice at the North Pole in March 1959. The U.S. submarines participating are the Seawolf-class fast attack submarine USS Connecticut from Bangor, Washington, and the Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine USS Hartford from Groton, Connecticut. The British Royal Navy's Trafalgar-class submarine HMS Trenchant also will be on hand. The vessels will conduct multiple Arctic transits, a North Pole surfacing, scientific data collection and other training, the Navy said. The exercise required approval for possible unintentional disruptions to marine mammal activities such as feeding, nursing and breeding. In its application to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Navy said it will install portable tracking

equipment for submarine training and testing near the ice camp. As part of the exercises, eight hydrophones that detect sound waves under water will be lowered on cables from sea ice to 98 feet (30 meters). The last Arctic exercise by the U.S. Submarine Force was conducted in 2016. A crack in sea ice through the command center camp forced its early evacuation.

Source: US News

## **US, Japan Conduct Anti-Submarine Warfare Drill in South China Sea**

- Franz-Stefan Gady

The Carl Vinson Strike Group, led by the Nimitz-class nuclear-powered supercarrier USS Carl Vinson, kicked off a bilateral naval exercise that includes practicing joint anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations with the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) in the South China Sea on March 11. The USS Carl Vinson and the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer are joined by JS Ise, a Hyūga-class helicopter destroyer displacing 13,950 standard tons, for the duration of the exercise. The JS Ise sails with three Mitsubishi H-60 Y (60 K/J) ASW helicopters. The helicopter carrier's primary missions include anti-submarine warfare, mine countermeasure, logistics, and search and rescue. The ship can carry a maximum of 18 aircraft. "As part of the exercise, four JMSDF liaison officers have embarked *Carl Vinson* to support combined operations," the U.S. said in a March 12 statement. "The operations will include formation steaming as well as anti-submarine and air-defense training. *Ise* will also conduct a replenishment-at-sea with *Carl Vinson*." According to Rear Admiral John Fuller, the USS *Carl Vinson* Strike Group commander: "Strong maritime partnerships maintain security, stability and prosperity, which the Indo-Pacific region has enjoyed for more than 70 years. Collaborating with a close maritime partner promotes regional cooperation." The *Carl Vinson* Strike Group just completed a historic port call in Vietnam's coastal city of Da Nang — the first time a U.S. aircraft carrier has returned to the country since the end of the Vietnam War.

The U.S. Navy and JMSDF are also currently holding an annual bilateral naval exercise, codenamed MultiSail 2018, off the U.S.-owned island of Guam in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. The focus of MultiSail 2018 is also on joint ASW and anti-surface warfare operations and includes live fire training. The Navy has dispatched the *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyers USS *Curtis Wilbur*,

USS *Benfold* and USS *Mustin*, as well as the *Ticonderoga*-class guided missile cruiser USS *Antietam* to the exercise. JMSDF is represented by the *Akizuki*-class destroyer JS *Fuyuzuki*, specifically designed to protect *Hyuga*-class and *Izumo*-class helicopter destroyers as well as their escort vessels. On March 10, as part of MultiSail 2018, the USS *Antietam* led a Surface to Air Missile Exercise (SAMEX) that included the firing of a Standard Missiles (SM-2). "MultiSail uses realistic, shared training scenarios to enhance the ability of the U.S, Navy and JMSDF to work together to confront any contingency," a U.S. Navy press statement reads. "MultiSail prepares forces that will provide the deterrence and stabilizing effects of a force-in-being, ready at the outset of a contingency without delays for buildups or extensive mission rehearsal."

Source: [thediplomat.com](http://thediplomat.com), 14 March 2018

### **China Unlikely To Match India Strength In Indian Ocean In Near Future – Analysts**

China first revealed its plan to build its first overseas naval base in Djibouti in 2016. As a focal point of the Belt and Road Initiative, championed by Chinese President Xi Jinping to boost the nation's global influence, Pakistan's ports on the Indian Ocean are widely expected to host a new Chinese military base in the near future. In response, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi secured access to naval facilities in Oman during an official visit last month. Earlier this year, India reached an agreement with Seychelles to build military infrastructure on the Assumption Island.

#### *Geographical Advantage*

As India and China both strive to boost their naval presence and strength in the Indian Ocean, New Delhi is likely to continue to enjoy an advantage over Beijing in the region thanks to its geographical proximity, military experts told Sputnik. "India is stronger in the Indian Ocean, because China has to go through choke points in the Southeast Asia. Their logistic line is very stretched. Although they have an aircraft carrier, it would take them a long time, probably decades, to incorporate that into an aircraft carrier battle group, which would allow them to achieve sea-control in the Indian Ocean. In this sense, I would say it would take maybe two-three decades. India still has a great advantage over the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean. I am not talking about West Pacific. I'm only talking about the Indian Ocean," Gurpreet Khurana, an Indian Navy captain and executive director of the National Maritime Foundation in New Delhi, India, told Sputnik. The Indian military expert explained the reasons



behind China's naval expansion in the Indian Ocean. "Geography is very important in assessing the comparative naval strength [between India and China]. China has a very adverse geography. Its land-to-coastline ratio is very adverse, which is one of the worst in the world. It means that a lot of China is land-oriented. Its coast in the east is very far from the source of natural resources. Because of this, it needs to come to the Indian Ocean desperately as its economic power continues to grow," Khurana said.

### *India's Concerns*

Khurana illustrated why China's increasing military presence in the Indian Ocean could cause concerns in New Delhi. "Because of India's geographical position, the Indian Ocean becomes very critical to the country's national security interests. In other parts of the world, such as the Indo-Pacific, we do not have the luxury of the West which has fought wars and got over it. We still have traditional military insecurities. India still has adversary relations with China, which has increasingly come into the Indian Ocean region. This has heightened the insecurity for India," he said. The New Delhi-based expert argued that India might decide to expand its military presence closer to Chinese territory in response. Although India has sufficient strategic depth in terms of territory, because of the overwhelming security stretch, it needs to have a greater area. India's strategic frontier needs to expand beyond the Northern Indian Ocean. It has to expand southward and eastward, to the Western Pacific. That's how the concept of Indo-Pacific comes into play, because of China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean," he said.

### *China's Vulnerability*

Chinese leaders understand the nation's maritime weakness and seek to compensate this geographical disadvantage by establishing new naval bases in the Indian Ocean, Khurana suggested. "Although the Indian Navy has a distinct advantage over the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean so far, Chinese realizes it. That's why, they're trying to offset India's advantage by building facilities in the Indian Ocean. For example, Djibouti and [Pakistan's] Gwadar or Jiwani could all have Chinese naval bases. What Chinese is trying to achieve is to shorten their logistic lines. They would be able to do it to a certain extent, but not completely. That's because even when they have bases or facilities in the Indian Ocean, they would need to be resupplied from their home base in China," he said. The Indian naval officer pointed out a key vulnerability of China in the Indian Ocean. "The naval bases China has in the Indian Ocean would be very vulnerable to Indian military strikes. It would be difficult for them [China] to establish

sea-control in the Indian Ocean. If you cannot establish sea-control, all your surface base and air base operations cannot be undertaken. Because of the historic adversary relations between the two nations, China is very vulnerable in the Indian Ocean because its energy supply lines passing through that area, where the Indian Navy traditional had a very strong presence. China would not be able to directly protect its oil shipments coming from the Gulf region or Africa through the Indian Ocean. What the Chinese is trying to do now is to increase their submarine presence in the Indian Ocean, as submarine warfare does not need sea-control. But the only way they can use submarine forces is in retaliation," he said.

### *No Military Conflict in Near Future*

Following almost three months of military standoff over a disputed border area, China and India finally decided to withdraw their troops to end the conflict peacefully in August 2017. Rising rivalry between the two nations in the Indian Ocean raised questions about a possible future China-India warfare at sea. Military experts argued that such warfare in the Indian Ocean is unlikely to take place in the near future. "I do not foresee an armed conflict in the Indian Ocean in the foreseeable future, until China consolidates its economic and military power in the Asia-Pacific region. Currently, China has only one aircraft carrier for training purposes. When China finally builds up its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, perhaps we can see more powerful Chinese forces going into the Indian Ocean. Right now, any Chinese forces sent to the Indian Ocean would be weak. I do not think they try to create a conflict with India," Ben Ho, a naval analyst with the Military Studies Program at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, told Sputnik. The Singapore-based military expert believes new Chinese military bases in the Indian Ocean could serve other purposes, instead of providing support in a traditional warfare."The establishment of new military facilities in the Indian Ocean, in countries like Sri Lanka or some of the Indian Ocean islands in the future, could give Chinese some advantages, but not in a high-end warfare sense. After all, they [the bases] are too small and isolated to provide much help for the Chinese military. They're more for conflicts below the warfare, such as counter-piracy missions or evacuation of Chinese nationals from crisis regions," Ho said. The expert added that new naval bases in the Indian Ocean also fit China's overall strategy of protecting its economic interests globally.

China's navy evacuated 600 Chinese nationals, along with over 200 foreigners, from the port of Aden in Southern Yemen in 2015, amid severe fighting in the restive African nation plagued by violence and domestic conflicts for years. The first massive



evacuation of its citizens from overseas won applause for the Chinese military domestically. A Chinese movie depicted a similar story shattered domestic box office records last year, while invigorating overwhelming patriotic sentiment in China.

Source: [sputniknews.com](http://sputniknews.com), 05 March 2018

### **Dutch naval ships will not take part in Atalanta in 2018**

Dutch naval vessels will not participate in the European Union's counter-piracy operation Atalanta off the coast of Somalia this year. This was stated in a letter sent by Ank Bijleveld-Schouten, the country's Minister of Defense, to the lower house of the Dutch parliament on March 7. Problems with the patrol vessels, personnel shortages and other NATO obligations are mentioned as reasons, according to the Royal Netherlands Navy.

The Netherlands has been deploying naval vessels since 2009 as part of the European Union's mission to prevent piracy and armed robbery off the Horn of Africa. The European Union Naval Force (Op Atalanta) Somalia – Operation Atalanta, was launched in December 2008. Its objectives are protecting vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) and other vulnerable shipping, determent and disruption of piracy and armed robbery at sea and monitoring fishing activities off Somalia.

Source: Naval Today

### **Pak, Iran to boost links between Gwadar, Chahbahar ports**

Pakistan and Iran today said they would boost links between Gawadar and Chahbahar ports that are being developed by China and India. This was decided in a meeting between Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif and his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif who is on an official visit here.

Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) spokesman said in a statement that the two foreign ministers held consultations on bilateral relations and regional peace and security. "The foreign ministers underlined that as two brotherly neighbouring countries Iran and Pakistan would deepen connectivity between the two sister ports of Gawadar and Chahbahar to benefit from their complementarities," the FO said. The two ministers also exchanged views on important developments on regional and international peace and security.

Zarif also called on Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and discussed efforts for strengthening of bilateral relations and issues related to peace and security in the region. Radio Pakistan reported that a 30-member business delegation comprising representatives from economic, trade and business sectors is accompanying the Iranian foreign minister. His visit comes weeks after Pakistan announced that it would send troops to Saudi Arabia, Iran's arch rival.

Source: [www.indiaseatradenews.com](http://www.indiaseatradenews.com), 13 March 2018

### **Sri Lanka Ports: Prepare for alliance-free mega-carriers**

The container shipping alliance model could gradually fizzle out as alliance members struggle to differentiate their product while competing purely on price, leaving five or six independent mega-carriers to dominate container shipping in the future. This was the prediction of Parakrama Dissanayake, chairman of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, who said the announcement by Maersk that it intends to become an integrator of container logistics is an indication of how this scenario might play out in the years ahead. “The integrated Maersk would have full control of its entire supply chain. Because they have the scale, the mega-shipping lines will not need to be part of any alliance. To run independently will be the only way to differentiate their product,” he told. “Currently, the alliances have four or five members coming into a port where they are all vying for the same box, so how do they differentiate the product? Only by price, and that is why the rates keep coming down. How long can the alliance model survive?”

Dissanayake said there is no real bargaining power in an alliance when it comes to ports because only individual carriers can enter into service agreements with terminals. “So, one-to-one there is no sharing of resources. The concept of the mega-alliances will change in time, maybe five years, maybe 10 years. You will be left five or six large shipping lines running the show.” Not convinced with this argument was Rolf Habben Jansen, CEO of Hapag-Lloyd, which is a member of THE Alliance along with Yang Ming and the three Japanese carriers NYK, MOL, and “K” Line, which will operate under merged entity Ocean Network Express (ONE) from April. Habben Jansen said ships are simply too big for one carrier to handle, with fewer direct calls limiting their ability to collect enough cargo. “To fill a 20,000 TEU vessel on your own at just three ports is a very big task. and if anything goes wrong you immediately have a huge utilization risk that would be mitigated by partners,” he said. “That is why in the airline industry you see a lot of code shares, especially on long haul because if one station can’t fill a plane, you have back up. It is partly cost but mainly sharing the

responsibility of filling the ships, and that is a very big responsibility.” The need to differentiate was also raised at TPM 2018 by Jeremy Nixon, CEO of ONE, who said the mega-carriers of Maersk, Cosco, Mediterranean Shipping Co., and CMA CGM had to differentiate themselves wherever they can. “What you are seeing is larger, stronger companies emerging, and they need to be very clear on what their market strategy is. They need a clear go-to-market strategy and a clear business plan, [to] execute that very well, and work out their segment strategy,” he said. “This idea of becoming a one-stop ship, a full-blown integrator — OK, that is their [Maersk’s] go-to-market strategy and it will be interesting to see how that plays out.”

Source: [www.indiaseatradenews.com](http://www.indiaseatradenews.com), 08 March 2018

### **Staggering 265-fold hike in labour levy at ports killing coastal shipping**

The government's practice of continuing to charge notional labour cess on coastal cargo operations, despite the fact that most ports are now mechanised and do not require manpower for loading and unloading, is taking a toll on the country's coastal shipping operators. Many are losing business to rail and road transport, and to ports run by the private sector. In some cases, the levy for a single labour job is as high as 265 times the total labour cost. Some ports have reduced it to 150 times, but others like Kolkata, Cochin and Mumbai continue to charge the cess in the absence of other sources of revenue. Experts say that with more and more ports being mechanised, labour cess is not required. Port mechanisation initiative is redundant if the government continues with the practice of charging notional labour cess to the cargo companies even when the coastal cargo operator does not use services of the port, the experts added.

Earlier, there was a requirement for labour at the time of loading and unloading of cargo, but port mechanisation has minimised the need for manpower. Coastal cargo operators do not need manual intervention for their operations and payment of a levy over and above the labour employed costs them dear. The former shipping secretary says, “Labour was required and, therefore, became part of the deal and later mechanisation took place. The funds collected from the levy are utilised towards pension contribution by the port authorities. Kandla Port was the first to have done that. Otherwise, the pension would eat into their (the ports’) corpus. This levy was even authorised by the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP).” The coastal cargo industry feels the levy should be completely scrapped instead of bringing it down, as the cess makes ferrying good through ports less viable compared to rail and road. “With more

and more ports going for mechanisation, there is no need for a labour cess,” Vishwas Udgirkar, partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, said. It is learnt that the industry has even petitioned the Prime Minister’s Office on this issue, but it is yet to respond on the matter.

Currently, all major ports barring Kolkata, Mumbai and Cochin are charging the levy only on bulk cargo and coal and have removed it for other commodities. India has 12 major ports -- Kandla, Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore, V O Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) According to an official at Vishakhapatnam, every port nowadays is either reducing or removing this levy due to competition from private ports. The only reason Kolkata, Mumbai and Cochin are still charging this levy is because they are not making money otherwise.

Source: [www.indiaseatradenews.com](http://www.indiaseatradenews.com), 13 March 2018

### **Hamburg Süd making a mark in door-to-door transportation**

Intermodal transportation goes beyond the mere maritime transportation by developing an optimal door-to-door transportation chain and organising the appropriate modes of transportation for this worldwide. So-called pre- and on-carriage will continue to be part of the specific services offered by Hamburg Süd in the future.

Hamburg Süd disposes of a particularly efficient and unique network for door-to-door transportation in Central and South America, where Intermodal South America, the continent’s leading logistics trade fair, will be held in São Paulo, Brazil, from March 13 to 15. Hamburg Süd and its Brazilian subsidiary, Aliança, will once again be the official sponsors of Intermodal South America, informed. When it comes to intermodal container transportation, both companies have, over years, built a worldwide network with reliable partners who are specialists in their particular fields and geographical areas. "This way, Hamburg Süd can offer its customers, very flexibly and fast, tailor-made and dependable logistics solutions," says Mr Frank Smet, CCO of Hamburg Süd. He adds: "This means our customers do not have to handle complex transportation chains themselves, but they can rely on Hamburg Süd so that their cargo will reach its destination safely, with the shortest transit time, and on time." Hamburg Süd organises and carries out the pre- and on-carriage for roughly one-third of all its container transports in Europe—and this share is even larger in other regions of the

world. Depending on the particular geography and infrastructure, railways, trucks, or barges are used to collect cargo in the hinterland or take it to its final destination. For example, whereas containers are primarily transported via railway in India, the major waterways—such as the Yangtze—are mainly used in China, and containers generally go over the road in the UK.

The Hamburg Süd subsidiary Aliança executes more than 200,000 intermodal moves per year in South America, including stuffing, stripping, cross-docking and warehousing to its customers. Two-thirds of Aliança's cabotage transports include intermodal operations, allowing customers to have their cargo transported in a cost-efficient manner and with minimum effort.

Source: [www.indiaseatradenews.com](http://www.indiaseatradenews.com), 14 March 2018

### **India: Major Ports To Get More Flexibility & Autonomy For Port Boards**

With a view to providing more autonomy and flexibility to Major Ports and to professionalize their governance, the Government has introduced the Major Port Authorities Bill in Parliament to replace the existing Major Port Trusts Act, 1963. Salient features of the Bill are given below:-

- (i) The Bill has been made compact by reducing its number of sections from the existing 134 to 65.
- (ii) Number of Board Members has been reduced to 11-13 from the existing 19-21.
- (iii) Appointment of Independent Members for professional and better decision making.
- (iv) Ports would now be required to take Central Government approval only in 8 occasions instead of existing 32.
- (v) Major Ports would be empowered to make its own master plan for areas within the port limits to the exclusion of any State or local regulations.
- (vi) Port authority would be empowered to fix tariff for its assets and services.

(vii) For Public Private Partnership Projects (PPP), operators will be free to fix tariff based on market conditions.

(viii) Power to raise loans / additional capital from Indian & Foreign lenders. In all future Public Private Partnership projects, concessionaire shall fix the tariff based on market conditions and on such other conditions as may be notified.

Under the proposed Bill all Major Ports will be empowered to make their own master plan for areas within their port limit to the exclusion of any State or local regulations. The manner of any contract or arrangement by the Port Board for lease of land or immovable property for port related use and non port related use shall be in such a manner as may be prescribed by rules/regulations. Shri Mansukh L Mandavia, Minister of State for Shipping gave this information in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

Source: [www.indiaseatradenews.com](http://www.indiaseatradenews.com), 14 March 2018



## MARINE ENVIRONMENT



### **CleanSeas Innovation Challenge awards bright ideas to fight marine Litter**

The winners of the #CleanSeas Innovation Challenge, a competition among university students awarding creative ideas in tackling one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time, were announced today. Launched in June last year by UN Environment in partnership with Think Beyond Plastic, the challenge was meant to inspire university students worldwide to come up with innovative solutions to the problem of marine litter. Contestants could submit ideas in four separate fields: engineering, communications, economics and prediction and recovery. Almost two hundred original and forward-looking project proposals were submitted to a jury of leaders in science, business, visual and performing arts, filmmaking and economics with four winners taking home awards.

- In the communication track, winners came up with the idea of reusable bags coupled with a strong outreach effort to encourage people to stop using single-use plastic bags. The bags, called Tasini, are designed as different marine animals that represent the ecosystems they aim to protect. These will appear as eco-ambassadors in several cartoons that the project will produce. The videos will present short stories about marine plastic, thereby contributing to raising awareness about the issue, while encouraging consumers to change their habits.
- In the design and engineering track, winners came up with an idea of designing a biodegradable plastic out of egg whites from waste eggs. The project, aptly named eggcellent, aims to use this “plastic” to make cups and plates and sell these commercially.
- In the economics track, the winning project called Ecoboat, coming out of Cameroon, created a recycling scheme for plastic bottles that were then used to build canoes, to be used by artisanal fisherfolk.
- Finally, in the prediction and recovery track, the winning contribution found a way of using remote sensing to detect marine litter along the Chilean coast.



- The four winners will present their ideas during the Sixth International Marine Debris Conference in San Diego, and gain entry into the Think Beyond Plastic annual acceleration programme.

“The winners of the #CleanSeas plastic pollution challenge have all shown great creativity in coming up with new solutions to address what is one of the most urgent environmental issues of our time. I wish them the best of luck moving forward with their ideas”, said Head of UN Environment Erik Solheim.

Each year, 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans: the equivalent of a full garbage truck every minute. This pollution threatens the survival of fish and other sea creatures, destroys marine and coastal ecosystems that support over three billion people worldwide, and endangers human health by entering the food chain. To combat this, UN Environment launched the [#CleanSeas](#) campaign in February 2017.

#### *About Think Beyond Plastic*

Think Beyond Plastic is an innovation accelerator focused on eliminating plastic pollution and advancing the transition towards bio-benign materials from renewable sources and associated manufacturing processes, innovative products and packaging design. It identifies early stage innovations, develops bridge to commercialization for qualified startups in all stages, and cultivates the investor network. Participants in its annual accelerator cohort benefit from a rich program incorporating business modeling, customer discovery, product development, go-to-market strategy, financial planning, identifying and managing strategic partnerships. For more information visit [ThinkBeyondPlastic.com](http://ThinkBeyondPlastic.com); follow @tbpinnovate

#### *About UN Environment*

UN Environment is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UN Environment works with governments, the private sector, civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations across the world.

Source: [www.unenvironment.org](http://www.unenvironment.org), 11 March 2018

## **Race to study mysterious Marine Ecosystem**

The iceberg known as A68, which is four times of London, calved off from the Larsen Ice Shelf in July 2017. The scientists will collect samples from the newly exposed seabed, which covers an area of around 5,818 km<sup>2</sup>. It is an urgent mission. The ecosystem that's likely been hidden beneath the ice for thousands of years may change as sunlight starts to alter the surface layers of the sea. Marine biologist Dr Katrin Linse from British Antarctic Survey is leading the mission. She says: "The calving of A68 provides us with a unique opportunity study marine life as it responds to a dramatic environmental change. It's important we get there quickly before the undersea environment changes as sunlight enters the water and new species begin to colonise. We've put together a team with a wide range of scientific skills so that we can collect as much information as possible in a short time. It's very exciting."

This newly exposed marine area is the first to benefit from an international agreement made in 2016 by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). This agreement designates Special Areas for Scientific Study in newly exposed marine areas following the collapse or retreat of ice shelves across the Antarctic Peninsula region. Professor David Vaughan, Science Director at BAS says: "Now is the time to address fundamental questions about the sustainability of polar continental shelves under climate change. We need to be bold on this one. Larsen C is a long way south and there's lots of sea ice in the area, but this is important science, so we will try our best to get the team where they need to be."

While the team mobilises for the expedition, glaciologists and remote sensing specialists continue to monitor the movement of the Larsen C Ice Shelf. In December 2017, a team from University of Leeds worked on the remaining ice shelf to investigate changes in ice structure after the calving event, to be able to predict shelf stability in the future.

Source: [www.labnews.co.uk](http://www.labnews.co.uk), 08 March 2018

## **Government backs wave of litter-busting pilot projects**

The first round of funding from the government's Litter Innovation Fund was awarded late last week, with 14 projects from across the UK sharing almost £125,000 of support. Grants worth between £2,000 and £10,000 were assigned to a range of projects proposed by councils, charities and business across the country. Successful

projects include developing bins to prevent seagulls from scattering litter on beaches, working with river users to reduce plastic getting into rivers, helping to tackle the issue of litter getting into our marine environment, initiative to curb the use of single-use coffee cups, a crack down on litter from the night-time economy, and a programme from charity Hubbub to tackle litter in sports stadiums. The funding builds on the government's wider Litter Strategy for England and the recently launched 25 Year Environment Plan. A second round of applications to the Litter Innovation Fund will be sought in the near future. "We want to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it and these innovative new projects will help reduce the amount of litter which so often plagues our streets, parks, countryside, rivers and marine environment," said Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey. "We have all seen the damaging effects that litter can have on wildlife and the environment, and I encourage people to do their bit, take responsibility for their litter and recycle more."

Her comments were echoed by Communities Minister Rishi Sunak, who said: "The Litter Innovation Fund is part of our wider strategy to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering while leaving a cleaner, greener and tidier environment for the next generation. I am looking forward to seeing these projects supporting that strategy while helping communities make a real difference in their area." Government has announced a raft of new measures in recent months to tackle litter and waste levels, including proposals to extend the 5p plastic bag charge to small retailers and introducing a ban on plastic microbeads. Ministers maintain efforts to tackle litter at source will bring significant economic as well as environmental benefits, noting that keeping the country's streets clean cost local government almost £700m last year.

However, the government has also faced criticism in recent weeks for failing to fast track a promised consultation on whether to introduce a new tax on plastics and rejecting proposals for a so-called 'latte levy' on single use coffee cups.

Source: [www.businessgreen.com](http://www.businessgreen.com), 12 March 2018

### **Marine environmental engineers help keep the base clean and safe.**

It is said a clean, safe and healthy environment results in a much more productive, happy and healthy environment for all to work and live in. This Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) involves wastewater management, air pollution control, recycling, waste disposal, radiation protection, industrial hygiene, animal agriculture,

environmental sustainability, public health and environmental engineering law. Environmental engineering is concerned with scientific and engineering principles for the protection of human populations from the effects of adverse environmental factors. This may include protection of environments, both local and global, as well as improvement of environmental quality. It is the responsibility of the Marine Corps environmental engineer to study the air, ground and water and identify and analyze sources of pollution and its effects on their installation.

Furthermore, it is their responsibility to find plausible solutions in the field of public health and implement laws which promote adequate sanitation in urban, rural and recreational areas. But, even more so these Marines inspire the community to live in safe and healthy environments by directing programs to control safety and health hazards in the workplace. Much of the work Marine environmental engineers conduct is done at research laboratories. However, aboard Quantico environmental engineers can be found in the Natural Resources Environmental Affairs(NREA) headquarters conducting their research. Aboard base these Marines can also be found at the water treatment plant, base facilities and recycling center conducting essential services that maintain a safe and healthy environment. However, the majority of the work done aboard Quantico is conducted outside in Quantico's natural landscape, including the trails, shoreline, ranges and woodland areas. Maj. John Crutchfield, acting environmental health and safety officer, currently leads a team of two Marines with various environmental projects aboard base. Since there is no official required training school for enlisted environmental engineers much of the MOS is learned through on-the-job training. Additionally, Marines receive various certifications to operate various machinery and handling and disposal of hazardous materials. Cpl. Spencer Patterson, who was formally trained in the primary MOS of combat engineer, has since received the secondary MOS of environmental engineer after being assigned to Marine Corps Base Quantico Where it is typically his job as a combat engineer to perform various duties accompanying demolitions and construction through altering, repairing and maintaining buildings and structures, his role as an environmental engineer is based upon the conservation of the environment. Some of Patterson's skills still translate from his combat engineer role to the environmental engineer position. This includes the pick-up and transport of hazardous and recyclable material, including ammunition on the training ranges by bracing and utilizing rigging devices, which aid in the transport of materials. Then there are environmental engineering officers, such as Crutchfield who receive formal education with a background in engineering management. Crutchfield was able to receive his education from the Air Force Institute of Technology, Graduate School of Engineering and Management via the

Commandant's Education Program. At the university, he learned how to assess studies on various factors affecting the environment surrounding him and then how to evaluate the significance of hazards and develop and promote regulations which advise the community on proper treatment to prevent mishaps. During 2017, Crutchfield, with the assistance of NREA, organized more than 250 volunteer hours clearing new nature trails and picking up more than 17 tons of trash and recyclables. This was done during a week-long Earth Day recycling initiative to clean up the base's natural landscape and create an environment that Marines and civilians aboard base could be proud of.

Because of the Earth Day initiative, NREA was able to raise enough money to build a Paintball Park at Quantico, located off McCard Road behind Butler Stadium. The Earth Day recycling initiative also inspired a recycling program at Lejeune Hall to encourage the community to maintain a clean office space by further helping to reduce the rate of trash thrown away. The environmental engineering MOS does a lot of work to keep the base safe and clean and all they ask is the base community help do their part by reducing the trash on the trails and other natural areas and recycle when possible. They also ask when recycling or disposing of hazardous materials such as paint, light bulbs and batteries that everybody follow the base orders. As Earth Day is fast approaching (it falls on Sunday, April 22), the environmental engineers and the NREA have already begun planning a week filled with environmentally conscious festivities to continue the progress the base made last year. Where the environmental team is small in total force a community working together can make a larger impact.

Source: [www.marines.mil](http://www.marines.mil), 12 March 2018

### **Marine plastic: a new and growing threat to coral reefs**

New evidence is emerging that shows that the human population's obsession with all things plastic is poisoning one of the world's natural wonders: coral reefs. Much more than simply an object of beauty, coral reefs are living, breathing ecosystems, teeming with life. Although they occupy less than 0.1 per cent of the world's ocean surface, they provide an essential home for 25 per cent of all marine life; they are also vital for protecting coastal communities, acting as natural barriers from cyclones and rising seas; and 275 million people depend directly on them for their food and livelihoods. Yet coral reefs are under attack on a number of fronts. In the past 30 years, we have lost up to 50 per cent of the world's corals from the effects of warming sea

temperatures due to climate change, overfishing, and a range of land-based activities. However, a major new study has revealed they are also under siege from plastic.

Each year, it is estimated that more than 8 million tonnes of plastic are ending up in the oceans – the equivalent of emptying a garbage truck of plastic every minute. We are producing 20 times more plastic today than in the 1960s. If we continue the current rate of plastic usage, we will have produced another 33 billion tonnes of plastic by 2050; a large portion of which will end up in oceans, where it will remain for centuries. In a survey of 159 coral reefs in the Asia–Pacific region, published in *Science* this year, researchers estimate there to be a staggering 11.1 billion plastic items entangled in the corals. This number is projected to increase by a further 40 per cent in just the next seven years. Of the 124,000 individual reef-building corals that were assessed, 89 per cent of those smothered in plastic were facing the threat of disease compared with only 4 per cent in corals free from plastic. The plastic debris starves corals of vital oxygen and light, and releases toxins enabling bacteria and viruses to invade. In another study published in the journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin* in October 2017, scientists recorded a worrying development in the ingestion of plastic by marine wildlife. There is myriad evidence of marine wildlife fatally mistaking plastic debris, particularly microplastics, for food.

However, researchers observed coral were not simply mistaking the small plastic particles for food; they were displaying a deliberate feeding response when the plastic floated by. In other words, there is something dangerously tasty about the chemical compounds in plastic, a development the researchers warned needs to be better understood to prevent further contamination and disease. The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) has declared 2018 the International Year of the Reef. UN Environment together with partner organizations is working to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability, and to motivate people to take action to protect them.

Source: [www.unenvironment.org](http://www.unenvironment.org), 05 March 2018

### **UAE sets up marine environment protection association**

Dubai Council for Marine & Maritime Industries (DCMMI) has partnered with Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (Helmepa) to establish a first-of-its-kind marine environment protection association in the UAE. The new UAE Marine Environment Protection Association is aimed at cultivating and promoting an

environmental consciousness within the maritime community. Both parties prepared and signed a declaration of voluntary commitment titled “To Save the Marine Environment”, based on Helmepea’s founding Declaration “To Save the Seas.” UAEMEPA offers the opportunity, for all those who care for the environment and are interested in safeguarding it, to learn about the significance of the “marine environment” for our economic prosperity, social well-being and quality of life, remarked Khamis Juma Buamim, the chairman of DCMMI and chairman of Offshore Arabia 2018 after inking the deal with Captain Dimitris C. Mitsatsos, the secretary of the International Marine Environment Protection Association during the Offshore Arabia Conference and Exhibition 2018. The marine environment is by nature a transboundary issue and it has to be managed through cooperation and according to integrated principles, stated Buamim. "Therefore, we aim to achieve “good environmental status” through creating, promoting and spreading safety awareness and security spirit within the maritime community," he added.

Source: [www.tradearabia.com](http://www.tradearabia.com), 05 March 2018

### **Arctic Birds Carry Signs of an “Atlantifying” Ocean**

- Cheryl Katz

Clouds of white kittiwakes drift like summer snow flurries around the Svalbard islands high in the European Arctic, searching for fish in the ice-studded fjords of the Barents Sea. The prey these small polar gulls ferry back to their cliff-side colonies are a sign of an abrupt and alarming shift—instead of cold-loving Arctic fish, new research shows that the seabirds are capturing creatures more at home in the warmer Atlantic. Scientists say it’s a clear sign of “Atlantification,” a sea change now underway as warm Atlantic waters muscle their way into the Arctic Ocean. “This area used to be polar-influenced, cold water,” says Geir Wing Gabrielsen, a scientist with the Norwegian Polar Institute and a coauthor of the new study. “Now it is the Atlantic system which is really dominating.”

Black-legged kittiwakes, which spend most of their lives at sea, are effective messengers of this change, Gabrielsen says. He and his colleagues have monitored colonies on the island of Spitsbergen in Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago some 1,000 kilometers north of the mainland, since 1982, providing valuable long-term data on this rapidly changing region. The foraging seabirds,



which spew their stomach contents when handled, tell researchers what's swimming in areas they can't otherwise observe. For decades, the birds were catching almost entirely Arctic species like polar cod. But in 2007, capelin, an Atlantic fish, suddenly took over. Atlantic cod, herring, and other warmer-water denizens soon followed. Today, Atlantic species all but rule the kittiwakes' diet. This abrupt shift was triggered by a flush of warm water moving from the adjoining Atlantic Ocean deep into the coastal fjords, Gabrielsen says. "Immediately, you started to see Atlantic species getting into the food samples." A decade on, this polar marine ecosystem appears more Atlantic than Arctic. The Atlantification underway around Svalbard is now spreading eastward across the Arctic Ocean, another recent report finds. This shows that the eastern Arctic's distinct layering of seawater—which provides a physical buffer against the Atlantic—is losing its strength, says lead author Igor Polyakov, a University of Alaska Fairbanks oceanographer. Normally, Arctic waters are highly stratified, with cold bands of lighter, fresher water atop heavier, saltier water. These layers cap the warm, dense Atlantic water and keep it from reaching the surface. As the climate changes, the new study shows that the barrier in the eastern Eurasian Arctic basin (north of Scandinavia to Russia) is breaking down, allowing Atlantic water to mix with the Arctic layers. Scientists are trying to understand the environmental impacts of this momentous shift. One of the biggest, already underway, is the toll on sea ice—which a new report shows is at a record low for this time of year, when it should be near its peak. Increased fluxes of Atlantic water in winter prevent new ice from forming, opening the door to solar heat and expanded algal blooms. And the more the ice cover shrinks, the more Atlantic water can move in. Polyakov says the phenomenon is accelerating and may continue to spread eastward toward Siberia. And though ocean physics are very different on the Pacific side of the globe, he says parts of the Canadian Arctic show signs of "Pacification." "This is a new polar ocean for us, a new polar ocean from many perspectives," says Polyakov. "It's just a completely new environment." Back in Svalbard, some seabirds are thriving on their new diet. Kittiwake populations, plummeting throughout much of their range, are actually increasing here. Atlantic puffins—endangered in Europe—are also flourishing in the archipelago. But for Svalbard's little auks, the Atlantic influx has swapped the small, rich polar crustaceans, *Calanus hyperboreus*, for the less-nutritious Atlantic species, *Calanus finmarchicus*, leaving these seabirds critically short on fuel. "So it really shows that there are winners and losers in this new system," says Gabrielsen.

Source: [www.hakaimagazine.com](http://www.hakaimagazine.com), 12 March 2018





### **Seasonal distortion leads to surging Chinese exports in February**

China's exports surged in February due to seasonal distortions and robust global demand, customs data showed on Thursday. Exports of goods increased by 36.2 percent in February year on year to 1.11 trillion yuan (176 billion U.S. dollars), compared with a rise of 6 percent in January, according to the General Administration of Customs. Imports fell 0.2 percent to 888.16 billion yuan in February. That left the monthly trade surplus at 224.88 billion yuan, a reversal from a trade deficit of 72.99 billion yuan in the same period a year ago. February's exports figure was a surprise given that holiday effects were expected to limit the pace of increase, said Bloomberg economist Tom Orlik. A one-week holiday for Lunar New Year, which fell in February this year but straddled January and February last year, was expected to hit export growth, he added. It is possible that there was a rush to ship goods ahead of the break, which could, together with a low base effect, account for the outsize gain, he said.

In the first two months, exports rose 18 percent while imports were up by 15.2 percent. The trade surplus expanded 37.2 percent to 362.2 billion yuan, customs figures showed. "That points to very robust external demand, though it is not a pace that will be even close to sustained. We expect a payback in slower growth in March," he said. February's reading came as the U.S. government showed increasing protectionism. U.S. President Trump has said that trade deficit reduction is one of the priorities for the administration's trade policy. Last week, Trump announced a plan to impose a 25-percent tariff on imported steel and a 10-percent tariff on aluminum to protect domestic industries. The protectionist measures have sparked widespread opposition from U.S. domestic business groups and trade partners, who argue that the actions would hurt both the U.S. and global economies and undermine the global trade system.

In a government work report delivered to the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), Premier Li Keqiang said that China promised to open its doors wider to foreign investors and further liberalize and facilitate trade and investment. Warning that protectionism is "mounting," the premier also voiced China's support for promoting economic globalization and protecting free trade. "China calls for trade

disputes to be settled through discussion as equals, opposes trade protectionism, and will resolutely safeguard its lawful rights," he said, noting that the country is ready to work with all parties to advance multilateral trade negotiations. China will also actively expand imports this year as it aims to further open up its market, said Li. The country will host the first China International Import Expo this year and lower import tariffs on products, including automobiles and some everyday consumer goods.

Source: [www.xinhuanet.com](http://www.xinhuanet.com), 08 March 2018

## **Trump's Foreign Policy: The Return of Geopolitics**

-Emil Avdaliani

On December 18, 2017, the US government unveiled the country's new National Security Strategy. The document states unequivocally that "after being dismissed as a phenomenon of an earlier century, the great power competition has returned." This is a striking admission by the White House. Although in Europe, Russia and elsewhere, the position of the new strategy document raised eyebrows, politicians in some parts of the Middle East — as well as the South Caucasus (particularly Georgia) and Ukraine — think it is well attuned to the geopolitical situation on the ground in the region. The overall tone of the document indicates that Washington has begun to realize that the post-Cold War approach to Eurasia did nothing to ensure a lasting peace or a furthering of American state interests.

The Russian military resurgence in the former Soviet Union, the rise of China in the Asia-Pacific, and Iran's successes in Syria have exacerbated the security situation across Eurasia. Geopolitical differences have reduced potential US-Russia cooperation on a number of issues (with the exception of counter-terrorism). The era of post-Cold War hopes for a lasting cooperation and peace in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere has officially ended. "[Future US strategy] is a strategy of principled realism that is guided by outcomes, not ideology," the document reads. Over the past couple of centuries, political realism (meaning a foreign policy based on the balance of power and geopolitical calculations) and its German version (realpolitik) have been scaled back on occasion by notions built on ideological and ethical premises. In 1815, during the Congress of Vienna, European statesmen worked hard to build a lasting peace across the continent following the devastating Napoleonic wars.

However, Napoleon III, Bismarck, Wilhelm II and the Third French Republic destroyed the foundations of ethical politics, which led to the resurgence of realpolitik and the return of geopolitics. World War I followed as a result, which ended with another hope for lasting peace after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Again, the subsequent rise of totalitarian governments in Germany, Italy, and Russia (1920-1930s) led to foreign policies based on geopolitical calculations that ultimately culminated in World War II. The third era of expected prosperity and peace was the post-Cold War period, but here too, political realism has been slowly emerging as a dominant force across Eurasia. Hopes of lasting peace tend to emerge after brutal military and ideological wars, but all previous historical examples show that geopolitics are never fully replaced by moral principles in foreign policy. International relations have never been free of geopolitical thinking to one degree or another. The new Trump document, which has now formally ushered in the end of ethical and moral premises in international relations and heralded the return of geopolitics, is an expected step and one rooted in the experience of past generations.

This thinking is well summarized in the following quote from the document, which notes increased competition among various powers in Eurasia: “These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades, policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false.” The new strategy also states that “the United States will respond to the growing political, economic, and military competition we face around the world. China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence.” The nature of the fundamental threat emanating from Russia is also reflected in the fact that North Korea and Iran, both of which have nuclear programs, feature only after China and Russia, as do assorted transnational terrorist groups. At the same time, it is important to stress that the return to Brzezinski-esque geopolitics by the US government did not happen overnight. It was the result of constant challenges to the US-led world order by such powers as Russia, Iran and others over the past decade.

The rhetoric of the new US strategy is a positive development for Israel (pressured by the resurgent Iran) in the Middle East, as well as Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova in the former Soviet space. It is well-attuned to the unstable situation currently prevailing

across Eurasia. Signs of stronger US engagement in Eurasia were already seen throughout 2017.

Overall it would be fair to say that the rhetoric of the document reflects the prevailing thinking in the White House, indicating that relations between the US and other major players in Eurasia, such as Russia and Iran, will now be more difficult to normalize. At the same time, geopolitical frictions among the big players will expose small states to ever more serious geopolitical challenges.

Source: [www.algemeiner.com](http://www.algemeiner.com), 12 March 2018

### **Can India ‘make China behave itself’? New Delhi bolsters defense partnership with Vietnam**

- Vivek Raghuvanshi

As it keeps a watchful eye on its neighbor China, India is further cementing defense ties with Vietnam for the joint production and transfer of technology of homemade weapon systems. The new partnership was announced March 3 during a visit by Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang. The two countries are expected to sign an agreement for a line of credit from India worth \$500 million that will go toward building capabilities through Vietnam’s defense industry. “Both sides agreed to further enhance defense ties, including through exchanges of senior-level defense delegations, regular senior-level dialogues, cooperation between the two armed forces, port calls of naval and Coast Guard ships, capacity building projects, procurement of equipment, and transfer of technology,” according to a statement issued by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. An official with the Indian Ministry of Defence noted that the idea of an Indo-Vietnamese defense partnership is not new. “Earlier, too, we have assisted them in building capacity including training their submarine personnel and logistic support for their ships, amongst other things,” he said.

India may “at a later date” offer the Brahmos cruise missile for export, according to Anil Jai Singh, a defense analyst and retired Indian Navy commodore, but the country can currently offer the export of ships; patrol craft; sonars; radars; communications equipment, systems and auxiliaries; and submarine repair and refit. The MoD official noted that it is important for India to help build capacity in friendly countries as part of a robust, cooperative capability to counter the many traditional and nontraditional

maritime threats in the region. The bilateral deal may prove important to India's Act East policy. "Vietnam is often viewed as a linchpin in India's policy of 'Act East,' and subterraneously it supports a counter-encirclement strategy against China," according to independent defense analyst Probal Ghosh. "Historically, the Vietnamese share an innate distrust of the Chinese, and the geostrategic importance and symbiotic nature of the Indo-Vietnam bilateral relations makes it imperative for India to not only encourage such ties but actively nurture it in every possible way." Arun Prakash, a retired admiral and former service chief, expressed hesitation about the agreement's potential results. "India can offer a line of credit, as in the case of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, for Vietnam to place orders for ships in Indian yards. However, capacity will be a constraint," he said. Ghosh was also tentative about the deal. "The issue of transfer of technology for Vietnam is a bit of a misnomer since Hanoi doesn't really have any production capability to manufacture high-end defense systems. On the contrary, India will have to assist Hanoi in maintenance of defense equipment that is already with Vietnamese Navy. Thus, it could service its Kilo-class submarines as well as other ships and systems." Still, Prakash acknowledged that the deal "will gain a useful ally in the South China Sea littoral and hopefully enlist a neighbor of China as [a] partner to make China behave itself."

Capt. Gurpreet Khurana, the executive director of the National Maritime Foundation think tank, said cooperation between India and Vietnam is especially important for the former. "Defense and maritime cooperation with Vietnam is critical for India because it is among the very few dependable partners in Pacific-Asia. Such cooperation will help both India and Vietnam to exert a dissuading influence upon China to moderate its behavior." On a political level, Khurana noted, India and Vietnam – and other like-minded nations – will need to continue exerting pressure upon China to uphold the established maritime order in terms of freedom of navigation and overflight. "India must be smart in doing this so as not to cross China's 'red line,' even though it is unclear and dynamic, too. But it is amply clear that a formal military alliance with Vietnam (or any other country), or developing a military base in Vietnam, or progressing the quad in the uni-dimensional military domain will not be a smart thing to do," he said.

Source: [www.defensenews.com](http://www.defensenews.com), 06 March 2018

## **China Warns of 'Strong' Measures to Counter President Trump's Trade Tariffs**

China will take “strong” measures to protect its own interests, the Ministry of Commerce said in response to President Donald Trump’s decision to levy tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. The measures will be based on evaluation of the potential losses triggered by the U.S. trade actions, the ministry said in a statement on its website Friday. "China urges the U.S. to respect the authority of the multilateral trade system, and repeal the measures as soon as possible," it said. China’s exports surged and its trade surplus unexpectedly widened in February, illustrating the lopsided nature of global commerce that Donald Trump is preparing to introduce protectionist measures against. China said the U.S. is sabotaging the multilateral system represented by the World Trade Organization, and its actions will “seriously shake” the global trade order. The comments follow those of China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who Thursday criticized the U.S.’s decision to brand the country as a “strategic competitor” and dismissed the notion that it poses a threat to the world’s biggest economy. Wang told a briefing on the sidelines of China’s national legislative session that the designation included in recent Trump administration national security documents was “fundamentally wrong.”

Trade tensions may be set to deepen further. The U.S. is said to be considering clamping down on Chinese investment and imposing tariffs on a broad range of goods to punish Beijing over unfair intellectual-property practices as part of an ongoing U.S. investigation ordered by Trump. Worsening trade ties will test China’s policy of "strategic composure" in dealing with Trump’s America First ethos.

Source: [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com), 09 March 2018

## **US navy carrier's Vietnam visit signals closer ties amid China tensions**

- Bennett Murray in Da Nang

Thousands of sailors from a US navy carrier and two escort vessels have taken part in a charm offensive while on a port call to the Vietnamese coastal city of Da Nang, in the largest US troop presence in the country since the war ended in 1975. In a classroom on the outskirts of the city, uniformed navy sailors played rock and country classics for dozens of enthralled children who had disabilities that have been blamed on the Agent Orange sprayed by the US military during the war. After the performance, more sailors

arrived for some arts and crafts. Cooks from the USS Carl Vinson visited local restaurants to learn Vietnamese recipes, and the US naval band performed songs from the war-era Vietnamese composer Trinh Cong Son. Dignitaries from both the US navy and the Vietnamese government lauded the visit as a sign of budding friendship between the two former foes, but looming over the fun, lighthearted atmosphere of the week was the question of China. Although geopolitical issues were largely left unspoken, analysts said the trip largely stemmed from anxieties over a millennia-old rivalry between Vietnam and its northern neighbour. Nguyen Chi Tuyen, a dissident blogger from Hanoi also known by his pen name Anh Chi, said the Vietnamese people welcomed US military engagement with “our hearts and minds”. He said opposition to China was deeply embedded in Vietnam’s national identity, with the South China Sea dispute only the most recent in a line of conflicts stretching back to China’s first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, in the third century BC. China claims almost all the South China Sea, including waters internationally recognised as Vietnam’s. The two countries fought a series of bloody skirmishes over the sea’s islands in the 1970s and 80s, with the last occurring in 1988. Tuyen is no fan Vietnam’s single-party communist state, which bans dissent. He has been arrested several times and was once beaten by thugs who he suspects were working for the secret police.

But he said most anti-government activists supported the Carl Vinson’s arrival. They also want American arms sales to Vietnam, which were legalised in 2016 when Barack Obama lifted a weapons embargo that had been in place since the war. Tuyen said that shortly before the embargo was lifted, Senator John McCain, a longtime advocate of close bilateral ties, asked him and three other dissidents at a private meeting in Hanoi whether the move would damage the human rights situation in Vietnam. All four told McCain the US should go through with sales, said Tuyen. “We know about the threat that if the US government lifts the ban, they can use them against the activists and the people,” he said. “But we think it is much more important than our own security that if the US government lifts the ban, Vietnam ... can use the weapons to defend our own country.” Carl Thayer, an emeritus professor at the University of New South Wales and an expert on south-east Asia, said the Vietnamese government considered the Carl Vinson’s docking to be a balancing act between powers. “The visit of the USS Carl Vinson does not signal that Vietnam is moving into the US orbit to oppose China. It signals that as trust has developed between Vietnam and the United States, the leaders in Hanoi are comfortable with a step up in naval engagement with the United States,” he said. But Le Dang Doanh, a former economic adviser to the government and a Communist party member, said Hanoi felt its hand was being forced. “It is Beijing that has pushed Vietnam closer to the US more than Washington has come closer to



Vietnam.” He said he was anxious about whether the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, who recently changed China’s constitution to abolish term limits, would use force against Vietnam as a show of strength. China’s former leader Deng Xiaoping ordered the 1979 invasion of Vietnam shortly after consolidating power, Doanh pointed out. “I don’t know how Mr Xi Jinping will demonstrate his power, we need to pay high attention,” he said. Would Vietnam ever abandon its non-alignment policy and become a US ally? “It’s not sure [if there could be an alliance], but it’s certainly not their last visit,” said Doanh.

Source: [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), 11 March 2018

### **China says ties with India continue to grow**

-Atul Aneja

*‘Focus is on building mutual trust’*

China on Thursday lauded Indian and Chinese leaders for demonstrating a “strategic vision” which had helped defuse last year’s Doklam crisis, and acknowledged that ties between the two countries were poised for a rapid transition. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at an annual press conference that India-China ties were seeing a turnaround. “Despite some tests and difficulties, the China-India relations continue to grow.” Mr. Wang stressed that China was keen to forge closer India-China ties, cemented by a focus on greater dialogue-based on “mutual trust”. In response to question on the flurry of visits by the Chinese and Indian officials after the Doklam standoff in the Sikkim sector, Mr. Wang said: “The Chinese dragon and the Indian elephant must not fight each other but dance with each other. If China and India are united, one plus one will not only include two, but also 11.” Mr. Wang and Chinese state councilor Yang Jiechi had visited India in December, in the backdrop of the post-Doklam meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the September summit of the BRICS countries in the Chinese coastal city of Xiamen. Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale had visited China last month for talks with top officials.

*‘Keen on rebuilding ties’*

“Through Mr. Gokhale’s visit, we wanted to demonstrate that we were as keen as China in rebuilding post-Doklam ties,” a diplomatic source told *The Hindu*. A spate of track-1 meetings is now in the pipeline, including the China-India strategic economic dialogue next month, which is likely to be preceded by visits to India of Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan and of Guo Yezhou, Vice Minister in the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Mr. Wang stressed that “more far-sighted leaders” have come to realise that as the largest two developing countries each with a population of more than a billion, “China and India must do everything to empathise with and support each other and avoid mutual suspicion and attrition”. The Foreign Minister, however, stressed that New Delhi and Beijing must focus on building “mutual trust,” which would be the key for the further advancement of the relationship. He pointed out that “mutual trust is the most precious commodity in the India-China relations.”

*Not even Himalayas can stop us*

“With political trust, not even the Himalayas can stop us from friendly exchanges. Without it, not even level land can bring us together.” Mr. Wang underscored the urgency of Beijing’s readiness to befriend India. “Let me put this to our Indian friends: our shared understandings far outstrip our differences. Our interests far outweigh the frictions. China is ready and willing... ready to inherit and take forward traditional friendship, and be a friend and partner of the Indian people,” he observed. “I hope the two sides will be free from mental inhibitions and meet each other halfway. Let us replace suspicion with trust, manage differences with dialogue and build a future with cooperation.” Mr. Wang dismissed the “Indo-Pacific” strategy, which included the formation of the quad grouping of India, Japan, Australia and the U.S. as “froth in the Pacific and Indian Oceans”. “They get some attention but may soon dissipate. Contrary to the claims made by some academics and media outlets, that the Indo-Pacific strategy aims to contain China, the four countries’ official position is that it targets no one. I hope they mean what they say, and their action will match their rhetoric.” Mr. Wang asserted that “a new cold war is out of sync with the times, and inciting bloc confrontation will find no market.”

Source: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com), 08 March 2018

## **France, India Seal 14 Accords to Enhance Nuclear Energy, Security Cooperation**

Macron is currently on a first visit to India since he assumed presidential office in May 2017. The visit started on Friday and will last through Monday. In terms of the defense and security cooperation, the two sides have agreed to work on the protection of classified information, countering radicalization and terrorism as well as ensuring freedom of navigation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Jean-Joseph Boillot, adviser at the Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales (CERII) and co-president of the Euro-India Economic & Business Group, believes that India wants to become an ally of France, which is an independent and very active country.

*"India needs strong ally on the international scene, and France is perceived as an independent and very active country. And France needs more allies, which are not pro-China, and not pro-US. It is a sort of middle path between the two super-powers, to build up a kind of secondary power – not an antagonist block, but force, counterbalancing the US and China bipolar position," Boillot said.*

In this regard, Macron said at a joint press conference in New Delhi on Saturday that while India was French partner in South Asia, France wanted to become India's partner in Europe. In terms of economy, Paris and New Delhi agreed on 200 million euros (\$246 million) investment in Indian economy, as well as supplying Indian Spice Jet airline with engines and modernization of water supply system in the Indian city of Davanagere. A contract between French gas company Air Liquide and Indian fiber optic cable manufacturing company was also among the commercial deals signed during Macron's visit. The sides have agreed to accelerate the construction of the Jaitapur nuclear power plant in India by a French company and develop railway system in India. Boillot noted that France had been trying to catch up with Germany on the Indian market.

*"One should not forget that the main economic partner for India is Germany, and the relations between India and Germany are also very good, but they are mostly economic. And for France it's much more diplomatic relations. In economic terms France wants to catch up with Germany on the Indian market, and they are using diplomatic proximity with India as leverage to develop economic relations," Boillot added.*

Jean-Luc Racine, the vice-president of the Asia Center research institute told Sputnik, that India was interested in attracting French investments.

*"Indians would like to have more French investments. Now France is third biggest commercial partner for India in Europe, equivalent to Britain and after Germany... Besides economic cooperation there are geopolitical questions standing, whether we will see Franco-Indian military cooperation in the Indian Ocean advance," Racine said.*

According to the French presidential office, the contracts signed in India are worth \$16 billion. During the trip, the French leader will also take part in a ceremony on Sunday, launching the International Solar Alliance summit, a common initiative announced at the Paris climate summit in 2015.

Source: [sputniknews.com](http://sputniknews.com), 11 March 2018