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U.S. pledges nearly \$300 million security funding for Indo-Pacific region

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pledged on Saturday to provide nearly \$300 million in new security funding for the Indo-Pacific region, as China forges ahead with plans to bolster its engagement in the region. Pompeo unveiled the figure to reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of foreign ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other officials from around the world in Singapore. "As part of our commitment to advancing regional security in the Indo-Pacific, the United States is excited to announce nearly \$300 million in new funding to reinforce security cooperation throughout the entire region," he said. The new security assistance will strengthen maritime security, develop humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping capabilities and counter "transnational threats", he added. The United States said earlier this week it would invest \$113 million in technology, energy and infrastructure initiatives in emerging Asia which he called "a down payment on a new era of U.S. economic commitment to the region".

The United States' developing vision for a "free and open Indo-Pacific" comes at the same time as China ramps up its influence as part of its Belt and Road plan to bolster trade ties with nations in Southeast Asia and beyond. Analysts have said that a spiraling trade dispute between Beijing and Washington could also ratchet up tensions over other regional hot spots, such as the South China Sea, claimed in whole by China and in part by some Southeast Asian nations. The Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, told reporters at the same forum that China welcomed, and was willing to work with, the United States to help with faster development and better security in the region. He added, however, that the United States had been sending "massive strategic weaponry" into the South China Sea and the region as a show of military might that puts pressure on China and other regional countries. "That is the biggest force behind militarization in this region," he said. China and the ASEAN bloc on Thursday hailed a "milestone" agreement on a single working text to kick off what will likely be protracted negotiations towards a code of conduct for behavior in the disputed waters. But critics have said that this enthusiasm for talks is a means for China to buy time and solidify its position during a period of relative dominance in the region where it has built island bases on submerged reefs. Pompeo told reporters that he had raised concerns at the meeting about Chinese militarization of the South China

Sea and the importance of maintaining a rules-based order. Progress towards resolving the continuing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar's troubled Rakhine state and other security issues were also essential to a free and open Indo-Pacific, he said. The use of "Indo-Pacific" has grown among diplomats from Japan, Australia, India and the United States in recent years, a shorthand for a democratic-led region, as opposed to an "Asia-Pacific" with China at its center. China says that its Belt and Road plan is about promoting the common prosperity of all nations involved, but critics see the signature policy of President Xi Jinping as a bid for greater political clout.

Source: www.reuters.com, 03 August 2018

Regional Maritime Security: Same goal, new approach

Ashfaq Ali

Maritime sector is important. Many view it as an index of prosperity of a nation. While everybody in the world benefits from sea and shipping – up to 90% of world's merchandise is carried by sea; very few people realize it as this largely remains hidden from view. Thousands of merchant ships trade internationally with capacity to carry huge amounts of goods, ply the world oceans carrying virtually every kind of cargo. Crude Carriers transport hundreds of thousands tons of crude oil on a daily basis across the oceans. The world fleet is registered in over 150 nations and manned by over a million seafarers of virtually every nationality. Interestingly, when compared to air, rail or road transport; sea transport is the cheapest transportation mode for an ever-growing, globalized economy. Apart from cargo transportation, passenger transportation (ferries and cruise ships), port services including berthing, and navigational services (vessel-assist tugs, harbor maintenance vessels, etc.) are important marine activities. Moreover, all ships use ports. Ports and terminals earn income by charging ships for use of their facilities and services. A ship's visit to port involves ship chandlers, surveyors, insurance people and repairers. Obviously added to these are ship builders, equipment manufacturers and port developers. Once ships get old, they are scrapped – again benefitting millions. Shipbreaking at Gadani, Balochistan is a stunning activity. Shipping industry is thus, phenomenal.

Besides, fish is the staple food in a large part of the world. Marine fisheries are the main source of income for millions. Moreover, apart from known reserves; improved technology is facilitating exploration of new under the seabed deposits of oil, gas and minerals worth billions of dollars. But the importance of the sea is not only

economic. It also acts a medium for national defence. Here the principles of ‘Freedom of Navigation’ and ‘Sea is the common heritage of mankind’: add distinct dimensions to the use of sea for national defence. With advances in naval technology, sea has become a preferred medium for projecting power and influencing events ashore, making it an arena for political and military power plays.

Pakistan is gifted with an important location astride the world’s energy highway across Indian Ocean – renowned American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan predicted Indian Ocean to be the place where much of the economic and strategic dynamics of the 21st century will be played out. Currently this region is not just viewed as a body of water or a medium for transporting nearly 65 percent of the world oil and 35 percent of natural gas from gulf but an arena for contemporary geopolitics – an important region that provides the easiest and shortest access to Central Asian States and Western China, and a route via which diverse consumer products are shipped from the east to markets in Europe and beyond.

These compulsions rightly makes Indian Ocean the jugular vein of world economy. It is imperative that Indian Ocean region (IOR) remains a safe and secure environment for maritime activities. Besides, non-traditional and asymmetric challenges of maritime terrorism, piracy, narco-trafficking and arms as well as human smuggling continue to manifest in IOR – further complicating the maritime security calculus. These compulsions as well as the ongoing war in Afghanistan and military presence in the Gulf has prompted sustained multinational naval presence in IOR, both independent and as part of coalitions.

Pakistan has over 1000 km long coastline. Our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf have an area, larger than the area of Pakistan’s biggest province – Balochistan. While unhindered shipping and marine activities are extremely important for any country, Pakistan clearly is no exception: ships must continue to move to and from our ports, timely and safely and also navigate in our sea area of responsibility without any security fears. Needless to mention that about 95 percent of our trade and imports of LNG and oil are via the sea route. Regular supply of oil and LNG, machinery and industrial imports and unhindered export of Pakistani products is crucial not only for our economy but indeed our national life. It may be mentioned here that while previously Karachi Port acted as our only major port, Port Qasim has in recent years been gradually catching up and in few instances surpassing Karachi Port in terms of Cargo Tonnage handled. It may also be added that currently Port Qasim houses all the LNG import facilities and infrastructure of Pakistan. Similarly,

operationalization of Single Point Mooring (SPM) for the import of POL by M/s BYCO, infrastructure development by M/s China Power Hub Generation Company for handling coal, and development of LNG import terminal by M/s Bahria Foundation are upcoming and key developments in the maritime sector that require to be facilitated and closely guarded. Besides, currently there is much under discussion regarding the CPEC. Few however realize that Pakistan can reap the benefits of CPEC only if its main component – the sea route is secure and Gwadar Port itself is safe and functional.

Geographically, close proximity to the Straits of Hormuz, which is the lifeline of the world's energy, makes Pakistan's location extremely important and necessitates fielding a worthwhile capability for ensuring peace and order at sea. In this regard Pakistan Navy has been gradually transforming itself as a potent force; capable of not only defending our maritime interests but also radiating influence in the region and beyond – striving to achieve national foreign policy objectives through regular engagement with friendly countries and foreign navies thus promoting strong ties with our friends through naval diplomacy, contributing to nation-building efforts by ensuring security of LNG terminals, offshore installations, ports and harbours, regulating marine activities like fishing and hydrographic/ offshore surveys, contributing towards uplift of our coastal belt and responding to natural calamities like floods, cyclones and other disasters.

It needs no mention that security dynamics across the globe, specifically across our region continue to evolve. Pakistan Navy, always standing for peace and amity in the region has been effectually responding to these changing dynamics. In order to ensure peace and order at sea, Pakistan Navy had been regularly participating in the multinational coalition, Task Force 150 (TF 150) as well as multinationals Task Force 151 (TF 151), under the auspices of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Responding to the evolving regional dynamics by realigning priorities and retorting very timely and pragmatically; Pakistan Navy has recently instituted Regional Maritime Security Patrols in the IOR, in line with UN Resolutions and UN Charter on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). With these patrols, Pakistan Navy aims to maintain a robust security posture in critical areas and choke points of the IOR. The goal: peace and order at sea by ensuring protection of national and international shipping against threats of maritime terrorism, piracy, narco and arms smuggling and human trafficking. The approach: independently deployed Pakistan Navy Ships can loiter in international waters, remaining highly mobile. By demonstrating forward presence and

commitment these ships will leverage deterrence and timely respond to potential or emerging maritime threats, with strategic autonomy.

Source: dailytimes.com.pk, 11 August 2018

Gulf of Guinea plans to enhance Maritime Security

- Shailaja A. Lakshmi

Participants from 10 countries - Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal and Togo, as well as international partners such as INTERPOL and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office - are taking part in a workshop in Monterey, USA (6-10 August) on developing and refining their work plans. This includes introducing new topics directly related to the successful implementation of maritime security strategies – such as negotiation skills for secure political and inter-Ministerial cooperation.

The workshop, which includes a field trip to the US Coast Guard Monterey Station, is organized by the US Department of State funded Center for Civil Military Relations (CCMR). It is the second of three events. A workshop in Abidjan was held in March 2018 and the final event is due to take place in Yaoundé in March 2019. IMO is represented by Gisela Vieira.

IMO facilitates this by helping Member States enhance their maritime security, focussing on what the civil maritime stakeholders, which includes both the shipping and port sectors, can do to protect themselves and to assist governments to protect global maritime trade.

IMO responds to maritime security threats in two ways: by developing appropriate regulations and guidance through its Maritime Safety Committee and Facilitation Committee; and through capacity-building work.

Source: www.marinelink.com, 10 August 2018

AU progresses in mechanisms to strengthen Maritime Security

Addis Ababa, Aug 13 (Prensa Latina) The African Union (AU) is today assessing more effective mechanisms in order to elaborate the 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy of the continent, which includes updated regulations on the matter in accordance with international law. According to an AU statement issued in a meeting attended by interested stakeholders from the member states, the preliminary stage of discussion of the annexes to the Strategy was finalized, which will be sent to the pertinent instances for consideration before being adopted by the regulatory bodies.

This process is a preamble to the meeting in Lomé, Togo's capital, whose main objective is the preparation of the African Charter on Maritime Security and Development, whose date has yet to be determined. The attendees agreed that the country continue to preside over the Task Force until the conclusion of the aforementioned document. The text disseminated by the bloc said that the three-day meeting was coordinated by the AU Office of the Legal Counsel and the Regional Economic Communities.

Source: www.plenglish.com, 13 August 2018

Tradewinds 2018 and the Caribbean's Maritime Security Challenges

- W. Alejandro Sanchez

The first two phases of the multinational, Caribbean-focused military exercise Tradewinds 2018 took place between 4-21 June. Said maneuvers, sponsored by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), brought together an estimated 1,700 troops from almost two dozen nations. Given the ongoing maritime security challenges that the Greater Caribbean continues to face, these confidence and interoperability-building exercises continue to be very important.

Tradewinds '18

The first two phases of Tradewinds 2018 took place in Saint Kitts and Nevis and then in The Bahamas. Phase III, a seminar among regional leaders to discuss the results of the first two phases, occurred from 17-19 July in Miami, Florida. The participating nations included the majority of Caribbean states, in addition to Canada, Mexico, the U.S. and extra-hemispheric states like France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Some of the platforms that were deployed include the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Charles David Jr. (WPC-1107); the British RFA Mounts Bay (L3008), a *Bay*-class auxiliary landing ship dock; Canada's HMCS Shawinigan (MM 704), a *Kingston*-class coastal defense vessel; and Mexico's ARM Oaxaca (PO 161), an *Oaxaca*-class patrol vessel. As for aerial platforms, these included AS365N3 Panther and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. As SOUTHCOM explains "this year's focus is on countering transnational organized crime in the region," apart from other priorities like improving disaster response. Operations at sea including procedures to intercept a non-compliant vessel, and live firing exercises with deck-mounted weapon systems like .50 caliber machine guns and 25 mm cannon.

In general, Caribbean governments and security forces have generally had a positive attitude toward these maneuvers. For example, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and Minister of National Security the Honourable Dr. Timothy Harris reportedly stated "I have been assured that we can therefore expect training components or injects that reflect real world scenarios so that in the face of a real threat, our security forces and emergency response personnel will be able to coordinate seamlessly and in a manner and time that both meet international standards." Similarly, Christian J. Ehrlich, an external analyst at the Strategic Research Institute of the Mexican Navy (Instituto de Investigaciones Estratégicas de la Armada de México), explained to the author that Tradewinds will help improve interoperability between regional navies and coast guards.

Caribbean Threats

The Caribbean's maritime security challenges are very diverse. They include drug trafficking (Washington's primary concern), weapons and human trafficking, illegal fishing, not to mention search and rescue operations. These crimes have been extensively recorded, but it is worth noting that some occurred, somewhat ironically, at the same time that Tradewinds was taking place. For example, in mid-June Her Majesty's Bahamian Ship (HMBS) Durward Knowles, a patrol vessel, intercepted a 50-ft Dominican fishing vessel that was poaching in Bahamian waters. Around the same time, the Dominican Republic chased a speedboat until it stopped in the coast of Pedernales province. Aboard were 351 packets which apparently contained cocaine. A month earlier, in early May, it was the Jamaican Defense Force's turn to catch a vessel at sea, as a ship reportedly intercepted off the coast of Westmoreland had "764.9 pounds of compressed marijuana."

Even more, piracy is becoming a noteworthy problem: in 2017 the organization Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) “recorded 71 incidents in Latin America and the Caribbean. Most incidents in the region occurred in territorial waters, with anchored yachts being the primary targets for attackers.” There were also 16 attacks against tankers and three fishing vessels, among other types of ships. A map prepared by OBP shows a cluster of incidents off the coast of Belize, Colombia, Venezuela as well around the islands of Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Not counted in the report was a late-April 2018 incident along the Guyanese-Surinamese border, where pirates attacked a group of four fishing boats, robbing the crew and killing several of them.

The Status of Caribbean Maritime Forces

Some Caribbean defense forces have attempted to upgrade and expand their maritime fleets in order to take better control of their exclusive economic zone (EEZ). For example, the Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) has acquired several vessels constructed by Damen Shipyard via the Sandy Bottom Project. These include Damen Stan 3007 and Stan Patrol 4207 patrol vessels as well as one Stan Lander 5612 auxiliary transport, roll on-roll off vessel. Similarly in 2016 the Jamaican Defense Force (JDF) upgraded its fleet by receiving two new Stan Patrol 4207 from Damen in 2017. That same year, the JDF received two 38-foot SAFE boats and two 37-foot Boston Whaler vessels, donated by the U.S. More recently, in late July 2018, the Barbados Coast Guard commissioned patrol boat Endurance, a 958Y inshore vessel donated by China earlier this year. The ambitious Sandy Bottom Project notwithstanding, Caribbean defense forces in general have limited defense budgets, hence new platforms, aerial or maritime, are not acquired or modernized regularly. Moreover, the aforementioned examples also highlight the continuous reliance on extra-regional allies for donations in order to expand the naval inventory of these defense forces.

Mr. Ehrlich mentions that greater regional cooperation and interoperability is needed in order to make up for a limited number of platforms and personnel, and in order to decrease the region’s dependence on SOUTHCOM and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Mexican Navy could step up its presence in the Caribbean to help its partners with maritime security, but unfortunately the Mexican Navy seems to be more focused on its Pacific territory.

As a final point, it is important to highlight the troubling scandals regarding regional defense officers that are caught in cahoots with criminals. For example, Colonel Rafael

Collado Ureña of the Dominican Republic's Army, was arrested in mid-2017 in Puerto Rico as he was about to carry out a sale of 12.9 kilograms of cocaine. Around the same time, a member of the Jamaican Defense Force was arrested at Kingston airport as he tried to board a flight to Toronto with 2.8 kilograms of cocaine.

Final Thoughts

Exercise Tradewinds 2018 recently concluded, and hopefully the maneuvers and training exercises that Caribbean forces carried out with counterparts such as those from Canada, Mexico, the UK, and the US, will be helpful for their future patrol and interdiction operations in their respective EEZs. We can also hope that these ongoing exercises, as well as generally cordial regional diplomatic, trade and defense relations, will lead to greater interoperability between regional forces.

While Tradewinds 2018 can be regarded as a success, these maneuvers will have limited positive impact if Caribbean defense forces do not obtain additional funding for new aerial and naval platforms given the size of the Caribbean Sea. Even more, scandals among security personnel, namely their involvement in criminal activities, stain the reputation of regional defense forces and limit the success of any training operations.

Source: cimsec.org, 07 August 2018

Increased tensions in Arctic region pose developing threats: British politicians

LONDON, Aug. 15 (Xinhua) -- The status of the Arctic as an area of low tension cannot be taken for granted, a committee of British politicians said in a major report Wednesday. The House of Commons Defense Committee said Britain must show greater ambition and apply more resources to address the developing security situation in the Arctic and the High North. Their report "On Thin Ice: UK Defense in the Arctic" noted that security environment in the region is being changed with changes of the natural environment. "Although the Arctic has traditionally been an area of low tension, characterized by close multilateral co-operation among the Arctic States, the changing natural environment is being accompanied by a change in the security environment," says the report. It adds: "The retreating ice sheet is making the Arctic more accessible to shipping and is exposing the region's extensive natural resources to exploitation."

British MP Madeleine Moon, who chairs the Defense Sub-Committee, said Britain has previously played a leading role in defending NATO's Northern Flank and in maintaining maritime security in the North Atlantic, adding: "The importance of this role is now returning to significance." The MPs say a new level of ambition backed up by adequate resources is required to meet the developing threats we have identified. The increase in strategic bomber flights over northern airspace and a marked increase in naval activity that projects power from the Arctic into the North Atlantic are among developments that potentially have serious strategic implications for Britain and for NATO, adds the report.

Source: www.xinhuanet.com, 16 August 2018



CAG raises stink over P8I naval aircraft deal done during UPA regime

- Manu Pubby

Tearing apart a \$2.1 billion deal signed by the UPA to procure P8 I maritime reconnaissance aircraft, the central auditor has said in a report that deliberate attempts were made to favour US company Boeing over its Spanish competitor.

In a scathing report, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has said the Boeing was favoured as the defence ministry `enhanced` a financial bid by EADS CASA, Spain to include a 20-year support package as well. This support package was not included in the Boeing offer, hence it turned up to be cheaper, the CAG has said in a report tabled in parliament today. "The contract was concluded with M/s Boeing, USA in January 2009 at MUSD 2,137.54. At a later date, M/s Boeing, USA offered the product support under a separate negotiable contract and consequently the deduced ranking of M/s Boeing, USA as L-1 turned out to be incorrect," the report says. Coming down heavily on the deal, which was inked to meet urgent requirements of the navy for a long range recon platform, the CAG has also said that the Boeing has not met its offset obligations of \$ 641 million till date, despite the contract specifying that all obligations have to be fulfilled by August 2016. More worryingly, the CAG has alleged that the American platform does not fully meet the requirements of the Indian Navy. "Owing to capability limitations of radars installed onboard, the aircraft is not able to achieve the envisaged coverage area requirements," it says. Specifying details, the report says that while torpedoes were procured as part of the deal, a critical ammunition for anti submarine warfare has not been procured even now. "In the absence of 'X' Bombs, the ASW capability of the aircraft could only be partially fulfilled," it says. It also has observations on the limitations of sonabuoy ordered by the Navy. While the CAG observations are scathing, the Indian P8I fleet has seen exceptional service within the Navy and have been deployed on all key missions and exercises. Besides the eight ordered in 2009, India ordered an additional four in 2016 in a \$ 1 billion deal.

Source: economictimes.indiatimes.com, 08 August 2018

New Delhi approves procurement of six next-generation OPVs for Indian Navy

-Rahul Bedi

India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) has approved the procurement of six indigenously designed and built next-generation offshore patrol vessels (NGOPVs) for the Indian Navy (IN) for INR49.41 billion (USD706.4 million) to enhance maritime security.

The MoD's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), which is headed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, sanctioned the procurement of the platforms on 13 August, which are to be fitted with state-of-the art sensors to perform multiple bluewater and littoral protection roles.

The Indian government's Press Information Bureau (PIB) said in a statement that the NGOPVs' tasks will include maritime interdiction, surveillance, mine warfare, anti-piracy missions, seaward defence, protecting offshore assets, and conducting counter-infiltration operations.

Source: www.janes.com, 14 August 2018

US, Malaysian navies strengthen ties with exercises

- Bertil Lintner

The United States and Malaysian navies are conducting their 24th Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) bilateral exercise off Kota Kinabalu, the US Navy News Service reported on August 10. The exercise, which the US conducts regularly with several members of ASEAN as well as Bangladesh, focuses on "the full spectrum of naval capabilities and is designed to strengthen the close partnership between the two navies while cooperatively ensuring maritime security, stability and prosperity," according to the website. Major General Dato Zulkapri bin Rahamat of the Malaysian navy is quoted as saying that the aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability as well as individual capacity to conduct amphibious operations at a tactical level ... "so that we can plan and conduct operations in the region whenever something arises."

What that "something" could be has not been made clear, but Malaysia is one of six countries that lay claim to islands in the South China Sea. The others are China,

Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei and the Philippines – and Kota Kinabalu in the Malaysian state of Sabah is close to some of the disputed area. In June this year, prime minister Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia wanted to continue occupying its islands in the South China Sea. He was then quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying that “China claims the South China Sea as theirs, but those islands have always been regarded as ours for a long time.” China and the South China Sea were not mentioned in the Navy News Service’s dispatch, but Captain Lex Walker, the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7, said the armed forces of Malaysia and the United States “have engaged and exercised with each other in increasingly complex and sophisticated scenarios.”

Source: www.atimes.com, 13 August 2018

Defence ministry approves procurement of next generation offshore patrol vessels

NEW DELHI: The defence ministry today approved a long-pending proposal to procure six indigenously manufactured next generation offshore patrol vessels (NGOPVs) for the Navy at a cost of Rs 4,941 crore, officials said.

The go ahead for the project was given by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the ministry's highest decision making body on procurement. The meeting of the DAC was chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The DAC accorded approval for the procurement of six indigenously designed and manufactured offshore patrol vessels at an approximate cost of Rs 4,941 crore, the officials said. The NGOPVs will be built in Indian shipyards and will be fitted with state-of-the-art sensor suite with increased endurance, they said. These platforms will be used for multitude of operational roles which include protection of offshore assets, maritime interdiction operations and search and seizure operations, surveillance missions, mine warfare and counter infiltration operations, the defence ministry said.

Source: economictimes.indiatimes.com, 13 August 2018

Shipping Corporation of India calls first vessel at Haldia

For the first time ever, Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) deployed its own container vessel at the eastern ports of Haldia and Kolkata by docking her flagship vessel m.v. Lal Bahadur Shastri at Haldia on July 20, 2018. The vessel, of LOA 188.7 m, breadth 28.4 m, DWT 28,803 MT with 1,869 TEUs capacity, is one the biggest containerships to have called Haldia/Kolkata. An exchange of 1,048 TEUs was made on her maiden voyage.

The J. M. Baxi Group's Haldia International Container Terminal (under O&M contract with HDC) is fully geared to efficiently handle bigger vessels with integrated vessel and yard operations and best-in-class equipment backed by professional staff working 24x7.

Mr G. Senthilvel (Deputy Chairman-HDC), Mr Swapan Saharoy (General Manager-Traffic), Mr Debashish Nandi (Deputy General Manager-SCI) and team, with Capt. Sudeep Banerjee (Terminal Head-HICT) exchanged greetings with Capt. Ashok Kumar (Master of the vessel) on her maiden voyage.

Source: steelguru.com, 06 August 2018

India concerned over China's rising investments in Sri Lankan port projects

- Amrita Nair Ghaswalla

As China rushes to invest in more ports in Sri Lanka, India views with concern the Asian neighbour's bid to increase its footprint in the Indo-Pacific region. China also recently gifted a naval frigate to the island nation. "Sri Lanka has started to emerge as the new battleground for the two Asian super powers, India and China. China, Sri Lanka Ports Authority and India are to invest over \$700 million for the development of three key ports over the next three years in Sri Lanka," said a government official. Though no details have been released about the recent frigate that was gifted to Sri Lanka, market observers believe it could be a Type 053 frigate, or even a Type C28A

or C13B corvette, since these three classes are the most common Chinese warships exported to other countries. The official pointed out that though China's inroads into the Indian Ocean region need to be carefully monitored, vessels are regularly handed over as part of military aid packages, and that India, too, has done so in the recent past. Apart from ports in Sri Lanka, India has committed an investment of \$500 million towards the management and operation of two dedicated berths at the Chabahar port in Iran, and has been assisting Myanmar with infrastructure improvement projects at the Sittwe and Paletwa ports. Sources said China could "gain exponentially" through extending financial aid for the development of Sri Lanka's ports.

Though several of China's projects in Sri Lanka have faced censure, concerns have been raised by the US, India and Japan that China might use Sri Lanka as a military base. The next three years are set to see fresh investments in Sri Lanka, both from China and India. While India is to invest \$40 million to upgrade the Kankesanthurai Port in northern Sri Lanka into a commercial port, and has extended financial assistance from the Export Import bank, the Sri Lankan Treasury has reportedly received aid of \$974 million for the Hambantota port project from China, which has already invested \$146 million for port development work.

In January, the Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) approved \$45.27 million in credit for the reconstruction of Sri Lanka's Kankesanthurai Port, which was devastated by the December 2004 tsunami and Cyclone Nisha in 2008. Reports indicate that this brings India's aid for various infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka to \$1.4 billion. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority is to invest \$100 million for the construction of the East Container Terminal, which is part of the master plan of the Colombo Port Expansion Project. Plans are also afoot for the conversion of Galle Harbour into a tourism port. Sri Lanka's maritime sector master plan, developed by Maritime and Transport Business Solutions, a consultancy firm from the Netherlands, and funded by the Asian Development Bank, is said to be nearing completion. As the government looks to promote Sri Lanka's cruise liner business, more infrastructure facilities are also to be added to the Colombo Port, to get more cruise liners to dock there.

Source: www.thehindubusinessline.com, 02 August 2018

India for changes in coastal shipping pact with Bangladesh to push transshipment

-P Manoj

Container shipping lines and port operators are seeking a change in the bilateral coastal shipping agreement signed between India and Bangladesh to permit transshipment of Bangladesh cargo from Indian ports. The India-Bangladesh coastal shipping agreement covers only origin-destination cargo between the two neighbouring countries. “We have started discussions with authorities in Bangladesh to allow transshipment of their cargo from Indian ports,” Capt Deepak Tiwari, Chairman of the Container Shipping Lines Association (CSLA), said. “Chittagong port in Bangladesh is heavily congested; so why not take advantage of that,” he said. The Shipping Ministry will separately pursue an amendment to the pact, a Shipping Ministry official said.

Garment cargo from Bangladesh is currently sent to the UK via the transshipment hubs of Colombo or Singapore. Recently, India denied request from a major UK-based retailer to transship its garment cargo from Bangladesh through Chennai as this was not allowed in the coastal shipping agreement, the Ministry official said. “There is a case for re-visiting the bilateral coastal shipping agreement signed between India and Bangladesh to include transshipment cargo as well,” said Vinita Venkatesh, director, Krishnapatnam Port Container Terminal Pvt Ltd. To facilitate transshipment, Chennai Customs has issued a notice stating that coastal vessels will now get Import General Manifest (IGM)/ Export General Manifest (EGM) rotation number for transshipment containers. Chennai Customs has also given green signal to sea-air transshipment of cargo from Chennai to West Asia based on a proposal from Orient Shipping Line. Besides, the Chennai Customs is evaluating the possibility of allowing transloading (re-stuffing into new containers) of Bangladesh garment cargo for an exporter who wants to transship the cargo to UK via Chennai instead of Singapore, the Ministry official said.

Source: www.thehindubusinessline.com, 06 August 2018

Eased cabotage law helps raise transshipment from Indian ports: Secretary

- Rajesh Ravi

Relaxation of the cabotage law has helped increase transshipment from Indian ports, and by the end of the year, 10% of Indian cargo transshipped abroad would be pulled

back to Indian ports, shipping secretary Gopal Krishna said on Friday. He said the recent policy changes in the shipping sector would help create new entrepreneurs in the coastal and inland shipping sector as the opportunity is huge. The shipping ministry on May 21 lifted restrictions on foreign-registered vessels to transport containers between Indian ports.

Earlier, as per the cabotage law, only ships registered in India were allowed to ply on local routes and foreign ships could operate along the coast only when Indian ships were not available. The policy changes are expected to increase the domestic shipping capacity and bring down cost of coastal transportation. “In the last two-and-a-half months, we have seen substantial number of empty and laden containers transshipped in Indian ports.

In June and July, 3,000 and 5,500 containers, respectively, were transshipped in Indian ports. By the end of the year, 10% of the cargo transshipped abroad will be pulled back,” Krishna said at the sixth edition of the Coastal Shipping and Inland Water Transport Business Conclave 2018 here. He said 4 billion tonne of cargo is transported annually in India through all the modes and the disturbing fact is that transportation through water has been very poor.

Source: www.financialexpress.com, 11 August 2018



MARINE ENVIRONMENT



Clothing, furniture also to blame for ocean and freshwater pollution

Think summer holidays and you'll likely call up images of a beautiful beach or a glittering blue lake. But more and more lakes, rivers and coastal areas are plagued by an oversupply of nutrients that causes algae to grow at an explosive rate, which can eventually lead to water bodies that can't support aquatic life. Scientists call this type of water pollution eutrophication, and it is an enormous problem worldwide: There are more than 400 marine 'dead zones' caused by over-fertilization, covering an estimated 245,000 km², which is an area six times the size of Switzerland. In some water bodies, eutrophication causes huge fish kills and toxic blue green algae blooms, which affects food supply, biodiversity and your favorite swimming spot.

Governments around the globe have battled eutrophication by working with farmers to control nutrient-laden runoff from fields and feedlots. But there's more to the picture, a new study published in *Nature Sustainability* shows. Using a detailed modeling tool called MRIO, a team of researchers identified important, but often overlooked sources of water pollution, namely clothing, and other manufactured products and services. When they did their analysis, the team found that the overall demand for non-food products in 2011 accounted for more than one-third of the nutrients causing eutrophication in both marine and freshwater systems worldwide. This was a 28 percent increase compared to 2000. "Normally we think of food production as being the culprit behind eutrophication. However, if we're trying to fully understand and control eutrophication, ignoring the contributions from other consumer products such as clothing and furniture means that we're only addressing part of cause of the pollution," said Helen Hamilton, a postdoc in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's Industrial Ecology Programme, and first author of the paper. "We need to look at the whole picture to address the whole problem."

Wealthier world, more pollution

Agriculture will most likely always be the most important cause of eutrophication, the researchers said. But as countries develop and people become richer, the amount of money that is spent on food relative to the total GDP decreases. With increased wealth, people have the opportunity to spend their extra cash on products that can also depend

on agriculture in their supply chains, such as textiles, clothing and furniture. A second challenge with goods and services is that they can often have long, complex supply chains across a number of countries before reaching the consumer, the researchers said. "For example, when we buy a shirt that was made in China, it is China and not the consumer that has to deal with the pollution related to producing it. All traded goods have this problem: the place of production and, thus, pollution is often far removed from the consumers," Hamilton said. "This makes it difficult to tackle pollution because the relevant players, such as farmers, policy makers and consumers, are spread across several countries." All those reasons, the researchers say, make it even more important to know how much goods and services contribute to eutrophication worldwide. "From our work, we know that non-food consumption is growing over time and as people get richer. It is, therefore, increasingly important to consider the consumption of clothing, textiles and furniture in our strategies for solving this major ecological problem," she said.

Nitrogen and phosphorus most important

Fertilizer typically contains a mix of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, all of which are vital to plant growth. But when excess fertilizer reaches water bodies, it's mainly the nitrogen and phosphorus that matter in feeding algal blooms. The production of non-food goods, such as clothing, can involve the release of nutrients directly, as when a farmer grows cotton or linen for the fabric to make the clothing. There are also more indirect sources, such as when electricity or another energy source is used to power the factories where the clothing is made. That can release NO_x, oxides of nitrogen, as air pollution which then can be absorbed by the oceans and add to the nutrient load. Knowing the importance of these nutrients and how they can be released in any number of different steps during production gives researchers the ability to nail down when and in which stage of production the pollution occurs.

Eutrophication footprints

By looking at how much nitrogen and phosphorous are released along the entire global supply chain for the product, they can then figure out how much the production of different goods and services contributes to eutrophication. Using their MRIO (which stands for multi-region input output) method, the researchers calculate country-specific "eutrophication footprints", which are simply the sum of all the pollution that occurs worldwide due to a country's consumption. This includes both the pollution that occurs within the country's own borders and the pollution that is generated in

other parts of the world due to the production of imported goods. A good example of this is the EU, Hamilton says. "Our results show that the vast majority of all eutrophication related to the EU's non-food consumption occurs in other regions," she said, a phenomenon that researchers call displacement. "In other words, the EU is generating an enormous amount of pollution in other countries by consuming imported products without having to deal with the consequences," Hamilton said. The researchers found that the EU drives the largest global non-food eutrophication displacements, to the Asia-Pacific region for marine eutrophication and to Africa for freshwater eutrophication.

US, China play a major role in overall eutrophication

Not surprisingly, the US and China have some of the biggest eutrophication footprints, the researchers found --although most of this pollution occurs within their own borders due to the high consumption of domestic goods, both food and non-food. China had the largest non-food eutrophication footprint for marine ecosystems. The country's total marine eutrophication footprint was 8.6 metric tons of nitrogen equivalents, with fully 3 metric tonnes of this attributable to the consumption of both imported and domestically produced non-food goods. "This was also double China's 2000 non-food marine eutrophication footprint, which really exemplifies the recent boom in the Chinese economy," Hamilton said. The researchers also found a similar trend with China's food marine eutrophication footprint, which increased by over 25% from 2000, peaking at 5.4 metric tonnes of nitrogen equivalents in 2011 for marine eutrophication. That's the highest country-level food footprint, Hamilton said. "It was also interesting to look at food-related eutrophication impacts to find trends there as well. In China, population growth combined with changes in diet have certainly contributed towards making them the world leader in food-related eutrophication," says Hamilton. However, when considering total eutrophication, or the sum of both food- and non-food related eutrophication, the U.S. takes the lead. In 2011, the U.S. was the largest overall country-level contributor for both marine and freshwater eutrophication. This is nearly triple its 2000 values, which highlights how much U.S. consumption is growing over time. More than one-third of eutrophication due to clothing, other products

When they looked at the big picture, the researchers found that clothing, goods for shelter, services and other manufactured products accounted for 35% of global marine eutrophication and 38% of the global freshwater eutrophication footprints in 2011, up from 31 and 33%, respectively, in 2000. "By comparison, the global food footprints

only modestly increased by roughly 10% from 2000 to 2011 values," Hamilton said. In the end, from a production standpoint, agriculture is the most important contributor to the problem, accounting for 84% of the total footprints for both marine and freshwater eutrophication. But the researchers pointed out that approximately one-quarter of these agricultural impacts in 2011 were due to non-food consumption. Another important aspect about non-food consumption is that, compared to food, it is also significantly more sensitive to changes in wealth and is more likely to be traded across borders. "Simply put, there are natural limits to how much people can eat. This means that as the population gets richer, diets and food consumption might change a bit, but where we see the biggest increases is with buying other products such as cars, clothing and furniture," Hamilton said. "These are also the products that are easiest to trade around the world because, unlike food, they don't have an expiration date. Therefore, we see much higher pollution displacement with non-food as compared to food."

Wealthy countries can drive improvements in developing countries

As economies develop, this points to the need for trade agreements and policies to consider the displacement of ecosystem impacts, the researchers said. And while the EU has developed frameworks and strategies for tackling eutrophication within Europe, for example, there aren't many policies that integrate international supply chains for addressing eutrophication abroad. "Countries that are responsible for the largest footprints could set consumption-based targets, such as a 40% reduction in the EU's global eutrophication footprint," Hamilton said. "That could help increase the transfer of technology or skills, such as improving fertilizer efficiencies or animal waste management, in producing countries." It also provides consumers in wealthier countries a way to drive improved environmental policies in developing countries, the researchers said, since wealthy regions can more easily afford the resources needed to support the implementation of these policies in developing countries.

Source: www.eurekalert.org, 02 August 2018

Karimunjawa fishermen complain about use of 'cantrang'

At least 60 traditional fishermen from Parang Island of the Karimunjawa Islands in Jepara, Central Java, have voiced their dismay over the continued use of *cantrang* (seine nets), which has destroyed the marine environment, particularly coral reefs that are home to various kinds of fish. Mustaqim, a Parang fishermen, said on Wednesday that the use of *cantrang* had caused problems for small-scale fishermen

in the area for the past two decades, and had significantly decreased their catches. He said that because of the damage done to the coral reefs, where the fishermen usually placed *bubu* (bamboo fish traps), their catches had decreased by up to half. "Even though the government has given us new *bubu*, the *cantrang* will sweep them away easily, like they took the coral reefs," Mustaqim said, referring to the 1,500 *bubu* handed over by the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry, last month. In addition to *cantrang*, small-scale fishermen are also often bothered by the operation of trawlers, which they say has forced them sail up to 100 times farther than previous times, when they only needed to sail several kilometers from the beach.

Fathqul Korib, another Parang fisherman, said that the *bubu* provided by the government were incomparable to the strength of trawls operated from 8 gross tonnage (GT) ships. "On bad days, we only get one or two fish after leaving a *bubu* for a week," he said. Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti issued two regulations in 2015 and 2016 to ban the use of trawlers and *cantrang*, but President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo called on the minister to delay their implementation because of strong opposition from fishermen. Unlike fishermen in Parang, those in other parts of Central Java rely on trawls and *cantrang* to catch fish.

Source: www.thejakartapost.com, 09 August 2018

Water quality deteriorating in sea areas

Water quality in the country's offshore areas is deteriorating, even though the amount of wastewater discharged into the sea dropped last year, a report has found. About 68 percent of water in the country's offshore area was found to be fairly good in 2017, down by 5.6 percentage points from 2016, according to an ecological report on the offshore sea area published by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment on Monday. It said 21 percent of the water from the 195 rivers that flow into the ocean is below Grade V, the lowest level in China's five-tier water quality grading system, up by almost 4 percentage points year-on-year. However, the report also said that the amount of wastewater directly discharged into the ocean dropped by 210 million metric tons from 2016 to about 6.4 billion tons last year. Among the 11 provincial regions in China's coastal areas, the less developed regions topped the water quality ranking, while the relatively developed regions were at the bottom of the report.

Hainan province stood out, with 100 percent of water in its offshore sea area fairly good, encompassing Grade I and Grade II of the four-tier system for ocean water. The

Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region came second with about 91 percent. Shanghai, the country's financial hub, ranked last with only 10 percent of water fairly good, though this was a marked improvement over the previous year when no water in its offshore area was rated at that level. Zhejiang province was the second-worst with only about 23 percent of its water fairly good, according to the report. Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, called on the government to pay more attention to marine pollution, as the country's ocean environment continues to deteriorate. "Marine pollution remains grim in the country," Ma said. He said controlling air pollution has been a government priority in recent years. While more attention is being paid to water pollution, priority has shifted to the treatment of black and odorous water bodies in urban areas and sources of drinking water, he said.

He added that it's noteworthy how quickly the East China Sea is becoming more polluted—a situation mainly related to pollution discharged from nearby land areas and pollutants in rivers. Previously, the State Oceanic Administration was in charge of supervising marine pollution. Many of the pollutants in the sea, however, come from onshore, which falls outside the administration's jurisdiction. Hope has arisen for better management of marine pollution after supervisory responsibility for marine pollution control was transferred to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in an institutional reshuffle initiated by the State Council this year, Ma said.

Source: www.china.org.cn, 08 August 2018

As the Arctic melts, maritime security gets real

- Tamara Dietrich

Hampton Roads residents know full well that the Atlantic is gnawing ever more ferociously at the shore, surging into the streets whenever it gets riled up, and a looming threat, experts say, throughout this century and for more centuries to come. What residents may not know is that, while half of the rise in global sea level is attributed to the simple physics that warming waters expand, the other half is caused by melting polar ice sheets, especially in the Arctic. The Arctic is heating up much faster than the rest of the planet, its vast expanse of sea and land ice shrinking. In fact, its September sea ice has shrunk by half in just 40 years of record-keeping, said Donglai Gong, a physical oceanographer at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point. "What's striking is that, regardless of which month you're looking at, the ice cover is spiraling in towards zero," Gong said. "And we're not too far from zero, actually." When he did the math, extending the last 20-year trend of ice melt into the

future, he deduced that the Arctic Ocean could lose its summer sea ice as early as 2040. “That’s just about 20 years,” Gong said. “So, sometime in our lifetime, the Arctic will be summertime ice-free. How are we going to operate in this new ocean? Humans have never experienced an Arctic Ocean like that.” While many onlookers are salivating at the notion of a new, navigable ocean and the potential for shipping lane shortcuts, oil and gas extraction, fishing, tourism and scientific research, others worry about Arctic nations and others jockeying for territory, maritime conflicts and despoiling one of the last pristine environments on the planet. Gong worries about those issues and more, including how a shift in Arctic weather patterns could be linked to more ferocious hurricanes in middle latitudes, including the mid-Atlantic. Such concerns are shared by others in the sciences, the military and political arenas. As climate change policy expert Sherri Goodman, a senior adviser at the Center for Climate & Security and the first Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Environmental Security, said: “What happens in the Arctic doesn’t stay in the Arctic.”

Coincidence or connection?

Gong and Goodman were among a slate of panelists at a forum last month on “Preparing for a Climate Changed Future” at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. The forum was hosted by the climate and security center and by the college’s Virginia Coastal Policy Center and its Whole of Government Center of Excellence. One particular focus: How a melting Arctic affects other parts of the world, from shifting weather patterns to maritime security. With so little known about that remote and rugged region, scientists say it’s hard to predict much, weather-wise, with any accuracy — not just over decades, but on much shorter time-scales. “We have all experienced winters that seem to be much colder than normal, or warmer than normal,” said Gong. “We have storms moving through our area that seem to be more intense than before. So, what is the connection to that in relation to the Arctic?” Gong believes he may have found one unsettling short-term relationship between the weather in the Arctic and in lower latitudes: hurricanes. At the forum, he pulled up radar images of weather patterns in the Arctic and the U.S. during three severe storms that affected Hampton Roads — hurricanes Isabel and Maria and Superstorm Sandy. The images showed that, as the three hurricanes raged in the mid-Atlantic, there was a strikingly similar “general anomalous warming” in the central and western Arctic. “What’s remarkable to me as I plot this up is the general pattern holds,” said Gong. “I don’t know if it’s a coincidence or whether there’s a dynamical connection, and that’s something to look further into.” Climate scientists have long warned that warming global temperatures can cause hurricanes to grow more severe.

Icebreakers

As environmental impacts on the Arctic region become starker, so do the security implications. The potential for an open Arctic Ocean already has spurred Russia and China to beef up their polar fleets. According to the Navy Times, Russia, which has the world's longest Arctic coastline, already has 46 icebreakers, with 15 more in the pipeline. China, which doesn't have a territorial claim in the Arctic but does have serious ambitions there, has three breakers and a fourth on the way. Compared to those countries, the U.S. is a laggard. The U.S. Coast Guard fleet includes just one heavy icebreaker. A second heavy was disabled by a fire in 2010 and now is being harvested for parts to keep the first one afloat. Both vessels are more than 40 years old — well past their 30-year service life. The Coast Guard also has a medium icebreaker and a light ice-breaking research vessel.

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommended adding six new icebreakers to the fleet to meet mission demands, and earlier this year Congress earmarked \$750 million for a new heavy breaker that would be ready for service in 2023. But that vessel is currently on hold: Homeland Security is reallocating the money to put toward the proposed southern border wall. It's a decision that troubles Heather Conley, senior vice president for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a D.C.-based think-tank. She spoke in June at a congressional subcommittee hearing on maritime transportation. "What concerns me the most," Conley said then, "is that the United States is placing one very big bet that the Arctic will remain of limited strategic value, and that our current, mostly seasonal approach will be sufficient. "Russia and China view the Arctic over the next half-century; we view it in the next budget cycle."

Russia, China

At the Williamsburg forum, John Conger, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment and now director of The Center for Climate & Security, did offer one sign of progress. The U.S. 2nd Fleet, which was merged with U.S. Fleet Forces in 2011, is now being reestablished at Norfolk Naval Base to counter a more active Russian presence in the Atlantic. "And a huge new mission has been given to Norfolk to deal with the Arctic," Conger said. "So it's not just about flooding. The Navy and, in particular, Norfolk has this mission now assigned to them for the 2nd Fleet to have jurisdiction and to have oversight over the Navy's operations in the Arctic. And that's a big deal." And it's about time, said Goodman. "The U.S. really needs

to step up its game in the Arctic,” Goodman said. “Secretary of Defense (James) Mattis said that not too long ago, so it’s not a new refrain. “In 1996, an intergovernmental council of Arctic nations was established consisting of the eight Arctic nations — the U.S., Russia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Canada, Denmark and Iceland — to promote cooperation in the region. Permanent members and observer states, such as China, have been added since. Last year, said Goodman, the Arctic Council agreed on a 16-year moratorium on fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean to enable research and observation. “Cooperation continues to be the norm,” Goodman said, “and we should work as hard as we can to preserve it. But we must prepare for a changing future, because, with the sea ice changing so rapidly and opportunities emerging, there will be competition both for resources and potentially for presence in the region in the future. So we need to increase our presence. We need a clear-eyed view with Russia.” Russia has long had industrial-size cities across the Arctic, where energy and mineral resources provide about 20 percent of its gross domestic product, she said.

The country has also changed its command and control and their ability to do very large-scale “snap” exercises, including in the Arctic, said panelist and retired Rear Adm. David Titley. “Moving tens of thousands of uniformed Russian military personnel on very, very short notice,” Titley said. “This makes our friends in Scandinavian and Nordic countries really quite nervous. “So, of course, if we get nervous, we increase our readiness and Russians increase their readiness and you don’t have to go back through history too far to understand this is not a long-term recipe for success.”

In January, China unveiled its very first Arctic strategy, in which it describes itself as a “near-Arctic nation” with plans to establish a sort of Polar Silk Road, called the Belt and Road Initiative, to link China and Europe through the Arctic Ocean. “So China is a nation to watch and observe,” said Goodman. As for the U.S., she said, the Coast Guard has long had a “robust” Arctic strategy, while the Navy — which has been criticized for showing little interest in the region aside from deploying submarines — is revisiting its Arctic strategy. The Air Force is finally developing one.

‘Whole lot of nothing’

Titley urged action, but with a firm grip on reality. “The operating conditions in the Arctic are still very, very hard and, frankly, unlike any other maritime operating environment that our service forces deal with,” Titley said. “There’s virtually no infrastructure up in the Arctic. There’s a whole lot of nothing up there still. “You have

more open water. Open water plus high winds means big waves. Big waves and temperatures below freezing means a lot of ice buildup. So you get also a lot more erosion on the shore. Tremendous amount of fog and restricted visibility in the summertime. So this is still a very, very, very hard place to work. “U.S. Navy surface ships are not ice-strengthened. I talked to some of the commanding officers we’ve sent up there in joint exercises with the Canadians and the Danes and, frankly, it’s a white-knuckle exercise. They can’t bash up their billion-dollar ship, but they still need to do their mission.” And, he said, while China, Russia and other Arctic nations are working in a “very deliberate fashion” to realize their overall Arctic strategies, the U.S. Department of Defense is still bogged down in “exquisite bureaucracy, studies and road maps.” “But what are we *doing*?” Titley said. “And I would argue we’re not doing very much. ... I think we are at increasing strategic risk of getting caught flat-footed.”

Source: www.dailypress.com, 11 August 2018

New Permit to Allow Cape Cod to Better Address Nitrogen Pollution

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) recently issued a unique “watershed permit” to the four towns sharing the Pleasant Bay watershed, Brewster, Chatham, Harwich, and Orleans. According to state officials, the permit “represents an innovative and flexible permitting approach to support Cape Cod communities’ efforts to address the critical water quality challenges stemming from nitrogen contamination of the Cape’s waterways.” With the dramatic increase in Cape Cod development and population during the past several decades, increasing amounts of nitrogen, primarily from septic systems, has been discharged into the Cape’s waterways, polluting local bays and estuaries and choking off once-abundant marine life. This contamination presents serious environmental impacts and has serious potential economic impact on fishing, shell-fishing, tourism, and property values. To address these challenges, in 2015 Baker certified a plan developed by the Cape Cod Commission aimed at both addressing Cape Cod water-quality issues and restoring those waters to levels where they are able to meet state water-quality standards. The plan, known as the 208 Plan, emphasizes local decision-making to determine the best, most cost-effective solutions rather than those that could otherwise be imposed on communities by the state and federal governments. The plan also encourages communities to share treatment systems to reduce costs, and supports innovation and natural solutions where possible.

In certifying the plan, Baker directed MassDEP to develop a watershed-based permitting program to provide communities flexibility in their efforts to address water-quality issues. “The successful collaboration represents a pioneering effort,” MassDEP commissioner Martin Suuberg said. “We fully expect that this experience will benefit other Cape communities sharing watersheds, and provide them with a clear pathway for developing the most effective, efficient solutions for their communities.”

The four towns sharing Pleasant Bay have, through the Pleasant Bay Alliance, been coordinating actions to address nitrogen contamination for close to two decades. The organization and member towns agreed to participate in a pilot project to evaluate the requirements and benefits of this new approach. The new permit, developed with the assistance of the Environmental Protection Agency, provides a permitting structure that “transcends municipal boundaries and focuses on nitrogen management solutions across an entire watershed.”

The watershed permit will:

Provide the communities an opportunity to employ a greater range of solutions to address their water-quality needs. The permit covers not just traditional wastewater systems, but also alternative approaches, such as fertilizer reduction, inlet restoration, aquaculture or permeable reactive barriers.

Allow communities to get credit for the nitrogen reductions stemming from non-traditional approaches and/or non-traditional technologies, credit they wouldn’t receive through traditional permitting.

Account for the need for long-term strategies, such as this 20-year permit, necessary to address wastewater issues.

Employ an adaptive management approach, acknowledging the uncertainties that may be associated with some projects, and carefully monitoring performance and assessing progress in a transparent fashion, and if necessary, making changes in the approach that may be needed to achieve water quality goals in a timely manner.

Coastal climate change

The state of Massachusetts also recently awarded more than \$3.2 million in funding to support local efforts to proactively plan for and adapt to coastal storm and climate-change impacts, including storm surge, flooding, erosion, and sea-level rise.

These Coastal Resilience grants, provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), are being awarded to Braintree, Chatham, Chelsea and Everett, Dennis, the Duxbury Beach Reservation Inc., Gloucester, Hull, Ipswich, Kingston, Marion, Mattapoisett, Nantucket, Provincetown, Salem, Wareham, and Winthrop. CZM's Coastal Resilience Grant Program provides financial and technical support for innovative local efforts to increase awareness and understanding of climate impacts, plan for changing conditions, redesign vulnerable community facilities and infrastructure, and implement non-structural measures to increase natural storm damage protection, flood and erosion control and community resilience.

Grants can be used for planning, public outreach, analysis of shoreline vulnerability, and for design, permitting, construction and monitoring of projects that enhance or create natural resources to provide increased shoreline stabilization and flood control.

Here is a look at some of the 19 projects recently funded:

Chatham: Prioritized Assessment for Coastal Resiliency and Adaptive Management along Chatham's East-facing Shoreline (\$182,122). The town will use tidal, wave, and sediment transport models to quantitatively evaluate the inlet and tidal channel dynamics at Chatham Harbor/Pleasant Bay. The study will support a detailed analysis of potential shoreline management options that could sustain the east-facing Chatham shoreline over the next 20-30 years.

Duxbury Beach Reservation Inc.: Duxbury Beach Dune Restoration Project (\$500,000). The nonprofit entrusted with preserving a natural recreational beach for the public will build a 3,600-foot-long dune restoration project between the first and second crossovers on Duxbury Beach to improve the resilience of the barrier beach system and provide storm surge and wave protection to the Duxbury Beach access road and the communities of Duxbury and Kingston.

Hull: Nature-Based Solutions for Community Resilience on North Nantasket Beach (\$142,011). The town will develop conceptual designs to enhance the resiliency and protective value of the coastal beach and dune system on North Nantasket Beach, including both near-term dune rehabilitation strategies and long-term, large-scale beach and dune nourishment.

Kingston: Monitoring and Maintenance of a Living Shoreline Project at Gray's Beach (\$50,000). The town will develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring procedure to help ensure the establishment and long-term sustainability of a recently completed salt marsh and dune restoration project at Gray's Beach Park.

Marion: Assessing the Threats from Climate Change to Marion's Vulnerable Wastewater Pumping Infrastructure (\$93,660). The town will evaluate the vulnerability of its wastewater pumping stations and related infrastructure to storm surge and sea level-rise impacts and recommend improvements and future actions to reduce risk to the pumping stations.

Mattapoissett: Construction of Mattapoissett's Potable Water Infrastructure at the Pease's Point Water Main Crossing (\$498,750): The town will relocate an existing water main that traverses an inlet between Pease's Point and Point Connett to a more landward and deeper location to help ensure that service and water quality will be maintained during storm events and future sea-level rise.

Wareham: Installation of Bypass Connection at Cohasset Narrows and Hynes Field Pump Stations (\$153,375). The town will install mechanical sewer bypass connections at the Hynes and Cohasset Narrows pump stations to allow the pump stations to immediately continue servicing critical infrastructure facilities in the event of a catastrophic flood event. The town will also prepare design plans for a third bypass connection at the Narrows pump station.

Wareham: Resiliency Assessment of Overflow Lagoons at the Wareham Water Pollution Control Facility (\$63,750). The town will determine the additional storage capacity needed at the WPCF overflow lagoons for heavy precipitation and peak flow conditions with elevated groundwater due to sea-level rise. The town also will evaluate potential modifications to the lagoons to prevent excessive wastewater discharging into the Agawam River during flood events.

Source: www.ecori.org, 10 August 2018



Worries grow in Singapore over China's calls to help 'Motherland'

- Amy Qin

SINGAPORE — Growing up in Singapore, Chan Kian Kuan always took pride in his Teochew heritage — the dialect, the cultural traditions and the famous steamed fish. But after visiting his ancestral village in Teochew, in Guangdong Province, China, and seeing the progress there, he became truly proud to be not just Teochew, but also Chinese. “It’s very messy. We are Chinese, but we are Singaporean, too,” said Mr. Chan, vice president of the Teochew Poit Ip Clan Association in Singapore. “When China becomes stronger, we feel proud. China is like the big brother.” As a young country made up mostly of immigrants, Singapore has for decades walked a fine line between encouraging citizens like Mr. Chan to connect with their cultural heritage and promoting a Singaporean national identity. But there are growing concerns here that a rising China could tip that carefully orchestrated balance by seeking to convert existing cultural affinities among Singaporean Chinese into loyalty to the Chinese “motherland.” Confident in its fast-growing political and economic clout, China has become increasingly assertive in its efforts to appeal to the vast Chinese diaspora to serve the country’s national interests and gain influence abroad. Already, there has been evidence of the Chinese Communist Party’s attempts to manipulate political activity among Chinese populations in countries like Canada, the United States and Australia. And with ethnic Chinese constituting nearly 75 percent of Singapore’s population of 5.6 million, some scholars and former diplomats worry that this island nation could be an especially tantalizing target for the Chinese government’s influence efforts. “For us, it is an existential issue; the stakes are extremely high,” said Bilahari Kausikan, a former permanent secretary of Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one of the most outspoken voices in the country on the subject of Chinese interference. “China’s rise is a geopolitical fact that everyone must accept,” Mr. Kausikan said. “But it’s a very small step in my mind from cultural affinity for China to the idea of Chinese superiority. We are only 53 years old. It’s not guaranteed that every Singaporean Chinese would not be tempted either consciously or unconsciously to take that step.”

Last month China's ambassador to Singapore took the rare step of publicly rebutting recent remarks made by Mr. Kausikan in which he raised an alarm about what he called China's covert "influence operations."

"We uphold the principles of peaceful coexistence and champion global fairness and justice," the ambassador, Hong Xiaoyong, wrote in an op-ed in *The Straits Times*, an English-language newspaper. "We oppose the big bullying the small and interference in others' internal affairs. This is what China has said, and this is also what China has been doing." "China respects Singapore's achievements in maintaining racial and religious harmony," he added. "It has no intention of influencing Singaporeans' sense of their national identity and will never do so." One example of how on-edge Singaporean officials have been came to light last year when the government expelled Huang Jing, an American academic born in China, for what it said was his covert effort to influence Singapore's foreign policy on behalf of an unnamed foreign government — widely believed to be China. The expulsion came amid heightened tensions between Singapore and China over territorial issues relating to the South China Sea.

Mr. Kausikan and others are also concerned about China's subtler influence efforts in Singapore, including appeals to sentimental "flesh and blood" ties to China.

In recent years, China has stepped up people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, helping to organize conferences bringing together overseas Chinese, arranging visits for Singaporean Chinese to their ancestral villages and coordinating study abroad programs and "roots-seeking camps" for young Singaporeans. These kinds of programs are not unique to China, of course. The camps, for example, bear some similarity to Israel's popular Birthright program. They are often arranged and paid for in part by Chinese government agencies like the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office.

In a description of one such camp held this year, participating Singaporean students were promised a full itinerary of activities including lessons in Chinese calligraphy and history. At another camp, in 2014, the schedule included learning the martial art of tai chi and singing Communist "red" songs.

In recent years, officials affiliated with the Communist Party's United Front Work Department — a powerful Chinese agency responsible for winning hearts and minds abroad — have also visited Singapore with the aim of strengthening ties with the local

Chinese. “My cellphone is on 24 hours a day,” Hong Guoping, then head of the United Front in the Xiang’an district in Fujian Province, told a group of Singaporean Chinese affiliated with that district in 2013. “My fellow countrymen can call me at any time. I’m happy to serve everyone.”

In a sign of the growing emphasis on building diaspora ties, it was announced this year that the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office would come under the purview of the United Front Work Department. “A more generous reading is that these are people-to-people exchanges,” said Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore, “and a more skeptical reading is that it’s an effort by China to exert soft-power influence.” Some scholars have highlighted what they call a worrying trend that has seen China increasingly blurring the distinction between huaqiao (Chinese citizens overseas) and huaren (ethnic Chinese of all nationalities). At an overseas Chinese work conference last year, President Xi Jinping stressed the need to bring together people of Chinese descent around the world — up to 60 million ethnic Chinese in more than 180 countries — to enjoy the “Chinese dream.” “The realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires the joint efforts of Chinese sons and daughters at home and abroad,” said Mr. Xi, according to Xinhua, China’s state-run news agency. Scholars say the focus on strengthening ties with overseas Chinese signals a major shift away from Beijing’s previous, more hands-off approach to diaspora relations.

“There is a sense that the emphasis now is on how all ethnic Chinese share a similar origin and therefore should be more sympathetic to a P.R.C. perspective,” said Professor Chong, referring to the People’s Republic of China. In some Western countries, China has already successfully mobilized local groups like Chinese businessmen, Chinese students and Chinese-language media, using them as proxies to rally against anti-Chinese views or to whip up support for Beijing’s line on contentious issues like the Dalai Lama or Taiwan. Frequently, the result has been a negative and often xenophobic anti-Chinese backlash. Many overseas Chinese have said they are now being unfairly subject to a cloud of suspicion simply for being associated with China. “When you start reaching out to people on the basis of race and blood, it becomes unacceptable to other governments,” said Wang Gungwu, a former chairman of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. “On the other hand, Beijing thinks it is natural to do so. And that is where the conflict lies, however unintended the consequences may be.” As the only country outside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan to have a majority-Chinese population, Singapore is in a unique position. Wary of being seen as a fifth column of China, the country under Prime Minister Lee

Kuan Yew went out of its way after gaining independence in 1965 to assert its sovereignty — making it a point to be the last country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish diplomatic ties with China.

At the same time, the government sought to build a Singaporean national identity based on multiracialism, equality and meritocracy. English is the country's official working language. But Singapore finds itself continually needing to remind officials in Beijing that it is not a Chinese country. Last year, for example, not long after China unveiled a gleaming new center to promote Chinese culture here, Singapore countered by opening a sprawling \$110 million, 11-story Singapore Chinese Cultural Center in the heart of the financial district. The message was clear: Singaporean Chinese culture is not the same as Chinese culture. And China's efforts to gain influence in Singapore are by no means one way. Recognizing the economic potential after China's opening up in the 1980s, Singapore has also gone out of its way to play up its shared Chinese heritage.

In the late 1970s, for example, the government started a language campaign to encourage young Singaporean Chinese to learn Mandarin — China's official language — instead of their native Chinese dialects, with an eye to facilitating greater business opportunities. Every year, the country also hosts numerous performances by Chinese entertainers, particularly during the annual Chinese New Year celebrations. Last year, Singapore was China's top foreign investor — a status many here proudly attribute to the country's ability to act as a gateway between China and the West.

“You could say Singaporeans are even more proactive than the Chinese” in building ties between the two countries, said Mr. Chan of the Teochow Poit Ip Clan Association. Not everyone is convinced that China will succeed in winning the loyalty of Singaporean Chinese, which are a large and fragmented population.

Young Singaporean Chinese as well as those who studied in the country's former English education system, for example, often have only a vague notion of China and limited Chinese-speaking abilities. Then there is the large influx of immigrants from China in recent years, which has sharpened the perceived differences between the two countries. “Maybe some people who go back to their ancestral village and see all the progress being made might feel their heartstrings being tugged, but at the end of the day, they would never look at it and think this is home,” said Pang Cheng Lian, the editor of the book “50 Years of the Chinese Community in Singapore.” Then again, when it comes to strengthening its influence abroad, China has proved that it is both patient and persistent. “They are not eager to have immediate results,” said Leo

Suryadinata, a visiting senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, “because Beijing’s view is always the long-term view.”

Source: www.nytimes.com, 05 August 2018

India and Indonesia: Strengthening Maritime Relations

-Sahima Gupta

India and Indonesia are maritime neighbours with a symbiotic relationship which can be utilised towards developing maritime cooperation in the region. The distance between India's Andaman Islands and Indonesia's Aceh is not more than 80 nautical miles. Additionally, the fact that the Indian naval ships have been making visits to Indonesia ports and coordinated patrolling of the sea for many years, just shows that the existing relations are already stable.

As a maritime nation, India with a coastline of 7,516 km is in a pivotal position in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) overlooking the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) that connect Asia to Africa, Europe, and in some cases the east coast of the Americas. In comparison, Indonesia with a coastline of 108,000 km overlooks the Straits of Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda, which connect the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Given the geographic advantage accrued jointly by both nations the strengthening of their relationship is considered important for regional peace, stability, economic growth, and prosperity.

This understanding and the realization of the requirement for strengthening the relations between the two countries led to the adoption¹ of the ‘Shared Vision on Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region’ on 30th May 2018, during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Jakarta

The main highlight of the visit was the agreement to develop the Port of Sabang in the Aceh Province, 104 nm from Indira Point (the southernmost point of India), and 376 nm from Port Blair. The prospects of future constructive engagement were further highlighted when President Joko Widodo stated that, "India is a strategic defense partner...and we will continue to advance our cooperation in developing infrastructure, including at Sabang Island and the Andaman Islands.”

For India, the strengthening of the relation with its maritime neighbour is beneficial in several ways. Firstly, it would result in port infrastructure development; Secondly, aid the concept of Freedom of Navigation (FoN); Thirdly, strengthen interoperability

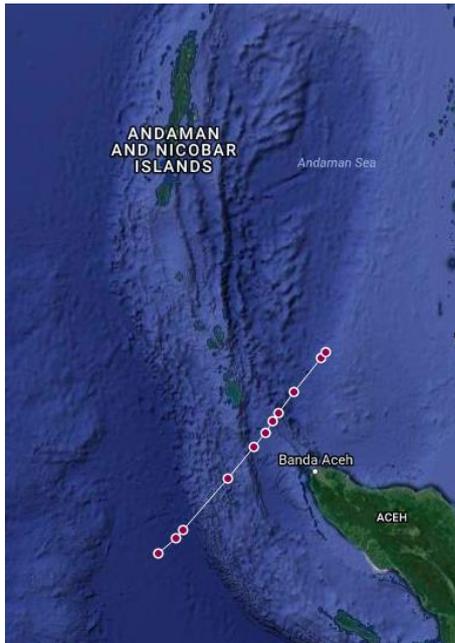
while ensuring regional security and; Fourthly, greatly aid economic development in the Bay of Bengal.

In order to have a healthy and productive engagement between both the nations it is necessary to find convergence area. In the case of India and Indonesia the convergence factor can be provided by two policies; SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) under India's Act East Policy and Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF). While GMF serves to improve the inter-island connectivity and also ensure greater participation of Indonesia in the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Modi's flagship project SAGAR works towards enhancing India's engagement with her maritime neighbours.

Another convergence aspect that merits attention is found in the shared vision for the Indo-Pacific document, specifically both nations believe in “free, open, transparent, rules-based, peaceful, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, where sovereignty and territorial integrity, international law, in particular, UNCLOS, freedom of navigation and overflight, sustainable development and an open, free, fair and mutually beneficial trade and investment system are respected.” The document also talks about the importance of Blue Economy for both the countries as it can help in their sustainable development and growth.

There have also been talks about enhancing the existing naval cooperation, which presently comprises of Coordinated Patrols and the institutionalized bilateral naval exercises. However, there is one existent grey area relating to the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the EEZ, the resolution of which would further cement the relationship.

In 1947, there was an agreement between both the nations demarcating the continental shelf between Great Nicobar Island and Sumatra (see map 1). Thirty years later in 1977, the revised treaty decided to extend the continental shelf to the Andaman Sea and the Indian Ocean. In terms of economic rights, on the continental shelf, a State has the right just over the non-living resources and activities such as installing structures and drilling.



Map 1: Continental shelf boundary between India and Indonesia based on 1974 and 1977 agreements.

Source: Google Maps

Until this juncture the agreements were clear without any issue. However, things changed after the introduction of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which gave states special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources. As per UNCLOS Article 56 in the EEZ the coastal state has, "sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). Even after the introduction of EEZ, the agreement between India and Indonesia remained unchanged, which provided rights ***only over non-living resources and not living resources***. This issue needs to be resolved to firstly avoid any future differences over the rights, and secondly to keep in the spirit of UNCLOS and thus maintain respect for a rules-based order in the region.

The two countries are yet to settle the EEZ boundary demarcation. Given that this issue is still not resolved, the fish resources in the extension (from the Continental Shelf line) belong to Indonesia, while the oil and gas resources and the sedentary species such as sea cucumber (which constitute the Continental Shelf resources) belong to India. Recently Jakarta showed interest in signing an agreement which would delimit the EEZ. In an interview with The Wire on 30 May 2018 the Director General for Legal Affairs and International Treaties, Indonesia, Damos D. Agusman said that "We agreed to an agreement on the continental shelf in 1974. At that time, EEZ did not yet

exist. After UNCLOS, EEZ was born, and we need to delimit it.” In order to resolve this issue, both the nations have commenced bilateral talks and have also held meetings.

The inclusion of living resources was not the only issue that was raised after the introduction of EEZ. UNCLOS limits the distance between the Continental shelf and EEZ to 200 nm. However, the continental shelf can be extended (to 350 nm) after submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). Also, if the distance between two countries is less than 400 nm, then the boundary (for the continental shelf and EEZ) is decided by bilateral negotiations. For India and Indonesia, the Indira Point in Andaman and Nicobar Island and Banda Aceh in Indonesia have a distance of just 80 nm.

The issue of delimitation needs to be well debated and discussed; and will therefore take time. A cogent and pragmatic approach in the spirit of UNCLOS will not only help set an example of respect for and adherence to international law, but also strengthen relations between these two maritime neighbours. This strengthening of relations could also aid stability and balance of power in the maritime expanse of the Indo-Pacific region.

Source: maritimeindia.org, 03 August 2018

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation- The Maritime Potential of a Continental Construct

-Adarsh Vijay

With its vast geographic spread accounting for 22 per cent of the world’s landmass and 40 per cent of its population, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), established in 2001, is the world’s largest regional organisation and is often construed as an Asian response to the West’s domination of international fora. As the successor to the erstwhile “Shanghai Five”, founded in 1996, the platform’s geopolitical agenda has remained predominantly focused upon the land-locked Central Asian region. Has that made the SCO essentially a continental construct and negated its potential in the maritime domain? This article is an attempt to examine the avenues of maritime cooperation in the SCO and the hurdles in the way of capitalising upon these opportunities.

Since its inception, the general trend in and around the SCO has been to fashion a continental alliance within the Eurasian landmass. However, the inclusion of India

and Pakistan as full members into the mechanism in 2017, has added to its maritime character. With this new overture, half of the eight-member body, along with Russia and China, possess approximately 60,176 km of coastline. However, has it enhanced the scope of the SCO's activities or does it challenge the organisation's original vision? The answer to this hinges on the degree of consensus and mutual confidence that the member States have been able to build thus far.

The genesis of the SCO is primarily attributed to existing regional insecurities, with China and Russia coming into an uneasy coexistence based largely upon their shared concerns regarding border management and domestic ethno-national insurgencies such as the Uyghur uprising in China. A meeting of the top security officials of the member States, in May 2018, identified the need for cooperation in the area of counter-insurgency operations, drug trafficking, and transnational crimes. All this notwithstanding, the presence of maritime-configured States within the grouping will, in all probability, lead to an eventual reorientation of their security concerns, forcing them to transcend their present 'continental mindset'. For instance, the inclusion of India and Pakistan has brought security threats emanating from- or within- the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) into the SCO's area of interest. In this regard, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), a subset of SCO, would need to redesign its framework in order to respond collectively to this expanded set of asymmetric threats.

The economic mandate of the SCO can also not forever exclude the maritime interests of its constituent member-States. According to a 2014 report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *"the ocean economy can be defined as the economic activity which directly or indirectly uses the sea as an input whereas the coastal economy represents all economic activity which takes place in a specific coastal region"*. The provision of an *"indirect"* use of sea, as provided in the definition, offers the possibility of instituting a 'blue economy' template under the SCO's ambit, with its landlocked members remaining important stakeholders. Even though Central Asian member States do not have access to the open oceans, they nevertheless have a significant market potential relevant to their maritime counterparts, all of which underlines the scope of 'blue' growth.

The Ashgabat Agreement (2011), to which India acceded in February 2018, would create a multi-modal transit and transport corridor between Central Asia and the

Persian Gulf. Amongst the four signatories, India and Uzbekistan are full members of the SCO, while Iran is an ‘observer’. On similar lines, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) agreement between India, Iran and Russia, provides for a 7,200 km multi-modal transport corridor, through ship, rail and road networks, which could, in due course, be brought within the purview of the SCO.

Despite this evidently adequate rationale for the institutionalisation of a maritime mandate, the achievement of consensus among the member States on forging a maritime identity seems remote at present due to some crippling factors. The long-standing unresolved political problems and mutual acrimony between India and Pakistan is one such factor, which severely constrains the likelihood of maritime convergence amongst the SCO’s most prominent Indian Ocean constituents. The trust-deficit between India and China, arising from their explicitly incongruent roadmaps for a reformed international order, further reduces the SCO’s value as an institution capable of producing a grand cohesive regional order. Most recently, India also refused to give support to the CPEC during the 18th SCO Summit held at Qingdao in June 2018. Although India and China ventured into the second edition of their bilateral ‘Maritime Security Dialogue’ on 13 July 2018, the future of a stable cooperation between these two Asian powerhouses remains unclear. Therefore, under the present circumstances, the maritime domain remains a difficult one in which the ‘Shanghai Eight’ could navigate. The bilateral concerns of the member States assume primacy over the organisation’s vision. The availability of a large coastal geography would not, in and of itself, guarantee the maturing of the SCO’s maritime character or potential. The ‘Shanghai Spirit’ must tread a long and challenging path towards the oceans.

Source: maritimeindia.org, 07 August 2018

Strengthening regional partnerships with Indo-Pacific Endeavour

HMA Ships *Adelaide* and *Toowoomba* are on their way to the Solomon Islands capital of Honiara; and concurrently, HMAS *Success* will visit Rabaul in Papua New Guinea. The deployment is one of the most significant annual regional engagement activities for the Australian Defence Force. IPE Task Group Commander, Captain Jim Hutton, said the visits would build on Australia’s long history of defence co-operation in the region and contribute to the nation's shared interest in building regional peace and

security. "These visits are an important opportunity for us to work with our closest neighbours to learn from each other to build interoperability between our nations," CAPT Hutton said. The Australian contingent includes a platoon of Australian soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and US Marines attached to the Marine Rotational Force based in Darwin. IPE also provides an opportunity to conduct women in leadership workshops, provide medical training, and work with communities to rejuvenate local schools will be very special for the crews of *Adelaide*, *Toowoomba* and *Success*. But more importantly, these activities support our mutual interests in a safer more prosperous region." As part of the visit, the crews will stand side-by-side with their Pacific and US partners to commemorate the loss of HMAS *AE1*, Australia's first submarine, which sank off the coast of Rabaul in 1914, and the sinking of HMAS *Canberra* during the WWII Pacific campaign. These port visits follow successful engagement activities and military training exercises during port visits in Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. CAPT Hutton said, "They're also a chance for us to give back to communities who have welcomed us to their home with open arms." *Adelaide* and *Toowoomba* are due to arrive in Honiara on 17 August. *Success* is due to arrive in Rabaul on 16 August. The Joint Task Group ships are due to return to Australia after the regional port visits.

Source: www.defenceconnect.com.au, 16 August 2018

US wants to remain 'Partner of Choice' in South America

- Carla Babb

High-profile U.S. officials have visited South America in recent weeks to signal strength in inter-American alliances amid U.S. competitors' increased interest in the region. Speaking to reporters while traveling to Brazil Sunday, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said Russian and Chinese involvement in South America has had "zero impact" on military-to-military relationships with America's Latin partners. Mattis said the United States supports "sovereign decisions by sovereign states," while also cautioning against potentially damaging "inroads by other nations." "There's more than one way to lose sovereignty in this world. It's not just by bayonets. It can also be by countries that come in bearing gifts and large loans...piling massive debt on countries knowing they know will not be able to repay it," Mattis said, in what appeared to be a jab at Chinese loans to countries like Venezuela and the Philippines. Chinese influence in Latin America grows from a "larger commercial perspective" to "feed Chinese demand back home," which Beijing then leverages to broaden security

collaboration, the director of the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center, Jason Marczak, told VOA.

Russia's role, however, "is specifically to undermine U.S. security interests," Marczak said. Moscow has been providing weapons to countries like Nicaragua and Venezuela, where police regularly abuse and arrest citizens protesting against the government.

'Partner of choice'

Mattis's trip to the region follows a visit by the top Navy admiral, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson to Colombia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil. In an exclusive interview with VOA, Richardson said the U.S. military, and especially the U.S. Navy, wants to make sure that it is the "security partner of choice" for Latin America. "We want to be that stable, steady, committed team that will be there for one another when the chips are down," Richardson told VOA. The U.S. Navy has been partnering with Latin American allies to combat illicit trafficking, particularly as it pertains to narcotics. Allies are also mindful of transnational types of terror threats, with partners in the Caribbean keeping a close watch for piracy, a crime Richardson called "terrorism at sea."

Officials say other security areas are ripe for inter-American military cooperation, from humanitarian missions to cybersecurity. Richardson said he believed shared values among inter-American militaries could help deepen transparency across their governments. "The stability that these security relationships provide offers a lot of flexibility for the other elements of national power, whether those be diplomatic or economic," Richardson said. About a month before of Richardson's visit, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence also spent a week in South America. Pence said on Twitter that he highlighted "opportunities for stronger economic and security relationships" during the trip while bringing renewed attention to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Refugees fleeing violence in Venezuela have poured over the border into Brazil and Colombia, two of the stops on Secretary Mattis's South America tour. Mattis will also travel to Argentina and Chile.

Source: www.voanews.com, 13 August 2018

China riled by the Indo-Pacific construct

- B. R. Deepak

Indo-Pacific Strategy is the outcome of the shift of power from the West to the East. Chinese academics, like others, have attributed the coinage of the “Indo-Pacific” construct to Gurpreet S. Khurana, who first explained it as a concept in an academic paper titled “Security of Sea Lines: Prospects for India-Japan Cooperation” published in the Strategic Analysis in January 2007. The construct referred to a maritime space stretching from the littorals of East Africa and West Asia, across the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean, to the littorals of East Asia. The term didn’t find much currency in the Chinese discourse—even if it was referred to by the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe during his speech to Indian parliamentarians in August 2007—for they believed that India was out of the Asia-Pacific construct and since when it became a Pacific or an Indo-Pacific country? Irrespective of Chinese reservations, the construct has been readily accepted by the Indian strategic community and the national leadership alike.

China started to feel discomfort as the construct started to appear in the official discourses of governments. It appeared in “Defending Australia and its National Interests”, a defence white paper issued by the Australian government on 13 May 2013, where the term was referred to as many as 56 times. The paper referred to it as a new “strategic arc” and “system” in which the US ally, Japan will remain a “major power”, with India playing an “increasingly influential role”. In June 2013, the idea of the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor was conceptualized during the US-India Strategic Dialogue of 2013 in New Delhi. The joint statement that was issued at the end of the dialogue reaffirmed India and the United States’ shared vision for peace and stability in Asia and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Both “reaffirmed the importance of maritime security, unimpeded commerce and freedom of navigation, and the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes in accordance with international law”. In the joint statement issued during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s US visit in June 2017, India and the US pledged to promote stability across the Indo-Pacific region, increasing free and fair trade, and strengthening energy linkages. Similar statements emanated from the first and the second quadrilateral talks between Japan, India, the US and Australia in 2017 and 2018, however, the construct of Indo-Pacific must not be confused with the formation of the “Quad”. More recently, during the Indo-Pacific Business Forum held in Washington, Donald Trump’s administration announced \$113.5 million in immediate funding to seed new strategic initiatives in

areas such as enhancing US private investment, improving digital connectivity and cybersecurity, promoting sustainable infrastructure development, and strengthening energy security and access.

References to “free and open Indo-Pacific” have often been interpreted as countering China’s assertiveness in the South-China Sea and the Indian Ocean Region with willing and able US allies in the region. Since the US has deemed China as a “coercive”, “revisionist” power following “predatory” economic policies, and with India being projected as a “lynchpin” in the US strategy, China has denounced the Indo-Pacific Strategy as a containment theory aimed at diminishing China’s geopolitical and economic influence. Undoubtedly, the Indo-Pacific Strategy is the outcome of the balance of power shifting from the West to the East. It has been estimated that by 2050 the region will account for over 80% of the global GDP.

Earlier in May, when the US renamed its Pacific Command (PACOM) as US Indo-Pacific Command (USIPC), China reacted strongly in an editorial published by the Chinese edition of the Global Times, saying that the “two long-term goals of the United States’ Indo-Pacific Strategy is the mutual strategic depletion of China and India”. It compared the strategy to “a big pit”, which it said, would bury the rise of both China and India. Chinese scholars such as Yang Rui and Wang Shida from the Communication University of China and China Institute of Contemporary International Relations posit that India will continue to readjust its policies to best serve the Indo-Pacific Strategy, so as to realise the “dream of becoming a great power”, meanwhile, counter China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” and “balance China’s rise” by joining the US and other countries. Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University’s Institute of International Relations says that the main purpose of US’ Indo-Pacific Strategy is to establish an Indo-Pacific geopolitical order that targets China on the one hand, and formulates a trade rule, centred on the US on the other. As regards the US injecting \$113.5 million in the region, Chinese academics see the security in command shifting to economy in command in the Indo-Pacific, but are still sceptical of the US and its allies committing investment in the region. Ma Xiaolin, a professor at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, has snubbed it as the “economic edition” of the Indo-Pacific Strategy working in tandem with its “military edition” in the region, the main motive of which remains to counter China’s “Belt and Road Initiative”. Prof Ma has pronounced it as the “barking dogs seldom bite” phenomenon. According to him, since the Indo-Pacific region overlaps with China’s “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, Southeast and South Asian countries eagerly want to board the “Belt and Road” ship and improve their lot. China’s strong economic ties with the

ASEAN, irrespective of its disputes with various member states in the South China Sea, will make it difficult for the Southeast Asian and smaller South Asian countries to forgo their interests, believe Chinese scholars.

As far as India is concerned, they still question India's relevance in the Indo-Pacific strategy. In the words of Zhang Feng, an adjunct professor at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, India, undoubtedly is an Indian Ocean country. When did it become a "Pacific country" or an "Indo-Pacific country"? According to him, India's primary concerns are in the Indian Ocean, therefore, its strategy is the "Indian Ocean Strategy" and not the "Indo-Pacific Strategy"; and it is merely because of the confluence of its "Act East Policy" and Southeast Asia that it has endorsed the Indo-Pacific Strategy. He argues that the bottlenecks in India's strategic capability have limited India's investment in the South China Sea and Pacific region. He believes that India rejoining the Quad was the outcome of its malevolent relations with China before and during the Doklam confrontation. Post the Doklam truce, especially after the Narendra Modi-Xi Jinping unofficial summit in Wuhan, China appears to be very positive about what Prime Minister Modi spoke at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

Was it a rebalancing of India-China relations at the unofficial summit or was India being sensitive towards Chinese sensitivities? Or was it about the differing perceptions on Indo-Pacific and India's own vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), which made Prime Minister Modi make it clear during his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue that "India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members? Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country"? India's vision for Indo-Pacific, according to the Chinese, is a positive one. And, why not when the "six elements" such as openness, inclusivity, common prosperity and security, globalization and connectivity, except "freedom of navigation", largely conform to the Chinese notion of the "new type of international relations" and "community of shared future" paradigm? Indo-Pacific Strategy is certainly not limited to the Quad, as it has already incorporated Mongolia and Indonesia in it, with many more likely to join. The security and economic engagement of the US and its partners in the Indo-Pacific will continue to make China nervous, however, integrating security, economic, and development investments still may be a difficult task.

Source: www.sundayguardianlive.com, 18 August 2018