



# MAKING WAVES

*A maritime news brief covering:*

- **MARITIME SECURITY**
- **MARITIME FORCES**
- **SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY**
- **MARINE ENVIRONMENT**
- **GEOPOLITICS**

**EDITED BY:**

**Capt Sarabjeet S Parmar**

***execdir.nmf@gmail.com***

**Mr. Oliver N Gonsalves**

***associatefellow1.nmf@gmail.com***

# CONTENTS

---

<b>MARITIME SECURITY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>US NAVY CARRIER STRIKE GROUPS TEAM UP IN BACK-TO-BACK DUAL CARRIER OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC TO SEND A MESSAGE TO RIVALS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COULD THE INDIA–CHINA BORDER CONFLICT LEAD TO A NAVAL WAR? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MISSION SAGAR: INS KESARI ARRIVES IN KOCHI .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>INDIA-JAPAN NAVAL EXERCISES: A MESSAGE FOR CHINA? .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>US AND CHINESE NAVAL EXERCISES OVERLAP IN SOUTH CHINA SEA.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>DODGING VIRUS, NAVY SHIPS BREAK RECORD FOR STAYING AT SEA.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>MARITIME FORCES.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>RUSSIA’S NEWEST SUBMARINE CAUGHT IN UNUSUAL SATELLITE IMAGE... </b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HUNDREDS OF PARATROOPERS DROP IN FROM ALASKA .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA SEEKS LONG-RANGE MISSILES IN INDO-PACIFIC DEFENCE SHIFT .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PLA NAVY DESTROYER FLOTILLA EXECUTE MARITIME OPERATION IN SOUTH CHINA SEA.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>‘WHY HAS INDIAN NAVY BEEN MUTE SPECTATOR TO HAL’S ALLEGATION?’ .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SHIPBUILDERS TO DELIVER NUCLEAR-POWERED AKULA-CLASS SUB TO RUSSIAN NAVY AFTER UPGRADE .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ZERO CARBON SHIPPING RESEARCH CENTRE LAUNCHED BY MAERSK AND INDUSTRY .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>JAPAN BETS BIG ON MOZAMBIQUE LNG .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CHENNAI-ANDAMAN &amp; NICOBAR ISLANDS SUBMARINE CABLE PROJECT GETS KEY CLEARANCE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>IRELAND PUBLISHES MARINE SPILL RESPONSE PLAN .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>ABU DHABI PORTS’ UNIT SIGNS MoU TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>MARINE ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BOAT PULLS 103 TONNES OF TRASH FROM PACIFIC OCEAN, SETS NEW WORLD RECORD FOR LARGEST HAUL .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>NORNICKEL: RUSSIA PROBES NEW POLLUTION AT ARCTIC MINING FIRM ....</b>	<b>24</b>

<b>MEXICO, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA WILL STRENGTHEN COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>GEOPOLITICS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>AMID MILITARY STAND-OFF WITH CHINA, INDIA GETS FRANCE'S ASSURANCE OF 'STEADFAST SUPPORT' .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>HOUSE, SENATE DEFENSE BILLS DIFFER IN APPROACH TO INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY, BUT STRESS REGION'S IMPORTANCE .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>HOW EUROPE FELL OUT OF LOVE WITH CHINA .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>IRAN, RUSSIA TURKEY IN TALKS TO FIND POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR SYRIA .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>37</b>

# MARITIME SECURITY

---

## US NAVY CARRIER STRIKE GROUPS TEAM UP IN BACK-TO-BACK DUAL CARRIER OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC TO SEND A MESSAGE TO RIVALS

- Ryan Pickrell

Two US Navy aircraft carriers are conducting dual carrier operations in the Pacific for the second time in a week. Following dual carrier flight operations involving the USS Theodore Roosevelt and USS Nimitz that began on June 21, the USS Ronald Reagan kicked off dual carrier operations with the USS Nimitz on June 28. Rear Adm. George Wikoff, the Carrier Strike Group 5 commander, said in a statement that "we aggressively seek out every opportunity to advance and strengthen our capabilities and proficiency at conducting all-domain warfighting operation."

"Dual carrier operations," he continued, "demonstrate our commitment to regional allies, our ability to rapidly mass combat power in the Indo-Pacific, and our readiness to confront all those who challenge international norms that support regional stability." The US has repeatedly accused China of challenging international norms through aggression and coercion, especially in the South China Sea. The rhetoric surrounding recent operations is similar to that used for freedom-of-navigation operations and bomber overflights in the contested waterway. The ongoing dual carrier operations come amid heightened US-China tensions in the South China Sea, where both the US Navy and Air Force has been very active in recent months and where the US and Chinese militaries have had a number of "risky" run-ins.

The Department of Defense said in May that it is "concerned by increasing, opportunistic activity by the PRC to coerce its neighbors and press its unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea, while the region and the world is focused on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic." In addition to warning rivals, the US military is also clearly projecting strength after a coronavirus outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt unexpectedly upended its Indo-Pacific deployment and forced it into port, where it remained for nearly two months. But, now the US Navy has three carrier strike groups operating in the region. The US Navy has only conducted a handful of dual carrier operations in the Indo-Pacific since 2001, and none of these past operations have been back-to-back dual carrier ops until now.

As China builds up the People's Liberation Army Navy, it is also building aircraft carriers. It currently has two aircraft carriers — one a refitted Soviet vessel and the other a homegrown copy of the other commissioned last year.

China regularly asserts that its military is for defending China's interests, as well as supporting global peace and stability. Commenting on the dual carrier operations, Rear. Adm. James Kirk, the Carrier Strike Group 11 commander, said that "only the US Navy can integrate a carrier strike force on this scale and consistently project power to protect freedom of the seas." "These operations are what keep us ready to respond to any contingency," he said. The last dual carrier operations in the Indo-Pacific prior to the most recent two was in 2018, when the USS Ronald Reagan and the USS John C. Stennis carrier strike groups conducted operations together in the Philippine Sea.

**Source:** [businessinsider.in](https://www.businessinsider.in); 29 June 2020

## COULD THE INDIA–CHINA BORDER CONFLICT LEAD TO A NAVAL WAR?

- Abhijit Singh

The recent developments in Ladakh on the disputed border between India and China were shocking and tragic. The clash in Galwan Valley last week has opened up a deep fissure in India–China ties, spawning tensions that could even escalate into an all-out-war. The latest reports suggest the Indian armed forces have begun a rapid mobilisation and the Chinese military has been shoring up its positions, even as political efforts are on to defuse the crisis. With a spiral of escalation building, a conflict so far limited to the Line of Actual Control with China could see other theatres open up, including one in the Indian Ocean. Unlike on the land border, where China has a relative advantage of terrain, military infrastructure and troop strength, India is better placed at sea. In the Eastern Indian Ocean through which most of China's cargo and energy shipments pass, the Indian Navy is the dominant force. In recent years, the Indian Navy has sought to consolidate strength in India's near seas through its mission-based deployments. Since 2017, Indian warships have patrolled Indian Ocean sea lanes and choke points, including the approaches to the Malacca Strait. In its bid to keep track of Chinese submarines in the Eastern Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy has also been operating P-8I maritime patrol aircraft from the Andaman Islands. A chain of radar stations along the Indian coast has helped in providing better information about maritime movements, and a fusion centre in Gurgaon near New Delhi is helping manage tactical information in the near seas.

China, too, has been probing the subcontinental littorals. Since 2013, when it first sent a submarine to Sri Lanka, the People's Liberation Army Navy has significantly expanded its military and civilian expeditions in South Asia. In recent months, China has sent intelligence ships and survey and research vessels into the Andaman Sea, attempting to track Indian naval activity in the region. While it has so far desisted from challenging the Indian Navy, the PLAN's pattern of deployment suggests an aspiration for a sustained presence in areas of overlapping interest with India.

Three aspects about a possible India–China maritime conflict seem relevant. First, unlike with Pakistan, when the Indian Navy established a loose blockade in the northern Arabian Sea during Operation Talwar in 1999 and Operation Parakram in 2001, and again after the Balakot attack last year, an aggressive barricading approach in China's near seas would be unviable. India has virtually no presence east of Malacca, and unless it acts in concert with the US, Vietnam and Japan in the Pacific littorals, the Indian Navy cannot hope to take on the PLAN in its backyard. What seems more realistic is an interdiction strategy aimed at choking Chinese trade passing through the Indian Ocean sea lines of communication. A vast majority of China's oil shipments, container vessels and bulk cargo traffic approaches the Malacca Strait through the 10 degree channel between Andaman and Nicobar. Observers say the Indian Navy could stifle the flow of Chinese traffic, while aggressively patrolling the Indian Ocean chokepoints, keeping an eye on Chinese naval reinforcements. Here too, however, there are likely to be complications. With a significant share of seaborne trade moving in Chinese-flagged vessels, an Indian interdiction strategy could result in regional blowback against New Delhi. Many Indo-Pacific states would view India's disruption of regular shipping in an international sea lane as a hostile act that imposes unacceptable costs on neutrals. To avoid such a scenario, Indian warships will need to be careful in targeting Chinese-flagged vessels, and refrain from the unnecessary use of force.

Second, the Indian Navy will need to focus on denying the PLAN tactical space in India's near littorals. Through the use of submarines and anti-submarine-warfare-capable air assets, India would seek to restrict China's freedom of operation in the littorals. Part of the strategy would be to position Indian naval assets on the east coast and in the Andaman island bases to keep up a high tempo of operations in regional hotspots. Denying China use of India's near seas won't be easy. With a vast fleet comprising nuclear attack submarines, guided missile warships, amphibious carriers and a host of other capable war-fighting platforms, the PLAN is the world's second most powerful navy, and should not be underestimated. But it is constrained by the absence of operational logistics, ship-based air cover and land-based maritime reconnaissance capabilities in the Indian Ocean—gaps that the Indian Navy would hope to exploit.

Third, India should expect China to use its Belt and Road Initiative in South Asia to reduce its tactical deficit in the Indian Ocean. In Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Chittagong in Bangladesh and Sittwe in Myanmar, where China is building maritime infrastructure, the PLAN is likely to press for a greater presence to overcome logistical constraints in the Indian Ocean. Already China is constructing a naval base for Bangladesh in Cox's Bazar that could be used to position naval ships and store military supplies. The imperative for India is to track Chinese naval activity and warship movements along the Bay of Bengal rim. As it seeks to expand basing facilities for submarines and ASW aircraft in the Andaman Islands, the Indian Navy would look to position long-range surface-to-surface missiles on the island chain to more directly threaten Chinese naval deployments. Needless to say, a naval conflict with China in the Indian Ocean would be an 'acid test' for India—one that would require considerable planning and effort to prevail over the adversary.

*Abhijit Singh is a senior fellow and the head of maritime policy at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. This article appears courtesy of The Strategist.*

**Source:** [maritime-executive.com](https://maritime-executive.com); 29 June 2020

## MISSION SAGAR: INS KESARI ARRIVES IN KOCHI

- A P Bureau

New Delhi: Indian Naval Ship Kesari arrived at Kochi on Sunday after 55 days of deployment to the Southern Indian Ocean region as part of 'Mission Sagar'. The ship was deployed on a special 'COVID Relief Mission' and made port calls at Male (Maldives), Port Louis (Mauritius), Antsiranana (Madagascar), Moroni (Comoros Islands) and Port Victoria (Seychelles) for delivery of 580 tons of food aid and essential medical stores to local authorities.

Further, a 14 member Naval Medical Assistance Team was also deputed to Mauritius and Comoros for 20 days each and assisted local governments in the formulation of long term strategy to counter COVID 19 through mutual sharing of experience.

The shipment of essential medicines and the Medical Assistance Team as part of 'Mission Sagar' reaffirms India's role as a preferred security partner in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) and reflects India's commitment to work together with its maritime neighbours and partners in the IOR. Ship's long deployment in rough seas and difficult times towards the delivery of essential medical aid has been widely appreciated by these countries. Prime Minister of Mauritius had personally thanked the Indian Prime Minister during a telephone conversation last month for the deployment of INS Kesari. Similarly, heads of states or senior dignitaries from other countries had also expressed gratitude for the timely aid. Overall, the Mission Sagar of the Indian Navy has been a great success.

**Source:** [telanganatoday.com](https://telanganatoday.com); 29 June 2020

## INDIA-JAPAN NAVAL EXERCISES: A MESSAGE FOR CHINA?

Joint exercises by the Indian and Japanese navies in the Indian Ocean at the weekend suggest the two countries are drawing closer to face what they perceive as a common threat from China, analysts say. While joint military exercises involving the two countries are not uncommon, the latest activity comes amid tensions both are experiencing with Beijing.

Indian and Chinese troops remain locked in a face-off along the disputed Himalayan border where 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a recent clash with their Chinese counterparts, while Japan and China are locked in a war of words over a Japanese move to change the administrative status of the Senkaku Islands, which China claims

and refers to as the Diaoyu Islands. New Delhi and Beijing have blamed the deaths in the Himalayas on each other. The Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong said Indian troops were responsible for the clash because they had “crossed the Line of Actual Control” which acts as the de facto border. In response, the Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri warned of “ripples and repercussions” in diplomatic ties because China was “trying to alter the status quo on the ground by force”.

Meanwhile Tokyo and Beijing have traded barbs over the islands. The Chinese Foreign Ministry has called Japan’s move a “serious provocation on China’s territorial sovereignty”, while Japanese Defence Minister Taro Kono responded that Tokyo would be monitoring Beijing’s “intentions, not only its capability”.

## **HEATING UP**

The exercise is the latest indication that geopolitical rivalries are heating up in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

In this month alone the United States has conducted three exercises in the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea. Two of these were conducted by three aircraft carriers, the USS Nimitz, the USS Ronald Reagan and the USS Theodore Roosevelt, while the third was conducted jointly with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force. Tensions are also running high between China and Vietnam after two Chinese vessels rammed into and sank a Vietnamese fishing boat. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) on Saturday issued what many experts saw as a strong assertion against Chinese claims over the South China Sea when it said the 1982 United Nations Oceans Treaty should form the basis of deciding territorial claims in the waters. Amid the renewed spat over the Diaoyu/Senkakus, Japan’s Ministry of Defence has also established a new team to advance better maritime ties with the US, India, Australia and the Southeast Asian nations.

## **‘A CONFLUENCE OF TWO SEAS’**

China’s assertiveness in the South and East China Seas has acted as a spur to bring together India and Japan, analysts say. Visiting India in 2007, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had called for stronger maritime ties between the two countries by invoking “a broader Asia” at the “confluence of the two seas” of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. Since then, the two countries have deepened their military cooperation, taking part in joint events such as the ‘Dharma Guardian’ land exercises, the ‘Shinyu Maitr’ aerial exercises and the trilateral military exercise ‘Malabar’ with the US.

Abe and his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have met often – in 2019 alone they met three times. The two countries even have yearly bilateral summits, which is rare for Japan. Analysts like C Uday Bhaskar, a retired commodore in the Indian Navy who is now the director of the New Delhi think tank Society for Policy Studies, said China loomed large over the relationship. However, Bhaskar said that while India and Japan shared a concern about Chinese assertiveness, both were “reticent about forging a robust security-strategic relationship”. “Delhi and Tokyo have a shared vision about the freedom of the seas, but that is still at the politico-diplomatic level,” Bhaskar added. Rajiv Bhatia, a former Indian ambassador, said the naval exercise also signalled to China the need for diplomacy rather than aggression. “The

signal is not one of escalating the conflict. It is, in fact, a reminder that sticking to the diplomatic channels [to resolve outstanding issues] would be the best for China and everyone else,” he said.

### **A RETURN OF THE QUAD?**

Some analysts said the uptick in activities in the Indian and Pacific Oceans indicated the renewed relevance of the Quad – an informal strategic military grouping between the US, Japan, Australia and India. This month, in their virtual summit, India and Australia signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, which allows their militaries to share logistical support and bases. Ambassador Bhatia, also a Distinguished Fellow at the Mumbai-based think tank Gateway House, said a surge in Chinese aggression might lead to the Quad gaining strength. “The signal is clear – the more China is troublesome to the region, the more the affected countries, particularly the Quad countries, are bound to move closer together.” Bhatia said strengthening military cooperation between the four militaries was a sign of that. He added that the Quad, though, needed to do more – from roping in Asean nations to conducting joint exercises.

That is why, according to Bhaskar, this might be only the beginning of the action in the Indo-Pacific. “The Indo-Pacific will be the most strategically relevant theatre for the US, Japan, India and China over the next decade and more. Currently, China appears to be more aware of this than the other nations in this region,” he said. In New Delhi there is a heightened realisation that the maritime domain is key to countering rising Chinese assertiveness. The two countries share a border 3,488 kilometres (2,167 miles) long.

Many retired naval officers have urged the Indian government to step up its maritime presence in the region. “The maritime domain offers certain options to temper China’s creeping aggression tactics, whether in relation to India or anyone in the extended Indo-Pacific,” said Bhaskar. Bhaskar said that the Chinese Communist Party had long been anxious around maritime powers controlling the Strait of Malacca, one of the world’s busiest waterways that is crucial to Chinese interests. “This anxiety can be stoked in a calibrated manner and professionals know how to signal this intent,” Bhaskar said.

**Source:** [scmp.com](https://www.scmp.com); 29 June 2020

## **US AND CHINESE NAVAL EXERCISES OVERLAP IN SOUTH CHINA SEA**

- Robert Delaney

The USS Nimitz is one of two aircraft carriers taking part in a large-scale naval exercise in the South China Sea. Photo: US Navy  
The USS Nimitz is one of two aircraft carriers taking part in a large-scale naval exercise in the South China Sea. Photo: US Navy  
The USS Nimitz is one of two aircraft carriers taking part in a large-scale naval exercise in the South China Sea. Photo: US Navy

The US Navy is sending two aircraft carriers to the South China Sea for exercises just as Beijing conducts military drills of its own in the disputed region, according to a senior US military official quoted by The Wall Street Journal. The USS Ronald Reagan, the USS Nimitz and four other warships will hold large-scale exercises in the South China Sea starting on Saturday, according to the report, which cited Rear Admiral George Wikoff, commander of the operation. The exact location was not disclosed. “The purpose [of the planned exercises] is to show an unambiguous signal to our partners and allies that we are committed to regional security and stability,” Wikoff said, according to the report, which also said the operation would include “round-the-clock flights testing the striking ability of carrier-based aircraft”.

The US Navy operation takes place at the same time as five days of drills by China’s military near the Paracel Islands, which started on Wednesday. It also comes amid heightened bilateral tensions over a number of issues, most recently the passage of national security legislation for Hong Kong by the National People’s Congress Standing Committee in Beijing.

The Paracels are the subject of overlapping claims between China, which calls them the Xisha Islands, and Vietnam, where they are known as the Hoang Sa Islands. The Philippines’ Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana called China’s exercises “highly provocative”, while Vietnam’s foreign ministry said they were a violation of sovereignty that could harm Beijing’s relationship with Asean. The US Navy’s operation follows a warning from the US Department of Defence on Thursday that Beijing’s military exercises “are the latest in a long string of ... actions [by China] to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbours in the South China Sea”.

A statement from the defence department said China’s actions “stand in contrast to its pledge to not militarise the South China Sea and the United States’ vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region, in which all nations, large and small, are secure in their sovereignty, free from coercion, and able to pursue economic growth consistent with accepted international rules and norms”. Wikoff told The Wall Street Journal the US Navy exercise was not so much a response to the Chinese naval exercises as a more general reaction to Beijing’s rising military assertiveness.

China notified the UN in December that Beijing had sovereign rights to all islands in the South China Sea, including the Paracels. In July 2016, a ruling by an international tribunal in The Hague determined China had no “historic rights” over the South China Sea and ruled that some of its reefs claimed by several countries could not legally be used as the basis for territorial claims. Beijing rejected the ruling and described it as having “no binding force”.

**Source:** [scmp.com](https://www.scmp.com); 04 July 2020

## **DODGING VIRUS, NAVY SHIPS BREAK RECORD FOR STAYING AT SEA**

- Lolita C Baldor

WASHINGTON (AP) — The two U.S. warships in the Middle East weren't aiming to break a record. But when the coronavirus made ship stops in foreign countries too risky, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and the USS San Jacinto were ordered to keep moving and avoid all port visits. On Thursday, as they steamed through the North Arabian Sea, they notched their 161st consecutive day at sea, breaking the previous Navy record of 160 days. And they're on pace to crush it, since they won't hit land again until they get home to Virginia later this year.

The milestone, Navy Capt. Kyle Higgins said, "is not one that I think we really wanted but one that the circumstances of the world thrust upon us. And we embraced it with style." When the ships left home in January, COVID-19 was just starting to emerge. By the time they crossed the Atlantic and moved into the Mediterranean Sea, the virus was escalating. In March, Vice Adm. Jim Malloy, the Navy's 5th Fleet commander, ordered a stop to all port visits to reduce the chance of spreading the virus through the fleet. Other ships were battling outbreaks, including the USS Theodore Roosevelt, which got sidelined in Guam.

With that, Higgins, the Eisenhower commander, and Capt. Edward Crossman, the San Jacinto commander, knew their sailors wouldn't set foot on land for some time. Both were interviewed a few days before the ships broke the record. For more than five months, the Eisenhower, an aircraft carrier, and the San Jacinto, the guided-missile cruiser that accompanies it, have been at sea, with no onboard visitors and strict controls over how aircraft deliver their supplies. The isolation has been challenging. Port calls not only give sailors time for rest and relaxation, they also allow experts to come aboard to do difficult repairs. When the San Jacinto's helicopter bay door broke, the crew members had to get creative. It was the middle of the night, and they realized they needed to replace a large sprocket. "My guys did the research, and they said, 'Hey, these 90-pound dumbbells are made from the same material that we need for this gear,'" Crossman said in an interview from the ship. So, they took the dumbbell down to the machine shop and created the part. "If they were magicians," Crossman said, "they'd have 100 rabbits running around the house because they keep pulling them out of their hats."

Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Grimes, a machinist mate, is one of the sailors responsible for keeping machinery operating. When the door broke, it was his team that figured out how to fix it. "I was skeptical, but the way things were going I didn't really count it out," he said. "Definitely the helo hangar door is the craziest thing we pulled off." On the Eisenhower, crew members had to safely replace a large, critical fan motor for the flight deck. It took four teams from the electrical, engineer, supply and machinist departments, but after consulting with experts on shore, they broke down the fan, got it onto a makeshift platform and installed the new part.

"Normally, this job would have called for cutting into the ship to get it down there," said Higgins. "I'm happy to report that the fan and motor are operating fine and we are 100% operational again because of it." Crew entertainment has also gotten creative. Disappointed sailors watched as they passed countries along the Mediterranean and headed through the Red Sea without stopping.

"This is my first ship as well as my first deployment," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Dionesha Simmons. "It's a bit of a struggle just because I was looking forward to some

of the port calls.” Instead, she said, she’s having fun making brunch for the Eisenhower crew on “Waffle Saturdays.” She and others take over to give the cooks a break. Higgins and Crossman said they’re trying to give sailors dedicated time off — sometimes a full 24 hours to do whatever they want, other times a couple days off in a row. They plan more swim days and “steel beach picnics” when sailors can wear civilian clothes and barbecue on the flight deck. The Eisenhower crew had cigar socials with jazz music. One popular event, said Petty Officer 1st Class Travis Bush, was a slam dunk basketball contest that he said relieved stress and showed off some talent.

On the San Jacinto, sailors substituted a mustache contest for the March Madness tournament. The 64-person bracket competed to see who could grow the ugliest mustache. “There’s definitely some disappointment in not going into port, especially considering our original plans. But we’ve made it this far,” Grimes said. “It actually makes a lot of us feel very proud that we can be part of this. ... The longest I’ve been underway is a little over 40 days, and it’s destroyed that record.” The 160-day record was set in February 2002 by the USS Theodore Roosevelt, early in the Afghanistan war. The previous 152-day record was set by the Eisenhower in 1980 during the Iranian hostage crisis. Navy historians say it’s difficult to check long into the past, because records are spotty.

Both ship captains planned celebrations. Crossman said sailors were competing to design the certificate that they’ll get, adding, “We’re kind of proud of the fact that we’re taking the record, but we’re going to blow it away. Higgins ordered “the best dinner” the crew could make, with surf and turf, a big cake and ice cream. He said he’ll wait before gathering the crew for a celebratory photo.

“It’ll be 161 days when we break the record, but we think we may be out here a little bit longer and the potential to pass that mark by quite a bit is fairly good,” he said. “So we might wait for a more round, even number.” Now one critical question remains: Which ship will pull into Norfolk last, snagging the record? “I’ve had a couple requests to see if we could stay out longer to make sure we beat the Ike,” Crossman said with a laugh. Higgins says they’ve joked about it. His response? “Time will tell.”

**Source:** [apnews.com](https://apnews.com); 25 June 2020

# MARITIME FORCES

---

## RUSSIA'S NEWEST SUBMARINE CAUGHT IN UNUSUAL SATELLITE IMAGE

- H I Sutton

On Monday, a satellite passing over Russia's arctic north captured an intriguing image. You can see a bright light, followed by a long plume stretching miles behind it. At first glance you could be forgiven for thinking that it has caught a rocket launch in mid-flight. But it is in fact Russia's newest submarine, the Knyaz Vladimir. The image was spotted by open-source intelligence expert Frank Bottema (twitter). Bottema was researching other vessel movements when he noticed what looked like a missile streaking out into the White Sea from the port city of Severodvinsk. Its location, and the fact that no warning notices or sea closures were reported (which can indicate missile tests) quickly pointed to something other than a missile test. But visually, it is unusual for a submarine to look like this in satellite imagery.

The sea conditions must be responsible for the wake remaining visible so far behind it. In fact you can trace the submarine right back to its berth in Severodvinsk. Knyaz Vladimir uses a pump-jet propulsor like the latest U.S. Navy Virginia Class boats and this may be contributing to the unusual wake. Knyaz Vladimir is the first improved Borei-A Class ballistic missile submarine to join the Russian fleet. It was only formally commissioned into the fleet on June 12. The Russian Ministry of Defense subsequently announced (in Russian) that the submarine left Severodvinsk, where it was built, to transit to its operational home at Gadzhievo on the Kola Peninsular. There it will be part of Russia's Northern Fleet and operate in the Arctic.

The Borei-A class submarine is armed with 16 Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles. These have a range of about 5,000 miles, possibly more, and can carry 6-10 nuclear warheads. Each warhead is a MIRVs meaning a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle. And each can be 100-150 kilotons. Altogether this means that the submarine is carrying up to 160 nuclear warheads totaling around 24 megatons.

The submarine also has to leave Severodvinsk to make room for Russia's next new Submarine, the unique Pr.09851 Khabarovsk. That submarine will be armed with six giant Poseidon nuclear-powered intercontinental torpedoes. These are part of a range of 'super weapons' unveiled by President Putin in 2018. All three of the berths where new submarines are fitted out were taken, but with Knyaz Vladimir gone there will be room for the new boat. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, before it arrives in Gadzhievo the sub will conduct "planned combat training tasks in the waters of the White and Barents Seas". It will also "check the operation of the ship's systems and mechanisms in various modes." In fact in the satellite imagery there is a warship a few miles dead ahead of it, suggesting that it will rendezvous for exercises. This could

possibly be a Admiral Gorshkov class guided missile frigate. It is difficult to spot submarines on low resolution satellite imagery at the best of times, and even rarer to catch them at sea. Obviously once it submerges the submarine is hidden from the prying eyes in low earth orbit. At least the civilian ones we have access to! So chance images like this provide a rare glimpse at submarine operations.

**Source:** [forbes.com](https://forbes.com); 30 June 2020

## **HUNDREDS OF PARATROOPERS DROP IN FROM ALASKA**

Army paratroopers from the Alaska-based 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team 25th Infantry Division parachuted into Andersen Air Force Base early Tuesday morning as part of emergency deployment readiness training. Col. Christopher Landers, commander of the combat team, led the training mission to secure the airfield as part of the U.S. Army Pacific's participation in ongoing joint exercises throughout the region to include the Mariana Islands.

"This scenario tested our ability to execute real-world missions and demonstrated that we are capable of deploying anywhere in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area at a moment's notice," said Landers in a press release. The unit delivered more than 400 paratroopers onto the airfield to make this the largest airborne operation here in recent memory, the Army stated in a press release. Multiple C-17 Globemaster aircraft appeared in the early morning sky carrying the paratroopers that had flown directly from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska.

To ensure health safety measures while on Guam, everyone was quarantined to Andersen and observed all COVID-19 safety precautions to include separation from the Andersen community throughout the exercise, the military stated in a press release. "We are successfully balancing readiness and mission requirements with health and safety precautions to protect ourselves and our communities," said Landers. "Andersen Air Force Base and Guam leadership have facilitated every one of our requirements. It's been an incredible experience to work with them." After securing the airfield, the paratroopers began preparations to return to their home station in Alaska, having demonstrated the ability to provide combat credible forces in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and its commitment to a secure and stable region, the Army stated.

*(Daily Post Staff)*

**Source:** [postguam.com](https://postguam.com); 01 July 2020

## **AUSTRALIA SEEKS LONG-RANGE MISSILES IN INDO-PACIFIC DEFENCE SHIFT**

- Yusuke Tanabe

PM Scott Morrison pledged A\$270bn (£150bn; \$186bn) to Australia's arms budget over 10 years - a 40% boost. He said Australia would acquire long-range missiles and other capabilities to "deter" future conflicts. It was necessary because the region was the "focus of the dominant global contest of our age", he added. Mr Morrison named several areas of tension including the border between India and China, and conflict over the South China Sea and East China Sea. It follows deteriorating relations between Australia and China - which are widely seen to be at their worst in decades.

### **What is Australia spending money on?**

The new defence capability budget - about 2% of GDP - replaces a previous decade-long strategy, set only in 2016, which had set aside A\$195bn. Mr Morrison said much spending would go to upgrading arms and equipment. Australia will purchase from the US Navy up to 200 long-range anti-ship missiles, which can travel up to 370km (229 miles). It will also invest in developing a hypersonic weapons system - missiles which can travel thousands of kilometres. Up to A\$15b would be spent on cyber warfare tools - which the prime minister noted "says a lot about where the threats are coming from". Last month, he warned that Australian institutions and businesses were being targeted by cyber attacks from a "sophisticated state actor". The remarks were broadly interpreted as aimed at China.

### **Why does Morrison say this is necessary?**

He said tensions between the US and China had accelerated in recent years and their relations now were "fractious at best". The pandemic had worsened these tensions and put the global security order at its most unstable point in decades. The region was also seeing "military modernisation" at an unprecedented rate, he said. "The largely benign security environment... that Australia has enjoyed, basically from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the global financial crisis, that's gone," he said. "The risk of miscalculation - and even conflict- is heightening." He said Australia would vigorously defend its democratic values and those of others in the region, adding that increasing military capabilities would help "to prevent war". Under the 2016 strategy, military priorities had been split equally across that region but also on operations with Western allies, such as US-led missions in the Middle East.

### **What's been the reaction?**

The Labor opposition has welcomed the change in strategy, saying it had long called for greater military focus on the region. Analysts say the change shows Australia is trying to be strong in its own region and on its own resources. "There's a great emphasis, implicitly, in Mr Morrison's speech, in recognising the rise of China and also that America may not be as big a help as it has been in previous years," said Sam Roggeveen from the Lowy Institute. Many have also interpreted the shift as Australia taking a more defined opposition to China's increasing influence in the region. Relations with its biggest trading partner have further deteriorated in recent months, following Australia's push for a global probe into the origins of the Covid-19 virus.

**Source:** [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/australia-56944444); 01 July 2020

## **PLA NAVY DESTROYER FLOTILLA EXECUTE MARITIME OPERATION IN SOUTH CHINA SEA**

Amidst tensions with Vietnam, China has announced a new military exercise beginning July 1, 2020, off Xisha Islands, internationally known as Parcel Islands in the South China Sea. According to Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military expert, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has very high war preparedness in all fronts, but despite tensions, the risk of a large-scale military conflict remains very low thanks to the PLA's strength and strategic deterrence. These last years, PLA has shown its capability to maintain high combat readiness in these different regions with intensive, simultaneous military operations.

Military exercises will be held in waters off the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea from Wednesday to July 5, according to a notice released by China's Maritime Safety Administration. During the period, no vessel will be allowed to navigate within the above lines and all ships have to follow the guidance of the commanding ship on site.

**Source:** [navyrecognition.com](http://navyrecognition.com); 01 July 2020

## **‘WHY HAS INDIAN NAVY BEEN MUTE SPECTATOR TO HAL’S ALLEGATION?’**

- Capt. D K Sharma (Retd.)

In the aftermath of COVID19, the government has offered fiscal tranches, financial stimuli, revolutionary monetary policies thereby doing the best to change the hue of self-reliance from “Make in India” to “Atma-Nirbharta”. Will this slew of measures herald this dream and transform the present state of Indian economy or is there something else required? For any idea to be successful at the national stage there needs to be strategic vision, policy guidelines and framework of rules for implementation.

The 111 Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH) program is one such strategic project aimed at galvanising the aerospace sector in the country. In August 2018, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) had directed that the procurement of NUH be processed under the Strategic Partnership (SP) model. An Empowered Project Committee with representatives from almost 10 departments of the Government including DRDO, Defence Finance, Production, Acquisition and Quality Assurance was formed to progress the procurement case from issuance of ‘Expression of Interest’ to contract conclusion in accordance with Chapter VII of DPP 2016.

- The NUH case has been a lot in the news lately with parleys between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and eminent journalists as well as revered retired naval officers especially aviators. Recently, CMD HAL was on social media wanting the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) to be included in the NUH Project levelling allegations against the Navy by stating ‘Earlier they had gone

through the SP route wherein they were looking at some foreign OEM aircraft particularly one of the aircraft'. I am sure that prior to making a statement, CMD of HAL was aware that the decision to progress the case under SP Route was that of the DAC and that the entire procurement process for NUH is being progressed by an Empowered Project Committee (EPC) and not by the Navy. Moreover, the SP Model envisions an Indian Private company to partner with a foreign OEM and therefore helicopters of foreign OEMs can only be considered as NUH. With the CMD stating that 'particularly one of the aircraft' he has cast aspersions on the entire governmental acquisition process which squarely rests on the shoulders of the bureaucrats, the Defence Secretary being at the apex. It surprises me to see such blatant and open criticism and allegations by head of a DPSU against the bureaucracy. Has our system become so open to accept allegations from another Governmental organisation head in the media?

The Naval QRs for NUH were first uploaded in 2008 followed by revision in 2014 as directed by DAC. HAL had in a written correspondence provided to the Navy informed that the ALH does not meet the QRs laid down by the Navy and that the Navy could purchase a suitable foreign helicopter. The same has also been stated by Shiv Aroor in the interview of CMD HAL. The moot point is that ALH has never met the QRs and nor does it meet the QRs presently. Is it appropriate for a CMD of a DPSU to make such sweeping statements that the 'specific NUH RFQ/RFI was designed for that' without assessing the facts?

What is interesting to note in this spat is – why has the Indian Navy been a mute spectator? There have been no statements by the Indian Navy even to defend the allegations levelled on it by CMD HAL. Has anyone asked why? The reason most likely is that the Navy is interested in a Utility Helicopter that meets its requirements and does not have any preference on the 'Type of Categorisation'. This is the mandate of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) (with Raksha Mantri as its Chairman) and the Navy understands this very well. The Navy rightfully appears to have put its foot down that it would not accept any concessions to its requirements. This makes the ALH unsuitable as the NUH.

But I am not questioning the compliance/ non-compliance of ALH to the Qualitative Requirements of the NUH. I am not even questioning the ability of HAL to undertake required modifications albeit on a helicopter which is not designed for naval roles in the first place. I am more interested in seeking answers to the levels of autonomy enjoyed by DPSUs like HAL and hold of the DPSUs on the Government mechanism. I say this after listening to every word of the CMD HAL. It also appears to me that there are a few bureaucrats in the procurement process who are playing the DPSU card and backing HAL. I am intrigued. Is the SP Model not a Government policy? Who among the bureaucracy are questioning this policy? Why was the NUH programme progressed under SP Model when after five years of wait and progressing the case to this advanced stage HAL was to be considered for inclusion? If this was the case, why not close the SP Model and accord HAL the contract under Nomination regressing to patronising the DPSUs as was hitherto done. How can four to five years of work and conceptualisation of a policy and framework of rules (in this case the SP Model) by qualified Empowered teams of the Government be cast aside just because of a DPSU's point of view? Is a DPSU like HAL so empowered to project opinions on Government

decisions in media indirectly through Consultants to MoD and now directly with even the CMD appearing on media?

There is a need to demystify and understand the objective of the SP Model which is being misrepresented in the media. Whether it be HAL officials or some correspondents, the impression that is being created is that only through DPSUs and selection of ALH as NUH would the mantra of 'Make in India' be realised and that 'foreigners will bleed us' (as brought out by HAL spokesperson in media recently) if we buy any helicopter through SP Model. To exemplify the misrepresentation created in the environment CMD HAL while referring to the IMRH Project in the interview with the Editor of Lifestate stated that IMRH being a 2 lakh plus crores project, the money needs to be retained in country. This will be achieved by HAL manufacturing the IMRH. What the CMD has failed to illustrate is the import content and how much of the 2 lakh crore plus would be retained in country. Some startling facts about ALH pertaining to the indigenous content and FE outflow. Sources have indicated that after 17 years of manufacturing ALH, almost 65% (by cost) of ALH is imported. This means that for each ALH that costs around 120 crores, approximately 75 crores in Foreign Exchange (FE) goes to USA, UK, Switzerland, Singapore and EU with only 55 crores remaining in India. However, with up to 45 percent Indigenous Content (IC) by cost through the Project and 60 percent on the last batch of helicopters under SP Model for NUH, the FE component in NUH through SP Model would be much lesser than ALH manufactured by HAL.

So, what all advantages would the SP Model provide in addition to the reduced FE outgo? One of the main features of SP Model is to induct critical technologies (Maintenance ToT and ToT) in the strategic manufacturing sector. Consequently, a Committee comprising HAL, DRDO, CEMILAC and MoD representatives was constituted to identify technologies required in the helicopter manufacturing sector that could be included as part of the SP Model for Naval Utility Helicopter. A total of 65 technologies as part of helicopter manufacturing were identified for transfer into the country by the Committee of which nine were selected for the NUH project. This clearly indicates the state of indigenous technologies with HAL. SP Model provides for sole license to manufacture, export and undertake MRO on the specific helicopter type in the world, setting up testing and certification capability, an alternate R & D facility, skilling of MSMEs and job creation. Through all this, there would be considerable inflow of foreign exchange into the country thereby offsetting the initial outflow of FE which would not be possible with ALH. The SP Model therefore is in true sense a catalyst for the economy at no cost to the Government. Even the CDS in an article had quoted the Maruti example which heralded a revolution in the car manufacturing industry in India. Despite such enormous advantages of the SP Model, why is it not being progressed? Bureaucrats in the procurement process are the advisers of the Government. It is they who need to evaluate the gains of the SP Model against the nomination of HAL for the NUH programme. Number crunching with facts and figures will speak for itself and quell the misinformation and accusatory tone of heads of DPSUs like CMD HAL. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the compromise of the trust in the procurement process caused by the statement of CMD HAL. Despite a diverse and qualified high level Empowered Project Committee steering the case, allegations on it do not augur well for the Acquisition Process. If Government policies made after due consideration and thought over years of labour when released into the

environment are shelved, the Government loses credibility. There is a need to take this bold step and provide an avenue to the Private industry to enter the strategic manufacturing realm of helicopters as competition to the DPSU. Atma-Nirbharta would never happen if we depend only on DPSUs/ PSUs/ OFBs. The vision, policy and rules to support SP Model are strong – what is required now is an equally strong will and conviction to implement this vision of Make in India.

*Capt. Sharma is a retired naval officer. He was spokesperson & public relations officer of the Indian Navy from till August 2019. He has handled communications for the Indian Navy during several critical episodes, including the mass evacuation of Indians from Yemen in 2015. The veteran officer is now a commentator on military & strategic affairs, and associated as a consultant with BharatShakti.in and StratNewsGlobal.com. The views expressed here are his own.*

**Source:** [livefistdefence.com](https://livefistdefence.com); 01 July 2020

## SHIPBUILDERS TO DELIVER NUCLEAR-POWERED AKULA-CLASS SUB TO RUSSIAN NAVY AFTER UPGRADE

- TASS

MOSCOW, July 2. /TASS/. The Northern Fleet's Project 971 'Shchuka-B' (NATO reporting name Akula) nuclear-powered submarine Vepr has completed trials after its repairs and upgrade and is set to re-enter service with the Fleet in mid-July, a source in the defense industry told TASS on Thursday. "The certificate of the acceptance/delivery of the nuclear-powered submarine will take place at the Nerpa Ship Repair Plant in the second ten-day period of July," the source said. The nuclear-powered submarine fully completed the program of its trials and stayed at the Nerpa Shipyard for removing faults. It was earlier planned that the sub would be delivered to the Fleet in the third ten-day period of June.

The press office of the Zvyozdochka Ship Repair Center that incorporates the Nerpa Ship Repair Plant declined to comment on the source's information for TASS. Project 971 nuclear-powered submarines have been developed by the St. Petersburg-based Malakhit Marine Engineering Design Bureau. The sub Vepr was built at the Sevmash Shipyard in northwestern Russia and delivered to the Russian Navy in 1995. After their upgrade, the submarines of this Project were armed with Kalibr-PL strike missile systems.

**Source:** [tass.com](https://tass.com); 02 July 2020

# SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

---

## ZERO CARBON SHIPPING RESEARCH CENTRE LAUNCHED BY MAERSK AND INDUSTRY

- [Maritime-executive.com](https://www.maritime-executive.com)

Leaders in the shipping industry are coming together to launch a new research centre to develop new fuel types and technologies as part of the industry's commitment to reduce its global carbon emissions.

Named the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Centre for Zero Carbon Shipping and made possible by a start-up donation of DKK 400 million (\$60 million) by the A.P. Møller Foundation, the founding company partners include ABS, A.P. Møller – Mærsk, Cargill, MAN Energy Solutions, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, NYK Line and Siemens Energy.

“The A. P. Møller Foundation wishes to support the efforts to solve the climate issue in global shipping,” said Chairman of the Board in the A.P. Møller Foundation, Ane Uggla. “My father, Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller was a visionary leader in the global shipping industry for more than 7 decades. He was concerned about shipping's impact on the environment. Already in the 1980'ies, he championed the use of low sulfur fuel, and he pioneered the first double hull oil tankers in the 1990'ies to minimize the risk of oil spills. Therefore, I find it very natural that my Father's name will be connected to the centre.”

The centre will be a non-profit organization, set up as a commercial foundation with a charitable purpose. As an independent research centre, it will work across the entire shipping sector with industry, academia, and authorities. A highly specialized, cross-disciplinary team will collaborate globally to create overviews of decarbonization pathways, accelerate the development of selected decarbonizing fuels and power technologies, and support the establishment of regulatory, financial, and commercial means to enable transformation.

Today it is estimated that the shipping sector accounts for around 3 percent of global carbon emissions. While the industry has made a firm commitment to eliminate carbon emissions within this century, achieving this goal is going to require the development of viable technologies as well as new legislation to enable the transition towards decarbonization. Launching this new initiative, the partners said that short-term measures related to increased energy efficiency would enable a 40 percent

relative reduction by 2030. However, achieving the long-term target requires new fuel types and a systemic change within the industry.

“The founding partners and the A.P. Møller Foundation share a long-term ambition to decarbonize the shipping industry,” said Søren Skou, CEO of A.P. Møller – Mærsk who has been confirmed as the first member of the board of directors for the research centre. “The establishment of the centre is a quantum leap towards realizing that ambition. This joint initiative will fast-track the maturation of solutions and strengthen the basis for decision making among industry players and regulators and hence accelerate investments and implementation of new technologies. I am looking forward to joining the board of this ambitious collaboration.”

During the first two to three years, the centre will recruit around 100 employees to the Copenhagen-based office and collaborate with new partners across the globe. The founding partner companies have committed one-third of the needed staff, the remaining two-thirds will be recruited independently. In addition to leadership and administration, the centre staff will include subject matter experts in energy, fuels, and ship technology as well as regulatory affairs, finance, and the global energy transition.

Bo Cerup-Simonsen has been named as CEO to lead the centre. Cerup-Simonsen holds a Ph.D. from the Technical University of Denmark in Mechanical Engineering, Naval Architecture, and has a proven track record in leadership of large-scale industry projects, maritime technology, research, and innovation.

The founding partner companies bring a common commitment to decarbonizing shipping and specialized knowledge and research capabilities. Furthermore, the founding partners will donate expert people resources and/or testing platforms to support the operations. The centre expects to attract several more partner companies in the future.

**Source:** [maltawinds.com](https://maltawinds.com); 29 June 2020

## JAPAN BETS BIG ON MOZAMBIQUE LNG

- Irina Slav

In partnership with the business sector, the Japanese government will invest some \$14.4 billion (1.5 trillion yen) in liquefied natural gas development in Mozambique, the Nikkei Asian Review reported. According to the report, the money will fund the development of a gas field in the African country to produce some 12 million tons of LNG annually, beginning in 2024. As part of the deal, trading major Mitsui & Co. and Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. will together buy a 20-percent stake in the field. Three Japanese private banks will provide most of the debt funding for the project, and the state-owned Japan Bank for International Cooperation will supply \$3 billion in loans. Another report also mentions \$3 billion to be provided in debt financing for the Mozambique LNG project in which Mitsui & Co. is a minority partner with 20 percent to French Total, which operates the project. Part of the \$14.4 billion may go into this particular project. Japan is the world's largest importer of liquefied natural gas, and earlier this year, the Nikkei Asian Review reported that the country's

LNG supply security was threatened by the coronavirus outbreak, with stockpiles at the time only sufficient for two weeks of consumption.

Mozambique, on the other hand, is turning into a hotspot for the LNG industry, with Total's \$20-billion Mozambique LNG project to produce close to 13 million tons of the fuel annually, and Exxon's Rovuma project to yield some 15.2 million tons once operational. For now, however, the Mozambique LNG facility is the only one in the country that has received a final investment decision. Exxon recently said it would delay its FID on Rovuma until next year because of current market conditions. The liquefaction operation was originally scheduled to come online in 2024, like Mozambique LNG.

**Source:** [oilprice.com](https://www.oilprice.com); 03 July 2020

## **HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CHENNAI-ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS SUBMARINE CABLE PROJECT GETS KEY CLEARANCE**

- Vishwa Mohan

NEW DELHI: A project of strategic importance, the Chennai-Andaman & Nicobar Islands (CANI) submarine cable system project, has finally got clearance of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). The clearance of NBWL, under the environment ministry, is mandatory for projects, which in any way, pass through or involve protected areas.

The project will connect eight islands of Andaman & Nicobar with the Indian mainland at Chennai through submarine optic fibre cable systems. It would provide A&N Islands with sufficient bandwidth for supporting voice and data connectivity, an important tool for governance and strategic operations. The CANI cable system will have speed of 100 gigabit per second (gbps). The eight islands to be connected with Chennai include Port Blair, Little Andaman (Hut bay), Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Great Nicobar (Campbell bay), Havelock, Long and Rangat Islands. The project got its final clearance in the 58th meeting of the NBWL's standing committee, chaired by environment minister Prakash Javadekar, through video conference on Friday. In another important decision, the committee recommended initiation of a dedicated project for conservation of Gangetic Dolphin on the lines of Project Tiger and Project Elephant of the ministry.

### **Total route length of A&N cable project to be around 2,200km**

The project for the national aquatic animal, Gangetic Dolphin, is aimed for conservation and protection of this endangered species found in the Ganges — Brahmaputra — Meghna and Karnaphuli rivers along deep river reaches in Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It was the second meeting of the board's standing committee during the current pandemic even as environmentalists have opposed the ministry's decision to hold such parleys on critical issues through video conference and accused the

government of bypassing scrutiny of stakeholders in its rush to give green clearances to many projects during the lockdown period. Officials, however, claimed that important decisions were deliberated in the presence of experts, chief wildlife wardens and members of the standing committee of the NBWL. The total route length of the project, which had earlier got other necessary green clearances including coastal regulation zone (CRZ), is estimated to be approximately 2,200km. It will provide secure, reliable, robust, and affordable telecom facilities in these islands.

**Source:** [timesofindia.com](https://timesofindia.com); 05 July 2020

## **IRELAND PUBLISHES MARINE SPILL RESPONSE PLAN**

Ireland's Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport published a new plan establishing a national framework and strategy to coordinate marine pollution preparedness and response in the waters of the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan (NMOSCP) addresses all oil and HNS pollution whether it originates from ships, harbors, offshore units or oil/HNS handling facilities and land-based sources.

Additionally the NMOSCP is consistent with the relevant International Conventions to which Ireland is a party. It has been developed with due regard to the International Convention, EU Directives and operational guidelines. Coordination between the Irish Coast Guard, other government and/or non-government entities is an essential feature of the national organization represented in the NMOSCP. Furthermore it provides a platform to coordinate responses in the context of the Major Emergency Management Framework and separately under the Strategic Emergency Management National Structures and Framework.

The implementation of the NMOSCP will address Ireland's obligation under international convention in respect to preparedness and response to maritime pollution incidents. Additionally it will provide the Irish Maritime Administration (Irish Coast Guard) with a framework in operations bench marked against best international practice in this area.

**Source:** [marinelink.com](https://marinelink.com); 29 June 2020

## **ABU DHABI PORTS' UNIT SIGNS MoU TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES**

- Lee Hong Liang

Abu Dhabi Ports' subsidiary Safeen has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Transport Authority (FTA) – Land & Maritime to provide

emergency response services and support maritime rescue operations across territorial waters.

The responsibilities for marine services firm Safeen under the MOU include all types of marine emergencies such as oil spills, firefighting, wreck removal, salvage, grounding, rescue towing, maritime surveying, search and rescue, as well as a host of ancillary services. The signing of the MOU is part of FTA's effort to enhance its partnerships with key national companies and authorities in the maritime sector with the aim of optimising safety, security and environmental protection of the marine domain within the UAE. FTA's engineer Ahmed Mohamed Sharif Al Khoori said: "By nurturing partnerships with leading national companies that provide reliable, safe and effective marine services, the authority will have the tools and procedures that will enable it to decisively respond to emergencies and ensure safety and security across the maritime sector.

"Our agreement will also allow us to provide further support to the coastguard and other local authorities that are essential to securing and safeguarding the waters of the UAE," he added. Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, group ceo of Abu Dhabi Ports, commented: "The terms of our accord reflect the spirit of good will that exists between our two parties as we seek to engage and collaborate in innovative ways that serve to further protect our marine environment's precious resources, while also enhancing the safety of our nation's territorial waters as well as the security of all our ports."

**Source:** [seatrade-maritime.com](https://seatrade-maritime.com); 29 June 2020

# MARINE ENVIRONMENT

---

## BOAT PULLS 103 TONNES OF TRASH FROM PACIFIC OCEAN, SETS NEW WORLD RECORD FOR LARGEST HAUL

- Aninda Das

A single marine plastic recovery vessel has done something that even a fleet of clean-up ships will find it difficult to do. A boat of the Ocean Voyages Institute has set a new world record after pulling the largest haul of trash from the Pacific Ocean. According to reports, the haul is now the largest open ocean clean-up in history. The boat docked at the port of Honolulu in Hawaii after being out for 48 days, collecting trash from the Pacific Ocean. Believe it or not, the boat brought back 2,06,000 pounds of fishing nets and consumer plastics. The boat had registered a record from a 25-day clean-up voyage in 2019. This year, their collection of trash doubled and reach an all-time high.

"I am so proud of our hard-working crew. We exceeded our goal of capturing 100 tons of toxic consumer plastics and derelict 'ghost' nets, and in these challenging times, we are continuing to help restore the health of our ocean, which influences our own health and the health of the planet," Mary Crowley, founder and executive director of Ocean Voyages Institute, said in a statement. "The oceans can't wait for these nets and debris to break down into microplastics which impair the ocean's ability to store carbon and toxify the fragile ocean food web," he added.

Over the years, Crowley has developed various effective techniques and methods to remove plastics put of the ocean. In 2019, his team managed to remover 48 tons of toxic plastic during two clean-up voyages. Crowley's theory that one tracker can lead to many nets is now being proved to be true by the GPS satellite trackers that the Ocean Voyages Institute has been using since 2018. "Ocean Voyages Institute has been a leader in researching and accomplishing ocean clean-up for over a decade, granted with less fanfare and attention than others, but with passion and commitment and making meaningful impacts," added Crowley. She added that the trash will be recycled and repurposed and nothing will end up in landfills or go back into the ocean. The record-breaking haul of trash will be unloaded while the vessel is docked alongside Pier 29, a press release by Ocean Voyages Institute said.

**Source:** [timesnow.com](https://timesnow.com); 30 June 2020

## NORNICKEL: RUSSIA PROBES NEW POLLUTION AT ARCTIC MINING FIRM

- Vaishali Dar

Russian officials are investigating a mining company in the Arctic over the pumping of waste water from one of its processing plants into nearby countryside.

Norilsk Nickel said it had suspended staff involved in the violation. The pumping has now reportedly stopped. It is a new pollution incident involving the firm, known as Nornickel. Emergency workers are struggling to contain a huge diesel spill from a fuel depot owned by the company. A local ecologist and reporters from Russia's independent daily Novaya Gazeta filmed foamy water being pumped into Arctic tundra from the reservoir at the Talnakh enrichment plant near Norilsk.

Security guards tried to stop them filming. The reporters said the waste water was believed to contain heavy metals - nickel, cobalt and copper - and sulphuric acid, which the firm has denied. In a statement, Nornickel said "those responsible at the plant have been suspended" for "allowing a flagrant violation of the operational rules at the plant's tailings reservoir". "Nornickel has launched an investigation into what happened, and the firm is working with the ministry of natural resources and the emergencies ministry," it said. Russia's Investigative Committee (SK), which probes serious crimes, has launched its own investigation into the incident.

According to Nornickel, the waste water does not contain toxic tailings from its mining operation. The firm says the "purified" water had been pumped away from the reservoir to prevent overspill, while admitting that it was not acceptable practice. Novaya Gazeta reports that the waste water entered the Kharaelakh river, which flows into Pyasino lake. The diesel spill in late May involved about 21,000 tonnes, some of which contaminated the lake. Stretches of the Ambarnaya river, flowing to the lake, turned red from the diesel. Nornickel has numerous plants in and around the Arctic city of Norilsk, which has long been categorised as one of the world's most polluted places. Billionaire Vladimir Potanin is the biggest shareholder, with a 30.4% stake, while the Rusal aluminium giant run by tycoon Oleg Deripaska owns 27.8%.

**Source:** [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55444444); 29 June 2020

## **MEXICO, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA WILL STRENGTHEN COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- *Ecoticias*

The 27th session of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was held virtually. The head of the Semarnat commented on the seven environmental transitions that the Government of the Fourth Transformation is preparing. In the framework of the forthcoming entry into force of the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ACA), parallel to the T-MEC, the highest environmental authorities in Mexico, the United States and Canada met virtually to celebrate the 27th

session of the Council of the Commission for the Environmental Cooperation (CCA) with the objective of laying the foundations to strengthen trilateral collaboration in favour of environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources in North America.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Canada, Jonathan Wilkinson, the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Andrew Wheeler, and the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, Dr. Víctor Manuel Toledo Manzur, who shared Mexico's expectations and priorities regarding the Agreement. The head of the Semarnat pointed out that our country works in the social and environmental restoration of the different regions of the country, for which it is essential to promote actions that allow moving from agro-industrial systems to agroecological systems for the production of healthy food, the elimination of pesticides and transgenics. He emphasized the close relationship between the current health crisis and the environmental crisis, aggravated by extensive monocultures and overcrowding in poultry and pig farms, sources of new viruses and bacteria.

In this context, he highlighted that the environmental sector promotes transition policies in the following areas: 1) Forests, agroecology and fishing, 2) Water, 3) Energy, 4) Bioculturality, 5) Urban and industrial centers, 6) Education, and 7) Citizenship, justice and environmental governance, which will allow progress in the ecological transformation required by the country. Likewise, Toledo Manzur explained that Semarnat promotes the idea of conservation beyond biodiversity, also considering the cultures of the native peoples.

In order to share Mexico's experience in "clean technologies for resilient communities", the main topic of the session, María Amparo Martínez Arroyo, general director of the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC), presented a success story in Mexico regarding the use of eco-technologies for adaptation, which includes rainwater harvesting systems and solar panels, as well as radio communication equipment to transmit climate and health alerts. For his part, Rodolfo Godínez Rosales, head of the Coordinating Unit for International Affairs and alternate representative of the CEC Council for Mexico, commented that the ACA is directly linked to the protection of various human rights, including a healthy environment, to health and life, as well as effective compliance with the law through cooperation and synergistic work among the countries of the region.

On the issue of resilient communities, he mentioned that the first level of government that must act is the municipal one, so the response capacity of this authority must be strengthened. At the conclusion of the event, the three countries adopted the CEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025, which will implement, through the cooperation programs that emerge, the provisions contained in the ACA and Chapter 24 on the environment of the T-MEC through six priority areas: 1) Clean air, water and soil, 2) Prevent and reduce marine pollution, 3) Circular economy and sustainable management of minerals, 4) Ecosystems and shared species, 5) Resilient economies and communities, and 6) Effective implementation of environmental legislation. The 27th session of the CEC Council included a session of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), which

has five Mexican members, within the framework of which a round table discussion on the ACA, Chapter 24 of the T-MEC, was held. and the Commission's Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Likewise, the winners of the Youth Challenge for Environmental Innovation 2020 were announced , which in the case of Mexico corresponded to Karime Guillén, Marco Alemán, Minerva Valier and Valeria García, students of the Bachelor of Biotechnology at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. Her project, called NoPlastic, consists of a 100% biodegradable and compostable bioplastic, made from inedible nopal, residues and organic additives with characteristics that promote ecological consumption.

**Source:** [maritimeherald.com](https://maritimeherald.com); 01 July 2020

# GEOPOLITICS

---

## AMID MILITARY STAND-OFF WITH CHINA, INDIA GETS FRANCE'S ASSURANCE OF 'STEADFAST SUPPORT'

- Anirban Bhaumik

France has assured India of “steadfast support” of its armed forces, as the Defence Minister of the Western European nation, Florence Parly, wrote to her counterpart, Rajnath Singh, condoling death of 20 Indian Army soldiers in the June 15 clash with Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) personnel at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh. External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, and his counterpart in French Government, Jean-Yves Le Drian, too spoke over the phone on Tuesday and discussed “issues of contemporary security and political importance”. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and his French counterpart François Delattre also had a video-conference on Monday. The back-to-back contacts between New Delhi and Paris came amid continuing military stand-off along the disputed India-China boundary in eastern Ladakh. The more than seven-week-long stand-off took New Delhi’s relations with Beijing to a new low, particularly after the violent clash between the soldiers of the Indian Army and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) – the de facto boundary between the two nations – at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on June 15.

The Indian Army lost 20 of its soldiers in the clash. The Chinese PLA too suffered casualties, but it did not make the number of its soldiers, who were injured or killed in the violent face-off, public. “This was a hard blow against the soldiers, their families and the nation. In these difficult circumstances, I wish to express my steadfast and friendly support, along with that of the French armed forces,” Parly wrote to Singh. “I request you to kindly convey my heartfelt condolences to the entire Indian armed forces as well as to the grieving families.”

France is likely to deliver to India the first batch of the Rafale fighter jets by the end of July. India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 to procure 36 Rafale jets manufactured by the Dassault Aviation for the Indian Air Force (IAF). Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year joined French President Emmanuel Macron to reaffirm “shared commitment to maintaining freedom of navigation, particularly in the Indo-Pacific zone”, sending out a signal of growing strategic convergence between India and France against the hegemonic aspirations of China.

Like India, France too has substantial geopolitical interests in western Indian Ocean and southern Pacific, with a large number of its military personnel deployed in the region. France has territorial control over Réunion and Mayotte islands in the Indian

Ocean and New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the Pacific. While over 60 per cent of France's Exclusive Economic Zone is in the Pacific, over 20 per cent is in the Indian Ocean. Djibouti on the Horn of Africa has a base of French Army.

**Source:** [deccanherald.com](https://www.deccanherald.com); 30 June 2020

## **HOUSE, SENATE DEFENSE BILLS DIFFER IN APPROACH TO INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY, BUT STRESS REGION'S IMPORTANCE**

- Megan Eckstein

The House and the Senate agree they need to prioritize the Indo-Pacific region in their annual defense policy and spending bills. They don't quite agree on how far to go in doing that, but an overriding sense that they need to start somewhere this year will likely get them to the creation of a Indo-Pacific fund to counter China, akin to the European Deterrence Initiative created in 2014 to push back against Russia. In its version of the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, the Senate Armed Services Committee this year made the first volley, pitching a Pacific Deterrence Initiative that would do several things. "First, the Pacific Deterrence Initiative will enhance budgetary transparency and congressional oversight. The National Defense Strategy refocused the Pentagon on strategic competition with China and Russia, elevating the priority of the Indo-Pacific and European theaters," reads an article in *War on the Rocks* jointly written by the SASC chairman and ranking member, Sens. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Jack Reed (D-R.I.).

"The Pacific Deterrence Initiative would ... [allow] Congress and the Pentagon to view the defense budget through a regional warfighting lens while increasing the visibility of options to advance U.S. priorities in the Indo-Pacific." The Senate's PDI would also focus money on developing the right technologies for the theater and fielding and supporting those high-end systems west of the International Date Line. "The Pentagon's investments in modern platforms have not been sufficiently matched by investments in the joint and enabling capabilities those platforms require, especially as envisioned by new operational concepts. Posture and logistics remain serious weak spots for credible American deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region, a major point of emphasis in the National Defense Strategy, as well as a recent assessment submitted to Congress by the commander of Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Phil Davidson," the article reads.

"Investments in theater missile defense, expeditionary airfield and port infrastructure, fuel and munitions storage, and other areas will be key to America's future force posture in the Indo-Pacific. As one example, it doesn't matter how many F-35s the military buys if very few are stationed in the region, their primary bases have little defense against Chinese missiles, they don't have secondary airfields to operate from, they can't access prepositioned stocks of fuel and munitions, or they can't be repaired in theater and get back in the fight when it counts. The Pacific Deterrence Initiative

will incentivize increased focus on posture and logistics, and help measure whether these requirements are being matched with resources,” the article continues.

Third, it would reassure allies and partners of U.S. commitment to the region, “help U.S. allies and partners build the capabilities they need to protect their sovereignty. And the initiative will assure U.S. allies and partners that they will not face the threat of Chinese coercion or aggression alone.” And fourth, it would “deter Chinese aggression by strengthening the credibility of American deterrence. ... A well-distributed posture will complicate Chinese targeting of U.S. forces and infrastructure. More capable missile defenses at American bases will make them more difficult and costly to strike. Greater numbers of combat-credible U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific will make it harder for China to seize and maintain the advantage early in a conflict. More resilient logistics will make it harder to take U.S. forces out of the fight or delay reinforcements. New land-based, long-range strike capabilities will provide a new source of resilient and survivable U.S. power projection. The Pacific Deterrence Initiative will focus resources on these efforts and others with the aim of injecting uncertainty and risk into Beijing’s calculus, leaving just one conclusion: ‘Not today. You, militarily, cannot win it, so don’t even try it.’”

For House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Adam. Smith (D-Wash.), that might go a bit too far.

“I think what we need to do is we need to have strong enough partnerships and build the alliances in the region to force China to play by the rules,” he said today at a virtual Defense Writers Group event. He added that he would be “troubled” by a program that would create “an arms race approach” to deterring China. Instead, the HASC bill proposes an Indo-Pacific Reassurance Initiative. “The stronger and more aligned our Asian allies are – like South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, India – the more we can, in that case, deter China from aggressive actions like what’s happening along the line of control with India, or what has happened with a number of island chain disputes with South Korea, Philippines, Japan,” Smith said.

“If they are emboldened to think they can roll over these territories without any adequate response from the areas, then they’re more likely to do it.” Still, Smith was confident the House and Senate could reconcile their differences. HASC Ranking Member Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) said at a separate Defense Writers Group event on Monday that “the key this year is, get going.”

He noted that two years ago the NDAA included language to set up the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, but he said the Defense Department hasn’t participated in the way Congress envisioned, leaving the program a diplomatic one without any military support behind it. “We’ve had two years of delay because the Pentagon was afraid, I think, of losing money or something, I don’t know,” Thornberry said. “But now you’ve got, [Defense Secretary Mark] Esper has voiced support. Again, you’ve got Republicans, Democrats, House, Senate. So the key thing this year is to get going.”

Inhofe and Reed addressed the ARIA issue in their article, writing that “we hear over and over again from foreign counterparts that they are hedging their bets for the future because they don’t know if they can count on the United States. Congress took a major step forward with the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, which clearly outlined U.S. policy and interests in the region on security, economics, and human rights and

boosted resources for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Pacific Deterrence Initiative will be a complementary effort focused on the Department of Defense to demonstrate that America's commitment to the region is bipartisan and enduring.”

The full Senate is debating the FY 2021 NDAA on the floor today, with Inhofe hoping to wrap up debate on amendments and have a final vote on the bill by Thursday evening, ahead of the July 4 holiday weekend. At the same time, HASC will hold its full committee markup on July 1, with the markup typically lasting well into the evening and often times past midnight. Thornberry said during the DWG event that his understanding of the upcoming House schedule was that the full House wouldn't meet for the first two weeks of July while the House Appropriations Committee worked on their bills. In the final two weeks of July, the House would convene to vote on both the NDAA and the spending bills, including the defense spending bill.

Once the full House approves a marked-up NDAA, the HASC and SASC could begin to negotiate on areas where the two bills differ. On Navy and Marine Corps areas of the budget, the two committees largely hewed to the Navy's requested budget. The HASC's bill – coming into the full committee markup and still subject to further amendment – includes the Navy's full shipbuilding request, plus \$2.57 billion in procurement and advance procurement funds to restore a second Virginia-class attack submarine to maintain a two-a-year production rate at builders General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding. The Navy had previously planned to buy two in FY 2021, but a last-minute cut at the White House level led the Navy to submit to Congress a shipbuilding request that included just one SSN. Lawmakers called this a non-starter.

On the aviation side, HASC added funding for six P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, which the Navy has increasingly used in the Pacific, Mediterranean, North Atlantic and other hotspots around the globe. The committee also added funding to speed up the Navy's procurement of its CMV-22 variant of the Osprey, which will replace the C-2A Greyhound as the carrier onboard delivery aircraft that ferries people, supplies and mail to aircraft carriers at sea. The bill does not cut F-35 aircraft from the Navy and Marine Corps but trims the overall program funding due to affordability challenges, unjustified cost items and expected savings in the next lot of aircraft to be built. For weapons, the HASC adds nearly \$60 million for ground-based anti-ship missiles for the Marine Corps, which is one of the service's biggest needs as it moves forward with its plans to help the Navy gain and maintain access to waterways from the shore.

On the Senate side, the SASC bill added \$472 million in advance procurement funds for an additional Virginia-class SSN at some point in the future, rather than adding the ship in this year like the House bill would. A HASC committee staffer criticized this approach, saying if Congress couldn't find funds to restore a second boat this year then it would never find funds to fully fund a third boat in a future year to make use of this extra advance procurement money. The Senate bill would also add \$175 million each to stabilize the submarine industrial base and the surface ship industrial base, and it adds \$250 million for the LHA-9 amphibious assault ship.

On aviation, the SASC adds \$325.5 million for additional F-35B and C aircraft for the Navy and Marine Corps. On weapons, SASC adds \$26 million to buy more Tomahawk missiles for the Marine Corps and \$35 million for the Navy to buy more Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASM) as both services focus on their long-range strike capabilities to support future warfare concepts.

**Source:** [news.usni.org](https://news.usni.org); 30 June 2020

## HOW EUROPE FELL OUT OF LOVE WITH CHINA

- Keith Johnson

After years of courting closer economic ties with China, the European Union is ratcheting up its rhetoric against Beijing's heavy-handed approach to the economy and human rights, with many officials describing what they once saw hopefully as a partnership as more of a rivalry.

Relations between Europe and China got frostier this week, after a long-delayed leaders' summit ended with no joint communique and prompted tough talk from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. For years, much as the United States did in the past, Europe has sought to nudge China to make reforms in how it trades and does business but has nothing to show for it. Now, European officials openly talk of China as a rival that needs to start making changes—or face increasing restrictions from Beijing's biggest trading partner.

“We are committed to making swift and substantial progress,” said von der Leyen after the summit, ticking off a litany of unfulfilled Chinese promises on trade, investment, industrial subsidies, climate change, and human rights. “We count on the Chinese leadership to match our level of ambition.”

This week's summit, and the increasingly terse tone taken by top European leaders, follows a spate of new EU initiatives meant to curb Beijing's worst excesses. Last week, the EU unveiled a new scheme meant to fight back against China's use of state subsidies to give its firms an unfair advantage against European rivals; this fall, a long-planned investment screening mechanism meant to shield key European firms and industries from predatory acquisitions will finally be implemented. Both, while nominally directed at all non-EU countries, aim squarely at China.

Taken together, “it gives the impression that the EU wants to show that it is time for a change, time for a recalibration of the relationship, and that it is time for China to give more,” said Frans-Paul van der Putten, an expert on China at the Clingendael Institute, a think tank in the Netherlands. If many of Europe's complaints about China sound familiar to those levied by U.S. officials including President Donald Trump in recent years, that's because they are. But there's one big difference, for now, in Europe's reaction to China that still sets it apart from Trump's scorched-earth approach. “Europe is much more concerned about China, and there is a much greater sense of urgency that something needs to happen,” van der Putten said. “But there is still a very

strong conviction in Europe that there is no future without China—we are not going to ‘decouple’ or have an economic disengagement. You don’t see that in the European mindset.” For much of the past decade, Europe and China were growing increasingly intertwined economically. Two-way trade in goods and services has grown over the last decade by about 60 percent, to more than half a trillion euros annually. Britain, when it was still part of the EU, literally rolled out the red carpet for Chinese investment, and for the past five years sought to ingratiate itself with Beijing, until starting to reverse course this year. In other parts of Europe, big Chinese investment in ports, railroads, telecommunications, and the power grid offered countries like Greece, Italy, and Portugal much-needed investment—and China a measure of influence inside the now 27-nation bloc. Italy even formally signed on to China’s trillion-dollar “Belt and Road” program of infrastructure investment and even at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic has sought to deepen its relationship with Beijing.

But that very deepening of the economic ties between the two also bred suspicion and concern that China was snapping up some of Europe’s crown jewels. Leaders in France and Germany, in particular, worried that Chinese acquisitions of key companies could undermine national security. Countries across the EU have been torn over whether and how much to allow China’s Huawei to participate in the development of advanced, fifth-generation mobile phone networks. The just-unveiled EU plan to treat foreign industrial subsidies with the same strict rules as the bloc applies internally for illegal state aid is just the latest sign that China’s state-led economic model has tried Europe’s patience too much.

“What China didn’t understand is that by launching national champions and throwing state money at them, that created a lot of hostility all over the world but in Europe in particular—German and French companies feel that they are facing some very unfair competition,” said Philippe Le Corre, an expert on China and Europe at the Harvard Kennedy School. The new anti-subsidies measure, he said, “really says a lot about the shifts in the mood in Europe and the fact that the commission is translating that into action.”

If Europe showed more spine this week, it has been a long time stiffening. Previous EU leaders, for example, launched the investment-screening measure to try to limit China’s ability to snap up critical European firms; this fall, the new mechanism will finally be in place. Likewise, Europe’s new foreign-policy chief, Josep Borrell, speaks unabashedly of China as a “rival” to Europe, sharpening the rhetorical confrontation with Beijing that has been steadily building in recent years.

“The mood at the European Commission had been changing over the past five years or so to a more critical perception of China—now it’s much more visible,” van der Putten said. If China is encountering a lot more pushback in Europe, it can look in the mirror for reasons why. Beijing’s insistence on abrogating an international treaty to erode Hong Kong’s guaranteed liberties through the introduction of a new security law that will essentially turn the island enclave into another Chinese city is just the latest hamfisted move that has alienated European leaders eager to find a middle road between Trump-style confrontation and coddling. As von der Leyen detailed after the fizzled summit, the two sides are also at odds on a long-stalled investment treaty; an unbalanced trade relationship with unequal access in China for European firms; state subsidies; forced technology transfers; the reform of the World Trade Organization;

industrial overcapacity in sectors like steel; climate change; and, of course, the handling of the coronavirus pandemic. “There aren’t a lot of very positive points in the EU-China relationship,” Le Corre said.

Still, even as anti-China sentiment in the United States has gone mainstream and bipartisan, with tough trade tariffs, technology and visa restrictions, and an increasingly apparent desire among both Republicans and Democrats to file for divorce, Europe’s not there yet. Von der Leyen harangued China over human rights and pleaded for Beijing to start making concessions on trade and the economy—but didn’t wield any big sticks. That’s partly a reflection of the difficulty of herding 27 different member states into a common foreign policy, a problem the United States doesn’t have. “They don’t have the policy measures quite yet—I don’t see any sign yet of the EU trying to exert serious pressure on China in the sense that the United States has,” van der Putten said.

The key to the future EU-China relationship could come from what happens in the U.S. election in November, where presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden holds a commanding lead in opinion polls over Trump, even in battleground states. While Biden, like other Democrats, has taken a more hawkish line on China, he was also vice president during the Obama administration, when the United States still sought strategic engagement, not outright confrontation, with the world’s second-largest economy. “The current EU position is a lot like Obama’s: We need to work with China, but we need to move them in directions that are important to us,” van der Putten said. “So if Biden goes back to that approach, this would create an interesting possibility of convergence with the United States.” If not, a more confrontational U.S. stance would only embolden countries like France that have called for Europe to play a more independent role on the global stage so that it doesn’t have to choose between China and the United States, he said.

**Source:** [foreignpolicy.com](https://foreignpolicy.com); 25 June 2020

## **IRAN, RUSSIA TURKEY IN TALKS TO FIND POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR SYRIA**

- Associated Press

Opposing sides in Syria's war Iran, Russia and Turkey have held talks reflecting "harmonised" efforts to bring peace to the country after nine years of devastating conflict. During a meeting held on Wednesday, the three sides "expressed the conviction" that Syria's war had no military solution and must be settled only through a political process, a joint statement said.

In the virtual meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin denounced newly imposed US sanctions that he said were aimed at "suffocating" Syria, while Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for peace and security to be restored in his country's southern neighbour.

The talks were the first since September in the so-called Astana format, three-way talks between the key foreign powers in the Syrian conflict. In early March, an agreement between Turkey and Russia halted the Syrian government's three-month air and ground campaign into rebel-held Idlib province. The ceasefire has largely held. Iran and Russia have been staunch supporters of President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey has called for the removal of his government and backed opposition fighters.

Rouhani told the conference "the Islamic republic believes the only solution to the Syrian crisis is political and not a military solution". "We continue to support the inter-Syrian dialogue and underline our determination to fight the terrorism of Daesh [ISIL, ISIS], al-Qaeda and other related groups," he said. "I emphasise that the fight against terrorism will continue until it is completely eradicated in Syria and the region in general." Rouhani used the call to urge the United States to withdraw its troops from Syria to allow al-Assad's government to fully reclaim control of the country's territory. Some American forces have remained in Syria to protect an expanse of Kurdish-controlled oil fields and facilities from falling into the hands of the Islamic State group.

Putin said the objective of the conference was to analyse the situation and agree on steps "to ensure the long-term normalisation in Syria". "Above all, it is a question of continuing the fight against international terrorism," he said. "The most-tense situation is still being observed in territories outside the control of the Syrian army, particularly in the de-escalation zone of Idlib and in northeastern Syria". "We need to actively help advance an inclusive inter-Syrian dialogue," said the Russian leader. Idlib is held by armed groups, some of them backed by Turkey, which has deployed forces in several military posts in the region as part of a 2018 deal with Russia. Putin also denounced as "illegitimate" a new raft of US sanctions against Syria, highlighting "the negative impact of the sanctions put in place against Syria, bypassing the UN Security Council".

The Caesar Act, which took effect in mid-June, punishes under US law any country, individual or entity that does businesses with al-Assad's government. The sanctions are the toughest set of measures to be imposed on Syria yet, preventing anyone around the world from doing business with Syrian officials or state institutions, or from participating in the country's reconstruction. The measures have cast a cloud over efforts to rebuild the war-ravaged country. "Despite the call from the UN Secretary-General [Antonio Guterres] for easing the pressure of sanctions under pandemic conditions, Washington like Brussels decided to prolong measures against Syria," Putin told the conference. "In addition, new sanctions presumably aimed at economically suffocating Syria have been adopted." Erdogan said Turkey's "fundamental priorities are to safeguard Syria's political unity and territorial integrity, restore peace on the ground and find a lasting political solution to the conflict". "We will continue to do what we can to restore peace and security to our neighbour Syria as soon as possible," said the Turkish president.

As well as Idlib, Turkey also controls a stretch of territory along its border in neighbouring Aleppo province following a series of military offensives since 2016. All three parties welcomed a meeting of the Syrian constitutional committee in August, a gathering that is meant to be a step forward in what the United Nations says will be a long road to political rapprochement, followed by elections. They agreed to hold the next trilateral summit on Syria in Iran, but gave no date, saying it would meet when

possible. The conflict in Syria has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions since it began in March 2011.

**Source:** [Aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com); 01 July 2020

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

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

Cover Designed by Gayathri Rajesh, NMF Intern.