



MAKING WAVES

A maritime news brief covering:

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

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MARITIME SECURITY

MAURITIUS MAKES PLAY FOR FUTURE WITH US BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA

- Marwaan Macan-Markar

COLOMBO -- When Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth joined other government leaders to congratulate U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, his message touched on the diplomatic storm brewing over Diego Garcia. The island hosts a secretive U.S. military base in a stretch of the Indian Ocean that lies within the archipelagic country's waters but is administered by Britain. Mauritius, Jugnauth said this month, was prepared to renew an offer it had made to President Donald Trump's administration: a long-term lease of Diego Garcia for its continued use "as a military base by American authorities." The proposal was a reminder to Washington that Mauritius is sticking to its diplomatic blueprint to reclaim Diego Garcia. The 30-square-kilometer island with a complicated colonial history is the largest in the Chagos Archipelago and provides a significant toehold for the U.S. to base aircraft and warships that have been deployed for maneuvers across the Indian Ocean. In 2019, the International Court of Justice, the U.N.'s highest court, affirmed in an advisory that the Chagos Archipelago is part of Mauritian territory. The same year, the U.N. General Assembly echoed the court's view in a sweeping vote.

The strategic significance of Diego Garcia to the U.S. has not been lost on Mauritius, which spans over 2,000 square kilometers in the heart of the Indian Ocean. "We are aware of the importance that the U.S. attaches to the base in Diego Garcia," Jagdish Koonjul, the Mauritian ambassador to the U.N., told Nikkei Asia in a recent interview. "We do appreciate the fact that the base has been used essentially to protect the oil routes and to ensure security in the Indo-Pacific region." The Mauritian offer of a 99-year-lease to the U.S. has bipartisan political consensus in the country of over 1.2 million people. "It is supported not only at the government level but by all political parties in Mauritius," said Koonjul. "There is a national consensus that we are not going to force the Americans to leave the Chagos Archipelago or the island of Diego Garcia, where they have got the base." Seasoned geopolitical analysts are following the diplomatic moves over Diego Garcia, given the shifting tides of U.S. strategic planning focused on the Indo-Pacific region under Washington's Free and Open Indo-Pacific plan. Along with the so-called Quad -- a U.S., India, Japan and Australia security grouping -- it is aimed at countering China's expanding influence across the Indian Ocean. The Diego Garcia base, which is cut off from media scrutiny, is one of the 800 military facilities the U.S. maintains beyond its borders, the most of any country. It was from this base -- dubbed an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" -- that U.S. military planes flew on bombing raids during the Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq.

The Diego Garcia dispute is rooted in twin legacies of colonization and the Cold War and one that dating back to the 1960s connects Mauritius with Britain. The U.S. government has reportedly taken advantage of that relationship to avoid dealing directly with the government in Port Louis, the Mauritian capital. As Britain was winding down its colonial era during that decade, it decided to grant independence to Mauritius, which it had ruled since the early 19th century. But at the final hour, London split off the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius to form a special geographic entity, the British Indian Ocean Territory, before expelling islanders, known as Chagossians, living in the Chagos Archipelago. In 1966, at the height of the Cold War, the British handed over Diego Garcia on a 50-year lease to the U.S. for a military base. The agreement was further extended unilaterally by London in 2016 for American use until 2036. Mauritius finally turned to the International Court of Justice in The Hague to resolve the long simmering sovereignty dispute. In February last year, the court delivered an advisory bolstering Mauritius' argument that its decolonization process from Britain was incomplete because of London's continued claims over the Chagos Archipelago. Three months later, the U.N. General Assembly echoed the court's view through a 116-6 vote favoring Mauritius. That 2019 U.N. resolution said that Britain should have handed over the Chagos islands to Mauritius by November of that year. "What the court found was that the U.K. had illegally occupied the Chagos Archipelago... and it had to withdraw its administration from the Chagos Archipelago," said Koonjul, reflecting on the year that has lapsed since the U.N. resolution for Britain to give up its hold on the Chagos islands. "Some countries, including the U.K., and to a lesser extent the U.S., feel this is an advisory opinion, and therefore it is not binding."

Mauritius flatly dismisses that interpretation. The offer of the Diego Garcia base to the U.S. under the 99-year lease is its strategy to assert ownership and deal directly with Washington rather than London. "Our offer is better than what the British have offered," asserted Koonjul. "Come 2036, it would be illegal and unlawful for the U.K. to continue giving that lease to the Americans." London has said control over the BIOT is not in doubt as it "has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814," according to a statement issued last November by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, minister of state for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. "Mauritius has never held sovereignty over the BIOT and the U.K. does not recognize its claim." Still, Mauritius is determined to keep the issue on the U.N. agenda in a bid to further isolate the U.K. and spotlight Washington's position regarding contested territory in the South China Sea -- where it is challenging China's claims and beefed up military presence by pushing to uphold rules-based freedom of navigation for international ships. "If they want to exercise soft-power in the South China Sea, then they have to correct this contradiction," said Koonjul. "I presume that under the Biden government rule of law will have a different meaning than the one the U.S. has now."

Source: asianikkei.com; 19 November 2020

INDIA AND FRANCE COOPERATION IN THE INDO PACIFIC: NECESSITY OF THE HOUR

- Kartik Asthana

India and France partnership is an unexpected coincidence in the Indian Ocean Region. A former imperial power and an emerging nation hardly have converging interests, more so when it comes to maritime sphere. But India and France share a common trait of civilizational exceptionalism as both nations have exercised fairly independent foreign policy amidst a divided world. India is known to have a non aligned status in international politics while France has defied US decree numerous times despite being a security ally. In fact after the end of Cold War France was of the view that United States has turned into a hyper power. French discomfort with the unipolar system led it to embrace virtues of multipolarity after the end of Cold War. India too embraced multipolarity as the norm in its conduct of International relations. With shifting geopolitical priorities from Atlantic to Asia Pacific, France decided on India as a preferred partner in the Indian Ocean. It was one of the first countries to sign 'Strategic Partnership' agreement with India in 1998 during President Jacques Chirac's visit to India. Even before India's nuclear test in 1998, France was opposed to India's exclusion from global nuclear order and demanded rectification of the order. After the nuclear tests France showed a greater understanding towards India's security compulsions and embarked on resumption of strategic dialogues. The dialogues that began in 1998 has grown over years in field of nuclear, space, defence, cyber security, intelligence sharing and counter terrorism operations. Bilateral military exercises between the two countries started with naval exercise Varuna in 2001, followed by air forces in 2004 and armies in 2011. These exercises have become a regular affair since then.

Space cooperation is one of the earliest domains India and France have worked upon. The launch facility at Sriharikota was set up by French assistance. The Centaur and Viking rocket technologies were also shared to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in the 1970s but Cold war constraints prevented further cooperation. Times changed after 1990s when CNES, French space agency and ISRO collaborated on Megha- Tropiques initiatives, a satellite mission for climate studies. Since the Strategic Agreement of 1998 India and France have worked on joint missions in space for meteorology, climate change and oceanography. In 2018 France and India concluded the Joint Vision for Space Cooperation.

In nuclear field France came to India's rescue in times of crises. After the US cut off the nuclear supplies for Tarapur in 1984 due to domestic reasons, France became the fuel supplier. After the Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver in 2008, India and France signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement which provided the framework for French Extended producer responsibility reactors in India. An agreement was also signed between India and France for building six EPR nuclear reactors with total capacity of 9.6 GW at Jaitapur.

French Aircrafts have been part of Indian air fleet since the 1960s. In defence sector an agreement to build six Scorpene submarines in India with French assistance was signed in 2005. Short range missiles and radar equipments were also acquired subsequently. The Rafale Agreement also helped deepening ties between private defence sectors in both countries. Regular exercises between defense services have led to agreements on logistics support and intelligence sharing. In keeping up with this vision, India and France came up with Joint Strategic Vision for Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region in 2018.

There has been a recent convergence of maritime interests of India and France. Like India, France has been worried about China's overtures in the Indian Ocean Region. With the advent of concept of Indo Pacific it became clear that interests of India and France lie in the cooperation. Fortunately both countries almost share the geographical concept of Indo Pacific i.e. from eastern coast of Africa to western coasts of America. French overseas territories in the Indian and Pacific Ocean provide it with second largest exclusive economic zone in the world. It has long maintained bases in Reunion islands and Djibouti and established another in Abu Dhabi in 2009. With economic and security dimensions at stake France has adopted for an aggressive response as stated in Joint Strategic Vision of 2018.

French Interests in the Indo Pacific

France has claimed to be a legitimate actor belonging to Indian Ocean Rim and Indo Pacific. Historically it has maintained a presence in the region either due to colonial possessions or to counter Soviet Russia's expansion. It has always emphasized that it is not an outside rather a resident power in the Indian and Pacific Ocean. France's presence in the region in the 21st century is also testament of the fact that it wants to become a middle power with global outreach. A middle power is a sovereign state that is not a great power but wields a large influence and international recognition. In a tussle of world domination between US and China, France is trying to leverage its position and offers an alternative arrangement to other middle powers of the region as its commitment to multipolarity. The vast distance of metropolitan France from western shores of Indian Ocean makes it impossible for France to secure the region unilaterally therefore it has been in search of multilateral alliances. Its commitments include respect of the international law, rule based order, open sea lanes of communication, combating piracy and terrorism etc.

France has also developed strong relations with many littoral nations of Indian Ocean to strengthen security of the region. Paris has established intense economic and defence relations with Gulf countries like UAE and Qatar and also with some Southeast Asian states like Singapore. It built strategic relations with China, India and Japan but eventually drifted away from China due to its aggressive policies in the Indian Ocean. Paris has acknowledged India's growing naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean and has found convergence of interests in its growth.

France has traditionally been focused on the Western side of Indian Ocean. It has recently formed an interest on the Eastern front as part of larger engagement with Asia. Indian Ocean provides two avenues of military interest for France. One is in the Southwest Indian Ocean and other in the Arabo- Persian Gulf. In the Southwest Indian Ocean France has sovereignty over its two overseas territories of La Reunion and

Mayotte which together constitute a population of 1 million citizens. The French Southern and Antarctic territories are large maritime expanses of economic, strategic and scientific significance. Together they form an area of 2.6 million square kilometers and require maintenance of 1900 troops in the islands of Reunion and Mayotte. However these bases have to face some non-traditional security issues like illegal fishing, illegal migration and southward extension of Somali pirates. To overcome these challenges France has promoted maritime cooperation with other states of the region like Madagascar, Seychelles and big stakeholders like South Africa and Mozambique.

The second area of relevance for French military is Northwest Indian Ocean. With two major inter services bases in Abu Dhabi and Djibouti; France maintains a permanent military presence in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden. The presence of these two bases serves three major strategic objectives for the France:

- To maintain stability in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa. A conflict ridden area but at the same time crucial for global security.
- To maintain an operational capability near the important choke points: Straits of Hormuz and Bab-el- Mandeb and sea lines of communication along the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea. These points are crucial for global energy imports and trade.
- To act as a platform to project force in the greater Indian Ocean Region, with Abu Dhabi serving as French Indian Ocean Regional Command.

In Eastern Indian Ocean, France has eagerly enhanced its focus realizing increasingly clout of Asia and realizing its responsibility as a permanent member of UN Security Council. The 2008 French white paper on Defence and National security argued that France must move away from its traditional preoccupation with West Africa toward the Middle East and Indian Ocean and from there to East Asia. In a strategy document of 2009 French Prime Minister Francois Fillon declared that France has presence in every ocean and extensive marine areas under their jurisdiction. He also talked about returning France to its historic maritime role. In its 2013 White Paper France identified the rise of China as affecting the established “equilibrium of East Asia” The paper also talked about securing Indian Ocean as an European access point to Asia. With China’s neighbours looking to arm themselves against China’s assertiveness France offered them a helping hand and an opportunity to expand its naval arms to the region. The 2013 white paper also reemphasized France’s role in the Indian Ocean reinforced by the development of privileged relations with India. As a committed player in security of the region the paper stated “For our country, the stability of Asia and freedom of navigation are diplomatic and economic priorities. Alongside its allies, France would, in the event of an open crisis, make a political and military contribution at the appropriate level.” However this cannot be ignored that France has limited operational capabilities in the Eastern Ocean and East of Malacca. Thus France has depended on defence and security cooperation with various states in the region. It has also strengthened its links with Southeast Asia by signing strategic partnership with Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.

With regards to the Pacific Ocean, France also has significant islands and associated EEZs, ‘archipelago of power’ which require substantial permanent military forces.

French possessions in Pacific are New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia and uninhabited Clipperton Island. New Caledonia hold 20-25 percent of World's nickel reserves therefore it is strategically important for France. Most of the South east Pacific is occupied by French Polynesia with a population of around 272,000. This includes 118 islands such as Tahiti; with an enormous EEZ of 4767,242 square km. As for established regional structures in the Indian Ocean, France is the founding member of the Indian Ocean Commission established in 1982. It brings together Reunion islands with other independent island states of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. France is also founding member of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) established in 2008 and seeks to get full membership of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). As for regional structures in Pacific, France is the founding member of South Pacific Commission, established in 1947. France has also been member of Western Pacific Naval Symposium from 1998 onwards.

Indian Imperatives of the Indo Pacific

Being the resident power and as a nation which considers Indian Ocean as its backyard Indo Pacific was a great opportunity to further its maritime interests. However the concept was propagated by US in the wake of China's rise, the acceptance of Indo Pacific in Indian strategy has been there for a long time. In 2004, Indian Maritime Doctrine alluded to "the shift in global maritime focus from the Atlantic- Pacific to Pacific-Indian". Therefore beyond the Indian Ocean, the Western Pacific has been identified as falling within the ambit of India's security interests. India considers the geographical expanse of Indo Pacific as through the east coast of Africa to the island nations in the Pacific Ocean. However with the rise of China and advent of 'Strings of Pearls' strategy India's embrace of the Indo Pacific has been much more potent. India's approach to Indo Pacific is exemplified by its evolving Look east Policy and ASEAN centrality. At The Shangri-la Dialogue of 2018 Indian Prime Minister shared major policy perspective of India on Indo Pacific. He focused on inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality in the concept of Indo Pacific. Security in the region must be maintained through dialogue, a common rules-based order, freedom of navigation, unimpeded commerce, and settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. India supports a rules-based, balanced, and stable trade environment in the Indo-Pacific region. Further India has been an active participant in mechanism like Indian Ocean Rim Association, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium etc. Further through Forum for India- Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) India is moving towards engaging Pacific Island countries. Economic imperatives have been at forefront of India's Indo Pacific Strategy. In security front it has entertained the concept of QUAD- a grouping of US, India, Australia and Japan but it has officially not come into fruition. India has embarked into security and logistics agreement with France that would allow it to access military bases in Djibouti, UAE and French Reunion Island.

India has been interested in building a naval facility in Seychelles' Assumption Island and entered into a bilateral agreement for the same in 2018, but the plan has faced some local resistance due to militarization fears. India's efforts have been praiseworthy but they do lack a solid security component against China due to weakness of India's defence forces and inability to project power in the oceans.

Indian Naval shortcomings

Indian Navy has aspired to become a 200 ship fleet since 2012 when it articulated its ambitions for the 15 year period. It was in congruence with India's plan of being a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region. With the navy's doctrine and mission statement it felt like although ambitious the blueprint of future blue water navy was ready. The Defence ministries agreed on the plan albeit not committing funds to it and deciding it on case to case basis from necessity to acquisitions on its own merits. Eventually the plan floundered and has been unachievable with successive governments failing to provide the means. Although India continues to be active in Indian Ocean Region it spends far less than its peers and competitors. Figures from 2017-18 indicate that India spends only 15 percent of its total military expenditure on its navy, far lower than its peers in the Quad. The United States leads the pack, spending nearly 30 percent of its military expenditure on its navy, while Australia and Japan spend nearly 25 percent and 23 percent respectively. Official numbers from China are hard to obtain, but reports indicate that China spends nearly three times as much as India on its military overall. The lack of expenditure on India's part has come at a time when navy has recognized the need to increase its capabilities. While India already has one commissioned carrier INS Vikramaditya and plans to commission a second, the INS Vikrant which has already faced delays and cost overruns. However when compared to India's actual expenditure on its navy, the ambitions are not matched by its spending. During 2017-18 Indian navy asked for \$5.2 billion for its expenditure but was allocated only \$2.9 billion. This under allocation meant that Navy would be able to achieve just its operational cost leaving no money for acquisitions or further modernization. As a result delay in building aircraft carriers like Vikrant or Arihant submarines which makes India unable to deter China in the Indo Pacific.

The lack of funds is also reflected in India's underutilization of strategically located Andaman and Nicobar islands. While India has built a tri service theatre command on the island to secure its interests in the Straits of Malacca, it continues to place limited assets on the islands and have used them only for logistics support. It is used as a logistics facility for planning and coordination for navy's deployment in East and Southeast Asia. India lacks in understanding that Andaman and Nicobar could be used as a true command to deepen collaboration and cohesion between India's three military services. It possibly hinders on India's plan to acquire P-8 platform as well as potential acquisition of Sea Guardian.

With the recent reduction in Navy's budget, procurement and modernization have been hit hard. The effect of this announcement is also felt in Indo Pacific region where questions will be asked about Indian Navy's ability to act as an important player. The self mandated regional role taken by Navy would not be backed by economic strength. India's regional diplomacy has revolved around capacity building of Indian Ocean littoral states. This has included transfer of hardware at no costs, training, maintenance and imparting maritime domain awareness. With paucity of funds and Indian navy unable to achieve its capability goals, its ability to support its maritime neighbours will be hindered significantly. In such a scenario it is quite likely that India is under danger of ceding maritime space to China and loses a measure of conventional maritime advantage against its traditional rival Pakistan. Until and unless India ties up with a major power in Indian Ocean it would be unable to deter China on its own naval capabilities. According to Kanwal Sibal, India may have a major interest in Western Pacific; it should be underlined by the fact that it is an Indian Ocean power

with enormous responsibilities to safeguard its coastlines, island territories, off shore economic assets and its EEZs. This has also bogged down India's ambitious targets for the Indo Pacific. The two vital choke points in Indian Ocean region: Strait of Hormuz and Malacca are of operational significance for Indian navy as they hold the key for international energy and trade routes. Besides India had experience of sea borne terrorists' threats which requires its coast guards and Navy to be always ready to address the situation. Piracy has also become a serious threat for commercial shipping in the Indian Ocean. Merchant vessels of many countries pass through Indian Ocean with Indian seafarers in them. Protection and rescue of these sea men in piracy infested waters is also one of the tasks of Indian Navy. Therefore Indian navy has been unable to maximize its efforts towards becoming blue water navy. Unfortunately there are no easy answers for the Indian Navy. Its need for the fleet of future is as real as lack of resources to attain it. There are not many options in present scenario. Either Navy has reassess its vision to match its capabilities and Indian Maritime Doctrine or it can actively take support of keen nations like France to overcome some of the shortcomings it faces in Indian Ocean Region.

Avenues of Cooperation

In October 2019 French President Emanuel Macron announced three pronged security partnership with India in Southern Indian Ocean against the backdrop of China's assertiveness in the region. Macron stated that India and France were sharing the analysis of joint maritime security in the Southern Indian Ocean, working on joint surveillance of the region and a possible deployment of Indian navy maritime patrol vessel in Reunion islands. In early 2020 France and India held a joint exercise in the Indian Ocean. First of its kind the two navies conducted joint patrols from Reunion Islands, the French naval base in the Indian Ocean. India has so far conducted Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) only with its neighbours. The United States had made an offer for CORPAT exercise but India rejected it. It shows the confidence that France enjoys in Indian diplomatic circles is unparalleled. It is also because France is not overwhelming power like USA and as a middle power is more reliable. The divergence in definition of Indo Pacific between US and India and transactional approach of US-India dynamic has led India to search for other reliable partners. Moreover India's economically driven approach towards ensuring freedom of seas is appreciated by France. France has also encouraged India's growing role in policing the South West Indian Ocean against pirates. However France has catered to the fact that India acknowledges its legitimate interests in the IOR. India has also accepted France as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region. At the 2019 Shangri –La dialogue, French defence Minister Florence Parly articulation of new strategy of Indo Pacific emphasized on building links and joint actions under the umbrella of shared security. She also talked about engagement with ASEAN and IORA nations to expand and consolidate France's alliance system in the Indo Pacific. India and France are on the same page when it comes for concern and challenges in the region.

India's maritime presence in the Pacific islands is limited as the eastern fleet of Indian Navy is in Vishakapatnam. India has operations up to the Malacca Strait but not as far as Pacific islands. It would need another fleet in the Andaman and Nicobar islands to extend its reach to Pacific. At present India does not have presence in Pacific but diplomatically it has shown interest in South Pacific affairs by participating in Pacific

Islands Forum since 2002. India also provided foreign aid to islands in the South Pacific by offering soft loans for infrastructural projects. France has extensive presence in South Pacific. The logistics agreement signed between India and France could prove fruitful for India in Pacific as France could help India in expanding its base in Pacific, culturally and strategically.

Benefits of the Alliance

France can truly benefit from evolving strategic relations with India. With a transactional dynamic with US and colonial hangover with UK, India would prefer France to be its long term ally. Closer relations with India and increased involvement in Indian Ocean will pave the way for France entry into ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) through which it would be able to access Southeast Asian economies. This would help France diversify its relations and attain a special position in Indo Pacific as the only European power to do so. It would give France greater legitimacy in the ASEAN and hence strengthening Indo Pacific. India on the other hand will benefit from ties with France as it's a partner that shares the values of multilateralism, pluralism and deterrence based policy. It also gains an ally which shares the same geographical construct of Indo Pacific. Relationship with France is also devoid of any domestic burden as since 1998 France support for India has bi partisan consensus. The joint patrols will prove to be additional security for India's maritime sphere. In addition a commitment to build a maritime surveillance system represents a practical and promising measure towards enhancing security in the Indian Ocean. It can help position India as a security leader in the region. India's decision to cooperate with France in the Indo Pacific would address its security needs and also fulfill security architecture for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Limitations

France comes to the region with the claim that it is a resident power. Many experts in France believe that France has been giving away its influence in Indian Ocean to India. India's activism in the Western Indian Ocean is seen as encroachment on France's traditional sphere of influence. It tries to retain its influence and hence would be a little apprehensive about India's expansion in its overseas territories. It could turn out to be as transactional relation as of India's with US. France would like to retain its dominance in the South Pacific and might work on set principles to oppose China in the Indian Ocean. Secondly it is difficult for France to deal with Indian Civil- military bureaucracy. It has caused hindrance in the defense engagement of two nations. The amount of time taken by Indian establishment to conclude a treaty or arrangement baffles France. It could happen that France engages itself with other middle powers like Australia, Indonesia and form an equally formidable alliance. India had to take pro active role in the affairs of Indo Pacific to keep France as its major security partner.

Recommendations

The election Of Macron in France in 2017 brought a lot of enthusiasm in maritime engagement of India and France. After 2017 a number of high level dialogues held along the lines of maritime security. As a result maritime cooperation between India and France is likely to advance along multiple axes. Some of the future actions that could be taken are as follows:

Strengthening maritime domain awareness

In 2017 India and France signed a White Shipping Agreement during the second round of their maritime security dialogue in New Delhi. Such agreements allow nations to exchange information on commercial shipping and create a shared picture of movements at sea. With their respective strength in eastern and Western Indian Oceans New Delhi and Paris can benefit from more intensive exchange of naval intelligence. With the signing of Logistics Support Agreement between respective armies of India and France in 2018, it has become easy for India to access French bases in Indian and Pacific Ocean. It is one of the first steps in India's entry to the Pacific islands. France can engage India in joint exercises, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in the Indian and Pacific Islands thus expanding Indian Navy's reach.

Joint Military activity and multilateral cooperation

India and France could embark on Future military engagements in Western Indian Ocean and South Pacific. With coordinated patrols with France, India is now ready to guard sea lanes of communication beyond its reach. India could help France attain a member status in Indian Ocean Rim Association while France can help India in getting membership of various Pacific organizations and strengthen FIPIIC.

Developing the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

As India wants to develop infrastructure in Andaman and Nicobar islands, it could engage with Reunion islands as sister islands of Andaman and Nicobar. Both these islands sit across key choke points: Malacca strait and entire coast of Africa and Mozambique Channel. India can get access to shores of Africa and provide support to French in Malacca strait to maintain free and open navigation and in turn develop Andaman and Nicobar as a hub to keep a check on Malacca Strait.

Delhi-Canberra- Paris Axis

President Macron in 2018 talked about a trilateral alliance to counter China. Delhi and Paris have real opportunity to extend their partnership to other countries and form trilateral. Australia is an ideal candidate for future cooperation in the Indo Pacific. As a fellow middle power Australia alone cannot check the overtures of China and its proximity to Indian and Pacific islands would make it a useful ally in the Indo Pacific. It is also the member of most Pacific and Indian Ocean organization thus helping India gain an avenue to Pacific.

Conclusion

India and France have formed a steady relationship in the past two decades. France has become a close partner of India like Soviet Russia was during Cold War. From supporting India for permanent seat in UNSC to providing India's nuclear demands France has taken an active role in India's rise in the region. A rare Anglo Saxon power to be not antagonized in India it has provided a privilege status to India in its imagination of Indo Pacific. As a major power it is accepting its responsibility in maintaining rule based order in the Indian Ocean. With US decoupling with the world France has been ready to be a net security provider in the region with help of other powers. India, an ambitious country with ambitious maritime policy is looking

towards allies in deterring China from encroaching in Indian Ocean. For India it is a sovereignty battle of Indian Ocean which it is slowly losing to China. In absence of a strong defense force, collective security is the only way to maintain a rule based Free and Open Indo Pacific. Thus India- France Cooperation is crucial for the success of multilateral cooperation in the Indo Pacific.

Source: moderndiplomacy.eu; 17 November 2020

US NAVY PLANS TO REVIVE FORMATION FOCUSED ON INDIAN AND PACIFIC OCEANS

- Rezaul H Laskar

The US Navy plans to revive a tactical formation that will focus on the Indian and Pacific Oceans and work with partners such as India and Singapore to cope with potential contingencies, a top American naval defence official has said. Kenneth Braithwaite, secretary of the US Navy or the top civilian official in the department of the navy, made the announcement about establishing the First Fleet while addressing the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium on Tuesday. The First Fleet, which will be one of the US Navy's "numbered fleets" or major tactical units, could be based out of Singapore in the long run, said Braithwaite, according to a report by USNI News, the journal of the US Naval Institute.

"We want to stand up a new numbered fleet. And we want to put that numbered fleet in the crossroads between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, and we're really going to have an Indo-PACOM footprint," Braithwaite said. "We can't just rely on the 7th Fleet in Japan. We have to look to our other allies and partners like Singapore, like India, and actually put a numbered fleet where it would be extremely relevant if, God forbid, we were to ever to get in any kind of a dust-up," he said. "More importantly, it can provide a much more formidable deterrence. So we're going to create the First Fleet, and we're going to put it, if not Singapore right out of the chocks, we're going to look to make it more expeditionary-oriented and move it across the Pacific until it is where our allies and partners see that it could best assist them as well as to assist us." Braithwaite's remarks came against the backdrop of the navies of India, Australia, Japan and the US kicking off the second phase of the Malabar exercise in the Arabian Sea.

The move assumes significance because of the current focus on China's assertive actions across the Indo-Pacific, especially the South China Sea. The US and the other members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue – India, Australia and Japan – have said they are committed to ensuring freedom of navigation and a rules-based order in this region. The First Fleet existed from January 1947 to February 1973, when it was redesignated as the Third Fleet. The US Navy currently has seven active numbered fleets. Each numbered fleet has task forces and other units for specific operations. Braithwaite, who is expected to visit India soon, said he had not spoken to acting defense secretary Christopher Miller about the plan for the First Fleet but had "crossed all the other t's and dotted all the other i's". An unnamed US defence official told USNI

News Braithwaite had discussed the proposal with former defense secretary Mark Esper, who was onboard with it.

During his address at the symposium, Braithwaite also referred to the Chinese showing “their aggressiveness around the globe”. “Every single one of our allies and partners are concerned about how aggressive the Chinese have been. I would argue with anybody that not since the War of 1812 has the US and our sovereignty been under the kind of pressures that we see today,” he added. The US alone cannot stand up to China and nations around the Pacific and the globe need to assist in “pushing back militarily and economically if there was a chance for deterrence to work”, he was quoted as saying. Braithwaite said he would travel to India in the coming weeks to discuss security challenges and how the two sides can help each other.

Source: hindustantimes.com; 19 November 2020

UNITED STATES FORMALLY WITHDRAWS FROM OPEN SKIES TREATY

- US Department of State

China's coast guard ships could soon be armed and authorised to launch attacks US and Japanese ships operating "illegally" in its waters, an article on the website of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has claimed. The op-ed, originally published by the Alpha Military Review, was written in response to a suggestion by senior US military analysts that Congress should authorise civilian ships to be fitted with guns as a way of countering the increasingly powerful Chinese navy. The state-endorsed article warned: "We might have to use guns when dealing with robbers, as that is the language that robbers understand. "If the US and Japan do not engage in trouble in the waters under China's jurisdiction, why should they worry?"

The op-ed added: "Allowing the coast guard to use force means that the US and Japan will assume greater security risks if they infringe upon China's maritime sovereignty. "What their media should worry about is not that China reasonably and legally safeguards its maritime rights and interests, but the dangerous provocations of their ships against China. "China is going to allow the coast guard to use force only against the criminals who would violate our maritime sovereignty." The fact that the strongly worded article is carried on the PLA's official site indicates the seriousness with which China regards the issue. Large Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) ships have been accused of multiple incursions into the waters of other countries in recent months. In July, Beijing was accused of sending a CCG ship into disputed waters in the South China Sea, coming within 30 nautical miles of a Vietnamese oil rig. The "media" referred to in the Alpha Military Review article headlined Unleash the Privateers!, penned by Colonel Mark Cancian, US Marine Corps (Retired) and Brandon Schwartz, and published on the website of the US Naval Institute in April.

In it, they urge Congress to issue "letters of marque", authorising civilian ships to engage in maritime warfare under a commission of war. They added: "The notion of privateering makes naval strategists uncomfortable because it is an approach to war

that does not conform to the way the US Navy has fought since 1815. "There is no modern experience of their use, and there are legitimate concerns about legal foundations and international opinion. "But strategists cannot argue for out-of-the-box thinking to face the rising challenge of China and then revert to conventional solutions because out-of-the-box thinking makes them uncomfortable. "As the strategic situation is new, so must our thinking be new. "In wartime, privateers could swarm the oceans and destroy the maritime industry on which China's economy - and the stability of its regime - depend. "The mere threat of such a campaign might strengthen deterrence and thereby prevent a war from happening at all."

Speaking in July, Andrew Scobell, a senior political scientist for the US-based RAND Corporation and a professor at Marine Corps University, said: "Many Chinese Coast Guard vessels are a lot bigger than many of the ships in most Southeast Asian navies. "They're pretty damn intimidating, they do ram fishing boats, and they act like naval vessels. "This is all about, from a Chinese perspective, promoting their interests in the South China Sea, strengthening their claims, using all instruments of national power, and at the same time avoiding escalation."

Source: defenceaviationpost.com; 12 November 2020

‘NO ATTACKS ON FLAGGED VESSELS’ IN FIRST YEAR OF ROYAL NAVY-LED GULF SECURITY MISSION

- Ciaran Mcgrath

A Royal Navy-led Gulf security mission has ensured safe passage for more than 1,100 merchant ships, with “no attacks on flagged vessels” in its first year. Coalition Task Force Sentinel was set up last year in response to growing tensions and increased threats to shipping in Middle Eastern waters. Headed up by the Navy since the end of January, Task Force Sentinel protects the merchant vessels of the International Maritime Security Construct – made up of nine nations, including the UK, USA and the United Arab Emirates. The task force safeguards the freedom of navigation of merchant vessels carrying oil, gas and goods from the Arabian Gulf, through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el Mandeb Strait, to the Southern Red Sea.

More than 17,000 ships a year pass through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and more than 42,000 ships a year pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and any closure of these waterways could have serious international economic consequences. The force uses ‘sentinels’ (larger warships such as HMS Montrose or destroyers working in choke points) and ‘sentries’ (patrol ships and corvettes working in waterways between the narrows). Additionally, airborne surveillance assets are employed to monitor the flow of traffic through the highest risk areas. A collective total of more than three years has been spent by the ships on station. Helicopters and long-range maritime patrol aircraft have flown the equivalent of more than 77 weeks in their efforts to provide surveillance and intelligence. Commander of Task Force Sentinel, Commodore Rob Bellfield said: “Since the inception of the International Maritime Security Concept, there have been

no attacks on flagged vessels. Mission success!” He added that there is “no doubt about the credibility of deterrence our task force brings against any threat to the stability of this essential region”.

Source: forces.net; 14 November 2020

DEA BUSTS ELECTRIC-POWERED NARCOSUB THAT CAN CARRY 6 METRIC TONS OF COCAINE

- Kyle Mizokami

The Colombian military, working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, discovered a new type of so-called “narcosub” that runs on battery power and is designed to completely submerge for short periods of time. On November 5, the authorities found the boat, designed to carry approximately 6 metric tons of cocaine (\$120 million), in a makeshift boatyard on the Colombian coast. The boat, according to U.S. Naval Institute News, features a fully enclosed, cylindrical hull, a hex-shaped viewing port with windows for navigating, and four dive planes designed to allow it to submerge underwater. The Colombian Navy posted a photos of the vessel to Twitter. There was room in the boat for an estimated 10 tons of batteries, giving it enough power to remain submerged for up to 12 hours while running at three knots. Analyst H.I. Sutton believes the boat was designed to be towed by another boat. Once near its destination, the narcosub would be cut loose and proceed under its own power. After the \$1.5 million boat unloaded the drugs, it would be scuttled.

South American drug cartels invented narcosubs. The boats first appeared as an alternative to high-speed, drug-running boats, which were liable to be intercepted by authorities. Narcosubs are designed to infiltrate coastlines, not invade them, slowly making their way across the Eastern Pacific and Carribean from South America to Central America and even as far as Europe. The development of narcosubs is similar to what was going on at the same time in the world of high-tech warfare, as drug smugglers turned from speed to stealth to deliver their cargoes. The term “narcosub” is mostly a misnomer, as few, if any, of the boats are designed to submerge underwater. Most are meant to simply ride low in the ocean, to the point where they're difficult for law enforcement to detect from another ship. Nevertheless, as time has gone on, narcosubs have grown increasingly sophisticated.

Source: popularmechanics.com; 18 November 2020

MARITIME FORCES

DRDO CHIEF FLAGS OFF VARUNASTRA

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, G. Satheesh Reddy, flagged off the first Varunastra, the heavy weight torpedo, which was delivered to the Indian Navy, at a ceremony held at BDL, Visakhapatnam unit, here on Saturday. Varunastra has been designed and developed by NSTL, Visakhapatnam. BDL, being the production agency, is manufacturing Varunastra at its Visakhapatnam unit for the Indian Navy. This product is also being offered for export. BDL is associated with the DRDO for its various missile programmes. BDL is also the production agency for Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM), for which, trials were conducted successfully recently. BDL is also the production agency for Astra Air-to-Air Missile System and has commenced manufacturing of these missiles. The missile system will be fully indigenous and has been developed by the DRDO for the Indian Air Force. Dr. Satheesh Reddy appreciated the synergy between all stakeholders, especially the design agency NSTL and the production agency BDL, in completion of the manufacture of the first Varunastra. He said that BDL should gear up for new programmes of ALWT and EHWT. Commodore Siddharth Mishra, CMD, BDL, said that BDL is poised to take on the manufacture of futuristic weapon systems. Towards this the BDL team is committed to hone new skills and create the necessary infrastructure. Dr. Sateesh also laid the foundation stone for setting up of state-of-the-art Central Stores at BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit. Vice Admiral K. Srinivas, Project Director, Ship Building Centre, Samir V. Kamat, Director General, Naval Systems & Materials (NS&M), DRDO, O.R. Nandagopan, Director, Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, and other dignitaries from DRDO were present.

Source: thehindu.com; 22 November 2020

US-CHINA RELATIONS: SHOOTING DOWN OF MOCK ICBM WAS WARNING TO BEIJING, OBSERVERS SAY

- Minnie Chan

The United States was sending a clear message to China on Tuesday when it shot down a mock intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) over the Pacific Ocean, military experts said. "The SM-3 Block IIA interceptor test could be seen as a response to China launching two 'aircraft carrier killer' missiles into the South China Sea," Beijing-based military expert Zhou Chenming said. He was referring to reports that the People's Liberation Army fired a DF-26B and a DF-21D from separate sites into the sea in

August, as covered by the South China Morning Post at the time. Last week it was reported that a former colonel with the Chinese military, speaking at a meeting in October, said the Chinese missiles successfully hit a moving ship close to the Paracel Islands.

Beijing has made no comment about either the launch of the missiles – known as “aircraft carrier killers” – or the mission’s apparent success. In the US exercise on Tuesday, the latest version of an Aegis SM-3 missile built by American firm Raytheon Missiles & Defence was fired from a destroyer in the Pacific, northeast of Hawaii. Its target was launched from a test site in the Marshall Islands, the Pentagon said. Although the US was most likely sending a message to North Korea, whose development of ICBMs and nuclear weapons is the main reason the Pentagon has sought to accelerate its building of missile defence systems, observers said Tuesday’s exercise could prompt China’s military – the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) – to conduct more missile drills this year. Zhou said the US had played up China’s missile launch to justify increasing its military presence in the Pacific and had used the interceptor test to show it still had military superiority in Asia. “[It wanted to show its] Asian allies that Washington is still able to protect them,” he said. The US exercise was the first time a missile interceptor had been launched from a ship at sea hit to destroy a mock ICBM in flight. Previous tests against ICBM targets had used interceptors launched from underground silos in the United States. But Hong Kong-based military commentator Song Zhongping said the SM-3 Block IIA did not have the capability to stop Chinese missiles like the DF-41 ICBMs and DF-26B intermediate-range ballistic missiles because of their superior manoeuvrability and rapid trace changes in flight. “The [SM-3’s] capability against a DF-41 is very limited, but it would be a threat to ICBMs developed by North Korea and Iran,” he said.

North Korea on October 10 unveiled its largest-ever, road-mobile ICBM during a military parade to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of its ruling party. “However, the [US] test will spur China to step up its missile renewal programme to upgrade its old generation ballistic missiles,” Song said. The SM-3 Block IIA was jointly developed by Raytheon and Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. In August 2019, the US approved the sale of up to 73 SM-3 IIA missiles to Japan for an estimated US\$3.3 million. The weapons will be installed at two sites in the East Asian country and expected to become operational in 2025. The missile launches come at a time of high tensions between China and America, partly as a result of the US increasing its military ties with Taiwan and conducting more frequent freedom of navigation operations in the disputed South China Sea, where Beijing’s posturing has been increasingly aggressive.

A Chinese military source said that besides the twin launches of the “aircraft carrier killer” missiles, the PLA Rocket Force also in August launched two DF-21s from a site in the northwest of the country to strike targets in the southern region of Guangxi. “The Guangxi missile drill was aimed at warning Taiwan’s independence-leaning ruling Democratic Progressive Party that the PLA has the capability to hit specific targets on land,” the source said. In contrast, the missiles aimed at the ship near the Paracel Islands were “specifically intended as a warning to the US navy”, the person said.

Source: [southchinamorningpost](https://www.southchinamorningpost.com); 18 November 2020

INDIA TO GET MORE EYES TO MONITOR CHINESE PRESENCE IN IOR & SCS: NAVY TO GET P8I AIRCRAFT

Indian Navy is getting ready to receive one of the four P-8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft later this month. With an additional P-8I aircraft in its fleet, India's surveillance, reconnaissance, and electronic jamming capabilities will get a boost in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Sources have confirmed to Financial Express Online, "As per the delivery schedule one out of the four aircraft are expected to arrive soon (before the month ends). And the balance three will arrive next year." The aircraft which was expected to come earlier was delayed due to the global pandemic COVID-19 and the lockdown. The configuration of the aircraft expected to arrive soon will be of the same configuration as the previous eight that are in service in the Indian Navy. Also, as reported by Financial Express Online earlier, there are plans of installing encrypted communications systems which have been delivered earlier. After India and the US inked the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), the installation of the encrypted communications systems on these P8i aircraft. These aircraft are coming from the Boeing Company.

How Does COMCASA Agreement Help?

It is the way ahead for achieving the interoperability, especially for the US-supplied defence equipment and platforms. It also helps as when the militaries of the two countries are involved in complex drills in sea, air, underwater or on land. With COMCASA in place, the P8i (specific for the Indian Navy requirement) and P8A Poseidon aircraft, the US Navy variant of the aircraft will be able to share real-time operational intelligence, which also includes a secure Common Tactical Picture.

More About The P-8I Contract

The contract for eight P-8I between India and the Boeing Company was inked for USD 2.1 billion in 2009. These aircraft are coming through the Foreign Military Sales Route (FMS) and India was the first international customer for this aircraft. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) placed a follow on order for additional four P-8I in 2016. And the DAC has given approval for more P-8I in November last year.

What Is Onboard The P8I For The Indian Navy

These aircraft are equipped with the most modern anti-submarine warfare (ASW) Technology. These include a Telephonics APS-143. This is not available on the original P-8A Poseidon in use with the USN The OceanEye Aft Radar System. Magnetic anomaly detector. The weapons systems including Harpoon Block-II missiles and MK-54 lightweight torpedoes come with the aircraft India has. These aircraft are all data-linked with Indian submarines. This makes them capable of passing all critical

information about the enemy vessels. Indian Naval Air Squadron 312A, is the P-8I Squadron, is operating out of naval air station Rajali, based in the South. In P-8I, the 'I' stands for India and it is the Indian Navy variant of the P-8A Poseidon and is for maritime patrol. It has the capability to carry around 129 sonobuoys which help in locating the enemy subs and can also be used for launching anti-ship missiles.

China's Growing Presence In IOR And The South China Sea

Though these aircraft were ordered much before the ongoing standoff between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the eastern Ladakh, more P-8I from the US will help in keeping a watch on the growing presence of the Chinese boats in the region. China has already managed to acquire a string of ports in the region – Myanmar (Kyaukpyu port), Sri Lanka (Hambantota Port), Pakistan (Gwadar port), Iran (Port of Jask).

More About The AGM-84L

The US administration has recently approved the sale of ten AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air-launched missiles. These will help the P-8I to engage and destroy hostile surface warships of choice. With a solid propellant well tested sea-skimming missile and a range of 67 nautical miles, Indian Navy will be in a position to undertake Airborne maritime surface target engagement tactics more effectively.

Importance of The P-8I Maritime Patrol Aircrafts

According to Milind Kulshreshtha, C4I expert, “These aircraft have been acknowledged as a force multiplier with its in-built inter-operability capabilities and as an advanced airborne platform by Indian Navy. Thus making the P-8I a multi-mission aircraft with C4I ingrained. “

Source: navyrecognition.com; 14 November 2020

HIT BY BUDGET CRUNCH, INDIAN NAVY NOW PLANS TO BUY 2 LANDING PLATFORM DOCKS INSTEAD OF 4

- Amrita Nayak Dutta

New Delhi: A budget crunch could force the Indian Navy's hand to cut down the number of Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) it is seeking to buy, ThePrint has learnt. The Navy is now looking at two LPDs, also known as amphibious transport docks, instead of four. Defence sources told ThePrint that the Navy is working on drafting a fresh 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) with new specifications for the LPDs, and discussions are on to reduce the number to two. However, a senior defence official told ThePrint that the Navy can float another tender in the future to buy the other two LPDs, depending on its priorities. The defence ministry in September withdrew the earlier RFP for procuring four LPDs. The Navy had, in November 2013, invited

proposals from private shipyards to build these four LPDs at a cost of Rs 20,000 crore. Since then, the RFP saw nine extensions and one re-submission of bids in seven years before it was withdrawn in September. Earlier this year, the Comptroller and Auditor General, in its report tabled in Parliament, had pointed out the Navy's failure to conclude the contract to procure the LPDs, despite deciding on the acquisition in 2010.

Budget crunch

In the last Union Budget, the Indian Navy was allocated only Rs 41,259 crore, as against the projected amount of Rs 64,307 crore. The budgeted amount wasn't enough to meet its existing committed liabilities — the expenditure that the Navy is committed to pay vendors as part of earlier orders and acquisitions. The budget cuts had forced the Navy to rethink its long-term plan to build a 200-ship fleet by 2027, as laid out in its Maritime Capability Perspective Plan (MCPP) for 2012-2027. It revised the figure to about 175 ships, up from the current strength of 150 ships and submarines. A senior Navy officer told ThePrint that the force is prioritising its immediate requirements to optimise available resources. "Several factors will have to be taken into account — such as the availability of troops trained in amphibious operations and the requirement of those ships during peacetime — in view of the available resources," the officer said, adding that the Indian Navy possesses five large Landing Ship Tanks (LST), two medium LSTs and eight Landing Craft Utility (LCU) boats for amphibious operations.

'Dual role of LPDs'

LPDs are used for amphibious operations or expeditionary warfare missions. They can carry Army battalions, tanks and armoured carriers, and helicopters into a war zone by sea. At present, the Indian Navy has just one LPD — INS Jalashwa. A senior Navy officer explained that an LPD has a dual role — in peacetime and during hostilities. "In peacetime, it can be used for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) or noncombatant evacuation operations (NEOs). The Navy is the first responder in case of rendering HADR in Indian Ocean Region littorals (countries with coastlines connected to the Indian Ocean). During a war, it plays an important role in transporting large numbers of amphibious troops and equipment for suitable operations to influence events," the officer said. The officer explained that amphibious contingencies in India could mean landing a large body of troops on the enemy coast, or retaking any occupied island(s) in the Navy's area of responsibility.

LPDs in other countries

Navies of other countries have developed advanced LPDs over the years. For instance, China has been supplying military equipment for its base in the African country of Djibouti using its new Type 71 LPDs. These provide China's PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) with a 'blue-water' capability for landing forces away from its borders. The US Navy has been building San Antonio-class LPDs since 2000, which are likely to make up two-thirds of its amphibious warfare fleet. The vessels can function as part of a three-ship amphibious ready group, a larger joint task force and even independently. Rear Admiral S.Y. Shrikhande (Retd), who headed India's naval intelligence, told ThePrint that LPDs are a critical component of any nation's expeditionary capability. "It concerns me that with the Navy's declining share of the budget, force planning has come under severe resource constraints. Of course, the priorities are for the naval staff to determine. If there is a constraint, maybe naval

expeditionary capacities will not be the highest priority at the moment. The priority may be to work on other capabilities,” Shrikhande said. The retired Rear Admiral added: “In the long run, a major Indo-Pacific nation like ours, which has a strategic offensive-defensive orientation, would do well to build the correct expeditionary capabilities — both air- and sea-borne. There will always be a need for such capabilities... The technology and tactics may change, but sea and air power have needed power projection capabilities, and expeditionary instruments are part of this.”

Source: theprint.in; 18 November 2020

THE US NAVY IS MOVING TO PUT MORE SHIP-KILLER MISSILES ON SUBMARINES

- David B Larter

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy is pushing ahead with fielding more anti-ship cruise missiles on submarines in the Pacific, the head of U.S. Navy Submarine Forces said Monday. As the U.S. fleet grapples with the rising threat of China’s expanding Navy, which now has more ships than the U.S. Navy’s fleet on both coasts combined, the service is packing its submarines with longer-range weapons, including the forthcoming Maritime Strike Tomahawk, Vice Adm. Daryl Caudle said. “We’re increasing our range and how we deliver kinetic effects,” Caudle said. “Long-range torpedoes, of course, because that’s our clandestine weapon, but also bringing back Harpoon in the Pacific. We’ve tested that capability — we know it works. The weapon, as everyone knows, has limitations, but still gives us some stand-off capability. And we’re also pressing hard to get the Maritime Strike Tomahawk building as well.” Adding the Maritime Strike Tomahawk, with a range of about 1,000 miles, will greatly extend the reach of its submarines in the Pacific.

The Maritime Strike Tomahawk is one of three Block V variants of the Navy’s stalwart cruise missile currently in development. The anti-ship missile, which incorporates a new seeker, is slated to start coming online in 2023. A Navy brief says the Maritime Strike Tomahawk’s new seeker “enables the capability to hit moving maritime targets through mid-course guidance via third party or seeker mode, to a terminal seeker area of uncertainty.” U.S. Navy and senior defense leaders have long pointed to submarines as the ace up its sleeve in a potential conflict with China, though the numbers of submarines in the fleet is declining as the Los Angeles-class attack submarines are decommissioning. The Navy expects to drop from around 50 today to 42 attack boats by the late 2020s. The service is exploring extending the service life of up to five of its LA class to blunt the worst effects. There is a growing consensus among military leaders that holding off the Chinese fleet is an imperative in any potential conflict, with the Air Force, Marine Corps and even the Army investing in anti-ship missiles. Michèle Flournoy, who many believe could be the incoming secretary of defense in the Biden administration, in a June editorial in *Foreign Affairs* said the military should be able to “credibly threaten to sink all of China’s military vessels, submarines, and merchant ships in the South China Sea within 72 hours.”

Source: defensenews.com; 16 November 2020

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

THE US WANTS TO TAKE ON CHINA OVER ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. WHY IS ASEAN WARY?

- Resty Woro Yuniar

Washington's recent moves to double down on illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing through a stronger maritime presence in Asia are welcome, analysts say, though they warn that countries in the region will not want militarised law enforcement that could spark bigger clashes in disputed waters – and not just with Beijing. Their comments are a response to United States National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien's announcement last month that the US Coast Guard would deploy its newest fast-response cutters in the Indo-Pacific to police illegal fishing by China.

Earlier this week, David Feith, deputy assistant secretary for regional and security policy and multilateral affairs at the US Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told journalists Washington would expand the number of "shiprider" agreements the US Coast Guard has with Pacific countries to help them counter China's "aggressive behaviour" on the high seas and in sovereign waters of other nations. Under a shiprider agreement, one country's authorities are allowed to board law enforcement vessels or aircraft of another nation while they are on patrol, during which the former can authorise the latter to take law enforcement action on their behalf. "In some areas, such as the Northern Pacific, stateless fishing vessels display characteristics of Chinese registration. In addition, China's maritime militia – estimated to include more than 3,000 vessels – actively carries out aggressive behaviour on the high seas and in sovereign waters of other nations to coerce and intimidate legitimate fishers in support of the Chinese Communist Party's long-term maritime strategic goals," Feith said. Gilang Kembara, researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, said Jakarta would not welcome a militaristic approach by the US to clamp down on IUU fishing.

"I think it's a good thing if the US offers Indonesia cooperation with their coastguard, since IUU fishing is a criminal activity, so we need law enforcement to fight it," he said. "But if what they offer is cooperation with the US Navy, and this becomes a [military] issue ... that approach is overblown because I don't think IUU fishing is an existential threat to a nation." Jay L. Batongbacal, director at the University of the Philippines' Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said the Philippines under President

Rodrigo Duterte would also not welcome joint enforcement. “But [Manila] will probably be satisfied with information sharing on activities at sea, and for at least the last two to three years the government, especially the fisheries bureau, has actually taken advantage of information available from the US on foreign fishing activities in the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ),” he said.

‘MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH’

According to a 2015 report published by the European Parliament’s in-house think tank, the 10 countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) account for an estimated one-fifth of global marine fish production, and fish exports from that region were worth US\$11 billion that year. By comparison, the global IUU fishing industry is estimated to be worth US\$23.5 billion annually, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. China, which has the world’s largest distant water fishing fleet, is the top perpetrator of IUU fishing. Its vessels are most active in the South China Sea – which Beijing claims almost in its entirety – though they are also present in other parts of the world, according to the Environmental Justice Foundation, a London-based advocacy group for global fishing sustainability.

The Overseas Deployment Institute think tank, also based in London, estimates that China has nearly 17,000 distant water fishing vessels, and at least 183 vessels in this fleet are suspected of involvement in IUU fishing. Beijing has dismissed Washington’s efforts to rein in the practice as politically motivated. It maintained that it was continuing to crack down on illegal fishing activities, with foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin saying in September that it had “zero tolerance” for IUU fishing. Asyura Salleh, a specialist in maritime security and governance at foreign policy research centre Pacific Forum, acknowledged that American efforts against IUU fishing would be seen as “an anti-China stance” in light of the Trump administration efforts to counter Beijing’s influence in the region.

But, she added, Washington was just addressing a real problem that had been happening for some time. “There’s a lot of emphasis on [how the US is] going to [assist] regional countries to better understand their maritime environment,” said the Kuala Lumpur-based researcher. Asyura predicted that this commitment would continue under the new Biden administration, although it might take “a more pragmatic approach” by helping Southeast Asian and Pacific countries improve their ability to monitor foreign fishing vessels’ activities instead of through the deployment of patrol assets. “If there are more skirmishes similar to what we saw in the Natuna Islands earlier this year, then that would definitely call for more [action] from the US administration,” Asyura said, referring to a part of Indonesia’s EEZ at the edge of the South China Sea. Jakarta and Beijing have clashed over Chinese fishing and coastguard vessels entering the area.

POTENTIAL REGION-WIDE DISPUTE

Chinese vessels are not the only ones engaging in IUU activities. Vietnamese vessels had also been caught for illegal fishing in Thai and Indonesian waters, driven by depleted stocks at home and a lack of local regulations or enforcement to stamp out the practice, said Dominic Thomson, deputy director and Southeast Asia project manager at the Environmental Justice Foundation. Thomson said initial analysis showed at least 59 Vietnamese vessels and 430 crew members were caught for illegal

fishing in Thailand-administered waters as of the middle of September. Riefqi Muna, emerging security affairs researcher at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, said data from 2014 to last year showed that of the 488 foreign vessels caught illegally fishing in Indonesian waters, 276 were Vietnam-owned vessels. Those ships were later scuttled by Indonesia's maritime authorities. He said Southeast Asia's largest economy suffers losses of up to US\$36.4 billion in maritime resources annually due to IUU fishing, which also depletes fish stocks and destroys invaluable marine life and environments. Batongbacal from the University of the Philippines said it was difficult to get data on foreign vessels entering Philippine waters in recent times as President Duterte had adopted a more conciliatory approach towards China.

The most recent time the country's fisheries bureau released such statistics was under the administration of Benigno Aquino III, prior to Duterte taking power in 2016. At that time, the data showed that Chinese vessels were the biggest IUU fishing perpetrator in Philippine waters. "It's still part of the overall policy of Duterte to be friendly and accommodating to China, and in 2017 he even said publicly that he was basically allowing the Chinese to fish in the EEZ, so it's a part of that fatalistic policy," he said. "There's nothing he can do about it other than allowing [the Chinese] to do so without any action, and because of that statement the fisheries bureau essentially is also toeing the line."

While IUU fishing was a transnational crime, Batongbacal cautioned that the current situation in Asean had the potential to flare up into a region-wide dispute and Asean countries should work together to tackle it. "There is an intersection between IUU fishing and other illegal activities that I've seen. The Philippines, for example, has been very concerned with drug smuggling as well as the smuggling of other goods, so you're not only talking about fish but also other activities that take place along with it," he said. "Even if [Southeast Asian countries] do not see a multilateral problem or issue [with IUU fishing], they will still need to address it and they will still need to deal with foreign fishers in their exclusive economic zones. So it is inevitable that at some point it does become a political or geopolitical problem." Asyura of the Pacific Forum said the best law-enforcement approach to illegal fishing was for countries to push vessels out of territorial waters into international waters rather than detaining fishermen, particularly amid fears of imported Covid-19 cases. "In fact this has been the case, Malaysia has been pushing out more boats than detaining them," she said. "I think that's because of the current climate that we're in, because of the pandemic, there has been a lot more enforcement quite generally around these borders."

Source: [southchinamorningpost](https://www.southchinamorningpost.com); 20 November 2020

BIG NEWS FOR ISRO! INDIAN NAVIGATION SYSTEM (IRNSS) GETS APPROVAL BY IMP FOR GLOBAL OPERATIONS

- Smriti Chaudhary

In an accomplishment, under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) initiative, the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) received a green signal from the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for operation in the Indian Ocean. The IRNSS is now a component of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) and works like the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS).

It will be used by merchant ships for navigation in the ocean within the area covered by 50°N latitude, 55°E longitude, 5°S latitude and 110°E longitude (approximately up to 1500 km from Indian boundary), reported Press Trust of India (PTI). The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of IMO during its recent meeting held from November 4-11 has approved the recognition of the IRNSS as a component of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said in a statement. The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) initiated the matter with the IMO for grant of recognition to IRNSS as a component of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System (similar to GPS and GLONASS), reported The Hindu. The report prepared by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was submitted to IMO for consideration. includes the details of the tests carried out on merchant ships concerning the accuracy of the system. IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed by India to provide accurate position information service to assist in the navigation of ships in Indian Ocean waters.

Source: [theurasiatimes](https://www.thehindu.com/news-international/india/indian-regional-navigation-satellite-system-irnss-receives-green-signal-from-imo-for-operation-in-the-indian-ocean/article66411111.html); 21 November 2020

IMO WILL LIST ALL PORTS WHERE CREW CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

- Sam Chambers

Among the outcomes from the virtual meeting this week of the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) delegates have approved plans to get the UN agency to include a public list of all ports where crew changes are possible, as well as highlighting crew change regulations in individual countries. Currently collated, reliable global crew change regulation information is limited with Splash regularly turning to Inchcape's crew change tracker to keep abreast of which ports are open for crew repatriation. Inchcape currently lists 26 countries as completely open for crew change. Following this week's MSC meeting, the IMO said it will now disseminate information about ports to enable shipping companies to easily plan and organise crew changes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Delegates attending the virtual meeting also endorsed IMO's crew change protocols, which it first published back in May. The IMO recommendations carry best practice advice on how to conduct crew changes safely during the pandemic.

A spokesperson for the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), which helped in formulating the protocols, commented: "The crew change crisis is still impacting hundreds of thousands seafarers across the globe and we urgently need these words to be translated into actions. The protocols provide the basis for safe and secure crew

change and look forward to their speedy implementation.” In related news, the Department of Transportation in the Philippines is set to open two more crew change hubs in the country. The ports of Davao in the far south and Batangas in the heart of the country will open up as crew change hubs shortly, joining existing crew change hubs in the ports of Manila, Bataan, Subic and Cebu. Transportation secretary Arthur Tugade yesterday reiterated his determination to make the country the crew change hub capital of the world.

Source: [splash247.com](https://www.splash247.com); 12 November 2020

RENEWABLE ENERGY: COULD FLOATING TURBINES POWER OUR HOMES?

- Chris Wood

Wind turbines floating miles out to sea could one day provide electricity to our homes, experts believe. Wales currently meets about 50% of its needs from renewable sources, including solar and wind. Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants to see fixed offshore wind farms power UK homes by 2030, while Plaid Cymru believes Wales could be self-sustainable through renewables by then.

But how big a part could turbines floating off the Welsh coast play?

A 96 megawatt (MW) wind farm capable of powering 90,000 homes is proposed for an area of sea 28 miles (45km) off Pembrokeshire by 2027.

However, this could be just the tip of the iceberg, in light of other developments. Successful trials in Scotland suggest floating turbines could have advantages over other types of renewables, including cost and environmental impact. A 96 megawatt (MW) wind farm capable of powering 90,000 homes is proposed for an area of sea 28 miles (45km) off Pembrokeshire by 2027. However, this could be just the tip of the iceberg, in light of other developments. Successful trials in Scotland suggest floating turbines could have advantages over other types of renewables, including cost and environmental impact. A proposed £1.3bn Swansea Bay project was shelved because of cost.

Placing solar panels and wind turbines on a large scale in rural Wales can also be difficult, with objections from campaigners and locals over the impact on the landscape. As Wales has about 1,680 miles (2,704 km) of coast, generating electricity there could be the obvious solution.

However, given the sea bed "drops dramatically" in many locations, Prof Jenkins believes fixed turbines are difficult in many places. "The fact that these (floating) turbines are so far out to sea make them less visible," said Rhodri James, of global energy firm Equinor. "It does help, as some people in certain areas don't want to see them. And in protected areas, such as Pembrokeshire National Park, putting them close to the shore might be difficult." There are also other benefits, such as saving on the expense on steel to fix turbines 60m underwater into the seabed, and the higher

wind speeds further out to sea and potentially more power generated. Global energy company Equinor first had the idea of floating turbines in 2001, to power offshore oil and gas platforms in Norwegian waters. These were run off diesel, which proved expensive and bad for the environment. While the initial aim was to provide clean energy at low cost, Mr James said Equinor quickly realised this was scratching the surface, adding: "It had the potential to feed into the National Grid if done on a utility scale." Mr James said adding more turbines reduced costs because of more power generated and saw expenditure per megawatt reduced by 70% with hopes of a further 40% cut. Fixed platforms are generally placed up to a depth of 60m, with floating turbines able to go in waters up to 1,000m.

"Pembrokeshire is the most favourable part of Wales as it has deep waters. There is a fair bit of offshore generation off north Wales, but they are fixed platforms in shallower waters," Mr James added.

"Wales is well-placed as an area to look into further as is Cornwall, Ireland, the Celtic Sea, but it's currently more extensive in Scotland, where there will be more tests and demonstrations and we are very confident of moving to full scale." Currently, UK offshore farms produce about 10 gigawatts (GW) of power, with a target of 40GW by 2030. A recent Welsh Government report said just two or three farms could provide 2GW of power, enough for more than a million homes. Graham Ayling, of the Energy Saving Trust, said the potential to create infrastructure "looks promising" and Wales could be self-sufficient from green energy within a decade. "Given the pace that renewable technologies have been deployed and developed, and the cost reductions that have been seen in recent years, it is possible that Wales may well meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030," he said. Being self-sustainable in renewables by the end of the 2020s was something proposed by Plaid Cymru in its 2019 General Election manifesto. Environment spokesman Llyr Gruffydd said wave and tidal sources off Pembrokeshire, in the Celtic Sea and off Anglesey were "some of the best potential renewable energy resource in the world". He said utilising these should be "a strategic priority", but also the most promising forms of renewable energy are emerging technologies and will not be fully utilised until the end of the decade. Meanwhile, Mr Gruffydd wants to see investment in research, development and building skills in the workforce, so the country is ready to take advantage in areas such as floating wind technology. The Welsh Conservatives' energy spokeswoman Janet Finch-Saunders said Wales' natural resources provide the opportunity to help stimulate the economy with the creation of "long-term green-collar jobs".

Source: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com); 15 November 2020

INT'L OCEAN FORUM OPENS IN INCHEON TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF OCEAN SHIPPING

- All News

INCHEON, Nov. 19 (Yonhap) -- The first edition of the Incheon International Ocean Forum (IIOF) kicked off in Incheon, a Northeast Asian hub of marine and air transport just west of Seoul, on Thursday, bringing together a large number of maritime industry experts and entrepreneurs from home and abroad to chart the future of the ocean industry. IIOF 2020, hosted by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries and the Incheon metropolitan government and organized by the Incheon Port Authority and South Korea's key newswire Yonhap News Agency, opened at Songdo Convensia in Incheon, just 40 kilometers from Seoul, for a two-day run under the theme of "New Normal, Reboot Ocean Industries," organizers said. Marine logistics scholars, entrepreneurs and officials from all over the world are visiting Incheon, home to Incheon International Airport, South Korea's main gateway, and Incheon Port, the nation's second-largest seaport, to share in-depth business ideas, new technologies and policies and trends in the maritime industry and pursue business networking during the forum, they said. Vice Minister of Oceans and Fisheries Park Jun-young, Incheon Mayor Park Nam-choon and Cho Sung-boo, president and CEO of Yonhap News Agency, were among the dignitaries on hand at the opening ceremony, and IIOF 2020 adopted a declaration on the promotion of a sustainable maritime industry. The forum participants also established the "Ocean Leaders Network," a private-public-academic consultative body, to spearhead efforts to promote cooperation and coexistence among marine cities worldwide and develop the maritime industry.

Mayor Park said in his opening address that he earnestly wishes the first international ocean forum hosted by Incheon would pave the ground for the prosperity of the ocean industry and marine ecosystem conservation. He also declared Incheon the starting point for the era of peace on the Korean Peninsula. Vice Minister Park also expressed a wish that IIOF would lead the future of South Korea's ocean industry and develop into one of the nation's representative global forums. Tan Chong Meng, group chief executive officer of PSA International; Ditlev Ingemann Blicher, Asia Pacific regional managing director of AP Moller Maersk; and Bae Jae-hoon, CEO and president of HMM Co., gave keynote speeches, analyzing pending issues of the South Korean marine industry and presenting the nation's development path to become a maritime powerhouse in the future.

Tan said the fourth industrial revolution, led by new technologies and digitalization, will further accelerate amid the severe impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global logistics industry and related uncertainties, calling for efforts to learn how to use and manage new technologies. Blicher also predicted that innovations, such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and data-based logistics, will revolutionize operational methods of logistics and create new opportunities, while the global spread of COVID-19 will speed up changes in the world's supply networks. Both Tan and Blicher delivered a pre-recorded video address. Bae urged shipping industry executives to prepare for a decline in world cargo volume in the post-COVID-19 era, while forecasting that the industry's paradigm may shift from price competition to service competition. The forum has four sessions -- ocean cities and ports, maritime and fisheries industry outlook, ocean tourism and ocean environment -- and one special session on inter-Korean cooperation in the logistics industry. On Thursday, the sessions also focus on establishing cooperation and coexistence networks between Incheon and ocean cities at home and abroad.

During the special session on inter-Korean logistics cooperation slated for Friday morning, Joseph Martin Fischer, former foreign minister and vice chancellor of Germany, will speak on his country's logistics cooperation process leading to the German unification in a pre-recorded online presentation. Friday's "smart ocean" session will deal with the fourth industrial revolution under way in the maritime sector and ocean digital communications, while the ocean tourism session will concentrate on building a post-COVID-19 marine tourism ecosystem based on the cruise industry. In consideration of the ongoing spread of the coronavirus pandemic, organizers said, the forum is taking place in a hybrid method that combines the in-person Songdo Convensia events and online discussions. For the same reason, only 200 selected people have been invited to the forum's venue and will be seated at socially distanced tables.

Source: [yonhapnewsagency](http://yonhapnewsagency.com); 19 November 2020

MARITIME AFFAIRS SPEARHEADING CONCEPT OF BLUE ECONOMY

- Faizan Hashmi

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Maritime Affairs is spearheading the concept of Blue Economy in the country which presents many investment opportunities in the Maritime sector. According to Ministry, Blue Economy is defined as sustainable commercial growth, improving livelihood and creating jobs using ocean resources while preserving and protecting the health of oceanic ecosystem. Blue economy concepts embrace many industries including ports, shipping companies, energy/renewable energy, fisheries, maritime transportation, tourism, climate change, waste management to name a few. The blue economy sector presents many investment opportunities in the maritime sector including Marine food processing chain, exploitation of EEZ, LPG terminal, LNG terminal, Silk Route and BRI, coastal development and shipping industry.

Source: urdupoint.com; 19 November 2020

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

THE TRICKY TASK OF LINKING DISASTROUS WILDFIRES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- Eve Driver

With wildfires raging through parts of California, one question continued to spark debate: Is climate change to blame? President Donald Trump, for his part, has taken the stance that he doesn't "think science knows," despite extensive evidence linking climate change to the hot and dry conditions that paved the way for the fires. When challenged on this stance in the first presidential debate, he pointed solely to forest mismanagement as the fires' culprit.

While misinformed, Trump's errors are instructive: They highlight a recurring problem with the way we talk about the connection between climate science and environmental disaster. First, Trump's take reflects the false choice – that either climate change or poor governance is to blame for this disaster – that has caused tension in much recent discussion of extreme weather. Not only are these two factors not mutually exclusive, but they almost always share responsibility for these tragedies' scales. Second, this false choice underscores a key distinction: There is a difference between the scientific act of modelling climate change's influence on individual weather events, known as attribution, and the moral and political act of ascribing blame and responsibility. Conflating attribution and blame can distract from important questions about the responsible stewardship of natural resources – questions that are becoming increasingly urgent as climate change takes its toll.

While for decades there has been scientific consensus that the climate is changing, only in the past few years has it become possible for scientists to link that change to particular weather events. Even as it advances, however, attribution science, also called probabilistic extreme event attribution, has uncertainties built into it. Broadly speaking, it's done by comparing two computer models – one that reflects the world as it is, and another that reflects the world as it would have been without global warming – to determine whether the probability of a weather event was affected by climate change and, if so, by how much. But the results come with caveats. For instance, attribution science doesn't determine whether climate change made an event possible, but rather if it made the event more likely. The method is also difficult to apply in locales that have little historical data on weather patterns. And certain kinds of events – hurricanes and droughts, for instance – are harder to model than others. Hard evidence of climate change's influence on Hurricane Sandy, which battered the northeastern US in 2012, didn't come until years after the fact. But for wildfires like the ones currently burning in the West, the links with climate change are relatively easy to model and affirm. Although attribution scientists have yet to publish a formal

empirical analysis of this year's wildfire season, the connections between climate change and wildfires are well-established.

The problem is that the simple scientific question – Did climate change increase the likelihood of the fires in California? – is, in practice, bound up with a much bigger political question: Should our governments be reining in our greenhouse gas emissions? Attribution science tends to be championed by those who say yes to that second question and rejected by those who answer no. The science takes on a moral and political dimension that extends far beyond the local weather phenomenon it sets out to model. As a result, we end up with officials who, like President Trump, cast doubt on attribution science in order to defend the narrative that clean energy reforms are unnecessary. And we get climate activists and organisations leaning on attribution science to marshal support for tighter emissions regulations – sometimes setting aside other factors like resource management in order to stress the havoc caused by burning fossil fuels. This blurring of the line between attribution and blame muddles conversations about environmental disaster, and makes it harder to make sense of the multitude of factors that play into them.

Indeed, in California, fire ecologists agree that factors unrelated to carbon emissions ought to share the blame for this year's destruction. For the past 100 years, the federal and state agencies in charge of managing these forests have largely embraced a policy of suppressing natural fires that, had they been allowed to burn, would've helped clear the forests of flammable underbrush. Due to financial and jurisdictional challenges, as well as pushback from residents, forest managers have largely held off on doing controlled burns, a technique widely seen as an effective tool for reducing the risk of uncontrollable fires. Compounding these effects, the number of new houses situated near or amid wildland vegetation grew by 41 percent nationally between 1990 and 2010, according to a 2018 study. That incursion on wildland areas not only increases the risk of fire ignitions, it puts more people in harm's way when fires do arise. Several ecologists have speculated that controlled burns and reduced development in and near forests might have mitigated the vast destruction of this year's fire season. Assuming both climate change and poor environmental management share culpability for the blazes, it might seem reasonable to ask: Which deserves more blame? Since this is an ethical question, neither attribution scientists nor fire ecologists have the tools to answer it. But ultimately, it shouldn't matter. Both issues are worth addressing if we don't want next summer to be like this one.

To avoid playing into this unhelpful framing, both attribution scientists and the activists who use that science to advocate for change should be careful not to obscure the other factors that exacerbate environmental disasters – and not to sweep the nuances of attribution science under the rug. In recoiling from the possibility that forest management might have contributed as much as, if not more than, climate change to heightening this year's wildfire risks, activists fighting the good fight against climate change denial risk undercutting an important part of their own message: The fact that the climate is changing does not absolve governments of the responsibility to help their constituents adapt to it.

We know that climate change will hit the poorest, most vulnerable populations the hardest, but that even well-resourced places like New York City will also struggle to withstand the effects of rising seas and storms like Sandy. Thus, the big-picture

problems are fossil fuel companies and the subsidies that keep them afloat, not the leaders who work to cushion people from their collateral damage. Still, governments made both good and bad decisions about managing their forests long before CO₂ levels began to rise – and the bad ones are still worth calling out. Moving forward, we should expect this tension to continue; around the world, the most devastating extreme weather events are likely to be those in which climate change’s effects are compounded by weak governance, and so parsing the ways that these factors coalesce will continue to be important. There will be water shortages, floods, fires and famines that could have been avoided, and chalking them all up to climate change’s wrath will do a disservice to their victims. As environmental disasters arise, we must continue to highlight climate change’s role in making them more frequent and severe, but not at the expense of crucial conversations about the messy politics of adapting to them.

Eve Driver is a writer based in Brooklyn. She graduated from Harvard, where she studied social studies, wrote a thesis on Cape Town’s “Day Zero” water shortage and the politics of climate change attribution, and was a member of Divest Harvard, a campaign to divest the university from the fossil fuel industry.

This article was originally published on Undark.

Source: thewire.in; 14 November 2020

MARITIME LEGISLATION TO CUT SHIP EMISSIONS

- Guest Contributor

Draft amendments to the MARPOL convention would require ships to combine a technical and an operational approach to reduce their carbon intensity. Draft new mandatory regulations to cut the carbon intensity of existing ships have been approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).

This builds on current mandatory energy efficiency requirements to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions from shipping. The MEPC also agreed the terms of reference for assessing the possible impacts on States, paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs). The draft amendments to the MARPOL convention would require ships to combine a technical and an operational approach to reduce their carbon intensity. This is in line with the ambition of the Initial IMO GHG Strategy, which aims to reduce the carbon intensity of international shipping by 40% by 2030, compared to 2008. The amendments were developed by the seventh session of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 7), held as a remote meeting 19–23 October 2020. The draft amendments will now be put forward for formal adoption at MEPC 76 session, to be held during 2021. IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim, said, “Considerable further work on the implementation of the measures is still ahead of us, but I am confident that, the IMO spirit of cooperation, shown during the past years, will enable swift progress with the

development of technical guidelines and a Carbon Intensity Code as well as the essential further work on the comprehensive assessment of impacts of the measures on developing countries, SIDs and LDCs. I express my gratitude to all Member States that have indicated a commitment to supporting these efforts.” He said the approved amendments were important building blocks without which future discussions on mid and long-term measures will not be possible. The progress in developing the short-term measures follows the timeline as set out in the initial IMO GHG strategy. The strategy proposed that short-term measures should be those measures finalized and agreed by the Committee between 2018 and 2023.

In more detail:

Draft MARPOL amendments

The draft amendments would add further requirements to the energy efficiency measures in MARPOL Annex VI Chapter 4. Current requirements are based on the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), for new build ships, which means they have to be built and designed to be more energy-efficient than the baseline; and the mandatory Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP), for all ships. The SEEMP provides for ship operators to have in place a plan to improve energy efficiency through a variety of ship specific measures. The draft amendments build on these measures by bringing in requirements to assess and measure the energy efficiency of all ships and set the required attainment values. The goal is to reduce the carbon intensity of international shipping, working towards the levels of ambition set out in the Initial IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships. The set of amendments includes the technical requirement to reduce carbon intensity, based on a new Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI); and the operational carbon intensity reduction requirements, based on a new operational carbon intensity indicator (CII). The dual approach aims to address both technical (how the ship is retrofitted and equipped) and operational measures (how the ship operates).

Attained and required Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI)

The attained Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) is required to be calculated for ships of 400 gt and above, in accordance with the different values set for ship types and size categories. This indicates the energy efficiency of the ship compared to a baseline.

Ships are required to meet a specific required Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI), which is based on a required reduction factor (expressed as a percentage relative to the EEDI baseline).

Annual operational carbon intensity indicator (CII) and CII rating

The draft amendments are for ships of 5,000 gross tonnage and above (the ships already subject to the requirement for data collection system for fuel oil consumption of ships) to have determined their required annual operational carbon intensity indicator (CII). The CII determines the annual reduction factor needed to ensure continuous improvement of the ship’s operational carbon intensity within a specific rating level. The actual annual operational CII achieved (attained annual operational CII) would be required to be documented and verified against the required annual

operational CII. This would enable the operational carbon intensity rating to be determined. The rating would be given on a scale – operational carbon intensity rating A, B, C, D or E – indicating a major superior, minor superior, moderate, minor inferior, or inferior performance level. The performance level would be recorded in the ship's Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP). A ship rated D for three consecutive years, or E, would have to submit a corrective action plan, to show how the required index (C or above) would be achieved. Administrations, port authorities and other stakeholders as appropriate, are encouraged to provide incentives to ships rated as A or B.

Review mechanism

The draft amendments would require the IMO to review the effectiveness of the implementation of the CII and EEXI requirements, by 1 January 2026 at the latest, and, if necessary, develop and adopt further amendments.

Next steps

The draft amendments can now be adopted at the MEPC 76 session, to be held during 2021. The MARPOL treaty requires draft amendments to be circulated for a minimum six months before adoption, and they can enter into force after a minimum 16 months following adoption. The amendment procedures are set out in the treaty itself.

Impact assessment

The comprehensive impact assessment will be based on the Procedure for assessing impacts on States of candidate measures, adopted in 2019, which says a comprehensive impact assessment should provide a detailed qualitative and/or quantitative assessment of specific negative impacts on States, and be evidence-based and should take into account, as appropriate, analysis tools and models, such as, cost-effectiveness analysis tools, e.g. maritime transport cost models, trade flows models, impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP); updated Marginal Abatement Cost Curves (MACCs); and economic trade models, transport models and combined trade-transport models. The final comprehensive impact assessment of the short-term combined measure should be submitted to MEPC 76. Based on this, a possible framework for reviewing impacts on States of the measure adopted, and addressing disproportionately negative impacts on States, as appropriate, would be considered.

Initial IMO GHG Strategy

The initial IMO GHG Strategy, adopted in 2018, sets ambitious targets to halve GHG emission from ships by 2050, compared to 2008, and reduce carbon intensity of international shipping by 40% by 2030 compared to 2008. The strategy lists a number of candidate measures which could also be considered to further reduce emissions and help achieve the targets in the strategy, in particular 40% reduction of carbon intensity from shipping by 2030. Short-term measures could be measures finalized and agreed by the Committee between 2018 and 2023, although in aiming for early action, priority should be given to develop potential early measures with a view to achieving further reduction of GHG emissions from international shipping before 2023. Dates of entry into force and when the measure can effectively start to reduce GHG emissions would

be defined for each measure individually. A procedure for assessing the impact on States of a measure has been approved.

Source: cleantechnica.com; 21 November 2020

FRANCE'S AMBITIOUS OFFSHORE STRATEGY FACES OBSTACLES

- Lucie Duboua-Lorsch

As the European Commission prepares to publish its offshore renewable energy strategy, France's wind farm projects – already delayed compared to its European neighbours – face opposition from fishermen already operating in difficult maritime environments because of Brexit. EURACTIV France reports. Since the European Commission announced the European Green Deal, it has been working on strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Its strategy on offshore renewable energy is due to be unveiled on Wednesday (18 November). The Commission stressed the need to strengthen the bloc's offshore activities last March. With its wish to take the lead in its multi-year energy plan published last April, the French government has already started to build several wind farms and launched new calls for tenders from 2024. Lagging behind From Dunkirk to Noirmoutier, the French coastline should welcome seven new offshore projects between 2022 and 2027 with a capacity of 3.5 gigawatts. The building of these wind farms was authorised after the French state made calls for tenders in 2011, 2013 and 2016. The French industrial branch of offshore wind energy is one of the most competitive.

Of the twelve European factories that produce offshore wind turbines, four are in France, Anne Georgelin, head of the French renewable energies union, points out. "It is a strength and an opportunity that we must use to launch offshore wind farms on French territory. Because we are very late compared to our European neighbours," she added. Indeed, despite these calls for tenders, France does not currently have any active wind farms, while the UK has nearly 2,225 wind turbines in operation, accounting for 45% of European installations on its soil, followed by Germany (34%) and Denmark (8%).

Mass condemnations

However, the large-scale size of such offshore wind projects requires long consultations. If after several years, the construction of French wind parks has barely begun, "it is because there were many tensions and differences with certain actors", says Georgelin, noting that the sector's relative novelty is also a reason for such tensions. "As long as we don't have evidence of a successful French wind farm, it will be difficult to remove the doubts of local actors. Moreover, these are projects that take time. In ten years, the elected representatives, the fishermen have changed... Not to mention the fact that we are in marine environments that are already shaken by crises, such as Brexit," added Georgelin. For several months now, the UK and the EU have

been at loggerheads over the issue of fisheries. But the risk of a ‘no deal’ Brexit scenario, which would exclude French fishermen from British waters, and the fragility of fish stocks, are not the only arguments that explain the reluctance of these fishermen to support wind farms. In the department of Côtes d’Armor, opposition to the wind farm project in the Bay of Saint-Brieuc began well before Brexit, as Katherine Pujol, president of the association Gardez les caps, explained: “We set up this association as early as 2011 when the first calls for tenders were launched. Four days before the election of François Hollande, at the very end of Nicolas Sarkozy’s five-year term, authorisation was given to operate the Saint-Brieuc Bay wind farm.” According to Pujol, this was a “botched” authorisation as no public debate or impact study had taken place at the time. While a debate was finally organised in 2013, impact studies were only carried out from 2015 onwards.

Fishermen bring case to EU Court

It is hard to reassure fishermen in such a troubled environment, especially as the wind project is expected to be set up close to Natura 2000 classified areas, which are crucial for fish stocks. Concerned about the environmental consequences that the wind project could have on various fish species, crustaceans or the famous scallops in the Bay of Saint-Brieuc, fishing associations have brought an action before the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Support is also coming from outside of France, as North Sea fisherman and former president of the Dutch fishermen’s association EMK, Job Schot, has lent his support to his French colleagues. “The North Sea lends itself particularly well to offshore wind turbines, where they are scattered. It is a relatively shallow sea, which makes it easier to build infrastructure. The situation is different in France, where the seabed is sometimes steep off the coast,” explained Schot.

Setting up wind turbines that go beyond 50 metres deep becomes very complicated, as it forces developers to build installations close to the coast. According to the renewable energy union, French wind farms are on average 11 to 18 km from the coast. A key zone for small-scale fishermen, notes the Dutch fisherman, who is not surprised by the French protests. In October, a study commissioned by the European Parliament’s fisheries committee indicated that if offshore wind farms are “a key axis of the global transition to a carbon-free electricity generation sector”, conflicts with fishermen were likely to increase “in the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean” and even “increase considerably in the Atlantic and Celtic Sea regions” after 2025.

[Edited by Benjamin Fox]

Source: euractiv.com; 18 November 2020

PEW JOINS PROJECTS TO BOOST US MILITARY BASE RESILIENCY THROUGH CONSERVATION

- Leda Cunningham & Zack Greenberg

Coastal military installations in the U.S. face serious threats from unconventional adversaries—sea level rise, coastal erosion, and more frequent and powerful storms—that can limit training and functionality, and compromise troop safety. In response, the U.S. Department of Defense’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program in 2012 established its annual REPI Challenge, which in October announced it will award \$17 million in 2020 to fund projects that protect and restore lands and habitats on and around installations in seven states. As part of the 2020 REPI Challenge Awards, The Pew Charitable Trusts partnered with two coastal military installations, leading academic institutions, and coastal restoration experts on proposals for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in Havelock, North Carolina, and Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, on the York River in York County, Virginia. In both places, sea-level rise and coastal erosion threaten the bases and their ability to fulfill their mission. The winning proposals for these projects are funded at a combined total of \$2 million.

In Virginia, restoring oysters will boost installation resiliency

The Yorktown project in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia will support conservation and restoration within the country’s largest estuary, the Chesapeake Bay. It will create about 900 feet of living shoreline and restore 3.45 acres of U.S. Navy land along the York River. This project also will install natural and artificial oyster reefs and complement ongoing restoration efforts underway in the area by federal and state agencies. Oysters are filter feeders, constantly cleaning the water and providing a healthier environment; their reef structure creates habitat for marine life, helping support valuable fisheries and jobs, and protects the coast from storms and tides. The installation, which supports the U.S. Navy’s Atlantic Fleet and Joint Commands by providing management, research, training, and storage services, is bounded by a degraded ring of shoreline and wetlands, which has led to the loss of land and estuarine habitat. The project will incorporate hybrid living shorelines that integrate artificial oyster reefs and seagrass beds that will both break down wave energy and provide a physical barrier to would-be attacks, such as a terrorism strike, over the water. The project will also stimulate salt marsh recovery and create shallow-water habitats vital to fish and shellfish production. The work also will support Virginia’s efforts to rebuild reefs in the York River under the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, a landmark accord that establishes goals and outcomes for the restoration of the bay.

Joining Pew and Naval Weapons Station Yorktown on this project are the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Christopher Newport University, the National Park Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Nature Conservancy, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

North Carolina project to protect and restore shoreline

The project at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point will construct about 2,100 linear feet of living shoreline—which are protected, stabilized coastal edges created with natural materials such as salt marsh and oyster reefs—along the Neuse River to augment a larger hurricane recovery project already underway along the river shore. It will be one of the largest shoreline protection projects on the U.S. East Coast. In addition to better protecting the base, the extension will support ecosystem health and could improve water quality for surrounding communities in the long term. The installation is home to the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing and supports aircraft landing practice, unmanned aerial systems, and other important training for the U.S. Marine Corps. The project’s lead partner is the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee, a collaboration among farmers, foresters, conservationists, and military installations. Other partners include the U.S. Marine Corps, North Carolina State University, the state’s Farm Bureau, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Department of Environmental Quality. Pew is partnering with Duke University and the North Carolina Coastal Federation to conduct research and help implement this precedent-setting living shoreline.

Models for future work at military installations

This year’s REPI Challenge Awards demonstrate the value of taking a collaborative, ecosystem-based approach to supporting military readiness at nearshore military installations. As REPI continues its work across the nation, Pew supports leveraging these types of solutions—and the lessons we’ll learn on these projects—to improve the resiliency of additional U.S. coastal military installations, while helping to conserve important coastal habitats and marine life.

Leda Cunningham and Zack Greenberg work on The Pew Charitable Trusts’ campaign to conserve marine life on the U.S. East Coast.

Source: splash247.com; 12 November 2020

GEOPOLITICS

INDONESIA, US SIGN \$750M INFRASTRUCTURE, TRADE DEAL

- Adrian Wail Akhlas

Indonesia and the United States signed on Wednesday a US\$750 million agreement to finance trade and infrastructure projects as the countries seek to strengthen economic relations. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the deal was signed in Washington DC by Indonesian Ambassador to the US Muhammad Lutfi and Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) president Kimberly Reed. The signing was witnessed by Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister Luhut Pandjaitan, who is visiting the US this week, along with Deputy Foreign Minister Mahendra Siregar, among others. Lutfi said the bilateral agreement was expected to help boost prosperity, advance democracy and ensure regional stability for both countries. “The MoU will further strengthen the economic partnership between Indonesia and the US as part of an effort to expand cooperation in investment and the procurement of goods and services,” he said in a statement. The agreement also aims to expand opportunities for both countries to work together on government projects and for business development in infrastructure, transportation and energy, among other areas. Infrastructure development is a main focus of President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s administration. The National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) previously estimated that Indonesia would need \$429.7 billion in infrastructure investment from 2020 to 2024, equal to 6.1 percent of the nation’s GDP. The figure outlined in the MoU is an increase from the previous \$500 million deal from 2017 to 2018. EXIM president Kimberly Reed said the agreement was a “significant achievement” in strengthening the US’ participation in Indonesian development projects in a broad range of sectors, such as energy, infrastructure and information and communications technology. “This MoU reflects Indonesia’s importance to the US administration,” Reed said in a statement.

Earlier this year, EXIM met with representatives from ASEAN to discuss ways to export more US goods and services to the region. They also underscored the role of EXIM in the \$110 billion worth of infrastructure development in the region. Indonesia recently secured a continuing beneficiary status in the United States’ general system of preferences (GSP) program, which is expected to help Indonesia increase its exports to – and overall trade with – the world’s largest economy. Under the program, Indonesia can export 3,572 types of products to the US without tariffs. So far, the country has only exported 729 of those preferred products. During the visit of the top Indonesian officials, the United States offered to cooperate with the country in vaccine production. In a meeting with US president Donald Trump, Luhut delivered a message from Jokowi, who thanked Trump for his support for cooperation between the two countries, specifically for the recent extension of the GSP. The nations exchanged

\$19.72 billion worth of goods between January and September of this year, a 1.85 percent year-on-year (yoy) decline, according to Trade Ministry data. US firms invested \$480.1 million in 1,024 Indonesian projects from January to September, making Indonesia the eighth-highest beneficiary of private US funds, below Singapore and China. The figure marks a 36.6 percent drop from the \$757.14 million invested in the same period last year as businesses cut back on investment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: jakartapost.com; 19 November 2020

TRADE WINDS: RCEP PACT CLINCHED, SEEN AS COUP FOR CHINA; INDIA MAY JOIN LATER

- FE Bureau and Agencies

China and 14 other countries agreed on Sunday to set up the world's largest trading bloc, encompassing nearly a third of all economic activity, in a deal many in Asia are hoping will help hasten a recovery from the shocks of the pandemic, AP reported from Hanoi. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP, was signed virtually on Sunday on the sidelines of the annual summit of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Tough India surprised participants late last year by abandoning the agreement, the partners have made it clear New Delhi is welcome to rejoin the pact. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he pulled out over concerns about how RCEP would affect the livelihoods of Indians, particularly the most vulnerable. "The clause allowing India to join at a later date is symbolic and shows China's desire to build economic bridges with the region's third-largest economy," Bloomberg quoted Shaun Roache, Asia Pacific chief economist at S&P Global Ratings, as saying. Malaysia recognizes the difficulties India is facing, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said in a speech on Sunday, it added. The pact will which cover 2.2 billion people with a combined GDP of \$26.2 trillion. It is expected to give a fillip to the partner economies by reducing tariffs, strengthening supply chains with defined rules of origin, and framing of new e-commerce rules.

The accord is also a coup for China, by far the biggest market in the region with more than 1.3 billion people, allowing Beijing to cast itself as a "champion of globalisation and multilateral cooperation" and giving it greater influence over rules governing regional trade, Gareth Leather, senior Asian economist for Capital Economics, said in a report. Among the benefits of the agreement include a tariff elimination of at least 92% on traded goods among participating countries, as well as stronger provisions to address non-tariff measures, and enhancements in areas such as online consumer and personal information protection, transparency and paperless trading, according to a statement issued on Sunday by Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry. It also includes simplified customs procedures while at least 65% of services sectors will be fully open with increased foreign shareholding limits. Bloomberg added: "Whether RCEP changes regional dynamics in favor of China depends on the U.S. response, experts said. The agreement underscores how U.S. President Donald Trump's 2017 decision to withdraw from a different Asia Pacific trade pact – the Trans-Pacific

Partnership or TPP – diminished America’s ability to offer a counterbalance to China’s growing regional economic influence.”

According to AP, “The accord will take already low tariffs on trade between member countries still lower, over time, and is less comprehensive than an 11-nation trans-Pacific trade deal that President Donald Trump pulled out of shortly after taking office. Apart from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, it includes China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, but not the US. (The bloc) is not expected to go as far as the European Union in integrating member economies but does build on existing free trade arrangements. The deal has powerful symbolic ramifications, showing that nearly four years after Trump launched his “America First” policy of forging trade deals with individual countries, Asia remains committed to multi-nation efforts toward freer trade that are seen as a formula for future prosperity,” AP reported. It added: China’s official Xinhua News Agency quoted Premier Li Keqiang hailing the agreement as a victory against protectionism, in remarks delivered via a video link. Now that Trump’s opponent Joe Biden has been declared president-elect, the region is watching to see how US policy on trade and other issues will evolve. Analysts are sceptical Biden will push hard to rejoin the trans-Pacific trade pact or to roll back many of the US trade sanctions imposed on China by the Trump administration given widespread frustration with Beijing’s trade and human rights records and accusations of spying and technology theft.

Critics of free trade agreements say they tend to encourage companies to move manufacturing jobs overseas. So, having won over disaffected rust-belt voters in Michigan and western Pennsylvania in the November 3 election, Biden is “not going to squander that by going back into TPP”, Michael Jonathan Green of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies said in a web seminar. But given concerns over China’s growing influence, Biden is likely to seek much more engagement with Southeast Asia to protect US interests, he said. The fast-growing and increasingly affluent Southeast Asian market of 650 million people has been hit hard by the pandemic and is urgently seeking fresh drivers for growth.

Source: [financialexpress.com](https://www.financialexpress.com); 16 November 2020

THE CHINA STRATEGY AMERICA NEEDS

THE ACHIEVEMENT of the Trump administration was to recognise the authoritarian threat from China. The task of the Biden administration will be to work out what to do about it. Donald Trump’s instinct was for America to run this fight single-handed. Old allies were henchmen, not partners. As Joe Biden prepares his China strategy (see article), he should choose a different path. America needs to strike a grand bargain with like-minded countries to pool their efforts. The obstacles to such a new alliance are great, but the benefits would be greater. To see why, consider how the cold war against China is different from the first one. The rivalry with the Soviet Union was focused on ideology and nuclear weapons. The new battlefield today is information technology: semiconductors, data, 5G mobile networks, internet standards, artificial

intelligence (AI) and quantum computing. All those things will help determine whether America or China has not just the military edge (see article), but also the more dynamic economy. They could even give one of the rivals an advantage in scientific research.

The first cold war created separate looking-glass worlds. The protagonists in the second are interconnected. That is partly a result of China's integration into the global economy, especially after it joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001. But it also stems from the network efficiencies of many tech businesses, which reward size and spread. And it reflects how hard it is for any one country to master the full range of specialisms in the tech economy. In chips, say, American or British designs may be made in Taiwanese plants, using Japanese and Dutch equipment with German lenses before being assembled in Chinese factories. It is no accident that autarkic North Korea can build nukes but not advanced computers.

The Chinese Communist Party has understood that tech is the path to power. China is blessed with a vast market, ambition and plenty of hard-working talent. The party is supercharging the efforts of Chinese firms with subsidies and industrial espionage. Aware of how scale matters, China is touting its technologies by securing export contracts, promoting itself as a digital power using the Belt and Road Initiative and waging a campaign of pro-China standards-setting in global bodies.

Mr Trump's abrasive solo response has had some successes. He has browbeaten some allies to stop buying gear for 5G networks from Huawei, a Chinese firm. And by threatening sanctions on chipmakers who supply Huawei, he has damaged it. But in the long run this approach favours China. It has already accelerated China's efforts to create its own world-class chip industry—though that could easily take a decade or more. More important, if a bullying America always focuses solely on its own narrow interests, it will drive away the very allies that can help it stay ahead in tech. Europe is increasingly unwilling to leave itself open to American pressure. The European Union's highest court has twice restricted the transfer of data to America, where they may be picked over by the intelligence agencies. And European policymakers have announced plans to impose rules on the cloud, to impose digital taxes on American tech giants and to limit foreign takeovers—including, potentially, American ones. A grand bargain would turn that conflict with Europe into collaboration (see Briefing). Rather than be consumed by squabbles, the allies could share an approach to issues like taxation, takeover rules and supply chains. For example, Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is on the way to becoming a *de facto* standard outside Europe. With closer collaboration in intelligence, the alliance could be more alert to security threats from Chinese hackers and tech firms. By co-ordinating their efforts on critical technologies, they could specialise rather than duplicate research. By diversifying supply chains and vetting each link they can protect themselves from accidental or malevolent disruptions. By working together on technical standards such as OpenRAN, which uses mostly off-the-shelf hardware for 5G networks, they can create a favourable environment for their own companies. Crucially, by collaborating on ethical norms over, say, facial recognition, they can protect their societies.

Instead of leaving America isolated, a grand bargain would help it keep ahead in the race for tech dominance by bringing it the gains of closer co-operation with like-minded countries. The whole alliance would be boosted by the tech industry's

formidable network effects. A bargain would also leave America more open to cross-border scientific collaboration and immigration, vital for a place that thrives on the contributions of foreign students, many of whom stay on to carry out research or work in tech. Such openness is a strength that China lacks. Some people argue that cooperation of this sort needs a treaty, an institution like NATO or the WTO. But that would take a long time to set up. What it would possess in gravitas it would lack in flexibility. A grouping like an enlarged G7 would be more adaptable and less clumsy. Either way, striking a grand bargain will be hard. For one thing, America would need to acknowledge that it is not as dominant as it was when it set up global governance after the second world war. It would have to be willing to make concessions to its allies right now—over privacy, taxation and some details of industrial policy, say—in order to protect its system of government in the long term. For the strategy to be credible abroad, there would need to be bipartisan consensus in Washington.

America's allies would have to make concessions, too. They would have to trust a country which, under Mr Trump, has sometimes looked on the transatlantic alliance with contempt. Some Europeans would have to temper their dream of becoming a superpower that stands apart from both China and America. Yet that European dream has always looked far-fetched. And if anything can overcome divisions in Washington, China can. Moreover, the sacrifices would be worth it. A grand bargain would help focus competition with China on tech, potentially enabling detente in areas where collaboration is essential, such as curbing global warming, health and, as with the Soviet Union, arms control. A grand bargain could make the world safer by making it more predictable. When superpowers are set on a collision course, that is something profoundly to be wished for.

Source: [theeconomist.com](https://www.economist.com); 19 November 2020

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