



MAKING WAVES

A maritime news brief covering:

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

EDITED BY:

Capt Sarabjeet S Parmar

execdir.nmf@gmail.com

Dr Oliver N Gonsalves

associatefellow1.nmf@gmail.com

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MARITIME SECURITY

INDO-SL NAVIES TO INCREASE BORDER PATROLS

- Dinitha Rathnayake

India and Sri Lanka reached a consensus on increasing border patrols and strengthening information exchange mechanisms between the two sides, in order to curb illegal activities at the 31st International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) meeting between the Navies of both the countries, held in a virtual setting recently. Held for the 31st time, the IMBL meeting focused on the exchange of views to overcome common challenges faced by both partners, while enhancing mutual understanding among the Navies as well as the Coast Guards of the two countries. The Sri Lanka Navy delegation for this year's meeting was led by Northern Naval Area Commander Rear Admiral Priyantha Perera. The Indian Navy delegation was headed by Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Naval Area – Flag Officer Commanding Rear Admiral Puneet Chadha. Amongst the main points of discussion from the Indian side were measures to curb smuggling across Indian waters, preventing the entry of Sri Lankan fishermen into Indian waters, and actions to be taken to educate the Indian fishing community to prevent Indian fishing vessels from entering Sri Lankan waters.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan delegation drew the meeting's attention to measures to be taken by both parties to prevent Indian fishing vessels from entering Sri Lankan waters and the assaults on and the destruction of the fishing gear of local fishermen by Indian fishermen. Further, attention was also paid with regard to the steps to be taken to prevent the fishermen of both countries from using their fishing vessels for the smuggling of narcotics and contraband to Sri Lankan waters. The meeting was also attended by Naval Operations Director Commodore Nishantha Peiris, Sri Lanka Coast Guard Deputy Director General Commodore Janaka Nissanka, and a group of senior officers from the Sri Lanka Navy and Coast Guard.

Source: [The Morning](#); 04 October 2021

IRAN REPELS PIRATE ATTACK ON TANKERS IN GULF OF ADEN

Speaking on television, the Commander of Iran's Army Navy Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said that the Iranian Navy had once again successfully defended Iranian tankers from an attack by pirates in the Gulf of Aden. The admiral said that escorting Iranian oil tankers and commercial vessels is the main mission of the fleet of Iran's Army Navy.

"The 78th naval fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran, consisting of the Alborz destroyer, was attacked by five pirate boats this morning while escorting two Iranian tankers," the commander said speaking on Iranian television on October 16. He described the incident as "maritime terrorism."

Iran's naval fleet was escorting two tankers in the Gulf of Aden when they reported that the small boats attempted to approach one of the tankers. They believed the pirates were attempting to damage the tanker, but the Iranian destroyer Alborz reported was able to get in between the tanker and the smaller boats and direct the smaller boats away from the course of the tanker. "With the timely action of the army marines, the two tankers safely passed through the Gulf of Aden," the Admiral added saying that no additional cases have been reported in this area. The Iranian Tasnim news agency said that the country has been patrolling the Gulf of Aden since November 2008 to safeguard merchant vessels and tankers from Iran and other countries. The Alborz, a 310-foot destroyer built by Vickers in England in 1969, was reportedly deployed into international waters in August to protect naval routes and maintain the security of Iranian cargo ships. The destroyer is believed to have recently undergone a refit and modernization although no details were available.

It is not the first time Iran has said that it used its Navy to defend from pirate attacks. In March 2019, the Iranian Navy said 11 speedboats approached one of its oil tankers in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, which links the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea. Again. They said their warship was able to chase off the pirates before they were able to board the tanker. Before that, in October 2017, an Iranian merchant ship was also reportedly approached by seven pirate ships in the same region and again defended by the Navy. International agencies report an overall strong decline in pirate activity in the Gulf of Aden. Last week in its report on global piracy in the first nine months of 2021, the ICC International Maritime Bureau said that there had only been one reported attack in the Gulf of Aden in the first nine months of 2021 and none in the similar period of 2019 and 2020.

Source: [The Maritime Executive](#); 18 October 2021

RUSSIA SAYS IT LAUNCHED AND INTERCEPTED 10 MISSILES DURING DRILLS NEAR JAPAN

- Alex Wilson

A fleet of 12 Russian ships, including an anti-submarine cruiser, launched and intercepted missiles in the sea between Japan and the Korean Peninsula on Monday.

The exercise, held by Russia's Pacific Fleet, featured the guided-missile cruiser Varyag and 11 other warships and support vessels, according to Russian state-sponsored news agency TASS. Ten missiles were launched and intercepted by the Varyag, which employed three surface-to-air missile systems. The fleet released video of the exercise, which showed numerous missiles being launched from a Russian vessel. Additional weapons systems, including the AK-630 rotary cannon and heavier artillery, are shown firing in the footage.

The exercise was part of a final inspection prior to the end of the summer training period, according to TASS. Russia previously announced the training, part of which took place inside Japan's exclusive economic zone, according to a report from Yahoo! Japan. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea does not prohibit military drills within a nation's exclusive economic zone, according to a 2014 study published by the U.S. Naval War College. The zone may extend up to 200 nautical miles from a nation's shores, or baseline. A spokesperson for Japan's Ministry of Defense was not immediately able to comment on the drills on Tuesday.

Russia's exercise comes as tensions continue to escalate in the Indo-Pacific region. China dispatched a record number of aircraft into Taiwan's air defense identification zone over the past two weeks. The dispute between China and Taiwan, which Beijing considers to be a breakaway province, has led to an increase in protests from both sides and other nations, including the United States. Tensions between North Korea and the global community are also heightened following a series of North Korean missile tests in September.

Source: [Stars and Stripes](#); 12 October 2021

ROYAL NAVY JOINS MARITIME SECURITY EFFORT IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Trent is setting sail to the Gulf of Guinea to undertake security patrols and a mission to support allies in West Africa. Becoming the first Royal Navy vessel to operate in the area for three years, the deployment is meant to demonstrate the UK's commitment to being more persistently engaged in the region as international efforts are concentrating on improving security in the Gulf of Guinea after a very violent 2020, which included an increase in kidnappings from commercial vessels. The U.K.'s patrol vessel HMS Trent is finishing preparations for her patrol to West Africa in the waters close to Gibraltar this week after a period of maintenance and a rotation of crew. Once arriving in the Gulf of Guinea, the River-class patrol ship will visit Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Gambia, and Cape Verde, and will take part in French-led multinational training exercises, known as Exercise Grand African Nemo, that will bring together international partners in the region. HMS Trent will also attend the Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (FoGG) G7++ conference in Dakar, which the UK is co-chairing with hosts Senegal.

During her deployment to the Gulf of Guinea, she will also conduct maritime security patrols as well as support partner navies by helping them to develop key maritime skills and develop plans for future operations in the region. HMS Trent carries on board a contingent of Royal Marines from 42 Commando, which will train partner forces across the region in skills like boarding and searching of suspicious vessels, as well as evidence handling and medical skills. The team is trained in boarding operations which will help the fight against illegal activity like piracy, drugs-smuggling, and terrorism. “This deployment demonstrates how Britain is stepping up on the world stage to tackle shared international security challenges,” said the U.K.’s Armed Forces Minister James Heappey. “Working hand-in-hand with our allies we are utilizing our forward deployed Armed Forces to tackle threats at the source, making the world a safer place for all.” The deployment of HMS Trent to the region comes as international attention returns to the region. In previous years, piracy has increased in the last months of the calendar year after the tropical storm season subsides. Denmark had also announced plans early in 2020 to deploy one of its vessels to the Gulf of Guinea to also assist in the efforts to increase maritime security.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recently commended the Government of Nigeria, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), and the Nigerian Navy for their efforts to improve maritime security in the region. The Nigerian representative to the meeting highlighted his country’s efforts, the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, known as the Deep Blue Project, which was launched at mid-year focusing on crimes at sea as well as the onshore activities of the pirates. The Nigerian representatives highlighted the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) report for the first six months of 2021, which showed that there has been an overall decline in reported incidents in the Gulf of Guinea. The country said it looks forward to working with international partners to continue to improve security across the Gulf of Guinea.

Source: [The Maritime Executive](#); 05 October 2021

UK CARRIER STRIKE GROUP LED BY HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH ENTERS BAY OF BENGAL

- British High Commission New Delhi

In its most substantial port visit to date, the CSG will provide a platform for a wide range of cultural demonstrations and trade and investment initiatives. Subsequently, the CSG will take part in the most demanding exercise ever between the UK and India, incorporating elements from all three military services. The deployment is a powerful demonstration of the UK’s commitment to deepening its diplomatic, economic and security-based ties in the Indo-Pacific region. India is essential in ensuring a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

British High Commissioner to India, Alex Ellis said:

India is an essential partner for the UK in the Indo-Pacific region. The Carrier Strike Group's visit demonstrates the deepening of the UK and India's defence and security partnership. Prime Ministers Modi and Johnson agreed to work in lockstep for our shared security and prosperity. This visit will boost the cooperation of our armed forces and show the living bridge connecting our people.

First Sea Lord Adm Tony Radakin said:

The CSG's engagement with India showcases the deepening comprehensive strategic partnership. Both the Indian and the Royal navy are blue-water, multi-carrier navies, which places us in a very exclusive club. Our growing interactions are a testimony to the shared commitment to rules-based international system, a belief in the values of open trade, and in the importance of the freedom of the high seas – a right conveyed on all nations.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to India, Nepal and Bhutan, Marten van den Berg said:

The Indian Ocean is a gateway for Europe into the Indo-Pacific and The Netherlands definitely recognizes the increasing importance of the Indo-Pacific region and crucial role of India in this region. The visit to the port of Mumbai by HNLMS Evertsen is a confirmation of our long standing strong relationship and a step towards enhancement of the Netherlands and India defence relations. The participation of HNLMS Evertsen in the UK Carrier Strike Group provides the Royal Netherlands Navy a unique opportunity for the operations and training with allies and partners and to enhance diplomatic, security and economic ties while visiting different countries along the CSG route. The Netherlands and India are like-minded partners and are committed to an effective multilateralism. The visit definitely reaffirms support to the rules-based international order and shares the common principles of security, stability and freedom of navigation by both nations.

Further information

- The maiden CSG deployment will travel 26,000 miles, visiting more than 40 countries.
- The Carrier Strike Group is led by HMS Queen Elizabeth – the most powerful surface vessel in the Royal Navy's history. Taller than Niagara Falls, her propellers generate the power of 50 high-speed trains.
- At 65,000 tonnes, she is the largest surface vessel ever constructed in the UK. She leads six Royal Navy ships, a Royal Navy submarine, a US Navy destroyer and a frigate from the Netherlands in the largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation.
- The CSG is manned by 3,700 sailors, aviators and marines from the combined forces of the UK, US and the Netherlands.
- It is equipped with the fifth generation F-35B lightening multi-role aircrafts. They are being jointly crewed by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and the US Marine Corps.
- The Netherlands frigate HNLMS Evertsen is part of the UK Carrier Strike Group. The navies of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have been working closely together for years and this joint activity offers a unique

opportunity for both forces to integrate and operate together to respond to the global security challenges.

Source: [Tehran Times](#); 02 October 2021

MARITIME FORCES

SAUDI, US NAVIES BEGIN MIXED MARITIME EXERCISE TO PROTECT RED SEA

RIYADH: The Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) and the US Navy on Sunday launched a mixed joint naval exercise in the Kingdom's Western Fleet, the ministry of defense announced. The "Indigo Defender — 21" exercise was launched in the presence of Rear Admiral Mansour bin Saud Al-Juaid, the Assistant commander of the Western Fleet and commander of the exercise, Rear Admiral Mansour bin Saud Al-Juaid, and Col. Daniel Bailey of the US Navy.

The exercise's commander said the 10-day maneuvers aim to strengthen relations and military cooperation, raise the level of combat readiness and preparedness between the RSNF and the US Navy. It also aims to exchange expertise in the field of port protection, clearing land and underwater mines, and contribute to developing security capabilities by protecting and securing the regional and international waterways to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Source: [Arab News](#); 17 October 2021

INDIA, JAPAN CONCLUDE JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES IN ARABIAN SEA

- Edward Lundquist, Special Correspondent

A significant bilateral naval exercise just completed in the Arabian Sea. The navies of Japan and India conducted JIMDEX 2021, the fifth iteration of their joint maritime exercises, which ran Oct. 6-8. The exercise was led by Rear Adm. Ajay Kochhar, flag officer commanding the Western Fleet of the Indian navy, and Japanese maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) Rear Adm. Ikeuchi Izuru, commander, Escort Flotilla Three. India's guided missile destroyer INS Kochi (D64) and guided missile frigate INS Teg (F45) operated with Izumo Class-multi-purpose destroyer Kaga (DDH 184) and destroyer JS Murasame (DD 101).

According to an Indian ministry of defense press release, the forces were engaging in a high tempo of operations focused on air, surface and sub-surface dimensions of maritime operations as well as the air domain. "The complex maritime exercises undertaken will enable the two navies to further strengthen their already wide-ranging

strategic partnership and, when required, to jointly safeguard their maritime interests and ensure peace, security and stability in the region.” Both navies share some similar platforms and systems, like the P-8 maritime patrol aircraft. Both navies operate indigenous ships and aircraft, like the Kochi and Izumo, which looks more like a helicopter carrier than a destroyer (at 27,000 tons fully loaded, Izumo is the largest ship in the JDMSF fleet). India’s and the Russian designed stealth frigate Teg and MiG 29 fighters might be representative of potential adversaries.

During the exercises the units conducted over-the-horizon targeting, antisubmarine warfare, naval gunnery and underway replenishment. The ships’ embarked cross-deck landings to demonstrate interoperability. The exercise involved what the Indian MoD statement described as “a high tempo of flying operations with MiG 29K fighters coming in for multiple simulated air strike on surface units.” India’s cooperation with other navies may be seen as statement to an increasingly competitive China. “The IOR [Indian Ocean Region] is quickly becoming the home of a contest between India and China,” wrote Aman Thakker in *New Perspectives in Foreign Policy*, published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “China has made aggressive moves to advance its strategic interests in the region, particularly by gaining access to military bases and strategic ports by employing illiberal and predatory economic practices. “India now recognizes that it cannot allow China to replicate the playbook it used in the South China Sea and challenge territorial claims and international norms of freedom of navigation, overflight, and unimpeded commerce in the IOR,” Thakker wrote. It is also significant for Japan in that it is conducting exercises far from home waters and with a nation other than the U.S., which can also be interpreted as a signal to China.

“The complex maritime exercises undertaken will enable the two navies to further strengthen their already wide-ranging strategic partnership and, when required, to jointly safeguard their maritime interests and ensure peace, security and stability in the region,” the Indian navy said in its statement.

Source: [Sea Power Magazine](#); 13 October 2021

AUSTRALIA, INDIA, JAPAN, AND US LAUNCH MALABAR 21 PHASE II EXERCISE

- Story by Carrier Strike Group 1 Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy hosted this year’s annual maritime exercise which includes a variety of high-end tactical training, including specific interactions that are designed to enhance interoperability between the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Indian Navy (IN), Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) and U.S. maritime forces. The first phase of MALABAR, which began in August, included maritime operations, anti-submarine warfare operations, air warfare operations, live-fire gunnery events, replenishments-at-sea, cross-deck flight operations, and maritime interdiction operations in the Philippine Sea.

The current phase is being conducted in the Bay of Bengal. Planning and executing multinational exercises in two phases allows participating nations to operate and train in two different regions of the Indo-Pacific. The second phase will consist of surface and air expendable mobile anti-submarine warfare training target exercise (EMATTEX), cross-deck helicopter operations, surface gunnery exercise, and replenishments-at-sea. The intent is to enhance integrated maritime operations between the Quad countries within the Indian Ocean Region. “MALABAR 21 improves the compatibility of our forces in support of our mutual desire for unmatched maritime security in the global commons,” said Rear. Adm. Dan Martin, commander, Carrier Strike Group 1. “Unit integration during complex task group maneuvers further demonstrates our ability to effectively work with our Indo-Pacific allies and partners and win in any contested maritime environment.”

Elements of the Royal Australian, Indian, Japanese, and American maritime forces routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability. “The participation of HMA Ships Ballarat and Sirius in MALABAR Phase II builds our collective ability to meet shared challenges in pursuit of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific,” said Cmdr. Antony Pisani, commanding officer HMAS Ballarat. “Close cooperation with key partners with India, Japan, and the United States fosters our professional mariner relationships and enhance our interoperability.” U.S. Navy participants for phase two included Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, consisting of aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70); Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2; Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57); Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106); and a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.

Representing the Indian Navy is Rajput-class guided-missile destroyer INS Ranvijay (D55), Shivalik-class multi-role stealth frigate INS Satpura (F48), and a P-8I maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft. JMSDF participants included Izumo-class multipurpose operation destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184), Murasame-class destroyers JS Murasame (DD 101). Royal Australian Navy participants included Anzac-class frigate HMAS Ballarat (FFH 155) and HMAS Sirius (O 266). Under Commander, U. S. Pacific Fleet, 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Source: [Naval News](#); 13 October 2021

FRANCE CONFIRMS NAVAL PRESENCE IN TAIWAN STRAIT

- Tseng Ting-hsuan and Joseph Yeh

France's defense minister has warned escalating tensions between Taiwan and China could have dramatic consequences, after revealing one of the country's naval vessels had been present in the Taiwan Strait. Defense Minister Florence Parly told a hearing of the country's senate on Tuesday that France would use its navy to demonstrate an

adherence to international law and freedom of navigation, citing maneuvers by the signals intelligence vessel Dupuy-de-Lôme in the Taiwan Strait as evidence, without giving a date for the sailing. The 3,600 ton Dupuy-de-Lôme, named after the 19th century engineer Henri Dupuy de Lôme, entered service with the French navy in April 2006. After being deployed to the Pacific in May, the ship was last spotted departing Japan on Oct. 1.

Parly had been responding to Senator Olivier Cadic, who had asked if any concrete action was being taken to back Paris' oft-expressed support for maintaining the cross-Strait status quo. Cadic, vice president of the French senate's Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces Committee, said Taipei was facing increased Chinese military intimidation, citing daily incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) as evidence. The senator, who recently concluded a five-day trip to Taiwan, said the Taiwanese lawmakers he met during the trip expressed the wish for support from Paris in ensuring security in the Taiwan Strait. Cadic was a member of a delegation of French senators that visited Taiwan from Oct. 6-10., which was led by Alain Richard, head of the French Senate's Taiwan Friendship Group and French defense minister from 1997 to 2002. The delegation also included Max Brisson and Else Joseph, vice presidents of the Taiwan Friendship Group, as well as the group's secretary Judith Bout.

Source: [Focus Taiwan](#); 13 October 2021

SUBMARINE USS CONNECTICUT SUFFERS UNDERWATER COLLISION IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

- Sam LaGrone

Almost a dozen sailors have been injured after a U.S. nuclear attack submarine hit an unknown underwater object in the South China Sea, USNI News has learned. The Seawolf-class nuclear attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN-22) suffered an underwater collision while operating in international waters on Oct. 2 and is returning to port in U.S. 7th Fleet, a U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman confirmed to USNI News on Thursday. “The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN-22) struck an object while submerged on the afternoon of Oct. 2, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. The safety of the crew remains the Navy’s top priority. There are no life-threatening injuries,” Capt. Bill Clinton told USNI News. “The submarine remains in a safe and stable condition. USS Connecticut’s nuclear propulsion plant and spaces were not affected and remain fully operational. The extent of damage to the remainder of the submarine is being assessed. The U.S. Navy has not requested assistance. The incident will be investigated.” A defense official told USNI News about 11 sailors were hurt in the incident with moderate to minor injuries. The attack boat is now headed to Guam and is expected to pull in within the next day, the official said. The underwater strike occurred in the South China Sea and the attack boat has been making its way to Guam on the surface since Saturday, a defense official

confirmed to USNI News. The Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Wash., based submarine deployed on May 27 for the Pacific, the Navy announced at the time. The service has released photographs of the submarine operating in the Western Pacific with port calls in Japan in late July and August. U.S. 7th Fleet commander Adm. Karl Thomas visited the submarine in August, according to the service.

Connecticut is one of three Sea Wolf-class boats, a late Cold War attack submarine designed to hunt the most complex Soviet submarines in deep blue water. Along with USS Sea Wolf (SSN-21) and USS Jimmy Carter (SSN-23), Connecticut is among the Navy's most capable and sensitive attack boats. The last known instance where a submerged U.S. submarine struck another underwater object was in 2005. Then, USS San Francisco (SSN -711) struck an underwater mountain at full speed near Guam. One sailor died in the incident.

The following is the complete Oct. 7 statement from Pacific Fleet.

“The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) struck an object while submerged on the afternoon of Oct. 2, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. The safety of the crew remains the Navy’s top priority. There are no life-threatening injuries.

The submarine remains in a safe and stable condition. USS Connecticut’s nuclear propulsion plant and spaces were not affected and remain fully operational. The extent of damage to the remainder of the submarine is being assessed. The U.S. Navy has not requested assistance. The incident will be investigated.”

Source: [USNI News](#); 07 October 2021

IRAN, PAKISTAN DISCUSS WAYS TO ENHANCE NAVAL COOPERATION

- FNA

TEHRAN (FNA)- Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri and Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi in a meeting in Islamabad on Thursday reviewed ways to further expand relations and cooperation between the two countries' navies. General Baqeri and Admiral Amjad Niazi exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, the latest state of fraternal relations between Iran and Pakistan, including the level of cooperation between the two countries' navies. The two sides discussed maritime security in the region and a wide range of other security developments.

Over the past two days, General Baqeri held meetings and consultations with the Pakistani political and military leaders. He met with Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Reza, and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. In these meetings, the latest situation of the relations between the two countries in the military, security, strategic dimensions, and strategies for the development of these relations were reviewed. Also, important issues related to the development of security on the common borders of Iran and Pakistan,

regional peace and stability, the Islamic world, and specially the need for consensus to return peace and security in Afghanistan were discussed.

Source: [FARS News Agency](#); 14 October 2021

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

CHINESE SHIPYARD CLOSES DUE TO LACK OF PROFITABILITY

One of China's mid-sized shipbuilders, Tianjin Xingang Ship Heavy Industry, announced that it will stop all operations as of the end of October. The disbanding of the company comes despite the recent resurgence in shipbuilding orders and China's overall leadership in the industry. The Shanghai International Maritime Information Research Center reported that the shipyard is shutting down for the second time in its history due to heavy financial debts. They reported that insufficient profits from shipyard operations in recent years led to the decision to cease operations. The shipyard announced that it has discharged its labor contracts with employees and will stop all of its operations and production by the end of the month.

Tianjin Xinjiang had relocated its operations in 2017 focusing both on new ship construction up to 500,000 tons and ship repair for ships up to 300,000 tons. It had a capacity to build ships up to about 1,000 feet in length. In operation since 1940, the shipyard had previously been reorganized about twenty years ago. It filed for bankruptcy in 2000 but completed a restructuring of the operations the following year. Tianjin completed construction to the 39,000 gross ton Global Mercy for Stena RoRo in June 2021. The vessel, which is the world's largest civilian hospital ship, will begin operations in 2022 for Mercy Ships. First steel for the vessel was cut in 2015 with the floating out taking place at the beginning of 2020. Especially design for Mercy Ships, it is being billed as the most technologically advanced ship of its kind. It has six operating rooms, 200 beds, a laboratory, general outpatient clinics, and eye and dental clinics. The total area of the hospital department is more than 75,000 square feet.

The shipyard also completed the construction of two 210,000 dwt bulk carriers built for COSCO Shipping Bulk Transportation Co. The vessels, each of which measures 984 feet in length, were delivered in May and June 2021, promoted as a new generation of a large bulk carrier. The shipyard said the vessels' design incorporated "intelligence, green, environmental protection, energy-saving, and reliable" technology. The reports indicate that Tianjin's operations will likely be divided up going to other parts of the Chinese state-owned China State Shipbuilding Corporation, which has also been undergoing a reorganization to improve results. Tianjin's shipbuilding business is expected to be taken over by Dalian Shipbuilding Industry while the ship repair business will become part of Shanhuaiguan Shipbuilding. The reports did not include any details on the size of the shipyard's orderbook.

Source: [The Maritime Executive](#); 13 October 2021

RUSSIA'S FISHING FLEET GEARS UP FOR SUCCESS

- Alex Ivanov. Moscow Correspondent

Already the fourth largest global exporter of seafood by volume, Russia plans to nearly double its total seafood exports by 2024. To achieve this, Russian fishing operators have unveiled plans to encourage greater investment in the industry, seeking to accelerate the roll-out of state-of-the-art vessels, modern seafood processing plants, and improved railways. 'There has been around \$5bn invested in the Russian fish industry,' said Petr Savchuk, deputy head of Rosrybolovstovo, the Russian Federal Agency for Fishing. 'But this is just the beginning'. In 2018, Russia started the construction of 35 new fishing trawlers and 20 new seafood processing plants, centred primarily around the country's largest fishing ports on the Far East seaboard. In addition, Rosrybolovstovo set a target of building at least 100 new vessels by 2025, a 50% increase in the fleet's overall capacity. However, since then, investment has begun to soar. In particular, Russia has unveiled plans to build railway hubs across the country, helping to speed up the movement of raw goods from the major fishing ports in Kamchatka to Russia's Atlantic side, including its primary fishing export hub in Murmansk.

On the 12th of April this year, FESCO Transportation Group began transporting containerised fish along the Trans-Siberian route, with products travelling at speed from Vladivostok to St. Petersburg. From there, the shipment was shipped across to Bremerhaven in Northern Germany. According to FESCO, this new route is twice as fast as transporting products via Suez and it shows that Russian firms are upgrading their logistics with great success. To reduce congestion, Russian authorities have also begun opening several more fishing export hubs throughout the country. As Savchuk explains: '[hubs are] being developed, for example in Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Rostov-on-Don and other big cities in Russia where big cold-store facilities are being built.' One company making an outsize contribution, both in the Far East and in the cod fisheries of the North Atlantic, is Norebo. Investing \$45m in a new shipping terminal in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Norebo looks to create an end-to-end service for fishing vessels in Russia. The terminal will allow vessels to store their fish in refrigerating containers in the Far East before shipping them to western Russia, the US, and Europe. Following the implementation of its fleet renewal programme in 2017, Norebo will soon have some of the most modern vessels operating not just in Russia but in the world. Radicalising how Russia's fishing industry operates, Norebo's new state-of-the-art vessels are set to increase energy efficiency, decrease waste, and create more comfortable working conditions for crews. 'A modern fleet is a requirement of our times. Only new vessels with high-tech equipment can offer optimal catch processing, as well as high standards of safety and comfort for the crew,' said a Norebo spokesperson.

It appears Norebo strives to achieve this and more with its latest fleet of vessels under construction. Indeed, one of the group's vessels, named Captain Korotich, incorporates architectural design elements never used before on a Russian fishing vessel. The hull is capsule shaped with an Enduro Bow line, which allows for increased working space on board and improved seaworthiness. It also has an incredibly powerful engine (6200kW), which enables the vessel to reach speeds of up to 15.5 knots and operate in ice up to 0.5m thick, while using less fuel than other comparable engines.

Designed with energy efficiency in mind, the vessel will also use electricity generated by the trawl winches for lighting and repurpose the excess heat from the main engine to heat the ship's rooms, including the cabins. Ingeniously, on Pacific vessels such as Captain Korotich, fish oil collected during waste processing is even put towards powering the boiler. These innovations reduce carbon emissions and eliminate unnecessary waste, all of which contributes to the excellent sustainability of the end product. The company's newest longline vessels will also be equipped with modern multi-functional factories that allow for advanced catch processing directly on board. This means that the time between catching the premium quality fish and creating the final product, ready for cooking, is shortened dramatically, with processing waste also reduced to almost zero. Norebo has found the provision of onboard factories has even improved the final product that reaches kitchens, as processing the fish immediately after it is caught helps to preserve its freshness, taste and nutrients.

Five years has passed since Norebo first announced its fleet renewal programme. Since then, the company has revealed plans to build ten state-of-the-art vessels, with more still to come. But every time a new keel is laid, it feels like the first time all over again. As Norebo founder Vitaly Orlov reflected at the unveiling of the first vessel in 2018: 'Although Norebo's current fishing fleet is up to date, the time to renew is coming. Today is a very emotional moment when we lay the keel of the first vessel. I hope that this event today will give a positive signal to the shipbuilding industry that Russia intends to build vessels that are as good as, or even better, than [from] shipyards anywhere in the world.' With Norebo leading the way, Russia's fishing fleet already competes with the leading fishing nations of the world in terms of consistency, quality of product and commitments to sustainable practices. Considering the future investment plans already announced, Russia is well on its way to meet the target of nearly doubling exports by 2024, confirming its status as a world leader, ranking alongside the legendary fishing fleets of old.

Source: eureporter.com; 11 October 2021

EXCESSIVE CENTRALISATION OF PORTS WILL IMPACT THE ECONOMY OF INDIAN STATES

- Dharani Thangavelu

The Indian Ports Bill, 2021 which attempts to centralise all the non-major ports that are under the control of the states/Union Territories, by breaching their authority to

plan, develop, regulate and control the ports, has created a stir among the maritime states. The Bill is viewed as an infringement of state rights and an attempt to stifle the states' authority in the ports that primarily drive the economy.

In June, just ahead of a Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) meeting to discuss the Bill with the states, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin wrote to Chief Ministers of nine states — Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Puducherry — urging them to express their objection over the new draft Indian Ports Bill 2021 and take joint action to prevent any move to dilute the powers already vested with the states. He said, “As per the existing Indian Ports Act, 1908, the powers to plan, develop, regulate and control the minor ports vests with the state governments concerned. However, the new draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021 proposes to change this and transfer many of these powers to MSDC, which has so far been only an advisory body. Further to this, many powers currently exercised by state governments would be taken over by the Union government.” All maritime state/UT governments except BJP ruled Karnataka have objected to the provisions of the draft bill that would allow the MSDC which has so far been an advisory body to function as a regulatory body for non-major ports. “We object to this proposed appropriation of state authority by the Union government. The proposed provision, instead of making India a strong maritime nation, will stunt the growth of port-led development in the nation through its centralisation of authority,” wrote Odisha’s Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera in a letter to the then Minister of State (Independent Charge) Mansukh Mandaviya, in June.

Both the Indian Ports Bill and the Major Ports Authority Act, 2021 have faced strong resistance from coastal states. The Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020 which became an Act after it was passed by the Parliament in February, and focuses on the major ports, was opposed by the BJP ruled Goa state government too.

Centralising through the Council

There are 12 major ports under the Union government and over 200 non-major ports governed by maritime state governments. A total of 76 and 148 ports are on the east and west coast, respectively. The MSDC is a central advisory body which was founded in 1997 to make recommendations and to work along with the major and non-major ports. But the new provisions of the draft Bill will allow the MSDC to function as a regulatory body rather than an advisory body. From the constitution to the composition of the council, the structure of MSDC is against the federal structure, according to experts. As per the new draft Bill, the MSDC council will not have any ministers from the coastal states as its representatives. While the shipping secretary and seven joint secretaries of the Union government will be part of the council, the maritime states will have no bureaucratic representation either, making it a nil representation from the states. “Like the GST council, the MSDC should ideally have ministers of both the Union and the maritime states and cannot constitute officials. Let’s say there is an issue and it leads to a division of votes. Then, the vote of an official would be counted on par with that of the ministers, which is a bad precedent,” says K Ashok Vardhan Shetty, a former IAS officer and an ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Indian Maritime University. The non-major ports in India come under the concurrent list which means the Union government has overriding powers and has the liberty to upgrade a non-major port.

“If the Union government finds a potential in any non-major port, they can very well take over, develop and upgrade it into a major port. Tuticorin, Paradeep and New Mangalore Port were all non-major ports at some point and were upgraded to major ports. But enforcing a centralised national plan on states will stifle the economy and curtail competition,” says Shetty. The provisions of the Bill that criminalise mere administrative breaches has also been contested. Of the many penalties and punishments mentioned in the draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021 a clause states: “If any authority, port or any other person fails to obey any directions of the Council, a fine which may extend to two lakh rupees, and twenty thousand rupees per day for the continuing offence; and a fine which may extend to two lakh rupees, or imprisonment up to six months, or both, on repeat offence.” According to industry experts and other stakeholders, such regulatory provisions will completely prevent international port developers from entering the Indian port industry. As port administration across countries moves towards a decentralised model, an approach of extreme centralisation in India will not merely delay the port capacity addition and slow down the decision-making process, it will majorly stifle the overall economy. Indian ports handle over 95% of the country’s total trade volume and around 70% of total trade value. Chozha Naachiar Rajasekar, President of the Tamil Chamber of Commerce, says that the Bill would snatch away “the power and negate all the development made by the states through their ports, over the years.” “This is an interference in the state autonomy, state revenue and the other modalities of the ports. Already states have lost their right over taxation after the introduction of GST (Goods and Services Tax), and this (Indian Ports Bill) would take away other sources of income too,” he says.

A 2013 National Transport Development Policy Committee headed by Rakesh Mohan, a former advisor to the government of India, stressed that the management of ports should shift from the current centralised form to a decentralised one where the port authorities are given autonomous powers within the policy frameworks of the central and state governments. The committee had also highlighted that the maritime states do not have any stake in the development and functioning of the major ports and that needs to change. The report said, “Given the relative success of non-major ports, it is recommended that their governance structure should be retained and the management of these ports should continue to be performed by the maritime states.” Excessive centralisation will curb economic growth. The Indian Ports Bill, 2021 with its extreme regulatory and centralising nature would curb the level playing field in the country’s port infrastructure development, delay and slow down port capacity addition and restrict international port developers to invest in India, stakeholders say, thereby impacting the economy. Recently, the Tamil Nadu Public Works, Highways and Minor Ports Minister EV Velu said that the provisions of the Bill will have “long term policy implications for coastal states”. He said, “Under the provisions of the Indian Ports Act, 1908, the minor ports in the country have developed well. The draft Bill totally dilutes this good system. I would like to request that the present system with regard to the powers of the state governments in matters of minor ports should not be disturbed in any manner.”

The Tamil Nadu government has also opposed “reducing the autonomous role of states in the regulation and management of the non-major ports”. The Ennore Kattupalli port, which was originally a minor port planned by the Tamil Nadu Maritime Board, is now controlled by the Adani group – one of the largest private ports operators. The

proposed expansion of this port has also raised serious environmental concerns among the residents of the region. It has to be noted that over the years, non-major ports under the states and Union Territories have been more successful in attracting private investments and generating revenue. The maritime states for long have leased out the non-major ports to private investors and the Union government adopted the approach of the states to switch over to a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in the mid-1990s.

The Rakesh Mohan committee report claimed that the non-major ports' share of the total cargo traffic handled by all ports increased due to lower levels of regulatory and financial control compared with major ports. The non-major ports, it said, have been more successful in attracting higher private investment, because they are perceived to be more business-oriented, customer-friendly, cheaper, and in general, more efficient. "If private players are interested in developing minor ports, let them directly approach the state governments, as they have been doing all these years. This will speed up the process, instead of routing it through the Union government," says Naachiar. He added that similar to how manufacturing industries are classified as micro, medium, small scale and heavy industries for multiple reasons including focused development and government investment, the same could be applicable to the development and regulation of ports.

As per an India Infrastructure Research report, the Indian port sector continues to face a plethora of challenges. The key ones include lack of adequate evacuation facilities at ports leading to increased cost of logistics to operators, limited share of coastal shipping and inland water transport, high port charges, lack of uniformity in technology adoption across ports, draft restrictions and delays in completing land acquisition and securing requisite approvals, among others. Over the years various recommendations have been made to the Indian government to develop mega ports along the east and west coasts. As opposed to large economies like China, US, Germany, etc, that have a few mega ports each, India with its 7,517-km coastline has none. "Instead of interfering in the works of the states, the Union government should focus on addressing the pending issues, on developing the major ports, and follow up on the implementation of various schemes," says Naachiar. He adds, "To prevent road accidents one has to regulate drivers, ensure safety measures, focus on infrastructure, monitoring, etc. But what would happen if you block the actual road in the name of preventing accidents. This Bill is as problematic as that."

This piece is a part of TNM's reader-funded Cooperative Federalism Project.

Source: [The News Minute](#); 11 October 2021

'CONTAINERGEDDON': SUPPLY CRISIS DRIVES WALMART AND RIVALS TO HIRE THEIR OWN SHIPS

- Lisa Baertlein, Jonathan Saul and Siddharth Cavale

LOS ANGELES, Oct 7 (Reuters) - The Flying Buttress once glided across the oceans carrying vital commodities like grain to all corners of the world. Now it bears a different treasure: Paw Patrol Movie Towers, Batmobile Transformers and Baby Alive Lulu Achoo dolls. The dry bulk cargo ship has been drafted into the service of retail giant Walmart (WMT.N), which is chartering its own vessels in an effort to beat the global supply chain disruptions that threaten to torpedo the retail industry's make-or-break holiday season. "Chartering vessels is just one example of investments we've made to move products as quickly as possible," said Joe Metzger, U.S. executive vice president of supply-chain operations at Walmart, which has hired a number of vessels this year. The aim is to bypass log-jammed ports and secure scarce ship space at a time when COVID-19, as well as U.S.-China trade ructions, equipment shortages and extreme weather, have exposed the fragility of the globe-spanning supply lines we use for everything from food and fashion to drinks and diapers. More than 60 container ships carrying clothing, furniture and electronics worth billions of dollars are stuck outside Los Angeles and Long Beach terminals, waiting to unload, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California.

Pre-pandemic, it was unusual for more than one ship to be in the waiting lane at the No. 1 U.S. port complex, which handles more than half of all American imports. Other big retail players, such as Target (TGT.N), Home Depot (HD.N), Costco (COST.O) and Dollar Tree (DLTR.O), have said they are chartering ships to deal with the pandemic-driven slowdown of sea networks that handle 90% of the world's trade. Or, as Steve Ferreira of shipping consultancy Ocean Audit describes the escalating concern: "Containergeddon." U.S. retailers' traditional lifeline from Asia is freezing up due to a resurgence of COVID-19 in countries like Vietnam and Indonesia plus a power-supply crunch in China. The supply snarls coincide with booming demand as consumers spend more on goods than going out, and the festive shopping frenzy nears. Burt Flickinger, managing director at retail consultancy Strategic Resource Group, said at least 20-25% of the goods stuck on ships were unlikely to make it onto shelves in time for the Nov. 26 Black Friday kickoff for the holiday shopping season, a period when retailers make more than a third of their profits.

ROUTE FOR GREAT PROFIT

The biggest chains are taking matters into their own hands. In a typical year, Walmart would have moved those toys from China to Los Angeles in hundreds of 40-foot (12-metre) cargo boxes stacked like colorful Lego bricks on gigantic container vessels that serve multiple customers. But 2021 is far from typical. Incoming cargo at the Port of Los Angeles is up 30% from last year's record levels. Trucks and trains can't remove it fast enough, leading to logjams, said the port's Executive Director Gene Seroka, reflecting the surge in consumer demand. "It's like taking 10 lanes of freeway traffic and squeezing them into five," Seroka said. Chartered ships that offer valuable cargo space and can sidestep the container terminals play a critical role in this second pandemic holiday season, particularly for time-sensitive goods like Christmas sweaters that won't sell if they arrive too late.

The Flying Buttress, for example, entered Los Angeles waters on Aug. 21. It got stuck in a queue outside the port before it bypassed clogged terminals and unloaded its goods at a separately operated bulk cargo dock nearby on Aug. 31, according to Refinitiv data and shipping records. During that voyage, Walmart circumvented the

shortage of 40-foot containers typically used for global shipping by switching to bigger 53-foot containers that are almost exclusively used to move goods by truck and train within the United States. Other companies are also playing the shipping game including Home Depot which said it was "creatively working to obtain additional capacity". The home improvement retailer dodged the Los Angeles gridlock by sending its Great Profit charter ship nearly 125 miles south to the Port of San Diego. On Sept. 15, the ship's onboard cranes hoisted 7-foot Halloween "Spellcasting witches", Christmas lights and other holiday decor onto docks there, said Ocean Audit CEO Ferreira, who helps shipping customers claw back overpayments. "This is the home stretch. They're doing whatever it takes" to win in an overheated market, he said of retailers.

WHY PORT SIZE MATTERS

Yet there is a limit to such workarounds. Great Profit moored at a terminal that handles everything from sugar to windmill blades but can only accommodate a maximum of 500 containers from one to two ships per month between now and the end of the year, said Greg Borossay, the port's maritime business development principal. That's because San Diego, like many other U.S. seaports, doesn't have the towering gantry cranes needed to pluck boxes from massive ships. Rail service is equipped for autos and other specialty cargo. And, roads in surrounding commercial and residential areas aren't set up for the fleets of trucks needed to whisk thousands of containers to other parts of the country. "We'd have a very unhappy community if we had 3,000 (boxes) coming off a ship," Borossay added. Not all retailers will hire ships to support sales, and other factors could be significant in picking out potential winners and losers. Clothing and accessory retailers have seen their inventories decline even as sales have accelerated, stoking worries about sell-outs, said Jason Miller, associate professor of logistics at Michigan State University's business college. General merchandise retailers like Walmart and Target, on the other hand have done a better job of keeping inventory on pace with sales, he added.

PAYING \$20,000 PER CONTAINER

The global supply crunch is providing lucrative opportunities for bulk cargo ship operators, though; they are cashing in on a record spike in container shipping rates that has sent freight costs above \$20,000 per box on the biggest liner vessels. Global container shipping players like AP Moller Maersk (MAERSKb.CO) and Hapag Lloyd (HLAG.DE), are flush with cash from the soaring rates. Major lines are "putting in every ship we can find", Hapag Lloyd CEO Rolf Habben Jansen said.

Several shipping sources said other firms were snapping up second-hand container vessels of all sizes. Hong Kong-based Taylor Maritime, which according to shipping databases manages the Flying Buttress, did not respond to a request for comment. Dry bulk transporters have a short window of time to prepare decks to safely secure and carry cargo boxes. They typically transport commodities in below-deck cargo holds. Genco Shipping & Trading is seeking approval from its ship safety certifier to prepare some of its own dry bulk vessels to carry containers. Genco isn't going all-in on container shipping, said CEO John Wobensmith, who called the project "opportunistic". Separately, agribusiness giant Cargill said it is looking into using some

of the dry bulk ships it charters to instead hold containers, if only as a temporary solution, to "alleviate bottlenecks".

Source: [Reuters](#); 07 October 2021

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

WILL ANTARCTIC WATERS RECEIVE NEW PROTECTIONS?

Twenty-five countries and the European Union will gather on- and off-line from 18–25 October to vote on extending protection of the Southern Ocean and on how to manage krill fishing there. Fishing in the region is regulated by CCAMLR (the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources). Back in 2002, CCAMLR agreed to create a network of marine protected areas (MPAs). Then in 2009, members took the first big step when they agreed on an MPA to cover 94,000km² below Antarctica's South Orkney Islands. In 2016, CCAMLR successfully negotiated the world's largest "marine park", covering 1.55 million km² in the Ross Sea off the south of the continent. (Unlike a permanent MPA, the status of this marine park will need to be renewed after 35 years.) Observers and marine experts are hopeful that the meeting will build on the momentum created by the COP15 meeting on biodiversity and the upcoming COP26 meeting on climate change. Still, they acknowledge that differences between countries, particularly from China and Russia, could make it difficult to reach a consensus between all members. "The two big crises on the planet are biodiversity and climate and the one place to take concrete action on both is at CCAMLR. This is where we have to show we are serious," said Andrea Kavanagh, director of Pew's Antarctic and Southern Ocean work. "The fact that it will be a hybrid meeting makes final decisions very difficult."

The proposals on the table

There are three MPA proposals up for discussion. The first would see three blocks of ocean and ocean floor protected along East Antarctica, an area rich in corals and penguin prey. Though the proposal has been discussed without success for nine years in a row, experts agree it has the best chance of moving forward. Another proposal is for a new 1.8 million km² MPA north of the continent, in the Weddell Sea. This was put forward in 2018 by the EU and subsequently received support from other members. It would, if created, be the largest nature reserve anywhere in the world. The third proposal was put forward in 2017 by Argentina and Chile. It would see an MPA to the west of the Antarctic peninsula, an area particularly vulnerable to the impacts of tourism, fishing and climate change. Up to three-quarters of Antarctica's krill is also located there. Speaking at the recent anniversary of the 1991 signing of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, which prevents mining in Antarctica, US special envoy for climate John Kerry said he hoped international diplomacy was mature enough to create new MPAs this year. "If we can get the support of China and Russia, many more would join," he added.

The two countries have been hesitant regarding the creation of new MPAs, asking for solid scientific data before agreeing to them. Still, a strong diplomatic effort at the

highest level could change this, as happened with the Ross Sea MPA, said Nengye Liu, professor at Australia's Macquarie Law School. Geneviève Pons, co-head of Antarctica2020, a group campaigning for Southern Ocean protection, agrees, adding that 18 of the 26 CCAMLR members have formally agreed to sponsor at least one of the three MPA proposals. This number was reached this year thanks to civil society's efforts to encourage dialogue at "the highest level."

Antarctica's Southern Ocean comprises approximately 10% of the world's ocean and is home to some of its most vulnerable and important ecosystems. Millions of penguins, seabirds, fish, seals, whales and krill, the region's keystone species, live there and need further protection. Experts agree that MPAs are the best way to provide it. Not moving forward with the three proposals on the table could have big consequences for Antarctica's ecosystems. The situation is especially important given that the Antarctic Treaty Protocol is expected to be reviewed after 2048.

Other key discussions

Antarctic krill will also be on the agenda at this year's meeting. CCAMLR's main krill conservation measure, known as CM 51-07, is expiring this year. Member countries could either adopt a new measure, renew the current one or allow unregulated fishing.

Krill forms the base of the Antarctic food web, sustaining predator species such as penguins, seals and blue whales. The crustacean also plays a role in the fight against climate change, by feeding on carbon-capturing algae and dropping its carbon-filled waste to the bottom of the ocean. Concentrated krill fishing remains a serious concern in the Southern Ocean, reducing the locally available amounts of krill for predators. Currently, catch limits are set for dedicated subareas. Today, the main krill fishers are Norway, China and South Korea. Emily Grilly, Antarctic Program Manager at WWF Australia, believes that CM 51-07 will likely be renewed, as no consensus has yet been reached on a new conservation measure. "Krill fishing is growing every year and if it's not regulated it would be a big problem. Fishing is already overlapping with areas of predators, impacting the food scheme," she added.

Source: [China Dialogue Ocean](#); 14 October 2021

MAERSK INVESTS IN VERTORO TO DEVELOP GREEN LIGNIN MARINE FUELS

Copenhagen, Denmark, and Geleen, Netherlands - Maersk's investment will be used to further develop and commercialise Vertoro's patented liquid lignin technology, and it will enable Vertoro to build a demo plant, which will become operational in 2022. The output of this plant will be used to develop marine fuels in partnership with Maersk as well as other applications for the materials and chemicals markets.

The minority investment supports A.P. Moller - Maersk's work to decarbonise marine operations. Maersk expects several fuel types to exist alongside each other in the future and has identified four potential fuel pathways to decarbonisation: biodiesel, alcohols, ammonia, and lignin-enhanced alcohols. Lignin is a class of complex organic polymers

which form key structural materials in the support tissues of most plants. Vertoro, founded in 2017, produces liquid lignin exclusively from sustainably sourced forestry and agricultural residues by means of a patented thermochemical process. Like fossil oil, liquid lignin can be used as a platform for fuel, chemical and material applications.

The investment in Vertoro is the third investment in the fuels of the future from Maersk Growth in less than two months. In September Maersk Growth invested in WasteFuel, a start-up focused on turning waste into sustainable aviation fuel, green bio-methanol, and renewable natural gas. Later followed the investment in Prometheus which is developing a direct air capture-technology to enable cost efficient, carbon neutral electro fuels. These investment activities underline how Maersk Growth has added green fuels as an additional sub-investment theme under their overall umbrella of supply chain investments. Furthermore, these investments are part of the A.P. Moller - Maersk journey to become carbon neutral by 2050. Maersk recently announced a total of nine vessels capable of running on green methanol.

Source: [Maersk](#); 14 October 2021

BIOFOULING GOES DEEPER THAN FUEL EFFICIENCY

- Jack Hogan

ECOsubsea has strengthened its partnership with AkzoNobel via the Intertrac Hullcare system, designed to monitor, maintain and extend the lifecycle of hull coatings. SuperyachtNews speaks with ECOsubsea CEO Tor M. Østervold about the partnership, the growing importance of proactive hull maintenance/monitoring, and the implications for the marine biosphere. Anti-fouling hull coatings have a terrible reputation, but the days of copper-rich carcinogenic paints designed to assault anything that touches the hull are, for the most part receding. Partnerships like this hopefully demonstrate a broader shift away from harmful industry practices. Østervold sees a change also, with more recognition of the biosphere as a whole. "I think it's a tectonic shift within the industry. Coatings and chemicals have been a workable solution for thousands of years. Now the focus is shifting to recognising the impact of the heavy metals, microplastics and, increasingly, non-native invasive species. It makes sense to take a condition-based maintenance view of the coatings, and it's fantastic that AkzoNobel is choosing this."

The ECOsubsea system consists of a remotely operated vehicle that moves along the ship's hull (think a pool cleaner, but a lot more expensive looking and upside-down). The cleaning system aims to remove hull fouling without damaging the hull coating and, crucially, pump what is removed ashore to be analysed and disposed of. As Østervold affirms, "Our decade long collaboration with AkzoNobel gives their customers the ability to plan maintenance with the peace of mind of sustainable collection and disposal of hull biofouling."

The significance of biofouling is manifold. A freshly painted and floated vessel has its most efficient drag coefficient and consumes the least fuel. From the moment it hits

the water, the growth begins microscopically and then more conspicuously. Eventually leading to entire mini-ecosystems of crustaceans, algae and molluscs. This significantly increases the drag, and therefore the fuel consumption. Owners are advised to inspect and clean hulls regularly between drydocks, with many commercial shipping charter contracts including a clean hull clause. However, port authorities and coastal states are banning or deterring hull cleaning methods without capture due to the environmental risks. With the superyacht industry's push towards sustainability targets and a decarbonised future, much of the focus is justifiably on CO₂ emissions. The relationship between a clean hull and increased fuel consumption should always remain part of this discussion. However, the most existentially significant consequence of climate change is the destabilisation of ecosystems, and in turn, the ability for us to produce food and live in anything reassembling a sustainable way.

The most significant barrier to the transportation of harmful species around the world is the oceans. As a New Zealander, I know this all too well. Pre-human colonisation New Zealand had an ecosystem that thrived with only two native mammal species (the long and short-tailed bat). Almost every other niche was filled by birds, from the giant Moa that stood 10ft tall to the Haast eagle with a wingspan of eight feet. The ground fauna was littered with variations of flightless and ground-nesting birds, such as the precarious but persistent Kiwi. That all changed when the first humans arrived, bringing with them the Brown Rat, followed by European settlers with cats, stoats, ferrets and, eventually, possums from Australia. Within centuries the ecosystem was irrevocably changed.

According to a comparative analysis study, New Zealand has the highest proportion of threatened or endangered species on earth, including 90% of all seabirds, 84% of reptiles, 76% of freshwater fish and 74% of terrestrial birds. A closer examination of the marine ecosystem had starker implications for the marine industry; A study conducted by New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research concluded that biofouling accounted for 70% of invasive aquatic species, compared to just 3% from ballast water.

The oceanic barriers that once kept the global ecosystems isolated and functioning are now crisscrossed by thousands of vessels every day. Many of the introductions that were going to happen have already taken place. (The proliferation of the Brown Rat to near-ubiquity for example) and many continents now have an irreversible anthropogenic ecosystem, defined by our interactions and introductions. The marine environment is still open and vulnerable to further, potentially disastrous introductions. And with the proliferation of the superyacht fleet, well beyond commercial shipping routes, we deserve scrutiny for our behaviour as an industry.

The coastline of Norway is one such ecosystem, as Østervold highlights, "The fact that we are transporting these species is a big problem. For example, in Norway this March, we discovered an invasive Japanese Algae (affectionately known as sea vomit). It started in the South, and by September, it had spread as far as Bergen. This species multiplies and covers an area 11 times larger in just 14 days, taking away almost all life on the seafloor, as nothing feeds on it." "In my view, the number one service that we are providing is monitoring, which shows the condition of the whole boat. Monitoring is the first thing that we need," affirms Østervold. Monitoring and recording the biofouling is the scientific next step to evaluating the scale of the issue. Waiting for an

invasive species to appear in a harbour and destabilising an ecosystem is placing the ambulance firmly at the bottom of the cliff, as Østervold continues; "It is also difficult because, even if we recognise that we have a big problem with biofouling, the only thing we can do without monitoring is say; 'ok, let's do more than we did yesterday' But that does not help anyone. We need to get our act together and start monitoring and measuring the weight and species breakdown of bio-foul removed."

Clean, energy-efficient hulls form a more sustainable backbone for the industry. With active monitoring of the conditions of the hull and the number and species of the unwanted passengers it is supporting, valuable data can be fed back to NGO's and scientific research institutions also. "We have an archive of thousands of video clips from our biofouling evaluations from many vessels," continues Østervold, "it is crucial for us to have these records because we need a baseline to know: what it is exactly we are doing something about?"

Source: superyatchnews.com; 13 October 2021

FOUR TUNA SPECIES SHOW SIGNS OF RECOVERY FROM OVERFISHING

- Todd Woody

In September, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) announced some surprisingly good news. Four of the seven most commercially fished tuna species that appear on its Red List of Threatened Species are showing signs of recovery from overfishing. That led the IUCN to update in its annual red list the status of the Atlantic bluefin from "endangered" to "least concern". The southern bluefin went from "critically endangered" to "endangered" while the yellowfin and albacore moved from "near threatened" to "least concern".

"But that doesn't mean that we should go out and eat more fish just because these species are doing better than they were 10 or 15 years ago," says Beth Polidoro, the red list coordinator for the IUCN group that reassessed the tuna species. What it does mean is that efforts to manage tuna fisheries more sustainably appear to be working, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, where most tuna is fished. "We should learn from what we're doing right and do it in more parts of the world across all stocks and species," says Polidoro, an associate professor of environmental chemistry and aquatic conservation at Arizona State University in the United States. She notes that tuna species such as the Pacific bluefin remain severely depleted, with the current population equalling less than 5% of the biomass it contained before commercial fishing began. Experts caution that the IUCN reassessment must be understood in context and not used to press for higher catch quotas for particular stocks of tuna, a long-lived and highly migratory top predator.

Assessing tuna's extinction risk

The IUCN red list evaluates the risk of extinction for the global population of a species. Scientists reviewed tuna stock assessments from regional fisheries, data from

scientists and independent organisations, as well as peer-reviewed studies, to estimate changes in population over three tuna generations.

Such global surveys, however, can mask declines in regional populations of tuna species that are commercially fished, according to Polidoro and Grantly Galland, a senior officer with the Pew Charitable Trusts international fisheries programme who focuses on tuna. For instance, they say, the IUCN reassessment found improvements in the population of yellowfin tuna, prompting the change in its status from near threatened to least concern. “That’s for the global species, but the population of yellowfin in the Indian Ocean is very poorly managed, and is approaching the point of potential collapse there,” says Galland.

Polidoro notes the same is true for Atlantic bluefin, whose status moved from endangered to least concern. “That’s driven primarily by the increase in the population that’s found in the Mediterranean Sea, which is actually 80%, more or less, of the global population,” she says. However, Polidoro notes, the Gulf of Mexico’s population of Atlantic bluefin “is doing quite poorly. It has never really recovered from overfishing in the 1960s and 70s.” The IUCN reassessment also upgraded Pacific bluefin from vulnerable to near threatened. “That’s not because it’s doing better per se, but because there’s now better data that showed the status of the population,” says Polidoro. “So it’s limping along at a very, very low population size compared to historical levels.”

Where tuna are doing better

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) regulates the region’s US\$5 billion fishery, setting catch quotas for albacore, bigeye, Pacific bluefin, skipjack and yellowfin tuna. China operates the largest tuna fleet in the region, according to commission records. Observers do not expect the IUCN reassessment to result in a change in catch limits set by the WCPFC and other RFMOs. “They all have their own science, their own scientists and they don’t make substantial changes in their operations based on species being down-listed or up-listed, as they manage at the population level not the species level,” says Galland.

WCPFC science manager SungKwon Soh said in an email that he could not comment on the IUCN reassessment of tuna species but noted that commission members “take their own initiative to conduct quota allocation and management practices”. Galland, who closely follows the WCPFC and other RFMOs, attributes the apparent recovery of some tuna species to policies the regional fisheries bodies have implemented over the past decade to more sustainably manage commercial fish stocks.

“Fortunately, in the case of tunas, they are generally pretty well managed, and generally in pretty good status,” he says of the WCPFC. Even so, pressure is building for the WCPFC to take more aggressive action to ensure the long-term sustainability of tuna stocks. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifies the sustainability of tuna caught by WCPFC fisheries and others around the world. It is a crucial label of approval, given that the commission oversees half the world’s commercial tuna catch. Of all MSC-certified tuna, 73% is from the central and western Pacific. In July, the MSC issued a statement warning that the commission’s tuna fisheries risked losing their certification unless the WCPFC made substantial progress in adopting “harvest strategies” – a set of rules and objectives designed to ensure the sustainability of tuna stocks by altering catch limits as conditions change. “The stocks are in healthy shape,

and that's why it's important to put in these harvest strategies now when tuna species are not up against the wall and it hasn't become a crisis," says Bill Holden, a senior MSC tuna fisheries outreach manager based in Sydney, Australia. Soh said he expects the commission to take up the MSC's concerns at its virtual meeting in December.

The impact of the pandemic and climate change

The absence of in-person meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed progress on adopting harvest strategies, according to Holden. The pandemic has also upended monitoring of tuna fishing as, in April 2020, the WCPFC suspended requirements that fishery observers be onboard vessels to deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In August this year, the commission extended the suspension until 15 December, but noted that vessel operators may choose to place observers onboard at their discretion if they follow safety protocols.

Holden says observers are a key source of real-time data on fisheries, and the decline in coverage during the pandemic – some Pacific island nations' borders remain closed – will impact the completeness of stock assessments in the coming years. "Observers are very good at collecting data and we know that the data is very reliable," he says. The sustainability of fisheries depends on collecting such data to assess changes in population and reproductive rates of fish stocks. That's always difficult when it comes to tuna, given that the fish migrate over vast distances. But climate change will make the task even more complicated, according to Polidoro. "It's really going to mess up fisheries," she says, noting that rising ocean temperatures could alter tuna reproduction and migration patterns. "It is a challenge to estimate population sizes for things that you can't necessarily count individual by individual," she adds. "And so keeping track of where the tuna are and what population they belong to is going to become increasingly challenging over the next couple of decades."

Source: [China Dialogue Ocean](#); 11 October 2021

K LINE SHIPS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ON MARINE PLASTIC WASTE

- Naida Hakirevic Prevljak

Japanese shipping company Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha (K Line) has signed a joint research agreement with the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology (TUMSAT) to start research on marine plastics. The TUMSAT has been surveying the amount of marine plastic waste, including microplastics – plastic particles 5 mm or less – floating in the world's oceans.

This joint research will use K Line's vessels to collect samples of plastic particles and is expected to promote the study of marine plastic waste. Specifically, the joint research will evaluate how much plastic waste can be collected from seawater under common process without installing any special equipment on intake and filtration of seawater by ships on voyages in order to avoid possible further marine pollution, K Line said.

First, the K Line vessel will take samples from the seawater intake line with a strainer while the ship is running, and then the TUMSAT will collect plastic particles from the samples and analyze the material, size, and other elements. The project will lead to further research, such as the collection of microplastics in the open sea using ocean-going vessels and the establishment of a monitoring system for the density of microplastics in specific areas.

The marine plastic waste problem

It is estimated that approximately eight million tons of plastic waste are discharged from land into the ocean every year throughout the world. This causes various problems, such as deterioration of ecosystems and the marine environment, deterioration of coastal functions, disruption of vessel navigation, and impacts on fisheries and tourism.

There is also concern about the impact of microplastics from seafood on the human body. As such, it has become a global environmental issue. What is more, more than 95% of marine plastic waste is believed to originate from land-based sources. Social initiatives are underway on land such as efforts to prevent the generation of plastic waste and introduce legislation. However, there is still no established method of recovering this marine plastic waste without expending significant energy. Tackling marine plastic waste is part of K Line action plan “Blue Seas for the Future” for until 2030. The company also participates in the Plastic Smart campaign launched by the Japanese Ministry of Environment that promotes intelligent corporate use of plastic.

Source: [Offshore Energy](#); 04 October 2021

GEOPOLITICS

BEIJING, MOSCOW, ANKARA PUSH US OUT OF RED SEA DOMINANCE

– Gregory Copley

Washington's escalating hybrid warfare operations against Ethiopia may have cost the United States its strategic influence over the globally vital Red Sea/Suez sea lanes. The U.S. abandonment of Ethiopia has forced its government to seek allies and protection elsewhere, and Russia, China, and Turkey have rushed in to fill the power vacuum. The now-open hostility of the Biden administration toward Ethiopia was rationalized as being supportive of Egypt's position as the United States' preferred partner in the region, controlling the Suez Canal. Washington also justifies its hostility on claims—widely discredited by the evidence—of Ethiopian “human rights violations” in its fight against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Marxist insurgency. But it was the TPLF that began the war surging into the neighboring Ethiopian Amhara and Afar regions, creating millions of refugees.

And despite U.S. efforts to please Cairo, Beijing and Moscow have also improved their positions with the Egyptian government. As a result, the Ethiopian government, which had seen Washington as its preferred partner, was forced to reopen talks with China—which the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali had essentially rejected upon taking office in 2018—as well as with Russia and Turkey. Turkey had been regarded as a threat to Ethiopia until this point, given that it had been funding Islamist insurgents in Ethiopia in recent years. To improve its defense position, the Ethiopian National Defense Force has been acquiring significant numbers of unmanned aerial combat vehicles (UCAVs) from China, Turkey, and Iran and large amounts of weapons and ammunition from Russia, Belarus, and the United Arab Emirates. Russia has been moving Sukhoi Su-27S combat aircraft to the Ethiopian Air Force.

The U.S. move to support Egypt's longstanding rivalry with Ethiopia—a rivalry which hasn't been reciprocated—was based on fear that a strong and united Ethiopia could dominate the lower Red Sea and jeopardize maritime traffic coming into and from Egypt's Suez Canal. Egypt has also alleged that Ethiopia, the source of the Blue Nile, was restricting Nile water flow to Egypt. This was proven to be a false claim, too, although Egypt does face an increasing water shortage due to its growing population. Cairo, however, needs a scapegoat. China and Russia have been able to prove that they have real leverage in the region by resisting U.S. attempts to have the U.N. Security Council authorize military intervention against Ethiopia. The U.S. move was to help the TPLF and the equally violent—and avowedly genocidal—Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to break up Ethiopia.

Beijing and Moscow gained considerable gratitude in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city, by using their veto powers in the Security Council to delay or block Washington's plans. And Beijing already maintains a significant military base in Ethiopia's neighbor, Djibouti, and built the new Djibouti–Addis Ababa rail link. In mid-October, Washington escalated plans for economic sanctions against Ethiopia for refusing to allow "U.S. aid" convoys to be routed through the Ethiopian capital to the TPLF. Addis Ababa quickly discovered that the "U.S. aid" convoys were going merely to support the TPLF's military operations against both the Tigrayan population and other Ethiopians.

Hundreds of "aid convoys" were reaching the TPLF, but the trucks never returned to the capital. They were diverted to be used by the TPLF to aid its mobile warfare, now well-entrenched in the Amara and Afar regions. Far from being embattled, the TPLF has been engaging in large-scale, formal offensive military operations and creating what's genuinely a humanitarian crisis, with massive casualties and an estimated 2 million refugees. The World Heritage city of Lalibela, Ethiopia, in the Amhara region, has been occupied for several months by TPLF forces, who were trained and armed by the United States under the Obama administration.

Long-serving U.N. officials in Ethiopia have complained that, with the U.S. pressure, new U.N. officials have been shipped into the country and have been promoting the U.S.–TPLF line against the advice of the more experienced U.N. country team. Ethiopian government forces had, by the second week of October, begun an offensive against the TPLF, utilizing China's Wing Loong II (CJ-2) MALE (Medium-Altitude, Long-Endurance) UCAVs, which had been shipped in urgently from Chengdu, China, to the Harar Meda Air Base in Ethiopia, not far from the fighting in the Afar and Amhara regions. The CJ-2s can carry 420 kilograms of ordnance, including precision weapons.

Ethiopia has also acquired Turkish Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs, as well as Iranian UAVs. It doesn't appear as though the U.S. escalation of political and economic warfare against Ethiopia will abate as long as the Biden administration's present State Department team is in place. State Department sources admit privately that they're using the same playbook against Ethiopia as they used during the Clinton administration against Serbia in the 1990s. But the United States was then strategically far stronger, and China, Russia, and Turkey were far weaker.

Source: [The Epoch Times](#); 17 October 2021

UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA INQUIRY LAUNCHED

The International Relations and Defence Committee is undertaking an inquiry into the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The inquiry will consider the extent to which the UNCLOS it is fit for purpose in 2021. It will examine the enforcement of UNCLOS, its dispute resolution mechanisms, and the extent to which it has proved able to adapt to new and emerging challenges, including climate change,

autonomous maritime systems, and issues of human rights and human security at sea. It will explore the UK’s current policy towards UNCLOS and approach in practice, and consider which international partners and alliances will be important for the UK to address these challenges and uphold its interests.

Focus of the inquiry

The Committee is seeking evidence on issues including:

- Enforcement of UNCLOS and the success of its dispute resolution mechanisms
- The role of the International Maritime Organisation
- New and emerging challenges facing the effective implementation of UNCLOS, including:
 - ❖ Climate change
 - ❖ Maritime security and human rights at sea
 - ❖ Autonomous maritime vehicles
 - ❖ The regulation of access to economic resources
- The UK’s current policy and practice, and recommendations for future priorities

Source: [UK Parliament](#); 15 October 2021

GREECE, US EXPAND DEFENSE PACT IN FACE OF TURKEY TENSIONS

- Ellen Knickmeyer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and Greece signed a deal Thursday expanding their defense cooperation agreement to grant U.S. forces broader use of Greek bases, as that nation deals with tensions between it and neighboring Turkey.

The deal, signed in Washington by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, will allow U.S. forces to train and operate “in an expanded capacity” at four additional bases in Greece, Dendias said. “This is not an agreement...against anybody else,” Dendias said in an interview with The Associated Press after the signing ceremony, although he noted the new agreement put a U.S. military presence just miles (kilometers) from Turkey. “It’s an agreement between Greece and the United States of America, and the purpose of the agreement is the stability and prosperity of both our countries.”

Greece is pinning much of its defense strategy on close military cooperation with France and the United States as it remains locked in a volatile dispute with Turkey over sea and airspace boundaries. Greek officials also have been actively pursuing other international agreements, with partners in the Middle East, Europe and elsewhere. Blinken at Thursday’s signing ceremony called the U.S. and Greece “two proud, strong NATO allies, both deeply committed to our alliance.” Thursday’s agreement, building on an existing one, will run for five years with automatic renewal, Greek officials said.

NATO – the North Atlantic defense bloc to which the U.S., Turkey, France and Greece all belong – is built on the idea of collective defense, so that an attack on one member nation is considered an attack at all. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg earlier this month appeared to criticize Greece's newly ratified mutual defense agreement with France, without naming the two countries. "What I don't believe in is efforts to try to do something outside the NATO framework, or compete with or duplicate NATO," Stoltenberg said then.

Dendias, speaking at the residence attached to the Greek Embassy in Washington, said Greece's mutual defense deal with France "is an agreement that is complementary to NATO." "It does not diminish the role of NATO," he added. NATO members Greece and Turkey are at odds over sea boundaries and mineral rights in the eastern Mediterranean, spurring Athens to launch a major spending program to modernize its armed forces. Turkey in turn accuses Greece of overstating its own territorial claims to the Aegean and other waters. Thursday's US-Greece agreement builds on one signed in Athens two years ago by Blinken's predecessor, Mike Pompeo, and will give the United States increased access to two bases in central Greece and one at Alexandroupolis, near the Greek-Turkish border. The U.S. naval base at Souda Bay, in the Greek island of Crete is also key to the defense relationship. The Greek push to build alliances comes as the United States tries to turn more of its international focus to competition with China, reducing its military strength in some other parts of the world.

The Greek government understands the United States' need to pay more attention to China and the Indo-Pacific overall — but argues that Greece's neighborhood is one American forces shouldn't leave, Dendias said. "If the American presence is not manifested, some countries may have clever ideas about their role," envisioning themselves as "local superpowers," he said. "I am sometimes afraid that Turkey may be falling under that category."

Source: [Associated Press](#); 15 October 2021

STANDOFF AS KENYA REJECTS ICJ RULING ON MARITIME DISPUTE

Kenya has vowed it will not abide by an International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that has given Somalia control of a vast EEZ area rich in hydrocarbons and fish resources. President Uhuru Kenyatta said that Nairobi rejects and does not recognize the findings in the decision, adding that Kenya is determined to use all means to safeguard its territorial integrity. "The decision embodies a perpetuation of the ICJ's jurisdictional overreach and raises a fundamental question on the respect of the sovereignty and consent of states to international judicial processes," he said. Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, widely known as Farmajo, implored Nairobi to "respect the international rule of law" and respect the verdict, which is "a fair indication of the transparency" of the ICJ. In their ruling on the protracted maritime dispute, which had dragged on since Somalia sued Kenya in 2014, the ICJ judges

unanimously ruled there was “no agreed maritime boundary” in force between the two neighbors. Instead, it drew a new border close to the one claimed by Somalia.

The new boundary drawn by the court mostly followed a line proposed by Somalia. It hands over several offshore oil blocks claimed by Kenya and gives Mogadishu exclusive fishing rights in disputed India Ocean waters covering an area of nearly 40,000 square miles. “In its Judgment, which is final, without appeal and binding on the Parties, the Court unanimously finds that there is no agreed maritime boundary between the Federal Republic of Somalia and Republic of Kenya that follows the parallel of latitude,” said the ICJ judges.

In the ruling, the judges said the starting point of the single maritime boundary delimiting the maritime areas between the two countries is the intersection of the straight line extending from the final permanent boundary beacon (PB 29) at right angles to the general direction of the coast with the low-water line. “By ten votes to four, the court decides that from the end of the boundary in the territorial sea (Point A), the single maritime boundary delimiting the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf up to 200 nautical between the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Kenya follows the geodetic line,” the court said.

Considering the ICJ has no means of enforcing its rulings, the decision by Nairobi to reject the judgment risks opening up another front of disagreement between the two neighbors, whose relationship is already frosty. “This decision is, in the circumstances, a zero-sum game, which will strain the relations between the two countries. It will also reverse the social, political and economic gains; and potentially aggravate the peace and security situation in the fragile Horn of Africa region,” said President Kenyatta. Somalia filed the case at the ICJ in 2014, alleging that Kenya was encroaching on its maritime territory. Five years earlier, in 2009, the two countries had signed a memorandum of understanding backed by the UN, pledging to settle the boundary dispute through negotiation. They failed to reach agreement, prompting Somalia to take the ICJ route.

Source: [The Maritime Executive](#); 14 October 2021

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