



MAKING WAVES

A maritime news brief covering:

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

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MARITIME SECURITY

CHINA SENDS NEW FLEET TO GULF OF ADEN 'ON ESCORT MISSION'

The 39th fleet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy set out from the city of Qingdao, in east China's Shandong Province, on Sunday to conduct an escort mission in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia.

The fleet is composed of the guided-missile destroyer Urumqi, the missile frigate Yantai, and the supply ship Taihu, with dozens of special-operations soldiers and two helicopters on board. In preparation for the mission, the fleet conducted training on the use of weapons, counter-terrorism and anti-piracy, as well as replenishment at sea. The PLA Navy began conducting escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia in December 2008.

Source: menafn.com; 29 September 2021

UNODC COMMENDS NIGERIA'S FIGHT AGAINST MARITIME CRIME

- Michael Olugbode

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has commended the efforts of Nigeria's government in the fight against maritime crime. A statement that was released yesterday by the UNODC Communications Associate, Ms. Olivia Ogechi Okorondu, said that the government of Nigeria, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the Nigerian Navy need to be commended for their sustained efforts in the fight against maritime crime. The commendation was given during the opening of a four-day Inter-Agency Expert Consultative Dialogue Session in Lagos, on the implementation plan of Nigeria's draft National Maritime Strategy (NMS), which was organised with the support of the Danish government.

The statement said that the government of Nigeria had in 2015 inaugurated a committee made up of several maritime stakeholders within the public and private spheres to work on drafting a NMS. The vision of the NMS is to support Nigeria's economic prosperity, growth and development through the sustainable use of the nation's maritime resources in a safe and secure environment. The event, which was hosted in Lagos, aimed at providing a platform to undertake a proper articulation of the implementation framework and to obtain practical consensus on the institutional arrangement for the operationalisation of the NMS.

The Country Representative of the UNODC Nigeria, Mr. Oliver Stolpe, in his remarks yesterday during the opening ceremony noted that the first six-month report of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) for 2021 that was released in July showed that there has been an overall decline in reported incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, which was attributed to the sustained and collective efforts of the regional and international navies, regional organisations as well as national maritime security agencies. Stolpe particularly commended the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure (INSWPI), which is also called the Deep Blue Project (DBP) being implemented by the NIMASA as well as the Nigerian Navy's increased presence within the maritime domain. He assured the government of Nigeria of UNODC'S continued commitment and support in the process of ensuring that the maritime security strategy is in place and operational.

In his opening remarks, the Danish Ambassador to Nigeria, Sune Krogstrup, stated that under the Danish Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Programme, the Danish government is currently supporting programmes for longer-term institutional strengthening of maritime governance through intensified regional capabilities as well as capacities for maritime domain awareness and response. He said that the development of national maritime strategies is key to long term maritime governance and noted that cost is reduced and economic development is enhanced wherever security is guaranteed. The minister of Defence, who was represented by Director Airforce, Ministry of Defence, Mr. Utsu Peter Ashibel, stated that the maritime environment provided a critical pathway for international commerce and socio-economic interaction between many countries in the world. He further stated that the maritime domain served as a gateway for the importation of goods into Nigeria and other landlocked countries in West Africa.

He re-emphasised the commitment of Nigeria and other Gulf of Guinea member states to improve safety and security in the region; adding that the DBP and the investment in the acquisition of more patrol vessels and aircraft for the Nigerian Navy were an attestation to this commitment on the part of Nigeria. He expressed confidence that the Inter Agency Expert Consultative Dialogue Session would provide the deliberative platform for clear articulation process for an effective implementation plan for the draft NMS, identify areas of collaboration among relevant stakeholders and further enhance its implementation framework. The draft National Maritime Strategy was concluded in 2019 and is currently awaiting approval by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The UNODC remained committed to support the strengthening of strategic approaches to maritime security in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea.

Source: thisdaylive.com; 29 September 2021

EX-MILITANTS MIGRATE TO PIRACY, DEVASTATING N/DELTA COMMUNITIES

- Victor Okeke

Residents of Niger-Delta have raised the alarm over the astronomical increase in piracy, kidnapping, deadly fights among pirates and attacks on oil infrastructure in the region. LEADERSHIP Weekend gathered that while many ex-Niger Delta militants totally embraced amnesty and are doing well in different fields of endeavours, others did not and have resorted to inflicting hardship on the region to finance their expensive lifestyle, drugs and alcohol dependency. This is even as oil bunkering, kidnapping, and piracy in the Niger Delta have continued to worsen in Niger-Delta. Recall that maritime piracy emerged with the first armed insurgency movements against the federal government of Nigeria and oil companies in the Niger Delta. The federal government in August 2009, however, granted an unconditional pardon and cash payments to the militants who agreed to lay down their arms, sadly, a lot of them put down their weapons but not all due to greed.

“These sets of militants are already used to the expensive lifestyle, besides the fact that they enjoy doing what they are doing, they need serious rehabilitation to halt their way of life. Drug abuse and alcohol dependency have made them financially irresponsible. Most of them could not do anything with the money they got, and they have resorted to their old ways making life miserable for residents in Niger Delta,” said Emmanuel Igbudu who resides in the sleepy coastal town of Okpoama in Brass Local Area of Bayelsa State. Igbudu noted that the crimes in the region are multifaceted, calling on the federal government to step up efforts to tackle the menace. He continued: “There are people who go into the creeks disguised as oil pipeline vandals but end up terrorising the whole waterways. These are the robbers on the sea, the highwaymen. They steal, they kidnap and sometimes they rape victims. “It is either you have men who are strong enough to fight off another camp that wants to tax you or you pay the tax to a superior group. “Besides these, there are pirates in the creeks who go out to perpetuate all these crimes in the guise that they want to provide for their family. They have less or no formal education and would hardly secure a white-collar job; hence, they resort to the quick means of making money in the neighbourhood. “There are also the market women who bring food and foodstuffs into the criminal hideouts. It is a whole community of its own. “Now, because they are involved in the illegal petroleum pipeline vandalism, they tend to cheat others leading to a breach of contract terms or attack from an opposing faction, they cannot resort to the police for a peaceful resolution. This is why they wage wars against themselves and destroy properties and kill innocent persons in the community,” he said.

Evolution of militancy

Maritime piracy emerged with the first armed insurgency movements against the federal government of Nigeria and oil companies in the Niger Delta, following the example of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). In August 2009, President Umaru Musa Yaradua granted an unconditional pardon and cash payments to the militants who agreed to lay down their arms. They did give back their guns and many of them acquired skills that are still sustaining them till today. They

were activists who attacked offshore rigs both in protest of the oil industry's waste and pollution of the Niger Delta's rivers — compromising the livelihood of millions who fish on the waters. The men also expressed the indignance and demand of the local communities mainly in the Niger-Delta region that still receive no direct benefits or development from the crude oil obtained from their lands.

Since after the amnesty programme, the region has once again been experiencing the activities of gun-toting gangs who have made the complex network of creeks their home, waiting to pounce on ships sailing through West African waters. Whereas sea piracy is declining globally, attacks are soaring in the gulf, whose waters wash the shores of more than a dozen countries from Senegal to Angola. Of 195 attacks that occurred on the world's high seas last year, 82 were recorded here, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), including almost all crew kidnappings. In Nigeria, counter-piracy efforts are overshadowed by other conflicts like the banditry, Boko Haram terrorism, secessionist movements and the farmers-herders crisis, as well as the poverty that helps drive piracy in the first place. "Many Gulf of Guinea countries suffer vulnerabilities because of their limited capabilities," said Kamal-Deen Ali, director of the Center for Maritime Law and Security Africa. Ali added that it's even more difficult policing waters than land, adding that once criminals get on the water, they have the opportunity to go in any direction. It is worthy to remember that during the era of militancy, the groups were both fighting for supremacy among themselves and against the oil companies and the government. They were not harming the indigenous people, people only die when they become victims of circumstance perhaps during crossfires.

Residents raise the alarm over increased attack

A member of the local community in Niger Delta, Erekosima Odaremete, a human rights lawyer in Port Harcourt, Rivers State told LEADERSHIP WEEKEND that militancy started as cultism among some restive youths in the early 2000s and grew into an organised armed campaign to fight for the control of oil resources in the Niger Delta. They acquired guns and other ammunition to match the pushback by Nigerian security forces. The Niger Delta militancy ravaged the Nigerian oil sector between 2004-2009, bringing it to a near-standstill. In response, the Nigerian government initiated the amnesty programme. "I know some of them who are currently electricians, tailors, and into different kinds of businesses. They were given the amnesty payment to help start the business and a lot of them are doing well today. Most of them who gave up their weapons and embraced the amnesty programme are doing well today. My cousin was one of the beneficiaries. He built an apartment and today he is a landlord with tenants paying rents to him," said Odaremete.

He explained that for these sets of people, what motivated them to join militancy was their unemployment and all the problems that come with lack. "It was indeed poverty speaking, they were not really cut out for violence. They were not really robbing, raping, looting, or doing anything against the people intentionally. That is why Tompolo and others are still held in high esteem," he explained. According to Odaremete, "Since they are not Asari Dokubo amongst others, they cannot really claim that they are fighting for the Niger Deltans anymore. They have now resorted to vandalizing oil pipelines, taking the oil to their own refineries and selling the finished products." Many residents have expressed their worry over the situation here. "We the

people of the Niger Delta are not happy with the situation here. The worst is that since the pirates are people who know the ins and outs of the creeks, it is hard for security officials to apprehend them because they know how to manoeuvre and get away with it. “People who are not part of this area don’t know what we suffer. They always shout, “oil money.” It’s not happening in every part of the Niger Delta though but in parts close to the sea. For those of us residing at the edge of the sea; this is our story and it’s still ongoing with no end in sight,” Odaremete said. At the moment, LEADERSHIP Weekend gathered that their most sought-after item was the engine of speedboats for their nefarious activities on the sea. The Yamaha Speed Boat outboard engine sells for about N300,000 to N2,000,000 depending on the horsepower.

Odaremete said, “It’s a way to make quick money. Those who are into the illegal oil refinery need the speedboats to transport their products off the creeks. “They will accost a boat and take the engine while leaving the boat and the passengers aboard to float on the waters until a rescue boat comes from the mainland. The pirates don’t steal from the oil refiners because they are not helpless like the innocent passengers on the boat. They go for the next best victim who are mostly the travelers on the waters. “The pirates are not cultists or militants; they are armed robbers on the waterways. Sometimes, they are unfortunate to encounter Nigerian Navy patrol officers and are killed in shootouts.” Last month, these pirates attacked Peace Koikoibi and carted away all her valuables alongside that of the passengers. She told LEADERSHIP WEEKEND that she and her fellow travellers were not the actual intended targets. “There is a King in one of the communities in Okpoama Brass. His enemies were trying to assassinate him. He got the information and passed through another route with another boat,” Peace said. They mistook Peace’s boat for that of their victim. The boat driver ran and escaped into the swamps. The passengers were caught. The driver, Mr Godfrey Enwefa said that he recognised some of the pirates and that they were from the community. He ran home and informed other community people who mobilised against the pirates. They called the attackers and demanded that they release their victims unharmed. Peace and her fellow travellers were eventually released but not with their valuables.

“The most dangerous of the pirate attacks for the local people is identifying any of them. If you recognise them, they will most likely kill you. They don’t let anyone who recognises them live,” Enwefa added.

Recalled that for several years, governments in the region have cooperated on joint missions to make the gulf safer – but with mixed results. As a panacea to solve this menace, a deeper social and economic dynamics hinder progress, experts say. Each state in the region has unique and crosscutting forms of insecurity. These include cultism, piracy, land struggles, election violence, and gangs. They are also driven by issues like drug abuse, poverty, unemployment, and environmental pollution. Militants-turned-pirates are striking farther out at sea. Nigeria’s security forces are stretched thin, battling an insurgency in the country’s north, and ethnic conflicts in the Middle Belt. However, one crucial agreement, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, was signed in 2013, establishing faster information-sharing and response between member countries. Foreign navies protecting their countries’ interests also patrol the international waters outside each country’s territorial zone. And in 2019 Nigeria, was

the first to introduce legislation specifically criminalizing piracy. (Previously, pirates were tried under armed robbery laws.)

Source: [leadership.ng](#); 02 October 2021

LAPID'S VISIT TO BAHRAIN INCLUDES A TRIP TO A US NAVY BASE, OFF IRAN'S COAST

- TOI Staff

During his landmark visit to Bahrain Thursday to inaugurate the new Israeli embassy there, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid conducted a tour of the headquarters of the US Navy's Fifth Fleet in the Arab kingdom. Lapid was joined there by his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif bin Rashid Al- Zayani, and was hosted by Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of the United States Naval Forces Central Command. The Fifth Fleet has sometimes clashed with Iranian vessels in the Persian Gulf, and Lapid's visit there was seen as a likely message to Tehran. "Our three countries work together because we have similar interests in the region," Lapid said, according to Reuters. "When we speak about peace, we need to remember that peace must be protected from those who would harm it." The fleet tweeted photos from Lapid's visit, saying the Israeli, American and Bahraini officials discussed "regional maritime security cooperation."

Iran said Friday that the visit by Lapid to Bahrain left a stain on the reputation of the Gulf state's rulers that "will not be erased." "We condemn any scheme that bolsters Israel's destructive presence in the region," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement reported by the official IRNA news agency and cited by the Reuters news agency. "It is unfortunate that Bahrain's rulers ignore the Zionist regime's daily crimes against the oppressed but resilient people of Palestine," Khatibzadeh said. "This stain will not be erased from the reputation of Bahrain's rulers. The people of the region will continue to oppose the process of normalization of ties with the Zionist regime," he said. Sunni-ruled Bahrain has faced long-running unrest among its large Shiite community that it has consistently blamed on Iran. Lapid met with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at the royal palace, the first public meeting between the monarch and an Israeli official. He also met with Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the prime minister and crown prince. Last year's deal to establish ties with Bahrain was part of the US-brokered Abraham Accords, which also saw Israel announce the normalization of ties with the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Morocco.

Source: [Times of Israel](#); 01 October 2021

ADMIRAL: IRAN'S NAVY WILL RESPOND TO ANY THREAT STRONGLY, DEVASTATINGLY

- Press Trust Of India

TEHRAN - The Iranian Navy has stood firm against the enemies in the seas, the Navy commander has said, reiterating the military commanders' position that Iran will give firm response to any mischievous act. "We will respond to any threat and naval action of the enemies strongly and overwhelmingly," Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said in an interview with Tasnim published on Saturday. Talking to the Tasnim reporter in Sanandaj, capital of Kurdistan province, he said the Navy maintains security at maritime borders. "The navy is present at the sea 24 round-the-clock to restore sustainable security," he insisted. The Navy chief also said the personnel of the Iranian warships are from different ethnic groups.

"It does not matter where these people are from, because our round-the-clock efforts and strategy is that all together, we should preserve the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the best possible way and with high authority." The top military official said the friends and foes have reached the conclusion that the Iranian Armed Forces are unitedly standing against the enemies, insisting, "We will respond to any threat and action firmly, and decisively." Highlighting that the Navy personnel have been standing firm, Admiral Irani said they will keep hoisting the Iranian flag proudly in international waters. "Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has always faced sanctions, conspiracy and threats, with the powerful presence of the navy personnel at sea, and the production of the best and most up-to-date equipment by the country's youth, we have controlled the enemies' mischief," the military official remarked. Admiral Irani, elsewhere in his remarks, stated that that the people of Kurdistan province always played an important role in guarding national borders. "The locals living in border areas always protect the borders with a revolutionary spirit, properly and with authority," said Irani, an ethnic Sunni Kurd. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei named Irani as Navy chief on August 17. His appointment won the praise of the Kurdish caucus in the parliament.

In remarks on September 8, the admiral said Iran is now able to navigating all open seas. Speaking at a press conference, Irani described the mission of the 75th Navy fleet to the northern Indian Ocean and St. Petersburg as "the biggest and most historical naval mission." He was speaking of the Navy fleet that consisted of Sahand destroyers. The mission was completed with power and success by traveling about 45,000 kilometers in the oceans and facing the harsh nature of the oceans and it safely returned to the homeland, Irani explained. "Demonstrating self-confidence and capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran at global arena was important in this mission. For those who never believed in the ability of the children of Iran, they now believe in this ability," he explained at the time. On the other hand, Irani emphasized, this mission sent glimpses of hope for the friends of Iran and created this chance that they can use this naval capacity in a desirable way. The Navy commander added crossing 55 countries on three continents was aimed to send a "message of peace and friendship" to the world. "Iranians have always been preachers of peace and friendship and have not attacked any country...," the admiral remarked. The commander went on

to say that this mission took place despite harsh economic sanctions and military threats against the Islamic Republic. “The conditions imposed on us show that sanctions and threats never work against the Iranians and that we can overcome great obstacles by relying on our own strength,” he underlined. Irani highlighted that the fleet is the result of the experiences that Iran has gained since 2009. The admiral explained the missions that the Iranian Navy have carried out.

“Apart from the Indian Ocean, we went to the direction of the China Sea and attended that region with Sabalan destroyer. Then we attended the Mediterranean Sea bypassing the Suez Canal. Then we took another step and went to the Cape of Good Hope. And in 20121 we honorably passed through three oceans and participated in the parade of the Russian Navy,” he explained. The admiral added the naval mission provided security for maritime commerce both for Iran and others. “We did not establish security only for our own economic purposes. Others also took advantage of it, and we can say that we also gave security to others,” the Navy commander said. He also said that today, Iran can exercise authority in all open seas whenever an order is issued. The admiral further said localization of propellants is important for Iran. “Soon we will see the construction of the first all-Iranian propellants that help all units in the sea,” Irani underlined. When asked about the challenges facing the 75th fleet, the Navy chief said that the biggest challenge for the fleet was to prove its self-confidence. “We are the only country that meet our maritime security singlehandedly, and this group of ships continued its journey without seeking help from any country,” he pointed out. Irani underscored that Iran did not need any port along the way, even to meet technical needs. “The enemy's attention on our fleet was more to see if we were breaking the rules or not, thank God we did not break any rules and we were able to cross three important canals and eight straits safely,” the Navy chief highlighted.

On September 23, the second-ranking commander in the IRGC, Brigadier General Ali Fadavi, had said while the U.S. itself was not able to do any military adventure against Iran it is quite clear the Islamic Republic does not allow its proxies to do so. “When the United States cannot take action against Iran, we will not even allow its proxies to do so,” Fadavi said in a talk show. Fadavi made these remarks as Iran marked the Sacred Defense Week. Iran refers to defense against the invading Saddam Army in the 1980s as sacred defense.

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

MARITIME FORCES

NAVY INAUGURATES NEW NEXT-GEN AIR COMBAT TRAINING SYSTEM

- Seapower Staff

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — The Navy's Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office's (PMA-205) Tactical Combat Training System Increment II (TCTS Inc. II) and Advanced Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX)-21 teams conducted their first live-virtual-constructive (LVC) demonstration in an operational environment last month, the Naval Air Systems Command said Sept. 27. As part of the Navy's broader initiative to enhance capability, the event displayed early LVC capability for the TCTS Inc. II system and included many "firsts" in naval aviation training. The ANTX-21 fleet demonstration simultaneously connected both fleet and test F/A-18 and EA-18G aircraft, an F/A-18 simulator, an operational destroyer, a guided missile from the ship pier side, the Joint Semi-Automated Forces system, and the Next Generation Threat System all via the Navy Continuous Training Environment (NCTE). This exercise was naval aviation's first demonstration of TCTS II in an operational environment, proving to be a simultaneous, multi-system, and multi-domain integrated warfighting training capability. The demonstration results will be used to further determine how TCTS Inc. II and LVC will be implemented effectively and efficiently in naval aviation training.

"While watching ANTX-21 unfold across the globe from Navy Warfare Development Command in Norfolk, Va., I had an opportunity to see and hear the Navy's excited reaction to TCTS Inc. II at the operation's center," said PMA-205 program manager, Capt. Lisa Sullivan. "On the surface side, ships have been using a training LVC mode for a while, networking back and forth to exercise coordinators running complex scenarios. Now aviation is part of the mix through validation of TCTS Inc. II as the host system connecting live aircraft into a LVC environment." The early LVC capability on the TCTS Inc. II system displayed during the event demonstrated successful integration of the system with the training environment, including simulated threats controlled by JSAT over NCTE, live aircraft air-to-air engagements, and integration with an F/A-18 simulator at the manned flight simulator facility.

Chuck Kaylor, the PMA-205 TCTS Inc. II team lead, said the event included several firsts for naval aviation training. It was the first flight of TCTS Inc. II pod on an operational fleet aircraft, the first time TCTS Inc. II was used to create a LVC surface-to-air engagement, the first virtual F/A-18 engaged with a simulated/constructive aircraft, and the first pier side operational ship receiving and engaging with TCTS Inc. II information.

“TCTS Inc. II is a critical enabler of Navy LVC, helping to close competition gaps in both operational security and training capabilities for the high-end fight, and this event comes with TCTS II already in production and approximately one year prior to initial operational capability” said Kaylor. The program office in coordination with U.S. Fleet Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and U.S. Naval Forces Europe conducted this exercise, which was designed to refine how the U.S. Navy synchronizes maritime operations across multiple fleets, in support of the joint force. The training is based on a progression of scenarios that will assess and refine modern warfare concepts, including distributed maritime operations, expeditionary advanced base operations, and littoral operations in a contested environment. This is the first iteration of what will become a triennial exercise with plans for future iterations to include partners and allies from around the world.

Source: seapowermagazine.com; 29 September 2021

FUTURE JAPANESE AIRCRAFT CARRIER EXPECTED IN COLOMBO AS A WARSHIP

Japanese warship JS Kaga, expected to be converted to an aircraft carrier in the future, will arrive at the Colombo harbour today. The Japanese embassy said that the Indo-Pacific Deployment 2021 (IPD21) unit of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), comprised “JS KAGA (DDH-184)” and “JS MURASAME (DD-101)”, is scheduled to make a goodwill visit to the Colombo Port from 2nd to 4th October, 2021. “Prior to the arrival in Sri Lanka, the JMSDF vessels made several goodwill visits to countries in the Pacific region and participated in bilateral and multilateral naval exercises,” the embassy spokesperson said, adding the current visit would contribute to further strengthening the friendly relationship between Sri Lanka and Japan. Since 2015, over 30 JMSDF vessels have visited Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka and Japan on Oct 1, 2015 entered into a Comprehensive Partnership Agreement.

Source: island.lk; 02 October 2021

HMS RICHMOND DOCKS IN VIETNAM AMID SOUTH CHINA SEA TENSIONS

HANOI, Oct 1 (dpa): British Royal Navy ship HMS Richmond docked in central Vietnam on Friday as part of a four-day visit that aims to display Britain's commitment to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific, the British embassy in Hanoi said in a statement on Friday. On Friday morning, the HMS Richmond docked at Cam Ranh international port, marking the third time a British Royal Navy ship has docked in Vietnam and the beginning of a visit focusing on "bilateral cooperation activities."

"HMS Richmond's visit reaffirms the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt and our commitment towards expanding defence relationships with key partners in the region," British Ambassador to Vietnam Gareth Ward said in a statement.

The move comes mere weeks after the announcement of a new alliance between Britain, the United States and Australia, known as AUKUS, which will see Canberra acquire nuclear-powered submarines from the US as part of efforts to counter China's influence in the South China Sea.

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea as its territory and has built artificial islands with military-capable facilities over reefs and outcrops in the area, which are also claimed in part by Vietnam. In its defence, Beijing says it has a historical claim to sovereignty over vast swathes of the resource-rich waterway, yet both Vietnam and the US say these claims have no basis in international law. The US has also sent warships to Vietnam on two occasions since the end of the Vietnam War and is increasing its freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea.

Source: [The Star](#); 01 October 2021

THE NAVY'S NEW REFUELING DRONE JUST PROVIDED GAS TO A F-35

- Kyle Mizokami

The Navy's new aerial refueling drone transferred fuel to a F-35C Joint Strike Fighter for the first time. The successful test is the latest step in giving carrier-based fighters longer legs than ever before, allowing them to fly and fight while keeping the aircraft carrier safely out of range of enemy weapons.

The MQ-25A concept was also fawned over by Chinese military officers in an analysis of the system, indicating Beijing's navy could end up with a refueling tanker of its own.

The test took place on Monday, September 13, near the MidAmerica St. Louis Airport in Mascoutah, Illinois. An operational MQ-25 prototype, named T-1, met up with a Navy F-35C from Air Test Wing and Evaluation Squadron Two Three (VX-23). The F-35C, according to the Navy's Air Systems Command, "approached T1, performed formation evaluations, wake surveys, drogue tracking and plugged with the MQ-25 test asset at 225 knots calibrated airspeed (KCAS) and altitude of 10,000 feet. From the ground control station, an air vehicle operator then initiated the fuel transfer from T1's aerial refueling store to the F-35C." The U.S. Navy first flew a fixed-wing drone from an aircraft carrier in 2013. The tests, involving the Northrop Grumman X-47B and the aircraft carrier USS Bush, validated the carrier-based drone concept. The Navy then took several years to debate how to deploy a drone across the carrier fleet. One school of thought held that the service should deploy stealthy, long-range strike drones to make up for the relatively short ranges of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and F-35C Joint Strike Fighter. Each carrier might embark up to a dozen drones with a range of 1,000 miles or more, allowing carriers to strike targets but remain safely out of range of most anti-ship weapons.

Another, more controversial school of thought was the Navy should instead deploy unarmed drone tankers. Rather than field one squadron of drones that could do one mission—long-range strike—drone tankers could bless any carrier-based airplane, from F/A-18E/F strike fighters to E-2D Advanced Hawkeye earlier warning aircraft—with extended range and greater flight time. This is particularly useful for the carrier-based F-35C, which has a combat radius of 670 nautical miles but which cannot equip wing-mounted external fuel tanks without compromising its stealthy design. The U.S. Navy plans to buy 76 MQ-25A Stingray drones for a total of \$1.3 billion, and the drone is scheduled to reach initial operating capability by 2025. The Navy is also considering other missions for the drone, missions that could include intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and even strike missions. Meanwhile, a group of People's Liberation Army officers recently studied the MQ-25A and concluded it would give the U.S. Navy a "qualitative leap". The Chinese military officers believe the drones will enhance the survivability of American carriers, making them more "resilient". The thread above suggests such a glowing endorsement could indicate that China will eventually build its own MQ-25A to support its own growing fleet of aircraft carriers.

Source: [Popular Mechanics](#); 20 September 2021

KENYA SETS UP NAVY BASE NEAR DISPUTED INDIAN OCEAN WATERS

President Uhuru Kenyatta has commissioned a new Navy Manda Bay Base in the coastal region of Lamu, where Kenya recently opened a new port. The area is prone to terrorist attacks instigated by the Somalia-based al-Shabaab group. The naval enhancement comes days before The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is set to rule on a longstanding maritime dispute between Kenya and Somalia. Its decision is expected on October 12. "The Kenya Navy Base Manda Bay is of utmost significance in enhancing counterterrorism efforts and maritime security, besides protecting the country's port infrastructure. In addition, this base boosts security in the region and guards vital trade routes that are the lifeblood of international commerce," said President Kenyatta. The base is strategically located in the Lamu archipelago, the epicenter of the \$24 billion Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor project. Kenya has also touted Lamu as a hotspot for exploiting the blue economy, and it is collaborating with the World Bank in a \$100 million socio-economic development project designed to support a sustainable marine fisheries sector and help diversify the income of rural coastal communities. The fishing community in Lamu has warned that the dispute with Somalia will significantly impact local livelihoods if the ICJ rules in favor of Mogadishu and Nairobi is forced to cede over 30,000 square nm of territory in the Indian Ocean.

Currently, the nation's blue economy supports an estimated two million people directly and indirectly, and Kenya reckons it has the potential to contribute three times its present share of the gross domestic product if fully exploited. "Given the growing investments in this part of our country and the promise of the maritime domain, Manda is an invaluable listening and watching tower for Kenya and Kenyans," said President Kenyatta.

Source: maritime-executive.com; 29 September 2021

MILLION DOLLAR DRUG BUST: \$2.59M OF CANNABIS DESTINED TO 'FUND TERRORISM' SEIZED BY ROYAL NZ NAVY

For the second time in days, the Royal New Zealand Navy has seized millions of dollars' worth of drugs from a vessel in the Indian Ocean authorities say would have been sold to "fund terrorism".

On Monday, a Kiwi-led task force confiscated 3600 kilograms of hash (cannabis concentrate), valued at \$2.59 million from a vessel outside the Arabian Gulf as part of a counter-narcotics operation. The Royal NZ Navy task force was working as part of an international Combined Maritime Forces operation on the French Marine Nationale frigate FS Languedoc. The intercept of a vessel with the \$2.95m of hash on Monday, follows frigate FS Languedoc's intercept and search of another vessel seven days earlier.

On that occasion, the frigate seized more than 1525kg of hash and 166kg of methamphetamine with a combined value of more than \$7.4m. Royal New Zealand Navy Captain Brendon Clark said that with the easing of the monsoon season, the Kiwi-led Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) was seeing an increase in narcotics trafficking through global shipping lanes. "For the second time in a week, the French frigate Languedoc has demonstrated her expertise and professionalism in seizing a large volume of narcotics that would have otherwise been destined for market with the funds from the sale being used to fund terrorism and criminal activity," he said. "The continued commitment and contribution of a French Marine Nationale Frigate to CTF 150 ensures mission success." Criminal and terrorist organisations use the proceeds of sales of narcotics to obtain weapons, ammunitions and equipment and for training for criminal and terrorist activities.

CTF 150 is one of three task forces of the CMF. Its mission is to disrupt criminal and terrorist organisations and their illicit activities, including the movement of people, weapons, narcotics and charcoal. CTF 150 conducts maritime security operations outside the Arabian Gulf to ensure that legitimate commercial shipping can occur freely. The Combined Maritime Forces is a multinational maritime partnership of 34 nations. It exists to uphold international rules-based order by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas and promoting security, stability, and prosperity across approximately 8.3 million square kilometres of international waters encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes. The New Zealand-led multinational team took over command of CTF 150 from Canada earlier this year. The NZDF will command and staff the CTF 150 until early 2022.

Source: nzherald.co.nz; 01 October 2021

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

NEW REPORT ON ILLEGAL FISHING RELEASED

- John Liang

The American Security Project this past week issued a new report on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. According to the report, “Bad Catch: Examining Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing,” IUU fishing threatens global maritime security while exacerbating food insecurity, marine degradation, organized crime, and poverty. Increased competition over dwindling marine resources has led to the evasion of fisheries authorities and the flourishing of corruption and transnational organized crime. The “Bad Catch” report explores the connections between IUU fishing and national security policy. The USA and allies need a strengthened approach to combat IUU fishing; otherwise, the tensions amongst fishing nations could threaten geopolitical stability, according to the report’s authors.

David Haines, co-author of “Bad Catch,” said:

“Without robust engagement from the U.S. government, IUU fishing will continue to have a detrimental and costly impact on U.S. national security while continue to deteriorate our oceans and marine ecosystems.”

The report was the focus of a September 29th, 2021 event that featured Liberian Defense Minister Daniel Ziankahn, retired US Navy Admiral William Fallon, US Coast Guard Rear Admiral Scott Clendenin, Sea Shepherd Captain Alex Cornelissen and others.

Source: deeperblue.com; 02 October 2021

INDIA TO SHARE WHITE SHIPPING INFORMATION WITH GULF

- Krishnan Nayar

Merchant shipping through the Gulf is expected to greatly benefit from a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed today to facilitate information exchange between the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) near New Delhi and the Maritime Security Center (MSC) in Muscat. The Indian government said in a press release today that the MoU would "contribute to enhanced maritime safety and security in the region." The exchange would cover white shipping information. In shipping terminology, white shipping information is about the exchange of advance information on the identity and movement of commercial, non-military merchant ships. India set up the IFC-IOR three years ago as part a high-technology approach to detect and deter maritime security threats in the Indian Ocean region, including the Gulf. Today's MoU represents a natural progression in meeting this objective. The MSC was commissioned in 2013. Among its objectives are fighting organized crime at sea, including illegal trading, piracy, mitigating sea environment pollution and protecting fisheries.

Today's MoU was signed between Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of India's Naval Staff, and Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser bin Mohsen Al-Rahbi, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman. The signing ceremony took place at the MSC during a visit by Admiral Singh.

Source: [Emirates News Agency](#); 29 September 2021

BANGLADESH RESPONDS TO INDIA'S OBJECTION OVER MARITIME BOUNDARY

India's objection to Bangladesh's amended submission on the maritime boundary to the United Nations is not in line with the international law, the Bangladesh government says. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) will now make a decision considering the positions of both countries.

Based on the verdict by an international court, Bangladesh submitted an amended maritime boundary to the CLCS on Oct 27, 2020, said Khurshed Alam, secretary of the maritime affairs unit in the foreign ministry. He said, "India has raised an objection against our submission asking the CLCS not to consider our claim. We said it's neither correct nor even legal," reports bdnews24.com. The arbitration to settle the dispute on the maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal between the two neighbouring countries started back in 1974. As a series of meetings over a long period of time failed to yield an agreement, Bangladesh moved to the international court on Oct 8, 2009. The issue was shifted to the International Court of Justice in the Hague in May 2011. In 2012, Bangladesh was awarded areas of continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles of the territorial sea baselines by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea following a conflict with Myanmar. Later on Jul 7, 2014, the International Court of Justice settled the delimitations of the maritime boundary of 25,500 square kilometres of the disputed area between Bangladesh, India and Myanmar and awarded 19,000 square kilometres of it to Bangladesh.

Based on that verdict, Bangladesh made an amended submission to the CLCS and India wrote to the UN secretary-general raising an objection against the amended submission on Apr 16. Bangladesh replied on Sept 13 through a letter, which was published on the CLCS website. India claims that Bangladesh has made a seaward shift of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and ‘consequently encroaches’ into the Indian EEZ recognised by the arbitration tribunal. “In this regard, Bangladesh has failed to highlight the Grey area in their amended submission,” India said. According to the rules, in case of a dispute in the delimitation of the continental shelf or maritime dispute, submissions are subject to Annex 1 of the commission procedure, India wrote in its letter. Therefore, the commission should not ‘consider and qualify’ the submission made by Bangladesh, India said. “We have no conflict with India regarding the continental shelf. The court has settled it and we have accepted, as they have. Now, India or any other country cannot request the CLCS to ignore our submission. We have raised this point,” Secretary Khurshed Alam said.

WHAT IS CONTINENTAL SHELF

A continental shelf is a portion of a continent that is submerged under an area of relatively shallow water known as a shelf sea. Much of these shelves were exposed by drops in sea level during glacial periods. The shelf surrounding an island is known as an insular shelf. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, 200 nautical miles from the end tip of the land of a country is considered the continental shelf. At least 200 miles of it is considered the exclusive economic zone which falls under the jurisdiction of that country and it gets the right to use the minerals and maritime resources found there. The rest of the continental shelf can be used by the opposite or adjacent country for fishing, but minerals are the assets of the country by the bay. According to the arbitration tribunal, Bangladesh received ownership of 350 nautical miles of the continental shelf. The government has fixed the triangular maritime boundary with Putni Island as the end tip of land for Bangladesh.

Source: [The Financial Express](#); 24 September 2021

SMALL FRY: PERU'S FISHERMEN BATTLE CHINA'S OVERSEAS FLEET

- Joshua Goodman

ABOARD THE OCEAN WARRIOR in the eastern Pacific Ocean (AP) - José López proudly remembers his first catch: he was 13 and a local skipper, pitying his ragamuffin look, hired him as an extra hand. When he returned home, his pockets stuffed with a day's wages, his mother protested. "She thought I had stolen the money," López recalls between boisterous greetings to younger comrades who know him simply as "Pépe." "I had to take her to the fisherman so she would believe me." Since then, fishing has been a way of life for López and dozens of other artisanal fishermen in Pucusana, a port carved from the barren, desert-like hills south of Peru's capital. For years the fleet thrived, earning López enough to buy a few boats and send his kids to college.

But a decade ago the tuna that he once effortlessly fished started to vanish. So, the fishermen turned their brightly colored boats bearing the names of Roman Catholic icons to squid. Now they face a new threat: China's distant water fishing fleet. The number of Chinese-flagged vessels lurking just outside Peru's waters has surged from 54 active vessels in 2009 to 557 in 2020, according to the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, or SPRFMO, an inter-governmental group charged with ensuring the sustainable fishing of squid. Meanwhile, the size of the Chinese catch has grown from 70,000 tons in 2009 to 358,000.

This story is a joint project between The Associated Press and Spanish-language broadcaster Univision.

The Chinese fishing takes place on the high seas - beyond the reach of any nation's jurisdiction - and at night when lights so powerful they can be seen from space are used to attract swarms of the fast-flying squid. "It really is like the Wild West out there," said Captain Peter Hammarstedt, director of campaigns for Sea Shepherd, an ocean conservation group. "Nobody is responsible for enforcement." The Associated Press with Spanish-language broadcaster Univision accompanied Sea Shepherd this summer on an 18-day voyage aboard one of its vessels to observe up close the Chinese fleet on the high seas off the west coast of South America. The patrol was prompted by an outcry last summer when hundreds of Chinese vessels were discovered fishing near the Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO world heritage site. Launched in the 1980s as a response to depleting fish stocks at home and the need to feed its fast-growing population, China's distant water fishing fleet has evolved into a thriving industry and a part of the country's geopolitical push to secure access to the world's dwindling natural resources.

"China doesn't do anything that Europe has not done exactly the same way," said Daniel Pauly, a prominent marine biologist at the University of British Columbia. "The difference is that everything China does is big, so you see it." The vast majority of the 30 vessels observed by the AP have a history of labor abuse accusations, past convictions for illegal fishing or showed signs of possibly violating maritime law. Collectively, these issues underscore how the open ocean around the Americas - where the U.S. has long dominated, and China is now jockeying for influence - have become a magnet for the seafood industry's worst offenders. One vessel, the Fu Yuan Yu 7880, is operated by an affiliate of a Nasdaq-traded company, Pingtan Marine Enterprise, whose Chinese executives had their U.S. visas cancelled for alleged links to human trafficking. The company has faced also accusations of illegal fishing and forced labor around the world. Pingtan declined comment. The Humboldt squid - named for the nutrient-rich current found off the southwest coast of South America - is one of the most abundant marine species. Some scientists believe it may even be thriving as the oceans warm and its predators, sharks and tuna, are fished out of existence.

But experts point to past disappearance of squid stocks elsewhere as cause for concern even if it's unknown how many Humboldt squid remain. "If you have a vast resource and it's easy to take, then it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that this is limitless," said William Gilly, a Stanford University marine biologist who has spent decades studying squid. Last year, China imposed stricter penalties on companies caught breaking the rules. They also ordered off-season moratoriums on squid fishing in the high seas. Seafood companies in the U.S. have started to take note of the risks posed

by China's expansion and are seeking to leverage their market power to bring more transparency to the sourcing of squid. China is responsible for around half of the \$314 million in squid that the U.S. imported in 2019, the bulk served up as fried calamari in restaurants. One alternative is to deploy technology, like publicly available tracking data, to allow consumers to eventually identify the very vessel that caught the fish. However, boosting transparency is a challenge the industry has grappled with for decades. To address concerns, several South American governments have proposed a number of conservation measures including banning transshipments at sea and boosting the number of observers on ships to document catch sizes and violations.

But China has opposed each proposal.

"China doesn't really seem interested in expanding protection," said Tabitha Mallory, a China scholar at the University of Washington who specializes in the country's fishing policies. "They follow the letter of the law but not the spirit." In the absence of stricter controls, López and his cohorts have to venture farther from home and spend as much as a week at sea to haul in what they used to catch in a single day. That's if they return at all: in June three fishermen set out never to be seen again. Adding to the fishermen's frustrations is Peru's logistical support for the Chinese fleet - their direct competitors. Since 2019, 212 Chinese fishing vessels have entered Peruvian ports for repairs, crew changes and to restock supplies, according to Peru's government. "There's no maritime authority that defends us," complains López, who says he's lost count of how many times he's notified authorities of Chinese vessels fishing inside Peru's waters. "I don't know what power the foreigner has that they come to my home and do what they want."

Source: [wnyt.com](https://www.wnyt.com); 24 September 2021

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

NEW DRONE FOOTAGE REVEALS THE VIOLENT INTERIOR OF HURRICANE SAM

- Ameya Paleja

Researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have successfully managed to send a drone where no drone has ever gone before. The drone has now beamed back footage of what it is to be inside a hurricane. According to AccuWeather, Sam is a Category 4 Hurricane and is 380 miles (612 km) away from Bermuda at the time of writing. With wind speeds inching to the 150 mph (241 kph) mark, this is the strongest storm currently on the planet. With a mandate to conserve America's coastal and marine resources, NOAA needs to predict the changing environment and therefore teamed up with Saildrone to study hurricanes.

Alameda, a California-based Saildrone, offers autonomous uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs) that can aid in a wide spectrum of operations ranging from mapping to weather forecasting, carbon cycling, global fishing, and climate change. Propelled by the wind, these USVs are equipped with solar-powered meteorological and oceanographic sensors for data collection missions. To improve the understanding of hurricanes, NOAA has deployed five USVs in the Atlantic Ocean which are collected data round the clock. SD 1045 is one such USV that is also equipped with a specially designed 'hurricane' wing that helps it operate in extreme wind conditions. So as Hurricane Sam turned away from the U.S. East Coast, the researchers directed the drone into its midst. Battling 50-foot (15 m) high waves the drone caught the footage of the inside of the Hurricane and beamed it back to the NOAA team.

Richard Jenkins, founder and CEO of drone company said, "Saildrone is going where no research vessel has ever ventured, sailing right into the eye of the hurricane, gathering data that will transform our understanding of these powerful storms." "New data from saildrones and other uncrewed systems that NOAA is using will help us better predict the forces that drive hurricanes and be able to warn communities earlier," said Greg Foltz, a scientist at NOAA. "Using data collected by saildrones, we expect to improve forecast models that predict rapid intensification of hurricanes."

Source: interestingengineering.com; 01 October 2021

VIEWPOINT: OFFSHORE WIND WON'T FISH

- Rep. Sherman H. Hutchins

There is no compatible mixing of wind turbines and fishing!

The endangered species of the Maine fishing family is already dancing around the newly announced National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) restrictions to protect the right whales from gear entanglement. Add several 10,000-ton floating wind turbines, and even more whale restrictions on the NOAA docket (98 percent gear reduction in 10 years), and you have a severely impacted Maine fishing industry. Special purple markings on their end lines prove Maine lobster fishermen are not entangling whales. This current regulation also includes a 1,700-pound breakaway feature that releases the gear in the event of a whale encounter. According to NOAA data, the Maine lobster fishery has never killed or seriously injured a right whale, and there have been no right whale Maine lobster gear entanglements in 17 years. The recent addition by the Biden administration of additional restrictions, without evidence that Maine fisheries are contributing to the problem, defies science, logic and common sense. Maine lobstermen have been leaders in conservation efforts for decades.

The ever-increasing restrictions on where Mainers can fish is the problem. From east to west, the coast of Maine is already divided into seven lobster fishing zones that are considered under maximum pressure. Lobster fishermen are required to stay in their own zones. They can fish up to 49 percent of their traps outside their declared zones, but must get special permission and appropriate tags from the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Most decline to do so, because it would intrude on other people's traditional fishing areas. Imagine, what happens when these narrow corridors are further decimated by wind farms? What happens when Zone B shrinks to accommodate a floating array of wind turbines? There is no place for the Zone B fishermen to go, and no room in the other zones to double up. The fishermen (and our food supply) will be squeezed once again. Although there is a 3-mile from shore moratorium on placement of wind turbines in state waters, some cables can run up 25 to 30 miles to get to the three-mile line. That is a lot of cable, with a substantial potential impact on Maine fishermen.

I fear NOAA is more a friend to the Green New Deal than to our fishermen, or even our whales. If NOAA determines the lobstering effort must be reduced, then what about the impact of wind turbines, anchor chains, electric cables, supply boats and cranes, etc., that will accompany the new industry? Won't all that traffic and construction add to the whale "dangers"? If NOAA has concerns, it is not telling us. In 2019, at a fishermen's rally in Stonington with hundreds present, Governor Mills, Sen. Collins, Rep. Pingree and others were reassuring all those present how they, the fishing families of Maine, would be protected in their ancestral vocation. Were these promises hollow? Talk is cheap, and these wind turbines eat money for little return in actual power. In Europe, the North Sea turbines are aging, with increasing maintenance costs for these behemoth structures. This in turn consumes taxpayer money. If we make a similar decision to go ahead with these expensive engineering experiments, aren't we just creating costs to consumers down the road?

Remember Texas last winter? Wind turbines were immobilized by a cold snap. In Maine, weather typically makes ice offshore for months each year. When these concrete and fiberglass structures fail (and they will), clean-up will be next to impossible. Of course, we can collect and bury the fiberglass, and then leave massive areas of tangled concrete and steel on the ocean floor. Future fishing in those areas

will be impossible, not to mention the exposed re-rod presenting yet another danger to sea life, including the right whale! I believe conservation and innovation have their place. Why would we endanger a proven fishing industry, supporting thousands of families and supplying fish to much of the country, for a technology that is proven to be costly and inefficient?

Republican Rep. Sherman H. Hutchins of Penobscot represents House District 131 (Dedham, Orland, Penobscot, Prospect, Stockton Springs and Verona Island) in the Maine Legislature.

Source: mdislander.com; 29 September 2021

SMART BUOYS OFFER HOPE FOR REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DAMAGE CAUSED BY LOST FISHING GEAR

- Laine Welch

Lost fishing gear -- be it nets, lines or pots -- continues “ghost fishing” forever, causing a slow death for countless marine creatures and financial losses to fishermen.

Now new “smart buoys” can track and monitor all types of deployed gear and report its location directly to a cellphone or website. Blue Ocean Gear of California created and builds buoys that also can track ocean temperatures, depth, movement, even how much has been caught. The small, 3-pound buoys are just 7 inches in diameter, don’t require special training to use and are tough enough to handle the harshest ocean conditions. “All the information is collected in a database,” said Kortney Opshaug, company founder and CEO. “We have both a mobile app that you can access from your phone or a web interface that allows you to see more of the data, charts and things like that. Most of the buoys have satellite transmission, but some also have radio transmission and we’re working more and more with that. They’re slightly more cost effective, and we can create networks out on the water that are talking to one another.”

Opshaug and her Silicon Valley team of engineers and product developers were motivated primarily by the impacts of lost gear on the marine environment and the costs to fishermen. “As we explored the space, it became very clear that lost fishing gear was one of the most devastating issues that has both environmental impacts as well as financial impacts on the industry,” she said. “There’s about 640,000 metric tons of gear lost every year and it continues to fish. It becomes devastating for the marine ecosystems, but it’s also unlimited competition for the fishermen from their own gear that they’ve lost. Plus, they have to pay to replace that gear. So we developed our smart buoys to be able to track gear out on the water. We thought if you could track it, you’re not as likely to lose it. “There may be a crab pot at the bottom of the ocean and a buoy at the surface, but when the tides and currents are strong, the buoy can get pulled underwater. Fishermen can’t find it and they waste a lot of time and fuel. But our device tracks the gear from the surface,” added Peter Macy, chief business officer. The smart buoys, which first hit the water in 2015, were tested by two vessels during

the 2020-21 golden king crab season in the Aleutian Islands to help refine the software and communications settings. The automated system identified several pieces of errant gear, including a line that had severed. It allowed the recovery in real time of nearly 100 pounds of floats and lines that would otherwise have been lost.

“Real time alerts are the difference between an eight-day trip and a 14-day trip,” said one of the skippers in a case study testimonial on the Blue Ocean Gear website, adding that “the time saved per string of gear was about seven hours.” “The main goal is to help fishermen fish more, and fish more sustainably,” said Macy. The smart buoys also are being used in Alaska’s halibut fishery, and a first order has come from a Southeast kelp farm, Macy said, crediting assists from the Alaska Ocean Cluster. The buoys also are in use on the East Coast, Canada, the Caribbean and the South Pacific.

Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#); 28 September 2021

TATA STEEL BECOMES FIRST STEELMAKER TO SIGN SEA CARGO CHARTER

- Rhys Berry

Tata Steel has become the 24th signatory - and the first steelmaker - of the Sea Cargo Charter (SCC). Launched in October 2020, the SCC establishes a common, global baseline to quantitatively assess and disclose whether ship chartering activities are in line with climate goals set by UN maritime agency, the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

‘As a leader in the steel industry, which continuously sets benchmark in sustainable operations, it is imperative that we look at reducing emissions with similar determination,’ said Peeyush Gupta, Vice President of Supply Chain for Tata Steel. ‘This is a decisive step in the direction to measure correctly and mitigate the impact on climate efficiently and innovatively.’ As part of Tata Steel’s efforts to align with the Charter’s ambitions, the company announced a partnership with Danish technology company Optimum Voyage in September to use big-data to help lower emissions from ships delivering raw material to its European operations. As previously reported, last month, Tata Steel signed a memorandum of understanding with Mitsui O.S.K. Lines to develop and deploy an environment friendly bulk carrier which will incorporate wind power and other emission-reduction technologies.

Source: [bunkerspot.com](#); 28 September 2021

GEOPOLITICS

TAIWAN-INDIA RELATIONS: INDIA COMMITTED TO FREE ASIA: ENVOY

- Lin Chia-nan / Staff reporter

India is committed to maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, while working with like-minded partners to deal with common challenges, including threats to maritime security, India Taipei Association Director-General Gourangalal Das said. India is a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with Australia, Japan and the US. On Sept. 24, US President Joe Biden hosted the first-ever in-person Quad leaders' summit at the White House, which included Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Das discussed India's views and contributions to the Indo-Pacific region's security in an interview with the Taipei Times and its sister paper, the Chinese-language Liberty Times. "The term Indo-Pacific underlines the inherent connectivity and indivisibility of the interests of the littoral states of the two oceans, Indian and the Pacific. The popularity of the idea reflects not only contemporary geopolitics, but also the reality of globalization," he said. "Unless we conceptualize them together, we will not be able to respond to, and make the best of, the evolving trends in this part of the world," he added.

"Indo-Pacific is our homeland. Whether to concentrate on our east or west, whether to focus on our immediate or extended neighborhood is a false choice," Das said. "Today, East Asia and the Pacific are the most dynamic arena of India's global engagement as a result of three decades of intensive economic cooperation, giving this region the highest heft and priority for our well-being," he said. "The Indo-Pacific being our home and source of our economic vitality, India has a deep and legitimate interest in maintaining its free, open and inclusive character, in preserving peace, security and prosperity, and in promoting respect for international law in the Indo-Pacific," he said. "We have pursued bilateral and minilateral cooperation with like-minded partners to deal with common challenges — ranging from natural disasters to piracy and threats to maritime security," he added.

A minilateral initiative would involve just three to four countries, he said. "India is also working to develop a positive agenda to enhance human-centric security in the Indo-Pacific, whether to foster connectivity, to harness our oceans, to fight pandemic[s] or to bring resilience to our supply chains," he said. Taiwanese officials have expressed hope that Taiwan could be involved in the Quad mechanism. While that has not yet happened, the importance of peace and security in the Taiwan Strait was one of the issues discussed in a virtual meeting among Quad countries on Aug. 12.

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

WHAT AUKUS MEANS FOR THE QUAD IN THE INDO-PACIFIC: FOUR TOP DIPLOMATS WEIGH IN

- Ranjit Bhushan

When on September 15, the US, UK, and Australia announced their trilateral security pact, dubbed AUKUS, for the Indo-Pacific region, it sent shock waves through the global diplomatic community. In what appeared like a new – and sudden – alignment of powers, the significance of this fresh constellation was not lost on the Quad – an alliance of the US, India, Australia and Japan, whose first in-person summit was held a day after the Aukus announcement.

As part of the pact, Australia would scrap a multibillion-dollar deal it had signed with French company Naval Group in 2016 to build a fleet of conventional submarines. Australia said it would instead build at least eight nuclear-powered submarines with American and British technology. Opinion in India remains divided on the impact of this new alignment. Some experts believe that Quad may lose its importance as a strategic counter to China. Others say that it has been strengthened with new aims and objectives included as part of its agenda announced last week.

Despite the feel-good factor, critics allege that the strategic imperative has been taken out of Quad's ambit because of Washington's realistic assessment that India and Japan do not have what it takes to resist China, when it comes to the crunch. The Aukus, therefore, is the new chosen instrument to send a strong message to China. Some experts also claim that Americans are unwilling to trust India with technology – its consistent refusal to lease or sell the US Navy hull classification for nuclear submarines to New Delhi, while supplying it to Australia as part of this new alliance, is a case in point.

Moneycontrol talked to four top diplomats to crystal gaze into the future of Indo-Pacific alliances, which have great bearing on India.

Navdeep Suri, India's former High Commissioner to Australia, and envoy to Egypt and UAE

There is some speculation that Aukus has downgraded Quad. Do you agree?

Not at all. Both are complementary to each other. Aukus is the hard military alliance while Quad looks at many issues, including climate change and cooperation between the various countries in the alliance. Aukus is a close military alliance between formal alliance partners. Security is not a zero-sum game. It shows that India is engaged militarily but there is also convergence on other issues.

Should the Americans feel reticent about sharing technology with India?

Every country is careful about sharing technology--and nuclear technology comes right at the top of that list. It is unreasonable to even ask to share technology and India has traditionally enjoyed strategic independence in that area. So, we can buy S-400 missiles from Russia and Rafales from France; it is our independence. There is some

speculation that the US could ask for Indian assistance for sharing military bases from its mainland. Until now, it has been a strict no-no. It depends on what both countries decide. India has an agreement to facilitate mutual logistical support during combined training, exercises and disaster relief operations. The agreement is part of the larger security cooperation including maritime, counterterrorism, defence trade and efforts for the speedy conclusion of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. So, it all depends upon how we wish to work with the US. Our relations are indeed very close.

Rajiv Bhatia, Former Ambassador, Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies Programme, Gateway House

Has the Quad been downgraded in comparison with Aukus?

My study and research show that the Quad has not been downgraded; it's just that its agenda has been expanded. Aukus will focus on strategic cooperation, defence and security issues while Quad will keep its focus on the economy, technology, climate and energy security, among other issues. A sober evaluation suggests that Aukus will have both positive and negative implications for the Quad. Expansion of the Quad agenda is on the cards, and will include new areas such as infrastructure and connectivity, education, cyber security and maritime security. But the Quad also has the necessary and backbreaking work of institutionalising itself to do, and the fulfilling of past commitments. With the China challenge now recognised as being both multi-faceted and long-term, the Quad needs to devise a matching strategy.

Can a double alliance like Quad and Aukus manage to neutralise China? Is the getting together of three Anglophone countries a more serious attempt to deal with the belligerent rise of China?

Yes, we can say that. Some evidence of a more muscular resistance to China is evident. At the same time, we must remember that Biden is not ruling out a dialogue with China.

And what about China? How will it handle this 'clique' of countries, as it puts it?

It all depends on how China decides to play its cards. Does it want a war? On available evidence, it does not want a war. It wants to achieve its aims of claiming Taiwan and needling India without fighting a war. But I can say that it will certainly find it more difficult to deal with these new groupings. I would say that India is better placed with the Quad agenda being expanded.

Deepak Vohra, Former Indian Ambassador

What do you say to the Quad vs Aukus debate?

Aukus is a supplement to Quad. While Quad is committed to development, Aukus is the defence end of the alliance. If China had behaved itself in the South China sea, things would not have reached this stage. What the Americans are giving to Australia are at least eight nuclear-powered submarines, which have the capacity to stay underground for several years at a stretch. What the French were offering instead were conventional, diesel-powered submarines. The nuclear submarines have the capacity to target or keep an eye on China's eastern seaboard, which is its industrial hub. So, China is naturally worried.

What do you say to those who allege that Quad, more specifically India and Japan, have been downgraded with the arrival of the Aukus?

These experts don't know what they are saying. As I said, Aukus supplements the Quad. They are two different alliances, geared towards the same aim. The Quad and the Aukus are not groupings of a similar nature. The Quad is a plurilateral grouping of countries with a shared vision of their attributes and values and the four members have a shared vision of the Indo-Pacific as a free, open, transparent and inclusive region. The Quad has also adopted a positive and proactive agenda with an array of initiatives at the global level to address contemporary issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic, supply of vaccines to Indo-Pacific nations, new and emerging technologies, climate change, infrastructure, maritime security, education, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

G Parthasarathy, veteran diplomat, Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Australia and Myanmar

Has the Quad been downgraded by the AUKUS?

Absolute nonsense. That is the British viewpoint. The Brits have ruined the deal for the French and Paris is furious. It is complaining to everyone who wishes to hear. If you see the Quad wording, nothing has changed on the agenda, it remains as it was. It was never a defence alliance to begin with.

Can there be two parallel alliances running, with the same agenda, in the same region with similar goals?

Yes, they can. Where is the problem there? The Aukus is the sign of typical British behaviour. They have cut out the French from the submarine deal because they wanted to be there. I don't think we should read too much into this.

RANJIT BHUSHAN is an independent journalist and former Nehru Fellow at Jamia Millia University. In a career spanning more than three decades, he has worked with Outlook, The Times of India, The Indian Express, the Press Trust of India, Associated Press, Financial Chronicle, and DNA.

Source: [moneycontrol.com](https://www.moneycontrol.com); 30 September 2021

CHINA'S STRINGENT DATA LAW WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE SOON

- Arsen Kourinian, Megan Von Borstel & Jasmine Zhao

On August 20, 2021, the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), regarded as China's GDPR, was signed into law, and will become effective on November 1, 2021. The PIPL supplements China's Cybersecurity Law and the Data Security Law, expanding China's legal framework for the protection and regulation of data security and personal information. The PIPL has an extraterritorial scope, imposing broad

disclosure, consent, and cross-border transfer obligations on organizations that provide products or services to or analyze activities of people within China.

Notable requirements of the PIPL include:

- **Separate Consent Scenarios.** The PIPL requires companies to obtain individuals' separate consent for processing in several scenarios, including (i) when sharing information with third parties, (ii) processing sensitive personal information, and (iii) transferring data outside of China.
- **Expanded Lawful Bases for Processing.** Similar to the GDPR, the PIPL requires a lawful basis for processing personal information. Unlike the GDPR, the PIPL does not provide a company's "legitimate interest" as a lawful basis, but it does include a lawful basis for HR management purposes.
- **Data Subject Rights.** The PIPL grants data subjects the rights to: (i) know and data portability, (ii) correct, (iii) delete, (iv) rescind consent, and (v) refuse automated decision making.
- **Strict Cross-Border Transfer Obligations.** The PIPL imposes more stringent data transfer requirements than other data protections laws, such as the GDPR. For instance, the PIPL requires verifying data transfers outside of China are "necessary," obtaining specific consent prior to a data transfer, and, under certain circumstances, storing data on servers in China.
- **Heightened Scrutiny for Big Tech Companies.** The PIPL requires critical internet platform providers with a large number of users and a complex business model to comply with additional protection and reporting requirements.
- **Private Right of Action.** Under the PIPL, individuals have a private right of action to be compensated for harm suffered from a controller's processing of personal information. The PIPL places the burden on controllers to prove they are not at fault.

Violators of the PIPL may face severe penalties with fines of up to 50 million Yuan or 5% of annual global revenue. The PIPL also authorizes the government to blacklist violators—restricting or prohibiting entities from receiving personal information from persons in China if it determines the entity infringes the interests of Chinese citizens or harms the public interest of China. If your company does business in China, we encourage you to seek legal advice to ensure compliance. Given the PIPL's heightened consent and cross-border transfer requirements, reliance on a GDPR privacy and data security program will be insufficient. A comprehensive review of your business practices in collecting, using, and sharing personal data, as measured against the PIPL requirements, is critical in avoiding legal pitfalls and enforcement actions.

Source: privacyquicktipsblog.com; 24 September 2021

INDONESIA, SINGAPORE STRENGTHEN MARITIME SECURITY COOPERATION

- VNA

Jakarta (VNA) - The Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) and the Singapore Coast Guard (SPCG) held an online meeting on September 28 to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies of the two countries. According to Indonesia's national news agency Antara, at the meeting, the head of Bakamla, Vice Admiral Aan Kurnia proposed four areas of cooperation to the Commander of the SPCG Cheang Keng Keong, including an annual bilateral meeting under the rotating mechanism between the two countries' coast guards to discuss cooperation, security and maritime safety issues in the region. Bakamla also suggested organising capacity building activities through coaching, training, research and development, exchange of experts, internships, conferences and seminars; establishing a direct connection and a single point of contact, as well as exchanging maritime security information.

Vice Admiral Aan emphasized that Bakamla and SPCG have similar functions and tasks such as maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and maritime patrol. Therefore, the two sides need to establish a cooperative relationship. For his part, Cheang Keng Keong welcomed the proposal of the Indonesian side, and agreed that both sides are facing the same threats and problems in maritime security, so it is necessary to work together.

Source: vietnamplus.vn; 30 September 2021

WHAT IRAN'S ENTRY INTO SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORG. MEANS FOR SINO-INDIAN TIES

- Tridivesh Singh Maini

TAIPEI (Taiwan News) — Iran's entry into the Shanghai Cooperation (SCO) Summit not only gives the country a new platform on which to pursue its foreign policy but also creates new diplomatic dynamics between Tehran, New Delhi, and Beijing.

Long-time coming

The SCO Summit, held at Dushanbe, Tajikistan on Friday (Sep. 17), was a momentous event for Iran, as it had been sitting on the sidelines of such summits for nearly two decades. By officially joining the SCO, Iran became the organization's ninth member state after China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Iran's ascension to full membership has been a long time coming, having been an observer since 2005.

At the event, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahi tweeted:

“Perfectly pleased to announce that the permanent membership document of the Islamic Republic of Iran was approved by the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Dushanbe in the presence of our esteemed President.”

Iran's membership was welcomed by all other members including China, Russia, and India. The SCO was set up initially in 2001 and was a successor of the Shanghai Five grouping consisting of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan, which had sought to enhance confidence-building in the military sphere, between Beijing, Russia, and the former Soviet republics. The SCO has become even more critical in recent years as Central Asia's economic growth soars and connectivity projects pick up pace. Chief among them is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), followed by the INSTC (International North-South Corridor), which links Iran to Central Asia, Turkey, and Europe. There is also the Chabahar Port, an Indian-operated port located in southern Iran.

Iran at the podium

The Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, used the SCO platform to elaborate on Tehran's foreign policy and was critical of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Iran. "The international order is shifting towards multilateralism and redistribution of power in favor of independent states," he said, hinting strongly at the fading of U.S. dominance. He also highlighted Iran's stance on Afghanistan and the need for an inclusive government.

Raisi emphasized the SCO is an independent organization and that the BRI, initiated by China, and other connectivity projects, such as the INSTC, could find common ground with one another and need not be looked at from a zero-sum perspective. This is important because India has been investing in the Chabahar Port with a view to connecting not just with Afghanistan but through Central Asia into Russia and beyond. New Delhi had also proposed other multilateral mechanisms, such as the India-Uzbekistan-Iran-Afghanistan Quadrilateral Working Group for shared usage of the Chabahar Port.

Transcending the Himalayan divide

The SCO is also important because it includes both India and China, giving both countries a chance to clear the air and engage, even in the midst of tensions. On the sidelines of the SCO Summit, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar agreed to reduce tensions during his meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, and both sides agreed on reducing tensions between the countries. The two sides agreed to resolve their disputes across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh in accordance with existing agreements.

In a tweet, Jaishankar encouraged Beijing to stop viewing ties with India from the perspective of a third country, namely, the U.S. The timing here was significant as the SCO Summit was held days before the in-person meeting of Quad leaders in Washington, D.C. The Chinese foreign minister said that given their economic prowess, both countries needed to work closely together.

The new world that is taking shape focuses on prioritizing a variety of interests and balancing foreign policy. For Iran, membership in the SCO enables it to better pursue an independent foreign policy, forge forward with connectivity projects and stabilize Afghanistan. For India, it provides a platform not just for enhancing ties with Central Asia but also to engage with Beijing. At a time when India is moving closer to the U.S., participation in the SCO signals that while New Delhi's foreign policy orientation may have changed, it does not like to be seen as purely within Washington's orbit.

Tridivesh Singh Maini is a New Delhi-based policy analyst associated with OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India. His areas of interest include South Asian regional cooperation, BRI, and the role of sub-national forces in foreign policy.

Source: taiwannews.com; 23 September 2021

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