

Editorial: *Maritime Affairs* Winter 2016 Edition

A landmark decision was announced by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in the China–Philippine arbitration case in July 2016. The tribunal ruled that China has "no historical rights" based on the "nine-dash line" in the South China Sea, which is a ruling in the favour of the Philippines. This has led to a proactive approach by some of the contestants of Southeast Asia who are engaging in diplomacy to settle the dispute in a peaceful manner. At another level, rising ambitions and changing geopolitics have also altered the power dynamics and alignments among regional countries.

Apart from hard military issues, maritime cooperation, migration at sea, blue economy and the broader maritime development agenda are gaining worldwide attention. This edition of *Maritime Affairs* continues to bring to the fore contemporary maritime issues, and provides critical analysis of some of these developments.

Gamage discusses the importance of the blue economy and the emergence of oceans as the new frontier of economic development. The paper briefly examines the concept of blue economy and discusses various initiatives which have been undertaken towards its development at the regional level in Southeast Asia.

In the second paper, Khurana examines the concept and the salient issues relating to rules of engagement (RoE) for maritime forces operating in a low-intensity conflict environment. The paper discusses the legal voids and concludes that there are numerous challenges in formulation and implementation of RoE. This inhibits the effectiveness of the navies to respond to low-intensity maritime threats in the Indo-Pacific region.

Saha's paper "Indonesia's Potential as a Maritime Power" analyses the recent measures undertaken by President Jokowi in the light of his vision of Indonesia as a global maritime fulcrum (GMF). The paper highlights that Indonesia always possessed maritime consciousness, and while many initiatives were taken by earlier leaders to support national maritime interests, these could not propel Indonesia to the coveted category of a maritime power.

Srivastava's paper "Russia's Naval Resurgence in Eurasia?" examines the drivers behind Russia's quest for resurgence and analyses the trends and intentions of the Russian Federation Navy (RFN) in the Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Caspian Sea. The paper compares the RFN's strength with that of the erstwhile Soviet navy and concludes that in order to attain similar naval might and status, Russia has to overcome a number of economic and geopolitical challenges.

The humanitarian crises unfolding in the Mediterranean and the Bay of Bengal have focused the spotlight on the maritime domain as a prominent escape route. In this background, Chatterjee discusses the issues of "migrants at sea" through two case studies – Syrians and the Rohingyas. The paper analyses policy responses to identify the best practices for states to comply with their international humanitarian obligations while taking state security imperatives into consideration.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) identified maritime safety and security as one of the six priority areas for cooperation among the member states. There is now a growing need to develop a legal framework for maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region. Wambua examines the prospects of new legal frameworks for maritime safety and security

in the Indian Ocean Region. The paper suggests the creation of an IORA legal group of experts and proposes that the IORA charter be amended to provide a mechanism to the member states to use as a forum for dispute resolution.

The impacts of emerging technologies on shipbuilding are discussed by Jha in his paper titled “Emerging Technologies: Impact on Shipbuilding”. This paper examines the impact of three-dimensional printing, autonomous ships and green technologies on the shipbuilding industry, including warships and mercantile marine. The paper observes that these technologies offer diverse applications across sectors, and early impacts of these technologies on shipbuilding are noticeable in “refit and repairs”, “retro-fittings” and “logistic chain” improvements.

Das, in his paper titled “Impact of Maritime Security Policies on the Marine Ecosystem”, discusses the acoustic impact of deployment of warships for anti-piracy operations. The paper presents an investigative analysis of a rare stranding of a blue whale in June 2015 and a Bryde’s whale in January 2016, off the west coast of India. The paper suggests that these events are a possible manifestation of the degraded acoustic habitat due to high levels of low-frequency ambient noise from shipping in the region. This reflects a permanent degradation of the acoustic habitat and has a direct impact on the well-being of large marine mammals, a fact which needs cognisance.

The Great Lakes are a group of interconnected water bodies located on the Canada–United States border. The Great Lakes – Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario – form the largest group of freshwater lakes on the Earth. The authors recount their experiences from the event “eXXpedition Great Lakes” conducted by an all-women crew around the Great Lakes region. The paper focuses on the problem of microplastics and highlights the lessons learnt by the citizens from the first-hand experience of seeing microplastics in their own backyard.

This edition of Maritime Affairs has three book reviews: Gopal reviews a book titled Shipping Industry in India – Colonialism to Globalisation by Sadanand Gupta; Rai reviews Pedro Machado book Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean; and Chawla reviews the book Rethinking the Oceans: Towards the Blue Economy by James Alix Michel, the President of Seychelles. I hope this collection of papers and book reviews will add to the understanding of the seas and the oceans within the broader maritime community. We at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) look forward to readers’ feedback on the academic papers in this issue.

The NMF has had a very busy schedule during the year, and amongst various academic engagements we finalised a bilateral agreement for academic exchange with RAND Corporation, Washington DC. The first exchange was organised in end-August and a five-member NMF delegation visited Washington DC for bilateral talks.

The seventh annual NMF- Centre of Naval Analyses (CNA) bilateral dialogue was held at NMF in October 2016, and a five-member delegation from CNA Arlington visited NMF. The Philippines Command and General Staff College delegation and visitors from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Singapore, also visited NMF in September and October 2016, respectively. The NMF looks forward to continued interactions and engagements with academic think tanks in its pursuit of excellence.

We now prepare for the Annual Maritime Power Conference – 2017 to be held in February 2017 on the theme of “The Blue Economy”. I invite researchers and practitioners to be partners with NMF in our academic journey and look forward to contributions. Wishing you a Very Happy New Year 2017.

Vijay Sakhuja
Director, National Maritime Foundation