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Navy rescues Vietnamese sailor from Abu Sayyaf

By Roel Pareño

The Philippine Navy on Sunday rescued a Vietnamese sailor that the Abu Sayyaf group had held captive since November, security officials said. R.Adm. Rene Medina, commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, said Do Trung Hieu was rescued about 9 p.m. on Sunday at Mataja Island off Lantawan town. Medina said combined forces from the Joint Task Force Basilan, through the Naval Task Group Basilan, Naval Task Force 61, and Navy Intelligence Service Group launched pursuit operations that led to the rescue. "The intensified military offensives caused the Abu Sayyaf Group to flee and opened a chance for rescue operations," Medina said. Do Trung Hieu along with five other crew of M/V ROYAL 16 crew members — identified as Pham Minh Tuan, Tran Khac Dung, Hoang Trung Thong, Hoang Van Hai, and Huang Vo — were abducted by the group of Sulu-based sub-leader Alvin "Arab Puti" Yusop, Alhabsy Misaya and Basilan-based sub-leader Radzmil "Kubayb" Jannatul while sailing near Sibago Island, Basilan on November 11, 2016. Hoang Vo, 22, escaped from his captors last June 16. The Abu Sayyaf beheaded Hoang Trung Thong and Hoang Van Hai in Barangay Tumahubong, Sumisip town on July 5. The Navy said that remains believed to be of Tran Khac Dung — alias Tran Viet Van — were also recovered in Buhanginan, Patikul town, Sulu on July 15. Security have yet to locate the last remaining Vietnamese captive in Basilan. Col. Juvymax Uy, JTFB commander, said the relentless pursuit and intelligence tracking led to the rescue of the victim. "Said rescue was a result of the maximized conduct of intelligence operations and the successful airstrike mission launched by our troops on the ground," Uy said. Do Trung Hieu was immediately brought to the headquarters of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao and given medical attention by military doctors at Camp Navarro General Hospital (CNGH) inside the Camp Don Basilio Navarro.

source: Philstar

Cooperation is the key to defeating pirates here's why

in [Piracy and Security News 24/08/2017](#)



Pirates are notoriously hard to capture. Their actions occur on the shifting, vast expanse of the open oceans. Perpetrators cannot simply be 'arrested' by a conventional police force and, even if they are caught, it's a challenge to prosecute an offender who by their very nature transcends borders. There is no single answer to the problem, particularly given pirates' different guises and motivations. Yet a study of historical anti-piracy operations, both ancient and recent, does reveal one commonality in the repression of piracy: international cooperation. Pirates terrorised the

Caribbean during the infamous 'golden age' of piracy in the 1710s and 1720s. The escapades of these pirates have long since passed into legend. Though their lives were full of adventure, their demise was brutal. Cooperation was the key to the pirates' eventual eradication. The ended over a decade of constant fighting among the colonial powers (Great Britain and Spain in particular). It allowed them to turn their attentions to the blight of piracy. The treaty to 'cause all pirates and sea-robbers to be apprehended and punished as they deserve, for a terror and example to others'. These words formed the basis for a successful campaign against the Caribbean pirates, with the colonial powers working together to defeat the antagonists. At a 1717 piracy trial in Boston, the condemned were 'all nations agree to treat your tribe as the common enemies of mankind, and to extirpate them out of the world'. It seems likely the pirates would have persisted, but for this commonality of purpose.

Getting together to fight the scourge

Justice was swift for those captured: pirates were usually tried and hanged within days of capture under the 1698, a new anti-piracy law that allowed for trials in the British colonies. The trials were light on procedural protections, but they were effective: in the British colonies alone between 1716 and 1726. To get around jurisdictional issues, courts espoused the principle of 'universal jurisdiction', the idea that any state may prosecute any pirate given the severity of the offence. It's a valuable principle that, today, has become commonly accepted. It was the combination of cooperation and effective law, then, that put an end to piracy in the Caribbean. The same factors were brought to bear on the modern wave of piracy that blighted the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia in the early 2000s. Somali piracy first became a serious problem in 2005 and peaked in 2011, when . The pirates of Somalia have since gone into decline, however, with only a in the region since 2013. International cooperation has again proved to be essential to removing the threat, particularly given the regional power vacuum left by Somalia's lack of governance. The EU-sponsored naval force, proved especially invaluable in disrupting the threat, removing some 160 active pirates from the seas since beginning operations. The real success story here, though, is the way in which to deal with the problem, particularly with the assistance of the . Trials take resources, expertise and dedication that are best obtained from international partners. In Kenya, The Seychelles, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Somalia itself, in purpose-built courtrooms, staffed by trained lawyers, using updated anti-piracy laws. The in the region (notwithstanding recent isolated incidents) is a tremendous success story for international cooperation and problem sharing. It's also a case study in building legal capacity, creating a robust platform for dealing with future outbreaks. Yet piracy is

going nowhere anytime soon. West Africa and the Malacca Strait, both areas where valuable maritime trade clashes with lacklustre governance, have superseded East Africa as new 'pirate hotspots' where successors to Blackbeard's brethren continue to put maritime trade to the sword. New approaches are needed, and the root causes have to be addressed. Yet the core of any successful strategy will always be the same: international cooperation and unity of purpose. The international community must constantly unite against common threats, be they piracy, terrorism, or international crime.

Source: MENAFN via <http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com>

Libya navy seizes oil tanker, detains Filipino crew

2017-08-28 18:58

Tripoli - The Libyan navy said on Monday it has seized an oil tanker near the maritime border with Tunisia and detained the 20-member Filipino crew on suspicion of fuel smuggling. Navy spokesperson General Ayoub Kacem said the vessel was intercepted on Sunday off Abu Kamash, 170km west of Tripoli, and its crew transported to the capital to appear before the prosecutor general. The Liberian-flagged tanker belonging to a Greek company was loaded with six million litres of contraband fuel, he said. Plunged into conflict and political chaos since a 2011 revolution that ousted and killed Libya's longtime leader Colonel Moammar Gaddafi, oil smuggling to Tunisia, Malta and Tunisia has become a lucrative trade.

Source: www.news24.com

Make in India: Government launches global hunt for 234 naval helicopters worth over \$5 billion

[Rajat Pandit](#) | TNN | Updated: Aug 22, 2017, 11:35 PM IST

NEW DELHI: India has launched a global hunt for 123 naval [multi-role helicopters](#) (NMRHs), with potent [anti-submarine warfare capabilities](#), as well as 111 armed naval light utility choppers (NUHs) for operations from the decks of warships. The projects, together worth well over \$ 5 billion, will be executed under the new "strategic partnership" (SP) policy under the "Make in India" framework. The SP policy is basically meant to boost the indigenous [defence production](#) sector, with Indian private sector companies producing cutting-edge weapon systems in collaboration with global armament majors through joint ventures and [technology transfers](#), as was earlier reported by TOI. The government had earlier issued the RFI (request for information) to arms majors of six countries for the over Rs 70,000 crore project to build six advanced stealth submarines in collaboration with an Indian shipyard under the SP policy. For the two helicopter projects, the government has also sought responses from original equipment manufacturers through RFIs by early-October. The vendors will then be issued formal tenders or RFPs (request for proposals) to submit their technical and commercial bids. With the Indian companies to be selected in a parallel process, it will take at least a couple of years for the final contracts to be actually inked. Both the NMRH and NUH are "critical operational necessities" for the Navy. Indian warships, for instance, are virtually bereft of helicopters that can detect, track and hunt enemy submarines at a time when Chinese nuclear and diesel-electric submarines are making regular forays into the Indian Ocean Region. ASW helicopters typically fly ahead of warships to "dunk" their sonars into the deep waters, "listen" for enemy submarines and fire torpedoes against them to clear the path for the fleet. In the 9 to 12.5-tonne class, these helicopters also have missiles to take on other warships as well as electronic warfare and early-warning suites. The Navy, in turn, wants the twin-engine NUHs to replace its ageing fleet of single-engine Chetak helicopters. The NUHs are different from the Army/IAF light choppers because they need wheeled landing gears, sea optimization, foldable blades and small dimensions to ensure they can fit into warship hangars. But the acquisition plans of the armed forces, which want to induct around 1,200 helicopters of different types over the next 10-15 years, have been dogged by long delays, scams and scrapping of tenders. Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

Pause in US Navy operations will not affect US' ability to defend allies: Adm Harris

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OSAN (REUTERS, AFP, Boomerang, NYTimes) - The head of the US military's Pacific Command said on Tuesday (Aug 22) a scheduled "operational pause" by the US Navy's fleet worldwide would not affect the military's ability to defend South Korea. Speaking at the Osan Air Base in South Korea, Admiral Harry Harris, commander of the US forces in the Pacific, said that the operational pause is "important" but added that pause "would not have an effect" on the US' ability "to defend our nation and our allies." The US Navy ordered [a fleet-wide investigation](#) and plans for temporary halts in operations to focus on safety after a US guided missile destroyer collided with an oil tanker in waters near Singapore and Malaysia on Monday. Commanders will space out the review to avoid hampering operations, like the war games in South Korea that started Monday. The review will take place over a week in a series of 24-hour periods, during which on-board actions, as well as leadership and operational procedures, will be examined, reported CNN. Monday's collision is the fourth major accident in the US Pacific fleet this year. In June, **USS Fitzgerald** collided with a Philippine-flagged cargo ship off the Japanese coast, resulting in the deaths of seven US sailors. On May 9, the guided-missile cruiser **USS Lake Champlain** was struck by a small fishing boat off the Korean Peninsula. In late January, the guided-missile cruiser **USS Antietam** ran aground while trying to anchor in Tokyo Bay. All three US warships and **USS McCain** are equipped with the Aegis missile defence system that detects and intercepts ballistic missiles. US Aegis-equipped naval ships stationed in the Pacific have been touted as a key line of defence against the North Korea missile threat. Analysts said the string of accident raised

questions about whether the US Navy was overstretched in Asia as it seeks to combat Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The string of accidents involving US naval ships has also dealt a heavy blow to US' prestige as the world's top military superpower, said observers. [Chinese newspapers said](#) the two collisions in two months showed that US' combat readiness level and military management level have declined and its naval vessels are becoming an increasing risk to commercial shipping in Asia. The *McCain* been heading for a routine stop in Singapore after carrying out a "freedom of navigation operation" in the disputed South China Sea earlier in August around the Mischief reef in the Spratly Islands, sparking a furious response from Beijing. Japan's defence ministry and military officials have voiced concerns that the collision between a US Navy destroyer and a tanker on Monday (Aug 21) may negatively affect the Japan-US security system with regard to North Korea, [reported Yomiuri Shimbun](#). The latest mishap and the order for the US Navy to have "one to two day" operational pause as part of a fleet-wide review came amid growing anxiety over a possible new missile launch by Pyongyang. North Korea's military on Tuesday (Aug 22) threatened that it is ready [to stage 'ruthless retaliation'](#) against South Korea and the United States over their on-going joint military exercises that started on Monday. Adm Harris and two other top US commanders- Strategic Command head General John Hyten and Missile Defense Agency director Lt-Gen. Samuel Greaves - travelled to South Korea observe the on-going Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercises. The 11-day exercises involve computer simulations designed to prepare for a possible attack by nuclear-armed Pyongyang. Connecticut Representative Joe Courtney, the top Democrat on the House Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee, said Congress needs to undertake "rigorous oversight" and review the "rising trend lines of accidents". "Our sailors are asked to operate every day in contested waters vital to the interests of the United States," Courtney said in a statement. "We need to make sure that they have the tools, training, and support they need to do their jobs successfully and safely." Besides the operational pause, over a few months the US Navy will complete a longer-term, comprehensive review of US naval forces in Japan, including looking at training and certifying readiness.

Source: <http://www.straitstimes.com>

Chinese Base in Djibouti: What Are India and the US Afraid Of?

MJ Vinod

Updated: 23 August, 2017 3:27 PM IST



Djibouti is in the limelight after the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) recently commissioned its first overseas permanent logistical base off the Horn of Africa. This has major implications for the region and beyond, as it is close to one of the world's busiest shipping routes, which matters for global commerce and

energy. The base is strategically located at the southern entrance to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Djibouti is only about 20 miles from war-ravaged Yemen. It lies on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a gateway to the Suez Canal. The 90-acre base is a useful prism to assess China's capabilities and ambitions. It is big enough to accommodate 10,000 Chinese troops and is considered to be a major milestone in China's naval logistics, for which Beijing will have to pay an annual \$20 million rent. Djibouti's growing importance as a trading centre coupled with its strategic location provides it much shelter and cover. Djibouti, which is sandwiched between Eritria, Somalia and Ethiopia, also hosts American, French and Japanese bases. Now the Saudis have also shown interest to have a base in Djibouti. Will it be India's turn next?

The Chinese Dimension

The Djibouti base is an indication of China's global ambitions. As Professor Dutton of the US Naval War College, Rhode Island states, "Its naval power expansion is for protecting commerce and China's regional interests in the Horn of Africa". Chinese oil exports sail through the Mandeb Strait, which is a major choke point as it connects the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. China has played down the strategic importance of the base looking at its value purely in terms of anti-piracy operations and ensuring the freedom of the high seas. This is clearly a strategic ploy. They prefer to call it a 'support facility' rather than a 'naval base'. They also see it as a base to provide support systems for Chinese participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations, humanitarian rescue missions and escort operations in the volatile Gulf of Aden. The Chinese Defence Ministry contends that it does not intend any expansion of its military or economic interests; nor does Beijing seek a sphere of influence. For China, the move transcends political-military dynamics, and factors economic and commercial considerations. Most of China's \$1 billion in trade to Europe traverses the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. In reality, Chinese submarines, naval vessels and aircraft are visible across the oceans around the globe. For instance, the installation of surface-to-air missiles and fighter jets on Woody Island in the South China Sea are all part of a larger strategy that falls into place.

The United States' Concern

The Djibouti base now brings China into closer proximity to its major strategic rival –the United States. The new PLAN base is located near Camp Lemonnier, a full-fledged US naval base which has over 4,000 sailors and marines. Camp Lemonnier is a special operations outpost, one of Pentagon's largest, most important foreign military facilities. This is a strategically significant base for US aerial and Special Forces operations in the Persian Gulf region, the Arabian Peninsula and East

Africa. It is the nerve centre for drone-launches. The US base is a staging ground for many of its anti-terror initiatives in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The US Navy base abuts Djibouti's International Airport and has even been used for various raids into Yemen. Camp Lemonnier's lease period has been renewed for 20 years and the annual payments doubled to \$63 million. It is the largest American permanent base in Africa. A US expert on the Chinese military Gabriel Collins opines that "It's like having a rival football team using an adjacent practice field".

India's Concerns

For India, Djibouti's location on the north western edge of China poses major challenges. India perceives Djibouti as part of Beijing's 'String of Pearls' strategy. Over the last two years, the Indian Navy has reported the presence of PLAN warships, submarines and intelligence-gathering vessels in the Indian Ocean waters. Now with a base in Djibouti, Beijing will find it much simpler to sustain PLAN operations in the region. Djibouti as a base also implies that the movement of Chinese ships – both commercial and naval – will increase in the Indian Ocean region which has security concerns for India. Undoubtedly, the PLAN's second overseas naval base is underway at Gwadar in Pakistan. Perhaps as part of the debt-relief swap, Hambantota, Sri Lanka will follow. Till now, the PLAN suffered from the tyranny of distance to operate in the Indian Ocean waters, which will now cease with the operation of these new overseas naval bases.

So What Do We Conclude?

Clearly, Djibouti forms part of Beijing's strategy in the second scramble for Africa and beyond. The base will not only provide logistical support to the PLAN fleet for escort duties in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast, but also pose challenges to the other non-Asian and Asian navies in the region, especially the US, Japan, France and India. Perhaps, this is only the beginning of many more bases to come. It also has relevance for China's 'One Belt One Road' ambitions. Moreover, Chinese defence expenditure is on the upswing and expected to reach \$233 billion by 2020. This will exceed that of the West European countries collectively. The Chinese state-run *Global Times* has admitted that this is indeed a 'military base'. Both China and the US seem to have a shared interest in the strategic location of Djibouti. Whether US and Chinese pursuits in Djibouti will turn out to be a zero sum game, only time will tell. Needless to say it keeps India on the edge. However modest the Djibouti base is made out to be, the fact is that the Chinese footprint is growing, with the potential to challenge America politically and militarily. Moreover, there can be a difference in China's 'stated' goals and its 'real' aspirations. Herein lies the challenge for both the US and India. (Dr MJ Vinod is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, Bangalore University. He can be contacted at mjvinod@gmail.com)

Source: <https://www.thequint.com>

China steps up training for African militaries

Erwan de Cherisey - IHS Jane's Defence Weekly

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The Chinese military has recently undertaken bilateral training activities with the Tanzania Naval Command (TNC), and completed the training of a new rapid reaction brigade for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).



President Joseph Kabila inspects his new Chinese-trained brigade in Kamina on 12 August. (DRC Presidency)

Details of the Tanzanian training programme were revealed when a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) flotilla consisting of a destroyer, a frigate, and a supply vessel visited Dar es Salaam on 16–20 August. In an interview with China's state broadcaster CCTV during the visit, TNC commander Rear Admiral Richard Mutayoba Makanzo said Tanzania currently operates two marine companies, both of which were trained by the PLAN, with the training of a third company to begin with Chinese assistance. The Tanzania People's Defence Force already possesses an amphibious warfare capability that is impressive by the standards of the continent, comprising two ex-PLAN Type 068 landing craft and Chinese-supplied Type 63A amphibious light tanks. The rear admiral further noted that Tanzanian marines are currently deployed in peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. CCTV news showed members of a special forces detachment from the visiting PLAN flotilla training Tanzanian personnel to fire the QBZ-95-1 assault rifle, QBU-10 anti-materiel rifle, and NSG-1/CS-LR4 sniper rifle. In the DRC, President Joseph Kabila on 12 August presided over the passing-out parade of the army's 32nd Rapid Reaction Brigade, which was activated after 18 months of training.

Source: www.janes.com

Five Defense Firms Fight For Supplying 150 Heavyweight Torpedoes For Indian Navy

On August 24, 2017

By: Sputnik News



The Indian Navy has approached five global manufacturers to deliver heavyweight torpedoes for its Scorpene class submarines, production of which is currently underway at the Mazagon dock shipyard. According to defense sources, Indian Navy contacted Rosoboronexport of Russia, Swedish SAAB, French Naval Group, German ThyssenKrupp, and Japanese Mitsubishi for supplying 150 heavyweight torpedoes. Project75, under which six Scorpene class submarines are being built with the help of French firm DCNS, originally envisaged equipping the submarines

with Black Shark heavyweight torpedo as their primary weapons. However, in June last year, the Indian government canceled a \$200million deal with Whitehead Alenia Sistemi Subacquei (WASS), a subsidiary of Italian arms manufacturer Finmeccanica, due to corruption allegations involving another Finmeccanica subsidiary, Agusta Westland. The first of the Scorpene class submarine built by India — **INS Kalvari** is expected to be inducted in the Indian Navy by end of August. It has successfully undergone a series of weapons trials including the test firing of a German SeaHake heavyweight torpedo and the launch of a French-made Exocet SM39 anti-ship missile, already in use by the Indian forces. The second Scorpene class submarine christened **INS-Khanderi** is also on the final stages of sea trial and is expected to be formally inducted in the Indian Navy by the end of this year.

Source: <http://defenceaviationpost.com>

Is Someone Attacking the U.S. Navy?

By James Rickards

Posted August 22, 2017



I'm most known for my research into currency wars, international monetary economics and financial warfare. But I also jointly run a service, *Rickards & Massengill's Defense Technology Alert*, that focuses specifically on the defense sector. That's why some recent tragic incidents involving the U.S. Navy have captured my attention. There have been two deadly incidents within the past two months, in which Navy warships have collided with merchant vessels. In the first incident, seven sailors were killed in June when the destroyer **USS Fitzgerald**

collided with a cargo ship near Yokosuka, Japan. Then early yesterday morning, the **USS John McCain**, a ship just like the **Fitzgerald**, collided with an oil tanker near the Strait of Malacca, close to Singapore. Sadly, 10 sailors are lost.

What's going on here?

Is the Navy losing situational awareness? Are the crews not properly trained? Are they not keeping watch? We don't know at this point. It's all under investigation. But there's one possibility I want to raise, and I want to be very clear about this: I'm raising the possibility for public debate. It's speculation on my part; I do not have any hard evidence. So I want to be clear that this is not something based on any actual intelligence I have. But if there were just one incident, if one civilian vessel had collided with one destroyer, the assumption would be that it was just an accident. Maybe there was some equipment failure or the crew on watch failed to detect the ship for whatever reason. But when the same basic incident happens twice, you have to raise your eyebrows. When you have a low-probability event that happens twice, in other words, the likelihood of coincidence becomes infinitesimal. You have to basically multiply one low probability by another low probability, and what you end up with is an extremely remote chance that both events are purely accidental. Is it possible that our adversaries, whether North Korea or Russia or perhaps even China — who are extremely good at hacking — have hacked into the navigation systems of these civilian vessels? Could they be using them as, in effect, battering rams or propeller torpedoes to crash into our naval vessels? "*Second tragic collision of U.S. warship with merchant vessel raises suspicion of nav system hacking on merchantmen. Are we already at war?*" It received a lot of comments. One was a very interesting comment from former Vermont governor and presidential candidate Howard Dean. Dean said, "*It's a possibility. I'm not sure if maybe experts talked about this. How about putting some knowledgeable intelligence folks on it?*" I agree completely. Again, I don't want to jump to conclusions. But we should at least consider the possibility that someone's combining cyberwarfare with kinetic techniques to attack our ships. In other words, hacking into a system to turn a civilian merchant

vessel into a battering ram to attack our vessels remotely. This is something the Russians have worked on. That's not speculation. We do have intelligence that the Russians have actually tried techniques like this on vessels in the Black Sea. I'm not the only one asking questions about these incidents, though. Here's what a former Navy information warfare specialist and current chief intelligence officer at a cyber intelligence service has to say about yesterday's collision: "When you are going through the Strait of Malacca, you can't tell me that a Navy destroyer doesn't have a full navigation team going with full lookouts on every wing and extra people on radar." He adds: "There's something more than just human error going on because there would have been a lot of humans to be checks and balances." Again, I want to make it clear: I have no proof that hackers were behind these recent incidents. And if it's not true, it would be a relief because the problem would be easier to fix through better training and improved protocols. Again, it could all just be coincidence. But I don't think we should ignore these incidents. The odds of these low-probability events taking place in such a limited amount of time at least make you scratch your head. You can bet the Navy will be doing everything possible to get to the bottom of this.

Source: <https://dailyreckoning.com>



Serco tug **Adept** turns back to base in Devonport after escorting the Royal Navy's flagship **HMS Ocean** out to sea, Aug 22. The helicopter carrier is having a last short work-up before she goes on a long deployment next week, which sadly will be her final voyage.

photo : Raymond Wergan, Newton Ferrers.(c)

Filipino officials: Chinese navy stalked Philippine area

BY JIM GOMEZ

China recently deployed navy and coast guard ships in a cluster of uninhabited sandbars in the disputed South China Sea amid concerns that the Philippines may build structures on them, two Filipino security officials said Tuesday. The government, however, said the issue was quickly resolved amid the Asian neighbors' friendlier ties. Two senior Philippine security officials told The Associated Press that three Chinese navy ships, a coast guard vessel and 10 fishing boats began keeping watch on Sandy Cay on Aug. 12 after a group of Filipino fishermen were spotted on the sandbars. The Filipinos eventually left but the Chinese stayed on. The two spoke on condition of anonymity, saying only the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila has been authorized to publicly discuss issues related to the country's territorial disputes with China. The foreign affairs department, however, has refused to divulge details of the situation at Sandy Cay, a cluster of three sandbars. A senior Philippine diplomat, who also spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly, said China "is concerned that we will build" structures on the sandbars. Chinese and Philippine officials have quietly worked to resolve the issue in recent days, said the diplomat, who is involved in the talks. A government security report seen by the AP says three Chinese navy ships, a Chinese coast guard ship and 10 Chinese fishing vessels took positions off Sandy Cay. Its nearest sandbar is about 2.5 nautical miles (4.6 kilometers) from Philippine-occupied Thitu Island. On Aug. 15, a blue Chinese helicopter flew low off Thitu's southwest coast, the report said. Philippine troops and villagers based at Thitu call it Pag-asa — Tagalog for hope — while the Chinese call the island Zhongye Dao. The Chinese military presence near Thitu sparked concerns in Manila. Philippine Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who has studied the disputes extensively, said the Chinese navy ships and other vessels encroached in the Philippine island's 12-nautical mile (22-kilometer) territorial waters. "In short, Sandy Cay is a Philippine land territory that is being seized, to put it mildly, or being invaded, to put it frankly, by China," Carpio said in a statement over the weekend. He said President Rodrigo Duterte and Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano have the constitutional duty to defend and protect Philippine territory. "The very least that they could do now is to vigorously protest this invasion of Philippine territory by China," Carpio said. "If both are courageous, they should send a Philippine navy ship to guard Sandy Cay and if the Chinese navy ships attack the Philippine navy vessel, they should invoke the Philippine-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty." The 1951 treaty binds the allies to come to the aid of each other when attacked. Cayetano, however, told reporters Tuesday that the issue has been diplomatically resolved and denied that China has invaded Sandy Cay. "Let me assure you, there is no more problem in that area," Cayetano told reporters, declining to provide details. "But it is not true that there was an attempt to invade or seize it." In Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said people with ulterior motives were seeking to "stir up conflicts between China and the Philippines." She offered no further details on China's activities in the area. "What I want to stress is that China has been committed to resolving relevant disputes peacefully through negotiation and consultation with the sovereign

states directly concerned," Hua said. Much-friendlier ties between Manila and Beijing under Duterte have allowed both governments to manage their disputes better. Since he took office in June last year, Duterte has courted Chinese trade and assistance and taken a non-confrontational approach to their territorial disputes. Despite such tact, Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez said the Duterte administration would never trade the national interest for economic concessions. "If our relationship with our neighbors isn't this good, the situation in the West Philippine Sea will be much, much worse," Cayetano said, using the Philippine name for the South China Sea. Duterte told reporters over dinner Monday that he has been assured by China's ambassador in Manila, Zhao Jianhua, and the Chinese foreign ministry that Beijing has no plans to occupy or build structures on Sandy Cay. One of the Philippine security officials said the military has been monitoring the Chinese presence at Sandy Cay but added it was difficult to check if Beijing's ships were still there due to recent bad weather in the remote offshore region.

Source: Maasmond Maritime

And they expected what exactly?



The Dutch Navy vessel Zr.Ms A 804 *Pelikaan* offshore Curacao - Photo : Hermann Hazenberg ©

Russia Just Revealed Its Plans for a New Aircraft Carrier

[Dave Majumdar](#)

August 23, 2017

Russia's Krylov State Research Center [is developing](#) a concept for a light multi-purpose aircraft carrier (LMA) to replace the Soviet-era *Admiral Kuznetsov*. The new Krylov proposal is a much more modest—and much less costly—proposal than the massive 100,000-ton Project 23000E Storm behemoth that the company has been pitching in recent years. The LMA carrier would only displace about 30,000 to 40,000 tons—slightly smaller than the French *Charles de Gaulle*—and would carry between 40 and 50 aircraft. The vessel would be able to carry the Sukhoi Su-33, a new carrier variant of the Su-35 and the MiG-29KR. A potential air wing could include airborne early warning aircraft and Ka-27 helicopters. The carriers would be built at Sevmash or potentially in Kerch—located in the disputed territory of Crimea. The Russians have announced that they would start building a new carrier in 2024—but analysts are skeptical that Moscow will buy such a vessel. Russia has no need for aircraft carriers given its naval strategy. Indeed, the entire concept seems to be what the Russians call *samopiar* or self-PR. "From what I understand, this center mainly makes model ships, and that none of the projects they've advanced are being seriously considered for production," Michael Kofman, a research scientist specializing in Russian military affairs at the Center for Naval Analyses, told *The National Interest*. "You can look at Lavina or Priboy. Basically, they continue to pitch projects but there is no indication that the Russian Navy is seriously considering any of their ideas for funding under GPV 2018-2025." Vasily Kashin, a senior fellow at the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at Moscow's Higher School of Economics told *The National Interest* that there is definitely an element of *samopiar* involved, but the if Russia's economy improves in the coming years, there is a chance that the Kremlin will purchase such an aircraft carrier. "If the economic situation improves by early 2020s that one may be real," Kashin said. "And 1-2 carriers will be needed anyway." A smaller carrier would make sense for Russia's needs. "If it is smaller than *Kuznetsov* and has a more efficient and reliable power plant, building it may actually be a way to save money," Kashin said. Kofman, however, is skeptical. In his view, the only flattop the Russian Defense Ministry might genuinely consider building is a large-deck amphibious assault ship in the 14,000-ton range. "My impression is that the only ship class being seriously considered by the Russian Navy is a LPD in 2020s," Kofman said. "Perhaps something along the lines of Dutch variants such as the Rotterdam or the Johan De Witt-class." Time will tell if this latest Krylov model eventually turns into a real ship.

Dave Majumdar is the defense editor for *The National Interest*. You can follow him on Twitter: [@Davemajumdar](#).

Source: <http://nationalinterest.org>

Macron might back warship pitch to Bulgaria

By: [Pierre Tran](#) August 21

PARIS — Naval Group will pitch its Gowind corvette in response to a Bulgarian tender worth €400 million, equal to \$471 million, for two warships, an offer expected to be supported by French President Emmanuel Macron on a planned visit to the Eastern European country, La Tribune reported Monday. “Sofia recently launched a new competition to acquire two corvettes to equip its Navy,” La Tribune reported about the Bulgarian capital city. Naval Group, formerly DCNS, is interested and will propose the Gowind, which would be armed with MBDA missiles. Macron is expected “to slip in a word of support for the French Team, which includes Naval Group,” when he meets his Bulgarian counterpart, Rumen Radev, and Prime Minister Boyko Borissov in Sofia on Aug. 25, the report said. The visit by the French head of state follows Borissov’s trip to Paris in June, when the two countries emphasized the importance of defense cooperation. “In defense matters, we also discussed our shared outlook, and that I wish to strengthen European defense, that several other countries have shown their wish to head in the same direction, that Bulgaria has a full role to play in this context,” Macron said in a June 6 joint statement with Borissov. Sofia seeks technology transfer for local industry to work on the two light warships, the report said. Naval Group and MBDA were not immediately available for comment. The recent tender follows a competition Bulgaria launched 10 years ago and then canceled due to budgetary problems. In the previous competition, Bulgaria had planned to buy four Gowind corvettes with debt financing arranged with a pool of banks led by French bank Société Générale and payment guaranteed by the Coface export credit agency. That order for four ships was worth €700 million, equal to \$827 million. Armaris, the then 50-50 joint venture between DNCS and Thales, had pitched the 2006 offer. Bulgaria is also looking to buy fighter jets, considering eight Saab Gripen, second-hand Lockheed Martin F-16 from Portugal and second-hand Italian Eurofighter Typhoons, La Tribune reported. The Bulgarian Army is also looking to buy 200 armored vehicles.

Source: <https://www.defensenews.com>

Electric Boat receives \$40.7M for Virginia-class submarine propulsion

General Dynamics Electric Boat received the contract action for Phase II main propulsion machinery control redesign for the Virginia-class fast attack submarine.

By Stephen Carlson

General Dynamics Electric Boat has received a \$40.7 million contract action for Phase II main propulsion machinery control redesign for the Virginia-class fast attack submarine, the Department of Defense announced on Friday. The action provides for long-lead time materials slated for the replacement of the original control systems for main propulsion and ship turbine generators. The work is projected to be completed by May 2020 and will be performed in Sunnyvale, Calif. The Virginia-class is a nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine built for anti-sub and anti-surface operations. It is armed with torpedoes, Tomahawk cruise missiles and is capable of mine-laying operations. It can also deliver special forces teams as it has the ability to operate in shallow or littoral waters. The Virginia-class is expected to gradually replace the Los Angeles-class attack submarine whose design dates back to the 1970s. The submarine has faced a number of redesigns and upgrades to simplify construction and reduce operating costs. Further expected modifications will include the Virginia Payload Module. The VPM will triple the Virginia-class Tomahawk capacity and allow greater flexibility for installing other vertical launch weapons systems.

source: UPI

US House panel to hold hearing on Navy warship collisions

By ANI | Published: 24th August 2017 12:24 PM |

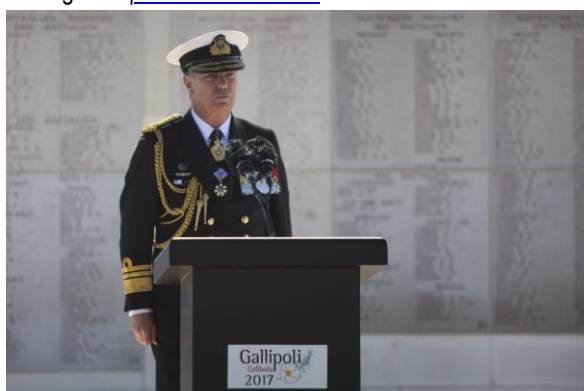
Last Updated: 24th August 2017 12:24 PM

WASHINGTON: The United States House Armed Services Committee will hold a hearing on the slew of deadly warship collisions which have been taking place lately, when Congress returns from the summer recess. “The September 7 hearing will feature testimony from Vice Adm. Thomas Rowden, commander of Naval Surface Forces, and John Pendleton, director of defence force structure and readiness issues at the Government Accountability Office,” reported the Hill quoting, the committee press release. On Monday, Navy destroyer John S. McCain collided with an oil tanker off the coast of Singapore. 10 sailors were reported missing, but officials confirmed on Tuesday that Navy divers had found the remains of some sailors in a flooded compartment. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told that an inquiry into the collision had already begun. “We obviously have an investigation underway and that will determine what happened,” he said. In June, seven sailors died when the **USS Fitzgerald** and a container ship collided in waters off Japan. The Armed Services hearing will look at readiness issues as an underlying cause of the crashes, according to its title, “**Navy Readiness – Underlying Problems Associated with the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.**”

Source” <http://www.newindianexpress.com>

Talking to the chiefs: Tim Barrett (part 2)

21 Aug 2017 | [Brendan Nicholson](#)



Australia’s surface warships and submarines will, in future, be much more closely linked to allied vessels to provide a collective defence against increasingly lethal threats, Royal Australian Navy chief Tim Barrett tells *The Strategist*. Discussing options and capabilities the revitalised fleet will bring, Vice Admiral Barrett says surface warships provide a

meaningful visible presence in, for instance, protecting trade routes. *'A navy must be able to demonstrate presence but also be capable of engaging and operating with others in the region—not just those you might consider to be future adversaries, but all others.'* Barrett says the issue then is to ensure vessels can operate freely against the sorts of threats being developed. Weapons being designed to attack surface ships are driving the shape, numbers, size and design of naval forces and, more importantly, the way the fleet will operate. *'So I still think there's a role for surface ships. While we still have trade routes around the world and the requirement for a surface ship to be able to support, engage and demonstrate an intent to allow that free flow of trade, I think the visible presence will still be there.'* The US naval concept of 'distributed lethality' is intended to deal with emerging threats to the fleet by arming and connecting every vessel in it to allow them to operate in contested waters as a much more lethal force, says Barrett. That will concentrate the mind of an adversary who may wish to attack a carrier group but who has to contend with the fact that all of the ships in a fleet could pose a lethal threat, making targeting much more difficult. *'Each ship becomes more lethal,'* Barrett says. Distributed lethality could involve ships from various nations using their Aegis air defence systems to protect the fleet from every direction. *'If we're to design a fleet in this day and age, and if we acknowledge our alliance, we would certainly need to consider those elements, otherwise we'd be an orphan sitting in one part of the region and not being able to provide a meaningful contribution.'* Barrett says that even before the navy's future frigate has been selected, a lot of work is already being done to establish infrastructure for its construction. *'That's being done knowing we haven't finalised the selection of a particular type but there are certain aspects that will be generic in terms of design.'* The government provided a very ambitious program—to cut steel by 2020, the navy chief says. *'Doing a number of things in parallel provides an increased risk that must be managed. It's a challenge but we knew that as soon as the date was set. But at the moment those things we told government we would do, are being done.'* From time to time it's suggested that the short take-off and vertical landing version of the new joint strike fighter, the F-35B, could be bought to operate from the navy's giant landing ships, or landing helicopter docks. The Spanish version of the LHD does operate British Harriers, so how feasible would it be for the RAN to do something similar? The government's been very clear in saying it would not do that, Barrett says. *'If you ask me in practical terms what would it take, Britain had to modify its carriers to take the JSFs. I'd envisage that we'd have to do that as well so there would be a cost beyond the airframes. That's just to operate them on deck.'* Barrett says it would be possible to fly the JSFs off the RAN's landing ships if technical issues could be resolved. *'But in practical terms, it's a relatively small deck that we've got, with six spots for helicopters. And you would need to consider broadly what you were seeking to achieve with that number of aircraft.'* The RAAF plans to use its conventional take-off and landing F-35As as part of a networked force with tankers and the Wedgetail command and control aircraft. Barrett says it's not clear what strategic advantage having jets aboard ships would bring to the navy. *'As an aviator I'd say that would be nice to have. But as chief of the navy I'd ask you to explain what you are trying to achieve here.'* Having a relatively small number of jets would mean fewer helicopters to carry troops ashore. *'If you turn the LHD into a fixed-wing carrier, then you're completely changing the effect you're trying to deliver and the nature of how you operate and defend that ship changes as well,'* Barrett says. *'So could we put them in? We'd find a way. Should we put them in? I would like to see all of the strategic logic before I could then consider the advice I'd provide to government.'* Asked if the navy's confident of finding, recruiting and training enough people to run its new ships, Barrett responds, *'If we do what we've always done, the answer is, no.'* Drawing a capable workforce will require coordination from government, industry and the education system as a whole of nation project, he says. *'There's a good opportunity for us all to reconstruct how we recruit from school, how we educate, and develop the skills which will allow me to dip into a bigger pool to have people to go to sea. I envisage a lot more people moving from navy to industry and back to navy through their lives. I also see closer engagement with education departments to put purpose behind why people should be studying certain things.'* And an increasing number of naval ships are being manned by civilian crews, Barrett says. Might Australia in the future employ unmanned surface warships? That's possible, says Barrett, along with unmanned submarines and aircraft, but they'd be likely to work with manned vessels on specific tasks.

Author: **Brendan Nicholson** is the defence editor for *The Strategist*. Image courtesy of the [Department of Defence](https://www.aspistrategist.org.au).

Source: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au>

The cyber risk for ships

in [International Shipping News](#) 23/08/2017



The cyber risk for ships As if the lingering threat of piracy wasn't bad enough, the shipping industry today has to contend with a rapidly growing risk – cyberattacks. Last June, Danish shipping giant Maersk was hit by the global Petya cyberattack outages – according to Reuters, the breakdown affected container shipping, port and tug boat operations, oil and gas production, drilling services, and oil tankers. The attack may have caused about US\$200 million to US\$300 million in damages to the company, Maersk said in a statement. *"In the last week of the [second] quarter we were hit by a cyber-attack, which mainly impacted Maersk Line, APM Terminals and Damco. Business volumes were negatively affected for a couple of weeks in July and as a consequence, our Q3 results will be impacted,"* it said. In an interview with the BBC, maritime cybersecurity firm CyberKeel discussed the case of one mid-sized shipping firm, whose computer systems were infiltrated by a small virus planted by hackers. *"They [the hackers] would then monitor all emails to and from people in the finance department,"* said a spokesman. He added that the hackers managed to steal "several million dollars" before the company took notice. Even

pirates themselves have gone digital. A recent report by telco giant Verizon revealed how these criminals use data to conduct more precise robberies. *“They’d board a vessel, locate by barcode specific sought-after crates containing valuables, steal the contents of that crate – and that crate only – and then depart the vessel without further incident,”* the report explained. Last month, the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted a resolution that established guidelines for cyber risk management. *“The guidelines provide high-level recommendations on maritime cyber risk management to safeguard shipping from current and emerging cyberthreats and vulnerabilities. The guidelines also include functional elements that support effective cyber risk management,”* said the IMO. *“Stakeholders should take the necessary steps to safeguard shipping from current and emerging threats and vulnerabilities related to digitization, integration and automation of processes and systems in shipping,”* it added.

Source: Business Insurance via <http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com>

This will affect the way pirates are countered, but can and will affect naval vessels as well.



DEME's New LNG-powered Dredger *Minerva* passing the Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam as seen from the deck of the *Queen Elizabeth* alongside the Cruise Terminal. Photo : Frank Behling (c)

Coming from a country where dredging is a part of nautical life, I have seen many dredgers of all types. I have, however, never seen anything like this before.