NAVY NEWS WEEK 30-4

25 July 2018

Bracing for Security Challenges in Niger Delta

July 16, 2018 7:31 am

To be in top form in the on-going war against militancy and other forms of criminality in the Niger Delta, the Nigerian military recently undertook exercises to brush up the skills of its men in weapons handling and marksmanship.

Emmanuel Addeh reports

It was not an occasion for the faint-hearted. The air was filled with the booming sound of guns. It was, indeed, a tense atmosphere as the trainees (officers and soldiers) kept strictly to instructions by their senior officers (the trainers), who were not ready to forgive any unnecessary errors. For the senior officers and their lieutenants, it was an opportunity to show those seated, including civilians, that the Federal Government's investment in their capacity to tackle security threats in the Niger Delta was not a waste.

Operation Delta Safe

Four joint sectors of the **Operation Delta Safe** (OP DS), the codename under which the special outfit operates, were to take part in the competency test of arms which would prepare them for any confrontation with the '*bad boys'*, a term used to described the criminals in the creeks who usually engage in sea robbery, pipeline vandalism and militancy. The OP DS deployed to protect oil installations in the Niger Delta comprises the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force, Nigerian Police, the Department of State Services (DSS) Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) among others.

Relative Peace

Although there is relative peace in the region, especially in relation to the former outright destruction of oil facilities, which usually resulted in the shutdown of the affected platforms and loss of revenue to the country, such confrontations between the military and the criminals are often commonplace. While destruction of oil facilities seems to have piped down, other forms of criminalities including kidnapping, sea robbery and cultism pose as a serious concern.

JTF Mandate

The mandate of the Joint Task Force (JTF), comprising all the military and paramilitary forces, continues to expand to curb these burgeoning acts of criminality. The expansion of this mandate lies in the fact that different communities continue to complain of intermittent raids by the hoodlums, while traders along the waterways of the Niger Delta have repeatedly reported the forcible seizure of their wares by pirates. Not left out are those who have turned abduction for ransom into a cash cow.

Weapons Handling

So, it was for those reasons that several senior military officers converged at the Elele military cantonment shooting range, Rivers State, to formally conclude the training exercise put together by the JTF headquarters in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, to combat the existing threats. According to the JTF, the shooting and marksmanship exercise which also witnessed an inter-sector skills at arms competition among the four sectors of the force based in the region was to enhance the precision of troops in the battle against criminals in the region. At the ranger were Commander, JTF, Rear Admiral Suleiman Apochi; Rear Admiral Saleh Usman, Flag Officer Commanding, Central Naval Command, Bayelsa; Air Officer Commanding, Mobility Command, Air Vice Marshal, Stephen Onuh and Commander, Land Component, JTF, Brig.-Gen Kevin Aligbe who also doubles as the Commander 16 Brigade, Bayelsa. Other senior officers were: Brig.-Gen IM Obot, Deputy Force Commander, OpDS; Commander, NNS Soroh, Bayelsa, Commodore Felix Esekhile, among others. During the competition, sector three won the gold trophy, sector two clinched silver while sector one went home with the bronze after various tests including accuracy in hitting targets, best shot, compliance with the rules and stripping and assembly.

Governor's rating

At the event, Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa, who was the special guest, reiterated that the performance of the military depends largely on their skills which should be constantly sharpened by training. Dickson who spoke through his Deputy, Rear Admiral John Jonah (rtd), appealed for the sustenance of the culture of periodic training of the armed forces to help them overcome the security challenges facing the country. He noted that the Niger Delta environment, which consists of creeks, swamps, rivers with settlements along the Atlantic coastline was a very difficult terrain for military operations, adding that the challenging terrain was a blessing in disguise as it provides a suitable training environment for the military and other security agencies. The governor therefore urged the officers and men to take the competition seriously and imbibe all the skills they had been taught in their everyday professional reality.

Combat Readiness

The gains of a combat ready military cannot be overemphasised. A strong believer in this ideology, Rear Admiral Apochi noted that the training exercise was designed to enhance the combat readiness of the troops in view of the enormous risks they face in the field of operations. Apochi said, "*The need for training cannot be over emphasised, more so due to the composition of the force with personnel across the services of the military. It is also to make the personnel from different services work as a team. The training is to make the personnel more proficient and increase their precision to defend*

themselves when under attack and to defend the citizens and oil infrastructure. "*The Skills at Arms contest was just an icing on the cake aimed at building team spirit, understanding amongst personnel from various services who are perhaps training together after their deployments to the joint force*." Quoting Tsun Tzu, the famous Chinese military strategist, Apochi said that military training remained an integral part of combat discipline, which is a prerequisite for mission accomplishment. "*The mandate of OpDS is to protect oil and gas infrastructure, deter and prevent militancy, crude oil theft and sea robbery or other criminalities within our joint operations area that could impact negatively on our area of operation*," he stated. "*Our troops need exposure to these kinds of trainings not just to enhance their state of preparedness but to ensure precision. The skills at arms will also enhance cooperation across the forces*." The FOC, Central Naval Command, Rear Admiral Usman, in his comments, said the exercise was to prepare the military to be battle-ready anytime they are called upon. Usman stated, "*When you train, on the D-day it becomes easier. Even the sound of the weapons alone is a form of training. Security personnel will know the kind of weapon by the sound, whether it is GPMG, AK 47 or just a pistol. These trainings keep you abreast. "These soldiers are deployed to various areas of operation in the creeks in the north east and other areas and it is about confronting the bad boys. You have seen criminals arrested with more sophisticated weapons. So, the best shot takes the day. You don't just wait till when your life is taken. So, their life and destiny are in their hands. "This is the first for the year and for the result, it is rated above average because not everybody here fired a shot. For the men on the battlefront, the morale is high. If you have any of those who took trophies in your team, you are home and dry*." AVM Onuh, who is in charge of air mobility in his remarks, said the exercise was important for the fact that the forces always have to be combat-ready for any eventuality. "*This is a range classification exercise for the OpDS joint operations. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. Continuous assessment makes you perform better and know how well you will do in real time. This is a real time exercise that people are being assessed on. "The JTF is given the responsibility of securing the Niger Delta, so they have to be at their optimum at all times. These kinds of events should take place regularly*," Onuh advised.

Reward for Success

At the end of the event, certificates of merit were presented to those who were tops in the exercises, including Lance Corporal Eze Bitrus who emerged the winner of the best shot at target. Best 'stripping and assembly' award went to Private Mikano Millan from sector three while the same sector also got accolades for the use of women soldiers in the entire wrung of the competition. Some of the participants were also exposed to actual combat situations where they were expected to hit special targets in moving and roughly driven military vehicles. However, there were also boos for those who did not measure up to the standard set by the crew of umpires, who painstakingly ensured adherence to the rules. As the heads of all the military and paramilitary forces drove out of the venue of the range classification, they were satisfied that the officers and men under their command were more prepared to face any threat to peace in the Niger Delta.

Source: https://www.thisdaylive.com

Mines and Unmanned Vehicles: The Ultimate Naval Weapons?

We take a look...

by Scott Savitz

July 16, 2018

Across the Eurasian littorals, small coastal nations as varied as Estonia, Georgia, Bahrain, and Taiwan face potentially aggressive threats from larger, more powerful adversaries. For all of these nations, their coastlines represent vulnerabilities that an adversary may seek to exploit, launching a seaborne invasion to seize key locales. At the same time, these small states have great difficulty building up traditional navies that can counter the maritime threat from their neighbors. Their prospective adversaries are up to one hundred times larger in both population and the size of their economies. Effective surface fleets are expensive, and submarines even more so; these small states would struggle to achieve even a fraction of the traditional naval capabilities of their much larger neighbors. Obviously, the small states' insecurity is partly offset by their alliances or ties with the United States and other nations. Unfortunately, given the time needed for U.S. and allied forces to build up in theater, a small state may be overrun before those forces arrive. Even if the small state's independence can be successfully restored, as was the case for Kuwait in 1991, the experience of foreign occupation is a nightmarish one. In some cases, independence may not be restored for decades, if ever: it took 50 years for Estonia, Latvia,

and Lithuania to escape from Moscow's rule following their annexation in 1940. In the face of such threats and the prohibitive cost of a traditional naval arms race, small states can aim to hinder and deter potential aggressors using less expensive systems. Naval mines are consummate disruptors, and their limited life-cycle costs enable even relatively small nations to purchase large numbers of them. An aggressive force seeking to launch a maritime attack then faces not only attrition due to the minefields, but also the delays and disruptions imposed by any efforts to clear the minefields. The aggressor's mine-countermeasures (MCM) operations can also serve as advance warning of an attack, reveal where it plans to launch that attack and enable the MCM forces themselves to be targeted. A demonstrated, robust mining capability could act as a powerful deterrent: an aggressor would need to develop a corresponding MCM capability to limit the attrition and disruption that the defender's minefields could inflict. Developing an effective MCM capability can require many years, and typically costs orders of magnitude more than developing a corresponding mining capability. For example, it would be relatively easy and inexpensive for Taiwan to design and build an array of naval mines for different targets and environments; the technologies involved date back a century or more. Interspersing different types of mines (such as moored mines that detonate on contact, and bottom mines that detonate in response to a ship's acoustic and magnetic signatures) would make the minefields particularly hard to clear. Taiwanese forces could enhance their readiness and demonstrate it to their prospective adversaries by repeatedly exercising the ability to quickly lay these mines. An ancillary benefit of such exercises is that by putting large numbers of inert mine-shaped objects in the water prior to a conflict, they could make it more difficult for an aggressor to differentiate where the real mines were once the conflict had begun. Even well-trained, capable MCM forces would need to move slowly in predictable patterns to gradually clear the minefield, rendering them vulnerable to other types of attack. Various clever counter-MCM measures (such as having influence mines detonate probabilistically, or designing them to look like industrial detritus) could stymie clearance efforts. In the meantime, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) MCM forces would be inadvertently revealing where the PLAN intended to operate next, giving Taiwan's forces advance warning. Overall, mines could help to slow down a seaborne invasion, thereby providing time for Taiwan and other nations to respond to the crisis before its conquest became a *fait accompli* . Advances in unmanned systems could also enable small states to counter threats from far larger nations at acceptable resource costs. Compact unmanned vehicles operating in the air, on the surface, and underwater can perform multiple functions that would otherwise require more expensive manned platforms. For example, they can undertake electronic warfare against adversary platforms, while also conducting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in environments that would be too dangerous for a manned platform . They can launch weapons, including the naval mines discussed above, as well as a variety of projectile weapons. Moreover, they can be treated as expendable: low-cost unmanned vehicles can also be laden with explosives, transmuting them into weapons that can take out far larger platforms. Swarms of low-visibility unmanned surface and undersea vehicles could be used to saturate defenses and disable an adversary's major warships. For example, while the Republic of Georgia cannot hope to match Russia's Black Sea Fleet on a ship-for-ship basis, it could use numerous, low-cost unmanned vehicles to inflict damage on key assets. Unmanned undersea vehicles could even penetrate into Russian-controlled ports, collecting intelligence and perhaps launching weapons in supposed sanctuaries. Ideally, developing all of the above capabilities could deter aggression, by denying a potential aggressor the quick, decisive victory they might otherwise attain, without overtaxing the limited resources of a small state. The low costs associated with the above systems could enable them to be purchased in appreciable numbers, enabling them to be widely distributed and therefore harder for an adversary to target. Other weapons systems, such as land-based anti-ship or anti-aircraft missiles , could also be considered if their costs do not exceed available resources. Nations that are able to inflict substantial damage against their attackers, and can stymie a maritime invasion for long enough to enable outside forces to come to the rescue, could be much less likely to become victims than those that are denuded of capable forces. These small states will never attain the strength of their much larger prospective adversaries; however, they primarily need to be able to disrupt an adversary's ability to quickly and almost bloodlessly defeat them, thereby causing aggressors to postpone such plans indefinitely.

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Once the flagship of the Royal Navy, " *The Mighty 'O'* " , **HMS *Ocean*** leaves Devonport July 16 flying the Brazilian flag over a courtesy Union Jack . Now the Marinha do Brasil's helicopter carrier **PHM *Atlantico* (A140),** at a price of £84 million, she is working up to sea readiness and was led out by **SD *Adept***, with **SD *Faithfull*** as rearguard and SDs ***Careful*** and ***Powerful*** as escorts. In the last six months she has been painted with Brazilian naval livery, given a complete overhaul, and has been fitted out with new search and surveillance

radars, four remote controlled weapons systems and four MK5B landing craft .When she has completed working up she will head for her new home port of Rio, arriving on August 25. **Photo: Raymond Wergan, Newton Ferrers. ©**

Saab unveils new anti-ship missile RBS15 Gungnir

Photo: Saab

Swedish defense technology company Saab has unveiled its next generation anti-ship missile system – the RBS15 Gungnir – that will be on display at the Farnborough International Airshow 2018 for the first time. The company says the new system continues the tradition of robust and autonomous all-weather capability of the RBS15 missile family but utilizing a design that unlocks a new level of future growth potential. Whilst RBS15 Mk3 delivers the capabilities that forces require today, the RBS15 Gungnir also integrates with pre-existing RBS15 infrastructure. The system is backwards compatible, so an investment in Mk3 today opens a smooth path to transition into Gungnir tomorrow. The name Gungnir is from Scandinavian mythology and refers to the Norse god Odin's spear which never missed its target. RBS15 Gungnir is the system level name whilst in the air-launched configuration the missile is called the RBS15 Mk4 Air. "*RBS15 Gungnir is offered in both air-launched and surface-launched configurations that offer greatly improved capabilities, compared to other missile systems on the market. With an improved range to more than 300 km and highly advanced target seeker, it gives the capability to engage any target, in all conditions*," says Görgen Johansson, Senior Vice President and head of Saab business area Dynamics. The option to engage targets from the air, as well as from land and sea gives the ability to perform coordinated attacks, with multiple missiles, against a wide range of naval and land-based targets thereby increasing mission flexibility and success. The latest version of the RBS15 development and production program was first contracted in March 2017 with the Swedish Defence Material Administration (FMV). That March 2017 contract amounted to SEK 3.2 billion with deliveries to take place during the period 2017-2026. Additional production of missiles was contracted with FMV in April 2017 for MSEK 500, with deliveries to begin in the mid-2020s. The RBS15 missile family is jointly produced by Saab and Diehl Defence GmbH & Co. KG and serves with various navies, coastal batteries and air forces from Sweden, Finland, Germany, Poland, Croatia, Thailand and an undisclosed country.

Source: Naval Today

The US Navy's FFG(X) Program Could Take a Nod from East Asian Shipbuilders

Should the next U.S. frigate come from the Pacific?

Photo: Jorge Delgado/US Navy

The future of naval power lies in the Asia-Pacific, not Europe. Japan, China, the United States, and South Korea will remain among the world's foremost maritime nations, and all possess sophisticated military shipbuilding industries. But Craig Hooper argues that the United States in particular, and the West more generally, has not paid sufficient attention to innovations in naval architecture in East Asia. In particular, Hooper wonders why Japanese and Korean designs have had relatively limited impact on the U.S. FFG(x) competition. Both countries have developed advanced frigate or small destroyer designs, and both have integrated technology compatible with U.S. requirements; both also have longstanding experience in shipbuilding. Why have these designs had less of an impact, despite their apparent sophistication and the heavy investment than Japan and the RoK have

made? As Hooper suggests, Korean and especially Japanese shipbuilders simply lack experience and expertise in export-oriented shipbuilding. Korean military shipbuilding has only recently matured to become internationally competitive, while Japan has until recently resisted entering the arms export industry. But these are explanations for the relative lack of attention, not reasons to perpetuate that lack of attention. Shipbuilding remains collaborative; Korean and Japanese designs owe much to the United States, and Chinese designs still have deep roots in Soviet shipbuilding of the Cold War. Japan's shipbuilding industry came of its own in the first decades of the twentieth century, with the assistance of the British. As Hooper points out, at its core industrial innovation owes a great deal to policies that facilitate the transfer of information and practice. During the Cold War, the United States reaped immense civil and military advantages from managing a globalized system of innovation and technology transfer that allowed it to leap ahead of the Soviet Union. It's also worth noting that while arms transfer relationships can solidify an alliance, the bulk of the transfers between the U.S. and Korea and Japan are one way, often with the United States saying "*no*" when technologies become too sensitive. But investing in ship designs with significant Korean or Japanese components could help bind the respective alliances together. And of course, it would also behove the Trump administration to think hard about how the trade relationships that the United States has laboriously constructed with its network of allies over the past seventy years has helped lay the foundations for America's military technological advantages. **Source: The Diplomat**

This scenario is unlikely to happen under the Trump-regime with *America First* policy.

The Norwegian **W 303 *Svalbard*** departing from Tromso **Photo : Huib Lievense ©**

The US COAST GUARD training ship ***Eagle*** attended by the KTK tug ***Mero*** approaching the port of Willemstad –Curacao
Photo : Piet Sinke
www.maasmondmaritime.com
(c)

A New Gap in the High North and Forward Defense Against Russian Naval Power

July 17, 2018 Steven Wills

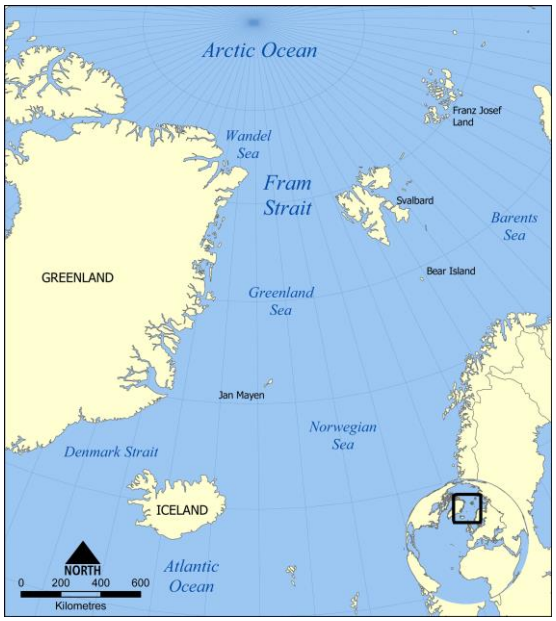
By Steve Wills, CNA Analyst

Norwegian Navy Skjold-class corvette.

The stand-up of a new NATO Maritime headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, the re-establishment of the U.S. Navy's East Coast-based Second Fleet and the prospect for a new NATO Maritime Strategy this year have again fueled interest in naval warfare in the wider Atlantic Ocean. One of the most commonly mentioned landmarks in this emerging environment is the iconic Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom (GIUK) gap. The scene of the German battleship *Bismarck's* passage to the Atlantic and the transit highway of early Russian ballistic missile submarines to their patrol stations near the United States and Europe, the GIUK Gap is synonymous with naval warfare in the Atlantic. Unfortunately, current references to the GIUK gap harken back to a different time and strategic situation that is markedly different from the situation today. Despite early assessments that the Soviet Union was going to target the sea lines of communication (SLOC) crossing the Atlantic, the Soviets never intended to make interdiction of Atlantic convoys a priority mission. Defense of their ballistic missile submarines, countering Allied aircraft carrier battle groups, and littoral defense and support to the Soviet Army were always their main priorities. Today's much smaller Russian Navy has similar missions and strategic geography, but now boasts long range cruise missile armament. The NATO Alliance must return to a deterrent posture similar to that of the Cold War in order to prevent potential Russian aggression, but the locus of action is much further north than Iceland. The real "**Gap**" where NATO must focus its deterrent action is the Greenland, Svalbard, North Cape line at the northern limit of the Norwegian and Greenland Seas. It is again time to consider deterrent action and potential naval warfare in the "**High North**."

Never the GIUK Gap Anyway

While important in the Second World War and perhaps the early and middle Cold War, the GIUK Gap did not have the same geographic significance in the late 1970s and 1980s. While earlier Russian ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) had to first sail close to the U.S. coast and then to the middle Atlantic in order to launch their weapons, the advent of the *Delta* and *Typhoon* classes with improved sub-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) allowed Soviet missile boats to launch their weapons from the safety of Soviet littoral waters. Intelligence gathered by U.S. and Allied sources in the late 1970s suggested that rather than conduct a rerun of the failed German U-boat campaigns of the World Wars, Soviet submarines were to be deployed in a largely defensive posture close to the Soviet homeland. Earlier work by the Center for Naval Analyses had suggested that Soviet attack subs would be prepared to defend their own SSBNs, attack U.S. Navy carrier battle groups, and perhaps venture forth to attack U.S. SSBNs. But attacking logistics and commerce on the Atlantic SLOCs was a fourth-priority mission at best.



The High North region.

By the 1980s, the U.S. Navy was planning, in the event of a failure of deterrence, to take the war to the Soviet littoral waters and homeland. This was a global effort that included U.S. and Allied action against the Soviets in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans, and the Mediterranean, Baltic, and Black Seas. U.S. submarines would stalk and sink their Soviet counterparts and SSBNs while U.S. carrier battle groups would attack Soviet bases on the Kola Peninsula (as well as other locations around the periphery of the Soviet state) to prevent a correlation of forces that allowed for a successful Soviet land attack in Central Germany. A series of exercises begun in the early 1950s at the dawn of NATO's existence had exercised both naval attacks on the Soviet homeland and the defense of Atlantic SLOCs, but the exercise effort moved into high gear in the 1980s. The advent of the aggressive Maritime Strategy meant the Navy would no longer focus on just the defense of SLOCs as it had

been told during the Carter administration. Encouraged by Reagan administration Navy Secretary John Lehman and led by experienced flag officers such as Admirals "Ace" Lyons, and "Hammerin Hank" Mustin, a string of aggressive naval exercises in both the Atlantic and "**high north**" practiced to defend Norway, drive the Soviets back to their home waters, and attack their bases on the Kola peninsula. Instrumented by the SOSUS system and patrolled by aircraft based in Iceland, the GIUK Gap was a strong symbolic barrier, but it was at best the southern signpost of a war to be fought much further to the north. The late Cold War focus on the maritime high north *"put Norway on both Brussels's and Washington's military strategic maps in an unprecedented way."*

The Reality of New Great Power Competition in the High North

The return of a revanchist Russia to the business of great power competition after a quarter century of decline has brought back Norway and its adjacent seas into U.S. and NATO strategic focus. The Russian Navy submarine force is less than a fifth of the size of its Soviet forebear. Many of these units will soon be ready for retirement, and are spread over four fleets. Despite those handicaps, Russian units are now equipped with the 3M-54 (Kaliber) cruise missile, which significantly extends Russian combat capability. This is also why the Russian Navy's mission set now includes an emphasis on non-nuclear deterrence. Soviet forces operating within their "bastion" defenses in the Barents Sea during the Cold War had to come south in order to engage NATO maritime forces and lacked a land attack cruise missile capability. Today's Russian Navy can remain within its Barents bastion and still launch accurate attacks against ships in the Norwegian Sea and NATO land targets without leaving these protected waters. If the Russians do leave their bastions it would most likely be on raiding missions enabled by land attack cruise missiles. Russia has a long tradition of raiding for short-term tactical and longer-term strategic gain, and such operations could manifest themselves in the maritime environment.

Possible zones of Russian bastion defense. (RUSI)

NATO faces significant challenges in dealing with this renewed Russian threat. The Alliance's naval forces are significantly smaller than during the Cold War and the United States Navy is less than half the size of its 1980s counterpart. Norwegian naval force structure is shrinking and even with planned qualitative improvements will not alone be sufficient for potential naval combat in the High North. Norway is set to significantly reduce its surface force through a planned decommissioning of its *Skjold*-class missile corvettes and remaining mine warfare ships in the next several years. The reductions are necessary in order to pay for new German-built submarines, P-8 Maritime patrol aircraft (MPA), and F-35A aircraft. The submarines and MPA purchases are appropriate force structure for potential combat in the Norwegian Sea south of Svalbard and north of Iceland, but reductions will result in a lack of surface patrol units necessary for maintaining sea control. The F35A can support sea control, but may be occupied elsewhere in defense of Norwegian shore-based infrastructure. For example, the Russian Air Force has launched a number of mock attacks on the Norwegian Joint Command Center at Bodo in recent years and F-35 aircraft may be largely focused on the defense of Norwegian C4I infrastructure. The Norwegian Coast Guard which contributes significantly to patrol efforts in the region has decreased in strength from 31 to 15 units from 1992 to the present. These Coast Guard units are also lightly armed and insufficient for contesting and retaining sea control in the region. The only significant Norwegian surface force structure in the next decade is likely to be the AEGIS *Nansen*-class frigates. These ships are capable multipurpose surface combatants, but their small numbers will require a significant commitment of NATO forces to the Norwegian Sea early in a conflict with Russia to ensure that Russian units, especially nuclear attack submarines, do not transit the Norwegian Sea "SLOC" to the North Atlantic. A key element of the *Nansen's* antisubmarine capability, the NH90 helicopter, has failed to deliver on its promised number of flight hours. While there may be enough helicopters for the frigates, there are no NH 90 helos with which to equip the Norwegian Coast Guard for its mission of Norwegian and Greenland Sea patrol and surveillance. The Norwegian Joint force is growing in capability, but even with improvements in air and subsurface units it likely cannot prevent passage of Russian Northern Fleet submarines through the Norwegian Sea.

Organizing for Maritime War in the High North

Once just the remote operating grounds of Russian ballistic missile subs, the Eastern Barents and Arctic Seas can now serve as bases for cruise missile platforms to threaten NATO units and land-based targets in and facing the Norwegian Sea. The NATO Alliance is moving in the right direction by reinstituting an Atlantic Maritime headquarters but more must be done to prepare for a conflict in the High North. Increased Alliance submarine operations in the Norwegian, Barents and Arctic

Seas serve to operationalize those headquarters changes. The North Atlantic SLOCs are important, but the Russians are not looking at the mid-Atlantic except for perhaps targets of opportunity. Joint and combined Allied activities that make use of the numerous air and port facilities around the Norwegian and Greenland Seas should be the main focus of JFC Norfolk. A NATO Joint Task Force (JTF) element, perhaps forward deployed afloat or ashore, may need to be present in the immediate area to direct operations.

The Royal Norwegian Navy frigate **KNM *Roald Amundsen* (F311)** underway in the Atlantic Ocean on 16 February 2018 as part of the U.S. Navy's Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG) while conducting its composite training unit exercise (**COMPTUEX**). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Scott Swofford)

Unmanned systems technology holds the promise of mobile, underwater detection grids that unlike the Cold War SOSUS nets can move themselves to better identify and localize submerged targets. The Norwegian and Greenland Seas are NATO lakes and receding sea ice has made for a wider and more open battlespace that allows for greater use of shore-based facilities in the region over a longer portion of the year. Small surface combatants such as the U.S. FFG(X) and LCS might operate in conjunction with unmanned units and maritime patrol aircraft and submarines to conduct a regional joint and combined antisubmarine warfare campaign.

Conclusion

A revanchist Russia does not directly threaten North Atlantic sea lines of communication, and the place to deter or engage them won't be the GIUK gap. NATO must prepare to deter and if necessary engage Russian naval forces in the High North long before these units can get into range of resupply ships or NATO nation port facilities on the European mainland. The Alliance has taken positive steps to meet this renewed maritime challenge, but must not be haunted by U-boat and Soviet ghosts from past Atlantic wars. The place to respond to a new Russian naval threat is close to its home base and not astride critical transatlantic communication routes.

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Source: http://cimsec.org

Africa's Blue Economy: An overlooked opportunity?

David Thomas

16 July 2018

Twelve miles off the coast of Namibia and 150 metres above the ocean floor, a fleet of six vessels scans and sifts for the valuable diamonds that boost the economies of southern Africa. Honing in on a promising area using geophysical mapping, a crawler cuts and dredges the seabed, sucking some 60 tonnes of sediment per hour through a giant pipe and onto the vessel. Without any human contact, the sediment is washed and sorted for the glittering stones, which are sealed into small, barcoded containers for the first stage of their journey to the boutiques of Europe and Asia. To many, subsea diamond mining may sound like a far-off vision of the future, a fanciful innovation on a par with asteroid mining. But with 1m carats recovered from the seabed in 2015 alone by global mining giant De Beers, the technology is already well into its infancy. For the firm, which has made a vast fortune sifting the soils of Southern Africa for 130 years, heading to the oceans is not just a technological luxury but also an economic necessity. With an estimated 95% of diamonds expected to come from the seabed off the coast of southwest Africa and land stocks ever more depleted and costly to exploit, the firm sees the ocean as a vital new frontier in its dominance of the global diamond industry. The sea-bound future of the diamond sector is just one of the thousands of eye-catching ways in which Africa's businesses, policymakers and ordinary citizens are turning their attention to the blue economy – a vast, largely untapped area of potential economic activity that has long played second fiddle to land resources. From deep-sea mining and oil drilling to fisheries, aquaculture, trade and tourism, Africa is only just waking up to the potential of the vast ocean and lake resources on its doorstep. Thirty-eight of Africa's 54 states are coastal, and maritime zones under Africa's jurisdiction total some 13m sq km, according to the United Nations. Africa's lake zones cover approximately 240,000 sq km while its transboundary river basins cover 64% of the continent's land area. Yet until recently, this vast canvas attracted surprisingly little attention. While small-scale fisheries and maritime trade have been a feature of the African coastline for millennia, the practical, technical and monetary difficulties of exploiting offshore areas mean that huge economic opportunities have gone begging. After years of neglect, the multilateral community is finally waking up. Policymakers are excitingly speaking of job creation, new sources of government revenue and the limitless

potential of ocean entrepreneurship. The African Union has launched its 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy in a bid to provide a broad framework for the protection and sustainable exploitation of Africa's marine resources. At its heart lies the creation of a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA), a common maritime space intended to boost trade, protect the environment and fisheries, share information and boost border protection and defence activities. But despite the obvious ambition, the challenges to successful implementation are immense. From concerns around environmental sustainability to the dangers of corruption and a dearth of actionable data, policymakers need vast resources to get to grips with large swathes of their own territory. In June, London hosted the inaugural **Africa Blue Economy Forum**, where policymakers and businesses met to chart a way forward. Speaking at the forum, World Ocean Council president and chief executive Paul Holthus summed up the challenge facing Africa: "*You need a stable operating environment based on security, the rule of law and a set of policies that are in place and enforced as a fundamental framework. There's clearly some significant challenges with regard to illegal and unregulated fisheries, piracy in relation to shipping, and oil and gas issues. Tapping these problems is really at the front end of having that stable environment, and solving them in themselves creates opportunities*." On land, policymakers struggle to turn well-meaning rhetoric into reality. If the blue economy is to become more than a branding slogan, meaningful resources and rigid policy implementation will be just as important at sea. "*We need to be able to govern resources effectively and be able to utilise them in a way that's transparent and inclusive*," says Kevin Chika Urama, senior adviser to the president of the African Development Bank (AfDB) on inclusive and green growth. "*The capacity to be able to do this requires resources which are lacking in some if not most African economies*."

Fishing for opportunities

In tiny fish markets along the coastline of Kenya, locals crowd around as fishermen return with their morning catch. From sleek fishing vessels manned by full-time crews to young boys in canoes trying their luck, all are looking for the best price for their catch. Yet while previous generations returned with the larger species once prevalent along the coast, today's fishermen have to make do with a diminished haul.

After decades of neglect from policymakers, the fishing communities of the coasts are facing potential catastrophe. As fishermen adapt to new technologies and increased populations boost demand for fish, coastal fisheries are being steadily decimated. It's a similar story in West Africa, where the income of artisanal fishermen has dropped by some 40% per canoe over the last decade, according to the World Bank. With freshwater and ocean fish contributing to the food security of over 200m Africans and providing income for over 10m, fishing sits at the forefront of debates about how to make the most of the blue economy while preserving a fragile ecosystem. "*Small-scale fisheries are collapsing themselves by overfishing – they're completely unregulated and unmanaged*," says Jeremy Prince of Murdoch University's Centre for Fish and Fisheries Research in Perth, Australia. "*The number of mouths to feed has been increasing, the value of the fish has been going up. For coastal communities one of the easiest ways to earn income is to sell fish. It's got easier to preserve and transport fish and that didn't exist a few years ago, so the reach of the market is further… the fishing gear is cheap and universal*." As well as the trade-off between profit and sustainability, the crisis in Africa's small-scale fisheries also highlights one of the most significant hurdles facing the wider blue economy – a dearth of actionable data with which to formulate policy responses. "*You're seeing food webs collapsing. They just haven't implemented management, fisheries have been below the radar and [policymakers] haven't been able to collect good statistics on them and there's been no way of making scientific assessments. If you can't measure it you can't manage it*," says Prince. "We don't really lack policies in terms of the blue economy, maritime industry and ports," concurs Urama. "*The problem with the sea is that it's a massive resource and you need massive resources to be able to understand what you have… to manage these things you need robust data, science and technology*." Paradoxically, that has left policymakers with far more data on large-scale fisheries operating miles offshore than the artisanal fisheries that operate under their noses. Indeed, sophisticated blue economy businesses may be easier to regulate than their artisanal peers. Adapting the data-driven approach that characterises attempts to regulate large businesses to smaller operators is one way to harness the potential of a burgeoning ocean sector – from small tourism boats to coastal fisheries and independent fish farms. Bringing small operators into tax and regulatory systems *remains a formidable challenge. "The* problem we've had is an inability to apply what we use from large fisheries to smaller ones," says Prince. "*These systems are too information and data intensive to apply to coastal communities where [policymakers] haven't even been able to count the number of fishermen. But there are some similarities – the basics of controlling the size of the fish you catch, not catching fish that are too small for their breed… in a big-picture sense the solutions are the same*." Yet building vast data sets, not to mention funding the education required at community and policy level to force through change, requires a huge increase in resources that many African countries lack. Persuading cash-strapped treasuries to splash cash on speculative ocean-based projects is a big ask at a time of on-land austerity. After all, there are few voters to be won in the middle of the Atlantic or Indian Oceans. "*Obviously you're going to need billions of dollars to be able to build all the capacity required to be able to do this,*" says Urama. "*Investing in education, science and technology, robotics and drones and all the technology that advanced societies are using to monitor ocean resources is huge. It's difficult to put a number on it.*" In a bid to interest countries in ocean management, the AfDB is developing finance mechanisms, including "*blue bonds*", to catalyse investment into marine opportunities. The AFDB is also looking to boost concessional financing for countries interested in launching ocean projects. "*Most of these states are small so they need concessional financing to harness the blue economy effectively. Within the bank we use the African Development Fund to help small and fragile countries to develop their economies with concessional funding… We find that many African governments are already beginning to work on blue economy development plans,*" says Urama. But where there are great opportunities for economic

advancement, there are also likely to be opportunities for corruption. Africa is already estimated to lose some $42bn per year through a combination of illegal fishing and illegal logging, according to UNECA. Industries notorious for corruption, including oil, gas and mining, are likely to turn their gaze towards the ocean economy. Meanwhile, the porousness of maritime borders and a lack of ocean security were brutally highlighted by the Somali piracy crisis of the early 2010s. Have policymakers learned from that era of marine criminality? "*Because things are offshore and out of sight, out of reach of direct government intervention, there's potentially more opportunity for activities that are outside the norms or illegal*," says Paul Holthus. "*On the other hand there is less opportunity for potentially corrupt practices in the sense of engagement by government officials because they're not physically there [at sea*]." "*We need to be able to deal with those issues before we are able to sustainably manage the blue economy and resources relating to it,*" adds Urama.

A blue future

Despite the immense challenges highlighted by the fishing industry, there is little doubt that successfully harnessing the blue economy offers huge opportunities for African nations. That is particularly true of Africa's rarely discussed island nations, for whom the blue economy brings special resonance. While Mauritius may be a small player with just 1,850 sq km, according to UNECA, its territorial waters of 1.9m sq km catapult it to the size of South Africa. "*Island countries like Mauritius, Seychelles, Cape Verde have really already been engaged in the importance of the ocean economy, and with the movement towards the blue economy at the same time as the Sustainable Development Goals, its really coming together for those island countries and those that have a greater historical interaction with the sea*," says Holthus. "*Major fishing countries have really been out in front with this and that is helping to drive continental and regional efforts to get countries engaged in this – there's some great best practices, terms of finance and investment and enabling policy conditions that are emerging from this*." While policymakers may finally be taking the lead, there remains a crucial responsibility for the business community to put its views across and drive the agenda. "*I would suggest there's a need for much more structure and engagement with the business community so that we really get that real world exchange with policymakers. [We want] business folks to say we've got these solutions, here are the challenges and barriers we are facing. Let's develop a more active exchange so we can fine-tune these frameworks and operationalise them*." The hope is that a new understanding between the governing elites and the businesses that ply the ocean will unleash a new engine of job creation. Whether in diamonds, fishing or tourism, the blue economy should become indistinguishable from the broader currents of economic growth. "*The blue economy generally is a huge job creator, from artisanal fishing to high-end aquaculture, marine biology and deep sea mining*," says Urama. "*For most countries, especially island states, the blue economy is the economy itself*."

Source: https://africanbusinessmagazine.com

Workhorses of the sea

The ***Peak Bremen*** loaded with 2 large TP's enroute from Antwerp to Nordenham

Photo : Flying Focus Aerial Photography www.flyingfocus.nl ©