

NAVY NEWS WEEK 13-3

27 March 2018

Pirates sighted in Ghana's territorial waters – Attacks on ships increase in Gulf of Guinea

in [Piracy and Security News](#) 21/03/2018



Merchant vessels transiting the country's coast have been cautioned to shore up their defence against forced boarding. The warning comes in the wake of increased activities of pirates off the coast of Ghana and in the sub region. For instance, a merchant ship was seen surrounded by three speedboats filled with armed pirates off the coast of Takoradi on March 8, this year. A report sent to the Maritime Domain Awareness For Trade – Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG) via email on March 8, this year, said, "at 1700 UTC a merchant vessel was approached by three speedboats, in position 03°55N 001°14E 155°/65NM from Takoradi, Ghana". The report further indicated that "occupants of the speed boats were wearing camouflage clothing and carrying weapons." Consequently, the MDAT-GoG advised vessels transiting the country's coast to exercise extreme caution to avoid any attacks from the pirates. Piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea has become an established criminal activity and is of increasing concern to the maritime sector with recent attacks becoming more widespread and violent. A report by the International Bureau on Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships suggests that there were 11 separate pirate attacks between 2013 and 2017 off the country's coast. Although the number of pirate attacks off Ghana's coast may not be alarming compared to other countries along the Gulf of Guinea, an expert in the maritime industry, Dr Kofi Mbia, in an interview with the **Graphic Business** on March 15 said "we need to improve upon our surveillance and get the Ghana Navy to increase their patrol. You know the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA) patrols the anchorage area of our ports and a lot of ships that want a safe haven come to our anchorage to get protection for some time but now that the spate of piracy has increased and their activities recorded on our coast, there is a need to increase the surveillance."

Effects of pirate activities on trade

Dr Mbia stated that the surge in pirate activities could have a wrong impact on commercial trading in the shipping industry as it would affect the climate of confidence in trade and influence the rise in insurance premiums. "When your coast is infested with pirates then there is the tendency for insurance premiums to go up for vessels that are calling at your port because of the threat to the vessels and at the same time it affects the climate of confidence in trade. Vessels must be able to move freely and navigate to and out of the port but whenever there are increase pirate attacks, there is the tendency for some vessels not to call on some particular ports because of fear of attack so indeed it affects commercial trading," he said.

Rising pirate attacks in GoG

In January this year, the government of Luxembourg reported that the product tanker **ST Marseille** was attacked by five armed pirates at an anchorage off Cotonou, Benin. The pirates succeeded in boarding the vessel, and two Beninese guards sustained gunshot wounds in an exchange. The **ST Marseille** had no cargo on board at the time of the attack and the pirates eventually gave up and departed. The crew were unharmed and were all accounted for. Both guards have received medical attention and are in stable condition. The **ST Marseille** is a Luxembourg-flagged tanker operated by French firm ST Management SAS. In a similar fashion, on January 10, the product tanker **MT Barrett** went missing from an anchorage off Benin and was not heard from for two days. It had been hijacked and the vessel's crew held hostage, hence the pirates contacted the shipowner to make arrangements for their return on January 12. After several days of negotiations, they were released unharmed, and the **Barrett** was allowed to go on its way. Again on February 1, the tanker **Marine Express** and its 22 crew members went missing from an anchorage off Cotonou. The vessel was held for several days and released unharmed.

Source: [Graphic Online](#) via <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com>

Navy Still Struggling with Readiness Balance between Overseas and U.S.-based Forces

CAPITOL HILL — Uneven readiness preparations favored funding deployed forces over those based in the U.S. and

creates a "tale of two navies" that persists, service leaders told a congressional panel on Tuesday.



Amphibious assault ship **USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6)** prepares to pass Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force general purpose destroyer **JS Kirisame (DD 104)** in Sasebo. **US Navy Photo**

A year ago, forward deployed units were described as being operationally ready to respond to any challenge, something U.S.-based units were not ready to do, said, Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), during a Tuesday House Armed Services readiness subcommittee hearing. She asked if the strain on U.S.-based units been reduced since then. *“I would say it still is a tale of two Navies, absolutely, and the reason is because we haven’t received the additional funding that’s requested in the FY 18 bill,”* said Vice Adm. William “Bill” Lescher, in charge of the Navy’s integration of capabilities and resources. The Navy is currently operating under Fiscal Year 2017 funding levels as part of the latest continuing resolution, Lescher said. The FY 2017 budget did not provide enough funding to pay for supplies and critical infrastructure projects, he said. The Navy would not be able to work on a backlog of readiness-related projects until the FY 2018 and FY 2019 budgets were approved. Rep. Joe Wilson, (R-S.C.), the readiness subcommittee chair, asked about a current readiness issue related to the Navy’s heavy lift capabilities. The Navy grounded its fleet of C-130T cargo planes in July after a Marine Corps operated KC-130T crashed in Mississippi. The four-engine turboprop planes – the backbone of the Navy’s ability to transport supplies and people between theaters – remain grounded because the Navy hasn’t received the \$121 million required to purchase a new propeller system needed to get aircraft working again. What has grounding the C-130T cargo planes done to readiness, Wilson asked. *“Right now, we have 42 percent degradation in that capability and that is related to the grounding of the C-130 Tangos,”* said Vice Admiral Luke M. McCollum, chief of the Navy’s reserve force. The Navy relies on reservists to crew its fleet of C-130T and C-40A cargo planes. To pick up the slack, McCollum said his fleet of reservists operated C-40A aircraft are currently operating at 100 percent capacity. If funded, McCollum said he estimates replacing the propeller systems would take between 12 and 18 months. Fully funding the program now would help the Navy finish the program sooner. The propeller systems, though, are currently listed as unfunded priorities in the Navy’s FY 2019 budget request. *“The Navy is laser-focused on executing this funding responsibly, closely scrutinizing the spending while driving performance,”* Lescher said.

Source: USNI News

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands: India’s Eastern Anchor in a Changing Indo-Pacific

[Darshana M. Baruah](#)



Image: Pratitimajumdar/[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Editor’s Note: This is the nineteenth installment of “Southern (Dis)Comfort,” a series from War on the Rocks and the [Stimson Center](#). The series seeks to unpack the dynamics of intensifying competition — military, economic, diplomatic — in Southern Asia,

principally between China, India, Pakistan, and the United States. Catch up on [the rest of the series](#).

India’s military priorities are highlighted by its [defense budget](#): the army funded at 55 percent, the air force at 23 percent, and the navy at a meager 15 percent. Since independence, troubles along India’s continental borders, including wars with China and Pakistan, have kept the country’s defense focused on its northern frontiers. A quiet maritime environment and a strong navy inherited from the British have allowed India to establish a prominent role in the Indian Ocean region without much effort. In particular, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been neglected in Delhi’s strategic and political priorities, especially given their distance (approximately 1200 kilometers from the mainland). Priorities within the navy focused on strengthening India’s immediate coastline while the islands’ potential was something to be taken advantage of later. However, recent developments in maritime Asia have forced Delhi to re-examine its naval priorities, and the current government has started showing more enthusiasm for maritime security. The Indian Ocean, which remained quiet after the Cold War, is reemerging as a critical theater for strategic competition. As China expands its presence in the Indian Ocean and strengthens its engagement with littoral states in South Asia, India is beginning to formulate a new maritime approach to retain its prominence in the region. While India is concerned about China’s engagement across the Indian Ocean, developments in the South Asian maritime domain are of particular concern. Critically situated near the Malacca Strait, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could significantly alter the maritime dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. While the islands have been envisaged as a platform for offensive capabilities, their true benefit today lies in furthering maritime domain awareness and maintaining a naval advantage for India and its friends. In addition to formulating a coherent strategy for the role of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in its national maritime approach, Delhi must also find a way to make use of its partners in addressing the islands’ lack of physical infrastructure. While India has neglected its naval priorities, the maritime domain

gives it an opportunity to establish itself as a leading regional actor. These maritime advantages will help India balance and respond to a rising and assertive China in its neighborhood.

Putting the Andamans into Perspective

Historically, maritime powers have used the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to project power in the Indian Ocean and as a key base for expeditions to the east. [Rajendra Chola I](#) of the Chola empire first tapped into their strategic advantages. The Chola dynasty was one of the most powerful in the history of South India, and its strong navy played a critical role in its expeditionary missions to Southeast Asia. After conquering modern-day Sri Lanka, Chola's navy used the Andamans as a base to launch successful raids on the ports of the Srivijaya empire, based in modern-day Indonesia. Among modern nation-states, the British and the Japanese effectively used the Andamans to advance their strategic aims. The [British Empire](#) kept a strong foothold in the Andamans and used them to expand its security footprint in the subcontinent and across the Indian Ocean. During World War II, the Japanese captured the islands in an attempt to fight the British and expand their presence in the region. [Imperial Japan](#) also used the islands to attack Burma and Northeast India. Throughout history, these islands have been vital to nations expanding their maritime presence in the Indian Ocean. The Andamans provide a bridge between the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean and overlook one of the busiest sea lanes of communications in the world. Moreover, they are a key chokepoint and trading route for goods traversing the waters of the Indian Ocean to East and Southeast Asia.

Projecting Indian Power

India maintains an unparalleled geographic advantage over China in the Indian Ocean, since the Indian Navy is based in this theater. However, China is beginning to address its weaknesses in the Indian Ocean, such as by starting to forward deploy with [its base in Djibouti](#). Beijing is building a series of commercial ports in the Indian Ocean that boost its strategic presence in the region. These [ports](#) — strategically located in Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives — could eventually serve a military purpose. Unfortunately, the political class in Delhi has for far too long downplayed the emerging challenge that China poses in the maritime domain and overlooked its own advantages such as the Andamans. The Indian Ministry of Defence has been primarily focused on strengthening its capabilities along its [northern borders](#), where India has territorial disputes with Pakistan in the west and China in the east. Delhi's approach to the maritime domain is [both new and largely reactive](#) to the changing maritime environment. As the Sino-Indian competition [continues to deepen](#) in South Asia, Delhi must be willing to develop its advantages in the Indian Ocean region. Beijing is concerned that, unless it can secure its own [sea lanes of communication](#) to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf via the Malacca Strait, it could be vulnerable to a [U.S.](#) and [India-led blockade](#) during a conflict. Yet it is unlikely that the United States and India would do this given that any attempt to blockade the strait would amount to a declaration of war against China. While this remains an option in a wartime situation, there are other good reasons to develop the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that may contribute to deterring China. The real advantage the Andamans provide to India is the ability to conduct surveillance over critical waters. As the main entry and exit point to and from the Indian Ocean, the islands offer unparalleled advantage in surveillance and monitoring the Malacca Strait. A coherent monitoring and response mechanism will help India detect Chinese vessels upon their entry into the Indian Ocean. The Indian Navy's [2015 maritime strategy](#) lists maritime domain awareness as a critical tool for achieving a favorable maritime environment. The strategy takes a bolder approach to the changing environment and is much more forward-looking than its predecessor in 2007. Maritime domain awareness, according to the navy, "*involves being cognizant of the position and intentions of all actors, whether own, hostile or neutral, and in all dimensions—on, over and under the seas.*" If it can create the required "*situational awareness*" through surveillance and monitoring of the Malacca Strait, India and its partners will be prepared to respond to threatening developments. Maritime domain awareness through the Andamans is critical, especially in monitoring sub-surface vessels. If not detected while leaving harbor or transiting through the strait, submarines are almost impossible to track in open seas. Given its crucial location, the Malacca Strait could help India track the movements of Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean. If detected at the entry point, India will be able to deploy the required assets to continue tracking such movements. The Andamans also facilitate India's reach over the Indonesian straits, which may become alternate transit routes for sub-surface vessels. Given the shallow waters and heavy traffic density of Malacca (which forces submarines to surface), it is likely that the straits of Sunda, Lombok, and Ombai will quickly become alternate routes for military vessels entering the Indian Ocean. In fact, China is already using the [Lombok straits](#) as a routine entry for its ships and vessels. While using these straits comes with legal and territorial issues, as well as other limitations, it is not impossible to use them. Relying on the geographical proximity afforded by the Andamans, India can collaborate with Indonesia to patrol and monitor these straits to uphold a rules-based order.

The Challenges India Faces

As India continues to develop the islands, it must prioritize strengthening its air, surface, and sub-surface surveillance capabilities. The islands need to be capable of basing and deploying surveillance resources and require stronger anti-submarine warfare and early warning capabilities. India should also upgrade the islands' communications infrastructure and integrate it with maritime domain awareness facilities on the mainland. The current infrastructure is poor and cannot sustain a coherent surveillance strategy. There is an urgent need to enhance the islands' intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance cover to fully utilize their potential. However, transforming the islands from a strategic outpost to a key forward operating base will require significant development of the islands and procurement of new assets. The islands are currently home to modest military assets and infrastructure with tremendous, though underutilized, potential. Surveillance

assets such as the P-8i's are deployed to the Andamans from the mainland. The islands will require considerable military and civilian infrastructure to support the required force structure of a full-fledged forward operating military base. However, developing these islands will carry massive environmental, sustainability, and tribal welfare challenges. There is an island-wide restriction on clearing land for development, and [94.68 percent](#) of the islands is under forest cover. The presence of indigenous tribes on the islands has also restricted commercial activities and development near tribal areas. While the current government is taking initiatives to transform the islands into a [maritime hub](#), the pace of progress is not fast enough to match maritime developments in the region. While Delhi struggles to develop its own islands, Beijing is moving steadfastly to build maritime facilities in India's neighborhood and across the Indian Ocean region. China's deepening [military and commercial engagements](#) with the Indian Ocean littoral states could undermine India's role if it fails to maintain its maritime advantages. While India debates a broader road map for developing the islands, it can utilize its existing facilities to strengthen its maritime domain awareness.

Transforming the Andamans into a Strategic Hub

One of India's first attempts at strengthening its military presence on the islands was establishing the country's only [tri-services command](#) in Port Blair in 2001. The command was established against the backdrop of increasing [transnational crime](#) around the islands and a better understanding of their strategic potential in the maritime domain. However, despite the presence of all three services, the Andaman and Nicobar Command has yet to realize its potential. The command has [limited assets](#) and presence in comparison to a theater-level presence of a joint command. While it has the potential to be the [forward operating base](#) for all of India's engagements with Southeast Asia, right now it mainly acts as a logistical facility for deployments of India's Eastern Naval Command to the East and Southeast Asia. Even for this role, the Andaman and Nicobar Command desperately needs an extension and upgrade of the runways, jetties, and ports located there. The 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean significantly [destroyed existing infrastructure](#) on the Andamans, including major roads, lands, and bridges. Although Delhi made considerable reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, major military infrastructure remains inadequately rebuilt. The tsunami aggravated the poor connectivity between the islands. One of the [major routes](#) linking North and South Andaman was damaged during the disaster and has yet to be fully reconstructed. The infrastructure and connectivity problems were largely neglected until recently. Since the islands are a biodiversity hotspot as well as [home to about 27,000 members of indigenous tribes](#), most development and construction-related projects [require clearances](#) from the Department of Environment and Forest and from the Department of Tribal Welfare. However, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has been able to push forward on many of [these projects](#) and get the necessary clearances to boost connectivity and infrastructure on the islands. The [appointment of Admiral D. K. Joshi](#), the former chief of the Indian Navy, as the lieutenant governor of the islands in October 2017 was a positive development that boosted Delhi's more active approach. Establishing a former naval chief as administrative head will allow a better understanding of the security, economic, and commercial potential and limitations in developing the islands. Some recent initiatives have been focused on enhancing [communications infrastructure](#), better connectivity, acquiring [platforms](#) for [amphibious operations](#), strengthening maintenance and [repair facilities](#), regular deployments of surveillance capabilities, strengthening [military-to-military ties](#) with Southeast Asia, and building [missile facilities](#).

Leveraging India's New Maritime Partnerships

While India has clearly shown its intention to develop the islands, it still faces significant challenges. Apart from environmental and tribal welfare concerns, the government also lacks the capital to build the required infrastructure on the islands. It must find a way to collaborate with its partners to advance its development vision. Many of India's naval partners have specific expertise that can help in this area. For example, India and Japan are building [infrastructure and connectivity corridors](#) in the Indian Ocean, including the Asia-Africa Growth corridor. These initiatives provide an opportunity to develop many civilian projects on the islands, like ports and highways. Similarly, as India continues to build its [partnership with the navies](#) of the United States, Australia, and Indonesia, it should use these collaborations to advance its maritime domain awareness capabilities on the islands, such as partnering with [France](#) on development of [renewable energy](#). India has historically been sensitive about international involvement with the islands, barring even partners from making port calls and military visits outside of the [MILAN exercise](#). But it must shed that cautious approach and start to discuss possible areas of collaboration. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands provide significant surveillance and monitoring advantages to India's navy. If India can chart out a role for the islands in its maritime domain awareness project, it can achieve far greater deterrence through staging and power projection. Additionally, the Andamans provide excellent opportunities to deepen India's new maritime partnerships with countries such as Japan, the United States, Australia, and France. India's approach is a testament to its continued neglect of its maritime advantages, though the attention given in the past few years has been an exception. Despite having significant coastline and positioning itself as a maritime power, Delhi has done little to elevate its actual maritime potential. It may be that the absence of confrontation in the maritime domain has allowed India to ignore its naval advantages as the Defense Ministry remained engaged in continental troubles. The lack of a coherent naval strategy has contributed significantly to such neglect. Developing the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will give India new options and opportunities as it continues to grow its partnerships and respond to a rising China. The islands will contribute to India's advantages, create more room for debate on deterrence policies, and contribute positively to India's effort to establish itself as a serious regional actor. Conversely, however, continued neglect will call into question the country's seriousness about maritime security — something India must prioritize as its foreign policy evolves.

Darshana M. Baruah is a research analyst and program administrator with Carnegie India. Her primary research focuses on maritime security in Asia with a focus on the Indian Navy and its role in a new security architecture.

Source: <https://warontherocks.com>



MEDITERRANEAN SEA
(March 17, 2018) A U.S. Navy submarine surfaces near the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer **USS Laboon (DDG 58)**, March 17, 2018. **Laboon**, homeported at Naval Station Norfolk, is in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of regional allies and partners and U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kallysta Castillo/Released)

India's Seychelles military base plan hits choppy waters

Opposition declares agreement between two governments 'dead' against backdrop of contest for influence in Indian Ocean.

by [Zeenat Saberlin](#)

21 Mar 2018



Seychelles is of strategic importance to Asian powers India and China [Nazanine Moshiri/Al Jazeera]

India's plans for building military facilities in [Seychelles](#) have hit choppy waters, with the Indian Ocean island's political opposition blocking efforts to ratify a

deal reached by the two governments. Seychelles and [India](#) signed a 20-year agreement in January to build an airstrip and a jetty for its navy on Assumption Island. This week, the opposition in Seychelles, led by Wavel Ramkalawan, declared the deal "dead". "I hope I have made it clear that this is the end of the Assumption agreement and that I don't expect to see it on any agenda between President Faure and the opposition," Ramkalawan said in the National Assembly on Tuesday. The opposition coalition holds a majority of seats in the National Assembly, and the country's law mandates that the agreement must be ratified by this body. Seychelles, known internationally for its picturesque beaches, is of strategic importance to both India and [China](#). Asia's biggest economies are drawn to its Indian Ocean location along some of the world's busiest sea-lanes.

Asian power rivalry

India and China are locked in a thinly veiled contest for influence across a vast part of [Asia](#). China last year inaugurated its first overseas military base in [Djibouti](#), situated on a global shipping point that links the Red Sea and Suez Canal. India's plans for a military base in Seychelles was first announced during a trip by [Narendra Modi](#), India's prime minister, to the islands in 2015. "This agreement would potentially allow for a greater arc of surveillance to curb piracy and other illegal activities in the exclusive economic zone of Seychelles. It would also burnish India's credibility as a collective security stakeholder," Uday Bhaskar, retired Indian navy officer and defence expert, told Al Jazeera. But the project has faced public protests in Seychelles as activists argue that the country cannot afford to be drawn into a regional conflict involving nuclear powers India and China. "It is clear that India wants to establish a military base in Assumption to monitor the traffic in the Mozambique channel in the Indian Ocean and to especially monitor the energy transport of China around the world," Ralph Volcere, a political activist who has led demonstrations against the pact in Seychelles, told Al Jazeera. "Seychelles, a small island with only 90,000 people, cannot afford to be taking sides. We are not pro-India, anti-India, pro-Chinese, anti-Chinese. We are only pro-Seychelles. "We know the rivalry between China and India to have influence over the Indian Ocean. The Chinese also wanted to build a base here, but we turned that down. Now we can't have India station its military personnel in

our country. It doesn't matter if they are American or English or German - we don't want foreign military personnel here." An email from Al Jazeera to the office of Seychelles president, Danny Faure, seeking details about the pact went unanswered.

Leaked pact details

The protests and demonstrations against the project led to the India-Seychelles agreement being amended in January this year. Safeguards including a no-nuclear weapons use were included in the renegotiated pact that also prohibited India from using the base during war. Earlier this month, details of the classified agreement between India and Seychelles surfaced on the internet along with a YouTube video, complete with maps and the location of proposed facilities. Following the leak, local news-media reports quoted President Faure as denying that land on Assumption Island was sold to India. His government has since ordered a probe into the leak. "Maybe the two governments should have made the text of the agreement available to the public. Secrecy has only roused suspicions that Seychelles interests will be harmed. But if you read the text of both the old and the new agreements, they are quite reasonable," Manoj Joshi, a Delhi-based foreign policy analyst, told Al Jazeera. India has said it intends to invest \$550m in building the military base. Also earlier this month, Seychelles Vice President Vincent Meriton said the deal is "still in the conception phase, and there is no clear cost attributed to it at the moment. It will cover about a quarter of the remote island about 1,140 southwest of the Seychelles' main island of Mahe".

India's waning influence

In any event, India's influence, from neighbouring [Nepal](#) to the Maldives and [Sri Lanka](#), may be waning, according to a number of Asia experts. "India is facing a lot of blowback in the region. China is a subtext in India's troubles in both Maldives and Seychelles," Joshi told Al Jazeera. "For small countries, China offers a leverage against a big neighbour like India. Indian diplomacy must find ways of dealing with China's rise in the Indian Ocean." As China expands its sphere of influence in Sri Lanka, building and operating ports in the country, India has bid for operating an airport on the island nation's southern tip. Like Sri Lanka, Nepal, a landlocked country between China and India, too has turned to Beijing for investments. According to some, it's "a natural fit". "Look at our roads, our infrastructure. There's popular demand for infrastructure investment," Swarnim Wagle, a former member of the National Planning Commission of Nepal, [wrote](#) recently in the South China Morning Post. "Our debt-GDP ratio is 22 percent. The average for low-income countries is 43 percent. We can raise borrowings substantially, but too much of internal borrowing crowds out the private sector. So there'll be need to look at funds from outside, and China is a natural fit as it's eager to invest abroad." Meanwhile, in the Maldives, once seen as one of the closest allies of India in the Indian Ocean region, India is struggling to mend frayed bilateral ties.

'Degree of discord'

The Indian and the Maldives foreign ministries traded barbs over an extension of the state of emergency in the country last month. "India has traditionally had a very robust, empathetic relationship with the Indian Ocean island states. This is currently in some degree of review, and there has been a degree of discord," Uday Bhaskar, the Indian defence expert, told Al Jazeera. "In Seychelles, the opposition party has voiced certain concerns about the military infrastructure in the Assumption island. "But there have been protests in Sri Lanka about China's infrastructure projects as well. One can expect that there will be a degree of competition between India and China in the Indian Ocean Region over the next decade." For now, the proposed Indian military base continues to generate anger in Seychelles. Demonstrators carrying "Hands Off Assumption" placards have protested in the capital Victoria every Saturday since January. As a battle for hearts and minds, this is an issue that reverberates far beyond Seychelles, all the way to New Delhi and Beijing.

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

Indian, US navies have shared interest: US Navy chief John Richardson

India and the US have a shared interest that their navies provide security which guarantees a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, a US Navy chief said today.

By: [PTI](#) | Washington | Published: March 22, 2018 12:26 AM



The US has been pushing for a broader role for India in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region. (Photo: Twitter/ Indian Navy)

India and the US have a shared interest that their navies provide security which guarantees a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, a US Navy chief said today. US chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson had a meeting at the Pentagon with Indian Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba who is on a

five-day visit to America. It was Richardson's fourth meeting with Lanba. The two had last met at the IMDEX Asia defense conference in May 2017. "We have a shared interest that our navies provide the security that underwrites a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region," Richardson told PTI after his meeting with Lanba. "I've met often with Admiral Lanba and our discussions center on a naval partnership built on respect and trust," he said. The two heads of Navy met with Secretary of Navy Richard V Spencer and discussed ways to improve interoperability to include additional naval exercises and staff talks, said a Pentagon readout of the meeting. "Naval exercises like **Malabar** and the **Rim-of-the-Pacific** are examples of our deepening cooperation and I look forward to continuing to explore opportunities that increase our interoperability," Lanba said. He is on a five-day visit to the US during which he will hold extensive talks with the top military brass of the Trump administration to consolidate bilateral naval cooperation, including in the Indo-Pacific region. The US has been pushing for a broader role for India in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region. In November last year, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending Quad or quadrilateral corridor to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free from Chinese influence. "The relationship between the US Navy and the Indian Navy has never been stronger," said Richardson. "There has been meaningful progress made in strengthening the cooperation between our two-great democratic and maritime nations. We are exploring every way to expand that partnership even further based on our shared interests," he said. India was accorded Major Defence Partner status by the US in 2016, bringing New Delhi on par with Washington's closest allies for defence-related trade and technology transfer. The Indian Navy cooperates with the US Navy on several fronts which include operational interactions such as the Malabar naval exercise and exchange of white shipping information. Warships from both navies have also been regularly visiting each other's ports.

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



PHILIPPINE SEA (March 20, 2018)
An MH-60S Sea Hawk attached to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 (HSC-25) approaches the amphibious assault ship **USS Wasp (LHD 1)**. **Wasp**, part of the Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group, with embarked 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance operability with partners, serve as a ready-response force for any type of contingency and advance the Up-Gunned ESG concept. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Taylor King/Released)

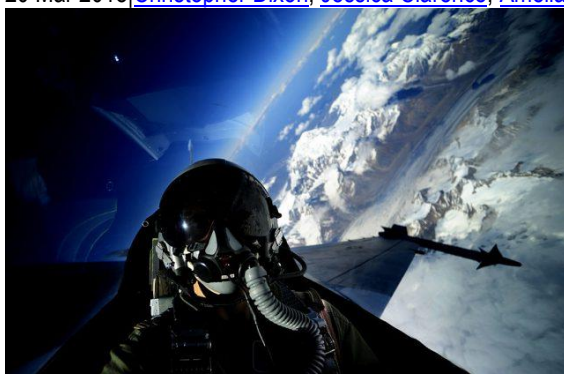
Russia's Black Sea Fleet receives new ships of various types since 2015

The Russian Black Sea Fleet has received a series of new ships of various types in the past three years, Alexander Vitko, commander of the fleet, told Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper in an interview published Wednesday. Since 2015, the fleet has received two new frigates, six diesel-electric submarines equipped with cruise missiles, and more than 10 counter-sabotage and patrol boats, Vitko said. The commander also noted that the Black Sea Fleet was replenished with two powerful new-generation towboats, modular diving platforms, a powerful floating crane, and a number of other support vessels, which immediately began to perform tasks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The fleet also completed the formation of a submarine brigade, which includes six new large submarines, in the Black Sea port city of Novorossiysk, said Vitko. "Therefore, it is already quite possible to talk about the revival of the Black Sea Fleet's underwater forces," he stressed. According to Russia's Basic Principles of State Naval Policy until 2030 approved last year by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russia aims to build its navy into the world's top two in terms of combat capabilities. The Black Sea Fleet is a large operational strategic command of the Russian Navy, operating in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Source : Xinhua

The five-domains update

20 Mar 2018|[Christopher Dixon](#), [Jessica Clarence](#), [Amelia Meurant-Tompkinson](#) and [Melissa Liberatore](#)



Sea state

The Japanese coast guard has recommended charging a US Navy officer with [negligent homicide](#). The recommendation comes 8 months after a collision at sea between **USS Fitzgerald** and container ship **ACX Crystal** in Japanese waters. The coast guard also recommended charging the *Crystal's* second officer with 'causing death and injury through negligence in the pursuit of social activities'. Seven American

sailors died in the collision. Qatar has ordered nine new [offshore patrol vessels](#) for its coast guard. The order is for three 48-metre vessels and six 24-metre vessels from Turkey's Ares Shipyard. This is the second large order Qatar has placed with the Turkish manufacturer, having ordered 17 boats for the Qatar Coast and Borders Security Department in 2014. The nine new vessels are expected to be delivered by 2020. China is planning to develop a [nuclear-powered aircraft carrier](#) as part of an ambitious military modernisation program. In a revealing news release, state-owned [China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation \(CSIC\)](#) said that it must 'speed up key breakthroughs such as the realisation of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, new-style nuclear submarines, quiet submarines and unmanned intelligent underwater defense systems'. CISC later removed all mention of nuclear-powered vessels from its website.

Flight path

Last week India [hosted](#) the air forces of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, [Nepal](#) and the UAE in a five-day multilateral air force exercise. The exercise simulated a tsunami response in India and aimed at improving multinational coordination in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations in Southeast Asia. It's hoped that such exercises will lead to better HADR air operations. Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of intent to purchase 48 Eurofighter Typhoon multi-role fighter jets from the United Kingdom. The deal has been in the works since 2014, but has been [slowed](#) by negotiations about how much of the raw materials and services Saudi Arabia would provide for the project. Saudi Arabia's aspirations to rapidly expand its local defence industry have been hampered by shortages in qualified and experienced Saudi contractors. [Declassified videos](#) of US aircraft encountering unidentified flying objects (UFOs) has raised questions about aliens on Earth. One former Pentagon official has [criticised](#) the US Defense Department's failure to investigate UFO reports made by different agencies. However, debunking website Metabunk [argued](#) that the footage gives the illusion of speed, but that the UFO was more likely a slow-moving object like a bird or a balloon. Disappointed alien enthusiasts may be better off looking to the stars for signs of extraterrestrial life.

Rapid fire

UK Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced that [British troops will be vaccinated](#) against anthrax. The secretary [also revealed plans](#) for a new £48 million chemical weapons defence centre. Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, a former commanding officer of the UK's Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Regiment, warned that these measures show that the [chemical weapons taboo is breaking down](#). The UAE [will train Somaliland security forces](#) as part of an agreement to build a military base near Berbera, Somaliland. The training exercise is seen as a confidence-building mechanism to ensure that the military base proceeds. Somalia [banned a separate UAE port project](#) constructed in Berbera. Berbera sits in a strategic position less than 300 kilometres south of Yemen, where the UAE has committed troops to the Saudi-backed coalition. Concerns [earlier this month](#) that Mali's security situation is deteriorating have been followed by an announcement that [Canada will commit peacekeepers to Mali](#). An aviation task force of up to 250 troops will deploy for up to 12 months. It will be [Canada's first peacekeeping mission](#) in Africa in over a decade. Its troops were stationed in Ethiopia and Eritrea until 2003. The deployment will help fulfil Canada's promise to fortify existing peacekeeping efforts, made at the [UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference](#) in Vancouver last year.

Zero gravity

US space warfighting forces aren't prepared to counter other countries' evolving space warfare capabilities according to former senior US defence official Douglas Loverro. Speaking to the [House Armed Services Committee](#), Loverro raised concerns that US leadership and capabilities in space warfighting are being '*actively and aggressively challenged*'. Loverro said other nations realise the importance of space systems to the US military and economy. Although Europe didn't feature as a potential challenger to the US space system in the Armed Services Committee's hearings, Oxford University researcher Nayaf Al-Rodhan argues that the European Space Agency (ESA) could provide a good [framework for the development of a world space agency](#). After [various speculations](#) about if and when China's Tiangong-1 space station will plummet back into the earth's atmosphere, ESA's Space Debris Office said that we can expect it to fall back to earth in about [two to three weeks](#). Tiangong-1 was China's very first space station. It was launched in 2011 but [Chinese authorities admitted they had lost control of it in 2016](#).

Wired watchtower

Australia and ASEAN nations have agreed to deepen their cooperation on cybersecurity and digital trade at the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit. [The Sydney Declaration](#) outlines the importance of tackling cybersecurity for the region's prosperity. ASEAN-Australia cyber cooperation—one of 16 initiatives established during the summit—aims to '*harness the opportunities that cyberspace enables, promote peace and stability in cyberspace, and guard against growing threats online*'. Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission [used blockchain to tally votes](#) for Sierra Leone's general election on 7 March. [Over 400,000 ballots](#) from Sierra Leone's Western District, which includes the capital, Freetown, were stored. The system recorded anonymised ballots in real time on blockchain, which were then available for anyone to review, count and validate. It's a world first and [heralds improved transparency](#) and reduced suspicion of corruption. India hosted the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. [Leaders from police organisations](#) in 15 states, including Australia, attended to discuss cybercrime and terrorism. Social media was singled out by India's home minister, Rajnath Singh, [as a serious challenge to policing](#), referring to the [2013 riots in Uttar Pradesh](#) that were incited by a fake video clip, and to reports of [a 'mass exodus' of people from north-eastern India](#) who had been living in Bangalore.

Author: Christopher Dixon, Jessica Clarence, Amelia Meurant-Tompkinson and Melissa Liberatore are research interns at ASPI. Image courtesy [US Defense Imagery](#) via Wikimedia Commons. **Source:** <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au>

Navy divers help recover jettisoned boxes after Karachi ship collision

KARACHI Port Trust (KPT) has operations under way to recover containers that fell into the sea when Hapag-Lloyd's 8,000-TEU **Tolten** collided with 6,350-TEU **Hamburg Bay** Monday at Hutchison's South Asia Port Terminal. At least 21 containers, carrying imported cars and freight worth millions, fell overboard as a result of the collision, reported Pakistan's Geo News. Two KPT cranes worked to recover the containers, assisted by divers of the Pakistan Navy, throughout the day before the operation was halted for the day. The recovery operation is expected to take two to three days, maritime experts told Geo News, after which the South Asia Port Terminal (SAPT) will be reopened. On Monday, the two ships collided but did no damage the quay cranes, a big worry at the time. SAPT operations were suspended until the containers were recovered.

Source: Maasmond Maritime

Navy ship Endeavour's final journey not end, thanks to recycling in India

By : LAINE MOGER



The decommissioned HMNZS **Endeavour** is off to India to be almost entirely recycled. The navy's **Endeavour** ship cast off her lines from Auckland's shores for the final time on March 20, but that final voyage marks a world-first. The **Endeavour** was the first western Government-owned ship going to Alang in India to be recycled. A total 99 per cent of the ship's body would be recycled and 70 per cent of that would be in its current

format. Everything, right down to the cutlery, would be recycled. "To reuse items in original format is quite impressive," project manager Chris Calvert said. Also, Indian orphanages will be gifted some of her relics, in honour of her grand 30-year legacy. Casting off the lines is routine for any ship departure, but today's event was significant as the severing of the last ... The **Endeavour** was decommissioned on December 15. Because of the Endeavour's age, the decision was made for the ship to be recycled, not sold, Calvert said. "She is a single-hull tanker and, while compliant now, this won't be in the future." The project had been 18 months in the making, and Calvert was incredibly proud of what the Endeavour's final journey said about New Zealand. It was important for New Zealand that her decommissioning be environmental, so the navy was very careful to research options. New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) worked closely together on this project, so it went smoothly and complied with international law, because it marked a couple of firsts, Calvert said. "You could put her on the beach here and still be happy with the process they are carrying out there." She was the first ship to be recycled under the Basel Convention, an international treaty designed to reduce the movements of hazardous waste between nations. Along her journey there would be three audit visits, as every kilogram of the ship would be tracked to make sure the process was completed properly, he said. Casting off the lines was routine for any ship departure, but this week's event was significant as the severing of the last connection to New Zealand. The last commander of the ship Martin Doolan said the finality of saying goodbye, was the "sad bit" of this project.

source: Stuff

Reducing Emissions in Ports

By Aiswarya Lakshmi March 21, 2018



Photo: International Maritime Organization (IMO)

How can ports cut emissions to ensure cleaner air and contribute to the battle against climate change? First, ports need to quantify emissions in ports, then they need to identify measures to cost-effectively reduce port-related emissions.

A strategic partnership between the International Maritime Organization (IMO)-executed GloMEEP energy efficiency project and the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) is helping selected countries to

develop port emission inventories and subsequently draw up a port emission reduction strategy. A new three-day workshop package on the "Prevention and control of shipping and port air emissions" is being developed as part of the GloMEEP-IAPH strategic partnership. Training will begin in May 2018 and will be rolled out to the ten lead pilot countries

participating in the GloMEEP project. The workshops will train port personnel in how to develop an inventory of emissions in a port, and subsequently how to develop a strategy to address emissions from ports, based on two technical guides which are also being developed (Guide for assessment of emissions in ports; and Guide for the development of port emissions reductions strategies). The workshop package is designed for port personnel and aims to increase their awareness about maritime energy efficiency from a port perspective and show how port management, port infrastructure development and port logistical systems contribute to overall maritime energy efficiency and air quality. GloMEEP technical adviser Astrid Dispert outlined the prospective new training course at the 5th Pacific Ports Clean Air Collaborative (PPCAC) Conference, hosted by the Port of Los Angeles, [United States](#) (20-22 March). The GloMEEP team also met (19 March) with experts representing IAPH, from the Port of Los Angeles, the Port of Long Beach and Starcrest Consultancy Group, to further develop the draft workshop package and guides. GloMEEP is a GEF-UNDP-IMO project aimed at supporting the uptake and implementation of energy efficiency measures for shipping, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions from shipping. The Lead Pilot Countries of the GloMEEP project are: Argentina, China, Georgia, [India](#), Jamaica, [Malaysia](#), Morocco, Panama, Philippines and South Africa. Source: <https://www.marinelink.com>

Workhorses of the sea



In the port of Zeebrugge the Belgian Tripartite Mine counter measure vessel *Lobelia* was loaded onboard SAL's *Calypso* the 450 ton in weight *Lobelia* was loaded with the two shipscranes, the MCM will be transported to Egypt, **Wilhelmsen Ships Services NV** was the handling agent for the *Calypso* in Zeebrugge. Photo : Dirk NEYTS ©