### VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4 | FALL 2019

# inFOCUS quarterly

Waterways



Mark Meirowitz on China's Threat to Open Seas | Keith Johnson on China's Ports Investments | Peter Huessy on Maritime Chokepoints | Yaakov Lappin on China's Haifa Venture | J.E. Dyer on Force Projection via the High Seas | James Stark on Maritime Disputes in Northeast Asia | Stephen D. Bryen Iran's Provocations in the Persian Gulf | Terry McKnight and Peter Cook on East African Piracy | Bruce Jones on Russia's Navy | Patrick Culver, Brian Chapman, Paul Windt, and Sean Newmeyer on the U.S. Coast Guard | Shoshana Bryen Reviews *Victory in Tripoli* 

Featuring an Interview with Jack Bergman (R-MI)

## **LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER**

hina. China. China. The "Waterways" issue of *in*FOCUS is intended to better understand America as an island nation that assumed the role of guarantor of freedom of navigation after 300 years of British-dominated control of the seas. China. China. China. Prosperity for us, our allies, and aspiring countries is de-

pendent on that freedom to ship goods, people, and energy. China. China. China. But you see what happens? Every time we start on the question of waterways, China takes

over. CHINA – oh, never mind.

It isn't an accident. Rep. Jack Bergman explains in our interview that China takes the long view and has plans for its future. And that should worry us because, as Mark Meirowitz explains in his essay, China believes neither in freedom of the seas nor open passage.

Keith Johnson reports on China's management of ports in Europe and around the world – and Yaakov Lappin weighs on Beijing's plans for Haifa and Ashkelon. We've written about China in the South China Sea, but RADM James Stark, USN (ret.) worries about the East China Sea and our allies Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. Peter Huessy considers the passage of oil through chokepoints that China or Iran may control.

There are, however, other water-related issues. Four officers from the Coast Guard's Law Enforcement Policy Branch bring us the latest on that under-appreciated service's work to secure our water borders. CDR Jenifer Dyer, USN (ret.) considers the expeditionary nature of U.S.

> naval forces and the expeditionary expectations of the American people. RADM Terry McKnight, USN (ret.) and Peter Cook review the effective international response to Somali pirates

earlier in this century. For more on pirates, read Shoshana Bryen's review of *Victory in Tripoli* by Joshua London.

But, if you're still worried about China, Bruce Jones and Stephen Bryen write to remind you that Russia and Iran are out there.

If you appreciate what you've read, I encourage you to make a contribution to the Jewish Policy Center. As always, you can use our secure site: http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/donate.

Sincerely,

Matthew Brooks, Publisher

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## China's Threat to Free Navigation by MARK MEIROWITZ

ow did we go from assessments like "Beijing is a seriously overrated power," and "China is a second-rate military power... in no position to matter much as a source of international political power" ("Does China Matter?" Foreign Affairs, September/October 1999) to the view that "the vast South China Sea has become one of the world's most dangerous hotspots" ("Limits of Law in the South China Sea," Brookings, 2016) in which, according to Admiral Philip Davidson, "China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States"?

Vice President Mike Pence was of the opinion in October 2018 that "Beijing is using its power like never before," referring to a Chinese naval vessel that came within 45 yards of the USS Decatur as the United States conducted freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea.

And how did we arrive at the point where, according to author Robert D. Kaplan, China treats the South China Sea as "China's Caribbean"? China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, and Vietnam all maintain claims in the South China Sea, but China has been using its power and influence to overwhelm its neighbors' rights and claims.

The source of the present situation lies in the interpretation of rules of the law of the sea related to the freedom of navigation and the ability of states to claim sovereign rights over wide expanses of what has traditionally been delineated as open seas.

### Open or Closed Seas

The age-old conflict between the 17th century's Hugo Grotius and the 20th century's John Selden – whether the high seas should be open ("Mare Liberum") or closed ("Mare Clausum") – namely, whether freedom of the high seas should be the rule or the exception, has morphed into a conflict between China and its neighbors in the South China Sea. This dispute has wide and grave implications for regional and global stability and is a litmus test for whether rules of international law and the global order, long advocated by the United States, will be followed or rejected.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) codified rules of the law of the sea and also stemmed the tendency of coastal states to make extensive claims of sovereignty to areas of the territorial sea (such conserve, and manage the resources in the water column and under the seabed (UNCLOS, Article 56). It also set rules for how to establish the outer limit of the continental shelf.

While one provision of China's domestic law guaranteed high seas freedoms for foreign flagged ships within its EEZ, another provision stated that the law does not apply to "historic rights enjoyed by the People's Republic of China." China claimed sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea based on its historic rights related to what it called the "Nine-Dash" or "U-Shaped line," which produced an enormous area of sovereign control claimed by China as its economic exclusion zone. China took the position that foreign military vessels do not enjoy freedom of navigation in its extensive exclusion zone. The United States vehemently opposed China's position.

Ironically, while America has never ratified UNCLOS, it abides by UNCLOS' rules, while China, which approved UNCLOS, has failed to abide by its requirements and rules.

as the claims of Chile, Ecuador and Peru to 200-mile territorial waters)

UNCLOS, among other provisions, established the maximum extension of the territorial sea at 12 miles, created a 200-mile wide Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in which the coastal state would exercise the right to explore, exploit,

### **Rocks**, Not Islands

In a dispute between the Philippines and China in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the Philippines sought a ruling on the effect of UNCLOS on China's claims to historic rights within its socalled "Nine-Dash line." The tribunal held that there was no legal basis for China to



USS Stethem sailing less than 12 nautical miles from Triton Island, which is claimed by China as well as Taiwan and Vietnam. (Photo: U.S. Navy)

claim historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within China's "Nine-Dash line." The tribunal found that the historic rights China claimed over its economic exclusion zone were extinguished when China acceded to UNCLOS. However, China's Vice Foreign Minister, Liu Zhenmin, described the PCA decision as "a piece of waste paper," and urged other countries not to "take the opportunity to threaten China."

Under UNCLOS, islands have the same jurisdictional regime (territorial sea, economic exclusion zone and continental shelf) as other land masses. The exception is what the UNCLOS terms "rocks" which are emergent lands that are unable to support human habitation or economic activity (Article 121). While a rock has a territorial sea, it has no economic zone, so what the Chinese have done is to militarize and place landfill to create islands which have a territorial sea and an EEZ. The Permanent Court of Arbitration declared that all the islands in the South China Sea (on which China based its extensive sovereignty claims) are not islands, but rocks. Therefore, they can not be used as a territorial basis for advancing China's economic exclusion zones.

However, the confrontation between the Philippines and China fizzled out, and Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippines' leader, needing China's support and bilateral economic cooperation, in effect ended the dispute with China. Duterte took the view that the South China Sea seems to be "back to normal."

### Freedom of Navigation

The United States has reacted to China's actions by engaging in freedom of navigation operations. Washington supports the principle of freedom of the seas guaranteed to all nations in international law. Ironically, while America has never ratified UNCLOS, it abides by UNCLOS' rules, while China, which approved UN-CLOS, has failed to abide by its requirements and rules. In the U.S. view, coastal states have the right to regulate economic activities in their exclusion zones, but do not have the right to regulate foreign military activities in them.

This issue has the potential to disrupt U.S. military operations not only in the South China Sea but also around the world. China's position is that coastal states have the right to regulate the activities of foreign military vessels in their exclusive economic zone. It is the U.S. position that while UNCLOS established economic exclusion zones as a feature of international law, giving coastal states the right to regulate economic activities (such as fishing and oil exploration) within their EEZ's, it does not give coastal states the right to regulate foreign military activities beyond their 12-nautical mile territorial waters.

America supports the principle of freedom of the seas guaranteed to all nations in international law. China has used coast guard ships and maritime militia more than its navy (the People's Liberation Army Navy) in maritime sovereignty operations to avoid precipitating an escalation of the conflict. China has also sought to "territorialize" the airspace over its economic exclusion zone. Obviously, the situation in the South China Sea is fraught with danger.

Commentator Oriana Skylar Mastro, writing in *Foreign Affairs* early this year, says "China has now entered the beginning stages of a direct challenge to the U.S.-led order... China is no longer content to play second fiddle to the United States and seeks to directly challenge its position in the Indo-Pacific region." The United States, in response to China, will continue its freedom of navigation operations. The State Department has indicated that "U.S. policy since 1983 provides that the United States will exercise and assert its navigation and overflight rights and freedoms on a worldwide baAccording to Mahan, "A government in full accord with the natural bias of its people would most successfully advance its growth in every respect; and, in the matter of sea power, the most brilliant successes have followed where there has been intelligent direction by

China's position is that coastal states have the right to regulate the activities of foreign military vessels in their exclusive economic zones.

sis in a manner that is consistent with the balance of interests reflected in the Law of the Sea (LOS) Convention. It will not, however, acquiesce in unilateral acts of other states designed to restrict the rights and freedoms of the international community in navigation and overflight and other related high seas uses." Said Vice President Pence when speaking about the USS Decatur incident: "Despite ... reckless harassment [by China], the United States Navy will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows and our national interests demand. We will not be intimidated and we will not stand down."

### Impending Backlash?

However, it may be that China has gone too far and may precipitate a backlash against its actions in the South China Sea. Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was quoted as saying, "China's recent behavior – particularly its aggressive military posture in the contested South China Sea – has been counterproductive. They've pushed their neighbors, including Vietnam, closer and closer in the U.S. security orbit." The U.S. has been supportive of Vietnam in its dispute with China over oil and gas rights.

The great 19th century commentator on sea power, Alfred Thayer Mahan, included as one of the elements of sea power "character of government." a government fully imbued with the spirit of the people and conscious of its true general bent." One might argue, based on Mahan's formulation, that China's authoritarian government, with a leader elected for life, might be held back from successfully projecting its sea power.

Admiral James Stavridis, USN (Ret.) in his book *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, states that the South China Sea "will be a maritime hinge upon which huge geopolitical issues will ultimately bases and access agreements around the littoral of the South China Sea at the same time as maintaining an open and constructive relationship with China where we can (the current trade dispute may make that more difficult). This is good advice.

### At a Crossroads

When asked recently if America misjudged the speed at which Xi Jinping would begin to project China's power around the world, General Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the United States, "made a judgment... that economic integration with China would lead to political integration" and "we thought that we could integrate China in a way that they would comply with the world order as we know it. As it turns out what they've tried to do is leverage the rules when they're to its advantage and ignore the rules when it's not to their advantage" (Council on Foreign Relations, September, 2019).

We are literally at a crossroads where an ascendant China has challenged the rules-based order which has always included freedom of navigation. The United States is hopefully not on

We are literally at a crossroads where an ascendant China has challenged the rules-based order which has always included freedom of navigation.

swing. The United States must consider it a crucial zone of maritime activity in the twenty-first century. If we cede it to China – something China deeply desires and would consider inevitable – our global strategy will fail. While we should not push ourselves into a cold war with China, we need to be mindful of the importance of international law."

Stavridis recommends that the United States maintain a network of

the brink of a new cold war with China, but rather at a point of effective engagement with a rising China to prevent conflict, resolve outstanding disputes and protect and promote the rulesbased international order so long supported by the United States.

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## Maritime Chokepoints: Inconvenient Geography by PETER HUESSY

ince 1974, interference in maritime oil transportation has been a factor in U.S. economic recessions. This interference has often been closely connected to the narrow straits or choke points through which more than half of the world's daily oil production passes by commercial tanker.

Despite great progress in expanding U.S. domestic oil production, we cannot escape the effects of such possible future interference. That's because we are still a net importer of crude oil, upwards of 10 million barrels a day – although over the past few years we have become far less dependent on foreign sources.

The Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandab are key maritime chokepoints where Russia and Iran have a history of interference with oil transportation. Iran has most recently been copying such activity as well in the Straits of Gibraltar. A take-over of Morocco by the rebel Polisario Front would put another rogue state astride a key oil route and add another vital "strait" increasingly vulnerable to hostile interdiction.

The Straits of Denmark, around the Cape of Good Hope along-side South Africa, and the Panama Canal are other straits through which large quantities of oil move daily, but remain historically relatively free of interference.

However, one worrisome and emerging factor is China's militarization of its illegal and artificial South China Sea islands, along with new Chinese military bases in East Africa, both of which give Beijing leverage over the maritime oil traffic moving through the Bab el-Mandab (Red Sea) and the Straits of Malacca, two critical global choke points.

The United States and its allies thus need to carefully watch the world's key maritime choke points as interference with oil tanker traffic can buffet the world's top industrial economies and trigger crippling economic recessions. And as we have seen just recently, Iran has shown itself ready to partially cripple oil production (a cut of 5 million barrels) and transportation, attacking tankers and now apparently launching missile and drone attacks against two key Saudi oil facilities-the Khourais oilfield and Abqaiq processing center. Closing the Straits of Hormuz, by comparison, would be the equivalent not of taking 5 million barrels of oil off the market each day but between 17-20 million barrels, fully 20 percent of daily world production.

## Vulnerability of Maritime Commerce

In 1961, all U.S. imports and exports totaled \$50 billion annually. U.S. trade now exceeds \$5.6 trillion, a 1,100 percent increase. Particularly noteworthy over this time has been the growth

billion and now at \$368 billion. All this oil now moves through eight key maritime choke points, which if blocked can skyrocket oil prices. *[Editor's Note: Numbers are unadjusted for inflation.]* 

For the United States this had become a growing strategic consideration. From 1961 until recently, U.S. exports of petroleum products diminished markedly while imports soared, growing from 365 million barrels in 1961 to 3 billion barrels in the past decade. As Robert Zubrin noted in a Jan. 16, 2012 *National Review* essay, U.S. economic recessions in 1974, 1980-81, 1990-91, 2000-01, and 2008-09, all were preceded by a dramatic increase in oil prices, and most of those spikes occurred because oil maritime transportation through these straits was either shut down or curtailed.

By mid-2008, for example, oil prices had run up to \$147 barrel by July 4, followed by major Saudi production increases that dropped oil prices to \$32 but not quickly enough to avoid a major recession.

The lowered price of oil did not sit well with the Russians, as oil at \$50 barrel barely allowed Moscow to pay its most pressing bills, given that half

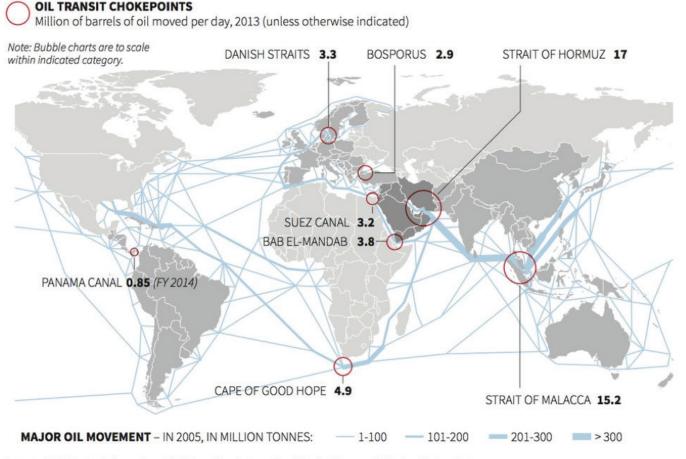
The Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandab are key maritime chokepoints where Russia and Iran have a history of interference with oil transportation.

in the U.S. import and export of oil and petroleum products, in 1961 under \$10

of the country's government income depended upon oil and gas sales. As a

## **Oil transit chokepoints**

About half of the world's oil production is moved by tankers on fixed maritime routes. The blockage of a chokepoint, even temporarily, can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs. Oil transit chokepoints are therefore a critical part of global energy security.



Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation

result, Russian assisted Somali "pirates" started seizing oil tankers traveling through the Straits of Hormuz and into the Arabian and Red Sea area, respectively to artificially elevate the price of oil. Seizing tanker traffic in narrow straits areas is much easier than doing so on the high seas.

Now, with the Somali pirates less a factor, the assumption remains in much of the academic, intelligence community, public policy groups, Congress, the entertainment industry, and the news media that interruptions of commercial and cargo sea traffic including oil, are a thing of the past. It is assumed that even rogue or adversary nations (Iran for example) do not want oil resources or

trade interrupted because the resulting oil price spikes or interruption of commercial ocean-going trade just causes too much economic dislocation.

Is this true?

When the Somali pirates starting grabbing oil tankers in the Hormuz Straits and Persian Gulf area, global oil prices remained stuck at over \$100 barrel, a not-so-inconsiderate factor in the record slow growth and recovery of the 2009-16 period, an economic performance that had lower economic growth compared to any other economic recovery since World War II. And now, multiple Iranian attacks on maritime oil traffic and oil production illustrate Iran has joined the disruption team as well.

### Is America Still Vulnerable?

However, with the widespread development of fracking (hydraulic fracturing) in the United States, and with American natural gas and oil production dramatically increasing, concerns over oil availability and price have largely dropped off the radar screen. U.S. oil and gas production have reached a record high in excess of 12-17 million barrels per day, the highest in the world. Many analysts now believe America is immune to oil price disruptions whether as a result of war, terrorist attacks, or deliberate cuts in production.

But as Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies explains, the United States is not immune to the world market price for oil. One cannot have a U.S. domestic market in one price (because we export and import very large amounts of oil) while the rest of the world has another price. That is why the Iranian attack in September spiked oil prices everywhere, including in the United States, but given this country's huge growth in oil proHormuz, as well as granting preferential access to the area. This threat was considered far beyond Iran's military capability until they "invited" the Russians to locate military forces on two Iranian bases on the shores of the Persian Gulf.

Collecting tolls in the broad expanse of the oceans makes no sense. But to do so in the area of key narrow straits

...despite the great news that America leads the world in petroleum and natural gas production, the U.S. economy is not necessarily immune to the machinations of the oil markets...

duction and emergency supply from the strategic petroleum reserve, the reduction in Saudi production did not panic world markets nor cause immediate shortages in the United States.

Therefore, despite the great news that America leads the world in petroleum and natural gas production, the U.S. economy is not necessarily immune to the machinations of the oil markets in which adversaries such as Russia, China and Iran play a prominent role. Especially if the flow of oil is stopped through key straits by military action that does in fact panic world markets.

As previously noted, Russian naval Spetsnaz graduates were assisting "Somali" pirates seizing large crude oil carriers. This helped drive oil prices to \$148 barrel on July 4, 2008. Despite the Saudi government pushing up production dramatically to stave off a serious recession, the help was too late. Even oil at \$32 barrel could not eliminate the sharp recessionary economic factors that caused one of the most serious economic downturns in the post-World War period.

## Emerging Iranian Maritime Strategy

The Iranians have not only seized oil tankers, they have begun to talk about being a toll collector for commercial sea-going traffic through the Straits of or choke points around the globe, that is a serious threat. Iran has added an additional factor of going after adjacent land production facilities, raising even further the specter of what I term economic IEDs (improvised explosive devices) as a means of Iran using oil blackmail to get its enemies to do its bidding.

Moving to the other side of the Indian Ocean, says China expert Rick Fisher, Chinese ballistic missiles threaten the entire Malaccan Straits. This would be especially so if deployed on the artificial islands built by China in the South China Sea. *2 million barrels a day greater than the allowable OPEC targets.* 

When, on October 21, 2008, the Director-General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Abdalla Salem el-Badri, went to Moscow, OPEC wanted Russia to cut production. Russia said no. Moscow then accused the Saudi government and OPEC of vastly exceeding their quotas for oil production, thus pushing down the price of oil.

Although true, the head of OPEC countered by noting how ironic that Russia—although not a formal member of OPEC—was also pumping oil as fast as it could. The Russians brushed aside the charge, claiming that to meet revenue targets they were being forced to pump more and more oil at a lower and lower prices, and thus were robbing themselves. They needed, "a commitment from OPEC not only to live within its production quotas but to lower those quotas, as well."

A few weeks later, on Nov. 15, 2008, the Saudi-owned, very large crude carrier (VLCC), the Sirius Star, carrying two million barrels of crude oil bound for the United States, was hijacked 450 nautical miles off the coast of Kenya.

Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand are three key American allies on whose territory new military facilities could certainly be built.

### Other Rogue State Imitators

What is interesting is how quickly oil prices can rise once interference with maritime tanker shipping occurs. As I wrote in 2010 for the Gatestone Institute:

In late August and early September 2008, the Saudi government pledged to the Bush administration that oil production in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would be pushed upwards of While thousands of ships of all kinds ply the waters of the Indian Ocean every year, the ability of Somaliabased pirates to find the VLCC, and to board and capture her, was not a small feat. "I am stunned by the range of it," said the American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen at a news conference. "The ship's distance from the coast was the longest distance I've



A fleet of allied navy vessles, including the USS John C. Stennis and USS John F. Kennedy in the Gulf of Oman. (Photo: U.S. Navy)

seen for any of these incidents." According to U.S. military sources, one does not just 'find' a ship hundreds of miles from shore. One needs 'real time intelligence.' Such an operation had to have had the help of a sophisticated nation state. Only two could have done the job: Russia or the United States.

### Potential Actions

In anticipation of potential disruption of critical oil transportation, the U.S. may want to consider expanding its and its allies' presence in the Pacific Ocean and Persian Gulf to assure freedom of navigation if threatened. This may include not only naval forces but also U.S. Air Force long-range aviation, both of which are critically important to keep sea passages open. Also necessary to consider, robust air, land and sea-based U.S. and allied missile defenses.

What is not often understood is that long-range aircraft play a vital role in countering an adversary's ability to launch offensive aircraft and missiles. This factor alone calls for accelerated procurement of the F-35 stealth fighter and continued emphasis upon the Next Generation Air Dominance program. Patrolling these straits is an expensive proposition, and it means America's allies, much more dependent on imported oil than the United States, will have to step up to help meet this challenge.

### New Secretary 'Gets It'

As Aaron Mehta writes in *Defense News*, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper understands exactly this threat and needed response. During his confirmation hearing, he called for "expanding base locations in the Pacific while continuing regular freedom of navigation operations in the region..."

Pat Cronin of the Hudson Institute echoes this point, explaining that the secretary is proposing "The...right to work on a more distributed set of access points throughout the Indo-Pacific in geographically strategic locations, where diplomatic and development support from the U.S. and allies and partners can ensure sustainable engagement to build capable partners and strengthen deterrence." Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand are three key American allies on whose territory new military facilities could certainly be built.

Iranian rogue behavior in the Persian Gulf led to what President George W. Bush apparently thought of as the "mullah's premium"— a \$15 a barrel upcharge on oil due to Iranian interference in tanker traffic in the early part of this century. This added \$300 million daily to America's energy bill. That is almost exactly the surge in oil prices that has now happened due to the apparent Iranian or Iranian-instigated attacks in September.

America must be watchful of any hegemonic effort to interfere with the maritime flow of oil and its related on-land adjacent production and processing.

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## Why Is China Buying Up Europe's Ports?

hina's trillion-dollar signature foreign-policy project, the Belt and Road Initiative, is often lampooned as just a fuzzy concept with little to show for it on the ground.

But in bustling ports from Singapore to the North Sea, state-owned Chinese firms are turning the idea into a reality with a series of aggressive acquisitions that are physically redrawing the map of global trade and political influence.

A pair of deep-pocketed Chinese behemoths, Cosco Shipping Ports and China Merchants Port Holdings, have gone on a buying binge of late, snapping up cargo terminals in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic rim. Just last month, Cosco finalized the takeover of the terminal in Zeebrugge, Belgium's second-biggest port, marking the Chinese firm's first bridgehead in northwestern Europe.

That deal followed a raft of other acquisitions in Spain, Italy, and Greece, in just the last couple of years. Chinese state firms, which once kept close to their home market, now control about one-tenth of all European port capacity.

The port deals are one of the clearest manifestations of Beijing's ambitious plans to physically link China to Europe by sea, road, rail, and pipeline.

The ports underpin the maritime half of the Belt and Road Initiative, snaking from the South China Sea across the Indian Ocean, through the Suez Canal and into the soft underbelly of Europe.

"For somebody like Cosco, the deals make sense financially, and they can make their lords and masters in Beijing happy because it fits the Belt and Road narrative," said Neil Davidson, a senior analyst for ports and terminals at Drewry, the maritime consultancy. "At bottom, there is a geopolitical underpinning to a lot of this."

For China, still shaking off what it views as a century of humiliation by Western countries — which culminated in the forced opening of Chinese ports by European gunboats — snapping up the sinews of modern commerce is a satisfying way to return to what it sees as the normal state of affairs.

"The fundamental goal seems to be to decrease China's dependence on foreign elements and increase China's influence around the world," said Fransassistance to scupper European Union condemnations of China's behavior on issues including human rights and the South China Sea.

Now that Chinese state-owned firms are marching across the Mediterranean — matched with parallel investment drives in Central and Eastern Europe — those worries aren't going away.

"The scale of the Belt and Road investments in key infrastructure means China's political influence in these countries will increase," said Turloch Mooney, who covers global ports for IHS Markit. "That is assured."

Chinese shipping and ports companies used to be relative minnows in a world dominated by giants such as A.P.

### Chinese state firms, which once kept close to their home market, now control about one-tenth of all European port capacity.

Paul van der Putten, a China expert at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

That rising influence is spooking many in Europe. With Chinese investment skyrocketing, European leaders are growing increasingly leery that Chinese President Xi Jinping is turning China's economic heft into political pull. Since Cosco dropped \$1 billion into buying and upgrading the once-sleepy Greek port of Piraeus, for example, Beijing has been able to count on Greek Moller-Maersk and Hutchison Ports. But in 2016, Beijing created a mammoth national champion by merging China Ocean Shipping and China Shipping Company to form Cosco, a sprawling group that includes the eponymous shipping line, the port operator, and other shipping businesses.

It didn't stop there: Last year, it spent more than \$6 billion to acquire a smaller rival, Orient Overseas International, further driving consolidation in the shipping business. Now, Cosco wields control over one of the world's largest shipping companies (and the biggest outside Europe) and one of the world's busiest port operators.

And when it comes to ports, Cosco isn't even the biggest state-owned Chinese firm: China Merchants Port Holdings moves even more cargo and has also been busy overseas, snapping up terminals in Sri Lanka, Djibouti, and Brazil, in addition to earlier acquisitions in Europe. government," Mooney said, Chinese firms can "acquire and continue to invest in assets even when there is little or no obvious commercial value."

That's not to say that the acquisition spree is only about geopolitics.

After shipping companies were hammered during the trade downturn in 2016 — Cosco lost \$1.4 billion that year — ports simply offer better returns, notes Drewry's Davidson. "Ports and

With Chinese investment skyrocketing, European leaders are growing increasingly leery that Chinese President Xi Jinping is turning China's economic heft into political pull.

Cosco and China Merchants have a crucial advantage over their mostly European rivals: easy access to bucket loads of cheap money that they can use to aggressively bid on attractive properties around the world. Both firms can get low-interest loans from state banks, and Cosco can even tap into a multibilliondollar kitty of Belt and Road financing made available by the China Development Bank.

"From a trade and commercial perspective, the availability of cheap money and good diplomatic backing is giving the Chinese terminal operators increased ability to beat rival investors and acquire choice port assets," Mooney said.

That financial freedom comes in particularly handy when, say, a port is more strategically valuable to Beijing than it may be commercially appealing. Cargo volumes at the China Merchants terminal in Djibouti, for example, fell in the first half of last year even as business elsewhere was booming. But Djibouti remains vital for Beijing because it is China's only overseas military base and is perched right on the vital Indian Ocean sea lanes.

"In the case of projects where there may be a major strategic value for the

terminals are profitable, whereas the shipping business is a little like airlines — it's a low margin business."

And companies like Cosco hope to turn their investments into money-spinners by transforming once-quiet ports into huge cargo hubs. Cosco turned Piraeus from a backwater to a busy key transshipment terminal right where Jean-Claude Juncker last fall warned specifically about foreign purchases of assets like ports, though without singling out China by name. The commission is working on new ways to screen foreign investment in sensitive areas.

French President Emmanuel Macron went further in his state visit last month to China, pointedly referring to Beijing's acquisition of key European infrastructure and calling for a united European front. "China won't respect a continent, a power, when some member states let their doors freely open," he said, according to Reuters.

While Chinese purchases of local crown jewels can spark a backlash — as the acquisition of German robot-maker Kuka did in 2016 — that is more out of concern Beijing will gobble up the cutting-edge technology that European economies need to keep their advantage.

The port deals, and other infrastructure projects associated with the Belt and Road in Central and Eastern Europe, threaten to politically hive off vulnerable members of an already tottering European Union, said van der Putten of the Netherlands Institute.

"There is more debate now about the

Cosco and China Merchants have a crucial advantage over their mostly European rivals: easy access to bucket loads of cheap money that they can use to aggressively bid on attractive properties...

Europe, the Middle East, and Asia converge. It hopes to do something similar in the western Mediterranean with the Spanish port of Valencia and in northwest Europe with Zeebrugge.

But the pace of Chinese expansion into critical sectors of the European economy, including ports but also the energy business and high-tech sectors, has European leaders increasingly on edge.

European Commission President

possible political implications of Chinese investment," he said. "The big difference now is that there is the assumption that Chinese investment in Mediterranean and Central European countries will influence their position toward China."

KEITH JOHNSON a geoeconomics correspondent for Foreign Policy magazine. An earlier version of this article appeared in that publication.

## Testing U.S.-Israel Alliance: Chinese and Haifa's Port

## by YAAKOV LAPPIN

he presence of Chinese stateowned companies at two of Israel's three key seaports—Haifa and Ashdod on the Mediterranean coast, but not Eilat on the Red Sea route to Asia—has been acting as a thorn in U.S.-Israeli relations.

According to China's Ministry of Transport early this year, a total of 52 ports in 34 countries were managed or were constructed by Chinese companies, and that number was set to grow as Beijing expanded its program. Expansion included Haifa's new private seaport, which the Shanghai International Port Group (SIPG) will begin to manage in 2021 for 25 years. Meanwhile, China's Pan Mediterranean Engineering Company (PMEC) is building Ashdod's private port and is due to complete the project in 2021.

The Israeli government views both new sites as alternatives to the older, state-owned ports in both cities. They have been prone to costly strikes, but will continue to operate.

In particular, the Haifa port project is drawing the concern of the U.S. Navy, which often docks at the Israeli naval base in the northern coastal city. That close cooperation could change if the nearby civilian port comes under Chinese management, American officials have warned.

With the issue continuing to stir controversy and debate in Israel, a number of commentators have expressed concern over the harm it might cause to Israeli-American naval cooperation.

"There is no doubt that this has reached a crucial junction," Professor Uzi Rabi, director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, told the Jewish News Service (JNS). "The American antagonism is clear to all, and Israel will – like on many aspects of the Middle East and in general – find a middle way that is very creative."

Asked whether Israel can indeed find a path that would let it enjoy the economic benefits of relations with Beijing, Rabi said that Israel will have to "dedicate a lot of energy and creativity" in charting a future of reciprocal economic relations. Such relations would have to ensure that the port for 25 years, and therefore, the possibility of withdrawing from the deal is possible and essential to Israel's security," said Israeli.

Israeli, who lectures at the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, argued that giving away the keys to a strategic port to any foreign party means a loss of Israeli control over a central gate to the outside world.

Haifa port project is drawing the concern of the U.S. Navy, which often docks at the Israeli naval base in the northern coastal city.

China does not "take control of central pillars of the local economy, or taint relations with the U.S."

An early sign of pressure on Israel to keep China out of the loop of new infrastructure projects may have emerged when Israel reportedly restricted a tender for the construction of a major new international airport to NATO nations only.

### Security Risks Too Great"

Washington has made no secret of its displeasure over developments at Haifa. During his visit in mid-January, then-National Security Advisor John Bolton conveyed the Trump administration's concern about China's involvement at the port.

Dr. Ofer Israeli, a geostrategist and international-security policy expert, said that while the construction of the Ashdod port is nearly complete – meaning that the matter is closed – the situation at Haifa port is very different. "In Haifa, a Chinese company would operate Israeli is also concerned by numerous reports of China taking advantage of the infrastructure it builds in other countries for surveillance, intelligence gathering or cyber warfare.

The proximity of the civilian port to the Israeli Navy base at Haifa could allow the Chinese to track Israeli naval activity, which is supposed to be classified, warned Israeli.

"In my view," he said, "Israel will not be able to deal with the security risks – not just in terms of spying, but also on other matters, such as the Chinese desire to bring ships to the port that could be on their way to train or assist Syrian forces or Hezbollah."

Washington will in all likelihood "force us to withdraw from the deal, and Israel will pay a higher price to the Chinese for every passing day, through the rising exit fines, and through the harm that would come to relations with China," he cautioned.



*A view from Mount Carmel overlooking the port in Haifa, Israel. (Photo: Inna Felker)* 

### The U.S. and China Compete

Roie Yellinek, a doctoral student in the department of Middle East Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, published a paper at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, in which he placed the Haifa-port tension within the wider context of growing, global American-Chinese competition. Yellinek, a fellow at the China-Med Project, which monitors relations between Beijing and regional countries, wrote that "while the direct implications of the port's management are of interest to China and the United States., their concerns are more related to a Cold War-type struggle."

"Similar to the Soviet-American struggle during the Cold War, Washington and Beijing are competing over areas of control and patronage. The question of influence over Israel is very important to both countries," said Yellinek. "From the American perspective, Israel is its oldest and most important ally in the Middle East, and one of the current administration's closest friends. From Beijing's perspective, the opportunity to increase its influence on a country that maintains such close ties with the U.S. can have deep implications for China's international status."

Yellinek said he believed that Israel could deal with the potential security challenges created by the Chinese company's presence at Haifa. But the strain this issue would cause to relations with the United States would be too costly for Jerusalem to bear, he argued.

"My personal view is that we need to satisfy American expectations because they guarantee Israel's security, while China has few sentiments for Israel's security needs," he said. "I think the government will have to act... Ultimately, China is closer to Iran than it is to Israel."

Yellinek noted that China has quietly begun establishing soft power channels in Israel to promote its cause. He also noted that Chinese companies operate ports around the world, and that there is nothing inherently unusual about the Israeli case.

As the world's second-largest economy after the United States, China has been rapidly expanding its global presence. Under President Xi Jinping, the country launched its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, creating a lucrative network of land and sea trade hubs across Eurasia. It is a network that greatly expands China's access to and influence on global trade.

In September 2018, Rear Adm. Oded Gour-Lavie (Res.), a former head of the Israeli Navy's Strategic Task Force, said that given its location in the eastern Mediterranean, and coastline on the Red Sea, Israel is well-suited to benefit from China's initiative. But in a situation in which economic interests clash with security interests, Israel will have to make future decisions differently, "so that we don't shoot ourselves in the foot."

From Yellinek's perspective, the alliance with Washington is the most important factor to defend. "The Israeli government should tell the U.S. that yes, Washington is undoubtedly Israel's best friend, but also that no American company offered to manage Haifa's port," said Yellinek. "And that this is aboveboard."

YAAKOV LAPPIN is a Research Associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in Ramat Gan, Israel. The Jewish News Service distributed a version of this story.

## inFOCUS | Fall 2019

## U.S. Navy and Marine Corps: An Expeditionary Power by CDR JENNIFER DYER, USN (ret.)

s the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps team looks to the future, it faces the need to balance and integrate the pressures of new technology, evolving political realities, and the enduring priorities dictated by the nature of the earth itself, with its surface covered 71 percent by water. The sea services must also fit the dictates of a very American constraint: the national preference for exerting power overseas on an expeditionary basis.

Geography imposes the planning dimension least likely to change for the Navy. America's basic need for a naval force comes from our essential nature as a maritime power. Americans are often apt to forget it, but we are effectively a continent-size island lying between the bustling precincts of Asia, Europe, and South America, with extraordinary stretches of coastline in the temperate zone, accessible year-round. We derive much of our strength and influence from trading with almost everyone on earth. Yet for the United States, only Canada and Mexico can be accessed for trade without crossing the sea, and even with those contiguous neighbors, the sea is in many cases a more convenient or costeffective option.

In the last century, the global seas have needed the United States for many things. But America, in her turn, needs the sea, and subsists in its environment for basic security as well as for resources and trade.

### **The First Priority**

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For this reason, the first priority of the U.S. Navy is sea control, on a vast scale unmatched by the needs of any other nation. Absolute control over the sea is not possible, of course. But we must be able to use the sea ourselves, and maintain cognizance of activities on the seas around us, with the power, when necessary, to interdict and exercise a veto over them.

With very long coastlines to protect, and two great oceans to patrol, America's homeland defense is as much a maritime as an air and space problem, and in some ways more. The priority of sea control, ranges, even if someday it is less intensively manned.

Neither the surface combatants nor the attack submarines, nor the air reconnaissance assets that support them, can be everywhere at once, of course. The "patrol" concept in the open oceans is about displays of power and deterrence, tokens of the veto the United States can exercise over emerging threats. In addition to more traditional threats, our sea control forces today must increas-

The "patrol" concept in the open oceans is about displays of power and deterrence, tokens of the veto the United States can exercise over emerging threats.

in the conditions of current technology, means the core of America's Navy will continue to be multipurpose combatants with formidable capabilities. We vest these capabilities in cruisers and destroyers, making them moving envelopes of combat power. Air, surface, and sub-surface warfare; support for the Marine Corps; standoff land attack; ballistic missile defense; intelligence collection; operating support for Special Forces and special operations – cruisers and destroyers do it all.

To patrol our ocean security buffers the attack submarine force is equally essential, representing in its realm a moving envelope of combat power like that of its surface counterparts. Unlike most submarine forces, ours will never not need to operate over extraordinary ingly consider unconventional concepts like sea-launched electromagnetic pulse weapons and drone swarms deployed from off our coasts.

## America's Operating Premise

Since World War II, however, the defense planning of the United States has focused largely on two other general conditions: the need to both field and defend against strategic nuclear forces, and the value of "defending forward" by promoting stability, quiescent conditions, and a balance of power abroad, especially in the Eastern hemisphere.

The second condition, defending forward, is the one that has given special importance for the Navy to aircraft carriers, amphibious ships and now the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and the new class of "small surface combatant" (SSC) intended to take on the missions once performed in the U.S. Navy by frigates. These are the platforms that perfect slices of forward-engagement missions – which by their nature are mostly about the land-sea interface of competing political interests – while cruisers, destroyers, and submarines shoulder the load of classic sea control wherever it is needed.

This second condition affects our planning and policy thinking through a small but significant set of filters that may be called "operating premises." Two big ones, for example, which have changed character somewhat over time, are the state of technology and the relative significance to our national policy of alliances.

### The Expeditionary Premise

A third, however – the focus of this essay – is an especially American operating premise. That premise, which has been with us from the earliest days of the Republic, is the enduring preference of the American people for using military power overseas on an expeditionthe consensus behind that post-1945 commitment has noticeably waned. The pendulum of public sentiment and electoral politics has been swinging back toward an older American consensus, one that favors not isolationism so much as an ability to act abroad with decision, at need, but without planting roots across the oceans that smack of occupation and even imperialism.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this American attitude is one we rarely give thought to. The expeditionary premise isn't about limiting our options to small interventions or token demonstrations that may not get the job done for our national interests. Rather, it is about empowering expeditionary force itself to achieve the effects we desire. From Veracruz in 1847 to Grenada in 1983, Panama in 1989, and Iraq in 1991, U.S. policy has "scoped up" expeditionary force to fit the goals of our policy, rather than the other way around.

This expeditionary premise has implications for all the services when we are defending forward. The going-in proposition of U.S. expeditionary power is that, for the Army and Air Force in

The expeditionary premise is essentially about achieving effects with as light a footprint as possible in terms of disruptive political reverberations.

ary basis; i.e., with as light a footprint on someone else's territory as possible, and as often as not, especially in our first 150 years, a "get-away" ship waiting offshore.

Acquiring territory in the Western Pacific from the Spanish-American War of 1898 introduced America to the custodianship of far-flung colonial territories. The globally disruptive character of World War II persuaded Americans to finally accept some level of military force stationed permanently on the territory of others. But in the last quarter century, and especially in the last decade, particular, we may like to retain basing rights if we can, but we have no intention of shouldering (or usurping) the burdens of sovereignty for the host nation. As for the combat elements of our Navy and Marine Corps, for the most part they will do what they normally do: come and go.

### **Future Challenges**

It is because the United States is fundamentally a maritime power of exceptional size, and one that prefers to use force on an expeditionary premise, that we are unlikely to stop seeing the need for a very large navy, and a marine corps with a unique role.

Since the end of the Cold War, America uses the U.S. Army and Air Force mostly on an expeditionary premise too. Increasingly, the military services simply perform missions jointly, and expect to. But time, alliances, and technology have yet to obviate the special affinity of the sea services for expeditionary operations. Approaching foreign countries from the sea is fundamental to the conditions imposed by the earth itself, and an expeditionary premise is uniquely intrinsic to maritime operations. The question is not whether we will continue to perceive expeditionary force through the lens of the sea, but what we will see through that lens.

The Navy and Marine Corps are already at work on one prominent vision that augurs rapid change: the use of unmanned weapons platforms and the level of automated, artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled technology incorporated in our weapon systems. In some of its aspects, such as expendability (what the Navy is calling "attritability"), this effort promises to empower U.S. forces with cheaper, more plentiful assets and a more agile, distributable basis for information, situational awareness, and decision-making.

In another aspect, however, it carries special import for expeditionary operations. The expeditionary premise is essentially about achieving effects with as light a footprint as possible in terms of disruptive political reverberations. Americans tend to think of that as meaning how much, or whether, there are "boots on the ground." But it also implies a specialized emphasis on rules of engagement, which are intended most basically to enable the defense of our own forces while retaining discretion over our responses, and retaining the initiative for our goals, and not the opponent's.

In a declared war like World War II, the automated responses of AI-enabled

weapon systems may suit our purposes. With expeditionary operations short of formally declared war, we are more likely to insist on human-in-the-loop command and control as a means of keeping the scope and purpose of the operations at the level we intend. Inherent in the expeditionary idea is not being drawn into a conflict bigger than the United States envisioned. It's hard enough to avoid that when there is little automation of command, control, and weaponry, as we learned to our cost in Vietnam. AI-enabled and autonomous combat systems may in some ways make it harder, if we don't take rigorous care in preparing for that possibility.

The future of our alliances is another key area with special significance for the sea services as an expeditionary arm. The reason is simple: few of America's allies are equipped to contribute significantly to certain types of expeditionary operations (e.g., amphibious assault). The allies that are equipped tend to offer niche capabilities. Some capabilities, like mine warfare, are indispensable, especially given the persistent shortfalls in our own forces. On the whole, however, outside of long-maintained operational plans like that for the defense of South Korea, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps must plan for resources and training that envision diverse, highly contingent levels of allied integration.

There is little point in complaining about this political reality, as allies have inherently different national priorities. It must simply be dealt with: reviewed and perhaps renegotiated as necessary. It is a major factor in our evolving view of the NATO alliance, for example, and one the Trump administration has been unusually energetic and determined about looking into.

### **Focusing on the Future**

If there is a way to systematize the framing of future requirements across both allied and independent uses of force in "forward defense," it may be categorizing them under umbrella headings. Three serviceable ones might be the following: chokepoint security, exerting pressure on rogue regimes, and the reemerging category of countering regional attempts at hegemonic area denial.

The last category may be the most interesting in the coming years. It is an old pattern, not a new one; we have little mental concept of it now because of the global maritime dominance of the British Empire and the United States over the last 300 years. But when it goes unchecked, it quickly becomes incompatthreats to American interests (including secure and freely accessible chokepoints, and stability for our allies), but constantly evolving military technological threats. If our forces – or third parties' – encounter supersonic or hypersonic missiles, it will probably be first in one of these areas. Our first encounters have already occurred there with some of Russia's and China's most modern air combat systems, and their front-line surface warships and submarines.

These national security problems

These national security problems are inherently about operating in a maritime environment, as much for area access, surveillance, and combat as for logistics.

ible with political stability, and its effects reach much further across continents in a geopolitical sense than our cultural memories may recall.

The premier example of it today is China's effort to build out "virtual territory" into the South China Sea and dominate the chokepoint belt in the whole region. But there are signs of a somewhat analogous effort being made by Russia to exert dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean through clients in Syria and Libya. Coupled with Russia's unprecedented use of Iran in the last two years of the Obama administration, as a way-point for combat operations in Syria (e.g., bomber missions and cruise missile attacks), these developments toll a death knell for the Truman Doctrine, which posited "support [for] free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

In Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, meanwhile, Iran is mounting a similar effort to surround and hold Israel at risk, through Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula and Red Sea. Each case of attempted hegemony and area denial presents not just a geographic definition for are inherently about operating in a maritime environment, as much for area access, surveillance, and combat as for logistics. The sea services can't look to the future without seeing them on the horizon and addressing them. Moreover, they are problems for which the American people will demand expeditionary solutions: bounded objectives (though not necessarily "small" ones), defined end-states, and departures. There is little appetite between Honolulu and Boston for establishing new bases overseas or acquiring, by force, new territory that needs administering.

Can the expeditionary premise yield military operations that can counter 21st century attempts at area denial and exclusionary hegemony, especially by Russia and China with their growing arsenals of highly lethal smart weapons? That's a tall order to fill. As a day-to-day matter, it is likely to be the pressing question for the Navy and Marine Corps, but also for expeditionary operations and U.S. national interests in general.

Commander J.E. DYER, USN, (Ret.) is a former Naval Intelligence officer turned blogger.

# The Dragon Awakes: China's Ambitions in Northeast Asia by RADM JAMES R. STARK, USN (ret.)

his summer, an unusual gathering took place at Hudson Institute, a leading Washington think tank. Retired senior officers from the armed forces of the United States, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan gathered to participate in a multinational tabletop exercise-a war game played out in seminar form. Their goal-to explore multilateral responses to China's growing campaign to expand its influence throughout East Asia, especially in the maritime domain. While it is not uncommon for U.S. officials to meet separately with their Japanese, Taiwanese, and South Korean counterparts, what made this latest effort unique was the fact that senior and highly respected national security experts and practitioners from three of America's staunchest allies and partner Asian nations were interested in collaborative multilateral approaches rather than just bilateral solutions. This raises the question of China's goals in this sensitive region. What are its legitimate concerns? Why are its neighbors reacting so strongly to Chinese pressure? And why is China pushing so hard to control its neighboring seas and expand its influence into the Pacific and Indian Oceans?

### China's position

China's geostrategic position has both strengths and weaknesses. It possesses a strong interior position with large inland areas from which it can operate its forces. As a land power, this works to its advantage. However, China's access to the high seas and its most important trading routes are hemmed in by the First Island Chain-the islands stretching from Japan down the Ryukyu chain to Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, all the way around to Singapore and Malaysia. These islands create a virtual barrier to naval expansion, threatening China's most important sea lines of communication and, if controlled by its enemies, allowing them to interdict China's critical trade routes and threaten its forces and shipping in the East and South China Seas. The same island chain can also be regarded as an obstacle to whatever ambitions China possesses in the mid-Pacific—or beyond. Consequently, China's regional policies must be seen in light of its efforts to exert control of these offshore seas and the

as technologically advanced as and with greater numbers than its potential enemies—particularly the United States.

The PLA and its branches (the PLA Navy and the PLA Air Force) have been expanding for more than 20 years. Today they have advanced fourth and fifth generation fighters, thousands of longrange cruise and ballistic missiles, and a rapidly expanding navy of increasing technological sophistication. China has used its massive intelligence apparatus to steal U.S. and European military and commercial secrets, allowing it to leapfrog the long, costly process of weapons development and used pirated Western technology to field its own advanced systems. China's naval forces are build-

China's access to the high seas and its most important trading routes are hemmed in by the First Island Chain—the islands stretching from Japan ... to Singapore and Malaysia.

maritime traffic which transits through them, and to push the United States far from China's coasts back to the mid-Pacific.

As China's economy boomed in the 1990s, its leaders also began a steady expansion of their military capabilities. Instead of a massive, low technology peasant army, China's military forces—the People's Liberation Army (PLA)—implemented an impressive naval and aviation building program. China's military modernization aims to make its armed forces ing aircraft carriers, nuclear and conventional submarines, amphibious assault forces, and several new types of air defense and anti-surface destroyers and frigates. Without question, China's navy is a very formidable force.

China has also used a series of new technologies to develop an integrated surveillance system to effectively monitor the seas out to several hundred miles from its coasts. At its most basic, this system includes fishing vessels, small coastal freighters, and large commercial vessels whose concerted efforts can locate foreign ships. Their reports are backed by sophisticated space-based sensors, coastal and airborne sensors, long-range over-the-horizon radars, and advanced listening posts all tied together to provide a near-real-time picture of all shipping inside the First Island Chain and beyond.

This advanced intelligence system is coupled with and provides targeting to China's strike weapons, consisting of thousands of short, medium- and longrange precision-targeted missiles along with advanced tactical aircraft and missile-equipped medium bombers. These military forces are backed by state-directed fishing and commercial fleets, maritime security forces, and a large and well-armed coast guard. The result is that China can threaten any ship or aircraft operating within hundreds of miles of its coast. It uses this capability to back its relentless policy of expanding its maritime frontiers. As a political statement, China wants to ensure that Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea all realize that it can now cut them off from their markets and allies.

Now that China has become the world's second largest economy, its leaders intend to regain their historical poChina intends to embark on a path of military conquest. While it will fight if necessary, China prefers to attain its goals by outmaneuvering its opponents employing a highly effective indirect strategy which it refers to as "the three warfares." The first element of this trio is psychological or political warfare, aimed at disrupting an opponent's decisionmaking capability. It uses diplomatic and economic pressure, rumor, threats

China has been quite successful in all three of these areas. And we see these elements at work as China harnesses all the resources of the state and applies them to the execution of its policies.

### **Taiwan's Position**

In Northeast Asia, China's three neighbors, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea each face different situations. Since it was occupied by Chiang Kai-shek's Na-

## Without question, China's navy is a very formidable force.

and false narratives to undermine an enemy's ability to conduct operations by deterring and demoralizing its military and civilian populace.

The second component is media warfare, aimed at exerting long-term influence on global perceptions and attitudes. It uses all instruments of propaganda – print, visual and Internet, along with international academic programs and widespread support for pro-Chinese advocates overseas to influence domestic and global opinion to support China's

China's extensive naval building program, coupled with a rapidly developing land-based missile force and a modern, highly capable air force have dramatically expanded its ability to carry out its threats.

sition, impose their will on the region, limit the economic and political choices of their neighbors, and use all elements of national power to establish China as Asia's acknowledged hegemon—the first among equals. Beyond that, China wants to use its economic strength as a path to become a dominant global power.

This does not, however, mean that

policies and undermine opposition to China's actions.

The third component is legal warfare, the use of international and domestic law to claim the legal high ground and assert China's interests. It seeks to undermine established Western legal structures and impose a uniquely Chinese approach to international legal norms.

tionalist troops in 1949, Taiwan has been seen by the Communist Chinese on the mainland as a breakaway province that is only temporarily separated from its parent. And mainland China has been largely successful in imposing this "one China" policy on all but a few other nations of the world. In fact, Taiwan also supports this one China policy, but with a markedly different interpretationthat the Republic of China (Taiwan) is the legitimate government of all China. In the succeeding decades, Taiwan has become a vibrant economic success story and a well-functioning and at times turbulent democracy.

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has consistently maintained that a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan would result in Chinese military action to reunite the two states. The PRC has backed up its words with significant military force. China's extensive naval building program, coupled with a rapidly developing land-based missile force and a modern, highly capable air force have dramatically expanded its ability to carry out its threats. Despite the fact that both nations are closely tied economically, each is prepared to employ military force to support their differing positions.

Since 1979, the United States has recognized the PRC as the sole legal



A Japanese government aircraft flies over the Senkaku Islands (Photo: Kyodo News)

government of China, with Taiwan as a part of China. Accordingly, Washington does not support Taiwan's independence. However, America maintains strong unofficial relations with Taiwan and has consistently supported the sale of arms and technology to help Taiwan maintain its defenses, the most recent of which is the \$8 billion-dollar sale of 66 American F-16V fighter jets that will materially improve Taiwan's air defenses. The American position on fundamental elements of Taiwan's diplomatic and security policy is ambiguous. If Taiwan were to declare independence unilaterally the American response is unknowable. But if China were to invade absent such a declaration, the United States would likely provide military support to the Taiwanese.

The net result is that Taiwan, despite its expanding ties with the mainland, is continually under the shadow of Chinese invasion. Separated from China by the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait, Taiwan would be a difficult challenge for any invader. The Taiwanese military has small but well-trained forces who could inflict severe losses on an invading army. Their U.S.-equipped air force, indigenous anti-ship coastal defense missiles, and large ground force reserves would be a formidable foe. The United States no longer routinely sends forces to Taiwan itself, but periodically sails naval vessels, including carrier strike groups, through the Taiwan Straits as a clear signal of our interest and ability to influence events in the region. Although assisting in a defense against a Chinese invasion would be a difficult task, U.S. forces could have a major impact. And that alone has the potential to deter a Chinese attack.

### **Japan's Position**

Japan's relationship with China is quite different from that of Taiwan. Unlike Taiwan, which was treated relatively benignly by Japan during the Second World War, mainland China was brutalized by the invading Japanese armies. The reluctance of Japan to admit to and apologize for these war crimes has kept this issue alive long after it could have been resolved. Consequently, there is an element of emotional antagonism between the two nations that colors all their relations. Just as China has pushed the boundaries of accepted international law and practice in the South China Sea, it has also laid claim to important areas in the East China Sea that are currently under Japanese administration. Foremost among these are the Senkaku Islands (or Diaoyu to the Chinese), part of the Ryukyu chain stretching south from Japan to Taiwan.

The Senkakus are uninhabited islands at the southern end of the Ryukyus. Their history is complex, but fairly straightforward after they were annexed by Japan in 1895. After the Second World War, they were administered by the United States until control was turned back to Japan in 1972. Large potential oil and gas reserves were identified in the waters off the Senkakus in 1969, and beginning in 1972, both Taiwan and China began pressing their own claims to the islands. The apparent disinterest of China and Taiwan prior to this discovery is one of the arguments Japan uses to support its claim.

More recently, China has been much more aggressive in asserting its position. It regularly sends scores of fishing vessels, backed by armed coast guard ships, to operate inside the nearby seas and the islands' territorial waters. Chinese military aircraft make incursions into Japanese airspace over the islands and are often chased away by responding Japanese fighters. And Chinese warships increasingly use the waters off the Senkakus as they transit past the First Island Chain into the waters of the Pacific Ocean.

### Korea's Position

Unlike its neighbors to the south and east, South Korea has no major maritime security issues with China. As a result, tense maritime interactions between the two states are not a problem. Instead, South Korea's primary security concerns are laser focused on North Korea. While it has relied primarily on U.S. backing for its security since the Korean War, South Korea began to expand its ties with other regional powers starting around 2000. By 2004, its trade with China was growing rapidly at the same time that U.S power and interest in the Far East was beginning to be perceived as declining. Moreover, North Korea's development of in 2016 to accept U.S. THAAD (Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense) antiballistic missiles on its soil angered the Chinese. In response, the Chinese government encouraged action to punish South Korea by popular boycotts of Korean products, a sudden rise in administrative problems for Korean-owned businesses in China, and a precipitous fall in Chinese tourism to South Korea.

By late 2017, relations started to improve once again as China became more flexible on accepting the THAAD presence and South Korea's president indicated there would be no additional THAAD deployments. The result is that South Korea continues to walk a tightrope seeking to balance its traditional reliance on the United States to augment its own substantial military forces, with its desire to expand its profitable trade relations with China, and at the same time depend on both to moderate the actions of North Korea.

### United States's Situation

The United States is in the awkward position of trying to balance the growing threat of an ever more powerful China with the need to provide credible support for American allies in East Asia, all while its own military forces are stretched thin around the world and

## Unlike its neighbors to the south and east, South Korea has no major maritime security issues with China.

nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles has meant that South Korea has looked to Beijing to reign in the North, even as it looks to Washington to provide it security guarantees.

This relationship has been rocky due in part to China's inability to completely control North Korea's actions. Most recently, South Korea's agreement Washington is confronted by competing budgetary priorities at home. One of the biggest problems for the United States is that China is increasingly perceived as a rising power, while the United States is viewed as a declining power struggling against the tide. Anything that undercuts U.S. leadership in Asia, such as the precipitous withdrawal from the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, only exacerbates this problem and creates doubt among our allies.

Today, the U.S. Navy is more powerful than its Chinese counterpart. But that too is changing. The U.S. Navy currently has around 280 ships that are hard pressed to meet their commitments around the world. The Navy aspires to expand to at least 355 ships, but that is very questionable given current budgetary pressures. Experience tells us that planned growth always seems to be just around the corner, a goal that stays just beyond reach—and in the current situation, the 355-ship goal requires support by presidents and Congresses for more than 30 years to succeed.

China, on the other hand, is developing impressive multi-mission naval platforms and is building them at an impressive rate. The PLA Navy in 2015 had 397 vessels (331 surface ships and 66 submarines). By 2030, it is forecast to have 531 vessels (432 surface ships and 99 submarines). It is also important to recall that the U.S. Navy has worldwide commitments, whereas the PLA Navy is concentrated in China's coastal seas. The net result is that, in the event of a crisis in the Far East, the United States will not have the luxury of stripping all its forces from Europe or the Middle East, resulting in a lopsided Chinese numerical advantage in naval forces at the outset of a confrontation.

For now, the U.S. Navy has an advantage in experience, doctrine, and tactics. But it is seeing its technology edge decline and is rapidly falling behind in numbers. China, on the other hand, has made its naval and maritime forces the cornerstone of its plans for global expansion. It has the resources to support this effort, it has begun deploying its ships to gain experience in distant operations, and it is already using these forces to pressure its Asian neighbors. It must also be noted that China has very effectively employed its non-naval assets such as its coast guard, fisheries patrol, police and commercial fishing vessels to pursue its policies, a technique known as "non-militarized coercion." In a nutshell, China has become a very formidable foe.

While all this might appear to paint a very negative picture, the United States is still in a very strong position. But to take advantage of our strengths, we must do a better job of employing all our assets. This means the United States has to refocus its efforts in the Far East. The first step has already been taken. That is to acknowledge that our policies of the past three decades-based on the assumption that an increasingly capitalist economic system would eventually moderate the communist government in Beijing and could even lead to a democratic system with Chinese characteristics-have been a failure. Our past policy of engagement and a search for a win-win accommodation has allowed China to become much more powerful. China's dynamic economic growth has financed its military expansion and enabled its centrally managed economy to penetrate important strategic markets around the world. That may now be changing since, at long last, the U.S. government seems to have awakened to the danger from China.

To be successful, the United States needs a more closely coordinated, multifaceted approach that ties together our policies both across our own government as well as with our allies. It requires strong public diplomacy to call attention to China's human rights violations against its own population, its flouting of international legal norms, and its bullying of its neighbors. It also means pushing back against China's theft of U.S. intellectual property, its use of unfair trade practices, and acknowledging the danger it poses to American business and workers. On the military side, the U.S. must continue regular reconnaissance missions in the region, along with periodic freedom of navigation operations. We should also reemphasize our strongest asset-our alliances and friendships with key Asian nations-to include diplomatic and economic cooperation along with military activities. And we need to continue to bring in other supportive nations such as the United Kingdom, France and India to help augment our policies.

In the diplomatic arena, we must insist on multilateral approaches to resolving international issues to prevent China from using bilateral negotiations to isolate and overwhelm its weaker neighbors. In the economic sphere, we must maintain strong, high profile U.S. support for multilateral institutions including ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the Asian Development Bank and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) countries. And we should join the Transpacific Partnership to regain our role as the "go to" nation in the Far East, backed up with stronger U.S. government support for investment in the region.

America's future in the Far East will be challenging. Yet we have all the tools to succeed. The United States has been a Pacific nation since the U.S. Navy established a Pacific Squadron in 1821. We remain so today with a long history of close relations with key allies in the region, highly trained, experienced military forces, and a vibrant democratic tradition. We must do more, but that is certainly not beyond our grasp. The future is still in our hands.

RADM JAMES STARK, USN (Ret.) served on destroyers and cruisers and in Washington on the Navy HQ Staff and National Security Council. He was President of the Naval War College.

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## "It's Not About You"

### An *in*FOCUS interview with Representative Jack Bergman

Representative Jack Bergman (R-MI) is the highest-ranking military officer elected to serve in Congress. A Marine aviator, he served in Vietnam and in a variety of positions in the United States and Europe as both an active duty and reserve officer. His last command was as Commander of Marine Forces Reserve/Marine Forces North. Elected to Congress in 2016, Rep. Bergman serves on the Committees on Armed Services, the Budget, Natural Resources, and Veterans Affairs. *in*FOCUS Editor Shoshana Bryen spoke with him in late August.

## *in*FOCUS: Let's start with the defense budget. Can we afford what we need?

**Rep. Bergman:** We cannot afford to *not* have defense capability – which means both defensive and offensive capabilities. And we cannot afford to not have the capabilities when we need them. The Marine Corps talks about how we are the most ready when the nation is the least ready. That's because we keep ourselves on the cutting edge of where we could be deployed, based upon the national defense strategy. We're not trying to be everything to everybody. That is – in a positive way – more the Army's job, because it's bigger.

So, getting back to the idea of 'can we afford ...' the challenge that we have is technology ... even if you take it out of defense and put it into business today or put it into your personal life. How many of us can keep up with the software upgrades in our iPhone?

#### *i***F**: Nот ме.

**Bergman:** That's at the very micro level. The digital world, and especially the cyber world, is changing at such a rate that we are indisputably at war right now in cyber. People trying to hack your credit card, people trying to hack your defense systems, whatever it happens to be. We talk about "managing change," but the first understanding of managing change is understanding the rate at which things are changing. In the defense world, whether we have \$700 billion or \$800 billion, if we're not managing those finite resources wisely in the Department of Defense, we're in trouble. We've talked about acquisition reform forever, but a big question is how we spend the money appropriately on R&D (research and development). Maybe it's not all defense money, some level of defense budget. When I was still in uniform, if you got \$1 million in your program last year, the next year you were supposed to ask for \$1.2 because that became the going rate. That's not acceptable. It wasn't acceptable then. It's not acceptable now.

The challenge lies in assessing the rate of change of the threats around the world, whether it be waterways, in space,

In the defense world, whether we have \$700 billion or \$800 billion, if we're not managing those finite resources wisely in the Department of Defense, we're in trouble.

maybe it's private sector money in some cases, so that in the end, there's a product that we can use in the fight.

As I look around the Armed Services Committee (HASC), there are a lot of good folks there. Democrats, Republicans, good folks there for the right reasons. But not enough of them understand what it really means to give DoD a dollar and to get a dollar's worth of product, of return, out of that. It's more of, "Well, I've got a base in my district," or, "There's a big defense supplier." That's not a bad reason, but it is different for those of us who've served and those of us who've built budgets. There are very few of us on that committee or even in the whole House who have actually built

or in the cyber world. We have to assess the best we can the future capabilities that our potential adversaries would have and make sure that what we do is perceived properly by those potential adversaries and our potential allies. We're in this all the way and we're developing our coalition partners in different parts of the world. But we're also sending the signal to those who would oppose us, that we're not going to stand for it.

*i*F: In light of that, are hypersonic missiles an entirely new thing? Should this be worrying us the same way that ballistic missile technology used to worry us before we had some

#### HANDLE ON IT?

**Bergman:** This is an open phone line. I just would say yes. But it's in its infancy. We don't know what goes from infancy to, if you will, adulthood or worse years, teenage years and how quickly. So yes.

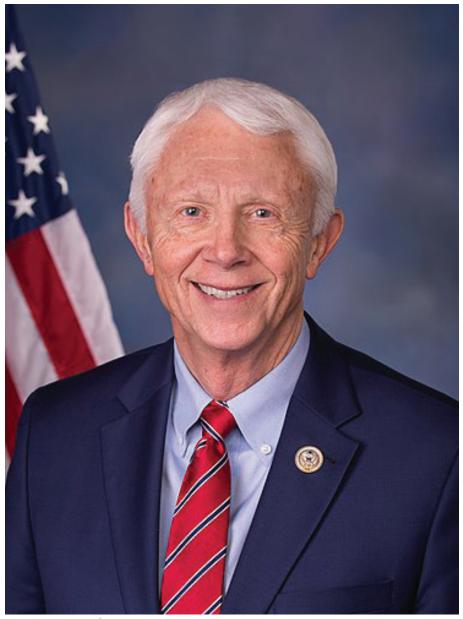
### *i*F: Are we going to get to 12 Aircraft carriers by 2023? That seems to have been on the docket at one point.

Bergman: I don't know. The SASC (Senate Armed Services Committee) and the HASC, basically worked here all of August. But if we don't have a 12-carrier fleet, we have to consider alternatives for protecting the open waterways, whether it's the Strait of Hormuz or the South China Sea or the Strait of Malacca. That presence is going to be essential to future global security. When I say global security, it's economic security, because of the free flow of goods and services. But also, we have to make sure that countries that are in that area know that that we are right in the area as well.

iF: Do we have allies to work with us? I know the president called for help in the Persian Gulf.

**Bergman:** That question would span where we are in the Persian Gulf, as far as NATO's role, but we also talk about our partners literally around the globe. It could be in ... South and Central America where it comes to getting coalition partners down there. The United States will be the best partner of any ally. But it's only because we took the time to build the relationship. I've been heartened by, not only the president's stance, but also the work that Secretary [of State Mike] Pompeo has done, because that's what the State Department does.

If you remember, after Saddam [Hussein] went down, that we were trying to move more State Department



Representative Jack Bergman

folks into Iraq to help on the rebuild. But too many of them said, "No. That's not what I signed up for. I signed up to work behind a desk in Washington D.C." In the military, you don't sign up to stay at home. You sign up to go to the fight. I've seen what I would call a positive change of attitude under Secretary Pompeo's leadership.

## *i*F: Can you give me some positives and some negatives about the current Defense bill?

Bergman: The good news is that we're continuing to build under President

Trump. We do realize that for eight years under the Obama administration our ability to defend ourselves, whether it be defensively or offensively, was eroded. The positive is President Trump and his administration pushing forward with higher numbers in defense.

What I see as a negative is that the military is not a social experiment. Never has been, never will be. So, the negative for me is that wasting time with social-experiment-type ideas within the military is a detriment to the overall capability of our young men and women who serve.

## *i*F: You authored the Improved Well-Being for Vets Act. Tell us about it.

**Bergman:** First, a data point: these are Marine Corps numbers, but they probably are not too far off for the other services. People assume that the highest percentage of people who would have suicidal ideations or actually complete as opposed to going into emergency room where we know the costs are higher. Now the key is getting the word out to the veterans who don't know. It's about all of us continually educating, in this case the veterans, about where the available health care is for them. Especially in rural and remote communities.

*i*F: Do you see any correlation

...if we don't have a 12-carrier fleet, we have to consider alternatives for protecting the open waterways, whether it's the Strait of Hormuz or the South China Sea or the Strait of Malacca.

the act would be those who had deployed to the fight and were under the stress of combat. That those people were coming back and taking their own lives. It's actually the opposite.

The higher number of suicides is among those who have not deployed. You have to think about what that really means, but there clearly has been a failure to assess the outcome of money spent on veteran care. This bill does two things.

First, under the Improve Act, information will be better shared among the entities serving veterans. Admittedly, there is a kind of a slippery slope. You don't want to invade a person's privacy, but at the same time we need to make sure that for people who are potentially at risk, the appropriate information is shared among agencies, healthcare agencies, whoever is providing that treatment so that nobody falls through the crack.

Second is to actually check the outcomes. After we do this, what are the results? And then where do we try to improve based upon what we found out? ... We found a problem with the veterans' use of hospital and doctor vouchers under the "Choice" act, so we changed things. Now veterans can go to Urgent Care facilities in their local communities BETWEEN VETS WHO AREN'T GET-TING JOBS OR ARE HAVING A HARD TIME TRANSITIONING BACK TO CI-VILIAN LIFE AND SUICIDES?

**Bergman:** Not necessarily. The challenge that we have in this country is the change in the nuclear family. Eighteen-year-old boys and girls, as they hit that next phase in life, don't have enough adult role models in their lives to pattern themselves after. Positive role models. I think there are expectations, whether

into a rural or remote area and become isolated, their only point of communication can sometimes be the Internet. We all know what happens when someone spends too much time on the Internet.

### *i*F: Draft military or volunteer military, you've done both, which is better?

**Bergman:** The National Service Commission was chartered a year and a half ago. Their interim report came out last February talking about some form of national service, whether it be the military, the Forest Service, the health service, the Park Service, whatever. The military is not for everybody. It ties into my answer to the last question. We need to do better at providing our 18-to-24-year-olds with a realistic view of the world, what and who they are, how they fit, and how they can excel.

One of the things the military does is make you understand that it's not about you. It's about the unit. It's about the group you choose to join. It allows people at that very vulnerable age of 18 to 24 to really mature in a broader sense rather than in a kind of silo. But I'm looking forward to the National Service Commission follow-on report, because I think we as a country would be better off if we had, whether it's compulsory for everybody or compulsory for most, something that

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you've served in the military or not, once you reach a certain age everything's supposed to be just fine. And we know that that's not the case. I think this is about managing expectations and managing the transition to adulthood.

One of the challenges with veterans is that if they leave the military and go

is going to help us as a country develop good, functioning adult citizens.

## *i*F: The negotiation for a U.S. exit from Afghanistan seems to be powering up.

**Bergman:** We have to think about how the threat unfolds. The Internet, just to



Turkey taking delivery of the Russian-made S-400 missile-defense near Ankara on July 12, 2019. (Photo: Turkish Defense Ministry)

be basic here, is something we use generally for good, our adversaries use it to recruit, train, execute missions, all of that. And we know that because of the Internet, these groups can operate in very remote places that are hard to reach in order to stop them. One of the reasons we built up the American presence in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa is so that when we had actionable intelligence, we could reach out and touch these groups very quickly. Bring that back to Afghanistan - where did Osama bin Laden go? Where do other groups go? Out to those remote places where they think they are outside of the range of our capabilities. Whatever we do in Afghanistan, we have to have a presence around the area where we can use actionable intelligence to take care of bad people.

I was an airline pilot when 9/11 happened. And the reason those hijackers were successful is because we had been trained as airline crews for 30 years, "Don't make the hijackers mad, all they want to do is get a free ride somewhere and make a political statement." And those hijackers counted on the response of the airline crews to be able to take over the airplanes and then use them as weapons.

But by the fourth airplane, United Flight 93 that went down in Shanksville, PA, the change had already occurred in what the passengers knew and what they did to take the plane down. And we're going to need global presence. It may or may not be visible in all cases, but to just say we're shutting the door, turning off the lights and walking away, is not an answer in the world in which we live today.

### *i*F: Can you talk about Turkey in NATO, out of NATO?

**Bergman:** Turkey is complex because if you kick someone out of a group, then you isolate them, you give them the incentive for more bad behavior. We have to always keep our negotiating doors open, but at the same time, look them in the eye and say, "This behavior is not acceptable." Let's face it, they decided to sacrifice the F-35 fighter for the Russian S-400s air defense system. But if you kick someone out, then you lose visibility and you lose whatever small communication you had going on at the time. I am not at a point yet where I'm ready to kick them out of NATO.

But going back to what I said about Secretary Pompeo and the efforts at the State Department at different levels, we have to continue every day to create those bridges because the world stage that everybody can see now is very small. The Internet has connected us. We can see what's going on in different parts of the world where 100 years ago we couldn't. One of the unique challenges we have in our time is the speed at which information flows and is visible to the world.

The best thing historically from the beginning of mankind is to have a strong, robust intelligence network. We sacrificed that beginning in the late '70s after Vietnam. It takes generations to build up a good network within different areas. Combine that, again, with the influence of Iran when it comes to Hezbollah or Hamas or whatever it happens to be, it's almost like unraveling a gang network. Every major city in the country here has an anti-gang unit that tries to unravel who's who. We have to maintain some level of presence [overseas]. things every year: They evaluate what they're doing that they need to keep doing. They look at what they need to start doing but they haven't been doing, but

This is the weirdness of the Internet. It makes us think we know more about what's going on because we can see all over the world...but we actually know less because we have a lot of information that we are not able to put into context.

### *i*F: Which causes you more angst, Russia or China?

### Bergman: China.

### *i*F: WHY?

**Bergman:** The patience and the longterm planning in China, and the goals are more organized and thought out and adhered to than those of Russia.

*i*F: My last group of questions goes back to the United States. You have focused on debt. Can we deal with the debt without raising taxes?

**Bergman:** The short answer is yes. Here's a data point. In my first term, I was on the Budget Committee. Every year the federal government pays out roughly \$150 billion, with a B, billion dollars in improper payments. What that means is somebody who passed away two years ago is getting a Social Security check. There's a check being cut for \$1,000, but through a clerical error, it should have been \$100, or there's a program or some small funding line that continues to be funded, but it doesn't even exist. It's the waste. This is not fraud, it's not abuse, it's just flat waste.

My philosophy is built upon my reading Jim Collins's book, *Good to Great.* Successful businesses do three the hardest thing for any entity is to stop doing things that no longer add value but consume resources. That is the biggest challenge.

*i*F: What's your evaluation of the national mood? If we had a major crisis, if we had, God forbid, a 9/11 or some other major crime, are we still all in this together?

**Bergman:** This is the weirdness of the Internet. It makes us think we know

scheme of things. What I see in my district is a bunch of pragmatic, hardworking, realistic people who truly are all in this together still. Do we have ideological differences? Absolutely, but from where I sit, both in my district and talking to people ... I talk to everybody. I represent everybody in the district, whether they voted for me or not. Although, if someone didn't vote at all then I give them a little lecture about losing their voice because they did not take the time to vote....

The part you do not see in the media, because the media have chosen what you are exposed to, is the bipartisan work that Democrats and Republicans do every day, morning to night. I'm here to tell you that it occurs. I'm part of it. I was the president of the Republican freshman class three years ago and my first goal was to not only get our Republican freshmen up and on speed in their ability to serve as functioning representatives, but also to get together with our Democratic freshmen colleagues to get to know one another because we were all new.

The media's job is to ... the media's goal, it's not their job... The media's goal is to make sure people watch their news-

The part you do not see in the media, because the media have chosen what you are exposed to, is the bipartisan work that Democrats and Republicans do every day, morning to night.

more about what's going on because we can see all over the world. We can see into everything, but we actually know less because we have a lot of information that we are not able to put into context. It's really not interesting to me if there is a forest fire in New Zealand today. It's not going to change my day, but The Weather Channel will show that to me.

Our challenge as individuals is knowing how we fit into the grand

cast, read their papers, do all those different things, but they really, really, really run a risk of alienating those people who want to believe them but have lost faith in their ability to objectively report.

iF: That's both a depressing answer and a good answer. On behalf of the members of the Jewish Policy Center and the readers of *in*FOCUS, thank you.

# In the Persian Gulf – A New and Fragile Situation by STEPHEN D. BRYEN

he United States, with support from the United Kingdom and Bahrain, is escorting some oil tankers and other ships in the Persian Gulf to safeguard them from Iranian attacks or hijackings. But the situation is, in many ways, quite different from past encounters in the Gulf. The mid-term prospect is that if a conflict with Iran breaks out and escalates, the United States will likely be alone in the fight. And there is a risk that Americans will become disenchanted with taking on another conflict, particularly when the Iraq war has not turned out very well for the United States and its friends (leaving Iran growing in influence and power) and while Afghanistan is still an expensive, inconclusive, and bloody American-led effort.

With respect to the possibility of conflict in the Persian Gulf, perhaps growing out of the oil tanker escort effort, a summary of the strategic, political and military factors in play:

1. The strategic situation has shifted a great deal to the disadvantage of the United States and its Gulf allies;

2. Iran has built up its military forces including missiles of many types, fast attack boats, and submarines. Operations in the Gulf (land, sea, and some air) are run by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC is also very active in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria and is supporting the Houthi rebels against the internationally recognized government in Yemen;

3. For Europe, oil from the Middle East is of negligible interest. Europe today gets most of its petroleum products from Russia, followed by Norway. Aside from the United Kingdom, Europe is not supporting U.S. ship escort operations in the Persian Gulf. Europe's main interest is supporting Iranian industry and related trade with Iran;

4. The United States is no longer dependent on Middle Eastern oil, importing approximately 11 percent of its oil from the Middle East;

5. Washington has different policy objectives in the Persian Gulf and Middle East than in past years when it primarily was focused on oil. Primary among American objectives today is preventing Iran from taking control of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Such control also could lead to renewed attacks on Jordan (once the Syrian civil war is settled) and would be an Iranian attack on U.S. warships that escalates into a missile war.

### **Changed Strategic Situation**

America maintains a significant presence in the Persian Gulf area, especially the U.S. 5th Fleet that is homeported in Bahrain. The deployed 5th Fleet is a powerful force that includes an aircraft carrier; Arleigh Burke class guided missile cruisers equipped with the AEGIS combat system – a ballistic missile defense system; amphibious assault ships such as the USS Boxer, that carry F-35B stealth jets, Harrier vertical takeoff tactical fighter planes, helicopters and V-22 Osprey multi-mission tilt rotor aircraft that can transport Marines for combat insertions and carry out spe-

A possible attack by swarming fast patrol boats equipped with missiles and torpedoes against American warships has drawn much attention in recent years...

on Israel (which already have started);

6. The United States also is protecting oil supplies to its Asian allies, particularly Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, that depend on oil from the Middle East. China is partially dependent on Middle Eastern oil (especially from Saudi Arabia) although its biggest supplier is Russia. Russian and Saudi exports to China have increased. China is also allegedly smuggling oil from Iran; and

7. The most likely war scenario

cial operations. The V-22 has a crew of four and can carry 24 passengers plus equipment.

Iran does not have a competitive air force compared to U.S. systems deployed in the Gulf.

Even so, the strategic situation in the area has shifted to the disadvantage of the United States. America faces different attack scenarios that could be initiated by the Iranians. A possible attack by swarming fast patrol boats equipped with missiles and torpedoes against American warships has drawn much attention in recent years, highlighted by Iran's willingness to interfere with U.S. naval operations in the Gulf.

During the years prior to the Trump administration, Iran profited by harassing U.S. warships, knowing that the ships would not shoot at or ram Iranian vessels. Iran went so far in 2016 as to torpedo (propelled by a rocket motor exploiting super-cavitation bubbles produced by the torpedo) that can reach between 200 and 300 miles per hour and pose a significant threat to U.S. Navy operations. Russia, China, and others (perhaps Europe) also have supplied Iran with sea mines of all types, including the Russian SMDM sea bottom mine that is fired from a torpedo tube to arrive

... perhaps the most capable Iranian asset is its considerable variety of surface-to-surface missiles, especially missiles that can damage or sink warships.

seize two U.S. Navy riverine boats and the 10 sailors on board after one ship wandered into Iranian waters due to mechanical issues. Iran broadcast footage of the sailors, crying, in detention, on television across the country, and later announced plans to build a "monument commemorating the event." While never announced, it is clear that the U.S. Navy's operating orders changed under President Trump, and the Iranians have stopped operations against U.S. warships, fearing strong retaliation.

Might the Iranians resume operations targeting American warships? The oil tanker escort operation, called Operation Sentinel, could trigger an Iranian attack on American ships or on the vessels they are escorting, or both.

Iran operates a submarine fleet composed of conventional diesel-electric Kilo class submarines supplied by Russia, and between 10 and 19 Ghadir class, 150-ton mini submarines – a technology transfer from North Korea. Iran is also building a new class of semi-heavy submarines called Fateh (500 tons) and Besat class submarines (1,200 ton). These are all capable of firing torpedoes and laying mines.

Iran reportedly has gotten Chinese copies of the Shkval Russian torpedo. This is a very fast super-cavitating at a fixed destination where it sits on the ocean bottom until one of its sensors activates it and it becomes self-propelled. These are very difficult to detect and can remain effective for a long time, perhaps as long as 10 years. Iran could use these to close the Straits of Hormuz, although that would also isolate its own fleet.

But perhaps the most capable Iranian asset is its considerable variety of surface-to-surface missiles, especially missiles that can damage or sink warships. The least sophisticated but nonetheless dangerous are missiles carried on Iran's fast patrol boats such as the C-801 from China. The C-801 is, more or less a copy of

Iran also has different missiles that are renderings of Chinese and Russian designs, such as the Hormuz anti-ship missile that tracks enemy radars; Fateh-Mobil (Bright Conqueror) and the Zolfager short range ballistic missile. Iran also has a cruise missile (NASR-1) and armed drones. In any conflagration it can be expected that Iran will be able to launch swarming type missile attacks against high-value U.S. ships, causing damage if they are not shot down. On Oct. 9, 2016 the USS Mason, defending the USS Ponce, a command ship with a very large crew, shot down two Houthi missiles which were later identified as C-801 type that may have been "liberated" from the Yemen Navy. The two Houthi missiles were knocked out by US Navy SM-2 missile interceptors.

### European Antagonism

Europe has no real skin in the game when it comes to oil from the Persian Gulf, because European countries import very little. This is especially true of Germany, which is heavily dependent on Russia and Norway for oil and natural gas. Behind that is the fact that the Germans see Iran as a very big market for their wares, one in which they have a natural advantage over the United States. Despite sanctions, German official trade with Iran still continues in permitted goods. Today approximately

... perhaps the most capable Iranian asset is its considerable variety of surface-to-surface missiles, especially missiles that can damage or sink warships.

the Franco-British Exocet missile that can be launched from a ship or aircraft. In the 1982 Falklands War with Great Britain, the Argentinians sank the *HMS Sheffield*, a type 42 guided missile destroyer with two Exocet missiles – and may have also sunk the container ship, *Atlantic Conveyor* with one Exocet missile. 60 German companies still are active in Iran and accounting officially for about \$1 billion, down from a high of nearly \$4 billion a few years ago. Iran says Germany accounts for 30 percent of Iran's industrial infrastructure.

There is also considerable resentment in France and Germany to the Trump



Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy speed boats. (Photo: IRNA)

administration's decision to pull out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the JCPOA or "Iran deal") - which they are trying to reverse. Because the United States can leverage companies that violate the embargo, the overall sense of industrialists and politicians on the European continent is that Washington is directly responsible for any trouble in the Gulf with Iran. (There are, of course, other consequences to Europe's energy dependence on Russia, not the least of which is to undermine NATO defense commitments, which Germany particularly is doing by not meeting NATO defense spending requirements.)

### American Objectives

Washington is trying to prevent Iran from conducting a power grab in the Middle East, one that would inevitably threaten American's regional allies. Iran's growing missile arsenal and its confrontational style, its operations supporting Shi'a factions in Iraq (including supplying arms and missiles), its support of Hezbollah both in Lebanon and Syria, its supply of IRGC personnel to Syria – including the notorious Quds special operations force – and its semi-covert support of the Houthis in Yemen are examples of Iran's spreading influence. Iran is also squarely behind all the various attacks on Israel and continues to funnel in precision missiles to Hezbollah along with other weapons and an attempt to build a missile production facility in Beirut. In the bigger picture, if Iranian influence isn't soon rolled back, the situation on land as well as on the sea can be expected to deteriorate and Iran's boldness will increase.

The United States also needs to try to protect oil supplies to its allies in Asia, particularly Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. China's bases illegally acquired in the South China Sea threaten the sea lines of communication for oil and other supplies; the possibility of Iran shutting down transit through the Gulf, and specifically through the Straits of Hormuz, is another threat that can't be easily dismissed, nor should it be disregarded. And Iran's support of the Houthi rebels in Yemen provides it with a position in the Red Sea by the Straits of Tiran near the American base in Djibouti.

In Asia, the U.S. position has eroded thanks in large measure to China's military buildup and its threat to take back Taiwan and isolate Japan. The latest political feud between Japan and South Korea also has significantly undermined U.S. regional influence.

### Conclusions

For the time being, the Gulf situation seems under control, but that could change at any moment. Iran's Revolutionary Guard forces could miscalculate, which could touch off a wider conflict. The United States also is isolated from most of its allies in Europe other than Britain (and British support for escorting ships in the Gulf could end with a change in government in the United Kingdom); and it gets no practical help from Japan or South Korea. Whether the American public will want to pursue new or expanded overseas efforts, particularly in the Persian Gulf, could become a question in the coming presidential election campaign.

So far, that has not happened. But it can't be ruled out.

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## The Decline of Maritime Piracy in the Horn of Africa by RADM TERRY MCKNIGHT, USN (ret.) and PETER COOK

n the early morning hours of 17 November 2008, the M/V Sirius Star, approximately 450 nautical miles off the east coast of Kenya, was transiting the Indian Ocean with a full load of two million barrels of crude oil heading for the United States. Well south of Somalia to avoid the prominently pirateinfested area of the Gulf of Aden. The crewmembers of the Sirius Star believed they were well clear of any pirate activity. Without warning the ship was under attack and hijacked by Somali pirates. Even to this day it has never been determined how the pirates knew the location of the Sirius Star, but being fully loaded, with a low freeboard and steaming at less than ten knots the vessel became a prime target.

In the storied history of global pirate activity, the *Sirius Star* became the largest ship ever hijacked. The Somali pirates had hit the jackpot. Shortly after her capture the Somali pirate leaders demanded the ship owner pay \$25 million for her release. In January 2009, after months of tense negotiations and pressure from major maritime powers in the international community not to make ransom payments, a final agreement was reached to pay the pirates \$3 million for the release of the Sirius Star.

From 2007 to 2012 there were more than 200 vessels captured by Somali pirates in the Horn of Africa region. Fearful of being hijacked in the Gulf of Aden, many merchant ships avoided the area and transited farther out to sea in the Indian Ocean. Starting in 2005 with the hijacking of the M/V Feisty Gas and the eventual ransom payment of over a quarter of a million dollars for her recovery, the cost of piracy off the Horn of Africa reached its peak in 2010 with ransom payments totaling over \$200 million. As in the case of the *Sirius Star* and the legendary capture of Captain Richard Phillips with his vessel the *M/V Maersk Alabama*, the Somali pirates changed their tactics and extended their reach hundreds of miles off their coastline into the complexities of the Indian Ocean. This extraordinary increase in pirate activity in the Northwest Indian Ocean region during this period amazed the entire maritime world.

### Understanding Somalia

To understand the beginning of this event in history, you must understand the region and the Federal Republic of

establish any form of rule or economy, Somalia has been devastated for years from tribal warfare and terrorism. Boasting 1,800 miles of coastline, the waters off the coast of Somalia are some of the most abundant fishing grounds in the world. With no central government to fund a navy or coast guard to defend its territorial waters (12 nautical miles), much less the economic exclusive zone (200 nautical miles) numerous foreign fishing fleets have devastated Somali waters without any concern of expense or retribution. Trying to deter these actions, Somali fisherman formed their own law enforcement coalition, capturing fishing vessels and demanding ransom payments. Quickly realizing the considerable profits gained by hijacking merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden.

Quickly realizing the considerable profits gained by hijacking merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden, tribal leaders began recruiting young males to go to sea and capture any vessel they could apprehend.

Somalia. Located in the Horn of Africa, Somalia borders the Gulf of Aden one of the busiest shipping regions in the world. More than 25,000 vessels transit this waterway each year. Most vessels are heading to or from the Suez Canal for ports of call in the Middle East, Mediterranean, Far East and the United States. The state of Somalia itself was formed in 1960 after years of colonial rule by both Italian and British governments. With a government never able to tribal leaders began recruiting young males to go to sea and capture any vessel they could apprehend. With the seizure of the *MV Danica White* in June of 2007 not only were fishing vessels under attack, but merchant vessels as well. After almost three months in captivity and a ransom payment of nearly \$1 million for the release of the *Danica White*, during the next five years piracy in the Gulf of Aden developed into an exceptionally lucrative business.



U.S. Navy sailors from the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer connects a tow line to the lifeboat from the Maersk Alabama to be processed for evidence after the successful rescue of Capt. Richard Phillips, April 13, 2009 in the Indian Ocean. (Photo: U.S. Navy)

### How Did it Happen?

How could this vast maritime region be terrorized by a third-world nation? Who were these swashbucklers? With Somalia's per capita income of less than \$300 per year, most of the pirates themselves were young desperate men in their late teens and early twenties with no realistic employment prospects, pushed to a life of crime. They were hired by more experienced local fisherman that served as craft to profit from the ransom payments. With a clear understanding of the global economy, the pirate kingpins required ransom payments be made in U.S. dollars only and in \$100 bill denominations.

In the early stages of piracy, the buccaneers departed the port of Bosaso in the northeastern Puntland State of Somalia. Generally, with several small boats teaming together, they were loaded with six to eight pirates each, an as-

The indisputable indication that these boats were not fishing vessels is that they were generally overcrowded and with no visual sign of fishing nets.

"pirate leaders" as a result of their familiarity with fishing in the region. However, it has been revealed over the years that reputable warlords served as the negotiators for ransom payments once the vessels were captured. During the height of the piracy period, there was even a "Pirate Stock Exchange" in wich investors would provide either money, weapons or small sortment of Soviet-era weapons (AK-47 assault rifles), GPS receivers, rocket-propelled grenades (RPG's) and grappling hooks. The indisputable indication that these boats were not fishing vessels is that they were generally overcrowded and showed no visual sign of any fishing nets. The pirates themselves having very little knowledge of the sea, would head north in the Gulf of Aden and attack in the busy shipping lanes. As the pirates became more brazen and had the assistance of dhows (medium size fishing vessels - motherships), they extended their reach to the Indian Ocean. As successful as they would be if they seized a vessel, nearly 50 percent of the pirates that ventured to sea never returned.

With heightened concern over the reduction in the free flow of commerce in the region, it became essential for the maritime powers to come together and find a resolution. Most suggested that more navy ships would solve the problem. However, with an area of over 2.5 million square miles, there could never be enough navy ships to patrol this strategic waterway. After much debate, four significant measures that became major factors in stemming piracy in the region.

### Maritime Task Forces

In 2001 U.S. Central Command established Combined Task Force 150 to patrol the Horn of Africa to fight the global war on terrorism. With very little resources to deal with the piracy problem Task Force 150 was hastily shifted to provide support for the anti-piracy mission. With the increasing number of pirate attacks in 2008, U.S. Central Command took an additional measure and in Janu-

for the free flow of commerce. China has even established a logistics facility in Djibouti. Even though they operate indepen-

### As successful as they would be if they seized a vessel, nearly 50 percent of the pirates that ventured to sea never returned.

ary 2009 Combined Task Force 151 was commissioned exclusively for counter piracy operations. More than 20 countries provided critical resources from ships to aircraft, in support of Task Force 151. First commanded by a U.S. Navy admiral in 2009, today the task force is under the command of Rear Admiral Byeong-Ju Yu, Republic of Korea Navy.

To provide protection along the Somalia coast for vessels belonging to the World Food Program (WFP) and African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), Operation ATALANTA was established in 2008 with nations from the European Union (EU) providing support. Approved by the North Atlantic Council in 2009, Operation Ocean Shield was established with assistance from NATO nations for anti-piracy missions.

Even today Task Force 151 and Operation ATALANTA are fully operational and still provide many security measures for the region. Operation Ocean Shield sporadically patrolled the Gulf of Aden and ceased operations in December of 2016. Over the last several years there have been scores of maritime powers providing resources to the counter piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden. Even the Swedish Navy provided boarding team training to African maritime personnel. One noteworthy navy that has continually deployed to the region to protect its massive merchant fleet is the People's Republic of China - Navy (PLAN), first operational in late 2008. The Chinese clearly understand the importance of the region dently, PLAN forces have continuously cooperated with the other task forces and are a major reason why piracy has decreased in the region.

### U.N. Security Resolutions

In December 2008 the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed both Resolutions 1846 and 1851. These gave States cooperating with the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) the powers to enter Somalia's territorial waters and use "all necessary means" to fight piracy in the region. With these resolutions, navies could extend their reach to go after the pirates in their encampments and if necessary bring down their economic support enterprises.

There are very few times over the years when the U.N. Security Council has voted with all 15 members supporting a resolution to enforce international laws. Without these resolutions the navies patrolling the region would only have been

### Shipping Industry

Despite the unprecedented cooperation and coordination by naval forces from a plethora of nations, the pirates retained the upper hand, hijacking ships at an alarming rate. In 2009, the year that Combined Task Force 151, EUNAVFOR's Operation ATALAN-TA and NATO's Operation OCEAN SHIELD commenced coordinated operations, more than 75 vessels were attacked by pirates, of which more than 40 ships were successfully hijacked, with at least 850 seafarers being taken hostage for several months. It was clear that a sea area greater than 2,500,000 square miles was almost impossible to dominate without a significantly greater commitment of naval resources than were deemed available by contributing governments. The U.S. State Department and the British Admiralty had already made the point that "piracy" was a merchant navy problem, implying that the industry should take measures to protect their own ships.

Consequently, the international shipping associations worked with the International Maritime Organization (IMO – the U.N. agency responsible for the safety and security of international shipping) to establish the Best Management Practices (BMP) for ship self-protection, establish the Internationally Recognized Transit Corridor (IRTC – a convoy route for ships escorted by warships) through the Gulf of Aden and define a voluntary reporting area (later referred to as the High Risk Area –

Embarking small teams of armed guards on ships transiting the High Risk Area became increasingly popular, especially when their use reduced the cost of insurance premiums...

allowed to take measures in international waters and the pirates would have had the protection of their territorial waters under international law. HRA) of the Northwest Indian Ocean. The associations also worked closely with the naval coalitions to improve mutual understanding and collaboration.

### Armed Security Teams

As the number of attacks across the vast expanse of the High Risk Area increased, several ships per day on some occasions, ship owners were anxiously looking for a different way to reassure their crews against capture, and protect their ships and cargoes. Additionally, the growing number of attacks and successful hijackings also dramatically increased insurance premiums for ships transiting one of the busiest areas of sea in the world (at any one time, around 40 percent of the global commercial fleet are in the western Indian Ocean), significantly increasing costs for ship owners. Several shipowners were experimenting with using unarmed security advisors to support their crews during the transit to avoid pirate boardings.

The unprecedented use of private military and private security companies in Iraq and Afghanistan, led by the U.S. and UK, had demonstrated an innovative effective way to measurably improve "point" rather than area security, at a reduced financial and potential political cost to governments. While the use of private armed guards to protect ships was initially viewed by most of the commercial shipping industry as repugnant, several incidents, including the capture of the M/V Biscaglia in November 2008 (in which the unarmed guards jumped overboard to save their own lives, having failed to deter a pirate hijacking), forced shipowners to reconsider.

Embarking small teams of armed guards on ships transiting the High Risk Area became increasingly popular, especially when their use reduced the cost of insurance premiums, making it often a break-even decision. In 2011, this developing trend prompted the IMO, along with shipping associations and the Security Association for the Maritime Industry (SAMI the representative and regulatory body for armed guards) to issue guidance on the use of armed guards by flag states and shipowners. In 2012, the shipping industry defined a standardized contract for the employment of armed guards, while the IMO, shipping industry and SAMI stipulated how private maritime security companies should conduct their activities. This was soon followed by the introduction of a model set of "Rules for the Use of Force" for private armed guards protecting ships against attacking pirates, sponsored by flag States, shipping associations and SAMI.

### What Success Looks Like

The collective efforts of the naval coalitions and merchant shipping selfprotective measures, including the use of armed guards, worked, spurring the Chief of Staff of EUNAVFOR's Operation ATALANTA to state publicly that "armed guards are part of the solution, not part of the problem." In May 2012, pirates successfully hijacked their last large commercial ship, in this most recent episode of piracy in the Northwest Indian

hijackings in last few years has virtually come to a standstill. This does not mean that seafarers can lower their guard on the high seas. As long as ships go to sea, there will be piracy. Off the west coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea there has been a major increase in piracy and armed robberies. The pirates in the Gulf of Guinea have a far more combative nature than the pirates of Somalia. The Somali pirates stick to the "pirate code" and in only a few rare cases have injured their captives. This is not the case in the Gulf of Guinea. These pirates are going after the oil rich cargo and have little regard for human life.

The most remarkable outcome in the history of piracy is that the entire maritime community came together to find a solution regarding Somalia. Starting with the United Nations Security Council, to the coalition forces

### Pirates retain the capability and capacity to return to sea and, if they sense the opportunity of success, piracy will return.

Ocean. There have been several isolated piracy attacks in the High Risk Area over the past few years, but they have all been unsuccessful. The naval coalitions maintain a presence, albeit significantly reduced, BMP protection measures for ships have been improved and embarked private armed guard teams continue to be used in large numbers.

This unlikely triumvirate is effectively deterring pirate attacks. However, complacency is the greatest enemy. Pirates retain the capability and capacity to return to sea and, if they sense the opportunity of success, piracy will return. The best way to fight piracy at sea is to invest in Somalia as a nation because pirates may ply their trade at sea, but they live ashore and that is where the difference is made.

Since the peak of piracy in the Horn of Africa region in 2010 the number of

working jointly together, the merchant community investing in its own protection and heads of state providing the funding to improve the lives of the average Somali citizen. The unabridged Horn of Africa counter-piracy operation has been a text book success for future international conflicts.

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## Russia's Naval Targets and Current Capabilities by BRUCE JONES

Russia's armed forces have the ability to operate almost as an amorphous mass. Formations involving hundreds of thousands of troops can be mobilized, transferred or deployed; tens of thousands of items of equipment and numerous warplanes can move in a matter of days, from one end of the Eurasian continent to the other. The West possesses no comparable capability.

The same applies but in a different way to naval forces. Vessels are transferred or deployed between fleets temporarily or permanently as operations demand. Rather than sea routes, smaller warships can, when needed, be transported along Russia's extensive system of navigable rivers and inland waterways linking the White Sea, the Volga, and Caspian and Black Seas.

### Fleets and Headquarters

Russian vessels are generally intended to engage primarily in support of land operations in coastal waters and enclosed seas. High seas areas where they would conduct ship-to-ship operations are mainly the North Atlantic and to a lesser extent the Pacific. In effect, most of the Black Sea for example, is covered by long range, shore-based, ultra-high-speed anti-ship missiles, some of which are nuclear capable, stationed mostly in Crimea.

Russia's four fleets consist of:

The **Northern Fleet** based at Severomorsk on the Arctic Kola Peninsula only 150 miles from the Norwegian border. It houses Russia's nuclear ballistic submarine (SSBN) fleet and comprises the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command, formed in 2014, now responsible for the entire Arctic Sea and coastline through to Alaska;

The Baltic Fleet, headquartered in Russia's strategic Kaliningrad enclave between Poland and Lithuania. It includes the Leningrad Naval Base (sic) at St. Petersburg, and its nearby Kronshtadt base. Kaliningrad has been upgraded significantly in the last five years with extra berthing and vessels and more personnel and naval aviation;

The Black Sea Fleet, headquartered in Sevastopol in the Crimea, was under long-term lease from Ukraine until the territory was annexed by Russia in 2014. instead of conventional forces, by an array of less lethal measures, not only as a means of preparatory conditioning and degrading enemy capabilities but as instruments of conflict, acting as "force multipliers." They can in themselves assist in making opposing sides more compliant, and avoid or minimize the need for "kinetic" war.

The most profound "conditioner" or "decision maker" in both Georgia and Ukraine has been the close proximity of overwhelming numbers of Russian conventional forces and behind that, unspoken, Moscow's vast numerical superiority in tactical nuclear weapons and wide

Russian vessels are generally intended to engage primarily in support of land operations in coastal waters and enclosed seas.

It also commands operations in the Mediterranean Sea and the Caspian Flotilla. This consists of smaller coastal vessels and had a crucial role in firing cruise missiles against Islamist targets in 2015 in the Syria conflict; and

The Pacific Fleet based in Vladivostok. This, the last to be upgraded and modernized, is focused on the Sea of Okhotsk, Sea of Japan, South China and Philippine Sea and the Northern Pacific toward the Bering Strait.

### Preparing of the Battle Space

All Russian confrontation projects are accompanied, in addition to or range of delivery means including surface and sub-surface naval vessels.

Lower-key but equally powerful measures include long-term agitation and propaganda, personalized social media and e-mail spoofing, jamming and spoofing GPS signals, active cyber attacks and EW (electronic warfare) jamming, and potential directed energy and non-nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) effects.

Long-term preparative propaganda, disinformation, and distortion are a well-known effective tool. Bogus personal social media messages and accusations have been used against NATO forces in Ukraine and elsewhere. The effects on ships' companies' and shore staff effectiveness and morale, especially once at sea, of automatically "spoofed" personal family messages including even "pet names," should not be discounted.

State-level cyber attacks, suspected

### Generating Warfare

Military confrontations cannot be launched from a standing start. One needs a pretext. Consequently, Russia has grievances of one sort or another with most of its neighbors. It also has disputes in most of the sea areas where

GPS spoofing and other location distortion have been used extensively in the Black Sea and northern Norway in recent years...

of being perpetrated by Russia, were launched against Estonia and Georgia as far back as 2007 and 2008. These affect everyday life: blocking bank transactions, in-store purchases and the functioning of many service providers.

GPS spoofing and other location distortion have been used extensively in the Black Sea and northern Norway in recent years, leaving pilots and ships' captains believing they are miles away from where they actually are. Thankfully there have been no serious accidents. Once the deception has been identified alternative, improvised navigation means have been used, sometimes very skillfully.

A further element of deception and distortion is the ability to create large numbers of electronic "ghost images," or targets, including large numbers of aircraft, missiles or surface craft. This obviously creates confusion in decision making and interpretation, induces complacency and hesitation, and probes, exposes and exhausts readiness states and reaction times.

The overall intention is to establish "Reflexive Control" in which a potential enemy responds and over-reacts directly to hostile stimuli, degrades its own decision-making abilities and loses the initiative. Senior NATO and other experts believe this happened to a significant degree in the build-up to the 2008 Georgian War. it has strategic or economic aims or interests. The most notable of these is the disputed undersea Lomonosov Ridge which extends beneath the Pole, from the New Siberian Islands and the Laptev Sea to Canada's Ellesmere Island, which Russia claims as an extension of its continental shelf.

Russia's perspective is that through a doctrine of low risk, low gain, one can over time achieve most of one's objectives incrementally or by adeptly exploiting opportunities.

If Russian intentions are blocked in one direction they will be increased in other directions. If the Kremlin's aims are thwarted in one land or sea area, beware of key point vulnerabilities elsewhere. Russian air and naval intrusions and maritime near misses are at so high a rate that the only way to increase their significance is to make them more dangerous or intrude deeper into Western operating spaces, or to deploy more aggressive and larger numbers of powerful assets including missiles toward the West and appropriate maritime assets in relevant sea areas. This is arguably beginning to be achieved by mammoth naval fire power demonstrations.

A further scenario is "Unavoidable War" in an episode similar the Kerch Strait incident in November 2018 in which with shots fired and ramming, Russian forces seized three Ukrainian Navy vessels and 24 crew, three of whom were wounded while attempting to enter the Sea of Azov under the Russian Kerch Bridge connecting Crimea with southern Russia. The concern is that always encouraged and supported by the Kremlin and the Russian public, naval or air forces including maritime aviation, through over-enthusiasm, could overstep the mark resulting in significant damage, casualties or loss of life. This would leave Western governments in a position in which harsh, escalating, but unavoidable action would have to be taken.

### Cutting Edge Capabilities

Whatever dark programs the West may possess, Russia has several field leaders of its own.

Poseidon (NATO Kanyon), previously known by its code name "Status-6 oceanic multi-purpose system," is a long range, nuclear-powered and nuclearcapable unmanned, torpedo-shaped, robotic mini-submarine. It reputedly can travel at up to 50 knots (60 mph), with a maximum range of 6,000 miles at a depth of 3,000 ft. Capable of striking the U.S. eastern seaboard or a U.S. carrier group, as a weapon of last resort, its claimed role is to contaminate wide coastal or ocean areas with toxic radioactive Cobalt-60. Diagrams of the weapon were revealed deliberately during a Kremlin defense briefing in 2015.

An area in which Moscow can be said to have cutting edge capabilities is clandestine deep-water operations. Russia possesses a range of submarines and submersible craft from mini-subs to very large submarine mother ships, most of which are nuclear powered. Some are reputedly capable of diving as deep as 10,000 or even 20,000 feet. The crews are honored as "hydronauts."

Their operational roles are subsurface intelligence gathering, including high-volume eavesdropping of Internet traffic on fiber-optic cables across the Atlantic, placing vessel sensors at strategic sites on the ocean floor, clandestine mine laying and sabotage including severing intercontinental communications' cables, pipelines and oil rig components.

They are the responsibility of two very shadowy organizations; the Ministry of Defense's Deep-Water Research Main Directorate (GUGI) and what is tracking and early warning infrastructure on the Kuril Islands stretching from the Kamchatka Peninsula to Japaneseclaimed Hokkaido.

Moscow has recently created the embryonic Chukotka "Operational Direction." This refers to the large epony-

One should not forget that the permanent gas troika of Russia, Qatar, and Iran already controls more than 50 percent of the world's supplies including through ownership of fields in other territories.

known only as military unit No. 40056. They are affiliated with GRU military intelligence and assigned to the 29th Independent Submarine Brigade, of the Northern Fleet, based at Gadzhiyevo on the Kola Peninsula.

### **Targets and Areas of Interest**

To make its presence felt, in summer 2019, the Russia Navy conducted mammoth live fire exercises, with exclusion zones, each involving as many as 30 vessels in Baltic, Black, Norwegian, and Barents Sea areas.

The naval term "Anti-Access/Area-Denial" (A2/AD) was viewed until recently as unfashionable. It means preventing an adversary from occupying or transiting an air, land, or sea area.

It is believed that in a crisis or conflict, Kremlin objectives would be to establish large "A2/AD umbrellas" around the Arctic Kola Peninsula, the Baltic Sea, and much of Scandinavia and the United Kingdom, enabling it to conduct selective expeditionary, force projection operations as it did in Syria in April 2018.

### Pacific

In the Far East and Pacific Ocean, Moscow's maritime interest is focused on the northern Pacific and Sea of Japan. It is expanding its defense, naval mous mineral rich territory facing Alaska across the narrow Bering Strait.

In the northern Pacific one of Russia's key concerns is industrial scale illegal fishing. Somewhat incongruously, to counter this, Moscow works in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard 17th District headquartered in Juneau, Alaska.

### Arctic and Energy resources

The Northern Fleet and its "combined-arms" Joint Strategic Command, along with the Federal Security Service (FSB), is responsible for the defense and security of the Arctic Sea, its coast, and scattered island groups including Franz Josef Land, on which at 80°N latitude, it has recently inaugurated the world's most northerly airbase at Nagurskoye. Other islands are becoming increasingly militarized with jetties, air fields, and electronic surveillance.

A principal Northern Fleet responsibility is the enforcement of the so-called "Northern Sea Route," commercially connecting the Bering Strait and North Atlantic and providing a cost and time saving shortcut. The project is assisted by melting polar ice fields. The Kremlin claims authority over the NSR in the same way as Panama and Egypt control the Panama and Suez canals, respectively, and intends to charge for passage. The rest of the world however, views the route as the high seas, open to free navigation.

There are, though, more important considerations. Russia and China intend to pool and exploit their cross-border efforts in extracting and refining liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and other fossil fuels and export them through ports on the Arctic Sea, the Chukotka peninsula and China itself.

One should not forget that the permanent gas troika of Russia, Qatar, and Iran already controls more than 50 percent of the world's supplies including through ownership of fields in other territories. Some highly respected government observers believe the long-term aim may be to quote and trade LPG on world markets in Chinese yuan ( $\S$ ) and not U.S. dollars (\$).

## Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) Gap

Few are currently familiar with the defense term "GIUK Gap." It denotes the ocean space, the dominance of which controls all crossings of the North Atlantic.

The general assumption until very recently of NATO navies has been that possession of the North Atlantic is a given and it is their own sea or "mare nostrum." In the last decade and a half, however Russian naval hull numbers have radically increased while Western hull numbers have declined. Russian vessels are operating around and below the gap. The Russian navy also regularly carries out large scale exercises in the Norwegian Sea and parts of the North Sea.

In short it means that in time of tension or conflict reinforcement and resupply of Europe, including NATO's "enhanced Forward Presence" (eFP) in the Baltic states, cannot be achieved without cost.

### Baltic Sea

The Baltic Fleet's objectives in time of confrontation would be to leverage naval parity or superiority in order to freeze naval movements; and if



Russia's only aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov. (Photo: Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation)

hostilities developed to achieve local area supremacy or A2/AD in order to enable the interdiction of NATO's navies and to conduct amphibious landings.

The target areas for landings would be key points as deep as possible towards the west of the Baltic, in order to cause maximum disruption, dislocation and diversion. In addition, any successful landing in force on one of the mid-Baltic islands of Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden) or the Åland island group (Finnish), would realize almost regional domination.

## Black, Mediterranean, and the Caspian Seas

The situation in the Black Sea is comparatively calm with no immediate disputes or objectives against regional neighbors, although there is obvious hostility towards Georgia. Naval operations and Russia's permanent flotilla in the Mediterranean are commanded from the Black Sea Fleet's headquarters in Sevastopol in (annexed) Crimea.

Russia's only permanent overseas naval base and logistics center, currently

being upgraded, is Tartus, Syria, which is on long-term lease. In the future it may be possible to station Russian warships there continuously.

### Persian Gulf

Russia has vowed to establish a presence in the Persian Gulf in view of the current stand-offs and crises.

Speculation continues in the Russian press that the Russian Navy will be offered long-term bases in Iran at Bandar Bushehr in the central Gulf and, or at Chekhbekhar on the north shore of the Gulf of Oman, a little less than 100 miles from the Pakistan border.

Sources relate fancifully that they would be guarded by Russian special forces and that warships based there could be include nuclear submarines, and that Russia is envisaging the air base at Bandar Bushehr as a hub for its latest Su-57 fighters; but who is to say?

A secret memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, commander of the Iranian Navy, and Russian Navy chief Admiral Nikolai Anatolevich Evmenov on July 29 in St. Petersburg. The two countries are shortly to hold joint exercises in the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf and later in the Caspian Sea.

### **Conclusion**

It is impossible to create apposite NATO hull numbers or to train and establish suitable numbers of experienced crews in less than five to 10 years. The situation comes concurrently with other massive budget demands including competing defense projects. The only interim solution might be more rapidly and less expensively developing and introducing as a priority world beating hitech naval systems.

In the meantime, when it comes to Russian naval challenges, one might bear in mind that an optimist is merely an ill-informed pessimist.

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# America's Maritime Security and the U.S. Coast Guard

## by CDR PATRICK CULVER, USCG; LT. CDR BRIAN CHAPMAN, USCG; LT. CDR PAUL WINDT, USCG; and LT. SEAN NEWMEYER, USCG

t is day 12 in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPAC) and the Astoria, Oregon-based Coast Guard Cutter ALERT has been away from homeport for 24 days already. This despite the ship being built 50 years ago with a maximum calculated endurance of 30 days. A target of interest (TOI) has been cued as the sun sets by 1800 (6:00 pm) at the lower latitudes and the sea goes from blue green to ink black.

The maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) was "bingo" fuel at 2000 and needed to return to base leaving ALERT alone in the vast EPAC with nothing but the ocean and the sky as companions for hundreds of miles around. The MPA provided the TOI's last known position, course, and speed, and the watch team in the cutter's Combat Information Center rapidly fixed its position 100 miles from the cutter. ALERT plotted an intercept course, but without the MPA, ALERT lost a critical component in detection capability in the cat-and-mouse game of hunter and hunted. Another aircraft would not be on scene for hours due to the distance offshore. ALERT would do its best with the limited capability organic to the cutter until a backup aircraft could arrive on scene.

The cutter Commanding Officer (CO) was left with a few options, but mostly educated guesswork based on time, speed, and distance equations at varying speeds and courses, so the position was a swag at best. The skipper looked around the combat information center and picked out the Operations Specialist First Class and said, "You pick the spot as it's all a crap shoot." The team discussed the pros and cons of the last known position and the likely course and came to all-stop in a position based on the in-depth experience of the cutter crew and sat in the darkness awaiting the arrival of the relief MPA, which was still two hours away.

The backup MPA checked in two hours later, at around 2200, and no sooner had the MPA radio operator exchanged pleasantries with the cutter, then the aircraft reported, "There's a suspect go fast 10 nautical miles north of you, and he's sitting dead in the water." Unbelievable. The cutter ordered the gofast bill be set, sending the entire 76-person crew into action. ALERT rapidly

separated the two small, darkened vessels approaching one another when the boarding officer reports, "They're flashing a light at us!" "Well, flash back," said the CO. And so it went, a flash was met by a flash right up until the small boat was alongside the TOI, a 35-foot, open construction panga-style vessel with a couple of outboard engines and several drums of fuel in front of the console. The look on the faces of the crew aboard the panga: priceless. A few muttered curses in Spanish followed as the boarding team assessed the situation and gained positive control of the suspect vessel and crew. What followed was the seizure of a ton of cocaine and apprehension of six suspects.

On average, a single at-sea interdiction removes more than 2,000 pounds of deadly narcotics intended for high-paying American consumers.

dispatched its cutter boat with a boarding team to intercept the target 10 miles away and well beyond visual and radar range of the cutter. As the cutter boat covertly inched its way north, the cutter took up a slow bell following in the wake, all in total darkness. The cutter, cutter boat, and MPA silently approached the target with all lights extinguished in an effort to prevent spooking the suspects into jettisoning evidence and fleeing.

The suspects aboard the TOI apparently counter-detected the cutter boat with its law enforcement team making its final approach. Now less than a mile

### The Scope of the Problem

ALERT's interdiction is not unique. The United States Coast Guard faces a nearly constant flow of drug-laden vessels. The Coast Guard stops a smuggling attempt every few days. On average, a single at-sea interdiction removes more than 2,000 pounds of deadly narcotics intended for high paying American consumers. Fiscal year 2018 saw a third straight year of the service removing more than 440,000 pounds of cocaine. In 2018, the Coast Guard removed 4.18 billion individual doses of cocaine (460,000 pounds) from American streets. That is the equivalent of a daily dose of cocaine for the entire U.S. population for 13 straight days.

Transnational criminal organizations use proceeds from illicit narcotics sales to fund an array of activities - very few of which do not result in regional destabilization. Violence caused by feuding cartels frequently encroaches on innocent civilians and legitimate business. Homicide rates attributed to cartel violence between the Jalisco, Sinaloa, and Juarez cartels in Mexico soared in recent decades. In 2018, TIME Magazine reported homicides eclipsed previous records, totaling nearly 35,000 in a single year. Descriptions of violent deaths, beheadings, mass graves, and daring prison escapes in Central America fill news feeds almost daily.

Neighboring countries in the Northern Triangle are equally influenced by cartels operating within their own borders. Tens of thousands of Salvadorians, Guatemalans, and Hondurans are forced from their homes due to drug-fueled violence, government corruption, and an inability of governments, police and militaries to provide necessary physical and financial security. Regional instability in the Northern Triangle has led to the displacement of more than 530,000 people according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Many of these are children forced to abandon educations and embark upon a long journey fraught with danger of starvation, illness, violence, and more. These often desperate civilians become increasingly susceptible to becoming criminals themselves, or worse, human trafficking victims.

The Coast Guard leverages decades of illicit trafficking interdiction experience in its counter drug mission. However, America and other regional partners are currently combatting an unprecedented cocaine flow from South America. Over the past five years, the Coast Guard has tracked a steady increase in coca production in South America that correlates to increased interdictions. Smugglers exploit the vast canvas of water in the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone, which is comprised of primarily the EPAC waters off Central and South America and the Caribbean Sea. Drug smugglers operate all sorts of vessels to transport cocaine shipments from South America to intermediate destinations. They use fishing boats, sailing vessels, semi-submersibles, and the most common "go-fast" vessels: 30to 40-foot open construction vessels capable of traveling in excess of 40 knots. The game is fast and ever-changing, creating a continued challenging environment for Coast Guard cutters and their crews of top-flight men and women.

capabilities, and partnerships to target drug cartels where they are most vulnerable. Operating hundreds of miles from any shore, the Coast Guard extends its border security function and removes bulk loads of contraband at sea before traffickers separate the bulk into smaller loads more easily concealed among legitimate traffic.

The Coast Guard targets shipments at a chokepoint in the supply chain where the product is consolidated in wholesale form. Upon arrival ashore in Central America, drug shipments are separated into hundreds of loads. Such dispersal requires law enforcement to target subdivisions of the same load, forcing impractical resource use. Fur-

Drug cartels have proven to be highly agile adversaries with a seemingly unlimited budget, and they are investing significant resources to build purposefully designed vessels capable of avoiding detection.

### The Role of the Coast Guard

Operating highly flexible enterprises capable of capitalizing on law enforcement weaknesses, competing demands and the limited resources of law enforcement, transnational criminal organizations hide among legitimate businesses. The Coast Guard is a key component in the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Drug Strategy. The goal is to prevent drug use, reduce illicit narcotics availability, and provide necessary treatment for those suffering from the disease of addiction. The Coast Guard maintains a layered security strategy to combat illicit trafficking networks by removing illicit narcotics supply and traffickers. Coast Guard removals provide law enforcement vital insight into criminal networks and their operations. This leads to future interdictions and prosecution cases against senior network leaders.

The Coast Guard leverages its unique authorities, competencies,

thermore, resellers in America add foreign substances to pure cocaine almost doubling the original product's size.

Drug cartels have proven to be highly agile adversaries with a seemingly unlimited budget, and they are investing significant resources to build purposefully designed vessels capable of avoiding detection. These include low-profile go-fast vessels and semisubmersibles, which ride very low in the water with only inches of freeboard visible from the surface. These smuggling vessels are almost completely invisible to radar and can only be seen visually from directly above or within yards from the surface. Drug cartels design some of these drug smuggling vessels to carry loads in excess of 10,000 pounds of pure, uncut cocaine. The Coast Guard must continue to adapt and leverage technology and partner resources to continue to effectively dismantle illicit trafficking networks.



The Coast Guard Cutter Alert patrols the eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of South and Central America. (Photo: U.S. Coast Guard)

### The Problems of Nature

From the rolling swells of the Eastern Pacific to the confused "washing machine" seas of the Caribbean, Coast Guard cutter crews come together at all times of the day and night to safely and effectively launch embarked boats and helicopters from rolling and pitching decks. Severe storms can come with little warning, turning the pursuit of a suspected drug smuggling vessel that spans hours into a battle with the elements.

Cutter boat coxswains deftly navigate through wind, waves, fog, sea spray and rain in darkness, rapidly adjusting the throttle as they crest each wave in pursuit of rapidly moving TOIs. Operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots, boat crews leave the safety and security of the parent cutter and depart over-the-horizon in search of a needle in a havstack that is adamant to remain undetected. Cutter boat crews outfitted with body armor, life jackets and weapons endure a white-knuckle ride aboard the 23-foot rigid hull inflatable boat with only a sliver of moonlight distinguishing the sea and the horizon ahead.

Additionally, particularly in the

Caribbean, the threat of hurricanes from June through November is everpresent and a cutter may find itself conducting drug interdiction operations one day and humanitarian relief the next. Crews demonstrate expertise and flexibility in rapidly shifting gears across the service's 11 statutory missions. The multifaceted threats of the maritime environment present no shortage of obstacles in pursuit of mission execution, and the adaptability of the Coast Guard breeds superior performance across all mission areas.

Key to the cutter ALERT's story, and the continued success of Coast Guard cutters in the drug interdiction mission, is the MPA. Without MPA to pinpoint TOIs in the vast Western Hemisphere Transit Zone, an area described as larger than the continental United States, our cutters are swinging blind and only with a bit of luck and experience would they have made this seizure. Only a handful of Coast Guard cutters patrol the EPAC at any one time, akin to a handful of police cars patrolling the continental United States. Sticking with that analogy, intelligence targeting puts the cutter in the "same state or county" as a TOI, and the MPA enables the cutter to be "at the street address" and effect an interdiction.

The critical performance and participation of MPA is essential to success in the U.S. government's continued efforts in maritime drug interdiction operations, a key arm in combatting transnational criminal organizations and reducing the availability of illicit drugs in the United States. The competing interests vying for flight hours is a challenge the Coast Guard contends with every year, if not every quarter, yet a surface asset hunting without MPA is almost like assigning someone to find a particular needle in a stack of needles, given the breadth of the ocean area smugglers use in the transit zone of the Western hemisphere.

CDR PATRICK CULVER is the Interdiction Division Chief (Drugs and Migrants). He, LT CDR BRIAN CHAP-MAN, LT CDR PAUL WINDT, and LT SEAN NEWMEYER are assigned to the Coast Guard's Response Directorate in Washington.

## "Where are You Bound?" "Wherever I Please!"

### review by SHOSHANA BRYEN

he setup: Muslim countries support and sponsor terrorists who kill, capture, hold for ransom, or enslave non-Muslims. Part of it is for profit - the Muslim countries don't do much in the way of commerce; part of it is religious - Christian and African non-Muslims are fair game in pursuit of Islamic hegemony. Western countries pay bribes, ransom, and tribute (weapons are most appreciated) to keep the peace, but sometimes it doesn't work. The French play both sides. The United States goes along for a period, decides there has to be a different/better way, and goes to war against the Muslim countries. Not entirely successful at first, the U.S. decides on diplomacy, pays bribes, ransom, and tribute, and gets a worthless treaty in return. Dropping the pretext of diplomacy, the U.S. goes back to war and wins a decisive series of battles.

But wait, you say. Iran has oil.

Yes, but the Barbary pirates didn't.

Early American history never looked as contemporary as it does in Victory in Tripoli by Joshua E. London, which is why this book, although 14-years-old, should be on your current reading list. London's career has crisscrossed the Jewish community (including here at the Jewish Policy Center); the conservative political realm, writing in The Federalist and The American Spectator magazine where he was a Senior Editor; and as a kosher wine and distilled spirits columnist. Here he brings a little-known part of American history to life, including the early division between those who would rely on diplomacy and those, including Thomas Jefferson, who preferred to put their faith in battle. And he finds George Washington's dictum on avoiding treaty entanglements not to have interfered with the first president's support for American defense capability.

The United States ought not to indulge in a persuasion, that, contrary to the order of human events, they will forever keep at a distance those painful appeals to arms with which the history of every other nation abounds... if we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace... it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.

The Muslim Barbary states ran along the southern Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean to western Egypt – about 2,600 miles – divided into Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco. The northern Mediterranean littoral and northward to Britain were Christian. South of the Barbary states were African tribes, some Muslim but mostly of traditional religions. Both trade and warfare were common on all sides, but in the early 16th Century, both the Spanish and the Ottomans were in expansionist mode, setting the stage for conflict that would last for nearly 300 years.

A small nitpick first: *Victory in Tripoli* would benefit greatly from contemporary maps – most of us are not familiar with the shoreline of North Africa – but perhaps that's what Google is for.

### Slavery Then and Now

London spends the first part of the book on Christians vs. Muslims – and

## VICTORY TRIPOLI

How America's War with the Barbary Pirates Established the U.S. Navy and Shaped a Nation



Victory in Tripoli by Joshua E. London

John Wiley & Sons 2005

writes without apology about the religious roots:

The point of jihad is not to convert by force, but to remove the obstacles to conversion for the infidels and the *in Tripoli* – made the connection for Americans:

Barbary is hell... So, alas, is all of America south of Pennsylvania; for oppression and slavery, and misery,

...the world was already a well-established place, for better and for worse, before Americans got there; and remains so.

apostates, so that they shall either convert or become dhimmis (non-Muslims who accept Islamic dominion) and pay the jizya, the poll tax. The goal is to bring all of the Dar al-Harb [world of war] into the peace of the Dar al-Islam, and to eradicate unbelief. The Qu-ran also promises those who fight in the jihad material rewards – booty and glory – in this world, and the delights of paradise in the next.

Slave trade receives its due. The Barbary states had been traders in human beings for centuries – Christian and non-Muslim African people, primarily. Slave trade continues to exist in Africa and the Middle East – including Christian slaves taken and sold by Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Yazidis in Iraq by ISIS. According to the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Group, more than 500,000 African slaves (more than 850,000 in some estimates) "are still bought, owned, sold, and traded by Arab and black Muslim masters" in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria and Sudan.

This does not absolve anyone else of anything else, but it is useful to be reminded that the world was already a well-established place, for better and for worse, before Americans got there; and remains so.

Col. William Eaton, diplomat extraordinaire – a key figure in *Victory*  are there... remorse seized my whole soul when I reflect that this is indeed but a copy of the very barbarity which my eyes have seen in my own country. And yet, we boast of liberty and national justice.

### The Problem for America

After independence, the young United States lost the protection of British forces at sea. The first American ship was seized in 1784 (released with help from Spain) and in 1785, Americans from two other ships were taken as slaves. Thomas Jefferson, then-minister construction began.

In 1801, the first cuts to the new navy were passed in Congress.

The ensuing chapters of *Victory in Tripoli* cover the diplomacy and diplomats, the naval maneuvering and the naval officers of the next several years. Some were excellent. Some were terrible. Some were moved by love of country. Some were desultory at best in pursuit of their missions. Some won and some lost. London makes them all human.

There was the honorable Captain William Bainbridge, forced to act as courier for Dey Bobba Mustafa of Algiers, sailing The USS George Washington to Constantinople under an Algerine flag. Eaton, then U.S. Consul in Tunis, wrote:

I never thought to find a corner of this slanderous world where "baseness" and "American" were wedded, but here we are the byword of derision, quoted as precedents of baseness...History shall tell that the United States first volunteered a ship of war, equipped, a carrier for a pirate. It is written. Nothing but blood can blot the impression out...will nothing rouse my country?

## After independence, the young United States lost the protection of British forces at sea.

to France, and John Adams, then-minister to Great Britain, were charged by Congress with negotiations to redeem the crew. They failed, and the crew of The *Dolphin* spent 11 years in captivity. But it also led the American Congress and then-President Thomas Jefferson to address the need for a navy to ensure American security in the Mediterranean. The Democratic-Republicans were opposed; the Federalists in favor.

In 1794, the Federalists won and

### Battles on Land and Sea

The country was, in fact, roused and the battles, both diplomatic and military, commenced. Gaps in communication were months long, and although Tripoli's Bey Yusuf Qaramanli declared war on the United States in June 1801, Congress didn't know about it until February 1802 and the first U.S. squadron sailing in response didn't approach Tripoli until June of that year.

Sent to enforce the first blockade of

Tripoli was Captain Richard Valentine Morris who brought his wife and son on his warship and hung around Gibraltar, apparently not in much of a hurry to see action. But after a bit, Commodore Stephen Decatur arrived and livened up the party.

The USS Philadelphia, stuck in Tripoli harbor, had been taken by the Tripolitans and was destined to become the finest pirate ship in Barbary. Until Decatur and his crew on The *Intrepid* slipped into the harbor to destroy it under the nose of Pasha Yusuf Quaramanli. As a result, the truly intrepid Decatur became the youngest captain in the U.S. Navy.

One of the most important pieces of action was actually on land, not on sea. William Eaton was the architect of the first U.S.-led regime change. He proposed bringing Ahmad Qaramanli, the exiled brother of Pasha Yusuf, from Egypt to Tripoli and installing him as a pro-American bey. After much discussion, the mission was approved by the U.S. government, allotting Eaton 10 Marines commanded by Lt. Presley O'Bannon. Those who know, know 10 Marines can cover a lot of territory – and they did.

London is in his element describing

how they raised an army, mercenary groups fighting with one another as much as preparing to fight the enemy as they marched from Egypt to Derne, and captured the city – and how O'Bannon and his Marines kept the motley army American stipend. So much for being an American ally.

The war actually goes on longer, and it wasn't until 1815 that a telling exchange took place from the bridge of Decatur's ship, The *Guerriere*. The captain

The USS Philadelphia, stuck in Tripoli harbor, had been taken by the Tripolitans and was destined to become the finest pirate ship in Barbary...until Decatur.

moving. Ready, then, to march on to Tripoli, they were caught flatfooted when Consul Tobias Lear, who had been negotiating with Yusuf for months, arrived not only at an agreement, but a proviso to re-exile Ahmad to Egypt while keeping his family hostage in Tripoli. Eaton was distraught. "Six hours ago, the enemy were seeking safety from them by flight – this moment we drop them from ours into the hands of this enemy for no other crime, but too much confidence in us." Later negotiations freed Ahmad's family and provided him a small of an Algerine ship demanded of Decatur: "Dove andante?" (Where are you bound?) Decatur shouted back in the vernacular, "Dove me piace!" (Wherever I please!)

Victory in Tripoli is great reading and a reminder that in ways illustrious and notorious, remarkable and maladroit, America's early days resemble its current days.

SHOSHANA BRYEN is Senior Director of The Jewish Policy Center and Editor of inFOCUS Quarterly.

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### A Final Thought ...

## The "Shiite Crescent" and Regional Disaster

For decades, the concept of a "Shiite Crescent" anchored by the radical Shiite supremacists in Iran and passing through Iraq, Syria, and Hezb'allah to the Mediterranean Sea has been understood. It would provide Iran not only with closer access to Israel, but also spread across the northern borders of two key Sunni adversaries — pro-American Jordan, and its most important enemy, Saudi Arabia, guardian of Mecca and Medina. It would further split off Sunni Turkey (a historic foe) from the other Sunni Middle East states.

The Crescent is, for Iran, a single battlefront and the Islamic Republic has spent decades successfully undermining and wrecking each subsidiary member.

Iraq is hardly a functional country. But as a staging ground for Iranian militias and weapons depots headed west, Iraq is a prize. Syria is largely a dead zone. But as a launching pad for Iranian military bases and attacks on Israel, Syria is a bonanza. Lebanon is a corrupt satrap of Syria and Iran, governed by a terror organization with a foreign legion and an international money/drug/weapons racket. But it's very weakness and its border with Israel make Lebanon invaluable. Each member of this "gang of four" maintains a state of war with Israel and threatens it on a regular basis. Israel's attacks on weapons centers Lebanon, Syria and Iraq are not the escalation of a fragile situation — they are the defensive response to a high-tech military buildup across the region orchestrated by Iran.

Israel has regional red lines, which have been discussed with both the United States and Russia. These include ensuring that neither Iran nor Hezb'allah has military bases in southern Syria near the Israeli border; ensuring no use of chemical weapons; not permitting Iran to build weapons factories — particularly nuclear-related or precision missile factories in other countries; and not permitting the movement of certain types of munitions across the Crescent.

Israeli action has set back Iran's aspirations. But it will take the continued support of the United States and others, including the EU and the Sunni Arab States — to come to terms with the "gang of four" and the havoc that is not limited to Israel, but has implications far beyond. And it will have to focus on Iran as the lynchpin of regional disaster.