

OPRF MARINT Monthly Report

March 2009



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This monthly report is edited/ summarized by publisher and staff writers based on published news resources.

Each resource is referenced with bracket below each title and is displayed as link URL on the last page of this report.

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Major Events in March 2009

Security: In March, the activities of pirates have been intensified. On March 22, a car carrier operated by the Japanese Mitsui O.S.K. Lines was attacked [by pirates] about 480 miles east of Somalia. Since March there has been a trend toward increasing incidents of piracy off the east coast of Somalia extending over the coast of Kenya, where there is no deployment of naval forces of the individual Member States. Incidents have also occurred in the maritime areas separated far from the coast.

On the other hand, in the Gulf of Aden, the activities of the warships sent by the individual Member States are getting more intensified, with which the opportunities of arresting pirate suspects are increasing. The European Union (EU) and the United States (US) have concluded with Kenya an agreement of extraditing the pirate suspects. In March, the US and Germany extradited the pirates suspects to the Kenyan authorities.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan have for the first time dispatched a fleet off Somalia. Two destroyers of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) left Kure port on the 14th, and they commenced the first mission on the 30th.

On the 18th, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon submitted the report pursuant to Security Council resolution 1846 (2008) of 2 December 2008. Concerning the piracy situation in Somalia, the report mentions there are two main piracy networks in Somalia. In a report, the U.N. chief encouraged U.N. members to help promote development and good government in Puntland and Somaliland which are in a state of anarchy.

Military: Five Chinese vessels shadowed and aggressively maneuvered close to the USNS *Impeccable* in the South China Sea March 8, a Pentagon spokesman said March 9. The U.S. oceanographic ship was conducting routine operations in international waters 70 nautical miles south of Hainan Island. The Pentagon spokesman said the acts of the Chinese vessels on that day were the culmination of earlier harassment - the most vicious act which had ever been noted.

On the 17th, Russia has begun mooring trials of the first submarine in the series - new *Borey*-class nuclear-powered strategic submarine (SSBN), the *Yury Dolgoruky*, Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said. The vessel has a maximum depth of 450 meters and a submerged speed of about 29 knots. It can carry up to 16 Bulava sea-based ballistic missiles and torpedoes. Two other *Borey*-class nuclear submarines are currently under construction, and are expected to be completed in 2009 and 2011. Russia is planning to build a total of eight submarines of this class by 2015.

On the other hand, the Russian Navy maintains a fleet of about 60 submarines, including 10 nuclear-powered strategic submarines and over 30 nuclear-powered attack submarines, diesel-electric submarines and special-purpose subs, a senior Navy official said on the 19th. Diesel-electric submarines in the Russian Navy are represented by *Kilo*-class vessels. They will be gradually replaced by Project 667 *Lada*-class submarines. The sub features a new anti-sonar

coating for its hull, an extended cruising range, and advanced anti-ship and anti-submarine weaponry, including Club-S cruise missile systems. The first submarine of the *Lada*-class is undergoing sea trials and may enter service with the Russian Navy in 2009. A second *Lada*-class submarine, which is the first in the production series, will be commissioned in 2009. A third submarine is expected to be launched in 2010.

On the 25th, U.S. Defense Department released the Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009. This is the eighth edition in a series of the reports, and the first one for the Obama's administration. We have taken it up in the analysis (2) in this monthly report.

Diplomacy and International Relations: On the 10th, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed the Philippine archipelagic baselines law (ABL). The ABL excludes the Scarborough Shoal and Kalayaan Group of Islands (Tagalog for the Spratlys group) from the archipelago, but treats these as part of a "regime of islands" (Article 121 in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: UNCLOS). The law specifies Philippine sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal and Kalayaan Group of Islands.

Shortly after President Arroyo signed the baselines bill, the embassy of China in Manila reiterated on the 11th that country's strong opposition and solemn protest on what it called the Philippines' illegal and invalid claim to the disputed territory in the South China Sea. Additionally, China dispatched its largest fishery administration ship to the Spratlys group. It will protect Chinese fishing vessels around Nansha, Xisha and Zhongsha islands in China's southernmost maritime territory, and demonstrate Beijing's sovereignty over China's islands.

Shipping, resource, Environment, and Miscellaneous: On the 9th, Sun Zihui, director of the China's State Oceanic Administration said that a deep-sea manned submersible vessel for the mission has been completed in 2008, and the test would begin in 2009. If successful, the China-made submersible vessel would be the first manned vehicle to reach such a depth 7,000 meters (m), surpassing 6,500m below the sea level ever held so far by the manned submersible vessels.

According to the Egypt's canal authority, Suez Canal revenue and traffic levels in February both fell, which mark the sixth successive decline. It said canal revenue in February was down to \$301.8m compared to \$407.7m in the same period a year ago, while the number of vessel transits declined to 1,272 from 1,676.

On the 26th, China and Burma signed four contracts, which included the construction of a cross border oil and gas pipeline. China will start construction in 2009 on oil and gas pipelines more than 1,200 miles long from Kyaukpyu Port on the Bay of Bengal through Burma to southwest China. Observers say that China will also use the pipelines for importing natural gas and oil from the Middle East and Africa, helping China to cut out oil shipping through the Malacca Strait.

1. Information Digest

1.1 Security

March 2 “Yemen coastguard saves Korean cargo ship” (The Earth Times, March 2, 2009)

According to Yemen's Interior Ministry, the Yemeni coastguard thwarted a pirate attack on a South Korean cargo ship on the 2nd. A coastguard unit based in the port of Aden answered a distress call from the Korean ship that came under attack about 40 miles off Aden, the ministry said in a statement. Pirates were closing in on the ship pointing rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers in an attempt to force it to stop as a dispatched coastguard gunboat reached the site. Coast guards exchanged fire with the Somali pirates and fatally shot one of them. The pirates fled the area, and the [Korean] ship was able to continue its journey. Further details of the ship's identity and its destination were not immediately available.

March 2 “U.S. transfers 9 pirate suspects to Somalia” (Fairplay Daily News, March 3, 2009)

On the 2nd, the United States Navy (USN) transferred nine Somalis who had been suspected of piracy to Puntland coastguards. These men had been arrested and held by the USN's guided missile cruiser USS *Vella Gulf* since February 12. According to a US Navy Central Command, the US Navy transferred these men, after they evaluated the situation and determined there was inconclusive evidence to support their prosecution. In addition, USS *Vella Gulf* is still holding seven pirate suspects in custody who were arrested on February 11. (As for details, please refer to OPRF MARINT Monthly report, February 2009, 1. 1 Security.)

【Related Story】

“U.S. delivers seven Somali pirate suspects to Kenya” (Reuters, March 5, 2009)

On the 5th, United States turned over seven suspected Somali pirates to Kenya for prosecution for the first time under a bilateral pact which was concluded on January 27. (These pirate suspects were arrested by the USS *Vella Gulf* on January 11, 2009.)

March 3 “U.S., German warships prevent hijackings in GOA (Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa, Press release, March 3, 2009)

On the 3rd, German Navy's frigate *Rheinland Pfalz* and the U. S. Navy's destroyer USS *Monterey* successfully fended off a pirate attack on the German-owned MV *Courier* in the Gulf of Aden (GOA). The former warship belongs to the EU fleet and the latter belongs to the CTF-151. On receiving the alarm call that the MV *Courier* was under attack, both warships launched helicopters to deter the attack. Finding the helicopters, two [pirate] boats abandoned their attack to flee from the scene. The *Rheinland Pfalz's* Sea Lynx pursued one of the two escaping skiffs for

over 10 miles, firing warning shots to stop the vessel before the warship closed in to board and search it. The suspects were arrested and a large amount of fuel, weapons and ladders among others were confiscated. The remaining skiff was also chased and stopped by the *Monterey* and its helicopter, and a number of suspects were apprehended. A total of nine suspects were arrested. The MV *Courier* was undamaged and no casualties were reported among the 18 man crew.

【Related story 1】

“Germany faces legal procedures over pirate suspects” (The Earth Times, March 3, 2009)

According to the German Defense Ministry, the German navy frigate *Rheinland-Pfalz* detained nine pirate suspects, and abandoned the weapons they had confiscated for security reasons. Germany must now decide how to proceed with the men arrested, and whether to try them in Germany or hand them over to another country. A specially convened commission, including the Interior, Foreign, Defense and Justice Ministries, is expected to decide whether to proceed under German law. If this is the case, the pirates would initially be taken to Djibouti, where the European Union's anti-pirate mission is based. From there, German federal police agents would collect the men and transfer them to Hamburg. The legal status is further complicated by the fact that the ship, although registered in the German city of Bremen, was sailing under an Antiguan flag.

【Related story 2】

“Germany turns Somali pirates over to Kenya” (Ecoterra International, March 10, 2009)

On the 10th, Germany turned nine Somali pirate suspects over to Kenyan authorities [for prosecution] in Mombasa. The handover was only possible after an agreement was reached between the European Union (EU) and Kenya on the 6th. The delivery of nine pirate suspects to Kenya for prosecution brings the total number of people delivered to Kenya by foreign navies to 24. Some of them have already been charged with piracy.

March 4 “China’s expeditionary fleet to Somalia escorts Taiwan’s ship” (China Daily, March 5, 2009)

On the 4th, Chinese expeditionary fleet to Somalia began an escort mission for a Taiwan ship, MV *Taisu* No 12, and four other ships from the Mandeb Strait. Expressing his gratitude to the Chinese navy, captain of the Taiwan merchant vessel asked for escort again on the return trip. According to the captain, his company Formosa Plastics Corporation filed an application for the escort mission via an agency more than 10 days ago. The Chinese navy escorted a Taiwan ship for the first time on January 12. The ship is also owned by Formosa Plastics Corporation.

March 5 “Thai to join patrolling in Malacca Strait by mid-2009” (The Jakarta Post, March 5, 2009)

Thailand will formalize its involvement in the coordinated patrols in the Malacca Strait in mid-2009. Although the patrols are so far being conducted by three coastal states of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Thailand had unofficially participated in the Malacca Strait patrols since two months ago, according to Major General (MG) Supiadin, operation assistant to the commander of the Indonesian Defense Forces. “Thai involvement will be formalized in the middle of this year, after all matters concerning Thailand’s participation in the Malacca Strait patrols are fully discussed internally and externally together with three coastal states,” said MG Supiadin. Matters which need to be discussed include the number of fleets and the patrol areas of the Thai military among others.

The trilateral coordinated patrol scheme codenamed MALSINDO - Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols - began to be carried out since July 2007. The control points of the coordinated patrols are at Belawan and Batam (Indonesia), Lumut (Malaysia), and Changi (Singapore). The control point will also include Pukhet (Thailand) when Thailand officially joins the coordinate patrols. Since the joint patrols began to be carried out, the crime rate in the Malacca Strait has decreased by about 70 percent.

March 5 “Somali pirates free Egyptian ship” (Fairplay Daily News, March 5, 2009)

According to the Egyptian shipping company GAC, Somali pirates have released the Egyptian cargo ship *Blue Star* which is flagged under St Kitts & Nevis on the 5th. It is understood that a ransom of \$3M was received, but no figure has been confirmed. The ship crewed by 28 seafarers has a cargo of 6,000 tons of urea. The *Blue Star* was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on January 1.

MV Blue Star

<http://www.mschoa.org/FairplayStoryDisplay.aspx?articlename=dn0020090305000016>

March 5 “Accomplishments of counter piracy operations off Somalia: Testimony of USCENTCOM” (House Armed Services Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, March 5, 2009)

On the 5th, U. S. Vice Admiral (VADM) William E. Gortney, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, testified at the House Armed Services Committee on the accomplishments of counter piracy operations of the CTF-151 and other cooperating naval forces dispatched off

Somalia, as follows. (VADM Gortney also commands the U.S. 5th Fleet and the Combined Maritime Forces - an international coalition [created to address the recent up-tick in piracy] in the Gulf of Aden.)

- (1) CTF-151 and other cooperating naval forces have encountered approximately 250 pirates. Of those, 130 have been disarmed and released, 110 have been disarmed and turned over for prosecution; and seven are pending final disposition.
- (2) Twenty-eight pirate skiffs were seized or destroyed. In addition, 133 small arms, 28 rocket-propelled grenades, 51 rocket-propelled-grenade projectiles, and 21 ladders and grappling hooks were confiscated.
- (3) As of 4 March, there were 26 piracy events. Of them four were successful, indicating 15 percent (%) of the events. Seven ships are currently being held by pirates, and approximately 123 merchant mariners are being held hostage. There were 122 piracy events in 2008. Of them 42 were successful, indicating 38% of the events.

Note: Refer to the statement of VADM William E. Gortney, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, on the web below:

http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FC030509/Gortney_Testimony030509.pdf

March 5 “Pirates attack in PIs, 3 dead” (GMA News TV, March 8, 2009)

On the 5th, three people were killed while two others were taken hostage when pirates attacked a trawler off Basilan Island in Mindanao, the Philippine Islands, a local government official said on the 7th. Whether the two hostages are still alive or not is said to be unknown. Authorities recovered the trawler but found it emptied and stripped of important parts. Sea around Basilan is known to be a bailiwick – a special domain of Abu Sayyaf terrorists and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels.

March 6 “EU signs agreement on delivering pirate suspects with Kenya” (Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa, Press Release, March 6, 2009)

On the 6th, a legal agreement was signed allowing suspected pirates detained by the European Union (EU) Naval Force off Somalia to be prosecuted in Kenyan courts. The signing took place at a ceremony in Nairobi between the EU Representative and Kenyan Minister of Foreign Affairs. This agreement will enhance the EU ability to bring pirates to justice without having to transfer the suspects back to the flag state of the arresting warship or the attacked merchant vessel. “This represents an important step forward in the EU's efforts to combat piracy and will act as a deterrent to those considering committing piracy,” a spokesman for the headquarters of the EU Naval Force said, stressing its significance.

March 7 “German warship rendezvous with liner” (Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa, Press Release, March 8, 2009)

On the 7th, the EU's German frigate FGS *Rheinland-Pfalz* made an unofficial rendezvous with

the German cruise liner MS *Deutschland* as she traveled through the Gulf of Aden after departing from Salalah (Oman). Despite her registry with Maritime security Center, Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), MS *Deutschland* needed little in the way of protection due to the size of her free board and high transit speed of over 20 knots. However, the warship's captain and liner's master were keen to conduct a close sail to exchange pleasantries with some fellow countrymen aboard the two ships.

<http://www.mschoa.org/display.aspx?articlename=51>

March 7 “Italian corvette to join EU Naval Force” (Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa, Press Release, March 7, 2009)

On the 7th, the Italian Navy has officially announced that the corvette ITS *Commandante Bettic* will join the EU Naval Force. The warship is expected to remain with the Force for the most of the month. The vessel is one of four light combatant ships that were built for the Italian Navy in 2003. With a crew of 70 they displace 1,500 tons and are equipped with surveillance radar, a number of guns and a Bell Augusta helicopter. They are ideally suited for anti piracy operations.

ITS Commandante Bettic

<http://www.mschoa.org/display.aspx?articlename=50>

March 7 “Chinese destroyer escorts Dutch ship” (China Daily, March 7, 2009)

The Haikou, one of the two destroyers of the Chinese naval fleet joining international anti-piracy campaign, began guiding a Netherlands-flagged vessel, MV *Philippine Express*, along with three other vessels on March 7. The *Philippine Express*, with all crew being Chinese nationals, became the first foreign vessel under Chinese Navy's protection after an approval from the Headquarters of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army. The Chinese naval convoy has escorted 102 vessels in total since January 6.

March 8 “USS landing ship becomes flagship of CTF-151” (Navy News Stand, March 10, 2009)

The US Navy’s amphibious ship, USS *Boxer* (LHD 4), home-ported in San Diego, assumed the role as flagship for Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 on March 8, after leaving the port and arriving in the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations as part of a regularly-scheduled deployment. CTF-151 currently includes naval forces from the United States, United Kingdom, Denmark and Turkey.

USS *Boxer* (LHD 4)

http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2009/03/navy_flagship151_031009/

March 10 “Sweden participates in EU fleet” (Ecoterra International, March 10, 2009)

According to The Ecoterra International dated March 10, the Swedish Government has given the Navy the green light to participate in the EU fleet. The Swedish navy will send two corvettes - HMS *Stockholm* and HMS *Malmö*, accompanied by the support vessel HMS *Trossö*. The Swedish force totals 160 personnel. The Navy’s mission is to protect the support vessels which are engaged in the United Nations (UN) World Food Program (WFP), not to track or pursue the pirates. Even so, the mission is highly dangerous, and if support vessels are attacked, the UN’s rules of engagement permit the use of armed force.

March 10 “Switzerland to send EU Fleet military personnel, experts” (Ecoterra International, March 10, 2009)

According to The Ecoterra International dated March 10, Switzerland will send up to 30 staff and experts to the European Union (EU) fleet. The Swiss foreign ministry has stated the mandate of the Swiss soldiers and experts would be limited to the protection of vessels of the UN World Food Program (WFP). It includes, however, the protection of the Swiss cargo ships crossing the Gulf of Aden. “Engagement by Swiss soldiers in the EU fleet must not exceed the mandate of a military police force. Military offensives against pirates at sea or on land are excluded,” the foreign ministry statement said. The deployment includes elite troops, legal experts and a medical team as well as senior officers and no time limit was indicated. The country has a fleet of 35 privately operated tankers and container ships. Around 30 per cent of Swiss-bound goods pass through the Gulf of Aden. Switzerland is not a member of the EU and its neutral status is enshrined in the constitution. The rightwing party accused the Swiss government of undermining

Swiss neutrality.

March 11 “PLAN’s DCOS: Chinese navy's anti-piracy escorts a long-term mission” (Xinhua, March 11, 2009)

Chinese navy's anti-piracy mission off the Somali coast will not end in a short period of time, said Zhang Deshun, deputy chief of staff (DCOS) of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), on the 11th. Rear admiral Zhang Deshun of the PLAN said, “The navy has already made a long-term plan for our escorting missions to the Gulf of Aden. The length of our mission depends on the Somali political and social stability. We feel our mission will not come to an end soon.” According to Zhang, China will send new ships and crew to replace its current three-ship flotilla in late April or early May.

【Related Story】

“China to send 2nd navy flotilla to Somalia” (Xinhua, March 31, 2009)

According to Xinhua News on 31 March, a second group of Chinese task force to be sent to Somalia will comprise the guided-missile destroyer, *Shenzhen* (6,000 tons), and frigate *Huangshan* (1,924 tons), as well as the supply ship, *Weishanhu* (23,000 tons), which served in the first escort mission. With total crew exceeding 800, including navy special forces, and two helicopters, the new flotilla is mainly tasked with ensuring the safety of Chinese vessels and those of the World Food Program [of shipping humanitarian goods] passing through the waters off Somalia. The second group of Chinese navy escort ships will leave Zhanjiang on April 2.

March 11 “NATO to begin new anti-piracy mission” (AP, March 11, 2009)

NATO will be in position soon to conduct a new anti-piracy operation in a major world shipping area off the coast of Somalia, the alliance's chief spokesman said on the 11th. He said that NATO Standing Naval Maritime Group 1 involving seven ships -- one each from the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, with two vessels from Germany -- would exit the Suez Canal on March 19. They will be there for about one month, and then they will go on and do port visits, and come back and near the end of June conduct about two more weeks of counter-piracy operations. The operation has been dubbed “Allied Protector.”

【Related Story】

“NATO resuming anti-piracy mission” (AP, March 26, 2009)

A NATO statement dated March 26 said the five ships will reach the waters off the Somali coastline within days to resume the anti-piracy patrols, codenamed Allied Provider. The NATO flotilla of ships from Portugal, Canada, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States is commanded by a Portuguese admiral. They will do a stint with the anti-piracy patrols there before sailing on for a tour of Southeast Asia. The flotilla is to return to Europe in June but at least some of its warships may stay on station in the waters of the Gulf of Aden.

March 11 “Somali pirates attack NK ship” (Maritime Global Net, March 12, 2009)

On the 11th, Somali pirates attacked the North Korean general cargo ship *Chong Chon Gang* (9,147GT) approximately 400 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. The pirates wounded two seafarers on board in an unsuccessful hijacking attempt. The location appears to indicate an attempt to evade the patrolling warships which are concentrated in the Gulf of Aden.

May 12 “Russian warship apprehends 10 Somali pirates” (CNN, March 13, 2009)

A Russian heavy missile cruiser, the *Peter the Great*, stopped three pirate ships – two small skiffs and one medium-sized support boat, and detained 10 pirates on the 12th, according to a statement released on the 13th by Russian Navy headquarters. All of ten pirates who had been detained are citizens of Somalia. Officials from the Northern Fleet's military prosecutor's office are currently questioning the detainees. Their future will be decided in coordination with the Russian Foreign and Justice ministries.

The Russians said a Russian helicopter Ka-27, which took off from the cruiser, had located two small boats, which were moving toward an Iranian vessel. The boats began to move toward their support vessel, which was adrift nearby. The two motor boats began to throw weapons into the sea, but the helicopter crew kept chasing the boats until the Russian cruiser arrived in the area. The three boats were captured and detained by the Russian cruiser. The detainees possessed weapons, including a G-3 rifle, an AK-47, two AKMS machine-guns, two grenade-launchers and two anti-infantry grenades, and also had a GPS receiver, a ladder, 500 grams of drugs, a large amount of money, a bag of sugar and a bag of rice.

March 13 “S. Korean navy sends destroyer to Somali waters” (Yonhap News, March 13, 2009)

On the 13th, South Korea dispatched a destroyer (with a full displacement of 4,500 tons), *the Munmu the Great*, with a crew of 300 called “Cheonghae unit.” South Korea should play a greater role in international security activities. At the departing ceremony at Jinhae naval base, President Lee Myung-bak encouraged the crew, saying South Korea should play a greater role in international security activities.

A South Korean naval unit for anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia was inaugurated in Bussan on the 3rd. The unit is called “Cheonghae Unit.” “Cheonghae” comes from Cheonghae-jin, a naval base established by famed Korean General Jang Bogo of the ancient Silla Kingdom that became a major trading hub. The unit consists of a 4,500-ton missile destroyer *the Munmu the Great* (KDX-II), a Lynx anti-submarine helicopter and 300 personnel, including 30 UDT/SEAL special naval forces and five female officers. (The Korea Times, March 3, 2009)

<http://japanese.vonhapnews.co.kr/Politics2/2009/03/13/0900000000AJP20090313001800882.HTML>

March 14 “Danish, Turkish warships deter pirate attack” (U.S. Central Command, Press Release, March 16, 2009)

On the 14th, the Danish warship HDMS *Absalon* (L 16) and Turkish frigate TCG *Giresun* (F-491) successfully deterred a pirate attack on a Vietnamese cargo ship approximately 50 nautical miles southeast of Al Mukalla, Yemen. HDMS *Absalon* received a distress signal from the Vietnamese-registered freighter, MV *Diamond Falcon*, reporting it was under attack from two fast-moving skiffs with an unknown number of pirates on board. Upon receipt of the emergency call, *Absalon* directed the cargo ship to conduct evasive maneuvers, and launched her helicopter. TCG *Giresun* also launched her embarked helicopter. The pirates then broke off their attack. *Absalon* and *Giresun* are operating as part of Combined Task Force (CTF-151), conducting counter-piracy operations.

March 14 “2 MSDF vessels leave for Somalia” (Domestic media sources, March 15 2009)

On the 14th, two JMSDF destroyers – *Sazanami* (4,650 tons) and *Samidare* (4,550 tons) - left the port of Kure for Somalia. The dispatch the destroyers is based upon the cabinet decision on the 13th that the government will send the Self-Defense Force under the maritime policing action provision of Article 82 of the Self-Defense Forces Law as a temporary measure for counter-piracy off Somalia and the in the Gulf of Aden. The members of personnel to be dispatched are about 400 and two helicopters and two fast-speed boats are being loaded on each ship respectively. In preparation for detaining pirate suspects, four maritime safety members of the Coast Guard who have judicial power and the members of the MSDF’s “Special Boarding Units” are embarking the destroyers.

The expeditionary fleet commenced escort mission at the end of March. According to the Defense Ministry, they completed the first escort assignment in the Gulf of Aden on April 1. In the escort mission, they escorted five Japan-related vessels – three automobile transporting cargo vessels and two tankers.

Left: Destroyer *Sazanami* leaves the port.

Right: Destroyers conduct their first escort work in the waters off Somalia. The lead vessel in formation, below right, is destroyer *Samidare*, (March 20, 2009)

Source: Each from Defense Ministry's home-page

March 18 “UN Sec-Gen submits Somali Report” (UN News Centre, March 18, 2009)

On the 18th, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon submitted the report pursuant to Security Council resolution 1846 (2008) of 2 December 2008. Concerning the present status on piracy in Somalia, the report summarizes the key points as follows while mentioning there are two main piracy networks in Somalia.

- (1) The Somali pirates have their roots in the fishing communities of the Somali coast, especially in north-eastern and central Somalia, and that their organization reflects Somali clan-based social structures.
- (2) There are two main piracy networks in Somalia: one in “Puntland” and the other based in the southern Mudug region. It is also reported that in “Puntland”, the most important pirate group is located in the Eyl district, with other smaller groups operating from Bossaso, Qandala, Caluula, Bargaal and Garacad. By the end of 2008, the “Eyl Group” was holding hostage six vessels and their crew and was expected to have earned approximately \$30 million in ransom payments.
- (3) The “Mudug piracy network” operates from Xarardheere. It was this group that held the Ukrainian ro-ro ship carrying tanks among other military equipment, together with three other ships, for a period of approximately five months from September 2008 to February 2009. It is widely acknowledged that some of these groups now rival established Somali authorities in terms of their military capabilities and resource bases.

In a report to the Security Council, the U.N. chief encouraged U.N. members to help promote development and good government in Puntland and another breakaway region, Somaliland which are in a state of anarchy.

Note: Refer to a full text of the report below:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/257/27/PDF/N0925727.pdf?OpenElement>

March 19 “Somali pirates seize Greek ship”¹ (Reuters, March 19, 2009)

Pirates seized a Greek-owned cargo ship, MV *Titan* (Saint-Vincent-flagged & 43,214 DWT) in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia late on the 19th, Greece's merchant marine ministry

said. The cargo vessel with 24 crew members was sailing from the Black Sea to Korea. This is the third such incident for the Greek-related vessels in the past three months. (One incident was noted off the east coast of Africa.)

MV *Titan*

<http://convenientflags.blogspot.com/2009/03/mv-titan-st-vincent-flagged-taken-by.html>

March 19 “Turkish warship foils pirate attack” (Hurriyet Daily News, March 22, 2009)

On the 19th, a Turkish naval frigate TCG *Giresun* foiled a pirate attack on a Turkish-related ship MV *Ulusoy 8*, Turkish army spokesman Metin Gurak said on the 20th. Receiving a distress call from MV *Ulusoy 8* that it was being attacked by pirates on board two fast-moving skiffs, TCG *Giresun* immediately headed toward the region and sent a helicopter to deter the attack. The warship is part of the CTF -151 - multinational task force designed to combat Somali pirates.

March 20 “U.S. Navy apprehended, released pirate suspects” (U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Public Affairs, Press Release, March 21, 2009)

The US Navy’s guided-missile cruiser USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64) apprehended six suspected pirates in the Gulf of Aden on the 20th. Responding to a distress call from the Philippines-flagged MV *Bison Express* that they were being pursued by a small skiff containing six heavily-armed suspected pirates, USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64) launched a helicopter, which intercepted a skiff. A *Gettysburg* visit, board, search and seizure team (VBSS) subsequently conducted a consensual boarding along with members of U.S. Coast Guard Legal Detachment (LEDET) 409 and apprehended the six suspected pirates. They were transferred onto the amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer* (LHD 4), the flagship and Afloat staging base (AFSB) for Combined Task Force (CTF) 151. After evaluating the situation, CTF-151 determined there was not sufficient evidence to hold the suspects for prosecution and released them back to their small boat. On the same day, before attacking the MV *Bison Express*, suspected pirates also attacked MV *Sea Green*. The motor vessel fired several warning flares at the suspected pirates as they approached, and successfully warded off the attack.

March 21 “Somali pirates attack, release ship after hijacking” (The Times of India, March 22, 2009)

On the 21st, pirates attacked and seized the Indian cargo vessel, MV *Al Rafiquei*, while it was sailing from Dubai to the next port of call Mogadishu in Somalia, the directorate general of Indian

shipping company said. The ship with all the 16 Indian sailors was released after about eight hours. Prior to the release, the pirates beat up the crew and also took away their mobiles, five barrels of petrol and 20 barrels of diesel. The vessel was carrying rice, refined oil, wheat and general cargo.

March 22 “Somali pirates attacked Mitsui shipping company-linked vessel” (MOL Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. Press Release, 23 March 2009)

According to the press release from the MOL Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. dated March 23, its operated car carrier MV *Jasmine Ace* (Cayman Islands-flagged; 13,038 GT) was fired on by pirates in two high-speed boats about 480 miles east of Somalia on the 22nd. The ship sustained some damage to the hull, but quickly accelerated and took evasive action such as zigzagging. After about 40 minutes, the pirates gave up chasing her. No one was injured in the attack, and no oil leaked from the hull. Bullets also damaged some windows in the wheelhouse, but the *Jasmine Ace* continues under its own power. The vessel loaded the cars at the port of Sharjah in United Arab Emirates on March 17, and was under way to Mombasa, Kenya.

MV Jasmine Ace

http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_E-QOnTGFX_o/Scdz9sHJ53I/AAAAAAAAAG3U/B2hWZDvXjWw/s1600-h/Ship%2BPhoto%2BJASMINE%2BACE.jpg

March 25, 26 “Somali pirates hijack tankers again” (Navy News Stand, March 27, 2009)

Somali pirates hijacked Norwegian-owned chemical tanker MV *Bow Asir* (Bahamian-flagged; 22,847DWT) with its 23-member crew on March 25. On the 26th, pirates also seized Greek-owned chemical tanker MV *Nipayia* (Panama-flagged; 8,742DWT) with its 19 merchant mariners. When hijacked, *Bow Asir* was operating more than 380 nautical miles southeast of Kismayo, Somalia, and *Nipayia* was in the waters 490 nautical miles east of Mogadishu. These maritime areas were the farthest yet from the Gulf of Aden, where the naval vessels of the international community are conducting patrols.

MV Bow Asir (22,847DWT)

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/Pirates+haul+tankers+Somali+coast/1435576/story.html>

March 25 “Seychelles’ yacht hijacked: state broadcast reports” (Shiptalk, March 26, 2009)

Somali pirates hijacked a yacht with two people on board - *SY Serenity* - in the Indian Ocean, the island nation's state broadcaster reported on the 25th. The yacht disappeared after it left the islands February 28 en route to Madagascar, which lies about 200 miles to the south. Hijacking was known, after one of the crew called his family on the 24. The Seychelles government has contacted the British, French and American governments to ask for their assistance.

March 28 “Somali pirates free German tanker” (Trade Winds, March 30, 2009)

On the 28th, Somali pirates freed a German LPG tanker, *MV Longchamp* (Bahamas –flagging; 4,316 DWT). The *Longchamp* was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on 29 January en route from Norway to Vietnam. It was in a designated safety corridor when it was attacked, and it was in a convoy escorted by an Indian warship. All crew members are believed to be safe. A ransom was delivered to the hijackers by aircraft, but its amount was unknown. At first, hijackers are said to have demanded six million US dollars.

MT Longchamp

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/E-QOnTGFx_o/Sc4_vypEfmI/AAAAAAAAAG5k/YOacEgTAHEU/s1600-h/longchamp.jpg

March 29 “Somali pirates mistake, fire German navy’s supply ship” (Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs, Press Release, March 30, 2009)

On the 29th, Somali pirates mistook a German navy’s supply ship (with a civilian crew), the Federal German Ship (FGS) *Spessart*, for a commercial merchant vessel, and chased to open fire on it. Subsequently, *Spessart* pursued the skiff while providing additional details of the attack to a variety of international naval vessels operating in the area. A number of naval ships and aircraft joined the pursuit, including: the Dutch frigate, a helicopter assigned to the Spanish warship, a Spanish P-3 maritime patrol aircraft, two Marine Corps helicopters from the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 flagship - US vessel, and the European Union’s CTF-465 flagship - the Greek frigate. Upon boarding the skiff, the team found seven suspected pirates and their weapons. The suspected pirates were disarmed and transferred to the German frigate *Rheinland-Pfalz*.

The frigate is currently on its way to Mombasa in Kenya. It has not yet been decided if the suspected pirates are to be turned over to the Kenyan authorities for prosecution. German prosecutors have charged seven suspected pirates. (Lloyd’s List, April 1, 2009)

FGS *Spessart*

http://www.snmg1.nato.int/SNMG1_ficheiros/Page2000.htm

March 29 “Russian Somali contingent departs from Vladivostok” (Itar-Tass, March 29, 2009)

On the 29th, warships of the Russian Pacific Fleet sailed out of Vladivostok for the area off Somalia. The group consists of the big anti-submarine ship *Admiral Panteleyev* (7,900 DWT), a rescue tugboat as well as two tankers. It is the second Pacific Fleet force to operate in the area of Somalia.

Admiral Panteleyev

<http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3%83%>

[AB:Destroyer Admiral Panteleyev.jpg](#)

1.2 Military

March 3 “India’s 1st indigenous A/C to be named INS Vikrant” (express.buzz.com, March 3, 2009)

According to the Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) which is building the first Indian aircraft carrier (AC), the first, indigenous AC that will be ready for induction into the Indian Navy by 2015 will be named INS *Vikrant*. (The name *Vikrant* is taken from the Sanskrit vikranta, meaning 'courageous' and 'victorious.') INS *Vikant* is the second-generation AC, and the first-generation AC was imported from Britain in the 1960s. Having played an important role in the India-Pakistan War of 1971, the first-generation AC retired in 1997 after 36 years of eventful service. The first indigenous AC has 40,000 ton displacement, and her keel-laying ceremony was held on February 28. The indigenous AC will have Russian-built MiG-29K fighter jets, indigenous light combat aircraft Tejas and Kamov helicopters. The carrier is designed to accommodate women officers as well for the first time as an INS.

March 4 “China's defense budget to rise 14.9% in 2009” (AFP, March 4, 2009)

The China’s defense budget for 2009 is 480.686 billion yuan (US\$ 70.2 billion), which would rise by 14.9 per cent compared to the previous year, Li Zhaoxing, the spokesman for China's parliament, told reporters on the 4th. The rise is slightly smaller than last year's increase of 17.9 per cent. The United States, Japan and their allies have long expressed concern that the Chinese government has not been transparent on its intent behind the expansion. Regarding this point, Li defended himself by saying that China's limited military powers will be solely used for the purpose of safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which will not pose a threat to any country. The spokesman said the increase was due in large part to the need to upgrade the military's information technology and its ability to engage in disaster response and anti-terror missions, in addition to improving the living standards for its service men and women.

March 5 “France selling small subs” (Strategy Page, March 5, 2009)

French submarine builder DCNS is now selling a new coastal boat, the *Andrasta* class. This is an 855 ton, 153 foot long sub, with a crew of 19 plus 8 passengers, usually commandos. The boat can stay underwater for up to five days. Surfaced, it can travel up to 5,400 kilometers, at slow (170 kilometers a day) speed. The boat has six forward firing torpedo tubes, which can also carry mines or anti-ship missiles. All the weapons are stored in the torpedo tubes, and there are no reloads. There are sufficient supplies on board to keep the boat out up to 30 days. Most missions are expected to be more like two weeks. The *Andrasta* is built to be quiet, and use its powerful passive sonar to detect surface ships or subs. The *Andrastas* cost less than \$200 million each, half the price of most normal size subs, and are attractive boats for nations wanting to use submarines mainly as defensive weapons.

March 5 “Chinese Navy destroyer arrives at Karachi” (Xinhua, March 5, 2009)

On the 5th, Chinese Navy destroyer, *Guangzhou* (6,500 tons) arrived at the southern Pakistani port of Karachi for multinational exercises. Exercise AMAN 09 is scheduled to be conducted in the North Arabian Sea from March 5-14. Navies of some 30 countries are expected to take part in or observe the exercises. This is the second exercise of AMAN series. First of the AMAN series was held in March 2007 when 14 ships of Bangladesh, China, France, Italy, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and the United States navies participated. AMAN is an Urdu word meaning “PEACE.”

March 5 “China near to having carrier: ESF commander” (AP, March 7, 2009)

The Associated Press (AP), March 7, cited the news of the Chinese media dated the 6th that reported on the address Admiral Xu Hongmeng, China’s East Sea Fleet (ESF) Commander, made regarding possession of an aircraft carrier (AC) while attending the National People’s Congress on the 5th. “China really needs a carrier. Both technologically and economically, China already has the capacity to build a carrier,” said Xu.

Strategically, an AC is seen mainly as a deterrent to US intervention in a conflict over Taiwan. A carrier would also provide vital air cover in the event of a conflict farther from China’s shores, either in the South China Sea or in the crucial sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Chinese officers and commentators have also focused on the importance of a carrier as a symbol of national strength, noting that China is the only permanent member of the UN Security Council that does not have one in its fleet.

March 8 “Chinese vessels harass U.S. surveillance ship” (Navy News Stand, March 9, 2009)

Five Chinese vessels shadowed and aggressively maneuvered close to the USNS *Impeccable* in the South China Sea March 8, a Pentagon spokesman said March 9. The U.S. oceanographic ship was conducting routine operations in international waters 70 nautical miles south of Hainan Island. The ship operates under the auspices of the Military Sealift Command. All her crew

members are civilians and unarmed.

According to the U. S. defense department, the Chinese vessels surrounded the *Impeccable* and two craft of them closed to within 50 feet. The Chinese ships included a Chinese navy intelligence collection ship, a Bureau of Maritime Fisheries patrol vessel, a State Oceanographic Administration patrol vessel and two small Chinese-flagged trawlers. Crewmen aboard the *Impeccable* used fire hoses to spray one of the approaching vessels as a protective measure. The Chinese crew members disrobed to their underwear and continued closing to within 25 feet. The Chinese vessels dropped pieces of wood in the water directly in the *Impeccable's* path, and two of the ships stopped directly in the U.S. vessel's path, forcing it to stop. The Chinese used poles in an attempt to snag the *Impeccable's* towed acoustic array sonars. *Impeccable's* master used bridge-to-bridge radio circuits to inform the Chinese ships in a friendly manner that it was leaving the area and requested a safe path to navigate. The Pentagon spokesman said these were dangerous close maneuvers that these vessels engaged in.

According to the Pentagon, the acts of the Chinese vessels on that day were the culmination of earlier harassment - the most vicious act which had ever been noted. A Chinese patrol vessel shined a high-intensity spotlight March 4 on the USNS *Victorious* operating in the Yellow Sea 125 miles from China's coast. Chinese maritime aircraft buzzed the ship 12 times March 5. A Chinese frigate crossed the bow of the *Impeccable* at a range of about 100 yards March 5. Maritime aircraft buzzed the ship after that incident. On March 7, another Chinese ship challenged *Impeccable* over radio, calling its operations illegal and directing the American ship to leave the area or suffer the consequences. U.S. ships routinely operate in the area.

According to the home-page (HP) of the Military Sealift Command's Special Mission Ships Program, USNS *Impeccable* is one of the five Ocean Surveillance Ships that are part of the 25 ships of the Special Mission Ships Program. It has a displacement of 5,368 tons with a speed of 12.0 knots and 25 contracting crew members. The *Impeccable* is based in Yokosuka, Japan. (<http://www.msc.navy.mil/PM2/>)

Left: Two Chinese trawlers stop directly in front of the military Sealift Command ocean surveillance ship USNS *Impeccable* (T-AGOS-23), forcing the ship to conduct an emergency "all stop" in order to avoid collision. http://www.navy.mil/view_single.asp?id=69478

Right: A crewmember on a Chinese trawler uses a grapple hook in an apparent attempt to snag the towed acoustic array of the military Sealift Command ocean surveillance ship USNS *Impeccable*. http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_E-QOnTGFX_o/SbZcEBze2AI/AAAAAAAAAGwo/zUmuSK3czXY/s1600-h/Grapple+hook.jpg

USNS Impeccable

<http://www.msc.navy.mil/PM2>

Related map

Source: BBC News, March 10

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7934138.stm>

【Related Story】

“USN destroyer to escort research ship” (AP, March 12, 2009)

On the 11th, the United States Navy assigned a destroyer, USS *Chung-Hoon*, to escort the surveillance ship, USNS *Impeccable*, which continues to operate in the South China Sea.

March 12 “Russia’s newest frigate to enter service before year-end (RIA Novosti, March 12, 2009)

Russia's newest frigate, the *Yaroslav Mudry*, will begin service before the end of the year 2009, the Russian Baltic Fleet commander Rear Admiral (RADM) Viktor Mardushin said on the 12th. The *Yaroslav Mudry* -- the second vessel in the 11540 Yastreb project after the *Neustrashimy*, which recently took part in an anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden -- is currently undergoing sea trials. According to RADM Victor Mardushin, the tests have been conducted successfully, which will last two or three months. The *Yaroslav Mudry* has a displacement of 4,250 tons and a maximum speed of 30 knots. It is armed with anti-ship missiles, air defense systems and a Ka-27 helicopter among others. The *Neustrashimy* could be sent back to Somalia in May-June, and the *Yaroslav Mudry* could join the international anti-piracy in the Gulf of Aden after entering service with the Baltic Fleet.

Yaroslav Mudry

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090312/120531152.html>

March 16, 17 “Russian military planes fly over U.S. Navy ships in SOJ” (CNN, March 19, 2008)

On the 16th, two Russian Ilyushin IL-38 maritime patrol aircraft flew just 500 feet over the U.S. aircraft carrier *John C. Stennis* while it was participating in the U.S.-South Korea joint military exercise in the Sea of Japan, according to U.S. military officials. On the 17th, the USS *Blue Ridge* and the *Stennis* were over-flown by two Russian Bear long-range bombers multiple times. In both cases, U.S. Navy F/A-18 fighters met up with the Russian aircraft about 70 nautical miles from the U.S. ships and flew alongside them until they left the area. U.S. aircraft tried contacting the Russian planes on radio channels, but the Russian pilots did not respond.

March 17 “Russia begins mooring trials of new SSBN” (RIA Novosti, March 17, 2009)

On the 17th, Russia has begun mooring trials of the first submarine in the series – new *Borey*-class nuclear-powered strategic submarine (SSBN), the *Yury Dolgoruky*, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov told a meeting at the Defense Ministry attended by President Dmitry Medvedev. The vessel has a maximum depth of 450 meters and a submerged speed of about 29 knots. It can carry up to 16 Bulava sea-based ballistic missiles and torpedoes. Two other

Borey-class nuclear submarines are currently under construction, and are expected to be completed in 2009 and 2011. Russia is planning to build a total of eight submarines of this class by 2015. The *Bulava* (SS-NX-30) is to be in service in 2009, carries up to 10 nuclear warheads and has a range of 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles).

SSBN *Yury Dolgoruky*

Source: RIA Novosti, March 17, 2009

(<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090317/120602125.html>)

【Related Story】

“Russia's submarine fleet has 60 vessels in active service” (RIA Novosti, March 19, 2009)

The Russian Navy maintains a fleet of about 60 submarines, including 10 nuclear-powered strategic submarines and over 30 nuclear-powered attack submarines, diesel-electric submarines and special-purpose subs, a senior Navy official said on the 19th. *Delta-IV* and *Delta-III* class subs form the backbone of Russia's strategic submarine fleet. One of the world's largest *Typhoon*-class submarines also remain in service with the Russian Navy, which has been converted as a test platform for Russia's new *Bulava* missile. Two other subs remain in reserve at a naval base in Severodvinsk. Russia's nuclear-powered attack submarine fleet comprises vessels of the *Oscar II* and *Akula* class. Each sub is equipped with 24 SS-N-19 Shipwreck long-range anti-ship cruise missiles. A fourth-generation *Graney*-class nuclear-powered attack submarine will be delivered to the Russian Navy in 2010-2011. Diesel-electric submarines in the Russian Navy are represented by *Kilo*-class vessels. They will be gradually replaced by Project 667 *Lada*-class submarines. The sub features a new anti-sonar coating for its hull, an extended cruising range, and advanced anti-ship and anti-submarine weaponry, including Club-S cruise missile systems. The first submarine of the *Lada* class is undergoing sea trials and may enter service with the Russian Navy in 2009. A second *Lada* class submarine, which is the first in the production series, will be commissioned in 2009. A third submarine is expected to be launched in 2010. The source also said the Russian Navy has several 'special purpose' submarines designed for testing of new technologies and weaponry. Some open sources earlier reported the existence of Project 20120 B-90 *Sarov* diesel-electric submarine, which has a nuclear reactor as a supplementary power generator. The vessel was commissioned in 2007 and according to some reports may be used by Russia's Northern Fleet as a spy vessel in northern waters.

According to a high-ranking officer in the Navy General Staff, about 10 submarines from the

Russian Navy are accomplishing various tasks throughout the world's oceans, and most of them are from the Northern and the Pacific fleets. (RIA Novosti, March 20)

Project 667 *Lada*-class

Source: RIA Novosti, March 20, 2009

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090320/120665371.html>

March 18 “JMSDF commissions new helicopter-carrying destroyer” (Japan Today, March 18, 2009)

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) commissioned its largest helicopter-carrying destroyer *Hyuga* at a delivery ceremony on the 18th. Deployed in Yokosuka, the 13,950-ton *Hyuga* sports a 195-meter full-length deck with the ability to carry up to 11 helicopters on board. It also enables up to four helicopters to take off and land almost simultaneously. According to the JMSDF, the *Hyuga* will serve as the nerve center for operations ranging from antisubmarine warfare to anti-disaster efforts at home and abroad, and for rescuing Japanese nationals overseas. Among the *Hyuga*'s roughly 340 crewmembers are 17 women—two officers and 15 sailors—who have become the first servicewomen on board a destroyer. (Additionally, regarding repercussions in foreign countries on her launching on August 23, 2007, refer to OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, August 2007.)

Hyuga

Source: JMSDF HP ; <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/gallery/ships/dd/hyuga/181.html>

March 19 “U.S. Navy nuke sub, landing ship collide in S. of Hormuz” (U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs, Press Release #046-09, March 20, 2009)

A U.S. Navy submarine USS *Hartford* (SSN 768) and U.S. amphibious ship USS *New Orleans* (LPD 18) collided in the Strait of Hormuz on March 19, 2009. Fifteen sailors aboard the *Hartford*

were slightly injured and returned to duty. No personnel aboard *New Orleans* were injured. The propulsion plant of the submarine was unaffected by this collision. *New Orleans* suffered a ruptured fuel tank, which resulted in an oil spill of approximately 25,000 gallons of diesel fuel marine. Both ships are currently operating under their own power. The incident is currently under investigation.

Hyuga

The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS *Hartford* (SSN 768) pulls into Mina Salman pier in Bahrain where U.S. Navy engineers and inspection teams will assess and evaluate damage.

http://www.navy.mil/view_single.asp?id=69837

March 20 “Indonesia sends warship to MTF-UNIFIL” (The Jakarta Post, March 20, 2009)

Indonesian warship KRI *Diponegoro-365* departed from Jakarta on the 20th for Lebanon as a maritime task force to join the Marine Task Force of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (MTF-UNIFIL) - CTF-448. KRI *Diponegoro-365* will make stopovers at several seaports such as Cochin in India, Salalah in Oman, Port Said in Egypt, and Beirut in Lebanon. The CTF-448 has already had warships from France, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Germany. It is for the first time that TNI, especially the Navy, has sent its maritime task force to join the UN peace keeping force. KRI *Diponegoro* will join the MTF UNIFIL for six months until October 2009, and if the mission is successful, TNI will send its second warship.

March 24 “Russian navy’s destroyer visits Jakarta” (RIA Novosti, March 24, 2009)

On the 24th, completing a three-month anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, Russian navy's destroyer *Admiral Vinogradov*, accompanied by the Boris Butoma tanker, arrived in Jakarta on its way to the home base in Vladivostok. Captain of the *Admiral Vinogradov* said, during the mission, they escorted 12 convoys with a total of 54 ships from 17 countries. The visit to Indonesia will last until the 28th, followed by a similar visit to the Chinese port of Zhanjiang on April 6-10, before returning to Vladivostok.

1.3 Diplomacy and International Relations

March 10 “RP President Arroyo signs territorial baselines bill” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 12, 2009)

On the 10th, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Republic Act (RA) No. 9522 - the Philippine Archipelagic Baselines Law. No ceremony was held that often marks the signing of key legislation, perhaps hoping to avoid controversy with other nations. The archipelagic baselines law (hereafter the law) excludes the Scarborough Shoal and Kalayaan Group of Islands (Tagalog for the Spratlys group) from the archipelago, but treats these as part of a “regime of islands.” The law includes only the major archipelagoes, but Article 2 in the law specifies Philippine sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal and Kalayaan Group of Islands. The exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is based upon the territorial baselines. The UN deadline for the submission of the outer limits of the extended continental shelf of the Philippines is May 13. The map in an enclosure shows the conceptual framework of the Philippines’ territorial demarcation shown in the law.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said on the 11th: “We are sending the message to the whole world that we’re affirming our national sovereignty.” Ermita said any fresh disputes that would arise over RA 9522 could be resolved based on the Code of Conduct between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China.

An image of the Philippine Archipelagic Baselines

http://www.ellentordesillas.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/map3_cmoa_option.JPG

【Related story 1】

“China protests signing of baselines bill” (INQUIRER.net, March 11, 2009)

Shortly after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed the baselines bill, the embassy of China in Manila reiterated on the 11th that country’s strong opposition and solemn protest on

what it called the Philippines' illegal and invalid claim to the disputed territory in the South China Sea. A statement by Chinese embassy spokesperson stressed that Huangyan Island and Nansha Islands have always been parts of Chinese territory and that the People's Republic of China has indisputable sovereignty over these islands and their adjacent waters. (Huangyan Island is what China calls Scarborough Shoal; while it calls the Spratlys group the Nansha Islands.)

【Related story 2】

“China’s fishery patrol ship reaches the Xisha Islands” (China Daily, March 16, 2009)

On the 15th, Chinese fishery patrol vessel, the *China Yuzheng 311*, reached the Xisha Islands on a mission to strengthen fishery protection and maritime surveillance. The *China Yuzheng 311* is China's largest fishery administration ship converted from a retired navy rescue vessel. At 4,450 tons, the vessel can reach a maximum speed of 20 knots. The ship will conduct patrol the exclusive economic zones (EEZ), including Nansha, Xisha and Zhongsha islands in the South China Sea. It will protect fishing vessels around Nansha, Xisha and Zhongsha islands in China's southernmost maritime territory, and demonstrate Beijing's sovereignty over China's islands", director-general of the administration Wu Zhuang said.

2nd ship fishery administration ship, the *China Yuzheng 45001*, has reached Xisha Islands on 27th, and will assist *China Yuzheng 311* in patrolling the South China Sea. (China Daily, March 28, 2009)

China Yuzheng 311

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-03/17/content_7587410.htm

【Related story 3】

“Philippine DS blames China on naval deployment to SCS” (INQUIRER.net, March 16, 2009)

On the 16th, Philippine Defense Secretary (DS) Gilberto Teodoro blamed China on its deployment of a patrol vessel to the South China Sea (SCS). “The Philippines’ baselines law is in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). What we did is

we acquired a legal weapon. We are not sending any war material to this place.” Teodoro said.

【Related story 4】

“Vietnam asks China to follow intl law” (VietNamNet/VNA, March 17, 2009)

Regarding Chinese fishing ship 311’s operations around Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos (Xisha Islands), Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Le Dung said on March 17, as follows: “Every attempt to exploit sea foods and resources at the East Sea (the South China Sea) should respect the rights to maritime sovereignty and jurisdiction of relevant countries in line with international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea issued in 1982,” concluded the spokesman.

March 10 “Indonesia, Singapore sign Maritime Border Treaty” (AFP, March 10, 2009)

On the 10th, Indonesia and Singapore signed a treaty setting out part of their shared maritime boundary. According to Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, the agreement legally defines the western part of both countries' sea boundary and was the result of nearly four years of negotiations. How the eastern part of the boundary should be defined will be settled through three-way talks between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, Wirajuda said. Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo said the legal certainty provided by the treaty would boost anti-piracy efforts in the Malacca Strait.

1.4 Shipping, Resources, Environment, and Miscellaneous

March 2 “Global fish catch in 2006 highest since 1950” (Economist, March 2, 2009)

World fish production hit 143.6 million (m) tons in 2006, the highest since records began in 1950, according to a new biannual report from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Of them, just over 110m tons were eaten by people, with the rest used as animal feed or for other commercial uses. Some 47 percent of fish on dinner plates is now farmed, and this is likely to increase as the amount caught in the wild levels off. China is the world's biggest producer in both categories, landing 17.1m toes of fish from its waters, and farming 34.4m tons.

March 2 “VLCCs used as crude oil storage for future price hike” (Shiptalk, March 2, 2009)

According to recent media reports, moves to use crude oil (c/o) tankers, centering on VLCCs, for c/o storage are expanding. At least 80 million barrels of c/o are now stored in tankers, and as many as 45 VLCCs are used for that purpose. The number accounts for 10 percent of the world's VLCC fleet now in operation, tightening the bottoms supply-demand balance. Crude oil prices at present have dropped by a wide margin compared to high prices prevailed in 2008, but

anticipation of a rise is strong in the market. Under such circumstances, moves became active late in 2008 to purchase c/o at low prices and store it in VLCCs in the U.S. Gulf or other places until the oil prices go up. As a result, the number of VLCCs assigned for c/o transportation is decreasing, practically creating reduced supplies. There is a view that such usage of VLCCs will further increase depending on c/o prices.

March 9 “China developing manned deep-sea submergible” (Asia Bulletin, March 9, 2009)

On the 9th, Sun Zihui, director of the China’s State Oceanic Administration said that a deep-sea manned submersible vessel for the mission has been completed in 2008, and the test would begin in 2009. If successful, the China-made submersible vessel would be the first manned vehicle to reach such a depth 7,000 meters (m), surpassing 6,500m below the sea level ever held so far by the manned submersible vessels. According to Sun, the submersible vessel could carry a crew of up to three people, and would play an important role in deep-sea exploration of natural resources.

March 21 “Liberia registers 3,000th vessel” (MARINE LOG, March 21, 2009)

The Liberian Registry has passed a major milestone by registering its 3,000th vessel, the Aframax tanker *Ise Princess* (105,400 DWT), managed and operated by the Geek shipping company. According to the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry (ISCR), the first vessel registered with Liberia in 1949 was also Greek, and today almost 600 Greek-owned ships, aggregating 38 million DWT, are registered under the flag of Liberia. And that number of Greek-related ships will grow still further. Despite the difficult economic outlook, Liberia has registered over 110 vessels in the first two and a half months of 2009.

March 24 “Suez Canal revenues plunge 6 months again” (Lloyd’s List, March 24, 2009)

According to the Egypt’s canal authority, Suez Canal revenue and traffic levels in February both fell, which mark the sixth successive decline. It said canal revenue in February was down to \$301.8M compared to \$407.7M in the same period a year ago, while the number of vessel transits declined to 1,272 from 1,676. Incidentally, records indicate that transits totaled 1,313 in January 2009 and 1,560 in December 2008. Explanations for the decline include avoidance of the Suez Canal at a time when shipping is facing up to the global economic downturn, and increasing moves by some operators to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope to avoid the piracy-prone Gulf of Aden. According to projections of one local economist, canal revenues will total \$4.4BN in the 2008/2009 fiscal year, which runs until the end of June, down from \$5.1BN in 2007/2008.

March 26 “China, Burma sign oil pipeline agreement” (The Irrawaddy, March 28, 2009)

On the 26th, China and Burma signed four contracts, which included the construction of a

cross border oil and gas pipeline. China will start construction in 2009 on oil and gas pipelines more than 1,200 miles long from Kyaukpyu Port on the Bay of Bengal through Burma to southwest China. The pipelines will pass through Kunming in Yunnan Province and continue through Guizhou Province to Chongqing municipality in southwest China. Chinese state media reported that construction in Yunnan Province will start in the first half of the year as part of the 72 billion yuan (US \$10.5 billion) energy project. The project includes railway, road and waterway construction, as well as upgrading the port at Kyaukpyu in Arakan State. As part of the pipe line project, China has secured a 30-year deal from the junta for natural gas tapped off the Burmese coast. Observers say that China will also use the pipelines for importing natural gas and oil from the Middle East and Africa, helping China to cut out oil shipping through the Malacca Strait.

March 27 “China starts drilling new oil fields in Pohai Bay” (Xinhua, March 27, 2009)

China National Offshore Oil Company Limited (CNOOC Ltd.) announced on the 27th it has started drilling in two new oil and gas formations discovered in East China's Bohai Bay. One well was drilled to a depth of 3,910 meters, with water depth at about 26 meters. The well was tested to have an output of an average 1,270 barrels of oil and 393,000 cubic feet of natural gas per day. The other well was discovered at the new field, with drill down to a depth of 3,991 meters, water depth at approximately 27 meters. The field was tested to produce 3,930 barrels of oil and 15.2 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.

2. Intelligence Assessment

U. S. Defense Department Report on China's Military Power 2009

On March 25, U.S. Defense Department released the Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009 (hereafter the report)¹. This is the eighth edition in a series of the reports, and the first one for the Barack Obama's administration.

As it said in the 2008 edition, the report says, "The lack of transparency in China's military and security affairs poses risks to stability by increasing the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation." It adds, "Current trends in China's military capabilities are a major factor in changing East Asian military balance, and could provide China with a force capable of prosecuting a range of military operations in Asia – well beyond Taiwan," among others. Thus, the report has the contents of showing the continued alert for the activities of the Chinese military power which is lacking in transparency. It is of note that, taking up China's global military engagement, the report mentions traditional military diplomacy since 2002, bilateral and multilateral military exercise with other nations, peacekeeping operation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and increasing Chinese military activities leading to the arms sales. Although the report is not the one which represents an independent view of the Barack Obama's administration, continued alert for the activities of the Chinese military power which is lacking in transparency is common to what was described in the last report in the days of the George W. Bushes' administration, considering the contents in a general description of the report.

Below are the major characteristics of the report which are viewed from the areas of interest in this monthly report.

1. Military Balance in front of Taiwan Strait

There is no change in the assessment that a short term focus on strengthening the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s military power is placed on preparing the capabilities for settling the conflict in the Taiwan Strait, taking the view of the possibility on U.S. intervention. The report says the modernization and the threat to Taiwan continue despite significant reduction in cross-Strait tension over the last year since Taiwan elected a new president.

It is remarkable that a rapid buildup of missile forces is continuing. According to the report, by September 2008, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had deployed between 1,050 and 1,150 mobile CSS-6 and CSS-7 short range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) to units opposite Taiwan. It is increasing the size of this force at a rate of more than 100 missiles per year, including variants of these missiles with improved ranges, accuracies, and payloads.

¹ As for the report, please refer to URL below;
http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/China_Military_Power_Report_2009.pdf

As for air power, the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and the PLA Navy (PLAN) combined have approximately 2,300 operational combat aircraft. As in the report in 2007, of them, 490 aircraft could conduct combat operations against Taiwan without refueling. However, this number could be significantly increased through any mobilization of other aircraft of forward deployment and decreased ordnance loads. On the other hand, Taiwan has 390 combat aircraft.

As for naval force, the East and South Sea Fleets would be expected to participate in direct action against Taiwan Navy. According to the report, two fleets combined have 17 destroyers, 39 frigates, 25 tank landing ships, 23 medium landing ships, 32 diesel attack submarines, and one nuclear attack submarine. Except for an increasing numbers of three frigates, the others are almost the same as those in the 2008 edition. However, the number of 55 coastal missile boats shows a remarkable increase from 35 in the 2008 edition. On the other hand, the Taiwan navy has four destroyers, 22 frigates, 12 tank landing ships, four medium landing ships, and four diesel submarines, which is the same as the number in the 2008 edition. The number of 59 coastal missile boats shows an increase by eight units, compared to the number in the 2008 edition.

The trend of military balance of two coasts in the Taiwan Strait is seriously related to the security of sea lane of Japan. As for the cross-Strait military balance, the report mentions, "The balance of forces continues to shift in the mainland's favor." This is the same assessment that has continued since the 2007 edition. However, the report regards China is deterred on multiple levels from taking military action against Taiwan. First, China does not yet possess the military capability to invade and occupy the island, particularly when confronted with prospect of U.S. intervention. Additionally, the reports points out that China's leaders recognize that a conflict over Taiwan involving the United States would lead to a long-term hostile relationship between the United States and China – a result that would not be in China's interests.

2. Anti-access / area-denial capability development

(1) The ranges to be reached by China's air and naval forces are in the trend toward expanding beyond Taiwan. According to the report, China is prioritizing the development of measures to deter or counter third-party intervention in any future cross-Strait crisis. China's approach to dealing with this challenge appears to be reflected in a sustained effort to develop the capability to attack, at long ranges, military forces that might deploy (anti-access) or operate (area-denial) within the western Pacific. In this context, China's anti-access/area-denial forces increasingly overlap, providing multiple layers of offensive systems utilizing the sea, air, space, and cyber-space.

The United States is most concerned about this anti-access/area-denial. As the incident of harassment of the China-side to the U. S. surveillance ship on March 8 shows, the western Pacific Ocean areas are becoming waters where the maritime strategies of the United States and China will gradually converge, which will cause intensive rivalry between the two nations, as the reach of China's anti-access/area-denial capability extends. (As for the shadowing of the Chinese vessel to the U. S. surveillance ship, please refer to 1. 2 Military in this report.)

- (2) Chinese aim of the hour in this strategy is seeking the capacity to hold surface ships at risk through a layered defense that reaches out to the “second island chain” (i.e., the islands extending south and east from Japan, to and beyond Guam). In the long term, improvement of China’s Command, Control, Communication, Computing, Information, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities, including space-based and over-the-horizon sensors are improved, could enable Beijing to identify, track and target military activities deep into the western Pacific Ocean. Regarding the aim of China, the reports in the past three years have recognized this concept. However, the current report points out that some PLA Navy thinkers emphasizes the concept “Far Sea Defense” as an alternative to the concept of “Offshore Active Defense.”
- (3) According to the report, China’s naval forces include some 75 principal combatants, over 60 submarines, 55 medium and large amphibious ships, and approximately 70 missile-equipped patrol craft as anti-access/area-denial capabilities. However, regarding a major expansion during the past year, it is pointed out, as follows.
- (a) During the past one year, two new *SHANG*-class (Type 093) nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) and one *JIN*-class (Type 094) SSBN have entered service alongside four older *HAN*-class SSNs and China’s single *XIA*-class SSBN.
- (b) China has an estimated 13 *SONG*-class (Type 039) diesel-electric attack submarines (SS) in its inventory. The *SONG*-class SS is designed to carry the YJ-82 (CH-SS-N-7) ASCM. The follow-on to the *SONG* is the *YUAN*-class SS. The first unit is already in fleet service and the second is conducting sea trials. The *YUAN*-class SS are armed similarly to the *SONG*-class SS, but also include a possible air independent propulsion (AIP) system.
- (c) The PLA Navy recently received several new domestically produced surface combatants. These include two *LUYANG II*-class (Type 052C) DDGs fitted with the indigenous HHQ-9 long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM); two *LUZHOU*-class (Type 051C) DDGs equipped with the Russian SA-N-20 long-range SAM; and four *JIANGKAI II*-class (Type 054A) guided missile frigates (FFG) to be fitted with the medium-range HHQ-16 vertically launched naval SAM currently under development. These ships reflect the leadership’s priority on an advanced anti-air warfare capability for China’s naval forces, which has historically been a weakness of the fleet. A description on surface combatants in the current report is the same as the one in the 2008 edition, except that the PLA Navy had one more *JIANGKAI II*-class (Type 054A) guided missile frigates (FFG).
- (d) China is *continuing* construction of its new *HOUBEI*-class (Type 022) wave-piercing catamaran hull missile patrol boat. More than 40 of these units have already entered service. Each boat can carry up to eight YJ-83 ASCMs.
- (4) Moreover, according to the report, China launched the 10,000-ton *ANWEI*-class hospital ship in October of 2008, which may also help support Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) efforts in Asia. The report is regarding with interest that PRC naval militia forces (commercial fishing vessels, referred to as a Militia Offshore Support Detachment) purportedly refueled and supplied two PLA Navy warships operating at sea in a designated

sea area off the coast of Zhejiang in May 2008. However, the extent to which Militia Offshore Support Detachments could provide logistics is unknown.

- (5) Mentioning construction of a new PLA Navy base on Hainan Island for the first time, the report regards that the base appears large enough to accommodate a mix of SSNs and SSBNs and advanced surface combatant ships. The port, which has underground facilities, would provide the PLA Navy with direct access to vital international sea lanes, and offers the potential for stealthy deployment of submarines into the deep waters of the South China Sea. The incident in which Chinese-side hindered the passage of the U. S. Navy's surveillance vessel occurred in international waters 70 nautical miles south of Hainan Island. (As to the naval base at Yulin (Sanya) Naval Base on Hainan Island, please refer to 1. 2 Military in the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, April 2008.)

Insisting on its territorial sovereignty by surrounding in U-shaped line the Huangyan Island and Nansha Islands in the South China Sea, China is intensifying the activities of demonstrating presence by protesting against the Philippines' territorial baseline law and sending the surveillance ships among others. (Please, refer to 1.3 Diplomacy in this report). The area is an important sea-lane which is used for 80 percent of the oil transportation to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and the activities the naval base at Yulin (Sanya) Naval Base on Hainan Island have great significance to the security of the Northeast Asian countries, including Japan.

3. Sea-lane defense capabilities and presence in the Indian Ocean

- (1) The report says that, as China's economy grows, dependence on secure access to natural resources has increased, which has become a remarkably significant factor shaping China's strategic behavior. According to the report, in May 2008, China became the world's second-largest importer of crude oil, surpassing Japan. China currently imports over 53 percent of its oil demand, and about 46 percent of its imports from the Middle East, 32 percent from Africa, and 5 percent from East Asia. Therefore, for China, the defense of sea-lane from the Middle East and Africa to its homeland is vital to its national security.
- (2) According to the report in the 2008 edition, China's current ability to project and sustain power at a distance remains limited, and the PLA, at least for the near and mid-terms, will face an ambition-capability gap. "Currently it is neither capable of using military power to secure its foreign energy investments nor of defending critical sea lanes against disruption," the report said. Additionally, the report in the 2008 edition pointed out that China would in the long term might seek to close the gap by developing extended-range power projection, including aircraft carrier development; expeditionary warfare; undersea warfare; anti-air warfare; long-range precision strike; maritime C4ISR; expeditionary logistics and forward basing; training and exercises, especially in open water; and a more active military presence abroad.
- (3) What is noteworthy in closing the gap is that the PLA Navy deployed two destroyers and one supply ship to the Gulf of Aden to conduct counter-piracy escort and patrol operations in

December 2008. The report says, outside of occasional ship visits abroad, this represents the PLA Navy's first operational deployment beyond the immediate Western Pacific region.

The navy has already sent the second expeditionary force to the Gulf of Aden and off Somalia. The anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast will not end in a short period of time. The continuous deployment of the Chinese fleet means that China will virtually establish a regular, constant presence in the Indian Ocean. On March 11, Zhang Deshun, deputy chief of staff (DCOS) of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) said that the length of their mission off Somalia would not come to an end soon, and they made a long-term plan for their escorting missions to the Gulf of Aden. (Regarding the departure on April 2, refer to 1. 1 Security in this monthly report.)

The anti-piracy measures will give China an ideal excuse for deployment to the Indian Ocean. The strategy that China is developing to secure the military positions along the sea-lane from the Middle East and Africa, so-called the "String of Pearls," will have an important strategic significance which should not be overlooked for the security of the Japanese sea-lane if these positions have come to be utilized on the way to continuous deployment of the fleet.

Robert D. Kaplan, Fellow with the U. S. think-tank, the Center for a New American Security, says that the Indian Ocean is turning into the stage of "Great Game in the Ocean" between China and India in the Indian Ocean, and calls that the power game in the Indian Ocean is significant as "The Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century."²

- (4) In this process, it should be regarded with attention when China will have an aircraft carrier. The aircraft carrier is regarded to be an essential platform if the PLA Navy is to grow into real ocean-going navy with sea lane defense capability over the distance. The report in the 2008 edition says, "If the leadership were to so choose, the PRC shipbuilding industry could start construction of an indigenous platform by the end of this decade." It was regarding a start of construction was up to a decision of the leadership. The current report says that China has already announced its intention of having an aircraft carrier, it has shown interest in purchasing the Russian-made Su-33 ship-borne fighter-aircraft, and they have reportedly decided to initiate a program to train 50 navy pilots to operate fixed-wing aircraft from an aircraft carrier. The report also adds, "The PLA Navy is considering building multiple carriers by around 2020." (As to a speech of Admiral Xu Hongmeng, China's East Sea Fleet (ESF) Commander, regarding possession of an aircraft carrier while attending the National People's Congress on March 5, please refer to 1. 2 Military in this monthly report.)

² Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century; Power Plays in the Indian Ocean", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (March / April 2009), pp.16-32.

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