

OPRF MARINT Monthly Report

February 2011



CONTENTS

Intelligence Summary in February 2011

1. Information Digest

- 1.1 Maritime Security
- 1.2 Military Developments
- 1.3 Maritime Boundaries
- 1.4 Diplomacy and International Relations
- 1.5 Shipping, Shipbuilding and Harbors
- 1.6 Ocean Resources, Energy, Sea Environment and Others

2. Intelligence Assessment

Review of “Recent Development in the South China Sea: Grounds for Cautious Optimism?”

This monthly report was summarized and produced by OPRF staff writers based on their analyses and assessments of open source information.

Each source of information is described as an internet link in a bracket, which is available as URL online as of the end of February 2011.

Publisher: Masahiro Akiyama

Staff writers:

Kazumine Akimoto, Takehisa Imaizumi, Aki Mori, Wakana Mukai, Eiji Sakai, Daisuke Sekine,
Takehisa Tomomori, Hideshi Ueno, Yuko Takada

All rights reserved.

This report, or parts thereof, must not be produced in any form without permission in writing of the publisher.

Intelligence Summary in February 2011

Maritime Security: The Stratfor, the global security consultancy based in Texas, U.S.A., points out that, by using larger mother ships capable of riding out heavy seas during the monsoon season, Somali pirates not only overcame the limits of the past attack areas, but also expanded capability to detain their hijacked vessels in 2010.

In February, six hijacking incidents were noted. Of them, two were hijackings of yachts. In particular, on the 18th, Somali pirates hijacked a yacht with six Americans on board, SV *Quest*, in the waters 240 nautical miles off Oman. This incident had a tragic consequence. When U.S. special operations force converged on the *Quest* in small boats, the four Americans on board had already been dead. It is the first time that Americans were killed by Somali pirates.

On the other hand, holding of pirate groups and the destruction of mother-ships and skiffs by international naval forces have increased. According to an announcement of the Indian Navy, on the early morning of the 6th, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard apprehended 28 pirate suspects onboard the Thai fishing boat, the *Prantalay 11* which had been used by the pirates as a “mother ship,” and rescued 24 Thai fishermen after a brief gun-battle in the Indian territorial waters near the Lakshadweep islands. On the 10th, the Royal Navy’s frigate HMS *Cornwall* searched a Yemeni-flagged dhow in the Indian Ocean. An initial search found 22 people on board, three skiffs, powerful outboard motors and various items of equipment associated with pirates boarding merchant vessels, such as ladders, enabling the dhow to act as ‘mother ship’ for a group of pirates operating in the area. Of 22 people on the dhow, five were the original Yemeni crew who had been held hostage for 92 days. On the early morning of the 11th, the Danish warship HDMS *Esbern Snare*, part of the NATO’s fleet, found a suspicious vessel with two skiffs on deck. After firing warning shots, the vessel stopped the skiff to detain 16 pirate suspects, and released two Yemeni fishermen.

On the 25th, Somali pirates released a Panamanian-flagged cargo ship operated by the Japanese NYK-Hinode Line Ltd, MV *Izumi* (20,170DWT). The vessel was hijacked in the waters south of Mogadishu on October 10, 2010. MV *Izumi* is likely to be used as a “mother ship” of Somali pirates. According to the EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release dated November 8, 2010, Spanish navy’s corvette, SPS *Infanta Cristina*, was fired on by pirates aboard MV *Izumi* as it accompanied an aid ship, MV *Petra 1*, destined for Mogadishu on the evening of November 6. MV *Petra 1* was contracted by the African Union peace keeping mission in Somalia to deliver food to Mogadishu. SPS *Infanta Christina* had to defend herself and her escort with only minimal force in order not to endanger the lives of the hostages (20 Filipinos) on-board MV *Izumi*. MV *Izumi* then fled the scene. Additionally, according to the EU NAVFOR, an attacking group of pirates was said to be confirmed to move from MV *Izumi* to the skiff and attacked the vessels underway in the sea off Somalia on November 5.

Military Developments: According to Jeff Head, an engineering consultant and member of the U.S. Naval Institute, the Chinese aircraft carrier, the *Shi Lang* (old name: Varyag), seems to have entered the final stage of outfitting of weapons systems and radar sensors. In view of Head and other experts, the Chinese Navy (PLAN) will launch the *Shi Lang* in the 2011-2012 time frames and begin trials and training for her use as an operational aircraft carrier.

Having passed through the Suez Canal, two Iranian warships, the frigate *Alvand* and the supply vessel *Kharg*, entered the Mediterranean Sea on the 22nd. According to Iranian officials, the two warships are headed to Syria for training.

On the 24th, the PLA Navy (PLAN) has dispatched a missile frigate, the *Xuzhou*, from the on-going 7th PLAN anti-piracy task force deployment off Somalia to steam to Libyan coast. This is the first ever mission, for which China mobilized military power to rescue PRC citizens living in the foreign country.

Maritime Boundaries: On the 25th, Bangladesh lodged its submission on the extended continental shelf of the Bay of Bengal to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to support the claim. The claim ranges from 400-460 nautical miles on the seabed of the Bay of Bengal.

Diplomacy and International Relations: Indonesia is chair of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011. On the 18th, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono claimed in a recent interview with the *Asahi Shimbun* that, as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, one of his top priorities would be to make progress over the South China Sea dispute by bringing China into multilateral talks. Evan A. Laksmana, a researcher with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has contributed to the Website journal, *The Diplomat*, an article titled “Jakarta Eyes South China Sea.” In the article, pointing out that the Chinese claim in the ‘nine-dotted line’ map threatens the waters around the Natuna Islands that hosts the country’s largest reserve of natural gas, Laksmana discusses a background of why Indonesia has an interest in the issues of the South China.

On the 25th on a visit to India, Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed underlined the atoll nation's special ties with India and said there was not enough room for too many players in the Indian Ocean.

Shipping, Shipbuilding and Harbors: On the 21st, Maersk Line, a Danish major shipper, announced that it had ordered ten colossal vessels for \$19 billion from South Korea’s Daewoo Shipbuilding. New “Triple-E” ships will carry 18,000 boxes each, 2,500 more than the biggest container ship currently in service, which is also operated by Maersk. The first of them is to be commissioned in 2013. The new ships will ply the routes between Asia and Europe.

Ocean Resources, Energy, Sea Environment and Others: After a discussion held between the Indonesian Minister of Naval and Fisheries and the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic

Resources in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Indonesia are to strengthen bilateral relations in the Fisheries field. Both Ministers agreed at this discussion to establish a fishery development cooperation arrangement between the two countries within the first quarter of this year in order to improve bilateral relations on Fishery Trade relations, conduct fishery training courses, exchange technical expertise on fishing and scientists.

Intelligence Assessment: In December 2010, Carlyle A. Thayer, a professor of the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy, issued a 33-page article titled “Recent Development in the South China Sea: Grounds for Cautious Optimism?” as a working paper of the Singapore-based Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). This working paper discusses or reviews four issues as follows: (1) Remarks on “core interest” that is attributed to Chinese officials concerned and the U.S.-China interactions over maritime power. (2) Diplomatic maneuverings over the South China Sea issues. (3) China-Vietnam interactions with a particular focus on the maritime interests in the South China Sea. (4) The status of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and progress by the China-ASEAN Working groups to implement the DOC.

1. Information Digest

1.1 Maritime Security

February 1 “Finland joins EU NAVFOR to start missions” (Defence Web, February 2, 2011)

The Finnish navy’s minelayer FNS *Pohjanmaa* docked in Djibouti on January 29 and commenced EU NAVFOR mission on February 1. It is the first time that the Finnish warship has participated in an international military operation.

An outline of the article: The Finnish navy’s minelayer FNS *Pohjanmaa* docked in Djibouti on January 29 and commenced EU NAVFOR mission on February 1. Finland has been contributing to EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta since it began in December 2008, with Finnish officers working in Force Headquarters as well as Operational Headquarters in Northwood, United Kingdom, particularly in the difficult area of legal matters that surrounds the piracy dilemma. However, it is the first time that a Finnish navy’s warship has participated in an international military operation. FNS *Pohjanmaa* is only one minelayer of this class (1,400 tons) in service in the Finnish navy and it is the service’s flagship. It has a crew consisting of 90 sailors.

Refer to the article: Finnish Navy fighting piracy off Somalia in historic move

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13392:finnish-navy-fighting-piracy-off-somalia-in-historic-move&catid=51:Sea&Itemid=106

February 2 “Somali pirates expand operation area drastically” (UPI, February 2, 2011)

The Stratfor, the global security consultancy based in Texas, U.S.A., points out that, by using larger mother ships capable of riding out heavy seas during the monsoon season, Somali pirates not only overcame the limits of the past attack areas, but also expanded capability to detain their hijacked vessels in 2010.

An outline of the article: According an analysis of the Stratfor, the global security consultancy based in Texas, U.S.A., Somali pirates have extended the range of their attacks deep into the Indian Ocean, striking up to 2,500 miles from their bases on the Somali coast, and far beyond the reach of international naval forces. The Stratfor mentions: By using bigger ships capable of riding out monsoon storms, Somali pirates not only overcame the limits of the past attack areas, but also expanded capability to detain their hijacked vessels in 2010. Usually, attacks were decreasing during the periods between January and March and between August and October when the seas are rough. However, by using “mother ships,” the Somali pirates can maintain a year-round strike capability, netting them more ships for ransom. On January 27, U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Mark Fox, commander of U.S. naval forces in the Indian Ocean, said in Washington there are up to eight “pirate attack groups” using hijacked vessels as mother ships.

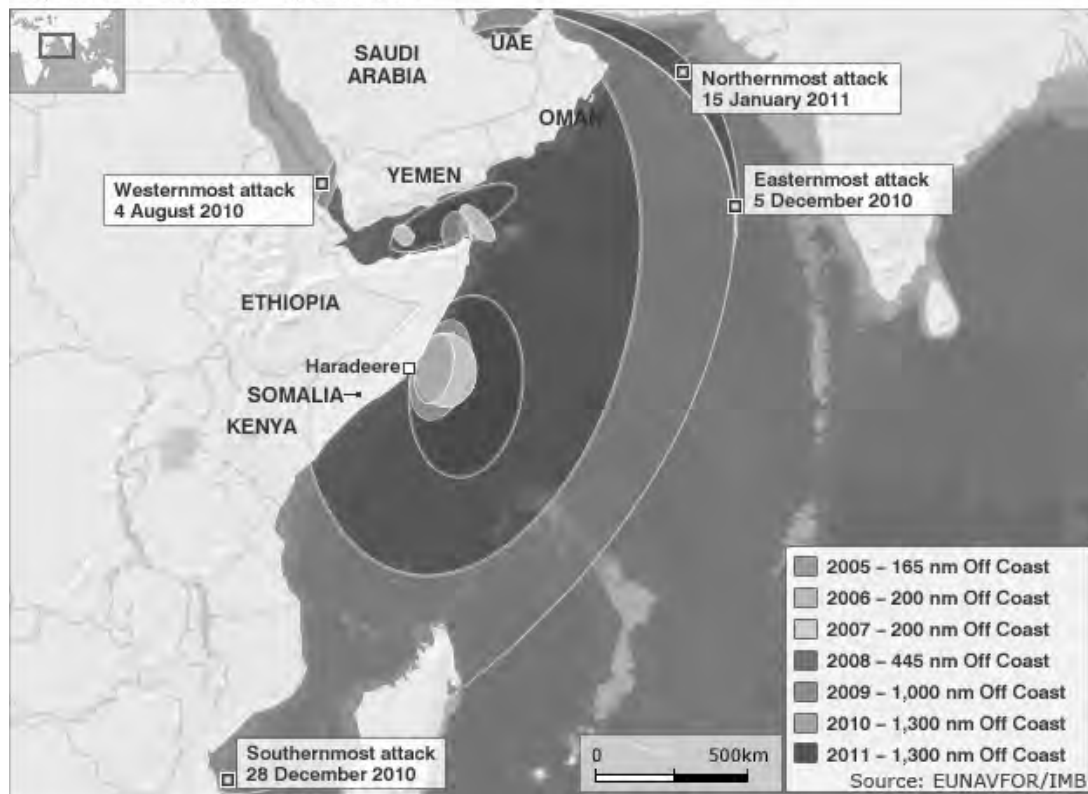
Refer to the article: Somali pirates get smarter, more ambitious

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/02/02/Somali-pirates-get-smarter-more-ambitious/UPI-10931296672235/

【Remarks】

Below is a chart showing an expansion of attacking areas by Somali pirates since the year 2005. According a report, on the evening of December 5, 2010, the Bangladeshi-flagged bulk carrier MV *Jahan Momi* (44,377DWT) was hijacked by Somali pirates in the waters around the Lakshadweep group of islands, some 275 nautical miles west of Kochi in India. This area is the closest to India, where the hijacking incidents by Somali pirates have ever been noted. (Refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, December 2010, 1.1 Maritime Security.) As for the case noted on the northernmost tip of the attacking area, on the morning of January 15, Somali pirates seized a Maltese flagged and South Korean owned vessel, the MV *Samho Jewelry* (19,6009DWT) approximately 350 nautical miles South East of the port of Muscat, Oman. MT *Samho Jewelry* was rescued by South Korean navy commandos of the anti-piracy force on the early morning of 21 January. (Refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, January 2011, 1.1 Maritime Security.) As for the case noted on the southernmost tip of the attacking area, on December 28, 2010, Somali pirates hijacked a Mozambican fishing vessel, the FV *Vega 5*, in the waters of the Mozambique Channel. The incident on the westernmost tip of the attacking area was an attempted one noted in the Red Sea approximately 220 nautical miles northwest of the Bab el Mandeb.

Expansion of pirate operations



Source: BBC News, February 10, 2011

【Related Story】**“South Africa to establish force for patrolling Mozambique Channel” (All Africa, February 3, 2011)**

On the 2nd, the South African Navy announced that it is preparing a force to patrol the Mozambique Channel to cope with the threat of attacks on vessels by Somali pirates. That force will comprise a frigate and a logistical support vessel that will remain in the Mozambique Channel for over a month from mid-February.

An outline of the article: On the 2nd, the South African Navy announced that it is preparing a force to patrol the Mozambique Channel to cope with the threat of attacks on vessels by Somali pirates. That force will comprise a frigate, SAS *Mendi*, and a logistical support vessel that will remain in the Mozambique Channel for over a month from February 13. On board the frigate will be military helicopters. The hijacking of a Mozambican fishing vessel, the FV *Vega 5*, was noted in the Mozambique Channel on December 28. South African military experts fear that piracy is expanding into the water of the channel.

Refer to the article: South African Navy to Patrol Channel

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201102040279.html>

February 2 “Somali pirates release Taiwan Fishing Boat” (RTT News, February 2, 2011)

On the 2nd, Somali pirates released the Taiwan fishing boat *Taiyuan 227* along with its 28-member crew nearly eight months after it had been hijacked off the coast of the Maldives on May 6, 2010. Before arriving at capital Colombo, the *Taiyuan 227* had been used as the mother-boat by pirates.

An outline of the article: According to Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry, on the 2nd, Somali pirates released the Taiwan fishing boat *Taiyuan 227* along-with its 28-member crew nearly eight months after it had been hijacked off the coast of the Maldives on May 6, 2010. The crew-members hail from China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya and Mozambique. Before arriving at capital Colombo, the *Taiyuan 227* had been used as the mother-boat by pirates. The ministry did not disclose if the release was made possible by paying any ransom.

Refer to the article: Somali Pirates Release Taiwan Fishing Boat

<http://www.rttnews.com/Content/GeneralNews.aspx?Id=1542498&SM=1>

February 6 “Indian Navy apprehends 28 Somali pirate suspects” (Deccan Herald, February 6, and Indian Navy Press Release, February 6, 2011)

According to an announcement of the Indian Navy, on the early morning of the 6th, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard apprehended 28 pirate suspects onboard the Thai fishing boat, the *Prantalay 11* which had been used by the pirates as a “mother ship,” and rescued 24 Thai fishermen after a brief gun-battle in the Indian territorial waters near the Lakshadweep islands.

An outline of the article: According to an announcement of the Indian Navy, on the early morning of the 6th, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard apprehended 28 pirate suspects

onboard the Thai fishing boat, the *Prantalay 11* which had been used by the pirates as a “mother ship,” after a brief gun-battle in the Indian territorial waters near the Lakshadweep islands.

The Indian Navy said that, on the evening of the 5th, the Indian Navy’s Western Command received from a naval ship patrolling approximately 100 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep islands information that a Greek-flagged merchant ship, MV *Chios*, had been attacked by pirates on board high-speed boats (skiffs). Taking evasive maneuvers, the merchant vessel escaped the attack. Organizing a joint team, the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard were on an anti-piracy patrol mission in the surrounding waters. The naval ship INS *Tir* and Coast Guard ship ICGS *Samar* (belonging to the Western Command) were searching for the skiffs and their mother boat. On the early morning of the 6th, sighting two skiffs, the *Tir* and the *Samar* ordered them to stop, but the two skiffs fired back at the *Tir* and the *Samar* and attempted to flee from the scene. The *Tir* and the *Samar* tracked the two skiffs that fled to the mother ship. Of the three Thai fishing vessels that had been hijacked on April 18, 2010 – FV *Prantalay 11*, FV *Plantalay 12* and FV *Plantalay 14*, the mother ship was assessed to be FV *Plantalay 11*, based on the number. The two ships tried to contact the mother ship by radio, but the mother ship fired back. When the two ships returned fire, strictly based on the principle of proportion, the mother ship surrendered by hoisting a white flag. The two ships apprehended 18 pirate suspects and rescued 24 fishermen. The mother ship, under tow by the patrol boat that accommodated 18 pirate suspects, sailed to Mumbai.

Refer to the article: Pirate ship captured, 52 held

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/135259/indian-navy-coast-guard-capture.html>

PRESS RELEASE: ANTI-PIRACY ACTION; 05-0-6 FEB 11

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/11561283/50981564/name/Press%20release%20Prantalay%2011.pdf>



Remarks: The area between Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep islands and Maldives is called the 'eight-degree channel' at latitude 8 degrees North, which witnesses a traffic of about 40 cargo ships on an average every day.

Source:

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_E-QOnTGFX_o/TUMU9xPD4nI/AAAAAAAAAKwk/EDGLkJoppHw/s1600/islands.jpg



Thai fishing boat with skiffs onboard (Left) and pirate suspects and fishermen jumping overboard (Right)

Source: left: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_E-QOnTGFx_o/TUMQXqR6enI/AAAAAAAAAKwc/0O5Xux3c7k/s1600/Prantalay.jpg,

right: <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/11561283/144351153/name/DSC04118.JPG>

Remarks: Prior to this incident, having exchanged fire with Somali pirates who were on board the Thai fishing boat FV *Prantalay* which the pirates had hijacked 300 nautical miles off Lakshadweep islands, the Indian Navy and Coast Guard put the boat engulfed in flames, apprehended 15 pirates, and rescued 20 Thai and Burmese fishermen on the 28th. FV *Prantalay* is one of three Thai fishing boats -- FV *Prantalay 11*, FV *Prantalay 12*, and FV *Prantalay 14*, which had been hijacked on April 18, 2010 and used as the "mother -ship" of the Somali pirates. (Number is unknown.) (Regarding this incident, refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, November 2010, 1.1 Maritime Security.) Additionally, on the evening of December 4, 2010, the Indian navy destroyer INS *Krishina* rescued a Thai crewmember of the Thai-flagged fishing boat *Plantalay 12* thrown into the sea by pirates about 350 nautical miles off Minicoy Island in the Lakshadweep Island chain. The fishing boat, together with *Prantalay 11* and *Plantalay 14*, is believed being used as a mother ship by Somali pirates. (As to this incident, refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, December 2010, 1.1 Maritime Security.)

Judging from these incidents, of three Thai fishing boats, either of the *Prantalay 12* or the *Prantalay 14* is believed to be used as the "mother ship."

February 8 “Somali pirates hijack Italian tanker” (EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, February 8, 2011)

In the early hours of February 8, the Italian-flagged Oil Tanker MT *Savina Caylyn* (104,255DWT) owned by the Italian shipping company was captured by Somali pirates approximately 670 nautical miles East of Socotra Island in the Indian Ocean. The vessel has a crew of 22.

An outline of the article: According to the EU NAVFOR, in the early hours of February 8, the Italian-flagged Oil Tanker MT *Savina Caylyn* (104,255DWT) owned by the Italian shipping company was captured by Somali pirates approximately 670 nautical miles East of Socotra Island in the Indian Ocean. The vessel was boarded after a sustained attack by one skiff with five suspected pirates firing small arms and four rocket propelled grenades while being on passage to Pasir Gudang in Malaysia from Bashayer in Sudan. The tanker has a crew of 22 – five Italians and 17 Indians.

Refer to the article: Italian Oil Tanker Pirated in the Indian Ocean

<http://www.eunavfor.eu/2011/02/italian-oil-tanker-pirated-in-the-indian-ocean/>



MT *Savina Caylyn*

Source: EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, February 8, 2011

February 9 “Somali pirates hijack Greek VLCC” (AFP, February 9, 2011)

On the 9th, Somali pirates seized a Greek-flagged very large crude carrier (VLCC) owned by the Greek shipping company, MT *Irene SL* (319,247DWT), about 220 nautical miles east of the Omani coast. The vessel has a crew of 25.

An outline of the article: On the 9th, Somali pirates seized a Greek-flagged very large crude carrier (VLCC) owned by the Greek shipping company, MT *Irene SL* (319,247DWT), about 220 nautical miles east of the Omani coast. The tanker was traveling from Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates to the United States via Suez, carrying about 270,000 metric tons (about 1.9 million barrels) of oil. The vessel has a crew of 25 – seven Greek, one Georgian and 17 Filipinos.

Refer to the article: Pirates seize laden supertanker off Oman

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ht5Uum5TV5fI-X28sIAxK38tYRIQ?docId=CNG.4f6d274f3aeb88a025c7211f3b0a1ee7.371>



MT *Irene SL*

Source: BBC News, February 10, 2011

February 9 “Somali pirates free South Korean ship” (AP, February 9, 2011)

On the 9th, Somali pirates released a Kenyan-flagged, South Korean trawler, FV *Keummi 305* (FV *Golden Wave*). The fishing vessel, with a crew of 43, was hijacked in the waters off Kenya on October 9, 2010.

An outline of the article: South Korea's foreign ministry said pirates released a Kenyan-flagged trawler owned by the South Korean shipping company, FV *Keummi 305* (FV *Golden Wave*), on the 9th. The vessel has a crew of 39 Kenyans, two South Koreans and two Chinese. The trawler was hijacked in the waters off Kenya on October 9, 2010. No information about a ransom was reported.

Refer to the article: Somali pirates free South Korean ship and 43 crew

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jsKot6NhXwQkpV_MBEv_12ou7XLw?d ocId=a7bf0628b3884763a8fbbab0d04f86eb

February 10 “British warship frees ‘mother ship’ for pirates” (Royal Navy HP, February 11, 2011)

On the 10th, the Royal Navy's frigate HMS *Cornwall* searched a Yemeni-flagged dhow in the Indian Ocean. An initial search found 22 people on board, three skiffs, powerful outboard motors and various items of equipment associated with pirates boarding merchant vessels, such as ladders, enabling the dhow to act as ‘mother ship’ for a group of pirates operating in the area. Of 22 people on the dhow, five were the original Yemeni crew who had been held hostage for 92 days.

An outline of the article: On the 10th, the Royal Navy's frigate HMS *Cornwall* assigned to Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 on the counter-piracy mission of CMF observed a dhow which was acting suspiciously in the Indian Ocean. The warship's boarding teams searched and secured the Yemeni-flagged dhow. An initial search found 22 people on board, three skiffs, powerful outboard motors and various items of equipment associated with pirates boarding merchant vessels, such as ladders, enabling the dhow to act as ‘mother ship’ for a group of pirates operating in the area. On the next day of the 11th, the Royal Navy confirmed that it was acting as a ‘mother ship’ for Somali pirates. Of 22 people on the dhow, five were the original Yemeni crew who had been held hostage for 92 days. The scene at the time is shown below.

Refer to the article: HMS Cornwall Frees Hostages From Pirates

http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/operations-and-support/surface-fleet/type-22-frigates/hms-cornwall/news/hms_cornwall_frees_h.htm



Source: http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/operations-and-support/surface-fleet/type-22-frigates/hms-cornwall/news/hms_cornwall_frees_h.htm

February 11 “Danish warship frees hijacked fishing vessel” (Allied Maritime Command Headquarters, News Release, February 13, 2011)

On the early morning of the 11th, the Danish warship HDMS *Esbern Snare*, part of the NATO’s fleet, found a suspicious vessel with two skiffs on deck. After firing warning shots, the vessel stopped the skiff to detain 16 pirate suspects, and released two Yemeni fishermen.

An outline of the article: On the early morning of the 11th, the Danish warship HDMS *Esbern Snare*, part of NATO’s counter-piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield, freed a hijacked fishing vessel in the Somali basin. Finding a suspicious vessel with two skiffs on deck, HDMS *Esbern Snare* launched her helicopter to investigate the vessel. After firing warning shots, the HDMS *Esbern Snare* made the vessel stop, and the crew surrendered. The HDMS *Esbern Snare* then sent a boarding party to the vessel, which detained 16 pirate suspects and released two Yemeni hostages. Additionally, during the search the boarding party confiscated weapons, including AK-47 rifles, rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, and ammunition. Commanding Officer of HDMS *Esbern Snare* stated: “I am very pleased that we have succeeded in capturing a pirate mother ship. These ships provide the pirates with a floating base when they are operating far from the shore.” Below is the scene at the time.

Refer to the article: NATO WARSHIP FREES PIRATED FISHING VESSEL

<http://www.manw.nato.int/pdf/Press%20Releases%202011/Press%20releases%20Jan-June%202011/SNMG2/20110211-Press%20Release%20Snare%20liberation-SNMG2SPAO-V1%200-U-10.pdf>



Source: <http://www.manw.nato.int/Images/SNMG2%202011/20110211-Press%20Release%20ESBN%20dhow%2011%20Feb%2011.jpg>

February 12 “Somali pirates hijack Malta-flagged ship” (EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press release, February 13, 2011)

On the 12th, Somali pirates hijacked a Maltese-flagged bulk carrier owned by Maltese shipping company, the MV *Sinin*, approximately 350 nautical miles East of Masirah (Oman) in the North Arabian Sea. She has a crew of 23.

An outline of the article: On the 12th, Somali pirates hijacked a Maltese-flagged bulk carrier owned by Maltese shipping company, the MV *Sinin* (52,466DWT), approximately 350 nautical miles East of Masirah in Oman in the North Arabian Sea. The bulk carrier has a crew of 23, comprising 13 Iranian and 10 Indian nationals. The *Sinin* was on route to Singapore from Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Refer to the article: MV SININ believed pirated in the Arabian Sea.

<http://www.eunavfor.eu/2011/02/mv-sinin-believed-pirated-in-the-arabian-sea/>



MV Sinin

Source: EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press release, February 13, 2011

February 18 “Somali pirates hijack yacht, kill 4 Americans onboard” (CBS News, February 23, 2011)

On the 18th, Somali pirates hijacked a yacht with six Americans on board, SV *Quest*, in the waters 240 nautical miles off Oman. Since then, four U.S. warships and sky-high drones shadowed the vessel's movement. On the next morning of the 22nd, a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) was fired from the *Quest* at the U.S. warship 600 yards away. According to commander of the U.S. 5th Fleet, the RPG missed and almost immediately afterward small arms fire was heard coming from the yacht. When U.S. special operations force converged on the *Quest* in small boats, some pirates moved to bow and put up their hands in surrender. At that time, the U.S. special operations force killed two pirates, and the bodies of two other pirates were discovered on the yacht. Also, fatally wounded, the four Americans on board the yacht eventually died.

An outline of the article: On the 18th, Somali pirates hijacked a yacht with six Americans on board, SV *Quest*, in the waters 240 nautical miles off Oman. Since then, four U.S. warships and sky-high drones shadowed the vessel's movement. On the 21st, two pirates from the yacht had come aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS *Sterett* to negotiate with naval forces for the release of the hostages, and remained aboard overnight. On the next morning of the 22nd, a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) was fired from the *Quest* at the USS *Sterett* 600 yards away. According to commander of the U.S. 5th Fleet, the RPG missed and almost immediately afterward small arms fire was heard coming from the yacht. When U.S. special operations force converged on the *Quest* in small boats, some pirates moved to bow and put up their hands in surrender. At that time, the U.S. special operations force killed two pirates, and the bodies of two other pirates were discovered on the yacht. It was not known if the pirates had fought among themselves. The four Americans on board the yacht were fatally wounded. It is the first time that Americans were killed by Somali pirates. Their deaths appeared to underscore an increasingly brutal and aggressive shift by pirates in their treatment of hostages. Mentioning that killing hostages “has now become part of our rules,” a pirate referred to last week's sentencing of a pirate to 33 years in prison for the attack on the U.S. cargo vessel MV *Maersk Alabama* in April 2009.

Refer to the article: 4 Americans on hijacked yacht dead off Somalia

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/02/22/501364/main20034691.shtml>



SV Quest

Source: <http://www.svquest.com/Home/wGennaker.jpg>

February 24 “Madagascar searches for pirated ship” (AFP, February 24, 2011)

According to Madagascar authorities, captain and six people including two pirate suspects of the Comoro-flagged small passenger ship, MV *Aly Zulfecar* which had been hijacked on November 3, 2010, arrived at Antsiranana port in the northern part of the country on a small boat and sought help on the 24th. Madagascar authorities launched a search for the vessel.

An outline of the article: According to Madagascar authorities, captain and six people including two pirate suspects of the Comoro-flagged small passenger ship, MV *Aly Zulfecar* which had been hijacked on November 3, 2010, arrived at Antsiranana port in the northern part of the country on a small boat and sought help on the 24th. (When hijacked, MV *Aly Zulfecar* had nine crew-members and 20 passengers on board.) Madagascar authorities launched a search for the vessel. The *Aly Zulfecar* was used as a “mother ship” from where pirates launched attacks on other ships after initially being held off Hobyo, a pirate hub in central Somalia. According to the authorities, it was the first time that suspected pirates gave themselves up to them. (Regarding this hijacking incident, refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, November 2010, 1.1 Maritime Security and Topic.) Receiving MV *Aly Zulfecar* on the 27th, the Madagascar navy took the vessel in tow to Antsiranana port. The navy said the ship appeared to have run out of fuel, and was drifting in the waters. (AFP, February 28, 2011).

Refer to the article: Madagascar searches for pirated Comoros ship

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jLXA1S11DaqBCsQYFfHSYRjuvmGw?docId=CNG.b8be1fa9ceeaf77e3700b0e75ec87ead.431>



MV Aly Zulfecar

Source: <http://www.shipping.nato.int/Zoulfecar>

February 24 “Somali pirates hijack Danish yacht” (The New York Times, March 1, 2011)

On the 24th, Somali pirates hijacked a yacht carrying seven Danish citizens, including three children, in the southern part of Arabian Sea. The yacht appeared to be heading toward Somali.

An outline of the article: On the 24th, Somali pirates hijacked a yacht carrying seven Danish citizens, including three children, in the Arabian Sea, the Danish foreign ministry said on 28th. The foreign ministry did not explain why it had waited several days to make the announcement. According to Ecoterra International, a nonprofit maritime group that monitors pirate attacks, the yacht had been hijacked in the southern Arabian Sea, far from the Horn of Africa, but it appeared to be heading toward Somali coast.

Refer to the article: Pirates Hijack Vessel Carrying 7 Danes, Including 3 Children

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/world/africa/01pirates.html?ref=world>



The Danish yacht was taken shortly after four Americans were killed.

Source: The New York Times, March 1, 2011

February 25 “Somali pirates release Japan-related ship” (EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, February 28, 2011)

On the 25th, Somali pirates released a Panamanian-flagged cargo ship operated by the Japanese NYK-Hinode Line Ltd., MV *Izumi* (20,170DWT). The vessel was hijacked in the waters south of Mogadishu on October 10, 2010.

An outline of the article: On the 25th, Somali pirates released a Panamanian-flagged cargo ship operated by the Japanese NYK-Hinode Line Ltd., MV *Izumi* (20,170DWT). The vessel was hijacked in the waters south of Mogadishu on October 10, 2010 while it was heading for Mombasa in Kenya, carrying a cargo of steel. The MV *Izumi* has a crew of 20, all Filipinos. (Regarding this hijacking incident, refer to the OPRF MARINT Monthly Report, October 2010, 1.1 Maritime Security.)

Refer to the article: MV IZUMI Released from Pirate Control

<http://www.eunavfor.eu/2011/02/mv-izumi-released-from-pirate-control/>



MV *Izumi*

Source: EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, October 11, 2010

Remarks: MV *Izumi* is likely to be used as a “mother ship” of Somali pirates. According to the EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release dated November 8, Spanish navy’s corvette, SPS *Infanta Cristina*, was fired on by pirates aboard MV *Izumi* as it accompanied an aid ship, MV *Petra 1*, destined for Mogadishu on the evening of November 6. MV *Petra 1* was contracted by the African Union peace keeping mission in Somalia to deliver food to Mogadishu. SPC *Infanta Christina* had to defend herself and her escort with only minimal force in order not to endanger the lives of the hostages (20 Filipinos) on-board MV *Izumi*. MV *Izumi* then fled the scene. Additionally, according to the EU NAVFOR, an attacking group of pirates was said to be confirmed to move from MV *Izumi* to the skiff and attacked the vessels underway in the sea off Somalia on November 5.

February 28 “Somali pirates hijack Panamanian-flagged ship” (EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, February 28, 2011)

On the early morning of the 28th, a Panamanian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk cargo carrier, MV *Dover*, was pirated approximately 260 nautical miles North East of Salalah in the North Arabian

Sea. The MV *Dover* has a crew of 23, consisting of three Romanian, one Russian and 19 Filipinos.

An outline of the article: On the early morning of the 28th, a Panamanian-flagged, Greek owned bulk cargo carrier, MV *Dover*, was pirated approximately 260 nautical miles North East of Salalah in the North Arabian Sea. The vessel was on its way to Saleef in Yemen from Port Quasim in Pakistan. The MV *Dover* has a crew of 23, consisting of three Romanian, one Russian and 19 Filipinos.

Refer to the article: MV DOVER pirated in the North Arabian Sea

<http://www.eunavfor.eu/2011/02/mv-dover-pirated-in-the-north-arabian-sea/>



MV *Dover*

Source: EU NAVFOR Public Affairs Office, Press Release, February 28, 2011

1.2 Military Developments

February 4 “Chinese Navy’s aircraft carrier ‘*Shi Lang*’ in final outfitting stage” (The Rising Sea Dragon in Asia, February 4, 2011)

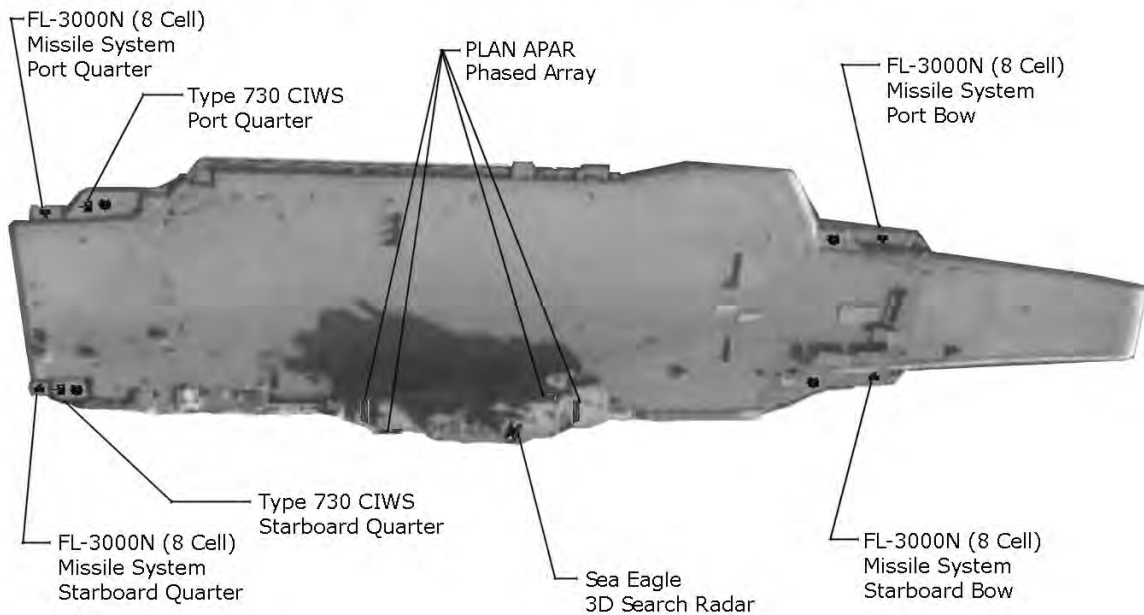
The Chinese aircraft carrier, the *Shi Lang* (old name: *Varyag*), seems to have entered the final stage of outfitting of weapons systems and radar sensors. In view of Head and other experts, the Chinese Navy (PLAN) will launch the *Shi Lang* in the 2011-2012 time frames and begin trials and training for her use as an operational aircraft carrier. Sea trials and training will be ongoing for several years in preparation for the introduction of one or more of their own indigenous carrier late in the 2010 decade.

An outline of the article: According to Jeff Head, an engineering consultant and member of the U.S. Naval Institute, the Chinese aircraft carrier, the *Shi Lang* (old name: *Varyag*), seems to have entered the final stage of outfitting of weapons systems and radar sensors. In view of Head and other experts, the Chinese Navy (PLAN) will launch the *Shi Lang* in the 2011-2012 time frames and begin trials and training for her use as an operational aircraft carrier with a wing of either SU-33 aircraft or a modernized J11 carrier-capable derivative of their own manufacture. Sea trials and training will be ongoing for several years in preparation for the introduction of one or more of their own indigenous carrier late in the 2010 decade.

Refer to the article: Varyag Transformation: Final outfitting of weapons systems and radar sensors.

<http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/redseadragon/varyagtransform.htm>

PLAN Shi Lang (Former Russian Varyag) Weapons and Sensor Outfitting 2010



This overhead shows the relative positioning of the CIWS guns and missile weapons systems and radars that are being fitted.

Source: <http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/redseadragon/2010-Overhead.jpg>



Outfitting of sensors on the Island continues in early 2011.

Source: <http://www.jeffhead.com/redseadragon/varyag-wl-04-012011.jpg>



Rendering/artists conception of Shi Lang completed

Source: <http://www.jeffhead.com/worldwideaircraftcarriers/ShiLang-02.jpg>

February 12 “India to purchase more American maritime reconnaissance aircraft” (StrategicWorld.Com, Feb 12, 2011)

On the 12th, India has decided to buy another four American P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft, largely in response to growing Chinese naval activity in the Indian Ocean. Three years ago, India bought eight U.S. P-8s, for about \$22 million each.

An outline of the article: On the 12th, India has decided to buy another four American P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft, largely in response to growing Chinese naval activity in the Indian Ocean. Three years ago, India bought eight U.S. P-8s, for about \$22 million each. The growing expense of maintaining their Russian Tu-142M reconnaissance aircraft, and the need for a more capable recon aircraft led to that initial order. The first P-8I will be deployed in 2014. The P-8A Poseidon is based on the widely used Boeing 737 airliner.

Refer to the article: India Seeks More Cures For Chinese Subs

<http://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htnavai/articles/20110212.aspx>

February 22 “Iran warships pass through Suez Canal” (BBC News, February 22, 2011)

Having passed through the Suez Canal, two Iranian warships, the frigate *Alvand* and the supply vessel *Kharg*, entered the Mediterranean Sea on the 27th. According to Iranian officials, the two warships are headed to Syria for training.

An outline of the article: Having passed through the Suez Canal, two Iranian warships, the frigate *Alvand* and the supply vessel *Kharg*, entered the Mediterranean Sea on the 27th. According to Iranian officials, the two warships are headed to Syria for training. It is believed to be the first time since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution that Iranian warships have passed through

the Suez Canal. Egypt could only have denied transit through the strategic waterway in case of war.

Refer to the article: Iran warships sail via Suez Canal amid Israeli concern

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12533803>



The *Alvand*



The *Kharg*

Source: BBC News, February 21, 2011

February 24 “China dispatches missile frigate to support Libya evacuation mission” (China SignPost, February 24, 2011)

On the 24th, the PLA Navy (PLAN) has dispatched a missile frigate, the *Xuzhou*, from the on-going 7th PLAN anti-piracy task force deployment off Somalia to steam to Libyan coast. This is the first ever mission, for which China mobilized military power to rescue PRC citizens living in the foreign country.

An outline of the article: On the 24th, the PLA Navy (PLAN) has dispatched a missile frigate, the *Xuzhou*, from the on-going 7th PLAN anti-piracy task force deployment off Somalia to steam to Libyan coast. The *Xuzhou* will support and protect the evacuation of the PRC citizens in Libya. *Xuzhou's* dispatch marks an important milestone, because this is the first ever mission, for which China mobilized military power to support a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) in order to help PRC citizens trapped in an active conflict zone. The latest deployment has a precedent for future military operations in areas where lives and property of expatriate PRC citizens come under threat.

The *Xuzhou* passed through the Suez Canal to enter the Mediterranean Sea on the 10th. The missile frigate is expected to arrive in the waters around Libya on March 3 (Xinhua, February 28, 2011).

Refer to the article: China dispatches warship to protect Libya evacuation mission

<http://www.chinasignpost.com/2011/02/china-dispatches-warship-to-protect-libya-evacuation-mission-marks-the-prc%e2%80%99s-first-use-of-frontline-military-assets-to-protect-an-evacuation-mission/>



Type 054 *Jiangkai-II* class missile frigate *Xuzhou*

Source: http://japanese.china.org.cn/politics/txt/2011-02/25/content_22005553.htm

1.3 Maritime Boundaries

February 27 “Bangladesh lodges submission on extended continental shelf to UN” (Gulf News, February 28, 2011)

On the 25th, Bangladesh lodged its submission on the extended continental shelf of the Bay of Bengal to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to support the claim.

An outline of the article: On the 25th, Bangladesh lodged its submission on the extended continental shelf to the United Nations commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to support the claim, Bangladeshi foreign ministry officials said on the 27th. “This is Bangladesh's most significant claim of the continental shelf in the Bay of Bengal since its independence and the claim ranges from 400-460 nautical miles on the seabed of the Bay of Bengal,” Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said.

Refer to the article: Bangladesh lodges claim on extended continental shelf to UN

<http://gulfnnews.com/news/world/other-world/bangladesh-lodges-claim-on-extended-continental-shelf-to-un-1.768816>

1.4 Diplomacy and International Relations

February 23 “Indonesia concerned about South China Sea issues” (The Diplomat, February 23, 2011)

Indonesia is chair of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011. On the 18th, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono claimed in a recent interview with the *Asahi Shimbun* that, as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, one of

his top priorities would be to make progress over the South China Sea dispute by bringing China into multilateral talks. Evan A. Laksmana, a researcher with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has contributed to the Website journal, *The Diplomat*, an article titled “Jakarta Eyes South China Sea.” In the article, pointing out that the Chinese claim in the ‘nine-dotted line’ map threatens the waters around the Natuna Islands that hosts the country’s largest reserve of natural gas, Laksmana discusses a background of why Indonesia has an interest in the issues of the South China.

An outline of the article: Indonesia is chair of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011. On the 18th, in a recent interview with the *Asahi Shimbun*, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono claimed that, as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, one of his top priorities would be to make progress over the South China Sea dispute by bringing China into multilateral talks. Contributing to the Website journal, *The Diplomat*, an article titled “Jakarta Eyes South China Sea,” Evan A. Laksmana, a researcher with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, mentions that Indonesia has an interest in the issues of the South China. The gist of his article is as follows:

- (1) While Indonesia is not a coastal state claiming territorial rights, it has a clear interest in the issue, especially as the Chinese claim in the infamous ‘nine-dotted line’ map threatens the waters around the Natuna Islands, an archipelago of roughly 300 small islands that hosts the country’s largest reserve of natural gas. Since the 1990s, Jakarta has sought clarification over the Chinese claim, but has so far failed to receive a sufficient explanation. This uncertainty around such a key strategic area perhaps explains why in 1996 and 2008, Indonesia held two of its largest-ever joint military exercises in the area. In addition, China’s claim is also likely behind Indonesia’s decision to forge strategic and security partnerships with Australia, India, and the United States in recent years.
- (2) On the other hand, overall Indonesia-China relations have been improving. In 2005, the Strategic Partnership Agreement was concluded, and there is an ongoing expansion in trade, investment, defense and education. However, there’s still some distrust within the Jakarta elite, especially considering China’s rapid naval modernization, lack of defense transparency, and growing assertiveness in the South China Sea. Of them the last issue is perhaps the real litmus test for long-term Sino-Indonesian relations.
- (3) The South China Sea issue is the potential for conflict in Indonesia’s northern zone which is considered its lifeline in terms of trade, fisheries and natural resources. Therefore, the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry has initiated track-two informal workshops and technical meetings on managing the conflicts in the South China Sea since 1990. These meetings have allowed for discussions on practical cooperation such as search and rescue operations and marine scientific research. Some experts have evaluated that the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties (DoC) was built upon the workshops’ proceedings.
- (4) The South China Sea has always been one of the most contentious and divisive issues within the regional grouping, challenging its overall cohesion and occasionally creating a mockery of the ‘ASEAN Way’ of peacefully settling disputes. There were 17 military clashes in the South

China Sea between 1974 and 2002 involving variously China, the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam. Such figures underscore the fact that it's not just about dealing with China, but also about reconciling the overlapping claims and interests of all countries involved. Therefore, as ASEAN chair this year, Indonesia has no choice but to push for the further implementation of the 2002 DoC, and even the formulation of a legally binding Code of Conduct.

Refer to the article: Jakarta Eyes South China Sea

<http://the-diplomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2011/02/23/jakarta-eyes-south-china-sea/>

Interview of the *Asahishimbun* with President Yudhoyono; Yudhoyono to urge China to join talks

<http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201102180201.html>

February 25 “Not enough room for new player in Indian Ocean: Maldives President” (Sify.com, February 27, 2011)

On the 25th on a visit to India, Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed underlined the atoll nation's special ties with India and said there was not enough room for too many players in the Indian Ocean.

An outline of the article: On the 25th on a visit to India, Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed underlined the atoll nation's special ties with India and said there was not enough room for too many players in the Indian Ocean. 'We are not receptive to any installation, military or otherwise in the Indian Ocean, specially from un-traditional friends. The Indian Ocean is the Indian Ocean,' the Maldives president replied when asked about China's increasing foray in the region.

Refer to the article: Not enough room for China in Indian Ocean: Maldives

<http://www.sify.com/news/not-enough-room-for-china-in-indian-ocean-maldives-news-national-lczrkkbjehc.html>

1.5 Shipping, Shipbuilding and Harbors

February 21 “Maersk orders colossal vessels” (Sea News, February 25, 2011)

On the 21st, Maersk Line, a Danish major shipper, announced that it had ordered ten colossal vessels for \$19 billion from South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding. New “Triple-E” ships will carry 18,000 boxes each, 2,500 more than the biggest container ship currently in service, which is also operated by Maersk. The first of them is to be commissioned in 2013. The new ships will ply the routes between Asia and Europe.

An outline of the article: On the 21st, Maersk Line, a Danish major shipper, announced that it had ordered ten colossal vessels for \$19 billion from South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding, with an option to order 20 more. New “Triple-E” ships will carry 18,000 boxes each, 2,500 more than the biggest container ship currently in service, which is also operated by Maersk. The new vessels will

use 50% less fuel per container than the present average. The first of them is to be commissioned in 2013. The new ships will ply the routes between Asia and Europe.

Refer to the article: The Danish armada: Maersk orders ten colossal vessels

<http://www.seanews.com.tr/article/TURSHIP/CONTAINER/54291/Maersk-Danish-armada/>



“Triple-E”

Source: Sea News, February 25, 2011

1.6 Ocean Resources, Energy, Marine Environment and Others

February 4 “Indonesia, Sri Lanka to strengthen fishery cooperation” (Asian Tribune, February 4, 2011)

After a discussion held between the Indonesian Minister of Naval and Fisheries and the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Indonesia are to strengthen bilateral relations in the Fisheries field.

An outline of the article: After a discussion held between the Indonesian Minister of Naval and Fisheries and the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Indonesia are to strengthen bilateral relations in the Fisheries field. Both Ministers agreed at this discussion to establish a fishery development cooperation arrangement between the two countries within the first quarter of this year in order to improve bilateral relations on Fishery Trade relations, conduct fishery training courses, exchange technical expertise on fishing and scientists. The Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said that, since Indonesia is one of the most technically advanced countries in the fishing industry, its assistance would immensely help for the development of fishing industry in Sri Lanka.

Refer to the article: Indonesia is to assist in Sri Lanka’s Fishery Development

<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/02/03/indonesia-assist-sri-lanka%E2%80%99s-fishery-development>

2. Intelligence Assessment

Review of “Recent Development in the South China Sea: Grounds for Cautious Optimism?”

In December 2010, Carlyle A. Thayer, a professor of the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy, issued a 33-page article titled “Recent Development in the South China Sea: Grounds for Cautious Optimism?” as a working paper of the Singapore-based Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS).¹

This working paper discusses or reviews four issues as follows: (1) Remarks on “core interest” that is attributed to Chinese officials concerned and the U.S.-China interactions over maritime power. (2) Diplomatic maneuverings over the South China Sea issues with a particular focus on the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus Eight (ADMM Plus Eight) and others. (3) China-Vietnam interactions with a particular focus on the maritime interests in the South China Sea. (4) The status of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and progress by the China-ASEAN Working groups to implement the DOC.

In this review, first of all, after a general view of the real facts over the remarks on ‘core interest’ surveyed and researched by Thayer, I will focus on ‘Grounds for Cautious Optimism,’ the main theme of the article. As the order of occurrences of the events is mixed up, the process of reaching ‘a cautious, but optimistic viewpoint’ on the issues of the South China Sea is a bit hard to understand. Therefore, in making the review of the article, I have examined the main points by eliciting out pieces of information and arranging them in a logical order so that the process would be easily understood.

1. The truth about remarks on ‘Core interest’

In the beginning, what is noteworthy in this article is the pursuit of reality on the term of a “core interest.” First, Thayer is energetically studying about a question of “whether or not Chinese officials have really said to U.S. counterparts that the South China was a ‘core interest.’” As a result of the foregoing, as to the term of the “core interest” which has attracted people’s attention in the international community, it is interesting for us to understand that the Chinese people are very nervous about it. Clarification of the truth over the term of the “core interest” is not only to emphasize the geopolitical and strategic importance of the South China Sea but also to

¹ Carlyle A. Thayer, “Recent Developments in the South China Sea: Grounds for Cautious Optimism?,” RSIS Working Paper No. 220, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, 14 December 2010. This paper is available at following URL:

<http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP220.pdf>

Professor Thayer is an expert in Southeast Asia and Diplomacy and National Security Affairs in Vietnam.

express frankly the strategic expectations of the United States and China over the South China Sea. From this standpoint, it can be said to be a favorable subject for understanding the issues of the South China Sea.

According to Thayer, the start in the pursuit of the truth is an article dated April 23 written by Edward Wong, the Beijing-based correspondent for *The New York Times*. According to the article, in March 2010, Chinese officials told two visiting senior Obama administration officials, Jeffrey A. Bader who is Asia Director at the National Security Council and James B. Steinberg who is the Deputy Secretary of State, that “China would not tolerate any interference in the South China Sea, now one of China’s ‘core interests.’” It was the first time the Chinese labeled the South China Sea a core interest, on par with Taiwan and Tibet, the officials said.

When Thayer, the author, mentioned this article at the presentation in the Australian National University (ANU) in August 2010, the author heard from a participant a story to the effect that one Chinese participant stated at a previously held seminar that “it is not official Chinese government policy” to make the South China Sea classified as “core interest.” One month later, quoting the article of Edward Wong, Thayer told a story to the effect that one reviewer, with extensive experience in the diplomatic-intelligence communities, commented “Chinese assertion first mentioned in *The New York Times* has subsequently been refuted by the relevant U.S. officials.”

Thereafter, the author sought to investigate the matter further for their assessments in Washington and Beijing, the results of which are as follows:

- (1) According to the Beijing-based sources who had access to those involved in the discussions between U.S. and Chinese officials in March, the U.S. officials definitely told him “that Chinese officials used the term ‘core interest’ in relation to the S. China Sea. Of course, it’s unclear who made this statement, and to what degree it reflects a new policy direction, if any.”
- (2) Source in Washington replied to my (Thayer’s) query as follows: “The China team of the United States Government (USG) has been lobbied by Chinese counterpart to say that they never told the USG that the South China Sea was a ‘core interest.’ This may be technically true, as I (a source in Washington) don’t have a confirmed record of their saying so in a formal China-U.S. or multilateral government to government meeting. However it is clear on the record that Chinese officials have called the South China Sea a ‘core interest’ of China. They have done so repeatedly. I am not aware of any U.S. officials repudiating the NYT report. I may have missed it, but I haven’t seen that.”

Thus mentioning, regarding confusion over which Chinese official spoke ‘core interest’ to the American officials, Thayer stated the points as follows:

- (1) According to *The Washington Post*, July 30, 2010, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Cui Tiankai reportedly told two senior U.S. officials that “China now views its claims to the 1.3 million-square-mile sea on par with its claims to Tibet and Taiwan, an island that China says belongs to Beijing.” On the other hand, another source, who is close to official Chinese thinking on defense and security matters, stated it was Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo who told Jeffrey Bader, a senior Obama administration official, that “Hainan Island and surrounding

waters' was a 'core national interest.'" However, the State Councilor did not include the Spratly Islands as a "core national interest." According to the source, once the remarks were reported in public, Chinese officials felt constrained about denying outright that the South China Sea was not "core national interest" for fear of provoking a domestic backlash among Chinese nationalists.

- (2) U.S. Secretary of Hillary Clinton has disclosed that at the 2nd U.S. China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Beijing in May 2010 the Chinese officials stated they viewed the South China Sea as a "core interest," Clinton stated in an interview. In reply to a query of "Was that Dai Bingguo that said to you?" from an interviewer, Clinton answered: "Yes, yeah. So if China was in the process of extending their efforts to claim and control to the detriment of international law, freedom of navigation, maritime security, the claims of their neighbors, that was the a concerning matter." She added: "And therefore, we worked with a lot of the ASEAN countries who are directly impacted and 12 of us raised it at the Regional Forum last July to make it clear that issues like that have to be resolved in accordance with the rule of law."
- (3) Since the initial March report, Chinese official have been equivocal when questioned whether or not the South China Sea has been raised officially to a "core interest" or "core national interest." For example, at the Shangri-la Dialogue in July 2010 a People's Liberation Army Major General told a correspondent who attended the same meeting "the South China Sea was not quite the as Tibet or Taiwan." On the other hand, however, the Chinese media frequently used the term "core interest" as what should be protected even by resorting to using force particularly in the July-August period.

As a conclusion of the assertion of "core interest," Thayer stressed: "Chinese officials repeated this assertion (that "the South China Sea is China's 'core interest'") in private conversations with foreign diplomats. Moreover, the term 'core interest' was frequently used in Chinese media reports. These statements generated a new level of anxiety about Beijing's strategic ambitions in the South China Sea. Subsequently, Chinese officials backtracked and now deny making such a statement If Chinese political leaders are committed to raising the South China Sea to a 'core interest,' that would imply Beijing would be willing to use force or the threat of force to defend its sovereignty."

2. Expectations and interactions of concerned nations over the South China Sea

Next, Thayer is pointing out expectations and interactions of concerned nations over the South China Sea, an outline of which are as follows:

- (1) U.S.-China interactions over of maritime power
 - a. In 2010, China-United States relations were largely featured by China's sharp response to the announcement that the Obama administration would resume arms sale to Taiwan in February and a large scale of joint naval exercises by the U.S. and South Korean naval forces following the sinking of the Republic of Korea Navy frigate *Cheonan* in March.
 - b. China suspended high-level military-to-military exchanges with the U.S, including the bilateral Military Maritime Consultative Agreement. Additionally, during the year China

conducted four high profile naval exercises to showcase the growing prowess of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). The PLAN conducted three large-scale maritime exercises between April and July 2010 and a fourth in November. These four PLAN exercises were viewed as a demonstration by China that it was now capable of deploying beyond the first island chain to the second.

- c. The United States has strengthened its military forces deployed to Guam and concluded new arrangements with Australia giving the U.S. greater and more permanent access to defense facilities in order to respond to China's naval build-up and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategies. Additionally, responding to China's deployment of a large submarine force, the U.S. has assigned 31 of its 53 fast attack submarines to the Pacific. Eighteen of these submarines are home-ported in Pearl Harbor, and others are based in Guam. Moreover, the United States has stationed the fifth-generation *Raptor* aircraft in Guam. Finally, the United States is developing an air-sea battle concept to counter China's A2/AD strategies.

(2) Shangri-la Dialogue

- a. It should be noted that immediately prior to the 9th Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore in June 2010 China turned down a request by U. S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to visit Beijing. Additionally, Secretary Gates aroused Chinese ire with his remarks to the 9th Shangri-la Dialogue. Gates then called for open, transparent, and equal access to the global common. Regarding the South China Sea, Gates said: "This sea is not only vital to those directly bordering it, but to all nations with economic and security interests in Asia." "All parties must work together to resolve differences through peaceful, multilateral efforts consistent with customary international laws. The 2002 'Declaration of Conduct' was an important step in this direction and we hope that concrete implementation of this agreement will continue."
- b. On the other hand, Lt. Gen. Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of the PLA General Staff, who represented China in the Shangri-la Dialogue in 2010, laid the blame for the suspension of military-to-military cooperation on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, U.S. surveillance activities in China's Exclusive Economic Zone and U.S. legislation that curtailed cooperation with PLA.

(3) ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

- a. Prior to the 17th ARF ministerial meeting in July 2010, several ASEAN members encouraged the United States to make a statement on the South China Sea. The United States responded affirmatively to them and lobbied them in advance to make supporting statements. When Secretary Clinton spoke at the ARF meeting and urged a multilateral approach to resolving South China Sea disputes, she received a sharp rebuke from China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. There was quite a sharp exchange between the Americans and the Chinese. At some points, the atmosphere was just a little tense.
- b. China was aware of U.S. plans to raise the South China issue and approached individual ASEAN countries and made its objection to internationalizing the issue clear. China argued that negotiations on the South China Sea should be settled bilaterally between China and

each claimant. Nevertheless, eleven (Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, European Union, Japan and South Korea) of the ARF's twenty-seven members joined the United States in raising maritime security/South China Sea issues. The Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi was shocked. Accusing the United States, Vietnam and Singapore, Yang gave a rambling speech in which he threatened economic punishment for Southeast Asian nations that sought stand up to Beijing.

(4) U.S.-ASEAN Leaders Meeting

- a. Prior to the 2nd U.S.-ASEAN Leaders meeting in Manila on September 24, 2010 a copy of the draft joint statement drawn up by the United States, as host, was leaked by the media. The U.S. draft statement included the wording that the leaders “oppose the use or threat of force by any claimant attempting to enforce disputed claims in the South China Sea” and reaffirmed the importance of freedom of navigation, regional stability, respect for international law and unimpeded commerce in the South China Sea. Both the U.S. and ASEAN were in agreement on supporting a full implementation of 2002 “Declaration of Conduct” and encouraging the eventual conclusion of a regional “code of conduct for the South China Sea.” However, the official Joint Statement dropped references to the use or threat of force and did not even mention the “South China Sea” by name.
- b. Why was the Joint Statement watered down? The US-ASEAN leader meeting took place at a time of growing tensions in relations between Beijing and Tokyo over a fishing incident in which a Chinese boat rammed two Japanese Coast Guard vessels. As Japan detained the boat captain, China reacted in a very aggressive manner and threatened unspecified action. The China-Japan dispute cast a shadow over the U.S.-ASEAN discussion. Besides, three days prior to the U.S.-ASEAN Leaders Meeting, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu stated: “We are concerned about any kind of statement that might be issued by the U.S. and ASEAN over the South China Sea. Words or acts that play up tensions and concoct conflicts and provocations are against the common wish of the countries in the region to seek peace and development.” Finally, Jian concluded, “We firmly oppose any country having nothing to do with the South China Sea issue getting involved in the dispute.” Considering those situations, several ASEAN states may have taken the view that now was not the time to antagonize China further. In short, China’s remarks prior to the U.S.-ASEAN Leaders Meeting had the desired response in getting ASEAN members to tone down the U.S. draft.

(5) ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus Eight

- a. On the eve of the 1st ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus Eight meeting held on October 12, 2010, PLAN Rear Admiral Guan Youfei, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Defense’s Foreign Affairs Office, denied that China was responsible for raising tensions over the South China Sea. He argued it was other countries that were giving a louder voice over the issue and worse, what they said is not true.
- b. On the day before the ADMM Plus Eight meeting, addressing an audience at the Vietnam

National University, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates pointedly noted that “relying exclusively on bilateral relationships is not enough” to resolve territorial disputes and that multilateral approaches were necessary. After the ADMM Plus concluded, China’s Defense Minister Liang Guanglie delivered this riposte: “Practical cooperation within multilateral frameworks does not mean settling all security issue.” Seven participants, including the United States, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam raised concerns about territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

3. Compromises between concerned nations

Thayer mentions that a changing atmosphere at the international meetings over the South China Sea issues was gradually noted throughout the period from September to October 2010. While there were interactions at ADMM Plus Eight, the moves of seeking cooperation among members were also observed. The gist of Thayer’s points is as follows:

(1) ADMM Plus Eight

- a. Both the U.S. and Chinese defense ministers, Robert Gates and Liang Guanglie, attended the ADMM Plus Eight in Hanoi. This meeting provided the opportunity for two defense ministers to hold a 50-minute bilateral on October 10. At the meeting Minister Liang invited Secretary Gates to visit Beijing early in 2011. Both ministers agreed to resume high-level defense contacts which had been frozen by China in reaction to the sale of U.S. arms to Taiwan.
- b. Secretary Gates noted in remarks to media, “China’s recent actions in the seas are clearly on everybody’s mind and fall within the rubric of maritime security.” On the other hand, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chi Vinh offered this assessment, “I think there is good progress... so far. The South China was not on the agenda, but ministers were free to raise it in their speeches, and I think there is momentum there now.”
- c. The Joint Declaration included an undertaking by eighteen defense ministers to strengthen regional defense and security cooperation. The ADMM Plus welcomed initiatives for practical cooperation contained in the Discussion Paper on “Potential, Prospect, and Direction of Practical Cooperation within Framework of the ADMM-Plus.” This Discussion Paper set out five areas for potential cooperation: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping operations. More concretely, the ADMM Plus established the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials’ Meeting Plus (ADSOM Plus) to implement these decisions.
- d. China and the U.S. held talks on maritime security in Hawaii from October 14-15. These discussions were aimed at improving security on the high seas when naval forces operated in close proximity to each other. This breakthrough in bilateral military relations paralleled an upswing in political relations when it was announced that China’s President, Hu Jintao, would visit the United States.

(2) China-ASEAN Working Group

During the first half of 2010, the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea has so far been totally ineffective in addressing this issue. Nevertheless, in October, the Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines, Liu Jianchao, revealed that a draft “code of conduct” in the South China Sea was being discussed with ASEAN members at the working level. In a display of conciliation, Liu stated that China was now open to different formulas and initiative[s], whereas previously China had rejected a formal code of conduct. China may have calculated that negotiations with ASEAN members were preferable to U.S. intervention in a sensitive issue of national sovereignty.

4. Part of Conclusion

In the part of conclusion, citing the remarks of a U.S. official in the second half of 2010, Thayer takes it as given grounds for his cautious optimism that tensions have eased between China and the United States, and, in view of the short-to-mid term, the situation is likely to develop into implementation of the confidence-building measures in the South China Sea. However, on the other hand, Thayer is calling people’s attention to that: (1) Relations of rivalry between great powers over the South China Sea are not easy; (2) In fact, China is enforcing its sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, and is constructing more Fishery Administration vessels; and (3) China’s lack of transparency on developing greater military capabilities has raised questions about its strategic intentions. Furthermore, Thayer is citing the words of Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon. Lee stated that “the U.S. needs to maintain an activist position in Asia to demonstrate that it is “here to stay” and “America plays a role in Asia that China cannot replace maintaining peace in region.” In short, as Thayer is pointing out, the issues of sovereignty claims will remain intractable, and great power rivalry will continue to be transmitted into Southeast Asia.

5. Comments – connotations to Japan

Regarding the “incident of the collision of a Chinese fishing boat with the Japanese patrol vessels off the Senkaku islands,” Thayer has not particularly carried out an analysis of it in detail, except a part of the event. However, from this working paper, I can read the currents of the diplomacy toward Japan implemented by the Chinese government during the period from September to October, in which eyes and ears of the world were concentrated on the transition of what had occurred between China and Japan. In other words, the coarse behaviors, including the procedures of halting exports of rare earths, detention of Japanese company workers in Chinese mainland, and others, gave strong impression on the international community. Around this time, key players involved in the sovereignty issues over the South China Sea have gradually come to turn their attention to making the soft landing of the situation. The United States was surprised at the rude reactions of Chinese diplomacy, with which ASEAN were nervous. As a result of it China may have been afraid of being isolated by the international community.

It seems that Thayer is, mainly, regarding the approaches of the respective nations and the

words of the government officials noted between from September to October, around the ADMN Plus Eight, as the basis of his “cautious optimism,” but he is by no means discussing the background of it in detail. However, it is sarcastic that one of the clues, in which an exchange of words in the diplomatic stage developed into a favorable direction, had been a rude behavior of the Chinese government. We should not overlook this point. Consequently, is a proverb that “After a storm comes a calm.” real? We should prepare for various means while responding to the Chinese actions carefully. Looking down upon the developments of China’s national power in recent years and positive, top-down, and rapid deployment of national strategy by the communist party regime, does it mean that we will eventually approve new Chinese order (Sino centric System) which is slowly but steadily proceeding - a power balance under Chinese superiority in East Asia? Therefore, Thayer may have called it “cautious optimism.” However, the Japanese people that face the Chinese Continent would be required to be more serious about this matter.

In either case, Japanese people in general may not be so much interested in the conflict over the South China Sea. Even though, it is necessary that we, Japanese, should realize that our reactions to the issues of the Senkaku islands and others are giving various influences on diplomacy - “war with no arms” where fierce maneuverings over the national interests continue to be waged.

Geopolitically and strategically, China is regarding the South China Sea as extremely important. The words on “core interest” are considered to be real intentions of a part of the Chinese people, and the revelations about their offensive postures intermingled with Sino-centrism and strategic culture. Considering history in which China was involved with the neighboring nations, and Chinese politico-strategic culture, we, Japanese, should always keep high guard particularly, while working on mid-to-long range strategies seriously again and again, without taking or trusting their passing words.

Today, the sea that surrounds the Japanese islands from all directions played a role of a defensive wall lying across the continent for a long time has become a “strategic domain” for those who can use it and project flexible and various military forces. Additionally, it is showing a remarkable change into a place of conflicts over natural resources. Above all, we should bear in mind that it is China in the neighborhood that is increasing its military force in the maritime domain with the strategic eyes and concentrated efforts.

(By Daisuke SEKINE, Research Fellow of the OPRF)

Ocean Policy Research Foundation

3F, Kaiyo Senpaku Bldg., 15-16 Toranomom 1-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001, Japan
TEL.81-3-3502-1828 FAX.81-3-3502-2033

The "Ship & Ocean Foundation" is operating under the name of "Ocean Policy Research Foundation"