BEYOND THE HORIZON

INFLUENCING AND PROMOTING GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Asia Pacific CRISIS WATCH

(26 FEB-5 MAR 18)

1. **US prepares to evacuate civilians in case of war in Korea**: The US military is working on continued improvements to its operation plan to evacuate American civilians in case of a war on the Korean Peninsula. The US Forces Korea and US Army Pacific are conducting noncombatant evacuation drills on a regular basis to check on the strategic and tactical aspects of the operation, such as designating places of assembly in Korea.
2. **Japan's New ASEAN Defense Initiative in the Spotlight with First Disaster Relief Engagement:** Japan's Defense Ministry announced that it would conduct a Japan-ASEAN invitation program on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief that would last from February 26 until March 2. According to the ministry, the initiative would be the first of its kind that invites military and civilian representatives from all ASEAN member states as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.
3. **Dewey arrives in Sasebo for Up-Gunned ESG Planning with Amphibious Force**: On February 28, the San Diego-based Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105), with emabarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 35 "Magicians" arrived in Sasebo, Japan for a scheduled port visit.
4. **British plans to transit South China Sea**: A British Royal Navy warship, Type 23 frigate HMS Sutherland, will transit the South China Sea in March, according to British Defense Secretary during his visit to Australia on Tuesday, February 13, 2018. He said the transit would assert freedom of navigation in the area, where six different claimant states disputed various islands and features.
5. **Australia considers sending war ship into South China Sea**: Australian government has been involved in giving intense consideration to conducting an independent Australian freedom-of-navigation operation in the South China Sea. Such an exercise would contradict Beijing's claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea and assert the right of free passage for international shipping.

Assessment:

There are approximately 200,000 US citizens in Korea. These tactical and operational exercises have been conducted several times in a year, and this helps improve the evacuation plan, but these exercises need to be done considering the level of risk in the event of a war in the region.

Japan New program's purpose was to boost the capabilities of ASEAN member states as well as to foster personal ties and improve awareness about Japan's own disaster response system and capabilities among regional states. Japan will possibly keep its ongoing attempts for extending of the region capabilities.

Dewey, as an asset of the Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group, is on a scheduled deployment in the Indo-Pacific region to support training under the U.S. Pacific Fleet's Up-Gunned ESG concept and to serve as a forward multi-mission asset for any type of contingency.

United Kingdom and Australia consider sending a war ship each into South China Sea. It shows their support to the US freedom-of-navigation operations. It may also be a US strategy to make partner the countries (depend on maritime trade) to the South China Sea problem.

The Carl Vinson's visit to Vietnam is important since it will be the first U.S. aircraft carrier visit to Vietnam since the Vietnam War. The exercise is also good opportunity to develop friendships and deepening partnerships across the region and Pacific Partnership Mission prepares to enhance disaster response cooperation, strengthen ties in Indo-Asia-Pacific.

In order to enhance security and stability; Wasp, as part of the Amphibious Force 7th Fleet, has been conducting operations as part of a routine patrol in the Indo-Pacific region.

USS Bonhomme Richard will possibly continue a regularly scheduled patrol with USS Wasp in the Indo-Pacific region supporting security and stability in the region. Both LHDs will possibly conduct training at sea.

6. **US Navy carrier to visit Vietnam and Pacific Partnership Mission:** The U.S. Navy has kicked off its largest multilateral disaster-response preparedness mission (Pacific Partnership-2018). The exercise has been conducted in the Indo-Pacific region on Feb. 23, with a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier (Carl Vinson) scheduled to visit Vietnam in early March. The Pacific Partnership is aimed at helping improve disaster-response preparedness, resiliency and capacity while enhancing partnerships with regional nations and civilian humanitarian organizations. The mission has made its debut in Thailand and the Pacific island of Yap.
7. **Wasp Departs Sasebo for Readiness Assessment, Regional Patrol:** On March 3, the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) departed from Sasebo for a routine patrol in the Indo-Pacific region. Wasp, an F-35B Lightning II-capable ship, is deploying as a rapid-response capable asset to support security and stability in the region.
8. **Bonhomme Richard Departs Thailand after Cobra Gold Exercise:** On February 26, the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) departs Laem Chabang, Thailand, following a scheduled port visit. Bonhomme Richard is operating in the Indo-Pacific region as part of a regularly scheduled patrol and provides a rapid-response capability in the event of regional contingency or natural disaster.
9. **India and Vietnam to strengthen defense ties:** On March 4, Vietnamese President has visited India Prime Minister in New Delphi. After the visiting, both side has declared that security and defence cooperation agreement between the two countries is already signed , and they will work towards capacity building, training, and UN peacekeeping. The security dialogue between the two countries will be conducted and they will work closely on regional security challenges, including on "maritime security and cyber security".

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INFLUENCING AND PROMOTING GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Mediterranean Sea CRISIS WATCH

(25 FEB-05 MAR 18)

Assessment:

The level of tension in Eastern Mediterranean stands still following several declarations from politics, academics on the share of EEZ areas and the potential energy sources beneath. Besides the local actors such as Turkey, Greece and Cyprus (Greek Adm and TRNC) global actors are also keeping eye on the developments.

Local actors's declarations are still in an aggressive manner supporting their own seats back at home while decreasing their credibility and accountability in the international venue especially in terms of cooperation and collaboration for a peaceful world.

On the Turkish side, recent claim of President showing their stance in the issue is a more effective message to domestic voters besides an announcement for global partners in any case Turkey would like to be on the table. Energy Forum in Greece has been a platform for the thesis of Greece and GCA to be promoted and several messages accusing Turkish Side on the issue transmitted which also includes call for EU, NATO or US intervention into the case.

For the global perspectives the level of tension among two allies is a good mean to keep them in shape in terms of military posture against real adversaries but it is not an option to let the crisis rise over barriers.

A win-win peaceful solution for local actors should be economically based which can be blossomed by mutual understanding, respect and common sense. The struggle of having share in the natural sources among global actors by worldwide known oil and gas companies is a crucial cause should be optimized behind the scenes. A comprehensive solution to the overall disputes is not expected in the short-run..

1. **Discussion in Delphi Economic Forum on Turkish threats to EU energy security :** MAR 2. The Turkish diplomatic and military pressure in the Aegean Sea and Eastern Mediterranean about Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Cyprus Island has been a hot topic in Delphi Economic Forum in Greece on March 2. Energy analyst John Roberts told New Europe that "What it means, is that it is for the Turkish government to decide how far it is prepared to go with either the threat or the use of force rather than resorting to diplomatic approaches, because it has to weigh its physical activity to prevent actions with the rest of the world and fully consider the legal ramifications against its own difficult relationship with its allies in NATO".(neweurope)
2. **Greek Media: Exxon plans to start work on parcel number 10 on March 5th** 28 FEB-The Kathimerini newspaper, published in Greece, wrote on February 28th that two research vessels will arrive in the Eastern Mediterranean for further research. According to the Greek newspaper, research vessels of US oil giant Exxon will start work on parcel number 10 to conduct a field survey before the drilling work scheduled for launch on Monday, March 5th. From the ships mentioned in the news, the Cook Islands are bordered by the Med Survey at the Haifa port of Israel, while the Panamanian flagged Ocean Inestigator is located in the Aegean Sea between Lavriyon in the south of Greece and Makrosios island. ((amerikanin sesi-kathimerini))
3. **Excon Mobile plans to send survey vessel:** The US oil giant ExxonMobil announced that plans to send two surveying vessels to disputed area (Block 10) regarding exclusive economic zone around Cyprus Island despite the ongoing tension, which also extends to the waters around Cyprus. (16 FEB)
4. **ENI intervened by Turkish Navy:** Turkey's naval blockade near Cyprus Island continued preventing the Italian energy company Eni from drilling in the exclusive economic zone (there is also a great dispute on the delimitation of EEZs in East Med) for two weeks already.
5. **Turkish ships impede Eni's drill vessel second time:** Skai radio said that, Four or five ships of the Turkish navy tried to once again obstruct the Saipem 12000 drill ship of Eni, that has over the last couple of weeks been prevented from performing its duty to search for hydrocarbons at Block 3 off Cyprus.(Ekathimerini) (23 FEB)
6. **Russia and Lebanon Drafting Agreement for Increased Military Cooperation** Recently, in early February 2018, Moscow and Beirut began to discuss an agreement to allow port visits by Russian naval forces and military aircraft to Lebanese facilities. On January 26, Lebanon replied to overlapping Israeli maritime claims by completely rejecting them: "The Republic of Lebanon will not hesitate to avail itself of its inherent right to self-defense if an armed attack occurs against the economic activities carried out in its maritime areas
7. **Cargo ship URAL with Russian military cargo still held by Tunisia:** 28 FEB-Ro-ro cargo ship under Russian name URAL but operated by Mersin-based Turkish company, was detained in Sfax port, According to Tunisian sources, military trucks, armored and military personnel armored vehicles bulldozers, ambulances, tank trucks, electric generators, military uniforms and radio and satellite communication equipment – everything one needs to build up militant cam, were found on board. Also 24 containers with ammunition, all military cargo said not to be properly documented, destination of shipment unclear. (insurancemarinenews, maritimebulletin)
8. **Mediterranean Sea Operation Sea Guardian Coordinating with EU's Operation Sophia in the Central Mediterranean Sea:** 27 FEB- The Task Group Commander for NATO's Maritime Security Operation Sea Guardian (OSG) visited the European Union Operation SOPHIA Force Commander onboard the Op SOPHIA flagship ITS San Giusto on February 24th to discuss tactical level coordination and information sharing in the central Mediterranean Sea. (27 FEB) (NATO)
9. **Two Irish Naval ships to join Mediterranean migrant rescue** 26 FEB-The Irish Government is expected on Tuesday to agree to send two Naval Service ships to the Mediterranean in an effort to help the European Union's mission to rescue migrants and reduce people-smuggling .
10. **Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 10,243 in 2018; Deaths Reach 418** 3 MAR- I IOM, the UN Migration Agency, reports that 10,243 migrants and refugees have entered Europe by sea through the first two months of 2018, with just over 50 per cent arriving in Italy and the remainder divided almost evenly between Greece and Spain..(IOM)

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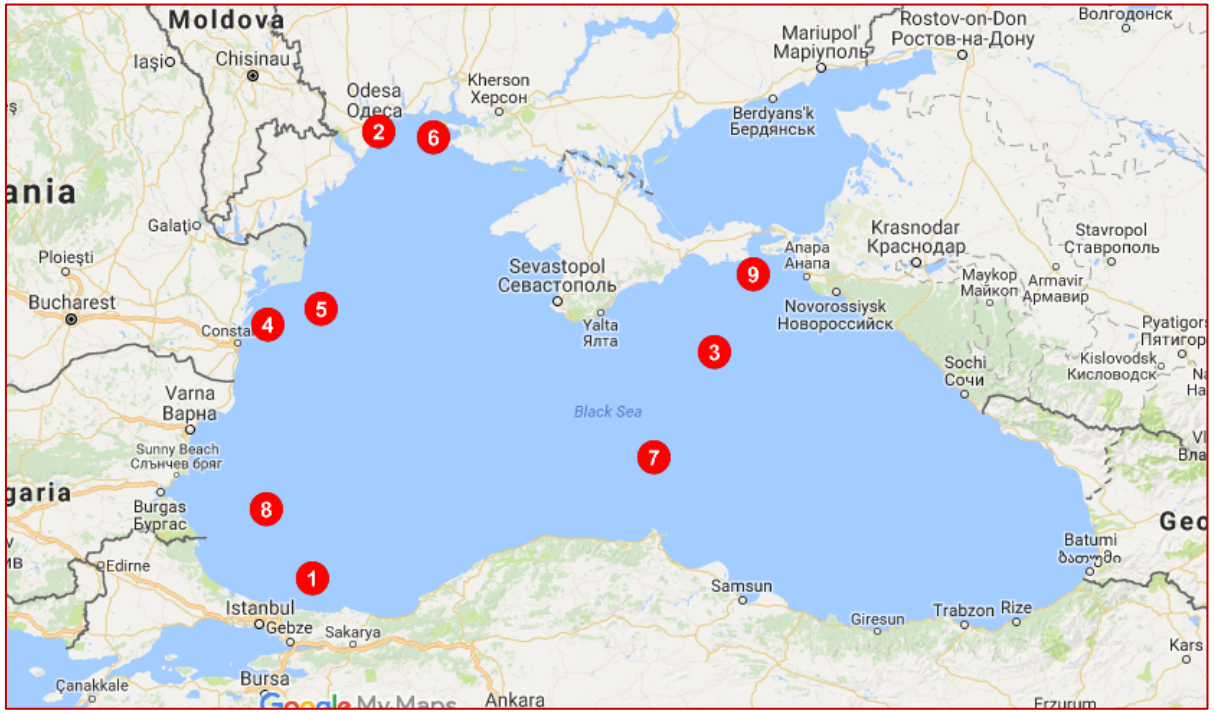
Black Sea CRISIS WATCH

(26 FEB-5 MAR 18)

1. **US Warships Left the Black Sea:** 3 MAR-Two American destroyers had entered Black Sea as of 17 Feb. The two US destroyers, having AEGIS anti-missile system, deployed in the Black Sea, USS Ross and USS Carney left the Black Sea. As of March 3, there is no US warship in Black Sea.
2. **Main Planning Conference for the Sea Breeze-2018 Kicked off in Odessa**: 27 FEB-MPC for the Sea Breeze-2018 military exercise, which is annually conducted in June and co-hosted by Ukraine and the US, kicked off in Odessa on Feb 27. The conference is attended by Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, and UK. BH assesses that almost all the countries (except Finland and Latvia) feeling themselves under direct Russian threat are attending the exercise.
3. **US Air Assets Continue Reconnaissance above Black Sea Despite Recent Harassment**: FEB 28-US air assets did not cease reconnaissance operations in the Black Sea, despite the recent harassment (on Jan 29) from Russian fighter jet. They periodically continue flying around Crimea and Krasnodar regions to spot military activities of Russia (milradar.livejournal)
4. **MoD of Romania Fifor: There Is a Very Intense Hybrid War, Which Romania Also Feels, Not To Mention the Cyber War**: 2 MAR-In Bistrita, Romania, in response to a press question about new Russian weapons and Putin's statements on his state of the nation adress on March 1st that no anti-missile system is an obstacle for Sarmat ICBM, Romanian Minister of Defense Mihai Fifor said that Romania, as a NATO member and strategic partner of US, is concerned about what is happening in the Black Sea, and is the most important security provider, and that is why they are strengthening their military capabilities. He also added: "We are often asked why this effort by the country to allocate 2% for the Romanian Armed Forces… We are living in complicated times, what with the annexation of Crimea by the Russia in 2014. Practically we are bordering Russia in the Black Sea and I want to tell you that there is a very intense hybrid war, which Romania also feels, not to mention the cyber war, which is also real…(agerpres)



Assessment,

Romania's new deposit seems to have a positive impact on both Hungary's and EU's energy security and supply diversification.

Russia wants Ukraine pay the price for approaching the West, and tries to economically weaken Ukraine. Nord Stream 2 and Turk Stream pipeline projects are intended to bypass Ukraine for gas transit to EU, and thus leaving Ukraine out of 2 billion Euro transit revenues. Annexation of Crimea, Russian support for separatists in Donbass, restrictions on the dimensions of the vessels passing through the Kerch Bridge newly built by Russia which is negatively affecting Ukraine agriculture transportation are all inhibitors for Ukrainian economy. And these kinds of projects, like Go Highway, are effective ways to confront Russian efforts to disrupt Ukrainian economy. China's recent investments in the Ukraine for the Belt and Road Initiative are also evaluated as facilitators helping out Ukrainian economy to recover.

On the other hand, Kremlin uses U.S. military presence in Black Sea as an effective tool for its inner/outer propaganda. Inner propaganda means the one to Russian people to buy their continuing support for its policies also considering approaching elections.

US warships' presence and US reconnaissance from the air in the Black Sea currently serves as the main, if not only, response to Russian expansion.

5. **ExxonMobil, OMV Petrom to Extract 6 Bln Cubic Metres of Gas per Year from Black Sea:** U.S. based ExxonMobil and Austria based OMV Petrom will start producing 6 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas per year from the Neptune block of Romania offshore Black Sea, starting with 2020-2021.
6. **EU Ready to Partially Finance GO HIGHWAY Project Intended to Link the Baltics and Black Sea:** Go Highway transnational transport corridor project is aimed to link Ukraine's Black Sea ports of Mykolaiv and Odessa with Poland's Gdansk on the Baltic Sea. Once implemented, goods deliveries between Baltics and Black Sea would be cheaper and faster. The project is also backed by World Bank.
7. **Russia Sees Progress in the Turkish Stream Gas Pipeline:** In 2018, Russian state-owned natural gas monopol Gazprom has increased its estimated budget from $6 billion to $7 billion. The increase will initially be funded by Gazprom's own budget but eventually be refinanced through project bonds.
8. **Pipelaying Commenced along TurkStream's Black Sea Route near Bulgarian EEZ :** IPioneering Spirit pipe-laying platform has begun installing the first line of the TurkStream gas pipeline in the Black Sea area near the border of the Bulgarian Exclusive Economic Zone, the project company said in a statement on Feb. 19.
9. **Economic Consequences of Russian Expansion in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov for Ukraine:** 22 FEB-Russian expansion in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov aims to establish control over critical maritime areas and transport communication nodes. Russia is actively building the Kerch Bridge connecting Crimea to Krasnodar (the region on Russian Northeastern Black Sea coast). On May 2017, Russia announced a restriction on the dimensions of vessels passing under the bridge which would not be met by about 50% of Ukrainian Azov trade fleet. The losses of Mariupol and Berdyansk seaports of Ukraine in Azov for 2017 are 43% for freight reduction and 30% for trans-shipment shrinking. Total loss is about $54 million. This figure is expected to be significantly higher in 2018. With the Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine lost 70% of its naval capabilities. For now seven maritime gas fields belonging to Ukraine is under Russian seizure. Russia has extracted 7.2 bcm of gas since the annexation of Crimea. This volume amounts to about $ 1.73 billion in Ukrainian consumer prices in 2017.

BEYOND THE HORIZON

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Caspian Sea CRISIS WATCH

(26 FEB-5 MAR 18)

1. **Is there an Agreement on Caspian Sea Delimitation?** On December 5, 2017, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced that all the key issues regarding the delimitation of the Caspian Sea had been resolved and that a treaty was being prepared for heads of state to sign in 2018 in Astana. Yet less optimistic statements from the other parties, particularly Iran, suggest that Lavrov's assessment was premature. If Russia and Iran can nevertheless **reconcile** their differences on the demarcation of the Caspian, this would have important strategic consequences not only for the littoral states, but also for the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Clearly Moscow is trying to force the pace and shoehorn other countries into its definition of their interests while also working towards a broader partnership with Tehran. Yet if this agreement does come about in 2018 it will not only be due to Russia's persistent pressure on these states and unending quest for a working partnership with Iran. It is also due to the stubbornly persistent but myopic Western strategic neglect of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Such neglect is in no way benign, but quite malignant. It is largely due to such strategic inattention that Moscow and Tehran have continued to advance their agendas and until it is reversed they will continue to do so..

Assessment,

Russia and Iran's proposals "concerning environmental assessment for the pipelines across the Caspian" for the most previous draft text of the convention was: "The Contracting states may lay submarine main pipelines on the floor of the Caspian Sea, under the condition that an ecological expertise of these projects will be approved by all the coastal countries..." Other countries were opposing this proposal for it gives the covert veto right to other countries whose seabed (mining site) is not used for pipeline laying. Also, this proposal is clearly against international law, namely The UN Energy Charter and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

It's just an educated guess, but probably Russia persuaded or is trying to persuade Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan accept the proposal above in order to restrict them from constructing Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline which will negatively affect Russian strategic control of energy flow from Central Asia to Europe. Russia might have used Nagarno-Karabakh issue as leverage to Azerbaijan and might have exploited the very poor economic condition of Turkmenistan by promising it urgent revenue for buying its gas and reselling it to Europe via Turk Stream or other west-bound pipelines in Russia.

2. **Deputy FMs of Caspian Countries Meet in Moscow:** MAR 2-Special Working Group tasked for the preparation of the text of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea met in Moscow between Feb.26-Mar.1, 2018. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry's statement, the Group verified the texts of the draft Convention and prepared a "draft Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-Boundary Context" to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Maritime Environment of the Caspian Sea signed in 2003. (mehrnews)

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Horn Of Africa CRISIS WATCH

(26 FEB-5 MAR 18)

1. **CTF 151 Bahrain Handover to Japan**: Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, assumed command of CTF151 from Royal Bahrain Navy on 1 March 2018 at a ceremony at CMF headquarters in Bahrain. CTF 151's principal mission is to deter piracy and armed robbery in the maritime environment across an area of almost 2 million square miles, encompassing the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin and Southern Red Sea.

2. **EU NAVFOR Support Djiboutian Armed Forces:** EU NAVFOR's warship ESPS Patiño has conducted capacity building with Djiboutian Armed Forces during a recent port visit. Soldiers from the Djiboutian Armed Forces visited the EU Naval Force Warship ESPS PATIÑO on 27th February 2018 to improve their skills during Local Maritime Capacity Building (LMCB). The ship's military boarding and medical teams provided training in Visit Boarding Search and Seizure (VBSS) and basic first aid procedures.

3. **Piracy Attack in Gulf of Aden :** On 27th February 2018, a Russian cargo vessel was attacked by an unconfirmed number of skiffs and a mother vessel. The armed security team on board the cargo vessel and a Chinese warship in the vicinity successfully repelled the attack.

4. **MT Leopard Sun attacked 160 nautical miles off the central coast of Somalia:** On 23rd February, the Motor Tanker Leopard Sun was attacked by two skiffs 160 nm off the coast of Somalia. The Singapore flagged 50,000 metric tonne chemical tanker was en route from Oman to Cape Town when the incident occurred. The skiffs approached the MT Leopard Sun from the stern and fired upon her, after which the on-board Private Armed Security Team returned fire with warning shots. The crew employed the full range of Best Management Practices (BMP4) as well as the actions of the embarked private armed security team. It has been confirmed the vessel and crew are now safe.

Assessment:

Somalia region continues maintaining its importance since Somalia pirates still have the capability and capacity to carry out attacks. CMF is a unique multi-national collective of 32 like-minded nations and it is one of the great models to show cooperation and coordination among the nations.

EU`s support and skills transfer of this kind with local partners is key to developing capacity and security in the region, ensuring future prosperity and the continued free flow of international maritime trade around the Horn of Africa.

This incident shows the importance of BMP such as armed security team o board and independent deployment in the region to repel the piracy
attacks.

All waters in / off Somalia are still risky and even up to 160 nautical miles from the coast, attack has been reported. This incident shows how BMP is important. All the ships, planing to pass through high risk area, should be encouraged to follow the guidance of Best Management Practice.