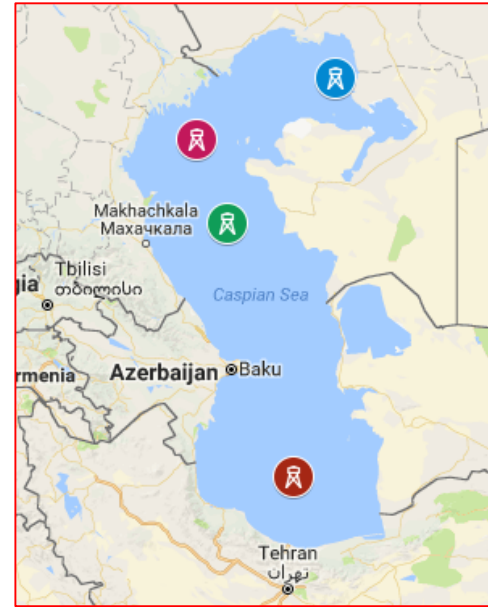




Caspian Sea CRISIS WATCH

(11-17 JUN 18)



3. Russia's Caspian Flotilla, Dominant at Sea, Gains New Shore-Landing Capability

13 June 2018, A proposal on the date of the summit of the heads of state of the Caspian countries has been received, but first of all it should be announced by the host country, Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Khalaf Khalafov told reporters June 13.

He noted that, the summit is scheduled for the first half of August. "Therefore, the working meetings have been envisaged. At least one working meeting will be held. And the meeting of foreign ministers can be held the day before the event," Khalafov said.

The Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea is a five-sided document between Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Iran. The issue of the status of the Caspian Sea remains a key topic of discussion at the summits of the states of the region. For the first time, the leaders of the five countries met in 2002 in Ashgabat. The second Caspian summit was held in Tehran in 2007, the third - in Baku in 2010, and the fourth - in Astrakhan in 2014. (Azernews) (<https://goo.gl/W5h8HX>)

4. Iran to hold Intl. forum on exports to Caspian states

14 June 2018, The northern Iranian province of Mazandaran will play host to an international conference on the development of marine exports to the Caspian Sea littoral states, an official said.

The northern port and free trade zone of Amirabad, located in Mazandaran Province, will host the forum on July 11-12, Siavash Rezvani, the port's director, said on June 14, according to the portal of Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran.

He added that representatives from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia will attend the gathering.

The role of free trade zones in improving exports and increasing the efficiency of ports in preparing the ground for international multimodal companies in exports among the five Caspian Sea littoral states will be among the major topics to be discussed at the conference, Rezvani said. The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed body of water on Earth by area and is variously classed as the world's largest lake or a full-fledged sea.

(Trend News) (<https://goo.gl/GiQGkj>)

Assessment:

- As it was mentioned on the paper published at www.behorizon.org on 22th of May 2018 , the Trans-Caspian Pipeline (TCP) project has been tried to be realised by Turkmenistan to diversify its customers and similarly by the EU to diversify its suppliers. The US has wanted the TCP to break Russo-Iranian energy dominance and their regional political influence. And Western energy giants have favoured it since it is the optimal east-west transfer method for Central Asian hydrocarbons.

On the other hand, Russia and Iran have not wanted the TCP since it would result in tremendous deterioration on their economies, on Russia's energy dominance over the EU and on its political influence in Central Asia. To date, they officially based their objection on the undefined legal status of the Caspian Sea and ecological damage the pipeline could cause.

Due to abovementioned reason I don't think that 5 countries will reach an agreement in favour of TCP implementing project in the short term.

-The TANAP project intentions to bring natural gas, produced from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz II gas field and other areas of the Caspian Sea, primarily to Turkey, but also to Europe via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP).

TANAP is crucial project for Turkey and European Countries because European Union imports almost % 40 of natural gas it needs from Russia and this fact weakens the bargain power of European Union against Russia, thanks to TANAP Turkey and European Countries will reduce dependence on other gas resources from places such as Russia and by TANAP Turkey will also gain bargain power against Russia in terms of lower energy prices.

1. Summit of Caspian states leaders scheduled for August 12

14 June 2018, The summit of the leaders of the Caspian states has preliminary been scheduled to be held in Aktau on August 12, Kommersant writes referring to a source close to the Kazakhstani Foreign Ministry.

The agenda of the Aktau summit is expected to include signing of the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Reportedly, representatives of Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran have been working over the document for over 20 years. Signing the document should, in particular, simplify the resolution of disputes over the ownership of oil and gas deposits, prospects for laying pipelines along the Caspian seabed and presence of foreign states in the Caspian Sea waters. According to K. Khalafov, "the text of the convention has already been agreed".

To remind, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin, earlier noted, the relationship between the Caspian states develop in a positive direction. He also added, the convention "does not solve all the emerging issues, but it will create the necessary framework for agreements between the Caspian states." (KAZTAG)

2. EU's long-term objective is to create a pan-European energy market

13 June 2018, In a key step towards completing the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) that will reduce the EU's reliance on Russian gas supplies, Turkey and Azerbaijan have officially opened the Trans Anatolian Pipeline or TANAP, which will bring Caspian gas to Europe.

The project was inaugurated in Turkey's Central Anatolian city of Eskişehir on June 12.

TANAP, which will deliver 6 billion cubic meters of gas per year to Turkey and 10 billion cubic meters to Europe after it is connected to the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) at the Turkey-Greece border, is part of Turkey's ambition to become a key energy hub.

European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič hailed the opening of TANAP, noting that the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline, together with the South Caucasus Pipeline and TAP, is an essential part of the Southern Gas Corridor.

The Southern Gas Corridor at present consists of the giant Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan, the South Caucasus Pipeline and its expansion through Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey; the construction of the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) through Turkey to Greece; and the construction of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) through Greece, Albania and the Adriatic Sea to Southern Italy. (Neweurope)



Horn of Africa CRISIS WATCH

(11-17 JUNE 18)



1. Heavyweight Spanish warships supporting EU NAVFOR 14 June. Cooperation is vital in order to deter piracy and to protect vulnerable shipping, such as World Food Programme vessels. European warships often transit the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden conducting maritime patrols, and this gives them the opportunity to directly support EU NAVFOR. EU NAVFOR Italian Flagship ITS Carlo Margottini has rendezvoused with Spanish warships ESPS Blas Del Lezo, a frigate, and ESPS Juan Carlos, an amphibious assault ship equipped with AV-8B Harrier II attack aircraft in the Western Indian Ocean. [EUNAVFOR](#)

2. EU NAVFOR participates in Major Counter-Piracy Exercise 12 June. EU NAVFOR champions the cooperation and coordination of efforts with civilian and military partners to combat piracy; events such as the recent Counter-Piracy Exercise with the Multi-National Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) demonstrate this. EU NAVFOR ships and aircraft from Italy, Spain and Germany operated alongside US, Korean and Japanese warships of CMF from 6th to 8th June. They worked towards developing common techniques and coordinated responses for dealing with piracy related events, and practiced how to execute counter-piracy operations and other maritime security related incidences. Assets from CMF along with EU NAVFOR's flagship ITS Margottini, ESPS Meteor and the Spanish and German P-3 Orion Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA) tested satellite and radio communications on the first day to ensure fast and efficient flow of information. [EUNAVFOR](#)

3. CTF visited HMAS Warramunga for their extraordinary contribution to the disruption of illicit narcotics 17 June. Commodore Moorhouse OBE Royal Navy, (CTF150), has visited Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Warramunga during a recent port visit to thank the Ship's Company for their extraordinary contribution to the disruption of illicit narcotics smuggling in the Indian Ocean. HMAS Warramunga arrived on station in the Middle East in November 2017. Since that time the ANZAC class frigate and her Ship's Company of 180 sailors have been conducting maritime security operations, including in support of CTF150. In this regard, HMAS Warramunga has broken new ground in the fight against illicit narcotics smuggling, having conducted 16 successful seizures since arriving in the Middle East. This has resulted in the seizure and disposal of approximately 31.8 tonnes of hashish and approximately 2 tonnes of heroin, valued at approximately AUD\$2.17 billion. [CMF](#)

Assessment:

EUNAVFOR and CMF collective efforts in the region to provide safe and secure environment in the region are exposed one more time in the counter-piracy exercise.

HMAS Warramunga, Australian naval ship in the CMF framework, has already earned to be respected by CMF commander after her admirable performance dealing with the distribution of illegal narcotics at sea. The successive achievements in this area by CMF ships make us think that there should be a reliable intelligence support in the background and dedicated executing crews at sea.

On the other hand the tragedies of migrants are almost have the same unfortunate dramatical scenes elsewhere.

4. 46 migrants drown, 16 missing, off shore of Yemen 7 June. Forty-six migrants drowned and 16 are missing after their boat capsized off the shore of Yemen on Wednesday, the United Nations Migration Agency said. At least 100 migrants were crammed into a smuggler's boat that left the port of Bossaso in Somalia on Tuesday, travelling through the night. The boat overturned in high waves in the Gulf of Aden at around 5:00 am (0200 GMT) as it approached its destination. "IOM staff reported that 46 migrants had drowned, 37 men and 9 women. A further 16 remain missing, presumed dead," the agency said in a statement, adding that they were all believed to be Ethiopian. "Survivors said the passengers, who were without lifejackets in the smuggler's boat, started panicking as high waves struck close to the shore. As the boat took on water, they were pitched headlong into the rough seas where so many succumbed." [nation.co.ke](#)

5. Ethiopia seeks to legitimise port deals with Somalia

16 June. Ethiopia has agreed on a joint investment in Somali ports in what could be seen as Premier Abiy Ahmed's move to legitimise logistical deals initially questioned by Mogadishu. After a meeting in Mogadishu on Saturday, President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo' and PM Ahmed said they will be investing in major infrastructure projects including ports and roads. "In an effort to attract and retain foreign investment to the two countries and the Horn of Africa Region, the leaders agreed on the joint investment in four key sea ports between the two countries, and the construction of the main road networks and arteries that would link Somalia to mainland Ethiopia," a Communiqué from the meeting said.

PORT STAKE

In March, Ethiopia bought 19 per cent of the stake, meaning Somaliland would retain 30 per cent.

But President Farmajo's administration did not like being left out. With Ethiopia accessing the sea and importing 95 per cent of supplies through the Port of Djibouti, the latest move by Premier Ahmed could be seen as a way of securing and widening access to the ports. On Saturday, the leaders vowed to respect each other's sovereignty, perhaps in reference to the controversy that erupted in March. "The two leaders unequivocally stated their mutual respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and the unity of both nations and called upon all Somali actors to relentlessly work towards the unity and cohesiveness of Somalia," they said.

The dispatch did not say whether the Ethiopian stake in the port would be redone or forgotten.

[nation.co.ke](#)



Asia Pacific CRISIS WATCH

(11-17 JUNE 18)



Assessment:

The need to protect China's overseas interests, vital waterways used by oil tankers and cargo ships and particularly the interests in the South China Sea are expected to increase as the country's ambitious belt, and road trade initiative starts to take shape. But unlike the US Navy, which has a true global presence, PLA ships do not have many overseas ports for resupply. It is a disadvantage for Chinese Navy, however; China has invested to build military port/base in African countries. Other nations in the region are also alarmed by China's maritime moves.

CSIC is one of the country's two major shipbuilders and plays a lead role in the development and construction of naval vessels – including nuclear and conventional submarines, and aircraft carriers in the country. Sun Bo was appointed a general manager in 2015, and he was the second man after the chairman. Chinese President Xi is decisive to build an elite maritime force. While building an elite maritime force, he also seems decisive to combat the corruption in the shipbuilding sector.

By redeploying the missiles on the South China Sea, China sends a message to the US that China would do whatever is necessary to protect its sovereignty. On the other hand; the US, Britain and France are increasing their military presence in the area, including navy patrols to counter those of China. These countries are also considering sending warships to the Taiwan Strait and stepping up naval patrols in the disputed waterway.

So far the United States has taken the lead in confronting China over its territorial claims in the South China Sea. France and Britain are the only European nations to send their navies into the region regularly. France sends its ships into the South China Sea three to five times a year.

The multi-nation exercise, CARAT, is organised in bilateral phases with regional nations and is designed to enhance capabilities in a broad spectrum of naval operations.

After the historical summit between President Trump and Kim, Jong-un, the North Korean leader reaffirmed his commitment to the "complete denuclearisation" of the Korean Peninsula in a joint statement with President Trump. In response to this commitment, South Korea and US are planning to stop training exercises such as Key Resolve, Foal Eagle and Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercises.

1. Xi Stresses Building Elite Maritime Force During Navy Inspection: 15 June. Chinese President Xi Jinping has delivered a speech during an inspection to the navy under the Northern Theater Command. He has stressed building an elite maritime force to resolutely accomplish various missions entrusted by the Party and the people. He also spoke of the need for the navy to meet the requirements of transformation. Additionally, he urged the navy to coordinate with civilian departments, innovate in institutions and mechanisms and development models to improve military-civilian integration. (Chinese Defence Ministry)

2. Man Behind China's New Aircraft Carrier Detained in Corruption Investigation: 17 June. Sun Bo, general manager of China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC), is suspected of serious violations of the law and party discipline, the National Supervisory Commission said in a brief statement issued. The inquiry comes as President Xi Jinping is pushing for China to modernise its navy and become a major maritime power. (SCMP)

3. China Puts Missiles Back on Contested South China Sea: 11 June. Satellite images show that China had returned its surface-to-air missile systems on Woody Island, known in China as Yongxing Island, in the Paracels in the South China Sea "exactly to the same positions where they were as amid rising tensions with the United States. One week ago, the removal came as tensions between China and the US flared over the troubled waters after Washington sent two nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to fly over the disputed Spratly Islands. (SCMP)

4. 28th Chinese Naval Escort Taskforce Visits Cameroon: 12 Jun. After Nigeria and Ghana, the 28th escort taskforce of the Chinese PLA Navy arrived at Douala Port, Cameroon for a three-day friendly visit. Prior to Cameroon port visit, the Chinese naval taskforce and the Ghana Navy carried out joint maritime drills in formation movement, ship-to-ship communications and other subjects, deepening cooperation and exchanges and enhancing mutual trust and friendship. (Chinese Defence Ministry)

5. France and U.K. challenge Beijing in South China Sea: 12 June. France and the U.K. are increasing their military presence in the Indo-Pacific region, sending warships through the South China Sea and planning air exercises to help counter China's military build-up in disputed waters. Since late May, the French assault ship FS Dixmude and a frigate, FS Surcouf, sailed through the disputed Spratly Islands and around a group of reefs that China has turned into islets, to push back against Beijing's claim to own most of the resource-rich South China Sea. And, several Chinese frigates and corvettes tailed the French vessels. 40 British, 50 US marines detachment and two Spanish helicopters with their crews support the French (Joan of Arc) deployment. (Straits Times)

6. US, Royal Thai Navy Kick Off 24th CARAT Drill: 14 June. The US and Royal Thai Navy started the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise series in Pattaya. The guided-missile destroyer USS Mustin (DDG 89), expeditionary fast transport USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6), diving and salvage ship USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52) and a P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft will participate in cooperative evolutions at sea alongside the Royal Thai Navy while Marine forces will engage in jungle training and live fire evolutions. Additional phases of CARAT will occur in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Bangladesh in 2018 along with similar maritime training engagements and activities with Vietnam and the Philippines. (Naval Today)

7. S. Korea and US Likely Announce Suspension of Combined Military Drills: 17 June. South Korea and the United States are expected to announce their decision to suspend large-scale combined military exercises this week amid dialogue with North Korea. After his historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore, US President Donald Trump said that he will stop "provocative, inappropriate and expensive" exercises with the South, which Pyongyang has decried as an invasion rehearsal. (Korea Herald)

8. US Navy Activities in Asia Pacific: 11 June. USNS Millinocket (T-EPF 3) and embarked U.S. 7th Fleet staff Sailors and Marines arrived in Manila, Republic of the Philippines. (C7F)