



## Mediterranean Sea CRISIS WATCH

(25 JUNE-01 JULY 18)



### Assessment:

There is still no precise agreement on burden sharing of irregular immigration to EU and there is no fundamental change in the course of actions to solve the problem in origin state instead of blocking the migrants at the borders or summing them in several reception centres, the tragedy at sea is getting to a more touchy statue each day. Each day we witness any other drama of people fleeing from the insecurity and chaos at home.

While Greek and Italian requests to share the burden together may be understandable, the reactions from the other EU members and even the practices are not highly welcomed regarding humanitarian aspect where some members refuse to open doors in for any migrants. Although feeding people with a dish of fish every day is not the right approach while you can teach them how to catch fish, nevertheless it is better than nothing to let them survive on the blue planet.

The declarations on the issue by UN, NATO and even the Red Cross may show the actual position of these institutions on the case, do not help much without concrete and quick actions at the field. Solutions and following actions not-focused or concentrated in the origin lands or main transit lands will just only cover up the issue only in the short term.

UK's proposal to send ships to support activities against irregular immigration and help Search and Rescue operations may be a change of policy whereas as in the previous years UK Parliament assessed a similar effort Operation Sophia as a failure claiming that she failed to reach the objective of its mandate—to disrupt the business model of people smuggling, besides highlighting that People smuggling begins onshore, so a naval mission is a wrong tool for tackling this dangerous, inhumane and unscrupulous business. Once the boats have set sail, it is too late.

Following some degree of pre-settlement in Caspian Sea, Russia deployed some naval assets to Mediterranean. This activities and even the EU or NATO commanders frequent declarations on Russian submarines or threat in one aspects promotes the steps for a new Cold War Order in which Russia will again fulfill one head role.

**9. Lebanon's President: Israel Refuses to Agree on Maritime Borders** 26 June. Dispute is over 860-square-kilometer triangle with potential gas, oil reserves. Lebanese President Michel Aoun said Tuesday that Israel was refusing to agree a final maritime border between the two countries, a month after Lebanon began exploring for its first offshore oil and gas reserves. [Haaretz](#)

**10. Egypt-Greece-Cyprus Launch Joint Naval and Aerial Training (Medusa 6)** 25 June. The joint Egyptian-Greek Cypriot naval and aerial training "Medusa 6" was launched with the participation of elements of the Egyptian, Greek and Cypriot air and naval forces, which will last for several days on the shores of the Mediterranean in Egypt. [MOD EG](#)

**11. Greece, Egypt and Cyprus to hold joint exercise south of Crete** A joint land and air exercise between Greece and Egypt, with the participation of Cypriot forces, is set to begin on Sunday in an area stretching from the island of Crete to the coast of the North African country. [Ekathimerini](#)

**12. Kammenos: Any violation of Greek sovereignty to be met with 'devastating' response** 21 June. Kammenos said, "If Turkey at any point dares question our sovereign rights, it must know that the [Greek] response will be devastating." [Ekathimerini](#)

**13. Truman Departs Marseille, France** 25 June. USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75) is back at sea following a scheduled port visit to Marseille, France, June 21-25. [dvidshub](#)

**14. USS Donald Cook Departs Haifa** June 29. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) arrives in Haifa, Israel, June 29, 2018, for a scheduled port visit.

**15. Russia transfers five warships out of Caspian Sea** 25 June. Russia has transferred at least five warships out of the Caspian Sea into European waters in response to threats in that theater, at least temporarily leaving Russia without a substantial portion of its Caspian firepower. [Eurasianet](#)

**16. Russian Caspian corvettes enter Mediterranean** 21 June. Russia's Caspian Flotilla has deployed two long-range missile corvettes to the Mediterranean, its Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed on 17 June. The Buyan-M (Project 21631) corvettes Veliki Ustyug and Grad Sviyazhsk were photographed by ship-watchers in Istanbul passing through the Bosphorous towards the Mediterranean on 16 June. [Janes](#)

**17. Russian submarines are a growing threat, says Europe's top Navy commander** 20 June. Russia is deploying more submarines to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and North Atlantic than at any time since the Cold War as part of a growing power game driving the U.S. to revive a decommissioned fleet and NATO to strengthen its naval defenses, the Navy's top commander in the theater said. [stripes](#)

**1. UN to present plan for Mediterranean migrant centres for EU** 26 June. The United Nations agencies for migration and refugees will present the European Union with a plan for "regional disembarkation platforms" around the Mediterranean where the bloc could hold migrants and decide whether to admit them. [middleeastmonitor](#)

**2. Like the US, Europe is warring with itself over migration** 26 June. Like the United States, where President Trump is under fire for his strict immigration stance, the EU has been experimenting with sometimes harsh measures such as paying non-EU states to keep migrants away. [thehill](#)

**3. UK sending more help to tackle Mediterranean migrant crisis** 27 June. Britain is sending an extra naval patrol boat to the Mediterranean to help with the migrant crisis, Theresa May announced in talks with her Greek counterpart. The Border Force cutter is the latest naval asset deployed to the Aegean as Greece faces continued pressure from illegal migration. She said: "I'm pleased to be able to announce today that we will be sending an additional Border Force cutter to the Aegean to help in the search and rescue operations there." [eastthiancourier/](#)

**4. UK offers EU border patrol boat ahead of summit** 26 June. Theresa May told Alexis Tsipras the UK would provide an extra boat to help the EU manage migration. [politico.eu/](#)

**5. Italian minister calls for migrant reception centers south of Libya** 25 June. The populist Italian interior minister Matteo Salvini has called for migrant reception centers to be set up on the external borders of southern Libya after a meeting with the African nation's leaders in Tripoli. [theguardian](#)

**6. NATO says it's ready to help Italy in Libya** 24 June. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Sunday the alliance was prepared to help out in troubled Libya as it grapples with a migrant crisis but warned there were no military solutions." [thelocal](#)

**7. EU migration deal may force NGOs to rethink, says charity** 29 June. EU migration deal may force NGOs to rethink, says charity Médecins Sans Frontières fears becoming 'agent of Libya' and forcing migrants to return. Matteo Salvini, on Friday repeated his call that all ports in Italy would be closed to NGO ships. [theguardian](#)

**8. EU leaders defend migration deal as doubts emerge** 29 June. European Union leaders have defended a migration deal struck during talks in Brussels as doubts emerged about whether they would fulfil their promises to build secure centers for processing asylum claims of people rescued at sea. [theguardian](#)



## Asia Pacific CRISIS WATCH

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**Assessment:** As of South Korea's decision on P-8 Poseidon, this seems to be a final declaration of pre-decided choice, where South Korea has probably favoured US Boeing for its lower cost, as well as its compatibility with other weapons, tools and equipment. However, two more firms were included in the tender to reduce costs.

Besides, The decision on Type 26 by Australia may be driven by Australia's desire to secure strong terms with the U.K. as it negotiates a series of new trade agreements after Britain leaves the European Union.

Indonesia's Navy and Marine Corps have been expanding their amphibious power and shore-to-shore transport capabilities as landing ships have become indispensable to ASEAN.

Chinese maritime patrol targeted to expand regional cooperation and combat unlawful activities in critical sea lanes.

China is aiming to deepen China-Africa defense and security cooperation and to elevate China-Africa military ties. These are signals of how China is deepening her engagement on Africa countries. The defense cooperation, by providing logistical and defense support to African countries, could also be seen as China's effort to secure its strategic interests abroad. This includes the One Belt One Road initiative, which calls for \$1 trillion of investment in infrastructure and other projects.

Peace Ark, which is one of the symbols of China's Soft Power, performs similar activities to a different region in each year. At a local level, the arrivals of this ship is a welcomed development as it provides medical services that local populations in Africa may not be able to obtain otherwise from their local governments. Moreover, these visits help to boost up the image of China in the eyes of the hosting government and population. It is also interesting and important that Peace Ark has only visited countries whose governments recognize the People's Republic of China and not the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan). ASEAN-China maritime exercise can be seen as multilateral risk reduction and confidence-building measures on which China and ASEAN countries have already agreed such as a framework for a code of conduct on the South China Sea in ASEAN Summits in previous years.

**1.S. Korea Chooses Boeing's P-8 Patrol Aircraft for Naval Procurement Project:** 25 June. South Korea decided to purchase P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft from US defense company Boeing with a \$1.7 billion project. Before the decision, a three-way competition had emerged, in addition to US Boeing; Europe's Airbus Defense & Space and Sweden's Saab. (Korea Herald)

**2.Australia's Future Frigate:** 28 June.Australia has selected BAE Systems' Type 26 design for its new future frigate design. BAE has won the U.S. \$26 billion contest to build nine frigates, which are being designed with anti-submarine warfare. The construction on the ship is scheduled to begin at the shipyards at Osborne in 2020. (Defense News)

**3.Indonesia Launches New Landing Ship Tank (LST):** 28 June. The Indonesian Navy's newest domestically-built landing ship tank (LST) KRI Teluk Lada (pennant no 521) was launched in Lampung. KRI Teluk Lada is the fourth ship in the fourth ship in the Teluk Bintuni-class. The 117 meters long vessel has a width of 16.4 meters and reaches a maximum speed of up to 16 knots. It has an operating range of 6,240 nautical miles. Teluk Lada has two helipads with two hangars and is capable of carrying 10 Leopard main battle tanks. (Naval Today)

**4.India and Bangladesh Navies Start Coordinated Maritime Patrol:** 28 June. The navies of India and Bangladesh kicked off their first ever coordinated patrol (IN-BN CORPAT) from the Bangladesh port city of Chittagong. The Indian Navy sent frigate INS Satpura and corvette INS Kadmatt to take part in the patrol. Bangladesh contributed frigate Abu Bakr and corvette Dhaleshwari, while both navies also sent maritime patrol aircraft. The CORPAT will also be instituted as an annual feature between the navies of both countries. (Naval Today)

**5.China-Africa Defense and Security Forum Opens in Beijing:** 26 June. Representatives from 50 African countries and the African Union discussed China-Africa defense and security cooperation at a forum in Beijing. It is the first time China-Africa Defense and Security Forum was held and hosted by China's Ministry of National Defense. Participants have discussed the topics including the security situation in Africa and Africa's independent capacity-building in security. Concurrently with the China-Africa Defense/Security Forum; the 28th Chinese Naval Escort Task Force has paid visits at Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Gabon and South Africa. (Xinhua Net)

**6. Chinese Navy Conducts Real Combat Training:** 26 June. A flotilla sent by China's Eastern Theater Command has been undertaking a real combat training in high seas since it set out on June 17. The naval formation is comprised of the Luyang II-class destroyer Jinan and the Jiangkai II-class guided-missile frigate Huanggang. The flotilla sailed through the Taitung Strait, the Bashi Strait and the Taiwan Strait, and conducted real combat training with naval surface/air vessels and coastal defense forces in multiple sea areas. (Janes)

**7.China Navy's Hospital Ship Peace Ark Sets Sail for "Harmonious Mission 2018":** 28 June, China Navy's hospital ship Peace Ark has set sail to conduct Harmonious Mission 2018. It is the Peace Ark's 7th "Harmonious Mission", which will bring the ship to more than ten countries, including Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Columbia, Venezuela, Grenada, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic and Ecuador, to provide humanitarian medical services. Upon invitation of the Chilean Navy, the Chinese naval hospital ship will also have a stop in Chile to participate in the Chilean Navy's 200th founding anniversary celebration activities. (China Defense Ministry)

**8.China, ASEAN to Hold Maritime Drill:** 28 June. China and the 10 members of the ASEAN have scheduled a joint maritime exercise to take place later this year. The purpose of the joint drill is to enhance mutual trust, expand exchange and cooperation, and safeguard regional peace and stability. The parties are currently working together to arrange the details. (China Daily)

**9.HMS Albion Visits Busan/S.Korea:** 27 June. HMS Albion left the UK in February, and has now reached the mid-point of her deployment. She has paid a 4-day visit to Busan/S.Korea. Sailors and Royal Marines from Britain's flagship paid tribute to their countrymen in UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan.

**10.US Navy Activities in Asia Pacific:** 26 June. The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Mustin rendered assistance to two distressed mariners whose fishing boat had suffered an engine malfunction, rendering the vessel inoperable. 26 June. The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers USS Antietam and USS Chancellorsville arrived in Manila, Philippines, for a regularly scheduled port visit. 25 June. Personnel from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force embarked the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan participated in bilateral training. (C7F)



## Horn of Africa CRISIS WATCH

(25 JUNE -01 JULY 18)

**1. EUNAVFOR AND ROYAL Navy of Oman Operating Together** 2 July. After departing the port of Muscat following her visit to the Sultanate of Oman, EU NAVFOR flagship ITS Carlo Margottini carried out naval manoeuvres with the Royal Navy of Oman warship, RNOV Al Naasir. Sailing in close proximity to each other requires expert seamanship and during this time Margottini and Al Nassir both displayed these skills with ceremonial salutes to each other. This interaction at sea was a fantastic opportunity to enhance the already strong relationship and mutual understanding between the EU NAVFOR and Royal Navy of Oman, and a way to strengthen partnership in promoting peace and maritime stability. [EUNAVFOR](#)

**2. CTF150 visited Saudi Arabia** 29 June. Commodore Steve Moorhouse OBE Royal Navy, Commander Combined Task Force 150 (CTF150), visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 25th June to meet key members of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces and the Commander, Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Cell, in order to further strengthen maritime security cooperation between the Kingdom and the Combined Maritime Forces. Commodore Moorhouse said: "With the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shortly due to take command of Combined Task Force 150, this was a timely opportunity to discuss common interests regarding maritime security and the free flow of maritime commerce in the region." [CMF](#)

**3. Maritime Industry releases BMP5 and Global Counter Piracy Guidance** 28 June. EU NAVFOR welcomes the announcement of the publication of BMP5 and the launch of Global Counter Piracy Guidance. These documents contribute to the security and safety of merchant shipping transiting the High Risk Areas off the Horn of Africa. BMP5 continues to strongly encourage shipping operators to register their transits with EU NAVFOR MSCHOA and to follow the self-protection advice contained within BMP5. BMP5 and Global Counter Piracy Guidance documents are now available on the following websites; <http://eunavfor.eu/mediaroom/> & [www.mschoa.org](http://www.mschoa.org). Somali piracy has not been eradicated and remains a threat. As well as piracy, regional instability and conflict have resulted in the deliberate targeting of ships by extremist groups using weapons such as anti-ship missiles, sea mines and Water-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (WBIED). Warships and aircraft of EU NAVFOR Somalia's Operation Atalanta continue to patrol the region, providing a permanent presence to deter, prevent and repress piracy and other maritime security threats and the protect World Food Programme (WFP) [EUNAVFOR](#)



### Assessment:

**Cooperation between EU NAVFOR and regional partners is vital for the maintenance of maritime security and free flow of international trade around the Horn of Africa.**

Intelligence and support from the local countries are very crucial issues for CTF 150 to accomplish his mission of dealing with illegal activities, drug smuggling and such in the area of responsibility ranging to 2 million square miles.. In this sense official visits to the countries in the region are promoting efforts in the agenda.

**Since The Global Coalition (against ISIS) members are committed to degrading and ultimately defeating ISIS group as well as destroying its terrorist and financing networks. In this sense Qatar's active/sincere presence in this coalition will be highly helpful.**

**In European Council's conclusions, they underlined the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Red Sea region for global trade, the regional economy and overall stability. It expressed the EU's readiness to engage with all the relevant actors and to contribute to reviving ties and building a community of shared interests, commerce, investment and security.**

**4. Singapore assumes command of Combined Task Force 151 in Bahrain** Singapore has taken over the command of Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) from Japan in a change of command ceremony held at the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bahrain on June 28. Rear Admiral Saw Shi Tat, Republic of Singapore Navy relieved Rear Admiral Daisuke Kajimoto of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force at a ceremony attended by VIPs from a number of different nations, overseen by the Commander Combined Maritime Forces, Vice Admiral (VAdm) Scott Stearney US Navy. [navaltoday](#)

**5. Qatar attends meeting of Global Coalition against ISIS group** Qatar participated in a meeting of political officials of the Global Coalition against ISIS group to discuss the threat posed by the group in the African continent, especially in Libya, West Africa, Sahel states and the Horn of Africa. The meeting is hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco. The State of Qatar attended the meeting along with the representatives of nearly 50 countries as well as a number of regional and international organizations, QNA reported. [Thepeninsulaqatar](#)

**6. Djibouti's squandered independence** So, 41 years of freedom, respect for human dignity and development for the Djiboutian people? This is a relevant question today. The fight for independence from colonial rule was ostensibly fought to secure social change and ideals, to advance a better and more prosperous life for me and my fellow citizens. Indeed, these values were — in theory — the driving force, the very engine that propelled our sisters and brothers who stood up against the brutal colonial order. These are the goals and objectives that they had given their time, their energy and their material resources for. These national heroes risked their lives for this vision, suffering arrests and detentions, physical and psychological violence. This is what many of them, both well-known and anonymous, died for. [mailguardian](#)

**7. Horn of Africa and Red Sea: Council adopts conclusions** 25 June. the Council discussed and adopted conclusions on the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. Developments in the Gulf region have triggered renewed geopolitical competition on both shores of the Red Sea. Combined with the absence of an adequate system of cooperation and conflict prevention and management mechanisms, these developments, not least the conflict in Yemen, are having a negative impact on security in and around the Red Sea. This could jeopardise EU interests by impacting freedom of navigation and further destabilizing the Horn of Africa. instability in the EU's wider neighborhood. [consilium.europa](#)



# Caspian Sea CRISIS WATCH

(17 JUN-01 JUL 18)

**1. Russia transfers five warships out of Caspian Sea** 25 June. Russia has transferred at least five warships out of the Caspian Sea into European waters in response to threats in that theater, at least temporarily leaving Russia without a substantial portion of its Caspian firepower. Moscow may be calculating that its limited resources are not best spent on the Caspian. In any case, the ships could always go back the way they came. (Eurasianet)

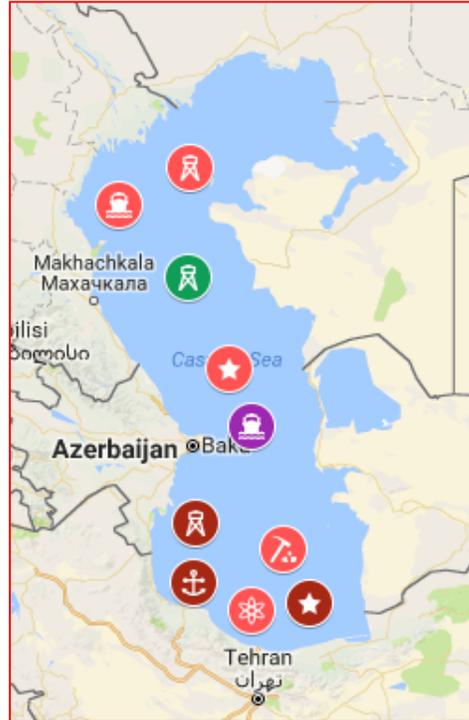
**2. Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Company eyes to put shares for sale in foreign markets** 26 June. Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Company plans to put up for sale its shares at international exchanges in the long term, director of the company Rauf Veliyev said June 25 at an event dedicated to the Day of the Sailor. He noted that the company intends to improve its competitiveness at international level. (trend)

**3. Iran, Russia to carry out joint research on Caspian Sea** 25 June. Iran and Russia have signed a contract to conduct geological studies on the Iranian part of the Caspian Sea, head of Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) Khalil Bahar-Firouzi says, ISNA reported on Saturday. The agreement was reached between the Russian State Geological Company (ROS GEO) and GSI during St. Petersburg International Economic Forum held on May 26, the ROS GEO website reported. (tehrantimes)

**4. Iran, Azerbaijan consider joint Caspian Sea development** 19 June. The presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran have signed protocols for development of a jointly owned deep water oil field in the Caspian Sea, according to a report in Iran Petroleum published by news service Shana. (OffShore)

**5.3. Russian Government Approves Draft Convention on Caspian Sea Status** 22 June. The Russian government has approved the draft convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, says the relevant resolution published on the official internet portal of legal information. The document also proposes to submit to the President of Russia a proposal to sign the convention.

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



### Assessment:

- Because of USA's withdraw from the Nuclear agreement with Iran and sanctions imposed against Iran by USA, Iran would like to find alternative solutions to overcome the negative effects of these economic sanctions. As we remember substantial incident popped up on the night of 28 December 2017, when protests across the whole country were ignited against poverty, corruption, rising costs of staples and fuel in Iran. Six months passed over these protests and there is still no positive sign, contrary decision of USA about nuclear agreement will highly likely worsen the economy and new small protests are still occurring against poverty in Iran.

Iran was opposed to plans that increases the role of Azerbaijan Republic in the Caspian Sea both as the ally of the US and Israel and also the main challenger of Iran's positions in the legal regime of the Caspian Sea (which directly affects the share of Iran in the Caspian Sea) and tried to help it's ally Russia, so that Iran has not wanted TCP project to be implemented before but due to Russia's agreement with Israel in Suria against Iran and economic problems she confront, she might look for alternative solutions to overcome her economic problems and hence Iran may shift her policy about Trans Caspian Gas Pipeline.

Last week I made an assessment in a negative way about endorsement of TCP agreement in the short term, but world political situation is highly volatile nowadays so that as I explained above opposite development is also possible.

-If Russia will sign the convention it means that she found a win-win solution related with the status of Caspian and I assume that Russia will get highest benefit from this agreement.

- There might be a link between the agreement which will probably be signed by Caspian littoral countries in August and the recent transfers of Russian warships from Caspian Sea to other places. When we consider recent transfers of warships from Caspian sea to other areas, it means that Russia will assure the security of Caspian Sea with minimum forces and she would like to use it's military power in a most effective way.

**6. New Transport Corridor Links Iran's Caspian Port to China, Kazakhstan** 26 June. With the arrival of an Iranian vessel at the Caspian Port in Gilan Province's Anzali Free Trade Zone, the China-Kazakhstan-Iran Multimodal Corridor was officially launched on Tuesday. The corridor starts off as a rail route from Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region in the far northwest of China, and reaches Kazakhstan's Aktau Port, located on the east bank of the Caspian Sea. Then goods are loaded onto vessels before they are transported to the newly launched Caspian Port in Anzali Free Trade Zone. The new transit route reduces travel time and transport expenses. (finacialtribune)

**7..Iran, Russia FMs Discuss Nuclear Deal, Caspian Sea Summit** 25 June. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov have discussed the latest developments vis-à-vis a landmark nuclear agreement Tehran signed with the P5+1 group of countries after the United States' move to withdraw from it. (almanar)

**8. Iran looks to Enhance ties with China, Caspian Sea States-First VP** 26 June. Es'haq Jahangiri, the Iranian first vice president, said the Islamic Republic is seeking to promote its "solidarity" with China and the Caspian Sea littoral states. "We are after enhanced solidarity with the Caspian Sea states as well as China," Jahangiri said, IRNA news agency reported. China's flurry of investments in Iran is in line with the Asian giant's "Belt and Road" initiative, a project aiming to build a modern-day "Silk Road" at a cost of \$1 trillion. (Trend News)

**9.LUKOIL Commissions Third Well At Filanovsky Field Second Stage In Caspian Sea** 18 June. LUKOIL said it has completed the construction and commissioned the third well at the second development stage of the Vladimir Filanovsky field in the Caspian Sea. This is a bilateral horizontal oil producing well. The construction of wellhead platform currently undergoes at the Astrakhan shipyards as part of the field's third development stage(EURASIAREVIEW)

**10.Draft Convention on Caspian Sea allows for laying of pipelines on seabed** 22 June. The draft Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea provides for the possibility for the participating countries to lay underwater pipelines, RIA Novosti reports with reference to the document published by the government of the Russian Federation. (azernews)