

Featured *MSP Perspective*:



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China's Drift Towards Naval Normality**Author**

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China's narrative in recent years has been that it is not a hegemonic power and will not follow the normal historical pattern as its maritime power develops. For evidence of this, the Chinese point to their concepts of the 'Harmonious Ocean' and the Maritime Silk Road project which is to be seen as an opportunity not a threat. But China's recent assertiveness in the South China Sea makes some commentators sceptical of such a narrative.

Five recent developments suggest they are right to do so. First, China seems to be following the normal pattern of naval development in wanting to extend the Navy's operational reach. Its steady development of carrier aviation, air and antisubmarine defence, amphibious capability and long range fleet support all point to an aspiration to be able to operate a long way from home. Nor, given the country's growing global interests and vulnerabilities, is this at all unexpected.

Second, their desire to establish a fleet base at Djibouti, together with the militarisation of several features in the South China Sea is a reversal of declaratory policy, brought about no doubt by the discovery of just how demanding it is to conduct fleet operations a long way from home in a sustained way. In this too, the Chinese are merely mirroring established practice. However, given their past condemnation of bases as inherently imperialistic, this is a startling development.

Third, there appears to be a slow acceptance of traditional maritime attitudes to the sea as China moves away from the 'continentalist' tendency to regard it essentially as territory to be

defended. Even in the sensitive area of the freedom of warships to operate in other people's EEZs, there seems to be some movement as for the first time Chinese spokespeople have admitted that they too conduct unauthorised military activities off the US, Japan and Australia. In this they are following the Soviet Navy which likewise adopted standard maritime conceptions of the sea during the UNCLOS negotiations.

Fourth, the recent reorganisation of the Chinese Armed Forces and security decision-making apparatus will provide for a modern agile, integrated Command system that reduces the dominance of the Army and will provide yet more leeway for the Navy. This is far removed from the Navy's 1960s role as simply the 'handmaiden of the Army.'

Finally the PLA Navy has moved away from its initial reluctance to engage with other navies, either through its suspicions of them or a disinclination to reveal its own deficiencies. Instead it is entering into more and more exercises and exchanges with foreign navies. Sometimes these are competitive, as in the South China Sea and sometimes not, as in the counter-piracy mission off Somalia.

This last point, though, shows that while China indeed seems to be drifting into normality, that this should not necessarily be seen as a threat. All it means is that the outside world should no longer dismiss egregious behaviour at sea simply on the grounds that China is not the sort of power that does that sort of thing.



SINGAPORE-UNITED STATES | 8 DECEMBER | CHANNEL NEWSASIA

US surveillance plane deployed to Singapore

Singapore's Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen and his United States counterpart Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter welcomed the inaugural deployment of the P8 Poseidon aircraft to Singapore from Dec 7 to 14.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 3 DECEMBER | THE CHINA POST

Official reiterates dual approach to acquiring submarines unchanged

The head of Taiwan's defense mission in the United States said Tuesday that the country's two-pronged approach to acquiring new submarines remains unchanged and that the U.S. defense industry is interested in Taiwan's local submarine program.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 3 DECEMBER | THE ECONOMIC TIMES

India enhancing security in Andaman & Nicobar: Navy chief Admiral R K Dhowan

India is beefing up security capacity in the "strategically important" Andaman and Nicobar Islands by building up assets and infrastructure there even as it monitors activities of Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean region, Navy chief Admiral R K Dhowan said today.

[Full Report](#)

NORTH KOREA | 8 DECEMBER | THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON

North Korean Submarine Damaged in Missile Test

North Korea's first submarine capable of firing missiles underwater suffered serious damage during a failed test launch last month, according to defense officials.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 9 DECEMBER | WASHINGTON TIMES

Pentagon confirms patrols of Chinese nuclear missile submarines

China has begun patrols with nuclear missile submarines for the first time, giving Beijing a new strategic nuclear strike capability, according to the U.S. Strategic Command and Defense Intelligence Agency.

[Full Report](#)

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JAPAN | 12 DECEMBER | DECCAN HERALD

Japan to be regular at Malabar exercise

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe on Saturday agreed that Japan would now regularly join India and the US in the annual Malabar naval exercise.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 12 DECEMBER | FOCUS TAIWAN

Wharf, lighthouse on Taiping Island inaugurated

Interior Minister Chen Wei-zen presided Saturday over the opening of a renovated wharf and a newly constructed lighthouse on Taiping Island, the largest of the disputed Spratly Islands, which is controlled by Taiwan.

[Full Report](#)

BANGLADESH | 14 DECEMBER | THE NEW NATION

BD receives two warships from China

Bangladesh has received two new most advanced corvette class warships from China to enhance the capability of its navy in securing the country's maritime resources.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA | 15 DECEMBER | BBC NEWS

Australia conducting 'freedom of navigation' flights in South China Sea

The Australian military is carrying out "freedom of navigation" flights over disputed islands in the South China Sea, the BBC has uncovered.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 16 DECEMBER | THE JAKARTA POST

Navy to choose submarines from among three vendors

The Navy is yet to make a decision on what type of submarines it will purchase to complete its weapons system procurement in the next five-year strategic plan.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 18 DECEMBER | REUTERS

Exclusive: Japan's far-flung island defense plan seeks to turn tables on China

Japan is fortifying its far-flung island chain in the East China Sea under an evolving strategy that aims to turn the tables on China's navy and keep it from ever dominating the Western Pacific Ocean, Japanese military and government sources said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-UNITED STATES | 19 DECEMBER | REUTERS

U.S. studying Chinese complaint that B-52 flew near man-made island

The Pentagon said on Friday it was looking at Chinese complaints that a B-52 bomber recently flew near a Chinese artificial island in the South China Sea, a sensitive issue because the two powers disagree over Beijing's territorial claims in the region.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 24 DECEMBER | REUTERS

China says carrier operations improving as navy chief visits

China is getting better and better at operating fighter jets from its lone aircraft carrier, with confident pilots and an increasing number of flying operations, the military's newspaper said on Friday as China's navy chief visited the ship.

[Full Report](#)



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THAILAND | 24 DECEMBER | BANGKOK POST

'Chakri Naruebet' gets new lease of life

With a major facelift for HTMS Chakri Naruebet, the Royal Thai Navy is entering a new era with heightened prowess.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 30 DECEMBER | BLOOMBERG

China Sends Japan a 'Don't Meddle' Message Via an Ex-Navy Ship

Tensions are rising in the East China Sea after China deployed an armed, former navy frigate for the first time to challenge Japan's control of contested islands in what may be an attempt to shift Tokyo's attention away from disputes in the South China Sea.

[Full Report](#)



INDONESIA | 26 DECEMBER | THE JAKARTA POST

Navy steps up campaign against endemic piracy

In an attempt to improve security in the country's territorial waters, the Indonesian Navy's Western Fleet (Armabar) plans to launch a piracy prevention program.

[Full Report](#)

VIETNAM | 1 DECEMBER | VOICE OF AMERICA

Killing of Vietnamese Fisherman in Contested Waters Sparks Outrage

Vietnam has launched an official investigation into the killing of a fisherman in disputed waters near the Spratlys.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 1 DECEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

Indonesia mustering global support to eradicate illegal fishing

Indonesia, through the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries, is mustering global support for the eradication of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in its waters, according to Marine and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA-PAPUA NEW GUINEA | 1 DECEMBER | PNG MIRROR

PNG and Indonesia sign Communique to combat Illegal Fishing

Fisheries and Marine Resources Ministers of PNG and Indonesia today signed a Joint Communique to combat illegal and unregulated fishing in the waters of both countries.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 1 DECEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

Consider illegal fishing a transnational crime, says fishery minister

Indonesian Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti has urged that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) activities be regarded as transnational crimes.

[Full Report](#)

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NORTH KOREA | 2 DECEMBER | REUTERS

North Korean ghost boats, in deadly hunt for fish, wash up in Japan

Fishing boats carrying decomposed corpses have washed ashore in Japan in recent weeks, leading to speculation they are rickety North Korean vessels that have strayed dangerously far from port under the impoverished nation's push to boost its catch.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 3 DECEMBER | THE HINDU

Navy rushes amphibious ship to Chennai for relief ops

Adding its mite to the massive relief operations in Chennai, the Indian Navy has rushed to the southern metropolis its amphibious warship INS Airavat stocked with supplies from the Eastern Naval Headquarters here.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 4 DECEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

Indonesian waters must not be like those of Africa: Minister

Minister of Fishery and Marine Resources Susi Pudjiastuti has said that Indonesian waters must not become like those in Africa which are now controlled by foreign concessionaires.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 4 DECEMBER | BANGKOK POST

Pair nabbed after pirates attack Thai fishing vessel

Malaysian authorities yesterday recovered a Thai-flagged fishing boat and arrested two suspected pirates after the vessel was attacked and six of the crew were thrown into the sea off the coast of Satun.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-JAPAN | 9 DECEMBER | XINHUA NEWS

China, Japan agreed to continue discussion on early start of air, marine contact mechanism

China and Japan agreed to continue discussions on an early start of an air and maritime contact mechanism in their fourth round of high-level consultations on maritime affairs.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 8 DECEMBER | YONHAP ENGLISH NEWS

(LEAD) S. Korean Navy fires warning shots at Chinese ship in Yellow Sea

The South Korean Navy said Tuesday that it has fired warning shots at a Chinese vessel intruding into the de-

facto western maritime border between the two Koreas.

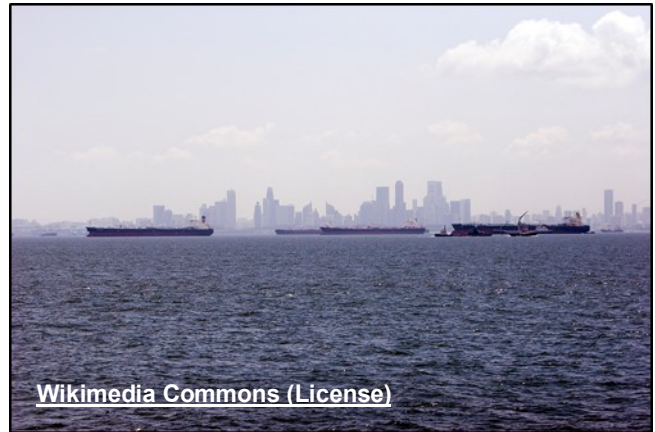
[Full Report](#)

INDIA-MALDIVES | 14 DECEMBER | HAVEERU

Indian navy ship in Maldives for joint surveillance

A navy ship from neighbouring India arrived in Maldives Monday as the two nations move to strengthen bilateral cooperation amid mounting concern over the Maldives' pro-China stance.

[Full Report](#)



SINGAPORE | 17 DECEMBER | CHANNEL NEWSASIA

6 missing after freighter collides with chemical tanker in Singapore Strait

Six crew members of a freighter are missing after the ship sank following a collision in the Singapore Strait, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-SOUTH KOREA | 17 DECEMBER | YONHAP ENGLISH NEWS

S. Korea, China set up coast guards' hotline

South Korea and China have agreed to set up a hotline between their coast guards to help them swiftly cope with maritime accidents and prevent illegal fishing, Seoul officials said Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA-INDONESIA | 21 DECEMBER | THE JAKARTA POST

Ri to address boat people issue with Australia

Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi said on Sunday that Indonesia would offer solutions for the recurring boat people issue to Australia during the so called "2 plus 2" ministerial meetings to be attended by the foreign and defense ministers of both countries in Sydney on Monday.

[Full Report](#)



GLOBAL | 28 DECEMBER | CNBC

Weak demand, vessel surplus to create horror 2016 for commodities shipping

Shipping companies that transport commodities such as coal, iron ore and grain face a painful year ahead, with only the strongest expected to weather a deepening crisis caused by tepid demand and a surplus of vessels for hire.

[Full Report](#)

EGYPT | 1 DECEMBER | SHIP AND BUNKER

Expanded Suez Canal Said to Give Shippers Savings of 5-10%

The Bank of Alexandria believes the new Suez Canal will reduce total operating costs of maritime transportation companies by between 5 and 10 percent.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE-BELGIUM | 10 DECEMBER | CONTAINER MANAGEMENT

PSA closes one of its Zeebrugge terminals

Singapore-based port operator PSA International has begun procedures to close its Container Handling Zeebrugge (CHZ) terminal citing a lack of profitability, Dutch news outlet Flows reported.

[Full Report](#)

FRANCE-SINGAPORE | 3 DECEMBER | REUTERS

France's CMA CGM secures bank funding for NOL takeover-sources

French shipping giant CMA CGM has obtained firm commitments from banks to finance the takeover of Singapore's Neptune Orient Lines (NOL), which has a market value of \$2.2 billion, two people familiar with the deal said.

[Full Report](#)

EGYPT-GREECE-CYPRUS | 10 DECEMBER | STAR AFRICA

Egypt, Greece and Cyprus to form committee on maritime economy

Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus have agreed to form a committee of maritime economy to discuss tripartite cooperation in the fields of maritime navigation, technology and tourism, announced Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades Wednesday in the Greek capital, Athens.

[Full Report](#)

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THE PHILIPPINES | 13 DECEMBER | MANILA BULLETIN

Davao companies buck P19-B Sasa Port modernization

Davao businessmen are questioning what they perceive as a rush to bid out the P19-billion modernization project for the Sasa Port under a public-private partnership (PPP) scheme despite some issues raised against it.

[Full Report](#)

EUROPEAN UNION | 14 DECEMBER | FISH INFO & SERVICES

AIPCE stresses pros and cons of ATQ regulation

EU Fish Processors Association (AIPCE) has publicly welcomed the autonomous tariff quota (ATQ) system for the next three years because it considers it properly reflects market needs but regrets it disregards opportunities to support the sector innovation and growth.

[Full Report](#)

VIETNAM-ASEAN | 15 DECEMBER | VIETNAMNET BRIDGE

AEC could revolutionize fish & seafood industry

The Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) recently announced high expectations for expanded exports of Vietnam seafood and other aquaculture exports to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) region as a result of its formation.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 22 DECEMBER | DAILY NEWS AND ANALYSIS

Government to scrap over 100 archaic laws of shipping sector: Nitin Gadkari

As a new year beckons, the government plans to weed out several archaic rules, some of which are over 100 years old, relating to shipping sector and also harness inland waterways, lighthouses and islands as new growth drivers of the Indian economy.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA-COLOMBIA | 23 DECEMBER | SEATRADE MARITIME NEWS

Dan-Bunkering enters Colombia in joint venture deal

Bunker trading firm Dan-Bunkering has formed a joint venture with Australian Bunkers for physical supplies in Buenaventura, Colombia, to develop and strengthen its physical presence in Latin America.

[Full Report](#)

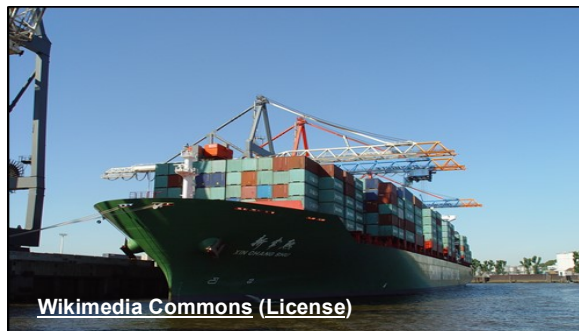
GLOBAL | 24 DECEMBER | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS

Global marine fuel regulations could shock refining

and oil markets

MO regulations call for global standards for sulphur content in marine fuel to be tightened to 0.5% from its present 3.5%.

[Full Report](#)



CHINA | 28 DECEMBER | BBC NEWS

China fines global shipping firms for price-fixing

Chinese regulators have fined seven major international shipping companies 407m yuan (\$65m, £42m) for fixing prices after a year-long investigation.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 28 DECEMBER | SEATRADE MARITIME NEWS

Bali's Benoa Port to handle international cargo from next month

Bali's Benoa Port, which is run by Indonesian state-owned port operator Pelindo III, is set to start export and import services from next month as part of the government's efforts to increase international trade in Bali, local reports said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 29 DECEMBER | SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Another shipping conglomerate born as Beijing approves merger of Sinotrans and China Merchants

Beijing has approved the merger of Sinotrans & CSC and China Merchants Group as part of wider restructuring of state-owned companies and consolidation of the shipping industry reeling from slowing global trade and overcapacity.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 30 DECEMBER | SEATRADE MARITIME NEWS

Keppel bags \$88.5 in offshore contracts

Keppel Shipyard in Singapore picked-up to conversion jobs for Malaysian offshore players.

[Full Report](#)